



Reveille – No.3 November 2020

The magazine of Preston & Central
Lancashire WFA

southribble-greatwar.com

*In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.*

*We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie,
In Flanders fields.*

*Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.*

John McCrae

Cover photograph by Charlie O'Donnell

Oliver at the Menin Gate

Welcome...

...to the November 2020 edition of our magazine Reveille. The last few months have been difficult ones for all of us particularly since we are not able to meet nor go on our usual travels to the continent. In response the WFA has been hosting a number of online seminars and talks – details of all talks to the end of the year and how they can be accessed are reproduced within this edition. The main theme of this edition is remembrance. We have included articles on various War Memorials in the district and two new ones this branch has had a hand in creating. The branch officers all hope that you are well and staying safe. We wish you all the best for the holiday season and we hope to meet you again in the new year. **Charlie O'Donnell, Stan Grosvenor & Trudy Reynolds**

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In The Beginning ...



Was a man with a vision and the strength of a loving wife and family around him.

John Giles was born in 1921. He married Margery in 1946 and although he was not blessed with good health, they had 45 good years together before he died suddenly at home. He had, however, a great sense of humour and would have enjoyed watching me as I typed a nought instead of a nine above, which would have extended his marriage by nine hundred years.

He was fortunately also blessed with a great determination which together with that sense of humour helped him to achieve many goals. Perhaps one the greatest of those achievements was the founding of the Western Front Association 40 years ago, almost to the day you receive this magazine.

So, the WFA was born with the major aims of remembrance of all those who served their countries on the Western Front in the Great War and to foster interest in that period. John was our first Chairman, serving from 1980 to 1984.

Some years ago, Tony Spagnoly, referring to a pre-1980 visit to the Somme battlefields with John, wrote

"I have to smile when I sit in the bar of the 'Baselique' [Hotel de la Basilique] and think about that night. I nearly say to Claude (mine host),

" A plaque is called for in that corner of the bar "

I have been unable to visit the Somme for some years now – did anyone succeed with that plaque idea?

Over the years there have been some thirty thousand WFA members who all have good reason to be grateful to our founder chairman. When we remember John Giles, we should also remember his wife Margery and indeed all those other founder members of the Association.

John, I honour and salute you!

Stan Grosvenor

NB: I had originally intended to write a longer piece but a detailed in-depth special edition of John Giles and the early years is to be published by the EC with the next issue of the Bulletin.

John Kelly – A Leyland Lad

Doreen Fielding, Queensland, Australia



Leyland Civic Memorial. Photograph by Charlie O'Donnell

John Kelly (1894-1916). On 3 September 1914 John Kelly, age 19 years and 10 months, responded to the call to arms by making his way to Southport, Lancashire to volunteer for “Kitchener’s Army”. After undergoing a medical examination, he was “attested and posted” to the 12th (Service) Battalion of The King’s (Liverpool Regiment), part of Kitchener’s Second New Army, which joined the 20th (Light) Division as Army Troops. His Primary Military Examination described him as 5 feet 6.5 inches tall, with a chest measurement of 34 inches, a fair complexion, grey eyes, light brown hair and weighing 127 lbs.¹ By November 1914 his medical history indicated that he was fully inoculated, in good physical health, had normal vision, and was ready for training. Training commenced at Aldershot in the United Kingdom, and after completion in July 1915 he was posted to France to complete trench familiarization.² The 12th Battalion fought in the Battles of Mount Sorrel, and on the Somme in The Battles of Delville Wood and Guillemont. It was during the Battle of Guillemont, on 3 September 1916, whilst serving with 12th Battalion King’s (Liverpool Regiment), 61st

Brigade, 20th Division XIV Corps, 4th Army [British], Private John Kelly. Infantryman, Regiment No. K14779 was killed in action.³

On 4 August 1914 Britain declared war on Germany. It was reported in The Daily Mirror that The King and Queen, accompanied by the Prince of Wales and Princess Mary, were “hailed with wild enthusiastic cheers when they appeared on the balcony of Buckingham Palace, before which a record crowd had assembled”.⁴ Their enthusiasm reflected the general mood of the people as “there was virtually no opposition to the war”.⁵ Three days later Lord Kitchener appealed to the nation for 100,000 volunteers aged between 19 and 30 to reinforce the regular Army, and by Christmas 1914 one million men had volunteered. They became known as the New Armies, with the 11th - 14th (Service) Battalions generally being made up of blue-collar workers.⁶ It is not known what motivated the thousands of young men (overwhelmingly from the working class) to volunteer. Perhaps John, who had been working as a crofter at the Leyland Bleachworks, perceived it as an adventure to travel somewhere beyond his village for the first time.⁷ “Romantic ideals of war, patriotism, fear of public shaming, and the lure of regular pay” were also factors. As was the shame of being handed a white feather by a woman to a person not in uniform?⁸ By January 1915, with the help of propaganda posters, over one million men had enlisted but this was not enough due to the increasing numbers of casualties. Hence the government passed the Military Service Act 1916, which imposed conscription on all single men aged between 18 and 41, with some exemptions.⁹

Recruits were transformed from civilians to soldiers learning military discipline and how to fight with rifle and bayonet at the training camps throughout Britain. The temporary ‘Kitchener Blue’ uniform and cardboard cap badges had to be produced and distributed quickly. Pay books included a message from Lord Kitchener reminding them to be ‘courteous, considerate and kind’ to local people and allied soldiers, and to avoid ‘the temptations both in wine and women’.¹⁰

John’s initial training in 1914 took place at Aldershot, England. In July 1915 he was dispatched to Boulogne, France, then on to the Fleurbaix area for trench familiarization before going into battle in August 1915.¹¹

Life in the trenches was challenging and exhausting, especially during the winter months. As well as the mud and rain, the troops had to cope with the frosts. Their boots would freeze while sleeping, as would their overcoats and the yellow clay that coated them.¹² The trenches were described as very muddy and uncomfortable with overflowing toilets. The mud caused trench foot and the overflowing toilets brought the predominant disease of trench fever which spread through the faeces of body lice. To add to the discomfort were smells from raw sewage, body odour, dead bodies, exploded shells, cigarette smoke and cooking.¹³

The soldiers looked forward to receiving mail from home and whilst they were permitted to send letters home their letters were heavily censored by the Ministry of Defence. Details of the soldier’s location were deleted as were details of any

movements that the soldier was involved with and hence the letters were often unreadable.¹⁴

From 1 July – 18 November 1916 The First Battle of the Somme raged. Battle was the word used to describe a group of battles. The Battle of the Somme was defined as being made up of twelve individual Battles and three Actions.¹⁵ The 12th Battalion was actively involved in the Battles of Delville Wood and Guillemont between 14 July – 15 September 1916. The War Diaries from 20 August to 10 September 1916 detailed daily movements, including numbers killed or wounded. These diaries affirm there had been very heavy fighting during the month of August, with the enemy, at one point, coming up behind the 12th Battalion as they advanced. The handwritten War Diary entry for the 3rd September reads:

“3 9 16 At 9 am the Battalion left the CRATERS and moved to Assembly trenches East of BERNAFAY WOOD. Battalion moved forward through TRONES WOOD at 12.25 pm to CORNISH ALLEY.”¹⁶

“A subsidiary attack of the Somme Offensive was launched at midday on 3 September 1916, which finally saw Guillemont fall to the British”. This was the day that John Kelly was killed in action.¹⁷ John’s parents were notified of his death and his “personal possessions and War Medals (The British War Medal and the Victory Medal)” were dispatched to them. His mother was also notified that she was entitled to receive a Dependant’s Pension.^{18,19} The emotions his parents felt would have been indescribable; pride for the role he played in defending his country, yet overwhelming sadness at the loss of a son and the anguish of wondering how to tell, and comfort, John’s six sisters and two brothers. Although we do not know a lot about him, John Kelly’s name will live on in history through the numerous War Memorials dedicated to those soldiers who gave their lives to defend their country. “The 72,194 names of the men missing in action on the battlefields of the Somme are inscribed on 64 huge stone panels of the Thiepval Memorial”. John’s name can be seen on Pier and Face 1D8B and 8C.²⁰ He is also honoured on the Leyland Town War Memorial which commemorates 196 residents of Leyland who were killed or missing in World War I and 74 in World War II.²¹ On Armistice day in 2015 a new South Ribble War Memorial was unveiled to honour all the South Ribble men who had lost their lives in World War I. John’s name appears on the memorial along with 685 others.²² (Editors note: The memorial now bears the names of 748 men as of November 2019).

