



CHESTERFIELD WFA

Newsletter and Magazine issue 38

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**Welcome to Issue 38 - the February
Newsletter and Magazine of Chesterfield
WFA.**



**The next meeting of the Branch will be on Tuesday
February 5th at 7.30pm. Our guest speaker is Dr
Simon People who will discuss `The Versailles
Conference of 1919`**

The Branch meets at the Labour Club, Unity House, Saltergate, Chesterfield S40 1NF on the first Tuesday of each month. There is plenty of parking available on site and in the adjacent road. Access to the car park is in Tennyson Road, however, which is one way and cannot be accessed directly from Saltergate.

Grant Cullen – Branch Secretary



Western Front Association Chesterfield Branch – Meetings 2019

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

January	8th	Jan.8th Branch AGM followed by a talk by Tony Bolton (Branch Chairman) on the key events of the first year after the Armistice.
February	5th	Making a welcome return to Chesterfield after a gap of several years is Dr Simon People who will discuss the `Versailles Conference of 1919`
March	5th	A first time visitor and speaker at Chesterfield Branch will be Stephen Barker whose topic will be the `Armistice 1918 and After`
April	2nd	No stranger to the Branch Peter Hart will be making his annual pilgrimage to Chesterfield. His presentation will be “Aces Falling: War Over the Trenches 1918”
May	7th	John Beckett Professor of English Regional History, Faculty of Arts at the University of Nottingham - `The Chilwell Explosion Revisited`
June	4th	Rob Thompson - always a popular visitor to Chesterfield Branch. We all tend to think of recycling as a `modern` phenomenon but in Wombles of the Western Front- Salvage on the Western Front` Rob examines the work of salvage from its small beginnings at Battalion level to the creation of the giant corporation controlled by GHQ.
July	2nd	In Dr John Bourne we have one of the top historians of The Great War and he is going to talk about `JRR Tolkein and the 11th Lancashire Fusiliers on the Somme`
August	6th	Carol Henderson is an emerging historian making her first visit to Chesterfield, she will talk about the `Manpower Crisis 1917-1918`
September	3rd	Back with us for a second successive year is Dr Graham Kemp who will discuss `The Impact of the economic blockade of Germany AFTER the armistice and how it led to WW2`
October	1st	Another debutant at the Chesterfield Branch but he comes highly recommended is Rod Arnold who will give a naval presentation on the `Battle of Dogger Bank - Clash of the Battlecruisers`
November	5th	Chairman of the Lincoln Branch of the WFA, Jonathan D`Hooghe , will present on the “7th Sherwood Foresters - The Robin Hood Rifles”
December	3rd	Our final meeting of 2019 will be in the hands of our own Tim Lynch with his presentation on “One Hundred Years of Battlefield Tourism”

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Notes from the Chair (31)

In the light of the criticism by some disgruntled members and the resignation of some of the national Trustees I decided to put my name forward for election onto the Executive Committee. I know that all the ex-servicemen and women among you will say I therefore deserve all I get and should know better than to volunteer for anything it nevertheless seemed important to make sure the Committee was not hijacked by a pressure group no matter how well intentioned. If I am elected or if no other member puts themselves forward the appointment would be from the AGM in April. I will of course keep you informed but if elected it is my intention to remain as Chairman of the Chesterfield Branch.

I am pleased to say that your branch committee elected at the January local AGM has started the year with great enthusiasm and is assisting Grant with the 2020 speakers list. They have also suggested a number of ideas which should help to raise the profile of the WFA locally and have proposed that we follow up last year's trip to Lincoln with a day trip this year. We hope to give you more information soon.

The Committee and I are always happy to receive any suggestions either for speakers, trips or events which we could attend to spread the word about the WFA and what we do.

Following on from last year's Armistice Commemorations in Chesterfield the Council are hoping to organise some event to remember the signing of the Peace Treaty on 28 June or perhaps the Centenary of 'Peace Day' 19 July. Again we have been invited to join the Working Group at the Town Hall, if anyone has anything they would like to bring to the Groups attention please let me know, the next meeting is scheduled for 26 February.

Tony Bolton Branch Chair

Secretary's Scribbles



Welcome to issue 38 of the WFA Chesterfield Branch Newsletter and Magazine.

The January meeting was, as is our custom, in two parts - firstly the Branch AGM which went very smoothly indeed, receiving reports from the Chairman and Treasurer, preceded by the election of office-bearers for the forthcoming year, an election which saw all current office bearers being elected unopposed plus the addition of Peter Harris to the Committee - welcome Peter. Our Treasurer, Jane Lovatt, gave an excellent report on the state of the Branch finances (very healthy by the way) but perhaps more importantly drew members' attention to the current Branch age demographics. Sadly, we lost stalwart Charles Beresford during 2018, a year which also saw, on account of health issues no attendances by Malcolm Ackroyd and his wife Pam, two people who did so much to secure the establishment of the Branch in its early days. Perhaps as a presage to Jane's comment at the AGM, in December 2018 I wrote to all the senior schools in the Chesterfield area inviting any students - more particularly those studying history - to come along to our meetings. Sadly, I did not receive a single response to each of these invitations - not even a 'thanks but no thanks' reply. This left me quite deflated. Your committee, however, are not prepared to sit on our hands with respect to re-invigorating the Branch and are looking at ways in which we can take the Branch forward, given the rather disappointing attendance at our first meeting of 2019. So, at this moment, all I can say is 'watch this space'.

As Tony has said in his notes he has thrown his 'hat in the ring' for a post on the Executive Committee of the WFA. If, as we hope, he is elected, then this will be effective from the WFA AGM in April. What many members don't realise is that members who serve on the Executive Committee as Trustees are indeed very busy people and when I was asked to support Tony's nomination it was a wee bit with trepidation but that soon settled when he advised that he would be carrying on as Branch chair. Our Branch Vice Chair, Mark Macartney has indicated that he will offer himself for re-election as Branded Goods Trustee at the same AGM.

One Tuesday we welcome Dr. Simon People as our guest speaker. Simon has been to the Branch on two previous occasions, but it is a few years since his last visit. His presentation will be on the **Versailles Conference of 1919** quite an appropriate follow up to Tony Bolton's talk in January about the year of 1919 as a whole, much of which revolved around the machinations of that (in)famous Peace Conference.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible on Tuesday, let us hope the weather is kind to us.

Don't forget the Book discussion Group at 7pm on Tuesday 19th February - all welcome - even if you haven't read the book, we gather for a good natter !

Grant Cullen - Branch Secretary

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

MARCH**30****Birmingham**

8th WFA President's Conference

Saturday 30th March 2019

Doors 09.00. Start 09.45 until 16.30

Tally Ho! Sports and Social Club, Birmingham B5 7RN

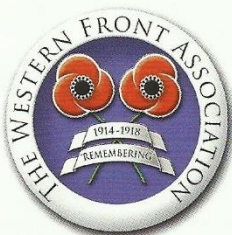
REFLECTIONS ON THE GREAT WAR

- **Far from Contemptible: Memoirs of the BEF's 1914 Campaigns**
Dr Spencer Jones
- **The BEF's Commanders on the Cusp of Victory, September 1918**
Prof John Bourne
- **France's Pyrrhic Victory: Military lessons and Political-Strategic legacies of 1918/1919** Prof Martin Alexander
- **Not quite more of the same: British Officers in two world wars** Prof Gary Sheffield
- Panel chaired by Peter Simkins

Cost £35 - booking via website or by contacting WFA Office

Telephone: 020 7118 1914

www.westernfrontassociation.com

APRIL**27****RAF Cosford**

2019 Spring Conference and AGM

Saturday 27th April 2019

at RAF Cosford, Shifnal, Shropshire TF11 8UP

Transport - free parking: Half hourly trains from Birmingham (Shrewsbury Line) to Cosford Station (10 minute walk to venue)

Programme for the day

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 9.30am | Doors: tea & coffee |
| 10.15am | Welcome by the President |
| 10.20am | Escapes and Escapades? British Prisoners of War during the First World War Dr Oliver Wilkinson |
| 11.20am | Shell Shock after the First World War Dr. Fiona Reid |
| 12.20pm | buffet lunch (need to pre-book) |
| 13.20pm | AGM |
| 14.40pm | tea/coffee |
| 15.05pm | AGM |

FREE TO MEMBERS

Contact Steve Oram to book place + book optional £15 buffet lunch.

secretary@westernfrontassociation.com

First World War Research Group

STUDY DAY

Saturday 23 February 2019

'Elite Units on the Western Front 1914-1918'

Room MC001, Lecture Theatre, Millennium City (MC) Building,

City Campus Wulfruna (South), University of Wolverhampton, Wolverhampton WV1 1LY

Fee £20 (£10 students)

Programme:

10.00 - 10.15am Welcome and Introduction

10.15-11.30am Dr Tony Cowan (Independent Scholar)

“Arrogant and dashing throwbacks”: German elite and non-elite troops, 1914-1918’

11.30-12.00 Coffee Break

12.00 -1.15pm Patrick Gregory (Writer and Journalist)

‘The US Army 94th Hat in the Ring Squadron 1917-1918’

1.15 - 2.15pm Lunch Break

2.15 -3.30pm Matthew White (University of Wolverhampton)

“Winston's Little Army:” The Royal Naval Division 1914-1918’

3.30 - 4.00pm Tea Break

4.00 - 5.15pm Dr Tim Gale (British Commission for Military History)

‘Elite Units of the French Army on the Western Front 1914-1918’

5.15 - 5.30pm Concluding Remarks

5.30pm End of event.

CAR PARK

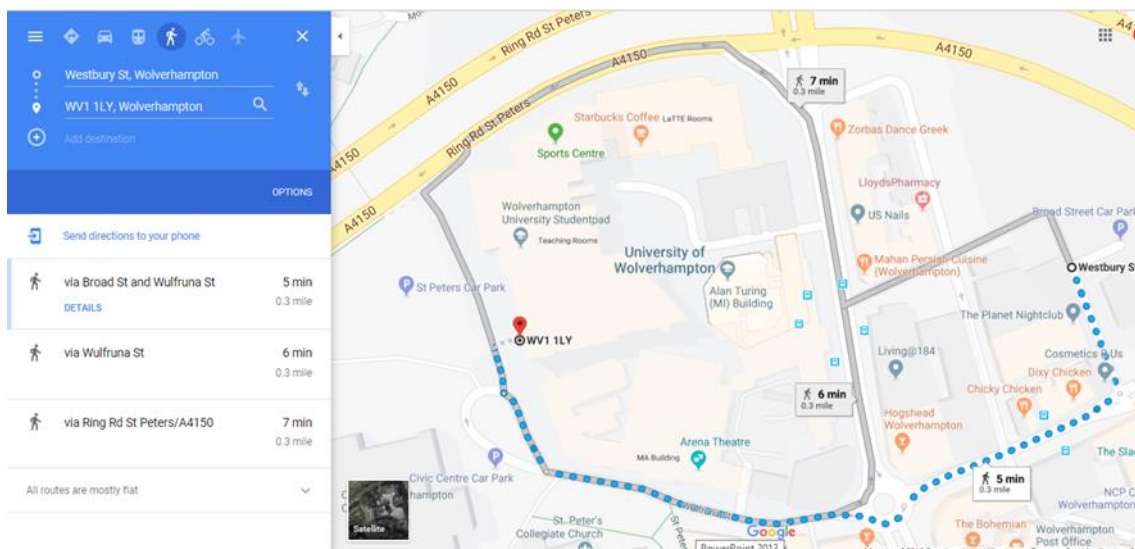
Broad Street Car Park 0.3 miles 5 mins walk to Millennium City (MC) Building

Westbury Street

Wolverhampton

WV1 1JD

Pay and display £4.50 all day.



