

V.E. Day Commemorative Exhibition At The Rose

A free audio installation to mark the 70th anniversary of V.E. Day ('Victory In Europe' Day) is being held at Rose Theatre, Kingston running from 28th April to 21st May 2015.

'V.E. Day Remembered' features personal recollections of V.E. Day from the local community through a selection of recorded memories, an installation of local streets and wartime garden complete with an Anderson Shelter, and photographs and personal stories in a free commemorative booklet

A street party for contributors at the Rose Theatre on the 8th May 2015 will conjure up the V.E. Day spirit once more.

V.E. Day was the official celebration of Victory in Europe Day, the public holiday to mark the end of World War II in Europe. In the UK millions of people celebrated in the streets on 8th May 1945 to mark the end of the European part of the war.

Alison Ramsey of Digital Drama, the event organiser, explained that 'the project focuses on preserving and sharing the personal memories of members of the community who experienced V.E. Day first hand. Their reminiscences of such an extraordinary moment in world history will help to tell the local story of the official end of the European conflict. All memories gathered will be published in a booklet to mark the occasion.'

If you would like to share your memories of V.E. Day for the exhibition, get in touch with Alison Ramsey on: alison@digitaldrama.org / 07525 205148 (deadline 18th April)

WW2 Veteran's Civilian Memorial Appeal

An appeal has been re-launched by WW2 Royal Navy veteran Kenneth Watson for a memorial to be erected in memory of those Surbiton civilians killed by enemy air raids during the Second World War.

Kenneth was brought up in Surbiton and now Chairs Surbiton branch of Royal British Legion. He has had the idea for many years but never quite managed to fulfill his ambition. Now, with the 70th anniversary of the end of World War Two upon us, Kenneth believes it is a good time to re-launch his appeal: "I would like the memorial simply to read 'In Remembrance of Those Civilians of Surbiton, Tolworth and Hook who lost their lives through enemy action 1939-1945'."

A strong impression of the devastating effect of the enemy air raids on our local can be



Courtesy of DigitalDrama

gained by reading Mark Davison's and Paul Adam's book 'Surbiton Bombed' (ISBN 00-9543759-0-4). The book records the after effects of air raids in words and pictures and includes a list of 59 local civilians known to have died during the air raids.

Of course, Surbiton already has a very poignant reminder of the impact of enemy action. The cairn of stones in the Memorial Gardens, Ewell Road was built using stone from nearby St Mark's Church, which was hit during an enemy air raid 2nd October 1940.



The Association is working with Kenneth, and Surbiton RBL to raise funds and bring his idea to reality.

If you are interested in donating, please contact mail@local-hero.org.uk.

Victoria Cross Plaque Unveiling Ceremony

2.30pm Saturday 16th May sees the unveiling of a memorial to honour local man Douglas Belcher's WW1 Victoria Cross.

Mayor Kenneth Smith will preside over the ceremony at Surbiton's Memorial Gardens. Family descendants will be attending. A Rifle Brigade bugler and Tiffin Boys choir will provide musical accompaniments.

The event follows the government's award of a plaque to each Victoria Cross winner. A magnificent effort has been made to plan the event by Kingston Borough Council's Scott Herbertson. The Council's young surveyor Leigh Matthews has designed the memorial stone on which the plaque will be mounted.

Amy Graham of the Local History Rooms has prepared an exhibition of Douglas Belcher's life for Surbiton Library.

'Impact of World War One on Surbiton' Research Presentation

On 23rd April 2015, University of the Third Age and Hillcroft College present the findings of their three-month research project on 'The Impact of World War One on Surbiton'. Researcher Stephen Van Dulken gives a brief preview.

The project has generally been about researching the involvement of Surbiton citizens in the 1914-1919 war. The range of topics was wide and included the soldiers/sailors, auxiliary workers and conscientious objectors with a local connection. The project has also explored the valuable

contribution of women in war work and the role of voluntary organisations in the area. The project also explored the early history of Hillcroft College and its students, some of who worked in munitions.

Researchers have found many fascinating news stories, often just a few sentences long, casting light on what it was like in wartime, many of which make sad reading. One 1915 story tells of the tragic impact on loved ones:

'Leaving a letter saying that her soldier sweetheart had been killed at the front, and that she had nothing to live for, Rose Harding, 20, a domestic servant of Russell-Road, Walton, formerly in service at Surbiton Hill, committed suicide in the Thames.'

Another in 1915 tells us of the pressures on local young men to volunteer:

'A hairdresser in business at Surbiton Hill has the following notice displayed in his establishment: - "The proprietor of this once flourishing business is proud to record the fact that 133 of his customers have gone to do their best to uphold the glorious traditions of Britain's supremacy. Why don't you ALL go?" To compensate himself for the loss sustained by diminished trade, he is undertaking the work of cleaning and repairing watches and clocks.'

And a few have a distinct touch of comedy. This is about Douglas Belcher, the only Surbiton man to be awarded a Victoria Cross in World War I.

Lance-Sergeant Belcher, V.C., of the London Rifle Brigade, who resides at Surbiton, and was formerly a shop assistant at Waring and Gillow's at Oxford-street, W., has been commanded to attend at Buckingham Palace on Monday morning to receive his coveted decoration at the hands of the King. Since the shop assistant has

come home he has been lionised to an embarrassing extent and has spent much of his spare time in signing autograph books. On paying a visit to the Kingston Empire he was recognised while sitting in a box with his friends and after being given musical honours by the audience bowed his acknowledgements. After the performance some of his admirers endeavoured to "chair" him, but, leaving by a private exit, he boarded a tramcar to his home and so escaped them.

Research into battalion war diaries, has uncovered events, often in soberly horrific detail, of attacks both made and received. The deaths or wounding of named officers seem always to be recorded, but the names of the "other ranks" are only sometimes mentioned, perhaps, because there were so many of them. In the Battle of Loos, for instance, James Grayland of Tolworth, a Private in the East Surrey Regiment, was killed on a day when the war diary states that 14 named officers and 430 other ranks were casualties. That was half the battalion.

We only know that Grayland was one of them because he is listed in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's website. The website sometimes gives addresses for parents or wives. Private Alfred Kenneth Stepney's parents lived on Hook Road. He was in the West Surrey Regiment, and died on the 13 July 1915. His battalion's war diary for the previous day notes:

If you have any anecdotes, photographs or even souvenirs of the war that relate to Surbiton that you would be willing to contribute to the exhibition, please contact Stephen Van Dulken by mobile 07854 453109 or email svandulken@hotmail.com.

The presentation takes place on Thursday 23rd April at 11:00am at Hillcroft College, Southbank, Surbiton, KT6 6DF. For more information or to reserve a place, contact: Hamish Chapman, email: hchapman@hillcroft.ac.uk

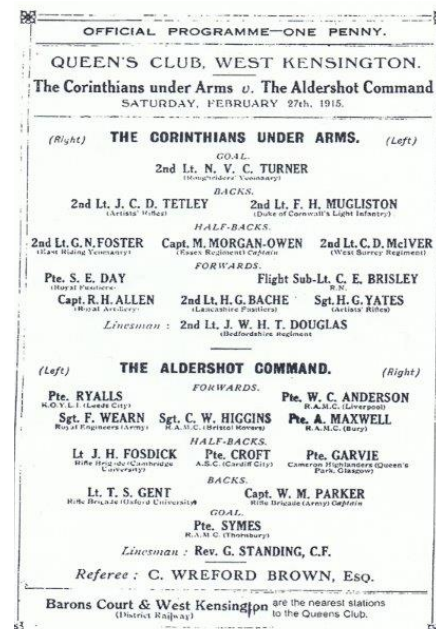
Corinthian-Casuals v Army XI Charity Match

On Saturday 2nd May, Corinthian-Casuals are hosting a football match against an Army team at their home ground in Tolworth. The event marks the centenary of a match played by a team of the club's ancestors, all of whom had volunteered for the services. They played under the guise of "Corinthians under Arms" against a team from the "Aldershot Command" on 27 February 1915.

Club Vice-President David Harrison notes: "We will pay tribute to members of both those teams who died in the Great War and extend the tribute to the 69 members of the Corinthians and Casuals (then separate clubs) and also to many more from the London Regiment who gave their lives."

