

Residents invited as WWI hero finally gets headstone

by Charles Thomson

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RESIDENTS have been invited to attend a service this weekend, where a headstone will be officially unveiled for a war hero who has laid in an unmarked grave for 99 years.

Arthur Charles Argent was discharged from the British Army after suffering severe injuries to his left arm in the German spring offensive in March 1918.

He died of pneumonia two years later at the Billericay Isolation Hospital and was buried in the church yard of St Mary's, Little Burstead.

Researcher Karen Dennis has led the campaign to give Mr Argent a proper headstone.

She said: "After he was discharged, he was given an army pension. Those weren't easy to come by, so his wounds must have been pretty severe. On his death certificate he is described as an army pensioner, which suggests he was unable to work when he came home.

"He came from a long line of agricultural labourers. His mother had already died, as had a couple of his siblings. He had a surviving brother, but he had lost



Tribute: Karen Dennis helped buy a headstone for soldier Arthur Charles Argent

his wife in the flu pandemic and I just don't think they had any money to put up a headstone."

Karen took up researching local war

heroes as a hobby after illness forced her to give up work. She said: "I became very interested in my own family's history and in particular my

great uncle, who served in and survived the Great War. Each year we go to the Remembrance Service at the War Memorial and say, 'We will remember them', but when I asked around, nobody really did remember them or know who they were. I started looking into who our local soldiers were who had died and there were two or three I really struggled with. One of them was Arthur Charles Argent."

When Karen finally pinned down who Mr Argent was, she was told Government would not provide a headstone because it could not be proved that his war wounds had contributed to his death.

Aided by Reverend Paul Carr and local funeral director Roy Farrer, Janet quickly raised the cash herself.

She said: "Local people and organisations responded very generously. Within three weeks, I had got more than enough funds to secure the headstone for him. So after 99 years, he's not going to be in an unmarked grave anymore."

Members of the Royal Anglian Regiment – successor to the Leicester Regiment, where Mr Argent served – will attend the ceremony at St Mary's at 10.15am on Saturday, June 22.

NEWS IN BRIEF

A MAN was robbed at knife-point last week as he walked by garages off of Honeyport Lane.

A gang of three men grabbed him around the neck, threatened him and stole bank cards cash, then left towards Broadmayne.

The attack was at roughly 10.20am on Sunday, June 16. All three men were white and in their 40s.

One was around six-foot with short, dark hair and wore a black top with jeans.

The second was about 5'5" and 'slim' with 'shoulder-length, scruffy hair'. He wore a black bomber jacket and tracksuit trousers.

The third, the same height and build as the second, had 'very short hair' and wore a white top with blue jeans.

Police urged anyone with information, CCTV or dash cam video to dial 101 and quote crime reference number 42/94498/19.

YA Readers & Advertisers message

We sadly have to report that as we go to press we are currently in consultation with staff at the Yellow Advertiser, which could result in the closure of the titles published, so this could be the last edition of the Yellow Advertiser Series. If this is our last edition we would like to take this opportunity to thank our customers and readers for your loyalty over many years.

Poundland hits back at YA's council leader chat

DISCOUNT shopping chain Poundland lambasted Basildon's new council leader, saying he used the company's name in a 'pejorative' way.

The company issued a statement on Twitter, after Labour leader Gavin Callaghan made the comment in an interview with the Yellow Advertiser.

Cllr Callaghan was outlining his ambition to halt the former Tory administration's plan to sell a £1,025,000 plot of green land to a first-time developer for £1, so it could construct a hotel.

He referred to the proposed development as 'the Poundland hotel'.

The company responded by saying: "While your politics is your business, not ours, our 18,000 colleagues don't really appreciate the name of the business they work hard for being used pejoratively.

"But we have 31 stores in Essex. So even if that doesn't give you pause for thought, maybe the fact that a fair proportion of those 18,000 people may have recently voted to give you your

recent promotion will.

"They would probably be grateful if you could think of another name to use for your local newspaper soundbites. Not least because I'm sure you wouldn't want to be accused of losing touch with the ordinary people you were elected to serve."

Cllr Callaghan responded: "I totally get why Poundland doesn't want to be associated with a Tory plan to sell £1million of land for £1. It's terrible business. Basildon deserves better."



RESPOND: Gavin Callaghan speaks out



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