

As in towns and villages all over the country, for Simpson the weekend of 10th & 11th November – and the days that preceded and followed – saw many ways of commemorating the centenary of the ARMISTICE which brought WORLD WAR 1 to an end.

With the area around the war memorial and the green already decorated with hundreds of knitted poppies the weekend commemorations began on Saturday evening in the church, with a concert of music and poetry with a wartime theme, organised by Pat Hodges.

The programme included songs from Malcolm Austin, Linda Kirk, Chris Bell, Harvey Norton and Bill Ridsdale, variously accompanied by Geoff Long, Erwin Hiddema and Jean Mattinsley. Erwin and Geoff also entertained on the clavinova. The Simpson Singers, accompanied by Julia Burkett, invited the audience to sing John Lennon's Imagine and in addition there were opportunities for the audience to join in singing familiar songs from both wars.

James Whysall, Anne Monk, Margaret Young, Pat Hodges, Alison Lucas and Philip Coppen were among those reading from the works of the well-known war poets and Peter Barnes offered a speculative account of what the mood might have been like in Simpson a hundred years previously, on the arrival of news of the Armistice.



Continuing on the next pages you can read the personal accounts of Pamela Lambourne, Karen Steeden, Wendy Searle and Ashlynn Wilkinson.

Strengthening the Community

Building on local Community Spirit

EVERYONE welcome

Come along to The Plough, Simpson on Thursday **December 13th** at 10.30am to help plan for the future of our local community

MINCE PIES AND COFFEE / TEA

Any queries please contact the parish clerk:
clerk.simpsonandashland@gmail.com

07597 304054



Simpson Charity Social

Saturday 1st December
2.30 – 4.30pm

Simpson Village Hall

Refreshments • Raffle

Tombola • Home produce

Regift table & more

All welcome
please help & support

Sian MK 670529

Margaret MK 670667

**Believe in
children**
Barnardo's





The very enjoyable evening included a bring-and-share supper and a collection raised £238 to be divided between the church's Restricted Building Fund and the Royal British Legion.

At 10am on the morning of Sunday 11th the church bells were rung by a team of four – Brian Baldwin, Paul Cromblehome and Christina and Peter Tribble. The peal was Double Bob Minimus.

A well-attended service at St Thomas's was conducted by Rev Ian Herbert and shortly before 11am the congregation left the church to join those already gathered around the memorial, swelling the numbers present to over 100.

The names of the dead from the two World Wars, as engraved on the memorial tablet, were read out before Harvey Norton recited the lines from Laurence Binyon's poem – *'They shall grow not old...'*

The two minutes silence was ushered in by 15-year-old trumpeter **Joshua Inkson**, from Woburn, who played the Last Post with great confidence. His sounding of Reveille was followed by a short religious service before a wreath was laid on behalf of the church by Eric Coles, whose father, George, had been injured at the Battle



of the Somme in July 1916 and whose uncle Archie was killed in France in March 1917.

Peter Barnes laid a wreath on behalf of Simpson and Ashland Parish Council and then, in a unique and moving ceremony, Margaret Harrison planted individual crosses, each decorated with a poppy that she had knitted, as the names of the eleven dead from World War 1 were read again in order, from 1st September 1914 to 2nd August 1919. Within that sequence, Dorry Goss planted the cross in honour of her uncle, Archie Coles. There was then an opportunity for those present to pay their own tributes. Later that morning the 1st Tinkers Bridge Rainbows, Brownies and Guides laid their own wreath.

You can read more about the eleven men who died in the war at: www.simpsonandashland.co.uk/lest-we-forget

Peter Barnes



The People's March in London



We were fortunate to win tickets to participate in The People's March as part of the Armistice centenary commemorations on Sunday 11 November.

Traditionally, only serving armed forces and civilian organisations march past the Cenotaph in Whitehall after the remembrance service, followed by a veterans march. This year it was decided to recreate the 1919 memorial and allow members of the public to take part in their own parade to remember all those lost in armed conflict.

We chose to represent and remember those lost from our village of Simpson in World War 1. We purchased a special 'Thank you' poppy wreath from the Royal British Legion and wrote all the names from the Simpson memorial on it. The list included Private Jack Janes, a past resident of what is now our home at The Mount.

