



## Notes on Remembering Bucks in the Great War 4th meeting

11<sup>th</sup> October 2014

The Lord Lieutenant welcomed participants to the meeting. He displayed a DVD recently produced, and entitled 'A County at War: Life on the Home Front in Hertfordshire'. It was suggested that a similar DVD should be produced for Bucks, and that contact should be made with possible partners in such an enterprise. SSVC at Beaconsfield, Amersham College and Bucks TV were all mentioned.

**Professor Ian Beckett (Bucks Military Museum Trust)** gave an update on a number of issues. Apologies were due as problems were still being experienced with the Bucks Military Museum website. While news of events could be added to the news and events page, they could not be added to the Great War page where most visitors would expect to find them. It was hoped that these technical difficulties could be resolved shortly although it was recognised that a longer term solution would require the appointment of a webmaster with sufficient technical expertise. A number of exhibitions were now underway at the County Museum, Buckingham Old Gaol, Waddesdon Manor, and Wycombe Museum. HLF funding had been received for the BMMT Great War Virtual Trail and museums, organisations and societies in the county would be contacted shortly with regard to beginning the process of capturing images, the website being currently under construction: images had already been supplied by Amersham Museum and Stewkley Local History Society. The first public roadshow event for the trail would be held in conjunction with the County Museum in Aylesbury on 21 February 2015. BMMT would also be staging an exhibition on Gallipoli at the Old Gaol in summer 2015. The AHRC-funded First World War Engagement Centre based on the University of Hertfordshire, 'Everyday Lives in War' would be holding its first workshop on 15 October at Hatfield on 'Staging the First World War', aimed at assisting groups to adapt contemporary Great War plays for modern audiences. A roadshow would be held, presumably also at Hatfield, on 29 November 2014, enabling the public to bring in items for identification. It was still not clear how far the Engagement Centre would be making grants available to local groups in Buckinghamshire but it was liaising with Laura Cotton in the Centre for Bucks Studies and Shane Downer of Milton Keynes Heritage Service. It was advisable, therefore, that groups in Bucks approach Laura and Shane first rather than contacting the Centre direct.

WW1 events diary:- <http://www.bmmt.co.uk/index.php/features-and-events/>

**Laura Cotton (Centre for Bucks Studies)** reported that the original £100,000 county bid to HLF had not been successful but the bid had now been scaled back, and one of £41,000 resubmitted. It was hoped that the result would be known by January 2015. In the meantime, volunteers were transcribing the 1918 Absent Voters' List, and work on military records generally was ongoing. A leaflet was now available on tracing

World War I Servicemen, and a companion to Great War records similar to the existing guide to Second World War records was also in preparation. The Great War recruiting posters currently being displayed as part of the County Museum's exhibition were all available digitally for other exhibitions. Laura appealed for all groups engaged in commemorative activities to supply a copy of any programmes and leaflets produced to the Centre for Bucks Studies so that a permanent record could be preserved.

The BCC Great War toolkit giving advice on exhibitions is still available on the County Council website <http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/media/1794200/WW1-Toolkit-v11.pdf>

**Lt. Colonel Simon Wilkinson (Bucks Military Museum Trust)** reiterated on behalf of BMMT that events should still be submitted for inclusion on the events page of the website. He also reported that there would be county representation at the centenary commemorations planned for Fromelles in 2016. It would be appropriate to plan to commemorate Pozieres as well since the 1/1st Bucks Battalion was in action there on the same day that the 2/1st Bucks Battalion was engaged at Fromelles. Arising from this, there was some discussion of twinning events where communities were linked to Belgium, France or even Germany. Wolverton, for example, was twinned with a Belgian town and was looking at the issue of Belgian refugees, as was Chalfont St Peter. It was also thought appropriate to mark the participation of others who came to the county during the war, such as the 21st Division, recruited from Durham, Northumberland and Yorkshire, and which was stationed for initial training in and around Halton in 1914-15.

The meeting was opened to the floor with the following activities and events announced.

**Aylesbury Vale District Council** was producing a film by participating schools recording commemorative events. A war-related play, 'The Armed Man' would be performed at Aylesbury Waterside Theatre on 29 November 2014, together with a centenary choral concert.

**Bletchley Park** was planning an exhibition for May 2015 on wartime intelligence work such as that by the Admiralty's Room 40. The exhibition would be on-going over the course of the centenary.

**Buckingham Old Gaol** had printed copies of Philip Sturtivant's map showing the locations where those from the town and surrounding villages whose names appeared on the war memorial had lived. A copy was displayed at the meeting and attention was also drawn to a similar map prepared by Cawston Grange Primary School near Rugby, which might serve as a further model. It was also intended to send a letter to the present residents on the date of the death of each man who appeared on the war memorial, giving details of his service. There would be a new exhibition at the Old Gaol prepared in conjunction with Akeley Wood School, Buckingham Primary School, and the Royal Latin School in spring 2015.

