



CHEL滕HAM & GLOUCESTER BRANCH of THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

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Welcome!

You may have been aware that it had been our intention to hold a summer barbeque after our meeting on June 14, however due to the ongoing work on the car park at the Ed Shed this looks unlikely to be feasible. We are therefore hoping to simply postpone it to a later summer meeting once the space is available again. This will be intended as an opportunity to offer a more sociable aspect to an evening, so as soon as we can confirm when we will be able to run it I'll let you know.

In the fear of repeating the same requests, may I once again float out a couple of old ones. We are in need of more volunteers to help run the branch as either committee members or simply occasional volunteers. I can assure you that responsibilities would not be onerous or too time consuming, but it is evident that the basic tasks of running the branch are being taken on by fewer and fewer people — please consider throwing your hat into the ring if you can.

On a similar note, we're still after articles for subsequent editions of *The Sentinel*, the branch

publication. The June edition will be going to press shortly, but the autumn edition is looking very empty. If you're not a branch member and have never read *The Sentinel*, then we would love you to join — pamphlets are available at the meeting or speak to a committee member. We even have some past Sentinels if you wish to take one and read as a sample.

The 10th WFA President's Conference is on Saturday, 21 May from 9.45am to 4.30pm at the Tally Ho! Sports and Social Club, Birmingham B5 7RN with free parking. The talks include *Mastering Trench Warfare* by Harry Sanderson. The cost is £35 to include a buffet lunch. Full details and booking information can be found on the WFA website.

Finally, it's a long way until Christmas, but I'm already putting together our speakers for the ten minute talks at our December meeting. If you can put together a short presentation for us on any subject, however loosely linked, on the Great War I'd love to hear from you.

Peter

Future branch events

Tuesday, 14 June

Ypres: Holy Ground of the British Empire
Professor Mark Connolly
The Ed Shed at 7.30pm

Mark looks at the special place of Ypres in British commemoration 1914-1939, the feelings of pilgrims, the role of the Ypres League and the rise of an Anglo-Belgian community as ex-service IWGC gardeners married local women and started families.



Tuesday, 12 July

Not Quite Fitting the Mould
Professor Peter Simkins
The Ed Shed at 7.30pm

A fresh look at some brigade and battalion commanders on the Western Front 1916-1918.

Always in the vanguard of revisionism, Peter has studied the developing effectiveness of the BEF from the mid-war offensives to the final battles of 1918.

The delegation of tactical responsibility driven down the ranks from High Command to junior officers and beyond ultimately, with new technologies and methods, led to the successful warfare of the 'Hundred Days'. Nowhere was this more important than in the middle ranks of brigade and battalion command.

Second Lieutenant Archibald James Cathie Royal Flying Corps

The 1901 Census has a man of this name down as being born at Gosport, Hampshire in 1889 and at the time of the census he was a scholar at Christ's Hospital School, Newgate, London. It cannot be certain that this is the same man.

His name does not appear to be present in the 1911 Census but interestingly a passenger of this name sailed from Liverpool to Philadelphia on 5 January 1910: the occupation stated was 'bookkeeper', so possibly Cathie spent some time in the USA prior to the Great War.

His Medal Index Card shows that originally he joined the Army Service Corps and was given the number M2/053858. On 10 April 1915 he was posted to France and a commission into the Royal Flying Corps followed on 12 July 1916 and he was wounded, in France, on 19 September. The National Archives File AIR 76/80 indicates he was a Second Lieutenant on 1 April 1917.

Archibald died in an aero accident in the Cirencester area on 11 July 1917, aged 28. Reports in the *Gloucester Journal and Cheltenham Chronicle* of 14 July give some detail. Cathie, in the company of Second Lieutenant Henry William Knowlson Williams, took off early on the morning of Wednesday, 11 July in an aircraft which had been checked the night before and that morning and was in apparent perfect order. Cathie was considered an experienced pilot and he was familiar with the aircraft and



was regarded as a most reliable pilot: he has spent seven months as an observer in France. According to a witness at the inquest the aircraft was trying to make too flat a turn at too low an altitude, when it fell from about 150 feet, crashing into the ground and catching fire. Cathie suffered a fatal concussion and two broken legs, whilst his companion died of a broken neck. The inquest jury returned a verdict of accidental death. According to *Airmen Died in the Great War* he had been flying a Bristol F2A (serial number A3310), whilst with 38 Training Squadron, which was based at Rendcomb aerodrome.

Second Lieutenant Archibald James Cathie's grave in Cirencester Cemetery is marked by a stone cross, which notes that he was the eldest and dearly loved son of Commander R A and Mrs Cathie of Corrig House, Dalkey. Dalkey is a coastal resort about eight miles south east of Dublin and this Irish connection would tie in with the fact that his medals were sent to 41 Rathmines Road, Rathmines, Co Dublin. The Irish connection is further underlined by the fact that there is an entry for Second Lieutenant A J Cathie in the volumes of *Irish Casualties of World War One 1914-18*, which only notes that he was accidentally killed while flying on 11 July 1917.

Graham Adams

(Gloucestershire War Graves Project biographical archive)

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