



# CHESTERFIELD WFA

## Newsletter and Magazine issue 55

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**Welcome to Issue 55 - the July  
2020 Newsletter and Magazine of  
Chesterfield WFA.**

**In view of the current public health  
pandemic engulfing the globe, your  
committee took the prudent  
decision, before the introduction of  
Government legislation, to cancel until  
further notice our monthly meetings.**

**Meetings and other activities will be  
restarted as and when the authorities  
deem it safe for us to do so.**

**In the interim this Newsletter / Magazine will  
continue**

We would urge all our members to adopt all the government's regulations that way we can keep safe and hopefully this crisis will be controlled, the virus defeated, and a degree of normality restored.

Stay safe everybody – we are all – in the meantime -  
`Confined to Barracks`

***Grant Cullen – Branch Secretary***



## Western Front Association Chesterfield Branch – Meetings 2020

Meetings start at 7.30pm and take place at the Labour Club, Unity House, Saltergate, Chesterfield S40 1NF

January	7th	. <b>AGM</b> and Members Night - presentations by Jane Ainsworth, Ed Fordham, Judith Reece, Edwin Astill and Alan Atkinson
February	4th	<b>Graham Kemp</b> `The Impact of the economic blockage of Germany AFTER the armistice and how it led to WW2`
March	3rd	<b>Peter Hart</b> Après la Guerre Post-war blues, demobilisation and a home fit for very few.
April	7th	<b>Andy Rawson</b> Tea Pots to Tin Lids...how the factory which inspired his research (Dixons) switched from making tea services for hotels and cruise ships to making Brodie helmets in the Great War. <b>CANCELLED</b>
May	5th	<b>Nick Baker</b> . The British Army has always fought a long battle with the debilitating cause to its soldier's efficiency through venereal disease, a combination of behavioural change and civilian interference resulted in an 'epidemic' of VD which threatened military effectiveness. <b>CANCELLED</b>
June	2nd	<b>Rob Thompson</b> 'The Gun Machine: A Case Study of the Industrialisation of Battle during the Flanders Campaign, 1917. <b>CANCELLED</b>
July	<b>6th</b>	<b>Virtual Meeting...On Line.</b> Tony Davies entitled `The Knutsford Lads Who Never Came Home`. Jointly with Lincoln and North Lincs WFA .Fullest details of how to participate elsewhere in this newsletter
August	4th	<b>Beth Griffiths</b> ` The Experience of the Disabled Soldiers Returning After WWI`
September	1st	<b>John Taylor.</b> 'A Prelude to War' (An Archduke's Visit) - a classic and true tale of `what if` ?
October	6th	<b>Peter Harris</b> Tanks in the 100 Days. Peter will present some of his researches for his Wolverhampton MA course
November	3rd	<b>Paul Handford</b> Women Ambulance Drivers on the Western Front 1914 - 1918.
December	1st	<b>John Beech</b> 'Notts Battery RHA - Nottinghamshire Forgotten Gunners'

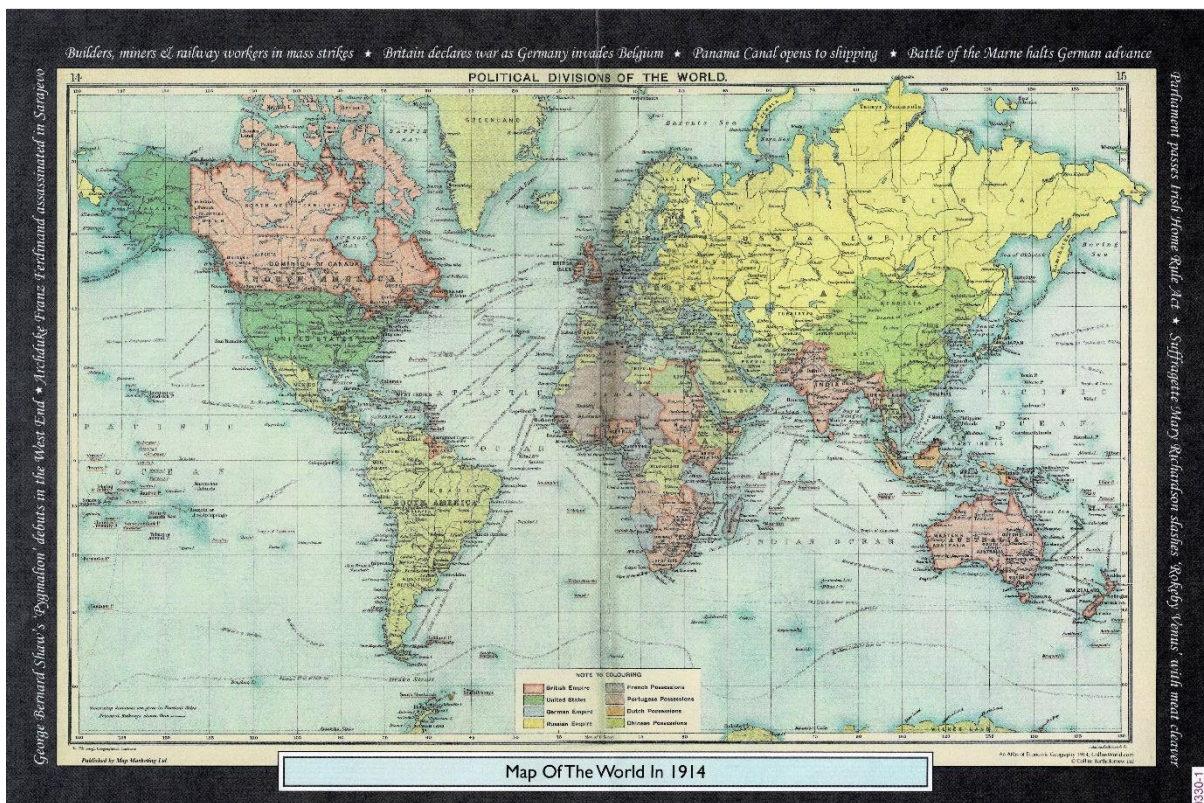




## Personal Note from the Chair (45)



I expect many of you have, over the years, been bought a present by someone who knows that you are interested in the First World War. These presents are occasionally spot on and bring a great deal of pleasure but in many cases, they are only loosely related to our interests and in truth would not have been on our Christmas or Birthday list. Mrs Bolton and I have long since given up the idea that she can walk into Waterstones or wherever and find a suitable book and for the most part it is normally a book. I have tried dropping hints but they tend to be ignored. The problem is of course that one has to say nice things about a book that you would normally avoid like the plague. It was therefore with some trepidation that I unwrapped by birthday present in June. To complicate matters ordering on line during Lockdown resulted in my present arriving a week late but I wasn't going anywhere. Book I thought as despite it being a week late it had to be suitably wrapped but no managing to surprise me after nearly fifty years of marriage it was in fact a jigsaw. Now I am not a habitual jigsawist (or whatever the term is) but this was very unusual.



As you can see it is a jigsaw of a world political map from 1914. It gave me quite a bit of a challenge because the world may have been red in 1914 it also had a great deal of blue sea and much of it devoid of islands.

I would also like to thank those of you who supported the branch joint virtual meeting with Lincoln. I have to say I was very apprehensive about the presentation but from the very positive feedback I received from Chesterfield members, Elsewhere in this newsletter Grant will be drumming up support for our next meeting on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> July, I hope you will feel inclined to sign in.

**Tony Bolton**, Branch Chair



## *Secretary's Scribbles*

**Welcome to issue 55 of the WFA Chesterfield Branch Newsletter and Magazine.**

We have now just passed the 100 days since the Government `lockdown` was imposed and whilst there has been some relaxation of the restrictions, there is a long way to go before any degree of normality returns. I have been helping out at a charity shop in Worksop which my wife helps to run - I've been `doorman` ....or as Andy Rawson described me as `bouncer` ....as we have to limit the number of folks in the shop at any one time. A lot of the clientele are older people and most stayed home for 12 weeks. Sadly many feel they

have `lost` that time, time which, especially at their age, they can never recover. Indeed, many feel neglected what with hospital appointments being cancelled, not being able to attend church, something which brings comfort to many in the `senior` generation and being deprived of contact with, for example, grandchildren.. Let us hope that society can make it up to them for complying and making this sacrifice

Again have been heartened by the number of contributions for inclusion in this Newsletter received from members and I am grateful to Andy Rawson and Jane Ainsworth for helping to make this a `bumper` edition.

Mark Macartney, WFA Branded Goods Trustee, reminds me that he has managed to put in place a system whereby some - not all - of the WFA branded items - are available. See Mark`s article which follows this editorial.

Well, our `virtual` online meeting - held in conjunction with our friends at WFA Lincoln was held on the evening of June 15<sup>th</sup> ...everyone on this mailing list was invited to participate, and given that we have received no negative feedback, can be considered a success - so successful that we are having another session on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> July - full details elsewhere in this magazine. Meeting starts at 7pm but attendees are advised to join at 6.55 pm...all of course will have signed up before this time.

The presentation will be by Tony Davies entitled ***`The Knutsford Lads Who Never Came Home`***.

Tony had a long career as a police officer, on retiring he went to work with the UN war Crimes in Bosnia and Kosoavo, then with the UN refugees in the Western Sahara. He is now a WW1 historian and author and goes into schools giving talks on WW1 (and Jack the Ripper).

His talk is based on a book he wrote in 2015 about the Knutsford lads killed in WW1... and will also give an overview of the town within the war years."

Here is the link to sign up for this talk .....<https://my.demio.com/ref/sTs3L2VM4VAuF9Z7>

Take Care

Grant Cullen - Branch Secretary

07824628638      [grantcullen@hotmail.com](mailto:grantcullen@hotmail.com)

*Any opinions expressed in this Newsletter /Magazine are not necessarily those of the Western Front Association, Chesterfield Branch, in particular, or the Western Front Association in general*

**THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION**  
Registered Charity No 298365



**BRANDED GOODS**

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**Tel 0207 118 1914**

**OPEN AS  
USUAL**

After a lot of preparatory work and investigation by our Branch Vice Chairman (WFA Branded Goods Trustee) the WFA is now able to dispatch some Branded Goods without the need to go to Post Office (we do this by means of purchasing Royal Mail postage on line)

The Eshop on the Website has been updated. The link to the Website is here

<http://www.westernfrontassociation.com/shop/>

(these details are as under)

Regarding the Covid-19 pandemic please note that only some orders will be accepted

These are:

Clothing items ; These are supplied direct from the Manufacturers

Orders on the following items will be accepted as these can be dispatched via Royal Mail Letter Box (but will only be sent out weekly)

Bookmarks; Baseball Caps ; WFA Classic Ties; Lapel Badges ; WFA Coasters (Special Edition); Mousemats; DVD's (Individual -not sets) ; Stand To Reprints (Vol 3) The following items will not be available until further notice: WFA Mugs; Messenger Bags; Shoulder Bags ;DVD (sets); Binders (Stand To and Bulletin)

No orders will be accepted on these items until the situation is improved, The current thinking is that as such this is likely to endure through to the summer. Apologies for any inconvenience

***Mark Macartney | Branded Goods Trustee | The Western Front Association***



The Branch will be participating in a further joint event with (Chesterfield/Lincoln\*) on 6th July at 7pm. It will be a 'virtual' meeting - held over the internet - and will feature a talk by Tony Davies entitled 'The Knutsford Lads Who Never Came

For those of you that are unfamiliar with webinar and online conference tools (and therefore might be worried that they lack the IT skills to participate) it is hoped that the following, short, explanatory note - which takes the form of some frequently asked questions (FAQs) - might go some way to easing any concerns that you may have. The link to the registration page appears at the very end.

Q1. Do I need to download anything?

No. Unlike Zoom and some other apps, the webinar tool we are using DOES NOT require you to download anything onto your device. The app - which is called Demio - uses your internet browser. It is therefore as straightforward and as easy to use as clicking on a webpage.

Q2. What internet browsers does Demio support?

Demio supports all four of the main internet browsers – Chrome, Firefox, Safari and Microsoft Edge. That being said, you should ensure that your browser is up-to-date with the latest version. For Chrome this is Version 55+; Firefox (Version 53+); Safari (Version 12.1+); and Microsoft Edge (Version 42+).

Q3. Do I have to use my computer or can I use some other device?

You can, of course, use your desktop computer. But you can also use your laptop, tablet or smartphone. However, once again, if you are using a mobile device, you should make certain that you have installed the latest version of its operating system (either iOS or Android OS).

Q4. Is Demio secure?

Nothing on the world wide web is ever totally secure. But, for reasons which are explained below, Demio is pretty secure. And for those that have been concerned by recent reports of things like 'Zoom bombing' and think to themselves 'What's that all about?', don't worry. This will not be a problem for us.

Q5. Is there a limit on numbers?

Only as far as cost is concerned. We will normally be paying for a room capacity of up to 50 people. If, however, an event is likely to be oversubscribed we do have the ability to pay extra and increase the capacity to 150. In fact, for the first meeting on 15 June we have gone to a capacity of 150. (Indeed, for the moment, we are not paying anything. The platform has been put at our disposal by one of our members, for free.)

