

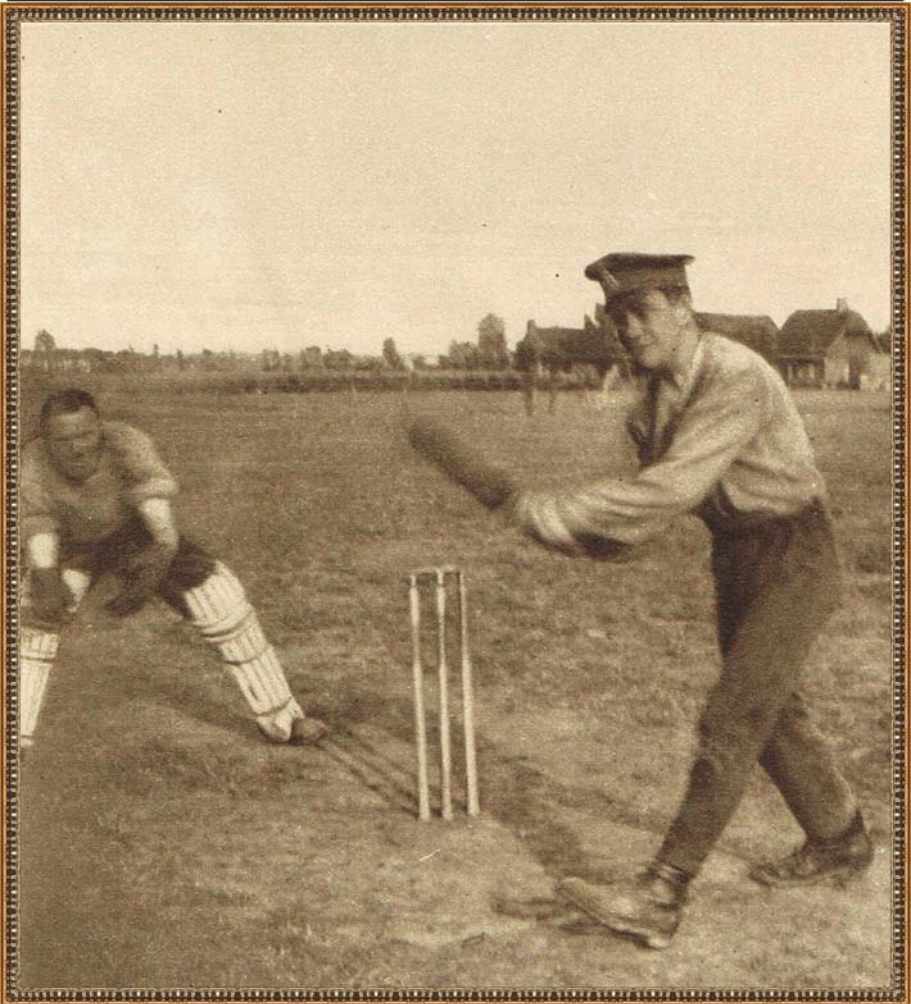


THE WESTERN FRONT
ASSOCIATION

Lancashire North Branch

Despatch

Issue 5: May 2010



The above photo, from the Illustrated War News of September 1915, exposes how many cameras of that era were unsuited to action shots, but the caption suggests another reason, that the photographer realised the batsman had an eye on hitting the ball into his stomach! Whatever, it is a seasonal frontispiece and several items inside mention cricket. One article, about disturbing the eternal rest of one of the “Several Battalion Commanders” in my talk last May is definitely not cricket but telling the story will hopefully result in a reverent solution see Page 15.

Editor's Musing

In my report on the talk given by Clive Harris (Page 20) I refer to him getting "*under the skins of the individuals in his talk*". This is a feeling I experience when researching officers for presentations. There is a compulsive feeling to pursue all means to gather information to understand and portray the individuals. I muse about them when my mind has nothing better to think about.

Having delivered my talk last May, Gilbert Mackereth went out of my thoughts and in a sense the visit to his grave in San Sebastian last summer was final closure. To be subsequently advised of the threat to his earthly remains flicked me back under his skin and I have mused much about him again. He was an extraordinary individual and maybe realised his burial in Spain would ensure he would not be forgotten.

survived to become manager of Martins Bank in Kendal.



The other brother who served was George Bargh. The family (5 brothers, two sisters) was brought up at Proctor's Farm in Wray and George was

third youngest. At the age of 12 and after attending Wray School, George went to live with his newly married eldest sister Hannah and her husband George Platts, a butcher in Halifax. Young George won a scholarship to the Halifax Higher Grade School and then a place at University College Reading. After graduating he became a schoolmaster at Hawes Grammar School and lived at East House, Gayle.

Whilst in Reading George served for two years as an officer cadet with the Reading Contingent of the Officers' Training Corps (Senior Division). On 2 January 1914, whilst living in Gayle, George applied for a commission in the 1st Battalion King's (Liverpool) Regiment and was placed on the Special Reserve list. At the outbreak of the Great War he was appointed a Second Lieutenant and joined his regiment which was stationed in Aldershot. As was the case with many young officers, George was transferred to a regiment short of officers, in his case the 1st Btn Suffolk Regiment. George Bargh landed at Le Havre on 20 February 1915 and, according to the War Diary, was posted to 'C' Company on 28 February whilst the Suffolks were at Bailleul preparing to 'engage the enemy' at Ypres (leper).

MORE INFORMATION FOR ARTICLES WHEN:

(+P) : photos, maps in Photo Gallery,

(+S) : supplementary information report

See our website www.wfanlancs.co.uk and look against this Despatch

2ND LIEUTENANT GEORGE BARGH "*MISSING IN ACTION*". Tricia Platts (+P)

Many members of the Branch will be familiar with the green and gold liveried lorries of SJ Bargh Ltd, the haulage business based in Caton village. Sam Bargh had two brothers who served in the Great War. John William, a private (later Company Sergeant) in the 8th Border Regiment, crossed to France on 26 September 1915, was wounded three times (according to family legend) but



George survived the opening phases of the 2nd Battle of Ypres when the German's gas attack on 22nd April broke into the Salient west of Poelcappelle. His battalion was attacked by gas near Gravenstafel Ridge on 24th April. In the succeeding days the Germans made further strong attacks and on 4th May the British established a new line of defence.

George was north of Frezenberg on 8th May when the Germans broke through on the Suffolks right flank. According to the Official History "the Suffolks held out desperately in isolated detachments when with all communications cut they were surrounded. Lieut Col Wallace, 11 officers and 432 other ranks became casualties". The entries in the battalion War Diary for the 8th to 10th May are thin and record that in the evening of 9th May the **29 men** "survivors from the trenches" were joined by 127 NCOs and men from Felixstowe via le Havre. From 18th April to 8th May the Suffolks had lost all but one of its officers and 947 other ranks.

George Bargh's Officer's Records are available at Kew and give a fascinating

insight into the plight of a family whose son has been posted 'Missing in Action'.

The War Office telegram to the Bargh family was followed by a report in the local newspaper:

Second-Lieutenant George Bargh, who belonged to the King's Liverpool Regiment, but was attached to the 1st Suffolk Regiment, and who, before he received his commission, was a schoolmaster at Hawes is reported missing since May 10th. He was 25 years of age. His people have farmed in Lunedale for many years, and his father took an active part in public affairs.

A War Office letter dated 1 June tries to add some finality, "The Military Secretary . . . deeply regrets to inform Mrs Bargh that 2Lt G Bargh, previously reported missing, is now unofficially reported killed." However, Mrs Bargh's response on 23 June is to request a form on which "I can send particulars to the American Ambassador in London asking for enquiries to be made . . . in Berlin." This procedure is duly carried through but the response eventually forwarded to Wray is brief: *Nicht in den Kriegsfangenlisten verzeichnet. Nachforschungen warden angestellt, bei Ermittlung erfolgt Benachrichtigung*".

