

Notes on Remembering the Great War in Bucks, 11th Meeting, held at Viney House, Aylesbury on 17 March 2018

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 HLF-funded Great War Virtual Trail had now been signed off as completed. There were just two more images to add. It had been decided to produce a book including a selection of the images together with those that could no longer be matched such as factory interiors as well as documents in co-operation with the Centre for Bucks Studies.

Following the success of the major exhibition, 'The Last Charge' on the 1/1<sup>st</sup> Royal Bucks Hussars at El Mughar in November 1917 at the County Museum from October 2017 to January 2018, there would be a small exhibition this year at the Old Gaol in Buckingham focussing on the 1/1<sup>st</sup> Bucks Battalion in Italy in 1918. A forthcoming event on Sunday 29 April 2018 was the Viney Memorial Lecture, which this year would feature the comedian and military history enthusiast, Al Murray. It would take place at Aylesbury Waterside Theatre's Second Space at 7.00 p.m. Tickets, which could be obtained through the theatre, were already selling and there were just 200 available. Tickets £27.50 inclusive of booking fee with an additional transaction fee of £3.65. All proceeds would go to the Trust. <http://www.atgtickets.com/shows/trench-humour-with-al-murray/aylesbury-waterside-theatre/>

Laura Cotton (Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies) reported that some 200 biographies had now been completed for the HLF-funded 'Great War Buckinghamshire' project. These would go on to the website in due course and approximately 120 of them were being tested in the BETA stage of the website. It was intended that thematic material would also appear on the website such as submitted articles on aspects of the war as it affected the county. In addition, the digitalised images from the 1/1<sup>st</sup> Bucks Battalion Casualty Books, Company Order Books and Trench Logs would also be included. Currently, three volunteers were working on transcribing the Casualty Books in the AHRC-funded 'Casualties of War' project. As before, groups were urged to deposit research materials from their Great War projects in CBS. It was now possible to take electronic material into the new digital archive facility.

Katherine Gwynn (Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies) reported that the portable Great War exhibition was being revised and would be available for local events. There would be a Great War Buckinghamshire Showcase on Saturday 12 May 2018 at Arts4Every1 Centre, Desborough Road, High Wycombe, HP11 2PU from 10.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. There would be local history exhibitions, Great War family history advice, family craft activities, and live music and poetry readings. Entrance was free and refreshments would be available. It was likely there would be a similar event at Milton Keynes in October. In addition, there would be a Researcher to Researcher Day at County Hall, Aylesbury on Saturday 16 June, at which those undertaking projects would be able to exchange information. In addition to the book of images and documents mentioned by Professor Beckett, CBS would also be producing a guide to its Great War sources similar to that available for its Second World War holdings.

Lieutenant Colonel Simon Wilkinson (WW1 Steering Group) reported that the Royal British Legion was establishing a Midshires Band for Buckinghamshire, Berkshire and Oxfordshire and this would be available for events in the region. He had been contacted by two French villages keen to twin with villages in Buckinghamshire similar to the contacts established between The Lee and Fromelles and between Oakley and Fayet. At Fromelles, additional research was under way to identify three more possible mass graves behind the German lines that might contain British rather than the predominantly Australian graves discovered in 2010. Discussions were continuing on the heritage and legacy of RAF Halton, which was scheduled to close in 2020. He reminded groups that the Bucks Military Museum Trust would welcome donations of any surplus funds remaining at the end of groups' research projects as well as volunteers able to help with IT and cataloguing.

The Lord Lieutenant then initiated a discussion on the commemoration of the armistice in November 2018. Sir Henry reported that Bucks County Council, Aylesbury Vale District Council, Aylesbury Town Council and the Royal British Legion had outlined joint plans for 'Battle's Over: A Nation's Tribute' on Sunday 11 November 2018. A lone piper would play in Aylesbury Market Square at 6.00 a.m. to be followed by a breakfast either at the RBL Headquarters in the High Street or in Old County Hall at 6.15 a.m. The usual Remembrance Day Service would take place in the Market Square at 11.00 a.m. Between 1.00 p.m. and 4.00 p.m. there would be a celebration event either in

Aylesbury Waterside Theatre's Second Space or The Gateway. A Church Service would follow in St Mary's Church at 5.30 p.m. and a bugler would play the Last Post in the Market Square at 6.55 p.m. Finally, the bells of St Mary's would ring out for peace at 7.05 p.m. There would be no county beacon on this occasion. There would be discussion on achieving the right balance between remembrance, commemoration and celebration in events in morning, afternoon, and evening.

