

OX & BUCKS BRANCH

NEWSLETTER

JULY 2026



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Ox & Bucks WFA

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COMMENT

Welcome to the July Branch Newsletter. Hopefully those of you at the June meeting enjoyed the talk, but as I missed it (being on holiday) I am sorry that there is no write up of it. However, by way of compensation, I have written a short piece on an incident in the war in the Adriatic. There is also news at short notice about events in Ypres in connection with Captain Fryatt; so if you are in Belgium later this month you may wish to go along. Saturday is our last branch meeting until September, so we hope that we will see many of you before the break.

- David Adamson

Future Meetings 2026

18th July Phil Tomaselli “MI5 and the struggle against German Espionage”

August NO MEETING, AS USUAL

19th Sept. Ian Castle “Gotha Terror”

17th Oct. Nigel Atter “The 2nd Leicesters in Mesopotamia”

**21st Nov. Chares Fair “Balkan Purgatory - the 60th (London) Division in Salonika -
December 1916 - June 1917”**

12th Dec. Alan Leahey “Anti-Tank Gun Hunters”

Serviceman Remembered:

Pte. Reuben John Verrey, Worminghall, 18th July 1916



Reuben John Verey was born in Watlington, Oxfordshire 13th September 1886 to Robert, an agricultural labourer and Mary Ann (née Wright) Verey, the eldest of 10 children. In 1911 he was working as a farm labourer and living with his widowed mother and some of his siblings at Worminghall, between Long Crendon and Oxford.

Joining the 1st Ox & Bucks Light infantry he landed in the Middle East on 25th November 1915 in a draft for the battalion. Almost certainly captured at the surrender of Kut on 29th April 1916 he died on 18th July 1917 and is buried in the Basra War Cemetery. He is also commemorated on a plaque in Worminshall Church.

Italian Airship Attack on Austro-Hungarian Port of Pula, 1915

On holiday in Croatia, last year, we visited Pula on the Istrian peninsula, which was formerly the main Austro-Hungarian port. One of the places we visited was Kastel Fort including its underground tunnels. In these were some photographs of an Italian airship and her crew which had attacked the port in 1915 and been shot down. The following is taken from this display:



CITTÀ DI JESI

Late at night, on 5 August 1915, the Italian airship *Città di Jesi* set off on its military flight from Ferrara, aiming to attack Pula, the main Austro-Hungarian military port.

The six-member crew in an airship armed with 20 destroyer bombs (25 kg) and 10 incendiary bombs (5 kg), and enough fuel for eight-hours of flying departed for Istria.

After the airship reached the horizon of the Istrian coast, the floodlights of the Austro-Hungarian anti-air defences noticed it. It was attacked with artillery fire from the coastal batteries and was knocked down.

It collapsed into the sea from a height of almost 3000 m near the island and lighthouse of Porer in south Istria.

The crew survived but they were captured. The commander Bruno Brivonesi and the crew were briefly detained in the prison space of the Kaštel fort where you are now.

The remains of the airship were towed to Saccorgiana bay in Pula by the Austro-Hungarian torpedo boat "79 T". After its parts had been studied, it was dismantled and the pieces were sold as souvenirs.

Following three days of confinement in Pula, the crew were transferred to the Mauthausen prisoner-of-war camp after being detained briefly in Graz for medical treatment.







Captain Frayatt Exhibition and Commemoration in Ieper (Ypres)

A former branch member, Mark Baker, has been in contact about an exhibition, later this month:

“This year, to commemorate the 110th anniversary of the death of Captain Fryatt, I shall be taking my special exhibition about him to Ieper (Ypres), where it will be open from Wednesday 22nd July to Tuesday 28th July in the Saint George’s Memorial Church Hall in Elverdingestraat (see details attached). To coincide with this, Alex Fryatt (the great grandson of William Fryatt, the Captain’s younger brother) has arranged for a plaque in memory of the Captain to be erected in the church itself, and this will be dedicated during the service on the Sunday morning, 26th July.

Separately, your members might also be interested to know that I recently worked with Andrew Kennedy, the editor of ‘Steam Days’ magazine, on an article about the Captain for the July edition of his magazine. In the end, we decided that the story was too big for just one edition, and so I’m now working with him on the second part of the story to be published later this year. If your members would like a copy of the magazine, they should be able to obtain one directly from the publisher at <https://www.steamdaysmag.co.uk/18041/july-2026-2/>.”



If you are interested, more details are available from Mark
(mark.p.baker@btinternet.com, tel: 07711 894188).

Committee

Chairman & Newsletter Editor - David Adamson (adtm@btinternet.com)

Deputy Chairman - Nigel Crompton, Treasurer – Lance Hale, Speaker Liaison – Bob Swayne, Simon Cains, Paul Bennett

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

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

