



CHELTENHAM & GLOUCESTER BRANCH of THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

Number 158

December 2019

Welcome!

This year we have once again been blessed with an excellent array of talks organised by Andy Hinks. We also had a superb Branch tour to the Western Front orchestrated largely by Dave Gargett but with great assistance from Bob Brunsdon and Graham Adams (the latter of which is a wizard at keeping the budgets under control), and a very popular trip to the Vickers Machine Gun Collection also organised by Andy Hinks.

Our Gloucestershire War Graves Project has gone from strength to strength under the stewardship of Graham Adams, and once again our Branch publication *The Sentinel* has been a bastion of excellent articles under the editorship of the branch's 'rock' - Hilary, who keeps everything running as our accountant and secretary. All of these and indeed all our committee members very much deserve our thanks for all they do but also thanks should

go to all those that do the simple, perhaps unrecognised things - such as setting out or packing away the chairs at meetings, tidying up, providing raffle prizes, assisting with lifts for speakers or other attendees.

The most thanks should however go to you. For supporting the branch, attending meetings and giving of your time to be a part of a collective. Thank you!

I hope you enjoy this evening and the talks are: *Some more of Paul's Holiday Surprises* by Paul Haig; *Accidental injuries on active service* by Graham Sacker; *Indigenous Peoples in the Empire's Armies* by Paul Cobb and *The Treaties of 1918, not just Versailles* by David Maconochie.

I sincerely wish you a very Happy Christmas and hope that 2020 brings you happiness and health for yourself and your loved ones.

Peter

Future branch events

Tuesday, 14 January 2020

The Fall of the Ottomans:
The Great War in the Middle East 1914 - 1920
Professor Eugene Rogan

National Star College at 7.30pm

Professor Rogan delivers a talk based on his latest book of the same title that covers the Ottoman perspective of this theatre of war considered largely a 'side show' by other powers.

He examines the geo-political landscape and draws on his research using little known Turkish and Arab sources, addresses the Armenian genocide, Arab statehood and the Balfour Declaration bringing into focus those issues that still resonate today.

Professor Rogan is the Director of Near Eastern studies at St Anthony's College, Oxford University where he teaches the modern history of the Middle East to both undergraduates and graduates and is well published on Middle Eastern affairs. Professor Rogan was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 2017.

Tuesday, 11 February 2020

Nobody of Any Importance:
A Foot Soldier's Memoir of World War 1
Phil Sutcliffe

National Star College at 7.30pm



Phil reads from his father Signaller Sam Sutcliffe's memoir of World War 1. It covers his childhood through to volunteering at 16, then Gallipoli, the Somme, the Spring Offensive, his POW months - March to Armistice - the aftermath, and the Peace celebrations of July, 1919.

Phil worked as a journalist until semi-retirement when his father asked him to edit his writings which he did in time to publish the memoir in July 2014. It needed only a light touch and Phil can say all the words are Sam's - though not necessarily in his original order.

Captain John Ramsay Cox

6th (Special Reserve) Battalion attached to 1st Battalion, Worcestershire Regiment

John Ramsay Cox was born on 29 June 1873 in Yatton, Somerset to Catharine Margaret and William Charles Cox. The census of 1881 shows the family living at Ashley Lawn, Yatton with John's three elder sisters Mary, Kathleen and Edith. William's occupation at that time was a Leather Merchant.

John was educated at King's School, Bruton and privately. By 1891 he was employed as an Architect's Clerk. The family had moved to Weston-super-Mare and another son had been born, Erskine.

On 2 November 1898 John married Florence Julia Mary Comber at Christ Church in the parish of Walcot St Swithin, Bath. By 1901 they were living at Wilton Court, Ross, Herefordshire and John was a Fruit Grower.

John was gazetted as a Lieutenant on 1 December 1907 and his first commission in the army was 7 December in that year; the address he gave was Park House, Cheltenham. From 7 December 1907 until August 1908 he was serving with the 4th Battalion, King's Shropshire Light Infantry in Northern Bengal. From August 1908 until June 1912 he was serving with the 6th Battalion (Special Reserve) Worcester Regiment in the Mounted Rifles. He was a member of the East India United Service Club, and was good at all games, but preferred tennis and golf. He was also keen on hunting.



John rejoined the army early in September 1914 when he was gazetted to his old regiment on the 4th having been attached to the 11th Worcestershire, and temporally employed as a Staff Captain at the 78th Infantry Brigade Headquarters at Prestbury House, Prestbury (the HQ later relocated to John's house in Thirlestaine Road, Cheltenham).

He proceeded to France in early January 1915 as part of a draft for the 1st Battalion, Worcestershire Regiment. The battalion's War Diary noted that he joined them on 24 February 1915; John had been promoted to Captain on 2 February. On 9 March the battalion

was in billets at Red Barn on the Estaires - La Bassée road and on 10 March The Battle of Neuve Chappelle commenced. It was at about 9am on 12 March that Captain Cox was killed in action, when, to quote the words of his Commanding Officer: "*... he behaved with the greatest gallantry during the whole operation.*" He was 41 years of age.

Captain Cox's body was never found and he is remembered on the Le Touret Memorial. He is also remembered on the Christ Church Roll of Honour; Cheltenham War Memorial; St Luke's Church, Cheltenham; King's Bruton Roll of Honour; St Brigid, Bridstow, Herefordshire and Worcester Regiment Roll of Honour.

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