Buckingham (Lionel Weston) reported that there would be the usual service at 11.00 a.m. on 11 November but a celebration concert of some form in the evening and a possible drama based on those who returned from the war and whose families were still resident in and around Buckingham. Around noon on Saturday 10 November, ten local students would be acting as 'silent soldiers' as a living memorial to those lost. In addition, a tapestry showing local events over the past 100 years would be on display.

Chalfont St Peter (Linda Smith) reported that there would be a beacon on Gold Hill Common at 7.00 p.m. on Sunday 11 November. There would be a parade with a band during the afternoon but discussions were continuing on what might be arranged between the afternoon parade and the lighting of the beacon. Local schools might be involved and, equally, there might be some kind of community sing song before the beacon was lit.

Flackwell Heath (Sally Scagell) reported that there would be the usual 11.00 a.m. service on 11 November but 55 young people wearing red tabards would line the route to the event at the war memorial representing the 55 lives lost from the village. 55 white crosses would be lit with candles in Jubilee Gardens during the evening, and there would be a beacon lit there. The details of each casualty would also be displayed on bollards in the Jubilee Gardens in the week leading up to Remembrance Sunday. At some point during the day, four boys would stand at the corners of the war memorial to give short presentations on the village's wartime experience. It was likely that the church bell would be rung.

Great Missenden (Jill Robertson) reported that the war memorial was being cleaned with the assistance of the War Memorials Trust and it would be re-dedicated on 11 November.

Milton Keynes (Sam Crooks) reported that a beacon would be lit at 7.00 p.m. on Sunday 11 November at the Belvedere in Campbell Park. There would be a central service at 11.00 a.m. to complement those taking place in the towns and villages within the district, and a festival of remembrance at Christ the Cornerstone that might lead to an evening service prior to the beacon being lit. There would also be a street naming event in Wavendon on 11 November.

Oakley (John Mole) reported that there would be an exhibition similar to that held during the commemoration for Edward Brooks VC over the weekend. Following the 11.00 a.m. service a Peace Tree would be dedicated at noon at the Village Hall.

Following the discussion of Remembrance Day events, reports were received on other planned events in 2018. It was noted that all events could be publicised through Visit Buckinghamshire, whose current themes were very much the Great War and extension of the suffrage to women in 1918.

<https://www.visitbuckinghamshire.org/>

Buckingham was holding a concert, 'We Will Remember Them' on Saturday 24 March 2018 with two performances by the Lenborough Singers at 2.00 p.m. and 7.45 p.m. in St Bernardino's Church, Buckingham with proceeds going to SSAFA.

Flackwell Heath (Sally Scagell) would be dedicating this year's Flower Festival on Saturday 23 June to the Great War, and events would include a showing of the Bucks Great War DVD.

Great Missenden (Jill Robertson) drew attention to one new publication and two forthcoming publications: *Holmer Green Heroes of WW1* (2017), *Chesham at War, 1914-18* (forthcoming 2018), and *Great Missenden in World War I* (forthcoming 2018), all from Hawkes Design and Publishing.

[www.hawkesdesign.co.uk](http://www.hawkesdesign.co.uk)

Halton (Francis Hanford) would be hosting all those contingents participating in the centenary commemorations of the founding of the RAF for the three weeks preceding the events in London on Tuesday 10 July 2018. As previously reported, there would be services at Aylesbury and High Wycombe.

Marlow (Mike Hyde) would be commemorating the VC awarded Second Lieutenant Basil Horsfall on Wednesday 27 March 2018. Born in Ceylon, Horsfall attended Sir William Borlase's Grammar School and was killed on 21

March 1918 while serving with the 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion, East Lancashire Regiment (Accrington Pals). A replica VC would be presented to the school. In addition, there would be a walk to the trenches in Pullingshill Wood commencing at Bullingdon Green at 9.30 a.m. on Thursday 24 May 2018 as part of the Chilterns Walking Festival.

Newport Pagnell (Tina Butterwick) would be holding a World at War Vintage Event on Saturday 9 June 2018 including re-enactments although the theme was more the Second World War than the First World War.

Amanda Nicholson announced her wish to hold a celebration party for the children of men and women who had served in the Great War on Monday 8 October 2018 in commemoration of her father whose life was saved when shot down close to a Red Cross tent on the Western Front on that day in 1918. It was suggested that the details be circulated to the press, social media and parish councils in the county to ascertain the possibilities for the event.

After discussion it was resolved that there be one last meeting of the group in October 2018 at which the form and/or desirability of the meetings could be reviewed, perhaps in terms of the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorations of the Second World War from 2019 onwards. In view of the forthcoming GDPR regulations, it would not be possible to operate the database for the meetings in the same way. A possible solution would be for any meetings to be subsumed within the new Bucks Heritage and Archives Network.