WFA Chesterfield Branch - 2019 AGM 8th January 2019

After John Beech spoke Binyon`s Exhortation, Branch Chairman Tony Bolton opened the meeting asking if all had received the minutes of the 2018 AGM and copies of the annual financial statement. He asked Branch Secretary, Grant Cullen, if he received any Notices of Motion or any notices of intention of any member to seek office - in addition to those sitting office bearers, all of whom had indicated willingness to stand for re-election. GC said that in addition to a number of apologies for absence, Peter Harris had indicated his willingness to serve on the Committee, if elected. There was no other correspondence regarding the AGM. TB then reminded members that only those who were fully paid up could take part in any voting. TB then asked if there was any omissions or corrections to the 2018 AGM minutes. There being none, members unanimously adopted these as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

All offices were declared vacant.

Tony Bolton suggested, as in previous AGMs, if members approved, to re-elect committee members *en bloc* adding Peter Harris, who had indicated in writing his willingness to serve. Members agreed unanimously.

It was agreed therefore the following be elected to serve as office bearers and Committee members for 2019. Tony Bolton - Chair, Mark Macartney - Vice Chair; Grant Cullen - Branch Secretary; Jane Lovatt - Branch Treasurer; Jon-Paul Harding - Committee, Andrew Kenning - Committee, Peter Harris, Committee.

Tony Bolton then called upon Jane Lovatt for the Treasurers report.

Jane stated that 2018 had been a satisfactory year for the Branch with an average attendance of 27 at meetings, a decrease of 2 from 2017. Jane put this down to an ageing membership with several members unable to attend on account of poor health. Financially we generated a surplus during the year of just over £600 with reserves now standing just over £3500. In part this was enabled by several members being willing to share their time and knowledge with the rest of us at no cost to the Branch, or for a minimal fee. Speakers from outside the Branch have supported the WFA ethos by only charging reasonable expenses which the branch has been able to cover without any monthly meeting costs dipping into the red. Members were thanked who have donated books as raffle prizes - thanks also to those who support us at each meeting by buying raffle tickets.

During the year the Labour Club maintained the cost of hiring the room but Jane expected this to be subject to a small increase in 2019. We consider we have an excellent venue for meetings, representing very good value for money and gives members access to private parking and of course, the licensed bar. It was stressed that in order to comply with local licensing laws everyone who attends a meeting must become a member of the Labour Club on an annual basis. This cost is met by the Branch.

Jane asked that all members must ensure that they sign in on entry to the meeting and to ensure that their Club membership is up to date and that they are in possession of a current Club membership card. The suggested attendance donation has again been kept at £3 and has remained unchanged since the Branch was inaugurated in 2010.

During the year a Book Discussion Group has been established and in September the Branch organised and subsidised a members outing to the WFA Lincoln Branch Great War

Seminar which was preceded by a visit in the morning before the Seminar to the Museum of Lincolnshire Life to view the Mark IV tank on display there.

Jane cautioned that we are a `not for profit` organisation and asked that members give some thought as to how some of these funds be spent.

Grant Cullen proposed, and the members unanimously agreed that in memory of the late Charles Beresford, the Branch make a one -off donation to the Ashgate Hospice which had provided care for Charles and support for his family in his closing days. Committee to decide on value of donation.

Jane concluded her report by thanking her fellow committee members for their hard work and time, and thanked all members and friends for the continued support of the Branch.

The financial statements and the Treasurer`s report were unanimously adopted as a true representation of the Branch`s affairs, by a members show of hands, there being no one otherwise minded, with Tony Bolton thanking Jane for her efforts during the past year.

Branch Chairman, Tony Bolton, then asked if there was any further business, there being none, he therefore declared the Branch AGM closed.

The Branch Office Bearers & Committee for 2019 is -

Chairman - Tony Bolton

Vice Chairman - Mark Macartney

Treasurer - Jane Lovatt

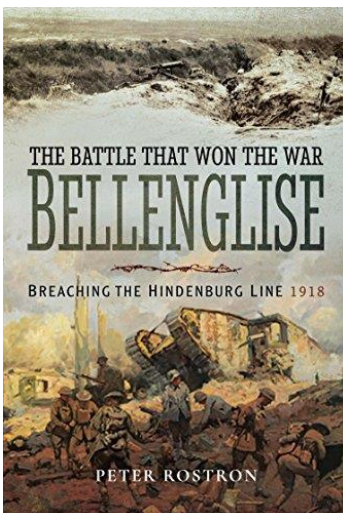
Secretary - Grant Cullen grantcullen@hotmail.com

Committee - Jon-Paul Harding

Andrew Kenning

Peter Harris

Book Discussion Group



The next meeting of the book group will be on Tuesday 19th February and the book chosen is The Battle That Won the War - Bellenglise: Breaching the Hindenburg Line 1918 by Peter Rostron and published by Pen & Sword in 2018. Available from Amazon for £11.69, with the Kindle edition at £3.83

All welcome - whether or not you have read the book - come and join us for a great natter about all things WW1 - don`t forget it`s a 7pm start.

January 2019 Meeting

The business of the Branch AGM done with, Branch chair, Tony Bolton, continuing with a tradition going back to 2014, discussing events of 100 years ago, stepped up to deliver his talk on 1919, the first year following on from the cessation of hostilities on November 1918. Before commencing Tony said that this would probably be the last `100 year Anniversary` talk, as he didn't feel it appropriate carrying on reviewing 1920 and beyond etc.

Perhaps aptly, as Tony would describe, the title of the presentation was **1919 Peace?**

Tony said that, whilst preparing his notes for this talk, he found, in fact, that 1919 was a very interesting year, not a case of `they think it's all over`, indeed, far from it.



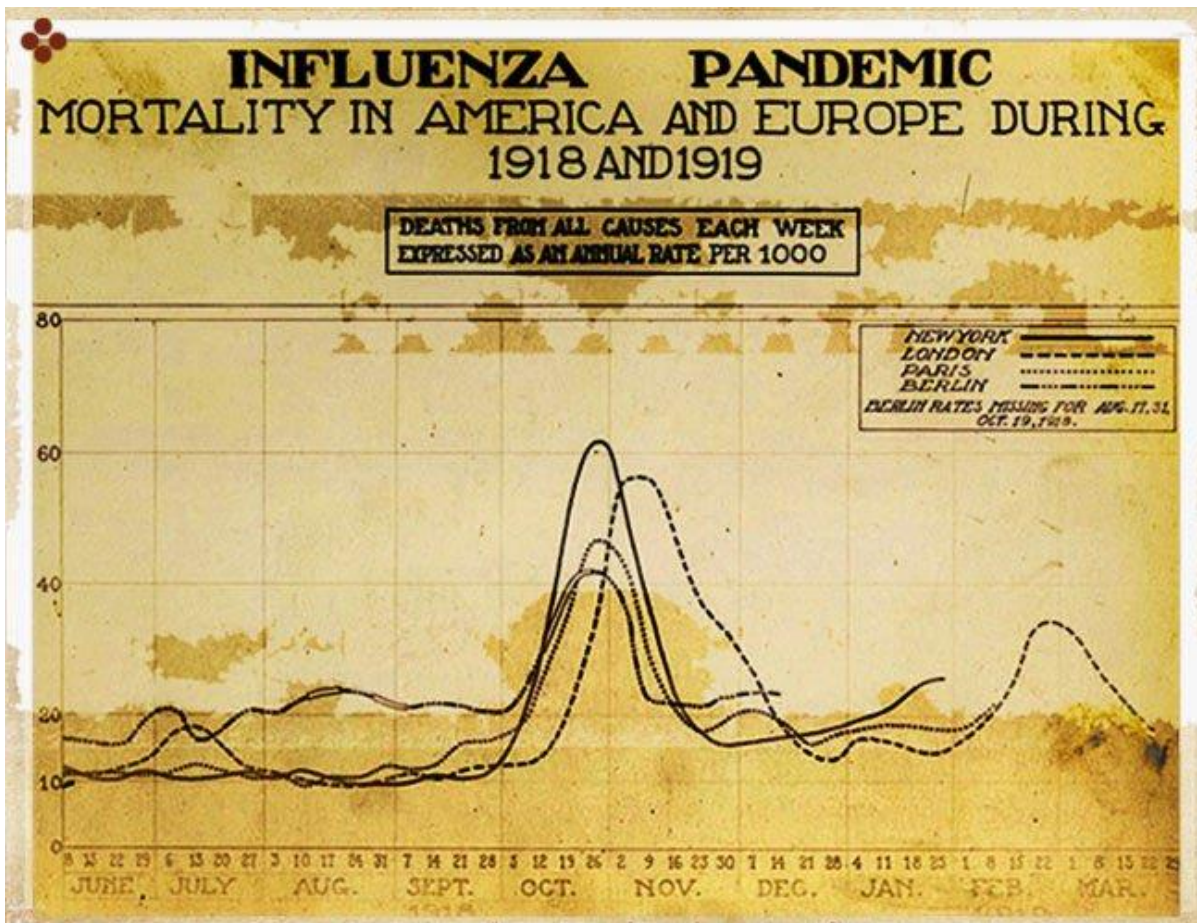
Tony went on to say that generally when he did this sort of talk, he started and worked through the year chronologically, but he felt that to really understand 1919 you have to go back to what was the decisive factor and that of course was the Armistice of November 11th 1918.

The Armistice - or more precisely the German armistice - there had been earlier cessations with Bulgaria, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire prior to that. The armistice terms that were given to the German civilian representatives by the Allied military were really

quite harsh and set the tone for subsequent peace negotiations the following year. It is hard to blame the military for the harshness of these terms for after all they realised that it would be a practical impossibility to re-energise the allied armies to renew any offensive even supposing they could be supplied as the most advance units had outstripped the ability of the supply chain to keep them effective in the field. So the cessation of hostilities had to ensure that the German army could not just regroup, reorganise and set off again in 1919, hence the terms of the armistice were deliberately set to be difficult. We also have to remember that on October 17th, 1918, Ludendorff was actually advocating a sort of a `Ride of the Valkyries` or mass attack to defend the borders of Germany in early 1919. Of course the home front in Germany was crumbling but the military negotiators at Compiegne did not know that.

