



THE WESTERN FRONT
ASSOCIATION

Lancashire North Branch

Despatch

Issue 10: Nov 2012



Katie Hampson's sketch of the Menin Gate has been specially commissioned for this 10th Issue of Despatch. A former pupil in Blackpool Katie, now 19, is a university student and shows what the record number of entrants for this year's Armistice Prize could aspire to. More about Katie's work and the Armistice Prize submissions are inside Despatch. Also read about: Billy Bagot and how the Preston Pals are remembered on Preston Railway Station; how the students at the Staff College, Quetta helped win the war; of the Irishman who tutored many British Generals; of the unique photos taken by a 2nd I/C of a Lancashire battalion in 1914; and much more.....

Editor's Musing

On the evening of 27th July I was relaxing, glass in hand, when my mind wandered to speculate about what Brigadier General Reggie Kentish would think of the unfolding Olympic opening spectacle on TV. In 2011 I had told how Reggie was complimented by Haig for his work on officer training, motivation etc and briefly spoke of his role as Commandant of the British Teams at the 1920 and 1924 Olympics in Antwerp and Paris respectively. The TV spectacle was a far cry from photographs of the opening ceremonies in Reggie time.

Reggie's teams did well finishing 3rd and 4th in the medal tables respectively and on conclusion of London 2012 I speculated how he would have marvelled at this year's happening including the Paralympics.

As founder of the National Playing Fields Association one thing which would not please Reggie is the publicised loss of sports fields. Let's hope the petition against their loss is successful (I have signed it & mentioned his name!).

On a more pragmatic thought I am grateful to David and Pat Shackleton for 10 of the 13 Epitaphs in this Despatch and many more for future Issues.

**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**

**William BAGOT, Lance Sergeant 13181,
"D" Company (Preston Pals) 7th Battalion
Loyal North Lancashire Regiment: Terry
Dean**

When preparing Despatch and having regard to Paul Conlon's report about the commemoration of the Preston Pals

Memorial on Preston Railway Station (see Page 21), it seemed appropriate that the usual "In Memoriam" article should be a man from the ranks of the Preston Pals.

William Bagot ("Billy") of 3 Liverpool Street, Preston was the second son of George and Elizabeth Ann Bagot. He was employed in his father's butcher's shop prior to taking the oath on 7th



September 1914. He was 19 years 8 months old and would need to stand his tallest to meet the minimum height requirement of 5ft 3 inches when being examined (his recorded height was 5' 3¼"). He was one of the 219 men listed on the Preston Pals Roll of Honour



published by the Preston Herald and who left Preston Railway Station in September 1914 bound for Tidworth where they formed "D"

Company of the 7th Battalion Loyal North Lancashire Regiment (7LNL).

Together with the 7th battalions of the King's Own Royal Lancaster, East Lancashire and South Lancashire Regiments they composed 56th Brigade in 19th Division. The Battalion's early days were somewhat chaotic, the new volunteers having very few trained officers and NCOs to command them, no organised billets or equipment. By early July 1915 the Battalion was judged sufficiently trained to be mobilised and Billy crossed to Boulogne on the 17th.

19th Division was assigned to join the Indian Corps south of Merville. The



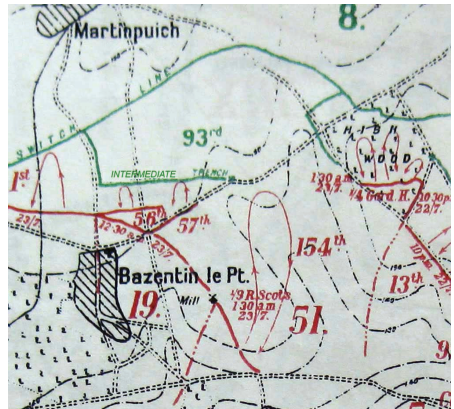
Battalion undertook intensive training in all forms of trench warfare going into the trenches with other regiments of British and Indian brigades. In September 19th Division were deployed to possibly take some part in the Battle of Loos and until late November 7LNL spent periods in the front line north of Festubert. On 19th October Billy was appointed Lance Corporal (unpaid).

In April 1916 19th Division was withdrawn into general reserve for battalion training prior to moving towards the Somme and on 22nd April Billy accidentally suffered a bayonet wound to his thigh. He was back with his battalion when they moved southwards from Estree Blanche in May.

On 1st July 19th Division were in reserve to 8th and 34th Divisions who attacked Ovillers and La Boiselle respectively and it was intended Billy's Division would continue the attack on La Boiselle after dark. However following the morning's failures 19th Division's attack was cancelled and on 2nd July 7LNL moved back to the railway cutting near Albert. Next day 7LNL moved

forward again to help secure La Boiselle where they were involved in action for 4 days, during the course of which the Battalion's Lieutenant Wilkinson gained a posthumous VC.

After a period in camp near Albert the 19th Division moved to attack the German's Switch Line north of Bazentin-le-Petit on 23rd July. However 7LNL could make no progress attacking the German's Intermediate Trench which was strongly held and they suffered very



heavy casualties in the process. They were relieved and moved back to dug-outs in Mametz Wood. Between 1st to 24th July the Battalion had 18 officers and 454 other ranks killed, wounded and missing. Billy was promoted Lance Corporal (paid) on 25th July and 2 days later was promoted further to Corporal. However he had suffered from his recent experiences and on 29th July he was evacuated to a Field Ambulance.

He was back with his Battalion after several days and on 3rd August moved with 19th Division to occupy the line firstly at Messines then in the Ploegsteert area. In October they moved back to the Somme and in November attacked south of the Ancre taking nearly 200 prisoners. 19th Division then moved out of the line in late November to the south of Doullens

and Billy had leave which allowed him to spend his last New Year at home.

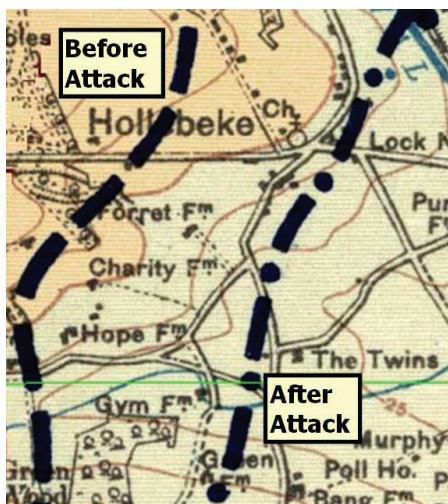
For the first half of 1917 19th Division saw no major action but in May prepared to take part in the attack at Messines and 5 days before the attack Billy was promoted Lance Sergeant. At 3.10 a.m. on the 7th June the nineteen huge mines were exploded and C & D companies led the Battalion's attack capturing all the objectives. In July more time was spent training prior to the next stage of the Third Battle of Ypres.

At 3.50 a.m. on 31st July all companies

Ottersteene where he died from his wounds on 2nd August 1917.

The 7LNL were relieved on the night of the 3rd/4th August by which time all the objectives had been taken. The Battalion was not called into offensive action again although casualties were suffered when holding the line. In early February 1918 manpower shortages led to the Battalion being disbanded like many others, so that other units could be brought up to strength.

Billy is buried in Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension and on 18th October we called to say "Hello" to him and left a small poppy wreath in remembrance.



HE GIVETH HIS BELOVED SLEEP – Lance
Sergt W Bagot Loyal North Lancs Regt

QUETTA CLASS 1913: Paul Conlon (+S)

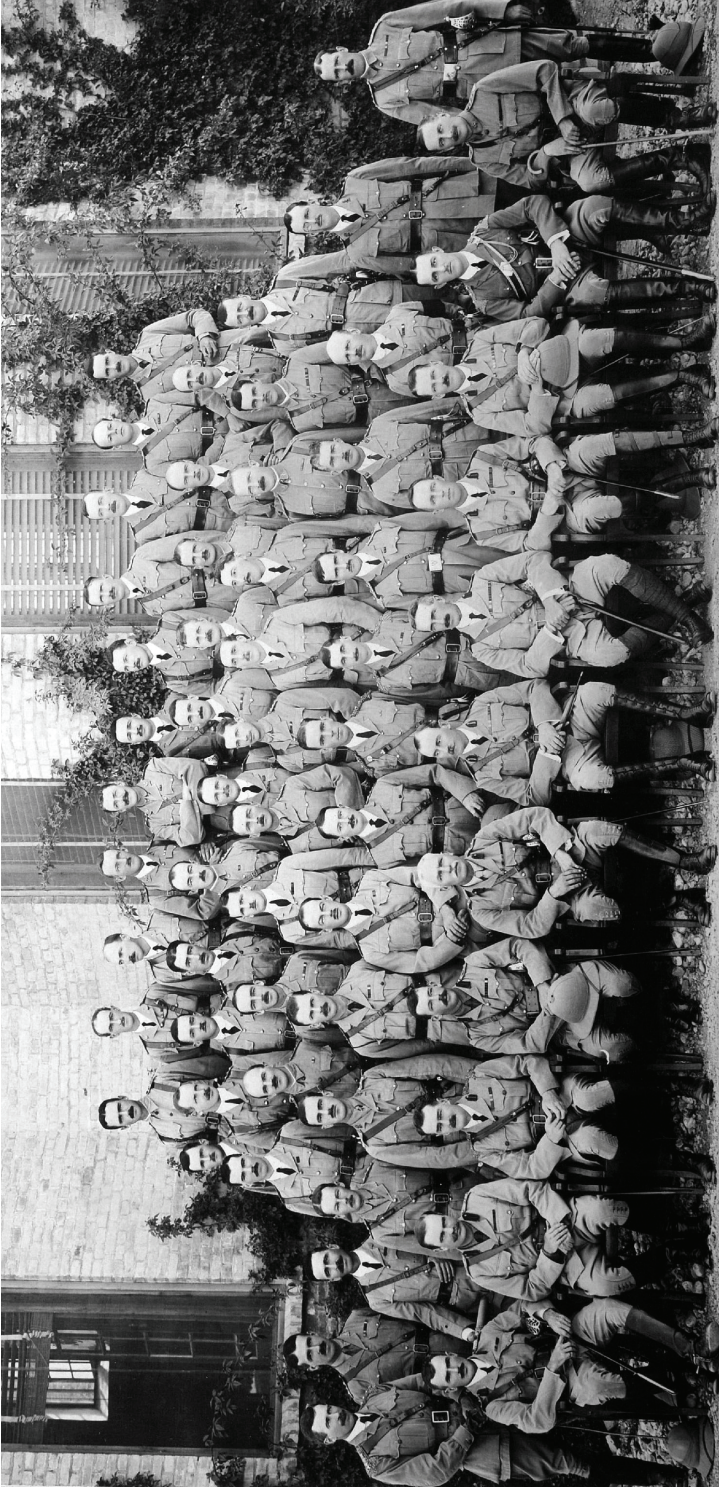
In last May's Despatch Terry Dean reported on the front page photograph showing the staff at the Staff College, Quetta in 1913. The photo was in the album of Captain Arthur Mordaunt Mills who was Adjutant of the college at that time. Mills had annotated names on many photos, including one showing the students at the college and Terry invited a reader of Despatch to examine the contribution made by the pupils to the war effort. A copy of the photo showing students and staff is across.

