



CHELTENHAM & GLOUCESTER BRANCH of THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

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Welcome!

We were recently contacted for help about a soldier, Arthur Fowler, whose grave lies in St James Churchyard, Charfield. A small biography which Graham Adams had researched was picked up from our website by a local group who are attempting to get a proper memorial for this man who died in 1916. More information can be found on their crowdfunding page and they would be very appreciative of any financial support if you were interested in doing so. Their page is: <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/funding-grave-marker-for-young-ww1-soldier>

I am delighted to congratulate one of our members, Richard Farrimond, who many will remember for the wonderful talk he gave us last year. Richard recently won the Chapple Prize awarded by the Society for Army Historical Research and the National Army Museum, for the best book by a first time author on the history of the Armies of the United Kingdom and the British Empire/Commonwealth. His book is about Field Marshal Birdwood - *Birdie More than Soul of Anzac: Field Marshal Lord Birdwood of Anzac and Totnes, 1865-1951*.

Len Evans, who is organising the Orders and Medals Research Society Day at Swindon Village Hall on July 6, has asked if members could indicate if they intend to come to this event on the day. It is free of charge unless you want to have a buffet lunch, and will be an interesting day for military history buffs. Anyone wishing to attend can book in through Len. Ken Beedon will be manning a CGWFA stand and selling our book stock on behalf of the branch. So if you are having a clear out of books, do bring them to a meeting so they can be taken and included in the sale.

Finally, a reminder about Armed Forces Day on June 29 in Gloucester Docks. We will have a stand which Adrian Smith has generously offered to arrange and organise on our behalf but could do with a couple more fellow WFA branch members to help on the day - effectively on the Saturday afternoon. The event runs from 1245 to 1700hrs so any help, even an hour or two would be just great! There will be various events during the afternoon including a BBMF flypast (weather permitting). If you can help please let me or Adrian know.

Future branch events

Tuesday, 11 June

Escapers All

Richard Lloyd

The Ed Shed at 7.30pm

Richard tells the stories of officers and men who escaped from German captivity 1914-18. He will cover the preparation and planning of escapes, the consequences of failure, the escaping 'experience' and those who completed 'home runs'.



*Exposed tunnel at
Holzminden POW camp*

Tuesday, 9 July

The Last Naval Hero

Lieutenant Commander Roy Smart

The Ed Shed at 7.30pm

The extraordinary story of David, 1st Earl Beatty. Blessed with the Nelson touch, a matinee-idol image, and a ruthless and charismatic personality, Beatty rose with meteoric speed from Cadet to First Sea Lord and to Statesman.

This talk discusses his rapidly increasing fame and fortune, his marriage to an opulent, hedonistic American socialite, Ethel, and his role as a national hero. It examines his central and controversial part in the greatest naval battle (Jutland) and, later, the greatest naval surrender (Der Tag) as well as his 'Downton Abbey' life-style of marital strife and scandal.

Captain John Lloyd William Howard Abell

11th Battalion, Cheshire Regiment

Lloyd (his preferred name) Abell was born at Leckhampton on 18 November 1887. He was the son of Howard C Abell and his wife Eleanor, who died two days after his birth. They lived at Marlborough House, Witcombe.

After being educated at Crypt Grammar School, Gloucester, Lloyd undertook a teacher training course and spent two years at schools in the Bristol area. In 1909 he took up a post at Wallasey Grammar School, Cheshire, heading up one of the junior year groups.

Upon the outbreak of war Lloyd enlisted in the Cheshire Regiment and was posted to the 11th (Service) Battalion together with his colleague and friend Thomas Murray. Both were to be killed in action with the Cheshires on the same day.

Lloyd was commissioned on 24 September 1914 and was appointed Temporary Captain on 12 July 1915. The 11th Cheshires went to the Western Front on 26 September 1915 and were deployed at Ploegsteert Wood, Strazeele and the Arras sector before transferring south to the Somme at the end of June 1916.

On 24 June Lloyd was reprimanded by the GOC of 25 Division for writing 'a letter of an insubordinate character' to his CO: evidently connected with a transfer application.



The 1 July 1916 saw the battalion located in Martinsart Wood and on 3 July it was called into action. The location was just north of the Leipzig Salient, south of Thiepval and north east of the village of Authuille.

At 6.20am the Border Regiment, to the left of the Cheshires, attacked the German positions. This left their right flank exposed and the lead companies of the 11th Cheshires immediately advanced over No Man's Land in what was described as perfect order.

Unfortunately, the German wire in the area was uncut and the attack was stopped about 50 yards in front of the German lines by withering machine gun fire. The battalion CO, advancing with a reserve company, was killed and the Adjutant, now acting CO, ordered a withdrawal. Of the 20 Officers and 657 Other Ranks who had entered the trenches prior to the attack only six Officers and 350 Other Ranks came out the following day. Every company commander had been killed and this included Captains Abell and his friend Murray.

Their remains were never located and they are commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial and likewise on the Kingsway Academy (formerly Wallasey Grammar School) War Memorial. Lloyd Abell's name also features on the Brockworth and Witcombe War Memorial.

Graham Adams

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