



frontline.

The newsletter of the MK WFA, March 2023.



'The Russian Front' - Phil Tomaselli
Well known historian and author Phil Tomaselli talks about how events on the Russian Front intimately influenced strategy in the West. In 1914 the early Russian advance into East Prussia pulled crucial German units out of Belgium. In 1915 they fought a retreat across Poland and their 1916 offensive helped save Verdun. The 1917 revolution freed German troops for their 1918 offensives in France, but thousands of British troops were still fighting in Russia in late 1919. Phil Tomaselli has written extensively on military and family history, and he has made a special study of the Western Front, in particular the decisive campaign of 1918. He has published many books and articles on aspects of army and air force history. It has been a long while since we have had any talks about the Russian Front so this will be a fascinating talk, not to be missed.

MK WFA Seminar, October 14th, 2023.
Jim and the committee are organising a seminar for this October. The venue will be The Masonic Centre in Bletchley, easy to get to, plenty of parking, and perfect for our needs. Top speakers Peter Hart and Alex Churchill, and hopefully Charlie Barrett, are already booked. Tea, coffee, and a buffet lunch are arranged. A display of militaria, a second-hand militaria bookshop, and our own display will provide added interest and atmosphere. (Please donate any of your unwanted militaria books about any conflict for the book stall, and any donations for a raffle would also be very much appreciated.) We are hoping that most of our membership, including those who are unable to join us at our regular meetings, will be able to attend the seminar to make it a truly memorable event. Please make sure that you reserve Saturday October 14th in your diaries, we need a great turn-out!



MARCH

Walter Lingard, Anne's great-grandfather's cousin

He was wounded at Courcelles and died in the No 47 Casualty Clearing Station on 11th March 1917 aged 35. He was in the 13th Bn E Yorks Regt and married with 2 young sons.

James Ward Kirkman, Anne's great-grandfather's cousin by marriage

He was killed while out on a patrol at Arras on 28th March 1918 aged 32. James was in the 6th Bn Yorkshire Regt; he was a married man - his widow never re-married.

Lance corporal James Suckling, Eric's great-uncle by marriage.

James enlisted in the Border Regiment in 1905 and served for 2 years in South Africa. On completion of his 7-years' service in 1912 he was discharged. In 1914 he re-joined 2nd Borders which became part of 20th Brigade, 7th Division on the Western Front in France and Flanders. In November 1917 James was drafted to 8th Bn., (the Kendal Pals). He was killed in action during the opening phase of the Ludendorff Offensive on 22nd March 1918. His body was not recovered, and he is commemorated at Tyne Cot.

Private N Short, Gary's great uncle.

One of the three brothers of Gary's grandfather who were killed in action in WW1, N was in the 8th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers. He was killed in action on 18th March 1916 and is interred in Vermelles British Cemetery.





Mentioned in Despatches

Minutes MK WFA AGM 17th February 2023

Apologies) Kevin (presenting a talk elsewhere).

Welcome) Stuart thanked members present.

Minutes - last AGM) The minutes of the last AGM were run through and validated.

Election of committee) The present committee; Stuart, Anne, Jim, Ian, Caroline and George are all willing to stand for another year and were re-elected. (Stuart asked if anyone else would like to join the committee, and after the meeting Gary Short offered to help, so welcome aboard Gary). Stuart offered his heartfelt thanks to all the committee for their consistent and invaluable input and support (and he intended to include Rhian for her attendance and help with the raffle and assorted technical issues, so many thanks Rhian).

Treasurer's report) PowerPoint slide from Caroline outlining the financial side of MK WFA. Stuart ran through the finances which included the costs for speakers, the monthly raffle, income from donations and membership of MKHS. Included were two donations from the WFA which we had applied for; one, travel costs for the wreath laying at the Cenotaph and two, a £300 covid recovery grant which will go to paying for the extra projector, stands and cables needed to adapt to the layout of our 'home'. The closing bank remains healthy at £1864.94.

