



CHELTENHAM & GLOUCESTER BRANCH of THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

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Welcome

Initially a request. It has come to our attention recently that not everyone receives my monthly email reminding about the forthcoming talk. If you are on email and don't receive this missive, could you either drop me an email or let me know your email address. It could be that your address has changed or we have historically listed it incorrectly.

The details of our Branch Tour in September, *Arras 1917*, together with application forms, are available tonight. If you would like to join the tour, please get your application in as soon as possible. The numbers are limited and the places will be sold on a first come, first served basis.

The Anzac Parade and Service will be held on Sunday 26 April 2015. The parade musters at 2.15pm in the playground of Leighterton Primary School (GL8 8UH). At 2.35pm Dame Janet Trotter, Lord-Lieutenant, will inspect the parade then march off to the cemetery, where

there will be a service at 3pm, with poppy wreath-laying by VIPs, including representatives from the Australian and New Zealand High Commissions. Our Cheltenham and Gloucester WFA poppy wreath will be laid by Dave and Helen Earle. Following the service the parade will march back to the school, with a march-past taken by Dame Janet and the other VIPs. There is limited parking in the village of Leighterton, therefore we suggest you arrive early.

On 28 April Jon Cooksey (editor of *Stand To!* and author of numerous books) is giving a talk entitled *Kelly's War: The Great War Diaries of Frederick Kelly*. This is the extraordinary story of Frederick Septimus Kelly, the musician, composer and Olympic rower who was killed in action during the Great War. The diary is impeccably detailed, beautifully written and at times emotional. The meeting starts at 10.30am in St Matthew's Church Hall, Cheltenham.

Peter

Future meetings

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.

Tuesday, 12 May 2015
The Battle of Verdun: 21 February-19 December 1916
Colin Ellender
National Star College at 7:30pm

This battle was fought between the French and the Germans with no British involvement. This was the longest and, arguably, the bloodiest battle of the First World War. Verdun was surrounded by a ring of forts and should have been impregnable. Both sides fought themselves to a standstill over 10 months with over 800,000 casualties.



Troops gathering before the attack

Second Lieutenant Herbert Sidney Park

1st Battalion, Border Regiment

Herbert Park was born in Stroud on 3 June 1894, the son of Sidney Benyon Park and Ellen Park, who also had a daughter and the family lived at Highmead, Field Road, Stroud. He was educated at Wycliffe College, Stonehouse from 1904 - 1910, where he was a member of the Literary and Debating Society and a School Senior (or prefect).

In January 1913 he was appointed as a clerk in the Civil Service, working in the National Health Insurance Audit Department, where he was held in high esteem for both character and abilities.

The Civil Service was reluctant to release him for military service but in 1916 he joined the 28th Battalion London Regiment, better known as the Artists' Rifles, before receiving a commission into the Border Regiment in March 1917. He was posted to the 1st Battalion while it was in a training area at Candas (about 50km south west of Arras) on 9 June 1917. On 26 June the Battalion moved into the front line north of Ypres, where it stayed until 7 July, giving Herbert his first experience of the trenches. He wrote: *"These days, chiefly spent in strong posts and pill-boxes, were most interesting and instructive,*

and I found that I didn't get 'the wind up' nearly as much as I thought I should."



On 31 July, the opening day of Third Ypres, the Battalion supported the Guards Division's attack on Pilkem Ridge, making roads in the Boesinghe area, before taking its place in the front line on 12 August. On the 15th it began to move off in preparation for its participation in the Battle of Langemark. The Battalion was relieved on the 17th, having spent 18 days at the front, losing 181 officers and men, killed, wounded or missing.

Seriously under strength, the Battalion moved to a rear training area at Bailluelmont (between Arras and Doullens) and Herbert had now become its bombing officer. On 26 October 1917 he was teaching a group how to use a bomb when one went off spontaneously, killing the Private holding it and Herbert. He was aged 22.

Herbert is buried inside Bailluelmont Communal Cemetery and remembered on the Wycliffe School Roll of Honour.

(Acknowledgement to 'Lest we Forget: The Stroud District & its part in the Great War 1914-1919' edited by Chas Townley)

Ancestry

There have been recent enhancements to available searches at *Ancestry*. The Army Register of Effects 1901-1929 which tells you what the relatives of soldiers who were killed received from the UK Government; WWI Service Medal & Award Rolls which include the War &

Victory Medals and the 1914/15 Stars and correspond to the letters and numbers on soldiers' medal index cards; Naval Service Records which have useful details about those who served in the Royal Navy. *Ancestry* is a paid subscription service - www.ancestry.co.uk.

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