

Leicestershire and Rutland War Memorials Project

NEWSLETTER ISSUE 14
April 2012



News:

New war memorial in the making for Plungar: Tim

Chamberlain of the East Midlands branch of the Western Front Association has kindly provided me with information on a fundraising effort to install a memorial to the casualties of a plane crash near Plungar in Melton district. If you would like to be put in touch, please let me know. A public meeting is to be held on 26th April at 7.30pm in Plungar Village Hall. The memorial is due to be unveiled on Saturday 22nd September, with service at 2pm at Plungar Church. You can read more about the crash in the article provided by Tim Chamberlain below.

Veteran experiences: I'm glad to be working with the Leicester branch of the **British Korean Veteran's Association** on some **oral history recordings**, which I hope to start in the next few months. I would like to use this to interest schools across Leicestershire in hosting some of the Korean veterans who can speak about their experiences to the students. 2013 marks the 60th anniversary of the signing of the armistice on 27th July 1953; this is the only thing that technically prevents the fighting from continuing to this day, as a peace settlement was never reached.

Members of the Leicester branch were interviewed on the subject of National Service at an event at **Donington le Heath Manor House** (right) last November, which as you will see in the events section is being run once again, on 17th June. If you would like to have a table at this event, please contact Richard.Knox@leics.gov.uk or myself Liz.Blood@leics.gov.uk



“Stand by Your Beds!” an event at Donington le Heath on 17th June, is looking for groups and veterans' associations to take part.

WW1 soldier on Twitter: notice from the Carillon museum

“WW1 Soldier to publish his diary on Twitter.

William Grudgings was a schoolteacher at Cobden Street School when in April 1916 he left to join the army. He was sent to France with the 8th Batt Leicestershire Regiment. Later he returned for officer training and eventually a commission.

Throughout his service William kept a diary and made an entry everyday, simple one-line comments on what that day brought. After the war William returned to teaching and was eventually made headmaster of Cobden Street.

Loughborough Carillon War Memorial Museum who have the diary are to post the entries William made each day on Twitter along with appropriate links. Hannah Shuttleworth the young volunteer who will be posting (or Tweeting) the entries said, “This is an exciting project and I am looking forward to being involved”

The success of the project will be measured in how many ‘Followers’ we can get. You do not need a smart phone to follow Twitter, it can be done on a PC but you do need an account which takes a couple of minutes to set up. Please pass the account name to all those you feel would be interested.

The Twitter account is [@williams_war](#)”

New memorial at Groby:

Groby Club, on Leicester Road in Groby, has a new war memorial. Groby’s existing war memorials are all inside buildings; the Club itself, or in St Philip & St James’s Church. This new stone of remembrance in a newly landscaped corner of the Club car park, is Groby’s first external war memorial.



Its plaque reads “Groby War Memorial / It is with honour, pride and gratitude that we remember all / those brave servicemen and servicewomen who sacrificed their / lives in defence of our liberty and freedom. We salute you. / We will remember them.”

A record for it, number WMP2042, has been created in our website.

Events:



Wednesday 25th April – LEICESTER, VICTORIA PARK, 7am
Early morning Anzac Day service at the Lutyens arch war memorial.

Wednesday 25th April – LEICESTER Welford Road Cemetery, 11am
Anzac Day Service at the war memorial and visitor's centre. See notice from Mr Chris Stephens on the next page for further details.

Thursday 26th April – PLUNGAR Village Hall, 7.30pm
Public meeting about the new memorial to the plane crash casualties. (Thanks to Tim Chamberlain for notification)

Sunday 17th June – DONINGTON LE HEATH Manor House, 11am-4pm
'Stand by your Beds!' – National Servicemen and the British Armed Forces 1946-1966. Family event, free entry. Poster below.

Saturday 23rd June – ARMED FORCES DAY

Thursday 28th June – LONDON, Green Park
Unveiling of the memorial to the 55,573 lost serving with Bomber Command. (Thanks to Tim Chamberlain for notification)

Saturday 22nd September – PLUNGAR Church, 2pm
Unveiling service for Plungar plane crash memorial. (Thanks to Tim Chamberlain for notification).

Saturday 6th October – LEICESTER, De Montfort Hall, 7.30pm
'The Gurkhas are Coming!' The Military Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas performs at De Montfort Hall, all proceeds in aid of The Gurkha Welfare Trust. 7.30pm. Tickets £20. Box Office 0116 2333111. Poster below.

