



# The Dugout

Newsletter of the Dorset and South Wiltshire Branch of the  
Western Front Association (Registered Charity : 1142787)

[www.wfa-dorsetswilts.org.uk](http://www.wfa-dorsetswilts.org.uk)

## Parish Notes

### Chairman:

Martin Willoughby  
Telephone: 01929 553060  
cambrai@eastcote.go-plus.net

### Diary Dates 2012

Meetings:

#### Saturday, 9 May

*Peter Hart - Defeat at Gallipoli*

#### Saturday, 9 June

*Tim Tawney - The Zeebrugge Raid*

#### Saturday, 11 August

*To be confirmed*

#### Saturday, 1 September

*John Tozer - Allied submarine warfare in the Sea of Marmara*

#### Saturday, 13 October

*Chris Baker - The Abandoned Army - the Portuguese on the Western Front*

At Pimperne Village Hall, Blandford -  
2pm for 2.30pm start.

Further details on WFA website  
[www.westernfrontassociation.com](http://www.westernfrontassociation.com)

### Field Trips:

#### Friday 14 - Monday 17 September

Battlefield Tour - Tanks on the  
Somme

Further details from the Secretary,  
Judy Willoughby, or the Chairman

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### Newsletter Editor:

Helen Kerridge:  
baytnaa@btinternet.com

## Chairman's Chat

The year has literally flown by so far. The Branch has held a number of very well attended meetings and its first 'field trip' this year to the IWM which was very well subscribed. Our second field trip in June to Bletchley Park is also fully subscribed and our Battlefield tour in September is well up on previous years.

The monthly meetings continue with a range of interesting topics and speakers and thus it is easy to conclude that branch trustees have got it right. However we are not ones to rest on our laurels and the trustees who form the executive committee of the branch continue to work hard on your behalf to bring you a full schedule of events during each year. It is certain that this task doesn't get easier as time goes on. Organising the mix of speakers, topics, trips, publication of 'The Dugout', (the editor is always seeking articles – if you have that unpublished article you have been working on, please send it to the editor!), website maintenance and other events all takes time and dedication on the part of the committee. As a result of our newly gained charity registration we have been able to register for Gift Aid. Resources are always at a premium and the branch can gain a tangible benefit from HMRC which will in turn benefit the branch and its members. If you are a UK tax payer you can provide tangible support to the branch by signing up at the next meeting if you haven't already done so. May I also encourage you all to join our branch

membership scheme as members or associates? This will enable you to take advantage of the branch Corporate Membership of the Keep Military Museum in Dorchester and other schemes that will develop in the near future. Planning continues for the forthcoming series of Great War centenaries and we are close to having a firm way forward on our approach to marking these important occasions.

For the remainder of the year we can look forward to presentations on a diverse range of topics and of course our next field trip and battlefield tour.

Finally your continued support is vital to the long term future of the branch. In addition to the 'encouragements' above, please 'spread the word' tell people about us and bring a friend to our meetings. You will know that we are a forward looking, friendly branch providing an interesting, varied and high quality itinerary in a relaxed style.



Chairman and Branch Members at the  
National WFA AGM in Oxford

## School Competition 2011

This third annual competition attracted a wide range of interesting entries from two schools, Poole Grammar School and Portsmouth Grammar School, and more than sixty Branch members welcomed prize-winners, their parents and the Heads of History from each of the schools to the prize-giving at the meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> November.

The judges were delighted to see a wide range of types of entry: a model, artwork, a discovery pack, project files, a newspaper front page and essays.



First Prize Model - Scott Dodds (Poole Grammar School)

Equally pleasing was the range of topics chosen from our question booklet which is sent to the schools each year. This year's topics included: tanks, gas, women in the armed forces, conscientious objection, family history, the air war, and Jutland.

Whilst the competition allows for imaginative treatment of the subject chosen, the entrants must fulfil the criteria set by the judges. These reflect the nature of the competition as an historical research project and thus models and artwork require research folders to accompany them.

The judges were impressed with the creativity shown by the pupils and were particularly encouraged this year to be able to award prizes across the range of types of competition entries, thus rewarding a consistency of standard achieved in family history research, a model, artwork and an essay.

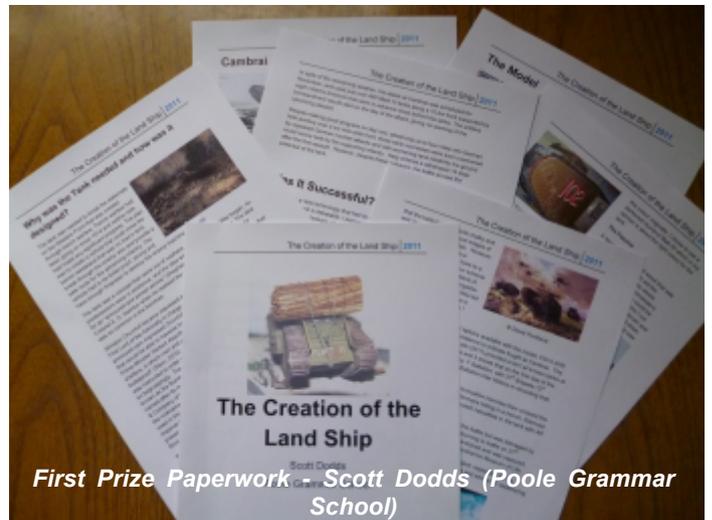
Five entries were awarded Highly Commended prizes and pupils were presented with the book *Private 12768-Memoir of a Tommy*. These entries included an imaginative series of letters from a soldier to his sweetheart in which the problems facing a conscientious objector were examined, a well-researched project on women in the armed forces and a study of gas presented in the shape of a gas-mask itself.

