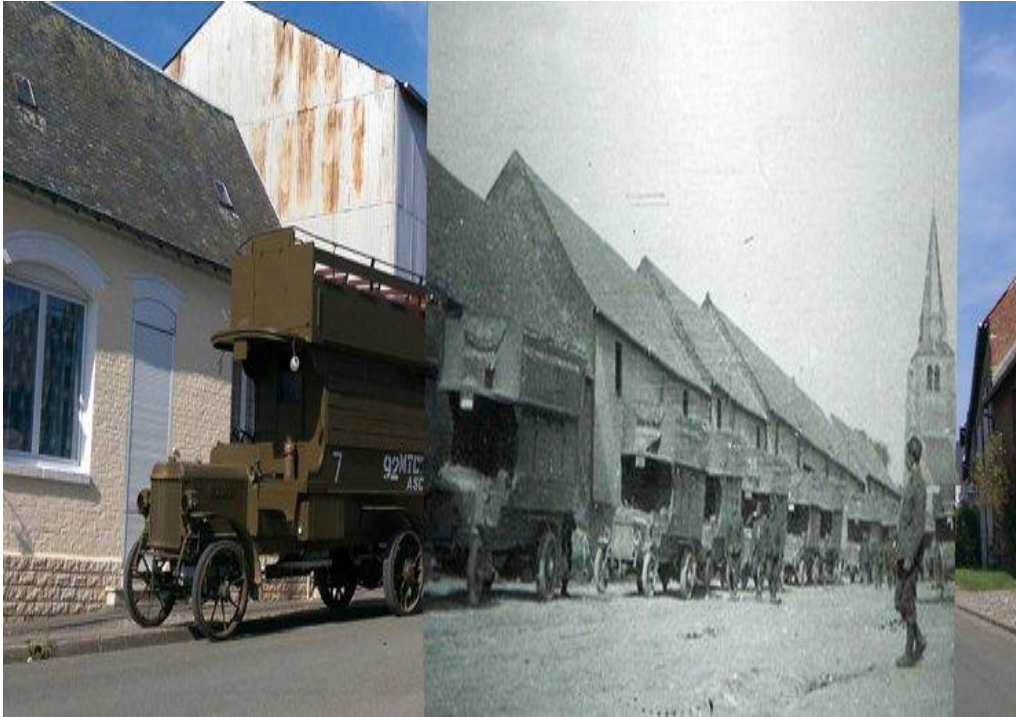




Quarter Four – November 2015



Creeping Barrage

News & Notes
from the Herts &
Beds Branch

NEXT: 'THE BATTLE BUS PROJECT'

**VENUE: ST. GEORGE'S SCHOOL, SUN LANE (SPORTS HALL ROOM SP101),
HARPENDEN AL5 4TD**

DATE AND TIME: FRIDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 2015 AT 8:00PM

Introduced in 1910 by the London General Omnibus Company (LGOC), the B-type bus was Britain's first successful mass produced motor bus. It was built in London for London, and within 18 months had replaced LGOC's entire fleet of horse-drawn omnibuses. At the outbreak of the First World War, buses were commandeered for the war effort. Approximately 1,000 buses were taken from London to serve as troop carriers, ambulances, and lorries. Drivers and mechanics were often recruited with their vehicles, many never to return. On the home front the war resulted in a shortage of vehicles and staff. For the first time, women were employed on London's transport network from 1915 to replace the men fighting the war.

To commemorate the role of London's transport in the First World War, London Transport Museum restored B-type bus B2737. Working with a team of skilled craftsmen, engineers and technicians, **Tim Shields** was project manager for the Battle Bus project. Specialising in bringing LTM objects to life through interpretation and conservation, he also project managed LTM's highly successful Met 353 railway carriage restoration in 2012.

