

HISTORY RECORDED IN PATTISHALL

Saturday 10th November 2018 will be recorded as a day in the history making of Pattishall.

We were celebrating 120 years of Pattishall Church of England Primary School and Commemorating the Centenary of the closure of Eastcote Prisoner of War Camp. Two totally unrelated events but drawn together through celebration and commemoration.

They became associated because the pupils have recorded their own school's 120 years of history and completed a project about the POW camp. Emma McLean the Head Teacher explained what they had done and the pupil's work was displayed. A school choir, organised especially for the day, sang two songs beautifully with one specially written by one of the teachers and has been entered into a competition!

Colin Chapman the co-author of 'Detained in England' shared his recent research and findings about the camp. There is definitely a second book in the offering! Little did we know of the importance of the Eastcote Camp - it was the central figure in the South East corner of England coordinating all camps down to the south coast, through Kent and up to East Anglia.

100 years ago, in the fields opposite the school, a World War 1 Prisoner of War Camp was established, Eastcote Camp, which at one time held 4,509 POWs and had a great impact on the life of the local community.

At the end of the war, the POWs were repatriated, the camp closed, and the buildings taken down and the fields returned to farming. (Two of the buildings were removed to School Road and one became the Village Hall until the early 1980's)

For 100 years, there has been nothing to show that the camp ever existed. The Parish Council decided to commemorate this very important part of our Parish history with a Memorial Stone – now sited on the grass verge opposite the school.

It is hoped that both present and future generations will be aware of Eastcote Camp.

The Commemorative Stone also remembers the 33 men who died whilst interred at the camp. They may have been our enemy at the time, but that was 100 years ago and they were someone's son, someone's brother and someone's husband. We prefer to think of them as "SOLDIERS OF THE GREAT WAR"

After viewing all the pupils work everyone was led outside by the Royal British Legion Standard Bearers for the unveiling and Blessing of the Commemorative Stone. Peter Stratton explained why we were gathered, then jointly the Deputy Lord Lieutenant, Lady Ellwood and Lt Colonel Schreiner

representing the German Embassy, unveiled the Union Jack and the German flag. Lady Ellwood congratulated everyone concerned with the occasion and Colonel Scheiner gave a very eloquent speech, saying how honoured he was to be representing his country and indeed the history of 100 years.

Reverend Canon Káren Jongman led prayers and provided a blessing for the Commemorative Stone. A member of the Royal British Legion said the 'Exhortation' and Peter May sounded both the 'Last Post' and the 'Reveille' with a minute's silence in between. The Deputy Lord Lieutenant, The German Attaché, The Royal British Legion and Chairman of South Northants Council all laid wreaths before the Chairman of SNC gave the closing speech.

Guests then adjourned to a Reception at Eastcote House the former Headquarters of the Prisoner of war Camp. The 150 guests; included teachers, parents and pupils together with specially invited guests gathered for this very special occasion marking the Commemoration of the POW Camp.

We were honoured to have:

Lady Ellwood, Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Northamptonshire
Lt Colonel Sebastian Schreiner from the German Embassy
Cllr Richard Dallyn, Chairman of South Northamptonshire Council
Reverend Canon Káren Jongman, Rector of Amelcote Benefice
Colin Chapman, Lord of the Manor of Pattishall and Richard Moss, co-authors of the book about the POW Camp, 'Detained in England'

Peter Stratton, the instigator who primed the Parish Council to recognise the need to commemorate the POW camp. Through Peter's many speaking engagements, he raised a lot of money and that together with a very generous donation from his branch of the Royal British Legion enabled the Parish Council to fulfil the setting of the Commemorative Stone.

Also present were members of the Royal British Legion, David Wilcox who represented the WW1 Commemoration Committee, Dr Anthony Holdom and his wife Jacinta representing the YMCA who provided needs for the prisoners, Don Rowe representing the Quakers who provided pastoral care for the prisoners, Cllr Sandi Smallman my fellow District Councillor, Cllr Ann Addison another District Councillor and Peter May the bugler.

Mr and Mrs Robert Hawtin and members of their family were present. They currently farm the land that once was the POW camp, Sidney Hall who was actually born during WW1 and my fellow members of Pattishall Parish Council.

Mr and Mrs David Rowden very kindly hosted a reception at Eastcote House the former Headquarters of the Prisoner of War Camp.

I was able to reassure the guests that the community were very proud that they were attending this very special day in the history of a rural village in South Northamptonshire.

Roger Clarke
Chairman-Pattishall Parish Council