There were 51 students and information has been found on all of them. The class consisted of 49 Captains and 2 Majors, 3 of the class had already won the VC.

The students at Quetta were highly motivated career soldiers and had been identified as having potential for advancement. As such we could expect

of the Battalion attacked on a front of 700 yards south of Hollebeke but were held up 100 yards short of their objective. 122 Brigade to the immediate left of 7LNL failed to capture Forret Farm and enemy machine guns in the Farm and their artillery fire caused many casualties in the Battalion.

Billy's diminutive frame perhaps helped stop him being successfully being targeted by bullets but he could not avoid the indiscriminate artillery fire and he suffered shrapnel wounds to his chest and abdomen. He was taken to No 53 Casualty Clearing Station at



5: Hogg, Johnson, Brown, Tobin, Dixon, Duigan, McLaughlin, Anderson, Wilson, Teesdale, Meinertzhagen
 4: Palmer, Ogle, Wilmer, McPherson, Pope, Ponton, Bowring, Loch, Binny, Coningham, Villers-Stuart
 3: Howell, Crowley, Officer Clarke, Charles, Murray K, ??, Dent, Ogg, Cadell, Skipwith, Hutchinson
 2: Craster, Hanbury, Costello, Magniac, Carr-Harris, Powell, Macleod N, Gribbon, Gillies, De Burgh, Maitland, Fergusson,
 Rainsford- Hannay, Murray A, Wylly,
 1 Bottom (Staff/Students): Mills, De Pree, Taylor, Isacke, Austin, Braithwaite, Sheppard, Skeen, Shuttleworth, Macleod W, Hore-Ruthven

them to make a significant contribution to War

Casualties

They were never going to come through the War unscathed and ten of them were killed during the War. Four in Europe, 3 in Iraq, 1 in Egypt, 1 at Gallipoli and 1 in East Africa.

Capt F S Bowring: 22nd Punjabis, killed 22 November 1915, remembered on Basra Memorial.

Capt A M Brown: 47th Sikhs, killed 12 March 1915, buried in Guards Cemetery, Quinchy.

Capt E D Carr-Harris: Royal Engineers, killed 3 November 1914, named on Tanga Memorial, Tanzania.

Capt H B Dixon: Sherwood Foresters (Notts & Derby) Regiment 1st Battalion, killed 13 March 1915 and remembered on Le Touret Memorial.

Major N E Howell: 82nd Punjabis, killed 7 January 1916, remembered on Basra Memorial.

Major D W McPherson: 62nd Punjabis, Killed 16 November 1916, buried in Suez War Memorial Cemetery, Egypt

Lieut Col M Magniac: killed 24 April 1917, buried in Beurains Road Cemetery.

Capt W G Palmer: 113th Indian Infantry and 30 Squadron RFC, killed 5 March 1916, remembered on Basra Memorial.

Major F R Teesdale: 25th Indian Cavalry (Frontier Force), died 17 March 1916 and buried in Walton-on-the-Hill, Surrey

Major H G Wilmer: 14th King George's Own Ferozepore Sikhs, killed 5 July 1915 and remembered on Helles Memorial, Gallipoli Peninsula.

The first to be killed was **Captain R E Carr-Harris**, Royal Engineers. He was Canadian born in Kingston, Ontario and he was killed in the Battle of Tanga on 3



November 1914. This was an unsuccessful amphibious assault by 8000 men in East Africa, launched on 2 November 1914.

Coincidentally one of his fellow students Meinertzhagen was involved in the assessment of the German forces prior to this unsuccessful engagement; more about this interesting student later in the article.

The closest to home is **Lieutenant**

Colonel Meredith Magniac of the 1st Battalion Lancashire Fusiliers. He was



the son of the late Major-General FL Magniac. He commanded the 1st Battalion briefly at the end of 1915 and continuously from March 1916 until he was killed by shellfire at Monchy le Preux on 24th April 1917. He was awarded the DSO for his services at Gallipoli and mentioned in despatches in July 1916 when he commanded the Battalion in the sunken road on the Somme.

Achievements

Every single survivor from the class had been promoted by the end of the War and at the very least had reached the rank of Major.

As would be expected, these officers acquitted themselves with honour in action and the records show that 28 of them won the DSO amongst a host of other battle honours.

There are two notable high achievers and I'm sure that it is no coincidence that they had already been awarded the VC before they attended Quetta.

By the end of the War both Major EW Costello VC and Captain Hore-Ruthven VC had reached the rank of Brigadier General.

The highest overall achiever was **Brigadier General Sir Alexander Gore Arkwright Hore-Ruthven VC, GCMG, CB, DSO and bar** as he became the 10th Governor General of Australia serving for 9 years, 1936-1945. He is the longest serving Governor General in Australian history.



Brigadier General E W Costello VC CMG CVO DSO also has a local connection as he attended Stonyhurst College. He became Director of



Military Studies at the University of Cambridge.

Staff Officers

The rapidly expanding army needed highly trained and talented Staff officers and so it is no surprise to find that at least 24 of the class were holding Staff positions by 1918. Certainly more of them went on to hold Staff positions after the end of the war.

Interesting Students

Captain E de Burgh went on to become General Sir Eric de Burgh KCB, DSO, OBE and finished his career as Chief of General Staff, India. He was



the grandfather of the singer Chris de Burgh of 'Lady in Red' fame.

Captain W H Gribbon made Brigadier and commanded the 2nd Battalion the King's Own Royal Regiment (Lancaster) 1928-31 and his son also had a great military career. Major-General Nigel St George Gribbon became Assistant Chief of Staff (Intelligence) Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) 1970-72.

Captain Harry Walter Tobin reached the rank of Colonel and was a founder member of the Himalayan Club. 'Toby' obviously loved the mountains and lived in Darjeeling. He helped to organise the successful 1953 Everest expedition.

Captain Richard Meinertzhagen was awarded the DSO in February 1916 and reached the rank of Colonel. He



was a supporter of Zionism and was a member of the British Delegation to the Paris Peace Conference, with responsibility for the Middle East. Subsequently he was Chief Political Officer in Palestine and Syria then Military Adviser in the Colonial Office. Widely travelled, enigmatic and controversial he wrote a number of books and articles on ornithology. He was awarded the CBE in 1957.

A summary of the information I have in relation to all the students is in the Supplement on our website.

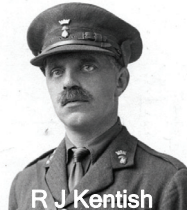
I THANK MY GOD UPON EVERY REMEMBRANCE OF HIM AS DYING, BEHOLD HE LIVES – Lieut Col Meredith Magniac DSO Lancs Fusiliers

**DOCTOR THOMAS MILLER MAGUIRE -
TUTOR OF GENERALS: Terry Dean
(+S)**

U.S. Army War College, Pennsylvania have provided information about Maguire's writing.

Thomas Miller Maguire was born about

In my presentation "Leadership, Morale, and Esprit de Corps: The Winning Factor?" about the life of Brigadier General R J Kentish (RJK) I mentioned that in 1895 his father sent RJK to Dr Miller Maguire an "Army Crammer" in order to pass the entrance exam to Sandhurst. I also mentioned that Maguire had defied my attempts to find his photo which was surprising with his many famous pupils including Generals Rawlinson, Smith-Dorrien, Byng, Gough, De Lisle. Chetwode, Field Marshals Plumer, Allenby, Henry Wilson and Winston Churchill.



What a difference a "c" makes? My investigations into Maguire were not helped by me wrongly transcribing his name into my notes as "Macguire" but after the first delivery of my talk in Lancaster I sent a DVD of my Powerpoint presentation to Jonathan Maguire in the Royal Irish Fusiliers Museum who had helped me considerably when I visited Armagh to gather information on RJK. After viewing my presentation Jonathan advised me that he was possibly related to Miller Maguire but more importantly he had passed my DVD to Miller Maguire's great grandson Brian Merry.