DONATION AT THE DOOR £3.50

www.westernfrontassociation.com



Zone Call - Notes from Geoff Cunnington, Chairman and Branch Secretary



This month we are pleased to pay tribute to the one of the icons of the Great War – the London omnibuses which were pressed into service to ferry troops to and from the front line at a time when mechanised transport on such a scale was in its infancy. Tim Shields from the London Transport Museum will be at St. George's to tell us all about it as well as the bus restoration project which has garnered much attention over this centenary period. I do hope that you will be able to attend this presentation and I thank Jonty Wild of the Herts at War Project for providing additional publicity for this event.

We also take time out this month for the annual remembrance commemorations and, for those of us fortunate enough to see them last year, to recall the wonderful display of ceramic poppies at the Tower of London. That display had a timeless quality to it and I make no apologies for re-producing an image of that event below.



Looking ahead, you might find of interest, a series of seminars organized by *In Flanders Fields Museums*, *Gateways to the First World War* and the University of Kent. The seminars in Ypres will take place in the conference room of the Town Hall (2nd floor), Cloth Hall, Great Market 34, 8900 Ieper. The Canterbury seminars will take place in Darwin Lecture Theatre 2, University of Kent. - See more at:

<http://westernfrontassociation.com/all-about-the-wfa/wfa-news-events/wfa-latest-news-releases/5172-first-world-war-seminar-series.html#sthash.JffUMVJV.dpuf>

And finally, your Committee met on 21 October to examine and consider future options for the Branch. We will report back to you once we have crystalised further a few thoughts and ideas – rest assured, we are still in business and the programme for 2016 is as eclectic and varied as ever.

Please continue to support the Branch.

SAVE THE DATE

**Joint Branch Seminar with Milton Keynes
23 October 2016**

**The Cruck Barn, Milton Keynes City Discovery Centre
Alston Drive, Bradwell Abbey MK13 9AP**

**Geoff Cunnington
November 2015**

Previously at Herts & Beds 9 October 2015

A Two-Part Presentation: 'Cycling in the Great War' and 'St. John Ambulance in the Great War'.



Branch Regular, Roger Yapp writes:

At the October Members' Meeting, Charles Harvey presented two short talks on subjects which combined relatively little known aspects of the Great War and two of his major interests – Cycling and the St John Ambulance Service.

Cycling in the First World War

Whilst stuck at home recovering from a ruptured tendon in 2014 Charles was inspired by the Tour de France visiting a number of significant Great War sites, and as a result wrote a short article for the "Cycling Club" magazine, which has become the basis for his talk "Cycling in the Great War".

By the 1880's several technical innovations came together to greatly improve the humble bicycle – the roller chain, tension spoke wheels, new light-weight metal tubing and the pneumatic tyre. Old-style "Penny-Farthing" bicycles were replaced by new "Safety Bicycles" primarily developed by John Kemp Starley and the Rover Company. By the end of the 1880's basic design of the bicycle was determined and has largely remained unchanged through to the modern day.

In 1888 the first Cycle Unit was raised – the 26th Middlesex Rifle Volunteers. Similar developments were taking place in the Armies of the world. Bicycles were used for reconnaissance and communications, with some success by both sides in the Boer War and on 12th August 1914 the Belgian Army used 500 Cyclists to stem the flow of the German advance at the Battle of Haelen at the start of the Great War. In the opening months of the War the British and Germans made extensive use of Cyclists for reconnaissance, to carry messages, to move troops, and to mount limited surprise raids. The French used cycles to pursue the Germans after the Battle of the Marne, and the Germans used cycles to reinforce their troops on the Aisne.

In 1914 fourteen Cycling Battalions, numbering 14,000 Cyclists, were formed into the Army Cyclist Corps. As the trench warfare developed, cycles were of little use in the Front Lines, but continued to be used for communication.

At Home, Cyclist Companies were used to patrol the East Coast, to protect against German invasion, but as the War progressed, and the Germans showed no intention to invade many of the units were disbanded and the men sent abroad as Infantry. The London Cyclist Battalion was posted to India.

The Army Cyclist Corps was disbanded in 1919. In 1921 a Memorial was unveiled to the Cyclists killed in the Great War, at Meriden, near Coventry.