In 2014, to mark the 100th anniversary of the start of World War I a work of art titled "Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red", was dedicated to the memory of commonwealth servicemen and women who served in the Great War. “On 15 July 2014 the first ceramic poppy was placed in the moat of the Tower of London and over time another 888,245 poppies were added, each representing a military fatality from World War I. The poppies were arranged to appear as a flowing sea of blood pouring from the Tower's Weeping Window”.²³

Whilst photographing the scene I was overcome with an emotion I had never felt before, knowing that one of those poppies represented my Great Uncle John.

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- 11 12th Battalion, Kings (Liverpool Regiment), The Wartime Memories Project, <https://www.wartimememoriesproject.com/greatwar/allied/battalion>. Accessed 4 August 2020
- 12 Voices of the First World War: War in Winter, <https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/voices-of-the-first-world-war-war-in-winter>, Accessed 11 August 2020.
- 13 What was life like in a World War One trench? <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zqhyb9q/articles/z8sssbk>, Accessed 8 August 2020.
- 14 World War 1 A Letter From The Trenches WW1, <https://hubpages.com/education/World-War-1-A-Letter-From-The-Trenches>, Accessed 12 August 2020.
- 15 The Battles of the Somme, 1916, The Long, Long Trail, <https://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/battles/battles-of-the-western-front-in-france-and-flanders/the-battles-of-the-somme-1916/>, Accessed 23 August 2020.
- 16 War Diaries 12th Battalion Kings (Liverpool Regiment) dated from 20th August to 10 September 1916. UK National Archives Ref Nos: WO952126-2-2, p10 and WO95-2126-2, p12.
- 17 Battles - The Battle of Guillemont, 1916, <https://www.firstworldwar.com/battles/guillemont.htm>, Accessed 5 August 2020.
- 18 British Army WWI Service Records, 1914-1920.
- 19 Grosvenor, Stan, Secretary, Western Front Association, Preston and Central Lancashire Branch, email 28 May 2020, to Doreen Fielding. Copyright permission to use Medal card and pension card information. Original held by the author.
- 20 Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France. Panel or Grave Reference: Pier and Face 1D 8B and 8C. Index No. M.R. 21 Thiepval. Mem Part XXV <https://www.cwgc.org/find/find-cemeteries-and-memorials/80800/thiepval-memorial> Accessed 13 July 2020.
- 21 Leyland War Memorial, <https://www.tracesofwar.com/sights/16677/War-Memorial-Leyland.htm>. Accessed 7 August 2020.
- 22 South Ribble Memorial. <https://www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/memorial/221393>. Accessed 5 August 2020.
- 23 Taylor, Alan. 'Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red', The Atlantic. <https://www.theatlantic.com/photo/2014/11/blood-swept-lands-and-seas-of-red/100851/>, Accessed 6 August 2020.

Baptism Registers on the Web

Stan Grosvenor MA FCA

A Parish Summary

I have recently been working for my parish church, digitising baptism details, hopefully to make it easier for volunteers in the church office to deal with family queries. The register I am presently dealing with runs from 1911 to 1962, a total of 4000 entries recorded on 500 pages.

I have often used digitised records on the internet to further research but never, until recently, taken original script and transferred detailed records onto a spreadsheet. Those of you who are seasoned research veterans will probably be able to teach me a thing or ten but to those of you who are not, I offer the following observations – the opportunities for error are vast.

Prestidigitation (Now you don't see it)

Numbers

Whilst the only possible number confusion due to difficult handwriting is from 0 to 9, this has a greater effect when quoted numbers run into the hundreds – it only takes one digit of three to be difficult to blur or draw a research blank. Aside from a number that looks more like a letter, with some handwriting it can be difficult to differentiate between ones, sevens and nines, also fives, sixes and eights. The betting ones among you can work out what the number of variations could be.

Aside from number misdirection when considering research of digitised records, there can be problems due to there being no number [or house name] attached to a street address. This can be due to a simple digitisation error [number missed], or none shown in the original register.

Baptism Date

If a search of original or digitised records is made simply by baptism date it must be remembered that some people were not baptised until long after their birth date. I have come across baptisms that took place 24 years later.

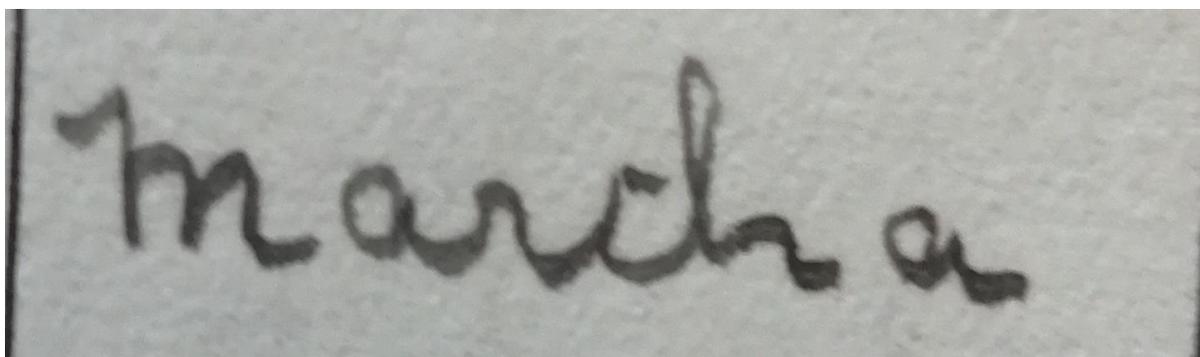
Spelling Identification

Clearly poor handwriting will cause problems for the digitiser and subsequent researchers across the whole spectrum of information in a register, including the name of the officiator. This latter can sometimes be checked against other church records,

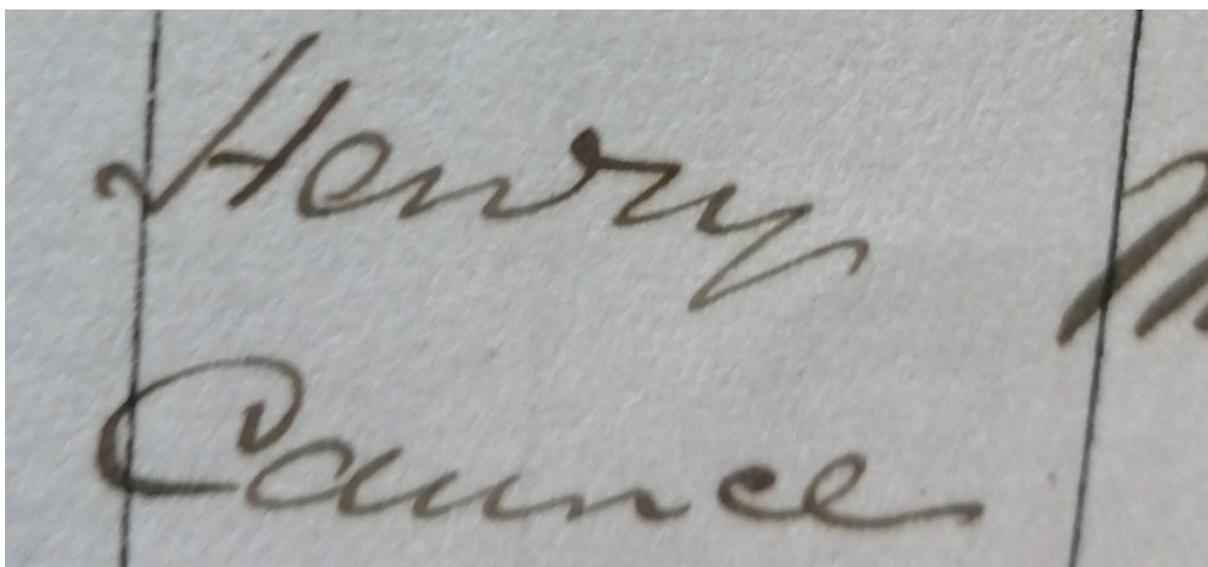
although not all of those officials, vicars and curates, would necessarily have written up the register, sometimes it could be the Parish Clerk. Furthermore, the register could have been completed by visiting clergy. Each different hand potentially creating more difficulties.

