

Notes on Remembering the Great War in Bucks, 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting, held at Viney House, Aylesbury on 22 October 2016

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) reported that the functionality of the Trust's HF-funded 'Bucks Great War Virtual Trail' had been much improved by recent changes ([www.bmmt.co.uk](http://www.bmmt.co.uk)). There were now 100 images up on the site and more images had been received from Marlow, Princes Risborough and Winslow. Much of the modern photography had been completed but research on the captions was taking time. Following the Roadshow at the Old Gaol on Saturday 2 July 2016, talks were proceeding with Marlow Museum about the last of the scheduled roadshows, the likelihood being that it would be in February or March 2017.

The centenary commemoration at Fromelles had gone well. A party from Bucks had attended the commemoration organised by the communities of Fleurbaix and Fromelles at Le Trou Aid Post on Sunday 17 July 2016. A wreath was laid on behalf of the British Legion, whose standard bearers were in attendance. Visits were also made to the Fromelles Museum and the Pheasant Wood Cemetery. A separate wreath had been laid at the Rue du Bois Cemetery, location of the mass grave of 52 members of the 2/1<sup>st</sup> Bucks Battalion. There was also attendance at an evening concert in Fleurbaix Church and a plaque to the 62<sup>nd</sup> Division had also been unveiled at Fleurbaix. On the following morning, a group travelled to Pozieres and laid a wreath to the 1/1<sup>st</sup> Bucks Battalion at Pozieres British Cemetery, as well as honouring a number of individual graves. A short DVD of the commemoration at Fleurbaix was shown at the meeting by Colin Doyle.

The Lord Lieutenant had headed the official Bucks party at the Australian-led centenary commemoration at Fromelles on Tuesday 19 July 2016. The official party went on to lay a wreath for Lance Corporal William Pearce, 2/1<sup>st</sup> Bucks Battalion, at the Aubers Ridge British Cemetery. Bucks TV had covered the official event and prepared a DVD of the official commemoration together with a ceremony for Lance Corporal Pearce at Booker on 19 July.

([www.buckstv.co.uk/centenary-commemoration-of-the-battle-of-fromelles-2016/](http://www.buckstv.co.uk/centenary-commemoration-of-the-battle-of-fromelles-2016/))

The Trust's exhibition on the Bucks Battalions at Pozieres and Fromelles had opened at the Old Gaol, Buckingham on Monday 12 September 2016 and would run until November. Duplicate images from the exhibition were also on display in the RBL Headquarters in Aylesbury High Street, and at St Mary's Church. In autumn 2017 there would be an exhibition on the 1/1<sup>st</sup> Royal Bucks Hussars in Palestine at the County Museum. This would facilitate acquiring on loan one of the versions of the oil painting of the charge at El Mughar on 13 November 1917 by J. P. Beadle so it could be shown alongside Beadle's original sketch and another version of the action by T. C. Dugdale, both of which were in the Trust's existing collection. It was hoped to co-operate also with the Rothschild Archive and the Jewish Military Museum.

The Trust had also been approached by King's Lynn Library to help identify nine members of the 2/1<sup>st</sup> Royal Bucks Hussars who had carved their names or initials into brickwork in the Library Tower while on Zeppelin-watching duties in the winter of 1915-16. It had proved possible to identify positively seven of the men. It was hoped that a resin mould could be applied to preserve the names. It follows work with the local historical association from Great Ryburgh in Norfolk to identify men of the 1/1<sup>st</sup> Royal Bucks Hussars who had signed a visitor's book there in the winter of 1914-15.

Lieutenant Colonel Simon Wilkinson (Great War Steering Group) reported that the Mayor of Fleurbaix had expressed an interest in twinning with a Buckinghamshire village, particularly if connected to the events at Fromelles in 1916. The French also wished to continue to commemorate Fromelles in ensuing years.

The Civil-Military Partnership Board for Bucks was forging additional links between local authorities and the armed forces as well as with youth organisations. The next Armed Forces Day would be held at Aylesbury Rugby Club on Saturday 17 June 2017 to coincide with RAF Halton Families Day and, thereby, to include a fly past by the Red Arrows. A larger 'First World War Village' than previously would be organised by Lieutenant Colonel John Williams and county organisations and groups were invited to participate in putting on displays to enrich the visitor experience.

Laura Cotton (Centre for Bucks Studies) reported that the HLF-funded 'Great War Buckinghamshire' project had now fully started under the leadership of Katherine Doyle with a team of 15-20 volunteers already involved in researching different aspects of individuals' wartime experiences. The original funding bid had envisaged perhaps 500 'biographies' but it was now expected that the project might record details of over 10,000 individuals by the end of 2018. The website, which it was hoped would eventually incorporate the work of Buckinghamshire Remembers, would launch in early 2017. An eight-panel changing exhibition on the project was available and team members had attended seven events around the county since the last meeting. More events were planned for 2017 with the CBS History Fair being held at CBS on Saturday 19 November 2016 to showcase a wide range of local historical projects.

