



The Spire Sentinel



**The Newsletter
of The
Branch of The
Front**



**& Magazine
Chesterfield
Western
Association**

ISSUE 117 - November 2025

Our aims are 'Remembrance and Sharing the History of the Great War'.



Western Front Association Chesterfield Branch – Meetings 2025

Meetings start at 7.30pm and take place at the Labour Club, Unity House, Saltergate, Chesterfield S40 1NF

January	7th	. AGM + `Quintinshill 22 nd May 1915 - Britain`s Worst Railway Disaster` Grant Cullen. Meeting Cancelled
February	4th	AGM + Villages at War - Clowne and Barlborough in World War 1 by Paul Burkitt.
March	4th	Andrea Heatherington - " Scamps in Khaki " - <i>criminal deserters'</i> Deserters sometimes turned to crime to support themselves whilst on the run.
April	1 st	Grant Cullen Britain`s Worst Railway Disaster - Quintinshill - 22 nd May 1915
May	6th	"Combat motivation and morale in British Empire armies in the two world wars" by Prof. Gary Sheffield
June	3rd	'The Forgotten Blitz and the Defeat of the Zeppelins' by Ian Castle
July	1st	Jutland - Clash of Titans by Scott Lindgren
August	5th	Roy Larkin - Follow a Supply Column and others through mobilisation and the total chaos of the opening weeks of the Great War
September	2nd	'Motorcycle Despatch Riders In 1914' by Nick Shelley. Nick describes the motorcyclists' contribution to the 1914 campaign, using their own words and their own previously unpublished photographs.
October	7th	Peter Hart I'm Out! Escape from German POW Camps, 1914-1918
November	4th	After Kut - What ?. Tony Bolton
December	2nd	An Historians Wrongful Assumption ? - a short look at Sniping and how it developed in World War One. By Morris Charlton

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Chairman`s Notes.... Branch chair Jon-Paul Harding



May I start by saying I hope everyone is well and in good health. It was another great talk by Peter Hart in October on POW escapes in WW1, it was very entertaining and an interesting subject, always great to hear about different aspects of WW1. Tony Bolton will be giving us a talk on the 4th of November which I am sure will be very interesting. I attended the Chairs conference in Leeds which was thought provoking and a privilege to attend and find out more about what's happening in The Western Front Association.

It will be a very busy Remembrance weekend for many of us; I will be laying a wreath on behalf of our branch in Chesterfield on Sunday 9th and then traveling to London on Tuesday the 11th of November to do the same. If anyone is traveling down to attend the parade let me know so we can meet up on King Charles Street. Rob Nash is parade Marshal again and I am sure he will do a fantastic job.

The Branch committee is contemplating putting on a buffet at the December meeting so could we have a rough idea of who will be attending so we know how many to cater for. Also, we have had an idea for a branch trip for next year and we will let you know about this in due course for any interested parties.

I look forward to seeing you on Tuesday 4th of November

Jon-Paul Harding, Branch Chair

November Meeting Speaker - Tony Bolton

Tony needs no introduction - past Branch Chair and currently National Chair of the WFA. The title of Tony`s talk is "After Kut - What?. The Fall of Kut sent reverberations through the military and political establishment....Tony will guide us through the machinations. A talk not to be missed by an expert in his field of interest.



Secretary`s Scribbles

Dear Members and Friends,

Welcome to the November 2025 edition of our Branch Newsletter. I started typing this at 03.15am on Thursday morning...one eye on the keyboard - one eye on the window watching for an ambulance coming. 5

hours ago my wife`s left hip (replacement) joint popped out leaving her in agony - she had to wait a further 4 hours before help came. She`s now in Doncaster hospital getting excellent care. At this moment in time I`ll probably miss Tuesday`s meeting particularly if she gets home before then. As you will see much of this issue is dedicated to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission - more particularly as our Branch Chair, Jon-Paul Harding is a volunteer with the “Eyes On - Hands On Group which does so much to monitor the condition of all the war graves, particularly in those out of the way places, small churchyards and such like.