"Though it will be a solemn occasion for both sides Corinthian-Casuals are hoping to

make the event something of a family day with stalls and refreshments; also some small sided games for club juniors before the main event. The London Regiment are bringing their pipe band and also the very football which, at the Battle of Loos in 1915, soldiers of the London Irish Rifles kicked ahead of them as they attacked the enemy lines.



Copy of the original 1915 teamsheet – Courtesy of Corinthian –Casuals.

The match programme on 2nd May will include the original team sheet above from the game v Aldershot Command and press reports of Corinthians' 4-1 victory in which inside forward Flight Lieutenant Cuthbert Brisley scored a hat-trick. He was tragically killed in 1918 on a training flight with the Royal Flying Corps.

Kick off is at 3pm and all are welcome. Spectators will be invited to pay what they wish to at the gate. All proceeds will go to charities, including military charities such as Help For Heroes. The ground is in King George's Field, Queen Mary's Close, Hook Rise South, Tolworth, Surrey KT6 7NA

Visit to Tiffin Archives

In February, Tiffin School archivist John King kindly invited Association member Graeme Hodge to view records of students who had served in the Great War. Graeme said: "John showed me admission records from the pre-war years, which were very detailed. I was also able to view cuttings, pictures and a range of other ephemera that related to the War". Afterwards, Graeme had the opportunity to visit memorials to former pupils who fell in both First and Second World Wars, as well as a memorial to former Old Boy Douglas Belcher who was awarded the Victoria Cross in 1915.

Since the visit, Graeme has informed the school of three more Tiffin boys who lost their lives in the Great War. These names will be added to the memorial in due course.

Shrewsbury House Memorial Rededication

On Friday 14th November Shrewsbury House School held a ceremony to rededicate its War Memorial to acknowledge the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of The Great War. The original memorial has been cleaned and, following recent research, a new plaque has been added to include additional former pupils also discovered to have died in the Great War.

The Ceremony hosted by Headmaster Kevin Doble was very well attended, not only staff, pupils and their families but also by WW2 veterans from Surbiton's Royal British Legion, local MP Edward Davey and Reverend Helen Hancock from St Matthew's Church, Tolworth.

There were moving and informative readings, recitals and musical performances by the pupils. Afterwards, the school was extremely hospitable in offering excellent food and refreshments served by the school's friendly and helpful staff. The Association is delighted to have been invited to attend.

Sean Smart, Head of History at the school, has been at the forefront of a pupil-led research project to investigate the stories behind the names. The research continues, and the school is now moving on to research WW2. The school is always pleased to receive information and help. Contact Sean at s.smart@shspost.co.uk.

'Surrey in the Great War: A County Remembers'

Surrey History Centre's has been successful in its Heritage Lottery Fund bid for the second stage of the project 'Surrey in the Great War: A County Remembers'.

Phil requests that anyone doing research about Surrey in the Great War to contact the Surrey Heritage team at Surrey History Centre. They will then ensure that they are contacted and consulted once the project starts.

For more information contact Phil Cooper at: phil.cooper@surreycc.gov.uk or call 01483 518730.

Pilot Officer Cyril Joe Barton VC Remembered

On 31st March 2015, members of Maldens and Coombe Heritage Society laid a wreath in remembrance of Pilot Officer Cyril Joe BARTON VC, who died 71 years earlier.

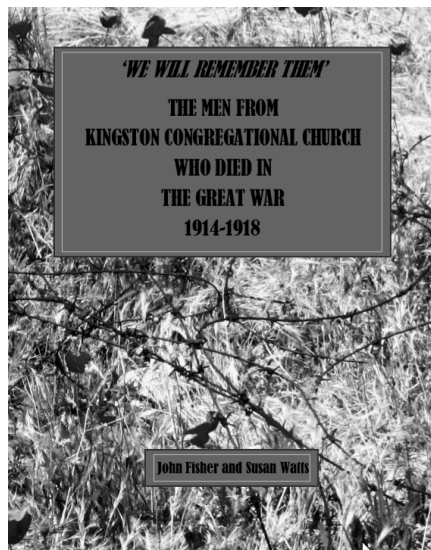
On 24th April 2015 Lieutenant Humphrey Osbaldston Brooke FIRMAN VC RN will also be remembered (99th anniversary) at New Malden, as will Squadron Leader Ian Willoughby BAZALGETTE VC, DFC on 4th August 2015 (71st anniversary).

All three Victoria Crosses were granted posthumously. Each man died in the action for which the decoration was granted.

Two New Local WW1 Commemorative Books

Two local churches have produced books to commemorate the fallen from their respective parishes.

Kingston United Reformed Church has 'We Will Remember Them...' which tells the story of the 27 young men who gave their lives in the Great War. The men are commemorated on a plaque beneath the Memorial Window in the Church. The book has 103 pages with many illustrations in colour. Price: £12.50 (including packing and postage). Enquiries to Susan Watts email: isoparix3@aol.com.



St Paul's Church, Hook parishioners David and Madeline Child have also published 'Hook and Southborough 1914 - 1918 War Memorial' on behalf of the church. The book brings to life the stories of 47 young men commemorated on their memorial and roll of honour.

In both cases, the authors are particularly interested to hear from any descendants of the men who would like to share more information.

Tiffin School Classics Trip to Turkey

By John King, Tiffin School archivist.

At the end of March 2015 the Classics Department at Tiffin School led a trip to Turkey, which besides visiting Istanbul, Troy, Ephesus and Pergamon also included a visit to Gallipoli. A total of 30 boys ageing in range from Year 7 to Upper Sixth were on the trip.

The main focus of the Gallipoli visit was the area around ANZAC cove including Lone Pine and Chunuk Bar. Whilst in the area the opportunity was taken to lay a wreath on the grave of an Old Tiffinian, Sgt Marcus Charles Bullen who is buried at Shell Green Cemetery. He was serving with the Australian forces having emigrated to Western Australia with his parents after 1911. He was at Tiffin between 1907 and

1911. Whilst in the area the School also remembered two other Old Tiffinians, Sub Lt John Warden Edwards Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (RNVR) (Tiffin 1904-1908) and Lt John Nixon Horsfield RNVR (Tiffin 1889-1896) both of whom served in the Naval Battalions and are buried in the south of the Gallipoli peninsula near Cape Helles. These three Old Tiffinians are also commemorated on the War Memorial in the School Hall, which contains 123 names from the First World War.

For many of the students on the trip this was their first visit to a CWGC cemetery. The Year 10 History students do visit Ypres on an annual trip, which includes a number of visits to cemeteries in the area. Remembrance and understanding the reality of these wars is an important part of the wider education of the students at Tiffin.

This is not the first time a wreath has been laid on Classics trips. In 2013 a trip to Tunisia allowed a visit to a remote CWGC cemetery in northern Tunisia where a wreath was laid on the grave of Private W H Greenhalgh (Tiffin 1930-1936).

Kingston Choral Society 'The Christmas Truce'

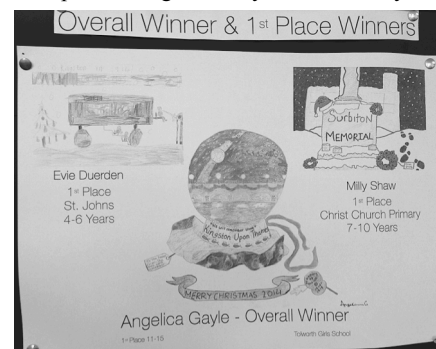
On 16th December, Kingston Choral Society held a one-off performance at St Andrew's Church, Surbiton to commemorate the Great War Christmas Truce in 1914.

The choir conducted by Andrew Griffiths and accompanied by organist William Vann performed a number traditional English and German Carols interspersed with recitals of letters home from serving soldiers.

We were delighted to see Amy Graham from the Local History Rooms was part of the choir.

Christmas Card - 1914

Local children produced some wonderful artwork as part of a Christmas Card Competition organised by MP Ed Davey.



Winners 'Christmas in Kingston 1914'

Many of the winning entries had themes of remembrance of commemoration, including that of Angelica Gayle, the overall winner. Her Christmas card drawing included a banner with the words 'We Will Remember Them'.

Residents from Royal Star & Garter Homes, Surbiton took part on the judging panel.