The most difficult transcription relates to family names in respect of which there is no viable record with which to compare. The most difficult to decipher are where the writer has made little or no difference between letters. One writer in this register did not differentiate between the letters 'r', 'n' and 's' in low case: the more unusual the name the greater the risk of error. It is also normal for many writers to squiggle the last one or two letters of a name.

Christian Names



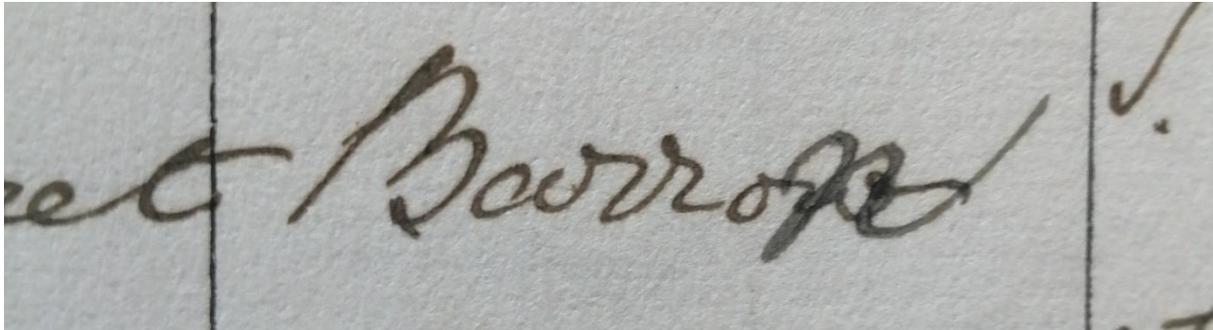
Two unusual names in the earlier part of the above register are 'Etheline' and 'Eugenia' although I have come across the name 'Eugenia' before. As the years pass, more and more unusual names are seen as are the differing spelling of common names.



In the early years of the twentieth century it was common to refer to abbreviations - Maggie, Madge, Nellie, Harry, Frank, Fred and Tom being quite common. The worst case is that of the name Elizabeth which has many abbreviated versions including

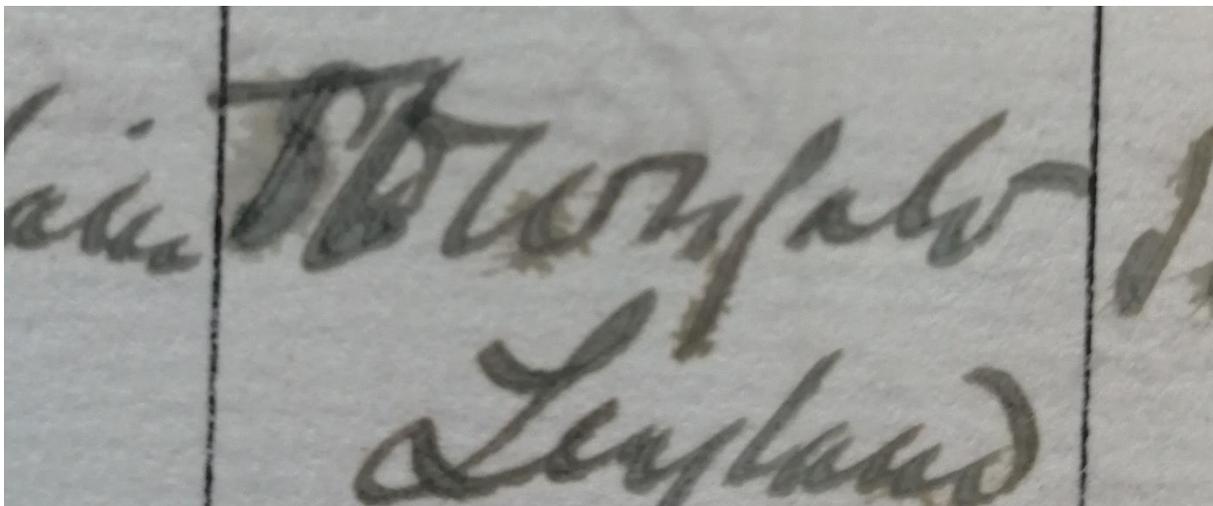
Bessie and the more obvious and easily tracked Eliza. Whether such abbreviated names appear on the birth certificate is a matter for conjecture.

Surnames



Similar letter confusion to that in Christian names invades surnames too and this is exacerbated by historic spelling errors which gives names that have now a variety of differing spellings made worse by the oddities of pronunciation. Common examples are Mahoney, pronounced and spelled Marney: similar to the forename Alicia, sometimes spelled today as Aleesha. Common variations include Thompson and Thomson. Less obvious ones include Wiggins and Wiggans.

Abode (Address) Limitations

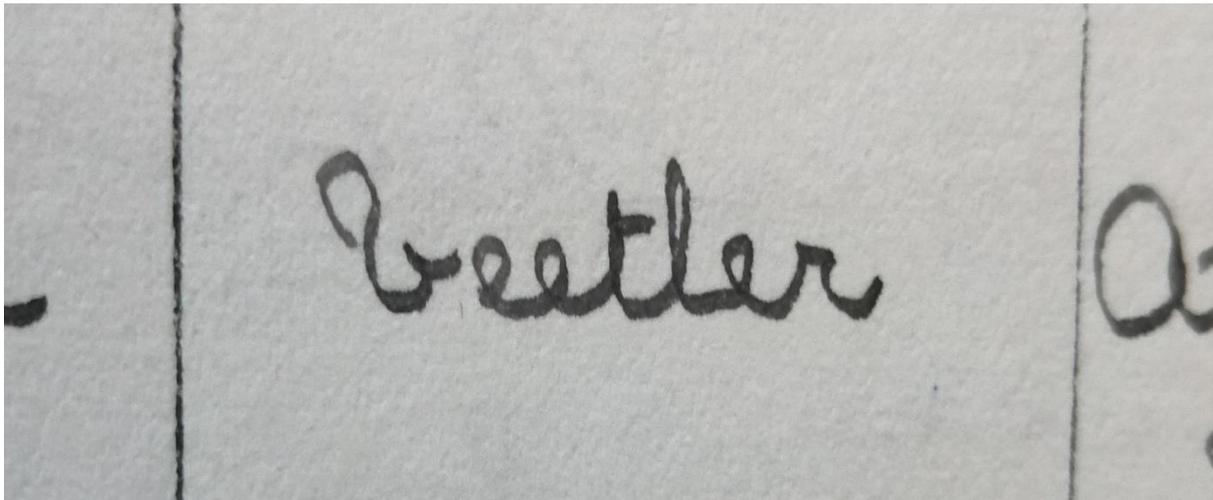


Aside from problems due to incorrect or missed numbers [see above] further difficulties can arise because only the general address area is quoted in the register. An example I have seen in Middlesbrough is the description 'Linthorpe' being quoted rather than the street address - perhaps 'Linthorpe Road' (?) but it could relate to any road in the general area. Linthorpe is now a Middlesbrough suburb but was originally a small village where roads may not have had names. In Leyland there are similar confusions with Earnshaw Bridge and Turpin Green.

