



CHELtenham & GLOUCESTER BRANCH of THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

Number 209

July 2025

Welcome!

We had another interesting talk last month, this time given by Dr Simon Peale who not only talked about the lessons the BEF had learnt during the course of the previous four years but how effectively they were used during the 100 Days Campaign that concluded the war. Those present were also treated to an explanation of some of the activities of the GLOSTERS during those final few months.

Armed Forces Day 28 June - Gloucester Docks

We had a very successful time at Armed Forces Day although we were in danger of being blown away for much of it!

We were visited by the Lord Lieutenant and High Sheriff along with the Mayor of Gloucester. All were happy to learn that we hold our monthly meetings in the Ed Shed. Perhaps more importantly they were all interested in the contribution we make to the community and remembrance via our Commonwealth War Graves Project.

Unfortunately, the wind meant our revised information boards had to be laid down rather than stood up as originally intended. They have been updated to include a range of slides taken from recent lectures whilst retaining some of our historic information.

They proved to be very effective in engaging members of the public in conversation about our activities. As a result, three individuals were interested enough to request our programme of events and to suggest they would be keen to attend future meetings.

As a result of the wind our already somewhat battered pull up sign is now damaged beyond repair and our previously damaged briefing boards are now the worse of wear. Consideration will need to be given to replacing them if we are to attend next years Armed Forces Day.

As special mention must go to Paul, Ken, Simon and Luisa who helped to run the stand and, in the process, raised £32 for the Branch via book sales (they shifted the equivalent of two boxes of books!) Equally Len acted as a very effective Quartermaster, raiding the SOGM for anything that we needed!

August Meeting

Finally, a reminder that we are meeting in August when, as noted below, we will be welcoming back Roy Larkins who recently talked to us about logistics and the Army Service Corps will be returning to talk about the 'money!'

Simon

Future Branch Events

Tuesday 12 August

Where The Money Went Roy Larkin



This fully illustrated talk looks at where the money was spent during the Great War. Intended to awaken the imagination & look at aspects of the war, rarely considered. Sometimes it is the size of the number, other times it is minimal with a nice back story.

7.30pm Ed Shed

Tuesday 9 September

The Battle of the Sambre 4 November 1918 Dr Derek Clayton



This talk is based on Dr Clayton's PhD Thesis (University of Birmingham 2015) The Third and Fourth Armies deliver the final knockout blow to the German Army as they assault the Forest of Mormal and force the crossing of the Sambre.

7.30pm Ed Shed

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

Second Lieutenant Stuart Charles Sillem 27 Squadron, Royal Flying Corps



Stuart Charles Sillem was born at Kensington, London in 1898. He was the only son of Charles Frederick Sillem and his wife, Susan Hurrell, who also had a daughter. During the time of the Great War the family home was at The Chestnuts, Minchinhampton.

Stuart joined the Royal Flying Corps as an Air Mechanic in October 1916, aged 18 and underwent training at Denham, Buckinghamshire, the School of Military Aviation, Oxford and at Spitalgate, near Grantham. He was commissioned on 27 February 1917 and gained his 'wings' two months later, on 25 June.

A posting to 27 Squadron followed on 14 July 1917, where he was to fly a Martinsyde G102, a single seat daylight light bomber, nicknamed 'The Elephant'.

Almost one month later, on 12 August 1917, he took off from 27 Squadron's base at Clairmarais North aerodrome, near St Omer, on a bombing operation over enemy lines, from which he never returned. His body was never recovered and he is commemorated on the Arras Flying Services Memorial inside the Faubourg d'Amiens Cemetery, Arras. His name also appears on the Minchinhampton War Memorial.



Following the death of her only son, Stuart's mother suffered sleeplessness and general depression and died from an overdose of an opiate to induce sleep in December 1917.

Graham Adams

Cheltenham & Gloucester Branch Contact Details

President: Professor Peter Simkins MBE FRHistS
Chairman:
Lieutenant Colonel (Retd) Simon Shephard MA
Email: chairman@cgwfa.co.uk
Mobile: 07818 720156
Address: Awre House, Awre Road, BLAKENEY,
GL15 4AA
Newsletter Editor: Adrian Smith
Email: newsletter@cgwfa.co.uk
Mobile: 07557 325656

Website: www.cgwfa.co.uk
X (Twitter): @CGWFA
Facebook: Cheltenham & Gloucester Branch of
the Western Front Association

The Western Front Association
BM Box 1914,
London WC1N 3XX
0207 118 1914
membership@westernfrontassociation.com
www.westernfrontassociation.com



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