East Surreys At War: January to April 1915

In the last edition of the Newsletter we told of our local Regiment the East Surreys' involvement from the outset of the Great War. The 1st Battalion took part in the British Expeditionary Force's very first major encounter with the enemy at Mons. It was then part of a retreat of nearly 200km over two weeks, halted by the Battle of the Marne. The subsequent advance and 'Race To The Sea', where the opposing armies outflanked each other, then stagnated into trench formations that became synonymous with the rest of the war. By the end of the 1914, twelve East Surreys men with local connections had already lost their lives.

*Regimental Barracks, Kings Road, Kingston
[Courtesy of Surrey Infantry Museum]*



From January to April 1915, the 1st Battalion mostly remained in trenches around Armentierers and Ypres. Between 19th and 23rd April 1915 they were involved in the Defense of Hill 60. 2nd Battalion arrived in France in January 1915, having returned from service in India. They were positioned at the Ypres Salient and were involved in the Battle of St Eloi. The 3rd and 4th Battalions remained at home whilst the 5th Battalion was renumbered 1st/5th Battalion and sent to India.

By the end of April 1915, a further 17 local men from the Regiment are known to have died, eight from the 1st Battalion and nine from the 2nd Battalion.

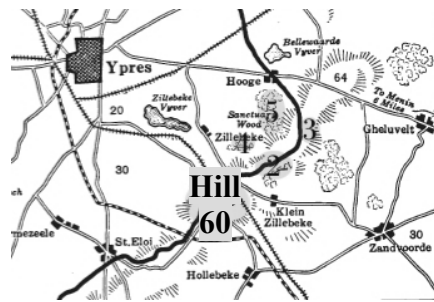
1st Battalion Defense of Hill 60, April 1915

Five of the eight 1st Battalion casualties occurred in just two days, in the famous defense of Hill 60. The hill to the south east of Ypres was of strategic importance and held by the Germans until a successful British attack on 17th April 1915. In the early hours of the 19th April, 1st Battalion, as part of 15th Brigade, took on the role of defending the position. There were heavy bombardments on the 19th. Pte Nelson Victor EDGE was killed. The next day the Germans launched a counter attack. Four local men were lost: Captain Damer WYNARD, Lance Corporal Alfred HAYES, Pte Samuel OVEREND, and Pte Percy SCOTT.

The Battalion was much lauded for its successful Defense of Hill 60. Three Victoria Crosses and seven Distinguished Conduct Medals were awarded as a result of

bravery and conduct during the action. However, the cost in human lives had been very high with 113 killed and 165 wounded.

Hill 60, 'Caterpillar Ridge', 4m SE of Ypres



Other local men from the 1st Battalion lost between January and April 1915 include Privates FW BLAKE and William HUGHES, both of wounds as well as Pte Edwin KELLY who was killed on 2nd April 1915, a day on which the Battalion was reported to have encountered heavy sniping and shelling.

2nd Battalion Defense of St Julien, April 1915; German Gas Attack

A few days later 2nd Battalion suffered even worse casualties in the Battle of St Julien, near Ypres. 141 were killed and 256 wounded. Four of those killed were local men from the 2nd Battalion: Corporal Charles FOWLER, Pte. Gilbert COOLE and Pte. Philip AYRES and Pte William PERRIN between 23rd and 27th April.

Two days earlier, St Julien had been comfortably behind the front line. However, it became part of the battleground following a collapse in the front line on 22 April 1915. The collapse was due to the Germans' first mass use of poison gas. On 24th April, the Germans again used gas when attacking St Julien. Although again successful in creating a gap in the front line, the German soldiers were themselves too nervous to occupy the gas-infected area so failed to exploit the situation.

Other local men from the Battalion to have died include: Private Stephen BOWDEN and Alfred CHAMBERS, killed in trenches on days for which 'nothing unusual occurred' according to the Battalion diary, despite a total of 8 killed, 19 wounded and 2 missing on those two days.

Private Tom STEPTOE was killed on a terrible day for the Battalion 12th March 1915. The diary reports that the Battalion was based in trenches at Lindenhoeck, South West of Ypres, Belgium. They were to launch an attack on German defenses in the morning but owing to a mist, the attack was delayed until late afternoon. Whilst waiting, their own trenches were mistakenly heavily shelled by British artillery causing many casualties. The attack ensued regardless but was unsuccessful. The diary reports 32 killed, 42 wounded and seven missing.

Pte George HOLLOWAY died of wounds in France and Pte Frank LIDDLE dies of illness back in England.

Another 71 Local Men Die in Four Months

As well as the 17 men from the East Surrey Regiment, a further 54 local men die in the Great War in four months from January to April 1915. All are listed on the Roll Of Honour below. A few stories stand out.

Able Seaman Alfred Colin HARDS died when HMS Formidable was sunk on New Year's Day 1915, along with many of his crew mates, off the SW coast of England. Apart from the tragedy itself, the story is notable for two reasons: (1) It was only the second ship to be sunk by self-propelled torpedo. In the last newsletter, we reported that local man Alexander SPOONER had been killed aboard the first ship to be sunk by a torpedo – HMS Pathfinder; (2) One sailor who was rescued and taken ashore unconscious apparently came to after being licked by a dog named 'Lassie'. It was apparently this story that led to the idea for the canine film character of the same name.

17-year old, Walter Victor TAYLOR of New Malden and 36-year old Leading Seaman Richard STEVENS of Kingston were both lost at sea aboard HMS Clan MacNaughton, which disappeared off the coast of Scotland whilst on patrol. The story of Walter Victor TAYLOR is told in more detail below.

Brothers Major Philip LARGE and Herbert Edward LARGE die within two months of each other. Their story is being told in detail by U3A as their 23rd April presentation.

The Gallipoli campaign, which starts in April 1915, also starts to take its toll.

Gallipoli Campaign Takes Its Toll

Winston Churchill's plan to knock Turkey out of the war is now regarded by historians as almost certain to fail even before it started. The campaign, which started with landings on 25 April 1915, continued until early 1916 before given up as a lost cause.

In the first two days, at least four local men have been killed.

Privates William YARLETT, Joseph YATES of Kingston and William WILCOX, all die on the first day of the beach landings, 25th April 1915. Private Henry HOLLAND of Surbiton is killed on 26th April 1915.

Pte William YARLETT of Tolworth Terrace, Surbiton was the brother of Florence YARLETT. Her husband Alexander SPOONER had been killed aboard HMS Pathfinder in September 1914.

Private William WILCOX, born at Peckham, was actually serving with the Australian Infantry. He had presumably emigrated there. After his death, parents, John and Florence Emma Wilcox, resided at 18, Grayham Rd., New Malden.