Chairs and secretary's address) This was presented as a PowerPoint, which included -

A 'history' of our one year, two months at Wolverton Workingman's' Club

Slides of all the lectures we have had since the last AGM - a wide and interesting variety - and including a special thanks to Eric for his August 'special'

A look at the CWGC tour of Wolverton Cemetery with Mike Chapman

A report on the Albert French Commemoration at the MK Rose, with special thanks to all who took part or attended

The MK WFA display at MK Museum during the Heritage weekend

Our participation at the Cenotaph for the November 11th commemoration

The twinning trip to Ploegsteert in Belgium

A tribute to our great friends, Roger Penny and Robert Excell

A review of our newsletter, 'Frontline', with thanks to all who have contributed (future contributions; local interest, members' interests, relatives, trips etc, very very welcome)

Future programme 2023) A slide prepared by Anne showed the forthcoming lectures organised by Ian. We have a full and varied calendar for the year, just one to fill.

Seminar) Jim and the committee are organising a seminar for this October. Peter Hart and Alex Churchill are already booked, with several suitable venues being considered. We are hoping that most of our membership, including those who are unable to join us at our regular meetings, will be able to attend the seminar to make it a truly memorable event.

Meeting concluded. (see below) Followed after refreshments by our 2023 quiz.



Geoffrey's Avro



The Avro 504k is one of the greatest training aircraft ever built. It was used to equip training units first in the Royal Flying Corps and its later reincarnation, the Royal Air Force.

Developed from the original Avro 504 of 1913, the 504k differed from the earlier training variants by having modified engine bearers which allowed it to be fitted with a variety of rotary engines. Interchangeability was necessary due to shortage of certain types of engine and provided a welcome flexibility for the hard-pressed training units. Pilots were trained on the 504k and the Avro 504J, using Major Smith Barry's methods of systematic flying instruction which developed at the school of Special Flying at Gosport during World War One. This training method has provided the basis for virtually all primary flying instruction given throughout the world since then. More than 8000 were built during the war by A.V. Roe and sub-contractors such as Grahame-White Aviation at Hendon.

Although always known as a training aircraft Avro 504k's were also used as an emergency home defence fighter operating against German aircraft raiders. After the war surplus 504k's were used by civilian flying schools and barnstorming companies and continued as a trainer, using a lynx engine well into the 1930s. Watch Douglas Bader's (Kenneth More) first flight in 'Reach for the Sky' for example. But the aircraft we are interested in is not really a wartime aircraft but a 'swords into ploughshares' example. The Avro 504L was a three-seat design to capture some of the early requirements for the birth of civil flying in the post war years - the ability to carry mail, passengers and freight. The Avro 504L was tested in February 1919, powered by a 130hp Clerget engine. 25 airframes were converted and 6 built new from scratch using a 150hp Bentley rotary engine.

Last year Milton Keynes Aviation Society had a lecture presented by Geoffrey New on the 504L. He was in the process of rebuilding one to flight status, a process that had already taken him sixteen years. This will be the oldest passenger carrying aircraft in existence. Geoffrey had started his flying career in 1960 on gliders with the ATC before joining the RAF, training on Jet Provosts and Varsitys before spending several years piloting the mighty Vulcan V bomber. Then he embarked on a long and distinguished career in civil aviation. As well as all this he has owned several vintage light aircraft, built his own from scratch, and designed an electric engine for light aircraft.

Geoffrey's Avro was one of the new builds and started life as a seaplane, giving pleasure flights from holiday beaches, two passengers at a time. Look carefully at the page from its logbook below to work out some typical details.

