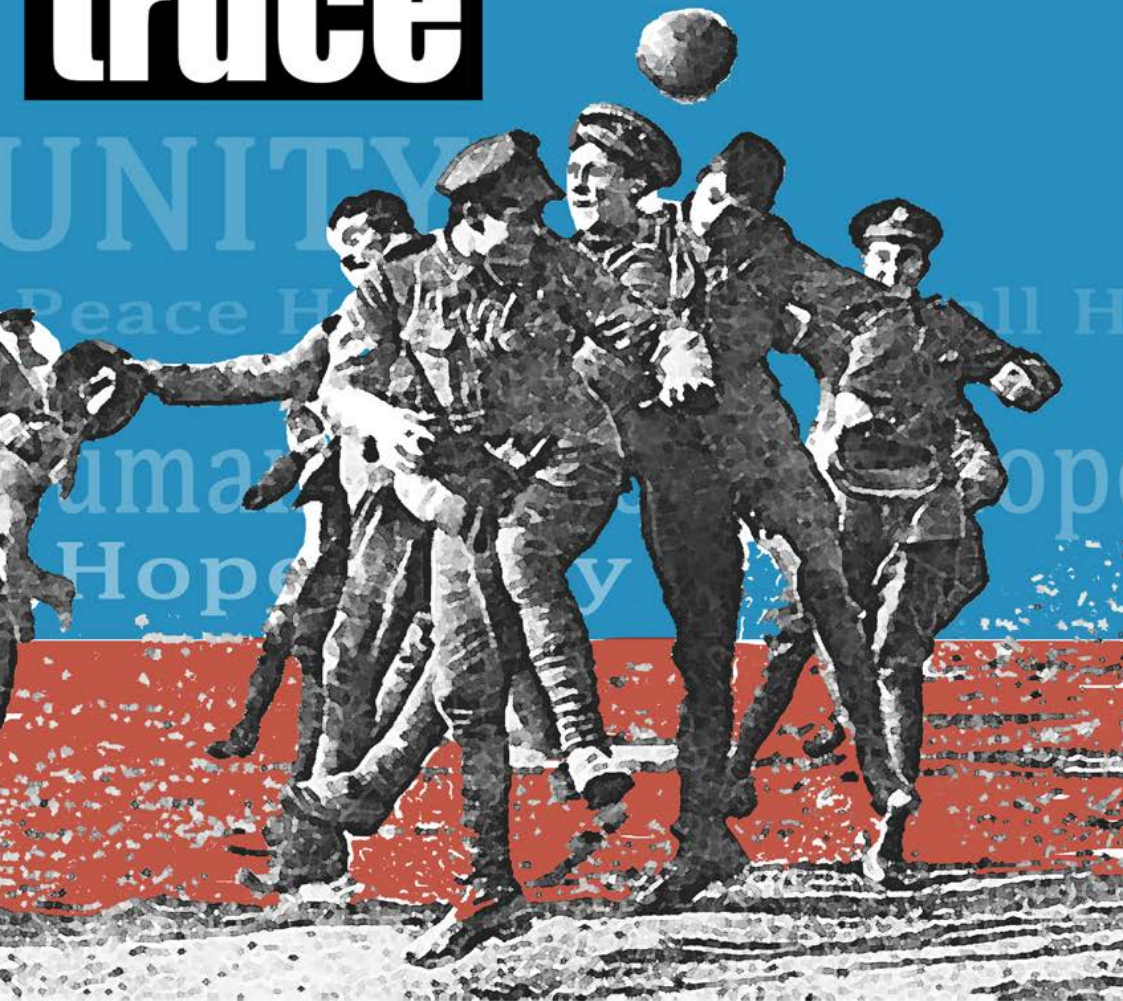


Peace Humanity Football
Hope PEACE



truce



Souvenir Programme of the Event Commemorating
The Centenary of the Christmas Truces 1914

Saturday 20th December 2014

Accrington Stanley FC v Wycombe Wanderers FC

The Christmas Truce

The assassination of heir to the Austrian throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife in Sarajevo on 29 June 1914 sparked a rapid sequence of events which led to the outbreak of World War One. In early August, Germany swept past Luxembourg and Belgium on their way into France and at first made rapid progress. The Allies and Germans tried a series of outflanking movements which eventually led to a battle line – the Western Front.

Soldiers dug trenches and erected barbed wire to hold their positions: the nightmare that was to become ‘trench warfare’ had begun. In places the trenches were just yards apart and the proximity of the enemies allowed men to shout out to their opponents. After a particularly heavy barrage of missiles or bullets, the soldiers might shout out “Missed” or “Left a bit”. This black humour was to be the start of a ‘conversation’ between troops that would hasten the onset of a Christmas truce.

On Christmas Eve the temperature dropped and a sharp frost enveloped the landscape, creating a ‘white Christmas’. Germans celebrate Christmas on 24 December more than they do on the day itself, and on the Western Front on Christmas Eve, German soldiers sang carols and placed Christmas trees lit with lanterns above the trenches.



