

Notes on Remembering the Great War in Bucks, 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting, held at Viney House, Aylesbury on 17 October 2015

The Lord Lieutenant, Sir Henry Aubrey-Fletcher, Bt. welcomed those attending the meeting, especially anyone attending for the first time.

Professor Ian Beckett (Bucks Military Museum Trust) announced that there were now 63 images uploaded to the Trust's HLF-funded Virtual Trail ([www.bmmt.co.uk](http://www.bmmt.co.uk)) with another dozen or so waiting to be uploaded. There was now particularly good representation of Aylesbury, Buckingham, Chequers, Cliveden, High Wycombe, Marlow, and Waddesdon as well as a sprinkling of other locations. Most original images had now been collected but Milton Keynes Living Archive and Slough Library still had to be visited. Curiously, there seemed to be few images from anywhere north of Buckingham. It was still anticipated that over 100 images would eventually be uploaded. The Trust's 'Roadshow' at High Wycombe Library on 26 September, organised by the Great War Sub-committee, had been reasonably well attended in the morning but numbers had then dropped off after lunch. It had been advertised through the Library's contacts and the local press, as well as being mentioned that morning on Three Counties Radio. Similar roadshows would be held at Milton Keynes and Buckingham in 2016 and it was hoped they would be well supported. The Trust currently had an exhibition on the 1/1<sup>st</sup> Royal Bucks Hussars at Gallipoli at the Old Gaol in Buckingham, which would run until December. There would be a display on the 1/1<sup>st</sup> Bucks Battalion at Pozières (23 July 1916), and the 2/1<sup>st</sup> Bucks Battalion at Fromelles (19 July 1916) at the Old Gaol in summer 2016.

It had been decided that there should be county representation at the centenary commemoration of Fromelles on 19 July 2016. As yet negotiations were still underway with the French authorities but the County Council, Bucks Royal British Legion and Bucks Army Cadet Force were all keen to participate. Some accommodation had been booked provisionally at Lille and quotations sought for a one and/or two day trip. It was likely that there would be a heavy Australian presence. It was thought desirable to mark Pozières as well as Fromelles and, irrespective of whether the official party went only to Fromelles on 19 July, it was hoped to have a visit of some kind to Pozières on 20 July. More details would be announced in due course.

Together with the Centre for Bucks Studies, the Trust had put in a bid to the Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded First World War Engagement Centre at the University of Kent (Gateways to the First World War) for a project based on the 1/1<sup>st</sup> Bucks Battalion Casualty Books held at the CBS. The application form had been especially daunting in terms of complex financial calculations, and the bid had been put back until the next deadline in January 2016 in order to assess the requirements fully. Unsurprisingly, only four projects had thus far been funded by the Engagement Centre since it was opened to bids in January 2015.

Laura Cotton (Centre for Bucks Studies) announced that the CBS had secured funding of £40,400 from the HLF for its 'Great War Buckinghamshire' project, details of which had been given at previous meetings. The project had not yet been launched due to ongoing restructuring of the team at CBS. It was hoped to compile as much information as possible on up to 500 individuals over the next four years to reflect the diversity of experiences of war in the county. It would take advantage of those sources already available such as June and Peter Underwood's Buckinghamshire Remembers and Clint Lawson's database of Bucks servicemen. It was also hoped that the fruits of all those local projects being undertaken within the county would be placed in CBS. Volunteers were being recruited, much of the grant being allocated to travel expenses. In addition, digitalisation of images and of documents such as the casualty books was underway. Information on local stories and offers of assistance should be directed to Laura at ([lcotton@buckscc.gov.uk](mailto:lcotton@buckscc.gov.uk))

Joanna Barclay's research assistants, Deborah and Breslie, reported on the progress of the Bucks Great War Film. The National Film and Television School at Beaconsfield and Pinewood Studios were both giving valuable assistance to the project, and the resulting film would be given its premiere at Pinewood in July 2016. Some £30,000 had been raised towards the cost, the intention being to distribute the film free to schools and libraries, but with the opportunity for individuals to purchase copies. Still images had been collected, and the team was also pursuing contemporary newsreel clips from firms such as Topical Budget, Empire News, Gaumont and Pathé, relating to Bucks in the war, of which over 20 had been potentially identified. [Note: While Topical Budget clips had been proving elusive, they have been located since the meeting] Many interesting stories about individuals on the Home Front were being followed and a draft script had been produced. Pinewood was advising on

a suitable professional narrator. The difficulty would be cutting down the material to 30 minutes for schools but there was the possibility of a separate longer version. The team would like to locate images of two wartime teachers at Wendover School, Messrs Gomm and Molineux. They would also still like to hear of any interesting home front stories as the script would not be finalised until the end of the year. Joanna and her team could be contacted at ([joannabarclay2@gmail.com](mailto:joannabarclay2@gmail.com))