Saturday 10th November 2012 – LEICESTER, Welford Road Cemetery, 11am
Short service and laying of wreaths organised by the Friends of Welford Road Cemetery.

Anzac Day – notice from Mr. Chris Stephens:

'In Welford Road Cemetery, Leicester, there is a large memorial wall and burial sites for casualties who died at the nearby Northern General Military Hospital, including some Australian and New Zealand casualties.

The 'Friends of Welford Road Cemetery' have, for the last 4 years, held a short service of Remembrance and wreath-laying, commemorating Anzac Day. This is a national day of remembrance in Australia and New Zealand, based on April 25th, 1915, when the newly formed Australian and New Zealand Army Corps played a considerable part in the Gallipoli Campaign, displaying great bravery and tactical enterprise.

This period of service, in the First World War, resulting in many casualties, came to be regarded as the 'coming of age' of the joint Army Corps and of the two new Dominions. The day has become, to them, as symbolic as our Remembrance Sunday ceremonies. Until recently, little formal notice was taken in this Country of this significant occasion, but since the FWRC ceremony has become known in Australia and New Zealand we have learnt that there has been much appreciation expressed.

This year we hope the numbers will increase. The ceremony at Welford Road Cemetery is on Wednesday April 25th, at 11am, followed by refreshments at the Visitors Centre. It provides a fine opportunity for us to remember and recognise the great contributions made by both Countries in both World Wars and other conflicts.'

Mr Stephens also enclosed a photograph of the site for those who are unfamiliar with the memorial wall and cross.



Photograph Copyright: C Stephens 2012

“Stand by your beds!”

The exploits of National Servicemen and the
British Armed Forces 1946 – 1966.



DONINGTON le HEATH MANOR HOUSE

Sunday, 17th June 2012

11 am – 4 pm

A great chance to meet veterans, see re-enactors, period military vehicles and displays exploring the often forgotten campaigns of the British Army, Navy and Air Force in trouble spots around the globe, including Kenya, Korea, Cyprus, Suez, Aden and the jungles of Malaya and Borneo. Discover the life of the many thousands of young National Servicemen who were transformed after conscription for 18 months to 2 years from 1947 to 1960 to do their bit to help the British Armed Forces in the Cold War era.

If you were a National Serviceman, or otherwise served during this period, please come along, meet some old comrades and share your experiences.

ADMISSION FREE

Donington le Heath Manor House is on the south-west edge of Coalville, between Hugglescote and Ibstock.
Open 11.00am – 4 pm from Wednesday to Sunday. There is a free car park and also a gift shop.
For further information telephone (01530) 831259

FUTURE FREE EVENTS

June 24th 11-4pm Food through the Ages: focusing on 13th and 17th century cookery
July 28th&29th 11-4pm Highwaymen and Robbers!: exploring the darker side of 18th C life.

For information regarding the 2012 programme of Donington events and information regarding the 'Friends of Donington le Heath' please contact Richard Knox, Keeper of Donington on (0116) 265 8327 or visit www.leics.gov.uk/donington

**THE
GURKHAS
ARE
COMING!**



The Military Band of
The Brigade of Gurkhas
will be performing at the
DE MONTFORT HALL
Leicester

