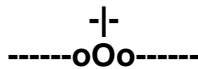


## Branch Newsletter – February 2018

### Next Meeting:

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> February at St Peter's Collegiate School, Compton Park, Compton Rd. West, Wolverhampton WV3 9DU. Doors open at 2.00pm, with proceedings beginning at 2.30pm. If visiting us by car, please approach from the A454 Compton Road West, turn off and follow the Compton Park Road along for about 800 yds or so; the school is on the right, past the Wolverhampton Wanderers FC Training Ground. We park in the Staff Car Park, which is the third entrance onto the site - almost at the end of the road.

This month we have our very own Nick Baker talking to us on "The Auxiliary Red Cross Hospital in Stourbridge"



### An important message from our Treasurer:

*"Annual Voluntary Donation*

*49 of us paid our AVDs in January - thank you. After I did the book-keeping for the AVD, I find that I had a sum of money in excess of 49 times £15. I keep the AVD money separate from other money, so it looks like I have short-changed someone. If you had in the back of your mind that you ought to have more money left in your wallet, then speak to me. (Not you Mr Langford, you haven't paid yet.)"*

### Some interesting news from the National Army Museum:

[Decorated Iraq veteran to take charge at National Army Museum after accusations £24m revamp is too politically correct](#)

## Australia remembers:



Thought to be the only Australian test cricketer to fall during the Great War.

## A New Year message for us from “Harp and a Monkey”:

*“Dear WFA chairmen/chairwomen and officials - happy New Year.*

*Please forgive the generic nature of this email, but I am delighted that there are far too many of you to email individually. 'Delighted', as we are clearly doing well as an organisation to have such outreach!*

*Some of you will be familiar with myself as a speaker at your branch or via my work with the historical folk and storytelling collective Harp and a Monkey. This email regards the latter...*

*A new documentary has been released today - part 2 of our ongoing WWI centenary project funded by the Arts Council and supported in kind by the Western Front Association. There is a press release below with more details.*

*This project has so far reached thousands of people who might previously have had little contact with the rich and complex history of the First World War. If you aren't familiar with it, please check out the new documentary - and then put the kettle on, sit back and enjoy the first one too.*

*Better still, please help spread the word by forwarding the link included and press release to your members. If you were minded to share it on social media sites, that would be even better.*

*The short link to cut and paste for a trailer for the documentary (good for Facebook, Twitter etc) is <https://youtu.be/vfcTlpD63i0> and for the full documentary (for members and websites etc) is <https://youtu.be/cexqhcqBeTQ>.*

*Thank you for your patience in reading this far, and please consider coming to one of the 'War Stories' performances. You may be surprised at how many complex and challenging topics can be presented in an approachable and engaging way to the general public via music and short stories.*

*All the very best for 2018, Dr Martin Purdy (Lancs and Cheshire Branch)''*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vfcTlpD63i0&authuser=0>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cexqhcqBeTQ&authuser=0>

## **New WW1 documentary by folk storytellers**

A small rural church in Cumbria, a disused airfield in Norfolk, an old railway wagon in Sussex, and the winding room of a former colliery in Tyne and Wear – these are the intriguing sites that provide the backdrop for a new documentary about a series of poignant performances by the acclaimed experimental folk and storytelling act Harp and a Monkey.

The Lancashire trio are renowned for doing things differently, and they certainly lived up to that reputation during the second phase of their ongoing project to mark the centenary of the First World War with stories from home shores.

The band, who include an internationally respected WW1 historian, author and broadcaster, have been playing in unusual sites in Britain with different tales to tell of the conflict. They have been documenting the process by recording the performances and interviewing local people with evocative stories.

Sponsored by Arts Council England and the Western Front Association, the new documentary *The Great War: New Songs and Stories (Part 2)* can be viewed on the band's website ([www.harpandamonkey.com](http://www.harpandamonkey.com)), YouTube and on the website of the Western Front Association, which is the largest international body committed to the study and remembrance of the war. A short trailer for the documentary is presently being circulated.

Dr Martin Purdy, the band's front-man, a respected WW1 historian and long-standing member of the Lancashire and Cheshire branch of the WFA, explained: "The shows featured in this documentary gave us the chance to talk about the role of religion,

flight, espionage, repatriation of the dead and industry. We also discovered that the last surviving British veteran of the conflict was a woman from Norfolk, which was news to us! We really hope people find this documentary as interesting and entertaining to watch as we did to make.”

