

## Branch Newsletter – May 2023

**SEPTEMBER MEETING: please note that this will be on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> and not as originally scheduled**

### Next Meeting:

Will be on Saturday 13th May at St Peter's Collegiate School, Compton Park, Compton Rd. West, Wolverhampton WV3 9DU. 2.00pm for a 2.30 kick-off.

Our speaker is Lt Cdr Roy Smart, RN and his subject is "*The Last Naval Hero -David 1st Earl Beatty*".

The talk looks at Beatty who rose with meteoric speed from Cadet to First Sea Lord to Statesman. The story includes his marriage to Ethel an American socialite.



And were he to catch any junior officer wearing his cap at such a jaunty angle in strict contravention of the regulations he'd wish he hadn't been born!

**Thanks to Andy Johnson for this contribution:**

***A 12 minute mining film from IWM***

[Click HERE](#)

*An interesting use of 12 minutes of your time. This is certainly 'fake news', the IWM calls it "dramatised".*

*As 'Mining Dave' David Whittaker pointed out, there's a lot of light available where the men are digging supposedly at the face (3-4 minutes in), also more spacious than might be imagined. Almost certainly a re-construction for the camera.*

*Even so, interesting. And a change from the usual extracts from the 1916 Malins 'Battle of the Somme' film.*

**Chris Twigg reports on a recent Battlefield Tour :**

***Back to the Front***

*Every March between 2010 and 2020 I have accompanied a party of Year 9 (13-14 yrs) pupils from Highworth Warneford School in Highworth on their tour of the Ypres Salient. The last tour was in March 2020 just before Covid 19 brought everything to a halt. This year the History Department resurrected the tour and it took place between March 6th - 8th.*

*The tour party consisted of 43 pupils, 4 staff, the coach driver and me as the Battlefield Guide. I knew the staff from previous trips and this was a great help. My role was to provide the "expertise" as we visited a number of sites. From my point of view this was good as I had no responsibility for the pupils and once the day's touring is over I could relax. It also meant that the staff did not have to deal with explaining the relevance of each site and be responsible for a whole host of other matters, such as providing the evening's entertainment, dealing with eating arrangements and just about anything else you can imagine. I can well remember my own days as a teacher how exhausting it could be with a day on the tour that often started at 6.30 am and ended at midnight.*

*A typical school trip to the Salient has an itinerary which features many of the most popular sites which will be very familiar to WFA members : Sanctuary Wood, Tyne Cot, Langemark German cemetery, Essex Farm cemetery etc. Our visit included all of these and others. A variety of visits helps with the intention of focusing on different aspects of the conflict. An endless diet of cemetery visits where the pupils stand around listening for 20 to 30 minutes will not result in a memorable visit or heightened interest in the Great War. It really is important to avoid the "Not another b\*\*\*\*y cemetery" situation.*

*In most years we have had at least one visit to the grave of a pupil's ancestor, but not this year. However, we did visit the location of one of the actions in which a Highworth man was killed.*

*The key to any school trip is to remember that it is not only about visiting the battlefields and helping to provide a deeper understanding of historical events, it is also an opportunity for pupils to experience a different country and even see their teachers outside of the usual classroom scenario. It is important that they come away with a positive experience and hopefully one that will see at least some of them to come back again at some point, or indeed become tomorrow's battlefield explorers. To this end making sure the day is a mixture of "work" and relaxation is vital. There will be some working time after the evening meal but then the pupils have time to relax. Similarly at some point they will have time to explore Ypres.*

*This is my diary for the trip.*

### *March 5th*

*Travel to the Premier Inn North Swindon. This is a few miles south of Highworth.*

### *March 6th*

*Wake at 4.45 am. Wash, shave and have a breakfast of sorts comprising a cup of instant coffee and a pan au chocolat. Final check that everything I need is packed and then check 4 or 5 weather forecasts for the Ypres area in the forlorn hope that conditions will have improved overnight...they haven't!*