				Brought forward
1		A. G. Linton	—	Works to beach
		do.	1	beach to works
3	AM	C. Barrett	1 mechanic	To parade
			6 flights 11 passengers	
	PM		2 passengers	To Benhill and return
			1 mechanic	To works
7	AM		1 mechanic	To Haulings
			8 flights 15 passengers	
			1 mechanic	To E. G. Linton
8	AM	Major Zander	1 flight 2 passengers	To parade
		C. Barrett	8 flights 15 passengers	
		A. G. Linton	4 flights 8 passengers	
		C. Barrett	1 mechanic	
				Brought forward

The plane, floats removed, was then operated in Sweden on survey work for many years. An engine failure caused a crash landing. Owing to the dense forests surrounding its remote location, the aircraft was considered not worth recovering. Its owner dismantled it and stored it in a boathouse, taking care to store the engine in oil, and there it remained for decades until its discovery, rescue and subsequent sale, being bought as a 'basket case' by Geoffrey, who has worked on it ever since.



A painting of the Avro in its heyday, surveying in Sweden. Look carefully and you can spot the three crew.

On the 12th March members of Milton Keynes Aviation Society, including yours truly, travelled to Finmere airfield where Geoffrey New was looking forward to showing us his pride and joy, and his collection of unique and fascinating documents. These included the original 1920 airframe and engine log books, certificates of registration & airworthiness, photos and more.



To the left is a photo of *Geoffrey*, behind him is the main fuselage taking shape. You can see the long landing skid. The engine, or most of it, is on a bench to the right. Although a very early aircraft, the design and strength of it is amazing. Nearly all wood, beautifully crafted, its main strength and rigidity comes from myriads of bracing wires and turn buckles, with everything at the exact correct angle and tension. And the most amazing thing of all is that nearly all that gleaming varnished wood is original! The rotary engine with its constant loss system had, over the years of operation, coated and soaked the airframe with a thick layer of castor oil, which had preserved it perfectly. (Although it needed hundreds and hundreds of hours of restoration).





Lightness and strength - wing design.



Original instruments.

It is an amazing fact, as Geoffrey pointed out to us as he gave us a tour of his Avro, that the adaption of this aircraft was the first design job entrusted to a certain Roy Chadwick, who went on to design the famous Avro Lancaster and then the Vulcan on which Geoffrey flew for most of his RAF career. As Geoffrey pointed out, the time span between the Avro 504L, first flown as a three-seater in 1919, and the Vulcan, first flown in 1955, was only 36 years! What incredible progress, and both created by the same man. With luck, Geoffrey's Avro will, in the not-too-distant future, take to the skies again, and Geoffrey will have flown the first and the last of Roy Chadwick's designs, and will have brought back to life the world's oldest passenger aircraft, a plane born by war but adapted to peace. Quite a legacy.



Stuart.

Bibliography

<https://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/>

Wikipedia

<https://www.baesystems.com/en-uk/heritage/avro-504j---avro-504k>

The Stony Tram Tragedy of WW1



The Wolverton to Stony Stratford tramway was opened in 1887. The service was extended to run as far as the village of Deanshanger in 1888 but was withdrawn within two years as it proved uneconomic in operation. The tracks remained for years afterwards.

The rolling stock included two engines, two tramcars, one built to hold 80 and one for 20 people, and two were built to hold 100. They were pulled by the engines as they had no power of their own. The upper deck of the large tramcars had curtains, and at various stages of their life carried advertising for local businesses. Adverts even appeared on the locomotives pulling the tram.



Passenger seats were arranged sideways in the upper and lower decks. In the early days the upper deck of the tramcars was also completely open-sided, then 'modesty panels' were added. The photos above show the preserved tramcar in the transport section of Milton Keynes Museum, the interior with two 'period' figurines, and the rear stairway to the upper deck. (Well worth a visit.)

It was a normal part of local life, travelling along roads which were - by today's standards - amazingly free of traffic. A weekly ticket could be purchased entitling the traveller to four rides per day. The fee from Wolverton to Stony Stratford was 2d. The Stratford terminus was for most of its life outside the Cock Hotel.