Saturday 6th October 2012 at 7.30pm

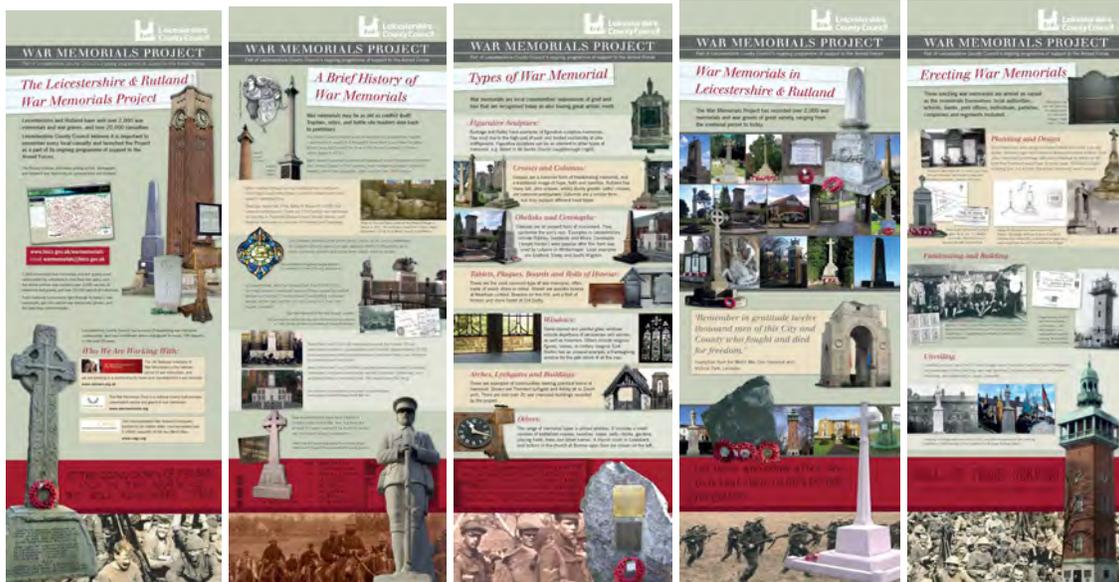
Tickets £20, Concession: Military groups (4 plus) £18.
Box Office: 0116 2333111 or www.demontforthall.co.uk

Proceeds In Aid of

The Gurkha Welfare Trust

Your events:

If you are holding a war memorial-related event this year and would like to borrow our banners, please get in touch to book. Currently, they are available from May to October (excepting 25th June, and 30th August to 20th September). We are unable to offer them for loan around Remembrance Day as we will be using them at County Hall. Next year we hope that they will tour local libraries.



5 of our 9 banners

Articles:

Tim Chamberlain: The Plungar Crash

Early in the morning of the 5th March 1943, Dennis Kirk was on ARP duty when he heard the sound of an aircraft approaching, it was obviously in trouble and the engines sounded like they were starved of petrol. The aircraft passed overhead and then crashed about a quarter of a mile from Plungar (Leics) in the direction of Langar airfield (Notts). Dennis and his group rushed towards the scene to render assistance they found one dazed survivor on the railway line. They asked him if there were any bombs onboard and he was able to reply that they had already been dropped, sadly all the other crew members they found were dead. Personnel arrived from RAF Langar and took control of the crash site. A fire tender arrived from Melton Mowbray and the crew promptly “mashed some tea.”

A recently discovered piece of the aircraft shows damage from a cannon shell so perhaps some crew members were either dead or wounded which would explain why a “bale out” order was not given. The aircraft was not on a correct approach to land at Langar and it would appear that the pilot was struggling to maintain height and control which could indicate that it had suffered battle damage. The crash is timed at 0308 on 5/3/43, the aircraft was a Lancaster 111 ED 549 100 Squadron HW S. This night was

a “quiet” night for Bomber Command prior to the commencement of the Battle of the Ruhr. 6 Mosquitoes had flown to the Ruhr and 27 aircraft had been minelaying (the role of the crashed aircraft), 16 aircraft were from Operational Training Units from which one Wellington was lost and a Lancaster was presumed lost over the target area.

100 Squadron was formed in February 1917 and by December 1942 was operating from Waltham (Grimsby) Lincs where it remained until April 1945. It had only begun to fly Lancasters against Germany in March of 1943. The Squadron was part of No 1 Group Bomber Command based in North Lincolnshire. The Group’s operations cost the lives of 8,577 British and Commonwealth airmen. 100 Squadron lost its last two crews from Waltham on the 16th March 1945, raiding Nuremburg. That brought the tally to 89 Lancasters lost in 25 months flying for the Squadron.

The crew of “our” Lancaster took off from Grimsby at 1838 on the 4/3/43 they were;

Flight Sergeant G.R.Avey RCAF Pilot Killed
Sergeant B.T. Hallett Flight Engineer Killed
Sergeant A.H.Spence Navigator Killed
Sergeant G.D. Cumberbatch Air Bomber Killed
Sergeant J.Robinson Wireless Operator Killed
Sergeant D.S. Davies Air Gunner(Mid-Upper)Injured
Flight Sergeant R.R.Landry RCAF Air Gunner(Rear) Killed

Armed forces personnel who lost their lives in the UK were normally buried at locations requested by close relatives, this was obviously not possible with the many overseas members serving and so three of the crew were buried at Long Bennington (St Swithun) churchyard, they are;

Flight Sergeant Gerald Russell Avey the son of Mr and Mrs J.A. Avey, of Norwich,
Ontario, Canada

Flight Sergeant Rene Rodger Landry aged 23 Son of Mr and Mrs O. Landry, of
Norman, Ontario, Canada.