In April this year I received a photograph of Miller Maguire from Brian. When thanking him he told me more about his ancestors and I mentioned my idea of an article for Despatch. As well as help from Brian and family, papers by Lieutenant Colonel Geoffrey Demarest U.S. Army (retired) who studied at the

1850 in Bray Widelow, Ireland. His father was Rev Thomas C Maguire a Methodist Minister. He graduated from Trinity College, Dublin and in 1874 he was made Doctor of Law (LL.D) at Queen's University Dublin. In 1879 was appointed an examiner in English literature. In the early 1880s he married and started to raise a family in London.

He set up the Imperial War School jointly with Dr Chetwode Crawley and in 1883 demonstrated his knowledge in military matters with letters to the press concerning army waste through poor treatment of new recruits and on the subject of army entrance exams. In 1887 his first significant work, "*A Summary of Modern Military History, with comments on the leading operations*", was published.

In October 1890 the Morning Post contained a Notice advising he had opened a teaching establishment in Earls Court Square "to secure the most perfect preparation of candidates for all branches of the public service". On 5th November 1890 the notice, below, gave more information about the establishment.

C LASSES and LECTURES for the MILITARY and ALL PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS, 12 and 14, Earls-court-square, S.W., Under the direction of Dr. T. MILLER MAGUIRE And 3 and 4, Fly-price, Dublin, Under the direction of Dr. W. CHETWODE CRAWLEY. Parents and Guardians are informed that for the future the advantages of these Two Well-known Establishments will be combined. References are kindly permitted to a great number of former pupils. The Dublin branch has for a quarter of a century been one of the most successful of educational establishments, and for certain examinations, such as Royal Irish Constabulary Cadetships, has been without a rival. Gentlemen who have read with Dr. Maguire have for many years met with uniform success in the most difficult subjects, and his houses have had the highest reputation for the comfort and order secured to resident students. To this the parents of past pupils are prepared to bear witness, and references are permitted to most distinguished officers now living in London. There is no pretence at cramming, but every subject is thoroughly well taught by able and highly accomplished Lecturers with the gift of conveying their learning to others. Students who are backward will be individually looked after in a special manner. Officers who wish to read for the Staff College can refer to Gentlemen who are now working at 12, Earls-court-square, or to the majority of the officers now at the Staff College, who have read with Dr. Maguire. Classes will be held for the Preliminary Examinations for the Army, to which particular attention will be devoted, for Woolwich, Sandhurst, the Indian Civil Service, the Royal Irish Constabulary Cadetships, and the Staff College. Attention is called to the admirable arrangements made for resident students at 12 and 14, Earls-court-square. The handbooks, maps, notes (printed and otherwise), examination papers, charts, and very large mass of materials collected for many years by the Principals will be available in both establishments. Dr. T. Miller Maguire can be met by appointment either at 12, Earls-court-square, or at 1, Pump-court, Temple. A prospectus, with references, terms, lists of successes, &c., can be had on application. November 5.

Census records for 1891 show him living at 12 & 14 Earls Court Square with his wife, 4 children, 7 domestic servants and 2 visitors, one of whom was an Army Captain.

Maguire made it clear there was no pretence at "cramming" with every subject being taught thoroughly by specialist lecturers, subsequent notices gave information on the high success rate of his pupils in the various examinations. By 1897 Maguire's establishment occupied 10, 12, 14 & 16

Earls Court Square and there was even "a fine Riding School and a good Gymnastic Branch".

As already indicated Maguire was a commentator on military subjects and author. Well read among British students of strategy at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, his

matter-of-fact encapsulations regarding the marshalling and application of land power, couched always in History and Geography, remain relevant today. In several writings, Maguire offers a brief synthesis of what he accepts as timeless principles of military strategy.

Geoffrey Demarest's interest in Maguire was inspired by a paragraph he wrote in 1899 in the introduction to a book on military geography which,

he felt, is worthy for consideration today:

"Once the reader understands that soldiering and fighting are far from synonymous--that in a campaign combats are occasional while marching is constant - that before entering into battle a general must be most careful to secure his line or lines of retreat; he understands the leading principles of strategy, whether he can define the phrase to his satisfaction or not. He sees that a general whose road homeward or to his base is threatened or cut by a superior force

must, if he loses a decisive battle, be ruined as well as defeated; while a general who has secured his line of communication will not be ruined even if defeated, but can fall back, procure recruits, replenish his waggons, and begin to fight again with a fair prospect of success."

There remain available today at least sixty of his titles, although most are short pamphlets, lecture summaries, narratives, and editorials. Among his longer works are *A Summary of Modern Military History* (1887), *The Campaigns in Virginia* (1891), *Outlines of Military Geography* (1899), *Guerilla or Partisan Warfare* (1904), *Strategy and Tactics in Mountain Ranges* (1904), and *General Von Clausewitz On War* (1909).

Maguire was in his teens and early twenties when the American Civil War and the great German campaigns of 1866 and 1870 were the talk of Europe and these are among the historical elements that most immediately influenced Maguire's writing. In his later works, the Second Boer War, ominous military escalations on the Continent, early 20th century wars in the Far East, and the Balkan Wars all occupied Maguire's attention.

Maguire lamented that the officers schooled on the eve of the Second Boer War had not been made aware in official training of earlier engagements with the Boers. He pointed as a special example to the battle of Majuba Hill in 1881. Maguire's 1887 history included the following unlearned lesson:

"Still another point of great importance seems not to have been fully recognized, and this was that rapidity of loading, with increased accuracy and range, would no longer permit infantry in masses approach as heretofore a position defended by troops using breach loading

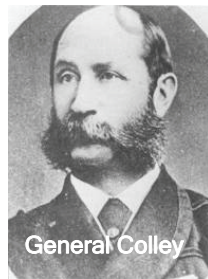
arms. ...the attempt to move in masses under fire had to be absolutely abandoned."

This is what British General Colley did at Majuba Hill to have his command wiped out, himself ignominiously killed, and the war lost. The same error would be repeated at the outset of the Second Boer War in 1899. It was this indifference to military history and preparedness that angered Maguire and apparently set the tenor of his commentaries after 1900. Repeated British failures to appreciate lessons that might be derived from a study of military history were a source of frustration to him.

Maguire commented matter-of-factly on thought processes in strategy above operational or theatre considerations. The selection of generals and unity of command; need for national intelligence; significance of environmental appreciation; imperative of advanced planning and flexibility; the overriding importance of logistical security; care of soldiers health; and problems of recruitment and training are all noted in his writings.

Maguire also spoke regularly on military matters to the Royal United Services Institution (RUSI), in the Prince Consort's Library at Aldershot and in November 1900 gave an address entitled "The Art of War" in Blackburn Town Hall.

Doctor Thomas Miller Maguire died in 1919. In a notice concerning his death the RUSI commented "that he was known to an earlier generation of soldiers as an Army crammer and to younger



members of the Institution as an admirable lecturer or as one who took a leading part in the discussions following the lectures of others and that his death will be very greatly regretted in the Army and amongst members of the Institution. His knowledge of military history was probably unrivalled; he was a born instructor and many officers now high in the Army owe their present positions to him."

Having learned about him I cannot help wonder what he would have written about some of the engagements in WW1 particularly 4th Army's attack on 1st July 1916 commanded by one of his former pupils General Henry Rawlinson. Also I ponder and awe at his contribution to teaching the stock of officers that secured victory in 1918.

A FAVOURITE POSTCARD: Andrew Brooks



A recently read crime novel centred on a group of women living in East Ham who gave out white feathers to men during WW1 has prompted this choice of postcard. Although I had seen a few picture postcards of the occurrence and read about it in books I thought it was a spontaneous reaction by some women and not brought about by an organised campaign.

Admiral Charles Penrose Fitzgerald who was supported by a prominent author, Mrs Humphrey Ward, organised the campaign in the first few days of the war. On the 30th August 1914 he handed out feathers to thirty women with the instructions to give them to men who were not in uniform. Public sentiment was divided and many people became increasingly critical as the campaign spread throughout the country. Any followers of the ITV drama 'Downton Abbey' will recall the incident that divided opinions in one of the early episodes when a group of women try to distribute feathers during a concert.

The campaign started to cause problems when civil servants and other employees in state industries came under pressure to enlist. The Home Secretary Reginald McKenna thought fit to order the issue of lapel badges reading 'King and Country'. Likewise the Silver War Badge was given to servicemen who had been discharged due to wounds or sickness. In a similar vein the 'On War Service' badge was worn by both men and women.

**GO TELL MY COUNTRY THOU
THAT PASSEST BY THAT HERE
OBEDIENT TO HER CALL I LIE -
2nd Lieut Harold Archer Crowe 1st
Bn London Regt R. Fus.**

MUSEUM REPORTS

Liverpool Scottish Regimental Museum Trust: Ian Riley (Honorary Secretary)

We continue to see visitors at our archive office in the Artists' Club in Liverpool but in-depth cataloguing of the archive did not make the progress for which we had hoped. We were drawn away from the task by jobs such as assisting our regimental trustees as well as a long break over almost all of August as a result of holidays and illness.

The staircase immediately adjacent to our offices has been decorated by the Treasurer and the Hon. Curator and the gallery of past COs and honorary colonels has come out of storage: our ancestors once more gaze down on our comings and goings. Our new website was launched in May, errors have been corrected and we are now trying to establish some 'virtual museum' pages using photographs taken at the time of the closure of Botanic Road in 2008.

A recent photo has been received of the memorials to two rugby international captains side by side in Kemmel



Churchyard. "Toggy" Kendall, a solicitor who played for Birkenhead Park, rose through the ranks to be C/Sgt before resigning in 1906. He re-enlisted into the ranks of the 10th (Scottish) Battalion KLR on 5th August 1914, was commissioned and accompanied the Scottish when they crossed to France in November 1914.