The judges awarded three second prizes of £25 and a copy of *Private 12768*, all to pupils from Portsmouth Grammar School.

Brandon Choi's striking painting was the result of his investigation into mustard gas. The use of colour, the depiction of blistered hands and the carefully observed gas mask, which was the main feature of this artwork, were all commented on by the judges.

Freya Derby's imaginative family history pack based on the story of her great-grandfather took the reader on a journey of discovery through a collection of facsimile documents. Freya also gave her study a more general historical dimension through her examination of how elements of the war may have contributed to shaping the subsequent history of her family as well as the families of others affected by the First World War.

Roxanne Goacher produced a promising and well-structured discussion essay dealing with the design quality of British and German aircraft. Her comparisons were analytical and her conclusion offered an opinion based on the evidence which she had included in the essay. When awarding prizes, the judges take into consideration the bibliography which the entrants provide and in Roxanne's case this showed wide-ranging research, with books as well as the ubiquitous websites consulted.



First Prize Paperwork - Scott Dodds (Poole Grammar School)

The outstanding overall winner in the 2011 competition was Scott Dodds from Poole Grammar School for his impressive model of a Mark IV tank, presented in a battle setting, accompanied by his meticulously researched study of the invention of the landship and his detailed explanation of the processes he went through to make his model tank look as authentic as possible. This won him the first prize award of £50, and a copy of both *Private 12768* and *The Old West Country Regiments - from Plassey to the Somme* by Jeremy Archer.

The prizes were presented by Colin Parr, curator of The Keep Military Museum in Dorchester. The Dorset and South Wiltshire Branch, WFA, is grateful to The Keep Military Museum and to the trustees of the Western Front Association for supporting the 2011 School Competition and to teachers Simon Powell and Simon Lemieux for encouraging their pupils to take part.

**David and Katherine Seymour  
Dorset & South Wilts Branch Trustees**



### A Cornish Doughboy

In May 2010 my wife and I were walking the South West Coast Path in Cornwall. We were staying on a farm at Germoe, near Helston. I took the opportunity



to visit the local war memorial situated on a hilltop above the village. When we returned home I wrote an article about the four Great War casualties named on the memorial, and this appeared in Issue 7 of The Dugout (January 2011).

One of those named was a Sampson Richards who emigrated to the United States in May 1913. It appeared that he had enlisted in the United States Army, but I was unable to discover any details about his war service.

In March this year (2012) Helen Kerridge received an email from Merrie Richards in the United States. Sampson Richards was her great-uncle and she was seeking a copy of one of the photographs that accompanied my article. Merrie has now provided some information about the young Cornishman who did indeed die fighting as a soldier in the United States Army.

Sampson Richards was born on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1894 in Germoe. His mother was Mary Ann Richards but his

father is unknown. Sampson had an elder brother, William John Richards, who emigrated to the United States in 1908. He also had a younger sister, Mary Richards, who remained in Germoe.

In 1913 William John Richards' wife and three children left Cornwall for the United States and Sampson followed them in May 1913 on the passenger ship 'Campania'. Sampson's mother had died in 1909, so the Mary Richards that I found quoted as his next of kin on his US immigration papers was probably his sister.

Sampson lived with his brother in Taft, near Bakersfield in California for a few years before moving north to Sanger, near Fresno, where he worked as a farmer.

The United States declared war on Germany on 6<sup>th</sup> April 1917 and Sampson Richards registered for the United States Draft at Fresno in June 1917. He was unmarried.

Sampson served in the 167<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment part of the US 42<sup>nd</sup> Division. He died on 14<sup>th</sup> October 1918 of wounds received earlier that day near Landres-et-Saint Georges in the Ardennes. In December 1918 the Bakersfield Echo published a letter received by Sampson's brother from First Lieutenant Ernest T. Bell, 167<sup>th</sup> Infantry, Co. H. The following is a summary:

"Corporal Richards was wounded on October 14<sup>th</sup> and died in a field hospital. He was respected by every officer and enlisted man in this organisation. It has never been my privilege to know a man who possessed such an unusual degree of coolness and courage as did your brother. Time after time he demonstrated that he was absolutely without fear, and his coolness and never failing cheerfulness, even in the most desperate conditions, always served as a stimulant and example to his comrades. At the time of his being wounded he was acting-sergeant and we have never had one more capable. On a previous occasion he had been recommended for the Distinguished Service Cross and received a personal letter of commendation from our divisional general. He has again been recommended for the DSC."