On Tuesday we have our former Branch Chair - and current WFA National Chair, Tony Bolton making a welcome return to the Speakers` podium with a talk based on his speciality area of WW1 conflict...the Middle East with his presentation...”After Kut...What?”

Our December meeting sees a first time visitor, Morris Charlton coming to give us his talk... ***An Historians Wrongful Assumption?*** - A short look at Sniping and how it developed in World War One. We also plan to have a free drink / buffet for all attendees - our way of saying “Thank You” to attendees for your support throughout the year. To help Jon-Paul and Jane plan for this can you let them know if you will be attending and partaking of the buffet.

As always happy to accept articles / correspondence for inclusion in this Newsletter / Magazine. Grant Cullen ...Branch Secretary...
grantcullen@hotmail.com07824628638

October Meeting - a couple of pictures of Peter Hart in full flow.....



WFA Calendars 2026

The Western Front Association Calendar for 2026 will soon be available - 28 pages of photographs and calendar pages. Our branch will be having a supply...when they become available....remember if you the buy through the Branch, the Branch gets 50% of the Branch selling price of £10, they will later also be available to purchase on line shortly. Available at November meeting



JANUARY- JUNE 2026



THE MALTZ HORN FARM CRUCIFIX JANUARY 2026

Photographer – Andrew Holmes



THE KIRKEE MEMORIAL FEBRUARY 2026

Photographer – Brian Harris for CWGC



SPRING AT LE TOURET MARCH 2026

Photographer – Anonymous



ON THE GALLIPOLI SHORE-LINE APRIL 2026

Photographer – Brian Harris for CWGC



NURSE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN MAY 2026

Photographer Brian Harris for CWGC



THE BUTTERFLY AT MESSINES JUNE 2026

Photographer – Anonymous

JULY – DECEMBER 2026



ETRICOURT OLD ENGLISH CEMETERY

JULY 2026

Photographer – John White



THE DORSETS ON THE SOMME, 1918

AUGUST 2026

Photographer – Stephen Kerr



THE LEICESTERS & Lincs AT BRIDGE HOUSE

SEPTEMBER 2026

Photographer – David Tattersfield



CATERPILLAR VALLEY

OCTOBER 2026

Photographer – Martin Barry



THE FIVE CANADIANS IN TRACK X

NOVEMBER 2026

Photographer – Andrew Holme



SERRE ROAD NO. 2 CEMETERY

DECEMBER 2026

Photographer – Carl Liversage

On 13th October 1914, a young captain in the British Expeditionary Force in northern France was shot in the right lung by a German sniper. He played dead, hoping that he would not remain a target.

One of his men tried to rescue him but was shot and collapsed lifeless on the captain. The sniper carried on firing. The captain was hit in the knee, but the soldier's body took the rest of the bullets. Both were presumed dead by their comrades and were left where they were until night time, when it was safer to recover them.

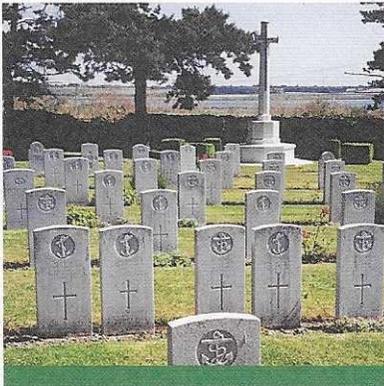
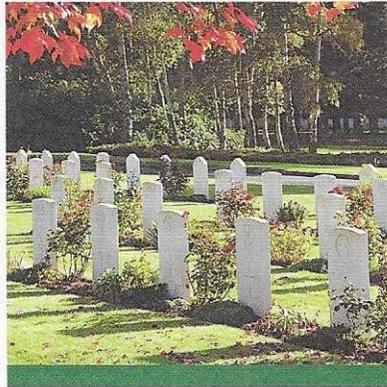
The stretchers bearers found the captain still clinging to life but doctors at the British advanced dressing station held out no hope for him and ordered a grave to be dug. Miraculously the captain held on and, after a year in hospital back in Blighty, was able to return to Army duties.

