



# frontline.

The newsletter of the MK WFA, April 2024.



**April 19th<sup>th</sup>** Historian Dr Graham Kemp's presentation introduces the essential differences between U-boats and submarines, and examines the different kinds of U Boats used in the First World War. He then looks at how Germany first planned to use them and how, almost by accident, they were developed into a deadly raider. The talk will then examine in detail the U boat Commerce campaign of 1917-18, its aims, hopes and intentions, before explaining why it was doomed to inevitable failure, and the huge cost that Germany paid for that failure. Dr Kemp is an experienced speaker, and his passion is getting across the human perspective and experience in his talks. Therefore, the second part of the presentation will examine the actual experiences of the crews serving in the boats, what it was like to serve in them, the danger, the humour, and is drawn from the very few accounts ever written by their crews. This is a talk that you won't want to miss!

As we reported in the previous 'Frontline', after the success of last year's seminar we are holding another this year. The venue is again Bletchley Masonic Hall, last year it proved perfect for our needs, and we have booked an exciting line up of speakers; Helen Frost, Peter Hart, Major Charles Barratt, and Nigel Crompton, plus two members of the Great War Society are attending to give talks as members of the British and German infantry respectively, and bringing a display of their equipment. Add to this other militaria displays, a British Legion stall, Martin's second hand book stall, a buffet lunch and lots of teas and coffees and you will see that we have an excellent day planned. **Please put 19th October in your diary, we don't want anyone to miss this one!**

Our outing to visit Stow Marie's special World War One day on the 27<sup>th</sup> July has sadly had to be cancelled due to insufficient take up, but if you did commit to going on the trip and can get there under your own steam please do so, it promises to be a great day out!



**APRIL**



**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 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.

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

The youngest of three brothers who lost their lives in the Great War, Percy is commemorated on the Ploegsteert Memorial, panel 4. 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 counterattack which took place that night. There were 20 casualties, of which Percy was most likely one.



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

Henry Ainscough was born in Chorley, Lancashire on 19<sup>th</sup> 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 later moving to the 6<sup>th</sup> 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 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.

**Edmund Phillipson HMS Bittern drowned after collision 4<sup>th</sup> 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. Edmund joined the Royal Navy on 26<sup>th</sup> November 1910 where 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 and then HMS Cornwall in 1914.

Edmund married Annie Whiteside at St Thomas Church, Preston in 1914. Their only child, John was born in 1916. 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* 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. 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.

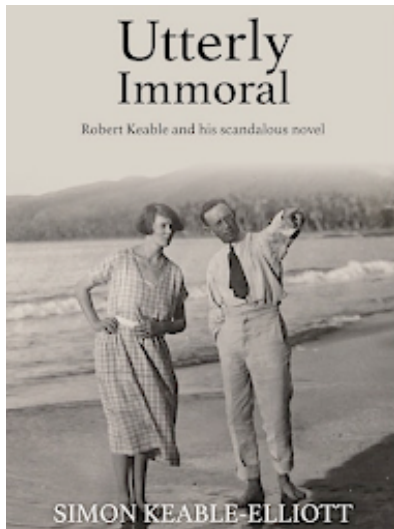




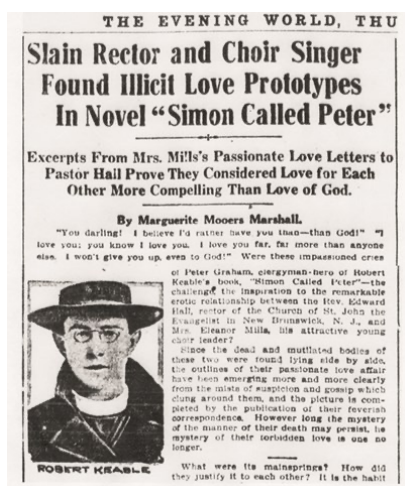
## Mentioned in Despatches



March talk 'Robert Keable, utterly immoral WW1 chaplain?' by Simon Keable-Elliott



In March we welcomed Simon Keable-Elliott (pictured above) who gave us a fascinating talk on his grandfather, Robert Keable. Simon introduced himself and told us that, originally, he knew very little about his grandfather apart from seeing a letter written during WW1 from Basutoland, so he knew he had been in Africa. So, wondering what had happened to his grandfather, and wishing to find out more about him, Simon started researching. Very soon he came across lurid tales; Robert had been a priest who organised a Nativity play and seduced the girl playing Virgin Mary; Robert had been defrocked; Robert had joined the Catholic church; Robert had seduced the choir mistress etc etc, most of this was not true. Simon had persevered with his research, which resulted in a book, also pictured above, and a host of lectures and talks, the very latest being the one we were enjoying.



Robert Keable



Robert's fame, or notoriety, originally came not from his lifestyle but from his first novel, a war story with no fighting, first published in 1921. The storyline involved Peter, an army chaplain sent to practice in the huge army rest camps around Rouen. Here he was horrified by the gambling and womanising that went on there. (We had heard in previous lectures the huge number of brothels in the area, and how busy they were). Eventually our chaplain gets used to this and befriends an army nurse. The last three chapters, the 'hotel sequence', describes the outcome of this friendship, in details considered shocking for 1921. Peter is caught between his love for Julie, the nurse, and his church. The story ends with Julie persuading him to return to France and his faith.