The wreath travelled with us from Simpson to Whitehall and was placed at the foot of the Cenotaph, along with many others. It was a privilege to represent our community and those we had lost at such a unique and special anniversary.



Karen Steeden and Wendy Searle



Poppies for remembrance



When, early this year the Simpson in Bloom Group sent out a request for knitted poppies to help make a display to commemorate the centenary of the end of World War 1, we did not anticipate the extraordinary response we had.

Over a thousand were knitted by people from far and wide, not only in Simpson but surrounding areas of Milton Keynes and as far away as Northern Ireland and the USA. Then, in October, the poppies were sewn on to ribbons during the Tuesday coffee mornings in the Village Hall.

Despite wet and windy weather we were able to arrange a display of poppies around the village, concentrating mainly on the green by St Thomas's Church.



Dorry Goss making some of the knitted poppies

The hedges, the Christmas tree, the oak tree and the memorial bench were covered. A poppy arch was constructed on the path leading to the church and individual poppies were placed in the ground as a tribute to Flanders Field. When the sun shone the whole area glowed.

Other areas of the village were decorated too: the porch at The Mount was festooned and there was a lovely waterfall display at the entrance to Mount Pleasant. During the Remembrance weekend candles were placed around the Christmas tree and the war memorial. At night they looked wonderful and made the scene very moving.

We hope everyone was pleased with the display. Over the week it certainly caused a great deal of interest, with many people visiting the village.

The Simpson in Bloom group was overwhelmed by the number of people who, by making the poppies, wanted to be part of the experience of remembering and commemorating. It was a real community effort and brought so many people together.

Despite our best efforts we do not have the names of everyone who contributed to making the decorations. So we would like to take this opportunity to say a great BIG THANK YOU to all who helped to make the Remembrance weekend a very special and memorable occasion.

Over the course of the weekend £322 was raised for the Royal British Legion, including the proceeds from Saturday's concert.

Pamela Lambourne



A young person's remembrance



When my two daughters Eva (4) and Esmae (5) first started noticing all the poppies being displayed and sold this year, I knew that we would soon be having our conversations about remembrance and what this means.

As I'd done with my older (now 14-year-old) son at the same age, I've been having similar conversations with them for the last few years and each year our conversations delve a little deeper as their enquiring minds develop and their understanding and knowledge grow a little more.

I distinctly remember last year, attempting to explain the word 'war' to Esmae when she had constant questions about '*why the soldiers died?*' and '*but why did they fight? Fighting is bad Mummy, they should talk to each other and share*'. All very sensible suggestions from a four-year-old learning to resolve her own conflicts with other pre-schoolers.

This year, while my husband and son attended sporting events which held their own moments of reflection, I told the girls we would be going to our local church and memorial just down the road from our house in Simpson.

They were excited at this prospect; they had seen the beautiful handmade poppy displays made by our wonderful Simpson residents and were keen to get a closer look. I told them this year also, we would be taking some time to be still and silent with other people from our village to think of all those lost in conflict.

They enjoyed the service held at the church, the singing, taking in some comprehension from the words spoken and, of course, the chocolate biscuits provided after the service!

They stood as quietly as they could for the silence at the memorial, perhaps managing as much as 25 seconds before whispering mumbles of how lovely the poppies looked. And as they settled down to bed that night, after carefully placing their poppies in their 'special boxes' beside their bed, Esmae reflected on the day's events saying that '*she always wanted to appreciate the soldiers because they didn't want to die, did they Mummy? But they cared so much about us all that they did*'.

'It feels very sad doesn't it Mummy?' added Eva.

And so in their own young way, they will remember.

Ashlynn Wilkinson

Developments at The Walnuts

After the Milton Keynes Music Service moved out of The Walnuts in Simpson in August 2017 the site has been lying dormant, awaiting the next stage of its life.

Built in 1903, it was a private house until 1972 when it became a school for children with autism. When the school moved to specialist premises in 2007 the Music Service took up residence.

At the beginning of October work started to convert the premises to provide a day-care service for people with dementia. The two buildings at the rear of the old house are being linked and the interiors redesigned to create day rooms, showers and bathroom facilities. There will also be safe access to the garden area. It is anticipated that construction work will be completed by early March 2019 and the service will become available soon after that.

