



CHELTENHAM & GLOUCESTER BRANCH of THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

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Welcome

I hope the storms aren't causing you too much inconvenience - it's certainly been a rough start to February.

I think the first thing I would like to mention is a belated but congratulatory word to our very own Colin Hardy who was awarded the Holmes Prize back at the end of last year for his literary project *Reconography: Intelligence and Reconnaissance in British Tank Operations on the Western Front 1916-18*. Fantastic Colin! We are all very proud of you.

A note of thanks is due to Paul Haigh who has worked tirelessly on behalf of the branch in his role as Membership Secretary. Paul announced at our AGM that he will be standing down from his position at the next AGM (November) and we are looking for a volunteer to take on the mantle. Paul has offered to assist the new secretary in the transitional phase so that the task isn't too onerous. There is some time yet, but if you fancy throwing your hat into the ring to help the branch please come forward as soon as possible.

The First World War Research Group is holding a study day at the University of Wolverhampton on Saturday 13 February from 10am to 5.30pm. The topic is *New Ways of Killing* and will feature the talks by Dr Howard Fuller - *The Royal Navy's Plans for Coastal Assault 1914-18*; Dr Peter Preston-Hough - *Developments and Effects of Air Power in the First World War 1914-1918*; Philip Ventham - *British Tanks on the Western Front - a Weapon of Mass Destruction?*; Simon Jones - *In Praise of Phosgene: Gas Warfare in 1916*. The cost is £20 and you can book a place online at: www.estore.wlv.ac.uk and click on 'Conferences and Events'. Colin Hardy will be going and can take a couple of people in his car.

Bruce Cherry's book *They Didn't Want to Die Virgins: Sex and Morale on the Western Front 1914-1918* has just been published. Full details are on our display board and Bruce's book is available on Amazon at £25 or you can contact Bruce at d.b.cherry@btinternet.com

Peter

Future meetings

Tuesday, 8 March 2016
Dogs in the First World War
Emma White
National Star College at 7:30pm



The role of dogs during the First World War is often overlooked, or is only thought of in relation to mascots. This illustrated talk will show how the British Army settled on a dog service, chose its commander, trained its troops and successfully employed them on the Western Front. The use of dogs in other armies will also be discussed briefly.

Tuesday, 12 April 2016
Slimbridge Remembers
Den Bannister
National Star College at 7:30pm



A Heritage Lottery Fund grant and parish funds were awarded to Slimbridge Local History Society to enable them to research the stories behind the names on the Slimbridge War Memorial. Their work has resulted in an excellent book *Slimbridge Remembers* which contains in-depth stories for each name recorded on the memorial: the book was given to each household in the parish.

1409 Corporal Frederick Arthur Gordon 1 Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment

Fred Gordon was born in Croydon on 17 August 1894 but attended the British School in Wotton-under-Edge from September 1900 to June 1908.

He enlisted at Wotton-under-Edge as a Special Reservist, joined the 1st Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment and was sent to France on 19 September 1914.

He was involved in some heavy fighting during the first year of the war and suffered wounds on five different occasions. On 15 October 1915, whilst in action in the Lilles area of France, near to Bethune, he sustained two serious head wounds.



Fred was repatriated to England for treatment and in February 1916 underwent an operation in Torbay hospital, from which he did not recover and died on 22 February 1916, aged just 21 years. At that time his parents were living in Bristol, so he was buried, with full military honours, in Horfield (Holy Trinity) Churchyard.

He is commemorated on the Roll of Honour in Holy Trinity Church and also on both the Tabernacle Church Roll of Honour in Wotton-under-Edge

and the town's War Memorial.

(From *First World War Heroes of Wotton-under-Edge* by Bill Griffiths)

Events

A workshop entitled *First World War Women* takes place at The National Archives on Wednesday, 10 February from 2 to 4pm. Gain a better understanding of the experiences of women during the First World War with this introductory workshop on how to research and interpret relevant records held at The National Archives. With original documents to hand, you will be given a chance to explore a range of surviving records, including those covering nurses, female military corps and the home front. Entrance to The National Archives is free and there is no need to book. For more details, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/whatson.

There is an exhibition at the Victoria Art Gallery in Bath of World War One Recruitment Posters. Displayed in their building a century ago when they were used to urge men to join up, this stunning collection of posters has been unseen for many years. With their vibrant colours and stirring slogans, they are a reminder

of the optimism and patriotism that characterised Britain at the beginning of World War One. The exhibition is free and runs from 27 February to 13 April.

Booking is now open for the *Pack Up Your Troubles* conference which is supported by the WFA. This three-day conference runs from 27 to 29 April at the University of Kent. The conference is a combination of keynote speeches, panel sessions, workshops and performances featuring work on a broad range of wartime subjects including music, music hall, theatre, cinema, dance and a screening of Charlie Chaplin's *The Vagabond* (1916). The full programme and cost can be found at www.gatewaysfww.org.uk. There is a 5% discount on the conference packages for WFA members. Just enter the promotional code WFASPECIAL and your membership number on the booking form and this will provide access to the discounted rates.

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