



frontline.



The newsletter of MK WFA, November 2023.



Our next talk is 'He Didn't Talk About It - Analysing Veterans' Silence' by Julian Walker 'He was in the war, but he never spoke about it'. An unwillingness to talk about the war, expressed in this familiar sentence, sums up its horror, stoicism, and inexplicability. As the culture of the war then and since has been so much a verbal culture, this notable absence of words needs to be considered. Was the silence engendered by the soldiers themselves, was there pressure on them to remain silent, or was there a drift into leaving it all behind? Considering trauma, censorship and social convention, Julian Walker asks why many soldiers were unwilling or unable to talk about their experience of World War One.

Julian is an artist, writer and educator, who works with the Learning Department at the British Library. His research-based art and writing practice explores language, social history, the nature of objects and engagement with the past. He is co-author of '*Trench Talk: Words of the First World War*'.

Coming up - November 11th, the WFA Remembrance ceremony at the Cenotaph, with a service at the Guards' Chapel afterwards, and on December 2nd is our visit to the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum, with a pub meal afterwards.

Please note, no talk in December, see back page for WFA MK diary.

Mentioned in Despatches



MK WFA Seminar. Our seminar took place on 14th October 2023 at Bletchley Masonic Centre. We certainly had some planning excitements before the day of the seminar with early and last-minute changes of speaker, worries about slow ticket sales and several other smaller issues, but in the end we can safely say, judging by the comments we received on the day, and the many complementary emails we received afterwards, that the day was a great success. The crux of the day were five renowned expert speakers presenting four talks that covered an exciting variety of aspects of the Great War.



Roy Larkin



Helen Frost

Our first speaker was Roy Larkin, who you may remember previously presented a talk to our branch on the logistics of the Western Front. Michael O'Brien, who in turn was a replacement for Major Charlie Barrett (called away on operations) was expected to give a talk entitled 'Gabriel D'Annunzio -The Pirate of Buccari' but was unable to attend. Fortunately, I had noticed on my Eventbrite information that Roy was one of the first people to purchase a ticket, so I knew he was coming. Therefore, I contacted him and said, "Hi Roy, you know that you are intending to have a peaceful and relaxing time at the seminar? Well.....". He had earlier sent a list of his new talks to us, and our choice of 'The Army Service Corps' proved to be a really great way to open the seminar. He was followed by Helen Frost, not on the list of WFA speakers, so our 'secret weapon'. She presented an amazing talk on 'The Women's Land Army in WW1', and also brought an excellent display that enhanced the entrance hall. Also giving attendees something to look at was Kevin's Vickers set up at the front of the hall, and at the back some of Anne's excellent display from the recent MK Museum event supported by some of my props. In the entrance hall alongside Helen's Land Army display was my trench 'reconstruction', only partly set up, I'm afraid, because I ran out of time with it and couldn't find all the bolts. Consequently, it sagged badly and gave a passable imitation of being hit by a 'Jack Johnson'. Don't suppose many people noticed!



Wonder why everyone was so well behaved?

After a superb buffet lunch organised by Anne, giving time for attendees to have a chat to old friends (and MK WFA did have a lot of friends there) look at the displays and purchase raffle tickets and new books brought from the speakers, or from the second-hand stall (Some people left with armfuls!) it was time for the 'second half'. Alexandra Churchill, in her indomitable style, gave a very informative talk on 'The Hejaz Railway', and she was followed by Peter Hart and Gary Bain giving a kind of double act 'Laugh or Cry: Life or Death in the Trenches', which gave an entertaining insight into the sometimes grim but essential humour that allowed the British Tommies to somehow mentally cope with the horrors of their surroundings. Five speakers and four talks, a variety of subjects, all differently and refreshingly presented. All that remained was to call the raffle and give heartfelt thanks on behalf of our branch to the speakers, but also especially to all those who attended and made the day such a success. (Even those who had purchased tickets but were unable to attend magnanimously turned down an offer of a refund, so we made a small profit in the end.) Thanks also need to go to Jim and the committee for all their hard work organising, promoting and setting up, as well as Sue and Lettie for providing vast and very welcome quantities of tea, coffee and biscuits throughout the day, Martin Passand for bringing his excellent collection of second-hand books, and sharing his profits with us, Kevin for bringing his stunning Vickers machine gun, and my friend Steve from the Masons, (who originally helped us find the venue, which proved to be perfect for our needs) and was also on hand all day providing us with help and support, and at the same time running a British Legion stall that fitted in perfectly with the surroundings and the day. And what a great day it turned out to be!





We Will Remember Them.



Personal commemorations from members of MK WFA for Remembrance Day

Private Richard Johnson, Essex Regiment/RAMC. Bob Birkett's uncle, his mother's brother. Survived.



Richard was born in 1896 in East London. His records show that in February 1913 he joined the Volunteer Militia-17th County of London Battalion (Poplar and Stepney Rifles). He was just 17 when he joined. He went on to serve in the Essex Regiment and the Royal Army Medical Corps. (Poplar was in Essex at that time). He served with the Essex Regiment in Egypt and Palestine and came home sometime in 1919. I was unable to find out more about him as the National Archive revealed no additional information on him and it is extremely likely that his service records were destroyed in the Blitz in WW2. Richard died in 1976.

Lance corporal James Suckling, The Border Regiment, killed in action 22nd March 1918. Eric Webb's great-uncle by marriage.

James Suckling (1887 - 1918) enlisted in the Border Regiment in 1905. He was a London lad, born and bred, and had attested in London, but at the time the Borders were short of recruits and he was one of several hundred London volunteers sent north to make up the numbers. After initial training he was assigned to 2nd Bn. and served for 2 years in South Africa. In 1905 the Battalion returned to the UK and on completion of his 7-years' service in 1912 he was discharged to the reserve.