In World War II his defiant determination inspired the many thousands of troops he led as Field Marshal of the Army. His name was Bernard Law Montgomery - 'Monty.' Always remembered.



|||||
COMMONWEALTH
WAR GRAVES
|||||

COMMONWEALTH
WAR GRAVES
COMMISSION
IN THE UNITED
KINGDOM AND
IRELAND



DISCOVER · LEARN · REMEMBER



ABOUT THE COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES COMMISSION

2

We honour and care for the men and women of the Commonwealth forces who died in the First and Second World Wars, ensuring they will never be forgotten. Funded by six Member Governments, our work began with building, and now maintaining, cemeteries at 23,000 locations all over the world.

Today, over a century after we first began, our work continues through our staff, supporters and volunteers who preserve our unique cultural, horticultural and architectural heritage and ensure that the stories of those who died are told.

THERE ARE OVER **306,000** **COMMEMORATIONS** TO THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE COMMONWEALTH FORCES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND IRELAND AT OVER **13,000** **LOCATIONS**. AROUND **170,000** OF THESE ARE **BURIALS**, WITH THE **REMAINDER** BEING HONOURED ON **MEMORIALS TO THE MISSING**.

MOST SITES ARE **OWNED, OPERATED AND MAINTAINED** BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES, CHURCHES, PRIVATE COMPANIES OR INDIVIDUALS.



BEFORE WE UNDERTAKE ANY WORK **WE LIAISE** WITH LOCAL COUNCILS, PARISHES OR PRIVATE LANDOWNERS.

EACH SITE HAS A **UNIQUE PROGRAMME** OF INSPECTION, CARE AND MAINTENANCE.



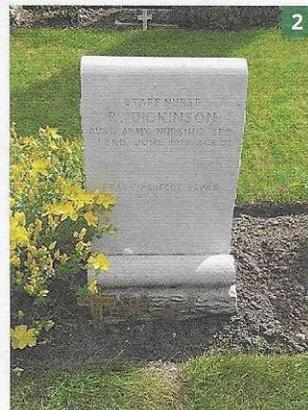
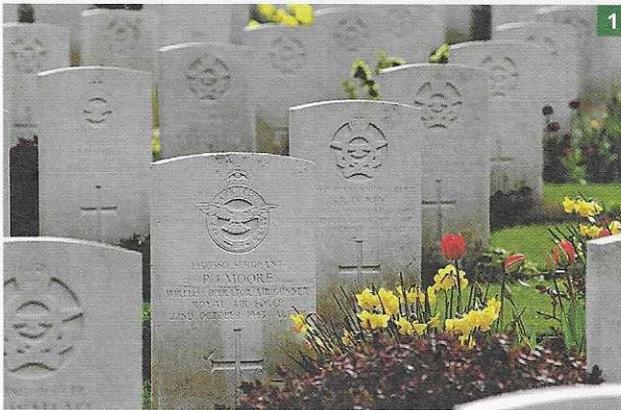
WE CARE FOR WAR GRAVES WITHIN THESE SITES VIA **PLANNED INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE PROGRAMMES**.

THE UK HAS THE SECOND HIGHEST CONCENTRATION OF **WORLD WAR BURIALS** AFTER FRANCE.

OUR AIMS

3

- We adopt a conservation approach to caring for our headstones
- Inscriptions should be legible at reasonable light levels and viewing distances
- Headstones should be upright, clean and accessible
- The area surrounding the grave should be neat and tidy
- Badges and emblems are clear enough to be recognisable
- Natural wear, weathering, nicks and chips are acceptable if they don't affect legibility
- On average we clean our headstones every two to three years but more often if necessary
- Conservation and care are our priority; headstone replacement is the last option