The St John Ambulance in the Great War

The Order of St John started in the Middle Ages when the St John Hospital in Jerusalem was established as a place of hospitality and care for pilgrims and the sick. The Catholic Order continued to expand throughout the Mediterranean lands and Europe. During his reign Henry VIII wound up the Order in Britain, but in 1858 the Order was re-founded as an Anglican organization. In 1877 the St John Ambulance Association was founded and in the absence of a National Health Service provided first aid training at a time when there was an increasing number of railway, industrial and mining disasters and accidents. The organisation flourished and in 1887 the St John Ambulance Brigade was founded. This uniformed group provided trained volunteers to cover the first aid at major events, which until then had been handled by the local Police. The Brigade continued to grow, and introduced qualifications and re-certification for their members to ensure that they maintained the highest standards of care and by the end of the 19th Century a First Aid Manual was produced to standardize practices and procedures.

Over 2,000 St John Ambulance volunteers served during the Boer War (1899-1902), providing 25% of the medical orderlies involved in the conflict. They served alongside the Royal Army Medical Corps and sixty-one of them died on duty. Whilst the Medical Service on the whole was criticised after the Boer War the support of the St John Ambulance Brigade was well received. As part of the Army Reforms the Territorial Army was established in 1907/8, and this brought the foundation of the Royal Navy Sick Berth Reserve, the Military Home Hospital Reserve, and Voluntary Aid Detachments (V.A.D), and St John Ambulance members joined all of these. One third of the male members were associated with these reserve units.

In August 1914, at the outbreak of the Great War, the reserve organisations were mobilized. After First Ypres it was realized that the Medical Services needed to be re-organised, to support an industrialised war, which "wouldn't be over by Christmas". A joint committee of the St John Ambulance and the Red Cross was set up to avoid duplication of services and competition for charitable funds, and to support the Military Medical Services.

From 1914, the St John Ambulance members joined up with their local regiments, or provided back-fill for Home based medical units, releasing more able-bodied men to be sent to the Royal Army Medical Corps at the Front.

In September 1915, in time to receive casualties from the Battle of Loos, a St John Hospital was set up at Etaples on the French Coast. It included 550 beds, X-Ray machines and the first electro cardiograph in France. It was bombed by accident by the Germans in 1918, and was re-opened at Deauville later in the same year.

As the War progressed the accidents and injuries on the Home Front increased, and the St John Ambulance

continued to provide first aid training and support, but at times found it difficult due to the loss of their members to the services and the Front.

By the end of the War over 30,000 persons from the St John Ambulance had served either in local regiments, with the Brigade or with the Royal Army Medical Corps. At least 1,000 died and are commemorated on the Brigade Roll of Honour. St John Ambulance contribution to the War Effort was considerable. It was recognized by the War Office that they were providing well-trained and disciplined personnel, and that the Medical Services could not cope without their support.

Roger Yapp, October 2015

Coming-Up at Herts & Beds - Remaining Programme for 2015

11 December 2015

“Suicide Club to Butchers: The Palestine Brigade RFC/RAF 1917-1918”

Stuart Hadaway will conclude our programme for 2015 by describing how from 1914 until the summer of 1917, the RFC in Egypt and Palestine had struggled with outdated aircraft and inadequate resources against a German force that was smaller but much better equipped. In the summer of 1917 this all changed, as an infusion of modern aircraft allowed them to turn the tables on the German Air Forces even as they too were reinforced. The RFC would play an important role in the 3rd Battle of Gaza from October to December 1917, and would then grow over the following year until it was able to become a decisive element in the Battle of Megiddo in September 1918. In the process, they developed principles and techniques that still underpin aerial campaigns today.