It may be possible to confirm street spellings against contemporary or current street maps and other entries in the register.

Another hazard for the researcher relates to those baptisms where parents live away from their original home area. In this register the greatest distance I have seen so far is a Bulawayo address; next furthest is Douglas Isle of Man. 4% of the first 1000 entries are from outside the register area.

Quality trade or Profession (Jobs etc)



Difficulties can arise when the transcriber is not familiar with industry that is associated with a particular area. In the example of Leyland, whilst I know something of job descriptions in the motor industry, I am less familiar with jobs in rubber and cotton. I had never come across the term calenderer – one whose business it is to pass cloth through a calender [machine] for the purpose of smoothing etc. Those of you who are knowledgeable will be aware that a saggar maker's bottom knocker is/was an occupation in the Potteries. One description in this register was that of Gentleman. A not uncommon variation is to quote the place of work, rather than the work carried out.

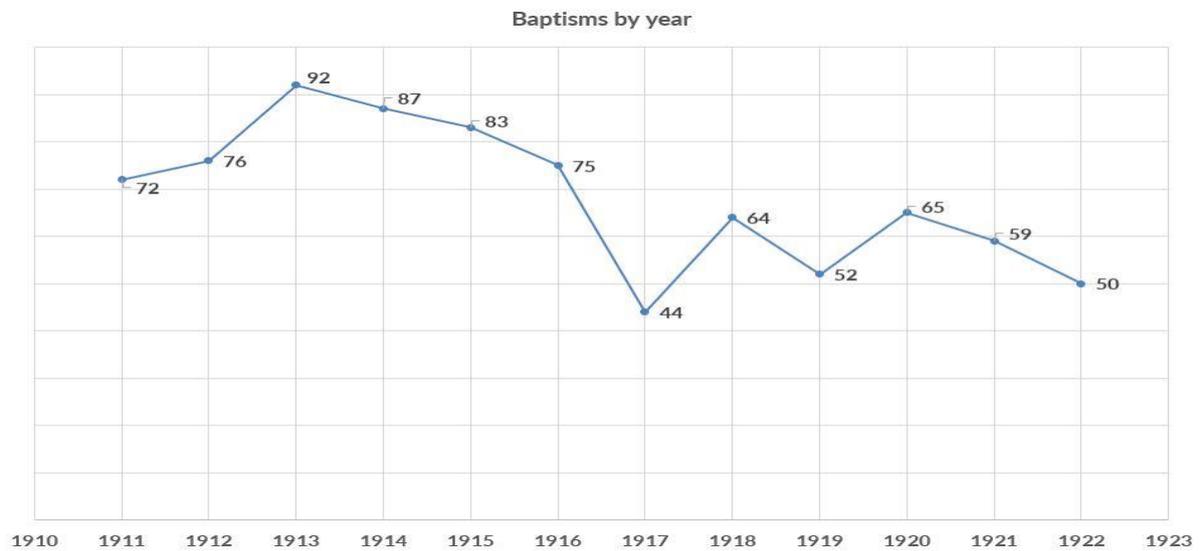
Check against other Sources

As always, one should try to confirm facts from more than one source. I offer the above observations particularly for those who may never have seen a church register.

The Great War

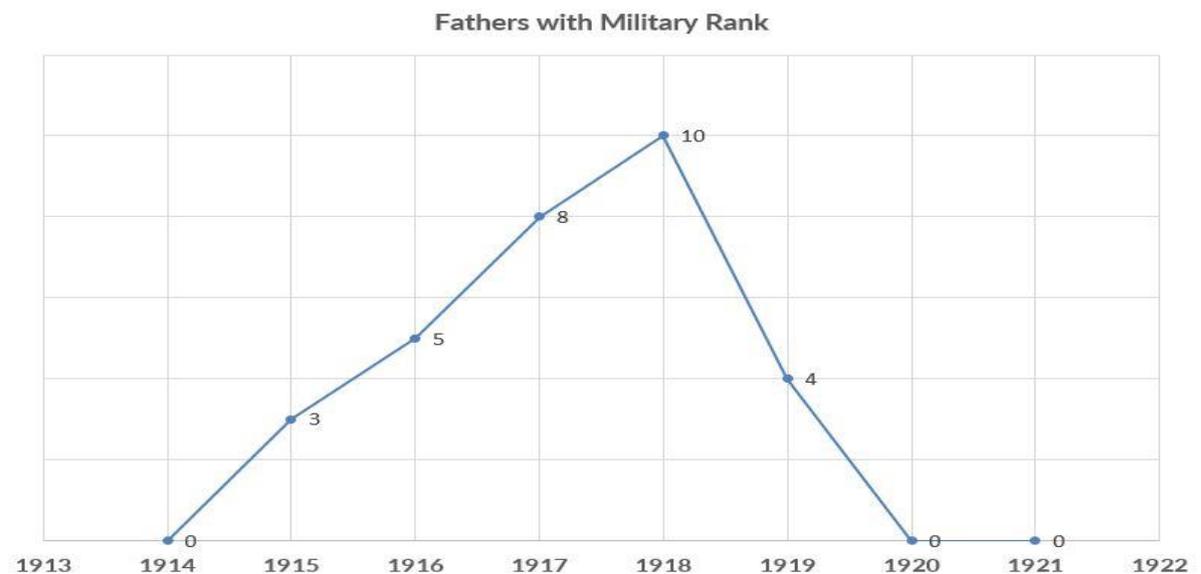
Whilst tapping my computer keys I wondered if it were possible to learn anything of the Great War in the earlier entries. Accordingly, I carried out a simple analysis of total number of baptism entries and those where fathers' jobs were identified as Military.

Total Numbers 1911 - 1922



In the period covered baptisms were rising, reaching the maximum in 1914 then dramatically reducing in 1917. The subsequent reduction is not surprising at a period when women outnumbered men even more than pre-war.

Fathers' Jobs - Military



This chart covers the official period of the war and has a trend not dissimilar to the yearly baptisms. It is possible that serving military men logged their civilian job titles particularly towards the beginning and end of the war years.

At Ease...



THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

Upcoming WFA online events

All of these events will take place on [Zoom](#) and will require prior registration. Clicking on the links below will take you to the WFA webpage for more information and details of how to register. If you have never used Zoom before and want to learn more about it [then this beginners guide will help](#). For these WFA events a free Zoom account is all you need.

09/11/2020 8pm - [Gas Warfare in the First World War - an Overrated Weapon - or an Underrated One?](#) With Gary Sheffield

11/11/2020 8pm - [The Unknown Warrior and the Grieving Widow](#) With Andrea Hetherington

14/11/2020 7pm - [Haig and his Dominion Commanders](#) With Doctor Christopher Pugsley

16/11/2020 8pm - [Lessons from the Mud](#) With Paul Knight

18/11/2020 8pm - [The Centre Cannot Hold: Arras 1918 and the Failure of German Counterattack Doctrine](#) With Dr Bill Stewart

23/11/2020 8pm - [Cambrai: dawn of an era now ending?](#) With Alexander Turner

26/11/2020 8pm - [They Shoot Spies - the untold story of the first female agents](#) With Viv Newman

30/11/2020 8pm - [A Month in the Life of the Chief: Douglas Haig in September 1917](#) With Clive Harris

08/12/2020 8pm - [A Horrid Nightmare: 28th Division and the Battle for the Hohenzollern Redoubt, September-October 1915](#) With Dr Spencer Jones

14/12/2020 8pm - [The Chinese Labour Corps on the Western Front](#) With Wenlan Peng

21/12/2020 8pm - [Just Another Day on the Somme: the attack by 53 Brigade on Delville Wood](#) With David Blenchar

What do Pershing and Falkenhayn Have in Common?