*5.25 am emerge from the Premier Inn into the darkness of the car park. It is already raining but my lift to the school, courtesy of the Deputy Head who is one of the accompanying staff, is already there. It is a brief 10 minute drive to the school where the pupils are already beginning to arrive. Matters run very efficiently in terms of packing and getting everyone onboard. I take the opportunity to chat to the driver and run through the day's itinerary. If all goes well we will be in Ypres by 2.30 pm local time. We discuss possible changes to planned visits if the weather is problematic.*

*6.20 am and we are away heading for the Rail Terminal at Folkestone.*

*After a brief stop at Cobham services for a comfort break and coffee we arrive at the Folkestone Terminal in plenty of time. We are waved through British Border Control and arrive at French Border Control. At this point we all have to disembark from the coach and go through to have passports checked. The 6 adults all have their passports individually stamped. However, the prospect of stamping 43 pupils' passports appears too time consuming. French officials decide they will simply stamp a list of pupils' names and we can proceed. This will later on come back to cause problems.*

*2.30 pm We arrive at our first site visit which is Essex Farm Cemetery. The good thing about having this tour so early in the year is that you are not facing competition with several other parties. We have the place to ourselves. The vegetation around the site has recently been vigorously cut back and it has a rather bare appearance. The weather has improved, in the sense that the forecast rain has held off, but it is bitterly cold with quite a stiff breeze.*

*Most of the pupils on the trip have only just started the part of the Year 9 History syllabus that covers the Great War so I have to assume that they have little prior knowledge of the*

*topic. The key to any school visit is to focus clearly on what you want them to understand and not overwhelm them with detail. In addition nobody is going to want to stand around for too long listening to me wittering on. We visit the bunkers where the main focus is to convey some understanding of the role they played in the medical aid structure for dealing with casualties. A chance to explore the different parts of the bunker produces the first series of questions from the pupils. We then proceed to the MacCrae memorial and a chance to tell his story and the background to his famous poem "In Flanders Fields".*

*We conclude our visit by looking at the grave of 15 years old Valentine Joe Strudwick. His story came to prominence in the 1980s when it featured in a guide book to the Salient produced by a teacher, Les Coate, and published by Tressell Publications. The result of the publicity of Strudwick's story has been that Essex Farm is thought to be the most visited British Cemetery on the Western Front apart from Tyne Cot and his grave is almost certainly the most visited.*

*I point out to the pupils the presence of cuddly toys as well as wooden crosses at his grave and ask them their thoughts on the matter. It is a reflection of the time in which we live that they perhaps regard such matters as quite normal because it's what they see on TV when a news item covers a child's death. Coming from a different generation I find it rather inappropriate, as 15 year old Strudwick would have seen himself very much as an adult in an adults' world.*

*Our visit concluded we return to the coach and head off via Ypres and Wijstchate to the Pool of Peace at Spanbroekmolen. The weather is still behaving itself but the site at Spanbroekmolen is very exposed at the wind gives us all something of a battering. We assemble to the side of the crater, on what was the German Front Line from the autumn of 1914, looking out towards the British positions and the villages of Wulverghem and Neuve Eglise. This is an opportunity for the pupils to get some understanding of the importance of high ground and the difficulties of attacking positions across open ground. Another good reason for taking them here is that it is the site of a British attack on March 12th 1915 involving men from the Worcestershire Regiment and the Wiltshire Regiment. Among those involved in what was to be an unsuccessful attack were some men from Highworth. One of the casualties was Acting Sergeant Ernest Moulden who was killed and his body subsequently lost. His home in Highworth still exists and it all makes for a good connection with the pupils home town and the present day. I later suggest that on the following Sunday afternoon (March 12th, the 108th anniversary of the action at Spanbroekmolen) they might like to take a stroll along Grove Hill, where Moulden lived, and then on along Station Road. This would replicate his journey to work every day as he was employed by the GWR at Swindon and would have travelled by train from Highworth station to Swindon.*

*Having looked at the action of March 12th we then moved to look at the mine crater left by the explosion of June 7th 1917. This provides an opportunity to explore the matter of mining and tunnelling in the Great War. It also gets us out of the wind for a short while. It is fair to say that the size of the crater makes a clear impression on the pupils and more questions follow.*

