



STEP UP!

The STEP SHORT NEWSLETTER

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July 2014

4th August - Outline of the day's events— by Malcolm Triggs

Excitement is building as Folkestone prepares for its big day on Monday 4 August, when HRH Prince Henry of Wales (Prince Harry) will arrive to open the commemorative arch commissioned by Step Short.

Although timings are still subject to change, the royal visitor is due to arrive at The Leas, accompanied by the Lord Lieutenant of Kent, Viscount De L'Isle, at around 11.30am.

He will be presented to the chairman of Step Short, Folkestone and Hythe MP Damian Collins, before being invited to unveil a plaque and declare the arch, designed by Philip Gearing, officially 'open'.

The stainless steel arch, funded by a range of donations as well as enjoying generous support from organisations including the Roger De Haan Charitable Trust and Kent, Shepway and Folkestone councils, is a dramatic sight at the end of The Leas.

It has been erected in tribute to the many millions of men and women – nurses and civilians as well as soldiers – who passed through Folkestone on their way to or from the Western Front during the First World War.

After opening the arch, Prince Harry will meet some of those who have worked so hard to complete the project before moving to the nearby War Memorial, where he will lay a wreath after a short Act of Remembrance which will include two minutes silence and the playing of *The Last Post* and *Reveille*.

The backdrop to the arch ceremony and the Act of Remembrance will be two parades, one of representatives of the armed forces, led by the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas, and the other made up of 800 civilians, many of whom have marched in this way before.

Both the parades will then continue down the Road of Remembrance, where the command "Step Short" will be given as it was 100 years ago to prevent marchers tumbling forwards on the steep slope.

After more presentations to civic dignitaries, the prince will follow the marchers down to the harbour area, where he

will have an opportunity to meet veterans, Step Short volunteers, members of the military and some of the public.

After 600 white balloons with poppy imagery have been released, the prince will leave Folkestone at around 1pm after a historic day in the town. The number of balloons echoes the number of names on the War Memorial.

For those in the harbour there will still be plenty to see and do, with the BBC's *World War One at Home Live Event* the main attraction between 10am and 5pm.

The free event, which will take place in the harbour car park, will reflect the dramatic impact the war had on families and communities across Kent and help people to explore their own family links to the war.

Later in the day there will be World War One-themed musical entertainment at the Leas Cliff Hall – called *Keep the Home Fires Burning* - which will begin at 7.30pm and end in time for the torchlight parade. Tickets are available from the Leas Cliff Hall at £7 each.

The torchlight parade will form up outside the bandstand on the Leas ready to set off for the War Memorial, via the commemorative arch, at 10pm. After a short service and two minutes' silence the lights will be extinguished at 11pm.

LATEST NEWS 4TH AUGUST.	1
THE ARCH IN PLACE	2
NAM EXHIBITION OPENING	3

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Erecting the Arch— 26th June 2014

Folkestone and Kent gained a new landmark on the 26th of June. The Step Short Memorial Arch was erected by Walkers Construction Ltd under the direction of Lease Lend, the project managers. The four pieces of the Arch had been delivered to site and a test assembly had shown the metalwork was completed to within 2mm of the plan. A fine achievement for such a large assembly 18 metres high and weighing 17 tons.

At around 1300hrs the two lower pieces were readied on wooden blocks and some of the black plastic protective sheeting peeled off. The giant crane lifted the first piece and lowered it into position on the cliff edge side of the Leas. It was then bolted in place on its mount. The second lower piece was soon readied and was again bolted down. The two smaller top pieces were then prepared and connected. Weighing in at 3.5 tons each these were not insignificant parts. They also had extra connectors for locking the structure together plus the inbuilt lighting. As these were lifted expertly into position it was realised that the cliff edge lower part needed a small adjustment to its position. This was done and the two pieces were locked into position. The main work was done by 4.30pm. The team then needed to make a number of small adjustments and it all fitted perfectly. Arch designer Phillip Geering was on hand to see his vision made real.

The whole process was filmed by Meridian TV and Paul Emden gave them an interview which was broadcast that evening. A great day for Step Short and for Folkestone. Photos : Copyright John Bailey 2014



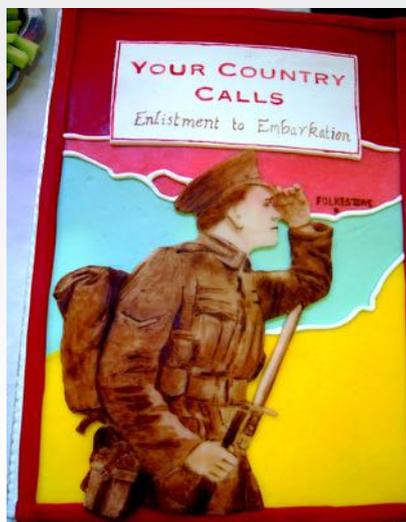
The assembly of the Arch, Paul Emden interviewed by Meridian TV, Phillip Geering on hand, The St Martins School group and WUDI.



National Army Museum Exhibition Opening

On Tuesday 24th June the Exhibition at the Town Hall building in Guildhall Street was formally opened. The Director General of the NAM, Janis Murray, Damian Collins MP and Folkestone Mayor Alan North all gave speeches of welcome and thanks. Also in attendance from the NAM was Head of Learning Tristan Langlois and Head of Communications Rebecca Hubbard. The launch was very well attended.

Photos from the NAM Exhibition opening.
Photos: Copyright John Bailey and Malcolm Triggs. 2014.



The NAM Exhibition is themed around the call up and the soldiers embarking for the front line.

Exhibits include ;
Three volumes of the Harbour cafe visitor books, a soldiers uniform jacket, recruiting posters, A video of an officer recounting his experiences, the Belgian Refugees painting which has been in the Grand Hotel for some years, and more.

The exhibition has free entry and will be open through to April 2015.