The armistice was, of course, an excuse for public celebration, and in many cases, private grief. But if you look at personal accounts from troops in France and Belgium they all have a number of common themes, yes, relief that the war is over, a sort of feeling of uncertainty, of unreality, what had been their lives for almost four years was no longer there. The purpose had gone. Increasingly, there was a fear for a very uncertain future. You have to remember that, for many working men, the war had actually been a period of relative plenty. They were well fed, there was no fear of unemployment and their wives and sweethearts were earning good money in the wartime economy. Now, with the armistice, that was all under threat.

One of the ironies of the First World War, and Tony said he has found the First World War peppered with these ironies, is that in the very week that the guns fell silent in France the influenza pandemic in the UK reached its highest death rate.



From the graph, you can see the peak (for London) was in early November. The epidemic had been raging for most of 1918 but had abated, rising again from September with 4000 deaths per week in London whilst in Manchester 50% of the population had contracted the disease with a death rate of seven in every hundred. Across the world 27 million people are thought to have died from it, with the underdeveloped areas of India, China and Africa being particularly hard hit. It was known as `Spanish Flu` not because it had originated in Spain but because the King of Spain was one of its first victims.

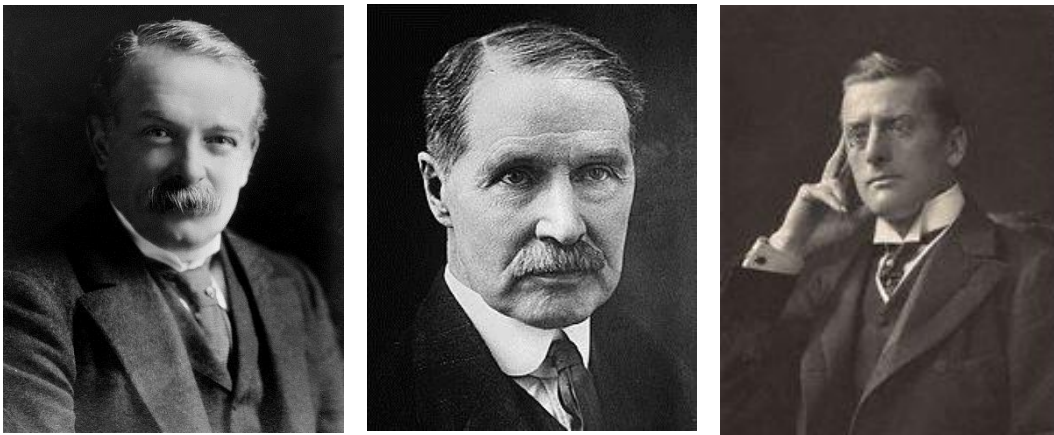
In Britain, 150,000 troops and civilians died as a result of the epidemic. Within days of the armistice being signed and at the height of the `flu epidemic the electioneering began for the 1918 General Election. The General Election of 1918 had been long overdue, indeed a general election should have been held as far back as January or February of 1916 but as the war was raging at that time Asquith used the creation of his Coalition Government in May 1915 to bring in Conservatives into government and thereby get their agreement for the postponement of the general election. That General Election finally took place in December 1918 and was known as the `Coupon Election`. The `Coupon` using the jargon of the time was the ration coupon but the coupon itself was a letter of endorsement from the Coalition Government to individual MPs and candidates to say that that individual was a supporter of the Coalition and was worthy of your vote.

Who was, and who was not to receive this endorsement from the coalition government? This had been decided in the Maurice Debate in Parliament in April 1918. Tony reminded members that General Maurice had accused the Prime Minister, David Lloyd George of lying to parliament over the numbers of troops in France and in the debate that followed Lloyd George survived, partly on account of Asquith`s poor performance, and the fact that at that time the Germans were pressing the Allies hard and parliament felt it would be inappropriate to change governments but retribution hung over the Liberals. The General Election was the first election to be held

under the terms of the 1918 Representation of the People Act which increased the franchise to all men over 21 and all women over 30. Those eligible to vote rose from 8 million to over 18 million of whom 7 million were women. In the event 10.5 million votes were cast and it was the first time in a general election that the whole of the UK had voted on the same day - Saturday 14th December. Nowadays elections are held on Thursdays but that in fact only dates back to 1935. Counting was delayed to allow for the counting of troops many of whom were still overseas, indeed it did not commence until December 28th

Predictably, the result was a coalition landslide, with the Conservatives under Bonar Law, the biggest gainers, returning 382 MPs, an increase of 111. Lloyd George`s Coalition Liberals returned 127 whilst the old Liberal Party under Asquith suffered severely, returning only 36 MPs and seeing the entire Opposition Front Bench annihilated. George Barnes` National Labour Party gained 9 seats, while the Official Labour Party under William Adamson gained 15 seats, returning 57 MPs despite the lack of `coupons`. The interesting thing for the Labour Party, though, even although their increase was modest, they saw a considerable swing (42%) in the popular vote and gained just short of the combined total of the two Liberal parties.

Although Lloyd George and his Coalition was basking in the `khaki afterglow` of the successful conclusion to the war they were left in no doubt at all by the electorate what was expected of them - an end to conscription, a demand to hang the Kaiser and to make Germany pay to the last farthing. Lloyd George wanted a `land fit for heroes`. Tony then went on - rather tongue in cheek - by saying that he did not think that any of the coalition MPs got hold of a large red bus and painted a `reparations` sum on the side of it by nevertheless ministers and MPs vied with each other to pander to the electorate and jacked up expectations as to what would be returned by way of German reparations.



The new government took office in January 1919, Lloyd George, Prime Minister again, Bonar Law relinquished the Exchequer and this post was taken by Austen Chamberlain (right). Bonar Law became Lord Privy Seal as well as Leader of the House.



The veteran Conservative minister AJ Balfour (left) became Secretary of State for Foreign affairs but, exasperated by Lloyd George ignoring him, he resigned and was replaced by Lord Curzon of Kedleston . Churchill was in the new cabinet in charge of a new ministry combined the War Office and the Air Ministry. Another interesting appointment was Eric Geddes (middle left), the only man in the war who had been both a General and an Admiral. He was co-opted into the Cabinet as Minister Without Portfolio with specific responsibilities for post war regeneration until he became the first Minister of Transport in May 1919. George Barnes (middle right) who had been Leader of the Labour Party until expelled by the party for refusing to leave the Coalition Government, was rewarded by being appointed Minister without Portfolio, having won his Glasgow Gorbals seat. Lloyd George initially maintained his small wartime cabinet, much to the irritation of Churchill and Balfour.

On November 11th 1918 there was approximately 3.5 million men serving in the British Army worldwide, with about 1.9 million of them being in France and Belgium and a very high proportion of these were eighteen year old conscripts who knew nothing of peacetime employment. Almost as soon as the dust of war had settled, men began to look over their shoulders and fear that the jobs at home - perhaps the only jobs would go to those who could get back quickest began to pervade the army and quickly became a cause of disaffection, insubordination and mutiny, particularly in rear areas and in Army Service Corps depots at home. There was a demobilisation scheme but it had been drawn up by civil servants in 1917 and quite logically it prioritised the men who were needed to restart the peacetime economy with employers who had a job waiting for them. Logical maybe but it was not seen as equitable as many of those who fitted the economic profile had been among the last to arrive at the front. Men from the army of 1914 and 1915, men with families, men with wound stripes were not seen as a priority. The system clearly lacked a natural justice. As Churchill said... *the discipline of every single separate unit throughout our army in all theatres of war has swiftly and simultaneously been rotted and undermined...* Churchill`s solution was issued by the War Office on January 29th with personal approval of the Prime Minister in spite of Treasury fears that the increased costs and in full recognition that, despite public opposition to a new conscription bill, a new bill would be required so that those eighteen year olds who had completed their training but had not yet been sent overseas would be required to furnish the army of occupation of the Rhineland and garrisons until a new regular Army could be established later in the rear. Henceforth age and length of service would be the overriding criteria for demobilisation. Men with two or more wound stripes were immediately demobbed but as these orders were issued, in Calais, a full scale mutiny was underway. On January 7th Army Ordnance and Mechanical Transport detachments at the Calais base, refused to carry out orders and they were soon joined by men returning on the leave boats. Within 24 hours the whole of Calais was occupied by 3000 armed men, the army losing control of the town completely. Two divisions of

troops, marching towards the occupation of the Rhineland had to be halted and turned round. These troops were extremely annoyed, their demobilisation and the demobilisation was being disrupted by men who had seen little or no fighting and had had a fairly `cushy` number. The bayonets of the two divisions encircled Calais and most of the mutineers quietly went about their normal duties. Some of the ringleaders were arrested but the whole incident ended without any serious bloodshed. Subsequently, for a period of six months an average of 10000 men per day were returned to civilian life and most of them managed to find employment. At its peak demobilisation reached 14000 men per day - the equivalent of a single division, every single day. Men arrived at one of the 26 dispersal stations, rifles and equipment were exchanged for a ration book, pay for twenty eight days terminal leave and a `baggy` demob suit. They could either keep their greatcoat or exchange it at any railway station for one pound - the army disappeared like a deflating balloon. In addition to demobilised troops, 150000 returned POWs were also processed but it was some months into 1919 before the 250000 German POWs in Britain were returned home - largely on account of French opposition. When they got home they were amongst the best fed people in Germany.

The Royal Navy blockade of Germany came into being right at the outset of the War in August 1914 and was significantly tightened after the American entry into the war in April 1917 and remained in place until May 1919. In 1914 Germany had been 80% self-sufficient in foodstuffs but the drain on manpower and horses plus the diversion of nitrogen used in fertilisers into munitions production meant that agricultural output steadily declined. The failure of the potato harvest in the winter of 1916-17 resulted in that winter becoming known as `The Turnip Winter` and in spite of rationing - which was never as effective or fair as it was in Britain - Germans went hungry. In December 1918 the German Board of Health claimed that 763000 civilian deaths had occurred during the war as a result of malnutrition and its related diseases. A further 100000 are claimed to have died after the armistice.

This data is highly subjective, an academic study in the 1920s came up with a much lower figure of 424000 deaths with over 200000 of these attributable to the influenza pandemic. However to the uncertainty of statistics you have to add the question `Was civilian starvation a cause of German collapse and revolution or was the revolution itself the cause of starvation as it disrupted the whole country?`

In addition to that the German delegation at the Peace Conference used German civilian starvation as a pawn to try and seek the removal of the blockade which in fact, after the armistice had been tightened. They also used as an excuse to try to mitigate their unrestricted use of submarine warfare. To further complicate matters an influential body of opinion in Britain, exemplified by Basil Liddell-Hart in his book `The British Way of Warfare` emphasised the effectiveness of the blockade as it suited their argument that Britain had been wrong in fighting a continental war. In any event, it seemed probable that German First World War civilian deaths exceeded those by Allied air raids in the Second World War.