The Broadside – 2016

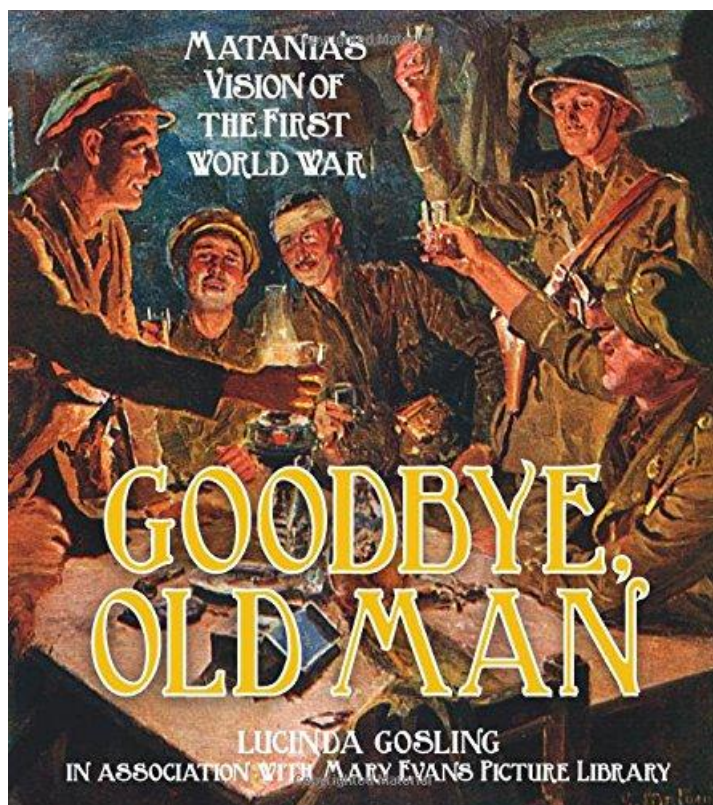
Future presentations at St. George's School, Sun Lane (Sports Hall Room Sp101), Harpenden AL5 4TD

All meetings start @ 20:00. Tea, Coffee and Biscuits included. Donation at the door: £3.50 minimum.

15 January

'Goodbye Old Man' – The Artist Fortunino Matania's Vision of the Great War

Lucinda Gosling will present a survey of the body of work painted by Italian artist , Fortunino Matania, for *The Sphere* magazine – his techniques, working methods and anecdotes from his time spent at the Front as an intrepid 'special artist'. Lucinda Gosling studied history at the University of Liverpool and has worked in the picture library industry since 1993. She managed the magazine archive of the Illustrated London News before moving to work for historical specialist, Mary Evans Picture Library in 2007. With a wide interest in a number of historical subjects including royalty, costume, illustration and the Great War, Luci has contributed to variety of publications including History Today, Majesty and Illustration magazine.



19 February

Letter to an Unknown Soldier

On Platform One of Paddington Station in London, there is a statue of an unknown soldier; he's reading a letter. On the hundredth anniversary of the declaration of war everyone in the country was invited to take a moment and write that letter. **Angela McSherry**, the project's producer, will tell the story of this fascinating enterprise and will tell us how a selection of those letters contributed to a new kind of war memorial – one made only of words.



18 March

The Battle of Arras 1917 – 'Visiting the Fallen'

Peter Hughes has recently written three books under the generic title: "Visiting the Fallen". All three books are on Arras - 'Arras North', 'Arras South' and 'Arras Memorials'. There is a website to complement the publication of these books: <http://visitingthefallen.co.uk>. The site gives a good idea of what the books are about and these will form the basis of Peter's presentation which will comprise an overview of the Battle of Arras in 1917 coupled with a sort of 'Who's Who' of those buried in the CWGC cemeteries in and around Arras, or commemorated on the four main memorials in that area.

22 April

'Keep the Home Fires Burning'

Valerie Fry from *Wind & Words* will present a clarinet and poetry programme based on the First World War, being a recital of World War 1 poetry interspersed with music from the time played on clarinet – a combination of classic well-known poems and original verse.

20 May

'The Glorious Dead': Figurative Sculpture of British First World War Memorials

After the First World War many thousands of memorials were produced in the United Kingdom. Hundreds featured figurative imagery, the largest project of public sculpture the country has ever seen. In this talk, **Geoff Archer** will explain how, why, by whom, and for whom, memorials were produced. The greatest sculptors of the 1920s were called upon to render in marble and bronze the nation's remembrance and grief: George Frampton, Albert Toft, Goscombe John, C.S. Jagger, Gilbert Ledward, Derwent Wood, Alexander Carrick, Walter Marsden, Louis Roslyn and many more. After nine decades their work can now be viewed in a new light and their contributions to the history of 20th century British sculpture rightfully restored to centre stage.

