



The Monte Cassino Society

Furthering an interest in the Italian Campaign 1943–1945

NA15141

Welcome

Summer/Autumn 2013

Aim

To remember and further an interest in the experiences of all who took part in the Italian Campaign.

Welcome to this, our latest newsletter. I hope you have enjoyed the best summer we have had for several years and were able to take advantage of the warm summer days.

You will quickly realise that this edition of the newsletter is smaller than usual, an interim edition. The Remembrance Weekend in London will soon be upon us and I am anxious to get out the information in good time. Also, to update those booked on our 70th Anniversary Pilgrimage to Italy.

The response to the trip to Italy next May has been overwhelming and reluctantly we have had to restrict numbers—to one hundred and four! My sincere thanks to Paul Taylor and John Leach who are working tirelessly to ensure we have a memorable week in Cassino.

We continue to attract new members and with the publicity surrounding the 70th anniversary I hope we will attract even more. The Monte Cassino Society was started eight years ago—our first newsletter went out to forty veterans and twenty sons, daughters and friends. Sadly over those eight years we have lost many of our veteran members. However, the Society still boasts in excess of one hundred veterans! I think we can be justly proud of what we have achieved and can confidently say that we have stayed true to our aims—*To remember and further an interest in the experiences of all who took part in the Italian Campaign.*

Judith Coote

Daughter of the late Gerald Soady

91st LAA, Royal Artillery, 4th British Infantry Division

News

London Remembrance Services

As in previous years we will be represented at the Field of Remembrance and at the Royal British Legion Cenotaph Ceremony.

Admittance to the Opening Service at the Field of Remembrance and the Service at the Cenotaph is by ticket only. If you wish to attend either or both services, will you please complete and return the enclosed pro forma to Judith Coote, White Horses, Meadway, Looe, PL13 1JT

FIELD OF REMEMBRANCE. WESTMINSTER ABBEY

The Opening Ceremony, attended by a member of the Royal Family, will be held on Thursday, 7th November. The gates will be open from 8.45a.m. to 10.30a.m. (admission by ticket only). After a short service the field will be open to the public and remain open until 8.00a.m. on Monday 18th November. Our plot is number 176 and we will be delighted to meet with any members and friends.

As usual we have ordered crosses for our plot and if you would like a dedication for a loved one, comrade or friend, please let us know on the enclosed pro forma.

We represent all those who served at Cassino, and welcome the names of those who survived the battles but are no longer with us as well as those who did not return.

CENOTAPH CEREMONY

We have passes for the Royal British Legion Cenotaph Ceremony and March Past on Sunday 10th November and would urge as many as are able to join us. The British Legion ask us to point out that we are likely to be standing in Whitehall for at least one and a half hours prior to the March Past and then marching for a distance of over a mile, possibly in inclement weather. That said, if anyone is still interested, please complete and return the pro forma to Judith, address above.

THE BIG LOTTERY—HEROES RETURN 2

We are thrilled that the Heroes Return 2 fund has been extended and those who have benefitted from the fund for an earlier trip have the opportunity to apply again. The extended scheme includes widows of

News (cont)

World War Two veterans.

All our members who applied through the Society joint application have been approved.

The Fund Manager, Zoe Edmonds, and her team are anxious that as many as possible take advantage of the money available and if you know of anyone who might be eligible, in whatever theatre of war, do please encourage them to take advantage of this scheme. Zoe and her team have been extremely helpful to us in our joint application.

70TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIONS

Pilgrimage to Cassino

The response has been fantastic, more wishing to go to Italy than we had anticipated! Our numbers were dependent upon coaches needed for travel in Italy and once we had decided to book a second coach we were able to increase the number to what we have now—104 which includes 14 veterans. After that point it was impossible to cater for any more; there is now a reserve list.

Next year is a very significant anniversary and while some of us will be in Italy for the service in Cassino War

Cemetery, it is very likely that others will wish to mark the occasion at our Memorial in the National Memorial Arboretum in Alrewas.

Most of our veterans are unable to undertake the journey to Italy but many may wish to join with comrades and family to mark the event.

We would be grateful if someone was willing to oversee an informal service at the Arboretum on or near the 18th May 2014. Mike Anslow liaised with the staff at the Arboretum, organised the Service of Dedication of the Memorial in May last year and the Memorial Service this year. Mike and Judith are willing to advise and help with details— who to contact, format, etc.

(Contact details on page 8)



Letters

From Chris Smith, Farnham

I met Garth Wright and Tom Allett last year at the Dunkirk Veterans Cruise on the Thames. Subsequently I was involved in a local charity bike ride and wanted to arrange for donations to be channelled towards raising funds for Garth and his colleagues to make their planned visits to Monte Cassino and Dunkirk.