The largest tramcars had primarily been designed to bring workmen to and from Wolverton Works. The smaller tramcar was originally used for the Deanshanger arm of the tram route, but when this service ceased it was used for off-peak times between Wolverton and Stony Stratford. The Wolverton to Stony Stratford tram was unusual in that it travelled through open countryside between the two towns. The tram earned a steady income from the Wolverton works staff but it was sometimes involved in accidents and was derailed and resuming normal service took some time and organising!



Near to Russell Street in Stony Stratford the tram entered a depot and circled round the back of the houses in a loop, thus turning round to return to Wolverton. Later, a "run-round loop" was added outside the Foresters Arms



The running of the tram service had been taken over by the London & North Western Railway, and this stabilised the business. However, other forms of transport began to rival the tram: a motorcoach could do 30 miles an hour - the tram did only 8 or 9. Even bicycles were faster than the tram, when ridden by younger men! However, a bicycle during WW1 cost at least £2-£3, a lot of money then.

In 1924, the London & North Western Railway was incorporated into the newly-formed London Midland & Scottish Railway group. The tram service was maintained, but for some years it had been losing money heavily. When the General Strike came in 1926, the tram service was suspended. It never resumed.

The tram tracks were dug up and removed, and the tramcars sold or dismantled.

A Stony Stratford resident, Cecil Palmer, remembers the tram service between Stony Stratford and Wolverton.

"The tram depot was in the road where we're living. The tram was drawn by steam engines.

"The tram ran from the top of Stony Stratford outside the "Foresters", to the railway station at Wolverton, that's all, where it turned round and came back again. They ran two, one at twenty past and the other at half past five in the morning and they'd bring the men home from the Works in the evening. In the day time they'd work the timetable so that they were at the station to meet the trains. At night time, at half past five, when we got home, the engine turned round - they got the double lines here so they could do it, and would go straight back to pick up the Print Workers because they worked till 6 o'clock. There wouldn't be another one till after seven from Stony, and I had to be in Wolverton at the Science & Arts by seven so I walked!"

"There used to be a stop at King St, then it didn't stop again until it got to the Print Works - only when it couldn't get up the hill, when we had to get out and push: Snow or anything on the line would stop it. The road in those days was twisty and turning to Wolverton and it was only when they took the metals up that they straightened it.

"Where the road turns to Old Wolverton there was a sharp hill and when they did the road they levelled it off. But in those days when the tram was running it was quite a sharp incline. If the tram hadn't got enough steam he'd go bop, bop, bop and it would run back. We'd have to get out and then push it back over the top of the hill, then get back in and away we'd go again. If it was a wet morning the driver would run it back nearly to the Mill Drive, get up steam and then go again, hoping he'd get over. Sometimes it would come off the rails and they'd just back it on till it dropped on the metals and away it goes again."

On 20th February 1915 a tragic and somewhat mysterious accident involving the tram occurred. The main incident took place a few hundred yards down the road from our meeting place at Wolverton Working Men's Club. The following Saturday, the 27th, 'The Buckingham Advertiser and North Bucks Free Press', a local paper, reported the following under the heading of -

'Shocking Death of National Reservist'.

Some mystery is attached to a pathetic road tragedy that occurred at Wolverton late on Saturday night. The victim was Private Frank Mower, an aged National Reservist, who is a member of the 1 company of the Norfolk Regiment, which has been engaged on patrol duty in the neighborhood of the LWNER main line at Wolverton for some weeks. Mower was off duty on Saturday night and in company with his billet comrade (Private R Vines) left his billet at Mr. Downings, 150 Church Street Wolverton to pay a visit to Stony Stratford. The two comrades stayed in the old town for some considerable time and then parted company on the understanding that Mower would return to Wolverton on the 9.15 tram from Stony Stratford. Whether Mower caught this tram, or whether he walked to Wolverton, it is impossible to say, for the next that was seen of him was an hour later, when he made a futile attempt to board the last tram from Wolverton to Stony Stratford opposite Messrs. McCorquodale's printing works, at the Western end of the railway town. The tram was travelling at a good pace when, without any warning, the reservist walked from the shadow of the

printing works, and, unknown to the driver or guard, so it is believed, tried to mount the second car by jumping on the coupling between the two cars. Whether he actually mounted the car and slipped off again is also a matter of conjecture. At any rate, by some means he was dragged under the last car and pulled along the ground to a point in the road some distance from the path that leads to Old Wolverton, and is nearly 100 yards from the place where he tried to board the tram.

