



CHELTENHAM & GLOUCESTER BRANCH of THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION



Number 213

November 2025

www.cgwfa.co.uk

Welcome!

Peter, our President, has now received a diagnosis and is in Morton-in-the-Marsh Hospital undergoing further tests whilst the clinical staff work out the best mediations to help manage his symptoms. I have passed on all our best wishes and have told Peter and Jane that we are all ready to support them in any manner they made need.

Gloucestershire War Graves Project

I would like to offer a big thank you to Simon and Louisa Cook for all their hard work and efforts throughout the year on our War Graves Project. Without them driving this project forward it would not be the huge success it is. I am pleased to report that a total of 535 Poppy Crosses have been laid on the County's war graves.



Branch AGM and Members Evening

Just a reminder that next month's Members Meeting will commence at **7.15 pm** with our AGM followed by three in-house 10-minute lecturettes. I have already issued the agenda with this month's call-in notice and will be issuing the minutes of the previous AGM and our statement of accounts with next month's call in notice.

We still have spaces available if you wish to deliver

one of the three 10-minute lecturettes - on a subject of your choosing - just let Andy Hinks or myself know.

If you are willing to donate a raffle prize that would be fantastic and please could you let me know if you are willing to run the raffle.

Given this is our first attempt at holding the AGM concurrently with the Branch Members Meeting I do hope you will not be put off from attending – there will be ample mince pies, cakes and other treats to reward you as well the raffle and lecturettes.

2026 Programme

Andy has done an amazing job pulling together another fantastic range of presentations for next year. Some old familiar faces will be returning to talk to us along with some new presenters who have not yet visited our Branch.

Of note, rather than Peter giving us his traditional President's Lecture, with his agreement, we are trying something new. Next September we will hold a 'Presidents' Panel' where Peter, along with some guest experts will seek to answer all your Great War questions!

Next year's programme will shortly be with the printers and should be available for distribution at our AGM and Members Meeting.

Simon

Tuesday 8 December 'AGM and Members' Evening'



We will hold our 2025 AGM ahead of our December meeting **** starting at 1915hrs **** in the Ed Shed. After the AGM we will 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

**Please arrive ready to start the AGM at 7.15pm
Ed Shed**

13th January

Tommy's Trench Humour in the Great War Stephen Barker



Soldiers often turned to humour to alleviate the stress of life in the trenches. Jokes, puns, and satirical songs were a part of the soldiers' oral culture. Much of the humour was lost on those outside the soldiers' group, but it resonated with the soldiers and allowed them to cope with the strain of service and combat.

7. 30pm Ed Shed

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

28489 Rifleman John Charles Clapham
1st Battalion, Rifle Brigade

John Clapham was born in Cheltenham in August 1887, the son of William Edwin and Agnes Maria Clapham. On 2 August 1915 he married Frances Taylor at St Paul's Church, Cheltenham and they lived at 29 Victoria Street, Cheltenham.

On 8 December 1915 he attested for military service and gave his age as 28 years and four months. He stated his profession to be a 'pelt monger' - a purveyor of animal pelts.



It was almost six months before Army service commenced, with an initial posting to the Gloucestershire Regiment, with whom he served at home until 30 November 1916. On 1 December 1916 he transferred to the 1st Battalion, Rifle Brigade and landed in France on the following day, joining his new unit in the field on 10 December 1916.

In the extremely cold and wet winter of 1916/17 he suffered from trench foot and was treated at 135 Field Ambulance on 23 March 1917, returning to duty on 4 April. On 7 July 1917 he was wounded in action, suffering shrapnel wounds to his right leg and left arm. He was sent to 1st Canadian Hospital at Etaples, before repatriation to No 1 Birmingham War Hospital where he stayed from 13 July to 30 August 1917.

After a period in the 6th (Reserve) Battalion he returned to France on 29 January 1918 and rejoined 1st Rifle Brigade. On 2 September he was again wounded in action: a serious gunshot wound to the back which had penetrated a lung. He was sent 3rd Australian General Hospital, Abbeville on 5 September and two days repatriated to the Military Hospital at Endell Street, London WC2. He never recovered from his wounds and died at 2am on 18 September 1918, with his wife and mother present. He was aged 31.

He was buried in Cheltenham Borough Cemetery and commemorated on the Cheltenham War Memorial and also those at Charlton Kings, St Paul's Church and St Mary's Church.

(Research by Graham Adams, for the Branch's Gloucestershire War Graves Project)

Cheltenham & Gloucester Branch Contact Details	
President: Professor Peter Simkins MBE FRHistS	Website: www.cgwfa.co.uk
Chairman: Lieutenant Colonel (Retd) Simon Shephard MA Email: chairman@cgwfa.co.uk Mobile: 07818 720156 Address: Awre House, Awre Road, BLAKENEY, GL15 4AA	X (Twitter): @CGWFA Facebook: Cheltenham & Gloucester Branch of the Western Front Association
Newsletter Editor: Adrian Smith Email: newsletter@cgwfa.co.uk Mobile: 07557 325656	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"