The Meuse-Argonne Offensive in a Different Light

By Randy Gaulke – Tuesday 10/11/2020 at 6pm GMT



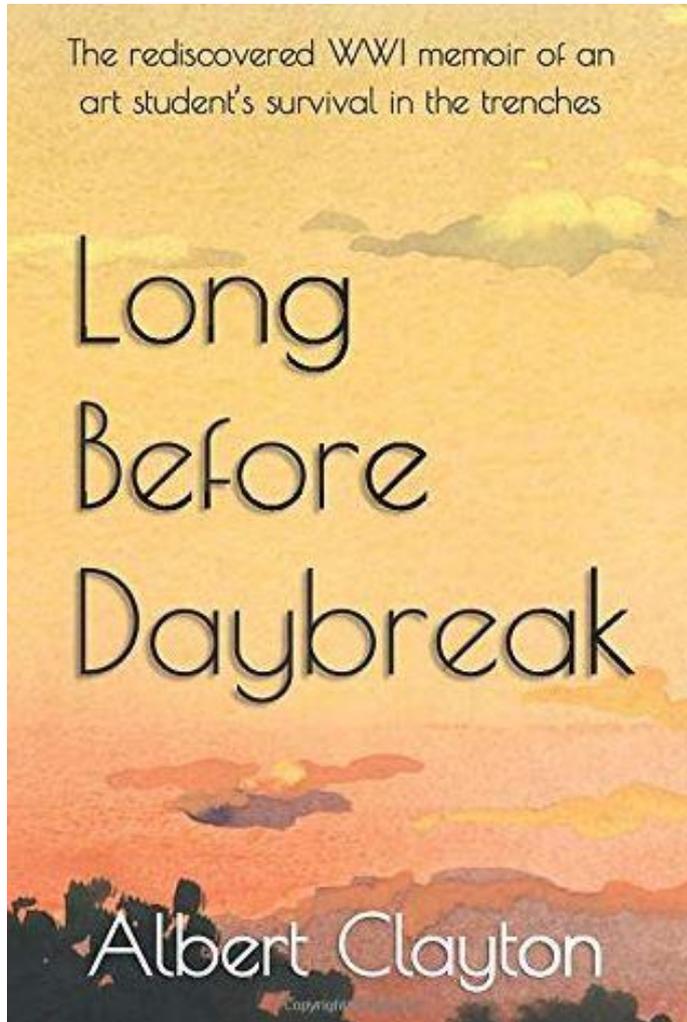
Moving away from a traditional chronological account of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, historian and battlefield researcher Randy Gaulke will cover a range of related topics that put the offensive in the context of late 1918 events. Randy has been studying and visiting the Meuse-Argonne regularly since 1994. In 2014 he published two chapters in Ed Lengel's *A Companion to the Meuse-Argonne*, which focused on the experience of two German regiments. In 2017-18 he lived in the Meuse-Argonne for eight months, working as a freelance tour guide to the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) battlefields. He is now CEO of [Knee Deep Into History Battlefield Tours LLC](#). Randy is also a long-standing member of the Western Front Association.

The seminar will be presented online via Zoom. To reserve your space and receive login information, please email Knee Deep Into History LLC at lavarennnes@meuse-argonne.com

Editors note: As part of our usual programme of talks, Stan and I have been trying to get an authoritative speaker on American involvement in The Great War for a while, but there are very few speakers on the subject this side of the Atlantic. This is a great opportunity to hear from an expert on the AEF.

Long Before Daybreak by Albert Clayton

The rediscovered WWI memoir of an art student's survival in the trenches



In 2019 a box was found containing a graphic account of life at the front line in WW1. Albert Clayton's remarkable story in 20 chapters remained hidden for decades, unknown to his family, until its chance discovery along with several photographs from the same time.

Albert takes us with him through the ravaged landscape of northern France from July 1916 to May 1917, revealing vivid scenes of front-line warfare, the banter of his comrades, and the raw intensity of 'going over the top', which he did on several occasions.

Despite brushes with death, his was an experience many lived through on the front line but few have recorded with such comprehensive narrative. We can be thankful he did, for his rediscovered legacy is a personal and engaging story that

brings sharp focus to places and events which are fading in the memory of a passing generation; the likes of which we may hope no one should have to witness again.

Albert Clayton 1895 – 1981 came from the Lancashire mill town of Accrington. He studied at the Leeds School of Art and the Royal College of Art, spending most of his life in London where he became an art teacher and exhibiting artist.

The book is available at [Amazon](#) priced £10.49 for the paperback edition and £6.49 for Kindle edition. There will be a full review of the book in the next edition of this magazine.



St. Anne's On Sea War Memorial

Previous Page: Detail of The Soldier sculpture. Photograph by Charlie O'Donnell

The following is a reproduction of an article that originally appeared in The Fleetwood Chronicle 8 December 1922 concerning the work of the Accrington born sculptor, Walter Marsden.

An Imposing War Memorial.

LANCASHIRE SCULPTOR'S FINE WORK FOR ST. ANNE'S

The figures here represented are two of the main features in a war memorial which is to be erected in the Ashton Gardens at St. Annes. The memorial is the gift of Lord Ashton, and its cost is estimated at £10,000, It is two and a half years since the commission to carry out this work was given to that eminent young Lancashire sculptor-artist, Mr. Walter Marsden, an ex-Service man, of Accrington, whose studio is in London. Nearly two more years will pass before the monument is finished. It was on the recommendation of Sir George Frampton, who is greatly interested in the monument, that Mr. Marsden was chosen for the work. He is considered one of the three leading sculptors in the country among the younger men.

To quote Coun. Richard Leigh, J.P., of St. Annes, who is closely identified with the execution of the work on behalf of the Council, and who has penned an article on the memorial and its designer: "As this is Marsden's work of magnitude he is determined it shall establish his reputation, both as designer and executant. The whole design of the monument, the conception of the statuary, and the actual modelling is the personal work of Marsden himself.

"The monument consists of a grey granite square column, forty feet high over all, standing on a pedestal of granite 20 feet square, and this on a base about 36 feet square. At the base of the column and seated on the pedestal are two bronze figures, 8 feet high, one on each side, a soldier on one side and on the other a war widow with her child. Bronze panels about three feet deep run round the other two sides of the pedestal. They depict various incidents in the war, with about thirty figures in low relief. Under the two main figures are two bronze shields containing the names of the fallen. It would not be possible to find an artist to represent these scenes as Marsden has done, who had not been through it all and had it burned into his memory.

"The two main figures are creating a sensation among sculptors who have seen them. The 'Tommy' sitting on the edge of the trench with his gas-mask and full accoutrements except his tin hat, which Marsden says the soldiers often lost, is wonderfully realistic. He is supposed to be saying, as the sculptor had so often heard men say, 'They're coming again.' Many sculptors who have seen this model consider it the finest soldier yet designed for any memorial. Sir George Frampton is very pleased with it.

“The Mother is a tragic but sublime conception. The idea the sculptor wishes to convey is that she has just been informed her husband has died for his country. She is too overwhelmed even to notice her suppliant child. When this figure was first modelled in the small size, the sculptor asked an old gardener what he thought of it. ‘Oh, I don’t know much about these things, but it makes me feel like crying.’ That is a feeling many others have experienced.

“The panel shown above is one of several to be placed on the sides of the pedestal. The figures are all in low relief and made from life models depicting scenes with which Marsden was too familiar. On the left, the wounded man who could walk no further, the stretcher bearers with their helpless burden, the officer in command, which is a wonderful piece of low relief work; and on the right are the three blinded men holding together for guidance.”