Critics at the time were incandescent. 'The Guardian' saw it as 'a very offensive novel' and claimed, 'this book dwells lovingly on lust' and also 'is an infamous libel on those brave padres'. This immediately resulted in a massive boost to sales, becoming the fifth most popular book in the USA in 1922. A play based on the novel became a huge hit on Broadway but was banned from being performed in the West End by the Lord Chamberlain, Bishop of London. A film of the novel, also very successful, was produced in Hollywood. In America a priest gave the novel to a lady chorister, they had an affair and were subsequently found murdered, see newspaper front page above. Scott Fitzgerald, who also hated 'Simon Called Peter', based his 'Great Gatsby' on these murders. An unfortunate librarian in Boston was fined one hundred dollars, a huge amount at that time, just for lending the book out! New York tried unsuccessfully to have the novel banned.

So, after explaining all this furore, Simon then turned our attention on his grandfather, a fascinating character.



Cover of an early edition.

Captain Reverend Keeble was born in Battersea. His father was very religious man, a tallow maker who subsequently became very wealthy, so Robert became totally involved in religion and morality. He won

a scholarship to Cambridge reading history and went from being evangelical to high church. He was the first student to get a first in history from Magdalen College. After meeting the Bishop of Zanzibar, he then went to Africa, becoming a parish priest in Basutoland. He loved life over there as a teacher and missionary and set up scout groups, making sure that the troops were mixed in religion and race.

At the outbreak of war he returned to England where he made several unsuccessful attempts to become an army chaplain. Returning to Africa he married Sybil Armitage in 1915, and began to recruit for the South African Native Labour Corps. The War Cabinet had decided that Zulus etc would be suitable to fight but the Colonial Office took a different view, sending men over to join the British Army, but as totally segregated non-combat troops. Over twenty-five and a half thousand Africans volunteered, many of whom were the elite, the sons of tribal chiefs and teachers. White officers were also recruited locally, but their experience was from the mines, not the military, and their attitude was racist. The first battalion arrived in France in 1916 with another ten thousand in 1917, and from the word go their treatment was appalling. Their camps, which were so close to the front line that they were frequently shelled, were totally inadequate, as was their food and equipment. The Africans broad feet, not used to shoes, were forced into narrow British Army boots with often severe results. The winter of 1917 was exceptionally bitter, yet the African troops lacked any warm clothing. They worked in forests, quarries and on the railways. They were not allowed in the trenches despite being constantly shelled. When a committee was set up to raise money to equip the troops the War Office shut it down. When six hundred Africans drowned in a sea collision between England and France the whole affair was hushed up. During all this and unaware, Robert was still recruiting in Basutoland.

The camps were eventually moved back out of the range of the German artillery, but conditions remained far worse than other labour camps, which is saying something. The men were little better than slaves. The British High Command insisted on a closed compound situation, and no-one was allowed to leave. The Chinese were allowed out, British soldiers passing the African camps called out for them to come and play football, but permission was never given. Most other labour groups such as the Chinese worked ten-hour shifts, the Africans worked twelve.

By this time Robert had arrived in France as an army Chaplain. Entering Le Havre, he was horrified at the squalor and deprivation, where in one street alone nearly two hundred thousand men per week visited the brothels there. Robert described it as 'filthy and hell-like,' but he was even more horrified at the racist and inhumane treatment of the men he had recruited. He wrote a book entitled 'The First Black Ten thousand', but the censor banned it and had the plates destroyed. Robert went to the front, he didn't write about this experience for ten years, but he did say "In all that night of horror no one wanted a priest." Robert then met a Canadian Forestry Corps driver named Jolie Buck and they started an affair that lasted until 1918 when the South African Government withdrew the SANLC. The Africans were given the option of re-joining but nearly all were so bitter about their treatment they refused. On the way back to Africa in two ships, they called in various ports. The men had to remain on board, but their white officers were allowed ashore, picking up Spanish flu, which then affected most of the men aboard, and they imported the lethal virus back to their homeland.

Back in South Africa Robert had a hard time. Lots of stories circulated about him and his affair. During his last year as a priest he started to write his book, based very much on his own experiences, then resigned and returned to England to write another novel. He earned a living by teaching at Dulwich College (although the college would like to deny it) and after that at Dunstable Grammar

School. But when his book sales took off he suddenly found he was earning ten times his teacher's salary. So he ran away with Jolie, who was teaching dance in London. He went to see his wife Sybil in South Africa, she remained and he went to Tahiti, met up with Jolie and rented Gaugin's house before building their own. They went on a tour of Europe where Jolie became pregnant. On the 14<sup>th</sup> November 1924 Simon's dad was born, but Jolie, overdosed with chloroform, died. She was 25 yrs old. Robert went to America, saw the play of his novel, which he said was rubbish, and returned to Tahiti. Here he met Ina Salmon, a Tahitian princess. Within eighteen months, in November 1927, she gave birth to Robert Keable's second son, Henry. A month later Robert Keable died.

This was a brilliant talk by Simon, greatly appreciated by everyone there, and there were plenty of questions and discussion afterwards. What really made it so close to home and real was when Simon was talking about Jolie dying in childbirth and he said, 'That was my Granny.' Many thanks Simon.

### **Twinning News.**

Details of the trip are nearly finalised, and include a trip to a proper brewery, not the bottle store we visited before. This trip has always been very enjoyable and worthwhile in the past and is a great opportunity for MK WFA to have a get-together, as well as playing an important part in the twinning. Anyone going, it's time to pay your deposits if you haven't already done so. Evidently there are some spare places still not taken up, so anyone, plus family and friends, who would like to go on the trip and has not yet registered an interest, please contact George, our Wolverton Town Council liaison, at [ggmabey45@gmail.com](mailto:ggmabey45@gmail.com) or Chris direct at [Community@wolvertonandgreenleystowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:Community@wolvertonandgreenleystowncouncil.gov.uk) asap.