WW1 ROLL OF HONOUR, JANUARY 1915 - APRIL 1915

Area	Date Died	Name	Rank	Serving with	Dec.	How/Where	Age +/-1	Public Memorial	Other Memorials	Adopt
S	01/01/1915	HARDS, Alfred Colin	Able Seaman	Royal Navy, H.M.S. "Formidable."		Killed, At Sea	23	Surbiton	St Andrews Church; St Mark's Church	N
S	06/01/1915	WILSON, Harold Algar	Captain	King's Shropshire Light Infantry, 1st Bn.		Not sure, France and Flanders	22	Surbiton		N
S	06/01/1915	NEWTON, William Savage	Captain	Honourable Artillery Company, Infantry		Killed, France and Flanders	36	0		N
S	20/01/1915	HERBAGE, Sydney Harold Wilfred	Rifleman	London Regiment (London Rifle Brigade), 5th Bn.		Killed, France and Flanders	18	Surbiton	St Andrews Church	N
K	20/01/1915	PUCKETT, George	Private	Hampshire Regiment; "A" Coy. 1st Bn.		Killed, France and Flanders	29	-	St. Peter's, Norbiton; St Mildred's, Whippingham St Paul's, Newport	N
K	21/01/1915	BLAKE, F. W.	Private	East Surrey Regiment; 1st Bn.		Wounds, France and Flanders	-	-	St Luke's Church, Kingston	N
K	21/01/1915	HAYES, Hughie Job	Company Sergeant Major	Welsh Regiment; 2nd Bn.		Wounds, France and Flanders	32	-		N
K	25/01/1915	HAND, Maurice William	Second Lieutena nt	Cheshire Regiment; 1st Bn.		Wounds, France and Flanders	28	-		N
M	03/02/1915	TAYLOR, Walter Victor	Boy 1st Class	Royal Navy; H.M.S. "Clan McNaughton."		Killed, At Sea	17	New Malden	Christ Church (New Malden)	N
K	03/02/1915	STEVENS, Richard	Leading Seaman	Royal Navy; H.M.S. "Clan McNaughton."		Killed, At Sea	36	-		N
K	07/02/1915	CAMBRIDGE, George William	Private	Coldstream Guards; 3rd Bn.		Wounds, France and Flanders	28	Kingston	St. John's Church, Kingston	N
K	11/02/1915	BOWDEN, Stephen	Private	East Surrey Regiment; 2nd Bn.		Killed, France and Flanders	27	-		N
M	12/02/1915	CHAMBERS, Alfred	Private	East Surrey Regiment; 2nd Bn.		Killed, France and Flanders	-	-		N
M	15/02/1915	COLLYER, Frederick Charles	Private	Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry; 2nd Bn.		Wounds, France and Flanders	-	New Malden	Christ Church (New Malden)	N
K	15/02/1915	HOOPER, Thomas	Sapper	Royal Engineers; 1st/1st (South Midland) Field Coy.		Killed, France and Flanders	-	-		N
S	16/02/1915	LARGE, Herbert Edward	Captain (Adjt.)	Middlesex Regiment (Duke Of Cambridge's Own), 3rd Bn.		Killed, France and Flanders	38	Surbiton		N
K	22/02/1915	WHEELDON, Harry	Lance Corporal	12th (Prince of Wales's Royal) Lancers;		Wounds, France and Flanders	22	Kingston	St. Luke's Church, Kingston	N
K	27/02/1915	DOPSON, William James	Private	Royal Fusiliers; 3rd Bn.		Wounds, France and Flanders	22	Kingston	St. Luke's Church, Kingston	N
K	05/03/1915	GIBSON, Alexander Daly	Rifleman	London Regiment (London Rifle Brigade); 5th Bn.		Wounds, France and Flanders	18	Kingston	St. Peter's Church, Norbiton	N
K	06/03/1915	DREW, Albert James	Private	Royal Army Medical Corps; 83rd Field Amb.		Died , France and Flanders	19	Kingston	St. Peter's Church, Norbiton	N
S	10/03/1915	HUGHES, William Benbow	Private	East Surrey Regiment, 1st Bn.		Wounds, France and Flanders	29	Long Ditton		N
K	10/03/1915	BROWN, William Edward	Rifleman	King's Royal Rifle Corps; 1st Bn.		Unknown, France and Flanders	18	-		N
K	10/03/1915	CLAYTON, Alfred	Corporal	King's Royal Rifle Corps; 1st Bn.		Killed, France and Flanders	34	-		N
S	12/03/1915	GRAHAM, Ronald MacLeod	Second Lieutena nt	Essex Regiment, attd. 2nd Bn. Royal Scots Fusiliers		Killed, France and Flanders	19	-		N

WW1 ROLL OF HONOUR, JANUARY 1915 - APRIL 1915 (Cont'd)

Area	Date Died	Name	Rank	Serving with	Dec.	How/Where	Age +/-1	Public Memorial	Other Memorials	Adopt
K	12/03/1915	STEPTOE, Tom	Private	East Surrey Regiment; 2nd Bn.		Killed, France and Flanders	19	Kingston	St. Luke's Church, Kingston	N
K	13/03/1915	KEMP, John Lane Guy	Lance Corporal	Bedfordshire Regiment; 2nd Bn.		Killed, France and Flanders	21	Kingston		N
K	16/03/1915	LUETCHFORD, Alfred	Chief Petty Officer	Royal Navy		Died , Sea	50	Kingston		N
K	17/03/1915	STRINGER, W.	Private	London Regiment; 13th Kensington Bn.		Wounds, France and Flanders	-	-		N
K	24/03/1915	WEEDON, Walter James	Sergeant	Royal Army Medical Corps; 83rd (2nd/3rd Home Counties) Field Ambulance		Died , France and Flanders	22	Kingston	St. Luke's Church, Kingston	N
K	26/03/1915	LIDDLE, Frank Charles	Private	East Surrey Regiment; 2nd Bn.		Died, Home	-	-		N
K	26/03/1915	SAWYER, Henry John	Rifleman	King's Royal Rifle Corps; 1st Bn. "C" Coy.		Wounds, France and Flanders	22	-		N
S	02/04/1915	GRAHAM, Eric Montrose	Lieutena nt	South Wales Borderers, 1st Bn.		Wounds,	21	0		N
K	02/04/1915	KELLY, Edwin Harry	Private	East Surrey Regiment; 1st Bn.		Wounds, France and Flanders	-	-	Knapp, Drewett and Sons Ltd. War Memorial	N
K	06/04/1915	HEDGES, Frederick George	Sapper	Royal Engineers; 2nd Field Coy.		Wounds, France and Flanders	-	-		N
K	10/04/1915	JOHNSON, Herbert	Lance Corporal	Northumberland Fusiliers; 1st Bn.		Killed, France and Flanders	26	-		N
K	11/04/1915	BONSOR, Eugene Alfred	Sapper	New Zealand Engineers;		Died , Egypt	17	Kingston		N
K	11/04/1915	BAKER, William Cousin	Private	Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry; 1st Bn.		Killed, France and Flanders	-	-		N
S	13/04/1915	HONEYWELL, Frank Tycho	Private	Middlesex Regiment (Duke Of Cambridge's Own), 1st/8th Bn.		Killed, France and Flanders	20	0		N
K	14/04/1915	SMITH, Arthur John	Private	Royal Fusiliers; 3rd Bn.		Killed, France and Flanders	20	Kingston		N
K	14/04/1915	SURREY, Thomas William	Private	Dorsetshire Regiment; 1st Bn.		Killed, France and Flanders	-	-		N
K	15/04/1915	HOLLOWAY, George	Private	East Surrey Regiment; 2nd Bn.		Wounds, France and Flanders	25	Kingston	St. Paul's Church, Kingston Hill	N
M	16/04/1915	BLACKLIDGE, John Duncan	Purser	Mercantile Marine; S.S. "Manitou" (West Hartlepool)		Drowned, Sea	31	New Malden		N
K	18/04/1915	WRIGHT, Horace	Private	South Wales Borderers; 1st Bn.		Killed, France and Flanders	18	Kingston	St. Luke's Church, Kingston	N
K	18/04/1915	KING, Harry Sidney	Lance Corporal	King's Royal Rifle Corps; 1st Bn.		Died, Home	27	-	St. Peter's Church, Norbiton	N
M	19/04/1915	EDGE, Nelson Victor	Private	East Surrey Regiment; 1st Bn.		unknown, France and Flanders	17	New Malden	Christ Church (New Malden)	N
M	20/04/1915	WYNARD, Damer	Captain	East Surrey Regiment; 1st Bn.		Killed, France and Flanders	25	New Malden	Christ Church (New Malden)	N
K	20/04/1915	HAYES, Alfred	Lance Corporal	East Surrey Regiment; 1st Bn.		Killed, France and Flanders	-	Kingston		N
K	20/04/1915	SCOTT, Percy James	Private	East Surrey Regiment; 1st Bn.		Killed, France and Flanders	19	Kingston	All Saints Church, Kingston	N
K	20/04/1915	OVEREND, Samuel	Private	East Surrey Regiment; 1st Bn.		Unknown, France and Flanders	35	-		N
K	20/04/1915	BEAUCHAMP, Henry William	Private	Royal Army Medical Corps; 83rd Field Ambulance		Killed, France and Flanders	32	Kingston		N