The performances, which are tied to the band’s critically lauded third album ‘*War Stories*’, include field recordings and interviews with veterans, new songs and re-workings of traditional and contemporaneous songs. Harp and a Monkey are presently putting together a further series of shows related to the project, whilst also performing their popular (non-war) shows around the country in what is the outfit’s tenth year as leading figures in the experimental British folk movement.

### **Thanks to Richard Pursehouse for this story of Freda:**

*“On 10<sup>th</sup> November 2017 a ceremony took place over Cannock Chase. It was organised by The Friends of Cannock Chase and performed by Reverend Norma Bellamy from St Mary and St Luke’s Church Shareshill and St Chads in Chadsmoor.*

*The event has taken place since 2000, and remembers all dogs and animals involved in the Great War, and also highlights the contribution of animals today.*

*A floral tribute and wreath were placed by Alan Dudson, Chairman of Cannock County Council, one from the Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Friends of Cannock Chase. Richard Pursehouse (and his dog Parker) laid a wreath on behalf of the Dolores Cross Project ([www.dolorescrossproject.org](http://www.dolorescrossproject.org)) in New Zealand.*

*Bebe the flat coat retriever has been selected to train as an Assistance Dog and was brought along to assimilate her in crowds. She helped her handlers place a wreath on behalf of Assistance Dogs. Bebe was joined by several other dogs and around 30 people attended the event.*





*Freda was a Great Dane and was the mascot of the 5<sup>th</sup> (reserve) Battalion of the New Zealand Rifle Brigade, which was based on Cannock Chase from September 1917 until its departure in June 1919. Freda was struck down by a 'mystery illness' and died in December 1918. Her burial place is in 'H' Lines which was mainly Mess huts and clerical offices. She did have a litter of pups before she and the NZRB moved up from Tidworth Pennings near Salisbury. There is a letter sent to New Zealand that she was doing fine and "likewise the second generation thereof" dated early 1918.*



*Her death greatly affected her handler Captain Magnay, who after the war remained in Stafford. There are stories of her 'inspecting' the men on the nearby parade ground (where the New Zealanders constructed the Messines Model in the spring of 1918), and accompanied the troops on route marches as well as New Zealand contingents sent to entertain the crowds at local Tank Banks at Wolverhampton and Walsall."*



Capt. Magnay is 4<sup>th</sup> from right, front row – the only one not in a lemon juicer...

**I suppose we shouldn't be surprised:**

*ISIS terrorists: British war graves smashed in Mosul by jihadi thugs | Daily Star*



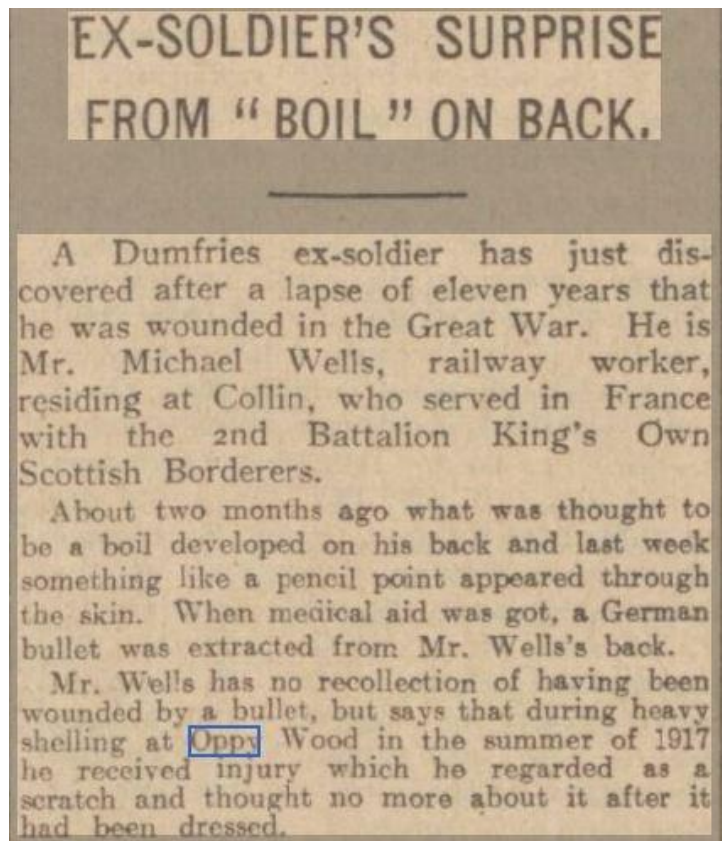
**We've all read about "Trench Foot" from time to time:**