Q6. I have a poor internet connection. Will this be a problem?

The short answer is yes, it might be. Live streaming takes up quite a bit of bandwidth and a poor internet connection may well affect the quality of your experience.

Q7. How will I know if I will have sufficient bandwidth?

Demio uses high-quality, low-latency streaming, so it's important that your internet connection can support it. Attendees should have at least a 1mbps download speed. If you are concerned, you can carry out a system check now using this link: <https://event.demio.com/system>

Q8. The check tells me that I have poor video and/or audio connections. Is there anything I can do to improve this?

There are lots of things that you can do to help mitigate any potential problems. (See also Q12) First, if there are other people in the house using the internet connection, try asking them (politely) to give you priority. 😊 In particular, ask them not to download (or watch) their favourite Netflix or YouTube channel at the same time as you are watching the presentation. Second, close down all the applications that you are not currently using (and which might be running in the background) including other webpages you may have open. Third, and if you understand this term, try viewing in an 'Incognito window'. The reason for this is that sometimes other browser extensions that you may have downloaded can conflict with your viewing experience (this is rare, but, as the saying goes, 'every little helps'.)

Q9. I don't have a webcam. Do I need one?

No, you don't need a webcam. In fact, the first thing you will notice when you enter the room is that your webcam and microphone have been automatically disabled by the administrator.

Q10. If my webcam and microphone are disabled, how do I participate in the meeting?

The audience communicate with each other, and with the presenter(s), by means of a chatbox. This is particularly useful when you want to put questions to the presenter at the end of the presentation. And you can also participate - through the medium of polls - to questions put to you by the presenter.

Q11. Some presenters like to give the audience 'hand-outs'. Can this be done in Demio?

Yes, in Demio there is a facility for you to download documents during the meeting.

Q12. What happens if I have connectivity issues during the presentation?

Demio is a highly stable platform. However, experience has shown that up to 20% of the audience may experience connectivity problems at some time during the session. It is important to stress that 99% of the time these connectivity problems will be specific to you and will not be the fault of the platform (and they are probably not being experienced by other members of the audience). Common connectivity problems include: poor video; poor or non-existent audio; or both! If this happens to you during the session then one of these three quick fixes (in Army-speak, Immediate Action (IA) Drills) usually works.

Drill 1. Refresh your browser. If this fails...

Drill 2. Come out of the browser and re-enter it using the same unique link you first joined with; and if this fails...

Drill 3. (If you have the capability) change browser (for example from Chrome to Firefox). If this fails...



then we're sorry but we can do no more. But see Q13.

Q13. Will there be a replay?

Everyone who is registered for the event will automatically receive a copy of the replay. This means that if you do drop out everything is not lost. It also means that if you are unable to attend you can still enjoy the presentation at your leisure at a later date.

Q14. How do I register for the event?

The Branch will send everyone a registration link (usually via the weekly or monthly newsletter). You can share this link with other WFA members if you think they might be interested in the presentation. The link will take you to the event registration page. Once you have completed the registration process you will be sent a unique joining link. This is your link; it is unique to you and you should not share it with anyone else.

Q15. What happens if I forget? Will I be sent reminders?

If you run a digital calendar the registration link also allows you to save a diary entry. Thereafter you will be sent two reminders. The first is sent to you 24hrs before the event. The second reminder is sent out 15 minutes before the presentation is due to start. Both reminders will once again include your unique joining link.

Q16. What happens when I click on my joining link?

We advise you to join the meeting five or 10 minutes before the advertised time. Then, when you click on the link, you will be taken to a 'waiting room'. You will also see a countdown timer. At the appointed time, the host will 'open' the meeting and you should see one or more presenters waiting to greet you.

Q17. What happens if the meeting is oversubscribed?

At the moment our room capacity is limited to just 150 people and this should be more than enough room. Moreover, experience has shown, that not everybody who registers will actually turn up on the night because, as we all know, 'life' sometimes gets in the way! Nevertheless, in an attempt to gain maximum attendance we will be operating a first-come-first-served system - ie only the first 150 people to click on the joining link and hit 'enter room' will be able to attend the event. If the room is full latecomers will find themselves stuck in a waiting room until one of those first 150 people leave the room. Hence our advice to everyone is - click on the join link early! (Please be assured, however, that everyone who registers will subsequently receive a copy of the recording - regardless of whether or not they were successful in attending the live session.)

Q18. Okay, you've convinced me. I'll give it a go. Where is the link to the registration page?

Here it is:

<https://my.demio.com/ref/sTs3L2VM4VAuF9Z7>

Hopefully one or more of the answers to these questions will have set your mind at rest. However, if you have any other questions, feel free to email Dudley Giles - [battlefieldeventsandtours@gmail.com](mailto:battlefieldeventsandtours@gmail.com)

## Virtual Meeting - June 15<sup>th</sup>

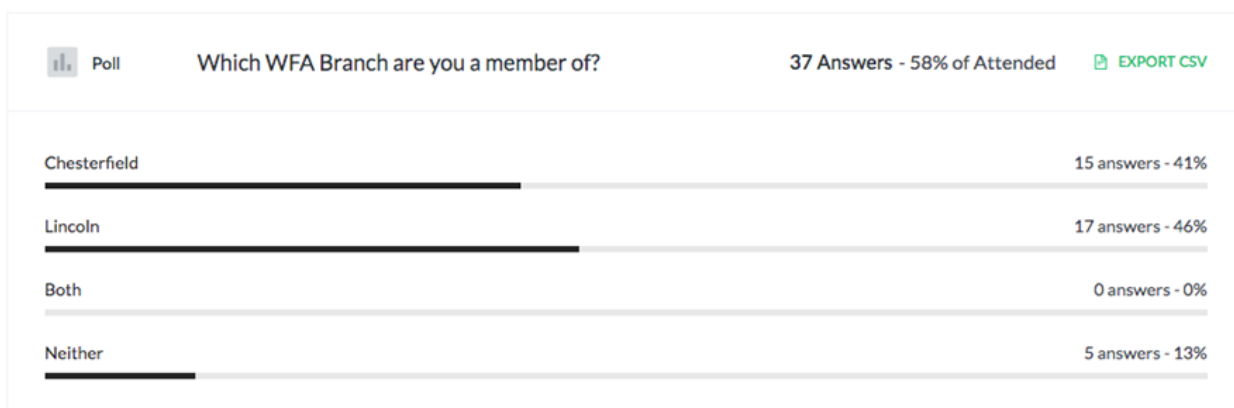
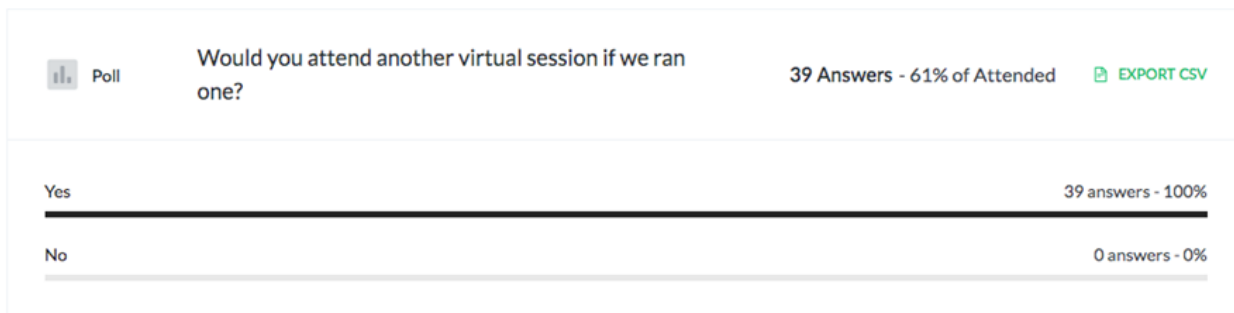
Sadly, as we are all aware there will be no Branch meetings until further notice due to the government regulations introduced to contain the Covid19 pandemic.

Rather than just sit around and wait for some degree of normality to return...and frankly no one really knows when or how long that will be, discussions took place between Chesterfield Branch committee members and our friends at Lincoln and North Lincolnshire WFA, with a view to embracing technology and holding a `virtual, online, interactive meeting` In this we were ably assisted by WFA member Dudley Giles who put everything in place using the `Demio` social media platform.

Our own Branch Chair, Tony Bolton, volunteered to be the first to go `over the bags` and do the inaugural presentation, entitled `Invasion Scares - from Napoleon to the Kaiser.` Members and Friends of both Branches were invited to `sign up` and upon doing so, were sent a link which connected them to the `meeting` at 6.55pm on June 15<sup>th</sup>.

As all of us were very keen to know the success (or otherwise) of this venture - if you like a `post-match` analysis. Dudley sorted out the statistics and feedback from all the participants. I think the overall opinion was that the `meeting` was a success, with participants being able to put questions to Tony once his, as ever, excellent presentation was finished.

For interest, this is how it all worked out.....



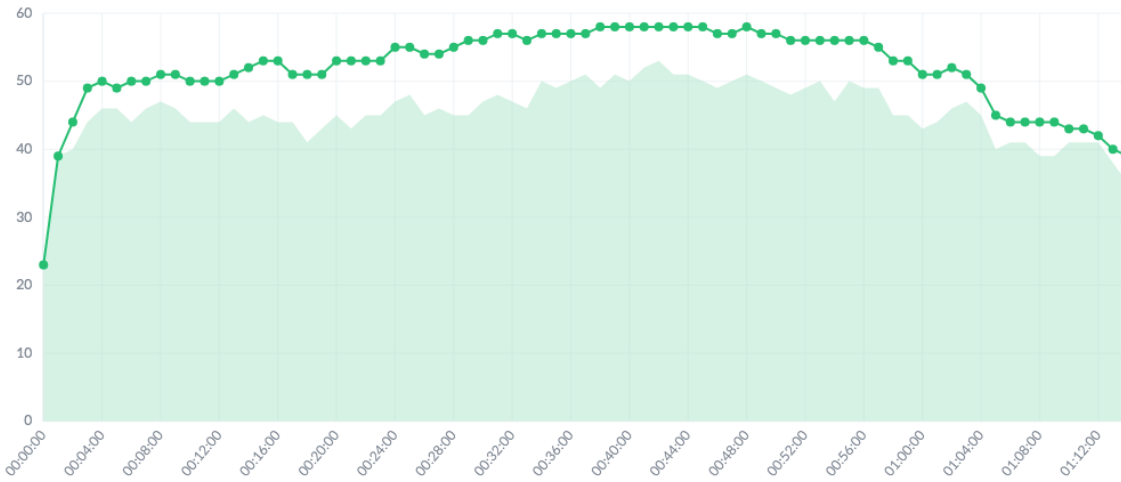
Several attendees identified as Chesterfield Branch members but from our records don't appear to have attended `live` meetings....maybe when `normality` returns we might see them at a Branch meeting - a warm welcome awaits you.

### Attendance Summary

80% of Registered 64 Attended • 16 Missed

#### Overview

Attended Focused ⓘ



SESSION DURATION

1h 14m

AVERAGE TIME ATTENDED

1h

82% of Session Duration

AVERAGE TIME FOCUSED

53m

88% of Time Attended

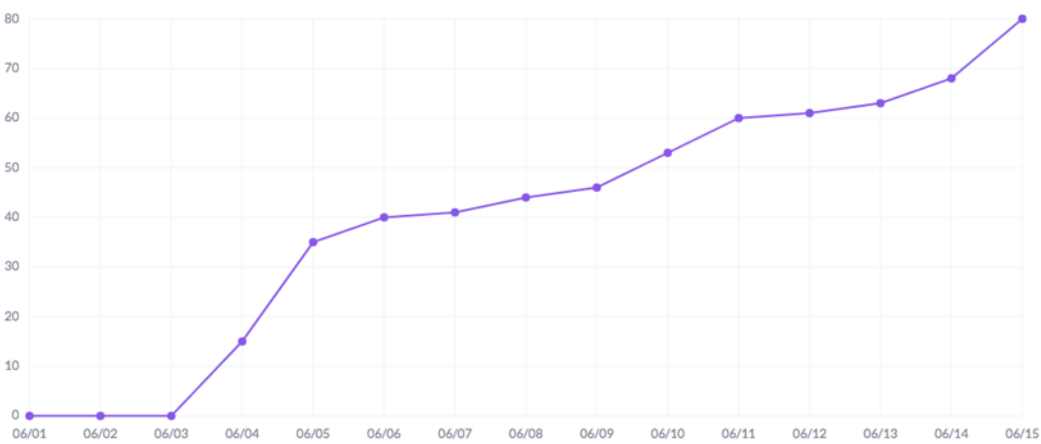
### Registration Summary

80 Registered

#### Overview

Registered

Group By: Days ▾



After the introductions by Dudley Giles and Jonathan D`Hooghe Tony began by first of all mentioning the sudden death of Jon Cooksey, Editor of the WFA Journal 'Stand To' who had passed away on June 14<sup>th</sup>.