WW1 ROLL OF HONOUR, JANUARY 1915 - APRIL 1915 (Cont'd)										
Area	Date Died	Name	Rank	Serving with	Dec.	How/Where	Age +/-1	Public Memorial	Other Memorials	Adopt
K	21/04/1915	WRIGHT, James	Private	Bedfordshire Regiment; 1st Bn.		Killed, France and Flanders	43	Kingston		N
K	23/04/1915	MCONIE, Ronald James	Private	Canadian Infantry (Manitoba Regiment); "H" Coy. 16th Bn.		Killed, France and Flanders	27	-	Buchlyvie War Memorial	N
K	23/04/1915	PERRIN, William	Private	East Surrey Regiment; 2nd Bn.		Killed, France and Flanders	26	-		N
K	24/04/1915	KIDWELL, George William	Private	Bedfordshire Regiment; 1st Bn.		Wounds, Home	18	-		N
S	25/04/1915	TURNER, Montage Alweyn Fisher	Lance Corporal	Northumberland Fusiliers, 2nd Bn.		Killed, France and Flanders	22	Surbiton		N
M	25/04/1915	COOLE, Gilbert Granville	Private	East Surrey Regiment; 2nd Bn.		Killed, France and Flanders	21	New Malden	Christ Church (New Malden)	N
K	25/04/1915	FOWLER, Charles Edward	Corporal	East Surrey Regiment; 2nd Bn.		Killed, France and Flanders	24	Kingston	St. Luke's Church, Kingston	N
S	25/04/1915	YARLETT, William	Private	Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment), 2nd Bn.		Killed, Gallipoli	26	Surbiton	St Matthews Church, Surbiton	Y
M	25/04/1915	WILCOX, William John	Private	Australian Infantry, A.I.F.; 11th Bn.		Killed, Gallipoli	23	-		N
K	25/04/1915	YATES, Joseph Thomas Wilfred	Private	Royal Fusiliers; 2nd Bn.		Killed, Gallipoli	22	Kingston	All Saints Church, Kingston	N
S	26/04/1915	HOLLAND, Henry Peter	Private	Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment), 2nd Bn.		Killed, Gallipoli	-	Surbiton	St Matthews Church, Surbiton	N
M	26/04/1915	BROOKS, George	Private	Royal Fusiliers; 3rd Bn.		Killed, France and Flanders	44	New Malden	Christ Church (New Malden)	N
M	26/04/1915	CROMPTON, William George	Rifleman	London Regiment (London Rifle Brigade); 1st/5th Bn.		Killed, France and Flanders	-	New Malden	Christ Church (New Malden)	N
K	26/04/1915	BARR, John	Private	Royal Fusiliers; 3rd Bn.		Killed, France and Flanders	32	Kingston	St. Peter's Church, Norbiton	N
K	26/04/1915	RANCE, Harry	Rifleman	Rifle Brigade; 1st Bn.		Wounds, France and Flanders	31	-		N
S	27/04/1915	LARGE, Philip Martin	Major	Middlesex Regiment (Duke Of Cambridge's Own), 1st Bn.		Killed, France and Flanders	-	Surbiton		N
S	27/04/1915	BAKER, H.	Private	Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, 2nd Bn.		, France and Flanders	20	0		N
K	27/04/1915	AYRES, Philip Margetto	Private	East Surrey Regiment; 2nd Bn.		Killed, France and Flanders	41	Kingston	St. Luke's Church, Kingston	N
M	28/04/1915	JAMESON, John	Rifleman	Rifle Brigade; 1st Bn.		Killed, France and Flanders	19	New Malden	Christ Church (New Malden)	N
M	28/04/1915	WRIGHT, Neville Ormonde Butler	Lance Corporal	London Regiment (London Rifle Brigade); 5th Bn.		Killed, France and Flanders	24	New Malden	Christ Church (New Malden)	N
K	28/04/1915	WOOD, John	Private	Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry; 1st Bn.		Killed, France and Flanders	20	Kingston	St. Peter's Church, Norbiton	N

Key: Area: Chessington, Kingston, Maldens & Coombe, Surbiton, Tolworth & Hook

Decorations: **DCM** Distinguished Conduct Medal, **MC** Military Cross, **MM** Military Medal, **MID** Mentioned in Despatches

Help Find 'The Missing'

Our research so far has uncovered stories of over 2200 people with a local connection that died as a consequence of WW1. However, there are still a number of missing stories - where we have not yet been able to establish a local connection or other information.

We would be delighted to hear from anyone whom has information on the missing names.

Our online roll of honour www.local-hero.org.uk shows these names at the end of each list.

We can be contacted at mail@local-hero.org.uk.

Missing Ship Mystery: New Malden Boy Lost

On 3rd February 1915 HMS Clan MacNaughton set sail from Chatham to patrol the North Sea. It was never seen again. On board was 17-year old, Walter Victor TAYLOR.

By Nick Howgill and Graeme Hodge.

Walter Victor TAYLOR was born at New Malden 25th October 1897, third child of James Taylor and Janet Purvis (nee Colquhoun). James was born at Mitcham in 1860 and Janet at Glasgow in 1862. They married at Holy Trinity Church, Wimbledon 22nd May 1893. At the time of their wedding, James was employed as a cellarman for a wine merchant and was residing at Hazlehurst Road, Streatham. His bride-to-be was living in Haydon's Road, Wimbledon. They soon became a family with children James and Winfred born at Earlsfield in 1894 and 1895 respectively. Followed Walter's birth in 1897, two younger siblings Leonard and Margaret followed in 1900 and 1902.

By the time of Walter's birth, the family had moved to New Malden. They were residing at 1 Mayfield Gardens, Northcote Road when Walter was baptised at Christ Church, on Sunday 2nd January 1898. The Rev. Walter Allen Challacombe conducted the baptism service.

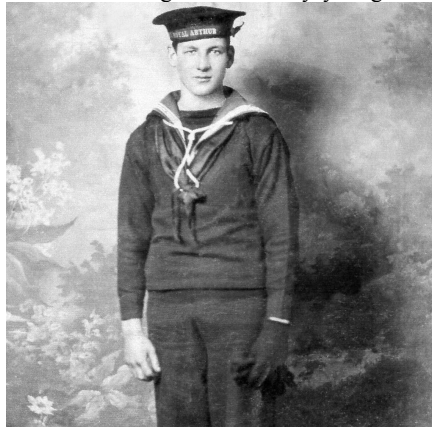
By the 1901 census they had moved to 74, Northcote Road. They moved again and in 1911 were at "Clovelley" 129, Blagdon Road, New Malden where they remained for many years thereafter.

In the 1911 census Walter was recorded as being at school. His school is not known but youngest sibling Margaret is known to have attended Christ Church School, Lime Grove. She went on to Burlington School, Burlington Road. It is possible that Walter attended the same schools.

The 1911 census also records Walter, aged 13, and brother Leonard, aged 11, to be Milk Boys whilst also attending school. Eldest brother James, aged 17, was working alongside his father in the wine trade as a cellarman's boy. Elder sister, Winifred, aged 15, was employed as a domestic servant.

According to family legend, Walter had long wanted to join the Royal Navy and on several occasions had run away from home with the object of doing so. Eventually his parents gave in, and in 1913 they duly signed his enlistment papers. At that time, the navy recruited boys aged fifteen and a half upwards, provided they were: medically and generally fit, of reasonable height, able to read and write and of good character, the latter to be certified by a reference from a professional person. These boys would agree that, on reaching the age of eighteen, they would enlist for a further twelve years. Parents were responsible for both arranging and paying for the medical examination and the testament of good character.

Boy seamen were calculated to have provided some twenty-five percent of all naval ratings, and on average only one in four applicants were successful. Walter must have been a bright and healthy young man.



Walter Victor Taylor, 1914. Photo Courtesy of Catherine Jenkins; restoration by Cristina Ruiz de Asua.

On 23 September 1913, Walter, aged 15, joined as a "Boy Second Class" (Boy II). He attended the boys training establishment at Plymouth-Devonport, known as "HMS Impregnable". Each main naval base possessed a similar establishment. Although the boys were based on an old sailing ship hulk, training was very up-to-date. The Royal Navy, alone amongst the world's major navies, no longer used sails as part of basic recruit training.

Boys were trained in all manner of seamanship, including knots, gunnery and boat handling, with strict discipline and regimentation. The was recorded at the best-known of the boys training establishments "HMS Ganges", based at Shotley near Harwich.

'... A man can do his duty and chase the youngsters around and make them do what they were told when they were told. That was one side of the question that was proved out and out and came in very useful during action... But there was no need for the brutality.' (*Band of Brothers: Boy Seamen in the Royal Navy*, by David Phillipson (2003, Sutton Publishing, Stroud), p. 46),

Its harsh regime is likely to have been common amongst all of the training establishments.