Standing, as the monument will in that central position, says Coun. Leigh, it will be a fitting memorial of those who gave their lives for us, and at the same time a monument of the generosity of him who has done so much for the benefit of the town and its inhabitants.



Illustrations from the article

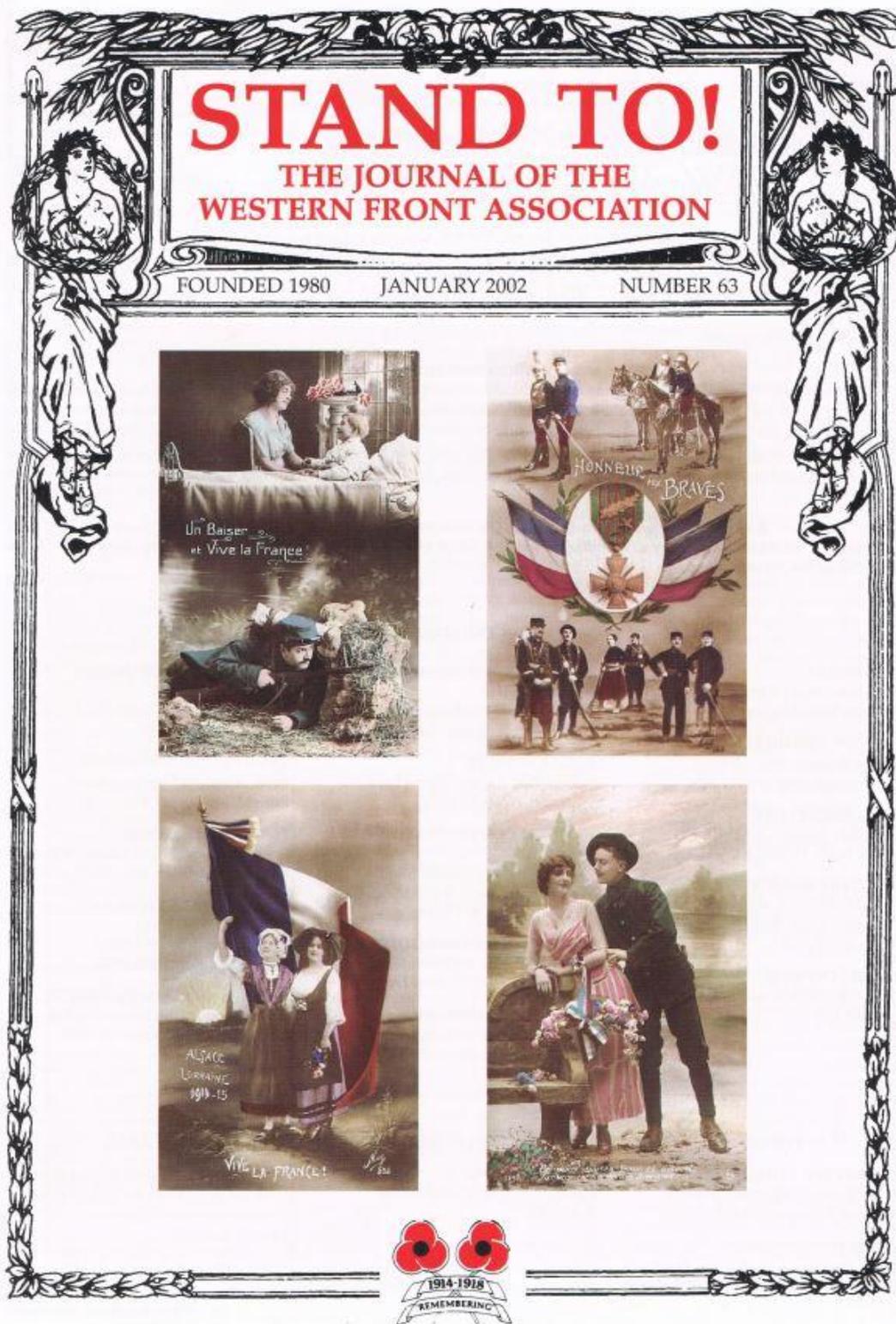
A Striking Panel depicting the Blind and Injured.



A Symbolic Figure – The Soldier.



Another Symbolic Figure – The War Widow.



For more information on the military career and the work of Walter Marsden, members can find an article on page 37 of the [January 2002 \(No.63\) edition of Stand To!](#) 'Walter Marsden – Soldier and Sculptor' by Richard Hughes.



South Ribble World War 1 Memorial

Previous Page: Official photograph of the South Ribble World War 1 Memorial, courtesy South Ribble Borough Council

Charlie O'Donnell & Steve Barritt (South Ribble BC, retired)

Building a New Memorial

The borough of South Ribble was defined in 1974 and was assembled from the villages and townships formerly administered by Leyland Urban, Walton le dale and Preston Rural Councils. As a consequence, the borough had no single point of remembrance for those who died during the Great War. Indeed, a list of those souls local to the area who surrendered their lives in defence of our country was not in existence.

The Council became aware that Charlie O'Donnell had, for some years, been researching the information contained on the various war memorials in the area. When approached, Charlie kindly agreed to develop a specific list of those soldiers who were born in and/or lived in South Ribble and died as a consequence of the First World War

As part of the Council's suite of events to commemorate the Great War It was decided to create a significant memorial prominently positioned and central to the borough. The location chosen was Dandy Brook Park in Lostock Hall near to the roundabout at the southern end of Watkin Lane. Included in the memorial were to be the names of the fallen compiled by Charlie.

The memorial, recently installed, is 8m in diameter, semi-circular in plan and rises from 4m to 9m in height. The steel frame is clad in Cor-ten steel which is designed to rust evenly. Once the outer coating of rust is formed the remainder of the steel plate is protected from further rusting. An image of a soldier in repose, 5m high, is cut into the centre and a traditional poppy is attached.

When viewed from within the park the names of the fallen can be seen, these are laser cut into the plate and backed with stainless steel.

Within the park a peace garden is being formed. The garden is intended as a place for quiet reflection and contains a simple grassed lawn flanked by beds of sensory planting. The area is shielded from the rest of the park by a recreation of a WW1 trench wall made up of H section steel posts supporting oak sleepers and topped with sand bags (these sand bags contain concrete and are protected by a steel wire gabions). To the wall will be attached a plaque listing, in alphabetical order, the names of the fallen and showing the date of death and service number. It is thought this information could form the basis of further research by the community.

Further works has since been completed linking the memorial and peace garden, through the park, to St Catherine's Hospice. New paths were created and a new bridge

has been installed to cross the River Lostock. The bridge is based on a design commissioned at the start of WW1 and developed in 1915 by Charles Inglis.

Finding the fallen

When I first set out to publish the work that was to become South Ribble in the Great War back in 2012, I had no idea that a permanent memorial would be planned for the area and that I would have a major role in piecing together the names for that memorial. I had begun by making a survey of all the memorials in the local towns and villages and compiled these into an offline database. The next step was to find the basic details of the men by using various online resources such as the Commonwealth War Graves website and military sources via Ancestry UK.

Steve Barritt from South Ribble Council became aware of my work through the auspices of David Hunt at the South Ribble Museum and exhibition centre. I had visited David as he is the custodian of the Wesleyan WW1 memorial. Steve had compiled a basic list by using the publication 'Soldiers Died in the Great War' via Ancestry UK. A basic search using place names by Steve and myself yielded a number of new names that have not previously been on memorials in the local area. I added these to my ever-growing database and had to whittle it down to men who were born or who had lived (or both) in the local towns and villages. This stage involved the use of civilian records such as Births, Marriages and Deaths and the 1911 Census.