I went ahead with the bike ride and would like to make a contribution to the cause from my company. Please find enclosed a cheque to the value of £100 in this respect.

I wish you well with your charity endeavours. Your work has made me feel better by providing an opportunity to contribute towards such a good cause.

Yours sincerely,

(signed) Chris Smith

ENGLAND 1930s by Mr. Geoffrey Smith

When I was young I'd reason to be proud
To be growing in such a pleasant place.
By railways, trams, canals and streams endowed,
With meadows, parks and moorlands' open space.
In April, ropes and taws and tops were found,
In May, the sunny days were ripe for bats
On balding lawns, or at the County ground
Where heroes stood against the wild "Ow Zats?"
Sutcliffe applauding called, "Well done, lad!"
His on-drive caught at the boundary rope
When a six would make a record score.
We'd swap pork pies, "Your's aren't so bad,
See your lot here next year, I hope."
Ah, life were grand before Hitler's war.

Accounts

WAR& PEACE REVIVAL

In Mid July at RAF Westenhanger, Folkestone Racecourse, Mary and Grahame Tidy of the Italy Star Association and Suzanne Turk from the Monte Cassino Society braved the heat for five days to mount a joint display—*The Italian Campaign*.

Suzanne writes— “We had a fantastic response from the public, from old and young alike. Many adult children of WW2 veterans who said they regretted not asking more of their Dads and now it is too late”.

There were numerous enquires about membership for both associations and our thanks go to Mary & Grahame and Suzanne for ‘flying the flag’.



MARY AND GRAHAME TIDY WITH SUZANNE TURK

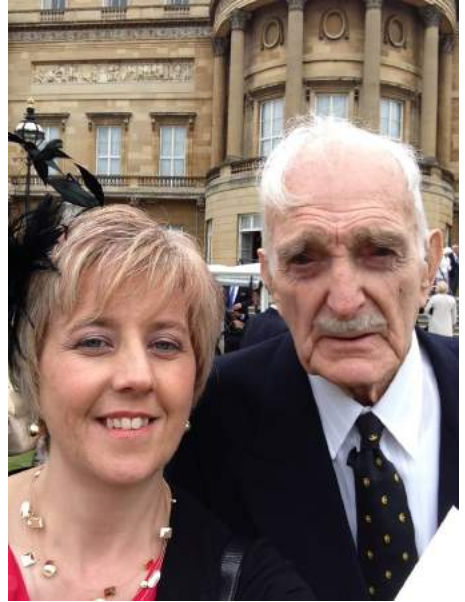
VISIT TO THE PALACE

(From the Sussex Express Newspaper)

This summer several residents of Alfriston have been invited to Buckingham Palace garden parties for a variety of reasons, mostly to do with valued long service in the community.

Bill Clarke is a member of the Monte Cassino Society and as such was invited to a garden party being held by the Not Forgotten Association. The association is a Tri Service Charity founded in 1920 and provides entertainment and recreation for ex-service men and women with disabilities.

On July 2 Jan Apps went with her father Bill Clarke to Buckingham Palace. Bill, having served in WW2 and seen action at Monte Cassino, wore his medals with pride, as did a lot of the other veterans. Once in the garden they were served with tea, cucumber sandwiches and petite cakes while the band played. HRH the Princess Royal and her husband, Vice Admiral Sir Timothy Laurence, arrived at 4 pm and chatted to groups. There were lots of celebrities and service personnel, many who had been injured in past and ongoing wars. Jan and her 90 year old Dad said, "it was a truly wonderful day and one we will never forget".



New Members

David Bage—Grandfather in 2nd Battalion The Cameron Highlanders

Peter Brennan, Son of Cassino Veteran

R.H.A. Keeping, Royal West Kent Regiment

Mrs. Nellie Ladbrook—Widow of Derek Ladbrook, 5th Scottish Parachute Regiment

Robert Mitchell, son of Cassino Veteran

John Strafford—Son of Ernest Strafford, 1st Battalion York and Lancaster Regiment

Robert Tong, Special Air Service

And Finally -

As a result of our successful 70th anniversary lottery application the Big Lottery Heroes Return 2 have sent me ten (between us all) travel kits—I would have called them survival kits! Each kit consists of a zipped canvas carrying bag, a water flask, a gentleman's handkerchief and a small container of sun block. As you can see from the photo below, they are the remnants of the 65th anniversary!!

(tongue in cheek) Any offers?

Judith



In Memoriam

Mr. W.H.H. Lewis, RAF Signals



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