Not until the guard with his lantern made a search underneath the last car did the passengers and tramway officials fully realise that a man had been killed, for Mower was quite dead when extricated. He was badly crushed about the body, and had ugly bruises on his head and limbs. The driver promptly uncoupled the first car, on which he conveyed most of the passengers, without much delay, to their destination. P S Stritton, of Wolverton, was notified of the tragedy, and at his request Mr. P Williams and a number of men from the lifting shop of the railway factory hurried to the spot with jacks, with the aid of which they were enabled to raise the heavy tram sufficiently to be able to extricate the dead man. The body was taken to the Crauford Arms Hotel. Mower, who belonged to Norwich, was 64 years of age and was a widower. He has one son on active service and another son living at Norwich, besides a daughter at Wantage.'



CWGC headstone in Wolverton cemetery to Private 4080 F Mower, Norfolk Regiment who died 20th February 1915. Frank was married, and he and his parents lived in Norwich, hence the inscription on the headstone 'Of Norwich Resting'. His age given on his headstone is 60, and on the plaque on his coffin, 65. Frank was born in Suffolk in 1851 so it is easy to work out which age is correct.

An inquest into the incident was held on the Monday in Wolverton. The paper reported that 'Mr. Bell, of Bedford, represented the Wolverton and Stony Stratford Steam Tramway Company, and Lieutenant Cook represented the Norfolk Regiment of National Reserves. Fred Mower, 21, Longman Square, Kennington, London, identified the deceased as his brother, Frank Horace Mower. Private Richard Vine said that he met Mower in the White Horse Inn at Stony Stratford. His friend had been in Stony Stratford some hours before he got there. He left the witness to catch the car for home, but he could not say whether he did this or not. At 10.30, to his great surprise, he met the deceased at Wolverton walking towards Stony Stratford. As Mower was of a peculiar disposition, he did not speak to him, as he thought he would return home in a few minutes. Answering the Coroner, witness said they went nowhere else but the White Horse. They had some beer, but the deceased was quite sober.

Sidney William Dumbleton, engineer's apprentice, who was riding on the platform of the last car, said he thought he saw a man walking in the middle of the road. He ran and tried to mount the first car, but as there were no steps he could not get on, and he "sort of toppled over" and got under the car. Witness called out to the driver and said, "You have run over a soldier". As far as he (witness) could say, the man made up his mind all of a sudden to get on the first tram. Tram driver Reynolds said that

the cars were fairly full. As he was driving towards Stony Stratford he passed a soldier who was also walking towards that town. He was walking a yard from the footpath. The man made no signal to the driver to stop, but directly after he passed him he felt a slight drag on the engine, and thirty yards on he heard the communication bell ring. When he got to the last car the deceased was doubled up between the front wheels.



Image © Johnston Press plc. Image created courtesy of THE BRITISH LIBRARY BOARD.

Dr Harvey gave medical evidence.' (This was followed by a rather heated exchange between the Coroner and Colour-Sergeant Smithson, who, in the words of the reporter, 'spoke very heatedly about the equipment of trams'. The Colour-Sergeant was of the opinion that if the tram cars had been fitted with cow catchers, the fatal accident might not have occurred. The Coroner was not of this opinion and ordered Smithson to stand down.

The jury returned a verdict of Accidental death and attached no blame to anyone.

