

Sandwich Salutes the 40s

The May bank holiday weekend, which runs from Saturday 4th till Monday 6th, may seem like a terribly long way in the distance from these long cold nights of February we're currently enduring. However, in the spirit of the 40's, 'Keep Calm and Carry on' and know that it will eventually arrive and when it does come around it will provide many of us with a much-needed and well-appreciated long weekend. There's no better way to spend that time than at the brilliant festival, Sandwich Salutes the 40s.

The festival that pays homage to the fighting spirit of the fabulous forties is set to be a fully immersive one, a time travelling treat to when Brexit wasn't a word, when we weren't obsessed with social media and when community spirit thrived. It is anticipated that Sandwich Town shops, businesses and groups will take part and will dress in 40s style. Entertainment over the weekend include a concert in St Mary's on Saturday evening and free live music from the deck of the P22 on all three days featuring 40s style singers and dancing and music outside the Fleur de Lis pub.

As well as all this 40's fun, the P22 Rhine Patrol Boat manned by a crew of 6 (dressed in period uniform) and armoured with three 50 calibre Browning machine guns will form the focus of activity on the Quay in Sandwich for the weekend. It will be the heart of a weekend of re-enacting the 40s with over 200 experienced re-enactors taking part. Living History groups such as the likes of the Desert Rats, RAF, Red Cross Nurses, Military Police, Home Guard, Land Army Girls, number 4 Commando Group and more will bring to life scenes including rescuing downed airmen from the Sea and transporting the wounded to field hospitals via stretchers. Air raid sirens and the sound of gunfire will add to the feel of authentic WW2 atmosphere.

The event is organised through a collaborative committee with members from Rotary Club



of Sandwich, Sandwich Community Events Association and the P22 Trust as well the wonderfully titled 'Chief Petty officer' Simon Todd of The Hooligan Navy, US Coastguard living history group. The free three-day event is funded by the generosity of Sandwich based Businesses, local grant applications and the proceeds from a prize draw, with prizes this year including trips on the P22 Patrol Boat, vouchers from the Co-op Sandwich, a cash prize and other local Sandwich based prizes. Community Ad had the pleasure of sitting down briefly with Vice-President of the Rotary Club of Sandwich and a man who plays a

pivotal part in organising the weekend, Stephen Ruston.

So, Stephen, how did Sandwich Salutes the 40s come to be?

"Originally, this all came about through a group of re-enactors who approached the Rotary Club of Sandwich through the then president, Terry Kemp. It soon became clear that if the town were to play host to such an event it could not be limited to the Rotary club alone but shared with other community organisations. It is now in its third year and is growing year-on-year both in visitor numbers and physical area the activities cover".

Why is Sandwich the perfect place for this nostalgia trip?

"The town of Sandwich is a Historic town, a medieval town, and has had an important relationship with history throughout the ages.

It lends itself perfectly to host any event which pays homage to any by-gone age. It's a wonderful town that celebrates history no matter what period. Also geographically speaking, it's suitably self-contained town centre with open green spaces around the peripherals makes it perfect to host all that goes on throughout the weekend. We're also blessed with good facilities, shops, cafes and a plethora of public houses".

"The community spirit is something that shines in Sandwich, as without co-operation this event simply wouldn't take place. The local business network here is absolutely crucial. A massive thanks go to all the businesses who play such a vital role of which there are too many to name here".

If you wanted to get involved in a voluntary role please feel free to contact Stephen either via his shop in strand street Halcyon Ways or via [email Steवरuston8@gmail.com](mailto:Steवरuston8@gmail.com). Further information on the upcoming festival can be found at www.sandwichevents.org.uk