



## CHELtenham & GLOUCESTER BRANCH of THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

Number 206

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### Welcome!

It is with a sigh of relief that I can once again attend our meetings in person – for those that have offered well wishes I can report that my mother is in a much-improved condition. Before going on I must again thank Bob, Paul, Andy and the other members of the team who have continued to keep the Branch on an even keel during my recent absences.

For those attending this Tuesday's meeting I will be canvassing for ideas and date options regarding a summer BBQ. However, recognising that not everyone is able to attend every meeting so please feel free to email me at [chairman@cgwfa.co.uk](mailto:chairman@cgwfa.co.uk) with your thoughts on whether we should have a BBQ this year?

What my enforced absence has proved is that we could really do with one more willing volunteer to help with the running of the Branch. Whilst I know everyone is busy and that helping to run a club is not everyone's 'cup of tea' I do find it hard to believe that from across our sixty odd members there is not someone who could spare a couple of hours a month to help myself and the rest of the committee?

As promised, I have finally been able to write to you all regarding the changes to our Branch annual subscriptions and the donation we ask you to consider giving when you attend one of our monthly meetings. It should be in your inboxes today.

I know that these have both been highlighted already in earlier newsletters so these changes should come as no surprise. Indeed, both Paul and I are very grateful to those of you that have already taken the necessary action to adjust your Standing Orders or to make an additional payment to cover the difference between last years and this year's subscriptions.

In terms of wider WFA activity last month, I attended a Teams Meeting for Branch Chairs. As it was my first one, I was very much on 'receive.' However, these are quarterly events so if there is anything you wish me to raise with the wider WFA on your behalf, please do let me know and I will take it forward on your behalf. I will also be attending the bi-yearly Branch Chair's conference in October.

Simon

### Future Branch Events

**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 v lance charge on the Western Front at Le Moncel, just outside Paris. The story was misrepresented in paintings and in the regimental history which only supports the British cavalry narrative. Phil

seeks to present an accurate portrayal from both sides.

**Tuesday 10 June**

**Lessons of the Hundred Days**

**Amiens to the Armistice**

Dr Simon Peale

**7.30pm Ed Shed**

Simon reviews the lessons learned during the Last Hundred



Days Campaign during the Advance from the Battle of Amiens on 8<sup>th</sup> August 1918, to the taking of the Hindenburg Line and then on to the Armistice on 11<sup>th</sup> November 1918.

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

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**7066 Private George Henry Randell  
1st Battalion, Wiltshire Regiment**

George Henry Randell was born at Cirencester in 1888 and was a married man with four children at the time of the outbreak of war. At the time of the 1911 Census, he was living in Chester Street, Cirencester and his occupation was shown to be a coal porter with a local merchant. It is possible that he had some previous service with the Wiltshire Regiment, given his low Army number and that when war broke out, he was serving in the Reserve. Unfortunately, no service record has survived to confirm this, but a newspaper report stated that he joined the Army on 5th August 1914, which is a strong indicator of recall to the Colours.

He joined the 1st Battalion of the Wiltshire Regiment, who arrived in France on 14th August 1914, as part of 7th Brigade, 3rd Division. In the following October he wrote to his wife Rhoda stating that he had been involved in seven battles, including Mons.



(IWM 'Lives of the First World War' website)

On 13th October the battalion was located about six miles north east of Bethune and had driven the enemy back to the village of La Couture. The Germans had shelled the British positions at intervals throughout the day and it may well be that Private Randell met his death during one of the episodes of shelling. A comrade wrote to George's wife stating that he saw her husband hit and badly wounded in the stomach and that he died shortly after. The War Diary indicates that eight Other Ranks were killed that day and nineteen wounded.

According to the *Wiltshire & Gloucestershire Standard* of 7th November 1914, Mrs Randell, having received no official word of her husband's death, wrote an enquiry to the War Office who replied on 3rd November stating that he was 'in the best of health'. About four days later she received an official confirmation of his death.

Private Randell's body was never recovered for burial, and he is named on the nearby Le Touret Memorial to the Missing.

He is also commemorated on the Cirencester 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"***