



# CHELTENHAM & GLOUCESTER BRANCH of THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

Number 163

September 2021

## Welcome!

It was an excellent meeting last month and a delight to see so many familiar faces and old friends for an excellent talk at a different location. We will be holding all our meetings for this year at the Ed Shed and I would welcome all feedback on it as a venue - both positive and negative - as we seek to re-establish a permanent home.

After months of not having the right software to update our website due to a laptop dying, I have finally taken the plunge and repurchased and can confirm that I am updating the site as and when possible. Please do keep an eye on this as, with Covid still affecting our lives, there will undoubtedly be changes to speakers from time to time.

Finally the request that I was unable to make last year! Our December meeting speedily approaches and as usual it will be a 'Members Evening' with several short (ten minute) presentations. As yet I have no one on my list, so if you would care to deliver a short talk on any

subject Great War related then please let me know. In many ways this is my favourite meeting of the year and so I shall look forward to your suggestions - just drop me a line or have a word during the evening.

There are three WFA online talks in September:

### **25 September at 10am**

Dr Meleah Hampton will present a talk on how the two Australian battles that we call 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Bullecourt were planned and executed.

### **27 September at 8pm**

Two talks on the Canadian Corps in the Hundred Days.

*Tubes, Typewriters, Trucks and Training 1918: The Canadian Corps' Advantages* by Dr Bill Stewart.

*The Forgotten Liberations: The Canadian Corps in 1918* by Dr Tim Cook.

Full details of how to sign up for the talks are on the WFA website.

*Peter*

## Future branch events

**Tuesday, 12 October**

*The 'Spanish Flu' Pandemic 1917-19*  
Dr Jane Orr

**The Ed Shed at 7.30pm**

Dr Jane Orr is a leading expert on the history of the 1918 Spanish Flu pandemic and its military impact.

Her talk is an explanation of the epidemiology of the pandemic and a discussion of its effect on the progress of the war effort in 1918, especially from the German point of view.

**Tuesday, 9 November**

TBA

**The Ed Shed at 7.30pm**

**Tuesday, 14 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.

**2022**

**11 January**

*Clearing the Dead 1919-1939*  
by Peter Hodgkinson

**8 February**

*Gloucester and the cities reaction to the Armistice in 1918* by Tony Conder

**8 March**

*London Omnibuses on the Western Front*  
by Roy Larkin

## Private Arthur Leonard Griffin (31531) 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment

**Arthur Leonard Griffin** was born in Gloucester in 1880, the son of James and Harriet Griffin. On 4 August 1902 he married Annie Webber at St Nicholas Church, Gloucester and the couple lived at Pineapple Inn, Westgate Street, Gloucester.

Arthur attested for military service on 8 December 1915 stating his age to be 35 years and six months and was placed into the Army Reserve. He had previously worked for 22 years at John Stephenson of Kingsholm a firm of pickle and jam makers.

He was mobilised on 25 January 1917 and was in training until 12 May, when he joined the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Glosters at Rouen. His stay with the 8<sup>th</sup> lasted about three weeks as, on 2 June, he joined the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion, who were serving in the field, as part of 95 Brigade, 5<sup>th</sup> Division.

Ill health manifested itself shortly after. On 17 June 1917 he was treated at No 23 Casualty Clearing Station and on 11 July at No 22 General Hospital at Camiers, on the Channel coast. As there was no improvement in his condition he was evacuated to England on 19 July and admitted to Bradford War Hospital: his service on the Western Front had lasted 69 days.

A medical board at Bradford War Hospital heard that Arthur had been diagnosed with pyrexia of unknown origin (an undetermined infection - possibly 'trench fever'). He suffered from pains in the head, back and legs and had experienced temperatures of up to 101 degrees Fahrenheit. The board concurred that the infection was attributable to military service and agreed to his discharge as 'no longer physically fit for war service': this with effect from 5 November 1917.



Arthur Griffin died in Gloucester Royal Infirmary on 30 June 1918, aged 37, having undergone an operation. According to a funeral report in the *Gloucester Journal* of 13 July, following his discharge from Bradford War Hospital he returned home only to be re-admitted to the Red Cross Hospital, Great Western Road, Gloucester. He had returned home for eight weeks, prior to his re-admission to the Royal Infirmary, where he died, leaving a widow and four children.

He was afforded a semi-military funeral at St Mary de Lode Church before interment at Gloucester Old Cemetery, where a standard CWGC headstone marks his grave.

*(Research by Graham Adams for the Branch's 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."***