I have also been lucky enough to have been allowed access to the work of other researchers in the area. In particular I need to mention Bill Waring of Leyland Historical Society who started his research in the 1990s, Jim Rawcliffe for Browndedge & Bamber Bridge, Sarah Yates for Higher Walton, Bill Brierley for Lostock Hall, Helen Howell for Walton-le-Dale, Teresa Taylor for Samlesbury & Roach Bridge, Steve Barritt of South Ribble Council and Heather Crook for Penwortham and the western parishes.

The final stage was to quality assure the list I was putting out. The aforementioned Bill Brierley and Sarah Yates together with Stan Grosvenor verified the names and I am indebted to them. Stan in particular has been a great source of information and inspiration and we have chewed the fat many times over a few pints at The Gables in Leyland.

2018/19 – Review

The memorial was constructed in such a way that we could add more people to it at a later date. I returned to my original work and completely revised it in 2017 and 2018. Preston & Central Lancashire WFA have revised the panels on the trench wall and these were installed by South Ribble Council in time for Armistice Day 2019.



The Inglis Bridge – Steve Barritt

Previous page: Portrait of Charles Inglis (Public Domain)

The 1 July 2016 saw a service at the South Ribble Memorial to commemorate the men from the area who fell at the Somme. The ceremony was attended by dignitaries and pupils from Lostock Hall High School. The pupils had made poppies from clay and these were arranged in an area to the side of the memorial. The names of the men who fell were read and the exhortation was read and the last post played.

A few days earlier saw the unveiling of the continuation of the memorial area. The Inglis bridge erected over the River Lostock (or dandy brook) is based on a World War 1 design. In previous conflicts, rivers were spanned using boats and timber beams lashed together to form pontoons. Although much of the Great War was fought from the trenches, when the order came to advance, speed of movement became the key to success. A new type of bridge was needed. A modular bridge which was light and portable. Charles Inglis had already considered the issue and had a design ready to go.

In the field the bridge was used to support front line troops. The sappers were often called upon to build bridges whilst under fire. The rapid deployment of the Inglis Bridge helped to reduce the casualties. As the fighting moved forward the sappers would erect a more permanent structure whereupon the Inglis Bridge would be dismantled and transferred forward to support the next offensive.

Design

The Inglis Triangular Light Footbridge, designed in 1913, was known officially as the Inglis Portable Military Bridge Light Type and is of importance because it was the first British equipment bridge of the fixed or dry bridge, as apposed to the wet or floating bridge, type. It could be rapidly constructed, required little training and was easily transported. It was of unusual design in that it was of triangular cross-section, with a single top compression member and two bottom tension members. The two Warren girders forming the bridge trusses were thus inclined together at the top, with a common top chord, forming in effect a number of pyramids and giving rise to its popular name of the Inglis Pyramid Bridge. The girders were formed from 8ft long drawn steel tubes, each fitted with a welded steel tongue, a screw and a nut at both ends. To connect two tubes, adjacent nuts were slackened off and the two tongues inserted into a cast-steel junction box; a pin was then passed through a slot in each tongue and the nuts tightened to lock the joint. Timber transoms connected the lower 8ft panel points of the two girders and supported a narrow wooden gangway; light sway bracing was fitted in each bay.

Installation Method

It was usual to construct the bridge on a small two-wheeled erection trolley, close to and parallel to the gap or river that was to be crossed. The forward end of the bridge

was built sufficiently long enough for the erection team to bear down on the home end whilst the completed bridge was rotated like a swing bridge.

Trials

The heaviest part of the bridge was the transom, weighing about 190lb, but the tubes were light and the simple construction meant that, when first demonstrated in France, a 108ft bridge was built across a canal by an untrained party of Army Service Corps troops in thirteen minutes. The bridge could carry infantry in single file over spans of up to 96ft. A bridge capable of carrying a 3-ton vehicle across a 96ft gap could be improvised by placing two footbridges across the gap at 16ft centres. Crossbeams would then be lashed to corresponding transoms on the two bridges and road bearers and chasses added to complete the bridge.

The Royal Engineer Committee referred Inglis' proposals for his footbridge to General Headquarters in France who asked that trials be carried out, as a result of which an initial order for ten sets of 88ft span bridge were placed for use with the British Expeditionary Force. This resulted in a request for a similar type of bridge that could carry first-line transport, and Inglis produced a design for the similar Inglis Heavy Type Bridge, using 12ft long tubes and capable of carrying loads of up to 7 tons over spans of up to 96ft. Subsequent versions of the Inglis Bridge were developed throughout the Great War and were still in use early in the second world war and went on to influence the design of the Bailey Bridge.

The Bridge Builders

The castings for the original bridge were made by a company called Kryn and Lahy. For many years Jacques Kryn and Raoul Lahy operated an iron and steel foundry in Belgium. However, with the threat of war looming and invasion by the Germans imminent they were forced to flee to England. Here they settled in Letchworth where Kryn, a diamond merchant, used some of his wealth to re-establish the steelwork business. By March 1915 work had commenced on building a new factory and in lightening time the company was once again manufacturing, only this time they produced weapons and ordnance for the war effort. One of their first commissions saw a departure from their core business when they were approached to manufacture a number of Inglis Heavy Bridges. These they constructed in collaboration with the Round Oak Iron Company, of Brierley Hill, West Midlands, who supplied the steel tubing.

Today

A 1/10 scale model of the Inglis Bridge was made in 1916 to train the sappers the techniques of assembly before being deployed in the field. This model is still in use today at the Royal Engineers Museum, Gillingham where it is used to demonstrate the principles of bridge building to modern day students. The museum holds the unit diaries of Robert Slater, Walton Le Dale and John Trafford, Leyland both of whom are

commemorated on the nearby war memorial. The world's only surviving original bridge of this type spans the Basingstoke Canal near Aldershot.

The New Bridge

The new bridge is based on the version developed by Charles Inglis during 1915 and referred to as the 'Heavy Type'.

Every effort has been made to recreate the bridge as closely as possible to the original. However, for safety reasons, the following design changes have been introduced; the timber transoms (large members across the base) are replaced with steel, steel decking is installed and safety barriers added. The bridge is fixed and cannot be disassembled.



The newly installed Inglis Bridge over the River Lostock. Photograph by Charlie O'Donnell



Penwortham War Memorial & The Time Capsule

Previous Page: Penwortham War Memorial – detail of the Celtic wheel. Photograph by Charlie O'Donnell.

Heather Crook

A few months ago, when John Kay, who is researching the names of the men on the war memorial boards in St. Mary's church, showed me an order of service relating to the unveiling of Penwortham War Memorial, it gave me a date, which is one thing we did not know. Armed with that wonderful bit of information, the very next morning I spent in the Reference Library in the Harris, and lo and behold I found an article telling us all about the unveiling of our war memorial, just what we needed. After reading it a couple of times I could not wait to share the news with Ron Drakeford, volunteer custodian of the War Memorial, about the mention of a parchment containing the names of all the men from Penwortham who served in the First World War that had been placed in the war memorial.