Sandra Rankin (Head of Service, Older People's Housing and Community Support, Adult Social Care People Directorate at Milton Keynes Council) is very excited about the prospect of coming to Simpson: 'It will be a wonderful move for our day services for older people and also for a base for our city-wide Homecare service.' She goes on to write:

The plan is for two of the three day-services for older people in Milton Keynes to combine to provide a service for 45 people each weekday. Older people will be able to enjoy activities and company, have a hot meal and be looked after by trained care staff. Most of those who come will have a dementia and some will be quite frail and otherwise unable to leave home without support. These day care services also provide much needed breaks for carers.

The homecare service will be in a large shared room in the modular building (the 'box' on the Linear Park side of the site). This will be a great improvement for the service. There will be 20–25 staff on site from 7am each weekday.



The day service will operate on Monday to Friday between 8.30am and 5pm. Four purpose-built buses will leave at about 8.30am and return at about 10.30am; the return journeys will be between 3.30pm and 5pm. It is unlikely that the facility will be used in the evenings or at weekends.



Initially, the house itself will be used for training and meetings while a longer-term plan is developed.

We are keen to develop links in our new community. There will be a launch or open day once we are settled in and I hope we will be able to meet many residents then.

We have been thinking about a new name for our service. Some of our staff and clients have made suggestions. Please send in yours to sandra.rankin@milton-keynes.gov.uk.

Charles Warren Academy School Council



Charles Warren Academy has a School Council whose members lead discussions on new initiatives so that the thoughts and views of all the pupils can be taken into account.

The Council also provides opportunities to voice concerns and celebrate successes so that we can work together to continue to make improvements to our school. The Council meets twice a month with the Lead teacher, Carl Ryan.

Over the past year the Council has planned and run fundraising activities and worked with other professionals, schools and campaigns to develop a greater understanding across the school of the importance of developing teamwork, problem solving and debating skills. Money has been raised for medical detection dogs, Children in Need, and Sport Relief.

Last year the school had major problems with flooding, following bad weather, and the School Council wanted to look at ways to resolve that and also to improve road safety at the front of the school. Councillor Emily Darlington (one of our parents) arranged a meeting with Councillor Pete Marland, Leader of Milton Keynes Council, and transport experts at the Civic Offices. The children developed and presented a proposal. Since that meeting MK Council have started to improve the drainage system near the entrance and are looking into whether the school could benefit from additional road signs to improve safety around dropping off and picking up times.

All of the children have learnt valuable skills, including that in order to bring about change, processes need to be followed!

A Winter of History

An experimental series of monthly talks with a historical theme starts at the end of January in Simpson Village Hall. The 'experiment' is to test whether there is an appetite, locally, for such a menu.

Here, John Hammar and Eric Gates, both Simpson residents, entice you with their concoctions. The local theme continues on 23 March when Peter Barnes will trace the nefarious doings of Rev William Rice, Rector of Simpson, who died 100 years ago, in February 1919. The talks are in Simpson Hall and start at 7.30pm. Entrance is free; donations may be invited. For further information – and suggestions – contact Peter Barnes peterrwbarnes@hotmail.co.uk

Cycling from Colditz – John Hammar

Saturday 26 January at 7.30 in Simpson Village Hall

The first book that I can remember reading as a 6-year-old was *The Latter Days at Colditz* by P. R. Reid. I was captivated by this true story, written in the 'Boy's Own' style of the times and represented well in both the 1952 film and 1972



BBC drama. Reading of unsuccessful escapes, I always thought 'I would have escaped on my own and wouldn't have made their mistakes'.

So, in 2005, on the 65th anniversary of an escape from Laufen near Salzburg that led to recapture and incarceration in Colditz Castle, I tried walking their route by night and sleeping in cover during the day. One cannot reproduce the mental circumstances and I didn't even make it halfway to Switzerland before my ankles locked! After that, I started cycling many routes associated with the Colditz story and this summer rode the 706 miles from Colditz back to Calais. More interesting and challenging was the 483-mile ride from

Colditz to Ramsen on the Swiss border, following the incredible exploits of French Lieutenant Pierre Mairesse Lebrun's successful escape in 1941 – he stole two bicycles.

