



CHELtenham & GLOUCESTER BRANCH of THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

Number 146

December 2018

Welcome!



With the festive season upon us it is always a pleasure to host our special Christmas Meeting. Not only does it give us a small opportunity to socialise with those that we see perhaps just once a month, but with whom we share a common interest, but it gives us the chance to enjoy some short presentations from our own members.

Tonight we will be entertained not just by some short talks, but also by a re-enactment and a quiz. It should be a good night!

As a branch, 2018 has yet again been an excellent year. We have had a fantastic array of speakers, the branch trip to Italy was a great success and we have been involved in a number of local community events.

Looking forward to 2019 we can certainly be enthused about the talks that we have in store for us and let us hope that the branch can continue to flourish and indeed that the Association as a whole can put any negatives behind it and go from strength to strength.

I do wish you one and all the happiest and healthiest of Christmases and New Years and look forward to seeing you again in January.

Peter



Future branch events

Tuesday, 8 January

*The Work of the Joint Casualty and
Compassionate Centre*

Nicola Nash

National Star College at 7.30pm

The Commemorations Team is responsible for undertaking work to identify and bury the remains of recently discovered Service personnel killed in historic campaigns from WW1 onwards. The Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre co-ordinates efforts to identify remains, working with the host nation, CWGC, Service historic branches and regimental contacts employing records and any forensics recovered at site. Nicola explains the work of the JCCC supported with case evidence and some recovered artefacts to illustrate the attempts to trace surviving relatives and arranging re-dedications.

Tuesday, 12 February

*They Shoot Spies - the untold story of the
first female agents*

Dr Viv Newman

National Star College at 7.30pm



*French secret agent,
Louise de Bettignies* Moving beyond the stereotypes of Edith Cavell and Mata Hari this talk explores the lives and actions of two Belgian and one French woman whose espionage made a significant contribution to the Allied Cause. One is believed to be the only woman, probably the only person, to have been decorated by France, Belgium, Britain and Germany.

Private Norman Sollars (67389) 1/5th Battalion, Devonshire Regiment

Norman Sollars was born on 2 July 1898 to Samuel and Mary who were living in Far End, Sheepscombe. Samuel was a gardener at Skippetts and the path across the common to Skippetts was known as Sam Sollars path. Norman went to Sheepscombe School from April 1902.

Norman enlisted in the Devonshire Regiment and in 1918 his battalion was in Kantara. They boarded ship on 24 May in Alexandria and left Egypt for Europe on 26 May. The War Diary whilst in harbour states: *Casualties 1 other rank disembarked Alexandria 25th sick*. It is possible that this refers to Norman being taken ashore to hospital.

A telegram received on 19 May said Norman was dangerously ill and another telegram received ten days later said: ... *he passed away on 28th after an operation for appendicitis. Norman was one of Sheepscombe's youngest soldiers and was only 19 last September. He went to Egypt in*



Norman is the middle boy in this school photograph

the October, had seen the Turks at uncomfortably close quarters, already had some hairbreadth escapes to recount and was looking forward to the hot months as a time when he would not be called upon to make such strenuous exertions.

Private Norman Sollars died on 28 May 1918, aged 19, and is buried in Kantara War Memorial Cemetery, Suez, Egypt.

Taken from The Wayside Cross published by the Sheepscombe History Society.

Can you help?

Teresa and Martin Davies have asked for help to identify this object. It is about 2.5 cm long and a friend of theirs found it amongst his recently deceased mother's belongings. The markings on the reverse show that it is Sterling silver with a registration mark of Rd. 651069, with the word in capitals being "PROTECTED". They are not sure about the maker's signature but think it is "E. Adams". There are initials scratched into the back - 'P W' (they now think stands for 'Phil Willett') and a less clear 'N M' (possibly 'Nellie May' who is the girl that Phil Willett married).

A search of the internet uncovered two items that have been sold - one was a quatrefoil badge with the image of the soldier in the middle of it and the other was a silver spoon with the soldier attached to the top of the handle - on the reverse both items are marked Sterling, Rd 651069 and

PROTECTED but makers names are different. In one of the cases it was suggested that the soldier could be a fundraising item but nobody is sure.

If you are able to help, please contact them on mandtdavies@outlook.com.



Contact details

Cheltenham & Gloucester Branch President

Professor Peter Simkins MBE FRHistS

Branch Chairman

Peter Gill

Lansdown House, Pittville Circus Road,
Cheltenham GL52 2QE

07702 253 638 • 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

Facebook

**Cheltenham & Gloucester Branch of
the Western Front Association**

Twitter

@CGWFA

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."