*Well, here it is*

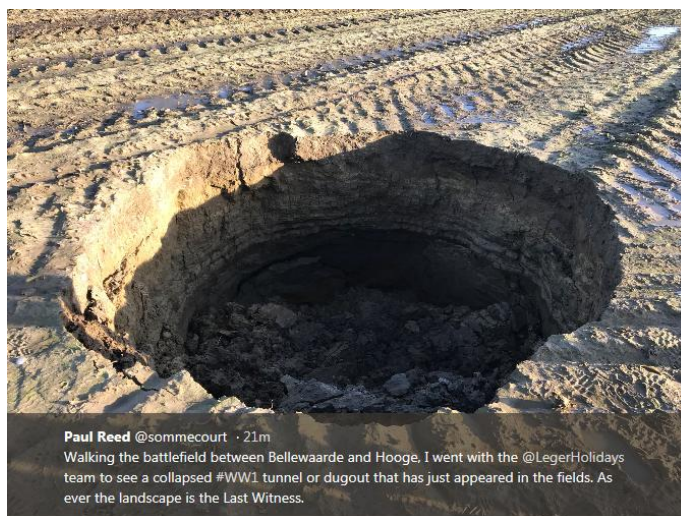


Shamelessly lifted from Paul Reed's twitter feed:



**A new hole in the ground:**

Careful where you put your feet...



(Again, by courtesy of Paul Reed)

**Meanwhile, at Lijssenthoek:**



*“Strong winds in the early hours of yesterday, Thursday, morning led to storm damage at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission’s Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery.*

*Thankfully the tree fell away from the headstones and after being reported in the morning our tree team had cleared all the items by mid-afternoon.”*

*Find out more about the cemetery, here: <http://ow.ly/4Lir30hSiT5>*

*#WeAreCWGC*

## **Dates for your Diary**

**i. Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> February – “Old Contemptibles, Birmingham”**


**[Remembering the Chums - Birmingham Old Contemptibles 90 Years](#)**

*An informal event to celebrate the 90th Anniversary of the formation of the Birmingham Branch of the Old Contemptibles Association, and the 65th*




*Anniversary of the renaming of the Albion Hotel as "The Old Contemptibles" in their honour.*

ii. **Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> February:**



UNIVERSITY OF  
WOLVERHAMPTON

**IN STAFFORD**



**A Military History  
Talk by Professor  
Gary Sheffield**

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**1918: How The Allies Won  
the First World War**

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**13<sup>th</sup> February 2018  
6.30pm - 8.00pm**

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The University of  
Wolverhampton in  
Stafford  
2A Staffordshire Place  
Tipping Street  
Stafford  
Staffordshire  
ST16 2LP

Places are free but need to be pre-booked  
To register , please contact us on  
01785 247622  
or by email [UWiS.enquiries@wlv.ac.uk](mailto:UWiS.enquiries@wlv.ac.uk)  
Places can also be booked by visiting our  
eventbrite page at  
<https://wlvstafford.eventbrite.co.uk>

[The University of Wolverhampton in Stafford - Military History Talk - Gary Sheffield Tickets, Tue, 13 Feb 2018 at 18:30 | Eventbrite](#)

- ii. **Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> February – Local History Symposium**  
Venue: Wolverhampton City Archives, Molineux Hotel. 10.00hrs – 16.00hrs. Tickets £5 (at cost) available from the Archives.  
Sandwiches and cake will be available to buy on the day thanks to the Friends of Wolverhampton Archives.

