



## CHELTENHAM & GLOUCESTER BRANCH of THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

Number 183

May 2023

### Welcome!

Helen Earle has kindly brought it to my attention that the Commonwealth War Graves Commission are holding War Graves Tours during the week of 20 - 28 May and the closest one to us at present is being held at Tewkesbury Borough Cemetery on Saturday, 20 May from 11am - 12.30pm. This is a free event, though you have to prebook tickets, and full information can be found on the CWGC website: [www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org). Once there follow the links as follows:

- See Current List of War Graves Week 2023 Event
- West of England War Graves Week Events
- Tewkesbury - 20 May 2023 11am - 12.30pm

A reminder of a forthcoming event of our own - that of Len Evans' kind hosting of a branch visit to the Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum on the evening of Wednesday, 28 June. We will be meeting at the museum at 7.30pm and the charge per person will be £4. If you would like

to join us then please let me know - places are filling up very fast, so don't leave it to the last minute!

The series of evening talks at the Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum continues with *On Her Majesty's Service and at Her Majesty's Pleasure* with Nick Welch on 7 June at 7pm. Tickets are £2 for members and £5 for non-members and are available at the museum or online at [www.soldiersofglos.com](http://www.soldiersofglos.com).

Finally, on Saturday, 22 April Adrian Smith organised, on behalf of the branch, a pop-up military research day at The Folk for anyone interested in finding out more about any ancestors who served in the First World War. This proved to be a very successful event both for those wanting assistance in their research and in publicising the branch and our meetings. We're planning more of these pop-up events in the future so do keep an eye out for them!

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### Future branch events

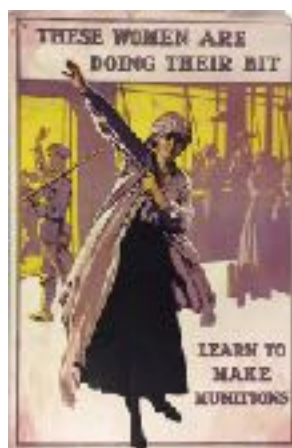
**Tuesday, 13 June**

*Foch, Pétain and the Poilus:  
The French War Effort 1914-18*  
Martin Alexander  
**The Ed Shed at 7.30pm**

The Western Front ran mostly through France and was mostly held by French armies. In March 1918 Foch became the Allied supreme commander. We shall explore the roles of Joffre who saved France on the Marne in 1914 and Pétain who rallied wobbling French soldiers after the 1917 mutinies, and consider the troops too. With Paris secure, offensives were repeatedly mounted to 'boot the Boches out of France' and we shall probe why they were essential. At the close of 1918, France was liberated. But 1,390,000 French soldiers died in the effort, a price that mortgaged the nation and its strategic mindset for the rest of the 20th Century.

**Tuesday, 11 July**

*Women in the Great War*  
Dr Ritchie Wood  
**The Ed Shed at 7.30pm**



This talk considers the role of women in society during the pre-war Edwardian era, what was expected of them when war broke out as against what they actually achieved on both the battlefield and the Home Front. It evaluates their contribution to the

British War Effort and the movement towards the emancipation of women.

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## Private Henry James Fisher (203889) 1/5th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment

Henry James Fisher was born in Stroud on 23 March 1898 to Henry and Alice Fisher (née Tooze).

He enlisted at Gloucester on 12 September 1914, stating his age as 17 years and six months (he was actually a year younger), having previously been employed in the office of the Stroud Brewery. He served at home until 20 August 1917 when he was posted to join the 1/5<sup>th</sup> Glosters on the Western Front.

Henry was wounded near Broodseinde on 5 October 1917 when a piece of shrapnel penetrated his steel helmet above his forehead, penetrating his brain. However, the shrapnel was removed by a doctor at the 64<sup>th</sup> Casualty Clearing Station at Mendinghem. This had caused damage to his right eye and sight.

There was a report in the *Stroud News* dated 8 February 1918 stating that Henry was in hospital at Bristol: *'suffering from wounds to the head and the loss of the sight of an eye'*. It appears he was there from 21 December 1917. The report also stated that: *'he has written a very cheery letter to his friend, Mr S D Watson of Lansdown, Stroud, and he hopes to be all right soon and back among us'*.



Henry was discharged from the Army on 8 April 1918. He was entitled to wear one gold wound stripe and was awarded the British War Medal. His records state that he was: *'Permanently excluded from liability to medical re-examination with the Military Service (Review of Exceptions Act 1917)'*.

Henry had served for three years and 206 days and was deemed as *'being no longer physically fit for war service'*. At some time he must have been moved to Eastleigh military hospital as there is a document from the records office in Warwick

dated 13 February 1918, detailing personal items that were to be returned. These were a wallet, dictionary, letter, pens and nibs.

Henry never fully recovered from his injury and died in Stroud Hospital on 28 September 1918, age 20. There is a funeral report in the *Stroud News* which reports that Henry was given a funeral with full military honours. His grave in Stroud Old Cemetery is now marked with a CWGC headstone.

*Research by Helen Wollington for the Gloucestershire War Graves Project*

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