In my talk I will be describing some of the interesting, tragic and humorous things that I discovered in these and other journeys. As well as the well-known escapes, I'll talk about some of the lesser known aspects of the Colditz story, what those brave men endured and the tolerance/fairness of (most of) their German captors.

Charles Warren and the Lost Inheritance

a Victorian mystery story' by Eric Gates

Saturday 23 February at 7.30 in Simpson Village Hall

It's the 11th of April, 1872. Charles Warren, the builder and owner of Simpson House, lies dying in his bedroom. Charles has lived in the house for over 40 years and since arriving in the village as a young building surveyor has become a prosperous builder, farmer and landowner. During the day he is visited by Charles Powell from Newport Pagnell, his long-term friend, solicitor and business partner.



He makes a number of seemingly inexplicable and substantial changes to his will ... and nine days later, Charles Warren is dead. My talk explores the background and the events leading up to the drama surrounding the death of Charles Warren and my attempts to unravel the Mystery – or should it be Conspiracy? I follow the aftermath: its effect on the future of Simpson House and the impact on all those involved in or caught up in the Mystery of the Lost Inheritance.

Sparrowhawk

There are three ways you are likely to spot a sparrowhawk.

1. Overhead, you may be aware of its characteristic flight pattern: flap – flap – glide.
2. Or you may see it high in a tree or on a fence post, sitting upright, surveying the field.
3. Or you may be aware of a sudden commotion in your garden or when out on a walk as the bird comes crashing through, hoping to pick up a victim that fails to move fast enough.

That was the fate of a hapless pigeon in a Simpson garden in October. The female sparrowhawk in the photograph is larger than its male counterpart, with a browner barred underside, as distinct from bluish-grey.



Our new clerk

Hello! My name is Rupert Fairclough and I'm the new Parish Clerk for SAPC. Some of you have already met me at my weekly 'surgery' which I hold at Simpson Village Hall between 10am and 12pm every Tuesday.

If you have any questions or concerns that the Parish Council may be able to help with, just drop in for a chat.

This isn't the first time I've been involved in local government. Between 2008 and 2012, I was first a Councillor, then vice-Chair and finally Chair of Bow Brickhill Parish Council. I was also the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) at Bow Brickhill, a position that I now hold at SAPC. It means that I'm responsible for making sure that we make sound financial decisions and that our money is properly managed.

Previously I spent 30 years as a management consultant which took me all over the world – Europe, USA, Hong

Kong, Australia and New Zealand – helping large companies to get better at what they do. I specialised in customer service and helped make sure that my clients were giving the best service possible to their customers.

I've lived in and around Milton Keynes since 1998 (with a brief stint in 1985) so I'm familiar with the way the 'city' works and its various communities. Simpson and Ashland are two very diverse communities – one very old and one very new. Each has its advantages and its challenges, and I'm here to help ensure that your Parish Council does what it can to support and represent you.

You can contact me via **Facebook** and **Twitter**, call me on **07597 304054** or email me at **clerk.simpsonandashland@gmail.com**.

I look forward to meeting you soon!



Halloween on Ashland

by Crystal Grant

Burning sun seeps through our windows
"wake-up! It's Halloween!"
Look towards the lake; a mist

... Painted orange – atmosphere is eerie.
"For one night only" is the echo of the fallen.

Anticipation of Oh-hallows rituals, through our calling;
"What's the time?"

"Get your mask!"

"I can't wait for sweets..."

Its time... step outside... the glow of Jack-O-Lanterns speak...

Illuminating Ashland, allowing us to walk the streets...

Darkness taking over; 'Splurge the Pumpkin' leads the way, dancing red lights, gain our sight – there's something not quite right. The Purple 'Langham ghosts' are calling kids and adults too.

Don't let giant Frankenstein trick your mindset, *"BOO!"*
Penshurst Crescent is its dwelling



"It's running this way, MOVE!"

Killer clowns have games for us and the cackling witches too! But what about the pumpkin head!? *"Oh my, oh my, we're doomed"*

Let's get the sweets – get out of here, trick or treat is why we came.

Knock the doors and premier, let anticipation grow... lined trays of perfect presented sweets, is what we have to greet us!

Everyone is friendly... inside homes and on the streets; we are one, smiles all round and enthusiasm bouts...