## **Twinning Trip - Don't Miss It!**

### **CWGC War Graves Week tours.**

Mike Chapman has informed me that bookings are opening up for the CWGC War Graves Week tours in May. He is running -

- Bletchley (Manor Road) Cemetery - Thu 16 May + Sat 18 May  
- <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/cwgc-war-graves-week-2024-bletchley-manor-road-cemetery-tickets-758602118357>
- Cranfield (St Peter & St Paul) Churchyard - Sun 12 May  
- <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/cwgc-war-graves-week-2024-cranfield-st-peter-and-paul-churchyard-tickets-760266998057>



- Halton (St Michael) Churchyard - Mon 13 May + Sun 19 May  
- <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/cwgc-war-graves-week-2024-halton-st-michael-churchyard-tickets-878028004397>

He's not doing anything at Wolverton Cemetery this time around but will have tours there later in the year (July-September). Buckingham Cemetery is also looking good, with agreement in principle from the CWGC and the cemetery manager. He is just waiting for a positive decision from Buckingham Town Council at their meeting this month, which should just be a formality.

For anyone who might be interested in going further afield, <https://www.cwgc.org/visit-us/war-graves-tours/> or its Eventbrite equivalent <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/commonwealth-war-graves-32780046267> will hold the complete lists. Locations are still being added, but that should be completed for May shortly. Tour dates for later in the year will be popping up on those web pages as well, as they become available. Mike says that Halton is turning out to be even more interesting than first thought, with the general information about the history of the camp and the reasons why many RAF personnel clearly felt such a strong connection to the place long after they left being fascinating. He suggests that it would be wise to book this tour sooner than later.



Following on from the success of last year's seminar,  
Milton Keynes Branch is hosting a 2024 event

## **“A Great War Miscellany”**

**on 19<sup>th</sup> October 9.30am – 4.30pm**

There is an excellent line up of professional speakers on a wide variety of topics :

**Major Charlie Barrett "The Story of the Q-Ships"**

**Nigel Crompton “Women’s Police Service in the Great War**

**Helen Frost "When the Land Ships came to Town"**

**Peter Hart and Gary Bain "Fly or Cry" (Dark humour in the Navy)**

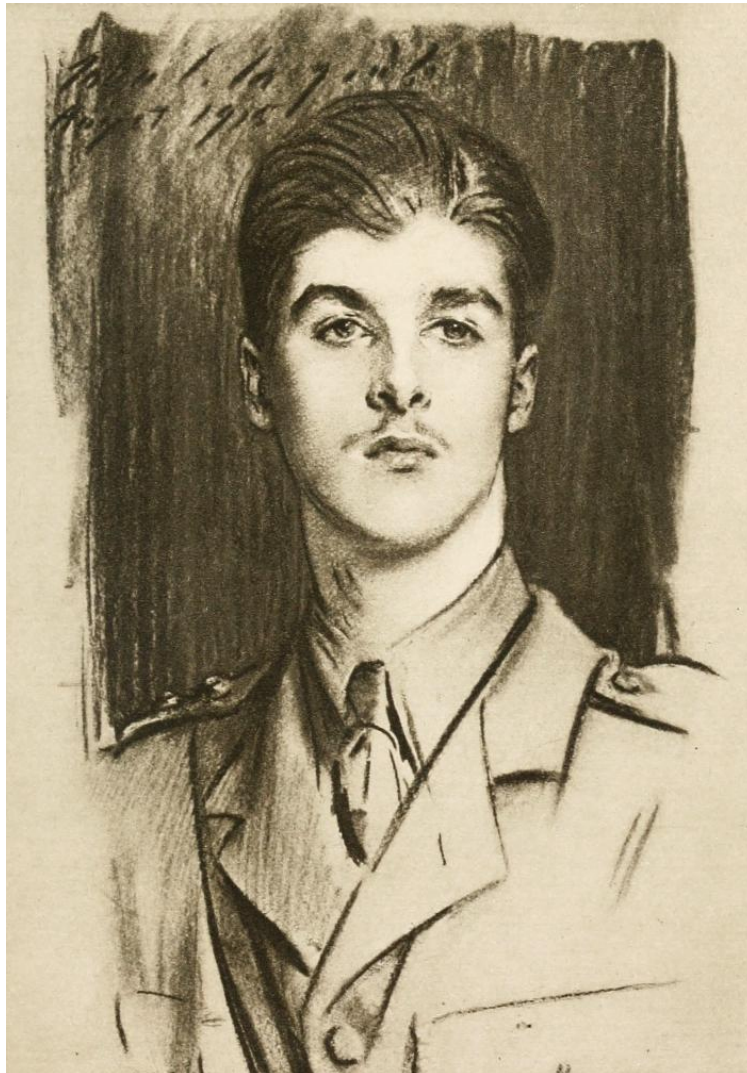
**Additionally, there will be short talks and demonstrations by The Great War Society**



Ticket includes excellent buffet lunch and free tea and coffee will be available throughout the day. Static displays and second-hand book stall (cash please). Venue : Bletchley Masonic Centre 263 Queensway, Bletchley, MK2 2BZ (Free car park) Book Early to avoid disappointment.

Tickets available priced £30 each by emailing [wfa.miltonkeynes@gmail.com](mailto:wfa.miltonkeynes@gmail.com)

## War Poet - Edward Tennant



Edward Tennant was born on 1 July 1897, the son of Edward Tennant, who became Lord Glenconner in 1911, and Pamela Wyndham, a writer. Nicknamed 'Bim', Edward was educated at Winchester College until the age of 17, when it was decided he would lodge with a family in Germany to learn the language, in preparation for the Diplomatic Service. Therefore, when war broke out, he found himself free of school and joined the Grenadier Guards. After a year's training in London he went to Bovington Camp (along with Harold Macmillan) in August 1915, where his company of signallers earned distinction. He and his men were sent to the front that same year, and saw action at the Battle of Loos, where the Battalion suffered some 340 casualties. The sight of corpses piled between the two front lines inspired the poem which will feature shortly, entitled 'The Mad Soldier' written in June 1916.