- iii. Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> March – Wolverhampton University Study day.**  
Further details to follow.
- iv. Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> March - Wolverhampton University/WFA Open lecture:** 'From No Man's Land to Auxiliary Hospital: The Work of the Royal Army Medical Corps in the First World War' by Dr Jessica Meyer.  
Venue: MC Building, Main Lecture Theatre MC001, Wulfruna Street.  
17.30 hrs, free admission.... E-mail [P.Badsey@wlv.ac.uk](mailto:P.Badsey@wlv.ac.uk) to reserve your place.
- v. Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> March – The one, the only “Trench Raiders” (with Fish & Chip supper too!)**  
Venue: Gilbert’s, Field Street, Willenhall WV13 2NY. (See poster hereunder for ticket availability)

## THE TRENCH RAIDERS CONCERT PARTY

Willenhall Memorial Park WW1 Then and Now project



### FISH AND CHIP SUPPER

**Saturday 10th March 2018 at 7.30 pm**

**Gilberts, Field Street,  
Willenhall. WV13 2NY**

**An entertaining romp through World War 1  
in anecdotes and song to give  
you "something to write home about"**

**TICKETS - £10 from Café in the Park** (Wednesdays from 11am - 1.30 pm)  
**Gilberts, Lovebirds - Cross Street, CHART - Gomer Street, New  
Invention Library Hub** (The Square on Tuesday and Thursday mornings 10 am)  
[WW1research@outlook.com](mailto:WW1research@outlook.com) or 07802408850

**WW1 Artefacts on display and work from local schools with  
Planet Art and designs for the new Memorial Garden.  
See how the project is progressing**

All profits will be  
donated to the local  
branch of The Royal  
British Legion

**“SAVE THE DATE “**

**COMMEMORATION EVENT - Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> August in the Park**

- vi. **Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> March – “World War 1 Postcards – a personal collection” by Diana Clarke**  
 Venue: Wellington History Group, Wellington Library, Larkin Way, TF1 1LX @ 19.00hrs  
[Wellington History Group](#)
- vii. **Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> March – “A 1918 Memorial Concert”**  
 Venue: Dudley Town Hall, St James’ Rd, Dudley @ 19.30hrs.  
 Details here:  
[We will remember them](#)



Wot? No “Trench Raiders??”

- viii. **31<sup>st</sup> March – 2<sup>nd</sup> April – “Trenches through the Ages”**

[Trenches through the Ages \(WW1 and WW2 Living History Event\)](#)

*Looking for something to do this Easter? Why not come and visit the Trenches through the Ages WW1 and WW2 Living History event?*



*Dates: Saturday 31st March, Sunday 1st April and Monday 2nd April 2018.  
Location: The Countryside Experience, Park Hall, Oswestry, Shropshire,  
SY11 4AS.*

*This is a new event hosted by Axis-Allied (AX-AL) with a large range of WWI nationalities all displaying in a trench system. We will also have a ww2 living history field filled with Axis and Allied impressions with plenty to see and do. This will be a 3 day event across the Easter Weekend!  
Event Page: <https://www.facebook.com/events/171821750235895/>*

**ix. Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> April – “The 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Great War Forum Conference”**

Venue: Tally Ho! Centre, Pershore Rd, Birmingham B5 7RN. £32 inc. lunch.  
Speakers to be announced. (Shame about the date...)

[Great War Forum Conference 2018](#)

**x. Saturday May 5<sup>th</sup> – Wolverhampton University Study Day: Stories, Myths and Legends of the War:**

*Prof. Stephen Badsey on “The myth of the German Corpse Factory  
De David Clarke on The Myth of the Angel at Mons  
Harry Richards on the German Spy Scare 1914/15  
Prof Gary Sheffield on John Terraine – Mythbuster*

Further details to follow.

**xi. Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> May – “The King’s Shropshire Light Infantry” by Wendy Palin**

Venue: Wellington History Group, Wellington Library, Larkin Way, TF1 1LX @ 19.00hrs

[Wellington History Group](#)

**xii. Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> June – “The 7<sup>th</sup> WFA President’s Conference”**

Venue: Where else, but the Tally Ho! Centre... Further details to follow.

[Seventh Western Front Association President’s Conference 2018](#)

**xiii. 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> September 2018 – International Conference on the First World War 'The End of War & Reshaping of a Century'**  
Venue: Wolverhampton University  
Details to follow.

I trust it will also be affordable for we lesser mortals...

**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)

Don't force me to write all this – your contributions will be gratefully received.

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