

9 MAY 2017

BATTLE'S OVER – A NATION'S TRIBUTE

Dear Colleagues,

On 3 August 1914, Britain's foreign minister, Sir Edward Grey, was looking out of his office window. It was dusk, and gas lights were being lit along London's Mall, leading to Buckingham Palace, when he remarked to a friend, "The lamps are going out all over Europe; we shall not see them lit again in our lifetime".

Our country was about to be plunged into the darkness of the first world war (WW1), and it would be four long years before Britain and Europe would again experience the light of peace.

In commemoration and remembrance of the end of the war and the many millions who were killed or came home dreadfully wounded, a chain of 1,000 beacons will be lit throughout the United Kingdom, Channel Islands, Isle of Man and UK Overseas Territories at 7pm on the 11 November 2018 – a century after the guns fell silent. You will be pleased to know that more than 320 organisations have already confirmed their involvement.

The event will also commemorate the huge army of men and women on the home front who, often in dangerous and exhausting conditions, underpinned the war effort - keeping the wheels of industry turning, bringing the harvests home and ensuring the nation did not starve.

The beacons will symbolise the light of hope that emerged from the darkness of war, and we hope that your organisation will join us in this important national commemoration on Sunday 11 November 2018, especially as the majority of you would have had a previous member of your family involved in this four year conflict.

Detailed co-ordination begins in April 2017, when the Pageantmaster will publish a special Guide to Taking Part, similar to that produced for Her Majesty The Queen's Birthday Beacons on 21 April this year. If you can confirm your involvement by the end of March 2018 we will be able to include your organisation in the guide's acknowledgements pages before it is distributed to others encouraging their involvement too.

Participating councils, organisations and community groups will also receive a special certificate as a permanent reminder of their involvement in this special tribute.

There are a number of cost-effective ways of participating in the chain of beacons.

1. Use existing beacon braziers on tall wooden poles erected in 1988 and for other recent anniversaries.
2. Use gas-fueled beacons lit for The Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012.
3. Use the gas-fueled VE beacons lit to commemorate the 70 year anniversary of VE Day in 2015.
4. Use the gas-fueled beacons lit for The Queen's 90 year old birthday in April this year.
5. Build a traditional bonfire beacon.

I would be grateful if you would confirm your involvement by providing the Pageantmaster (contact details are: Bruno Peek LVO OBE OPR, Pageantmaster, Battle's Over - A Nation's TributE, telephone: +44 (0)7737 262 913 and email: brunopeek@mac.com) with the following details as soon as possible to ensure that you are included in the guide and on our website for others to consider taking part.

- Name of organisation
- Name of beacon co-ordinator
- Address of beacon co-ordinator
- Telephone number
- Mobile number
- Email
- County
- Country
- Beacon location

Please confirm if your beacon will be open to the public or will be lit at a private event for family and friends. This is important because private beacons will not be included in the acknowledgements pages of the guide but will be included in the list kept in memory of this unique occasion.

When planning your beacon, your local newspaper could help you in contacting a relative of someone who served their country in WWI so you can invite them to light your beacon. This will also help you to gain media coverage for your event while providing a personal and touching aspect to the occasion.

We do hope that you will be able to join in this special tribute.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sue Baxter". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Cllr Sue Baxter
Chairman, National Association of Local Councils