At the outbreak of War in 1914 he was recalled to the colours. He re-joined 2nd Borders which became part of 20th Brigade, 7th Division. It landed at Zeebrugge on 6th October 1914 and continued on the Western Front in France and Flanders until November 1917 when it moved to Italy; here it remained until the War's end. However, James' army service eventually followed a different trajectory.

On 22nd October 1915 he married Lottie Constant in Wandsworth Registry Office whilst on leave, returning to the front soon afterwards. Sometime in 1916 or early 1917 he appears to have been wounded, then to have spent a lengthy period in the UK, on sick-leave and/or home service. During this period he fathered Eric's mother's cousin Bessie Suckling, born on 10th December 1917, his and Lottie's only child.

Meanwhile in November 1917 James had been drafted to 8th Bn., a New Army unit formed in 1914, also known as the Kendal Pals. He went on to serve again on the Western Front. Whether he had the opportunity to see his new baby daughter before his departure, or later on leave, is unknown. 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.

<<Letter in the possession of James' & Lottie's granddaughter, my 2nd cousin.

In the Field

3.4.18

Dear Mrs. Suckling,

It is with the deepest sympathy that I write to inform you of the death of your husband No. 8086 L/c Suckling J. He was killed by a German Sniper on the 22nd inst. I was his Platoon commander and shall miss him greatly for his example at all times was a credit to everybody in the Coy.

These things are hard to bear, but it will be some consolation to you to know that your husband died the death of a good and brave soldier.

You must realise that after all death is but the gateway to that higher life, which no doubt your husband fully realised. This being so try to comfort yourself knowing that he is in far happier surroundings where all trouble is a thing of the past.

Please believe that you have my very sincere sympathy and that of every officer and man in the Coy.

I am

Yours Sincerely

W.C. Preston 2nd Lieut

8 Bn The Border Regt

(2nd Lt. William Carter Preston was himself killed in action a week later, on 10th April 1918. Like James Suckling he has no known grave. He is commemorated on the Ploegsteert Memorial.)

Both of Hilary Webb's grandfathers served - one in the Royal Fusiliers, the other in the Royal Navy. The Fusilier was awarded the MM - as he always claimed, for getting the rum ration through!

Lance corporal John Boyd MacFarlan, A&S Highlanders, killed in action 19th September 1918. Stuart Macfarlan's great uncle.



Son of Donald MacFarlan of Barrhill Road, Gourock, a master blacksmith. John was educated at Gourock Central School and Greenock Academy, where he obtained an excellent record. He was an Aberdeen University student in Arts, 1908-12; MA, 1912, with honours in Classics, having taken concurrently the full course for teachers at the Training Centre. He was appointed to the staff of Cartsburn school, Greenock, in 1913, where he taught until he enlisted. John had three brothers, all in the army, and three sisters. He is listed on the Greenock High School Roll of Honour, and the St John's Memorial in Gourock.

John attested on December 10th, 1915, in the 5th Battalion Reserves, and joined the British Expeditionary Force on 22nd December 1917 with 12th Battalion, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.

Owing to family reasons, and having three brothers already in the army, John did not join up till 1917. He served for seven months at home and was sent to Salonika as a Lance corporal. A little more than a year later he was killed on the Bulgarian front, on 19th September 1918, in the attacks on Pip Ridge and Grand-Couronne. It was reported that his company was cut off from the rear, and that he and two others went back to establish communications - all being killed. He is buried in Dorian Military Cemetery.



After their strenuous and memorable campaign in Gallipoli the 5th Argylls, after the evacuation of the Peninsula had been carried out, were transported to Egypt for a well-earned rest. In the above photograph are a quintette of well-known "Terriers"—Messrs M'Kenzie, Gabriel Macfarlan, Kerr, James Macfarlan, and Campbell—perched on camels paying a visit to the pyramids.

The caption on the above photo taken in Egypt 28/14/16 reads - *'After their strenuous and memorable campaign in Gallipoli the 5th Argylls, after the evacuation of the Peninsula had been carried out, were transported to Egypt for a well-earned rest. In the above photograph are a 'quintette' of well-known 'Terriers' -Messrs M'Kenzie, Gabriel Macfarlan, Kerr, James Macfarlan, and Campbell - perched on camels paying a visit to the pyramids.'*

Corporal Gabriel Macfarlan, 1st/5th battalion Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. Stuart's great uncle. Survived.

Lived Gourrock. Volunteer from 1908. Photo above.

James Macfarlan, 1st/5th battalion Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. Stuart's great uncle. Survived.

Photo above. Still being researched, as is the third brother.

Private Philip Cook, East Yorks Regiment. Stuart's maternal grandfather. Survived.



'Pop' is standing first left in the photo above He joined the Lincolnshire regiment and then transferred to the East Yorks (The Hull Pals) as a lewis gunner. He was wounded in 1915 at Loos, 1916 at Albert and 1918 at Bullecourt. There is a photo of him lying in a hospital bed in Wharnccliffe VAD hospital in Sheffield in 1916, presumably recovering from his injury at Albert. On 28th March 1918, during fighting at Grevillers, the East Yorks were withdrawing. Pop was shot in the leg, and unable to retire, elected to cover his comrades' retreat by pinning down the approaching Germans with his lewis gun. Running out of ammunition, and fearing retribution from the Germans, he crawled as far away from his gun as possible. Taken prisoner, he spent some time in a German hospital and the rest of the war as a POW. In the Second World War he was an Air Raid Warden.

4783 Private James Ross Duperouzel, 51st Battalion, AIF KIA 14/16 August 1916 (Bill Duperouzel's uncle)

James Ross Duperouzel was born in July 1897 and grew up on the family farm in Western Australia, In December 1915, he enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force at Perth. Due to his young age, he got his parents' consent to enlist for active service overseas. On 1 April 1916, Duperouzel embarked from the port of Fremantle on board the troopship Ulysses. He disembarked in Egypt, and after training he sailed for France and arrived at Marseilles in June. Here Duperouzel joined the 51st Battalion, and during July, his battalion trained and marched toward the Somme front.