Sampson Richards was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

The citation reads, "The President of the United States...takes pride in presenting the Distinguished

Service Cross (Posthumously) to Corporal Sampson Richards (ASN: 97564), United States Army, for extraordinary heroism in action while serving with Company H, 167<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, 42<sup>nd</sup> Division A.E.F., near Landres-et-St. Georges, France, 14 October 1918. When his platoon had become scattered during an attack and his platoon commander had been killed, Corporal Richards, although himself seriously wounded, reorganized the platoon under heavy shell and machine-gun fire and turned the platoon over to the next in command ready for the assault before he permitted himself to be evacuated, thereby setting to his associates an example of utter disregard for danger and remarkable coolness and courage in the face of the enemy.”



Sampson Richards was buried at the Meuse-Argonne American Military Cemetery in Romagne, France.

### **Rod Arnold**

*[With thanks to Merrie Richards for the headstone photograph and new information]*

### Footnotes

- The Campania was a Cunard passenger ship built in 1893 and displacing 18,000 tons. She was converted to a seaplane carrier for the Royal Navy in 1915. A few days before the Armistice, HMS Campania sank during a gale in the Firth of Forth following a collision with the battlecruiser HMS Glorious.
- The US 42<sup>nd</sup> Division was known as the “Rainbow Division” because it comprised units from 26 states of the Union. The divisional Chief of Staff in 1918 was Douglas MacArthur.
- The Meuse-Argonne Cemetery is the largest American military cemetery in Europe with some 14,200 burials. Most are of soldiers who fell in the “47 Days”, the period from 26<sup>th</sup> September 1918 to the Armistice.



## **Collingwood Memorial & Service**

On the first Friday afternoon in June each year the traffic is brought to a halt on the road between Blandford Forum and Salisbury and, for a brief moment, silence descends on a small corner of an English field above the village of Pimperne so that an Act of Remembrance can take place. This two-minute silence is part of the annual service held at Collingwood Corner, the site of an obelisk-shaped memorial in a tiny garden near to Blandford Camp.

The polished marble memorial commemorates the officers and men of the Collingwood Battalion, Royal Naval Division, who gave their lives at Gallipoli on 4 June, 1915.

The 2011 service was taken by the chaplain of HMS Collingwood, the Royal Navy’s largest training establishment, which also provided the guard of honour. After the wreath-laying a lone piper played a lament which carried across the fields where the Collingwood Battalion had trained before setting off for the First World War campaign in which so many of them were lost.

In 2010, Stuart Adam, “a grandson of the RND”, whose family has had a long association with the memorial

and with organising the annual service of Remembrance, invited those with an interest in honouring the memory of the Collingwood Battalion and the Royal Naval Division to become founding members of the Friends of the Collingwood Memorial.

Subscriptions from Friends will be used to fund the maintenance of the memorial and the costs of the annual service so that both have a secure future.

On 3 June 2011, in hot sunshine, the hymns “Jerusalem”, “I Vow to Thee My Country” and the naval hymn “Eternal Father” were played by the Light Cavalry Band. Through this Act of Remembrance not only those of the Collingwood Battalion but also men



who lost their lives during World War One whilst serving with the Anson, Benbow, Drake, Hawke, Howe, Hood, Nelson and Royal Marine Battalions were remembered.

Several Dorset and South Wiltshire WFA Branch members have become Friends of the Collingwood Memorial, each with their personal reason for wanting to preserve the memory of those who were lost.

Branch member Robert Scott-Puttock has been attending the service for many years to ensure that one casualty is not forgotten and he takes up the story:

"It all began in 1940 at Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Between that city and London my Mother and I travelled to and fro fairly frequently, which meant changing one air-raid shelter for another. In each garden there



was the half-buried corrugated arrangement into which one would repair upon hearing the siren. It must have been dreadful for adults, but for a child it was an extremely exciting time. The sight of half the street missing upon emerging from the damp, earth-scented shelter in South London, etched itself upon an eager and alert young mind. Oh, would that it had been so eager and alert later in life!

The newspaper in the North East bore the headline "Durham man wins the VC." It was explained to me by an uncle, wearing an A.R.P. steel helmet, what a VC was. 2nd. Lieutenant Richard Annand of the Durham Light Infantry had won the Victoria Cross, that greatest of all awards for valour, by single handedly driving off the enemy by hurling hand grenades at them as they prepared to attack. Although wounded he again attacked the enemy with grenades the same evening. Added to this heroism was an extremely brave act of recovering his wounded batman, by means of a wheelbarrow, when he had been discovered missing. Over the years I checked with Whittaker's Almanack, in the surviving VC's section, that the now Captain Annand was still alive. A local hero indeed. In later years when the number of survivors barely filled half a page Capt. Annand's name was still there.

Having moved to Dorset from London in 1990 I attended the funeral of Admiral Godfrey Place VC in Sherborne Abbey. Surviving VCs and GCs attended. Following the ceremony I stood on the grass outside that superb edifice watching the distinguished visitors emerge. One elderly gentleman, wearing his Victoria Cross, came in my direction and said that he was waiting for his wife. He asked if I had come far to attend, and I replied that I had not. I asked where he was from and he replied, "Durham City," I said "You are Captain Annand!" He then looked surprised when I mentioned more local connections with Durham. When I told him that I was born at Chester-le-Street, County Durham we got into deeper discussion. He was, of course, a Durham man himself. So, there, outside Sherborne Abbey, I met my boyhood hero. He explained how he came down every year in June to lay a wreath on behalf of his late father who, as the adjutant of the Collingwood Battalion, had been killed at Gallipoli on the 4th June 1915. I learned that the remnants of the Battalion had been attached to the Hood Battalion in which my uncle, by marriage, Harry Bone MM, had served and survived the conflict.

