



Wylve Valley School pupils taking part in their ANZAC service

Codford

Paying homage at Codford to fallen from Australia and New Zealand

At the annual ANZAC Day Service in Codford school children joined veterans and current servicemen at the Commonwealth War Grave (ANZAC) cemetery near St Mary's Church at 6.30am.

Each year on April 25 numbers at the service grow. This year about 100 people attended, many from New Zealand and Australia.

The Rev John Tomlinson officiated and the service followed the format used in New Zealand and Australia. After the opening prayer Richard Hills read The Origin of ANZAC on behalf of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, followed by Prayers for Remembering, read by Romy Wyeth, For Soldiers Serving Abroad by Lt Colonel Nick Claypoole, For The Commonwealth by Tom Thornton and The Soldier's Prayer, read by Brigadier David Shaw.

Abide With Me preceded the reading of the ANZAC Requiem by Australian Lt Colonel Grant Mason. Wreaths were laid on behalf of the Governments of New Zealand and of Australia, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and the Codford branch of the Royal British Legion.

The Roll of Honour for New Zealanders buried in the churchyard was read by Lt Colonel Hastings Neville and for the Australians by Major Matthew Worthington. Colonel Sir William Mahon Bart, chairman of and the Codford Branch RBL recited the Ode, and the response this year was, as used in the Antipodes, Lest We Forget. The Last Post and Reveille were sounded either side of the One Minute Silence by cornet player Richard King of Amesbury Town Band, before Rev Tomlinson concluded the service with the Blessing.

Piper Douglas Stuart, formerly of the Black Watch Pipe Band, played at the start and the end piped through Codford High Street to the village hall where 70 people breakfasted. The Pelican of Stapleford provided an excellent full English breakfast, while Australian officers attending supplied ANZAC biscuits and rum for the tea and coffee. Traditionally the early morning repast after the ANZAC Day Service is known as a 'gunfire breakfast', as before setting off to Suvla Bay in Gallipoli in 1915 the soldiers had rum in their tea.

Codford retains strong links with its military past. The CWG cemetery is the UK's largest WWI New Zealand cemetery and the second largest ANZAC. The biggest Australian cemetery is in nearby Sutton Veny. Each year in the summer locals join with serving soldiers to refurbish the Codford Australian Badge chalk hill figure on Lamb Down. In two years time the Codford badge, nicknamed The Rising Sun, will be 100 years old, marking the 1916 centenary of the forming of the Australian and the New Zealand Command Depots at Sutton Veny and Codford.

Children from Wylve Valley School also attended a service at St Mary's to remember ANZAC day.

They were greeted by Bill and his family, a real Kiwi, dressed in his military costume, who joined them for the church service where the children read out the Anzac alphabet and sang Make Me a Channel of Your Peace and We Will Remember.

Following the service they went out to the Anzac graves, to observe a one-minute silence in front of a soldier's grave. A sprig of rosemary, a symbol of remembrance, was placed on each grave.



Australian Major Matthew Worthington, left, and New Zealand Staff Sgt Bill Cook

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