Duperouzel's battalion was part of the 1st Anzac Corps and was given the task of breaking through the German lines and driving a wedge behind the German salient there. Their objective was taking Mouquet Farm, at Pozieres. On the night of 13 August 1916, Jim's battalion moved into position to the east of Mouquet Farm. The following day, despite a heavy Allied artillery barrage, four German machine-guns were still firing when the first men leapt out of the trenches and into no man's land. The Germans shelled the Australian lines heavily. At some point between 14 and 16 August 1916, Duperouzel was killed in action. He was 19 years old. Duperouzel's remains were never identified. His name is inscribed on the Australian National Memorial at Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery in France.



Norman, Percy, Albert Ernest Short



Gary at Norman's grave at Vermelles British Cemetery.

Private Albert Ernest Short, Hertfordshire Regiment, killed in action 13th November 1916, Gary's great uncle.

Private Albert Ernest Short, service no 5547, was the first of the three brothers to lose their lives in WW1. Recorded as enlisting in Hertford into the 1st Battalion Hertfordshire Regiment During 1916 the regiment formed part of 118th Brigade and 39th Division. This Division became heavily engaged in the battles of the Somme, and in October attacked the German positions overlooking the river Ancre. On 13th November, the Hertfordshires marched to the Schwaben Redoubt and mounted a successful attack just before dawn. Seven of their officers were wounded, twenty-five other ranks killed or missing and one hundred and fifteen other ranks were wounded. Private Albert Short was killed. He has no known grave and is commemorated on the Thiepval memorial, panel and face 12C.

Private Norman Short, 8th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers, killed in action 18th March 1916 Gary's great uncle.

One of the three brothers of Gary's grandfather who were killed in action in WW1, Norman was in the 8th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers. Recorded as enlisting in Marylebone, London, he entered service in France on 1st June 1915. 8th Battalion Royal Fusiliers was part of 36th Brigade, 12th (Eastern) Division. In late September and early October 1915 the Division was engaged in the battle of Loos. They remained in this area of the front in early 1916 and 36th Brigade was involved in an attack on the Hohenzollern Redoubt in early March. This was followed by heavy fighting and Private Short was killed in action on 18th March 1916, the second of the brothers to die in action, and is interred in Vermelles British Cemetery.

Private Percy Short (6th/7th Bn Royal Scots Fusiliers) who died in action on 18th April 1918 aged 19. (Great Uncle of Gary Short).

Son of Mrs Alice Short of 48, Church Lane, Rickmansworth, Herts, the youngest of three brothers who lost their lives in the Great War. In 1911 Percy, aged 12, lived with his parents, William and Alice and his seven siblings at 1 Pretoria Cottages, Church Lane, Mill End. William was a brewer's labourer. Percy was born on 20 July 1898 and baptised at St Peter's Mill End on 21 September 1898. He attended St Peter's school. William was born in Chalfont, Bucks and Alice in the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire. The family had also lived in Harefield and West Hyde. Recorded as enlisting in Hertford, Private Percy Short joined the Northumberland fusiliers before transferring to the 6th/7th Royal Scots Fusiliers (Pioneers) (59th Div). During March 1918, Percy's battalion had been continuously in the front line attempting to resist the German Spring Offensive near Vaulx-Vraucourt, East of Bapaume. At the beginning of April the battalion moved to Ypres and relieved the 18th Middlesex Pioneers at Middlesex Camp. They mounted working parties to repair shell damage to infrastructure such as railway tracks. By 15 April the battalion was defending the front line near Bailleul. On 17 April 100 rifles from 'A' company were placed at the disposal of 100th Infantry Brigade for a counter-attack which took place that night. There were 20 casualties, of which Percy was most likely one. Percy is commemorated on the Ploegsteert Memorial, panel 4. The army paid his parents £36 2s 8d after his death including a war gratuity of £16 10s.

John Charles Boon, MGC killed in action 16th Nov.1916. George Mabey's relative by marriage.

John Charles Boon (below) Machine Gun Corps. From Mount Pleasant House, Aspley. He originally joined the London Rifle Brigade along with his cousin, the writer Henry Williamson, a relative by marriage of the Turney family. (Williamson told of his extensive war experiences in 'The Wet

Flanders Plain (1929); *The Patriot's Progress* (1930) and in many of his books in the semi-autobiographical 15-book series '*A Chronicle of Ancient Sunlight*' (1951-1969). William survived the war to eventually write '*Tarka the Otter*', but his cousin John sadly did not. He was killed in action 16th November 1916 and is buried in the Frankfurt Trench Cemetery in Beaumont Hamel.



An interesting picture of Charlie Boon and Henry Williamson taken in the back garden of Mount House, Aspley Guise in happier times circa 1908. Anyone for Croquet?

Private Harry Hardy, Canadian Infantry, killed in action 11th Sept. 1916. George's relative.



Harry Hardy, picture taken in a Studio, Victoria, Vancouver Island, B C, Canada, training to be a Master Baker. He lied about his age to enlist in the Canadian Infantry. George's grandfather, his older brother, went mad when he found out, telling him he would soon be shipped out to the Western Front and probably end up dead. Unfortunately, exactly what came to pass! His grave is in Courecele British Cemetery. He was 22 years old.

Petty Officer George Ernest Morgan, Royal Navy, Hilary Webb's paternal grandfather. Survived.

George Ernest Morgan (1896 - 1955) served in the Royal Navy from 1912 through the Great War until 1927, then re-joined - serving at shore establishments - during WW2. So, his was a naval career through and through - and indeed one of Hilary's sisters became a Wren.

