



E-news



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Schools Competition 2025

One of the goals of our Society is to educate young New Zealanders about their country's history in the First World War, particularly with regard to Passchendaele on the Western Front. Part of that ongoing effort has been the 2025 Schools Competition which was organised by our board member Dylan Woodhouse – who, with other then students, won the very first such competition.

This year's competition was launched close to Anzac Day. It drew 18 entries from students in Years 7-10 (ages 12-15) from across New Zealand.

Students were given a demanding brief to make a 3-5 minute video telling the story of a New Zealander (whom they would choose) who served in Belgium during the Great War. The competition was promoted via the Society's Facebook page, amongst its directory of history teachers, and via posting of notices in various Facebook groups involving teachers of history and of social sciences.

Dylan gathered together a panel of suitably qualified judges – our patron Sir Wayne Shelford, our vice-president Lode Notredame (whose hometown is Passchendaele), the renowned New Zealand military writer and Society historian Glyn Harper, the Belgian Honorary Consul Dr Lisbeth Jacobs, award-winning educator and veteran history teacher Defyd Williams, and of course Dylan himself, the Society's manager of educational resources.

Winner of the first prize (\$1000) was Anna from Hamilton. The second prize (\$500) went to Orlando, Timothy and Felix from Tauranga. The third prize (\$250) was awarded to Spike and Luke from Auckland.

Board members Bill MacGregor and Dylan travelled to meet all the winners in their home towns and to present them with their prize money, certificates and books for their school libraries.

The judging panel was mightily impressed with the standard of entries – not just with the creativity on display, but also with the focus given to their message and with the respect shown in the treatment of their subjects.

We would like to record our thanks to the Embassy of Belgium in Canberra which not only endorsed the competition but also sent congratulatory letters and books to the prize winners. The Embassy commends all students who participated and thanks the educators and competition organisers.

Links to the winning videos are as follows

– First: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9q0E6ptQ_B0&ab_channel=MikeBaird Second: https://youtu.be/Xp0WQaq9N3g?si=WL_sn5n3Bgt9-yXR

Third: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uYAc5jlqDIQ&ab_channel=Pixel_Rider

New Members

We are pleased to welcome five new members - Anna Harris - Winner of our 2025 Schools Competition : Geneth Hartley - Widow of our late-Treasurer Mike Hartley : Jenny Valentine - History Teacher, Central Hawke's Bay Colleg3 : Marijke Vandervyvere - President, NZ Pilgrimage Trust : Simon Louagie - Manager, Talbot House, Poperinge, Belgium

Supporting the New Zealand Pilgrimage Trust

There are quite a number of organisations throughout the world dedicated to remembering those who lost their lives in battle for the sake of their country. The Passchendaele Society is just one.

The New Zealand Pilgrimage Trust is another. The NZPT was established in Flanders during the centenary commemorations in 2016, with a mission to support New Zealand pilgrims tracing the footsteps of their forebears, and to ensure that the memory of their sacrifice on the Western Front lives on.

The Trust assists New Zealand schools, groups and individuals with planning and research for visits to the Western Front battlefields.

The Pilgrimage Trust has three objectives – 1) To encourage and support those visiting the Western Front to learn about New Zealand's history and sacrifice 2) To lead or support commemorations and anniversaries significant to New Zealand 3) To foster partnerships and improve coordination between those working to tell and preserve the New Zealand story

This third point has become a strong focus for the Trust – to connect the people and organisations across New Zealand, France and Belgium which continue to remember New Zealand's role on the Western Front, and to be a trusted link for the sharing of information, events and opportunities to collaborate.

The Passchendaele Society therefore sees a strong bond with the Trust. Our Board suggests members consider offering support by becoming a member of the NZPT. The Trust is currently rebuilding its website and hope to have it live very soon – but in the meantime you might like to visit its Facebook page and look for the membership form. This will support the objective of honouring our forebears while building a connected community of remembrance.

Commemoration on 12 October

Plans for this year's Annual Commemoration have been a little delayed because of uncertainty about our usual venue at Auckland War Memorial Museum – you might be aware of the problems there with asbestos contamination. However, we are pleased to announce that our

Ceremony will take place at the Museum on Sunday 12th October in their World War Two Memorial Hall. This is quite different from their WW1 Hall, and may actually make a pleasant change, with better acoustics and no noise from the foyer below. Our Guest of Honour and Speaker this year is Chris Penk MP, Minister for Veterans. The Royal NZ Artillery Band will again be performing, also our Society piper Pipe SGT Stewart Hobson. So please note the date and make every effort to attend, and bring friends, family and youngsters. Further arrival instructions will be sent a little nearer the time.

The Society's Constitution is to be amended

Our Society is registered under the 1908 Act. On 5 April next year, this Act will be repealed and replaced by the new Incorporated Societies Act 2022. To continue as an Incorporated Society, we must re-register under the new Act and also meet the requirements of the Societies Act 2025.

The new Act requires that our Constitution meets certain additional requirements. We are making a start on this now. Our membership needs to approve the amended Constitution well before 5 April 2026 and have everything set in place before that date.

This means all members will be emailed the text of the revised Constitution in due course. You will need to indicate your approval in order for us to claim we have official membership approval.

More new on this subject later.

Welcome Darryl Saul – our new board member and Hon Treasurer

Originally from South Africa, Darryl moved to New Zealand in 2007 and has built a career as an accountant, holding senior roles in both the health and not-for-profit sectors. He currently works as Training and Development Manager at SBA, supporting accountants nationwide.

Darryl's interest in history, particularly the First and Second World Wars, stems from his father's lifelong passion and his own family connection — a great uncle who was lost during the Second World War. This personal link has deepened his commitment to preserving and sharing the stories of those who served.

Married to Lindi, with two children, Darryl brings both professional expertise and heartfelt dedication to his role as Treasurer of the Society

Editor: Gerard Birss

President & Hon.Secretary: Bob Davis

Email: passchendaelesocietynz@gmail.com

Tel: 09 413 5322