Terri Bloxham (Buckinghamshire Branch, Historical Association) announced that the next in its continuing programme of annual lectures related to the Great War would be a talk on 'Film, History and Gallipoli' by Professor Ian Beckett on Wednesday 18 November at The Friends' Meeting House, Rickford's Hill, Aylesbury at 8 p.m. ([www.buckshistoricalassociation.org.uk](http://www.buckshistoricalassociation.org.uk))

June and Peter Underwood (Buckinghamshire Remembers) announced that they were still refining and developing their database of over 8,400 names on Bucks war memorials as more information became available. Clint Lawson's database of over 44,000 names of Bucks servicemen was also hosted by the website.

There had been over 29,000 'hits' since 2006.

([www.buckinghamshireremembers.org.uk](http://www.buckinghamshireremembers.org.uk))

John Lovelock (Hedgerley Historical Society) was negotiating with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to locate and mark a lost grave of one of the ten men from the village who died in the war. This was proving a lengthy process and he would appreciate any advice. ([jdlovelock@btinternet.com](mailto:jdlovelock@btinternet.com))

Jill Robertson (Great Missenden) was researching the 39 war dead from Great Missenden and there were now images of 14 of them available. There had been an annual display of the on-going research in Great Missenden Church each November, to which local schools had been invited. A website would be developed in due course. One of the Great Missenden dead, Herbert Sprake, had a particularly interesting story that was being followed for the Bucks Great War Film.

John Mole (Chairman of Oakley Parish Council) was beginning the detailed planning for placing of the official commemorative stone for Edward Brooks VC on Friday 28 April 2017, one of the 483 stones to be placed in the location of VC winners' birthplace in Britain. The stone would be put on display by Bucks County Council and AVDC prior to its arrival in Oakley. The Rifles had agreed to undertake a march past and discussion was taking place on funding

the commemoration, which would also honour the 23 war dead from the village. The stone would be placed close to the War Memorial in the Churchyard but, as it was a paving stone, there would be an additional display board in the village drawing attention to its location. As it happened, a new headstone had been placed by the family on the grave of Edward Brooks in Rosehill Cemetery, Oxford on Saturday 10 October 2015 but the village was keen to reclaim Brooks for Bucks. Not only had he been born in Oakley but he had also served first in the Royal Bucks Hussars before transferring to the 2/4<sup>th</sup> OBLI. For details see ([oakleyvc@molesekin.org](mailto:oakleyvc@molesekin.org))

Lt. Colonel Ingram Murray (Soldiers of Oxfordshire Trust) drew attention to the enquiry service provided by the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum at Woodstock, which had records of some 27,000 soldiers from the OBLI and its predecessors dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> Century onwards. A fee of £50 was charged for research by the SOFO team. The current display on Oxfordshire in the Great War would be replaced in 2016 by one on Airpower in the Great War since Oxfordshire had hosted many RFC pilot training centres. ([www.sofo.org.uk](http://www.sofo.org.uk)) Attention was also drawn to the 'Lightbobs' website at ([www.lightbobs.com](http://www.lightbobs.com))

SSAFA had organised a charity concert, 'Eyes Front', by Isla St Clair to be held at The Church of Christ The Cornerstone at Milton Keynes on Thursday 29 October 2015 at 7.30 p.m. Joining Isla would be the filmmaker Patrick King and the Milton Keynes Pipe Band for a combination of live performance and film describing the effect of music in wartime from the Napoleonic period to the two world wars. Tickets £10 from The Church of Christ The Cornerstone, or Wilkinsons Estate Agents at Winslow and Leighton Buzzard, or from 01296 712513.

Carol Fryer (Stone and Hartwell Local History Society) announced that the Society had developed a travelling exhibition based on its research into the village in the Great War, which would be shown for the first time in the Church in November. Work was also underway into the visit of Baden Powell to Hartwell in 1915.

It was agreed that there should be another meeting in March 2016.