



CHELTENHAM & GLOUCESTER BRANCH of THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

Number 100

February 2015

Welcome

Welcome to our 100th newsletter! Quite a landmark for the branch and I can honestly say that when Hilary and I were putting the very first newsletter together for our inaugural meeting in October 2006 I had no idea that we would be so successful that almost nine years later we would still be going strong. Tonight will actually be our 101st meeting as we had to forego a newsletter on one occasion and time has passed very fast.

Needless to say a branch is only as strong as its supporters and I have to say that we are blessed to have such a loyal group as yourselves and I will take this opportunity to thank you one and all for your continued support. I would like to particularly thank all the committee members past and present - especially Hilary who is the bedrock to the branch and to Graham Adams who I believe has attended more meetings than any of us! Thanks for being here tonight and here's to the next 101 meetings!

Our tour this year will be from 10 to 13 September. We are staying at the Holiday Inn, Arras and the cost is £300 + £100 single supplement. We are going to look at the Battle of Arras in April and early May 1917, concentrating on the major actions. The itinerary has to be finalised but will include a visit to Vimy Ridge and its tunnels, the fighting around Fampoux, Rouex (including the infamous Chemical Works) and Monchy, and wreath-laying at the Arras Memorial. If you are interested in joining us, please let Bob know - trips@cgwfa.org.uk.

The Paper Store houses changing displays from The Wilson's collection of archival items. As part of the *Gloucestershire Remembers* project they are showcasing their collection of World War One material. The display runs until 1 March at The Wilson (Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum), Clarence Street, Cheltenham GL51 3JT.

Peter

Future meetings

Tuesday, 10 March 2015

Righting the wrongs of past commemoration

John Dixon

National Star College at 7:30pm

As the war approached its end, there was a desire to mark the sacrifice of those who served their country. The obvious focus was upon those who lost their lives and in most parishes in the country war memorials were planned and erected. Each locality adopted its own protocol and an obvious problem in Tewkesbury, where the list of names was decided by 31 December 1925, was that severely wounded servicemen, who lost their lives beyond the deadline, were not officially commemorated.

John Dixon is the President of Tewkesbury Historical Society. Their aim is to revisit the period of commemoration with the benefit of hindsight and research and publish biographies of all those from Tewkesbury who were killed in the Great War, including those inadvertently omitted from official commemoration.

Tuesday, 14 April 2015

Forgotten Germans of the Great War

Barry Kitchener

National Star College at 7:30pm

This talk relates to the persons held at the Tower of London for spying against England during the Great War. It covers the various ways of spying, the treatment the men received, their trial, some brief facts around the cases against them, how they were executed, their burial and the memorial for those that were executed.

The talk features the full story of one of these men and briefly covers the rest. It is illustrated with slides of the accused and some of the artifacts used in spying.



Carl Lodi (pictured) was the first spy to be shot in the Tower of London during World War One. He was executed on 6 November 1914.

Second Lieutenant William Rufus Kennard Heath 1st Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment

Rufus Heath (born in 1886) was one of five children born to William and Annie Heath of Kingswood House, near Wotton-under-Edge. His father was, for 16 years, the manager of the Co-operative Bank in Gloucester.

Rufus was educated at Katherine Lady Berkeley's Grammar School, Wotton-under-Edge and obtained a commission into the 3rd Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment on 24 February 1915.

He arrived in France in November 1915, following the Battle of Loos and transferred to the 1st Glosters. The Battalion remained in the Loos sector during the hard winter of 1915/16.

At 7pm on 25 February 1916 an Allied mine was exploded under Hart's crater (itself an older mine crater). Second Lieutenant Heath



was ordered to take a bombing party up to the lip of the new crater. Whilst doing so he was killed, probably by fire from a German trench mortar or rifle grenade. His body was retrieved following the action and was buried in St Patrick's Cemetery, Loos.

Rufus was 29 years old when he was killed and he is commemorated on the Katherine Lady Berkeley's School Roll of Honour and also the Wotton-under-Edge War Memorial.

In 1936, in memory of their son, Rufus' parents paid for the installation of electric lighting in St Mary's Parish

Church, Kingswood, a village adjacent to Wotton-under-Edge.

(Taken from First World War Heroes of Wotton-under-Edge by Bill Griffiths)

WFA news

The WFA's 2015 Spring Conference and AGM is to be held at Peel Hall, part of the University of Salford, on 18 April.

The outline programme for the day:

- 9.30am Tea/coffee on arrival
- 10.15am Welcome from Chairman
- 10.20am *Territorials in 1915* by Bill Michinson
- 11.10am *The Salford Pals* by Mike Stedman
- Noon Lunch in the Salford Museum Gallery
- 1.15pm *Railways in the Great War* by Rob Thompson
- 2.15pm Tea/coffee
- 2.45pm President's remarks and AGM
- 4.30pm Finish and depart

The 4th WFA President's Conference will be held on 27 June at the Tally Ho Conference Centre, Edgbaston, Birmingham. There are five key speakers: *The Breakthrough that never was: German Plans for an Offensive on the Western Front in 1915* by Dr Robert Foley; *The Worst Year: The French Army in 1915* by Dr Jonathan Krause; *The Trench Warfare Department 1914 - 1915* by John Sneddon; *Harsh Realities: The BEF's Spring Offensives 1915* by Dr Spencer Jones and *The Battle of Loos: Planning, Execution and impact on the BEF's Learning Process* by Dr Nick Lloyd.

Full details are available on the WFA website.

Contact details



The Western Front Association
BM Box 1914
London
WC1N 3XX

0207 118 1914
office@westernfrontassociation.com
www.westernfrontassociation.com

Cheltenham & Gloucester Branch President

Professor Peter Simkins MBE FRHistS

Branch Chairman

Peter Gill

2 Queensholme, Pittville Circus Road, Cheltenham GL52 2QE
01242 587 776 • chairman@cgwfa.org.uk

Branch Treasurer & Newsletter Editor

Hilary Jennings

4 St Stephen's Road, Cheltenham GL51 3AA
01242 243 927 • newsletter@cgwfa.org.uk

Branch Website

www.cgwfa.org.uk

"When you go home, tell them of us and say, for your tomorrow, we gave our today."