We all know that Germany descended into revolution...or did it? There was strikes, mutinies and bloodshed but was it a revolution? The German historian, Imanuel Geiss, probably better known for his work on the origins of the First World War, made the case that in Germany only three distinct acts were revolutionary and that they all occurred on the same day, 9th November 1918

- Chancellor Max von Baden`s premature announcement of the Kaiser`s abdication (11am)
- The midday assumption of the Chancellorship by Friedrich Ebert (below)
- The 2pm declaration by Ebert`s socialist deputy Schiemann, of the republic



Geiss goes on to say that from that point everything was strictly legal, even if occasionally turbulent and violent. Now that might be a legalistic or indeed `Germanic` view of the issues as to what constitutes a revolution but it does not to any favours for the future understanding of German history, to underplay the revolution that was taking place. By midnight on November 10th Chancellor Ebert had agreed with General Groener, Ludendorff`s successor as Chief of Staff, that his government would do all it could to suppress Bolshevism in return for the support of the Army. Thereafter Ebert and the members of the MSPD Socialist party knew that they were adopting a socialist vocabulary whilst at the same time were working with conservative elements within the country to destroy any revolution. He particularly targeted works and soldiers` councils which had sprung up even although most of them were his own party members. He worked to convene a constituent national assembly. He managed to `nationalise` major industries by the age old political trick by referring these to a Commission. On the 15th of November, Industrialists and Trade Unionists reached a form of agreement, a semblance of agreed power to the unions but in doing so effectively neutralised them as a political force. The minority socialist party the SPD resigned from the government in protest, but that just allowed Ebert to bring in more of his own ministers including Gustav Noske (below)



Noske became the `iron man` of the administration and the organiser of the paramilitary `Freikorps`. The Freikorps were newly formed regiments of officers and soldiers who had had no pre-war political affiliations but who had enjoyed soldiering. They were to become the forerunners of Hitler`s SA and SS.

On 6th January 1919 agitators again brought Berlin workers out on strike to protest against what they saw as government `backsliding`. A few were armed and a few carried red flags. The red flag was raised over some public buildings and on January 11th, against the strong advice of Karl Leibknecht and Rosa Luxemburg (below), the communists decided to make a bid for power. Communists fought the Freikorps and other troops on the streets of Berlin but were quickly and bloodily put down. On the 15th of January, probably on the 15th of January members of the Freikorps -



coming out as the even with the could not command



Guards Cavalry Schutzen Division kidnapped and murdered Leibknecht and Luxemburg throwing their bodies into the Landwehr Canal.

On the 19th of January elections for the National Constituent Assembly were held, the first to provide for female suffrage in Germany. Ebert`s MSPD Socialist Party largest party returning 163 seats although support of smaller socialist parties he a majority. Instead a coalition with centre

right parties was necessary further constraining the government`s revolutionary tendencies. Ebert became the first President of the new Republic on February 11th which took its name from Weimar where the government was sheltering from the upheavals in Berlin. Over the next few months soldiers and workers councils were systematically targeted by the Freikorps and broken up. In May the Freikorps cleared Munich which had been a hot bed of communism since before

the end of the war. Lenin`s dream of a communist bloc extending from Russia, through Hungary and Austria and into Southern Germany was at an end.

When Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg announced the formation of the German communist party on the 30th of December 1918 it was in fact the eighth communist party outside of Russia, parties already existing in Austria, Hungary, Poland, Greece, Holland, Finland and of all places - Argentina. On March 22nd, Hungary became only the second country, after Russia to become a Soviet Communist state, the trigger, rather than being any social unrest was what became known as the `Vyx Note` issued by Lieutenant Colonel Vyx, the French head of the Allied Mission to Budapest who, probably exceeding his authority, ordered the Hungarian army to withdraw from lands previously Magyar thus reducing the size of Hungary by about two thirds and almost three million ethnic Hungarians lost.



The Social Democratic government in Hungary fell and the country turned to Bela Kun (right) and the communists. Kun had been a prisoner of war in Russia and had been much influenced by Lenin and his teachings. Although the Hungarian communist Party was actually very small and ill-organised, they formed a government because it was thought that Kun could call upon the red Army to help prevent the break up. In fact this was not going to happen and the Roumanian army marched into Hungary and took the land that they wanted. The Red army in Russia had other things to contend with. Kun fell from power on August 1st 1919 and with him the Hungarian Communist state. The Roumanian army entered and occupied Budapest and extracted their own particular `reparations` which included the tramcars from the streets which were shipped back to Roumania. Kun fled to Russia where, in 1938, he was executed in one of Stalin`s purges.

Given the apparent chaos across Europe and the export of Bolshevik propaganda even in Britain there were concerns although these concerns were probably exaggerated that revolutionary challenges were afoot. To the widespread concerns over the mis-handling of demobilisation which had seen outbreaks of red flag carrying troops on the streets, there came significant threats from the trade unions although even during the war there had been significant strikes in the Welsh coalfields and on Clydeside. The wartime dilution of many industries was coming to an end and with it an increase in militancy. Even before the outbreak of war in 1914 there was a steady rise in the numbers of industrial actions as working men began to use their organised power to demand greater rights and provision. The armistice was the trigger to set off demands for better conditions for the working man and it was of course working `men` as soon after the armistice many women workers willing returned to `hearth and home`.

Fuelled by feelings that wartime service in the forces or in industry entitled them to a fairer share of the national cake and fears that demobilisation would cause widespread unemployment, the New Year of 1919 opened with demands, led by the miners for a reduction in the working week from the recently negotiated 47 hours to 40 hours. By the end of January 200,000 workers were out on strike and on January 31st thousands of workers from the industrial belt of Southern Scotland - somewhere between 20 - 60,000 depending upon the source, gathered in George Square, Glasgow, some carrying red flags. They went there to await the results of negotiations taking place at the City Hall. Whatever the cause, around lunchtime the police baton-charged the crowd, but the police were seriously out-numbered and the crowd refused to break up and the out-numbered police retreated with running fights breaking out in nearby street and this violence carried on into the night. At 3pm that afternoon, a War Cabinet meeting, chaired by Bonar Law, in the absence of Lloyd George, decided that the risk of serious

disturbance was so great that it was necessary to deploy troops in support of the civil authorities. 12000 troops and six Medium `C` tanks were sent to Glasgow, the first soldiers arriving that night and their presence quietened the situation. The tanks took four days to be transported from Bovington to Glasgow.



The veteran Labour MP Emanuel `Manny` Shinwell (right) was one of the leaders arrested in the aftermath of the George Square riots and he was imprisoned. Early in February the strikes had spread, even the London Tube was closed but by February 12th the strike had started to weaken and strikers started to drift back to work having failed to achieve their goal of a 40 hour week.

Strikes and unrest did continue throughout the year, a police strike in Liverpool brought troops and tanks on to the streets and over 300 men were arrested for lawlessness. Between the 26th September and October 5th a national rail strike forced what the U boats had failed to achieve - a reduction in the food allowances in the rations. Lloyd George denounced this strike as an `anarchist conspiracy`. On `Peace Day` - 19th July, rioters, probably fuelled by alcohol, burned down Luton Town Hall. Disturbances also took place in the United States, France and Italy. There was a racial element to the disturbances.

British India was no exception to the disturbances, Wilson`s Fourteen Points appeared to offer Indians the prospect of self -determination and the educated classes chaffed at the slow pace



and increasing power which the home government was prepared to cede. Elements in India agitated against British rule. The Indian government responded with the March 1919 Rowlett Act banning gatherings and the detention without trial for up to two years. The predictable response was a general strike organised by a little known lawyer recently returned from South Africa, Mahatma Gandhi. Although he himself was pacifist, extreme and violent groups used the strike to attack and murder British officials and missionaries. Lahore and Amritsar were given over to the mob. Against this violent and threatening backdrop, on April 13th Brevet Brigadier-General Reginald Dyer (left) arrived at Amritsar with two armoured cars and a small party of Indian

troops and members of the Gurkha Rifles. Finding around 5000 men, women and children in an illegal assembly and without issuing any warning Dyer ordered his fifty troops to open fire. He was unable to get his armoured cars into the enclosed Jallianwal Bagh but even so, official reports put the death toll at 379 with over 1000 injured. Other sources put the death toll at a much higher figure. It was not only the fire from the troops, but also the panic and the crush of the crowd at the four narrow exits. The brutality of Dyer quietened the agitation and Gandhi called off the strike. For some, Dyer was the man who saved India. The Daily Mail ran a subscription which raised £25000. Lloyd George`s government was shocked and censured Dyer`s actions.

In May 1919 the Emir of Afghanistan, largely to deflect attention from his complicity in the murder of his father and seeking to benefit from the civil disorders inside India launched an invasion into India through the Khyber Pass. The British army in India which was at that time in the throes of post war demobilisation and the return of Territorial battalions which had replaced the regular battalions at the start of the war, together with local tribal irregulars,

assisted the Afghan army cut off and surrounded several garrisons, fighting several actions. However the invasion made little headway, Reginald Dyer of Amritsar notoriety, was among the most successful British commanders. The army was supported by the RAF which carried out bombing raids as far away as Kabul. Its success in dispersing gathering tribesmen did much to explain the inter war policy of using the RAF offensively and the army defensively, along the North West Frontier. This war ended in August with the Treaty of Rawalpindi which gave Afghanistan a measure of freedom from British control but with loss of its subsidy and the agreement of its previously disputed border. The British casualties amounted to 236 killed and 1500 wounded, the Afghan losses being about 1000 killed.

The fighting in the First World war might have ended in November 1918, but it was not only on the frontier of India that further conflict involving British troops took place.



Closer to home, Sinn Fein, big winners in the 1918 General election in Ireland had taken 73 of the 105 seats contested, including the first woman to win a parliamentary seat Countess Markiewicz (left) with 47% of the votes cast. Refusing to take their places at Westminster they established their own Dail Eirann in Dublin on the 21st of January. On the same day two policemen in Tipperary were ambushed and killed.



In February, Eamonn de Valera and several other prominent republicans escaped from Lincoln jail. The death toll of policemen rose and on the 8th of September, incensed by the failure of a coroners court jury to rule that a colleague had been murdered in an ambush the previous day rioted in the garrison town of Drummoy. Within a week the Dail Eirann was declared illegal and on December 22nd Lloyd George announced the creation of two parliaments in Ireland, one in the North and one in the South, both of whom would sit on a Council of Ireland. Recognising that this was not an easy or popular solution the problem, he said

“No party in Ireland is prepared to accept anything except the impossible”

Three days earlier former Commander in Chief of the BEF, Sir John French, had survived an assassination attempt in Dublin.