Moving on, Tony said his talk would consider *threats* of invasion whether they were real or imaginary and how if at all invasion scare literature influenced government policy, we would look at some of the more significant examples of invasion scare literature and there was about 150 of them over the period and try and put them into some sort of context to help understand what the purpose of these books. He would also look at the effects on government policies of a relatively new phenomenon that we were just starting to see at this time - public opinion, and look at how mass circulation newspapers and magazines were seemingly able to fan the flames of an increasingly literate population. Clearly newspapers existed at the beginning of this period, the Manchester Guardian dates from 1821, the Daily Telegraph from 1855, and of course `The Thunderer` - The Times - predates both. Before 1800 it was extremely rare for a newspaper's circulation to exceed 5000 copies and their influence was extremely limited accordingly and limited to the educated classes.

Now in order for public opinion to form and become influential, it has to be;

(a) Informed

(b) Widespread

No government is going to pay much attention to half a dozen farmers in a pub in Falmouth moaning about press gangs. Public literacy and mass circulation newspapers, therefore, were indispensable elements in the formation and manipulation, all of which in the days before broadcast, and more extremely, social media.

After 1860 there was a huge rise in public literacy and by 1900 virtually the whole population could, and indeed did, read regularly. The 1870 and 1880 Education Acts first established State Education - prior to that education was the province of The Church and some charities. Education, at least at elementary level, was made compulsory in 1880, the result being a phenomenal rise in literacy. This was the precursor to the popular, mass circulation, newspapers, what today we would probably describe as `red tops`. These were influential, and copied by, the `popular` style that was adopted by many US newspapers. By 1900, the Daily Mail, which was a relatively new boy on the block had managed to achieve the first one million circulation, anywhere in the world and ten years later this circulation had quadrupled. This presentation will look at how newspaper owners exercised the power that this gave them.

Now within the time frame being considered, the first of the invasion scares can be traced to 1846 and its trigger was none other than the ageing Duke of Wellington. In a speech to the House of Lords he drew attention to the dilapidated state of the nation's defences and fortifications - the well-known Martello towers and other structures surrounding naval bases. In the time of relative peace after 1815, these had been able to fall into considerable disrepair. Palmerston, in the House of Commons, picking up on this theme established one of the perennial features of invasion scares - that is - Technology - and the threat from technology





INVASION SCARES  
FROM NAPOLEON  
TO THE KAISER

**Early Invasion Scares.**

**1846-1847**

‘Steam navigation has rendered that which was before impassable by military force nothing more than a river passable by a steam bridge’

Palmerston

**1851-1852**

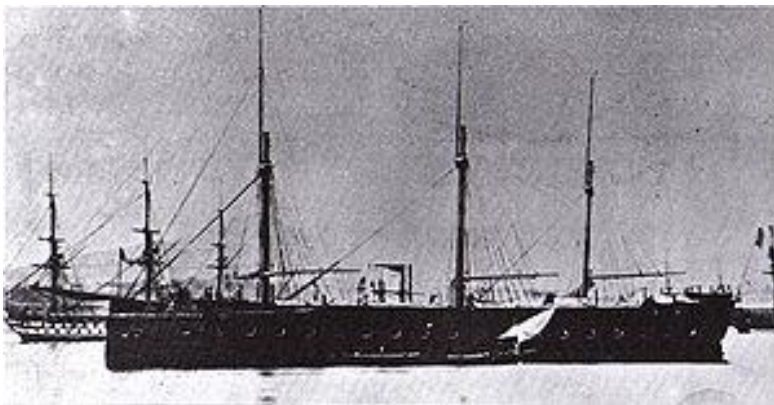
Coup d’ Etat by Louis Bonaparte (Napoleon III)



Palmerston stated that *‘Steam navigation has rendered that which was before impassable by military force nothing more than a river passable by a steam bridge’*

Now this may have been an overstatement or an exaggeration of steam power which was in its infancy in those days. The result was, not surprisingly, that a reluctant administration, was obliged to find the resources to fund the restoration of these defences. This use of fear to secure extra military expenditure is another feature that can be recognised from future invasion scares.

Hardly had the masons started on the renovation of these defences when across the channel, Louis Bonaparte, nephew of the famous ‘Boney’ seized power and from the rather unusual position as President of the Republic, he took over and subsequently declared himself to be Emperor Napoleon the Third. The name alone was sufficient to renew fears of invasion. At first things went pretty well, in 1854 Britain and France joined together to take on Russia in the Crimean War but remarkably quickly afterwards, fears resurfaced as French military spending grew quite apace. The French laid down a keel for a steam powered ironclad La Gloire which was deemed to be technically superior to any ship operated at that time by the Royal Navy. They also began to expand and modernise the naval base at Cherbourg.



In Britain these moves were watched with some consternation

INVASION SCARES FROM  
NAPOLEON TO THE KAISER

1858-1859

British citizens involved in the Felice Orsini assassination attempt on Napoleon III.

Three bombs placed under his carriage killed 8 and injured 150 bystanders.

Palmerston's 'Conspiracy to Commit Murder Act' defeated French parity with Royal Navy and the laying down of *La Gloire*, Steam Ironclad technically superior to anything in the Royal Navy.

1858 National & Constitutional Defence Association – volunteer rifle corps.  
£12,000,000 on new and upgraded fixed defences.



In 1858 Britain was implicated in an attempt on the life of the French Emperor.

The Orsini terrorist group which was associated with the cause of Italian nationalism planted three bombs under Napoleon the third's carriage which when they went off, killed eight and wounded 150 Parisians. Not only was the bomb found to have been made in Britain, but the terrorists were found to have been living here and there was even some British citizens involved in the plot.


In the face of understandable French anger, the Prime Minister, Palmerston, placed before the HoC his 'Conspiracy to Commit Murder Act' to make it a crime in this country to plot to commit murder overseas. The Act ran into problems in the Commons, from two sources. First there were those who saw it as bowing to French pressure and secondly the civil liberties fraternity. The Act was voted down and Palmerston resigned. At least at this time there was some real justification for fear of invasion, parliament voted £12 million for new and upgraded defences. HMS Warrior, now preserved in the Portsmouth Dockyard was laid down, along with her sister ship Black Prince. Both were specifically designed to outclass *La Gloire*




The National Constitutional and Defence association was formed ushering in the Volunteer Rifle Corps, much to the satisfaction of the government as it was privately financed and didn't cost the government anything.

INVASION SCARES FROM  
NAPOLEON TO THE KAISER



Richard Cobden MP and Radical  
 “Successive governments have rendered themselves wholly responsible for the invasion panics by making them a plea for repeated augmentation of our armaments”  
*Cobden, The Three Panics 1862*



By now, several of the radicals were beginning to `smell a rat` and to suspect that these invasion scares was just a cover for raising defence spending.

Richard Cobden an MP and radical in his 1862 book `The Three Panics` and gloated...

...”successive governments have rendered themselves wholly responsible for the invasion panics by making them a plea for repeated augmentation of our armaments” and Karl Marx, writing in the New York Daily Tribune in 1859, made exactly the same point.

After some success in Italy, Napoleon III, the new *bete noir* for Britain overreached himself and almost out of the blue the balance of power in Europe shifted dramatically.



INVASION SCARES FROM  
NAPOLEON TO THE KAISER

**Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871**

The defeat of France changed the balance of power in Europe.

If the object of British Invasion fears could be so spectacularly defeated what did the future hold in the face of mass continental armies.

In 1871 France was utterly humiliated by the Prussians, political certainties shifted seismically and in Britain, the initial satisfaction at seeing her rival brought down was replaced by a realisation that a new military power had arisen, not based on along service, professional army but a mass conscript army, leading people to ask what the future would hold .

## INVASION SCARES FROM NAPOLEON TO THE KAISER

### George Tomkyns Chesney.

Captain Royal Engineers.

Written 1871 in the aftermath of Franco-Prussian War.

Royal Navy destroyed by 'wonder weapon'.

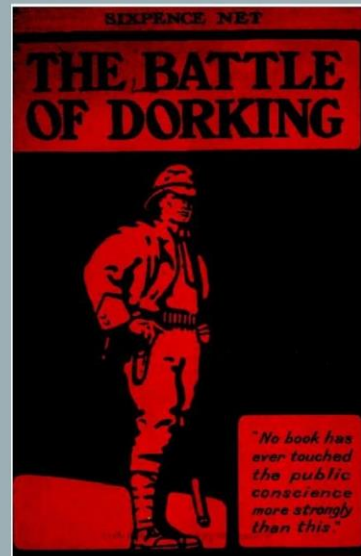
Germans land at Worthing!

Hastily raised defence force defeated at Dorking.

Empire broken up.

Ireland in perpetual anarchy of civil war.

Britain a heavily taxed province.



George Tomkins Chesney, a captain in the Royal Engineers was more than happy to tell the populace what the future was. In the book that is generally regarded as the one that established the whole genre of invasion scare literature, Chesney said that after the Germans had landed at Worthing and defeated the local defence forces at the eponymous 'Battle of Dorking', the Empire would be broken up, Ireland would descend into civil war and anarchy with Britain becoming a highly taxed province of Germany. Chesney, like many subsequent imitators, had the problem as to how such an invasion could take place in the face of the Royal Navy so he, and his fellow 'invasionists' opted for an as yet unknown 'wonder weapon'.

Now many historians, knowing that the 'Battle of Dorking' related to a German invasion, tend to write as if Chesney's book was the first of the 'invasion scare' books, reflecting the deterioration in Anglo-German relations leading up to 1914 rather than realising that its proper context was in the immediate aftermath of the Franco-Prussian war.

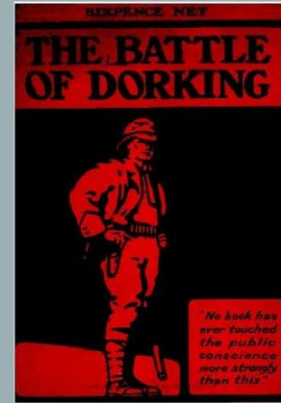
What then were Chesney's motives for the publication of this book? It was written in 1871, a mere two years after the Second Reform Act came into full force. This was the first Act which gave the vote to working men, or at least those working men who fulfilled financial and property criteria, a situation that would remain largely unchanged until the 1918 Representation of the Peoples Act, but for Chesney it was clearly a step too far.



## INVASION SCARES FROM NAPOLEON TO THE KAISER

Political Power has passed from those who  
'know best' to the lower classes.

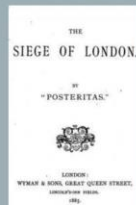
"The popular cry which denounced those who  
would secure the defence of the nation by  
enforced arming of its manhood as interfering  
with the liberties of its people",



In Dorking he bemoaned... `Political Power has passed from those who know best to the lower classes` ...and he rails against `the popular cry which denounced those who would secure the defence of the nation by enforced arming of its manhood as interfering with the liberties of its people..`

Dorking, therefore, is not only a swipe at the reformers, but it is an early plea for National Service or conscription up to and even during the First World War .

Less than 20 years later the country was subject to another of its periodic `scares`



## INVASION SCARES FROM NAPOLEON TO THE KAISER

### The Scare of 1888

Bismarck's attempts to stifle French *revanchism*.

Popular French pamphlets on invading England picked up by British press.

National Defence Bill to speed up mobilization.

Calls for improved defences for London.

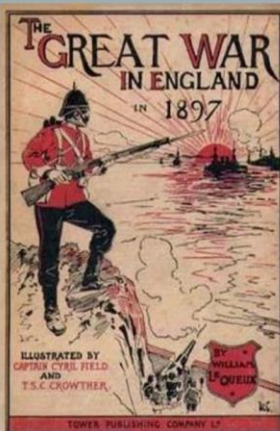
Adjutant General Lord Wolseley shamelessly used scare to press for increased military expenditure.

Salisbury appoints a Royal Commission, Naval Defence Act 1889 formally adopts two-power standard, £21,500,000 on 10 new battleships and 38 cruisers.

This was triggered, not this time by Germany but again from across the channel. After the war of 1871, Europe had been astonished by the speed of French recovery stifling Bismarck`s attempts to stifle this *revanchism* . Renewed French political and popular self-confidence resulted in the issuing of various pamphlets on a number of subjects, one of them called for an invasion of England. These pamphlets were picked up the British press and publicised. A book which had come out a few years earlier `The Siege of London` provided ammunition for MPs to agitate for improved defences for the capital. The government was obliged to bring forward a National Defence Bill to speed up mobilisation and the

government turned to Lord Wolsley, Garnett Wolsley, in the words of Gilbert and Sullivan...`the very model of a modern Major General`. He was then adjutant-General and rather than supporting the government who were trying to calm the situation, he shamelessly fanned the flames, pushing for increased military expenditure. The PM, Lord Salisbury fell back on that age old political tactic of appointing a Royal Commission, but when it reported the following year, 1889, he found himself obliged to stump up the then enormous sum of £21.5m for ten new battleships, 38 new cruisers, and perhaps equally significantly, we were obliged to adopt, as policy, the `Two Power` standard whereby the royal Navy was obliged to be bigger than the net two navies combined.

