

## Branch Newsletter – June 2022

### Next Meeting:

Will be on Saturday 11th June at St Peter's Collegiate School, Compton Park, Compton Rd. West, Wolverhampton WV3 9DU. 2.00pm for a 2.30 kick-off.

The speaker this month is Phil Sutcliffe, who was supposed to visit us in March 2020. Something must have gone wrong...



## NOBODY OF ANY IMPORTANCE

A Foot Soldier's Memoir of World War I

## SAM SUTCLIFFE

Edited by Phil Sutcliffe

## "Nobody of any importance. A foot soldiers memoir".

It is based on his father Sam's experiences in the Great War. The talk will cover Gallipoli and the Somme as part one. Phil will return next year to complete the memoirs for the last two years of the war.

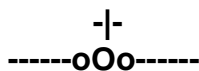
Phil Sutcliffe writes:

*"My father, Sam Sutcliffe (1898-1987), was a WWI Tommy. He grew up in Edmonton, north London, enlisted at 16 with the 2/1st Royal Fusiliers in September 1914, trained in London, Tonbridge, Malta (becoming a Lance Corporal Signaller) and Egypt, fought in Gallipoli September 1915-January 1916 (Suvla Bay and V Beach).*

*After his second evacuation, via Egypt again, he moved to France, and transferred to the Kensingtons for the Somme (May-September, Gommecourt around July 1, then further south). After his age was discovered –18 on July 6, 1916, still legally too young for foreign battlefields – he had a welcome (and guilty) year out, further transferring to the Essex Regiment, and "training", sometimes without the inverted commas, in London, Yorkshire, Northumberland, Nottinghamshire and Sussex.*

*Then, returning to France in December, 1917, he fought against the Spring Offensive near Arras where he was taken prisoner on March 28, 1918 (his Battalion was sacrificed to cover a strategic retreat), and endured eight months as a POW on the move in France and Germany until Armistice started his long totter west from a camp in occupied Lorraine to the French lines and various French, American and British hospitals before he was able to return to his family.*

*The Memoir continues via some interesting experiences back in England– including service at a Sussex POW camp guarding German soldiers – until the July 1919 Peace parade in Hyde Park which he attended a couple of weeks after his 21st birthday and with his brother Ted whom he'd enlisted with in September 1914 and whom he knew to be dying of poison-gas damage (which he did in 1922; Ted's given name was Philip and I was named for him 25 years later)."*



## Gallipoli 2022 Commemoration:

Back at Cannock Chase after previous cancellations due to COVID.



*Evelyn Slater places Wolverhampton WFA wreath on the Cross of Sacrifice at Cannock Chase ANZAC ceremony. The other wreath for the Gallipoli Association was laid by Wolverhampton WFA member Alan Hurst. Photo by Richard Pursehouse*

*“Finally, after a three-year hiatus, the annual ANZAC ceremony at Cannock Chase Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery took place on Sunday 24th April 2022. The weather was good, a pleasant breeze keeping everyone cool.*

*During the last three years, members of the public have still visited the cemetery for personal, low-key and informal laying of tributes and wreaths, in order to maintain continuity for the ceremony.*

*Groups attending included the Western Front Association’s Wolverhampton branch (wreath layer Evelyn Slater dressed as a First World War V.A.D nurse), The Chase Project Group, Rugeley’s Landor Society (Marion Kettle), Alan Hurst from Wolverhampton WFA Branch (Gallipoli Association) various cadet groups, 116 Provost Company (1st Regiment Royal Military Police, based in Cannock) under Captain John Bailey, and Friends of Cannock Chase. The musical accompaniment was as usual provided by Rugeley’s Lea Hall Brass Band, plus the Mercian (V) Corps of Drums. Richard”*

**A follow-up on last month's piece on Paul Reed's "Old Front Line" series of podcasts from our esteemed Treasurer, Andy Johnson:**



*"The picture of the veterans in the last Newsletter was at the 34<sup>th</sup> Division Memorial at La Boisselle.*

*I have another picture of a group of (now) veterans at the same memorial. It was 22 May 2011, and this was after lunch at the La Boisselle cafe, then on to a ride on the Somme Railway, then the unforgettable Alan Angell presentation about Richthofen!*

*Don't they look young!      Andy"*



Don't you just love capitalism? A war can be used to sell you almost anything:

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Daily Graphic 20<sup>th</sup> March 1915

Our worthy Secretary Bill Pinfold informs us about a little-known aspect of the Great War and its effect on the Austro-Hungarian Empire:

*The Treaty of Trianon 1920*

*"I recently had some Hungarian visitors and bearing in mind the current situation in the Ukraine I asked them about the mix of languages and ethnicity in modern Hungary. They told me that Hungary today is less than 30% of the size it was before The Great War and its peoples were scattered across many other countries as a result of the Treaty of Trianon and were amazed that I'd never heard of it.*

*Using my good friend, Google, I learned that it was one of half a dozen peace treaties signed at Versailles. This one dealt specifically with Hungary. It was led by the French and was more of a dictation than a negotiation and was signed under protest by the Hungarians.*

*Hungary had to pay war reparations to its neighbours.*

*As a result of the Treaty of Trianon, Hungary lost more than 70 percent of the territory it had previously controlled, which left 64 percent of the inhabitants, including 3.3 million ethnic Hungarians, living outside Hungary.*



*The country's population fell from 20.9 million to 7.6 million as Hungary lost five of its 10 most populous cities and was deprived of access to the sea and of some of its most valuable natural resources. The main beneficiaries of territorial realignment were Romania, Czechoslovakia, and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, which later became known as Yugoslavia. The Treaty is still marked every 4<sup>th</sup> June in Hungary as a day of National Tragedy.*

*The Great War continues to affect people's lives over 100 years later. Bill Pinfold''*

**I know it's the wrong war (by a century!) but it's too interesting a story to ignore:**

[Forgotten soldiers of the Revolutionary war recovered](#)



Outwith the remit of the CWGC, but surely they could make an exception?

From the “Boy’s Own Paper”, 1918:



## **Dates for your Diary**

- i. **Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> July – The 2<sup>nd</sup> Worcesters at Kohima 1944** by Hugh Richards. Organised by the Friends of the Mercian Regiment Museum. Venue: Lyppard Grange Community Centre, Ankerage Green, Worcester WR4 0DZ 19.00 for 19.30 start. £3 inc. Tea & Coffee

In April 1944 the Japanese advance on India was blocked only by a small garrison at Kohima. Outnumbered by 10 to 1, the garrison held out for two weeks until relieved. The battle was the turning point of the war. This talk looks at the battle through the eyes of two soldiers from Worcestershire - one in the garrison and one in the relieving force.

**If you know of any other relevant events that our members may be interested in, don't be shy – let me know and I'll put it in the Newsletter.**

### **Future Newsletters:**

Please send any items you would like to be included to me at my official e-mail address: [wfawtoneditor@gmail.com](mailto:wfawtoneditor@gmail.com)

Many, many thanks to those members who have provided items for the Newsletter; you know who you are, and your reward shall be in Heaven...

**John Hale**  
**Branch Newsletter Editor**