Geoff Archer's 2009 publication, *The Glorious Dead*, is the first comprehensive analysis of this subject. Lavishly illustrated with the author's own photographs of soldiers and sailors, allegories of Peace, Grief, Victory and Death and images of women, workers, horses and biplanes, it concludes with lists of figurative memorials by date, design, location and sculptor.

24 June

Those Who Served: Remembering First World War Nurses

Dianne Yarwood will describe how the personal letters, documents and reports collected for a 2015 exhibition at the Royal College of Nursing in London tell a story of dedication and loyalty to nursing in the Great War. Whilst the desire to serve is complex and driven by many different causes, the stories of RCN members illustrate a strong, personal commitment to professional nursing. A commitment that, according to the British Journal of Nursing in 1921, lost 150 nurses their lives. Read more:

https://www.rcn.org.uk/development/library_and.../those-who-served

Dianne Yarwood is a retired nurse educationalist; most recently associate dean at City University London in the then St Bartholomew School of Nursing & Midwifery. Dianne has been an RCN member since she was a student during the 1960s and has been a member of the RCN History of Nursing Society since its inception. She is currently secretary of the London & South East history of nursing group and is actively involved in an oral history project for the Charing Cross Hospital Nurses League.

16 September

Members' Evening and Annual General Meeting

14 October

The Angels of Pervyse: Elsie and Mairi Go To War

Elsie Knocker and Mairi Chisholm spent most of the War saving hundreds of soldiers' lives by giving basic first aid just a hundred yards from the German trenches at Pervyse. They received 17 medals for their bravery and became known as the 'Madonnas' and 'Angels of Pervyse': they are two of the iconic women of the Great War in the company of Edith Cavell and Mata Hari. This talk by **Diane Atkinson** will describe their lives, their works and the project to commemorate them. Diane taught history at secondary schools in London before moving to the Museum of London, where she worked as a lecturer and curator, specialising in women's history.

At three o'clock in the afternoon of 22nd of November 2014, a life-size bronze sculpture of Elsie Knocker and Mairi Chisholm, and their little dog Shot, was unveiled in the garden of the Hotel Ariane in Ypres, a hundred years to the day since they started giving 'golden hour' treatment to Belgian soldiers in their dug-out in Pervyse ten miles away. Read more: <http://www.dianeatkinson.co.uk/>

11 November

Public Schools and the Great War

David Walsh will analyse the contribution of British public schools and their alumni to the war effort and examine the effect of the war on those institutions during the war itself and subsequently. David Walsh taught history at Tonbridge School in Kent, retiring as Deputy Head in 2009. He has subsequently written two books - 'A Duty to Serve: Tonbridge School and the 1939-45 War' (TMI 2011) and 'Public Schools and the Great War: A Generation Lost' (Pen and Sword 2013) with Anthony Seldon. He is a member of the WFA and occasionally takes groups of friends on battlefield trips.

16 December

The Great War – Rothamsted's Contribution

Professor Roger Plumb will describe the impact of the Great War on the work and the staff of Rothamsted Experimental Station in Harpenden. Rothamsted was well-positioned in 1914 to progress its research activities with the Board of Agriculture when war broke out and changed the dynamics of the organization as staff volunteered to serve and to adapt to changing wartime requirements. Professor Plumb will take us through all these events in some detail culminating in the notable Zeppelin raid of September 1916.

BRANCH CONTACTS

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Tail Spin - You Might be Interested In.....

‘For Freedom and for Empire’



If you are holidaying in North Wales, then this small exhibition at the National Slate Museum is worth a look as is the Slate Museum itself with its collection of mining machinery and locomotives.

<http://www.museumwales.ac.uk/slate/whatson/8490/For-Freedom-and-For-Empire/>

