

Braunton Memory Cafe News



Hello to you all,

November has brought us winter weather and a second lockdown. We hope that you are still keeping safe and well.

November also brings us two events annually, namely Bonfire Night and Remembrance Day. Both these events have been significantly changed by lockdown as large group gatherings are banned but as you will see on page one, a small representation of people were able to attend the memorial at St. Brannock's Church, including three representatives from Braunton Caen Rotary.

As to Bonfire night, I did hear fireworks being set off but any official display, such as the excellent one that I attended in 2019 at the Braunton Cricket Club, did not take place this year. Nonetheless we will be talking of both in our newsletter and touching on three stories kindly provided by Braunton locals in respect to family members that fought in the Great War. Martin Underhill has kindly written another lovely poem for us on Guy Fawkes Night.

Please remember if you need to speak to a member of the team, contact Geoff on 01271 815377.



BONFIRE NIGHT

Bonfire Night is celebrated on November 5th. It marks the day in 1605 when Guy Fawkes tried to blow up the House of Commons. In fact, it was a group of thirteen English Catholics, led by Robert Catesby, who plotted to assassinate King James 1 when he opened Parliament. They filled a cellar at the Houses of Parliament with gunpowder and Guy Fawkes was put in charge of guarding it. An anonymous letter alerted the authorities and subsequently they searched the cellars and arrested Guy Fawkes.



He was tried and along with three others who were involved in the plot, all were sentenced to death. Londoners were encouraged to celebrate the failure to assassinate their king and Guy Fawkes became a popular effigy for Royalists and Protestants to burn every year. Fireworks were added to the celebrations in 1650, although the first fireworks were set off at the wedding of Henry VII in 1486.



HALLOFAWKES

Remember all those fireworks glowing
The penny guys the kids were showing
Back garden bonfires reached the skies
Golden Rain delighted cries
The evenings they were dark and damp
But you could make a candle lamp
A jam jar and a lighted candle
Tied up with string to make a handle
How those sausages did sizzle
In the darkness and the drizzle
Memories and each other now
Will give our Guy Fawkes night a glow
Put on the kettle sing a song
With hearts of joy we will be strong

Martin Underhill

Did you hear about the boy that broke into a firework's factory?

The police let him off!



What do you call a duck who likes fireworks?

A firequacker!



What was Guy Fawkes favourite meal?

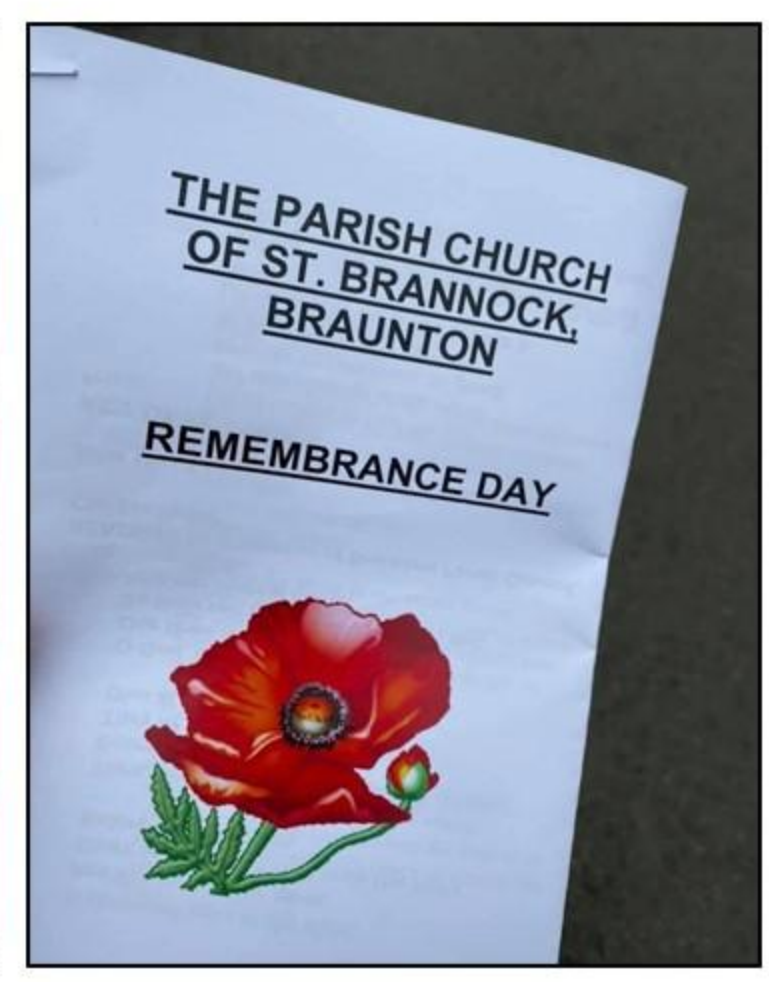
Bangers and mash!