The next letter from the War Office is dated 7 February 1916 and is based on news forwarded to the WO by Col Wallace's wife many months previously. Her husband, who is a prisoner of war, writes that 2Lt Bargh was besides him during the attack on 10th May. The Craven Herald reprints an article from the London Gazette:

News has reached Mrs. Bargh from Colonel Wallace, 1st Suffolk Regiment, who is a prisoner of war in Germany, that on that date her son was shot in the head just before the Germans took the

trenches as he was bandaging a wounded soldier and killed instantly.

The WO now asks Mrs Bargh "to confirm the fact that no further news of this officer has reached you . . . and be regretfully constrained to conclude that he died on or since that date."

The reply is almost too poignant. Helen Bargh has refused to lock the front door of Proctor's Farm for nearly twelve months in case her son came home. She now writes, "I'm only too grieved I cannot give you any further information regarding my son, missing May 10th"

On 3 November 1916 the Craven Herald reports on the Impressive Memorial Service held in Hawes.

A very impressive memorial service for the soldiers from the parish, and those closely connected with the parish, who have fallen in the War, was held in St. Margaret's Church on Sunday afternoon. From the Church tower the flag of St. George was flying half-mast, and the solemn tolling of the Church bell, announcing the hour of service, deepened the solemnity of the occasion. There was a large congregation, among whom were the relatives of many who have fallen. The service was conducted by the vicar (Rev. S. D. Crawford), and the hymns were 'Lead, Kindly Light', 'On the Resurrection Morning', and 'For all the Saints'. The soldiers whose memories were honoured were: Frederick Cockett, Albert Leach, Thomas Walton, J. W. Fryer, Reginald Milburn, James Banks, J. Chaytor Metcalfe, George Bargh, and James H. Milner

George Bargh is remembered on the war memorial and Roll of Honour in Holy Trinity Church, Wray and on the Menin Gate. After his death the family commissioned a full length portrait of him. It is now in the keeping of his nephew John Bargh and a head and shoulders

portrait, taken from a photograph, is with another Bargh nephew.



Holy Trinity Church, Wray. Marble Tablet

HOW BRIGHT THESE
GLORIOUS SPIRITS SHINE -
Pte E L Mathers Cameronians

THE HARRIS ORPHANAGE MEMORIAL FULWOOD: Mike Sherrington

The Harris Orphanage was founded at the bequest of a wealthy Preston solicitor Edmund Robert Harris (1804-1877) who left £100,000 to support the charity. Its design was based on an idea pioneered by Dr Barnardo for a village of houses arranged looking inwards around a green. It was built on former agricultural land between Black Bull Lane and Garstang Road (A6) in Fulwood, then a largely rural area. The architect was Benjamin Sykes, and George Rowbotham, Preston Parks' Superintendent was responsible for the design and lay out of the grounds.

The orphanage provided homes for approximately 120 children whose parents had to have lived within 8 miles of Preston town hall for a minimum of one year. Accommodation was based in 8 single sex houses, each containing 16 children. The orphans were looked after by childless married couples; the housemothers saw to the needs of the

children, while the men were employed on the estate. It was a strict but caring regime. The houses featured every modern amenity including washrooms, bathrooms and electric lighting. In addition there was a gatekeeper's lodge, an infirmary, a laundry, a tailor's shop, sewing and knitting rooms and a barber's shop, so that the community was in many ways self-sufficient. All domestic tasks were carried out by the children. School was attended on site up to the age of 14, after which duties were assigned until the inmates left at 15.

Places were highly sought after by parents who could no longer care for their children properly as a result of bereavement, sickness, accident or unemployment. As the alternative was the nearby Preston Union Workhouse, the institution was always oversubscribed. From the time of first admission in November 1888, a total of 1630 children passed through the orphanage during its 94 year existence.

Although the admissions register records several casualties, the First World War scarcely figures in the school log book. Headmaster Robert Jones resigned his post and enlisted in 1914 and the armistice was celebrated with a half-day holiday. One former orphan also recalled knitting khaki socks for soldiers, but claimed the war was over before she had finished her first pair.

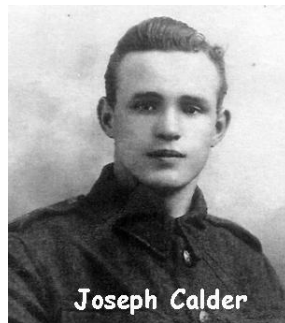
Of the 127 old boys who enlisted, 18 were killed and large numbers wounded and disabled. Two former orphans won the DCM and 5 were awarded the MM. The war memorial was paid for by old boys and girls and unveiled on October 18th 1924. It contained 17 names, with 4 from the Second World War being added more recently. It consists of a 6 foot polished granite plinth on which stands a

white marble statue of a soldier with rifle reversed. The inscription reads:

"In loving memory of the old boys of the Harris Orphanage who fell in the Great War 1914-1918. They died the death of honour for God, King and Country. Erected by their orphan companions."

Those commemorated served in the British Army, RFC, CEF and AIF and died in theatres of war from France and Flanders to Mesopotamia. Airman Richard Crane was killed in a training accident in Canada, another Pte Percy Clitheroe (CEF) died in the flu epidemic in 1919.

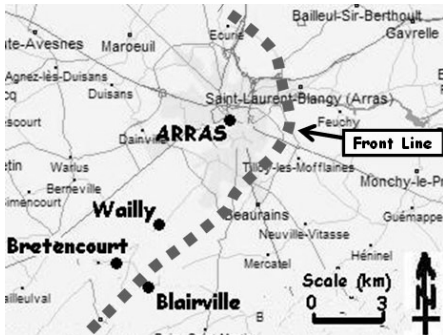
While Sgt Robert Tye 2nd Bn South Lancs Regt was one of the MM winners.



The story of Pte Joseph Calder 200845 (pictured) is perhaps a more typical one. He was born in Preston in 1897 and entered the orphanage in 1902, his older brother and sister having been admitted the previous year when their father, a railway worker, had been tragically killed while trying to restrain a runaway horse. Three years later when their widowed mother remarried the family was reunited. After leaving Emmanuel School, Joseph worked at Calvert's cotton mill in Aqueduct St, near to his home on Fylde Rd.

He enlisted on 23rd October 1914 with 1st/4th Bn Loyal North Lancs Regt aged 19. After home service in Swindon and Sevenoaks he landed in France in May 1915. His battalion was based in the

area between Wailly and Bretencourt, south of Arras, from early February 1916.



Here he was one of 60 volunteers for a special raiding party. On June 28th they were to take part in a co-ordinated daylight raid on enemy positions along a 2 mile front involving 5 other groups drawn from the Liverpool Regt and Lancashire Fusiliers. A mock up of the target trenches at Blairville was used for intensive training and they were issued with the short Lee Enfield. Bayonets had been sharpened and they had drawn their grenades the previous day, but the attack was postponed. Nevertheless they were ready and in good heart when at 5.30 pm the barrage finally opened. However, an unfortunate change in wind direction resulted in the gas and smoke screen lifting, so that the advancing raiders were completely exposed. All hell was let loose 50 yards from the German lines as rifle, machine gun and trench mortar fire was directed at the attackers. A survivor recalled "Someone shouted 'On the Kellys' (a nickname they had adopted) and on we went but were cut down like corn. The Jerrys were 2 deep in their trenches and we realized we were done." The situation was clearly hopeless and as a result an orderly withdrawal took place.

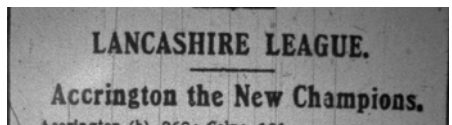
The Divisional Commander claimed that "great damage and loss [had been] inflicted on the enemy" and added that

"The gallantry, devotion and resolution shown by all ranks were beyond praise." Seventeen other ranks were wounded and three officers and 7 men were killed. Joseph Calder was among them. His body was never recovered and he is commemorated on the Arras Memorial and Preston's own memorial in the Harris Library.