The paper also reported on the military funeral, which was very well attended. 'Quite a thousand people, the great majority being women, witnessed the obsequies at Wolverton, on Tuesday, of Private Frank Mower, of the Norfolk Reservists, and the victim of Saturday's tram fatality. A large proportion gathered at the house where the deceased was marched, under the command of Lieut. Cook, in the absence of the commanding officer, Colonel Grey, through illness. A platoon of twelve, in charge of Colour-Sergt. Smith, formed the firing party, with arms reversed, and preceded the bier, The coffin was furled with the Union Jack, and on it rested the deceased's hat and sidearms. In the mourning carriage were the following relatives: Mr. Frank Mower (son), Miss Ada

Mower (daughter), Mr. Frederick Mower (brother), Mrs. Mansfield and Mrs. Middleton (sisters). The rest of the Reservists, with Buglers Scragg and Goodridge, of the Wolverton detachment of the Bucks Territorials, brought up the rear.

The first portion of the plain but beautiful service was conducted at St. George's Parish Church by the Rev. W. L. Harnett M.A. (Vicar), and afterwards the funeral cortege proceeded to the new Cemetery, the route being thickly lined with spectators. The last scenes were of an impressive character. On a bitterly cold afternoon, the atmosphere promising a coming snowstorm, many grey heads were bared to the keen, icy wind. A square was formed by the soldiers, and the vicar solemnly pronounced the committal prayers. The platoon then fired three clear volleys over the grave of their comrade, and the buglers sounded the "Last Post".

The coffin, of polished oak, bore the inscription: -

Private Frank Mower, Died Feb. 20, 1915, Aged 64 years.

Four wreaths reposed on the coffin from Sister Rebecca and family; Sister Polly and family; the NCO's and Men of 1 Company, Norfolk National Reserves; and from the Norfolk Country Club and Staff (where deceased was employed)

3519 W1 20092/W881 10.000 227 146 F & S

GRAVES REGISTRATION REPORT FORM.

London Area Command.

Name of Cemetery WOLVERTON CEMETERY Report Number 650 (additional)
 Parish WOLVERTON Certified Correct and Complete. Schedule Number 2
 County BUCKINGHAMSHIRE Signature *[Signature]* Asst. Area Inspector London Area Category of Graves d

Unit	Regtl. No.	Name	Rank and Initials	Date of Death	Number or letter of			Type of Memorial	Type of Grave	Remarks
					Plot	Row	Grave			
1/5 (T) Norfolk R.	4080	MOWER	Pte. F.	20.2.15	N		68	N.M. Common	EXX	<i>Man. Grave (P.D.C.W. Books) Bk/ 3652/1337</i>

Stuart.

Bibliography

<https://www.mkheritage.org.uk/>

Buckingham Advertiser and North Bucks Free Press. (British Library Board).

Authors, alias Douglas Reeman.

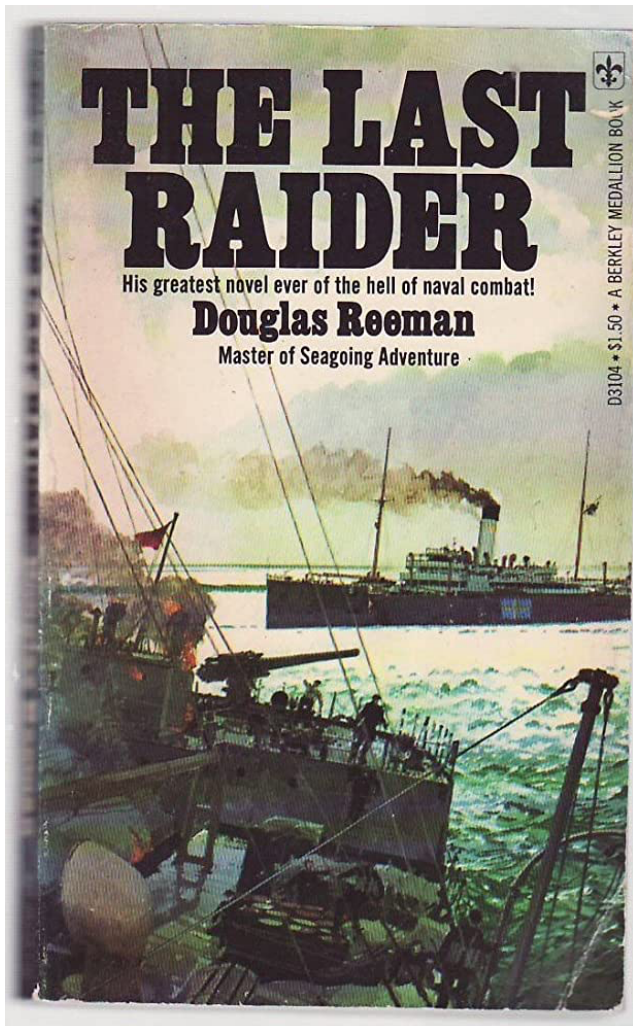
Looking at authors who wrote about the First World War, and whose books are available to borrow from our lending library.