Messages began to be shouted between the trenches. The following day, British and German soldiers met in no man's land and exchanged gifts, took photographs and some played impromptu games of football. They also buried casualties and repaired trenches and dugouts. After Boxing Day, meetings in no man's land dwindled.

The truce was not observed everywhere along the Front. Some officers were unhappy at the truce and worried that it would undermine fighting spirit. After 1914, the High Commands on both sides tried to prevent any truces on a similar scale happening again. Despite this, there were some isolated incidents of soldiers holding brief truces later in the war, and not only at Christmas, but nothing on the scale of 1914.

**The truce symbolises human spirit,
a wonderful example of humanity
during one of man's darkest hours.**



Peace on Earth

Jim Boyes. Voice Publishing

The songs rang out from either side between the lines
Enchantment held the battlefield at Christmas time
No Eastern Kings came bearing gifts to celebrate a birth
But in the midst of conflict there was Peace on Earth

Then enemy found enemy to their surprise
No savagery, no enmity behind their eyes
Then all was salutation and joy and mirth
And for an instant there existed Peace on Earth

The seeds of peace lay buried 'neath the plains of war
But like a Christmas rose they blossomed by the score
The seeds of peace are with us still, for those who know their worth
And we can all remember and bring Peace on Earth

Throughout the world wherever present conflicts be
Although divided there can still be unity
Your friend could be your enemy, by an accident of birth
And through humanity there can be Peace on Earth

Like silences at the armistice, like poppies on the tide
Like tears of joy when differences are reconciled
Like Christmas 1914, out in No Man's Land
So join with us in celebrating Kerstbestand



A Letter Home

On Wednesday, December 23rd we went to the trenches. We had a very weary time with shells and Jack Johnsons. It started to freeze on Christmas Eve and was jolly cold. On Christmas Day when dawn broke it was very foggy so we were able to have a short run on top of the trenches to get us warm.

Anyhow the fog lifted and our men as well as the Germans were expected to fire but none fired. Then the Germans started to wave umbrellas and rifles, we answering. They sang and we sang. Then getting bolder, we advanced towards their trenches, they leaving theirs, both parties unarmed. When we met we found they were fairly old fellows. We exchanged greetings, they gave us sausages, cigars, cigs, sweets and parkin. We all mixed up together and men played mouth organs and tin whistles and danced, and my word the Germans can't just sing.

Some of them exchanged addresses and souvenirs were freely exchanged. The time came when we had to part. Shaking hands and shouting, they and we went back to the trenches. No firing was done on Christmas Day making it a peaceful day.

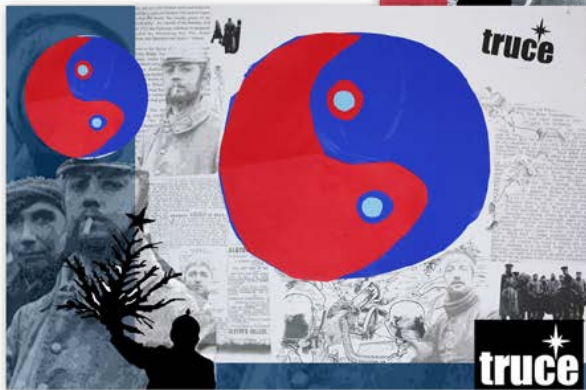
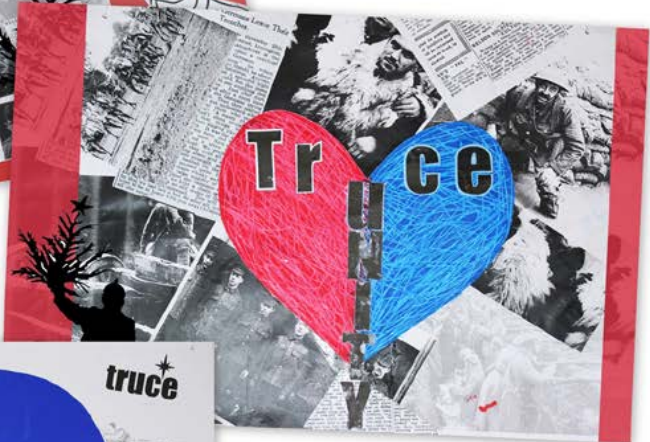
Signalman G L Blease



Accrington based photography student Cameron Procter researched letters describing objects that were exchanged during the Truces. These photographs show his response to these personal artefacts and the moments of exchange and connection.



Pupils at an after school group at Hollins Technology College, Accrington spent time with heritage expert and performer John Meredith learning about the First World War and the Christmas Truces.



They created flags for today's match in response to their learning, combining the colours of Accrington Stanley and Wycombe Wanderers with significant images and words.