In 1982 the trustees sold the Grade II listed complex to the University of Central Lancashire who funded a much needed restoration programme for the memorial, which had deteriorated as a result of years of neglect and vandalism. In 2006 the orphanage passed into private ownership and plans for redevelopment mean that the future of this historic site is uncertain. However the memorial remains a focus for remembrance for the local community, and if the sacrifices made by former orphans in both wars are to be properly remembered then it is essential that the undertaking given by the Town Council to accept the memorial and hand it down to posterity is honoured.

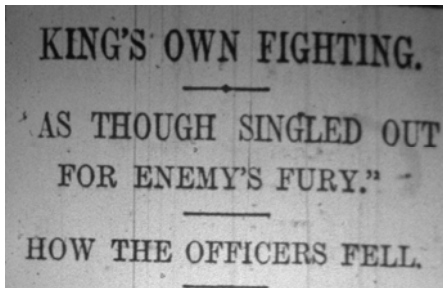
LANCASHIRE CRICKET & THE GREAT WAR: TD

Within days of war being declared in August 1914 Lancashire continued their mediocre form when playing Essex in the County Championship and Accrington stole a march on their rivals by defeating Rishton in the Lancashire league whilst many other matches were called off due to wretched weather.



On 7th September page 2 of the Lancashire Daily Post declared

Accrington to be the new champions and also told how the Kings Own "had been



singled out for the special fury of the (German) onslaught" with Col Dykes shouting encouragement to his men as he fell. Surrey won the County Championship which was then suspended from 1915 to 1918. Geese were kept on the grass at Lords whilst all suitable space at Old Trafford was used as a hospital.

In 1915 Accrington's Jimmy Ramsbottom and Alan Walmesley were both in the army but the club still won the Lancashire league championship undefeated. The 1916 season was played without professionals and Accrington won the championship again ending two points above East Lancs. League cricket was suspended in 1917 and 1918 with smaller knock out cup competitions taking place.

When the Lancashire league resumed in 1919 Accrington were not weakened by war losses but the same could not be said for Lancashire CCC. The Remembrance Plaque close to the dressing rooms in the Old Trafford Pavilion carries the names of 5 players killed during the war:

Major Harold Garnett, South Wales Borderers (batsman and wicket-keeper) with 5798 runs and 203 caught/stumped over 152 matches. Killed near Cambrai in December 1917.

Lieutenant Alfred Hartley, Royal Garrison Artillery (batsman) with 5049 runs in 116 matches. Killed North West of St Quentin in October 1918.



Private John Asquith Atkinson Nelson, Cheshire Regiment (batsman) with 7 runs in 1 match. Killed east of Ypres, August 1917

Lieutenant William Knowles Tyldesley, Loyal North Lancs (batsman, one of the famous brothers) with 2979 runs in 87 matches. Killed South West of Ypres in April 1918.

Captain Egerton Lowndes Wright, Ox & Bucks LI and Brigade Major 6th Infantry Brigade (batsman) 1638 runs in 37 matches. Killed South West of Arras in May 1918.

(Plaque c/o Lancashire CCC, statistics www.cricketchive.co.uk/Lancashire/)

OH GOD HOW MYSTERIOUS AND STRANGE ARE THY WAYS TO TAKE OUR DEAR LAD IN THE BEST OF HIS DAYS – Pte W Rayner East Lancs Regt

CALVERT'S EXPLOITS: TD (& Gorton Reporter)

When researching the story of Private Rigg for the November 2009 Despatch I came across an article in the Gorton Reporter of 7th November 1914 about another Kings Own soldier.



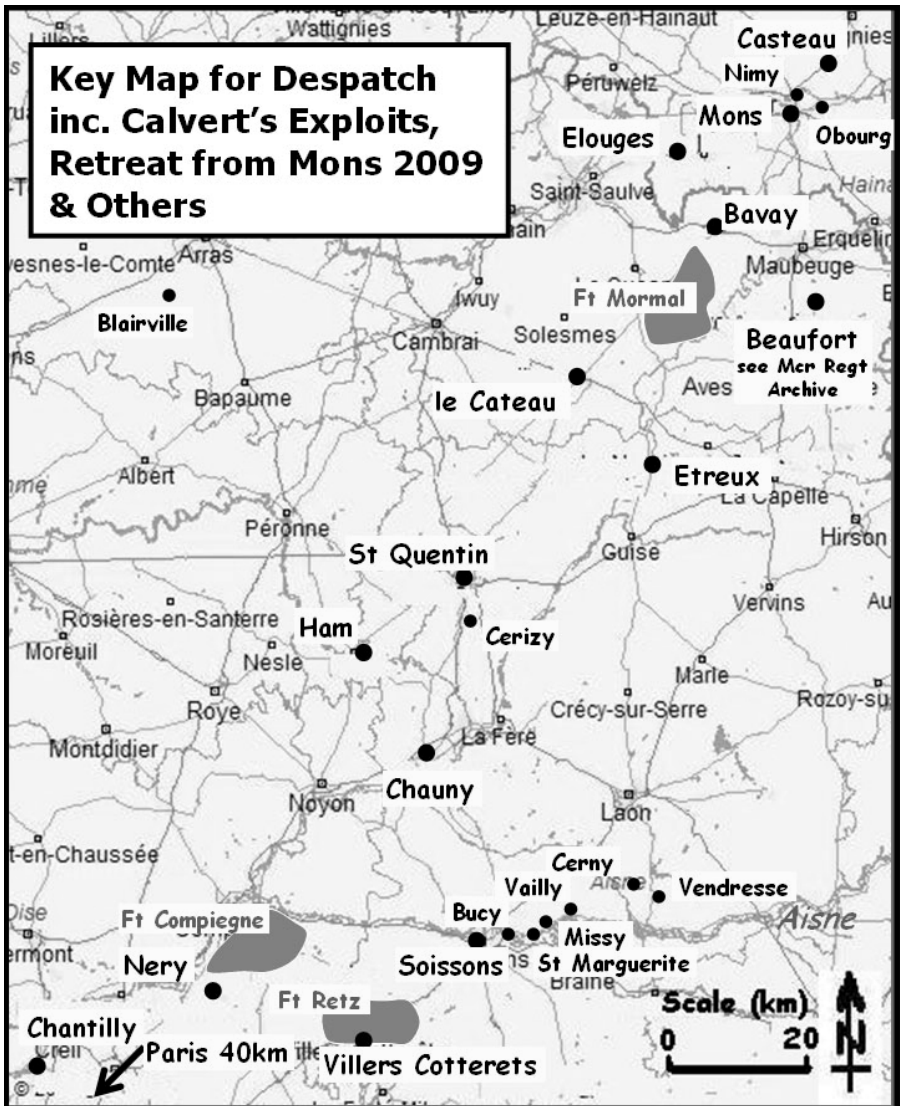
Richard Calvert was born early 1893 in Hayfield, Derbyshire, the second son of Arthur and Elizabeth Calvert. He had two younger sisters and in 1911 worked as an iron turner and lived at the family home in Gorton. He enlisted in the Kings Own on 3rd September 1913 and on 23rd August 1914 disembarked Boulogne as a Lance Corporal. The Gorton Reporter takes over the story....*he went right into the firing line at le Cateau to cover the retirement from Mons. On the 26th the regiment were taking up position when they were surprised by the enemy and had to retire. He was separated from the rest of his regiment and found himself behind the German lines about 20 miles north of St Quentin.*

He set off on foot to St Quentin arriving there on the 28th. Here his experience was decidedly rough. He had to forage for himself and sleep as best he could in haystacks, barns or outhouses. He was considerably helped by French peasantry. From St Quentin he journeyed on foot to Ham where he dropped across a straggler, Private Owen, of the Lancashire Regiment. They set out together - comrades in distress - and walked from Ham to Chauny, reaching that place on August 31st, where the enemy was in possession of the town. This caused the two to be careful in their movements. On September 3rd

they had to hide in a cornfield for the Germans were coming up with reinforcements.