On 4 October 1913, Walter was moved to HMS Powerful, an old cruiser employed as part of the Devonport training establishment. He remained there until 23 May 1914, having been promoted to "Boy First Class" on 17 May 1914. This was, perhaps, a result not only of having served time as a "Boy II", but also by virtue of a least one good conduct badge.

On 24 May 1914, Walter joined HMS Royal Arthur, an old cruiser used to take boys on a sea cruise as final training before they joined the fleet. On 30 November 1914, Walter left this ship and for the next ten days was at the naval barracks at Chatham Dockyard,

known as "HMS Pembroke". It was a peculiarity of the navy to name shore establishments as if they were ships (hence the soubriquet applied to them – "stone frigates").

On 11 December 1914, four months into the War, Walter's fate was sealed when he joined HMS Clan MacNaughton, a converted merchant ship of some 4000 tons, built for the Clan Line Steamship Company and launched in 1913. The Royal Navy had requisitioned her as an "armed merchant cruiser" (AMC), a merchant ship equipped with guns and other naval equipment and designed to act as an auxiliary cruiser.

Her role was to be part of the "Northern Patrol", a cordon established by the Royal Navy in the northern part of the North Sea. Its purpose was both to spot any break out by the German High Seas Fleet and also to control maritime traffic across the Atlantic to prevent war materials reaching Germany. This "blockade" of Germany eventually proved to be a key factor in the allied victory in the Great War.

Initially, old cruisers of the Tenth Cruiser Squadron maintained the cordon. They included some former boys training ships, such as HMS Royal Arthur. However, there were doubts about their ability and AMCs eventually took over the role. AMCs were able to stay at sea longer and, supposedly, better equipped to withstand the harsh weather prevalent in the area.

On 3rd February 1915, HMS Clan MacNaughton left Chatham under the command of Commander Robert Jeffreys, aged 39. Aboard were 20 officers and 261 crew, including 50 'Boys'.

What happened next is a mystery. She went missing and on 24 February 1915 was reported as lost. Some wreckage was sighted off the north coast of Scotland but there were no definitive clues to the cause of sinking. Some speculated that she may have hit a drifting mine, but the broad consensus is that she foundered in heavy weather. Questions raised in Parliament about her unsatisfactory conversion to an AMC lend credence to this version.

No trace of any of those on board was ever found. Walter is listed amongst the 172 names of his ship-mates at the Chatham Naval Memorial. A further 73 are listed at Plymouth Naval Memorial, 10 at Portsmouth Naval Memorial and the remainder, from the Newfoundland Royal Naval Reserve, are listed at Beaumont-Hamel (Newfoundland) Memorial, Somme, France.

Locally, Walter is also listed on the Malden and Coombe War Memorial, the tablet at Christ Church, New Malden and on the family grave at Kingston Cemetery.

Although Walter was just 17-years old, he was not the youngest to perish. Eighteen 16-year olds on board also lost their lives.

Walter's younger brother Leonard enlisted as a Bombardier in January 1917 but, thankfully, survived the war.

Letters from the Front:

Reverend H.B. Hamer

Local History Rooms volunteer Dan Leissner has been researching letters from army chaplain Reverend Herbert Barningham HAMER to parishioners at St Luke's, Kingston during the Great War.

The Kingston Parish of St. Luke's, like all others, was greatly affected by the Great War. Not only did many local men and women serve in His Majesty's Armed Forces, but also the Church provided spiritual and practical support to those serving and their families. Parishioners donated and sent comforts to the troops at the Front and entertained the wounded and soldiers on leave. The parish compiled a list of parishioners who were on active service.

One of those to serve was the third Vicar of St. Luke's Church, Kingston, the Reverend Herbert Barningham HAMER.



Reverend Herbert Barningham Hamer

He was not from Kingston. He was born in Ashton-on-Mersey, Cheshire 15th November 1875, son of Stephen Hamer, a manufacturer's agent, and wife Ann Hamer (nee Barningham). Herbert attended Manchester Grammar School before going on to St. John's College, Cambridge in the autumn of 1894. He was awarded a B.A. in 1897 and then a M.A. in 1901.

Herbert had presumably studied theology as, in 1900, he was ordained a Deacon then a priest one year later. His first posting was as Curate of Abingdon, Berkshire. This was followed by a variety of postings including as an Assistant Chaplain at St. Petersburg, Russia and as Assistant Priest and Precentor at Inverness Cathedral.

He married Katherine 'Kitty' Babington in 1904 and they had a child Monica Violet in 1905 at Foleshill, Warwickshire. In the 1911 census, the family was recorded as living at Lowestoft, Suffolk.

In 1912 Rev. HAMER was appointed Curate at St Luke's, Kingston before becoming Vicar in 1917.

On 2nd June 1915, aged 39 years and married with one child, Herbert attended an interview with the War Office (Chaplains Branch C1) for the role of army chaplain. He was successful and signed a one-year contract on 20th July 1915, renewed a year later. Rev. HAMER went first into training then to the Western Front. From 1917, he served as Chaplain to the Surrey Volunteer Regiment.

Rev. HAMER's Army Service Record can be found in the National Archives (ref. WO 339 94310). His medal index card shows that he was awarded the 1914/15 Star, British War Medal 1914-20 and the Victory Medal.

Name	Corps	Rank	Regt. No.
HAMER	R.A. CH. D.	CHAPLAIN	
H. B.			
Medal	1914/15 Star	Page	Clasp
Victoria Cross	1914/15 Star	Page	Clasp
Brevet	1914/15 Star	Page	Clasp
15 Star	1914/15 Star	Page	Clasp
Gr. S.	1914/15 Star	Page	Clasp

Whilst on service, Rev. HAMER regularly wrote home to his parishioners at St Luke's. The letters started in the summer of 1915 whilst at his training camp on Salisbury Plain. They continued through his time serving on the Western Front. These letters were published in the St. Luke's Parish Magazine.

Rev. Herbert Barningham HAMER died 14 May 1935, aged 59 and is buried at Kingston Cemetery (Grave No.2160).

In future editions of the Newsletter, based on Dan Leissner's transcriptions, we plan to share extracts and anecdotes from Rev. HAMER's letters that give a fascinating insight into the war from a Chaplain's perspective.

Army Chaplains In The Great War

In August 1914, when the British Expeditionary Force set sail for France, there were just over just over 100 commissioned chaplains serving in the Army Chaplains' Department. Of these, 65 accompanied the 'expedition'. By the war's end in 1918 close on 3500 had served in all theatres of the war - ministering to the needs of the men and women serving their country overseas.

The Army Chaplains Department had been in existence for some 120 years when the Great War started in the summer of 1914. Initially comprising only Church of England men, over the years it had evolved to encompass Roman Catholic, Wesleyan, Jewish and other smaller denominations by the beginning of the 20th century.

Military Chaplains known as "Padres" or, more affectionately, "Sky Pilots" provided spiritual guidance to men who sought it. They did not carry any form of weaponry,

even at the Front. In their armory there would only be a Bible, Prayer Book and, perhaps, some sweets and cigarettes for the men.

Chaplains were actively involved at or near the Front. They would hold services on the Sabbath and before battles. They would be found in field hospitals comforting men injured in battle. They would have also been busy with burial services. In addition to their spiritual role, they also carried out other tasks, such as helping men who had difficulty in reading and writing to keep in touch with their loved ones.

Padres frequently put themselves in great danger by administering the last rites to men wounded in the course of battle and in No-Man's-Land. Figures vary, but it is generally accepted that between 170 and 180 Chaplains themselves paid the ultimate sacrifice.

A number of men of the Chaplains Department were decorated during the Great War with Victoria Crosses, Distinguished Service Order and Military Cross awards amongst their number.

They were widely respected and appreciated for the role that they played in the grim realities of life that they endured on the Western Front and in other theatres.

Richmond Park in WW1

At Pembroke Lodge, Richmond Park there is currently showing a display mounted by the Hearsam Collection telling of some of the notable that happened at Richmond Park during the Great War.

The Park clearly had an important role: as a base for recruitment, army encampments cavalry training, sniper training a military hospital, women working on the home front and even a secret military experiment.

Photos on display include a 2nd Battalion Artists Rifles leaving the park on a route March led by their band, a cavalry charge and sniper in a tree.