When I was in my late teens, after being amazed by 'The Cruel Sea' by Nicholas Monserrat, and casting around for something similar, I discovered an author, Douglas Reeman, who wrote many historical novels about the British Navy in the two World Wars. I was also impressed with the historical novels of Alexander Kent, who concentrated on the sea battles of a much earlier age. Both wrote prolifically, so imagine my surprise when I later discovered that Douglas Reeman and Alexander Kent were one and the same! Alexander Kent was a pseudonym.

I also later discovered that Douglas Reeman lived in Thames Ditton, as did I at that time. Douglas wrote a total of 68 novels, selling 34 million copies in twenty languages. (I can claim at least a dozen of that total, and two more are in the lending library (See below))



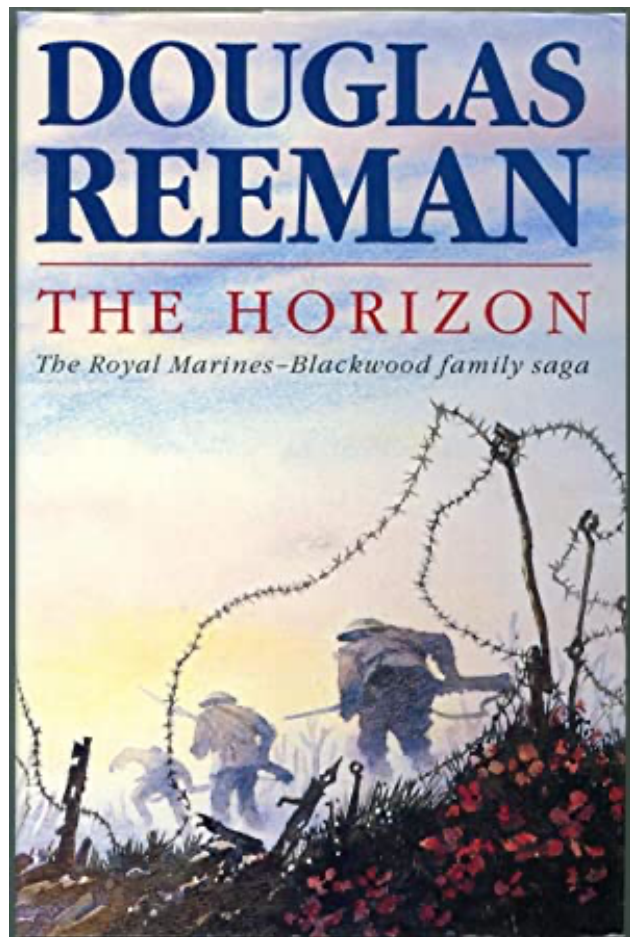
Douglas Reeman was born in 1924. When the Second World War started he joined HMS Ganges, the Royal Navy's boys' training establishment. In 1940 Reeman, aged 16, was appointed midshipman. His initial service was in destroyers on convoy duty in the North Atlantic. During this time his ship was sunk, and Reeman was injured by exploding depth charges. Later he transferred to Motor Torpedo Boats and then landing craft for the D-Day landings. It was then that he was injured badly when his landing craft was hit by shellfire. He finished the war with the rank of Lieutenant. Many of his experiences resurface in his novels, which explains their realism and accuracy. After the war, Reeman joined the Metropolitan Police, serving as a beat officer and later in the CID. At the beginning of the Korean War he re-joined the Navy and afterwards remained a Lieutenant-Commander in the Royal Naval Reserve. He published his first book 'A Prayer for the Ship' in 1958. Reeman is most famous for his Bolitho novels, set in the Napoleonic Wars and written under the guise of Alexander Kent, who was a friend and naval officer who died during WW2. Reeman also wrote a series of novels about the fictional Blackwood family (based partly on the reminiscences of his father who fought at Gallipoli) who served in the Royal Marines from the 1850s to the 1970s. Douglas Reeman died in 2017.