The day following the two comrades ventured forth with the intention of going to Soissons but an unpleasant surprise was forthcoming in the fact of their running into a patrol of Uhlans who took the pair prisoner. They were dispossessed of rifles and ammunition, but the rifles were returned later for the prisoners to carry. The latter were then taken to the transport wagons which were encamped about two miles outside Chauny. The two men were stripped of all their clothes with the exception of their shirts and placed in a transport wagon.

Towards dusk of that day Lance Corporal Calvert determined to escape and asked his companion to take the same risk. The latter declined in fear of being shot by the sentries. Lance Corporal Calvert managed to get away alone, and ran into the town of Chauny where he found a Frenchman standing at his door, who, after explanations took him inside his home and accommodated him for the night very hospitably. Next morning his host supplied him with a civilian suit and advanced him five francs and advised him to set off for Paris 130 miles distant, by way of the canal. Lance Corporal Calvert acted on the advice but on the way had to pass through the German lines. The journey took a week to complete. The first place en route where he procured a bed was at racing stables in Chantilly. Here English stable lads were kind to him. He stayed there one night and arrived at Paris next day by a motor car which had come to the racing stables. Arrived in the capital he reported himself at the British Embassy from whence he was sent to the Red Cross Society and provided with a change of linen, etc.



In the course of the next day or two he was sent off to the Headquarters of General French, afterwards rejoining his regiment at St Marguerite on the Aisne. They remained there in the firing line until October 2nd after which the Kings Own moved to Flanders. After 3 days in trenches he was invalided back to a military hospital in Edinburgh with exposure. Early November 1914 he was

convalescing at home in Gorton before returning to depot in Lancaster.

Evidently he never recovered his health and was discharged due to sickness on 19th November 1915. He died in 1923 aged 30.

A Favourite Postcard: Andrew Brooks

Strictly this is one of a group of similar cards from Friedrichsfeld POW camp. However this is the only cricket team I have for this camp or any other POW camp. There must have been another team on the camp as I presume the Germans would not have been too keen on away fixtures! There are seven football team postcards, including an Irish team with shamrocks on their jerseys and one of the French 1st eleven (wonder if they had a cricket team?).

Friedrichsfeld was one of the larger POW camps and is described as having an open space in the centre of the camp for football and tennis. On the reverse of all the cards there is a censor mark for the camp and many have a second censor mark for Minden POW camp. I have no explanation for the second mark



other than that the cards may have been developed and printed at Minden.

On the reverse of the cricket card is written in ink;

M.Berry, 18th K.L.R. att. 1st K.L.R.

Friedrichsfeld bei Wesel, Rhineland, Germany.

To Mrs Berry, 46 Curate Road, Clumoor, Liverpool, England.

So far I have not been able to identify this man from the King's Liverpool regiment from the Medal Index Cards.

MUSEUM REPORTS

Kings Own Royal Regiment Museum, Lancaster: Peter Donnelly

In the exhibition currently running (see back page) letters on display, some for the first time, include those to and from ordinary soldiers of the regiment as well as letters from Lord Kitchener and Douglas Haig. Local correspondence includes that between a former Lancaster school teacher to a pupil about life as a soldier in training in October 1914. Original letters and packaging from the years following the war illustrates the range of medals, commemorative

scrolls and certificates sent to those who had served and their families.

King's Regiment: Karen O'Rourke (Curator)

The plans for displays of the King's Regiment collection within the new Museum of Liverpool (NML) are now well underway. The building itself is almost complete and work has begun on the internal fit-out. The next year will see the huge empty shell of the building begin to fill up with cases, walls and display areas. Once we have these structures ready, the curators and museum staff can begin to add in the objects and images which will bring the museum to life.

The King's objects are featuring in several areas within the building, but the main focus is the First World War exhibition, due to open in the spring of 2011 and the Regimental gallery, currently due to open towards the end of that year.

The objects have been selected from our extensive collections and are all being looked at, cleaned and prepared by our conservators ready for display. I am writing information panels to accompany the objects.

The story of Liverpool in the First World War is huge and we do not have space to tell the complete story. We have tried instead, to capture small snapshots of the Liverpool story - looking at what was happening at home and at the front. We have also decided to focus on the Battle for Guillemont Village where a vast amount of Liverpool men were killed or injured in a relatively short space of time. The King's gallery will tell the chronological story of the regiment and will use many of the objects previously on display in the popular City Soldiers gallery of Museum of Liverpool Life. We are also hoping that we can provide some helpful databases on gallery that will answer some of the questions that are most frequently asked of us regarding family history. As can be imagined it is a very busy time at the museum and there never seem to be enough hours in the day!

This unfortunately means that our enquiries service remains suspended. It was a difficult decision to make to stop answering enquiries, but at the moment we have to focus on making the museum visit the best experience we can. I have tried to provide a comprehensive list of alternative resources for any enquirer who does contact us and this seems to be proving helpful.

We have had some wonderful offers to the collections recently. The contemporary material is particularly interesting as we need to build a stronger post-Second World War collection. Of course we will be covering the history of the regiment from the 17th Century onwards, but I am really keen to take a better look at the contemporary story and how the 'Kingo's' have evolved. We have also agreed to add the core of the Liverpool Scottish collection to our collections here at NML - the transfer of material will be a slow and complicated process, but we are pleased that we could offer a home to such a magnificent collection and are looking forward to continuing to work with the Liverpool Scottish Trust.

Plans to make the collection and archive as accessible as possible are still on-going and I cannot at the moment offer any further confirmation of when we will resume enquiries and when we will be able to offer access to the archive. We are working towards making the collection as accessible as possible, but for the time being at least we cannot allocate any staff time for such a service.

HE WENT TO SHOW IF NEED MUST BE
HOW BRAVELY BOYS COULD DIE - Lance
Corp C V M Powers Royal Guernsey LI

Liverpool Scottish: Ian Riley (Honorary Secretary)

Since the loss of the Botanic Road premises in 2008, much has happened but somewhat gradually. Our best news is that the Liverpool Scottish War Memorial, in bronze by H Tyson Smith who was also responsible for the panels on the St George's Plateau cenotaph, is to be placed within St George's Hall, one

of Liverpool's finest buildings. Additionally, the Colours presented by King George VI to the Liverpool Scottish, the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders, in 1938 have now been laid up in Liverpool Town Hall and are in a fine position on the main staircase.

The Trustees have decided that the best interests of the collection and the heritage of the Liverpool Scottish will be served by passing the core of the collection of artifacts to the Museum of Liverpool, part of National Museums Liverpool, which already holds the King's Regiment collection. The new Museum of Liverpool on the Pier Head is scheduled to open in the spring of 2011 and several museum trustees are also members of the King's Regiment Museum Advisory Committee. The possibility of successfully establishing another dedicated Liverpool Scottish Museum with limited resources both in finance and, particularly, in manpower seemed remote with the ever-present possibility that we might be faced with another accommodation crisis when we were all ten years older. We are working with the Museum of Liverpool to identify and transfer core items; unfortunately, staff members at the Museum of Liverpool are also under pressure in preparing the opening exhibitions. Other material will be made available to other museums (such as the Museum of Lancashire and regimental museums in the North West as appropriate) or disposed of in accordance with the ethical policy suggested by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council.