With Countess Markiewicz failing to take her seat at Westminster, it was left to Nancy Astor (left) to claim the title of first woman MP following the retention of her husband`s seat in November 1919. Astor was an American citizen who moved to England at age 26, and married Waldorf Astor. After he succeeded to the peerage and entered the House of Lords, she entered politics, in 1919 winning his former seat in Plymouth. She served in Parliament as a member of the Conservative Party for Plymouth Sutton until 1945

British troops were fighting to, in Russia in 1919, having been originally sent to Russia in the early months of 1918 with intention of preventing war supplies, which had been sent in support

of the Czarist and Kerensky governments, and to prevent these falling into German hands following from the Bolshevik Revolution and the subsequent Treaty of Brest Litovsk. By the summer of 1918, relations with the local Soviets in Archangel and Murmansk had deteriorated and in August of that year British troops supported the overthrow of these soviets by White Russian forces. By 1919, politically, the Allies were divided over Russia, France was keen to crush the Bolshevik state and in this they were supported by Churchill. Lloyd George and Woodrow Wilson were far more interested in a negotiated solution and all this resulted in a `drift` in policy. In January 1919 a peace conference was arranged between the Reds and the Whites but coming at a time when Deniken and Kolchek`s armies appeared to be in the ascendancy, the Whites secretly supported by the French refused to attend the peace conference.

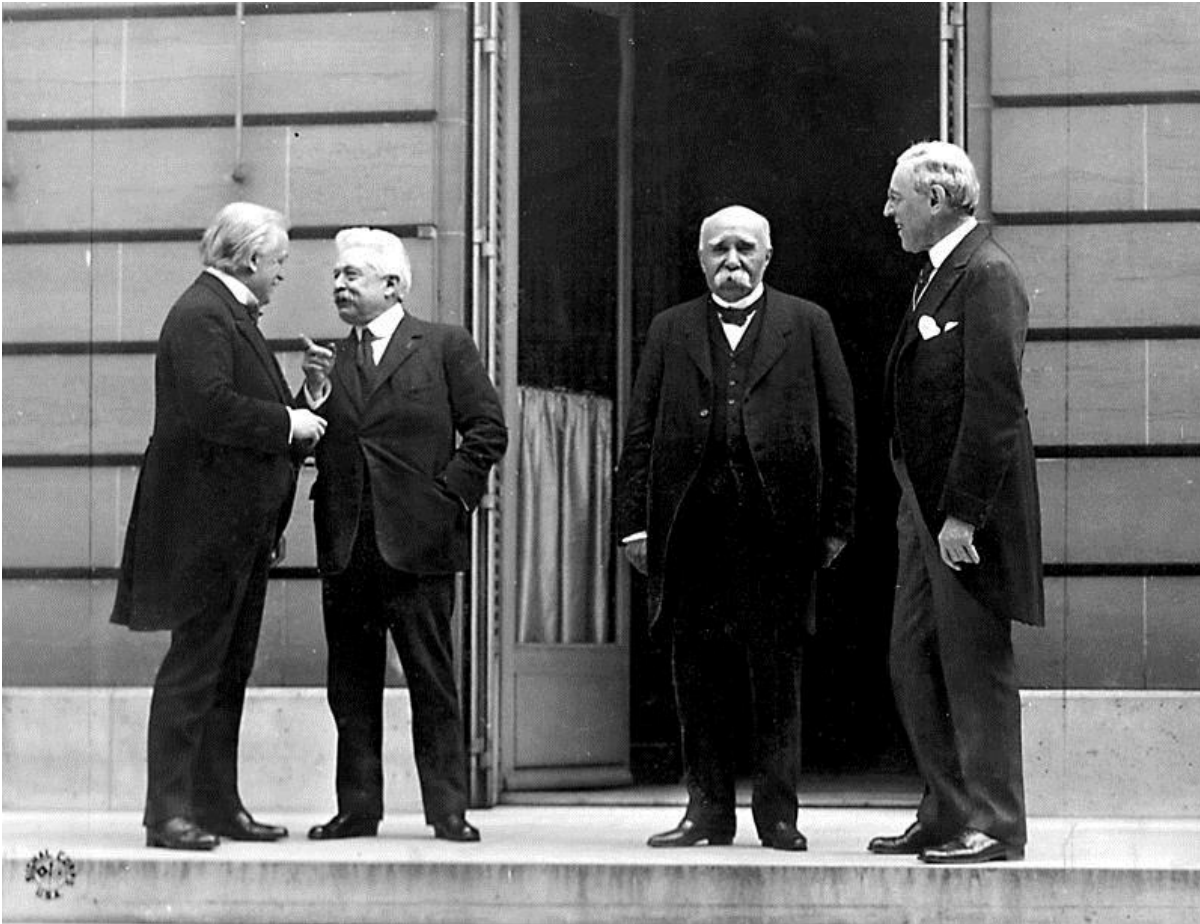
In March, worried by the adverse effects upon public opinion about the continued presence of British troops in Russia, and concern of `contamination of those troops by Bolshevik propaganda, the War Cabinet decided to evacuate Northern Russia. Once spring weather allowed it the troops would be brought back to allow for their demobilisation but in order to cover their withdrawal a new force of two brigades, the North Russia Relief Force, voluntarily recruited from demobilising soldiers, men who were therefore reliable. In April the French were forced to abandon their invasion of the Crimea following a mutiny in their Black Sea Fleet and the Red Army`s unexpected success. To cover the withdrawal, the North Russia Relief Force successfully drove the Red Army back, down the River Dvina and White Russians, supported by six British tanks manned by volunteer crews, pushed on towards Petrograd, it being hoped that Kolchek, moving west from Siberia, would link up with this thrust.

An international policy to support the White Russians and, in newly appointed Secretary of State for War Winston Churchill`s words, "to strangle at birth the Bolshevik State" became increasingly unpopular in Britain. In January 1919 the Daily Express was echoing public opinion when, paraphrasing Bismarck, it exclaimed, "the frozen plains of Eastern Europe are not worth the bones of a single grenadier". From April 1919, the inability to hold the flanks and mutinies in the ranks of the White Russian forces caused the Allied Powers to decide to leave. British officers at Shussuga had a lucky escape when their Russian gunners remained loyal. A number of western military advisers were killed by White mutineers who went over to the Bolsheviks. The British War Office sent General Henry Rawlinson to North Russia to assume command of the evacuation out of both Archangelsk and Murmansk. General Rawlinson arrived on August 11. On the morning of September 27, 1919, the last Allied troops departed from Archangelsk, and on October 12, Murmansk was abandoned.

October 1919 was the high water mark for the White Russian threat, the Red Army, however, was hold to hold, then push back the three White armies which were threatening. The last British troops left Siberia in February 1920 and withdrew from the Caucasus a month later. The Russian Intervention was over. British casualties were 160 officers and 877 other ranks of which 41 and 286 respectively, had been killed.

A detailed explanation of the Peace Treaties and Conference of 1919 would take a talk in its own right (as is happening at the February meeting) and Tony said he would try and summarise the more important points. Lloyd George and Balfour were accompanied by 750 civil servants and experts when they formed the British delegation. The Dominions were also separately represented. The Prime Minister crossed the channel on January 11th and Roy Hattersley, one of Lloyd George`s more recent biographers, suggests that he travelled with no clear idea as to what he wanted to achieve and that he was temperamentally unsuited to the demands of a long and tedious peace conference, not being at his best in a council of equals. Lloyd George`s own view was that he did not do too badly sitting as he was between Jesus Christ and Napoleon!

His relationship with the French President Clemenceau degenerated - `a disagreeable and temperamental old savage` whilst to Clemenceau Lloyd George lacked education and was `not an English gentleman`. However, both were united in their annoyance with the US President, Woodrow Wilson and his high moral tone who considered that he had a part to play out of all proportion to the take that his country had contributed, or intended to contribute to European affairs.



The principal players - left to right - Lloyd George, Vittorio Emanuele Orlando of Italy. Georges Clemenceau of France and Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States.

27 countries attended the conference although this number varied as new countries were formed but it was really a `Council of Ten` who would be the important players, chaired by Clemenceau, it comprised Lloyd George, Wilson, Orlando, their foreign secretaries, two Japanese delegates, who were the chief decision makers and the first of 145 closed sessions took place at the Quai D`Orsay on the 18th of January. The Japanese and the Italians subsequently pulled out of the council, considering that they were not getting what they were due and subsequently the foreign ministers were dropped leaving only Clemenceau, Lloyd George and Wilson - the Big Three.

Now it is said that Wilson was appalled when he first heard of the existence of the co-called `Secret Treaties` entered into by France and Britain during the war - the Italians had extracted a high territorial price from the Entente for their entry into the war on the side of the Allies. Japan and Roumania had been given promises and even France, Britain and Russia had had to agree to the Sykes-Picot Agreement against such express determination to leave such matters until after the war, if won. In addition to the Treaties, several of Wilson`s Fourteen Points, which drew a pithy comment from Lloyd George that `God only needed ten` were never going to get accepted.

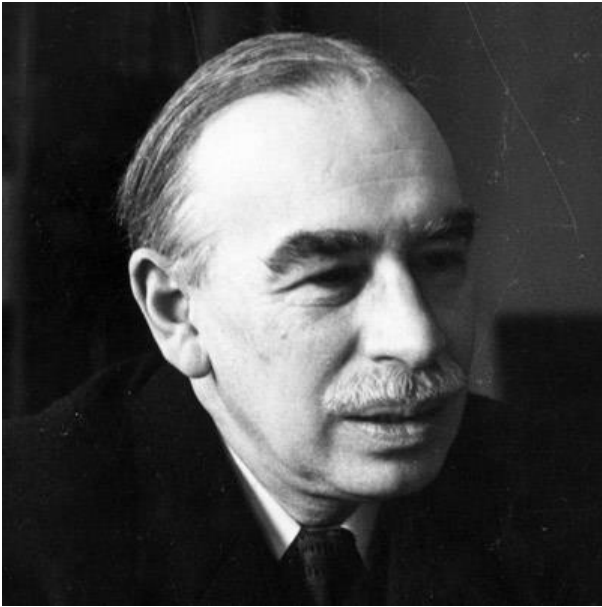
The 'Freedom of the Seas' clause was never going to be accepted by Britain if it meant that the Royal Navy's customary world-wide 'stop and search' would be curtailed. France and Britain had large empires which would be jeopardised if the wholesale rights of smaller nations was adopted and the Conservative majority in Lloyd George's coalition, egged on by the Dominions in light of free trade in preference to Imperial Preference. Wilson's idea of a 'League of Nations, however, were more well received and had been accepted as a War Aim even before the war finished. It took only eleven days for the sub-committee, under Wilson's chairmanship to present a unanimously agreed draft of its constitution to the conference. It was approved on April 28th 1919 and it remained unchanged until 1946 when it was replaced by the Charter of the United Nations.