*Our final part of our visit here is to walk around the outside of the crater and on to Spanbroekmolen British Cemetery, a journey of about 10 minutes. We are once again buffeted by the wind and I keep my eyes peeled for evidence of any unexploded ammunition. There is none to be seen as it is a rather early in the year for farmers to start unearthing*

*much in the way of war debris. However, the pupils have been warned about the potential dangers. Look, but don't touch is emphasised.*

*Spanbroekmolen British Cemetery is a small cemetery situated in the middle of farmland and reached by a long grass track. All, bar one, of the burials dates from June 7th 1917. It is a good example of a battlefield cemetery and allows me to make the point that not all cemeteries are the same. There are reasons for each one being where it is. Essex Farm provides a good contrast to this cemetery. A few more questions, in this case about headstones and their inscriptions etc follows before we make our way back to the coach and a chance to warm up.*

*This concludes our visits for the afternoon and we make our way to the village of Kemmel and our base at the CJT De Lork Hostel located about half way up Kemmel Hill.*

### March 7th

*Wake at 6.30 am to find that the weather has deteriorated and it is now raining steadily. Breakfast with the staff at 7.30 am where we discuss how we can change the itinerary to minimise the impact of the rain. A couple of planned visits to Harry Patch's memorial plaque by the Steenbeek to the south of Langemark and the grave of Jimmy Spiers at Dochy Farm fall victim to the bad weather. We decide to make the German Cemetery at Langemark our first stop of the day. At least it provides a modicum of shelter for the pupils at the entrance while I stand outside and get wet!*

*We depart at 9.05 am after having breakfast and having made our packed lunches for the day. By 9.30 am we are at the cemetery and have the place to ourselves. The rain has eased off a little so we gather in front of the Comrades Grave containing approximately 25,000 bodies. As is always the case this fact has an impact as the pupils come to terms with the numbers buried in such a small area. We then examine one of the headstones over the graves of several German soldiers where I mention the fact that, contrary to popular belief, the soldiers are not buried vertically to save space, but are buried in the usual way in the area immediately surrounding the headstone. I also admit to having repeated the vertical story burial myself over the years.*

*The group then moves to look at the 3 bunkers at the far end of the cemetery and I tell them about Hitler's visit to the area in 1940. The visit to Langemark is always important because of the contrast with British cemeteries, a contrast which is always more obvious during Spring and Summer when British cemeteries really do present a more colourful picture. At this time of the year this is not so obvious. Later in the day the party will go to Tyne Cot and there is the chance to contrast the area of land taken up by that cemetery in comparison to Langemark*

*The next stop is a visit to the excellent In Flanders Fields museum in the Cloth Hall at Ypres. This is the one part of the tour where the pupils have some specific tasks to complete. I think the staff have got this right as the last thing any teacher would want is to make every site visit work sheet related. It is important to give pupils the time to wander, look and think for themselves rather than making the whole exercise too prescriptive. I take the opportunity to have a look around Ypres and visit the Menin Gate before renovation work starts in earnest in April.*

*The museum visits takes just over an hour and we reassemble back by the Menin Gate to board the coach for our journey to Sanctuary Wood. This will be our lunch stop prior to*

visiting the museum and trenches. When we arrive there are already 4 coaches present so lunch is taken on the coach while we wait for the other parties to depart. The trenches and the stereoscopic photographs prove to be the main attractions. It looks as though the opportunity has been taken during the Covid lockdown period to refurbish the photo viewers and there seem to be more of them working than in the past. The pictures prompt the inevitable questions asking for clarification as to what it is the pupils can see. The trenches are probably something of a highlight for any school party. I have taken the opportunity to tell them something about the type of trenches they are and remind them that it isn't a playground, which is how some school groups seem to treat the site. All goes well until one lad manages to hit his head on the ceiling of the covered trench. He emerges with blood down one side of his face but fortunately it's not serious. Having been patched up by the tour Medical Officer (the Head of History) he's fine.

