



## CHELTENHAM & GLOUCESTER BRANCH of THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

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### Welcome!

As I hope you are aware, we learnt recently of the passing in May of Cecil Ballantine. Cecil was a great supporter of the Western Front Association having initially been a member of the Swindon Branch and then upon its formation our own branch. He was one of our first supporters and a stalwart attendee of meetings for many years. He will be remembered by the branch for the articles that he wrote for *The Sentinel*, the talks that he presented at Christmas meetings and for the generous donation to the branch of many books from his Great War library. Personally I shall remember Cecil for his cheerful demeanour, his intelligence and for his academic approach to the First World War. Cecil's Farewell Service on 27 June was a great testament to him and it was heartwarming to see so many of our branch members attending. I'm sure you will join with me in sending our warmest wishes to all of Cecil's loved ones.

On behalf of the branch I would like to thank Paul Haigh for his excellent work as Membership Secretary over the past eight years. Paul has now passed the role to Helen Earle. If you have any

membership queries Helen can be contacted at [membership@cgwfa.org.uk](mailto:membership@cgwfa.org.uk).

We have been asked by the Gloucester Civic Trust if we can help out with their all day event held at St Michael's Tower on Gloucester Cross on 29 July. They are looking for volunteers to assist with basic family research for people bringing in medals, documents etc, from WW1 relatives. Bob Brunsdon will be around at intervals but we particularly need someone (or two) who can take the lead on it. If you are able to help please let either Bob or myself know.

Whilst mentioning Bob - our peerless tour guide - please note that this year's Branch Tour to the Western Front is now full. However, if you wish to put your name down in case of any cancellations please feel free to do so.

Finally, Andy Hinks has very kindly offered to arrange a trip to the Vickers Machine Gun Collection and Research Association in Swindon - either on a Friday evening or weekend. If this would interest you, please drop him an email: [andrewhinks@btinternet.com](mailto:andrewhinks@btinternet.com). **Peter**

### Future events

**Tuesday, 8 August**  
*British Forces in Italy 1917-1918*  
Dale Hjort  
**National Star College at 7:30pm**

Dale's talk describes how Italy's war with Austro-Hungary led to British deployment, the challenging conditions of the Alpine front, the defensive action of Asiago on 15 June 1918, crossing the Piave River and the final victory at the Battle of Vittorio Veneto, and the 48<sup>th</sup> Division advance through mountains.



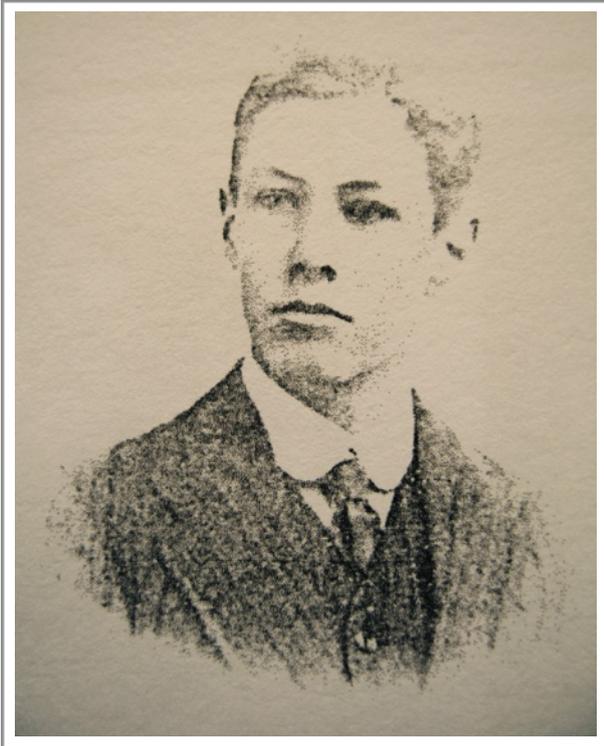
**Tuesday, 12 September**  
*The New Crusaders:*  
*The Americans at the Meuse-Argonne*  
David Williams  
**National Star College at 7:30pm**

The Battle of the Meuse-Argonne remains the single largest and bloodiest battle ever fought by the American Army. The Americans suffered around 122,000 casualties, a figure increasingly challenged as a very conservative estimate, with a disproportionate loss rate in the first eight days.

With the bulk of American divisions never having seen action before, the men of President Wilson's 'Great Crusade' launched an offensive hampered by rudimentary training, faulty doctrine and inexperience in the 'All Arms' battle, over terrain that provided formidable natural defences.

This talk examines the American performance that resulted in a costly but important victory.

## Midshipman Rupert Henry Ingles-Chamberlayne Royal Navy – HMS Hawke



Rupert Henry Ingles-Chamberlayne was born on 4 July 1897. He was the son of Henry and his second wife Grace Ingles-Chamberlayne, who lived at The Hyde, Stow-on-the-Wold.

Rupert joined the Royal Navy as a Boy Cadet in 1910 and became a student at the Royal Naval College, Osborne, on the Isle of Wight. He became a Midshipman in August 1913, when aged 16 and was posted to *HMS Hawke*, an 'Edgar' Class old light cruiser.

Upon the outbreak of war *Hawke* joined with other cruisers of its class to form the 10<sup>th</sup> Cruiser Squadron, deployed between Scotland and Norway on the blockade of the North Sea.

On 15 October 1914 *Hawke* was on patrol off Aberdeen and at 9.30am had stopped to pick up mail from its sister ship *HMS Endymion*. She then set off at thirteen knots to regain station, steering a straight, rather than zig-zag course. Out of sight of the rest of the squadron she was struck by a single torpedo fired from the German submarine U-9 (which had been responsible for the sinking of the cruisers *Aboukir*, *Hogue* and *Cressy* on 22 September). The torpedo ignited a magazine and a tremendous explosion ripped a large hole in the ship's side; she capsized and sank in minutes.

Concern was raised when *Hawke* failed to respond to signals and a destroyer, *HMS Swift*, was despatched from Scapa Flow to conduct a search. It found a raft containing an officer and 21 ratings and a boat with 49 survivors on board was picked up by a Norwegian steamer. The remainder of the ship's company, 524 in all, which included Rupert, were lost.

Rupert was described in the *Cheltenham Chronicle* of 17 October 1914 as 'a bright young fellow'. He is commemorated on Panel 1 of the Chatham Naval Memorial.

**Graham Adams**

### Commemoration of the Centenary of the Battle of Passchendaele

We have received an invitation to join the Cheltenham and District Branch of The Royal British Legion in a Parade and Service of Commemoration to mark the Centenary of the first day of the Battle of Passchendaele (31 July to 18 November 1917). It will be held on Sunday 30 July at 2pm at St Mary's Church, 44 Clarence Street, Cheltenham GL50 3PL.

Standard bearers are particularly welcome and would need to arrive by 1.30pm at the latest for a briefing and quick walk through. Please let the Chairman, Roy Roberts know if you can join them - [chairman.rblcheltenham@outlook.com](mailto:chairman.rblcheltenham@outlook.com).

Light refreshments will be available in the church after the Service which finishes at 3pm.

#### Contact details

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