In France, her attempts to strengthen her position against Germany saw her enter into an alliance with Russia. This was initially financial but culminated in 1894 with the Franco-Russian military alliance. This created shock-waves and real concern in Britain...and remember this was only 20 years before the start of the First World War. The two powers which posed the greatest threat to Britain and its Empire, France at home and Russia on the borders on the Raj, were now militarily united. The cold war along India`s norther borders - Kipling`s `Great Game`...seemed likely to warm up. In the same year, writer William Le Queux published a book `The Great War in England in 1897` in which a combination of French and Russian troops invade Britain...and interestingly Germany sends troops to help defeat the invasion.



### INVASION SCARES FROM NAPOLEON TO THE KAISER

Between 1891 and 1894  
Franco-Russian Alliance.

British fear of French threat at home and  
Russian threats on India.

**William Le Queux** 1894 Publication  
France and Russia Invade England.

Germany sends troops to help England



### Mediterranean Problem 1894.

If Royal Navy concentrates at Gibraltar to prevent French leaving Mediterranean to threaten UK, it would leave Eastern Mediterranean open to Russian and French action. If RN concentrates at Malta, French from Toulon might be able to invade UK before RN could catch up with them. Risk of defeat in detail if split, reduced as new ships of the 1889 Act start to arrive.

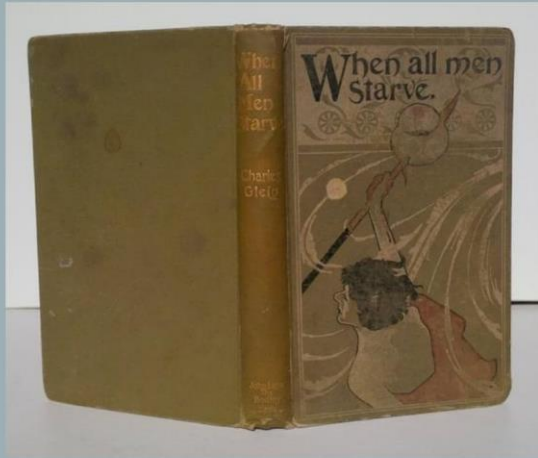
INVASION SCARES FROM  
NAPOLEON TO THE KAISER



The Suez Canal was opened in 1869 and returned the Mediterranean Sea into a vital artery of Imperial communication. The French decision to base almost their entire battlefleet at Toulon in 1886 certainly reduced the risk of invasion but it gave them superiority over the British Mediterranean fleet and set them firmly astride Britain's line of communications with the Empire in Asia and the Pacific. The Admiralty took the strategic decision to move the entire Home Fleet to Gibraltar to re-establish naval superiority, effectively bottling - up the French Fleet in the Mediterranean. At home, this resulted in a recognition, even in some Admiralty circles, that with the Home Fleet being away from its bases on the south coast, a rapid raid by French troops could not be ruled out. The army, therefore, for the first real time, started to assume a role in the defence of the country. The Franco-Russian Alliance posed new challenges, particularly for the Navy. If the Fleet was at Gibraltar it was powerless to counter a Russian threat to the eastern Mediterranean and of course it was through the Mediterranean that any reinforcement of the garrison of India would pass. But if they moved the Fleet to Malta to cover the eastern Mediterranean they ran the risk of allowing the French fleet to escape into the Atlantic and being forced into a stern chase to protect the Home Islands. If of course they divided the Fleet to the two stations, they faced defeat in detail. The admiralty faced a number of years on anxiety before the new ships, ordered under the 1889 Royal Commission, began to enter commission, and eventually allowed an adequate fleet to be based at both Malta and Gibraltar.

Now even in official circles the chance of an invasion was recognised as a real possibility, it is not really surprising that the public backed up that view.

In the same year that Le Queux set his 'Great War in England', a retired Naval commander, Charles Gleig published a book with the 'catchy' title 'When all Men Starve'



## INVASION SCARES FROM NAPOLEON TO THE KAISER

Charles Gleig

1897

'Showing how England hazarded her Naval supremacy and the horrors which followed the interruption of her food supply'

Retired Commander RN

In 1886 Britain imported 60% of her grain

In this he drew the public`s attention to the risk of not maintaining naval spending, his book drew the public`s attention to the country`s increasing reliance on imported food. As early as 1886, Britain was importing 60% of her grain and the potential of mass starvation if the navy was not able to secure the safety of the seas, anticipating the U-Boat threat in two world wars.

Now in the same year Joseph Chamberlain launched his campaign for Tarriff Reform and in 1898 there was another addition to the literature of Invasion Scares...from HG Wells

## INVASION SCARES FROM NAPOLEON TO THE KAISER

Invasion Mania resurfaces as  
Chesney's 'Wonder Weapon' returns with a  
vengeance in the 1898.

H G Wells



Wells resurrected Chesney`s idea of a `wonder weapon` but this time it was Martians - not French or Germans who were the invaders

In a homage to Chesney`s book FM Maude in 1900 issued a `new` Battle of Dorking` and this time the invaders were French and it reflects the parlous state of relations between the states as two years earlier Britain and France had almost come to war over Imperial rivalry, specifically, the Fashoda Incident. A French party had staked a claim to the headwaters of the Nile prompting Kitchener, as Khedive of Egypt to mobilise troops to evict them. The /French backed down and withdrew rather than



face forcible eviction and probable war, but Imperial tensions remained. This ensured that the heyday of the French Invasion novel was between 1881 and 1905.

Now it is fair to say that Invasion Literature was a symptom about a general feeling of unease about matters of defence around the turn of the century, the Navy league being formed in 1895.



INVASION SCARES FROM  
NAPOLEON TO THE KAISER

**Pressure Groups**

Navy League January 1895

National Service League February  
1902

National Service League.  
OFFICIAL BADGE.  
NSL  
THE NAVY LEAGUE IS THE BEST  
MANUFACTURED BY  
W. O. LEWIS,  
Howard Street, Birmingham.

EARL ROBERTS.  
From a sketch by the late C. W. Frere, A.R.A.  
Reproduced by kind permission of Mrs. Frere.

In 1902, in the wake of the Army's less than satisfactory performance in South Africa, the National service league was formed with Lord Roberts' 'Bobs' as its figurehead and it was supported by a number of popular newspapers, all focussed on threats from France.

But then in 1904 Britain and France agreed the Entente Cordial

It is hard to imagine the seismic shift that this had in this country. For the French, the game was quite evident but for Britain only the overriding necessity for self-interest can be cited.

The Anglo - German naval Race of 1898 - 1912 and the obvious bellicose attitude of the Kaiser were drivers towards this Entente as was the almost total international condemnation and isolation suffered by Britain in the wake of the Boer War.



## INVASION SCARES FROM NAPOLEON TO THE KAISER

### 1904 Entente Cordial

#### Rapprochement

1898-1912 Anglo-German Naval Race

The *Telegraph* Interview of Wilhelm II

First Morocco Crisis 1906. SMS Panther crisis July 1911

Changed Germany into the Invader.

27 German Invasion books 1906-1910



Now authors, publishers and pressure groups were more than happy to provide the public with warnings about this new threat from Germany. In this they were ably assisted by the Kaiser himself with his bungled attempts to split the Entente with manufactured crises in Morocco in 1906 and the Panther gunboat incident in July 1911. Between 1906 and 1910 there was 27 German invasion books published

## INVASION SCARES FROM NAPOLEON TO THE KAISER

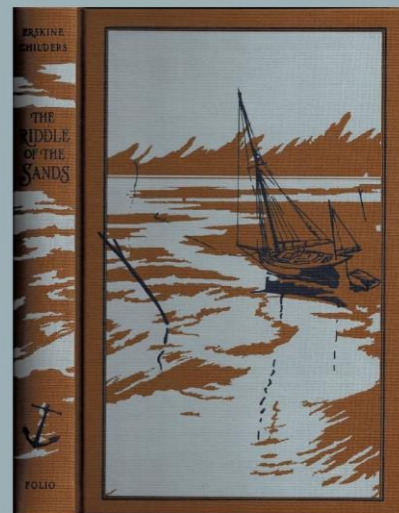


**Erskine Childers**

Published 1903

Back to a  
German Invasion

Filmed 1979  
Michael York



Even before the Entente was signed, Erskine Childers published in 1903 what was probably the most widely read example of invasion scare books...`The Riddle of the Sands`. Even in 1979 it became an epic film starring Michael York . There is no doubt this book seized the public`s imagination.

Returning to Mr Le Queux.....

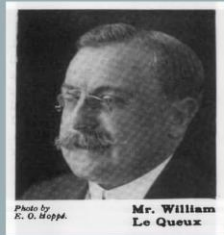
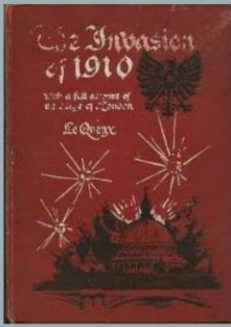


Photo by  
E. O. Hoppe  
Mr. William  
Le Queux

## INVASION SCARES FROM NAPOLEON TO THE KAISER

Originally serialised in *Daily Mail* from 10 March 1906.

London West End newsvendors dressed as German soldiers complete with pickelhaube carrying placards showing where the invaders would be next day.

Rewritten to include the names of towns and villages with large *Daily Mail* readership. Added 80,000 to the *Mail's* circulation

The book sold 1,000,000 copies translated into 27 languages.

A German pirated edition translated by Traugott Tamm.

Le Queux claimed inaccurately that it had an altered ending.

In 1906, his publication of the invasion in 1910, was serialised in the *Daily Mail* from March 10<sup>th</sup> 1906 and Lord Northcliffe, owner of the *Daily Mail* and consummate self advertising man in his own right, had his West End newsvendors dress as German soldiers, complete with *Pickelhaube*, distribute leaflets as to where the invasion would take place the next day.

Le Queux re-wrote the book including the names of towns and villages through which the invasion was to pass and - not surprisingly, these were town with very large *Daily Mail* readership. The serialisation of this book added nearly 80000 to the *Daily Mail's* already massive circulation. Le Queux's book sold more than 1 million copies and was translated into 27 languages. There was even a German pirated edition.



## INVASION SCARES FROM NAPOLEON TO THE KAISER

**William Le Queux 1864-1927**

Journalist and prolific author

12 guineas per 1000 words (Wells and Thomas Hardy)

A 'Walter Mitty' Character. Christopher Andrew, *Defence of the Realm, MI5*

Self acclaimed "man who dared to tell the truth"

With support from Northcliffe and Lord Roberts instrumental in CID  
Invasion sub-committee 1907-08.


The more newspapers publicised German 'spy' mania the more that was  
found!

Foundation of the Secret Service Bureau October 1909. forerunner MI5 & MI6

So what about Le Queux ? Who was this man ?

He was one of the most prolific journalists and authors of his day, being paid at the rate of 12 guineas per 1000 words, way more than that paid to Thomas Hardy or HG Wells, whom Tony asserted, were far better writers.

Christopher Andrew in his history of MI5, styles Le Queux as a `Walter Mitty` character and when Le Queux wasn't warning the public about German invasion, he was, with the support of the Northcliffe press, exposing German spy rings. He and his sponsor were responsible for so much of the pre-war `spy mania`, that he could reasonably claim to have helped found the Secret Service Bureau in October 1909. This the forerunner of MI5 and MI6. Of course, the more the papers reported on these spy rings, the more the public reported seeing them. Supported by Lord Roberts and Northcliffe, he also obliged the government to commission a Committee for Imperial defence (CID) to appoint an invasion sub committee to consider the threat. This was not a `Mickey Mouse` committee - it was chaired by Asquith and included all the Service ministers and all the Service chiefs. When it reported back that there was no real risk of invasion, Le Queux and co, simply ignored it. They preferred to report on the findings of the annual naval manoeuvres when a very small party managed to evade the navy and landed in Scotland




**The Message**  
By A. J. DAWSON  
Author of "Hildebrand," "Alvin Karpis,"  
"The Great War," "The Last Frontier,"  
"The Great War," etc.  
Illustrated from Color Slides  
By H. M. BRUCE  
DANA ESTES & COMPANY, BOSTON  
E. GRANT RICHARDS, LONDON

INVASION SCARES FROM  
NAPOLEON TO THE KAISER

**Alec John Dawson**  
*The Message* 1907

Pre war journalist with Standard and Daily Express  
Supporter of National Service League from 1905  
Military Propagandist MI7  
Major and MBE



Le Queux was not the only proponent of the genre, nor was the Daily Mail the only backer. Alec John Dawson, a reporter and supporter of the national Service League, published `The Message` in 1907 . Dawson, a journalist with the pre-war Standard and Daily Express, went on to have something which could be described as ` a good war`, attaining the rank of major, was awarded an MBE for his work as a military propagandist in MI7.