Meanwhile the Liverpool Scottish collection has loaned items to the Museum of Liverpool for their opening exhibition on the Great War; this is to be distinct from the permanent King's Regiment gallery. We have also provided

material for an exhibition at the Hooge Crater Museum on the Menin Road outside Ypres/Ieper that will focus on the Liverpool Scottish and the 'Battle of Hooge - 16 June 1915' (officially known as the First Action at Bellewaarde). This exhibition will run throughout 2010. Additionally we have displays at Altcar Rifle Range and at the Headquarters of the Reserve Forces and Cadets Association in Liverpool. We are seeking a location for our 'commando' display that marks the part taken by Liverpool Scots in special forces operations in WW2 (including St Nazaire when they went ashore in kilts). This has been the subject of a recent book by our Honorary Curator, Dennis Reeves. We have also assisted in research for several books and a student has attached herself looking at mining and tunnelling operations with the 55th (West Lancashire) Division.

We continue to seek funds in the form of donations for our research work, required to ensure the continued conservation of key items and to assist with the cataloguing and digitising of the large archive of material that must make the Liverpool Scottish one of the best documented Territorial battalions, especially in respect of the First World War. This archive is presently located in a military office in Liverpool, where we are guests, and we continue to receive queries through our website, sadly slightly out of date because of other commitments, and we also receive a steady run of personal visitors. The physical future of this archive is still under discussion but our priority would eventually to place it in a location where public access can be guaranteed.

The Honorary Secretary has recently completed his MA in First World War Studies at Birmingham University, delayed a year by the disruption of

museum closure, and as his dissertation took in some aspects of the training of the 55th (West Lancashire) Division, he would be happy to discuss these issues with anyone to aid his further research.

MAY WE STRIVE TO FULFIL THE
IDEALS FOR WHICH HE
SUFFERED AND DIED – 2nd Lieut
Alfred Stanley Martin The Queen's

Manchester Regiment Archive: Tom Philips, Salford University Military History Placement Student (+P)

A recent discovery at the Manchester Regiment Archive proves that fresh material on the study of the Western Front is still coming to light over 90 years since the First World War ended. An extremely large map of Northern France and Belgium, over 230 centimetres by 280 centimetres, was unearthed during an attempt to add the backlog of un-catalogued material to the main collection of the Manchester Regiment, see map portion on our website. The map, which had sat untouched and unrecognised for years, covers some 25,000 square miles of territory, and includes the major cities of Brussels, Amiens, Bruges, St. Quentin and Ypres, as well as major battlefields such as the Somme.

Perhaps the most striking feature of the map, however, is the markings on it that give some clue to its history. A series of blue and pink lines, some drawn in pencil and some painted in watercolour, penetrate the entire right hand side of the map, turning what would otherwise be a sleepy part of the Low Countries into a fiercely debated contest for military supremacy. The blue lines run in series down from the Belgian coast to the French forest of St. Gobain marking out

the trench-lines of the German front-line across the entirety of the Western Front in each step of the Hundred Days Campaign - the final Allied offensive of the War in 1918. The furthest lines on the right of the map are dated, and finish with the ill-dated 11th November, at 11 o'clock.

Why exactly a map of this kind would be deposited to a regimental archive remained unclear for weeks after its discovery; however, a clue as to its origin is printed at the bottom of the gigantic piece. Underneath the markings of French towns, villages and forests lies an official stamp: "Geographic Section - General Staff No. 2364". Normally maps of this kind would normally be mounted on walls of the War Office for Generals to ponder, or in this case in field Headquarters. Yet still this does not answer the question as to how it came to reside in the archives of the Manchester Regiment.

Despite its clues, the map would still have largely remained a mystery had a small almost illegible note not been written on the reverse of the map. Originally belonging to the H.Q. of the British Army 5th Corps, the map was taken by officers of the 13th Battalion of the Manchester Regiment when the H.Q. was abandoned by the 5th Corps at Beaufort. This grim souvenir of a bloody campaign would have otherwise have been left behind.

Now that mystery of the 5th Corps Map has been solved, the map has finally been catalogued and is available for all to see (archive reference number MR4/2/2/180).

The Manchester Regiment Archive is available for consultation at the Tameside Local Studies and Archives Centre. For more information on the collection, please go to

**Lieutenant Colonel Brereton Fairclough
C.M.G., D.S.O., T.D.: Jane Davies
(Curator, QLR Museum)**

Late last year the museum received a phone call from a retired Officer located in Somerset. He had found, amongst the costumes of an amateur dramatics society, a WW1 service dress jacket (see back page) that once belonged to Lieutenant Colonel Brereton Fairclough. It was in fairly good condition and still had the collar dogs (South Lancashire and Pioneer) and medal ribbons attached to it.



Lieutenant Colonel Breton Fairclough was a member of the illustrious Fairclough family who were associated with the South Lancashire Regiment Volunteer and Territorial Forces from 1890 until 1960. Brereton himself joined the 1st Volunteer Battalion in 1893 and commanded the second draft of Volunteers sent to South Africa in 1899. At the outbreak of the First World War he was the Commanding Officer of the 1/4th Battalion.

On the 12th February 1915, the Battalion, under Lieutenant Colonel Fairclough embarked at Southampton and sailed for Le Havre. Fairclough was to command his men for the next three years before being invalided home in October 1917. He had already been injured once before whilst taking part in the Somme offensive in 1916. For his services in command of the 1/4th Battalion he was made a Companion of

the Order of St Michael and St George and in 1918 was awarded the Distinguished Service Order. Fairclough was also Mentioned in Despatches five times and was later promoted to Colonel.

Apart from commanding the Pioneer Battalion with distinction, it can also be argued that Brereton Fairclough, along with his sister Helen, was responsible for the Red Rose design of the 55th Division. In 1915 all lettering on vehicles had been abolished and replaced by unit badges. Fairclough suggested that the Red Rose of Lancaster would be the appropriate emblem for the Battalion and his sister designed it. When the West Lancashire Division reformed, Lieutenant General Sir Hugh Jeudwine was 'so impressed by the territorial significance of the Red Rose used by the Battalion that he directed that it should be used, with modifications, as the distinguishing badge for the whole Division.'

The service jacket is currently undergoing conservation but will be on display later this year along with sketches of scenes drawn by Fairclough during his time in France and Flanders.

WOULD TO GOD I HAD DIED FOR
THEE MY SON – DAD – Lance Corp
J E Hall East Surrey Regt

Museum of Lancashire, Preston: Stephen Bull (Curator)

Funding from the Heritage Lottery and Lancashire County Council will transform the Museum of Lancashire by the provision of six interactive galleries along with new visitor facilities. The museum has closed whilst the work is carried out and the renovated museum is scheduled to open in May 2011.

The military centre-piece will be an atmospheric walk through a World War 1 trench with its authentic sounds, sights and smells. The trench will feature some near-unique exhibits and our First World War display space will also be considerably increased.

**FYLDE ROAD PRIMITIVE
METHODIST CHURCH BRASS PLATE**

When this church closed prior to demolition the War Memorial went to Leyland Lane Methodist Church where it languished, forgotten and unloved for over forty years. When Leyland Lane church was about to close I collected it and stored it in my garage. This year it has been accepted by the Museum of Lancashire for the last stage of their new Great War Gallery. Many thanks to George Glover of Penwortham for transforming it from black to shining gold.

Joe Hodgson

**EXHUMING LT. COL. SIR GILBERT
MACKERETH MC: Terry Dean (+P)**

In my talk last year about "Several Battalion Commanders" of the 17th Battalion Lancashire Fusiliers one of the five officers I spoke about was Gilbert Mackereth (GM). After service as a private in the Royal Fusiliers he was commissioned and joined the 17th battalion Lancashire Fusiliers in France in September 1916 as a 2nd Lieutenant, a position he held until February 1917. He was awarded the Military Cross in April 1917. In August 1917 he was seriously wounded, rejoined his battalion in June 1918 and commanded the battalion from August



1918. A rate of promotion that was meteoric.

After the war he joined the Diplomatic Service, married in 1921 and sadly from the viewpoint of this article had no children. He served in the Middle East, East Africa and was Consul-General in the East Indies in 1946 when Japanese troops were used to maintain law and order. During his final appointment as Ambassador to the Republic of Columbia from 1947 to 1953 he was knighted. In retirement he lived in San Sebastian, Spain until his death in 1962.