He was killed near Kemmel on 25th January 1915. "Tankie" Turner, a partner in the family printing firm, played for Liverpool Rugby Club. He enlisted as a Private in the Scottish in January 1912 and was commissioned 4 months later. Mobilised in August 1914 he was promoted Lieutenant before embarkation for France. He was 'shot through the head' by a sniper on 10th January 1915 whilst arranging some barbed-wire entanglements. These two officers are indicators of the quality of the first tranche of Territorials.

We have assisted our Regimental Trustees in the placing of the wooden Liverpool Scottish War Memorial for WW1 by Herbert Tyson Smith, the well-known Liverpool sculptor, in the Garrison Church of St Alban at Fulwood Barracks in Preston. It was originally in St Andrew's Church, the Church of Scotland in Rodney Street, Liverpool. It is soon to be rededicated and information regarding its provenance will be lodged with the Lancashire Infantry Museum at Fulwood, the Museum of Liverpool and the National Inventory of War Memorials. The main bronze war memorial is in St George's Hall in Liverpool.

**FOUGHT THE GOOD FIGHT ET
MAINTENANT CHEZ LE SEIGNEUR - Pte
W S Jackson Duke of Wellington's Regt**

Fusiliers Museum: Mike Glover (Curator)

George Ashurst and the Xmas Truce

For the past few years, for some unexplained reason, the 2nd Battalion of the Lancashire Fusiliers (2LF) has been the focus of much of my attention. The story began in 2003 when the Regiment buried Private Harry Wilkinson of the

Second Battalion in Prowse Point Cemetery Belgium. In 2006 the body of Richard Lancaster was discovered which was buried in 2007 with full military honours in the same cemetery. As a result of further excavations in 2011 there are currently six more soldiers to be buried three of whom have been provisionally named as Sergeant Parkinson, and Privates Pulford and Rowan. It therefore came as no surprise when Lion Television contacted the Fusilier Museum to ask for assistance in making a programme on the First World War which included an account of 2LF. However, the nature of their interest turned out not to be the pending burials but 2LF's involvement in the 1914 Xmas truce.

The intent of the production team from Lion Television was to make a programme on the 1914 Christmas Truce and in doing so bring together descendents of soldiers who were there. The team has picked up on **George Ashurst** who had written and recorded his memoirs of his service in the First World War as a Lancashire Fusilier. The team had done their homework and located Andy Simm who was George Ashurst's great grandson. The aim of the programme was to explain to Andy and several other descendents of soldiers who were there in 1914 what went on and what their ancestors experienced.

I was included to explain some of the background and this article is essentially based on my notes. George Ashurst was a Wigan lad who appeared to have been quite a character and shortly before the outbreak of the First World War George

joined the Special Reserve. He trained at the Lancashire Fusilier Depot in Bury and finished his camp on the 28th July 1914. At 4pm on 4th August the War Office received the order for mobilization. By 6pm that day the order was received at the Depot in Bury.

A party of reservists from Wigan had already turned up at the gate of Wellington barracks that afternoon in anticipation of the order. George was one of the 1,752 reservists held on strength at the Depot and by the end of the following day 1,454 had reported for duty. They were all equipped with weapons, uniforms, boots, webbing and "necessaries" and organised into groups for despatch. The Second Battalion at Dover received 648 and 800 were posted to 3LF which left for its war station at Hull on the 8th August. It is worth commenting that this was a truly remarkable feat of organisation and I am not convinced that with Information Technology available today that we could repeat this logistical exercise in such an efficient and effective manner.

George was posted to 3LF and spends the next few months getting bored in Hull. In the meantime 2LF had mobilised on the 5th at Dover, having celebrated Minden Day four days earlier. The fact that 2LF and many other infantry battalions in the BEF needed so many reservists to enable them to deploy would suggest that the BEF was perhaps not as proficient as we are often lead to believe. The Second Battalion initially deployed as part of 12 Infantry Brigade in the 4nd Division, to the South Coast to cover the move of the BEF to France but by 26th August it was involved with the stand at Le Cateau followed by the long and arduous withdrawal. By November as the Western Front began to stabilise and 2LF occupied trenches in the area of



Plougsteert Wood south of Ypres, with billets in Le Bizet near Armentieres.



George having exhausted the delights of Hull volunteered to go out to France to reinforce 2LF and arrived with the battalion on the 2 December following a 16 hour train journey in a cattle truck. He describes in his book, "My Bit" how he settled into the uncomfortable routine of trench life and is quite unprepared for but delighted by what happens a few days later on Christmas Day. He writes about the Christmas Truce in some detail and it is well worth a read. The regimental history describes the situations as follows:

In the early days, feeling did not run as high as it did later, and this was shown on Christmas Day, 1914, when an unofficial truce was spontaneously observed and both sides strolled about on the ground above their trenches. Men of the battalion threw across tins of jam and the Saxons opposite threw back cigars wrapped in German Newspapers. Cigars were also received in exchange for a copy of Punch, whose editor later waxed lyrical with disgust at the low value apparently attached to the publication. "A" Company played a football match against the enemy with an old tin for a ball; they won 3-2! Towards the evening the Saxons could be seen putting fir-trees

in their trenches and hanging candles on them after dark. But a few days later, normal activity had been resumed.

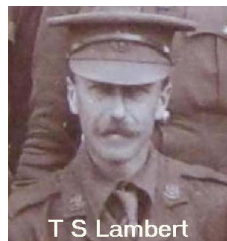
The Second Battalion were lucky, as the truce was not universal along the Western Front and some 41 British soldiers are recorded as being killed on Christmas Day. In fact throughout December, 2LF casualties were relatively light as the records for December show that on 19th December one man was killed and two wounded by snipers. Following the Christmas Truce the first man was killed on 26th December by a sniper and on the night of 30/31st December two men were wounded by one bullet.

George Ashurst remained with 2LF till April 1915 when he was injured in a gas attack. He returned to UK to convalesce and then feeling bored once again he volunteered to go and join 1LF in Gallipoli. He moved with 1LF to the Western Front in March 1916 where he took part in the Battle of the Somme. Following further injury and convalescence in UK he returns to the Western Front in 1917 and joins the 16th Battalion, one of the Salford Pals Battalions. In 1918 George is selected for officer training but the Armistice prevents him taking up a commission.

The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment - Lancashire Infantry Museum: Jane Davies (Curator)

Photograph Album of Major Thomas Stanton Lambert

The Lancashire Infantry Museum has in its archive



many photograph albums collated by soldiers who served during WW1. They contain images of life in the trenches on the Western Front as well as images from further afield such as East Africa and Gallipoli. However none of them, until a recent donation, catalogued the British Expeditionary Force's initial foray into France in August and September 1914.

When the 1st Battalion East Lancashire Regiment landed in France on August 22nd its second in command was Major T.S. Lambert who had been with the Regiment since 1891. The Battalion was immediately plunged into action taking part in the battle of Le Cateau and the battle of the Aisne amongst others. On the 15th September Lambert took command of the Battalion after Lieutenant Colonel L. St. G. Le Marchant DSO was shot dead by a sniper.

In October the Battalion was at Le Gheer. It was whilst Lambert was here that he was badly injured when giving out orders for a counter attack and evacuated back to England. When he had recovered in June 1915 he was posted to the 2nd Battalion. The photographs that Lambert took cover in great detail all the actions that the 1st Battalion took part in during the first 2 months of the war.

The album starts with photographs of



1st East Lancs on Braemar Castle

the troops aboard the Braemar Castle, their initial dealings with the Germans at Ligny, the first trenches dug on the Aisne,

artillery damage at Armentieres and 'no mans land' at Le Gheer. It depicts life behind the lines such as the delivery of much needed rations and the Officers reading the first newspaper they had



Reading first Newspaper

received since deploying to France. The album also shows German artillery fire and the effects of shelling on local houses and people and also the positions the men of the Battalion took to repel the German advance initially in fields and ditches then later on in the more sophisticated trenches.

The album is so rich with photographs that it depicts in great detail the first two months of action the 1st Battalion East Lancashire Regiment saw in WW1. The album is available to view by appointment. If you are interested in viewing it and any of the Lambert archive that we hold please contact Jane Davies on 01772 260362 or enquiries@lancashireinfantrymuseum.org.uk

Lambert went on to be promoted to Brigadier General and after the war was in charge of the 13th Infantry Brigade at Athlone, Ireland. In June 1921 he was driving back from a tennis match with his wife when he was ambushed by 6 armed men and shot in the neck. He died 90 minutes later in a Military Hospital in Athlone. Brigadier Lambert is buried in Brookwood Military Cemetery.

**OUR LITTLE BOY - 2nd Lieut S V Laws
Cheshire Regt**

Manchester Regiment Collection: Larysa Bolton

The articles we usually submit to the Despatch about the Manchesters often focus on interesting items from the archive collection, many of which are bundles of personal papers. Over the last few months, researcher Ian Hudson has been painstakingly sifting through many of these papers, and more besides, as part of the Museum of the Manchester Regiment's 'Man Behind the Medals' project. This ambitious and exciting project runs until summer 2013 and is funded by the Esmee Fairbairn Collections Fund.

Around a quarter of the 10,000 items in the museum's collection are medals, reflecting the service of some 800 individuals over 250 years. Ian's research aims to reveal the complete story behind the medal and the man to create a full tribute to the soldiers and officers of the Manchester Regiment. The research has not been limited to military service, as much information about the men's personal and family lives has been uncovered, turning each medal from a simple object to fitting testament to the man it represents.

The stories, along with images and photographs, will be available online through the museum's website, and will also be published and available for reference in the museum. Many of the medals were deposited with related papers so it is this material, along with the army service records held at the National Archives and other sources, which have formed the basis of the research.