In the United States, a combination of Wilson's own high-handedness, and what has been described as shameful partisan maneuvering in Congress by the failure on November 29th 1919, of the United States to ratify the League of Nations. The failure to agree to a collective response to security did much to undermine the organisation. It was, however, on behalf of the League of Nations that the former Ottoman provinces of Palestine, Trans-Jordan and Iraq were administered by Britain while France took on the mandate for Syria and Lebanon. In the Pacific, Australia, New Zealand and Japan administered former German colonies whilst in Africa, Britain, France, Belgium and South Africa took over those remaining German colonies. The fact that these were mandates did not prevent cartographers from colouring even more of the globe, red.

Article 231, the so-called War Guilt clause was probably the most controversial clause in the Peace Treaty. The original wording merely recorded the uncontested fact that Germany had invaded Belgium and France but this was 'souped up' and replaced by the 'aggression' of Germany and the root cause of this change was money, Lloyd George's determination that payments by Germany had to indemnify the Allies rather than just paying a reparation - by definition putting right something which is wrong - would have meant that Britain's claim would have been reduced to the damage done by aerial bombing and the shelling of towns on the east coast, neither of which amounted to enough money to satisfy Lloyd George.

Most of the conference was given over to re-drawing national boundaries, the Habsburg Empire being the principal loser in this re-mapping of Europe, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Yugoslavia all came into being whilst the rump of Austria was prevented from unification with Germany. Hungary was reduced by losses of land and populations to Poland, Czechoslovakia and Roumania, the new borders saw millions of ethnic Hungarians lost to the mother country. Germany also saw losses to Denmark, Poland and the Sudetenland to Czechoslovakia. Germany's losses, actually read like a countdown to the Second World War. Russia's penalty for signing the Brest Litovsk Treaty meant she failed to regain the Baltic states, Finland or Eastern Poland. In some areas plebiscites were held to try and understand where the majority of people wanted to affiliate to.

The investigations into Germany's ability to pay was first started by the British Treasury as early as 1916 and towards the end of 1918 an estimate of Germany's ability to pay came to the sum of 4 billion pounds, but it was thought that a more likely figure would be three billion.



John Maynard Keynes (left) one of the experts who accompanied Lloyd George to Paris had carried out the work on behalf of the Treasury and he felt that Germany should be asked for no more than 2 billion pounds believing that any more would ruin her. This moderate sum did not survive the electioneering with ministers pandering to the electorate demanding ever greater sums. A committee, under the chairmanship of Australia's hard line Prime Minister, Billy Hughes and numbering a former governor of the Bank of England, Lord Cunliffe, arrived at a wholly unrealistic figure of 25 billion pounds, to be repaid at 1.2 billion pounds per year. France's estimate was even more unrealistic at 44 billion pounds. Neither Clemenceau nor Lloyd George were enamored by Wilson's suggestion that Germany should be let off with financial penalties,

indeed Clemenceau told him that if he agreed to such a thing he would, rightly, be dragged out by his successor - and shot! Wilson replied that there was nothing finer than to be put out of office for doing the right thing!

Irrespective of the actual final sum to be extracted from Germany, how it was to be shared out occupied much time at the conference, France initially demanding 90% but the eventually proportions agreed were :-

France	52%
Britain	28%
Smaller countries	20%

A final estimate of Germany's ability to pay was eventually set at between 5 and 7 billion pounds but at Lloyd George's insistence, no total was ever put into the Treaty. Germany would pay until the debt was discharged. The public continued to expect the 25 billion they had been promised. Lloyd George, at home, faced a running battle with the Northcliffe Press and elements within the House of Commons over accusations of 'going easy' on the Germans. In contrast, Keynes branded the Treaty a Carthaginian Peace and the position he took did much to emphasise him as the economist of choice for the post World War Two world which had seen the sides fail so spectacularly within twenty years of the First.

On balance the final treaty gave Lloyd George more or less everything he wanted, he prevented France from becoming too powerful, he obtained for Britain a reasonable share of the financial benefits, he strengthened his power at home and restored the British strategic ideal of a European balance of power. He had achieved, he believed, an outcome based upon liberal realism.

Under the terms of the Armistice the German High Seas Fleet was to be surrendered to the Allies and interned until decisions could be reached, at the peace conference about its ultimate fate. On November 21st 1918 Operation ZZ took place. 70 ships of the German High Seas Fleet, including the most modern dreadnoughts and battle cruisers, the second most powerful navy in the world, assembled in the North Sea and was met by its escort



Frankfurt, Emden and Bremse entering Scapa Flow

Some estimates of the Allied and German fleets are as high as 370 warships. It was the largest assembly of warships, ever. The German ships, led by the Royal Navy cruiser HMS Cardiff and followed astern by masses of British destroyers led by HMS Castor, were flanked to the north by 19 battleships, 5 battlecruisers, 2 cruisers and 13 light cruisers, to the south by 14 battleships, 4 battlecruisers, one aircraft carrier, one cruiser and 12 light cruisers of the Grand Fleet which headed first to the Firth of Forth and subsequent internment at Scapa flow in the Orkney Islands. If this show of maritime strength did not overawe the German sailors, Admiral Beatty's signal that the German flag would be hauled down at sunset and would not be raised again without permission, left them in no doubt as to the identity of the victors. It was expected that the German fleet would be shared out amongst the Allies, a prospect viewed by Britain with some concern as it would erode the margin of British naval supremacy, at a stroke. Britain favoured scrapping the fleet.

The deadline set for Germany accepting and signing the Versailles Treat was June 21st and plans were in place to take possession of the German fleet.

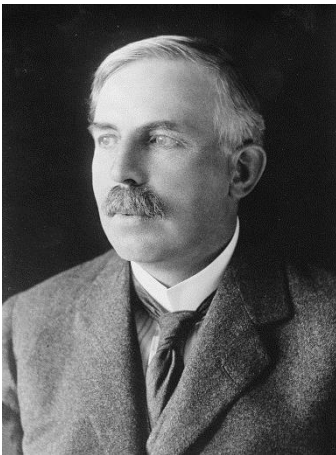


The Grand Fleet sailed out of Scapa Flow on the morning of the 21st on a training exercise when an extension had been agreed for the German signature. At 10.30 that morning, Rear Admiral Von Royter signaled to his High Seas Fleet 'paragraph 11 confirmed'. Prior to this his ships had been prepared with sea cocks partially open but upon receipt of this message they were opened fully. Nothing was obvious until around noon when the Friedrich der Grosse started to list to starboard. The skeleton crews began to abandon ships as the fleet began to settle. British attempts to force the German sailors back on to their ships in order to save them, resulted in the shooting dead of nine sailors and the wounding of sixteen others. They were amongst the last deaths of the First World War. Some ships were dragged ashore before they sank. 52 ships were successfully scuttled, over 400,000 tons of shipping making it the largest single days' loss of ships, ever.

For Admiral Wemyss, the scuttling was not without its bright side, he said *“I look upon the sinking of the German Fleet as a real blessing, it answers once and for all the thorny question of the redistribution of these ships.”* It was unnecessary to say that it also ensured the Royal Navy`s paramountcy remained undiminished. Of the 52 ships scuttled, all but 7 were salvaged in the inter war years. Those in deeper waters have been designated as Ancient Monuments from 1975 and now provide some of the best wreck diving in Europe.

Of course when the German fleet settled on the bottom of Scapa Flow and the German delegates reluctantly signed the Treaty of Versailles on June 28th, it was not the end of the story. When the `Big Three` left for their triumphal returns, treaties were concluded with the other Central Powers in a process stretching into 1920. The Treaty of Seves allowed Italian and Greek occupation of parts of South Western Turkey, the creation of an Armenian state and the internationalisation of the Straits. However the rise of Turkish nationalism under the charismatic Mustafa Kemal - Ataturk - saw the eviction of the Italians and Greeks and the end of Armenian hopes of an independent homeland. The Treaty of Seves was replaced by that of Lausanne in 1923 restoring at least the Anatolian part of the old Turkish Empire. It also led to an exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey on a scale that was not to be seen again until the partition of India in 1947.

Tony finished his talk by touching on some other matters of importance which took place in 1919.



On January 3rd, at Manchester University, Professor Ernest Rutherford (left) split the atom for the first time ushering in the nuclear age

On January 16th the US Congress passed the 18th Amendment to the US Constitution for state ratification - Prohibition would come into force in January 1920. March 1919 Benito Mussolini founded his fascist party in Italy. On June 15th British aviators Alcock and Brown made the first non-stop transatlantic flight flying a modified Vickers Vimy bomber from Newfoundland to Ireland - 1900 miles in 16 hours and 12 minutes.

Tony said that 1919 could be considered to be a year of `First and Last`, the events of that year clearly mark it as the final year of the First World War, but it was also the first year when the faint glimmers of the net World War can be seen.

Thus finished an excellent well researched and immaculately presented talk. Tony has (in my opinion) a very clear and distinct way of putting his presentation across - something which some of our more illustrious and learned speakers would do well to copy.

Following a short question and answer session, Deputy Chair, Mark Macartney proposed a warm (and witty) vote of thanks to Tony for his efforts on our behalf, to which the members present responded enthusiastically.

THE LIGHTS ARE OUT

*The lights are out now, they have gone to sleep.
 Left are mothers, widows that must live on and weep.
 The battle is over on this sickening and deadly field.
 The wounds of families left open, never to be healed.
 Brothers Bertie, Charlie, Ronald and Ted.
 Always to be remembered although you are dead.
 In a Glasgow church your names are placed.
 Not written down is those horrors you faced.
 You lie out there in some foreign land
 Your pals are with you, they hold your hand.
 When Empires clashed across this globe.
 Men fought and died young and old.
 This sacrifice these soldiers sadly gave.
 Now we pay homage to their grave.
 The guns are silent your job is done.
 God bless you all, everyone.*

By John Sullivan

Mephisto A7V the only remaining German Tank from The Great War

By Peter Harris

This article is based on that which appeared in the WFA's Bulletin magazine in December 2018 but which unfortunately did not have all the photographs included due to space. I have also added a few photos from the short presentation I gave on Mephisto.

As a follow up to Paul Cobb's article in the March 2018 issue of *Bulletin* I was in Brisbane on the 2nd February 2018 and was privileged to visit the Workshops Rail Museum in Ipswich, Queensland. I had arranged the visit through Jennifer Wilson, Senior Curator and on the day met her colleague Kazzie who kindly let me go up to *Mephisto* and take photographs. *Mephisto* had been removed from its protective plastic bubble and loaded onto a flat-bed ready for departure to the Queensland Museum in Brisbane a few days later. Later in the day my wife met her cousin who lives in Brisbane and he has since sent us photographs of Mephisto from a book on the history of the Queensland Museum.¹

Mephisto was abandoned during the battle of Villers-Bretonneux on the 26th April 1918 after ditching in a shell crater and on the 22nd July was captured by the Australian 26th division and dragged back to their lines by two tanks. The photograph of *Mephisto* after being captured is a rear view so the damage to the front offside roof cannot be seen, it also shows a painting of a

¹ Mather, P. *A time for a museum : a history of the Queensland Museum 1862-1986*, (Brisbane : Queensland Museum, 1986)

lion on the side of the tank, it is understood that this was done (or modified) by its Australian captors.



