

# OX & BUCKS BRANCH

## NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2026



@WFAOxBucks



Ox & Bucks WFA

[www.westernfrontassociation.com](http://www.westernfrontassociation.com)



## COMMENT

Welcome to the April Branch Newsletter. As I have mentioned a few times, it is the Branch AGM this month and it would be good to see many of you there. Those of you at the March meeting will know that, unfortunately, Wenlan Peng is unable to be with us, but we are planning to show a film that she has made about the Chinese Labour Corps, which looks very good. With this email will be the agenda and my report for the AGM for you to read in advance.

- David Adamson

### Future Meetings 2026

- |                                    |                     |   |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|---|
| 18 <sup>th</sup> April             | Wenlan Peng         | “The Chinese Labour Corps” & <u>Branch AGM</u>  |
| 16 <sup>th</sup> May               | Peter Caddick Adams | “The Italian Front 1915-1918”                   |
| 20 <sup>th</sup> June              | Dr Anne Samson      | “The Indian Army in East Africa 1914”           |
| 18 <sup>th</sup> July              | Phil Tomaselli      | “MI5 and the struggle against German Espionage” |
| <b>August NO MEETING, AS USUAL</b> |                     |   |
| 19 <sup>th</sup> Sept.             | Ian Castle          | “Gotha Terror”                                  |

### Serviceman Remembered:

**Pte. Andrew Bonar, 8<sup>th</sup> (s) Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment, North Crawley.**

Andrew Bonar was born in Kilmarnock on 20<sup>th</sup> March 1898, the third of six surviving children of Andrew, a gardener and Charlotte Bonar. By 1901 the family was in North Crawley, near Newport Pagnell and Andrew was at school there in 1911. Enlisting in Bletchley, Andrew was serving in 8<sup>th</sup> Gloucestershire regiment in 1918, part of 57 Brigade, 19<sup>th</sup> (Western) Division. Andrew died of wounds at a Casualty Clearing Station on 18<sup>th</sup> April 1918 and was buried at Haringhe (Bandagem) Cemetery, near Poperinge. He is commemorated on the North Crawley war memorial.



## **Report of Meeting of 21<sup>st</sup> March:**

### **Jonathon Rodell “David Lloyd George: The Man Who Won the War?”**

Jonathan is a social historian and was able to present a different view of Lloyd George to that that we might be used to. He began by explaining the big division between Church and Chapel in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, with membership of a non-conformist chapel often reflecting an anti-establishment view. It was from this context that Lloyd George came.

David George was born in 1863 in Manchester to Welsh parents. When his schoolteacher father died, his mother took the family back to Wales, near Criccieth. There they lived with David’s uncle Richard Lloyd, a shoemaker and chapel elder. David led a school strike at the age of nine in protest against saying Church of England prayer at school. He then qualified as a solicitor by correspondence course and was successful, via the Court of Appeal, in 1888 in confirming the right of Methodists to be buried in Church of England churchyards. It was early in his career that he added Lloyd to his name, in honour of his uncle.

An MP at the age of 27, Lloyd George was the most outspoken opponent of the Anglo-Boer War in 1899, which sparked riots in the country. By 1906 he was the star performer of the Liberal Party and became a junior minister as President of the Board of Trade, making reforms to Patent legislation. In 1908 he became Chancellor of the Exchequer during a period of welfare development, displaying phenomenal energy to transform British society.

Just prior to the Great War, it would have been expected that he would resign from the government over going to war, but he was actually in favour of it, from a strategic viewpoint. His main concern was the long-term threat of Germany getting to the channel coast, but publicly just referred to the invasion of Belgian neutrality. Lloyd George tackled the initial financial threats with a temporary bank closure and the issuing of one pound and fifty shilling notes. The government also took on the responsibility for maritime insurance. In these acts he secured cross-party support.

In May 1915 he encouraged Prime Minister Asquith to go into coalition with the Conservatives and he stepped down as Chancellor to become Minister of Munitions. Within a year, 60 new munitions factories were opened and he brought in experts to help with the war effort. In parallel he introduced a package of welfare reforms, such as shorter working hours, union recognition and alcohol licencing. The following year, after the death of Lord Kitchener, Lloyd George became the Secretary of State for War, but resigned in December of that year when Asquith rejected his proposal for a War Cabinet. Asquith also resigned in an attempt to reassert his authority but, after gaining support from the Conservatives, Lloyd George became Prime Minister.

He then toured the country giving speeches to spread his message and he reasserted civilian control over the war. In 1917 he promoted the convoy system and sacked Jellicoe who opposed the idea, and the following February removed Robertson from his position as Chief of the Imperial Staff over their differing views. He wanted to get rid of Haig, as well, but the latter’s friendship with the King prevented this. Lloyd George therefore promoted the idea of General Foch becoming Allied Supreme



Commander. He was always looking for alternatives to the attrition on the Western Front. During this time, he continued with his welfare reforms, increasing voting rights, creating 200,00 council houses, and raising the school leaving age.

By the armistice he was hailed by some as “the man who won the war”, with the Conservative Party leader Bonar Law saying of Lloyd George “he can be Prime Minister for life, if he likes”. At Versailles, he aimed to extend British influence in the Middle East and opposed the French humiliation of Germany. He also withdrew involvement in the Russian Civil War.

However, after a scandal selling honours for political funding and having to suspend social reforms because of a recession he finally lost support from the Conservatives and fell from power. Many people expected him to return to power at some point but he remained in the wilderness, with not even his former protégé, Churchill, giving him a post. In the Second World War, the Germans earmarked him as a possible head of a collaborationist government in the event of an invasion.

Was Lloyd George a forgotten hero? If so, why is this? Because he was tainted by scandal or because he was a working-class Welshman?

### **Branch Facebook Account**

Please remember the branch Facebook account where we are aiming at posting at least once every week, but more often coming up to a meeting. If you are on Facebook, please follow us at Ox & Bucks WFA.

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#### **Committee**

**Chairman & Newsletter Editor - David Adamson**

**Deputy Chairman - Nigel Crompton, Treasurer – Lance Hale, Speaker Liaison – Bob Swayne**

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Meetings: The Guide Centre, School Lane, **Chalfont St. Giles**. HP8 4JJ

*Usually on the third Saturday of the month, starting at 2:30*

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