

Special Feature

About Remembrance

Wootton Bassett has become a household name since the repatriation of fallen service personnel began at RAF Lyneham. When the Mayor, Percy Miles, was told of the first repatriation in April 2007 he

decided to wear his mayoral robes to see the cortege pass. The local British Legion began to alert the townspeople and veterans' groups when a repatriation was to take place.

Royal Wootton Bassett

We have all seen the growing numbers of people standing in silence along the main street of this small town as the hearses have passed through.

In March 2011 David Cameron announced that the town would be known as 'Royal Wootton Bassett' and August 2011 saw the final repatriation as the bodies of servicemen were once more returned through RAF Brize Norton. On October 16th the Princess Royal delivered the Letters Patent on behalf of the Queen, who said it was "an enduring symbol of the nation's admiration and gratitude."

Christine Bellenie Reflects

Not all the local people were happy with the attention paid to the town. Was media interest turning their dignified act of respect into something resembling a circus? Milton resident Christine Bellenie



Old Wootton Bassett

moved to Wootton when she was just five years old and spent an idyllic childhood there. Back in the 1960s everyone knew everyone else and they seemed to look out for each

other and lend a helping hand when needed. Christine feels very proud of the way Wootton Bassett honoured the dead servicemen as they passed through the streets. But she is sure that the townsfolk never sought the attention that came their way. She doubts that the locals will refer to their town as 'Royal' - it will always just be Wootton Bassett to them.

How Carterton is Remembering

The nation's attention has turned to Carterton as repatriations now come through RAF Brize Norton. The setting is very different, with a purpose-built memorial on Norton Way, but the mood is the same. People have turned out in their thousands to show their respect to fallen service personnel.

In September 2011 the people of Carterton launched an appeal to raise money to place a memorial bell in a tower opposite the memorial garden. By the middle of December the target of £18,000 had been reached.

The 644lb bell will be cast at London's Whitechapel Bell Foundry and should be installed early this year.

Christine Halliday