Inaugural service to launch

NORLEY WILDFLOWER MEMORIAL WALK

“In Honoured and Grateful Memory”
Sunday 7th June 2015
NORLEY METHODIST CHURCH

The service was an ecumenical one shared between the two Reverends Sue Levitt and Peter Rugen from the Parish church, St John the Evangelist.

Nearly fifty people were in the church to hear Graham Evans MP give a reading of John 15. 9-17 one of the key passages “Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends” being the epitaph for Jack Sanders who died age 19 of wounds on 15th May 1915 and reproduced on his plaque.

Phil Gifford the chair of Norley Wildlife Group, which was the driving force for the walk, gave an Introduction “Why we are here” which he said was a task which stumped even Stephen Hawking but undaunted he set out the basis of the walk, born out the love of and beauty of wildflowers together with WW1 poems such as “Break of day in the trenches” “In Flanders Fields” and “In memoriam” the latter literally encapsulating the walk. The Group too was mindful of the vital need to help pollinators which would be helped immensely by restoring a lost world that would have been familiar to those men.

Sue Levitt gave a thoughtful, encouraging and ultimately challenging sermon on the need to remember and said in conclusion:

“Such memories can also do more than just give us an opportunity to be encouraged by what they meant to us, they can also encourage and perhaps even challenge us by remembering their impact on our life.

So as we walk the walk - let’s think about how life might have been if it had not been for what they and many others did for us, for our freedom, for our peace?”

Deryn O’Connor, a long standing Norley Parish councillor, a keen supporter of the walk, gave a reading of Kahlil Gibran’s poem “Joy and Sorrow” which quite appositely describes how the two emotions are entwined;

“They are inseparable. Together they come, and when one sits alone with you at your board, remember that the other is asleep upon your bed.”
Peter Rugen then read out the 12 names of the men commemorated on the walk and also gave a challenge to us all on the nature of peace and how to achieve it.

Three hymns were sung, all very fitting for a service that was both sad yet also one of celebration. “Love divine all loves excelling” “Oh God our help in ages past” and “Make me channel of your peace”

Members of the Royal British Legion attended and a collection for the Legion amounted to £250 (after Gift aid was added) Afterwards in the Schoolroom set aside for refreshments, in pride of place was the Map of the walk. This, as Phil Gifford said, does indeed literally encapsulate the walk, with Edward Thomas’s poem most poignantly and beautifully enclosing the map itself. Everyone there was captivated by its beauty and fascinated as to how cleverly all the information could be so attractively displayed.

The map maker, the talented Ann Crawford who is both a parish councillor and the scout leader for Norley Scouts attended the service. She has supported the walk from its inception and actually pre-empted it when the scouts sowed poppies around the village in 2013/14. And engaged in “eco-terrorism” when 22 of her charges were each given a pinch of wildflower seed and in a Wide range exercise sowed them all hither and thither! The Map and Guide will be made available soon and will also appear as a “pullout” section in the June edition of Norley News. Phil Gifford said ”If there is a demand we will also produce a 2016 Calendar with the map and possibly a limited edition print run, Ann, has very generously given it to the Norley Wildlife Group”