Within 5 years of the Wright Brothers first heavier than air aircraft taking to the skies of Kittyhawk. North Carolina, invasion scare literature was already featuring the threat posed by this new technology.





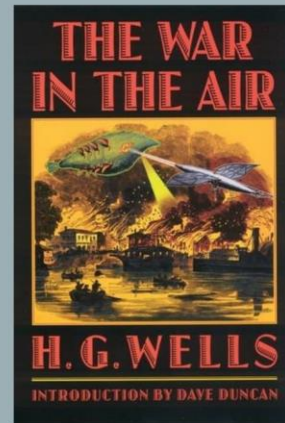
INVASION SCARES FROM  
NAPOLEON TO THE KAISER

H G Wells

War in the Air 1908

Preys not only on Invasion fear actually the  
USA.

Economic collapse and plague  
Jihad and the Asiatic Hoards  
World order destroyed



HG Wells returned to the genre with his 1908 book 'The War in the Air' only just less fanciful than his 'Martian Invasion'...world order is destroyed, economic collapse is triggered, plague returns, he also brings in jihad and the threat of the Asiatic hordes, to be found in later years with reference to the 'Yellow Peril'.

INVASION SCARES FROM  
NAPOLEON TO THE KAISER

P.G. Wodehouse

1909 'The Swoop'

Satire on the Invasion genre in which  
Clarence Chugwater and the Boy Scouts  
save England from German invasion.

(and just about every other country too)



In fact 'Invasion Scare' genre was becoming so widespread that it prompted PG Wodehouse (creator of Jeeves and Wooster) to enter the market in 1909 with his book 'The Swoop'. Although Wodehouse's contribution is sometimes mentioned by historians, few if any appreciate the fact that 'The Swoop' is in fact a 'spoof' - a satire on the whole genre. The hero - Clarence Chugwater and the Boy Scout Movement - incidentally the Boy Scout movement had only been formed two years prior to the publication of this book - managed to save the country from a German invasion. Wodehouse throws open his book to all manner of foes, including the Chinese led by the rather non-PC, General Ping-Pong.

Books were not the only method of galvanising public opinion



## INVASION SCARES FROM NAPOLEON TO THE KAISER



### Not only Books but the Theatre

1909. *An Englishman's Home* by Guy Du Maurier

A plea for recruitment of the Territorial Force.

1909. *A Nation in Arms* by B S Townroe

Actually sponsored by the National Service League to call for National Service rather than Territorial Forces.

In 1909, two plays were launched onto the London stage, Du Maurier's 'An Englishman's Home' and 'A Nation in Arms' by BS Townroe which both highlighted the threat of invasion. The first, a plea for recruitment to the territorial forces, whilst the latter was actually sponsored by the National Service League. Both sought to influence public opinion and hence government, in favour of conscription.

In 1913, the writer HH Monro, better known by his pen-name, Saki, penned 'When William Came', set, as invariably the case of invasion scares, just a few years in the future, 1915, with London under the heel of the Kaiser. It was an argument, once again, for compulsory military service.

Perhaps ironically given his support for conscription, Monro was killed on the Somme in November 1916, a Lance-Sergeant volunteer with the 22<sup>nd</sup> Royal Fusiliers.

## INVASION SCARES FROM NAPOLEON TO THE KAISER



**Saki (H H Monro)**

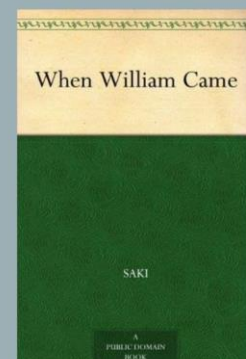
1913

London under the Kaiser set a few years in future.

An argument for compulsory military service.

Monroe KIA Somme 14 November  
1916

22 Royal Fusiliers



## INVASION SCARES FROM NAPOLEON TO THE KAISER

August 1914 did not end the  
'Invasion scare' genre



It may not be surprising but the start of the war did not end the genre, in fact it heightened the awareness of the risks of invasion to all levels of society. The police and the military were bombarded by reports from the public of German spies signalling to U Boats.

Edgar Wallace's contribution in 1915, entitled rather confusingly, '1925', the story of the 'fake peace', takes a slightly different tack, seeking to mobilise public opinion against any premature peace initiative, presciently, he says there will be a terrible sequel, in the lifetime of the present generation if this occurs.

MY object in writing this story is to bring home to readers the inevitable consequence of ending the present war in any other way than by the complete subjugation of Germany, and the destruction of Prussian militarism. Despite the established proofs that Germany *planned and willed* the present war with the set object of conquest, there are many who are not alive to the probable results of an unfortunate peace. That there would be a terrible sequel in the lifetime of the present generation is certain.

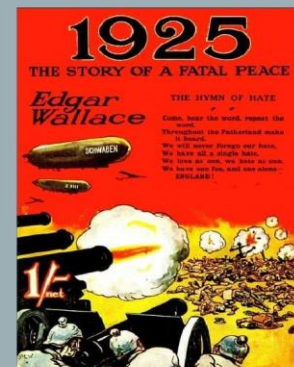
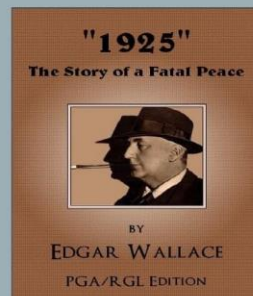
We cannot hope to end wars unless we crush the only power in the world which aims at securing aggrandisement by force of arms. We may not always find ourselves so closely allied to three great military nations. It may not even be possible, however much the Powers forming the present *entente* sympathise with each other, to show a solid front and fight side by side in some future conflict.

The only way to secure permanent peace for Europe is to destroy the power, which for forty years has rattled its scabbard at its peace-loving neighbours, and to destroy that power now.

EDGAR WALLACE.

London, September, 1915.

## INVASION SCARES FROM NAPOLEON TO THE KAISER



Moving on, Tony said he had something from our friends from Ireland - Gerry White of WFA Cork was an interested participant in this 'virtual meeting'.

### The German's in Cork

First published as a series of articles in *The Irish Times* in March 1916 as 'If the Germans came'

1917 in book form as 'The Germans in Cork'.

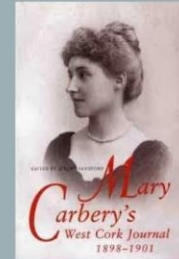
Both anonymously written by Lady Carbery of Castle Freke, Clonakilty.

Story of an Ireland after a German victory.

All Sinn Feiners are deported.

Among the misadventures of Baron Von Kartoffel she had him arrange – for supposedly humane reasons – to gas the inmates of Cork Lunatic Asylum.

### INVASION SCARES FROM NAPOLEON TO THE KAISER



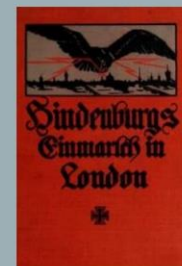
Ireland wasn't exempt from the whole litany of invasion scare literature. Just weeks before the Easter Rising of 1916, the Irish Times started to serialise a series of articles entitled 'If the Germans Came' which speculated as to what would happen in Ireland following a German victory. The subsequent book 'The Germans in Cork' was also written by the same personage, Lady Carberry of Castle Freke, Clonakilty. She describes how all Sinn Feiners are rounded up and deported and among the many adventures of the German Commandant for Ireland, Baron von Kartoffell, he gasses the inmates of the Cork Lunatic Asylum in what is really quite a chilling insight as to what would happen across Europe twenty years later. 41.08

### INVASION SCARES FROM NAPOLEON TO THE KAISER

*Hindenburg's Einmarchin London* (1915) Paul Georg Minch

Serialised in Britain in 1916 by People's Journal-  
"an opportunity to see the real working of the German mind"

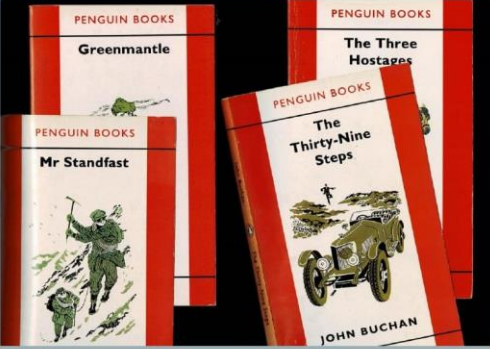
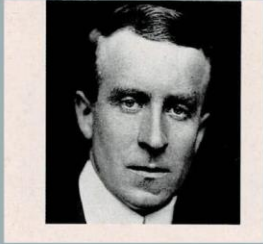
The inconvenient detail of the Royal Navy despatched in a single paragraph by Zeppelins and U Boats.



Invasion literature was not only a British phenomenon, in 1915, Paul Georg Minch published 'Hindenburg's Einmarchin London' it was picked up in Britain and serialised by the People's Journal as an 'opportunity to see the real working of the German mind'. Minch despatches the Royal navy in a single paragraph in his book, by a combination of Zeppelins and U-Boats.



Any review of invasion literature and invasion scares would not be complete without mention of the Richard Hannay novels of John Buchan

INVASION SCARES FROM  
NAPOLEON TO THE KAISER

**John Buchan's**  
**Richard Hannay Novels**

Not strictly 'Invasion literature'  
Published between 1915-1924  
Spies, Traitors and threats to Britain and the Empire.

During the war served in the War  
Propaganda Bureau.  
June 1916 at BEF HQ Intelligence Section  
1917 Director of Information under Lord  
Beaverbrook

These are not strictly 'invasion literature' but they abound with spies, traitors and threats to Britain and her Empire. Buchan had served as an intelligence officer at BEF headquarters in June 1916, his job being to escort journalists before taking over as Director of Information in 1917, under Lord Beaverbrook.



INVASION SCARES FROM  
NAPOLEON TO THE KAISER

**Common threads in Invasion Literature**

**Technology or Wonder Weapons** (Foreigners are better at it!)

Steam Power & Steam Ironclads 1847 & 1859  
Zeppelins, Aeroplanes and U-Boats

**Complacency**  
**Underfunding**

**Inadequate size and professionalism of army**

So, what can we draw to conclude as common threads from Invasion Literature. Technology is definitely seen as a threat - steam power - ironclad warships - Zeppelins - Aeroplanes and U-Boats. The underlying theme is that foreigners do it better than we were doing and this probably echoed, as the 20<sup>th</sup> Century dawned that Britain was losing its place as the unquestioned technological and commercial power in the world. They focus on the complacency and underfunding of the armed services, together with the inadequate size and professionalism of the army together with the political control of those services.

We can conclude therefore that invasion scares and its associated literature did have some effect on government policy, even if it was only stoking up public concern we can see that invasion literature did reflect and highlights the shortcomings in the armed forces and the policies that was directing them.

Governments did use public fears to secure increased defence spending, including within cabinets themselves where service ministers would mobilise public opinion to express support for enhanced military expenditure. Remember at the height of the `naval race`, the pressure on the Chancellor, Lloyd George by the `we want eight & we won't wait` campaign. Pressure groups for military expenditure and/or National Service supported many literary methods to stir public awareness. Invasion fears were particularly good for recruiting, particularly the Territorial forces and arguably the whole invasion scare and the accompanying literature was one of the factors in preparing the ground for Kitchener`s successful appeal for volunteers at the outbreak of the war.

So what was the result when it actually came to war?

#### INVASION SCARES FROM NAPOLEON TO THE KAISER

##### **Invasion fears during the war.**

Retention of two Infantry divisions from BEF in August 1914, 6 Div. brought from Ireland to Cambridge area.

German raids on East Coast

May 1915 'spectre of invasion' departure of almost all first line Territorial divisions and depletion of second line divisions. Home defence Army concentrated about Cambridge. Kitchener was convinced the Germans would come.

BEF key strategy to hold Ypres to protect Channel Ports.

From the first time the strategists focussed on the threat, centered as it was upon the North Sea, the Royal Navy realised they had a problem....they could not fulfil their primary objective that was to defend the homeland, the absence of any suitable defensible anchorages on the east coast, together with the threat from U-Boats, meant that the Grand Fleet anchorage at Scapa Flow, was too far north to prevent a sortie by the High Seas fleet, reaching the east coast, and that sortie could conceivably escort a sizeable raiding force, to wreak havoc on British soil. The Vickers factory on the Tyne was seen as particularly vulnerable target.

The navy was confident that it could prevent reinforcement and re-supply of any raiding force, it actually admitted it could not actually prevent an invasion of British soil. As a result, home defence fell to the army and the need to retain troops for such needs had to be balanced by the need for troops overseas. This, therefore, is the background to the invasion scares during the war and the practical effects that that fear generated.

While this fear was rife amongst the governing elite, it was not shared by the public at large when the BEF, initially 6 divisions strong, but only 4 initially sent to France, the other two being retained for home defence.

