



CHELTENHAM & GLOUCESTER BRANCH of THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

Number 201

November 2024

Welcome!

The date of our annual general meeting has been decided upon as being Tuesday 26 November at 7.30pm and once more Paul Haigh has generously offered to host at his home in Hatherley, Cheltenham. All are of course welcome, but please let me know that you will be attending so that we can cater for numbers. Amongst the issues that we will be debating will be the entrance donation for meetings and of course we shall be electing in new committee members including Simon Shephard as the proposed new branch chairman from January 2025.

Next month is of course our Christmas meeting and as ever I'm after a couple of ten minute presentations - please let me know if you would like to entertain us with a (however tenuously) related talk on the Great War. Also, of course we will be holding a raffle, so any donations will be very gratefully accepted.

Cheltenham & Gloucester Branch In Memoriam

With love, fondness and respect the Cheltenham & Gloucester Branch of the Western Front Association wish to remember those members that have now passed:-

Fred Ashmore
Scott Balchin
Cecil Ballantine
Cyril Bleasdale
David Earle
Christopher Fear
Hilary Haigh
Colin Hardy
Ken Henderson
Martin Middlebrook
Geoffrey North
David Rogers
David Timms

Peter

Future branch events

Tuesday, 26 November
Annual General Meeting
22 Hatherley Court Road,
Cheltenham GL51 3AG
at 7.30pm

Tuesday, 10 December
Members' Evening
The Ed Shed at 7.30pm

For our December meeting we draw on the expertise and knowledge of our branch members. We will have a small selection of ten-minute length presentations on a Great War related subject of their choice.

After the presentations we hope you will stay to enjoy a glass of wine and a mince pie. Also, we will have our Christmas raffle and any prizes you can donate will be very welcome.

Tuesday, 14 January 2025
*The Explosion in Halifax, Nova Scotia,
December 1917*
John Stanyard
The Ed Shed at 7.30pm

This talk examines the collision between the SS *Imo* and the SS *Mont Blanc* and the resulting explosion of three kilotonnes of TNT, guncotton etc. With at least 2000 dead and 9000 injured, it was the biggest man-made explosion the world would see until the atomic bomb.



Private Oliver Raymond Bartlett (1803) 1/6th Battalion, Welsh Regiment

Oliver Raymond Bartlett was born in Gloucester on 19 February 1895; one of thirteen children born to Henry Richard Bartlett and his wife Emma. In 1911 the family lived in Jersey Road, in the Barton district of Gloucester and Oliver was employed by the Midland Railway, as an assistant boiler washer. In July 1913 he joined the Great Western Railway as an engine cleaner and in December of that year he transferred to the company's Aberavon Depot as a fireman.

Whilst living in Gloucester he had served as a Territorial with the Gloucestershire Regiment but upon relocating to South Wales he continued his Territorial membership with the 1/6th Battalion of the Welsh Regiment.

He was called up for Army service in August 1914 and embarked for France on 29 October of that year, landing at Le Havre. The battalion was to remain at Le Havre, employed on Line of Communication Duties, until early July 1915, when it was posted to Wizernes for training and absorption into 84 Brigade, 28 Division. Thereafter deployment was within the Ypres Salient until 27 September 1915, when it was despatched to the Loos Sector.

The Battle of Loos had opened on 25 September 1915. To the north of the village of Loos, the



centre point of a square of land bounded by Cambrin, Haisnes, Hulluch and Vermelles was a very strong German keep like defensive position, known as the Hohenzollern Redoubt. A few weeks prior to the battle the Germans had dug two fire trenches in front of the Redoubt and incorporated them into the front line. The British named these 'Big Willie' and 'Little Willie,' after the Kaiser and the Crown Prince.

This was to be the scene of intense fighting into October, with these trenches being taken, lost, and retaken repeatedly. It was during this period of close fighting that Private Bartlett was killed in action on 2 October. The 28th Division lost 146 Officers and 3,231 Other Ranks killed, wounded or missing in the fighting around the Hohenzollern Redoubt.

Private Bartlett's body was never found and the site of the Hohenzollern Redoubt was the scene of much mining in 1916. He is commemorated on the Memorial to the Missing of the Battle of Loos at Dud Corner and on the Gloucester City War Memorial. His name and photograph are also included in the database *Fallen Railwaymen* maintained by the National Railway Museum.

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.co.uk

Branch Treasurer & Newsletter Editor

Hilary Jennings

4 St Stephen's Road, Cheltenham GL51 3AA

01242 243 927 • newsletter@cgwfa.co.uk

Website

www.cgwfa.co.uk

Facebook

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

X

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."