



CHELtenham & GLOUCESTER BRANCH of THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

Number 205

March 2025

Welcome!

I am sure that all who attended February's meeting will agree that the Chairman's performance was a significant improvement of my previous efforts. I am therefore very grateful to Bob for stepping in at the last moment to covering for me whilst I dealt with some short notice family issues. Unfortunately, they remain unresolved and therefore I am unable to join you this evening.

As many of you will know the team that have delivered our Summer BBQ are no longer able to support us. Currently we have scheduled a full evening talk for our August meeting. However, several of you have told me how much they enjoy the BBQ evening and have asked if we can look for another firm to deliver it. I am more than happy to investigate doing this and would therefore welcome any suggestions as to a suitable catering firm to contact.

Please can I also take this opportunity to canvas whether you would prefer the BBQ to be on the same night as a lecture (noting that this year we may need to make some adjustments to achieve that) or would you prefer it to be a purely social event?

Likewise, is there any preference for holding it in July or August

As many of you may be discovering I continue to have problems distributing the email notifications of our monthly meetings. Please bear with me as I try to resolve this issue. If you are received the notification more than once or not. Receiving it at all please could you let me know as it will help me to try and narrow down the issue!

I am afraid that I have not had a chance to write to all of you formally regarding the changes to our annual subscription fees. I will endeavour to do so before the end of the month. In the meantime, for those of you that are unaware of these changes please read last month's newsletter on our website in which I provide a brief outline about them and the actions we are asking you to take to make them happen.

I hope tonight is a fabulous meeting and I must say I am really disappointed not to be able to join you!

Simon

Future Branch Events

Tuesday 8 April
Musical Box
1918 and 2024
Andy Moody
7.30pm Ed Shed

On 8 August 1918, the Medium A Whippet tank called Musical Box took part in the opening phase of the Battle of Amiens. The tank, commanded by Lieutenant Clem Arnold went on a ten-hour rampage behind German lines, completely unsupported, causing mayhem until it was finally knocked out in the late afternoon.



Tuesday 13 May
Le Moncel
Lance versus Lance
Major (Retd) Phil Watson
7.30pm Ed Shed

On 7th September 1914, the 9th Lancers, 2nd Cavalry Brigade conducted the last lance versus lance charge on the Western Front at Le Moncel, just outside Paris. The story was misrepresented in paintings and the regimental history only supported the cavalry narrative. Phil's presentation seeks to represent an accurate portrayal from both German and British sources.



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

**Second Lieutenant Arnold Aldrich
1/8th Battalion, Worcestershire Regiment**

Arnold Aldrich was born at Diss, Norfolk in 1885. He was the seventh son and one of twelve children born to Robert Aldrich and his wife Jane Anne.

At the time of the 1901 census, aged 16, he was living in London as an apprentice to a furnishing company and in 1910 moved to Cheltenham, taking up a position as a cabinet salesman with local furnishers Messrs. John Lance & Co. In the following year he married a Norfolk girl and in 1912 the couple had a baby son. Arnold was a member and secretary of the United Methodist Church, Royal Well, Cheltenham and the electoral register for 1915 shows him living in Oakland Avenue, Cheltenham.



Arnold joined the Army in January 1917, initially posted to 28th Battalion, London Regiment (Artists' Rifles). That unit was known for being the entry point for men marked down for a commission and on 29 May 1917 he became a Second Lieutenant in the Worcestershire Regiment. Initially he was posted to the 1st Battalion and thereafter attached to the Territorial 1/8th Battalion. This battalion was part of 144 Brigade, 48 Division.

In November 1917 48 Division was sent to the Italian front, as part of an Anglo-French force sent to bolster the Italian army, following its defeat at the hands of the Austro-Hungarians at the Battle of Caporetto.

On 1 May 1918 Second Lieutenant Aldrich was in charge of a supply column making its way up a rough and rocky mountain road in the Asiago region. He was mounted on a quiet horse which unfortunately slipped off the side of the road and dropped down four feet. Arnold was thrown from the horse and his head struck a rock, fracturing his skull. He was taken to a French casualty station but sadly died before regaining consciousness: he was aged 34.

Arnold Aldrich now lies in Granezza British Cemetery on the Asiago Plateau. At the time of his death his widow was living in Charlton Lane, Leckhampton and he is commemorated on the Leckhampton War Memorial and on the Roll of Honour inside St. Peter's Church.

Graham Adams

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