



CHELTENHAM & GLOUCESTER BRANCH of THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

Number 193

March 2024

Welcome!

We have been asked if we would like to have a stand at the Armed Forces Day on Saturday 29 June in Gloucester Docks to publicise our branch and events. Adrian Smith has generously offered to arrange and organise this on our behalf but could do with a couple of fellow WFA branch members to help on the day - effectively on the Saturday afternoon. The event runs from 12.45 to 5pm so any help, even an hour or two, would be just great! We can hand out branch literature, have our pull up banner on display and also promote the CGWFA website and upcoming meetings. If you can help please let me or Adrian know.

I hope that all branch members appreciate the wonderful publication *The Sentinel* that we produce three times a year. A great deal of hard work and effort goes into the production of this, but it fully stands on the articles that we are able to include in it. Unfortunately we are again running short of material. Please, if you can provide an article of any length that would be of interest to our branch members, then we would be most appreciative. If you can help please get in touch with myself or Hilary.

In 2016, 22 deteriorating crosses were identified in a sorry condition in Cheltenham

Cemetery. A fundraising initiative was initiated to conserve the crosses along with a really clever initiative; the pupils of Pittville School researched the story behind the names on the crosses with 17 of them being identified as local Cheltenham men, and we now know the background of each of these brave men including their family circumstances, where they lived, pre-war employment and where they fell.

The Cheltenham Civic Society are determined to give these crosses and the stories behind the crosses, a final resting place and the Cheltenham Borough Council Cemeteries and Crematorium Department has identified the former groundsmen's hut for the proposed exhibition. The Civic Society are now trying to raise £10,000 to convert this building and make it a lasting memorial. I believe that this is an excellent cause for our branch to support and feel we should send them a small donation - they have told me that they're close to their target. If there are any objections to this then please let me know, or if you would like to make your own donation and would like details of how to do so, similarly drop me an email.

Peter

Future branch events

Tuesday, 9 April

The 21st Division on the Somme 1916

Dr Derek Clayton

The Ed Shed at 7.30pm



The story of three ultimately successful assaults during the Battle of the Somme. On 1 July, the Division captured and held its first objectives, resulting in the fall of the village of Fricourt the following day. On 14 July, the 110th Brigade stormed the Bazentin Ridge, capturing the woods and the village. In September, they played their part in the latter stages of the Battle of Flers-Courcelette, culminating in the capture of the village of Gueudecourt.

Tuesday, 14 May

The Invisible Corps

Roy Larkin

The Ed Shed at 7.30pm

Roy's talk looks at the vital part that the Army Service Corps played during the Great War through the use of mechanical transport. A story of growth, evolution, inter-service rivalry and meddling civilians. The talk is brought to life with numerous period photographs.



Lieutenant Cyril William Winterbotham 1/5th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment

Cyril William Winterbotham may have been destined for a prominent role on the political stage, had not the Great War intervened.

He was born in Cheltenham on 27 February 1887, one of seven children born to James Batten Winterbotham, a solicitor and Alderman of the town, and his wife Eliza. Educated at Cheltenham College and Lincoln College, Oxford University he took up law as a profession, becoming a member of the Middle Temple and was later called to the Bar, practising in the Oxford Circuit. In 1913 he was selected as the prospective Liberal Party Parliamentary candidate for the Cirencester constituency and was considered to have a promising political future.

Following the outbreak of war, he took part in recruiting meetings and in September 1914 was granted a commission as a Second Lieutenant in the 1/5th Battalion of the Gloucestershire Regiment. During his time as an officer in the Glosters he found time to write poetry and had a collection of poems published in 1916.

In June 1915 he was promoted to Lieutenant. For a few months in 1916 he was attached to 143 Infantry Brigade (48 (South Midland) Division) before returning to the 1/5th Glosters on 14 August 1916, where he assumed command of 'C' Company. The Somme Offensive was now into its second month and on 25 August the battalion moved into the front line.

On 27 August the battalion mounted a two company attack, with a further one in support on the German position known as Skyline Trench, which was south west of Mouquet Farm. 'C' and 'B' Companies were in the lead, with 'A' following up in support. Following an intense artillery barrage the lead companies entered the German trenches and overcoming stern



resistance Skyline Trench was captured, consolidated and held. However, this was not without cost as the battalion suffered almost 120 casualties. Lieutenant Winterbotham was one of four officers killed in the action.

A chaplain wrote to his mother in the days following his death stating that he had been buried in a captured German trench and a wooden cross marked the grave. The grave was subsequently lost and Lieutenant Winterbotham is named on the Thiepval Memorial. He is also commemorated on the Cheltenham War Memorial, that of the College and other memorials in the town. He was initiated as a Freemason in 1910 and his name appears on the Roll of Honour of Freemasons of Gloucestershire inside Gloucester Cathedral.

Graham Adams

Contact details

Cheltenham & Gloucester Branch President

Professor Peter Simkins MBE FRHistS

Branch Chairman

Peter Gill

Pen Y Bryn, Bull's Hill, Walford,

Ross-on-Wye HR9 5RH

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

membership@westernfrontassociation.com

www.westernfrontassociation.com



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