I attended the next ceremony at Collingwood and was told of a wreath being laid on behalf of Able Seaman Askew, a 19 year-old lad born in Chester-le-Street, my own place of birth. Each year it had been funded by his niece living in County Durham and was laid by whosoever was available on the day. That dedicated man of arrangement and manipulation, Bless him!, Roy Adam MBE learned that I was a Durham lad and ever since I have had the honour and privilege of laying that wreath. I always remember, too, my Uncle Harry, of the Hood Battalion to which were assigned the survivors of Collingwood. To make the experience even more interesting, the wreath to be laid immediately before "mine" was that being carried by Capt. Richard Annand VC in memory of his father. Each year we stood and nattered about Durham until the ceremony began. Over the years that lovely man and his charming wife, Shirley, proved such sweet and interesting company that it was indeed a pleasure and a privilege to be there. Alas, the splendid pair is with us no more and now two nephews attend the ceremony and lay the wreath. These friendly and amusing relatives of the Annands carry on the fine tradition. I have made some local enquiries in County Durham but have not been able to contact any relatives of the young Able Seaman Askew who was born around 1896 in Chester-le-Street. However, he is not forgotten."

**Katherine Seymour**



## Conscription 1912

*I have always understood that Kitchener was one of the first people to realise that the war that broke out in 1914 would be prolonged, and that Britain would need to create a mass continental army. In fact more than two years before the outbreak of the Great War, a report in the Manchester Guardian pointed out that the price of an alliance with France could be the introduction of compulsory military service in Britain.*

*The following item appeared in the newspaper on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1912.*

**Rod Arnold**

### **“The Suggested French Alliance” Paris, May 28<sup>th</sup>**

The suggestion made in England that the Entente Cordiale should be converted into a definite Anglo-French alliance has naturally attracted much attention here. The tone of the press comments is on the whole one of friendly caution; an article by M. Gabriel Hanotaux, in the Figaro, is fairly representative of them. M. Hanotaux is not an Anglophile, and his policy when Minister of Foreign Affairs was hostile to England, but he seems to think that an alliance, if it were possible, would be preferable to the existing Entente, which he has always disliked on the ground that it is deceptive and leaves the mutual relations and engagements of the two countries in a state of ambiguity. But he recognises the possible dangers of such an alliance, and the writers who receive the suggestion with more cordiality than he make much the same reservations.

The “Temps” says it is for each country to examine the matter from its own point of view and carefully weigh the advantages and disadvantages of a formal treaty. Other papers of different political shades say much the same thing as the “Temps,” some of them more explicitly. The general conclusion to be drawn from the comments of the Parisian press is that apart from all political objections, France would welcome an alliance with England only if England were able to give her effective military support on the Continent in the event of war. And it seems to be the general opinion that in the present conditions England could not give such support. This means, in plain words, that a necessary condition of an Anglo-French alliance would be compulsory military service in England.

It is the fact that enthusiasm for the Franco-Russian alliance has considerably cooled that gains such support as there is in France for the idea of an alliance with England. Distrust of Russia is steadily increasing, and nobody believes the official assurances that the relations between the allies are as

cordial as ever. As usual, the press has been muzzled, and there has been little comment on the Russian intrigues against Turkey, but what little has become known has created a very bad impression. Moreover, the Russian alliance was made when the Nationalist movement was at its height. The decline of Nationalism has brought about a natural dislike of an alliance with a despotic power. There is at present in France a sincere and widespread sympathy with England, due to the recognition of the fact that England and France are the two great democratic Powers of Europe.

***This item appears by courtesy of Guardian News & Media Ltd 1912***



## **The Kipling Memorials at Hautrage**

The penultimate stop on our 2011 Battlefield Tour (the traditional “replenishment halt” excluded!) was Hautrage Military Cemetery near St. Ghislain on the outskirts of Mons.



A number of our party were gathered around three headstones commemorating men who died as prisoners of war, were originally buried in Marche German Cemetery, “but whose grave has since been lost.” There was some discussion amongst the group as to whether or not these men might also be commemorated on a Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) ‘Memorial to the Missing’ elsewhere as they had no known grave.

The village of Hautrage was in German hands for almost all of the First World War. The military cemetery was begun by the Germans for their own casualties in August and September 1914. In the summer

of 1918 they brought into the cemetery a large number of British 1914 graves from the surrounding battlefields and local cemeteries. These were mostly casualties from the 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry and 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry Divisions.



*J Fitchett - Leicestershire Regiment*

After the Armistice 24 British graves (mostly prisoners of war) were brought in from various other German cemeteries (including Marche), and 85 more German graves were brought in from the area to the south-west

of Mons. The cemetery now contains 235 British and Commonwealth burials and commemorations from the First World War and 537 German war graves.

In response to an enquiry, the CWGC state that the three men from the Marche "lost graves" are not listed on any other CWGC memorial. They explain that this particular headstone design is used when a casualty is known or believed to have been buried in a particular cemetery, but the grave has either been destroyed in later fighting, or the exact location could not be established.