In October he was in hospital, not wounded, but probably suffering from some form of shell-shock and in late November went home on leave. He was back in France by 11<sup>th</sup> December and in the middle of March 1916 had arrived in the shattered town of Ypres. Horrified at the destruction he saw he wrote home describing the desolation of the scene: 'After lunch Osbert

and I went for a walk through the town. I have never seen such an abomination of desolation - not a single whole roof in the town; shell holes thirty feet in diameter and fifteen feet deep, full of green water; twisted iron staircases standing alone in the ruins of a house; everything knocked down except the tottering top storey bathroom which stands on a pyramid of debris'.

On 9 September 1916 his Battalion relieved troops in the front line at Guillemont where they were subjected to heavy shellfire and sniping. In three days the battalion had suffered 17 killed, 77 wounded and 5 men missing. 15 September 1916, the opening day of the Battle of Flers-Courcelette was also an expensive day for the Grenadier Guards, who again suffered heavy casualties.

Tennant wrote home describing the experience, how dreadful it was, and how thankful he was to be alive at the end of it. His company remained in the line near Combles, southeast of Guillemont. On the night of 21<sup>st</sup> September, Tennant out into No-Man's Land sniping and he was killed. His Commanding Officer wrote to his parents: 'Bim was sniping when he was killed instantaneously by a German sniper. His body is buried in a cemetery near Guillemont. The grave is close to that of Raymond Asquith, and we are placing a cross upon it and railing it round today'.

### The Mad Soldier

This poem was written on June 13<sup>th</sup> 1916, three months before the author's death in battle and fully exposes the horrors of war.

I dropp'd here three weeks ago, yes - I know,  
And it's bitter cold at night, since the fight -  
I could tell you if I chose - no one knows  
Excep' me and four or five, what ain't alive.  
I can see them all asleep, three men deep,  
And they're nowhere near a fire - but our wire  
Has 'em fast as fast can be. Can't you see  
When the flare goes up? Ssh! boys; what's that noise?  
Do you know what these rats eat? Body-meat!  
After you've been down a week, an' your cheek  
Gets as pale as life, and night seems as white  
As the day, only the rats and their brats  
Seem more hungry when the day's gone away -  
An' they look big as bulls, an' they pulls  
Till you almost sort o' shout - but the drought  
What you hadn't felt before makes you sore.  
And at times you even think of a drink . . .  
There's a leg across my thighs - if my eyes  
Weren't too sore, I'd like to see who it be,  
Wonder if I'd know the bloke if I woke?  
Woke? By damn, I'm not asleep - there's a heap  
Of us wond'ring why the hell we're not well . . .



Leastways I am - since I came it's the same  
With the others - they don't know what I do,  
Or they wouldn't gape and grin. - It's a sin  
To say that Hell is hot - 'cause it's not:  
Mind you, I know very well we're in hell. -  
In a twisted hump we lie - heaping high,  
Yes! an' higher every day. - Oh I say  
This chap's heavy on my thighs - damn his eyes.

Edward Tennant's other poems are 'A Bas La Gloire', 'In Memoriam W W B' and 'Home Thoughts in Laventie' This poem is a stark contrast to 'The Mad Soldier', focusing on the peace and beauty found amidst the devastation of war. The speaker and his fellow soldiers discover a hidden garden in the ruins of a town, and they take solace in its beauty and tranquility.

### Home Thoughts in Laventie

Green gardens in Laventie!  
Soldiers only know the street  
Where the mud is churned and splashed about  
By battle-wending feet;  
And yet beside one stricken house there is a glimpse of grass—  
Look for it when you pass.

Beyond the church whose pitted spire  
Seems balanced on a strand  
Of swaying stone and tottering brick,  
Two roofless ruins stand;  
And here, among the wreckage, where the back-wall should have been,  
We found a garden green.

The grass was never trodden on,  
The little path of gravel  
Was overgrown with celandine;  
No other folk did travel  
Along its weedy surface but the nimble-footed mouse,  
Running from house to house.

So all along the tender blades  
Of soft and vivid grass  
We lay, nor heard the limber wheels  
That pass and ever pass  
In noisy continuity until their stony rattle

Seems in itself a battle.  
At length we rose up from this ease  
Of tranquil happy mind,  
And searched the garden's little length  
Some new pleasaunce to find;  
And there some yellow daffodils, and jasmine hanging high,  
Did rest the tired eye.

The fairest and most fragrant  
Of the many sweets we found  
Was a little bush of Daphne flower  
Upon a mossy mound,  
And so thick were the blossoms set and so divine the scent,  
That we were well content.

Hungry for Spring I bent my head,  
The perfume fanned my face,  
And all my soul was dancing  
In that lovely little place,  
Dancing with a measured step from wrecked and shattered towns  
Away ... upon the Downs.

I saw green banks of daffodil,  
Slim poplars in the breeze,  
Great tan-brown hares in gusty March  
A-courting on the leas.  
And meadows, with their glittering streams—and silver-scurrying dace—

Home - what a perfect place!

When the news spread of his death in action tributes poured in, one of which so moved his mother, that she quoted from it on the memorial erected to her son in Salisbury Cathedral: 'When things were at their worst, he would pass up and down the trench, cheering the men, and it was a treat to see his face always smiling. When danger was greatest his smile was loveliest'.