The weather shows no sign of improving and two proposed stops at Hill 60, and Dochy Farm Cemetery to visit the grave of Jimmy Spiers who scored the winning goal for Bradford City in the 1911 FA Cup final, are abandoned. We make our way to Tyne Cot where once again our plans are disrupted by the blustery conditions and the work going on in the cemetery. The ground is quite soft and clearly suffering as a result of the visitors churning up some of the more heavily used paths. Our plan to visit the grave of Arthur Conway Young, a young man from a family of pacifists living and working in Japan, who decided to return to Britain to serve in the army, falls victim to being inside one of the roped off sections. We retreat to the covered area at the end of the Memorial Wall section at the back of the cemetery where I give the group an overview of the site. There is time for them to have a look around the cemetery but the weather doesn't encourage matters and everyone is getting wet and cold so we eventually return to the coach.

The afternoon ends with a chance for the staff and pupils to spend some time in Ypres. The pupils lay waste to the chocolate shops and the staff take turns to supervise and enjoy a hot drink in one of the Grote Markt's many cafes. Unfortunately the view is spoilt by the presence of a funfair taking up much of the main square. How it ever makes money is a mystery to me as on the numerous occasions it has been here it seems to be devoid of many customers.

At 5 pm we return to our base at Kemmel for the evening meal before setting out later for the Last Post at the Menin Gate. At 7.15 pm we head back to Ypres for the Last Post. Although it is a Tuesday evening in early March there are good numbers in attendance with at least 6 other coach parties, many of which are not British. I suggest to the pupils that they resist the temptation of so many to record it all on their phones. For many of them this will probably be the only time they experience attendance at the Last Post ceremony and it is better to focus on the moment rather than worry about whether they have a decent recording on the event. The Last Post is played by the buglers and a few participants lay wreaths and soon it is all over and we are back on the coach. The atmosphere on the coach is quite quiet during our return journey. Not the total silence I remember experiencing on one occasion back in the early 1990s when the return to Kemmel was memorable for the fact that not a word was said or sound made by anyone in the party.

### Wednesday March 8th

It has snowed overnight as forecast. Fortunately the snow is of the wet variety and doesn't look as though it is going to cause too many problems. However, we decide to abandon a possible visit to one of the cemeteries in Vlamertinge on our return journey. One of the

*pupils had discovered that they had a relative buried there and we had considered trying to squeeze in a quick visit.*

*After breakfast and clearing all the rooms the coach is packed and we are ready to go. We have a final visit to make to Kemmel Chateau Cemetery and the grave of 15 years old Private Reginald Wilson of the Devonshire Regiment. It has been something of a tradition of many years with groups from the school to visit Wilson's grave. He provides an interesting comparison with the grave of Strudwick at Essex Farm Cemetery. Strudwick clearly gets thousands of visitors every year whereas Wilson probably gets a single visit and that is from the Highworth Warneford trip. It is also a chance to contrast the life and priorities of the pupils with someone from an earlier time of a similar age. After telling Wilson's story, he was a typical victim of trench warfare, probably killed by random shell fire, we have a minute's silence and a wreath is laid. A fitting end to the trip.*



*The return journey is made without any problems caused by the weather and we arrive at Calais hoping to be able to get an earlier train. After a few inquiries it is clear that we can't get an earlier train and we have to wait for our allotted time slot.*

*On arrival at French Border Control things begin to go awry as it turns out that the pupil list with a single stamp that was deemed acceptable at Folkestone to allow us entry into France on Monday is invalid. There is much discussion and shaking of heads by the Border Control officers. We have effectively been travelling around France and Belgium with 43 illegal immigrants! Fortunately that matter is finally resolved and the relevant stamps are put in the pupil passports and we just make it to the train. The rest of the journey back to Swindon passes without hitch and I finally arrive home just before 9 pm. It has been a long day.*

*The big question with all school tours is: What do the pupils get from it? It is a tricky*

*question to answer. Unlike so much in education it isn't subjected to some process involving measuring outcomes...and thank goodness for that, as not everything can be assessed in such a way. I can't sit down with every pupil and try and gauge what they have gained from it. The impact will vary from individual to individual. For some this will just be another school trip, for some it maybe the start of a lifelong interest in the battlefields. There maybe be another Paul Reed (Paul, the well known guide and man behind "The Old Front Line" podcast, went on his first trip as a pupil back in the early 1980s) waiting to emerge, if not from this group, almost certainly from other school trips. Just judging by the questions and discussions I have had with some of the group the visit has made an impact and stimulated their interest.*