This second photograph taken after capture shows a side view and the damage to the roof. Note that as well as the graffiti 'Captured by the 26th Batt(alion) AIF the 'Salved by 1st G.C. Coy 5th Bd Tanks' as it was towed back to the Australian lines by a Gun Carrier tank from the 5th Brigade of the BEF Tank Corps.



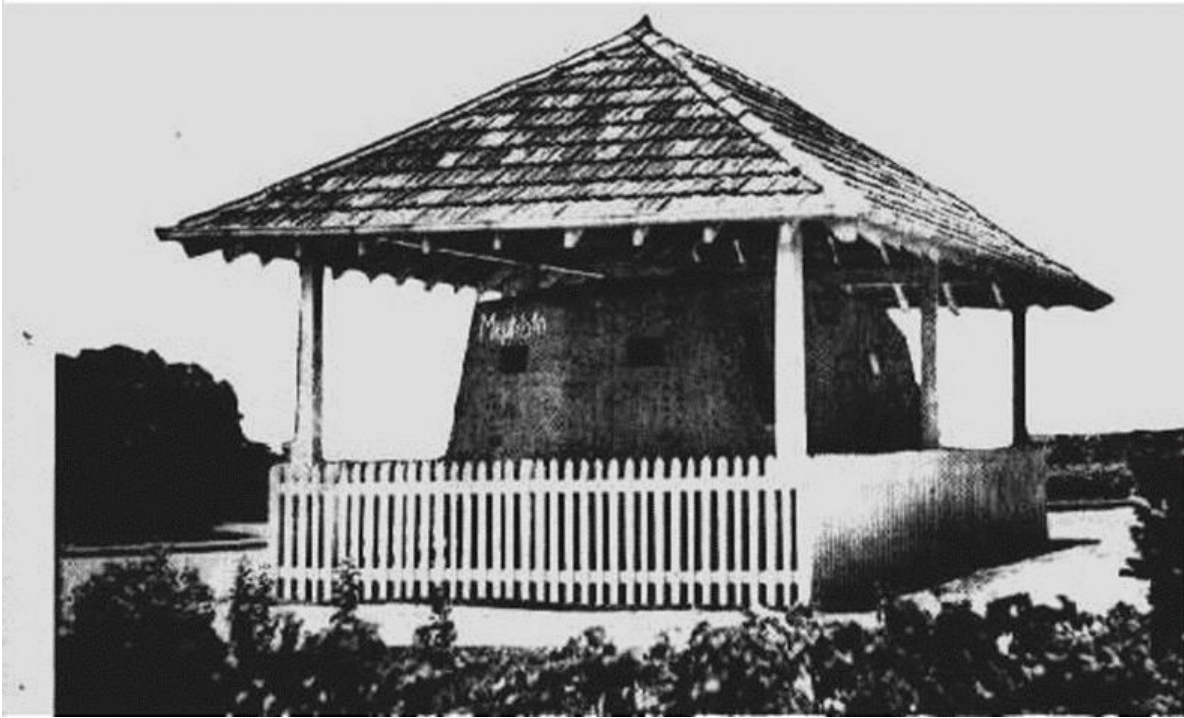
At this time *Mephisto* still had parts of the commander's turret on the roof. The second photograph shows *Mephisto* being lifted off the SS *Armagh* on the 6th June 1919 onto Norman wharf in Brisbane which is now an area of bars and restaurants and co-incidentally we had eaten there on the night before without knowing about how *Mephisto* arrived!



The third photograph shows *Mephisto* being dragged through Brisbane by steam rollers belonging to Brisbane City Council.



Mephisto was exhibited outside in Brisbane for many years and suffered from looting and corrosion until it was moved inside the museum and repainted and later placed in a controlled environment.



In November 2010 Brisbane was severely flooded and *Mephisto* was partly submerged. After the flood subsided *Mephisto* was taken to the Ipswich Workshops for restoration and then spent some time in 2015 in Canberra at the Australian War memorial before returning to Ipswich.

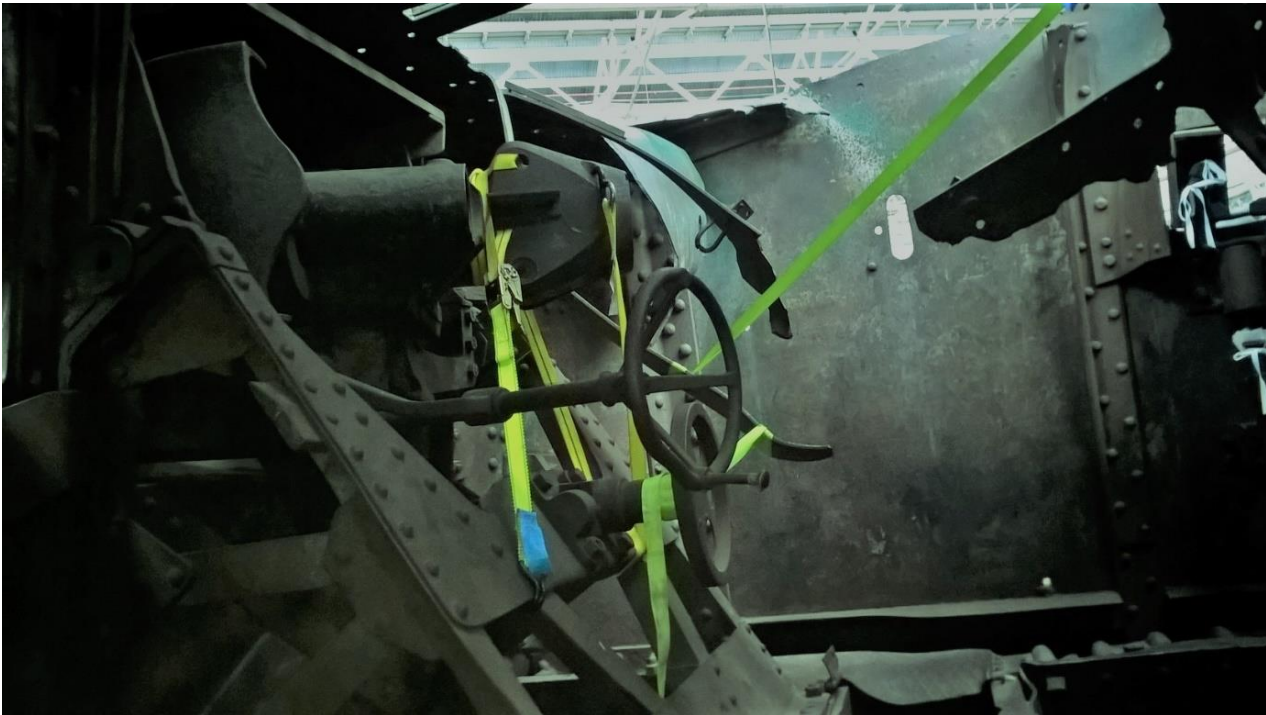


The following photographs are those that I took and are exterior views of *Mephisto* at the Ipswich Workshops.



These show the high quality of the restoration work that has been carried out at the workshops. The last two are views of the interior taken through the front side hatch and show the gun mount

and roof damage and the view of the engine. The damage to *Mephisto* was done by a German patrol who were trying to destroy the similarly ditched A7V *Elfreide* but got lost on the battlefield and instead tried to blow up *Mephisto*.²

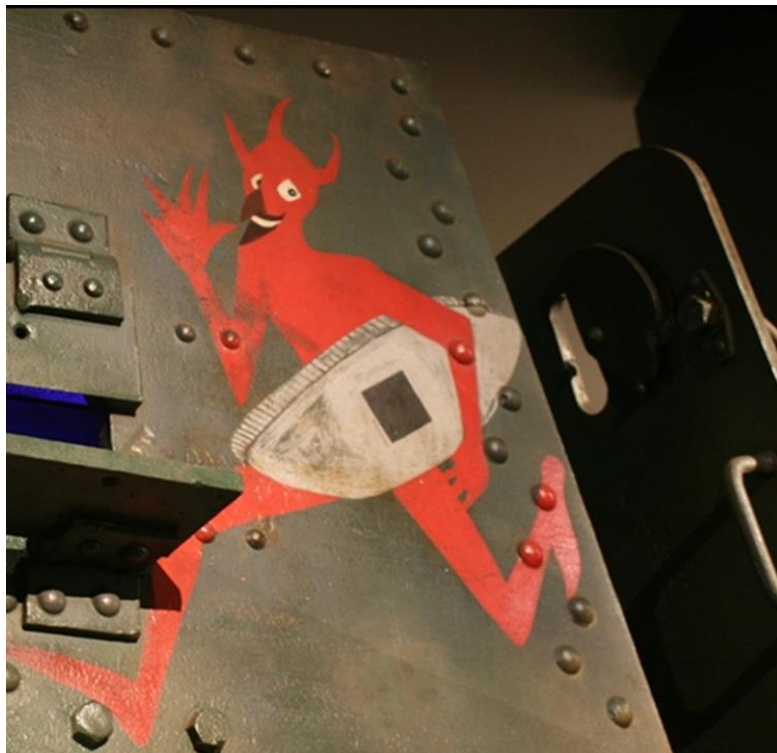


² Zaloga, S. J. *German Panzers 1914 -18*, (Oxford: Osprey, 2006)

A few days after my visit *Mephisto* was wrapped up and taken back to the Queensland Museum in Brisbane to be put in a new display they were creating. I was really fortunate to visit Ipswich when I did.



The photograph below shows a detail of the front of Mephisto showing the Demon Mephisto carrying a British tank to Hell.



Only 20 A7V's were built. The name 'A7V' stands for 'Abteilung 7 Verkehrswesen' which is the name of the committee that approved their construction the '7th Transport Department'. It was also referred to in German as a *Sturmpanzerwagen*, which translates as 'armoured assault vehicle'.

The A7V was 7.34 metres (24.1 ft) long, 3 metres (9.8 ft) wide, and the maximum height was 3.3 metres (11 ft). The tank had 20 mm of steel plate at the sides, 30 mm at the front and 10 mm for the roof. The tank had from 17 to 25 crew and was armed with six 7.92 mm MG08 machine guns and one 5.7 cm Maxim-Nordenfolt cannon. They were first used in combat on 21 March 1918, five tanks of *Abteilung I* under the command of Hauptmann Greiff were deployed north of the St. Quentin Canal and of these three broke down. On 24 April 1918 at Villers-Bretonneux, three *Abteilung* each of 5 tanks were deployed. One broke down, *Nixe* was destroyed by Frank Mitchell's MkIV, *Elfreide* rolled over and *Mephisto* bogged in a shell crater.

To end the story and bring it up to date we have recently received a newspaper article from my wife's cousin in Brisbane. *Mephisto* is now back in the Queensland Museum as part of a new display about the state's soldiers in the First World War which opened on the 11th November 2018.

