



CHELTENHAM & GLOUCESTER BRANCH of THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

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Welcome!

I have been asked by the WFA to draw your attention to a new Trustee position on the Executive Committee of the Association. The responsibilities of this new post can be viewed on the main website - go to 'About the WFA', 'WFA Trustee Roles' then click *Diversity, Inclusion and Access Trustee*. Full details will also appear in a *Trench Lines* e-newsletter in the near future. Applicants should apply using the Trustee Nomination Form that was included with the recent *Stand To!* and applications should be received by 1 December as set out on the form.

Something a little closer to home and which I am sure all of you will be interested in is the showing at the Sherborne Cinema in Gloucester of *Severn and Somme* - the story of the life of Ivor Gurney, the title being taken from his collection of poems published when he was still fighting on the Western Front. The film will be shown on Monday, November 14 at 6pm and Wednesday, November 16 at 2.30pm.

Admission is priced at just £7 for the evening showing and £5 for the afternoon one. More information can be found at the cinema's website: www.sherbornecinema.co.uk.

Next month is, of course, our Christmas meeting where, as usual, we will be providing a few Christmas treats and holding a raffle. If you have anything you could donate to our raffle then we would be most grateful - all proceeds going to keep the branch alive and healthy.

In early 2023 the Commonwealth War Graves Commission will start the restoration of the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial. To preserve the Memorial an in-depth restoration is required in time for its centenary in 2027. The works will be detailed, requiring extensive scaffolding and will unfortunately result in the essential closure of the Memorial to visitors for the entire duration of the works. Full details can be found on the CWGC website: www.cwgc.org.

Peter

Future branch events

Tuesday, 15 November

Cheltenham & Gloucester Branch AGM
22 Hatherley Court Road, Cheltenham GL51 3AG
at 7.30pm

Tuesday, 13 December

Members' Evening
The Ed Shed at 7.30pm

For our December meeting we draw on the expertise and knowledge of our branch members. We will have a small selection of ten-minute length presentations on a Great War related subject of their choice.

After the presentations we hope you will stay to enjoy a glass of wine and a mince pie. Also, we will have our Christmas raffle and any prizes you can donate will be very welcome.

Tuesday, 10 January 2023

The Doughboys 1917-18:
The American Experience in WW1
Mike Sheil
The Ed Shed at 7.30pm

Mike's talk is based upon the American battlefields of WW1. He will give a battlefield guides perspective of the American Expeditionary Force's war effort on the Western Front. Mike is an accredited member of the Guild of Battlefield Guides, a member of the British Commission for Military History and a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society.



Major Hubert Frank Fisher OBE AMIMEchE

Royal Air Force

Hubert Frank Fisher was born on 29 September 1884 at Gloucester, the younger son of John and Esther Fisher. Educated at the King's School, Gloucester; Wycliffe College, Stonehouse and Bedford Grammar School he undertook a two-year apprenticeship at Braintree, Essex in 1901. Upon completion, he studied mechanical and electrical engineering at King's College, University of London.



At the age of 21 he sailed to Argentina and in 1906 joined Agar, Cross & Company of Buenos Aires. Between 1907 and 1910 he was in charge of the installation of the company's ice-making and cold storage plants throughout the country. In 1910 he became the Chief Engineer for Pedro Storm & Company, importers of ice-making machines, various types of engines, dynamos and accumulators.

When war broke out in 1914 Hubert resigned his position and at his own expense undertook flying instruction and was soon awarded his pilot's diploma by the Aero Club of Argentina; the first Briton to receive this. In August 1915, Hubert presented himself to the British Embassy in Buenos Aires to volunteer his services as a pilot with the Royal Flying Corps (RFC). In February 1916 he and wife Marion (a fellow ex-patriot aviator) arrived back in England and he joined the RFC on 12 June: seven days later he was in France. In December of that year he became a Flight Commander (Temporary Captain) and was engaged in bombing operations.

His time on the Western Front was curtailed by a nervous condition affecting his eyes and he was

invalided home, to a convalescent hospital in Cornwall. Anxious still to play a part in the war, when released from hospital he became a flying instructor at Castle Bromwich, and rose to become a Chief Instructor (Temporary Major) on 22 September 1917. He had experience of flying about a dozen aircraft types and went on to spend time with several Reserve Squadrons and the No 2 School of Military Aeronautics, Oxford. An attachment to the Royal Canadian Air Force followed and an

appointment as Major and Chief Instructor and Lecturer at the No 4 School of Aeronautics, University of Toronto.

He returned to England on 4 January 1919 and was due to take up a position with the Sopwith Aeroplane Company, covering Brazil and Argentina, when he fell ill, probably a victim of the influenza pandemic and died of pneumonia on 22 March 1919, aged 34, at the RAF Hospital, Eaton Square, London. He was awarded the Order of the British Empire (Military Division) but the award was not published until shortly after his death.

Hubert's funeral, on 26 March, was held at St Lawrence Church, Barnwood and he was laid to rest in the churchyard. His grave is now marked by a CWGC headstone on what had become a family burial plot. The original headstone was a private stone cross, which had subsequently deteriorated.

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."