*Over the years working with school groups, both in my time as a teacher and in more recent times just being the battlefield guide, it is clear that these are valuable trips worth undertaking. I have known several examples of pupils who would go on trips on more than one occasion during their time at school, and of one pupil who went on 4 trips. I think it can be safely suggested that they were getting something from the experience.*

## **Richard Pursehouse has found a story to bring a smile to our faces:**

*Further to Peter Hart's comments about rats in trenches in his published works, I thought the below might be of interest:*

*From 'The Denstonian' Newsletter November 1916 (Denstone being a Public School in North Staffordshire, abbreviation 'O.D.' being Old Denstonian), an officer in the 1/5th North Staffs at Gommecourt 1 July 1916*

*"A huge rat, for some time pursued along a trench, finally escaped into "No Man's Land." The O.D. in question, filled with excitement, leapt over the parapet also. Not a shot was fired, and the animal was finally destroyed, amidst the cheers of both the British and the Saxons opposite. The deed accomplished, he walked back to his trench quite unmolested. "*

## **Another piece from Nick Baker on recent auctions – if he can't afford to buy 'em, he can at least tell us about 'em:**

***Land, Sea and Air Saleroom Battles.***

***At Sea – a Titanic Connection.***

*A recent sale by Noonan's, the London Auction House specialising in medals and militaria, included a remarkable lot which revealed that an individual being in the wrong place at the right time can considerably increase an item's value. These were the medals of Frank Winnold Prentice, a First World War group consisting of Military Cross, 1914-15 Star, and British War and Allied Victory Medals. Prentice joined the Army in 1914 and rose through*



*ranks in the Royal Engineers, Machine Gun Corps and finally Tank Corps, being*



*commissioned along the way. He was awarded the MC for his actions commanding a tank at Hamel in June 1918. In a quite remarkable action Prentice drove his MkV beyond the final objective (the Australian infantry having, for once, stopped there), passed through his own side's barrage, and marauded up and down the German line taking out machine guns. At one point he and a gunner left the tank to personally capture several Germans. His citation makes the specific point that Prentice 'pulled one out by a trench by his gas mask'. However, what placed a premium on Prentice's medals was not so much his MC exploits but his association with shipwrecks, and most notably that of the 'Titanic'.*

*Prentice was born in 1889 and before the war employed by the White Star Line in cross-Atlantic liners. He was an Assistant Storekeeper on the maiden voyage of the Titanic in 1912. After helping passengers into boats, Prentice ended up clinging to the rails of the poop deck (you know, along with Leonardo diCaprio and Kate Winslet) before sliding down the hull and clearing the propellers. Luckily, he was uninjured (although did almost freeze to death) and was picked up by a lifeboat and taken to New York aboard the Carpathia. Back in Britain Prentice joined the crew of the White Star Liner, Oceanic and a month after the Titanic disaster had the bizarre experience of being on board when it picked up a drifting Titanic lifeboat containing decomposing bodies. When war was declared the Oceanic was converted into an Armed Merchant Cruiser and sent to patrol between northern Scotland and the Faroes. Prentice remained on board as part of her crew. A few weeks later the Oceanic, in a feat of appalling navigation, ran onto a large (it had to be large to accommodate the huge ship) shallow reef off Shetland. Her bottom torn out, Oceanic settled onto the seabed and Frank Prentice once again found himself in a lifeboat. Shortly afterwards he joined the army. Prentice also served in the Second World War (although there were no WW2 medals in the sale).*

*Prentice lived until 1982 and as the Titanic's last but one surviving crewman was interviewed on several occasions. He bemoaned the fact that despite having served in two wars, "All anyone wants to know about is the Titanic". Indeed, it is interesting to consider that despite Prentice's medals having no direct link to the wreck his association with it turns them into 'Titanicabilia' and thus enter a different (and sometimes highly eccentric) field of collecting. Auction houses love this of course, and Prentice's group, estimated at £8,000 to £10,000, went for £24,000.*