It is as if we have been seeking this pagan celebration – to drop exteriors, talk to neighbours; an exchange of friendly glances. Community of people; feel the spirit, feel the love!

And then the Morning after it's no longer Halloween!

No further signs, just bags of sweets, the whispers in our homes...

"One a day, should see our little ghouls throughout the year"

"Let's be involved"

Please Ashland let us feel this spirit prior to the same time of next year!!

Halloween at the Mount

Residents at the Mount got together to celebrate Halloween proving age is no bar to getting the dressing up box out.

There were pumpkins and spooky music, a selection of ghoulish cakes and some rather fine cheeses and wines. As a nod to the Mexican day of the dead, they even enjoyed some tequila slammers...



Local Talent – Junction 14

Simpson residents Serena Teer and Sheila Thornton are proud members of Junction14, an acapella women's barbershop chorus.

In Harrogate at the recent annual barbershop convention the chorus won the trophy for 'The Most Improved Chorus' moving from 22nd to 14th place in a year.

Junction 14 are running a 'Love to Sing' day on January 26th which is free and open to any woman who just wants to sing!

More information is available on the website www.junction14.org (under events).



National Childbirth Trust Yoga classes for Pregnancy and Mothers & Babies

Simpson Village Hall is the venue for two yoga classes run by trained National Childbirth Trust teachers. One is for pregnant women and the other for new mothers and their babies.

Wednesday 7–8.30pm with Peggy Cheyo

Gentle yoga exercises designed to improve energy levels, relieve pregnancy discomforts, quieten the mind and allow women to take time out from their busy lives to focus on their pregnancy. At the end of each class there is the opportunity for the group to get to know one another whilst enjoying refreshments and discussion with Peggy.

For first time mothers there will be lots of practical tips, opportunity to meet others and ask questions. For those who are already mothers, the class is a time to relax, concentrate on the new baby, and think about your wishes for this birth.

Charges: £10 drop in or £40 for 5 sessions (£8 per session). To book, email Peggy at mkyogawithpeggy@gmail.com

Wednesday 1–2.15pm with Tracy Fowler

If you are a new mum here is a wonderful opportunity to ease your way back into exercise after the birth of your baby. Discover how yoga can help you stretch, strengthen and tone your body. The sessions include gentle yoga for your baby, so you can practise together. Music and rhymes throughout the class create a fun and relaxed atmosphere. Whether you are new to yoga or reconnecting with it, these classes will restore your sense of wellbeing. Just be sure you have had your six/ eight week check from your GP before starting.

Charges: Sessions are £7 each, payable in a 5-week block of £35, or pay £7 for a 'taster session' then pay £35 after that.

Book by emailing Tracy at tracyfowler20@gmail.com or using the NCT website link: www.nct.org.uk/course/33432290



Our shelter from the stormy blast...

For a number of Simpson residents the 18 bus service through the village is a lifeline for shopping, social and medical outings. In recent years residents have campaigned to maintain the service and, although only once an hour, its good record on reliability is much appreciated, as are the helpful drivers.



However, if you live at the Fenny Stratford end of Simpson, waiting for the bus to Bletchley can be problematic as there is no protection from the weather nor a seat while you wait, and the narrow footpath can be difficult to negotiate, particularly if you use a walking aid.

So, a big thank you to the two officers from Milton Keynes Council who met with residents recently to discuss ways of improving the situation. They registered the concerns and have promised to provide drawings and a plan very soon. These can then be used for further discussion and consultation with bus users and other local residents.

Play Area Litter Pick

Please come along to help litter pick around the Ouzel Valley parkland near the Simpson Drive Play Area on **Saturday 8th December**, meeting at 10am in the car park. All equipment will be supplied but strong footwear and warm clothing will be needed! This event is not suitable for young children.

Sheila Thornton – 01908 609987

CHRISTMAS RECYCLING

Do remember to recycle all your Christmas cards and wrapping paper EXCEPT those made from foil or decorated with glitter.



What's On...

The following events are at Simpson Village Hall unless otherwise specified.

* **QUIZ & SUPPER** evenings are held in Simpson Village Hall at 7pm – £12 p.p. To book and for more details please contact Pat Hodges on 01908 644785 or missquiz@sky.com.