Delivering October's Halloween treats and newsletter.



President Paula, President-Elect Chelsea and Vice-President Geoff attending a small service of Remembrance to honour those who have fallen in war.





Braunton has a Memorial Garden in which there is a covered seat and a plaque to honour those who have given "their lives to the cause of peace". There is also a stone memorial outside St Brannock's church which is where Braunton Caen Rotary Club laid a wreath, as seen in the photos on page one. Inside the church can be found memorials to those who lost their lives in the wars of 1914-18 and 1939-45.

A roll of Honour of all those soldiers from Braunton can be found on the pages of www.devonheritage.org but we have heard from three local residents of Braunton about their Grandfathers and their roles in the wars.



Some 10,000 American troops were stationed in North Devon in the build up to D-Day on June 6th, 1944. The Braunton Burrows dunes are similar in landscape to the Normandy beaches, (particularly to Utah Beach) and were therefore ideal as a training ground for their landings and assaults to secure the land. They built concrete replica landing craft in the southern area of the dunes; four were of Landing Craft Tanks and two of Landing Craft Mechanised. All six are now Grade II listed having been granted protection by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) on the advice of Historic England. The men practiced embarking and disembarking, as well as what to do once off the craft. There were also several Pillbox built and live ammunition was used during the training.



T/Maj/A/Lt-Col CE Jewels DSO, MC 18th Battalion Lancashire Fusiliers citings from King George the Fifth and Field Marshall Sir Douglas Haig in 1914-1918 war. He had similar DSO and MC during Second World War. Throughout he set a splendid example of gallant and able leadership to those under him.
From Paul Jewels



Here is a snippet of my grandfather Jim Dyer The big photo has him far left after collecting his Military Cross from the Queen. Jim's father far right He was actually awarded the MC twice, once with one bar. He spoke 6 languages and was in MI6. He latterly worked as a translator till his death. He also kept a diary whilst in trenches.
From Richard Congdon



Many locals remember the American soldiers, particularly their generosity. On the website, Explore Braunton, there are four short videos of people describing their experiences of the American soldiers. Joyce Almond recalls that the only thing that the troops were allowed to take with them to the Normandy landings was their dog tags. She was given a bracelet by a GI with an eagle in the design and the name 'Vincent'. She still has the bracelet. Liz Cotton was also given a gift, this time it was a box of Dominoes, which she too still has. She recalls too of her Grandfather being offered food when the Americans were packing up camp, but he had to refuse as Britain was under rationing.

11 NOVEMBER Remembrance Day

My grandfather George West ran a building business in Braunton from the 1930's (Geo West & Sons) during the D- day preparations his work shop was requisitioned by the war office to build parts for the gliders used in the invasion, although there doesn't seem to be any records of this only word of mouth from my family. Because this was a secret operation he was sent to Southampton docks to work on war ships as a carpenter.

From Gary West



Douglas Hopkins, staying with his Grandmother in Croyde in 1943, recalls the Americans billeted at Down End Holiday Park. With other children he remembers asking the soldiers "Have you any gum, chum?" Frank Kidwell wrote to us remembering "when the Americans were in training in Braunton, they would return from Barnstaple town on the 10.30pm (train). It was known as the 'Boozer' and to get on, a 5d ticket had to be purchased and given up at the gate because it was known that it would have been impossible to collect at Braunton where the gates were left open for the stampede!"

