



CHELtenham & GLOUCESTER BRANCH of THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

Number 212

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Welcome!

I must start by letting you all know that our President, Peter Simkins, has been unwell and is in hospital. I have spoken to his wife, Jane, and offered our best wishes for Peter's speedy recovery. These have been echoed by the WFA Executive Committee and from across the Branches. At the moment he is doing well and should hopefully be home soon.

As a result, Peter will not be giving us his usual annual talk in November. We are very grateful to Paul Cobb for stepping in to provide us with a lecture. Details can be found below.

I attended the Branch Chairs conference at the beginning of the month. There are three key takeaways:

- There will be a new WFA website going live at the end of this month which by all account should be a significant improvement on the current WFA site.
- Due to decreasing revenues from Ancestry.com the WFA is having to make a number of savings measure to bring the books back into balance.
- Next years national AGM will be conducted virtually.

Having mentioned the national AGM, I would now like to turn my attention to our own AGM. I intend to take a slightly different approach. Rather than held outside our normal schedule and at a different venue, this years will be held concurrently with our December meeting.

In outline the doors will open at 7pm with

refreshments available (mince pies, cakes etc) and the AGM will commence at 7.15. An agenda will be issued with next month's newsletter, and members are invited to raise any points they would like added to it before then. I anticipate the AGM lasting until about 7.50. After a short leg stretch we will then enjoy our usual three 10-minute lecturattes, along with more mince pies etc.

Which leads me nicely on to ask for three willing volunteers to entertain us with ten-minute presentations on a Great War-related subject of their choice. Please let me know if you are interested in taking part?

Gloucestershire War Graves Project

Preparations for this year's commemorations are in full swing and I must give a massive mention to Simon and Louisa Cook for their work on the crosses. In a new innovation, all of the 550 odd crosses have had QR codes included which when clicked, open the webpage for the 'Gloucestershire War Graves Project' and users can navigate to details about each of the casualties researched on the project.

Simon has coordinated the distribution of this year's crosses so that they will be in-situ before Remembrance Sunday.

Simon



Tuesday 11 November

'Conscription in Britain and the Dominions'

Paul Cobb



As a result of the Second Boer War the War Office focused up ways to integrate Dominion military forces with the Army. As we know the Great War demanded huge numbers of men, well beyond the quantity that voluntary recruiting could obtain. This talk examines how Britain, New Zealand, Canada and Australia tackled the thorny question of compulsory military service.

7.30pm Ed Shed

Tuesday 8 December

Members' Evening and AGM



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

7.30pm Ed Shed

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

**15385 Private Lionel Phipps
8th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment**



Lionel Phipps was born in 1886 at Bisley, the only son of Richard and Sarah Phipps, who were mill hands. by 1901, Lionel was 14 and working as a cloth worker. In December 1906 he married Rosa Ellen Young at France Lynch, and the couple went on to have three children. Later he became a labourer in a timber yard.

No Army Service Record appears to have survived covering Lionel's service during the Great War. However, an obituary which appeared in the *Stroud Journal* of 11 February 1916 indicates that he enlisted on 6 November 1914 and his Medal Rolls Index Card notes that he first went to France on 18 July 1915, this being with the 8th Battalion of the Glosters, part of 57th Brigade, 19th Division.

The obituary also noted: *He was wounded on 18 November 1915 whilst carrying a dead chum out of the trenches and died leaving a widow and 3 children for whom the greatest sympathy is felt ... he discharged his duties efficiently and to the entire satisfaction of his officers being in every respect a good soldier.*

On 18 November the 8th Glosters were located near to Festubert and their war diary contains the following: *Enemy snipers were very active today and two of our men were killed and five wounded by bullets. The parapet having fallen down in several places in all the trenches; men have to be very careful how they pass up and down.*

It is almost certain that Private Phipps was one of those wounded; reportedly it was a severe head injury. He was evacuated to England and was admitted to the Fort Pitt Military Hospital at Chatham. Here he died, on 26 January 1916, aged 28.

Lionel Phipps was buried in the churchyard of St Mary Magdalene, Rodborough, where a standard CWGC headstone now marks his grave.

Research by Helen Wollington, for the Gloucestershire War Graves Project

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