The subsequent German naval raids on the east coast did nothing to alleviate concern and even Lord Kitchener and First Sea Lord of the Admiralty, Jackie Fisher thought that an invasion was not only



likely, but probable. They even predicted when the invasion could occur, with reference to tides and moon conditions. The tenacious hold on Ypres throughout the war, was to deny the channel ports to the Germans. The loss of these ports would not only deny the BEF its best line of communication and re-supply, but could, as much informed opinion considered, leave Britain wide open to invasion.

Tony then concluded by making the point that the invasion scare genre, was an extremely long lived phenomenon and of course it received a boost when it returned with a resurgent Germany later in the century and we have seen it in more recent times with General Sir John Hackett's book... 'The Untold Story of the Third World War'



In his final comment, Tony hoped that all participants enjoyed this perhaps unusual and different virtual meeting.

The meeting then proceeded to questions which had been submitted by participants via the feedback column on the meeting screen.

All in all it was considered to be a successful first attempt at such a venture, and again we place our thanks on record for the professional way in which Dudley brought it all to our screens.

As mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter a further virtual meeting will be held at 7pm on July 6<sup>th</sup>. As before you have to register in advance and log in around 6.55 pm on the day of the meeting

Just follow this link....

<https://my.demio.com/ref/sTs3L2VM4VAuF9Z7>



invented the 'QWERTY' keyboard and the company Remington and Sons started selling typewriters which used it.

By 1897, Creed decided to exploit the opportunities offered by Great Britain's Empire. They opened their office in Glasgow and their machines were soon sending messages around the 'the empire on which the sun never set.' The General Post Office may have started using the device in 1902 but Creed had not been sitting on their laurels. He had invented a receiver which mechanically decoded the instructions, further reducing the time it took for messages to get through. It meant that typists could use a message on a QWERTY keyboard and the same message was printed at the receiving end. The 'Creed High Speed Automatic Printing Telegraphy System' - or 'Creed System' for short - had speeded up message sending and made it far more accurate.

The company relocated to South Croydon, in south London in 1909, and three years later the Daily Mail newspaper started using the machine. It allowed the editors to send messages to Manchester, so simultaneous publication of news stories was possible in the north of England as well. Other newspapers were soon using the system, while commercial businesses found it useful for messaging their overseas contacts.

Creed was so impressed with Harald Bille's work that he made him a partner in 1912 and the business was renamed the *Creed, Bille and Company Limited*. Creed continued to look for improvements and started to experiment with Guglielmo Marconi's new wireless telegraph messaging, which did away with the need for communication cables, in 1913. A Government order would instruct him to take down the aerial when war broke out, as part of the security measures introduced across the country.

The War Office ordered two sets of the Creed System and issued them to the Central Telegraph Office, so their trained typists could deal with the vast number of signals required by the War Book. One was set up at Southampton, while the other was sent to Grimsby. It meant that army units could keep in touch with the docks, the bottleneck in the logistics system caused by the loading of ships. Messages were sent backwards and forwards as 100,000 men and 120,000 horses, and all the transport and equipment they required, travelled on one of 18,000 special trains to the docks. The Creed System contributed to the rapid and organised deployment of the British Expeditionary Force to the Continental ports. The whole process took just five days.

Creed, Bille and Company Limited moved to Telegraph House, in East Croydon, early in 1915 and continued to coordinate the steady build-up of troops across the English Channel. The company also started making communications equipment, including tube amplifiers and small high-tension generators. It dabbled in the aerial industry as the Royal Flying Corps expanded, making spark transmitters, air compasses and bomb release gear. The factory eventually employed 500 men and 800 women and many were busy making high explosive shells and bomb fuses.

Harald Bille had been killed in a railway accident in August 1916 and the company was renamed Creed and Company Limited soon afterwards. Creed continued to improve his equipment after the war, replacing the mechanically operated keys with pneumatically operated keys, which improved the typing speed.

The factory may have stopped making war items at the end of 1918 but the company keep its finger on the pulse of the communications world. It produced the public address system called the *Stentorphone* and telegraph system for Press Agency. Soon subscribers all across the country were simultaneously receiving news items. Teleprinters dominated the 1920s and while Creed and Company was eventually merged into the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation in 1928, its employees continued to play an important part in the communications field through and after the Second World War. It even manufactured cipher machines which worked on a similar principle to the famous Enigma machine.



**Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery**, on the outskirts of Poperinghe is a regular place of visitation by school groups and tour parties. The majority of these, on a limited time schedule / agenda tend to head straight for one of three graves therein.



Top of the 'list.'....

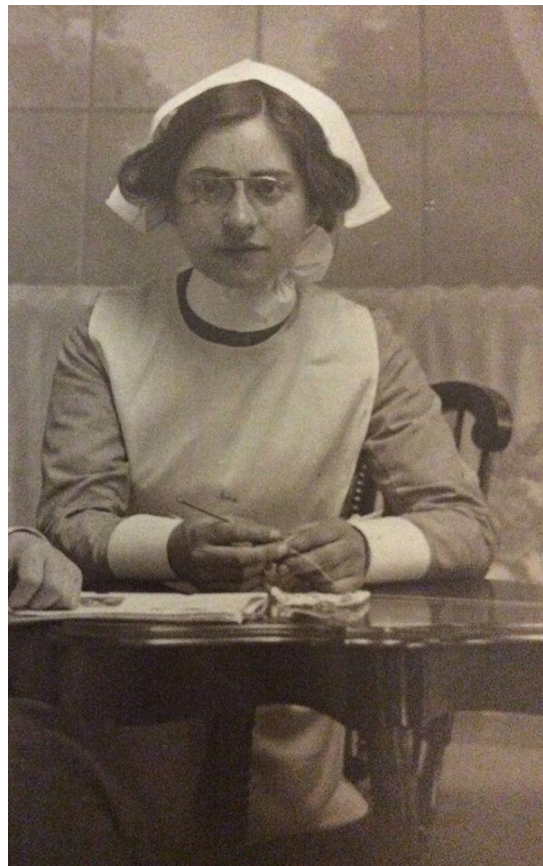
One hundred and three years ago. Two women, a common denominator, and a little-known fact.

**The British Journal Of Nursing**  
September 8, 1917

#### **Nurse Nellie Spindler**

'Miss Nellie Spindler, Staff Nurse, Q.A.I.M.N.S., was killed in the bombardment of the hospital at Abbeville (*q.v.*) by the Germans on August 21, 1917. Letter and telegram from the War Office state that she was 'killed in action.' Private communications from Abbeville (*q.v.*) state that the hospital was shelled all day, that Miss Spindler was struck at 11 am., became unconscious immediately and died twenty minutes later in the arms of Nurse Wood of Wakefield, which is also Miss Spindler's native city; her father being Inspector of Police. She was given a full military funeral and the 'Last Post' was sounded over her grave, which is quite near the hospital and will be well looked after.

Miss Spindler was 26 years of age, and was trained at the Townbridge Infirmary, Leeds, from 1912 to 1915. From November 1915 to May 1917 she was Staff Nurse at Whittington Military Hospital, Lichfield. Since May 1917, Staff Nurse at Stationary Hospital, Abbeville, France. (see footnote) She was right in the danger zone, but while recognising it her letters were hopeful and cheery. She is the second member of the Leeds Infirmary to die on Military Service. The first was the A.M.O. Capt. William Crymble, R.A.M.C., who died of enteric fever at Suez, after ten months' interment in Germany. He had been taken prisoner at the Battle of Le Cateau. At present there are over 100 nurses of the L.T. Infirmary on active



service. Miss Spindler was very popular during her training and her loss is deplored by the many friends she made who deeply sympathise with her family in their sorrow.'

(XVI.A.3) Staff Nurse Nellie Spindler, Queen Alexandra's Imperial Medical Nursing Service attd. No.44 CCS, Royal Army Medical Corps: *dau.* of George Kealey Spindler, Police Inspector; of 104, Stanley Road, Wakefield, co. York, and Elizabeth, *née* Snowden, his wife: *b.* Wakefield, September 1891: Commenced nursing City Fever Hospital, Wakefield, 1911; thereafter Leeds Township Infirmary, 1912 - 15; joined QAIMNS (attested date of birth 1889), October 1915; thence (10 November 1915 - 24 April 1917) Whittington Military Hospital, Lichfield; proceeded to France, May following, apptd. No.2 General Hospital, Le Havre; thence to No.44 CCS, Brandhoek, July 1917. The only woman buried at Lijssenthoek. She was killed on 21 August 1917 while attached to 44 CCS at Brandhoek - the only woman to be killed that close to the front at Ypres. Age 25. Sister K. Luard said, "Bits came over everywhere, pitching at one's feet as we rushed to the scene. A group of stricken MOs were standing about and in one tent the sister was dying. The piece went through her from back to front near her heart. She was only conscious for a few minutes and only lived 20 minutes. She was in bed asleep. It all made one feel sick." The CCS War Diary records - "Yesterday morning the enemy began to shell the railway alongside the camp and the third or fourth shell killed S/Nurse Spindler. She was hit in the chest and died in about five minutes." Four other nurses were concussed by the same blast and, as a consequence of this, next day 44 CCS evacuated all its nurses to St. Omer. 44 CCS moved back to Remy Sidings where the officers and men from the unit held a burial service for S/Nurse Spindler. Her funeral was attended by over one hundred Officers, four Generals and the Surgeon-General. The diary records that during the bombardment the Nursing Sisters behaved splendidly and one of them, Sister Minnie Wood (in whose arms she died), was awarded the MM - one of only a handful of women to be awarded this distinction. (*IWGC record age 26*)



Epitaph: - *A Noble Type Of Good Heroic Womanhood*

One of only two British female nursing staff buried in Belgium; the other, Sister. E.M. Gladstone, QAIMNS, died of pneumonia 24 January 1919, is buried in Belgrade Cemetery, Namur (I.A.5). Another nurse, Sister Elise Kemp, is buried in nearby Godewaersvelde British Cemetery, France (I.M.1). Capt. W. Crymble (above), Suez War Memorial Cemetery (A.61).

Endnote: In 1857 American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-82) penned verses in tribute to British nurse Florence Nightingale (1820-1910) and her services 'the lady with the lamp' administering to the wounded and dying in 'dreary hospitals' of pain and suffering. 'Wherever her shadow falls it is reverently kissed by the soldier sufferer on whom it alights.' Longfellow's '*Santa Filomena*,' placed Nightingale in the company of women saints. Her reform of army hospitals during the

Crimean War in the rhetoric of letters, reports, and imagery enshrined Nightingale - whose otherwise unacceptable actions did not conform to gender expectations - as an ideal of Victorian respectability; Wadsworth concluded '*A noble type of good heroic womanhood.*'

Footnote: The references to Abbeville are completely erroneous, how they originated is unknown, Nurse Spindler never served there; probably a clerical error, taking Abeele as an abbreviation.

'In Memory & In Mourning: Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery,' pg.188.

© Pen & Sword Books, 2014

[https://smile.amazon.co.uk/Lijssenthoek-Military-Cemetery-Memory-Mourning/dp/1473850959/ref=sr\\_1\\_6?crd=2P6XJAA1RFKX3&dchild=1&keywords=in+memory+and+in+mourning&qid=1591432171&s=books&prefix=In+memory%2Caps%2C142&sr=1-6](https://smile.amazon.co.uk/Lijssenthoek-Military-Cemetery-Memory-Mourning/dp/1473850959/ref=sr_1_6?crd=2P6XJAA1RFKX3&dchild=1&keywords=in+memory+and+in+mourning&qid=1591432171&s=books&prefix=In+memory%2Caps%2C142&sr=1-6)



## HERR ARNOLD SIEGLER (1883 - 1916)



Taking advantage of the relaxation of lockdown, I visited Keith (Tennant) recently to look at the postcards he had bought since we last met up – we share an interest in collecting old postcards, mainly of Barnsley and the First World War, as well as local history generally.

Keith has a photographic postcard of Arnold Sieglar, which he had signed and added 'Barnsley 1910'. (By serendipity the postcard had been printed in Chorley, Lancashire!). I offered to find out what I could about the handsome violin player and why he had been in Barnsley in 1910.

As I spend far too long (and too much) on eBay I checked first whether there were any postcards of Herr Arnold Sieglar and found three, ranging from £6 to £20.



**SURNAME SPIEGEL** - German and Jewish (Ashkenazic), for which there are various explanations. Variants include: Spiegl, Szpiegel, Schpiegel, Shpi(e)gel, Şpighel. It dates from at least the 12<sup>th</sup> Century as a German Christian surname when the Spiegel family were Barons of Desenburg and Peckelsheim in Hessen. A significant number of Jewish people have the surname, apparently taken from a house sign picturing a mirror in Frankfurt am Main Judengasse (Jew's Lane), which was one of the earliest ghettos in Germany from 1462 and now forms part of their Jewish Museum - the surname Spiegel is documented there from the 16th century. Alternatives are that it derives from the name of a town or lake, or from the occupation of seller of mirrors (from Latin speculum, a derivative of specere 'to look').