First published in 1963, 'The Last Raider' tells the story of a German war ship and her crew in 1917. Germany is losing the war; their navy has been decimated and is mainly blockaded in port. But the high command sends out one final warship to attack allied shipping. 'Vulkan' and her crew sneak past the blockade and commence raiding in the North Atlantic. 'Vulkan' appears to be a harmless merchant vessel, but her peaceful lines disguise a powerful armament of guns, mines and torpedoes. The Vulkan is a commerce raider, and under crack commander Felix von Steiger, her mission is to bring chaos to the seaways.

During their voyage of destruction they pick up survivors of torpedoed allied ships, including a British woman. The crew are forced to confront their notions of war-why they are fighting and what tactics in war are justified.

For three generations, members of the Blackwood family have served the Royal Marines with distinction. With the outbreak of World War I, at last comes Jonathan Blackwood's turn to carry the family name into battle. But as the young officer and his marines embark for the Dardanelles, and a new kind of warfare, it dawns on them that the days of scarlet coats and an unchanging tradition of honour and glory have gone forever, giving way to a new warfare of trenches, unrelenting shellfire and ruthlessly efficient machine-guns. First in Gallipoli, and two years later at Flanders, comes their horrifying initiation into a wholesale slaughter for which no training could ever have prepared them. Caught up in the savagery of a conflict beyond any officer's control, Blackwood's future rests on the 'horizon' - the dark lip of the trench which was the last fateful sight for so many.





'Jig-a-jig Tommy' - Bruce Cherry

Bruce Cherry is an author, tour guide and former university lecturer with a PhD in military history. Amongst other titles, is his book 'They Didn't Want to Die Virgins; a study of Sex and Morale on the Western Front'. Bruce's talk includes the British Army's attitude toward sex, the soldier's moral code, army morale, and the sexual lives of troops on the Western Front. Beyond the topics of venereal disease and sexual violence, Bruce explores the 'hidden' part of the Western Front story; how the military turned a blind eye to, and supported, the use of pornography, prostitution, and fraternization with local women - always mindful that this is also the story of a survival strategy for women. Don't miss this riveting and exclusive talk!

Our Events Programme.

April 21st 'Jig-a-jig Tommy' - Bruce Cherry

May 19th - 'I shall hope to try an officer and at least one corporal for cowardice' - Michael de Cicero

June 16th - 'Now the War is Over' - Dr Daniel Weinbren

July 21st - 'Britannia's unruly stepchildren', Americans in the British Armed Forces- Michael O'Brien

Meetings are 7.30 - 9.30.at Wolverton Working Men's Social Club, 49 - 50, Stratford Road MK12 5LS

Committee members are...

Stuart Macfarlan - Chairman (macfarlan87@gmail.com)

Anne McIntyre - Secretary/historical events co-ordinator (annefmmcintyre@gmail.com)

Ian Wright - Talks organiser

Caroline Wright - Treasurer

Jim Barrett - Seminar and visits co-ordinator

George Maby - Wolverton Town Council liaison (Twinning and Albert French commemoration)

Gary Short - Social Media co-ordinator.