### *Bibliography*

<https://warpoets.org.uk/worldwar1/blog/poem/in-memoriam-w-w-b/>

[https://www.winchestercollegeatwar.com/RollofHonour.aspx?RecID=461&TableName=ta\\_wwifactfile](https://www.winchestercollegeatwar.com/RollofHonour.aspx?RecID=461&TableName=ta_wwifactfile)

<https://allpoetry.com/E-Wyndham-Tennant>

## A Corner of a Friendly Field - St. James, New Bradwell.

Not all those who fell in the Great War are buried in a corner of a foreign field that is forever England - to quote those famous and evocative lines from Rupert Brook's poem, 'The Soldier'. Many of the fallen, perishing in accidents or from disease, or succumbing to their injuries whilst at a military hospital at home, rest in quiet churchyards across the United Kingdom. Other reminders of the Great War and its impact also abound, memorials of many kinds, to one person or sadly to many, some old, some quite modern, often also in churches or in some central public place.

The village of New Bradwell is on the northern edge of Milton Keynes and is more recent than many of the villages encompassed by the city as it was begun in 1852 to provide housing for workers at the railway works founded in 1838 at nearby Wolverton. The Church of St James's was built in 1857-60 and designed by G. E. Street, who also provided the design for the addition of the North aisle in 1897. (In 1956 the roof of the abandoned church of St Peter, Stantonbury collapsed, and the chancel arch was removed to preserve it. In the 1960s it was installed at St James as an interior surround to the West doorway). The church has a war memorial and a book of remembrance inside, as well as some splendid stained-glass windows. The main war memorial is in New Bradwell Cemetery (covered next month).



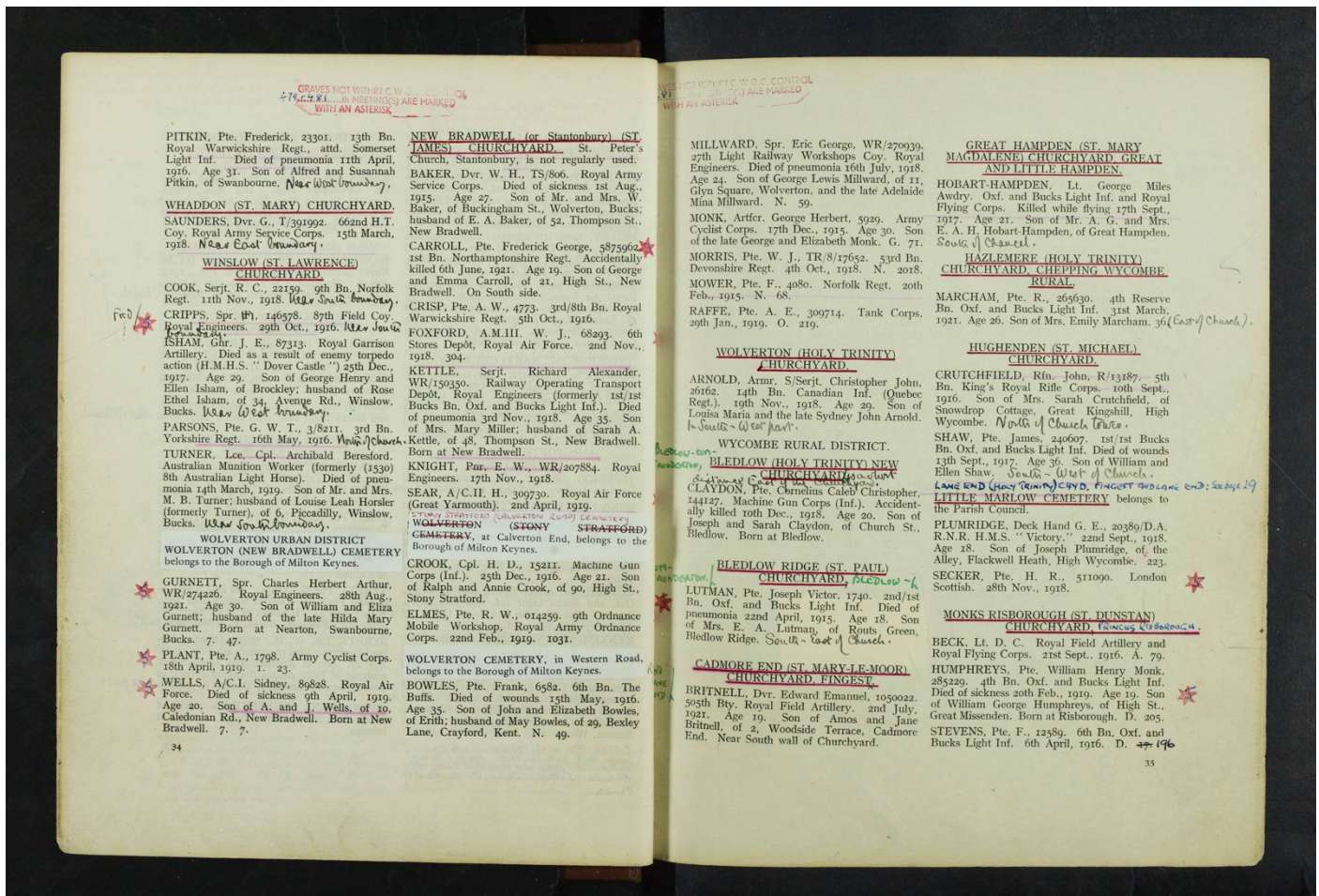
The main entrance to the Church is from Church Street, (next to the New Bradwell Community Centre. As soon as you are inside, turn right. The very first gravestone you pass, tall and almost completely covered in ivy, has an inscription that, if you peer through the leaves, reads 'Also of Leonard Powell, the beloved son of the above, who was killed in action May 9<sup>th</sup>, 1915, Aged 19 yrs. Interred in the 1<sup>st</sup> Bucks Battalion cemetery in Ploegsteert Wood Belgium. Gone but not forgotten.'