Penwortham War Memorial - Unveiling ceremony by General Shoubridge. A memorial to the men of Penwortham who fell during the war was unveiled on Saturday afternoon by Major-General T.H. Shoubridge C.B.E., C.M.G., D.S.O. A procession of relatives and friends of fallen-men, headed by the Preston Discharged Sailors and Soldiers Band and the Executive Committee in connection with the scheme, proceeded from Wren-avenue, at the lower end of Penwortham, to the site on Liverpool-road, which was given by Mr Lawrence Rawstone. The memorial, which takes the form of a granite runic cross, was erected by public subscriptions. The names of the fallen are inscribed on a stone tablet in the background, whilst in a recess was placed the parchment record of all who had served in the war. Mr Milner (chairman of the committee) who presided, was supported on the platform by members of the Penwortham Parish Council and the Executive and General Committees, the Rev. O. Burton (vicar of Penwortham), Father R. Gibb (St. Mary Magdelene's) Sir Geo. Toulmin, Col. J. Y. Foster and Col. C. J. Trimble, C.B., C.M.G., V.D. Major-General Shoubridge, following a statement by the chairman, giving the details of the scheme, expressed admiration both as to the position and character of the memorial, which he said, would be a constant reminder to the thousands who passed along the road of the part that district had played in the Great War. Speaking to the relatives and friends, he reminded them of the noble sacrifice their loved ones had made, and remarked that associated with their grief should be proud as they recalled the services they had been able to render to their country. After the unveiling ceremony there was two minutes silence, followed by the sounding of the Last Post by the buglers. In proposing a vote of thanks to Major-General Shoubridge, the Rev. O. Burton referred to the significance of the runic cross. Father Gibb seconded, and spoke of the unity with which the war was met without reference to creed or politics. Sir George Toulmin, in seconding, pointed out that it was fitting that one who had joined the toil and sufferings of the war should unveil that memorial in the presence of relatives, neighbours and friends. Not only would it be a lasting memorial to the dead, but would remind the living to be faithful to the ideals of justice, truth and freedom. THE LANCASHIRE DAILY POST - 21 March 1921



The team discover the Time Capsule. Photograph courtesy Heather Crook

On scouring the war memorial for a 'recess' we decided it was more likely to be the stone underneath the plaque in the middle of the back wall of the memorial. After seeking permission from Penwortham Town Council Ron soon acquired a mini camera with which we could make a small hole in the mortar to see if we could see anything inside. One evening the Friends of Penwortham War Memorial met up to see what we could find. Although the image was very blurred on the lap top screen, we thought there might be something there. Ron sought information from the Lancashire Archives and they kindly agreed to come along when we removed the stone, in case there was something there.

Archivist Mark Walmsley warned us not to get too excited as often these types of things have decayed many years ago, and there is not much left if anything. We all met at the memorial and local builder, Wayne Fletcher removed the stone. When all the dust had settled and the stone was slowly drawn out, we were all amazed to see, covered in dust and cobwebs, a bottle which was standing at the back of the recess. After carefully removing it amid cheers and gasps, and seeing a Preston Guardian rolled up inside, we took a lot of photos, then it was whisked off to Lancashire Records Office by Mark Walmsley and Glenn Swarbrick. They told us we could go up there in an hour or so, and inspect the find. Luckily, most of the contents had survived. Though the order of service was in tiny pieces, and the Roll of Honour Scroll had some water

damage, the majority of the names were still to be seen. There were also some pages from the Preston Guardian with an article and photograph about the war memorial being unveiled. We were allowed to take photographs and look at the contents in detail. Luckily the people who put the contents inside the bottle had sealed it with beeswax and this had been a great help in allowing most of the contents to survive for nearly a century.



The friends of Penwortham War Memorial. Photograph courtesy Heather Crook

It is fascinating to be able to look at the names on the scroll, which contains many names still remembered in Penwortham, Chitson, Dunwoody, Gildert, Greenwood, Rainford, to name but a few. After the work to preserve the contents further had been done it is now on display at Penwortham Community Centre for the next few weeks. So do go along and take a look and see if you can find any of your family members who served in the Great War named on the scrolls. The bottle used had the word 'Homestead' on it, if anyone has any suggestions about what it could have been, do get in touch.

A Wonderful Find

John McNamara Gardens & the VC Paving Stone

Previous Page: McNamara Gardens, Bamber Bridge, Preston. Photograph by Charlie O'Donnell

Charlie O'Donnell & Steve Johnson



On 2nd September 2018, on the eve of the one-hundredth anniversary of the events that were to win him the Victoria Cross, the Corporal John McNamara Victoria Cross paving stone was unveiled in his home village of Bamber Bridge ('Brig') near Preston, Lancashire. The paving stone has been mounted on a roughhewn stone and forms the centerpiece of a community garden that honours 'Briggers' past and present. Along with the stone is a handsome information board put together using research conducted by Charlie O'Donnell of Preston & Central Lancashire WFA.

Dignitaries including the Vice Lord-Lieutenant of Lancashire, Colonel Alan Jolley OBE TD DL, Nigel Evans MP (Ribble Valley), Seema Kennedy

MP (South Ribble) were present along with members of the McNamara family and local clergy. Stan Grosvenor MA and Charles O'Donnell were there for our WFA branch and Steve Johnson came all the way up north to represent the Surrey Infantry Museum.

John McNamara was born in 1887 to John Thomas McNamara and Margaret McNamara (nee Kelly) in Walton-le-Dale. He spent much of his life in the School Lane area of Bamber Bridge and worked as a ring-jobber (machine maintenance) at the Cotton Mill of J.S. Orr. He was courting his future wife Mary Ann Atkinson of Higher Walton and they married in 1912 at the Preston register office. They would go on to have four children together.

John's service record does not survive but we know from various records that he at first enlisted as Private #25097 in the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment and transferred 9 April 1918 along with the entire 10/Loyal NL to the 9/East Surreys under Lieutenant Colonel Ewen Cameron to reconstitute that battalion after their horrendous losses during the German Spring Offensive (or Kaiser's Battle). He is famous for the gallant

action that won him the British Army's highest award for gallantry, the Victoria Cross. His citation was published in the edition of the London Gazette dated 15 November.

“No. 28939 Cpl. John McNamara, E. Surr. R. (Preston). For conspicuous bravery, initiative, and devotion to duty. When operating a telephone in evacuated enemy trenches occupied by his battalion, Cpl. McNamara realised that a determined enemy counter-attack was gaining ground. Rushing to join the nearest post, he made the most effective use of a revolver taken from a wounded officer. Then seizing a Lewis gun, he continued to fire it till it jammed. By this time he was alone in the post. Having destroyed his telephone, he joined the nearest post, and again displayed great courage and initiative in maintaining Lewis gun fire until reinforcements arrived. It is undoubtedly due to the magnificent courage and determination of Pte. McNamara that the other posts were enabled to hold on, and his fine example of devotion is worthy of the highest praise.”

His VC citation is brief and does not mention the fact that John also helped evacuate the wounded from the action together with an officer still under enemy fire and that the following morning they returned for the dead to give them a proper burial. This has since been revealed in his letters home.

The VC award was made posthumously. John was killed in action 16 October 1918 in fighting in and around the town of Haussy where the East Surreys were pushing the Germans back in what had once again become a mobile war. John was buried at the Romeries Communal Cemetery near the town of Solesmes and he is also remembered by a plaque on an earth bank where his house used to stand in School Lane, Bamber Bridge.

On 22 November 1918 the Commanding Officer of the 9/East Surreys, Lieutenant Colonel Ewen A. Cameron, wrote to Margaret McNamara offering to accompany her to receive John's Victoria Cross. The medal was presented 27 February 1920 by King George VI at Buckingham Palace.

Charlie O'Donnell.

As Manager of the Surrey Infantry Museum, responsible for preserving the history of the East Surrey Regiment, I was honoured to be invited to participate in the Bamber Bridge ceremony. Fourteen Victoria Crosses were awarded to the men of the East and West Surrey Regiments during the Great War and we are fortunate to hold seven of the original medal groups including those of John McNamara, together with his Memorial Plaque. Although the majority of the Museum's inventory was destroyed or badly damaged in a catastrophic fire in April 2015, the VCs survived and will be at the heart of a collection rebuilt from restored salvaged items supplemented by newly-donated material.

Vel exuviae triumphans. (Even in defeat there can be triumph)

Steve Johnson. Manager, Surrey Infantry Museum



The Great-great grandson of John McNamara salutes. Photograph courtesy of South Ribble Borough Council.



The information board prepared by Preston & Central Lancashire WFA at McNamara Gardens. Photograph by Charlie O'Donnell