

SCULPTURE: Tribute to Hyde Park bomb's animal casualty on show

Artist battles ice and heat to recreate iconic horse

By Jake Bambrough

jake.bambrough@courier.co.uk

A WADHURST artist has expressed her delight at finishing a life-size sculpture of an iconic military horse.

Camilla Le May has spent two years sculpting Sefton – one of the horses which survived the IRA bombing in Hyde Park on July 20, 1982.

Sefton was the most severely injured horse to survive the bombing, which killed four soldiers and seven horses. He had 34 separate injuries, including a severed jugular.

The sculpture was commissioned by the Royal Veterinary College for their grounds.

"I was very excited and nervous when the college asked me to make the Sefton sculpture. It was the first time I have sculpted a life-size horse," said Ms Le May.

"While the large size of this piece made it easier in terms of the anatomy detail, the engineering was difficult – I needed to be able to move it around by myself when I was working on it.

Culmination

She added that seeing the sculpture installed was a "wonderful" culmination of all the hard work.

"It is surrounded by grass and trees, so he looks like he is walking free in a field.

"Finishing such a large project and being content with what I had achieved has been the real reward for the difficulties along the way."

The exhibit, at the college's Hawkshead campus in London, was due to be unveiled by Princess Anne, but she could not attend, so the opening was conducted by Lord Ballyedmond, who funded the project.

Ms Le May said one of the greatest challenges of such a long-term project was extremes of weather.

"I was in a draughty shed and during the bitter winter of 2010-11 the clay started to freeze solid so I had to insulate the shed and wrap the sculpture in horse rugs, a



PROUD DAY: Col Neil Smith RAVC, Professor Emeritus Peter Lees, sculptor Camilla Le May, Prof Stuart Reid (RVC principal), and Lt Col Paul Bedford (HCMR Commanding officer) at the unveiling of the Sefton sculpture

horse neck and head cover and bubble wrap.

"The winter was so cold I was also wrapped up with just my eyes showing and with woollen gloves and latex gloves on top so that I could still sculpt. One evening the door froze shut and I was stuck in the shed.

"Then in the early summer the heat made the clay dry out and crack quickly so it had to be misted and covered in damp sheets and plastic.

"In both extremes I had to unwrap only the area I was working on, to keep the rest protected from the freezing cold or the drying heat."

The former St Leonards-Mayfield student said she did not have many memories of the bombing, but had developed a close affinity with the tragedy through her work, adding: "I was only nine when it happened, and I don't think we had a TV at the time."

After a record-breaking eight hours in surgery Sefton was given a 50/50 chance of survival. But he made a remarkable recovery and was able to return to duties with his regiment in the Household Cavalry.

The sculpture was commissioned to celebrate the achievements of long-term senior academic Professor Peter Lees, who retired in 2010.

after car crash

BURWASH: Sussex Police are appealing for witnesses after a serious crash in the High Street.

In the early hours of Sunday morning at 1.35am, a 23-year-old man was seriously injured when his green BMW car left the road and collided with a wall in Burwash High Street.

East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service attended to free the driver from his car, which took around two hours.

He was airlifted to King's College Hospital in London with cuts to his head and serious hip and leg injuries. His condition was later described as "stable".

■ Anyone with information is asked to phone Sussex Police on 101, quoting Operation Headington, or e-mail collision.appeal@sussex.pnn.police.uk

Heroic ideas

CROWBOROUGH: Town councillors have discussed a unique way of celebrating heroes of the world wars.

They believe naming new streets in the town after fallen heroes would be a way of remembering them. The idea came at a town council meeting on how to commemorate next year's 100th anniversary of the First World War.

Quiz scrapped

CROWBOROUGH: A planned charity quiz in the town has been scrapped.

The event had been planned for February but Crowborough town council decide it would not be cost-effective to put on the event. The council said it would ask residents if they would like to see any other event, as there is a gap in the calendar.

Step into a creative world and rediscover
the art of enjoyable Christmas Shopping

**Crafts for
Christmas**

1st - 3rd
November