### ***In the Air – 'Ephemera'***

*Two war medals, a British War and Allied Victory, were included in a lot recently sold at C&T Auctioneers in Kent. Although the main interest was in an associated group of 'ephemera' ('material culture' these days, surely!). This included, amongst other things, a collection of photographs of aircraft (several crashed), instruction manuals and a rare lead-weighted message streamer. Griffiths was a wartime pilot who survived several crashes including one that fortuitously brought him down just a few yards the 'right side' of the British lines (or, as Squadron Commander the Lord Flashheart famously put it, "That's a stroke of luck; though I'd landed sausage-side!"). A 'daredevil' he was once reprimanded for flying under the Tyne bridges. After the war Griffiths joined Armstrong-Whitworth in Coventry as an instructor and test pilot. He was killed whilst flying altitude trails in a prototype Siskin fighter on 20 October 1923. The inquest revealed, on the evidence of another pilot aloft at the time, that Griffiths had taken his aircraft to around 25,000 feet before descending to less than 100 when it 'side slipped' and crashed with fatal results. The collection, estimated at £900 to £1,200, sold for £2,200. One thing not mentioned in the auction publicity but of interest to the Taphologists amongst us (you know who you are) is Griffith's gravestone. Located in Bidston, a village on the Wirral, this includes an RAF badge and a tribute carved on a very high-quality stone. Griffith's father was a monumental mason and may have been involved in its production. According to a recent report the stone has been laid flat due to 'safety concerns'. Such treatment usually results in rapid deterioration.*

### ***On Land – Sold on the Hoof.***

*A land-based item that was recently sold, appropriately enough in Cheltenham, was dedicated to a dead Tommy. Indeed, it was part of a dead Tommy. Although before anyone gets too upset Tommy was a horse which, despite being named after the common British soldier, belonged to a decidedly less than common one. The item was a taxidermy horse's hoof with a mounted pocket watch, which originally belonged to Sir Hubert Gough. An inscription reads 'Tommy, a faithful friend from 1906 – 1916, died in France during The Great War, 1916'. Horse hoof items are not uncommon, with inkwells, snuff boxes, pin cushions and the like often turning up in shops and sales. Many, like this example, are inscribed in remembrance of the animal, a much more convenient memorial than stuffing the entire beast. Gough, as a Cavalryman, would no doubt have taken a great interest in his personal animals and Tommy appears to have been with him from his time as pre-war CinC of the 10<sup>th</sup> Lancers to commanding the Reserve Army on the Somme. The accompanying watch is fairly average and not inscribed, although if you think about it, if it did belong to Gough, probably represents just as poignant a piece of personal memorabilia.*



