



The Heritage Open Day at Paddock Wood Masonic Hall, Saturday 8th September 2018.

The doors of the Hall have been opened to visitors on several previous occasions, but this year, to mark the centenary of the end of the First World War, W.Bro. Peter Hayler of Stanley Wykeham Lodge made the 'heritage opening' even more meaningful by staging a comprehensive and moving display telling the story of the local men, some less than 20 years of age, who lost their lives in that dreadful conflict. There were photographs of the men themselves, their graves and memorials, and newspaper cuttings giving information about their lives before going off to fight for King and Country and, in each case, the families who mourned their loss when they did not return home. It was a wonderful tribute by the present-day Freemasons of Paddock Wood to those from the town who made the ultimate sacrifice during the years 1914-1918, many of whom will have been known to the Masons who founded Paddock Wood Lodge No. 4291 in 1921.

The exhibition was enhanced by personal letters, photographs and mementoes from WW1 belonging to the relatives of Stanley Wykeham Lodge members W.Bro. Don Foreman and Bro. Martyn Evans.

Besides members of the three Lodges meeting at the Hall, namely Paddock Wood, Stanley Wykeham and Bradley, several accompanied by their wives, and two candidates for initiation, around 25 visitors attended to view the exhibition and tour the Temple. Among them was a party from the South-East Chapter of the Widows Sons Masonic Bikers Association who enjoyed a chat and refreshment before setting off on the next leg of their journey. The whole day was a most enjoyable social occasion as well as an opportunity to show what a gem of a building is hidden away in Paddock Wood.

Borough and County Councillor Sarah Hamilton, who is also the Chairman of 'Heritage Paddock Wood', paid a visit and praised the Freemasons' commemoration of the town's war dead, describing the Open Day at the Masonic Hall as a splendid community event.