The Spiegel family name was found in USA, Canada and UK between 1840 and 1920. In 1891, there were

24 Spiegel households living in London, which was about 92% of all recorded Spiegel's in the UK. Whereas London had the highest population of Spiegels in 1891, most were in USA in 1920. This was probably because of the First World War, when Germans and their allies were not welcome in UK.

#### HERR ARNOLD SPIEGLER

I have been unable to find many genealogical records for Arnold and do not know when or why he migrated to England. He does not appear on any Censuses but his occupation as an itinerant musician would have prevented this. He was born in 1883 in Hungary. Newspapers on FindMyPast have articles from 1907-13.

In November 1907, Arnold was in Hull. Arnold and Ludwig Blattner were Manager and Director of the Winter Gardens in June 1909, according to "Music Hall & Theatre Review", who noted: "Talented performances of Herr Spiegler & his Bohemian Orchestra are also worthy of praise". "Burnley Express" reported in March 1910 on the Grand Trades Exhibition at the Mechanics Institute, where Herr Spiegel and his orchestra appeared twice before King Edward & Queen Alexandra.

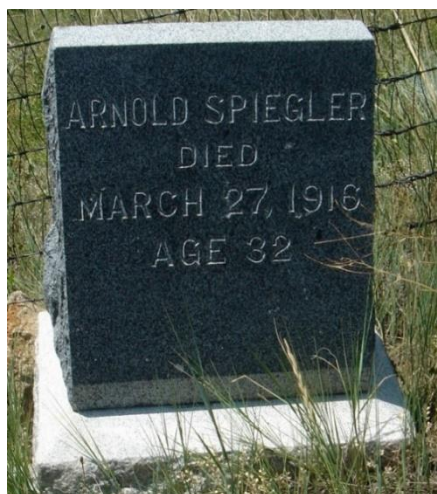
"BARNSELY CHRONICLE" – 25 June 1910: Trades Exhibition at Olympia Skating Rink, Town End. (Cookery demonstrations etc). "Herr Arnold Spiegler, the famous Hungarian Violinist, and his Hungarian Gypsy Orchestra, provide attractive musical programmes".

Arnold was in Beverley in 1911. 26.3.1912. "Sheffield Daily Telegraph" reported that he performed at Montgomery Hall, Sheffield, in March 1912. Two months later "The Stage, London" described Herr Spiegel as a "talented conductor and violinist".

"Leeds Mercury" noted in April 1913: "The Spiegler Quintet provided one of the best turns of the evening," Herr Spiegler was a "skilled violinist". Miss Lucille Benstead, vocalist, had a "fine voice and rare powerful expression". "The Stage, London" promoted in June 1913 that "Herr Spiegel and his Blue Band will appear thrice daily until nearly the end of September". By 23 September, Arnold was paying his "first visit to Cardiff after season's engagement at Grand Pier, Weston Super Mare".

Two emigration records on Ancestry reveal that Arnold Spiegler (aged 31, born 1883) resident in Weston Super Mare departed from Liverpool on SS St Paul (American Line) and arrived in Ellis Island, New York, USA, on 10 October 1914. It appears that he decided to leave England because of the First World War, which had started two months previously.

I was shocked to find out from FindAGrave website that Arnold had died within 18 months of arriving in USA. I added a record about his musical career being reported in newspaper articles while he was in England from 1907 (?) – 1914 in case any relations might like to contact me.



"A young Jewish professional violinist born in Brunn, Austria, who arrived in New York City on 11 October 1914 at the age of 31, on board S.S. Paul. Arnold intended to pursue a professional career as a musician in NYC but contracted Tuberculosis at the age of 32 and came to Colorado to seek treatment. He was admitted to Jewish Consumptives' Relief Society Sanitorium on 13 December 1915 and died there on 27 March 1916, aged 32. He was buried in Golden Hill Cemetery in Lakewood, Jefferson County, Colorado".

A small black marble headstone was inscribed:  
 ARNOLD SPIEGLER  
 DIED  
 MARCH 27, 1916  
 AGED 32

He was survived by a brother named Alois Spiegler in Brunn, Lower Austria, Austria.

## Military Ambulance Trains

Originally published in 1921 in the book `British Railways and the Great War` (two volumes)

### Part Four

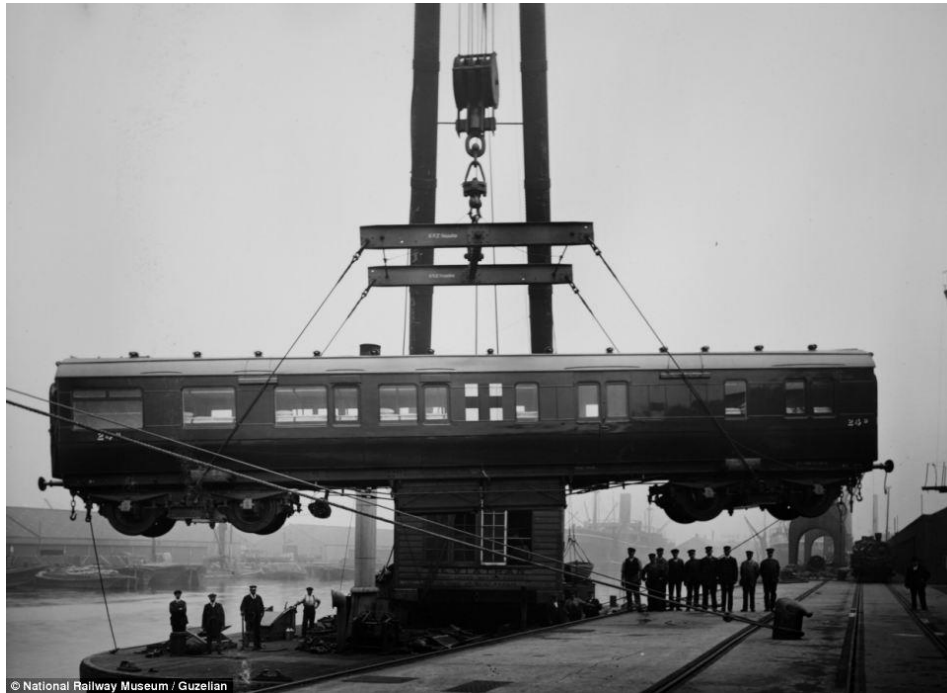
When the United States decided to take an active part in the war, her military authorities consulted with a deputation of the Railway Executive (consisting of Sir Francis Dent, Mr AJ Hill and MR GJ Bowen-Cooke), then in Washington for another purpose, and came to the conclusion that the best provision they could make for the transport by train of their sick and wounded in France would be by securing, on their own account a supply of ambulance trains constructed in England according to the very latest pattern. The Railway Executive Committee, at the request of the War Office, agreed to meet these further requirements through their sub-committee, the arrangement should be that the cost of the American trains be refunded to the Executive Committee (on behalf of the companies concerned) by the War Office, which would recover from the United States Government the amounts paid.

The first order for these ambulance trains for the US armies in France was given in August 1917. It was followed by others, and by the time the war came to an end there had been delivered in France for the United States Expeditionary Force, nineteen standard ambulance trains constructed by British railway companies as follows: Great Central, one; Great Eastern, one; Great Western, four; Lancashire and Yorkshire. Three; London and North Western, four; London and South Western, one, Midland, five.

In these nineteen trains there were 304 vehicles, all of the bogie type. Spare parts and materials for the maintenance of the trains was also provided by the sub-committee. Twenty nine other trains for the American forces were either in the course of construction or on order when the armistice was signed. Altogether the number of ambulance trains supplied and equipped by British railway companies for use overseas of either the British or the American forces was forty-nine, and the total number of vehicles forming these trains, or supplied separately for ambulance train purposes was 822.

As regards the application of the word `standard` to the trains in question, the fact should be stated that, whilst standardisation was aimed at throughout (and especially so from the time the Ambulance Trains for the Continent Sub-Committee was appointed), and whilst the adoption of this principle was of the greatest advantage in facilitating both construction and maintenance, there was, nevertheless, no rigid adherence to an established set of designs or ideas without any suggestion of still further improvement. The sub-committee in London were in constant touch with the Military Advisory Committee in France; Major Hosken kept them well informed as to the results of practical experience in the working of the trains, and the possibility of embodying fresh improvements - in order to meet all emergencies and to provide still more efficiently for the care and comfort of the sick and wounded travelling by the trains - was ever a matter of close and anxious consideration.

So it was that, although the first of the ambulance trains sent overseas in 1914 were themselves the outcome, partly of experiences gained in the South African War of 1899-1902, and partly of much subsequent study of the whole subject by railway, medical and military authorities in combination, the last trains to be supplied in 1918 embodied the results of continuous improvement based on the fresh experience gained, were a still further advance in completeness and simplicity of detail, and constituted almost `the last word` in the provision of a perfect type of rail-transportation facilities for military sick and wounded in time of war.



© National Railway Museum / Guzelian

### Shipment of the Ambulance Trains

One further item of interest in regards to the ambulance trains for use overseas relates to the methods adopted for their conveyance from this country to destination. Had the Channel Tunnel existed during The Great War, the sending of the trains to France would have been as simple and expeditious a business as that of sending them on a journey of equal distance in this country. The cost, also, would have been comparatively less. In the reverse direction the transport of the wounded to England would have been greatly facilitated, not only by the saving of transshipment, first from train to boat, and then from boat to train, but, also, because the continental ambulance trains, which carried many more wounded than the British trains, could then have come direct to England. As it was, the matter of transportation - and especially so in the early days of the war - became a source of much difficulty and considerable anxiety. It involved, also, in the aggregate, a substantial cost.

As the picture above shows, each car had to be raised bodily from the rails. Slung round over the vessel on which it was to make the cross-channel journey, lowered onto the deck, and then secured so firmly thereto that there would be no danger of the car falling overboard. It was not, however, every port in the country that had a crane capable of thus raising vehicles which had a weight of from 28 to 30 tons, and an average length of 57 feet.

Some of the coaches for the first ambulance train for overseas, were sent to France from Dover and the despatch of them from that port necessitated certain special arrangements. These included the laying of an emergency siding connection of 153 feet radius from the Prince of Wales Pier to Wellington Dock, to allow of their being taken to a spot where a 30-ton capacity crane would lift them on to the *S.S. Quenast* by which the carriages were to be conveyed, one by one, to Boulogne. The work of laying the siding thus needed was begun at midnight on October 19<sup>th</sup>, 1914 and was completed, ready for use by 9.30am, on October 21<sup>st</sup>. The coaches arrived at Dover the same day and the vessel sailed with the first of them on October 23<sup>rd</sup>. The sixth and last left on the 29<sup>th</sup>. All were shipped by the South Eastern and Chatham Company's Engineer.

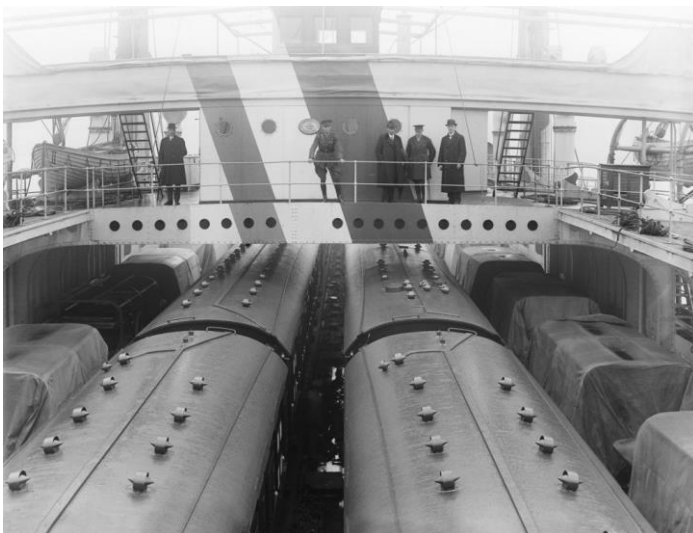
From Dover the work of despatching ambulance trains overseas was transferred, first to London docks and afterwards to Tilbury in order, more especially, that advantage could be taken of the 50-



ton cranes, which the Port of London Authority had available there. The admiralty, also, supplied transport, originally a cargo steamer, which was capable of carrying four long-bogie coaches one deck, instead of only one, as in the case of the *S.S. Quenast*. When the Ambulance Trains for the Continent Sub-Committee got to work, in January 1915 they arranged that gangs of railwaymen should not only load up the vehicles on the boat, but unload them again at the port of destination in France - then either Boulogne or Dunkirk - some specially made by the British Railway Companies being sent there for that purpose. At the outset the railwaymen entrusted with this work went to France with each fresh lot of vehicles; but subsequently it was decided to have one gang at the port of embarkation and another at the port of debarkation. This meant that at Dunkirk, owing to the frequency of air raids, a dug out had to be specially provided for the railwaymen. Later on in the war the War Office arranged for the vehicles to be despatched from Portsmouth where powerful cranes, located there for dealing with heavy naval guns, were available - to Dieppe or Le Havre, though the work of loading up at the port of embarkation was still done by railwaymen.