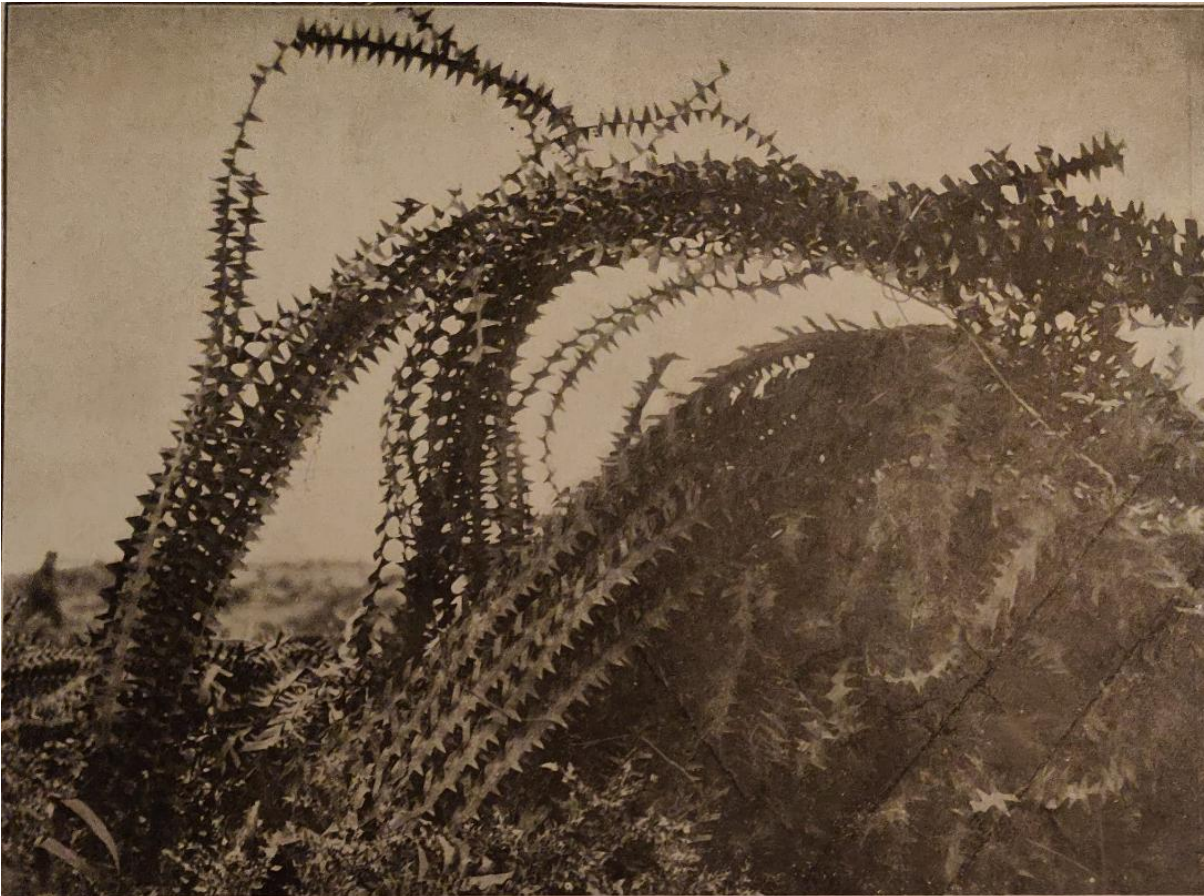
*Unfortunately, the auction house, concentrating on the hoof, provided no details. Provenance came via a descendant of Gough who also sold a sketchbook with drawings and paintings made in India by Gough's wife Harriet. The stand and watch were valued at an incredibly low £100 to £200 and were sold to a museum (we don't know which one) for £1500.*

Good grief:



Coins in the pocket of Optatius Boysens, a Belgian soldier of the Great War

**In case you ever wondered – THIS is barbed wire:**



WHAT THE TANKS HAD TO CRUSH: SOME GERMAN BARBED WIRE ENTANGLEMENTS, NEAR ARRAS.

(Official photograph taken on the British Western Front, in France, supplied by the Sport and General Press Agency, Ltd.)  
per Illustrations.

**CWGC “War Graves Week” is here again:**

[23rd/28th May - check HERE for details](#)

**And finally, thanks to Richard Pursehouse for this sobering story:**

*From The Times, April 8, 1923*

*Since the Armistice this country has spent £60,000,000 in its effort to cure men disabled in the war, and if the payment of pensions to any ex-Service men is being discontinued it is only because the medical service has been able to substitute restored health for monetary compensation. It will be many years, however, before the medical and surgical work of the Ministry of Pensions is complete.*

*Today, four and a half years after the Armistice, the Ministry is responsible for a daily average of 25,000 patients in hospital and for a daily average of 80,000 patients attending as outpatients at hospitals or clinics. In the past three years over a million cases of treatment have been given by the Ministry. So long as there is the smallest chance of improving a man's condition treatment is continued.*

*Investigation was recently made into a batch of 2,000 cases and it was found that 40 per cent had been receiving treatment of some kind from the Ministry for 18 months or longer. Many cases were gunshot wounds requiring orthopaedic treatment, others were tuberculosis and neurasthenia.*

*There is no work to which more time and anxious consideration is devoted than the treatment of men suffering from nerve or brain trouble. At present the Ministry owns 14 neurological hospitals and a large number of clinics, and it is claimed that as a result of the work there it has been possible to prevent many cases being certified and going into asylums.*