Ian is encouraging anyone who has donated medals, or who has relatives whose medals are in the collection, to come forward with any additional

information, photographs or documents about that person. There is more information about the project and a current medal roll at <http://www.tameside.gov.uk/museumsgalleries/mom/medals>. Please note that the details recorded on the medal roll are those that appear on the man's actual medal(s). Ian can be contacted at ian.hudson@tameside.gov.uk or on 0161 342 3693.

**AND ALL IS RIGHT THAT SEEMS MOST
WRONG IF IT BE HIS SWEET WILL - Pte
E Richmond N Staffordshire Regt**

Lancashire Infantry Museum, Journals of the Antecedent Regiments: Terry Dean

Earlier this year I was diverted from some WFA matters (no time to pursue my thoughts on a presentation in 2013) by my volunteering to arrange the "unlocking" of information held in the journals dating back to 1878 for the various Lancashire regiments in the museum at Fulwood Barracks, Preston. My interest in arranging the scanning of journals had been awakened by the help given by the Royal Irish Fusiliers Museum in Armagh when researching Brigadier-General Kentish for my 2010 presentation.

The scanning of some 1200 journals is near complete and shortly they will be available for purchase from the Lancashire Infantry Museum shop on word searchable DVDs.

With my interest in cycling I tested the searchable journals and hoped to find that, at least, one of the Lancashire regiments would have pioneered the use of cycles for use in WW1 but with no success. I then sought early comments on the value of machine guns as infantry weapons and this is what I found in the

THE LATEST MACHINE GUN

Of late years several scientific men have devoted their energies to the invention of Machine Guns, with the result that now three or four are in general use both on land and sea, which can fire with great rapidity, can be carried about with little trouble, and can be worked by two or three men without the slightest difficulty.

But the latest invention, by an American, Mr. Hiram Maxwell (sic), bids fair, if it can really do all the inventor claims for it, to



eclipse all previous productions of the sort, and almost to render unnecessary in the future the keeping up of large armies, the size of which is now-a-days the surest guarantee of victory, at any rate while on defensive tactics. The new machine gun is even self firing, and only



wants one man to start it and put in a new belt of cartridges which

holds 330, when those in the other are used up. Once started the recoil of each discharge works the machinery, turns out the empty case, puts in a loaded one and fires it, so it goes on while there are any cartridges in the machine. The speed of the discharge too, can be regulated, so that by moving the indicator opposite the number of discharges required, it can be made to fire from 1 up to the enormous

number of 600 a minute. It can also be made to move from side to side while firing, if required. To prevent the barrel getting hot from the pace of the discharge it is cased in an outer barrel, and has water between the two. We should think, though, that it would not require many minutes firing at 600 a minute to make the water as hot as the barrel, and so deprive it of its cooling effect. The inventor declares he can adjust it to any rifle and even to cannon. The whole machine can be made so as not to weigh more than 25lbs., and is not liable to get out of gear with any amount of use. With so perfect a weapon as this seems to be, with a force of half a dozen of them accompanied by a small escort, a little transport, some protective armour, lots of cartridges and an Armourer Sergeant, we surely ought to be able hold our own against a host.

The patent rights of the invention have been offered to the English Government. If the Maxwell Machine Gun can shew such perfection and the inventor says he has proved that it can—by the mere purchase of a patent England can at once effectively remedy the disadvantage she labours under of having too small a standing army, and be at least safe from attack, if still not quite as capable as other Powers for offensive operations. But then we are a peace loving, non-aggressive nation, at least so we tell ourselves, and the several wars we are waging and going to wage are merely the exceptions necessary to prove the rule.

I wonder how the writer of the article might have revised the last paragraph, with the benefit of hindsight, 30 odd years on.

TO SEE DESPATCH WITH LARGER TYPE AND PHOTOS IN COLOUR. VIEW AT: www.wfanlancs.co.uk

On the Somme 2012: David & Pat Shackleton (+P)

In ten years of living on the Somme, there are people and scenes we will never forget.



Two little coffins draped in French flags beside a mound of chalk, the diggings of their awaiting grave. An evocative sight. One coffin held the remains of Francois Marie Bideau of the 118th Infantry Regiment whilst the other held the remains of two “unknowns”. Much has been written about the discovery of these three soldiers at La Boisselle, but the funeral, although official, was simply a religious

family burial. They had come to bury their loved one, Francois-Marie Bideau, one of 12



children, several of whom died in combat. The son he never saw was also to die for France in 1940. Before his coffin was lowered into the ground, each family member sprinkled into the grave the Breton soil they had brought with them. Their emotion and grief was felt by all present.



This summer the relatives of **Second Lieutenant Andrew Weatherhead, 3rd** Kings Own Royal Lancaster Regiment, killed 1st July 1916, journeyed from

Australia to see his name on the Thiepval Memorial. We met them at Thiepval. Afterwards they placed flowers on the grave of an unknown Kings Own soldier buried at Serre in 2003. Could he be their loved one? Captain George Weatherhead, his brother had died in 1915 with the regiment and is buried in Ypres Town Cemetery.

With the remains of the unknown King's Own soldier the remains of two Germans had been found, one unknown. “Surely the worst of it is over” were the words Jacob Hones, the known German



soldier, had written to his wife Marie and 6 children shortly before he was killed. His grandson Walter had told us of his family's loss. Jacob's son, born in 1915, was never to see his father and died in 2003, two weeks after he knew his father's body had been found.

Just three young men who died for their country.

As the frenzy of the centenaries grows, let us not forget the cost of war. For me the importance is not about battles won, military strategy, military incompetence or famous people, for can anything be more

important than the loss of a loved one? I feel privileged that the descendants of those men, who had no choice but to fight against each other, have shared their family experiences with me. Remembrance is for all.

**LOOK ON THIS STONE NOT WITH
SORROW BUT WITH PRIDE - Pte J J
Collington Notts & Derby Regt**

Preston Pals Memorial: Paul Conlon (+P)

Sunday 22 July 2012 saw the culmination of the project headed by Andrew Mather to erect a permanent Memorial to the Preston Pals on Preston Railway Station.

The Preston Pals, in contrast to more famous Pals Battalions consisted of a company rather than a full battalion. The aim was that

the Preston Pals should be made up of men from the business and professional classes and Cyril Cartmell placed an advertisement to this effect on Tuesday 1 September 1914 in the Lancashire Daily Post. The response was such that the by Thursday afternoon enough men had volunteered.

Cyril Cartmell was the son of the Mayor of Preston, Councillor (later Sir) Harry Cartmell and Sir Harry recounts his part in the story of the Pals in his book "For Remembrance". The Pals became 'D' Company 7th (Service) Battalion of The Loyal North Lancashire Regiment in 19th Western Division.



The Memorial commemorates all of the Preston Pals, their sacrifice and service and so it is more than a Memorial to the Fallen; no list of the original Pals that fell in WW1 is currently available. The Memorial is located between platforms 3 & 4 on Preston Railway Station from where the Pals left on Monday 7 September 1914 for their training base in Tidworth.

My personal connection to this event is that my paternal grandfather was also in the 7th Battalion of the Loyals although definitely not a Preston Pal.

The event was well attended with over 100 people there and took place amongst the hustle and bustle of a busy Sunday at the station. The Lancashire Infantry Museum and WFA were both represented.

The one minute silence was superbly observed and surprisingly very effective despite the background noise of the station.

The speeches by Colonel Steve Davies MBE and Lord Shuttleworth KCVO were excellent and appropriate for the occasion and Lord Shuttleworth unveiled the Memorial successfully despite the breeze blowing through the station trying to pre-empt him. The singing was led by the Penwortham Girl's High School Choir with Mrs Alison Cattanach, Head of Music.

The occasion was rounded off nicely with refreshments in the Station waiting room.

"PRESTON REMEMBERS - ON ALL FRONTS": Terry Dean (S)

With a title befitting the WFA's motto it gives me great pleasure to report action being taken by my home town as the Centenary of the First World War approaches.

Preston Council has made a bid for Lottery funding to renovate the City's Cenotaph and deliver a 3 year Learning and Participation Plan.



Artist's impression of the renovated and restored Cenotaph

If the bid is successful, the project will:

- renovate the Memorial and its surroundings and make it much more accessible and mark it out as special part of the square
- develop and deliver a range of projects and events for a wide range of audiences to develop awareness and understanding of the Memorial and the history of Preston during and after the First World War

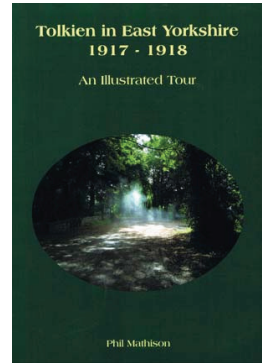
The WW1 Memorial in the Market Square was designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott and is seen as one of the best in the Country. The Harris Museum houses the WW1 Roll of Honour, also designed by Gilbert Scott and carved into the entrance hall of the building.

More information on the envisaged range of other activities is in the supplement on our website and, subject to Chairman Stan's agreement, I will say more at our December meeting when the outcome of the bid should be known.

BOOK REVIEWS: Paul Conlon

Tolkien in East Yorkshire by Phil Mathison

This book is one for the JRR Tolkien fans and the reader doesn't need to have an interest in WW1 although the enjoyment of the book will be enhanced if they also have a passion for the Western Front.



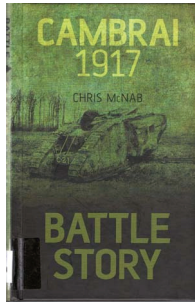
I have read the Lords of the Rings trilogy several times and watched the Peter Jackson films a number of times. Having said this, I would not describe myself as a huge Tolkien fan and had no more than a passing knowledge of his life. I was aware that he had fought on the Western Front with the Lancashire Fusiliers and assumed that a great deal of the Lord of the Rings story was developed whilst on active duty.