In 1916 a hospital was built for South African troops near Richmond Gate, equipped with over 600 beds. Just outside Richmond Gate, the Star & Garter Home for disabled servicemen established itself. The Charity continues to this day as an invaluable resource for ex-service personnel that has lasted until the present day.

As the War persisted, women became increasingly important. Richmond Park became a base for the Women's Auxiliary Corps (WAAC), formed in 1917 that supported the army both at home and abroad.

Intriguingly, an award-winning secret experiment was undertaken on Richmond Park Pond. The experiment was for an 'electrical light ray' designed by Harry Grindell Matthews to shoot down the zeppelins that were responsible for the bombing raids. The invention was never adopted.

Local Veteran's Story:

Jimmy Baynes

WW2 Royal Navy veteran Jimmy Baynes tells of his wartime experiences.

I was born in East Ham in 1923 and left school at 14 to begin a seven-year apprenticeship in the printing industry. In 1942 I went to HMS Collingwood and began a career as a signalman.

I was drafted immediately to the Middle East and joined Erica, a flower class corvette based in Alexandria. We were part of the Second Escort Group, which escorted convoys along the North African coast in support of Monty and the Desert Rats.

This was my baptism to the war at sea and there were several hairy adventures.

In February 1943 we were bringing a convoy from Benghazi to Alex [Alexandria, Egypt] when we struck a mine. One enormous explosion, Erica sank and I suffered severe burns. It's a small world because I found myself on the Southern Maid, one of the escorts, and her signalman had been with me at Collingwood.

I was flown to the 63rd General Hospital in Cairo. There were beautiful beds that didn't roll about, beautiful clean sheets and beautiful nurses. When I was discharged and given a warrant to travel back to Alex I looked like something out of a pantomime. I had lost everything and the hospital patched me up with whatever gear they could find.

A couple of years later, back in the UK, I joined the colony class frigate Anguilla and took part in the arctic convoy described below. On reflection, I feel that my four years in the 'Andrew' [a slang name for the Navy attributed to a fearsome Press Gang leader who kidnapped men and bundled them on to ships in bygone years.] was the finest finishing school ever. I certainly grew up.

And I marvel at the sea and the power of nature, far superior to man. The sea is a battleground like no other. There may be mayhem, death and destruction on land and the aftermath is there for all to see. But this is not so in our operations. Be it a small corvette of a thousand tons or the Bismarck, the sea clinically cleans up the wreckage and the scene reverts to normal.



On Tuesday 16th September 2014, I was invited to a ceremony at the Russian Embassy in London where Ambassador Alexander Yakovenko presented me with the Ushakov Medal. It was an occasion I will never forget. I'm sure that all present found it to be a personal, intimate reminder of the events of 70 years ago.

The Embassy provided a beautiful setting and the staff were extremely kind and helpful. In a way it seemed that the final piece of the jigsaw had been inserted. It is so sad that many of our shipmates are not around to share this wonderful experience. I will treasure The Ushakov Medal as a gesture of friendship and a special token uniting a band of special people.

Football Match in Russia

While the merchant ships went up river to unload in Murmansk Anguilla's footballers played against a team from HMS Goodall. The ground was frozen hard. We were glad of a run ashore to stretch the legs. We met a local resident.



One of the most hazardous times was when leaving for home via the Kola Inlet and entering the Barents Sea. A U-boat pack would lie in wait and it was very nasty indeed. On this occasion HMS Goodall was torpedoed with heavy loss of life. She remained afloat as a burned-out wreck. But as she was in the way of the home-going convoy we were ordered to sink her. Can you imagine our feelings?

Our escort group set off home, eventually steaming up the Mersey and berthing in Gladstone Dock. Believe it or not, the next day was VE Day and the war in Europe was over. We were shattered and I took some time to get over it.

I consider myself to be extremely fortunate to have reached my nineties and am able to have contact with events, which took place a lifetime ago.

Written by and photographs by Jimmy Baynes

Operation Varsity 70th Anniversary Service

On Sunday 22nd March 2015 a service attended by Kingston Mayor Kenneth Smith was held at Sutton Manor Park Memorial to mark the 70th anniversary of Operation

Varsity on 24th March 1945. The Operation, involving more than 16,000 British, American and Canadian Paratroopers, was the largest airborne operation in history to be conducted in a single day and in one location. It was part of Operation Plunder, Montgomery's attempt to cross the Rhine River and enter Northern Germany.

Although the mission was considered to be a success, casualties were high. By nightfall on 24th March 1945, 6th and 17th Airborne Division had suffered circa 2,700 killed, wounded or missing of the 16,870 who were landed. In 2013, Johnny Johnson of Sutton, a glider pilot in the operation was reported saying: "The paratroopers were shot to pieces. It was the worst day of my life; it was really a disastrous day, 2000 men died. We were lucky to get out of it."



Sutton Manor Park Memorial 24th March

Local WW2 veteran Colin Hards served with the Paratroop Regiment. He did not serve at Operation Varsity, having been taken prisoner during the ill-fated Operation Market Garden Campaign in October 1944. He tells the story in his excellent autobiography 'Dropped In It' [ISBN 978-1-4466-5439-2].

70th Anniversary, Netherlands

Local association member Ken Cowdery was fortunate to have the opportunity to accompany WW2 veteran Harry Prescott at 70th anniversary commemorations at Kapelsche Veer, Holland, 31st January 2015.



Harry Prescott (left) with a Polish Veteran

Harry, a 47 Royal Marine Commando veteran, was also involved on D-Day (his landing craft was blown out of the water) and in the liberation of Dutch island Walcheren, which followed the failure of Operation Market Garden. Harry, now aged 93, regards himself to be 'a very lucky man' to have survived the war.

Association News

Recent Association Talks

Wednesday 19 November 2014:

19:30–21.00 'RBK War Memorials Association' 20-minute talk by Graeme Hodge and Ken Cowdery at Western Front Association, Cobham. £2.00 (free to members).

Thursday 20 November 2014:

19:00–20.00 'Kingston's Fallen In The First World War' talk by Graeme Hodge at Kingston Museum. Free.

Tuesday 2 December 2014:

19:30–21.00: Maldens & Coombe's Great War: A talk by Graeme Hodge and Ken Cowdery at Maldens & Coombe Historical Society. Free to members.

Tuesday 16 December 2014:

19:30–21.00: Surbiton Tolworth & Hook's Great War: A talk by Ken Cowdery at Surbiton Library. Free.

Thursday 18 December 2014:

10:30–11.30: Surbiton Tolworth & Hook's Great War: A talk by Ken Cowdery at Surbiton Library. Free.

Tuesday 3 March 2015:

14:30–15.30: Chessington and Hook's Great War: A talk by Ken Cowdery at Hook Library. Free (£2 charged by Library).

Campaigns and Appeals

The Association is involved with a number of campaigns and appeals, updates are below. We would warmly welcome any help or support, however small, that any one can provide on any of these.

Cleaning of Surbiton Memorial

We are delighted that, the council has agreed to clean and repair the Surbiton Memorial in time for the Belcher VC Memorial plaque unveiling ceremony 16th May 2015.

Surbiton Civilian Memorial Appeal

As mentioned on the front cover, the Association is whole-heartedly supporting an appeal by WW2 veteran Kenneth Watson and the Royal British Legion, Surbiton Branch for a memorial to Surbiton civilians killed by enemy action in the WW2. The matter has been raised with the Mayor and the council but further fundraising will be needed.

Every Local Life Remembered

The aim is for every local Great War life lost to be remembered by at least one local person.

The aim is to ensure that locally we remember all those from our community who have made the ultimate sacrifice 'lest we forget' (as is inscribed on Surbiton's civic memorial).

So far, connections have already been with local family members so some of the names have already been adopted.

Individuals or organisations interested in 'adopting' a story, can choose a name from the roll of honour above or view the full roll on our website www.local-hero.org.uk. Then just contact us at mail@local-hero.org.uk to let us know the chosen name.

Local Veterans Stories

The aim would be to capture as many possible wartime stories of local veterans in words or perhaps on film.

Local Database/Website

The Association believes that, with the vast amount of data now collated, an online database recording the impact of the Great War on the local community should be established as an educational tool.

Historical Information Boards

We are promoting the introduction of information boards at local memorials, with information about the memorial and fallen.