1 HARROGATE (STONEFALL) CEMETERY, NORTH YORKSHIRE.

2 HAREFIELD (ST. MARY'S) CHURCHYARD, MIDDLESEX

3 BROOKWOOD MILITARY CEMETERY, SURREY

4 BROOKWOOD MILITARY CEMETERY, SURREY

TYPES OF COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES IN THE UK

PRIVATE MEMORIALS

- Over 37,000 graves are marked with private memorials chosen by family instead of a CWGC headstone
- CWGC does not own or maintain private memorials but we do monitor their condition to ensure the individual's name is legible

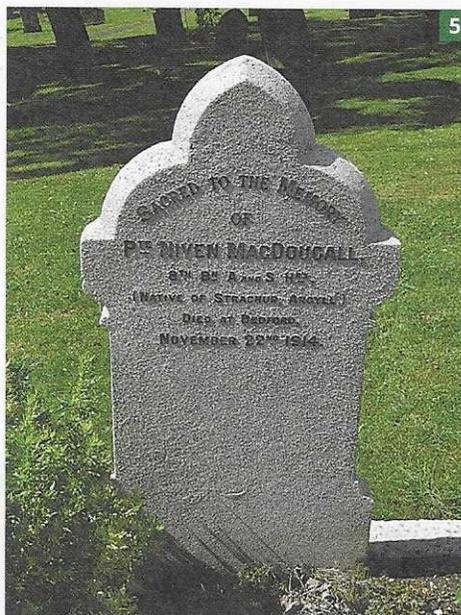
SCATTERED GRAVES

- Individual graves make up the majority of burials in the UK, with 90% of sites having fewer than 10 war graves
- They are found in every type of burial ground from churches to cemeteries amongst other graves
- Individual border planting is not practical on individual graves within these sites

5 PRIVATE MEMORIAL AT FOSTER HILL ROAD CEMETERY (BEDFORD CEMETERY), BEDFORDSHIRE

6 ARNOS VALE, BRISTOL

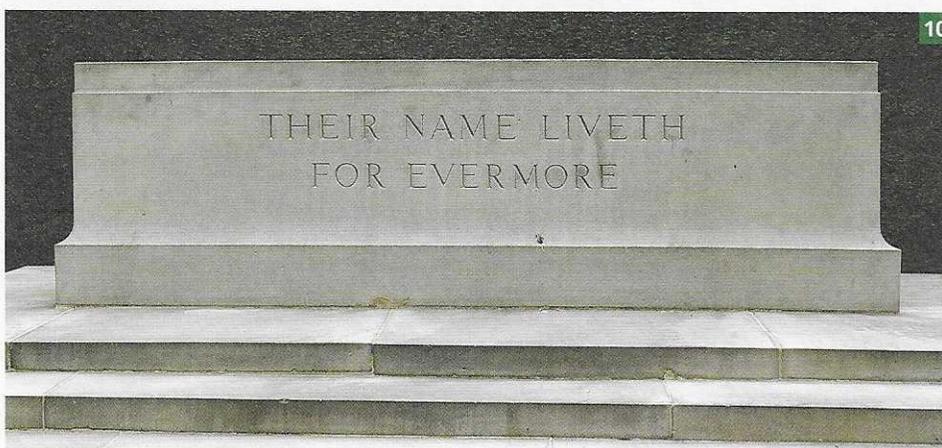
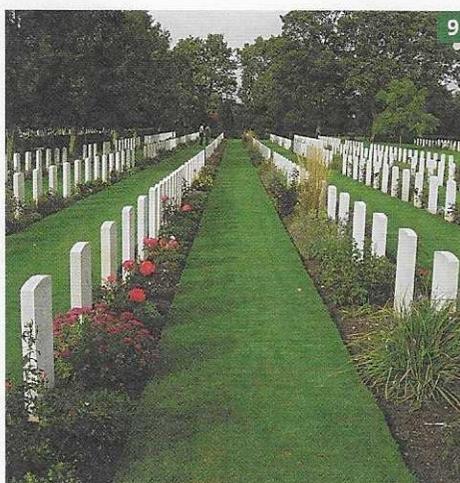
7 CHURCH OF ST MORWENNA AND ST JOHN THE BAPIST, MORWENSTOW, CORNWALL