Leonard was a private, no 1982, in the 1/1st Battalion, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. He was killed in action Sunday 9th May 1915 in France & Flanders, aged 19. Born and resident in 21 St Queens Street Stantonbury, Bucks, the son of Frederick, a coachmaker, and Florence Powell, whose tombstone is pictured below. Leonard, a compositor's apprentice, enlisted in Aylesbury and is commemorated on the memorial there. He is buried in Ploegsteert Wood Military Cemetery, Comines-Warneton, Hainaut, Belgium. Grave IV. B. 1.





Leonard Powell, Bucks Herald 1916, list of Aylesbury Fallen



Carry on down the right side of the church until you reach the trunk of the very tall fir tree and on your left is a CWGC headstone belonging to WR/207884 Pioneer E. W Knight, Royal Engineers. (Listed as Private on the memorial). Edwin Walter Knight was the son of John Thomas and Annie Knight, who were married in 1888. In 1911 he was residing with his parents at 51 Spencer St, Stantonbury, working as a carriage washer at Wolverton Railway Works for the London and North-western Railway. He enlisted in the Royal Engineers, Transportation Branch in 1915, aged 27. Edwin



Died of influenza and broncho-pneumonia on Sunday 17th November 1918 at the Military hospital at Frensham Hill.



Carry on to your right and just as you regain the path there is a white tier with the cross removed and laid on the grave and an urn put in its place. This is the grave of Walter Foxford. This was the hardest grave to find for me, partly because I expected a CWGC headstone, partly because information suggested that he might be interred in Stantonbury churchyard, and especially because he is listed on the headstone as Norrish, and it was only the date and his wife's name that gave the game away. There is no mention of his military service, but the epitaph reads 'A flower cut off in its bloom.'

W J Foxford was born in 1887 in Brackley, Northamptonshire. He was an estate foreman, carpenter and joiner by trade. He married Annie Foxford in June 1911 at Stantonbury and they had one son, John Albert Eric Foxford. He entered the RAF on 22 March 1917 at the age of 30, becoming an Air Mechanic 3rd Class, no 68293, based at the 6th Stores Depot, Royal Air Force. No 6 Stores Depot was in Ascot, with No 6 Stores Sub Depot at Hammersmith, London. Several men from the Depot died that month, with influenza and pneumonia among the causes, Walter could well have been one of these. He died in Connaught Hospital on Saturday 2nd November 1918.

Ahead is the CWGC headstone of Sergeant Richard Alexander Kettle, WR/150350. Born in New Bradwell, his mother was Mrs Mary Miller. When he married his wife Sarah, they lived at 48, Thompson Street, New Bradwell. He enlisted in Wolverton, aged 35, as 427, 1<sup>st</sup>/1<sup>st</sup> Bucks Battalion, Ox and Bucks Light Infantry, then becoming acting sergeant in The Railway Operating Transport Depot, Royal Engineers. He died 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1918. The inscription on his headstone reads 'In ever loving memory, At Rest,' submitted by Miss D M A Kettle, from his home address.

Twenty paces ahead is another CWGC headstone to Private 4773 A W Crisp 3rd/8<sup>th</sup> battalion, The Royal Warwickshire Regiment. Arthur William Crisp was the son of William John Crisp and Susannah Crisp (nee Markham). Arthur was born in Old Bradwell and on the 1911 Census was resident at 7 Harwood Street, Stantonbury with his parents, his occupation prior to enlistment was the same as his father, a brass finisher. He joined up in Wolverton and is listed as having died of wounds in France

and Flanders. However, he died at Victoria Hospital Keighley so had been evacuated back to England, where he sadly succumbed to his injuries on 5<sup>th</sup> October 1916, aged 30/31, and was returned home to be buried in the peaceful churchyard at New Bradwell.



Pass round the back and to your left and on the right-hand side is the CWGC headstone to TS/806 Driver W H Baker of the Royal Army Service Corps. He was the son of Mr and Mrs Baker of Buckingham Street, Wolverton, Bucks, and was married to E A Baker of 52, Thompson St, New Bradwell. He died of sickness 1<sup>st</sup> August 1916, aged 27 yrs. The inscription on the base of his headstone, placed by his mother, reads 'His Life for his Country, His soul for God'.

Carry on round the side of the church (again on your right, not a WW1 grave, but interesting all the same), is a tombstone with the inscription to the 'Late Troop Sergeant Major James Regan, 3<sup>rd</sup> King's Own Hussars, Died April 27<sup>th</sup>, 1885, Aged 62 yrs. The rest of the inscription has flaked away but you can just make out the words 'strife' and 'battle' so you can probably work out what the rest was. The 3<sup>rd</sup> (The King's Own) Hussars was a cavalry regiment of the British Army, first raised in 1685. It saw service for three centuries, including both World Wars, before being amalgamated into the Queen's Own Hussars in November 1958. Major Regan could well have been involved in the following - his regiment served in Ireland between January 1820 and June 1822 and between March 1826 and April 1829. It was dispatched in India in July 1837 and, having moved on to Afghanistan saw action at the Battle of Kabul in September 1842. It fought again in several battles during the Anglo-Sikh wars. It was posted to India in 1868, was back in England in 1879. Troop Sergeant Major James Regan died in 1885.





Regaining the path that runs across the front of the church and turning left along it, you will see the back of another CWGC headstone, set between a magnolia and a yew tree. Coming round to the front you will find it is the headstone of Private Arthur Frederick Charles Sapwell, service no 20070, 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion Royal Munster Fusiliers, died 15<sup>th</sup> June 1919, aged 22 yrs. This is a new looking headstone, and on the top is inscribed 'Buried elsewhere in this churchyard' - more about this later.