Douglas Belcher V.C. 'Blue Plaques'

The Association is pursuing the installation of a 'blue plaque' to mark the property at which Douglas Belcher was born. We understand that a formal request to the council needs to be made as well as permission of the property owner.

Memorial Trust Fund

The Association has been impressed by the work of the East Wickam and Welling War Memorial Trust (<http://www.ewt.org.uk>). We could see how such a similar Trust could be a valuable asset in the RB Kingston and are raising the suggestion with Council.

Connection With Oldenburg, Germany

Royal Borough of Kingston is twinned with Oldenburg in Northern Germany. The Association is promoting the idea that local school children could connect with each other and share their remembrance and learning. Experiences.

Research In Progress

The Association continues with its research into the Borough's Great War Fallen but is keen to progress with research in WW2 fallen.

It has been asked to help research the stories of the Aldershot Command XI who played Corinthians Under Arms in 1915.

Affiliations

The Association were extremely pleased and honoured to be invited to become affiliated to the highly regarded Maldens & Coombe Heritage Society.

Following a talk on the Great War by Association members, Mark Clark, the Chair of the Society put forward a motion for the Society to invite the Association to be affiliated. Society members present back the motion and the Association was delighted to accept.

Fundraising and Sponsorship

The Association is still seeking to fundraise and obtain sponsorship. Its founders are currently covering all Association costs.

Kingston Crest

You may have noticed that we are no longer using the Kingston Crest as part of our logo. We were contacted by a representative of Kingston council who informed us that it was in fact the council's own crest. We had assumed incorrectly that it was an historic Kingston crest so apologised straight away and immediately stopped using it.

Grateful Thanks

Since the last newsletter, the Association has received help from many people and organisations. We would wish to express particular thanks to the following:

Jim Creasy

Jim has been researching the Great War fallen for many years and compiled an extensive card index. He has very kindly passed this to the Association for safe-keeping. This has helped us unearth many missing stories and also introduced new stories. Jim continues to provide further snippets as and when he comes across them.

Stephen Van Dulken

Stephen has been an active researcher on U3A/Hillcroft 'Impact of the Great War on Surbiton' project. He has been extremely generous in sharing his research findings with us. He has found some fascinating new stories of the fallen, those who served and the local community.

David and Madeline Child

David and Madeline have undertaken an excellent research study on the fallen from Hook and Southborough commemorated at St Paul's Church Hook. They have kindly shared their findings with the Association, which has helped uncover missing information and introduce new stories.

Dan Leissner

Dan was a significant contributor to the research of the 1914 Kingston at War exhibition. He has continued to research the letters home of a soldier to his parish church at St Luke's, Kingston and has provided us with information that we can include rolling feature in future newsletters.

Membership

At the next meeting, a key topic will be how best to secure memberships among the many people interested in our activities.

Next Meeting Date

The Association plans its next meeting in May 2015 – exact agenda, date and location to be confirmed. If you would like to attend or add an agenda item, please email Ken at mail@local-hero.org.

Interested in finding out more about the Great War locally?

Are you, your local school or community group interested in finding out more about the impact of The Great War on our local community? In recent months, the Association has given talks at Surbiton and Hook Libraries, Kingston Museum, Surrey History Centre, Surbiton Rotary Club, Surbiton Methodist Church, Christ Church, Surbiton, Western Front Association, and Malden & Coombe Heritage Society as well as attending school workshops.

If interested, please contact mail@local-hero.org.uk.

Things For The Diary

The following events are known to be coming up over the coming months. Please let us know if there is anything else planned.

EXHIBITIONS

From 28th April to Thursday 21st May 2015:

V.E. Day Remembered Exhibition.

- Rose Theatre, 24-26 High Street, Kingston upon Thames, London KT1 1HL. Free.

From 16th May 2015

Douglas Belcher VC Exhibition

- Surbiton Library, Ewell Road, Surbiton KT6 6AG. Free.

EVENTS

Thursday 23rd April 2015:

11am, 'The Impact of World War One on Surbiton' presentation.

- Hillcroft College, South Bank, Surbiton KT6 6DF tel. 0208 399 2688. Free.

Friday 24th April 2015:

time tbc, Lieutenant Humphrey O.B. FIRMAN VC RN wreath-laying

- Malden & Coombe Memorial, High Street, New Malden

Saturday 2nd May 2015:

3pm, Commemorative Charity Football Match, Corinthian-Casuals v Army XI.

Donations at gate at spectators own discretion. All proceeds to Charity.

- Corinthian-Casuals, King George's Field, Queen Mary's Close, Hook Rise South, Tolworth KT6 7NA

Saturday 16th May 2015:

2.30pm, Douglas Belcher Victoria Cross Plaque Unveiling Ceremony.

Free. A Civil ceremony to Surbiton's only Great War Victoria Cross winner.

- Surbiton Memorial Gardens, Ewell Road, Surbiton KT5 (next to the Library).

Tuesday 4th August 1915

time tbc, Squadron Leader Ian W. BAZALGETTE VC, DFC wreath-laying

- Malden & Coombe Memorial, High Street, New Malden

WFA EVENTS

The following talks at the Surrey Branch of Western Front Association (WFA) will be held at The Day Centre, Lushington Drive, Cobham KT11 2LY.

All are welcome. Free to members. £3 Donation suggested for guests.

Wednesday 15th April 2015, 7.30pm:

'Captain Albert Ball VC RFC' - a talk by Bill Fulton.

Wednesday 20th May 2015, 7.30pm:

'David Beats Goliath' - a talk by Tim Stoneman.

Wednesday 17th June 2015, 7.30pm:

'The Battle of Loos' - a talk by Colin Ellender.

Wednesday 15th July 2015, 7.30pm:

'The BEF's Artillery in 1915' - a talk by Geoff Spring.

Wednesday 19th August 2015, 7.30pm:

'Medical VCs of the First World War' - a talk by Peter Starling.

Did you know? Some local Great War facts

- On 28 July 1915, Hook made front page news when Daily Sketch reported "There is not a slacker in the district, for the simple reason that every man, married and single, of military age has joined the army." Reports vary on the number of local men serving from 97 to 140. This tallies approximately with the local male population of serving age served.
- The number of names listed on our local civic Great War memorials totals 1291:
 - 624 Kingston
 - 386 Surbiton, Tolworth and Hook
 - 265 Malden & Coombe
 - 16 Chessington
- In our research, we have discovered many others with a local connection who were died in the Great War. The current overall total died is in excess of 2,200.
- Records show that about 957,000 soldier, sailors and airmen died from the events of the Great War and that about 2,273,000 were wounded. By interpolation, that would suggest there to have been in the region of 5000 wounded from the local community.
- Research so far shows that, of those killed from the Borough:
 - Youngest, 15-year old Cooks Boy Leonard Levi FRY, Mercantile Marine, was lost aboard S.S. Ancona when sunk by a U-Boat in 27 May 1917.
 - Eldest, 56-year old Lt. Col. George Alfred EDSSELL, served with Royal Army Medical Corps on the Western Front but succumbed to illness 15 August 1915.
 - Average age was about 26-27 years
 - Most common age was about 19-20 years.

Your Association Needs You

We would be very grateful to anyone who could help us with the following:

- Committee role(s) – treasurer / secretary.
- Database/website design/development.
- Social media development
- Graphic design.
- Fundraising
- Newsletter Research and Editorial



If you a local person or business that might be able to help or just interested in finding out more, then please do contact us mail@local-hero.org.uk.

Acknowledgements

Much of our research has been made possible thanks to the hard work of many people and organisations in the past and present whom have kept records safe and shared them with the public. We would therefore like to acknowledge with thanks:

Special thanks to contributors: Jimmy Baynes, Stephen Van Dulken, Jim Creasy, David and Madeline Child, Dan Leissner and Nick Howgill and John King

Locally:

- Digital Drama
- Hook Library
- Local History Room, Royal Borough of Kingston Upon Thames
- Malden & Coombe Heritage Society
- Royal British Legion, Surbiton
- Shrewsbury House School
- Surrey Comet Newspaper
- Surrey History Centre, Woking
- Surrey Infantry Museum, Clandon
- Surbiton Library
- University of Third Age

Nationally:

- British Newspaper Archives
- Commonwealth War Graves Commission
- Imperial War Museum
- National Archives, Kew
- Vision of Britain

Genealogy websites:

- Ancestry and FindMyPast