



## CHELTENHAM & GLOUCESTER BRANCH of THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

Number 154

August 2019

### Welcome!

It's that time of year when I start asking for volunteers for our Christmas Meeting. If you have, or can put together a ten minute presentation of a Great War related subject (even if it's tenuously linked!) and would like to deliver it at our branch meeting, then I would love to hear from you. We are after five presentations in total, so please give it consideration and be encouraged that we're not asking for the most professional of presentations as such!

And on the subject of voluntary contributions, we are also in dire need of literary contributions for our branch members' publication *The Sentinel*. Personal stories, photographic stories, pieces of research or just interesting articles that you may have come across or written would be heartily welcomed to fill our pages. No article too short or too long!

The Friends of St George's Memorial Church, Ypres are dedicated to the continued preservation of the historic church as a living

memorial to the thousands of service personnel from Great Britain and the present-day Commonwealth who fought and died in the Salient and other theatres of the Great War. They support the Chaplain, the Churchwardens and the Congregation in practical ways to help maintain the fabric of the church and the adjoining church hall and garden.

Individual membership of the Friends is £10 per year and the benefits are: Twice-yearly Members' Newsletter, updating Friends on activities relating to the Church; the opportunity to join existing Friends in various commemorative events connected to the church held throughout the year; the opportunity to join the Friends on their bespoke Annual Pilgrimage to the Western Front. For further details and an application form please visit: [www.stgeorgesmemorialchurchypres.com/friends-of-st-georges](http://www.stgeorgesmemorialchurchypres.com/friends-of-st-georges)

*Peter*

### Future branch events

**Tuesday, 10 September**

*Sex and Morale in the British Army  
on the Western Front 1914-1918*

Dr Bruce Cherry

**National Star College at 7.30pm**

**Tuesday, 8 October**

*More to this case than meets the eye*

David Saunders

**National Star College at 7.30pm**

There has been a collective amnesia when it comes to recalling the sexual activities of the British soldier on the Western Front between 1914 and 1918. Perhaps there has even been a conspiracy of silence with some inclined to let sleeping dogs lie. That the soldier could find the time, inclination, and indeed partners to enjoy a sex life amidst the mud and carnage is often a revelation even to those who are Western Front experts.

Noting that it 'takes two to tango', Bruce looks at the socio-demographics and motives of the women involved and the workings and economics of the 'Red Lamp' army-regulated brothels. Careful not to denigrate the memory of the men who served and died, and avoiding sensationalism, hyperbole, or tabloid-style copy, Bruce paints a vivid picture of the seedier aspects of life behind the front while arguing its positive impact on morale.

In the early evening of 3 July 1918 at Pont Coulogne, Calais, 40 year old Detective Sergeant Harold Arthur Collison DCM, MSM, MFP, a mature and experienced policeman, made a decision that ultimately led to his murder at the hand of a British Officer. To this day that decision has never been properly explained.

David takes a policeman's view of that decision and some of the other mysterious elements surrounding this case.



## Sergeant James Rutherford (S/5144) 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion, The Black Watch



Born in 1891 James Rutherford was an office worker in Edinburgh when the war broke out.

He was one of the first 100,000 to volunteer, an honored status within Kitchener's Army, when he joined the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion The Black Watch in September 1914. The battalion crossed to France in early May 1915, one of the earliest of the New Army to do so.

He saw action in September 1915 in the assault on Hohenzollern Redoubt and the fight to retain it thereafter at the Battle of Loos. And again in the dawn attack on Longueval in July 1916.

He rose to be a sergeant, this may be a measure of his ability as a soldier but was also a testament to his ability to survive as only 25% of

the battalion emerged unscathed from Longueval / Delville Wood.

The battalion was next in the firing line at Butte de Warlencourt in October. Here his luck ran out. After repelling a German flame thrower attack, he was killed in action, sadly, according to the battalion war diary, by our own artillery.

His death is recorded as 20<sup>th</sup> October 1916 although it was more likely the previous day as he would have been noted as killed in action at the morning roll call.

Sergeant James Rutherford lay with six other men undiscovered until 1932 near the Abbey d'Escault on the ridge east of the Butte and is now buried at Serre 2 Cemetery on the Somme.

*Ross Beadle*



### 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](mailto: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](mailto:newsletter@cgwfa.org.uk)

Website [www.cgwfa.org.uk](http://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](mailto:office@westernfrontassociation.com)

[www.westernfrontassociation.com](http://www.westernfrontassociation.com)



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