WAR GRAVE PLOTS

- There are nearly 600 plots with over 20,000 graves. At these sites the planting and uniform headstones resemble cemeteries more commonly seen in France and Belgium
- These plots are situated in land set aside after the wars within local authority areas and churchyards
- In many sites you will see the Cross of Sacrifice and, in larger sites, the Stone of Remembrance

- 8 CROSS OF SACRIFICE AT ISLINGTON CEMETERY AND CREMATORIUM, LONDON
- 9 CAMBRIDGE CITY CEMETERY, CAMBRIDGESHIRE
- 10 STONE OF REMEMBRANCE IN BIRMINGHAM (LODGE HILL) CEMETERY, WEST MIDLANDS



OUR SITES

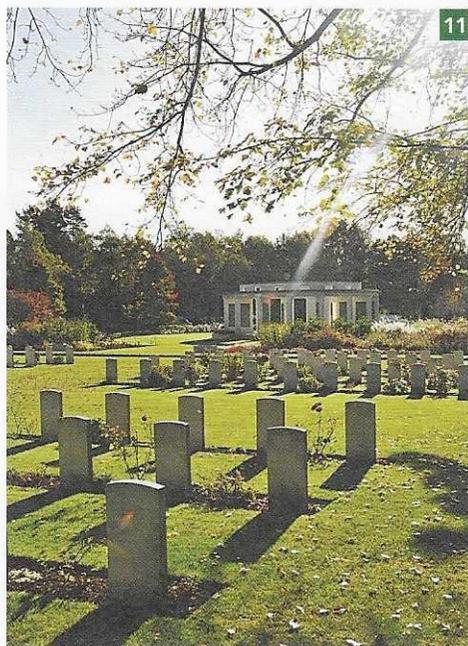
The CWGC own a small number of sites including the following:

- Brookwood Military Cemetery
- Cannock Chase War Cemetery
- Kilchoman Military Cemetery
- Kilnaughton Military Cemetery
- Lyness Royal Naval Cemetery
- Runnymede Air Forces Memorial

11 BROOKWOOD MILITARY CEMETERY, SURREY

12 CANNOCK CHASE WAR CEMETERY, STAFFORDSHIRE

13 RUNNYMEDE AIR FORCES MEMORIAL, SURREY



OTHER MILITARY CEMETERIES

- CWGC are responsible for the burials of Commonwealth Casualties from the First and Second World Wars
- We also look after some non-World War graves on behalf of other Governments
- CWGC war graves are located at these sites alongside non-World War service burials

14 NETLEY MILITARY CEMETERY,
HAMPSHIRE

15 SHORNCLIFFE MILITARY
CEMETERY, KENT

16 TIDWORTH MILITARY
CEMETERY, WILTSHIRE



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SCREEN WALLS

- Where conditions prevent the marking of individual graves, screen walls are placed to commemorate individuals by name. There are over 50 of these in the UK and Ireland.
- Casualties who were cremated are also commemorated on these walls
- Casualties whose graves are no longer maintainable, are also commemorated here

17 SCREEN WALL AT GRANGEGORMAN MILITARY CEMETERY, DUBLIN

18 SCREEN WALL AT SOUTH EALING CEMETERY, LONDON

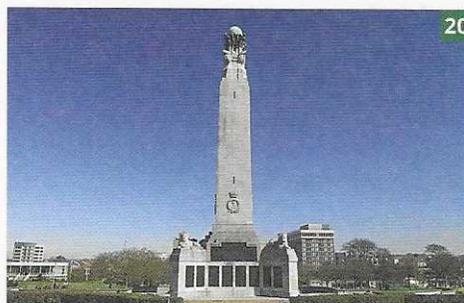
19 SCREEN WALL AT YARDLEY CEMETERY, BIRMINGHAM WEST MIDLANDS



MEMORIALS

Over 130,000 Commonwealth servicemen and women with no known grave are commemorated on our memorials to the missing across the UK. The main memorials are:

- Brookwood Memorial 1914–1918
- Brookwood Memorial 1939–1945
- Chatham Naval Memorial
- Hollybrook Memorial
- Lee-on-Solent Memorial
- Liverpool Naval Memorial
- Lowestoft Memorial
- Plymouth Naval Memorial
- Portsmouth Naval Memorial
- Runnymede Air Forces Memorial
- Tower Hill Memorial



20

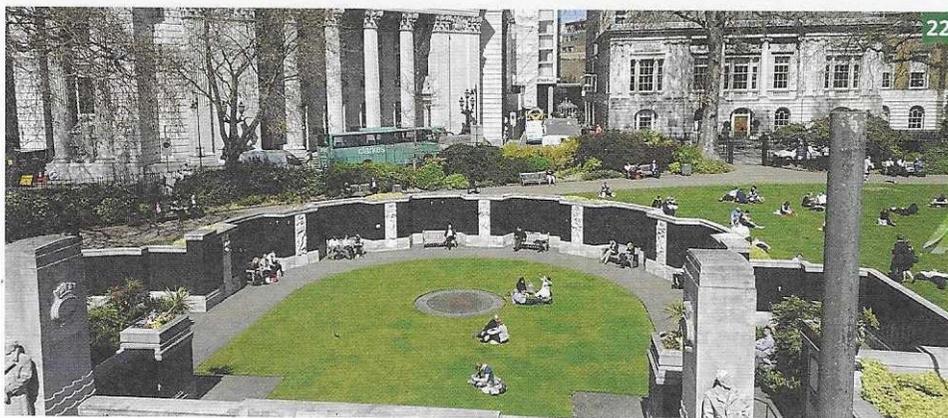


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20 PLYMOUTH NAVAL MEMORIAL,
DEVON

21 RUNNYMEDE AIR FORCES
MEMORIAL, SURREY

22 TOWER HILL MEMORIAL, LONDON



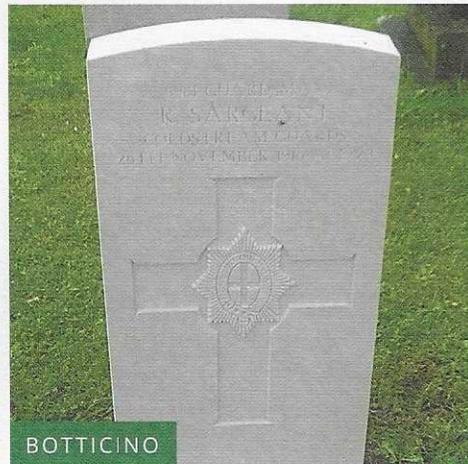
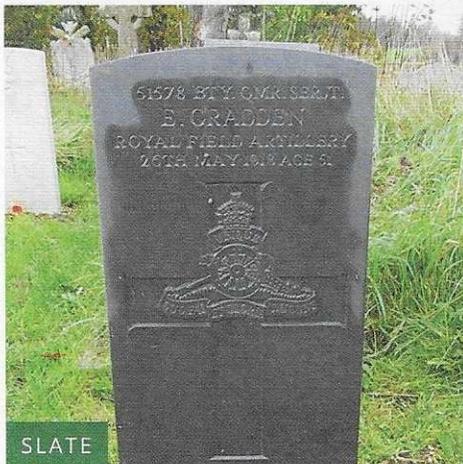
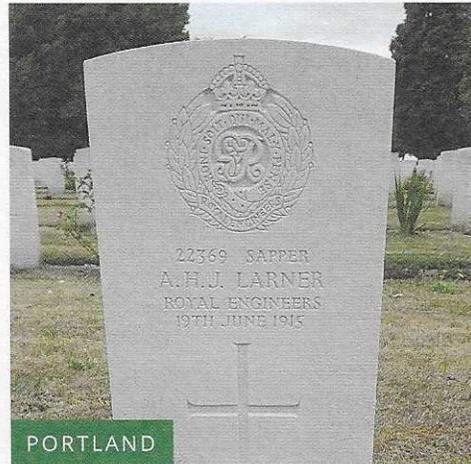
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TYPES OF HEADSTONE MATERIAL IN THE UK

10

Not all CWGC headstones are made from the familiar Portland stone commonly seen in Northern France. Various materials were used depending on availability at time of commemoration.

