Another salute to Selwyn’s past has been added to the streets around the cenotaph at Leeston. As part of the Poppy Places campaign, a poppy has been added to the signs for Gallipoli Street and Messines Street, which border the township’s landmark cenotaph.

Both streets trace their origins to the Leeston war memorial, erected in 1924 to commemorate soldiers from Ellesmere County who lost their lives during the First World War.

Many Territorial soldiers from the Ellesmere area volunteered to serve in the New Zealand Expeditionary Force when it was established at the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914. It was these initial volunteers, and those who followed in the reinforcement contingents in 1915, who fought during the Gallipoli campaign.

The battle of Messines in June 1917 was one of the NZ Division’s greatest successes on the Western Front, in that it achieved all of its objectives in the attack battle plan. However, the division sustained 3,700 casualties, including 700 killed. Most likely there would have been soldiers from Ellesmere County involved.

Council Asset Engineer Transportation, Mark Chamberlain, says the historic value of the poppy, street name and location made the addition an easy decision.

“As a growing district it is important to remember the people who have come before us and the sacrifices they made.”

“There are a number of families still in the Ellesmere area who would have had family members fight in the First World War, and this gesture is about helping to maintain the knowledge of what our forefathers went through,” Mr Chamberlain says.

The cenotaph and the naming of Gallipoli Street and Messines Street have provided the people of the district with a permanent focal point to remember and commemorate the sacrifice members of their community made during the campaign.

Information on the Poppy Places Trust can be found on their website – poppyplaces.nz – with information on Gallipoli Street, Messines Street and the other sites around New Zealand.

Out with the old, in with the new

Nearly 250 new LED lights have been installed on streets around Selwyn, as the district moves away from older street lights to brighter, more efficient technology.

Across the district the Council is in the process of replacing 5,800 existing lights with the new LED models. The replacement work started in the middle of 2018, and is expected to take three years to complete.

Support from the NZ Transport Agency has been a key factor, financing 85% of the $3.3 million project.

Normally NZTA funds 50% of local roading projects, but wanted to work alongside local councils to help them switch over to LED lighting.

The changeover started around Leeston, as its lighting stock is among the oldest in the district.

Asset Manager Transportation Andrew Mazey says some of the lights in Leeston have been in place for more than 50 years.

“We believe that some of the lights in the area haven’t been replaced since they were originally put in, and may date back to World War II”, Mr Mazey says.

The new lights are being installed in stages, with older settlements around Selwyn taking priority, due to the age of the lighting infrastructure.

Mr Mazey says Lincoln and Rolleston will be the last areas to have the upgrades.

“With a substantial number of new subdivisions in Lincoln and Rolleston, the two townships have had a head start in the switch over, as new subdivisions have to install LED lighting.

The new lights offer significantly cheaper running and maintenance costs.

Take action on distraction

What kinds of distractions do you encounter while driving?

There are many things that can distract you from driving safely – your passengers, eating food, talking on a hands-free phone, or taking your eyes off the road to look at something.

A recent Ministry of Transport crash report showed that in 2016, diverted attention was identified as a contributing factor in a total of 1,097 crashes in New Zealand.

These crashes resulted in 22 deaths and 210 serious injuries.

Selwyn District Council Road Safety Coordinator Peter Daly says drivers need to take responsibility when driving and to ensure their eyes are always on the road.

“Nobody ever thinks a crash is going to happen to them, until it happens,” he says.

“The best advice anyone can have when driving is to just drive – leave the cellphone, food, coffee and any other distractions until the car is turned off. If we are distracted when someone else makes a mistake in front of us, we have far less chance to avoid being involved in a crash or incident.”

Capacity building workshops

Are you a community group, club or not-for-profit looking to recruit some volunteers?

We’ll be running a series of free workshops over the next eight months, for not-for-profit community groups, organisations and clubs as a part of the Capacity Building Initiative. These workshops will consist of a wide range of interesting and useful topics, including funding and fundraising, governance, marketing, coaching and more.

The first of these workshops will be held on Wednesday 17 October from 5.30–7.30pm at the Lincoln Event Centre. The workshop will cover the basics of volunteer management including recruitment, retention and recognition.

If you’d like to learn more about this workshop or RSVP, please contact Michael.Heywood@selwyn.govt.nz. Please RSVP by 5pm, Thursday 11 October.

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On the roads this week
Pre-repair work is being undertaken along Old Tai Tapu Road and Curve Road. It will be taking place all week, and motorists are being asked to give way when approaching the work.

Shoulder forming and sealing work is being done along West Belt, over Thursday and Friday, motorists are asked to drive past the site with care.

The road reconstruction work on Waimakariri Gorge Road between Waddington Road and Minchin’s Road is continuing with drivers to take care while driving through the site.

There will be maintenance grading in the Hororata, Te Pirita and Kirwee areas.

Patch sealing will be undertaken on Websters Road, Harman’s Road, Manse Road and Old Tai Tapu Road.

Resealing will take place on The Lake Road and Leeston Dunandel Road.