Interestingly Sapwell is not listed in the war graves of Buckinghamshire list published by the Imperial War Graves Commission in 1930, but he is commemorated on the CWGC site today. Frederick was born in 1897, the son of bricklayer Edwin Frederick, and Sarah Anne Sapwell of Bradwell, and lived with them at 145 St. James St, Bradwell. Arthur worked as an engine cleaner before enlisted in Wolverton as Private 18447 in the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry 5th Battalion and later as Private 20070 Royal Munster Fusiliers 6th (Service) Battalion. At some point he was awarded the silver wound badge. Arthur was discharged 30<sup>th</sup> August 1918, and died at home 15<sup>th</sup> June the following year, being buried on the 19<sup>th</sup> somewhere in the churchyard. The personal inscription reads 'At the going down of the sun and in the morning we will remember'.

Follow the flagstone path and on your right, set low, is a clear white memorial scroll to 'Walter Carroll, Killed in France October 6<sup>th</sup> 1915 age 21, and Frederick Carroll, his brother, killed in Ireland 1921 aged 18 yrs.



Private 12934 Walter Carroll was born in Bradwell, the son of George and Emma Carroll of 21 High St, New Bradwell. He enlisted in Wolverton into the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Ox and Bucks light infantry and was killed on active service in France and Flanders, 6<sup>th</sup> October 1915. This is possibly what happened to him. The battalion diary records that on the day Walter was killed 'two platoons of B company and two of D company evacuated the trenches at 3pm. The two remaining platoons of A and C companies entered the trenches at 2pm for 24hrs instructions as companies. The machine gun section, under Lt. Miller, also went into the trenches at 2pm. Casualties - 10 men killed; 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. C A Manning and 25 men wounded. These men all belonged to no 1 platoon, A company. They were shelled by German trench mortars while occupying a shelter. 2nd Lt. Manning was wounded whilst directing the rescue party engaged in excavating the men who had been buried in the debris of the shelter.' Walter's body was either not found or subsequently lost, he has no known grave and is commemorated on the Thiepval

Memorial on the Somme. His brother Private Frederick George Carroll, service no 5875962 was in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion The Northamptonshire Regiment, and whilst serving in Ireland was listed as being accidentally killed on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1921, aged 18 years. He is buried in a grave behind his memorial.

Just past their memorial stone, against the wall is an imposing reddish marble family grave to the Oldham family that includes an inscription to their son, Private 15167 John William Prince Oldham of the Grenadier Guards. He was born 13<sup>th</sup> March 1894 in Wolverton to John and Harriet Oldham, who lived at 27 St. Giles St. New Bradwell. He had two siblings, Charles and Alfred. He worked in the trimming shop in the Wolverton Carriage Works, where his father was also employed as a brake fitter. However, on 10<sup>th</sup> March he enlisted in the Grenadier Guards and moved to their barracks in Aldershot. John was killed in action in Belgium on the 6<sup>th</sup> November 1914, (3<sup>rd</sup> on family headstone) aged 20 years, and is commemorated on the Menin Gate Memorial at Ypres.

**OLDHAM, JOHN WILLIAM PRINCE**, Private, No. 15167, 2nd Battn. Grenadier Guards, 2nd s. of John Seeley Oldham, of 27, St. Giles' Street, Stantonbury, Flitter, by his wife, Harriett Lydia, dau. of William Prince; b. Wolverton, co. Bucks, 13 March, 1894; educ. St. James's School, Stantonbury: enlisted 10 March, 1911; served three years with the Colours and joined the Reserve; was called up on the outbreak of war 5 Aug. 1914; went to France with the Expeditionary Force; was reported wounded and missing after the fighting at Ypres 6 Nov. 1914, and is now assumed to have been killed in action on that date. He was a keen footballer, and for two seasons captained the Bradwell Old Boys' Football Club; *umm.*



No. of Contract *15167* dated *1914/28*  
 Name and Address of Firm. *Mr A. W. Gurney, Newport Ad. New Bradwell.*

Imperial War Graves Commission.

Schedule "A" Page *1.*  
 Name of Cemetery. *NEW BRADWELL (ST. JAMES) CHYD. BRADWELL, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE*  
 To be stencilled on foot of headstones below ground level abbreviated thus:—

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT (A) OF HEADSTONE INSCRIPTIONS  
 to this report is attached  
 COMPREHENSIVE REPORT (B) HEADSTONE TEXTS  
 (those headstones to be inscribed with texts are underlined)  
 and  
 TWO STANDARD LAYOUTS (the layouts to be used are quoted on the badge design). *(PORTLAND)*

5646

Badge Design No. and Layout No.	1st Line. Number and Rank.	2nd Line. Initials, NAME and Honours.	3rd Line. Regiment.	4th Line. Date of Death. <small>In any instance where the entry "NONE" appears in Col. 5, the Age will be omitted from the Headstone and the Date of Death centred laterally.</small>	Age.	Centre of Stone. Relig. Emb.	To be stencilled on foot of Headstones below ground level. Plot P. Row R. Grave G. R. G.
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8) (9)
<i>R3/1078/16</i>	TS/806 DRIVER	W.H. BAKER	<del>ROYAL ARMY SERVICE</del>	1ST AUGUST	1915 AGE 27 CROSS		C 16 1 <i>R11</i>
1064/1A	4773 PRIVATE	A.W. CRISP	ROYAL WARWICKSHIRE REGT.	5TH OCTOBER	1916 NONE CROSS		F 8 2
1192/1A	309730 AIRCRAFTMAN 2ND CL.	H. SEAR	ROYAL AIR FORCE	2ND APRIL	1919 NONE P.M.		F 15 3
<i>1190/1C</i>	<i>WR/150350</i> SERJEANT	<i>R.A. KITTLE</i>	<i>ROYAL ENGINEERS</i>	<i>3RD NOVEMBER</i>	<i>1918 AGE 35 CROSS</i>		<i>M 1 4</i>
1190/1A	WR/207884 PIONEER	E.W. KNIGHT	ROYAL ENGINEERS	17TH NOVEMBER	1918 NONE CROSS		R 10 5
1043/1A	5875962 PRIVATE	F.G. CARROLL	NORTHAMPTONSHIRE REGT.	6TH JUNE	1921 AGE 19 P.M.		PLOT SOUTH 6 SIDE ROW C GRAVE 3
1192/1A	68293 3RD AIR MECH.	W.J. FOXFORD	ROYAL AIR FORCE	2ND NOVEMBER	1918 NONE P.M.		GRAVE 304 7