This article is a follow up to the brief presentation Peter made to Chesterfield branch on this subject last year.

The Munitions Crisis - part 20

A number of voluntary organisations rendered great help in the promotion of these canteens, such as the YMCA, YWCA, Lady Lawrence's Munition makers' Canteen committee, the Salvation Army, and the Church Army. As to the actual provision of canteen premises and equipment, however, there was a question whether the Board or the employers should finance these and it seemed much more desirable that the employers should undertake this responsibility, as it ensured their interest and gave a better prospect of permanence to the canteens. Accordingly the Minister secured treasury sanction for an arrangement whereby the cost of building and equipping canteens might be charged by controlled establishments against their current profits under Part III of the Munitions of War Act 1915, on condition that such buildings were maintained thereafter permanently as canteens, save by permission of the Ministry or of the Government Department which should inherit its duties. This concession operated from November 1915 until November 1918, during which time 867 schemes of canteens at controlled establishments were approved, the total cost of them which was recommended for writing off gross profits being £1909135. About one million workpeople were employed in the establishments to which these canteens were attached. The habit of regular and wholesome meals which these canteens encouraged, combined with the limitation and dilution of alcoholic beverages, helped to establish the then post war traditions of moderation in drinking and was subsequently viewed as steps to an improved standard of healthy living.

The progress which was made amply warranted the Minister to state to a visiting temperance deputation - a group urging total prohibition - that by confining the objectives to practical and

achievable limits, the government had been able to achieve a far bigger advance towards a degree of national sobriety than had hitherto been effected in a far longer period by all persuasive and legislative efforts in combination.

One of the most welcome features of the post of Minister of Munitions was the opportunity it placed within the Minister's reach to better the social and industrial conditions in the manufacturing establishments which came under the Ministry's direct or indirect control. Legislation reflected the growing desire in industry among both workers and employers for better standards in the workplaces. It was considered at the time that matters of this kind cannot move very far in advance of public opinion, otherwise it could become a 'dead letter'. Various measures were sanctioned to a greater or lesser extent by the demands of the workers, the successful experiment of enlightened employers, the zeal of practical reformers, and the growth of a progressive public opinion.

They represented, of course, only the minimum demand enforceable by law upon industry. Their incidence was limited and partial, and they did not go very far to ensure the highest attainable measure of amenity, health or comfort for the worker. Some employers were doing good pioneer work in the voluntary creation of improved conditions for their staff but they were in those days the exception rather than the rule. The establishment of the Ministry of Munitions and the new industrial developments which it organised gave an impulse to important changes in the general situation. In the first place, the State, as represented by the Ministry became a large scale employer of industrial labour and on an even larger scale an indirect employer of labour in the establishments engaged in munition work which were brought under its control. It was thus in a position to exercise persuasion, pressure and, if necessary, compulsion upon employers throughout the country to adopt higher standards for ensuring the welfare of their workers during their hours of employment.

Secondly, the withdrawal of a large part of the male population from industry into the fighting forces brought about the introduction of female labour on a scale never previously contemplated, and into industrial occupations which had formerly been staffed exclusively by men. There had, of course, before the War been a considerable body of female labour employed in certain types of factory - particularly in textiles - but it now invaded unusual fields of the heavy industries, the shell filling factories and even shipbuilding. In most of these establishments rough and unseemly conditions prevailed and had hitherto been put with by the male workers, but it was recognised as impossible to ask women to put up with them.

A singularly favourable opportunity thus presented itself for introducing into industry a great forward movement for improving the general conditions of the welfare of the workers - an opportunity which the Ministry took full advantage of.

One of the first tasks of the Ministry of Munitions was the creation of national filling and explosives factories, and from August 1915 a woman staff inspector of the Ministry was at work visiting these as fast as these were opened up and keeping in touch with the Boards of Management regarding the very important and varied questions of the welfare of women in this often dangerous work. Her duties included advice and help in the selection on women supervisors, in the training of the special types of labour required and in the provision of doctors and nurses for its care. In September 1915 a Health of Munion Workers Committee was appointed to advise on questions concerning 'industrial fatigue, hours of labour and other matters affecting the personal health and physical efficiency' of the munition worker. It was a strong committee representing the concentrated experience if the Home Office, of employers, labour and medical experts.



The Chairman was Sir George Newman (left) and its members included Sir Thomas Barlow, Dr Leonard E Hill, three leading officers of the Home Office factory department, Sir W M Fletcher, Secretary of the Medical Research Committee. Mr. Clyne's, Professor Boycott, Mr. Samuel Osborne and Mrs. J H Tennant. It rendered invaluable service during the war by recommendations on a practical programme for welfare work, supplied to the government and became a forerunner of the Industrial Fatigue Research Committee which post war carried out important investigations into conditions of industrial efficiency. Throughout the autumn of 1915 the supply departments of the Ministry of Munitions, working in consultation with this Committee, were organising measures to promote the welfare of workers in national factories.



In December 1915 Lloyd George took a further step in appointing Mr. Benjamin Seebohmm Rowntree (seen on the right with Lloyd George) as Director of the Welfare Section of the Ministry. Rowntree was well known, not only as a great employer but as one of the foremost and most successful pioneers in the development of improved conditions in his factories.

The work he did helped to transform the conditions for munitions labour during the war and indeed went on to leave a permanent mark upon conditions in our industries until his death in 1954

It was a difficult problem which confronted the new Welfare Section. In a large number of existing factories were very rough and primitive and there was no tradition of care for the health or comfort of the employee beyond the minimum that was already compulsory under the Factory Acts. The pressure of work had, of course, been greatly intensified by the necessities of war. Hours were long and premises often crowded. New factories and extensions to existing factories were being rapidly run up and these temporary erections were often occupied and buzzing with activity before any thought had been given to the provision of accessories in the shape of lavatories, cloak rooms, mess rooms, or canteens, And, in addition, they were being increasingly staffed by women and girls, for whose supervision no appropriate arrangements had been made.

The Health of Muniton Workers Committee, in a memorandum issued in January 1916, urged the need for attention to this side of the problem of production:-

"If the present long hours, the lack of healthful and sympathetic oversight, the inability to obtain good wholesome food, and the great difficulties of travelling are allowed to continue, it will be impracticable to secure or maintain for an extended period the high maximum output of which women are undoubtedly capable"

To be continued

German WW1 submarine emerges off French coast



The wreck is attracting curious visitors at low tide

The wreck of a World War One German submarine is gradually resurfacing on a beach in northern France after decades of being buried in the sand.

Shifting sand off Wissant, near Calais, is exposing the remains of the UC-61 which was stranded there in July 1917.

The crew flooded the vessel and abandoned it and by the 1930s the submarine had largely been buried.

It is now becoming a tourist attraction again, although the local mayor warns it may only be a fleeting visit.

Since December, two sections of the submarine have been visible at low tide about 330ft (100m) from the dunes.

"The wreck is visible briefly every two to three years, depending on the tides and the wind that leads to sand movements, but a good gust of wind and the wreck will disappear again," said Mayor of Wissant Bernard Bracq.

However, local tour guide Vincent Schmitt believes the winds and tides could lead to even more of the UC-61 being exposed.



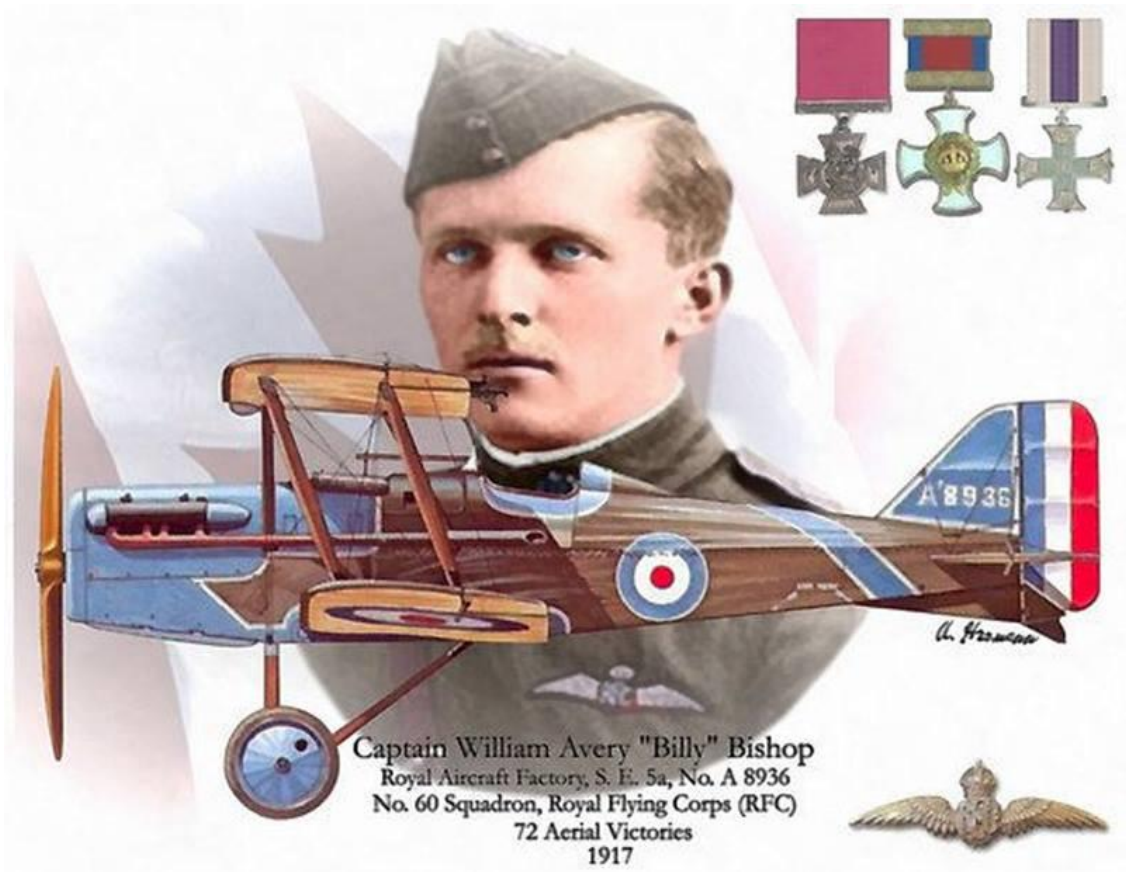
"All the residents of Wissant knew there was a submarine here, but the wreck is mostly silted and therefore invisible," he said.

"Pieces reappear from time to time, but this is the first time we discover so much."

Historians say the UC-61 was credited with sinking at least 11 ships, either by laying mines or by firing torpedoes.

On its last journey, the submarine had left Zeebrugge in Belgium and was heading to Boulogne-sur-Mer and Le Havre to lay mines when it ran aground.

The 26 crewmen surrendered to French authorities.



Billy Bishop and James Cagney in 1942 during filming of `Captain of the Clouds`



Thanks for Coming