So far as George Ernest's career record is decipherable, he served initially 'aboard' HMS Impregnable (a training establishment at Devonport) as a 'Boy II' then as 'Boy telegraphist' before going to sea aboard HMS Ajax, a dreadnought battleship, later in 1912. He continued on Ajax until April 1916, rising to Leading Telegraphist, when he transferred to HMS Speedwell, built 1888-90 as a torpedo gunboat, and in 1908 converted to a minesweeper, (apparently based at Scapa) so that he missed Jutland. (Family tradition is strong that George Ernest was 'at Jutland'. Eric can discover next to nothing of Speedwell's wartime deployment, she wins no mention in the Official History nor in any account of Jutland he can find. Eric supposes it is plausible that - along with a host of other 'small fry' - she accompanied the Grand Fleet southwards on 31st May 1916 as something in the nature of a 'flank guard' - and indeed to sweep for mines - or joined in later as the battle progressed). From Speedwell he transferred in July 1916 to HMS Neptune, another dreadnought, then in August 1916 back to Ajax, on which he now remained until July 1917 when he transferred briefly to HMS Blake, a semi-obsolete armoured cruiser. He was back on Ajax later that month and in August 1918 he won promotion as Assistant Petty Officer- Telegraphy. The following month he transferred to HMS King George V - yet another dreadnought - then February - April 1919 he was on 'HMS Victory': not Nelson's old flagship, but at Crystal Palace which was known as such (properly as HMS Victory VI) and used as a naval training establishment for the duration. Further service followed, afloat and ashore, by now as a full P.O. He took retirement - for the time being - in January 1927. Come the autumn of 1939 the England & Wales Register, drawn up early in WW2, lists him as: 'Petty Officer Telegraphist, R/N Shore W/T Stn. Whitehall Admin.'

From further evidence uncovered recently, following his apparent 'retirement' from naval service in 1927 - perhaps merely from seagoing service, or perhaps he quickly re-joined - George Ernest continued as a PO Telecommunications, shore-based in London save for a brief period at Devonport in 1938, until his final discharge in November 1946 - although he had drawn a pension in 1936. During this period, no later than 1941, he was promoted CPO (Chief Petty Officer). Family tradition, somewhat supported by the England & Wales Register, is that during the War he served at the Admiralty building in Whitehall. (He must therefore have handled - or supervised the handling of - some notably historic transmissions!) His employment post-war is unknown. He died of a heart attack on his bus to work aged 59, a few months after Hilary was born.

Serjeant Frederick Arthur Rawlin MM, Royal Fusiliers, Hilary's maternal grandfather. Survived.

Frederick Arthur Rawlin (1895 - 1971) served in the Royal Fusiliers - variously in 10th, 23rd and 32nd Bns. He saw service on the Western Front and in Italy, was wounded - but not severely - and won the MM 'for getting the rum ration through' as already described. Although his Army records were amongst those destroyed during WW2, his medal cards survive. These reveal that in the course of his service he attained the rank of Serjeant. He was awarded the British War Medal and Victory Medal but not the 1914-15 Star, so he was clearly not a pre-War regular nor - probably - an early volunteer. Award of the Military Medal is also documented (and indeed, one of his great-grandsons has the medal itself) but with no date and, as is common, no citation is to be found. Family tradition is that he fought on the Somme, at 'Passchendaele' (3rd Ypres) and - following his return from Italy - in the 'Final Push'.

Private Matthew Earnest Varty, Leicester Regiment. Kevin Varty's Paternal Great Grandfather. Survived.



Matthew Earnest Varty joined the Leicester Regiment in 1917 aged 40. He served in France as a Private and was wounded in 1918. Survived the war and is the man in the background of the photograph with his dog Bess being held by a very young Kevin.

Private George Adkin, MGC. Kevin's Maternal Grandfather. Survived.

Joined the Machine Gun Corps in 1916. Served as a Private in Italy and Mesopotamia. He survived the war and is holding Kevin in the photograph on the right.

Private Fred Johnson, Leicestershire Regiment killed in action 14th July 1916. Maternal Grandmother's first husband.



Joined Leicestershire Regiment, 9th Battalion as a private in 1915, service number 15047. Killed at the Somme, 14th July 1916. No known grave and is listed on the Thiepval Monument.



Sergeant John Barker, known as Jack. Leicestershire Regiment, died of wounds 23rd Oct.1916. Great Uncle.

Joined the Leicestershire Regiment, 9th Battalion as a Private in 1915, service number 15042. Promoted to Sergeant in 1916, wounded at the Somme and died of his wounds on the 23rd October 1916. He is buried in Castle Donington Cemetery.

Private Fred Barker, Leicestershire Regiment, killed in action 14th July 1916. Great Uncle.

Joined the Leicestershire Regiment, 9th Battalion as a Private in 1915, service number 15045. Killed at Trones Wood, 14th July 1916 and is buried in Serre Road No 2 Cemetery.

Private Everard Barker, Leicestershire Regiment, killed in action 25th Sept. 1916. Great Cousin.

Joined the Leicestershire Regiment, 8th Battalion as a Private in 1915, service number 15140. Killed at the Somme on the 25th September 1916. He has no known grave and is listed on the Thiepval Monument.

(Looking at the service numbers for the Barkers and Fred Johnson would suggest that they all joined together and all died close to each other.)

Lance Corporal A A Matthews, Gloucestershire Regiment, died of wounds 23rd October 1917. Glyn Wood's great uncle.

On this day, 23rd October 1917, Lance Corporal Arthur A. Matthews, 16431, 14th Battn. Gloucestershire Regiment, died of wounds at Dozinghem CCS, near Poperinge, Belgium, aged 23 years. Second son of Alfred and Lydia Matthews of White Hart Road, Cinderford Bridge, Ruspidge, Arthur was regular in attendance at Cinderford Bridge Wesleyan Chapel, a member of the Sunday School, Band of Hope, and Independent Order of Rechabites. He was also an industrious student at the mining classes, besides being a prominent member of the White Rose football and cricket teams. Previous to joining the colours he was employed at Lightmore Colliery as a collier. Arthur enlisted in Cinderford in December, 1914, going on to serve with the 1st, 8th and 14th Battns. Gloucestershire Regiment, landing in France on 18th July 1915.

Arthur was wounded on July 23rd, 1916, during the attack on the German Switch Line trenches between High Wood and Martinpuich, Somme. He returned to England and remained there convalescing for five months, before returning again to the front.