The separate but related AHRC-funded 'Casualties of War' project in co-operation with the BMMT was also proceeding with digitisation of the casualty books of the 1/1<sup>st</sup> Bucks Battalion about to commence. Volunteers were transcribing the entries and it was anticipated that this would be speeded up by digitisation since it would enable work to be done remotely from CBS. More volunteers were needed for both 'Great War Buckinghamshire' and 'Casualties of War'. (lcotton@buckscc.gov.uk)

Joanna Barclay (Our County at War film) reported that the premier at Pinewood on Tuesday 28 June 2016 had been very successful. The film had now been distributed to over 300 schools in the county as well as through the county's library system, with excellent feedback received from schools. For copyright reasons it was not possible to put the film on to the internet but it was available to the public in return for a minimum donation of £5, proceeds to be split between SSAFA and the BMMT. A number of showings had been arranged including the Film Place at Buckingham (Saturday 5 November 2016), Great Missenden and Hedgerley, and it would be available similarly to other organisations and groups in the county. (joannabarclay2@gmail.com)

June and Peter Underwood (Buckinghamshire Remembers) reported that information was still being received, especially on those individuals who had died on active service but who had not been commemorated on war memorials. In addition, about 1,000 photographs of those commemorated on memorials had been received and were also being added to the site. (www.buckinghamshireremembers.org.uk)

Bob and Jackie Slater (Burnham Branch Royal British Legion) reported that a commemorative whistle blowing had been held on Friday 1 July 2016. There had been a schools exhibition from 22 June to 3 September with an event and auction on Saturday 13 August 2016. Dominic Grieve MP had opened a commemorative concert involving local schools on Saturday 8 October 2016. The next event planned would be a commemoration of the establishment of the RAF on Saturday 7 April 2018 with a celebration concert to mark the centenary of the end of the war on Saturday 3 November 2018. It was noted that Burnham was twinned with St Dennis in France and advice could be offered on the twinning process.

Hedgerley Historical Society reported that the new memorial stone for Private Bowden would be dedicated on Sunday 13 November 2016. The research on Bowden and none other men from the village commemorated on the war memorial would be published in autumn 2017. It was also intended to show the 'Our County at War' film in the Memorial Hall.

From High Wycombe it was reported that the first meeting of the working party on the laying of the commemorative paving stone to Frederick Youens VC would be held on Monday 31 October 2016. Youens had won his posthumous VC on 7 July 1917 at Hill 60 near Ypres. A Great War Trail was also being developed in High Wycombe.

Mike Hyde (Marlow Museum and Marlow WWO Association) reported that there was a changing exhibition each quarter focussing on the events 100 years ago. The 1916 documentary, 'The Battle of the Somme' had been screened on Friday 1 July 2016 and there had been a display on the wartime role of Wethereds Brewery on Heritage Day on Sunday 11 September 2016, at which a plaque had been unveiled to the four brewery workers who had died on active service. A presentation on the group's research had been made to the Local History Association on Monday 17 October 2016 while there would be a concert in the church on Saturday 12 November 2016 commemorating the Australian composer, Septimus Kelly, who had lived in Bisham. Kelly was killed on the Somme in November 1916.

John Mole (Oakley Parish Council) reported that plans for the commemorative event for the laying of the VC paving stone for Edward Brooks VC on Friday 28 April 2017, and related events on Saturday 29 April 2017, were progressing well following study of those similar events held elsewhere. The two-day

exhibition would commemorate all who died and the total of 96 villagers who served. The machine gun that Brooks reputedly captured would be on loan from the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum while there would also be a display on Albert Ball RFC VC, a descendant of whom lived in the village. It was hoped, indeed, to have a fly past of vintage Great War aircraft but much depended upon an application to the HLF. Sadly, there had been no response to approaches from the mayor of the village of Fayet near St Quentin, where Brooks had won his VC. [oakleyvc@molesekin.org]

Catherine Taylor (Waddesdon Archive) reported that there would be a live concert of music to accompany the screening of the Battle of the Somme documentary in Aylesbury on Saturday 4 February 2017. It was hoped to reflect aspects of the Rothschild involvement with the Palestine campaign and the Royal Bucks Hussars as part of the changing exhibitions at Waddesdon, while there would be an exhibition linked to the legacy of war in 2018, with a roll of honour commemorating the 142 men from the estate who served during the war.

It was agreed that there should be another meeting in March 2017.