Last summer we travelled to France via Santander. Before setting off Manu Lizarta of San Sebastian Cemetery Authority identified Sir Gilbert's grave in the All Saints sector of Polloe cemetery. We called to say hello and leave our token of remembrance. He lies alone and his headstone reads "In Loving Memory of Sir Gilbert Mackereth KCMG MC". Evidently his burial had been arranged by Lady Mackereth.

Last October I received the following email from Cristina Garcia in San Sebastian:

Dear Mr Dean,

I presume it was you who left those lovely poppies and remembrance note at Lt Col MacKereth's grave here.

I am writing because recently the local Council has left also a note, but of eviction.

Apparently, those graves whose taxes haven't been paid for a long time are going to be disposed of and sold to other people.

I happen to like those old graves a lot, and I think maybe it could be saved if Lt Col.'s descendants are interested. Or perhaps they would like to retrieve his remains?

I immediately contacted Manu Lizarta to establish what was happening. He

advised me that his (GM's) "*grave is not regularized ... taxes are not paid... so this grave is going to be disposed of.*" He told me he only had the name of Lady Mackereth and wondered whether I had details of Sir Gilbert's family.

Having tried unsuccessfully to locate descendants of Sir Gilbert when doing my talk I got my bike out and pedalled off to think. I decided to contact a local MP and MEP, Sir Robert Atkins. As a Knight of our Realm himself with contacts in government here and in Brussels I thought Sir Robert could be helpful. I told Manu what I was doing and asked him not to dig up Sir Gilbert until further notice. Sir Robert was honest to admit the contents of my email "*throw me completely*" and asked whether I had contacted the Regimental Association.

Mike Glover the Lancashire Regimental Secretary of the Fusiliers thought the case "*very interesting (was) not sure what the Regiment/Association could do (and was) very much focused on current casualties in Afghanistan.*" I told Sir Robert what Mike Glover had to say. After telling Sir Robert, this he indicated he had "*no advice to offer as yet (and) what about the media?*" I told Sir Robert I would get back to Manu to see if he would tell me how much is owing on Sir Gilbert's grave and what they would do with his remains, so we would have all the information if we decide to publicise the story.

Last December Manu told me the money owing was 330 Euros and the cost of removing Sir Gilbert was 662 Euros. He also said "*if there is not anybody to take care of this we are going to take his remains off and give the grave to some one else.*" He went on to say "*it is not an immediate action but is the solution we give to these graves*". I wrote back to Manu just before last Christmas

asking "*if the money is not paid exactly how would you dispose of (Sir Gilbert's) remains.*"

When no reply was forthcoming to my question I mentioned the problem to Carlos Martinez, a Spaniard from Majorca who attends my gym. He helpfully telephoned Manu and ascertained Sir Gilbert would be cremated and the remains placed in a communal area in the cemetery, which is what happens to many Spaniards.

I then considered a number of possible options ranging from leaving things to Manu (i.e. "Do Nothing") to pursuing Lottery funding so that Sir Gilbert could rest in peace a little longer, but I judged the latter approach was not a sustainable solution. The conclusion I reached was that Sir Gilbert should be reverently exhumed, cremated and his remains placed in the new Gallipoli Garden adjacent to the new Fusilier Museum in Bury. Mike Glover agrees and would consider instituting a suitable Roll for other remains placed in the Garden.

Conscious that it would be useful if even a remote family member were to support this approach Alan Norrie, a friend of mine, identified two individuals who have Sir Gilbert on their family trees. However they have not, as yet, responded to approaches.

That is the story to date as I hand it over to readers of Despatch and make it available to the media. I will now sleep easier at night knowing my concerns for Sir Gilbert are widely known and I have a viable plan subject to no fundamental objections or setbacks. Whilst awaiting any comments Manu has been advised of the situation. I have also acquainted the British Ambassador to Spain in the event I need his help to bring the WW1 hero home.

ON THIS YOUR WIFE'S BIRTHDAY YOU
GAVE YOUR LIFE FOR ME – Capt
Fredrick B Ratcliffe The Royal Dragoons

Retreat from Mons 2009: Peter Bamford (See map on page 9)

Most of my visits to the battlefields of France & Flanders battlefields have been spent in the Ypres area, so last year, for a different perspective I went on a Holt's tour covering the retreat from Mons. My aim was to appreciate the distances covered and areas fought in by my grandfather, George Thorneycroft of the 1st Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers (9th Infantry Brigade, 3rd Division, II Corps), during those fateful days 95 years before (almost to the week).

We could not have had a better guide for this tour than Professor Richard Holmes who knows the ground intimately, having ridden it on horseback, the subject of his excellent book 'Riding the Retreat'.

We started at Casteau at the plaque marking the site of the opening shot of the war, on August 22nd 1914, by Corporal E Thomas, of the 4th Royal Irish Dragoon Guards and learnt how undulations of the road facilitated the 'hiding' of horses & men. Only 50 metres from here is the plaque marking the last shot on 11th November 1918.

From here to the Mons-Conde canal at Nimy to follow the actions of the Battle of Mons (23rd August). The bridge here, defended by the 4th Royal Fusiliers, was the scene of the action which earned the first VCs of the Great War, for Private Sidney Godley & Lt. Maurice Dease, commemorated by the plaque pictured.

Eastwards along the canal the railway station at Obourg was where 4th Bn Middlesex Reg't. fought a rear-guard



action with an unknown private firing from the station roof until hit and killed. More than 400 men were lost in this action.

We spent some time visiting Saint Symphorien Cemetery, with the graves of the first & last casualties almost facing one another and that of Lt Dease VC. It's the most interesting cemetery I've visited with differing styles of German headstones, a German memorial column and quite unlike any other CWGC cemetery. On from there to Elouges where the remaining 250 men of a battalion of the Cheshires were forced to surrender, having bought valuable time for the retreat

We then started the retreat passing through Bavay & the Foret de Mormal to Le Cateau where Smith-Dorrien made the decision for II Corps to 'stand and fight'. Heavy casualties were inflicted on the following German forces by air-bursting shrapnel shells and artillery firing at point blank range over open sight. Another tactical withdrawal was made later in the day. There are few reminders or memorials in the area to this short but bloody action other than a hilltop one to the 2nd Suffolks.

This was the last large scale action in the retreat but many fierce and bloody skirmishes occurred.

One such was at Etreux where 2nd Munster Fusiliers acting as rearguard to 1st Div'n failed to receive orders to withdraw so continued to hold their position despite being surrounded.

After delaying the advance of six German battalions for 6

hours the 250 remaining men of

the Munsters were overwhelmed. The cemetery where many lay is in the orchard where they finally succumbed.

Another skirmish visited was at Cerizy where the 5th Cavalry Brigade with an artillery battery put flight to German Dragoons following a surprise cavalry charge. This prevented the German cavalry exploiting a 15 mile gap which existed between the two British Corps.

Our journey continued south through the Forest de Compiègne to Nery where, at dawn on 1st September, 1 Cavalry Brigade were surprised in the mist in their billets. They were watering the horses when the first shots fell among them, the Battery Captain, managed to get three guns into action, and although two were quickly silenced, the last remaining gun, served by Gunners Osbourne and Derbyshire, Sergeant Nelson, BSM Dorrell and Captain Bradbury, one by one silenced the German guns, until it was itself knocked out. VCs were awarded to Nelson, Dorrell & Bradbury and the Battery was awarded the battle honour 'Nery'. A visit to the local cemetery,



where many of the casualties lie, followed.