On 22nd October 1917, Arthur's 23rd birthday, the 14th Gloucesters, along with the French, the 16th Cheshires and 15th Sherwood Foresters, took part in an attack on Houthulst Forest, Flanders. It was during this action that Arthur was mortally wounded. The following letter was received by his mother.

Dear Mrs. Matthews,

I deeply regret to have to say that your dear son, Lance-Corpl. A. A. Matthews, of the Gloucesters, passed away in this hospital on October 23rd. I conducted his burial service at our cemetery attached to these hospitals yesterday. It is a quiet spot and well looked after. Your son nobly gave his life for others. May the God of all consolation comfort you and all dear to your son in your great sorrow, and ever guide and guard you all.

Yours in sympathy.

P. J. Roberts, Chaplain.

Another letter received by his parents reads

Dear Mrs. Matthews,

I have great regret in writing to confirm the sad news of the death of your son, 16431 Lance-Corporal. A. A. Matthews, in this hospital on the 23rd. He was admitted on October 22nd so severely wounded in the chest that there was no chance of his recovery, and so gradually became weaker and passed away peacefully on the following day. Everything possible was done for him, and he did not suffer much pain. He was quite conscious but never seemed to realise how ill he was. All his personal effects will be returned to you later through the War Office.

With sincere sympathy, I am, yours truly, C. Mcarthy, sister-in-charge.

Arthur is buried at Dozinghem Military Cemetery, Westvleteran, Poperinge, Belgium, and is also commemorated on his parent's gravestone in St. John's churchyard, Cinderford, although the inscription incorrectly reads 'Fell in France.

Corporal Thomas Richard Fewell, Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, Killed in action 28th July 1916. Sue Macfarlan's great uncle.

Thomas had enlisted at Chelmsford and served in the 1st Battalion of the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, a regular army infantry unit which was in Ireland at the outbreak of the war, and was initially part of 14th Brigade, then the 95th Brigade, in the 5th Division. As part of the regular army Thomas landed in France on 21st August 1914, within three weeks of the outbreak of war.

He married Sarah Anne Rusk in Falmouth in 1915, presumably while home on leave.

His battalion participated in the Battle of the Somme in France - on 14th July 1916 it marched from Ivery to Candas. The following day it moved to Toutencourte, then Bresle arriving to the south of Becordel-Becourt on 17th July 1916. Two days later the battalion was located at forward positions in a sunken road leading to High Wood near Longueval, having arrived via Fricourt, Mametz and Montauban. Six days later the battalion went on the offensive but was forced to retire to Pont Street by counter attacks. The battalion was relieved and moved to Happy Valley. On 28th July 1916 Thomas' battalion moved to Longueval and it was on that day that he was killed in action while serving as Corporal 8970. He was aged 25. Thomas has no known grave and is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial.

Serjeant Charles William Fewell MM, (brother of Thomas) MGC, killed in action 28th Jan. 1918

Charles lived at Chelmsford and enlisted at Warley. serving as 9470 in the Essex Regiment. The Supplement to the London Gazette dated 28th January 1918 announced the award of his Military Medal. He was killed in action on 8th January 1918 while serving as Serjeant 9285 in the 148th Company of the Machine Gun Corps (Infantry). He was aged 26. He is buried at Belgian Battery Corner Cemetery, Ypres, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium

On 15th February 1918 the Essex Weekly News carried the following report:

"Sergt. C. Fewell, Essex Regt., of Upper Bridge-rd., Chelmsford, and formerly employed at the office of Mr. J. Dutton, Tindal-st., Chelmsford, has been killed by a shell which blew in his dug-out which he and an officer were occupying beside the machine guns.

Capt. J. S Husband, writing to Mrs. Fewell, says:

'Men eager to help at once started to dig the unfortunate officer and sergeant out. We got your husband free as soon as possible, but he was past all help. The shock of the explosion and the crushing which he received rendered him unconscious from the first. Everyone in the Company mourns his loss, for he was an excellent soldier and companion. When he joined my Company I at once recognised in him a non-commissioned officer whose efficiency and ability were much above the average. It is just about seven weeks ago that I had the pleasure of recommending him for a commission. To have had him with me as an officer would have been a great pleasure to me.

The G.O. commanding the Brigade expressed his regret at the death of so gallant and promising a soldier, for he had forwarded his commission papers with his recommendation. I cannot tell you how much I regret his loss, but to me he was the ideal of sergeants, efficient in instruction, patient with difficult men, gallant and resourceful in the field. I was proud to recommend him for the Military Medal for his prompt action when his officer had been killed during an engagement not far from the scene of his gallantry where he fell.'

Deceased is the second son of his parents have lost in the war, while the father and three sons are serving. (Their father served with the Royal Engineers during the war.)



**Private Tom Stanley Phillipson (Cheshire Regiment) - survived
(Anne McIntyre's grandfather)**

Having a hard life as a labourer on his uncle's farm, life in the army was an attractive proposition. On enlisting he lied about his age in order to serve abroad, and having rarely been out of his home town of Burnley, being sent to training camp in Wales (Kinmel Camp) was thrilling. He served in the Cheshires (with a spell in the KSLI) in the Middle East and Belgium where he had a close brush with death when he popped his head over the parapet of the trench and felt a sniper's bullet whizz past his ear! In World War 2, he served in the Home Guard.



L/Cpl Wilbert Devine (2nd Bn E Lancs) Killed in Action 24th April 1918, aged 22. (Great-uncle of Anne McIntyre)

He lost his life in the battle of Villers-Bretonneux. On the 23rd April 1918, the German attacked and captured the village. The Allied troops were positioned to the south and east of the village and the German attack reached them in the early morning of the 24th. It started with a short artillery bombardment with mustard gas and high explosive shells which resulted in the soldiers having to wear gas masks for two hours. The attack was supported by German A7V tanks and this resulted in the first ever tank vs tank battle between 3 German A7V tanks and 3 British MkIV tanks.

