

Unlocking Warwick

The Unlocking Warwick Volunteers

Newsletter Autumn 2018

Bringing people together
in the heart of Warwick



This newsletter brings you up to date with the recent work of Unlocking Warwick, the Town Council's volunteer group based at the Court House, and looks ahead to activities coming up later this year.

Marking the WWI Armistice Centenary

On November 11th the 100th anniversary of the end of the fighting in the Great War will be marked by major remembrance events around the world. Unlocking Warwick is playing its part by commemorating the sacrifices that were made here in the county town by many families.

Magnificent and Moving Response to 'Find the Fallen'

Our appeal for pictures and information about the 358 WWI names on the Warwick War Memorial has produced some excellent material from local people.

Project leader Christine Shaw says, 'We have had a magnificent response with some moving stories, particularly about those men who died so young on the Western Front or in the Middle East. Our research team have also been providing some fascinating information after spending very many hours at the County Record Office, combing through newspaper reports from every week of the war and photographing death notices.'

We now have information about the majority of the names on the memorial. But we still need more, particularly pictures from family albums.'

The material is all being posted on our special website www.warwickwarmemorial.org.uk which was launched earlier this year with the help of a community grant from the Town Council.

For example - we knew little about 'A.G.Kemp' named on the bronze plaque on the memorial until Warwick resident Juliet Homer produced an amazing family album including pictures of her great uncle Alfred Greatrex Kemp with his RWR battalion at Blackdown in 1915, pictured before they joined the Gallipoli campaign where Alfred died in battle a few months later.



Sub-Lieutenant Alfred Kemp among his men before leaving for Gallipoli. He lived at Red House, on the corner of The Butts and the Eastgate.

You can search the website to find the individual pages for all those named on the war memorial, and some we have found who for a variety of reasons were not commemorated there. They appear in a section called 'Not Forgotten'. There are features about the local regiments, other memorials in the town and what happened in Warwick during the war. And there is news about the centenary events happening in Warwick.

The Warwick Armistice Afternoon Tea, October 7th

Some of the personal stories from WWI will be related during an afternoon tea in the Court House ballroom on the final day of the Warwick Words History Festival, Sunday 7th October.

There will be readings about the impact of the war on the people of Warwick and the involvement of the local regiments, with poetry, and songs from the period performed by the mezzo-soprano Imogen Parker accompanied by Oliver Hancock, the Director of Music at St. Mary's Collegiate Church.

The tea served by the volunteers will be similar to what would have been available in the autumn of 1918.



Tickets at £16 are available at the Warwick Visitor Information Centre walk-in box office. Or call the Warwick Words box office : 01926 334418

Unlocking Warwick will also have a stand at the Warwick Words History Festival to be held this year in the Court House ballroom on October 6th between 10am and 2pm.

Perhaps some visitors will want to join the volunteers.

The Warwick WWI Walk October 13th

Stories discovered during the War Memorial Project will also be featured during a special Word War One Walk on Saturday 13th October led by Paula Fletcher.

The 3pm Walk – more of a gentle stroll – will start at the Court House where the Mayor, Richard Eddy, will re-enact the reading of the official proclamation of war, just as it happened in 1914 in front of a large crowd.

At the war memorial, guests will hear presentations by volunteers bringing back to life some of those commemorated on the plaques. The walk will end inside St. Mary's to see the RWR Chapel and the spectacular display of thousands of hand-made poppies.



Tickets for the walk are on sale at the Visitor Information Centre box office at £5. All proceeds will go to St. Mary's and the Fusilier Museum.

In the Ballroom

'In the Ballroom', the monthly social gathering organised by Unlocking Warwick for the Town Council, is also reflecting the WWI centenary. The June edition featured an illustrated talk about the Warwickshire Yeomanry by museum curator Philip Wilson. And in September there will be a singalong of WWI period songs with the SingWell Choir. The November gathering will hear the story of the big poppy display in St. Mary's Church which will have been unveiled on October 5th.

The mixture of a talk or activity, a quiz, tea and cake and time to chat has made In the Ballroom increasingly popular this year, regularly attracting more than fifty guests. One told us, "It's the highlight of my month!"



These gatherings organised by Ann Lettis and a regular team of volunteers, will continue next year. The programme will be announced later. In the Ballroom aims to bring together local people who may not be able to get out much and to help them make new friends over afternoon tea. And they can spread the word about the Regency ballroom as a lovely central venue for hire.

Tea and Dancing

Also happening once a month in the ballroom are the Tea and Dance Lessons organised by Cllr Dorothy Da Cruz with help from Unlocking Warwick's Sue Rigby. Numbers have been increasing and guests clearly appreciate the individual coaching from ballroom dance experts and the exercise which is good for posture, flexibility and balance, as well as enjoying the tea!



Tea and Dance Lessons will continue for the rest of this year on the second Tuesday of the month at 2pm, costing just £2.50 per person.

Other Activities

Our final **Court House Tours** of this season will take place on Saturday 15th September at 11am and 2pm during Heritage Open Days weekend. So far this year 112 visitors and 50 schoolchildren have heard about Warwick's history and been shown round the restored building. Volunteers regularly help out in the **Visitor Information Centre**. The manager Liz Healey says that our **What's On in Warwick** long-term calendar of events is hugely useful when people ask what's happening. It's getting more than 2,000 views online every month. In June we held our annual **Summer Social** – a chance to get to know each other better and to meet some of the Councillors.

Follow us? Join us?

Please keep an eye on the news on our websites and follow us on social media. If you would like to help with Unlocking Warwick's community activities, send an email to Rick at info@unlockingwarwick.org.

Contacts

The Unlocking Warwick Volunteer Group

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Treasurer: Stuart Davies

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Facebook: [@unlockingwarwick](https://www.facebook.com/unlockingwarwick)

Twitter: [@Unlockingwk](https://twitter.com/Unlockingwk)

War Memorial site: www.warwickwarmemorial.org.uk

The Warwick Visitor Information Centre
01926 492212

www.visitwarwick.co.uk