This book certainly filled in the blanks and corrected a number of my misconceptions. The idea that places here inspired locations in Lords of the Rings is certainly appealing.

This book was clearly a labour of love, with the author doing the research really for his own satisfaction. The end result is a very readable and warm treatment of Tolkien's time in East Yorkshire.

The book is detailed enough for anyone to use as a guide to follow in the footsteps of JRR Tolkien in East Yorkshire.

This is one of a series of books subtitled 'Battle Story' including famous battles such as Waterloo, Kursk, Arnhem and others.



It is the first of this series that I have read and it is a good introduction to the Battle of Cambrai. The book is short at a little over 150 pages and is extremely easy to read; in fact I read it in about 3 days.

The author assumes no prior knowledge of the Western Front on the reader's part and so the book can be read as a stand-alone look at one battle on the Western Front.

The book sets the battle in historical context by giving basic information on the Offensives of 1915, Verdun and the Somme.

The text is liberally interspersed with photographs, maps and illustrations all of which added interest and sped the reader though the book. In addition there are number of 'fact boxes' spread through the text, some of dubious relevance to the story but filling in some background for any reader completely new to the Western Front.

All in all, this book is worth a read but probably too superficial for any serious students of the Western Front. Certainly I would want to read more before agreeing with his conclusions about the battle and its legacy.

**NOTHING BUT MEMORIES AS WE
JOURNEY ON LONGING FOR A SMILE
FROM A FACE THAT HAS GONE -
Rifleman P Taylor The Rifle Brigade**



Fleetwood Upper Fleetwood Lower

Early this year my partner Emmie was given sketches of the upper and lower lighthouses in Fleetwood to add to her lighthouse collection. The sketches were by Katie Hampson whose father treats the knees of Malcolm, Emmie's brother-in-law. At that time I was contemplating what image would grace the front page of this Despatch and had the idea of a new "original" of the Menin Gate, I hope you like it.

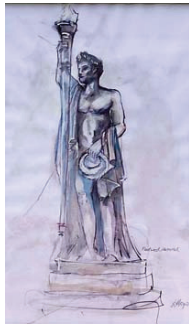
19-year-old Katie attended Fleetwood High School and Blackpool Sixth Form College and has already achieved what many artists twice her age haven't. Her work has been displayed twice in London's Mall Galleries and on winning the editor's prize from "The Artist" publication she was presented with her award by Princess Michael of Kent.



Her sketches are normally of animals (see www.outputt.com) but following her success with Fleetwood's

lighthouses and the Menin Gate she has produced sketches of two other Fleetwood landmarks which bear relation to WW1.

The most obvious one is Fleetwood's war memorial in the Memorial Gardens which was unveiled by Admiral Sir William Goodenough in 1927. A short film of the unveiling ceremony can be seen on the Pathe News website (www.britishpathe.com) and enter Goodenough in the search box.



The second is the Mount. The original Chinese pavilion on top of the Mount was also designed by Decimus Burton and replaced by the present structure in 1902. In 1919 the clock was added to

the structure in memory of the men from the town that died in WW1.

When asked how long she had been sketching Katie's answer indicated she has been a "lifetime sketcher". She did not study history at school but remembers watching "All Quiet on the Western Front" and produced what she describes as a canvas based upon it.



As mentioned on the front cover of Despatch "war art" would be suitable submission for the Armistice Prize and possibly this article and Katie's work might provide the inspiration for future entries.

TRAINING FOR WAR, IN BLACKPOOL: Nigel Neil

I am an archaeologist (WFA member), based in Lancaster, and I have been awarded a contract (till end of November) by Blackpool Council to research the site



of the 'Loos and Arras' WW1 training trenches, in Watson Road Park, near the Pleasure Beach. I am looking for any local research and illustrations, to augment a wealth of sources already located. Naturally, I will acknowledge fully any assistance given.

It is believed that the trenches were constructed between Nov 1915 and March 1916 by the 6th, 8th, and 9th KLR, 4th LNL, and 4th SLR, but perhaps uniquely in the UK, were opened to the public from June '16 onwards, in aid of the King's Lancashire Military Convalescent Hospital, with convalescing soldiers as guides. A guidebook and postcards exist and, besides extensive press coverage, there are interviews in the IWM, and film footage possibly recorded in these trenches.

Part of the brief is also to determine the significance of the site. I am aware of the training trenches at Bodelyyddan in

North Wales, and those at Beadnell, Embleton, Longhoughton, and Otterburn in Northumberland, Redmires (Sheffield), and Oswestry (Shropshire). Do you know of others?

Please phone 07968 621 530, or e-mail nigelrjineil@googlemail.com

**HE WAS AN INSPIRATION OF RADIANT BRIGHTNESS AND GREATLY LOVED -
Lieut F Elliot Burt N Staffs Regt**

MARTIN'S CORNER: Martin Simpson - Chairman, Cumbria Branch WFA

Our Christmas Lunch and AGM will be on **Sunday 2nd December 2012** at the Best Western Shap Wells Hotel which is on the A6 between Shap and Kendal not far from M6, Jct. 39. The nearest main line station is Oxenholme near Kendal. The day will commence between 11.30 am and 12.00 noon for a chat and drinks followed by lunch at 12.30. Lunch will be carvery style, with various choices of starter, main and dessert courses (inc vegetarian options).

After lunch the branch AGM will be held at approx 2pm in the meeting room and this will be followed by a talk by Dr Bryn Hammond.

The cost of the day is £22 per person. Contact me for more details if you are interested in coming (tel: 01229 230026 or email mcsimps2002@yahoo.co.uk)

BRANCH AFFAIRS



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ARMISTICE PRIZE 2012 (+S)

This year there has been a very welcome increase in participation with 7 schools submitting a total of 76 entries.

There was a wide span in the nature of entries: soldier's diaries, trench/other models, history canvases, poems, DVD of battlefield visit/experiences, artwork, WW1 booklets/folders, battle scenes, soldier's letters and WW1 replicas. The variety of entries presented a challenge for the marking scheme but the independent marking by Andrew Brooks, Barrie Bertram and Peter Denby gave closely correlated scores.

Taking comments from the notes accompanying Peter Denby's marking the winner was:

Hayley Jarvis, St Cecilia's, Longridge (the Armistice Prize trophy (again) and £100) for her WW1 folder: *"a lot of effort and research has gone into this comprehensive submission."*

With other prizes for:

Megan Kelly, Lancaster Girls Grammar (£25) for her poem "She gave him a feather": *"A lovely poem which would have benefitted from some background imagery and better font/formatting."*

Liam Watkinson, Balshaws CE High School (£25) for his model of a WW1 gas mask: *"pity Liam didn't mention the pupil casualties by name on the gas mask box"*.

The DVD submitted from **Archbishop Temple School** reporting on their experiences of a battlefield visit and on remembering was felt worthy of a commendation: *"A quality submission but a combined effort by older (year 11) pupils."*

Copies of the prize-winning entries are on our website and a Press Release is to be issued with a view to publicity being given to the prize winners prior to Remembrance Sunday.

Hayley Jarvis had 18 main pages in her WW1 Folder and overleaf is a copy of the first.

Also in her Folder Hayley devoted 4 pages to remembering Private John Joseph Youd, the great uncle of her first cousin. Pte Youd served in the 8th Battalion Loyal North Lancashire Regiment (8LNL), 25th Division and was killed on 21st May 1916 at Vimy Ridge. We called to



say "Hello" to Pte Youd on 17th October in Ecoivres Military Cemetery and on the poppy cross we left on his grave and in the cemetery visitor book referred to Hayley's remembrance of him in her winning Armistice Prize entry.

ONLY THOSE WHO HAVE LOST
ARE ABLE TO TELL THE GRIEF
FOR ONE WE LOVED SO WELL –
Pte J J Youd Loyal North Lancs
Regt

WWI

Here are some general facts + figures OF WWI:

World war 1 was triggered on 28th June 1914 by the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria and his Serbian wife Sophie.

The groups were:

<u>Triple Entente:</u>	<u>Triple Alliance:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Britain • France • Russia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Germany • Austria-Hungary • Italy

The poppy is worn in remembrance to those who died fighting in WWI. They use a poppy because when the soldiers died, the fields were covered in poppies.

The total number of military and civilian casualties in World War 1 was over 35 million. There were over 15 million deaths.

Many new revolutionary war ideas were introduced in WWI, such as, tanks, the Creeping Barrage, and aircraft observation.

Altogether, approximately 65 million soldiers fought in World War 1.

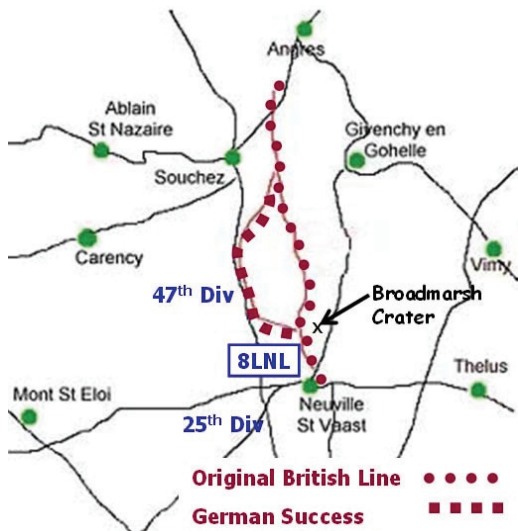
About $\frac{2}{3}$ of military deaths were in battle.

The total number of deaths from Gas attacks is 91,198.