*E T W Luther - Machine Gun Corps*

The CWGC add that headstones of this type are known as 'Kipling Memorials' because they include the quotation "Their Glory Shall Not Be Blotted Out" chosen by Kipling from the Apocrypha (Ecclesiasticus 44, verse 13).

Marche German Cemetery was situated in Belgian Luxembourg. The CWGC have provided a First World War map reference - Sheet 54.W.5.b.1.8. I suspect this location may be at Marche-en-Famenne in the Ardennes, south-west of Liege and north-west of Bastogne.

Can anyone confirm this please?

**Rod Arnold**

## Flanders 1981

Having a few days to spare after painting the house, I decided to visit the World War I battlefields of the Ypres Salient in Flanders, Belgium, and what better way to travel than by bike.

I cheated on the first leg of the journey, travelling to Dover by car with the bike on the roof. The sea crossing to Dunkerque was smooth but the ship docked a little later than scheduled.

I set off from the ferry terminal expecting to find the Ypres road easily. It proved to be otherwise. On reaching the town of Dunkerque I became hopelessly lost. Not knowing more than about half a dozen words of French I found communication very difficult, however, after much repetition of the name of my destination and accompanying gesticulations to several passers-by I was pointed in the right direction.

Shortly afterwards whilst peering over my left shoulder to make a U-turn, my front wheel caught in a train track, and I was pitched into the road, resulting in slight damage to myself but none to the bike. I pedalled off with my right elbow and knee smarting a bit. Then it rained. At the Franco-Belgian border village of Oost Cappel I made enquiries about accommodation, and was told that the nearest hotel was at Hond-schoote, which for me was in the wrong direction so I went on to Poperinge.

A few kilometres further on another temporary hold-up occurred in the shape of a puncture. At Poperinge I again enquired about accommodation and was told to try Talbot House (a Toc H establishment) - "Very English" my informant said, and so it proved to be. Rather weary by now I rang the bell/intercom at Talbot House and an English voice, that of the Warden, answered and said there was a room available. Thankfully I wheeled my bike inside and that night slept like a log. Next morning I pressed on and arrived in Ypres.

Dominating the town of Ypres and seen from many miles around, the Cloth Hall is a magnificent building, almost totally destroyed in World War I, but now faithfully restored to its former glory. On the ground floor is housed the 1914-1918 War Museum - an impressive collection of militaria. I found a small hotel and booked in, surprisingly, the only guest in the high season.

I then started my tour of the battlefields commencing with the northern sector of the Ypres Salient, crossing the Yser/Ypres Canal to Pilkem, Langemark and Passchendaele. The following day I toured the eastern area beginning at the Menin Gate (where each evening the traffic stops whilst buglers play the 'Last

Post'), down past Hell Fire Corner to Polygon Wood and Hill 62 (where some British trenches and shell-torn trees still exist). Then on to Hill 60 which saw some the fiercest fighting, with mining and counter-mining by British and German troops.

Returning to Ypres that day I stopped at Zillebeke Lake which is formed by an earth bund on the lower slopes of Messines Ridge, and was built in mediaeval times to provide a source of fish for the local inhabitants. It is now a boating and fishing centre and also boasts a cycle museum, which unfortunately was closed during my visit.

On the last full day of my tour, I visited the southern sector of the Salient including Wytschaete, Messines, and Ploegsteert, ('Plug Street' to our soldiers) and saw several mine craters. These were part of a system of 21, of which 19 were blown up by the British in 1917, to destroy the German defences. One mine was struck by lightning and blew up during a storm in 1955. And the last one? Well, it is still buried but no one knows exactly where. One crater is 250 ft. in diameter and 40 ft. deep, created by 91,000 lbs. of ammonal.

Sadly in the battle area there are a large number of British military cemeteries, some with a small number of graves and others like Tyne Cot, which contains over 11,000. All of them are beautifully kept by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. My last look at Messines Ridge was from the top of Kemmel Hill, which for that area in Flanders is very high at 156 metres, but the view was hazy so I descended and made for Poperinge for an overnight stay.

One very good feature of cycle touring in Belgium is the provision of cycle paths. These exist on all but minor country roads but have the disconcerting habit of changing sides of the road, so one is suddenly faced with having to cross the traffic. Another hazard is the use of cycleways by mopeds, some of which are moving very fast.

On the return journey I took the road from Poperinge to Dunkerque, some part of which I inadvertently spent on a motorway, which was quite alarming. However, I arrived safely at the ferry terminal and wheeled my faithful steed on to the ship where it was secured on the car deck by one of the crew. At Dover I collected my car and after remounting the bike on to the roof rack, drove the 200 miles back to Weymouth.

**Alan Watts**



## **The Cheshire Regiment at Audregnies**

Our 2011 Branch Battlefield Tour covered the Battle of Mons and the BEF's retreat as far as St. Quentin. The itinerary included a halt just outside Audregnies to visit the site where 9<sup>th</sup> Lancers and 4<sup>th</sup> Dragoon Guards charged advancing German infantry on 24<sup>th</sup> August 1914. The stand of 1<sup>st</sup> Bn. Norfolk Regiment and 1<sup>st</sup> Bn. Cheshire Regiment in the area between Elouges and Audregnies was also described.