Wilbert was buried initially at Chalk Lane Cemetery near Villers-Bretonneux and later moved to Adelaide Cemetery, Villers-Bretonneux.



Trooper Richard Francis Rawson (Household Cavalry) Killed in Action 13th May 1917 aged 26. (Great-uncle of Anne McIntyre)

Dick landed in France on 9th November 1916 (on his first wedding anniversary). By April 1917, the regiment was fighting in the Battle of Arras and was in the centre of the First Battle of the Scarpe to capture Vimy Ridge. Twelve tunnels were built leading up to the frontline through which 24000 men crawled to the battlefield and the British lines moved 3 kilometres forward. Three days of heavy snowfall brought action to a halt. In another attempt to advance (Third Battle of the Scarpe) on the 3rd May, Dick was killed in action. His body was never recovered, and he is commemorated on the Arras memorial.

Richard Rawson (butcher) and his wife



Private Fred Taylor (Border Regiment) Killed in Action 1st July 1916 aged 21 (Anne McIntyre's grandfather's cousin)

Fred enlisted with The Border Regiment in December 1915. He arrived at the Somme battlefield in March 1916 near to Beaumont Hamel. At 7:20 am on the first day of the Battle of the Somme an underground mine at Hawthorn Ridge, exploded. The force of 40,000 lbs. of explosives sent dirt and debris high into the air. Ten minutes later, at 7:30am the bombardment of German positions ceased. These alerted the Germans that an attack was soon to take place. The British had forfeited the advantage of surprise and the Germans immediately commenced their own artillery barrage over British lines and No Man's Land. Many of the British troops were cut down before they got

anywhere near the German Front Line. Over 19,000 men lost their lives that day - Fred Taylor was just one of them.

Second Lieutenant Henry Ainscough Border Regiment died of wounds while a POW 13th April 1918 aged 22. Anne's relative.

Henry Ainscough was born in Chorley, Lancashire on 19th May 1895 to Henry and Sarah (nee Emmett) Ainscough, the third of 5 children. His father and grandfather were boot and shoemakers in Chorley, however Henry didn't follow the trade and became an accounts clerk.



On enlisting he went into the Army Service Corps as a driver in the Horse Transport section responsible for moving horses around - an odd choice for an Accounts Clerk! - later moving to the 6th Border Regiment as a Second Lieutenant and transferring to the 1st Borders in February 1918. He was taking part in the Battle of the Lys, part of the German Spring Offensive when on 11th April 1918 Field Marshall Haig made his famous announcement :
"There is no other course open to us but to fight it out ! Every position must be held to the last man: there must be no retirement. With our backs to the wall and believing in the justice of our cause, each one of us must

fight on to the end"

That day, around Doulieu ,fighting was intense for Henry Ainscough's battalion and by mid-afternoon while other companies were withdrawing, two platoons of Henry's company could not be extricated and were last seen surrounded but still fighting. Henry was listed as 'Missing' - he was wounded and taken as a prisoner of war, dying two days later from his wounds aged 22. He is commemorated on the Ploegsteert Memorial and also on the family gravestone and on the War memorial in St Lawrence Church, Chorley.

On a visit to Ypres, we detoured to Ploegsteert to see the memorial - and Albert French's grave of course!

Levi Sharples Manchester Regiment died of wounds 15th October 1917 aged 37. Anne's relative.



Levi Sharples was born in Oswaldtwistle on 14th November 1880 to David and Mary (nee Hatch) Sharples, the ninth of 10 children. They lived in Brindle. His father though the son of a farmer, worked in the local quarry until around 1890 when he started to farm and Levi looked after the horses on the farm. In 1912, aged 31, Levi married Clara Turner and they had a daughter, Elsie in 1914. He was now working in the quarry alongside his father.

On enlisting on 6th December 1916 he went into the 21st Manchester Regiment.

At Passchendaele in the Third Battle of Ypres, on 4th October 1917, the

Manchesters' target was to attack the hamlet of Nordenhoek on the Broodseinde Ridge. They climbed up from Polygon Wood in heavy rain behind a creeping barrage but were under constant shell-fire. The objective was achieved but at cost for the battalion - 40 dead and 160 wounded with 19 men missing. Levi was amongst the wounded in this attack and was taken to a dressing station in a ruined farm near Wieltje on the Broodseinde Road. He was moved to the 1st Australian Hospital in Rouen where he died from his wounds on 15th October 1917 aged 37. Levi Sharples is buried in St Sever Cemetery extension. He is also commemorated on the war memorials in Brindle and Heapey and also on his wife's family gravestone (though it is said that on hearing of his death, his widow, Clara, cut his head off all photos in the house).

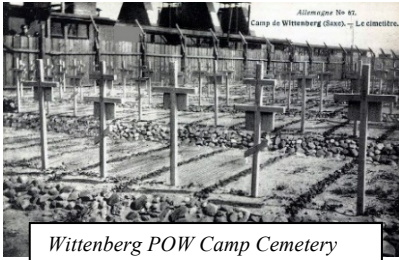


By chance, we had a holiday near Rouen a couple of years ago and I was able to visit Levi's grave. A distant relative became more real.

Nathan Wignall Carey East Lancs Regiment died of wounds as a POW 3rd June 1918 aged 25. Anne's relative.

Nathan Wignall Carey was born in Withnell, Lancashire in 1893 to Patrick and Elizabeth (née Wignall) Carey, the younger of 2 children. His father, a cotton spinner, was from London, the son of a professional soldier. Nathan's mother died in 1907 when he was 14 and his father re-married three years later. His sister died in 1914, having been married just six months. Nathan worked as a labourer in the weaving department of Abbey Mill in Withnell where his father was a spinner.

In 1916 Nathan married a local girl, Elsie May Ashmore, at Brinscall Wesleyan Chapel. Soon after his marriage, Nathan joined the 1/4 Bn East Lancs Regiment and was sent overseas.