The total cost of WW1 was 60,643,160,000 dollars.

Footnote re Vimy Ridge in May 1916

The Ecoivres Cemetery Register near Mont St Eloi makes reference to the attack of the 25th Division in May 1916.



In March 1916 the British took over trenches from the French from Loos to Ransart, including Vimy Ridge. On the Vimy Ridge sector the trenches were in very poor condition and overlooked from the German positions. Royal Engineer Tunnelling Companies were deployed to combat German mining activities and there was much above-ground fighting for the resultant craters. As the British miners gained the upper hand the Germans planned a large attack to capture the British mine shafts

On the night of 18th/19th May the Germans captured posts held by 8LNL around Broadmarsh Crater. After an artillery barrage on the 19th the Loyals counterattacked at 9.15pm and recovered/consolidated the lost ground, losing 9 killed, 20 wounded and 4 missing in the process.

During the 21st the Germans bombarded the whole of 47th Division and the left of 25th Division positions in *“the heaviest concentrated shelling of the war*

so far”. At 7.30pm the Germans exploded a mine near Broadmarsh crater and then attacked in successive lines of infantry. Many positions of 47th Division were over-run but 8LNL *“did great execution and fighting was heavy and prolonged with rifle, bomb and bayonet. The ammunition and bomb supply at last began to run out but led by Lieut Jones, Sergt Grayson and Corp Coates the men were reduced to “bombing” the Germans with lumps of chalk, flint and even empty bomb boxes!”*

The advanced positions were evacuated at 10pm but a counter attack was launched with bayonet alone at 2am on 22nd May and 8LNL recaptured the original support lines.

On the night of the 21st/22nd May 8LNL lost 3 officers and 27 other ranks killed; 5 officers and 103 other ranks wounded; and fifteen were missing.

For his actions, 19 year old Lieutenant Richard Basil Brandram Jones of the 8LNL was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross.



MEETING REPORTS

MacDonell's Multi-Continental Three-Dimensional War: 8th May, 2012 (21 attended)

Well, that is a mouthful of a title for a talk! I think that it has used up my ration of words to provide comment for 'Despatch'! Or, perhaps that was **Terry Dean's** cunning plan, for he certainly fooled me with the reference to 'Three-Dimensional'. I sat throughout the talk with one green lens and one red in my

glasses and nobody leapt out at me from the screen!

Well that's almost enough frivolity as I can sense Chairman Stan frowning at this point! As ever, Terry's painstaking attention to detail comes shining through, as indeed does his many hours of preparation, the evidence of this latter point being his notes which I subsequently borrowed for this write-up. This, coupled with his outstanding use of technology tools, ensures that the time passes before anyone starts clock-watching and the ardent listener is not disturbed by Chris Payne's snoring.

But what of the subject: **Ian Harrison MacDonell?**

Born in 1875, he was of that generation of bold young men who would venture to every corner of the British Empire and, in his case, would pack more into his first 40 years than could be imagined possible today. Studying engineering in Manchester, followed by a brief spell working 'on the railroad' in the shape of the London Railways, he joined the Foreign Office in 1898, a move that saw him spend the next 16 years (less the occasional spot of leave) in Africa, surveying in Uganda, chasing the Boer and dealing with rebellious Nigerian tribesmen with sword and revolver. During this period, he had changed careers and joined the West Africa Frontier Force being awarded the DSO for one of his forays in Nigeria.

Another career path opens, in 1913, as he learns to fly at Brooklands and then sought to join the fledgling RFC, eventually achieving that aim 2 years later despite the objections of the CFS



Commandant, Godfrey Paine. However, he soon appreciated that the intensive demands of flying meant that 'those magnificent men in their flying machines' needed to be a lot younger, and he sought yet another change. Perhaps he should have stayed flying, for the next move was to the chaos of Mesopotamia and 1/HLI slogging it up alongside the Tigris trying to relieve the troops besieged at Kut-al-Amara.

Wounded, he was eventually evacuated back to MacBlighty, and when he had recovered, sent, at the beginning of 1917, to attend the Senior Officers' School at the 'shot. Hoping to be given command of a Battalion and the Colonelcy that went with it, it seems that he was destined to be the 'blooming bridesmaid' with a number of 2ic appointments, only assuming the role of CO temporarily in the absence of holders of that position. This took him to Battalions such as 17/HLI, 2/RInnisF and 1/Dorsets. Gassed, wounded and suffering from nephritis, a proper wartime command eludes him, but instead he becomes CO of the Officer Cadet Battalion at Cambridge, a post that he seems to prefer as opposed to a recommended convalescence in Nice!

The war ends, and for a time he is with the Army of the Rhine, while regarding the Germans as a 'highly educated nation of swine'. Colonelcies are now few in number, and all the while he was bouncing along as a substantive Captain. But Africa again beckoned and in due course he would become CO of the Gold Coast Regiment with the local rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. Retirement came in 1927, spending his time in Hyeres, Jersey, London and Edinburgh, dying in the last named place in 1955. I would comment on Terry's use of the word 'uniqueness', for the lives of all men are

unique. However, that of Ian Harrison MacDonell was varied, and certainly, more so than most, and Terry must, again, be complimented in bringing yet another fascinating character to our notice.

Now, where have I put my clear lenses? (Barrie Bertram)

**THE LADS THAT WILL DIE IN THEIR
GLORY AND NEVER BE OLD -
Capt J A Ainslie KOSB**

Fritz Harber - German Scientist at War.
(26 attended)



In 1999 the scientific journal 'Nature' selected the Harber - Bosch Process as the most important scientific process of the twentieth century. However **Dave Wright**, our speaker, suggested that the title for his talk might have been 'Patriot or War Criminal'.

Fritz Harber was born into a wealthy, middle class German Jewish family in Breslau. His mother died at childbirth and his father, who did not get on with him, was an important man in the town who owned a chemical works. Luckily Fritz grew up having a loving step-mother and three step-sisters that doted on him. He was a bright student and received an excellent education and one of his tutors was Robert Bunsen (of Bunsen burner

fame). At some stage in his early life he decided to become an officer in the army but was turned down because of his Jewish origins.

During the second half of the nineteenth century there was a phenomenon known as the 'Guano Rush 1840-1880' when natural nitrate fertilizer (droppings from the Peruvian Booby bird) was imported into Europe from South America. As this began to run out predictions were made that the world would not have enough fertilizer to produce the food needed to feed the world's growing population. As nitrate was Nitrogen and Oxygen the problem was to turn the nitrogen in the air to nitrate and this was perfected by Harber and Carl Bosch, 'Bread from Air'. (Awarded the Nobel Prize in 1918). Nitrates were also used in the manufacture of explosives and during the First World War half of all nitrate production in Germany was needed for explosives at the expense of their agricultural industry.

Harber was also known as the father of Chemical Warfare and on an early visit to the Western Front he advocated the use of gas even though he knew it was illegal according to the Hague Convention of 1907. The Germans later argued that their first use of gas was legal because they did not use projectiles! Working at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute he brought together industry, academics and the military to exploit the use of gas in the war. For this, although he was Jewish, he was made a Captain and awarded the Iron Cross.

He was one of the first to realise that it was necessary to get soldiers to remove their gas masks in order to gas them! He added other gases to mustard gas and this acted as an irritant and they then took off their masks and died!

When the war ended Harber tried to obtain gold from seawater in order to pay off German war reparations, but he failed. He was bitterly disappointed in 1933 when he was ordered to sack all his Jewish workers and he resigned his post and left for England. The winters in Cambridge were not good for his health and he left for the warmer climate of Palestine only to die in Switzerland whilst making the journey.

His wife, Clara, committed suicide in 1915 after many arguments with Fritz over the use of gas in warfare. Zyklon A&B gases were developed under the direction of Harber and it is ironic that members of his extended family died of this gas in the Second World War concentration camps.

This was a most interesting and fascinating talk, well delivered by David and I am sure that for all members the hour passed very quickly. (Andrew Brooks)

A Nurse's Life in France and Flanders: July 2012 (32 attended)



Sue Light told us that much of what is known about the British military nursing services in the Great War comes from personal testimony rather than from official sources. Pre war military nursing services comprised:

- * 'Regular' nurses of Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service (QAIMNS), numbering about 300. These women were mainly drawn from the educated middle classes;

- * The QAIMNS Reserve (200);

- * The Territorial Force Nursing Service (TFNS). These 2,700 experienced nurses were fully trained civilian hospital staff; and

- * A further 600 civilian nurses of the Civilian Hospital Reserve, who had responded to a 1909 appeal to join a reserve in case of war.

When war broke out more nurses joined the QAIMNS Reserve or the TFNS, with some 22,000 trained nurses in total serving throughout the war, drawn from Britain and the Dominions. Overseas service was voluntary but popular, the first nurses leaving for France on 14th August 1914 to staff the three General Hospitals which left for the continent that day.

In charge of the nursing services abroad for the duration of the war was the Principal Matron (promoted in 1915, when aged 56, to Matron-in-Chief) **Miss Emma Maud McCarthy**.



Initially buildings were requisitioned for hospitals,

such as the 'sugar sheds' at Boulogne and the casino (for men) and hotel (for officers) at Wimereux. Purpose built facilities came later in the war, including Nissen huts from 1916.

The relative inefficiency of ambulance trains was mentioned.

Even the huge increase in trained nurses could not meet demand, and so from 1915 young, unpaid, patriotic

volunteers enrolled as Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) personnel, organised and given basic training by the Red Cross and Order of St John.

Most, but not all, VADs were middle and upper class girls, but in service no social distinctions were drawn, and the contribution of the 70,000 plus VADs was vital to the war effort at home and abroad.

