

## Branch Newsletter – December 2023

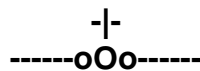
### Next Meeting:

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

Our speaker today is Mike Sheil: "Fields of Battle, Lands of Peace 1914-1918".



A talk based on Mike's photographic exhibition of the battlefields as they are today. It was viewed by 12 million people in 9 countries between 2014-2018.



### CHRISTMAS MEETING:

*65 folks have signed up for the buffet before the Christmas meeting. The buffet will commence at 1.00pm, so I suggest that you arrive from 12.30 onwards in order to sharpen your elbows.*

*If you're not taking part in the buffet, then the Christmas meeting will begin at 2.30pm as usual. We don't provide cake at this meeting. Andy.*

### **Annual General Meeting:**

*"The 41st AGM of the Wolverhampton Branch of the WFA will be held on Saturday 13th January 2024 at 2.30. It will be followed by the normal Branch meeting which is a talk by Chris Twiggs reflecting on his 40 years of battlefield tours.*

*The agenda and Treasurers report will be circulated nearer the meeting Bill Pinfold, Branch Secretary."*

### **Branch Tour to YPRES 2024 – Andy Johnson reports:**

*All places are taken, we are FULL! An amazing response, we're gratified and, as ever, will try to justify your faith in us.*

*This as a compliment to the many fine presenters in recent tours. Or, you are easily pleased. You should have all received your invoices from Dunwood and paid the deposit.*

**I am sure all of you attending the November Meeting would have been impressed with this marvellous cake. Mary Berry relegated to 2<sup>nd</sup> place...**



**Our inimitable Chairman Alan Angell says:** *The cake was made by Angela Caddick, wife of long time member Graham, especially for the meeting which was on 11th*

*November.*

*A cake which was crafted superbly and so appropriate for this time of remembrance.*

*Many thanks to Angela and Graham for their kindness on behalf of all our members.*

*A suitable donation to the fund for SSAFFA was made by one of our members, and Martyn Hale was asked to take the cake back to his school for the pupils to enjoy with the best wishes of Wolverhampton WFA branch.*

*A great result for everyone to accompany Ken's marvellous talk on the day.*

*Alan.*

**Thanks to Ron Cullen for this story about a casualty of the Battle of the Lys being finally laid to rest:**



MOD/CROWN/PA  
Lance Sergeant Robert Brand was buried at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Messines Ridge Cemetery in Belgium

Full story [HERE](#)

**John Scott & Mary Gough made it onto the Express & Star Website:**



Mary Gough and John Scott from the Wolverhampton Branch of the Western Front Association

**Loos British Cemetery extension:**



Remains were found during the construction of a new hospital at Lens, and more are expected as the new Canal du Nord project gets underway.

**Richard Pursehouse went to the opening night of the play about the Unknown Warrior:**



14 Branch members were in attendance, so it was well worth one of the cast visiting us to publicise it.

**Ron Cullen has shared this story with us of a CWGC Volunteer who also happens to be the head of a Premiership Rugby Union club:**

[Story HERE](#)

**David Whitehead found something interesting during a recent holiday:**

*A NEW FOREST SURPRISE*

*I expect some of our well travelled members will already be aware of what this missive is all about but some may not, so here goes.....*

*On holiday in the New Forest just a few weeks ago, my wife and I were driving from our base in Lyndhurst to Lymington and having just passed through Brockenhurst, my wife suddenly said that she had seen a sign for a CWGC cemetery.*

*We didn't investigate immediately as we were on our way to catch the ferry to the Isle of Wight but we went back the following day and discovered that the Church Lane site, during the First World War, was the location for No.1 New Zealand General Hospital and the adjacent military cemetery was the final resting place for the patients who died from their wounds.*

*If you ever find yourself in the area, it is well worth a visit, as is St Nicholas's Church which stands next to the cemetery. Directions – when leaving Brockenhurst towards Lymington, Church Lane is on the left just after you've gone over the level crossing. There is parking at the church and from the church a path leads to the cemetery.*

*More information can be found at: [this Link HERE:](#)*

*David Whitehead*

### **Richard Pursehouse visited the exhibition at Lichfield Cathedral which was publicised in the last Newsletter:**

*"In current Newsletter you mentioned the exhibition at Lichfield Cathedral and so mate and I popped over. It was an intriguing exhibition with a fair bit of info (in two languages). There was even a reference to Field Marshal Ernst Busch not having a headstone initially but getting one due to intervention from a Sunday Mercury journalist in 2012.*

*Richard"*



Especially for Nick and Andy:



## Dates for your Diary

- i. **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](#)
  
- ii. **Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024 – “The Poet and the Rogue: Wilfred Owen and Horatio Bottomley”** by Paul Norgate.  
Venue: Kidderminster Historical Society at the Museum of Carpet, Stour Vale Mill, Green St, Kidderminster DY10 1AZ (adjacent to Morrison’s).  
2.30pm. £4 admission  
  
[Kidderminster History Society programme](#)
  
- iii. **Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> March – “From Trams to Trenches – the men from Birmingham Tramways who died in the Great War”** by Doug Smith.  
Venue: Kidderminster Historical Society at the Museum of Carpet, Stour Vale Mill, Green St, Kidderminster DY10 1AZ (adjacent to Morrison’s).  
11.00am. £5 admission (inc. Cake!)

**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... No money will change hands, but you have a reasonable chance of your article being lifted by Head Office and reproduced in the Bulletin.

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