The days of British infantry regiments carrying colours into battle were over by 1914 but, as one of guides pointed out, the Cheshires had a miniature regimental colour at Audregnies.

The colour, one-quarter the size of the real Regimental Colour, was made by the wives of officers of 1<sup>st</sup> Bn. Cheshire Regiment in 1911 when the battalion was serving in Ireland. The colour was used as the trophy awarded annually to the highest scoring company on the firing range.

In 1914 it was taken to France with the battalion and carried by a drummer.

On 24<sup>th</sup> August 1914, the Cheshires and Norfolks, supported by the cavalry and two artillery batteries were tasked with covering the retreat of 5<sup>th</sup> Division. Heavily outnumbered the British force held their positions through most of the day. The time came for them to withdraw, but three messages sent to the Cheshires failed to arrive.

The battalion fought on until, broken into small groups they were overwhelmed and forced to surrender. This action alone cost the Cheshires 800 casualties, dead, wounded and missing.

When it became clear that it was at risk of capture, the drummer hid the colour in a barn under some straw. The local priest later arranged for it to be moved to the school where it was bricked up in the loft. It stayed hidden in the village throughout the war. After the Armistice in 1918, a party from 1<sup>st</sup> Bn. Cheshire Regiment visited Audregnies to retrieve the colour from its faithful custodians.

The battalion was also presented with a wooden cross made by a Belgian priest to commemorate their stand in 1914.

Today the miniature colour and the Audregnies Cross may be seen at The Cheshire Military Museum in Chester.

**Rod Arnold**



**A new addition to our illustrious newsletter - a chance to test your Great War knowledge. No prizes and the answers are at the end. Editor**

### Great War Quiz

1. Which French general was known as "The Fighting Friar"?
2. Which battlefield was the first in the history of warfare to be surveyed in its entirety by aerial photographic reconnaissance?
3. What was a "Chauchat"?
4. Who wrote "Testament of Youth"?
5. Name the flagship of the British Grand Fleet at the Battle of Jutland in 1916.
6. What name was used for the strategic bombing arm of the RAF in June 1918?
7. Which British tank made its debut in France on 28<sup>th</sup> March 1918?
8. Which German cruiser did HMAS Sydney drive ashore on 9<sup>th</sup> November 1914?
9. What symbol appeared on the badge of the British 33<sup>rd</sup> Division?
10. Which Yorkshire man was the only English professional footballer to win the VC?

### Book Reviews



#### **Thirteen Days - Diplomacy and Disaster: The Countdown to the Great War by Clive Ponting**

**Pimlico, 2003. Paperback.  
ISBN 0-7126-6826-8**

Why did the Great War happen? In 1914 Europe had been at peace for forty years and every diplomatic dispute had been resolved by negotiation. Clive Ponting questions the traditional view that the outbreak of war in 1914 was inevitable and that the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand was "no more than the action that lit the fuse that set off the conflagration."

He acknowledges that there were tensions caused by the alliance structure, economic and imperial rivalries, and a developing arms race, but argues that these factors did not mean a general European war was preordained.

Ponting suggests that it was the situation in the Balkans brought about by the wars of 1912 and 1913 and the struggle for influence in the area by Russia and Austria-Hungary that led to war in 1914..."the 'Third Balkan War' rapidly escalated into a European conflict."

Starting with a description of the events in Sarajevo on Sunday, 28<sup>th</sup> June 1914, the book covers the initial reaction in Europe. An analysis of developments in European capitals during the period 29<sup>th</sup> June to 22<sup>nd</sup> July (when the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum was served on Serbia) follows.

The core of the book tells the story of the thirteen days (23<sup>rd</sup> July – 4<sup>th</sup> August) that led from peace to the outbreak of the war that over four years destroyed the Old Europe. Ponting moves between the capital cities of Europe describing the day by day diplomatic and military manoeuvring as the situation spiralled out of control.

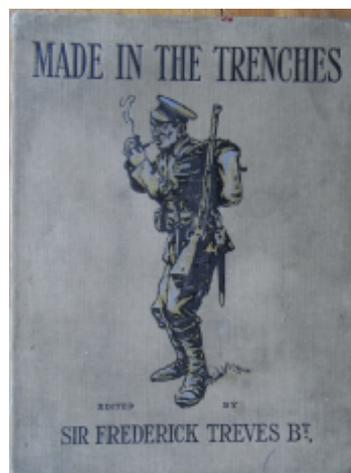
It appears that at one stage there was a proposal for a conference to negotiate a settlement that had both British and German support. I am left wondering that if Britain's inclination to steer a 'neutral' course until very late on in the crisis, contributed significantly to the outbreak of the Great War.

If you are interested in the diplomatic background to the outbreak of the Great War this book is well worth reading.

**Rod Arnold**

#### **Made in the Trenches Edited by Sir Frederick Treves Bt**

#### **What is a Dugout?**



Published in 1916, profits from the sale of *Made In The Trenches*, a book of "articles and sketches contributed by soldiers" were to be used towards providing an endowment fund for the new "Star and Garter" Home for totally disabled soldiers and sailors which was then under construction in

Richmond. Here, from the "Encyclopedia of Military Terms" included in the book, is one definition:

**"DUG-OUT** – A hole in the ground with a lid on. There are three kinds of dug-outs at the front. The "Bungalow" for Officers, the "Love in a Cottage" for Sergeants, and the "Noah's Ark" for privates. They are built for men, mice, rats, and cats to sleep in. A dug-out is decorated with jam, cheese, photographs and fleas."

