



Newsletter December '08

- Betty Smith has us in Stitches
- South & South East in Bloom
- Memorial Trail Waymarkers
- Plinth & Dedication Plaque
- Remembrance/Armistice Day
- Name Plaques
- Looking Ahead

All through the summer work has been continuing. Ongoing working party sessions have been busy planting, weeding, mulching, watering (yes, even THIS summer) and, at its summer height, the garden looked an absolute picture. A real transformation in such a short space of time. Here's a summary of notable happenings during the second half of the year.

Membership as of November - 64

Betty Smith has us in Stitches

Here is a photo of a postcard made by Betty Smith of the Bourne Quilters Group for their summer exhibition. Betty contacted us asking for a print of 'Absence' which she would use for her choice of design.

Here we'll let Betty tell the story.

"This years Bourne Quilters 'Quilt Show Challenge' was to make a postcard depicting what Emsworth means to you. After the show the postcards would then be made into a Bourne Quilters banner to celebrate the start of their second decade.

I chose Emsworth Memorial Garden. Michael Johnson's sculpture 'Absence' is so meaningful and I would like to say 'Thank You' to all who have worked so hard on the Garden.

Enclose a photograph of my postcard."

Betty Smith.

Well done Betty - thank you. It's a lovely piece of work.

We look forward to seeing the finished banner.



South & South East in Bloom



So encouraged by what they were witnessing for themselves, Havant Borough Council recommended (read insisted!) that the Garden be entered into the South & South East in Bloom competition to be held in July. Came the day of judging and everything was given its final touch of TLC - but the grass hadn't been cut ! What had happened to the promised mowing ?

Hasty, panic phone calls to the Council who came up trumps. Within the hour the maintenance team were on site. Half an hour later the lawn was beautifully stripey. The Garden really looked magnificent. The judges hurried in late having been delayed by the sheer number of entries and were rendered almost speechless by what they saw and were told. They could not believe what had been achieved in so few months. From what had been a construction site in February to the spread before them in July.

September's prize giving was to be the real accolade.

Overwhelmingly impressed with the ethos of the project and the sheer short term transformation, Southern Water, sponsors of the competition, had elevated Emsworth Memorial Garden to a specially designated **Community Action Award** and bestowed a specially framed certificate of excellence.

Superb recognition for all the team who have worked so diligently.



Memorial Trail Waymarkers

Of all the people looking at the Waymarkers how many realise that nestling in the base of each of the four is a different bronze casting each depicting an historic trade of old Emsworth? To draw attention to this fact, bronze title strips have been cast and affixed to each marker - Oyster Fishing, Market Place, Working Trades and Rope Making .

In a recent conversation, Michael Johnson, designer and sculptor of 'Absence', the memorial trail and dedication plaque, admitted that this commission for Emsworth had struck a special chord with him. His lectures and presentations regularly feature his Emsworth project. Michael recently made a surprise visit to Emsworth to inspect the Waymarker additions and see for himself progress with the Garden.



Michael Johnson, designer and sculptor, beside 'Absence'.

Plinth and Dedication Plaque



Those of you who have visited the Garden very recently will have seen that the dedication plaque on its Portland plinth is now firmly in situ. We must thank Wraight & Son of Emsworth for their generosity. They freely supplied the manpower and machinery to collect the stone from the masons, set it in position and affix the plaque.

Timing was perfect. It was in place a few days before the Armistice/Remembrance Day ceremony.

(Ed. Many of you, like us, will have been fascinated by Wraights window displays in their South Street premises during this summer. They seem to have an inexhaustible library of photographic memorabilia. How many nostalgic conversations have been struck-up between window gazers?)



Armistice/Remembrance Day

As always, an act of remembrance took place alongside 'Absence'. This year 11th November had added significance. 2008 marked the 90th anniversary of the signing of WW1 armistice. The morning of Tuesday 11th saw a large contingent of 47th Regiment Royal Artillery (probably 60 strong) from Baker Barracks on Thorney Island marching up North Street on their way to the Memorial Garden. We were also joined by pupils from both Emsworth and St James Primary Schools whose teachers recognise the educational value of the occasion. In total some 100 young people attended. It was quite moving and rewarding to see the Garden filled on all three sides by people from all generations. The Rev'd Simon Sayer conducted the ceremony with contributions from children from each of the schools and from the Regimental Sergeant Major.

Wreaths were laid by the 'Friends', 47th Regiment and Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service and countless poppy crosses were placed by adults and children.

Whether by design or coincidence, they formed a poppy-lined avenue leading to 'Absence' as a focal point.

Jonathan Capes, himself an ex Marine, sounded the Last Post and Reveille marking the 2 minute silence.

It is so encouraging to establish these ongoing contacts with our local troops and schools.



Name Plaques

David Lee of the Committee has spent many hours researching both locally and further afield, combing through records and talking with military historians and families in order to establish as accurate an historical record as possible of Emworth's fallen.

His endeavours have highlighted a few inaccuracies in the currently accepted lists and also several omissions. These amendments will be incorporated into what will be a definitive list.

The next and ultimate stage of establishing the memorial site will be the production and placing of the names. This though is totally dependent on funds being available and the committee is actively following up potential avenues.

Looking Ahead

Social/AGM

Date: Wednesday 4th March

Time: 7.30pm

Venue: Emsworth Centre, South Street.

You are invited to attend with your friends and share a glass of wine and some nibbles with us.

We have a special guest too. Local author Stella Rutter will be lifting the lid on her time working for General Montgomery as a specially requested member of his wartime staff.

Details she will reveal have, until recently, been kept officially secret under the 50 year rule and have been recorded in her book 'Who Goes Where? '.

In addition, she has unearthed some fascinating information regarding her ancestor's involvement in a 17th Century intrigue !

Mmmm - this promises to be a VERY interesting evening !

Mark it your diaries now. And as we said - bring your friends.



St George's Day

April 23rd is quite a significant day.

Yes - it is St George's Day. It is also accepted as being Shakespeare's birthday and, in addition, marks the anniversary of the Battle of Imjim when, in 1513, 700 gallant Royal Gloucesters stood against an opposing Chinese force of 10,000.

We are planning to bundle all these together and join forces with Emsworth Business Association (EBA) to produce an event running over several days around 23rd April under the banner 'St George's Day - A Celebration of Englishness'.

There will be a wide programme of activities during the days and evenings at a variety of locations around the area and will include a military parade by 47th Regiment Royal Artillery.

Watch out for breaking news about this exciting event - something to tickle all tastes.

So that just about wraps up this year.

We have to leave you and get busy. As you see there is much to be done.

May we thank everyone for their ongoing support and wish you all a happy and peaceful Christmas.

We will see you on the other side of New Year.