Next to Villers Cotteret and the Forest de Retz where the German advanced guard caught up with 4th Guards Brigade who had a costly running fight in the woods. The Guards Cemetery in the forest is a very tranquil and restful place despite being on the roadside.

This is where our retreat of 2009 finished, not completing the final miles that the BEF had marched in 1914. We were travelling in a luxury air conditioned coach not slogging the 200 plus miles footsore & battle weary in the heat of August 1914.

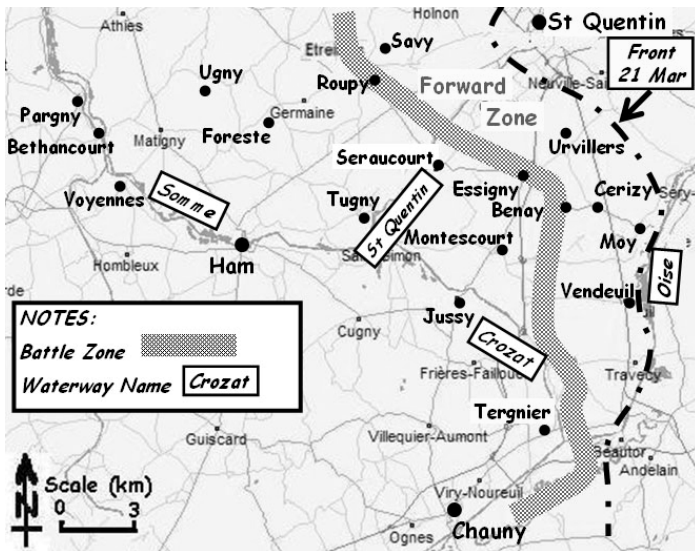
It was not the end of our trip though as we also covered the advance to the Aisne covering the crossings of III Corps at Bucy le Long and Missy and II Corps at Vailly. We also covered I Corps actions at Bourg en Comin, Vendresse and Cerny, laying a wreath in Vendresse Cemetery. Our final drive took us to the Chemin du Dames stopping for a visit to the Caverne du Dragon Museum before the long drive back to Calais and onwards to Blighty.

LINESMAN GOES TO FRANCE AGAIN: (& TD) (+S)

On 12th April Linesman (L) was in France again. The objective of the trip was to cover the section of line south/southwest of St Quentin which had been omitted when we commenced our cycle odyssey in 2002. Primarily we were covering the movements of III and XVIII Corps in the retreat during 21st to 23rd March 1918. We were armed with current maps of the area from (L) - see supplement, with trench maps on my Smartphone should they be needed. We also looked forward to gaining a better

understanding of the waterways and railways in the area.

We stayed at the IBIS in St Quentin making use of the free parking at the railway station during the daytime. Both cycling days we left town via the path adjacent to the St Quentin Canal.



Day one's key decision was to cycle south with a gusting NE wind and zig-zag across the forward zone and battle zone between the Oise and Crozat/St Quentin Canals. We viewed the location of the Boudicea, Station and Jeanne D'Arc redoubts in the forward zone and from the fortified village of Urvillers cycled south-west to Essigny. The loss of the Essigny - Bernay plateau was a key factor in the retreat to the Crozat/St Quentin Canal on the evening of 21st March. After Bernay we paused for photos at Cerizy, the site of the Cavalry action on 28th August 1914, visited the 5 cavalry graves in Moy Communal Cemetery before cycling the side of Oise Canal to Vendeuil. Then we re-crossed the battle zone to Montescourt and after passing over the Crozat Canal at Jussy went south to Tergnier. From there to

Chauny where we used the available time before our train back to St Quentin to call at the British Cemetery.

With the same gusting wind, next day we went west to see the ground over which the retreat to the Somme took place on the 22nd March. We called to

say hello at Savy, Roupy and Sereaucourt cemeteries before crossing the bridges at Tugny where Lieut. Knox of the Royal Engineers won his VC.

We then had a hard cycle to Foreste. Here we paused and wandered the interesting and unusual Communal

Cemetery with its scattering of graves and memorials. Then to Ugnay after which we cruised with the wind behind us to cross the Somme at Voyennes where the Lancashire Fusiliers also crossed in August 1914 during the Retreat from Mons. On arriving Ham we walked through the German dead to visit the CWGC cemetery then enjoyed the new rolling stock on the train to St Quentin.

The peculiarities of the Amiens - St Quentin train timetable had caused us to miss viewing the Somme north of Voyennes by bike so on our route to Calais we went via Bethencourt and Pargny and said "Hello" to the many "unknowns" in Pargny cemetery.

FAREWELL DEAR SON I LOVED YOU
WELL NO ONE BUT GOD AND I CAN
TELL - Corp B Connelly Lancashire
Fusiliers

DEAR EDITOR,

No letters received EXCEPT the one from Christina Garcia. See Page 15.

I look forward to receiving more letters to report in the next Issue.

BRANCH AFFAIRS



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Armistice Prize

Following the article in Bulletin 86 which suggested a national Armistice Prize, contact has been made with David Seymour one of the WFA Education Advisors. David's approach is to basically require submissions from pupils which are not coursework and are on one of a number of prescribed subjects. This is fundamentally different to "our" approach.

All High Schools in Lancashire and the southern part of Cumbria have recently been emailed to encourage coursework entries for our 2010 competition. The closing date is 1st August.

Also all schools have been provided with a copy of the Bulletin article suggesting a national Armistice Prize. Schools have been requested to reply to the email and indicate the degree to which they cover WW1 in their curriculum and whether any coursework is done by pupils.

MEETING REPORTS

Advertising in the Great War: November 2009 (31 attended)

Paul Michel's excellent PowerPoint presentation, illustrated with adverts and posters, discussed how brand names

affected the troops and how the troops were affected by brands. He gave us the stories behind famous brand names and how the War affected advertising.

Recruitment was the major advertising campaign, of which probably the most emotive poster was "Daddy, what did YOU do in the Great War?".

Food in the trenches was poor and the boredom of trench life meant that undue importance was given to meal times. Famous brand names at the time are still in use today, such as Tetley's, Nestle's condensed milk, Lifebuoy, Cherry Blossom and Pears soap. The two most successful at the time were Fray Bentos and Maconochies.

Smoking doubled during the War and some brands, like Little Japs, were special war brands, but the favourite was Woodbines. Sanatogen and Phosferine were advertised to help with nerves and there were other war products such as the Lifeguard Collapsible Periscope and Aquascutum field and trench coats.

This was a very interesting talk on a topic about which many Branch members had previously only a minimal knowledge. (Gaynor Greenwood)

The Greater Game - Sportsmen who fell in the Great War: Dec 2009 (30 att'd)

With a combination of research which got him under the skins of the individuals in his talk, intimate battlefield knowledge from The Nek to Regina Trench and enthusiasm for subject of his book, **Clive Harris** deserves a meritorious mention in Despatch for enthralling those present after the AGM. Starting with an analysis of whether August was the best month to go to war from the sporting viewpoint Clive considered the role of sport in keeping troops fit once static warfare reigned after 1914.

He then went on to consider the sports from golf to Australian rules, cricket to ice hockey in term of the usefulness of sporting venues to the war effort and sporting icons who served. In most cases his accounts of the individuals ended with the circumstances under which they met their end. The tennis star Anthony Wilding was laughing with comrades when his dugout suffered a direct hit from a German shell. (TD)

British Internees in Holland and Switzerland 1914-1918: January 2010 (21 attended)

Would those who were brave enough to venture into a chilled Lancaster for the North Lancs branch talk on a snowy evening just be greeted with the Christmas leftovers? Not a chance with **Andrew Brooks** twinkling away like tree lights, providing a master class on the treatment of British internees during the Great War!