**Katherine Seymour**



**The Best 500 Cockney War Stories**  
**"Arf a Mo Kaiser"**

**Amberley Publishing at £12.99**  
**ISBN number is 978-1-84868-424-9**



This 223 page volume of short, humorous cockney war stories from the First World War is an excellent read. The stories are gathered together in five sections: Action, Lull, Hospital, High Seas and the final section is entitled Here and there.

The book is a reprint of a volume that first appeared in 1921 when the stories were fresh in the minds of those

recounting them. All of the stories have a rich vein of Cockney humour running through them with many a good example of Tommy Atkins coming out on top of a situation or having the final word, be it against the enemy or on occasions their own 'Top Brass'.

One of the many strengths of this book lies in the descriptions in some of the stories. The scene is well painted and it makes the stories of comedy in the face of adversity even more vivid and striking. In addition the book is lavishly illustrated throughout with sketches and pencil drawings by an artist called Bert Thomas. Each illustration beautifully captures the essence of the story it accompanies. A further quality of the book is that it portrays the war from the soldier's point of view; nearly all of the stories are retold by non

commissioned officers and men. The tales written by the officers are about the soldiers they commanded.

The stories take place in every theatre of operations in the First World War. We read about our Londoners facing hardship and danger on retreat from Mons, through to the various battles on the Western Front. We follow our authors through the sufferings in Mesopotamia, Palestine and Africa and in peril on the high seas.

Like all tall tales these stories should perhaps be taken with a pinch of salt, or bear in mind that the story improves each time it is told over a pint of beer but it must be assumed that there is a core truth running through all of these recollections; in some of the stories there is enough detail to enable the reader to research the event or death that is portrayed. In most cases the name, unit and address of the serviceman offering up the story is provided.

An excellent example of one of the stories goes as follows:

"In the confused fighting round Guedecourt in 1916 a machine gun section occupied a position in a maze of trenches, some of which led towards the German line. The divisional pioneer battalion was the Monmouthshire Regiment, all of whose men were Welsh and for the most part spoke Welsh.

A Ration party of the MGC had gone back one night and had been absent some time, when two members rushed into the position, gasping: "We took a wrong turning! Walked into Jerry's line! They've got Smiffy – and the rations!"

We had hardly got over the shock of this news when Smiffy came staggering up, dragging the rations and mopping a bleeding face at the same time cursing the rest of the ration party.

"Luv us Smiffy, how did you get away? We thought the Germans had got you for sure!"

"Germans", gasped Smiffy. "GERMANS! I thought that was the Monmouths!"

S W Baxter late 86th MGC 110 Bishopsgate, EC2

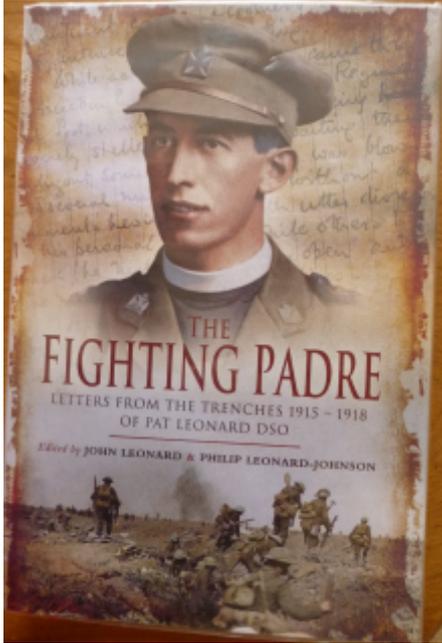
I thoroughly recommend this book.

**Nick Saunders**



**The Fighting Padre  
Letters From The Trenches 1915-1918  
Of Pat Leonard DSO  
Edited by John Leonard  
and Philip Leonard-Johnson**

**Pen and Sword Military**



If you hadn't intended to read yet another book of letters from the First World War then let me try to persuade you to change your mind and get hold of a copy of "The Fighting Padre". My initial reason for reading this book was to try to gain some insight into the work of a chaplain at the Front as part of my research into the life of the Reverend Eric Read, who was killed whilst attached to the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, the Dorset Regiment. However, I soon found that I became interested in Pat Leonard's letters for their own sake and was enjoying getting to know their author through their informative and often very witty style.

Known as "the Fighting Padre" because he was a proficient boxer, Pat Leonard served as a chaplain in France and Belgium, including on the Somme, from September 1915, first with the King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment, transferring late in 1917 to the Royal Flying Corps. In his letter of 18<sup>th</sup> August 1916 he told, with his usual humour, of some of the many tasks he was called on to perform:

"On active service the Chaplain is jack of all trades, and has a finger in every pie – par exemple I try to run the Mess, I censor letters, I organize concerts, sports and football matches – I keep saying "I". I should say "we" for all chaplains are the same. It is not that we have any more experience or skill than anyone else, but simply that we have, or are supposed to have, more time. On Monday, I tried my hand at a new game – namely judging a Transport Competition. What I know about transport might be written easily on a threepenny bit, but nothing daunted I inspected mules and harness and wagons and the rest, and tried to look as if I had been doing it all my life."