On the opening of the Channel Ferry from Southampton, the ambulance train made by the LSWR for the US Army in France was sent across by this means. The other ambulance trains for the American troops went either to Dieppe or Cherbourg by this route. The vehicles were, in each case, run directly onto the ferry from the railway lines at Southampton and direct on to the rails on the other side.



Ambulance train coaches on a train ferry at Southampton

Notwithstanding the risks involved in shipping such consignments as full sized bogie carriages in war time, only four of the 800 and more ambulance vehicles to be transported across the channel failed to reach their destination and a substantial amount of each of these four was recovered and again utilised.

To be continued



## A Double Family Tragedy

In this short piece I will show how combining information from several online sources turned up the story of a double tragedy in my family back in 1915. (A summary of resources will be given at the end). These events were new to me and my aunt. My late father, who passed on his passion for history to me, cannot have known either because he would have told me about it. Something to do with a family disagreement in times past I believe... But I digress.

I have known for many years that my maternal granddad, James Lomas, had lost two older brothers in the Great War. Farwell was mortally wounded during the battle of Arras in April 1917, while serving with the 8th East Yorkshires. Jack was killed during the battle of Fère-en-Tardenois in the Aisne region in July 1918, while serving with the 8th West Yorkshires; the first of Allied counter-offensives in the summer of that year. James would serve in the artillery in North Africa and Italy during the Second World War.

However, I knew of no Great War connections on my paternal grandfather's side, only that my grandfather spent the Second World War sailing around the world on merchant ships. Eddy even survived the sinking of the Empress of Canada in the Atlantic Ocean in March 1943. I knew his father (my great grandfather), Charles was a police officer in Sheffield between 1900 and 1925 but knew little of his life until recently.

I have been checking the British Newspaper Archive (BNA) for information about the Sheffield munitions industry and the city newspapers have been very useful. They report the daily news from the front line, from the government and from the factory floor. You will see what I found when I eventually get to deliver my talk to the branch.

I knew that Charles had moved from a tiny village on the Lincolnshire fens, called Bucknall. The sort of village which has a church, a school, a pub and a few houses. So, on a whim, I typed in the words 'Rawson' and 'Bucknall', to see what came up. And lo and behold, there was a William Rawson on the Bardney war memorial, just up the road from Bucknall. Now I doubted there were more than one family with my surname in these villages but you never know, because folk did not travel far to find a partner in those days. It also turned out that Bucknall was too small was its own memorial, so its war dead were remembered in the adjacent village.

A check on the Commonwealth War Graves website confirmed William had been killed on 24 August 1915, while serving with the 7th Lincolnshire Regiment, one of the Kitchener battalions. He has no known grave and is remembered on the Menin Gate, where his name looks down the stairs onto the road, where the buglers play the Last Post every evening.

Fortunately, it also gave his parents names; William and Sarah. A look at the online version of the Lincolnshire Regiment history on the Archive website said the battalion had reached France in July 1915, with the 17th (Northern) Division, and had been holding the line south of Ypres. William was one of twenty-one men killed during two tours of the Voormezelee sector.

I still had to confirm he was a relative, so my next step was the BNA. A search for the words 'Rawson' and 'Bardsney' turned up two vital pieces of information. The Sheffield Telegraph reported that a William Rawson had died in 1931, while on holiday at an address I knew well. It was my great-grandfather's address, the details of which I had acquired some time ago when the Ancestry website was having a free weekend (I like free weekends). A combination of birth, marriage and death certificates all tied up with the same address on St Thomas' Road in Crookes. So, I now knew that William senior and Charles were related.

A further look on the BNA turned up an article reporting William junior's, (referred to as Bill), death composed from information sent in by his parents; William Senior and Sarah. Now the odds of three

connecting names from such a tiny village are so high that I believe they are my great-great grand parents and great-great uncle. Bill and his work mate Edwin Hawkins had been working on a farm when war broke out in August 1914, and they had enlisted together. I confirmed Edwin's details on the website FreeBMD (Births, Marriages and Deaths).

The article also included a letter from Bill's pal, stating how he had been killed... "The Germans started to bombard us and a man was hit in the head. They called for a stretcher bearer and Bill came at once to attend to him. He had just started to bandage him when another shell came and burst beside them. He did not suffer at all; his death was instantaneous." The article had a picture of young Bill in his Sunday best, and I must say he has the Rawson ears! In case you are wondering, it appears Bill's friend survived the war because he is not on the war memorial and I cannot find anyone who fits the scant information on the CWGC website; but you can never be sure.

But that was not all. The same article closed with the intriguing sentence 'Only a few weeks ago, Mr and Mrs Rawson lost another son in a colliery accident.' There was not much to go on but fortunately, various historians have recorded accidents and incidents in the mining incident and have made their findings available on the internet for free. However, it was the Ancestry website which gave me the information I needed. Only two deaths were recorded with the surname Rawson in 1915 and James Rawson had been killed on 4 June 1915 at Southgate Colliery, near Clowne, in Derbyshire.

Another search on the BNA came up trumps. Thirty-four-year-old James was a 'stall man', one of a pair who worked behind the men cutting coal from the face. James had been collecting the waste stone so his mate, George Attwood, could build pillars to support the roof. The 'Pillar and Stall' method of mining allowed all the coal to be removed, leaving a patchwork of stone pillars holding up the roof. Only for them to collapse years later, leading to subsidence.

Newspaper reports explained how a fault, or 'bump' in the gallery roof had led to a section of rock collapsing. James had been 'terribly crushed' and it took half an hour to dig out his body. He left a widow, Dorothy, and two children. His brother Charles attended the funeral, knowing that his other brother was about to head to France to fight in the trenches.

So, there we have it. Some new places for a visit, while a trip to Lincolnshire may turn up more lost family stories. It turns out the family passed the time in two ways; working on a different farm each year and having a child each year. So, there are Rawson's scattered all across the county!

I do have plenty of information on Charles' police work, including burglaries, accidents, industrial strikes, social unrest and even gang warfare (just think of the television series, the *Peaky Blinders*). They were busy times for the police force because Sheffield had faced economic difficulties before the Great War. They multiplied after the conflict because the demand for steel fell at the same time as thousands of soldiers returned home and unemployment rocketed. Men who had just survived life in the trenches often refused to be bullied around by landlords, employers and even the police. Post war Britain is something rarely touched on by the Western Front Association but the impact of the conflict continued for the returning soldiers and their families. Maybe more on that another time.

The websites I used are: *Ancestry* website (subscription) for a wide range of items relating to births, marriages, deaths and other personal matters. The *British Newspaper Archive* website (subscription) has a vast collection of newspapers which are useful for seeing how your town coped during the war. The *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* website (free) needs little introduction; it has details on all fatal casualties. The *Archive* website (free) has a large collection of scanned rare and out of print books. The *FreeBMD* website (free) has limited information on births, marriages, deaths.

Andrew Rawson

## Summer News from the Cemetery Friends of Spital Cemetery FoSC

### July - September 2020

A summer newsletter! Well, it will not surprise you to know that there is very little news from the Friends but we wanted to send greetings to all our Members and supporters. We hope you are all well, taking care of each other and able at last to meet up with more friends and family and to get out into nature. Our thoughts are with the few who are still not yet enjoying this freedom. Mid-March we were asked by Bereavement Services not to organise any activities, specifically tours and gardening in the cemetery, as these were deemed as non-essential. Happily the cemetery has remained open for local visitors and we have seen an increased footfall, people suddenly discovering what a beautiful green space with fabulous headstones and monuments is on their doorstep. We hope they will continue to visit.

Three planned events are also still on hold, the council renovation of the Community Tool House, installing a permanent sign about The Gateway Path and unveiling the blue plaque on the house in Spital Gardens where Nurse Fletcher (the one woman buried in the cemetery in a Commonwealth War Grave) lived. So, watch this space!



It was wonderful to see that the three island beds at the bottom entrance have been planted with summer bedding. This is done under a contract with the council and it was great to see that it had gone ahead as usual, by late June.

The Friends gardening group planted and maintain the two island beds at the top entrance, between the Community Tool House and the chapels, see photo above. We hope that readers who have realised over the past few months how much enjoyment they get from gardening and being outside and active, and live locally, will consider joining the gardening group. Do send an email (subject matter Gardening) to [thefriendsofspitalcemetery@gmail.com](mailto:thefriendsofspitalcemetery@gmail.com) if you are interested and we will let you know when the group will next meet.

### **Monthly Tours in the Cemetery**

Our regular and very popular monthly guided tours will resume as soon as council run activities start up again. Please check on the notice boards at the entrances in the cemetery or email Margaret at [spitalcemeterytours@gmail.com](mailto:spitalcemeterytours@gmail.com) to find out the latest.

### **Feedback wanted about our remembrance event in November.**

As a response to climate concerns and the unprecedented loss of life and suffering caused by the virus we are keen to promote Spital Cemetery as a beautiful green space for reflection and remembrance.

Covid-19 has so far claimed the lives of 78 people from Chesterfield of which 18 have been from Hasland and Spital since 1st March and 31st May. In the light of this we would like a feedback on what we do at our remembrance event this year in November if it goes ahead of course.

Over the last few years our remembrance event in November has been tied in with Armistice Sunday and understandably the service personnel from WW1 and 2 in particular have featured heavily. We extended this with the Gateway path to recognising the family members who had to cope with their loss in the years of peace that followed.

However for this year would people be happy if this became an open event for family and friends to remember those who have lost their lives with this virus? We would also like this event to celebrate how at this time family and community have gone above and beyond to help each other in these times of crisis and separation, in many ways very similar to what was happening in wartime. Please let us know what your thoughts are, and if you would like to get involved in planning if, of course, we are able to have an event. Do send an email (subject matter Remembrance) to [thefriendsofspitalcemetery@gmail.com](mailto:thefriendsofspitalcemetery@gmail.com)

Ref: <https://www.derbyshiretimes.co.uk/health/coronavirus/these-are-13-postcodes-chesterfield-most-covid-19-deaths-2883580?page=2>



## Stephen`s Story

In February Rosemarie approached us to help her find the graves of her great great grandparents, Stephen and Honor Connolly. Stephen`s grave-space is marked with a vase with a slate plaque. Honor (Annie) is nearby in an unmarked grave but we planted daffodils so that each spring the family will be able to find where she lies. We had hoped to report that Stephen`s vase had been repaired and placed correctly in his grave-space but although permission has been given, Rosemarie is still waiting for this to happen. In the meantime we wanted, at this time, to share Stephen`s wonderful story.



Photo of Stephen at a wedding, wearing a bowler hat but not his ear-ring on this occasion!

Stephen Connolly was born in 1855 in County Galway Ireland. After his marriage to a local girl, Honor, they both set sail and emigrated to England.

Life was tough at first, but with hard work and endurance, their existence became more bearable. Stephen was employed at a local pit, and it is said, didn't retire until in his 80's. During his working life as a miner, he purchased some board and lodging properties in Chesterfield, which were originally located close to where the benefits offices are adjacent to the roundabout leading to the retail parks.

Back in those days many board and lodgings proprietors would place visible signs stating 'No Blacks - No Irish'. My great great grandfather Stephen Connolly placed visible signs in his board and lodging premises stating, 'Blacks and Irish Welcome'. It is said he was quite a character, but with a lovely and compassionate personality. He loved music and would play a variety of instruments to entertain all who cared to listen. He also loved the Romany gypsy attire, and decided to don an ear-ring caring not if it was socially acceptable. Sadly his wife Honor died of TB in 1899 aged 34. Stephen, besides being heart broken, was left with 6 young children to raise. Honor's mother thankfully offered to help, which enabled Stephen to continue working to provide for the family. Stephen died in 1947 at the grand old age of 92. Written by Rosemarie Cashin.

**Well Dressing 12th - 19th September 2020** The ancient custom of Well Dressing is only found in Derbyshire and is the art of decorating springs and wells with pictures made from natural materials. We are hopeful that we will still be able to have a Well Dressing in Spital Cemetery later this year. This will be the fourth year that we have created one at the bottom entrance to the cemetery where there was once a well that served the monks who ran the leper hospital that gave Spital its name.

St Leonard was a Norman abbot in France and England who died in AD559. Always depicted holding a length of chain He was known for his work with prisoners and for his healing. As in many areas, the local leper hospital from the 12th century was named after him. When the new mission chapel



was opened on Valley Road in Spital 125 years ago, that too was dedicated to him and in his honour this year our Well Dressing will feature him. If you would like to see the Well Dressing being made, or indeed would like to help in the making, please contact Margaret on [spitalcemeterytours@gmail.com](mailto:spitalcemeterytours@gmail.com) Further details about the Well Dressings in Chesterfield will hopefully also be available through the Tourist Information Office.

left: our Well Dressing in 2018

Friends of Spital Cemetery seek to promote Spital Cemetery as a haven for wildlife, and a place of remembrance, heritage and learning for the community.

<http://friendsofspitalcemetery.co.uk/> <https://www.facebook.com/FriendsofSpitalCemetery>

FriendsofSpitalCemetery

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