Each set of supporters will receive flags as a reminder of today's event and the Christmas Truces of 1914.



Football Remembers

Truce Centenary Cup 13th December 2014, Accrington

Fulledge Colts, Darwen Rangers Blue, Darwen Rangers Lads,
Hyndburn United and Rossendale United U12s

Winner: Darwen Rangers Lads Runner Up: Fulledge Colts

On Christmas Eve as each fireball went up from the German line our men shouted 'Hurrah' and 'Let's Have Another'. They also sang Christians Awake and Christmas hymns. On Christmas Day one of the Germans came out of the trenches and held his hands up. Our fellows immediately got out of their trenches and the Germans got out of theirs, and we met in the middle, and for the rest of the day we fraternised, exchanged food, cigarettes and souvenirs. The Germans gave us some of their sausages, and we gave them some of our stuff. The Scotsmen started the bagpipes, and we had a rare old jollification, which included football, in which the Germans took part. The Germans expressed themselves as being tired of the war and wished it was over. They greatly admired our equipment and wanted to exchange jack-knives and other articles. Next day we got an order that all communication and friendly intercourse with the enemy must cease, but we did not fire at all that day, and the Germans did not fire at us.

Sergeant Major Frank Naden



The Truce Choir

Before kick-off and during half-time, the Truce Choir will be singing songs from and about the Christmas truces. You are welcome to sing along.

This community choir, open to all, has had up to 100 members attending learning sessions, with a core for performances of around 70. Learning sessions took place in Accrington Library and St James' Church and the choir members not only learnt the songs but lots of information about the truces too. They gave an amazing performance at The Rhyme of No Man's Land on 29th November.

"Thank you for helping to make last Saturday such an amazing event. I enjoyed every minute of it and it was both a privilege and an honour to be a part of it. It was one of the best experiences of my life and one I will treasure. There was such an atmosphere of camaraderie amongst all participants and the audience that somehow reflected the spirit of peace, comradeship and shared humanity that the British and German soldiers demonstrated in such a wonderful and humbling way that Christmas of 1914." *Feedback after The Rhyme of No Man's Land*

East Lancashire Concert Band

We are proud to be working alongside The East Lancashire Concert Band who will greet supporters with a medley of WW1 tunes and Christmas carols.

In September 1914, under their original name, the Accrington Old Band was reported by the Accrington Observer as leading the parade of the newly formed Accrington Pals Battalion. "They played lively tunes as they marched past the Mayor who stood in front of Accrington Town Hall."

The Oswaldtwistle Recruitment Office for the Accrington Pals is now the Band's home base.

The Great People's Poppy

To mark the centenary of the outbreak of World War One, artist Emma Blackburn, in partnership with Up for Arts, called on the talented knitters, makers and fabric manipulators of Lancashire to contribute to a collective memorial poppy. These individual handcrafted poppies were united by Emma to create the art installation The Great People's Poppy, which will tour Lancashire starting today in the Sports Bar, alongside the photos of Cameron Proctor.

The centenary of the outbreak of World War One resonates strongly in Pennine Lancashire communities, who sent off sons, brothers and fathers to fight in ill-fated battalions.

We've taken the ceasefire of 1914 as the project's focus as it symbolises a moment of shared humanity. Truce is about the things that connect us. It's about communal singing and songs, football, stories and home. It's about the traditions and activities that bring us closer together as human beings, and in particular how those shared activities helped bring about a moment of peace in a bloody and horrific war and the lessons we can learn from the Christmas Truce.

The Truce project has been made possible by generous support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Lancashire County Council Arts Development Team, Granada Foundation and Hyndburn Homes and is supported by BBC Radio Lancashire (Up for Arts) and Accrington Stanley Football Club.

With grateful thanks to:

Accrington Stanley Football Club and in particular Robert Houseman
The members of the Truce Choir
Janet Swan (member of Natural Voice Practitioner Network) – Main Choir Leader
Olwyn Pearce & David Burbidge – Choir Leaders
East Lancashire Concert Band
Emma Blackburn (Up for Arts) – The Great People's Poppy
Cameron Procter - Photographs
Hollins Students (with Iain Broadley, Cath Ford & Cameron Procter) – Flags
Gill Brailey and the Lancashire County Council Heritage Learning Team
Waqar Ahmed (Hollins)
Accrington Library
Dr Steph Hawke
Anne Ellwood, Eoin Gallagher and Dominique Clarke
...and everyone else that contributed to this event.

Special thanks to Lead Artist Iain Broadley who originally envisaged this project.
We hope we've done you proud!



In Pennine Lancashire *Truce* is a Mid Pennine Arts Project commemorating 100 years since the Christmas Truces of WW1, when music, stories, food, faith and football brought opposing sides together.

Visual artists, musicians and performers have worked with choirs, schools and community groups to explore what we can learn from that moment of peace and humanity during a bloody and horrific war.

www.midpenninearts.org.uk/truce

