



CHELTENHAM & GLOUCESTER BRANCH of THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

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Welcome

Another reminder about this year's branch trip that Bob Brunsdon is leading. The basis of the tour will be Arras 1915 with the coach leaving on 10 September and returning on the 13th. As with all Bob's tours, this will be an exceptional few days and understandably demand is high with only three places remaining. If you would like to join the trip, please fill in an application form and return it to us as soon as possible - do remember that the trip is also open to family members, friends and non-branch members, so feel free to spread the news or invite someone who you think would be keen to join you.

An excellent booklet *Slimbridge Remembers* has been produced by the Slimbridge Local History Society. It is a collection of stories of the soldiers, airmen and a marine from Slimbridge who lost their lives in the Great War and who are commemorated on the war memorial. The Branch has a copy that it will lend to interested

members but, if you would like your own copy, contact details can be found at www.slimbridgelhs.plus.com and you might just be lucky! We are arranging a talk by the author in our 2016 programme.

The Hardwicke and District RBL is holding an *Armed Forces Day* on Sunday 28 June. There will be a parade starting at 2pm of Standards, Veterans and Cadets wreath-laying and Cadet presentations. There will also be various stands, military vehicles and a drill display by the Ceremonial Flight Air Training Corps. Parking will be available in Green Lane and at Hardwicke Village Hall. Our branch will have a stand in the marquee and if you would like to help out on the stand, please contact Paul Haigh on 01242 572493 or email: membership@cgwfa.org.uk.

Don't forget the WFA's Centenary website - www.firstworldwarcentenary.co.uk - to keep up to date with Centenary news and events.

Peter

Future meetings

Tuesday, 9 June 2015

The Easter Rising
Paul Cobb

National Star College at 7:30pm

As 1914 approached, Britain faced challenges posed by industrial unrest, the Suffragette movement and Home Rule in Ireland. In the case of the latter, there was an understanding that pursuit of Home Rule would wait until the war against Germany had been won but at Easter 1916 this changed.

This talk looks at the background to Home Rule and the events immediately before the uprising, the main characters of this tragedy and then a day-by-day account of the struggle between the British Army and the rebels. The account uses many maps and photographs to illustrate the fighting and destruction of parts of the city of Dublin, and to guide visitors to the key locations today. It also considers, albeit briefly, if these events were a distraction for Britain from the fighting on the Western Front.

Tuesday, 14 July 2015

Injustice or justifiable? WW1 Executed Soldiers
Dr John Sutton

National Star College at 7:30pm

This talk re-examines the evidence and the rationale why over 300 British soldiers were executed for cowardice and desertion during the Great War by focusing on the Court Martial system and why there was a mass pardon in 2007.



The Shot at Dawn Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum was modelled on 17-year-old Private Herbert Burden, who lied about his age to enlist in the armed forces and was later shot for desertion in 1915.

Second Lieutenant Fleming Newton 201 Squadron, Royal Air Force

Fleming Newton was the second son of Isaac Newton MRCS, Senior Medical Officer at Tonbridge School and his wife Alice, who later lived at Broadlands, The Park, Cheltenham. He was educated at Tonbridge School between 1912 and 1917, where he was a member of the OTC and captain of school.

At the end of the summer term in 1917 he joined the Royal Naval Air Service at Crystal Palace and was gazetted Temporary Probationary Flight Officer on 5 August. He passed as first class pilot in January 1918, receiving two months' seniority as a result of the tests and examinations passed and was gazetted Temporary Sub-Lieutenant effective from 23 November 1917. With the amalgamation of the flying services in April 1918, he became a Second Lieutenant, Royal Air Force.

He went to France on 4 March 1918 and during the German Spring Offensive was posted missing when his machine was practically

destroyed by anti-aircraft fire. He survived and managed to regain the lines far from his base and rejoined his unit some time later.



On 9 May he went out on offensive patrol in his Sopwith Camel and was confronted by a large formation of enemy scout planes about six miles behind the lines. Three of the enemy planes were shot down before he himself was shot and killed, crashing to earth from a great height. At the time of his death he was serving with 201 Squadron, flying from Nouex-les-Auxi.

He was originally buried by the Germans in a small cemetery east of Warlencourt on the Albert to Bapaume Road. After the war his remains were transferred to

Adanac Military Cemetery. He is commemorated on the memorial at St Philip and St James Church, Cheltenham and also on the Tonbridge School Roll of Honour.

(Taken from Leaving All That Was Dear - Cheltenham and the Great War by J Devereux and G Sacker)

National Archives event

The National Archives is hosting a special event, *Archives at Night*, on Friday 15 May from 6.30pm to 9.30pm. This event explores the personal stories of the First World War, with a unique opportunity to see what goes on behind the scenes at one of the world's biggest archives.

Actor Stephen McGann hosts the evening, giving readings of key documents and speaking about his own moving journey into investigating his family's involvement in the war. Leading

historian and author Richard van Emden will also speak about his research into the lives of the men who fought and how archives provide a unique insight into historical events.

Refreshments will be available, along with a range of other activities that should appeal to anyone with an interest in learning more about this historic conflict (including bookable behind-the-scenes tours). Full details are on their website: www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

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