



# STEP UP!

The STEP SHORT NEWSLETTER

100 Years Ago.....

STEP SHORT Registered Charity No. 1143305

November 2014

*It won't be over by Christmas!*

## Next Stop— The Front Line!



The London Transport Museum brought a genuine WW1 bus to Folkestone on its way to France for a tour of the Western Front. The bus was parked in Guildhall Street and the Museum had staff on hand to answer questions and show people around.

The visit started at the Memorial Arch where Step Short members were able to board the bus. It then went for a drive to the Town Hall before it was shown to the public in Guildhall Street. Our photo shows Step Short Chairman Damian Collins MP and Alan North Folkestone Town Mayor checking out the bus before the drive to the Town Hall.

The bus will visit many key WW1 sites after Folkestone including Ypres, Arras and Passchendaele. To date, driving this vehicle has led the LT Museum staff to have great admiration for the drivers in the War.

There are thought to be only 4 genuine WW1 buses left in existence. Step Short's work over the last few years has made this visit and other events possible.

We also saw Touch Wud out and about at Brockhill Park Performing Arts College '24 Hours In A Trench' WW1 History Project exhibition and tea party on the 4th October. Here he is with event organiser Jan Brown and a WW1 Ambulance, which was part of a Field Dressing Station display. There was also WW1 Cookery and a wide range of memorabilia, poetry, films and other displays.

WW1 BUS VISIT. BROCKHILL PARK ARTS COLLEGE. **1**

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Main photo Ann Berry, bottom photo Barbara Emden

## Christmas 1914—A gift to the men at the front

In the autumn of 1914 King George V's daughter Mary thought that ever sailor and soldier serving at the front should get a gift from the nation that Christmas.

Fundraising was immediately started and as part of it a 'Gift Book' quickly put together with contributions from leading authors and artists which was printed and sold to raise money to produce the gifts. The book later raised money for the Queens Work for Women fund as well. Contributors included J.M Barrie, A Conan Doyle, Rudyard Kipling and Arthur Rackham.

The initial idea was for each soldier or sailor to receive sweets, cigarettes and tobacco, plus a small gift. It was later decided to enclose the presents in a gilt brass tin. Today it is common to find the tins but normally the contents have long disappeared. Many of the Princess Mary tins were used as tobacco boxes post war by the old soldiers. In some cases the outsides have been worn nearly smooth by the regular polishing or the constant use by the old soldiers.

The standard package for each soldier was a small cardboard box that contained the brass tin, a packet of cigarettes, a packet of pipe tobacco, a pencil made from a bullet and a card or cards from the princess or sometimes the King and Queen. The Princess Mary card was inside the packet of cigarettes. Officers tins included a small friction lighter. Other packets included a pipe, a notepad and a writing package. The contents varied over time. Nurses and non smokers received either acid drops or chocolate in the tins. Indian troops also got sweets. The bullet pencils were made by Asprey, the Royal Jewellers and the bullet head is marked Sterling Silver. In most cases the bullet case is dated 1914. The brass tin, the cigarette packet, tobacco packet and the bullet case had Princess Mary's M cipher on them.

Around 220,000 tins were delivered to the soldiers and sailors for Christmas 1914 and a further 200,000 were delivered shortly after Christmas, these included a January 1915 New Year Card. Production continued as the fund had raised a lot of money. Final production was nearly 2.7 million tins as they tried to give the gift to 'All people in uniform at Christmas 1914'. Many other soldiers also got a tin. Production stopped with the brass shortage in 1916.



## Royal Anglian Regiment Visit

On the 10th October a detachment from the 1st Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment paid a visit to the Step Short Hub in Tram Road and were given a tour of the 'museum', and they were told about the history of Folkestone in the Great War and visited the Memorial Arch.



The are based at Woolwich and were visiting Shorncliffe Barracks for driver training. We were very pleased to meet them. (Photo Ann Berry)

### Alan Warren—Parade Commander

After five years organising the annual August parade and march down the Road of Remembrance, Alan Warren is stepping down as Parade Commander. Alan has done a terrific job every year. His replacement is being sought and a possible candidate is currently considering the position.

On the 12th November the Events Committee will present Alan with a gift to mark his work and show Step Short's grateful thanks for all that he has done over the last five years.

### PHOTO Competition

Sponsored by Seymour Harrison Photographic Shop - 25 Guildhall Street, Folkestone. Photo Competition Prizes are now confirmed as :- **First Prize—**a pair of 8X32 Finch Binoculars. **2nd Prize £50.** **Under 18's First Prize £50 .** **2nd Prize—**Gift vouchers for use in the store.

**Closing date is the 1st November 2014.**

### **Dates for the Diary**

**AGM at the Grand 14th November 2014. 7pm at The Grand Hotel.**

**Annual Membership due 11th November 2014**

**Curry Night 7th March 2015**



### **Events coming up.**

On Sundays at 7.00pm a bugler will play the last post at the Arch until Remembrance Sunday.

On Remembrance Sunday the Step Short Members are invited to attend the Service at the War Memorial.

On the 8th Ann Berry will lay a wreath on behalf of Folkestone at Etaples in France, our twin town.

### **Yoko Ono Visits Folkestone.**

Yoko Ono visited Folkestone on the 22nd October for the Folkestone Triennial, she said; "I thought I was coming to a sleepy little town, but I found this amazing energy, so much activity - a kind of spiritual rising.

It's not just a beautiful place; it also has an incredible history linked to the First World War.

I went to pay my respects at the new Memorial Arch, and I think it's so powerful.

It was dedicated by Prince Harry in August to the fallen soldiers and nurses who walked down Remembrance Road to the harbour to go to war. There are crocheted red poppies on the railings lining the road, and it's very moving.

I learned that, during the First World War, the people of Folkestone took in 115,000 Belgian refugees who arrived by boat and were welcomed and treated very well. It was much more than double the population - how did they manage? That was quite something in those days. I found it moving."

**Courtesy of the Daily Mail.**

## Folkestone Half Marathon visits the Arch.



The annual Folkestone half marathon organised by Ray Johnson supports local charities and this year Step Short was a beneficiary. The runners ran through the Arch for the first time.

**Genealogy at Step Short.** On Saturday 8th November a genealogy day will be held in the Step Short Hub. Get help tracing your ancestors or maybe just try to find out what your Grandfather / Grandmother did in WW1. Local historians will be on hand to help people.

### Commemorations at the Memorial Arch



Also on the 26th October relatives of Private Alfred Ernest Noble laid a personal memorial to their Great - Great uncle who gave his life for his country 100 years ago to the day. Private Noble served with the Royal Fusiliers and has no known grave.



Bugler Bryan Walker plays the *The Last Post* at the Memorial Arch, watched by around 300 local residents and visitors on the 26th October. It's hoped that this ceremony can continue after Remembrance Sunday and into the future. Piper Ben Millbery also played the parade onto the Memorial pavement. Up to 400 spectators have watched this event each week.

Photos Ray Johnson and John Bailey—Copyright 2014