Her talk went on to describe the accommodation of nurses (mainly huts and tents); food and dining arrangements; bathing and other facilities; recreation; sick quarters and leave arrangements. All of these were generally good by the standards of the time.

She gave several revealing and amusing quotes from Miss McCarthy and other nurses. Miss McCarthy oversaw disciplinary hearings, which were often for relatively small misdemeanors. For example dancing was prohibited, although illicit fraternization with men did - inevitably - occur, leading to disciplinary action...and sometimes pregnancy.

Few nurses died of illness or wounds, although latterly Spanish flu did claim many victims, especially amongst the VADs. (Peter Denby)

Note: One famous VAD nurse was Vera Brittain, the mother of the politician Shirley Williams, who wrote a vivid autobiographical account in her book *Testament of Youth*, which was one of our raffle prizes on the night (won by Paul Conlon).

THY BLESSED LABOURS DONE THY
CROWN OF VICTORY WON - Pte T
Reilly Highland LI

German Commerce War Part 3 - Under the Sea: August 2012 (24 attended)

Graham Kemp told us that U-Boats were not intended to be commerce raiders. They were intended to sap the Royal Navy strength by attacking shipping. On 20 September 1914 U9 sank three ships, the Aboukir, Hogue and Cressey and U-Boats went after the fleet at Scapa Flow. This forced Jellicoe to take the fleet to the other side of Scotland and the North Sea became empty of targets.

U17 seized a ship off the Norwegian coast and in doing so acted as a commerce raider. Following this success, other U-Boats started doing the same and were very effective in the Mediterranean where merchant ships were sunk without warning. Following the outcry after the sinking of the *Luisitania*, the Germans curbed unrestricted warfare but it was reinstated in 1917. The British losses grew but the introduction of the convoy system reduced these losses dramatically.

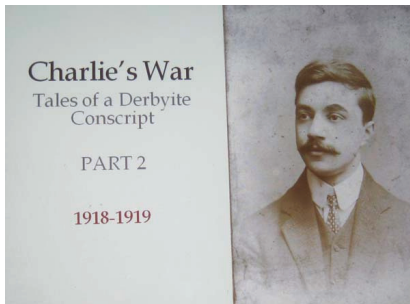
Graham outlined the hardships of daily life on board U-Boats and recounted tales of derring do. He also described how the men improvised when things went wrong at sea. Graham ended his absorbing talk with an extract from a book by a U-Boat commander, Ernst Haushagen "And so the history of the war lives on in us as an enduring memorial, as a tremendous monument of warning to the nations of Europe." (Gaynor Greenwood)

Charlie's War Part 2 (1918-1919) (30 attended)

In a similar manner to Part 1 of his talk (see Despatch Nov 2011 P26) **Chris Payne** seamlessly wove together content from Charlie's letters to his wife Ida as

well as outlining strategic aspects of the war and explaining the actions of Charlie's Battalion (2/5th Duke of Wellington's (DOWs)) in 1918.

Charlie's letters to his darling wife



shows how his mind attempts to escape the trials in France during 1918 and covers such things as: the effects of rationing at home and heavy mud on his hammer toes; Concert parties and liaison with French civilians; trouble with the censor; and his wish for leave.

Charlie certainly seemed to get his fair share (or more) of action since after a quiet spell in trenches at Oppy in January his battalion was in the forefront stemming the German's near Bucquoy in March at a cost of over 200 casualties. In July he was fighting alongside the French near the Marne and late August after 4th Army delivered the historic attack near Amiens Charlie's battalion attacked north of Bapaume losing 25% of their strength.

After leave in early September Charlie was involved in an attack near Marcoing which crossed the Canal de St Quentin and he wrote to Ida telling of "going for the Huns hammer and tongs" and "gazing at the Great Bear in the heavens thinking of you". Charlie's last fighting was in the crossing of the River Selle in late October and in a subsequent letter he wrote to Ida concerned about the Spanish Flu.

After the Armistice, Charlie was involved in a prolonged march into the Rhineland. In January 1919 he was

south-west of Cologne and wrote telling of his rapid promotion to sergeant.

With emotion in his voice Chris reported his grandfather's last letter was on 21st January 1919 but there was no happy ending to his splendid story. Ida received a telegram on 10th February telling that Charlie was dangerously ill with pneumonia, probably brought on by the Spanish Flu. He died next day and is buried in Terlincthun cemetery near Boulogne. (TD)

THIS IS THE LORD'S DOING IT IS
MARVELLOUS IN OUR EYES - Sapper H
Jones Royal Engineers

Prisoners of War in Russia 1914-1922:

October 2012 (28 attended)

Andrew Brooks focussed our attention on the Eastern Front, and presented an enlightening perspective that has been given little coverage in the English-language war literature or in our previous programme of talks. By way of introduction he pointed out that the principal armed forces fighting against the Russian Army at the outset of the war were the Austro-Hungarians (an eclectic mix of nationalities with at least 39 different languages and dialects spoken) and the Germans.

Unlike the situation on the Western Front, when the majority of Allied forces PoWs were captured during 1918, on the Eastern Front the majority of PoWs were captured by the Russian forces early in the war and particularly during 1915. Amongst the Austro-Hungarian armies, some 2.7 million men were captured on all Fronts (about a third of the total Austro-Hungarian forces), of whom 2.2 million ended up in PoW camps in Russia. In comparison, only some 160,000 German soldiers were taken

PoW on the Eastern Front, despite similar numbers of men being engaged in action in the two Empires. Such an invidious comparison encouraged Austro-Hungarian Generals e.g. General Conrad, to try to lay the blame at the door of particular nationalities within the Austro-Hungarian armies. Hindsight reveals that the blame can be targeted more accurately at the incompetence of Conrad (who was eventually sacked in July 1918) and other senior officers.

Illustrating his talk with examples of postcards sent by POWs in Russia, Andrew outlined the processing of the captured soldiers in Russia. Initially receiving good treatment from their captors, most of the PoWs were then marched long distances before being packed into railway boxcars to registration centres in Moscow and Kiev. Given one postcard to send home, the men were then distributed to the hundreds of PoW camps located around the Trans-Siberian railway, but some were sent to the eastern extremes of the Russian Empire, near Vladivostok. As the Russian Revolution developed during 1917, and after the treaty of Brest-Litovsk, some of the PoWs had the opportunity to 'escape'. However, other PoW camps found the camp-ownership switching between the warring Bolshevik and White Russian forces and some PoWs were not repatriated until 1922. Approximately 380,000 PoWs in Russia are believed to have died in captivity.

Andrew revealed that the Austro-Hungarian government displayed an authoritarian sensitivity to correspondence between the PoWs and their families. A mail censorship group was established to censor incoming mail from PoWs and outgoing mail from their families. By 1916, 1150 censors were in place, covering the large number of

different languages, with the office dealing with a staggering 500,000 items of correspondence a day. As the PoWs returned home from 1917 onwards, they were scarcely welcomed with open arms at the borders. The returning men were initially held in a 'quarantine' camp where they were questioned in case they were 'infected by the Bolshevik Bacillus', before being sent on to their regiment. It is little wonder that the Austro-Hungarian Empire fell apart at the end of the War! (Chris Payne)

2013 PROGRAMME

(ALL MEETINGS ON FIRST MONDAY IN MONTH AT 7.30 PM EXCEPT WHERE STATED OTHERWISE)

Dec 3rd: *"A.G.M. and Christmas Social"* - An invitation to members to speak for ten minutes on any WW1 topic

Jan 7th: *"A Display of WW1 Printed Ephemera"* - Andrew Brooks (N Lincs W.F.A.)

Feb 4th: *"The Blackpool Training Trenches: teaching soldiers then teaching the public"* - Nigel Neil (N Lincs W.F.A.)

March 4th: *"Chinese Labour"* - John Restorick (Bradford Mech. Inst. WW1 Group)

April 2nd TUESDAY: *"The Italian Front and the British in Italy"* - John Chester (Spalding & S Lincs W.F.A.)

May 7th TUESDAY: *"VADs"* - Sue Light (Sussex W.F.A.)

June 3rd: *"Mesopotamia"* - Alan Wakefield (IWM, author and Chairman of the Salonika Campaign Society)

Details of the remainder of the 2013 programme will be publicised as soon as possible.

THE EAST LANCASHIRE CONTEMPTIBLES

At 7.30 am on 22nd August 1914 the 1st Battalion East Lancashire Regt. sailed from Southampton to join the 4 Divisions of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) already in France. They disembarked at Le Havre and on



Trenches at Solesmes, 25th August 1914

23rd assembled in camp whilst the BEF fought at Mons. That night they set off by train to join the fighting and moved slowly to Le Cateau where they detrained at 7.30 pm on the 24th. Meanwhile on the 24th the BEF fought to disengage from the Germans and commence the famous retreat. The East Lancs moved off as quickly as possible and on the march to Briaste they heard the first news of the war situation. Early next morning (25th) they took up a position on the high ground south of Solesmes to protect the important Solesmes thoroughfare for retreating troops. Here Major Lambert took this unique photo, read more about his photos on Page 14.



LANCASHIRE'S BEST KEPT WAR MEMORIAL 2012

Blacko has won the award for the best kept War Memorial for 2012 with that in Wrea Green being highly commended.

Western Front Association, North Lancashire Branch

Chairman: Stan Wilkinson

Tel: 01524 262302

Secretary: Dr. Graham Kemp

Tel: 01524 310649

email: graham.kemp@nasuwt.net

Treasurer: Chris Payne

Tel: 01539 561980

Editor: Terry Dean

Tel: 01772 864182 Mob: 07866 493210

email: editor@wfanlancs.co.uk

Website: www.wfanlancs.co.uk