He fought at Passchendaele and in France along the Western Front. During the Spring Offensive in March 1918 there was a heavy bombardment near Hargicourt where Nathan was severely wounded and later taken prisoner in Soyécourt. Among many injuries he sustained, his shattered arm had to be amputated. He was held in Wittenberg POW Camp in Saxony but in the unsanitary conditions he succumbed to his wounds and died on 3rd June 1918 aged 25. Nathan was initially buried in the Wittenberg prisoner of war cemetery but

after the war was brought to Berlin South-Western Cemetery.

Nathan is commemorated on the family grave in Withnell, on the War Memorial in Abbey Village, Chorley and the Brinscall Chapel War Memorial.

I visited Berlin South-Western Cemetery earlier this year - the British War cemetery is within the communal cemetery full of gothic-style memorials amidst dense woodland! A good place for a Halloween party I felt.

Richard Phillipson Cheshire Regiment died of wounds in the 62nd CCS 21st October 1918 aged 22.

Sidney Phillipson Royal Fusiliers died of wounds in the 45th CCS 27th October 1918 aged 19.

Anne's 6xGreat Grandfather's 4xGreat Grandsons ! (5th cousins twice removed, I'm told)

Richard was born in 1896 and Sidney in 1899, sons of James and Susannah (nee Hobson) of 9, Croft St, Preston. James and Susannah had 11 children but 6 of these died in infancy so Richard and Sidney grew up in a family of 5 boys. Their father was a gas meter inspector. By 1911 the family was living at 5 Croft St Preston and Richard was working as a tenter (tending a frame for stretching cloth) in the weaving mills while Sidney was still at school.

When Richard enlisted he joined the 15th Cheshire Regiment and rose to the rank of Sergeant. While on leave in the summer of 1918, Richard married Lily Brown in Preston but returning to the front, just a few weeks later, he was wounded during the Battle of Courtrai and Richard died of wounds in the 62nd Casualty Clearing Station in the railway sidings at Remi on 21st October 1918, only three weeks before the end of the war. His daughter, Edith, was born the following February, never knowing her father. Richard's widow, Lily, did not remarry until 1951 when she married Alfred Woods. Richard's daughter Edith, married Ronald Crook in 1940 and died in 1953.

Sadly, Richard's brother Sidney died six days after Richard.

WILL.
In the event of my death I give all of my property to my mother.
Mrs. Susanah Thilly
5. Croft St.
Preston
Signature *S. Phillipson*
Rank and Regiment *Pls. R.F.*
Date *1st April 1918.*

Sidney had joined the 24th Royal Fusiliers and went overseas in 1918. In October 1918, with German forces retreating, the focus was on steadily recapturing French villages. In the Battle of the Selle, the 24th Royal Fusiliers captured the village of Vertain on October 23rd taking 250 prisoners and a significant amount of artillery and it seems likely Sidney was wounded during this operation. He was transferred to the 45th Casualty Clearing Station where he died on October 27th. He is buried in Awoingt British Cemetery near Cambrai.

It is probable that the older two brothers, Robert and Harry, also fought in the war and survived the experience as they, along with a younger brother, John, went on to marry and have families.

Coming back from Ypres we visited Richard's grave but have not yet been to Sidney's.

Edmund Phillipson HMS Bittern drowned after collision 4th April 1918 aged 27. Anne's grandfather's cousin.

Edmund was born at 58 Elmsley St in Preston on 20 June 1892, the son of Richard and Sarah Ann Phillipson, the youngest of 9 children. His father was a carter. Of his eight siblings, five emigrated to Australia with their families between 1911 and 1918.

Edmund joined the Royal Navy on 26th November 1910 when his occupation was listed as plumber. In the 1911 census, he was listed as a stoker on HMS *Sentinel* which was part of the fleet for coastal defence.

Edmund married Annie Whiteside at St Thomas Church, Preston in 1914. He was at this time serving as a stoker on HMS Cornwall in Plymouth. Their only child, John was born in 1916 although Annie went on to have another son, Robert, in 1922, four years after Edmund's death.

Edmund served as a stoker (he rose to the rank of Stoker 1st Class). Stokers kept the ship's engines running - living in a temperature of 150 degrees, in an atmosphere full of coal dust, with the furnaces roaring, in a rolling and pitching vessel, knowing that you were under the water line and that you could be attacked at any moment.

In February 1917 he was assigned to *HMS Bittern* which was undertaking convoy escorts and defensive patrol duty in and around the English Channel. On 4 April 1918, *Bittern*, under the command of Lieutenant R.N.R. James H. Short, was involved in a collision with SS *Kenilworth* off the Isle of Portland in thick fog. The destroyer was overwhelmed and sank quickly with the loss of all hands. Edmund Phillipson was amongst those drowned and his body was never recovered.

A Court of Inquiry found negligence on the part of the master of SS *Kenilworth*. His instructions had been to hug the coast as closely as possible from Portland Bill to Start Point. Instead he headed straight across, showing no lights nor sounding for fog. At 0315 the *Kenilworth* saw a red light and a ship 'small and low down' at the moment of impact.

Edmund Phillipson is commemorated on the Plymouth Naval Memorial Panel 28 and is recorded on the Roll of Honour in the Harris Library in Preston.

As a postscript to this, last month in Preston, I met Edmund's descendants for the first-time - his grandson (now 81), great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren. Amazing experience!



A Trip to Stow Maries, part 3

In the last two 'Frontlines' we reported a visit to the iconic and unique Stow Maries airfield in Maldon, Essex, an operational base for the RFC/RAF against Zeppelin and Gotha raids on England during the First World War. Here is part three continuing a quick look at some of the vehicles and aircraft that are based there.



Sopwith Tabloid, with cooper bombs in foreground.