*In one neurological hospital devoted to the most serious cases 134 cases were treated last year. Only nine of them had eventually to be certified as insane, and of the remainder 63 were discharged as recovered, and 12 were transferred to other institutions, including some for industrial training. Between 1,500 and 1,600 cases pass through all the neurological hospitals in a quarter, and of these on average 20 per cent are discharged as fully recovered.*

*Neurological cases are also dealt with by means of outpatient clinics. It is now intended to carry the matter further with some of the most hopeful cases of ex-Service men actually certified as insane. It is felt that the experiment, whatever the outcome, is well worth making, and the transfer of men will begin about the middle of this month.*

## **Dates for your Diary**

- i. **Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> May – Walk Round Merridale Cemetery WW1 Graves led by Quintin Watt.** A Black Country Society event. There are over 100 Great War era burials in Wolverhampton's Merridale Cemetery.

Meet at the Cemetery gates in Jeffcock Road WV3 7AE at 2.00pm.

- ii. **Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> May - The 11th WFA President's Conference : '1913 Expectations Meet the Realities of War'**

Venue: Tally Ho!, Pershore Rd, Birmingham B5 7RN.

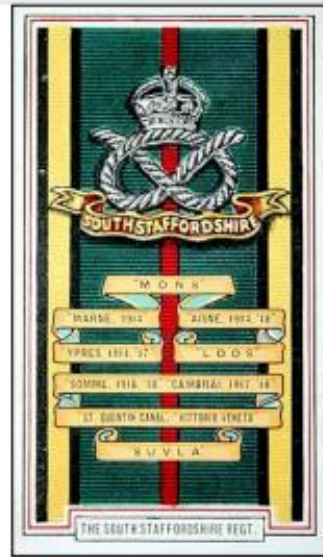
£35 inc. Lunch

Tickets [HERE](#)

- iii. **Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> May – Gallipoli and the wider Great War.** Venue: Staffordshire Regiment Museum, Whittington WS14 9PY. See hereunder:

# Gallipoli and the Wider Great War.

An event in conjunction with the



**Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2023**

**10.00am to 4.00pm**

A special day to remember the important theatres of the Great War, away from the Western Front.

Men from the Staffords served in Gallipoli, Mesopotamia, Persia and Italy. The war in these areas is often forgotten. Many Staffords were killed or wounded in these theatres. Lt. Col. Henderson was awarded a posthumous V.C. for his bravery in Mesopotamia.

The event will include

- *Displays on the involvement of the Staffords*
- *The trench will be re-configured to how it would have been in Turkey in 1915*
- *Free, bite-size talks on the wider war and the Staffords*
- *Re-enactors displaying uniforms and weapons of campaign Volunteers to answer questions on the campaign*
- *Quiz sheets and activities*

**Free entry to under 16's**

**Adults £6**

**For further details contact Ian Binnie [education@gallipoli-association.org](mailto:education@gallipoli-association.org)**

The Staffordshire Regiment Museum, DMS Whittington, Whittington, Staffordshire, WS14 9PY  
[www.staffordshireregimentmuseum.com](http://www.staffordshireregimentmuseum.com) 01543 434394

- iv. **Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> June – Clark Road goes to War by Chris Twygges**  
The story of 13 men from this road who served in the Great War  
Venue – The Wolverhampton Society, Tettenhall Wood Institute, Wood Rd,  
Tettenhall Wood, WV6 8NF. 19.00 for 19.30hrs. Modest admission charge  
applies.
- v. **Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September – Tudor Warfare Conference 2023** by Helion  
Books. Venue: Worcester Cathedral Learning Centre. £35.00 inc lunch.

Further details and how to buy tickets [HERE](#)

- vi. **Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> December – The Royal Warwickshire Regt 14/18 in books  
& cartoons** by Paul Jacques and David Vaux. A Midland Ancestors event.  
Venue: Birmingham & Midland Institute, 9 Margaret St, Birmingham B3 3BS.  
Free to attend.

Details [HERE](#)

**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**