One of the roles which Pat Leonard took on – his attitude to which shows his deep concern for his

men's physical as well as moral and spiritual welfare – was managing a canteen.

"We have got a big dugout in one of the support trenches, fitted up with shelves, well-stocked with cigarettes and tinned salmon, cake & Shinio; in fact all that a soldier wants. From there each day we send hawkers round the front line, soldiers carrying trays of various smokes & foods, who also sell the daily papers to the troops up there." (Monday 11<sup>th</sup> September 1916)

By December 1916, Leonard had acquired a four-wheeled baker's van for his brigade canteen which also served as a mobile shop, doing the rounds of the men in their billets, ringing a bell as it went! On transferring from the King's Own to become chaplain to four squadrons of the RFC in November 1917, Pat Leonard's letter home includes this wistful reflection: "[I] especially regret having to leave before I had got into working order the chipped-potato shop which I had just started in connection with the Brigade Canteen."

Shortly before his death in 1963, Pat Leonard led his last spiritual Retreat. A participant wrote "... his humour, his love, his joy in believing penetrated through all he said." These qualities shine through his letters from the Front too, and he was clearly held in high esteem by those to whom he ministered. In his letter of 14<sup>th</sup> January 1917, after describing the difficulties he had faced in improvising a church from a small marquee in a rest area near Halloy to which the Brigade had just marched, Pat Leonard was very moved by the support the soldiers showed him.

"I suggested then that those who didn't want to go to church should take a pace to the rear, and was frightfully pleased when the vast majority stood firm, so we simply packed them in as tight as we could....and we had one of the very best Services I can ever remember having."

From time to time, Quiet Days, for meditation, are arranged for the chaplains, for whom too often "the spiritual side is crowded out". One of these days, in March 1916, was held at Talbot House and thus it was that Pat Leonard's association with Toc H began. After the Great War, he and "Tubby" Clayton were the driving force behind this well-known organisation as it grew world-wide and Pat Leonard became chaplain to "Mark IV" in Manchester, one of the hostels set up in cities for men who were seeking work.

Sharing in all the ups and downs, the hardships and triumphs of the fighting forces he served with, immensely caring, with a keen appreciation of the humour in a situation – often at his own expense – Pat Leonard's letter of 28<sup>th</sup> April 1916 gives a snapshot of

the “strange life” he led. He made a point of writing because, along with the troops he ministered to, he was to move the next day. The week so far had included a Brigade entertainment featuring a concert party, the Divisional Band and “some very spirited boxing jumbled together”, the Final of the Brigade Football Cup, and preparations for an open-air concert to be held that evening. After the football match, Pat Leonard’s next task was to bury a Gunner. He found that there was no grave ready and had to use his “best French” to borrow the necessary tools and supervise the digging so that this soldier, “who had died of heart failure after running a race on a strenuous training of French beer” could be interred.

These letters have been edited by two of Pat Leonard’s family and it is to their credit that they have avoided unnecessary commentary and have allowed the war to unfold for us just as he experienced it. I warmly recommend this book.

### **Katherine Seymour**



#### **New from the Internet**

An exciting new European project was announced in November 2011 to bring together documents and images from all over the continent and make them available on the Internet.

The British Library together with 12 European partners, including national libraries in Rome, Berlin, Paris and Copenhagen have joined forces on this three year project, which will be completed in time for the commemoration of the centenary of the First World War.

Over 400,000 documents are to be made available include books, newspapers, trench journals, maps, posters, pamphlets as well as records from Germany of captured British servicemen.

[www.europeana-collections-1914-1918.eu](http://www.europeana-collections-1914-1918.eu)



Nursing Records have recently been added to The National Archives documents on-line. The records cover the period 1902 - 1922 and contain huge amount of information. The records are free to search but cost £3.50 to download. These can be found at:

[www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documentsonline/nursing.asp](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documentsonline/nursing.asp)

Military Historian Paul Reed has launched a new photograph website where over the next few years he will showcasing many of the thousands of photographs he has collected. The website can be found at: <http://greatwarphotos.com/>



The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) website has been given a major redesign. The database can now be searched using different criteria including regiment, cemetery and service number. [www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org)



The Imperial War Museum (IWM) had also revamped its website bringing half a million new items from the archives to view, including images, film clips and hundreds of articles. The IWM in London has also secured a £4.5M grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to expand its WW1 galleries in time for the 1914 Centenary



And finally:

The National Archives have launched their new on-line catalogue and digital document delivery system under the name ‘Discovery’.

The new system is a simpler system than its predecessor, which will run in tandem for the time being. A basic Discovery search requires just a key word or catalogue reference; there is also an advance search facility and the option to filter out unwanted terms in the results.



#### **Quiz Answers**

- [1] General De Castelnau – because of his strong Catholic faith;
- [2] Neuve Chapelle in 1915;
- [3] A French 8mm light machine-gun;
- [4] Vera Brittain;
- [5] HMS Iron Duke;
- [6] The Independent Air Force;
- [7] Medium Mark A or “Whippet”;
- [8] SMS Emden;
- [9] Double three domino;
- [10] Donald Sampson Bell.