THESE ARE THE
MAIN TYPES OF STONE
YOU WILL SEE IN THE UK.



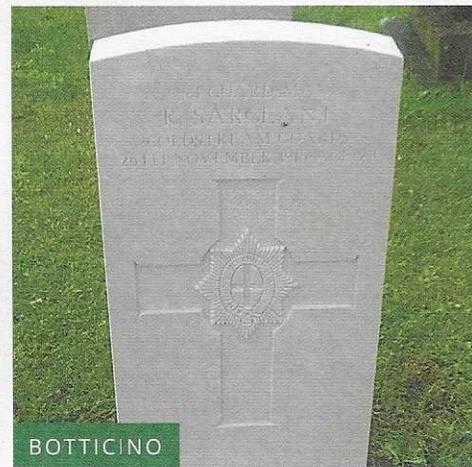
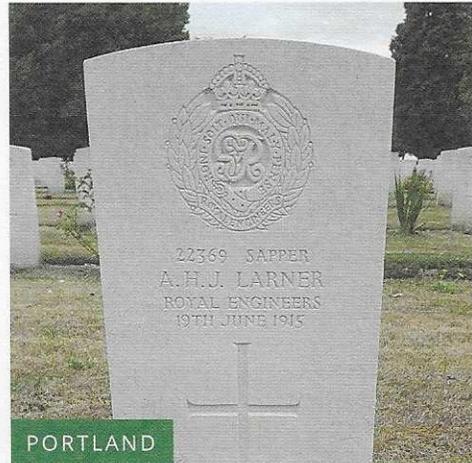
IF A HEADSTONE IS IN SHADE OR UNDER TREE COVER IT WILL "GREEN UP" WITH ALGAE QUICKER THAN THOSE IN THE OPEN AIR.

TYPES OF HEADSTONE MATERIAL IN THE UK

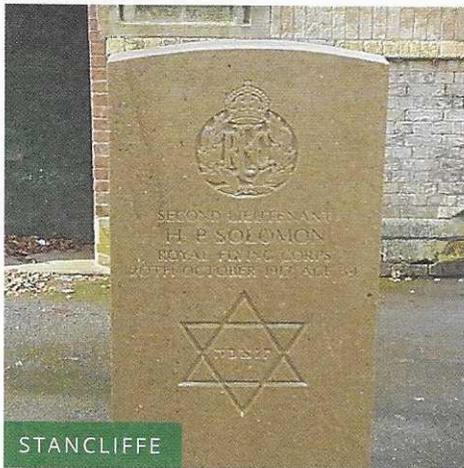
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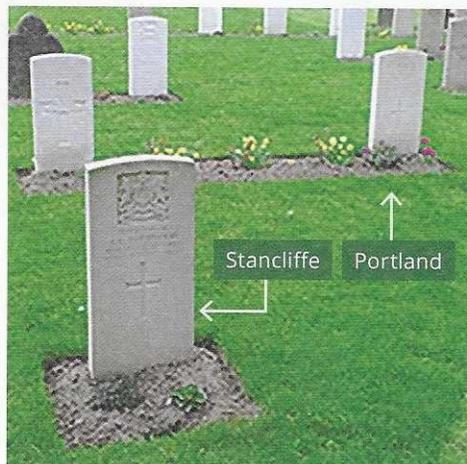
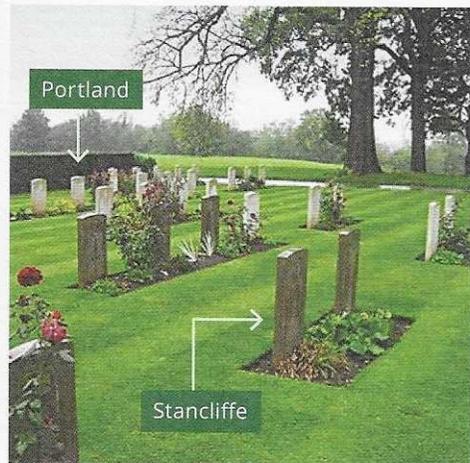
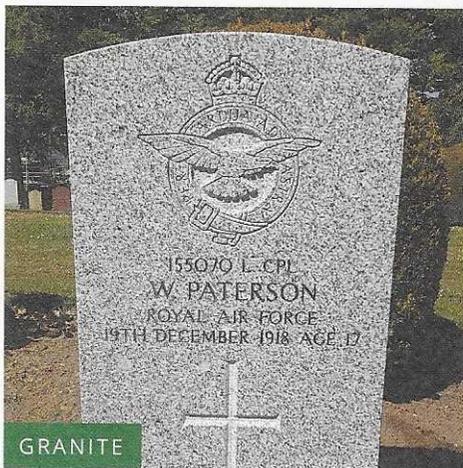
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IF A HEADSTONE IS IN SHADE OR UNDER TREE COVER IT WILL "GREEN UP" WITH ALGAE QUICKER THAN THOSE IN THE OPEN AIR.