I repeat similar observations that I made of his last talk, and that is his forte in extracting the maximum information from just a few lines written or postmarks stamped upon a picture postcard is quite remarkable, and more so when translated upon the events of the day. Most people know that internments took place, but only a very few have scratched below the surface. The Swiss and the Dutch governments, although clearly conscious of maintaining their neutral status, provided the facilities to house men excluded from the fray, initially those who stepped over borders such as the Royal Naval Division near Antwerp, later those ill, and then the prisoners of war who had been too long behind the POW camp wire. This effort needed to be underpinned by the belligerents in terms of the agreed medical qualifications for a

man to be an internee, a process occasionally bedevilled by purely military considerations such as the release of U-Boat crews and the labour requirements needing prisoners. Through a Power Point presentation of postcards and maps (well supported by his skilful PC operator!), we learned of the locations, the routes and the nature of the accommodation for the men, and even of the support given to stranded British holidaymakers!

It is quite refreshing in a programme of talks to get a balance between the accounts of "Over the Top" attacks on enemy positions, and a look at the less well-known background issues involved as a result of waging a total war. This talk clearly fell in the latter category, and Andrew provided a thoughtful insight into internees and prisoners, an aspect of the Great War that surely merits far more research than appears to have been done. I hope that for his next talk, he can provide more detail, having been able to extract and analyse the DNA from the postage stamps! (Barrie Bertram)

Medals , Badges and Tokens from the Great War: February 2010 (29 attended)



Bill Myers is an active member of the Cumbria WFA (and whenever possible he attends the North Lancs. Branch) and he presented our members with an authoritative talk based on his own

research and examples from his WW1 collection of medals and badges. The talk was illustrated throughout and personalised by describing the exploits of men from the local area. He commenced his talk with an explanation of the usefulness of the internet and how much research could be accomplished without leaving one's house. The CWGC website, Soldiers Died CD Rom and family history sites such as Ancestry provide masses of information on soldiers who fought in this conflict.

Joseph Baxter D.C.M. 46th Battalion Machine Gun Corps was one of the first to be discussed. He was born in Poulton, Lancaster and worked in the Ulverston Iron works before the war. As well as his D.C.M. and normal war medals, Joseph also wore the Silver War Badge as he had a 20% disablement due to his injuries. After the war he worked in the Barrow shipyards and died in 1948.

A Millom man, Sergt. Mudge M.M. of the 1/4th Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry (London Gazette May 1917) was the recipient of a Millom Heroes' Fund medal and this forms part of Bill's collection.

Bill also described the activities of Lt.Col. Paul Whetham of the Manchester regiment who was awarded the D.S.O. for his skill in co-ordinating the counter-attack during the German advance on the River Ancre in March 1918.

Munitions badges, YMCA War Workers badges and even badges for the Lancaster munitions fire were shown and discussed and needless to say there were many questions at the end of the talk , as well as an investigation of his display at the front of the room. (Andrew Brooks)

NOT MY WILL BUT THINE BE
DONE – Pte Baker Gloucs Regt

Suvla Bay 1915: March 2010 (35 att'd)

In his inimitable, rapid fire, style of delivery **Peter Hart** gave us an excellent talk on the disastrous 'August offensive' on Gallipoli,

The original plan had been to land the 11th Division on the night of 6th August on the beaches south of Suvla Bay to surprise and overwhelm any local Turkish troops and seize the commanding heights. It was thought Turkish defences would prevent a direct approach to these objectives so troops were to skirt the salt lake and approach from the unguarded north to secure them and prevent artillery being used against landing forces.. On 7th August they were to be reinforced by 10th Division and assisted by Anzacs forces to capture Sari Bair. Speed was essential in the actions to prevent the Turks moving up reserves...

These plans were diluted somewhat with no one left in overall command and no specific battle orders given for 10th Division, so the capture of the hills before dawn failed. Lack of leadership, shortage of water and Turkish resistance, meant that day's objectives had not been attempted let alone achieved. The Turks still held the high ground.

No further attempts at advancing were made for almost two days, by which time the Turkish reserves had advanced, severe casualties had been inflicted on 10th & 11th Divisions. 53rd Division was landed and thrown into battle. Imprecise briefing, a lack of maps and unclear objectives added to the chaos and demoralised troops already exhausted by battle, heat and lack of water.

Subsequent attempts to assault Scimitar Hill failed and were abandoned with nothing achieved despite severe casualties. Later attempts by 10th Division

to attack Kiretech Tepe made a little progress but were soon lost.

By the 15th the Corps Commander, Stopford, and many of the senior staff were sacked and replaced in a last ditch attempt to save the situation. It was hopeless, Allied troops were greatly outnumbered, Turkish reinforcements were arriving daily, they held the high ground and had artillery.

Further abortive attacks took place on the 18th & 23rd August but again nothing of importance was achieved; and many more casualties were incurred..

Peter concluded that this offensive must go down as an indictment of the British military system for its sheer incompetence and lack of leadership. (Peter Bamford)

Fromelles 1916: Apr 2010 (38 attended)

With the work coming to a conclusion on removing remains from the mass graves at Fromelles and re-internment in the nearby new cemetery, **Michael**



Senior's account of the events of 19th/20th July 1916 was very timely. Prevailing throughout over the erratic behaviour of the slide projector

remote control he set the scene by describing the formation of the 2nd Bucks battalion, some of the individuals in it and their fates. He likened them to a Pals battalion officered by local gentry.

After 18 months training they crossed to France and were introduced to trench life in June 1916. They were to form part of a two division assault to capture the German front line at Fromelles with the strategic objective of discouraging German troops being moved south to join the Somme battles. The Bucks were in

the British 61st Division of 1st Army and the other participating Division was Australian from 2nd Army.

The attack was launched at 6 pm on 19th July and whilst some success was achieved on the flanks, in the centre the British artillery was ineffective and the German strongpoint of the Sugar Loaf proved impregnable. A second phase attack by British and Australians against the Sugar Loaf was called off but the message to cancel did not reach the Australian who attacked alone and suffered heavy losses.

After the war efforts were made to locate 400 or so missing from the attack which eventually led to finding the mass graves adjacent to Pheasant Wood. The commemoration of the new cemetery will take place on the 94th anniversary of the attack on 19th July. (TD)

PROGRAMME OF FUTURE MEETINGS

(ALL MEETINGS ON MONDAY, 7.30 PM)

June 7th: *'Punishment in the Great War'*
- Bill Martindale (Cumbria and N.Lancs W.F.A.)

July 5th: *'The Rebuilding of Ypres'* -
Denise North (W.F.A.)

Aug 2nd: *'Aeronauts and Balloonatics'* -
Geoff. Barker (Bradford Mech. Inst. World War 1 Group.)

Sept 6th: *'German Commerce Raiders'* -
Dr. Graham Kemp (N. Lancs W.F.A.)

Oct 4th: *'War Graves and things...'* -
David Shackleton (N. Lancs. W.F.A.)

Nov. 1st: *'Chairman's Night'* -
Stan Wilkinson.

Dec 6th: *'A.G.M. and Christmas Social.'*
- An invitation to members to speak for ten minutes on any WW1 topic.

**Lt. Col. Brereton Fairclough's
Service Jacket (Page 14 refers)**



**King's Own Royal Regiment Museum,
Last Post Exhibition**



Several members of the Branch attended the preview night of the

exhibition in the City Museum, Lancaster on 19th March and enjoyed the hospitality provided. The exhibition, which runs until 12th June, features a combination of displays provided by the British Postal Museum & Archive on the role of the Post Office in the Great War and letters, cards and other items from the King's Own collection. A recreated regimental



postman's hut of the 1/5th Kings Own shows items that would be distributed by postman Corp. James Donohue from Blackpool. The Museum Report (at Page 10) describes some items from the museum collection that are on display.

It is an exhibition well worth a visit and in the adjacent room is a bonus for lovers of steam trains.

In addition to the exhibition there is a programme of special events. Details can be found on the museum's website www.kingsownmuseum.plus.com

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