*Lucy Silovsky’s address*

**WELCOME TO TUNSTALL**

And a special welcome to our friends from the armed forces joining us today:

Sergeant Ryan Gooding from 23 Engineers, stationed at Rock Barracks, his wife Clare and their two children, Maisie and Hayden.

Emily Tattoo RAF Officer, Jo Saagi Naval Officer, and cadets Will Jennings and Eddie Woodall, all from Woodbridge School CCF.

Malcolm and Heidi Norman. Malcolm’s modern-day service medals act as a salutary reminder to us all - that whilst today we are specifically commemorating those who served in WW1, we should not forget that since then, 1969, is the only year in which British servicemen/women have not been lost in conflict.

And finally a warm welcome to George Pinkneys family.

The collection of his handwritten letters displayed today, have been generously shared with our community some years ago.

Please make time to read them. We will be leaving typed copies here in a folder, to be read by anyone visiting the church in daylight hours, while our silhouettes remain on display.

In combination with what I have learned of my own two Grandfathers’ WW1 service, George Pinkney’s poignant letters home to his sister Edith, fuelled my desire to host today’s event - to “*Bring the Boys Back Home”* by telling their human stories, and encourage us all to understand more of who these men were as people.

The WW1 statistics of some 16 million military and civilian deaths worldwide, around three quarters of a million British servicemen, are numbers just too enormous for anyone nowadays to even begin to understand.

Especially our young people.

My suggestion is that you try to view these figures through a telescopic lens - and allow your mind and your eyes to zoom in, and zoom out, and zoom back in again – moving between the grim photographic images and huge figures, to the individual human stories of each man’s life.

And do so with your heart open.

Today we gather to mark the 100th anniversary of Armistice Day, the end of the of the First World War.

To do justice to that agenda, we must acknowledge the extraordinary commitment, bravery and sacrifice that was made by ***all*** who served, and by all their families back home as well.

Those who never returned are commemorated in many ways.

Too often, those who returned home were and are not, they became invisible, and they risk being forgotten now.

I therefore draw your attention to the Roll of Honour in the alcove beside the organ, listing the 131 men of Tunstall who served, from what was then a community of just 625 residents.

**All** of them deserve our thoughts, and our thanks.

Later, we will lay a wreath to express our gratitude.

Our 18 Tommy silhouettes have been purchased from There But Not There, and the proceeds raised this year are being used by charities to improve medical care and support for modern day veterans - in ways that were simply unheard of a hundred years ago.

We now understand PTSD and seek to assist our veterans with their mental health issues. Sadly, our society today, still judges too many of them harshly. They need, and deserve, our love and support.

We have sophisticated modern surgical techniques, limb replacement and rehabilitation services.

But none of that can ever bring back what was, or is, lost in conflict.

One hundred years ago those who returned home, but so damaged by war; whether physically or mentally, and often both – they returned to a country of silence that offered them no support, no NHS, no work, and no benefits.

The unspoken horrors stayed within and were never talked of.

We should have had 18 Tommies installed by today’s event, one for each of the fallen from our village, but due to an issue with the couriers, only 10 have arrived in time. Our Tommies will therefore need to double up together, 2 names to a silhouette, during the presentation of their stories, but I would ask that you view the tenth silhouette here at the front as a very symbolic representation of those other 8 missing Tommies. Think of this one Tommy silhouette as representing all of the lost, the long awaited, the not yet returned, the forgotten, the left behind, and the fallen, the never coming back.

Our 18 Tommies have been purchased through a combination of funds.

A Grant awarded by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund, a second grant from Tunstall Parish Council, and some private donations, one of which I would like to mention specifically.

John Heinsen, an American citizen from LA, is the grandson of Walter Heinsen, who in 1917, was a 16-year-old German combat photographer.

I met John by chance last year.

We were in Cambrai with a hundred or so others, to mark the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Cambrai, as descendants of Tank Corps men, connected in some way to the tank Deborah D51, the Mark IV tank that was dug up and recovered twenty years ago by a French historian and hotelier, and which is now on display in the new Cambrai Tank Museum.

My own Grandfather, as a then 28-year-old Major, was at the first Battle of Cambrai, as a Company Commander in ‘B’ Battalion of the newly formed Tank Corps.

For his gallantry and bravery, in leading his company of tanks to take the bridgeheads at Marcoing, at times walking between the tanks into the face of hostile enemy machine gun, sniper and shell fire, to check on his men and their tank positions - he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order medal - that I wear with great pride today.

Pride, not because of that military victory; but because of the great care that he always took in looking after his men, in war, and then later in civilian life too.

Last year, in the dampness and cold of that early morning on 20th November, a group of family descendants of Tank Corps men, walked together along the path taken by the Tank Deborah D51, a hundred years later to the hour.

As we walked through the still visible trenches, and crossed the Hindenburg Line, I fell into stride with John Heinsen.

One hundred years after both our Grandfathers were there, but on opposing sides, we instinctively linked arms and walked along together, talking of peace, reconciliation, the need to educate future generations, and of the human stories that lie behind the grim statistics of war.

John has funded one of our 18 Tommy silhouettes, as a gesture of reconciliation and to build a bond with our small community here in Suffolk.

On Friday, he sent me a print of this extraordinary photograph of 30 British POWs taken near Cambrai in late November 1917.

The photo was taken by his Grandfather, Walter Heinsen, who later became a renowned American studio photographer specialising in children.

My own Grandfather, was an architect before the war, Lt Colonel LS Henshall DSO by the end of the war, and later became a prominent business leader and Chairman of one of the worlds biggest linen yarn manufacturers.