Built between 1976 and 1980 using original drawings from BA's Kingston on Thames plant by engineer Don Cashmore, the Tabloid took 2,400 hours to build, and first flew in 1980. It flew in displays around Britain and was given a more modern engine, and the original wing warping arrangement was replaced with ailerons, to improve handling and safety. After nearly 67 flying hours and 134 flights it unfortunately was seriously damaged in a landing accident. Cashmore then rebuilt the Tabloid, converting it back to wing-warping configuration, re-covering it, and making provision for the installation of a rotary engine. It was purchased by the RAF Museum during March 1983 and delivered to Cardington, where an 80hp Gnome rotary and an original propeller were fitted. The aeroplane went on display at Hendon in November 1983, before going back to Cardington for a partial re-covering and corrections to the markings. It was finished as Tabloid serial 168 of the Royal Flying Corps, flown by Royal Naval Air Service pilot Flt Lt Reginald L. G. Marix alongside one other Tabloid during a bombing raid on the Zeppelin sheds at Düsseldorf on 8 October 1914. They destroyed the newly constructed Zeppelin LZ25 with their combined total of four 12lb bombs. On the return flight to its base at Antwerp the Tabloid ran out of fuel, Marix making a forced landing near the city before walking back to his airfield.

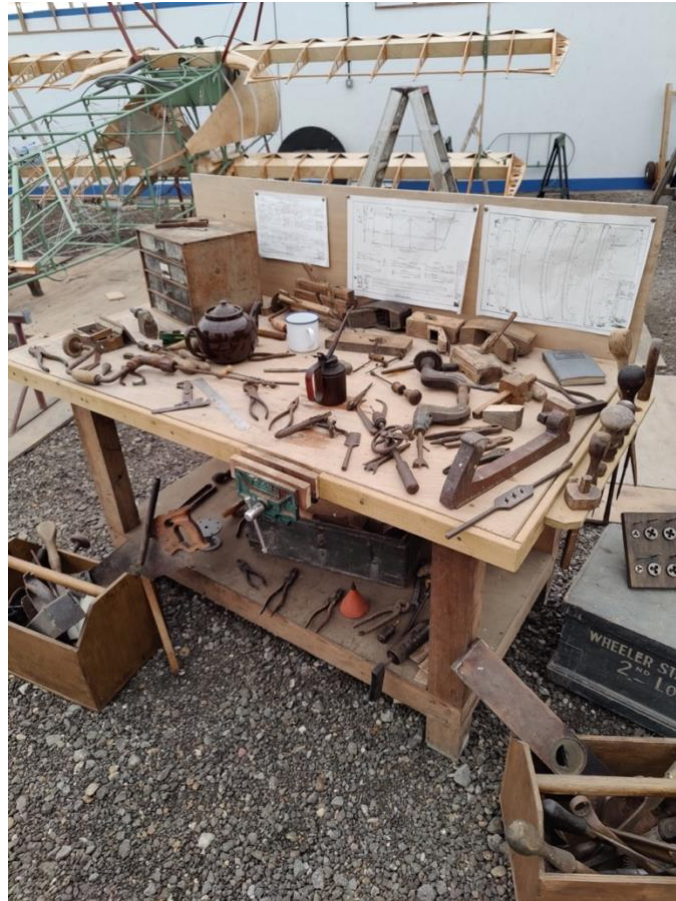
During 1990 the replica Tabloid returned to Hendon for exhibition in the Bomber Command Hall, until being moved into the Grahame-White Hangar in July 2005. In November 2010 it was relocated into the Grahame-White Watch Office building, but, rather puzzlingly, was removed from display shortly before the centenary of the Düsseldorf raid. After spending a few years in storage at Hendon, the Tabloid now resides proudly at Stow Maries.



This Avro 504K, although identical to the many thousands that were built during the First world War, and well into the 1930s, was built in 1930 and was originally on the civil register with an unknown owner, and then in 1936 to Williams and Company at Blackpool Airport. During the second World War it was taken on strength with the RAF and then to the Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester, where it reverted to its civilian colours. Totally original, but no longer airworthy, it now resides at Stow Maries.

Other aircraft are flown as part of the WW1 Aviation Heritage Trust Collection and are often seen at Stow Maries, including a full-size flying reproduction Nieuport 17, built from 1992 to 1997 by Robert Gauld-Galliers and John Day and until recently based at IWM Duxford. It had a film role in the 2006 film 'Flyboys' about the young American volunteers of the Lafayette Escadrille. Powered by a Warner Scarab 7-cylinder radial engine it is now owned and flown by John Gilbert.

This museum is really worth a visit, despite being a bit of a drive. Perhaps a group visit might be on the cards for next year?



Workbench with 'classic' tools, and a Fokker DR1 being constructed behind.



Model of the Aeroplane Twin Shed originally built at Stow Maries. These were the standard wooden aeroplane sheds, two at Stow Maries in 1917, with others at Goldhanger and Rochford. A flying two thirds scale SE5 on the right.

(Many thanks to Dave Hawkins for the photos.)



On December 2nd, instead of our usual talk, we are having a trip to the 'Soldiers of Oxfordshire' Museum, followed by a lunch, Christmas or otherwise, at one of the fine local pubs in the town. The 'Soldiers of Oxfordshire' Museum is a £3.2 million museum which was opened by the Princess Royal in 2014. The museum was created to honour soldiers from Oxfordshire regiments and present their history and is located in the grounds of the Oxfordshire Museum, which is also on the visit agenda.

As well as the permanent museum exhibition, the visit will include a new exhibition, a collaboration between Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum and Oxford-based Rebellion publishing, which offers us a chance to explore the history of British war comics through the archives of classic comic titles such as *War Picture Library* and *Battle Action*, which features original comic artwork on public display for the first time, enabling the discovery of the story of war comics decade by decade. All in all, it should be a first-class visit.

November 11th - WFA ceremony at the Cenotaph.

November 17th - 'He Didn't Talk About It - Analysing Veterans' Silence' - Julian Walker

December 2nd - Visit to Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum.

January 19th 'India's Great War' - Adam Prime

February 16th 'The Doughboys 1917-18' - Mike Sheil

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.