DECEMBER

Saturday 1 – *Christmas Charity Fayre* at the Village Hall, 2.30–4.30pm.

Monday 3 – *Parish Council planning meeting* in the Village Hall, 8pm.

Saturday 8 – *Litter pick in the Linear Park* 10–11.30am. Meet in the Picnic Area car park off Simpson Drive. Equipment provided.

Saturday 8 – *Quiz & Curry Supper** – Proceeds to Freedom from Torture.

Sunday 9 – *Nine Lessons & Carols* at St Thomas's Church at 4pm. Refreshments served.

Thursday 13 – *Meeting about Strengthening the Community*. At The Plough 10.30 am.

Friday 14 – *Salvation Army Carols* at St Thomas's Church at 7pm. Our 11th year to welcome them to Simpson. Bring & Share Buffet. Collection to be shared between the Salvation Army and Church Funds.

Sunday 16 – *Christmas tree lights switched on* at 4pm – carols, mulled wine and mince pies.

Monday 24 **Christmas Eve** – *Holy Communion* at St Thomas's Church 11.30pm.

Tuesday 25 **Christmas Day** – *Service* at St Thomas's Church 10am.

JANUARY

Saturday 5 – *Quiz & Supper** – Proceeds to Greyhound Compassion.

Monday 7 – *Parish Council Meeting* in the Village Hall at 8pm.

Saturday 19 – *Quiz & Supper** – Proceeds to Simpson Garden Group.

Saturday 26 – *'Cycling from Colditz'* – a talk by John Hammar. Village Hall at 7.30pm.

FEBRUARY

Saturday 2 – *Quiz & Supper** – Proceeds to Community Voices Water Eaton Choir.

Monday 4 – *Parish Council planning meeting* in the Village Hall, 8pm.

Saturday 16 – *Quiz & Supper** – Proceeds to Smile Train.

Saturday 23 – *'Charles Warren and the Lost Inheritance'* – a local history talk by Eric Gates. Village Hall at 7.30pm.

Coffee & Chat

I started the Tuesday Coffee Morning in January 2018 as a way for people in Simpson to meet up with friends and neighbours to enjoy a chat, play board games, cards, etc and have refreshments.



I was unsure as to whether it would attract enough people to make it an ongoing event but I'm very glad to say that there has been wonderful support from people in the village. An average of 20 people attend on a Tuesday and there is a very happy atmosphere.

On 2 consecutive Tuesdays in October volunteers brought in hundreds of hand-knitted poppies to make them into garlands for the Remembrance Day weekend on 10–11 November. On two occasions we have had visiting groups of walkers enjoying the hospitality in the Village Hall.

The whole year has been so successful that we are going out for a Christmas lunch on 4 December at the Inn on the Lake. I hope that the Coffee Morning continues to thrive in 2019 and perhaps more events can be arranged for the Summer.

Everybody is welcome to join us (young or old or in-between!). If you need any information please ring me, or just turn up on a Tuesday morning, 10am to 12 noon (£1.50 to cover unlimited refreshments) and I would be delighted to see you.

Anne Monk: 07803 507625

Where should the money go? Your ideas needed...

Each year the Parish Council spends your money, as raised through the precept which is part of the Council Tax that you pay to Milton Keynes Council. We are currently spending it on things like:

- Improvements to Simpson Village Hall
- Grants to local groups to support their activities
- Family activities during the school holidays
- The quarterly Newsletter
- Emptying dog bins

Every year we ask you to help us decide on spending priorities. Please come to the **Parish Council meeting** in the Village Hall on **Monday 7th January** at 8pm to contribute to the discussion about how your money might be used next year.

All who live in Simpson and Ashland are welcome.

www.simpsonandashland.co.uk

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This edition of the parish newsletter has been edited by Peter Barnes and Lorraine Hodgton.

With thanks to the following contributors: Carole Baume, Peggy Cheyo, Jill Dewick, Tracy Fowler, Eric Gates, Crystal Grant, John Hammar, Pat Hodges, Pamela Lambourne, Anne Monk, Cathy Pope, Sandra Rankin, Carl Ryan, Wendy Searle, Karen Steeden, Sheila Thornton, Ashlynn Wilkinson.

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