What resonates for me now in 2018, is that one hundred years after that battle, our 19 year old son, Chris, is this week helping John to film a new documentary in which he seeks to Bring Back Home these 30 Allied POWs.

Only this week they were together interviewing and filming the living descendant of the first of these POWs to be identified, Captain Box.

John’s intention, and mission, is to identify them all, to tell their human stories and thereby bring them back home to their families.

For our son to be assisting him, and also be together in London this weekend for Armistice 100, doing some of the first filming for that future documentary, marks just how far we have all come since WW1.

I believe, that if there is anything to be learned from the carnage of WW1, it is this.

The need to pause and think.

To reflect on the sacrifices that were made by all the men who served a hundred years ago, to protect our freedom, and to thank them.

I believe it is also our clear responsibility nowadays, to maintain that peace, to strive to build strong, resilient communities and to live in harmony and friendship with our neighbours.

I hope that today’s event will achieve three things.

**Firstly** – most importantly, that we will all say a heartfelt THANK YOU – to those 131 men of Tunstall who served in WW1, and also thank their wider home community, people who all toiled in support, running farms, homes, schools, and in other ways through nursing and medical services, police and factories etc.

We owe ALL of them our thanks.

We focus today on WW1, but we should not forget to thank those serving in WW2 and every other conflict since.

**Secondly** – that each of you today leaves inspired to do something.

Perhaps to research your own family history, and share it with your young. Bring the statistics to life in the human stories, so that the generations to come can understand the sacrifices that were made for them, and for our freedoms.

And **finally**, I hope that we will all make new connections here in our local community, including with our serving military families nearby.

Those who serve in our armed forces, are not ‘other’, they are not a different breed to us, but just like the 18 men that we are about to commemorate, they are an integral part of our community. They also have mothers, siblings, friends, lovers, spouses and children, and they too, have their own hopes, and dreams.

But they commit their lives to the service and protection of others.

For that we owe them all a huge debt debt of THANKS, and especially our support and friendship.

It is too easy to forget their needs, the needs of those who serve today, fall today, and the needs of our modern day wounded veterans.

Please do all that you can to help our society ensure that they are all looked after too.

**Thank you.**

I would now like to read you a short poem, written in 1982 by a serving Paratrooper in The Falklands War.

And then we will have some music from Wendy and Jean before we commemorate the 18 fallen of Tunstall by telling their individual stories.

**POEM:**

**What I miss most**

I miss the lads.

I miss those crisp clear nights,

when the frost glistens in the moonlight.

I miss those lonely exposed hills,

lashed by the rain.

I miss the young and innocent faces,

some of whom we’ll never see again.

I miss the laughter and the crack.

I miss their morbid humour,

the childish pranks and unspoken laws.

I miss the sense of belonging,

that unique bond.

I miss youth at it’s best,

though I’ll grow old, unlike the rest.

What I miss most ?

I miss the lads.

(James Love, who was a paratrooper in the British Army who served in the Falklands War in 1982 and also in the French Foreign Legion)

*Then*

**VIOLA AND PIANO MUSIC - Nimrod from Edward Elgar’s Enigma Variations**

*(Lucy explain the naming of the silhouettes…)*

As I seek to commemorate our fallen, by name, Eddie will carry a small plaque to be placed on the pew beside each Tommy, along with a copy of the words that I am reading, and a single poppy.

A candle for each of them will be lit here, by Will.

I hope that by asking those of you sat in a pew beside a silhouette, to place these items at the base of the Tommy, we will give each of these men back their human identity and thereby be able to **Bring the Boys Back Home.**

*Commemorating the 18 by name …. Lucy introducing each.*

**MORE VIOLA AND PIANO MUSIC… “Sunset”.**

*Lucy introduces Malcolm Norman*

Malcolm will now say a few words, and then a Thank You wreath will be laid beside the Roll of Honour, by Cadet Will Jennings and Maisie Gooding, 8 year old daughter of Sergeant Gooding from Rock Barracks.

If any of you wish to commemorate someone special to you, please do feel welcome to light one of the small poppy candles set out on the small table here/at the back of the church.

The single poppy in the vase on that table was made by Normandy housewives, and it was given to me in Cambrai, last November after I had presented my Grandfathers 100-year-old Tank Corps flag to the new Tank Museum earlier that weekend.

The poppy was handed to me with a very warm handshake by a French WW1 soldier re-enactor, who just came up to me in a cafe, on the 100th anniversary itself, and who looked me deep in the eye and simply said **THANK YOU.**

In that brief moment, I experienced an overwhelming sense of France thanking England.

**MALCOLM SPEAKS/READS POEM, AND WREATH LAID, words “FROM THE FALLEN”**

*Lucy introduced Verity to sing ….*

And now, to lift the mood, and allow ourselves to also celebrate today as the 100th anniversary of the end of WW1, we will hear from Verity Poulston, who has kindly come home to Suffolk, from her musical studies at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London.

She, (along with Wendy and Jean, known as ‘Cavatina’) will bring our formalities to a rousing finale and then we shall all have tea and lots of cake.

Thank you so much to all the bakers and to our wonderful tea fairies.

I hope you will all linger, make new friends, and exchange stories for as long as you would like to.

This beautiful building has stood here for 600 years, through wars and weather - and I believe Tunstall residents should make much more use of it as a venue in which to just gather together as a community, and enjoy a whole variety of events, music, and other activities in the years to come.

**THANK YOU ALL FOR MARKING THIS OCCASION HERE TOGETHER.**