**Bucks Historical Association** had a number of war-related talks in its programmes for 2014-15 including one on Stanley Spencer on 15 October 2014, and John Sheldon speaking on Stewkley on 18 March 2015. Web resources were being developed ([www.buckshistoricalassociation.org.uk](http://www.buckshistoricalassociation.org.uk))

**Bucks Royal British Legion** was participating in three nation-wide projects: Centenary Fields, to develop green spaces as a legacy in each council area; Poppy Seeds for Schools, to train 550 remembrance ambassadors to speak about the significance of the poppy to schools; and Centenary Poppy Sculptures, each designed to accommodate 3,000 poppies. One of the latter had been in Milton Keynes Shopping Centre in August 2014 and it was anticipated that one would return to the county at some stage in the future. The 40+ branches in the county had also been active. Hazelmere, for example, had visited a French village to lay up a standard in the local museum there. High Wycombe had identified 14 separate war memorials in the town and each had been visited on 4 August 2014. The Riders Branch of motor cyclists had also provided an escort for a pilgrimage from Penn Street to the Mein Gate.

**Chalfont St Peter Parish Council** was applying for replica VC plaques for the two VC holders buried locally, one having been born in London and the other in Australia. There had been a memorial service for the 108 war dead from the village on 20 July 2014, and work on the memorial garden was underway. It was hoped to undertake an exhibition in conjunction with Chiltern Open Air Museum in 2015.

**Chiltern U3A at Amersham** had received an HLF grant of £3,500 for the Amersham World War One Heritage Record, tracing the 98 men from the town who had served during the war. A booklet was being produced.

**Flackwell Heath and Loudwater Local History Group and Flackwell Heath British Legion Branch** were both involving schools in a series of events and community projects. A website on the names on the war memorial has a map of Flackwell Heath showing the home of each soldier who died and giving information on the individual concerned. Access through clicking on the poppy 'The Dream of Home (family connections) on [www.tinyurl.com/warmemorials](http://www.tinyurl.com/warmemorials) five additional names had been identified as missing from the memorial and Wycombe District Council had undertaken to consider whether or not these might be added to the memorial.

**Haddenham** had participated in the 'Lights Out' event on 4 August 2014. Currently, there was a display of memorabilia in Haddenham Museum, and there would be a further display in the Community Library from 6 November to 9 December 2014. In addition, a specially written community play would be performed on 14 and 15 November 2014, 'The Great War 1914-18 - Haddenham Village School', based on material from school log books. There would also be a public lecture on 27 November 2014.

**Hedgerley Historical Society** had an on-going project on the 88 men from the village who had served during the war, as well as those who had attended the Church of England Waifs and Strays Society home in the village. South Bucks District Council had been approached for a grant. In passing, it was noted that Jordans had been a wartime training centre for the Friends Ambulance Service.

**The Lee** staged and completed the ‘unfinished’ cricket match between the Manor House and the Village Cricket Club on 10 August 2014, the original having been abandoned due to rain on 3 August 1914. The event was covered in the Daily Telegraph.

**Marlow Museum** had a display on those from the town who had died during the war, with an additional changing theme each quarter on wartime events and particular individuals. Some 216 men appeared on the war memorial from 800 or so who had served. Wartime graves in the churchyard were being tidied. With the assistance of an HLF grant, there had been an event for 400 school children at Sir William Borlase School in June. There would be a forthcoming talk on the practice trenches in Pullings Hill Wood, and a further event on this theme in 2015.

**Milton Keynes Heritage Alliance** had received £95,000 from the HLF for the events being undertaken by its nine partners, including MK Heritage Association, which itself had 60 member organisations. Information was available from [www.greatwarmk.org.uk](http://www.greatwarmk.org.uk). Much of the focus was upon film, theatre and war memorials. There had been a major exhibition by the MK Living Archive at the Central Library; the local branch of the Western Front Association had organised a family history day; and other activities included an exhibition by North Crawley, and a Great War walk at Simpson. A forthcoming exhibition at the Central Library would be by Bucks Constabulary History Association on the wartime services of the Buicks Constabulary.

**Oakley Parish Council** was planning a ceremony to receive the VC plaque for Edward Brooks on 28 April 2017, the band of The Rifles having already been secured for the event, which would include a march past. The war memorial had been cleaned, and there would also be an exhibition of memorabilia on 9 November 2014.

**Stowe School** was organising a series of ‘Legend and Legacy’ events, beginning with a public lecture by Professor Sir Hew Strachan on 17 October. A war-related play, ‘Not About Heroes’, would be performed on 22 November 2014. The School events team would be pleased to display literature on other commemorative activities at all of its events.

**Swanbourne** would be holding an event in the Village Hall on 14 November 2014, including a talk by Professor Beckett on Bucks in the Great War.

**Wendover** was producing a monthly article for the Wendover News on events during the war that month. The U3A was working on all men from the town who served during the war, and the needlework group was undertaking a tapestry on a war-related theme. Wendover was also researching images for the BMMT Virtual Trail.

The next co-ordinating meeting should be held in approximately six months’ time.