§ Headstone for this grave is not included in the Contract.

The one grave I could not locate on this visit, although the grave details are shown above, belongs to Aircraftman 2<sup>nd</sup> Class 309730 H Sear, (Great Yarmouth) Royal Air Force, who died on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1919. Harry Sear was born in Stantonbury 20<sup>th</sup> September 1901. He enlisted into the RAF in 1918, his trade been given as a carpenter. The 'Great Yarmouth' could refer to the RNAS/RAF seaplane base there. I will go back for another search, or maybe someone else can have a look.



**Imperial War Graves Commission.**

No. of Contract \_\_\_\_\_ dated \_\_\_\_\_

Name and Address of Firm. \_\_\_\_\_

Schedule "B" Page 1.

Name of Cemetery

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT (B) HEADSTONE PERSONAL INSCRIPTIONS  
to be read in conjunction with  
COMPREHENSIVE REPORT (A) HEADSTONE MILITARY INSCRIPTIONS  
together with  
TWO STANDARD LAYOUTS (the layouts to be used are quoted on the badge design).

NEW BRADWELL (ST. JAMES) CHURCH.  
BRADWELL, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

Badge design No. and Layout. (1)	Headstone No. (2)	Line 1 (3)	TEXT Line 2 (4)	Line 3 (5)	Line 4 (6)	No. of Letters in Text (7)
1078/10	1	X HIS LIFE FOR HIS COUNTRY HIS SOUL FOR GOD	(Mrs. E.A. Baker, 59, Thompson Street, New Bradwell, Folkestone, Bucks.)		97	33
	2	✓				
	3					
1190/10	4	X IN EVER LOVING MEMORY AT REST	(Miss D.M.A. Kettle, 48, Thompson Street, New Bradwell, Bucks.)		7	24
	5	✓				
	6		(Mr. G. Carroll, 21, High Street, New Bradwell, Bucks.)			
	7					

Name and Address of person to whom the stones are to be sent (if different from the person to whom the stones are to be sent) and will not appear on the Headstone.

It was very easy to be a little overwhelmed by sadness at all this evidence of family heartbreak and loss, however much it has faded from living memory, but this was eased by the Spring sunshine, the trees full of bursting buds and birdsong, and the graves being nestled by primroses and bluebells. It was at this point, especially as I was full of thoughts of local families, that I had a stroke of luck. I bumped into the church warden and his wife. The churchwarden introduced himself as Graeme Crisp, his great uncle was the Arthur Crisp buried just a few yards away, and together we strolled back to the gravestone of Arthur Sapwell, great uncle on his mother's side. Arthur Crisp had lived in one of the little cottages facing us, and Arthur Sapwell was born in the row of cottages that is now The Nag's Head in Great Linford, one of eleven brothers! I asked Graeme if Sapwell's grave had become lost, and he said he didn't really know what had happened, but that his late mother had arranged for a new CWGC headstone in 2007, near to the spot where she knew he was buried.



War memorial and Book of Remembrance inside the church.

### Bibliography

<https://livesofthefirstworldwar.iwm.org.uk/lifestory>  
<https://www.roll-of-honour.com/Buckinghamshire/NewBradwell.html>  
<https://buckinghamshireremembers.org.uk/casualties>  
 CWGC

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Registered at the G.P.O.  
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TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1918

One Penny.

## HOW LONDON HAILED THE END OF WAR



### May 17<sup>th</sup> 'Now the War is Over' - Dr Daniel Weinbren

How did Britain respond to the momentous events of 1919 and 1920 as it adjusted to peace after four years of war? How did the British people cope with the massive changes and challenges that confronted them? Dr Weinbren will answer these questions, explain what happened in every sphere of life, and show that even today we are still dealing with the consequences of those years of transition. Across Europe were revolutions, a war for independence in Ireland, and widespread race riots in Britain. Most servicemen simply wanted to come home to a land fit for heroes, to their families and a secure job, but for most that didn't happen. There was no return to the old days, too much had been lost. Dr Weinbren will give us a fascinating insight into how the Great War changed the direction of the nation.

**April 19<sup>th</sup>** The U-Boat Campaign 1914-18' - Dr Graham Kemp

**May 17<sup>th</sup>** 'Now the War is Over' - Dr Daniel Weinbren

**June 14<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup>** Twinning Trip to Belgium

**June 15<sup>th</sup>** Albert French Commemoration at MK Rose.

**June 21<sup>st</sup>** 'Repairs and maintenance on the Western Front' - Roy Larkin

**July 12<sup>th</sup>** 10th Anniversary of MK Rose, including MK WFA commemorating Albert French.

**July 19<sup>th</sup>** India's Great War - Adam Prime.

**July 27<sup>th</sup>** Special World War One day at Stow Maries. (Cancelled - insufficient interest)

**August** - no meeting. Summer Break.

**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 (Twining and Albert French commemoration)

Gary Short - Social Media co-ordinator.