



CHELTENHAM & GLOUCESTER BRANCH of THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

Number 151

May 2019

Welcome!

We are delighted to welcome to our meeting this evening two students from Kingham Hill School who will be making a five minute presentation each on one of the Fallen commemorated on their school war memorial. The students are pupils of Gareth Williams who was one of the branch's very first supporters, so it is with great pleasure that we welcome him back.

I have the very sad duty to inform you of the passing at the end of last month of a regular and popular supporter of the branch, Nicholas Turner. Nick traveled to meetings whenever he could from his home in Worcestershire and will be sorely missed by all of those of us that got to know him. I am sure you will join me in sending most heartfelt sympathies and condolences to all his close friends and family, particularly to Roger Nall who many will know as joining Nick at many meetings. In our remembrance of one of Gloucestershire's Fallen, today I would like us all to pay a moment's thoughts to Nicholas.

In June the Commonwealth War Graves Commission will open the CWGC Experience - a unique new visitor attraction that will shine a light on the work of the remarkable organisation at the heart of remembrance of the war dead. Located just south of Arras at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, 5-7 Rue Angele Richard, 62217 Beaurains, France, the CWGC Experience will give visitors an up close and intimate look behind the scenes at the teams who still work painstakingly to care for the fallen. From the story of how they still recover and rebury the dead today, to the skilled artisan craftsmen at work maintaining the world's most impressive and recognisable monuments and memorials.

As part of their Open Air Festival, the Bacon Theatre is showing Peter Jackson's acclaimed film *They Shall Not Grow Old*. It is on Wednesday 24 July in the Tuckwell Amphitheatre at 9.15pm. Tickets are £9 and £8 concessionary rate. For full details visit www.bacontheatre.co.uk.

Peter

Future branch events

Tuesday, 11 June

Ypres: Holy Ground of the British Empire
Professor Mark Connelly
National Star College at 7.30pm

Professor Connelly looks at the special place of Ypres in British commemoration 1914-39, the feelings of pilgrims, the role of the Ypres League and the rise of an Anglo-Belgian community as ex-service Imperial War Graves Commission gardeners married local women and started families.



Unveiling of the Menin Gate in July 1927

Tuesday, 9 July

Hartlebury VAD Hospital
Douglas Smith
National Star College at 7.30pm

In March 1919 Hartlebury VAD hospital closed its doors to patients for the last time. The records of such hospitals were destroyed after the war and with them the stories of the soldiers and nurses who lived and worked there, but not Hartlebury. The Commandant of the hospital, Frances Gibbons, had four autograph books which she preserved. Douglas was fortunate enough to be asked to do the research on the books and found that there were four more books in the possession of the Hive in Worcester. From the jumble of photographs and messages has emerged his book *Cheer Boys It's Hartlebury!* which tells the story of the 436 soldiers recorded. It contains their final messages, their poems and art work, the nurses who looked after them and the countless trips, entertainments and sports they took part in.

Private Charles Coldrick (8686) 2nd Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment

Charles Coldrick was born in Gloucester in 1889, one of twelve children born to Thomas and Mary Coldrick.

On 20 January 1908 he enlisted into the Gloucestershire Regiment, signing on for seven years with the colours and a further five in reserve.

His initial posting was to the 2nd Battalion and his transfer to the 1st Battalion coincided with its posting to India on 3 November 1908. He returned from India in September 1913 and remained in the UK until the battalion was posted to France on 13 August 1914.

He was wounded in his right side during the retreat from Mons and was in hospital at Wimereux on 31 October 1914. He returned to duty on 12 March 1915, having been posted to the 2nd Glosters. The Battalion was despatched to Salonika on 25 November 1915, arriving on 12 December.

Charles fell seriously ill in May 1916, suffering a form of stroke, which left him with a paralysed



left arm and leg and impaired speech and he was admitted to No 20 Stationery Hospital. His condition showed some improvement but there was still some movement impairment down his left side and he was sent to Valetta Military Hospital, Malta.

Eventually he was re-patriated to England and was admitted to 2nd Western General Hospital, Manchester on 28 July 1916. On 20 November 1916 he was discharged from the Army as 'no longer physically fit for war service'. A medical board ruled that his condition was the result of active service and climatic conditions

and he was granted a permanent disability pension.

He never fully recovered from falling ill in Salonika and died in London, aged 28, on 28 October 1918 and was returned to Gloucester for burial in the Old Cemetery at Tredworth.

(Graham Adams, in connection with the Gloucestershire War Graves Project)

Change to our programme

In a change to our programme the September talk will be *Sex and Morale in the BEF on the Western Front* by Dr Bruce Cherry.

There has been a collective amnesia recalling the sexual activities of the British soldier on the Western Front between 1914 and 1918. Perhaps there has even been a conspiracy of silence with some inclined to let sleeping dogs lie. That the soldier could find the time, inclination, and indeed partners to enjoy a sex life amidst the mud and carnage is often a revelation even to those

who are Western Front experts.

Noting that it 'takes two to tango', Bruce looks at the socio-demographics and motives of the women involved and the workings and economics of the 'Red Lamp' army-regulated brothels. Careful not to denigrate the memory of the men who served and died, and avoiding sensationalism or tabloid-style copy, Bruce paints a vivid picture of the seedier aspects of life behind the front while arguing its positive impact on morale.

Contact details

Cheltenham & Gloucester Branch President

Professor Peter Simkins MBE FRHistS

Branch Chairman

Peter Gill

Lansdown House, Pittville Circus Road,
Cheltenham GL52 2QE

07702 253 638 • chairman@cgwfa.org.uk

Branch Treasurer & Newsletter Editor

Hilary Jennings

4 St Stephen's Road, Cheltenham GL51 3AA
01242 243 927 • newsletter@cgwfa.org.uk

Website

www.cgwfa.org.uk

Facebook

[Cheltenham & Gloucester Branch of the Western Front Association](#)

Twitter

[@CGWFA](#)

The Western Front Association

BM Box 1914,
London WC1N 3XX
0207 118 1914

office@westernfrontassociation.com

www.westernfrontassociation.com



"When you go home, tell them of us and say, for your tomorrow, we gave our today."