



CHELTENHAM & GLOUCESTER BRANCH of THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

Number 123

January 2017

Welcome!

I hope you had a wonderful Christmas and may I wish you a rather belated Happy New Year.

2017 looks like being another excellent year for the branch with a fine selection of speakers - including in November Richard van Emden! Details of all our speakers can be found in our programme leaflets so please pick up one for yourself and feel free to take as many as you like to pass on to friends and family or to put into local venues such as libraries and schools if you feel able.

Bob Brunson will once again be organising and leading our branch tour in September, and we have a couple of other small trips and excursions planned which we will advertise in due course.

Next month we shall be holding a special 'Unwanted Christmas Presents' auction on behalf of the branch. So if you received any presents that you don't really want and can donate them to the auction, please bring them

next month. It doesn't matter how small or silly these are - it's about having a bit of fun and raising some funds!

If you had a Christmas quiz sheet last month and want to hand it in for marking (there is a small prize for the winner), please do so tonight or scan and email it to me (petergill@live.co.uk) by the end of the week. The winner will be notified at next month's meeting.

The National Archives has launched a new online platform, *Great Wharton*, which brings together unusual aspects of the British Home Front - including an 'egg train', ginger beer strike and school pupils making munitions. You can take a journey through the fictional town and delve into these lesser-known stories at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/first-world-war/home-front-stories/

Apologies that I'm not here in person this month, but see you in February!

Peter

Future events

Tuesday, 14 February
Munitions Factories in the Great War
Nigel Crompton

National Star College at 7:15pm

In his talk on munitions factories Nigel includes an introduction to the Ministry of Munitions and where possible details of factories local to the area of the talk, and the role of women in the factories.

Please note the earlier start time. Before Nigel's talk we are holding an auction of all your unwanted Christmas presents! So please bring them along as all proceeds will go towards branch funds.

Tuesday, 21 February
Meet Tommy Atkins
Cheltenham Playhouse
Bath Road, Cheltenham GL53 7HG
at 7:45pm

On August 4th 1914, with the declaration of war between Britain and Germany, reservist Tommy Atkins is immediately called up to serve his country. Within weeks he sees his first action in

the fields of France and subsequently experiences the full scale of life in the Western Front trenches of the First World War - the horror, the pain, the misery, the boredom and even the moments of joy.

This play, written and performed by Peter, details through the eyes of a simple 'Tommy' the reality of war. From the beginning of the war to the end, Private Tommy Atkins was there. This is his story.

The tickets are £10 and can be obtained from the Playhouse Box Office on 01242 522852 or online at www.cheltplayhouse.org.uk. This is a fundraising event for the branch so please spread the word.

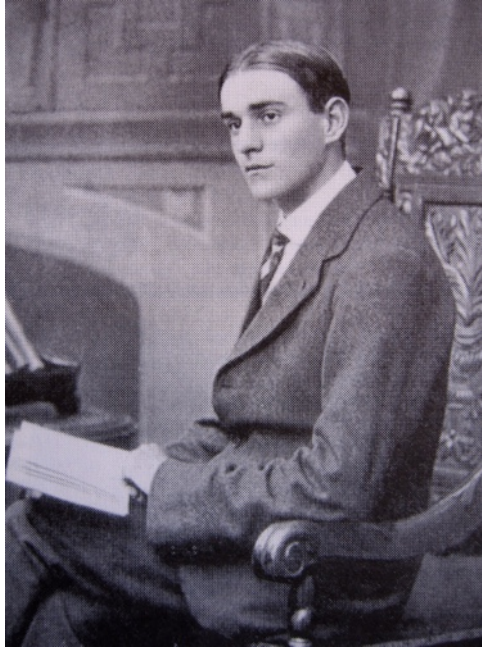
Tuesday, 14 March
Pyramids and Fleshpots: The Egyptian, Senussi and Eastern Mediterranean Campaigns 1914-16
Stuart Hadaway

National Star College at 7:30pm

Stuart's talk is based on his book of the same name which gives an overview of the campaigns in and around Egypt, including the Battle of the Suez Canal, support for Gallipoli, and the advance across the Sinai.

Second Lieutenant John Emerton Sanders 17th Battalion, Lancashire Fusiliers

John Emerton Sanders was the elder son of Richard and Charlotte Hay Sanders of Homestead, Old Bath Road, Cheltenham. He was educated at Wycliffe College, Stonehouse between 1909 and 1914 and on the outbreak of war applied for a commission in the Army. Impatient at the seeming delay, he enlisted as No 2566 in D Company, 1/5th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment and although under military age he went with the battalion to France on 15 May 1915, later being assigned to the machine gun section. He received his commission on 24 August 1916, after a course in a training school near to GHQ in France and was assigned to 17th Battalion, Lancashire Fusiliers, a 'bantam' battalion.



In August 1916 the Fusiliers were engaged in the Battle of Bazentin Ridge, part of the ongoing Somme Offensive and on 24 August sent out a strong patrol to gather information concerning

enemy positions. The patrol ran into a German post, heavily defended and only a few wounded stragglers returned, reporting that there were others lying wounded in some shell holes. On 25 August, the first day of his appointment, Second Lieutenant Sanders was ordered to take out a bombing party that night to look for survivors. This he did, returning safely with his command. He then went out by himself and did not return.

His body was never found and he is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial. He was one of seventy eight former students of Wycliffe College to die in the Great War and is therefore also commemorated on the College Roll of Honour and also on Cheltenham Borough

War Memorial and that in the Church of the Holy Apostles, London Road.

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

WFA Spring Conference and AGM

This year the WFA Spring Conference and AGM will be held at the University of Northumbria, Newcastle on Tyne on Saturday 6 May.

The programme for the day is:

9.30am - Tea/Coffee

10.15am - Welcome by the Chairman

10.20am - *British casualty evacuation from the Somme, July 1916: success or failure?* Jeremy Higgins

11.20am - *Winning with laughter: Cartoonists at War* Luci Gosling

12.20pm - Buffet lunch

1.20pm - *Politics and Command: Conflict and Crisis 1917* John Derry

2.20pm - Tea/Coffee

2.45pm - AGM

4.30pm - Finish

Please inform Steve Oram if you wish to reserve a place - secretary@westernfrontassociation.com.

A buffet lunch is available at £15 a head. Please send a cheque, made payable to *The Western Front Association*, to Steve Oram, Spindleberry, Marlow Road, Bourne End, Buckinghamshire ST6 5NL.

Contact details

Cheltenham & Gloucester Branch President

Professor Peter Simkins MBE FRHistS

Branch Chairman

Peter Gill

2 Queensholme, Pittville Circus Road,
Cheltenham GL52 2QE

01242 691 422 • 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

Website

www.cgwfa.org.uk

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The Western Front Association

BM Box 1914,
London WC1N 3XX
0207 118 1914

office@westernfrontassociation.com

www.westernfrontassociation.com



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