THE TYPE OF STONE AFFECTS THE LOOK OF A HEADSTONE. A HEADSTONE MAY NOT BE IN A POOR STATE OF REPAIR, IT COULD BE A DIFFERENT MATERIAL.



WE NEVER USE DETERGENTS OR BLEACH.

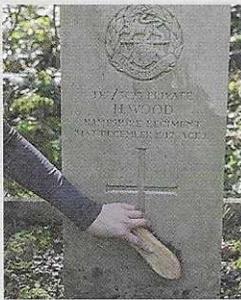
EYES ON HANDS ON

VOLUNTEER FOR US

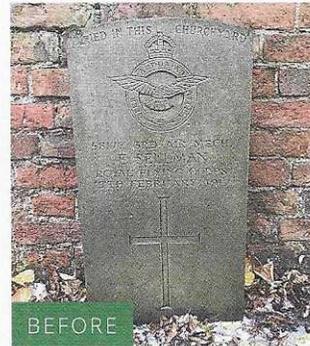
Would you like to help us honour your local War dead?

Get in touch to find out more about volunteer groups and training in your area:

Email: eyesonhandson@cwgc.org



EYES ON HANDS ON VOLUNTEERS CLEANING CWGC HEADSTONES IN ARNOS VALE CEMETERY, BRISTOL



BEFORE AND AFTER:
CWGC HEADSTONE
CLEANED WITH
WATER AND A SOFT
BRUSH, ST LUKE'S
CHURCH, CANNOCK,
STAFFORDSHIRE.

Eyes On, Hands On has been made possible thanks to a generous donation by Annington.





Western Front Association Chesterfield Branch – Meetings 2026

Meetings start at 7.30pm and take place at the Labour Club, Unity House, Saltergate, Chesterfield S40 1NF

January	6th	. AGM + Tim Lynch - “Huns on the Run” Tim explores the often overlooked experiences of German POWs held in Britain during and immediately after the First World War
February	3rd	Ross Beadle - Sarajevo 1914
March	3rd	Andy Rawson - Malta...Nurse of the Mediterranean
April	7th	Mick Byrne - Shot at Dawn
May	5th	Christina Holstein - Verdun
June	2nd	Scott Lindgren TBA
July	7th	John Wilson The action at Sheikh Sa'id November 1914, The opposed landing that nobody has ever heard about!
August	4th	Ian Castle - Gotha Raids
September	1st	Roy Larkin - tba
October	6th	Peter Hart - tba
November	3rd	John Horner ‘In the care of St Dunstons : Private Richard Horners story’
December	1st	Neil Taylor....”Winston`s Little Army...Aspects of the Royal Naval Division”