

From the Company Archives Gold Watches 'For Valour'



Daniel Laidlaw,
'The Piper of Loos'

The new website dedicated to the visual presentation of Musicians' Company treasures and archive information continues to grow as further historical aspects and artefacts are uncovered and researched. Since the last issue of *Preserve Harmony*, archive website creator Liveryman David Herbert has pulled together some fascinating background on five professional musicians who were awarded the Victoria Cross during the First World War and consequently received a Gold Watch from the Company. David takes up the story, which has particular poignancy with 1 July this year marking the centenary of the start of the Battle of the Somme.

Drummer Corporal Spencer John Bent arrived in France on 22nd August 1914 as a member of the 1st Battalion East Lancashire Regiment, part of the British Expeditionary Force. Bent was at Ypres in October and over the next week and a half was injured a number of times, sustaining a gunshot wound to his leg, shrapnel injuries to both arms and hands and a head wound. On the night of 1-2 November 1914, his Platoon Sergeant and Section Commander had been struck down and he took command, successfully holding the position. Drummer Bent had on two occasions that week brought up ammunition under heavy fire and