Press Release: For immediate or future use

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**EXNING PLANS TO COMMEMORATE ALL WHO SERVED IN WORLD WAR ONE**

This year, across Britain, communities are commemorating the outbreak of World War One in their own way.

Did you know that Exning has a unique record of all those men who enlisted and fought in the Great War? These are recorded on two illuminated Rolls of Honour, discovered in the bell tower St Martin’s Church in 2010 and subsequently restored and now displayed in the church. For each of the 280 men they contain the name, rank, regiment, marital status and street where they lived.

During the afternoon of November 8th the village is planning the Exning Enlistment Re-enactment (EER) during which it is hoped family members of those men, the current residents of their homes, or neighbours, will walk from their homes to Exning Primary School where they will sign a book, much as the men enlisting signed their attestations from August 1914 onwards.

The event, which complements “Exning Remembers WWI” held on August 3rd, is being organised by Exning resident John Saville who said “It was clear that many places would be commemorating WWI this year and, as the developer of several websites for the village, I was aware of the Rolls. I felt that each year we commemorate those who made the ultimate sacrifice but this year it would be appropriate to also remember all those who took part in the war, many of whom returned with physical or mental injuries.”

Following the “enlistment” signing it is hoped that the re-enactment will continue with “enlisters” marching away from their families “to war” and later return, but changed.

There will also be an exhibition with photos and other memorabilia.

The Re-enactment is supported by many local organisations.

Chairman of Exning Parish Council, Roger Stubbs, said ”This is a wonderful opportunity for people of all ages to work together and to both honour those brave men and understand, in part, what it was like to enlist in the First World War, or see one’s loved ones going away.”

In the evening Music Builds Communities (MBC) will be holding a World War I evening which will start with a “sing-a-long” of songs from the era but that will be followed by words and music to reflect the seriousness of the war. MBC Chairman, Clive Hook, said “We hold fortnightly “Singing for Fun” sing-a-long sessions during the year and usually put on a concert by our various groups in November. We felt this year we could give the local community a chance to give tribute to those who lived in our village a hundred years ago”

The date of November 8th was chosen as the first of the Exning Rolls was closed on November 14, 2014 and November 9th is Remembrance Sunday. Chairman of Exning British Legion, Mike Lovegrove, said ”The Re-enactment is the second part of our events during which ‘Exning Remembers World War One’ and complements the evening of words and music we held on August 3rd. It will provide a fitting reminder to us all as we focus during the following day on those who didn’t return during our Remembrance Day Services at the War Memorial and St Martin’s”

Work to date has concentrated on trying to identify the exact locations of the homes of the enlisters. Some no longer exist and have been replaced by more recent developments but the 2014 “enlisters“ will walk from the site of the 1914 homes.

If you want to see whether your home was occupied by one of the original WWI enlisters, or has replaced such a home you can look at the EER pages on the village website (http://www.exning.net/roh.html) .

Organiser, John Saville, said ”We would love to hear from anybody with an interest in this project and in particular any relations of the original enlisters, those living in their homes, or nearby. We will welcome participation by people of any age, or either gender, whether they live in a home that existed in 1914 or later. People can find contact details on the Exning.Net website (including links on Facebook and Twitter) or call me on 01638-604246.”

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Further Information

Exning Enlistment Re-enactment web pages from: <http://www.exning.net/eer.html>

“Exning Remembers World War 1” {August 3rd, 2014} http://www.exning.net/wwi140803.html

Exning Rolls of Honour: <http://www.exningparishchurch.net/roh.htm>

Music Builds Communities: <http://www.musicbuildscommunities.org/>

Exning War Memorial: <http://www.exning-remembers.info/>

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