Sergeant Grey Doyle Cumberbatch aged 21 son of Mr and Mrs C.W. Cumberbatch,
of St. Michael, Barbados.

Dennis Kirk still lives in Plungar and he has a very clear picture in his mind of the events of that fateful night. The site has recently been planted with trees by the landowner but we hope to erect a memorial in memory of the gallant six airmen who lost their lives whilst so close to safety.

Any additional information on this crew or the night’s activities is sought. Does a German Combat Report contain any details of an engagement with this aircraft? Was there any recorded dialogue between the pilot and the control tower at Langar?

Tim Chamberlin

Helen Bozon, Secretary of Seaforth Highlanders Pipes & Drums, Leicester was kind enough to send me the following update, which I think will be of interest:

“Just a quick update on the Seaforth Highlanders war memorials in St. Stephen's URC, De Montfort Street, Leicester:

Last year work in the church uncovered dry rot which led to the memorials being removed to allow remedial work to take place. The church elders then decided that the memorials would look better and be more relevant if they were moved to a new place.

The church already had a lovely memorial stained glass window and its own memorials to members of the congregation who fell in both World Wars and it was decided to bring all of these items together to form an area of remembrance.

The Seaforth memorials are now sited directly under the window which depicts St. Andrew and St. George. Flanking them are the churches own memorials and in a case are the Seaforth Highlanders Rolls of Honour 1914-1918 and 1936-1945. In the near future we will be forced to lay up our Regimental Association colours and it is envisaged that these too will be housed in the remembrance area.

I hope this information may be of use to anyone interested in Leicestershire military history.

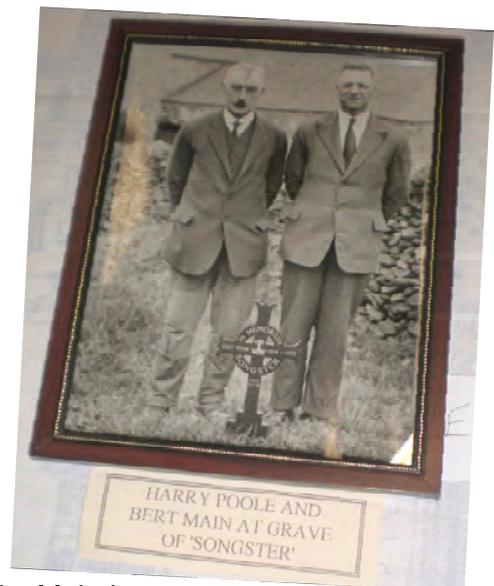
H Bozon, secretary, Seaforth Highlanders Pipes & Drums, Leicester.”

The War Horse of Woodhouse Eaves...continued!

Thanks to B Barnard and M Gould we have an update on the war horse story about Songster of Woodhouse Eaves. M Gould contacted the farm owner and the Yeomanry Association and there are hopeful plans afoot to remark Songster's grave.



The Yeomanry offered to fund the reinstatement of a grave marker, but the present owner of the site may in fact still retain the original one and is looking into reinstating this. Mel also enclosed the pictures shown (many thanks!).



Left: Trooper Bert Man with Songster

30th Anniversary year of Falklands conflict:

We do not have many records relating to the involvement of Leicestershire's service people in the Falklands conflict, but to mark the 30th anniversary we pay tribute to two known Falklands casualties from the County, who have been found on local war memorials.

Lieutenant Commander Robert Charles Simpson, C021831U, HMS Seahawk, Royal Navy. Born 1954 and died on 27th June 1985. He is named on the National Armed Forces memorial at Alrewas, and we believe he was killed in a plane crash. His name was added to the Carillon war memorial in Loughborough, by the addition of an individual plaque.

Corporal Peter Ronald Fitton, P033189P, 45 Commando, Royal Marines. Born 1957 and died 11th June 1982. He is named on the National Armed Forces memorial at Alrewas, on the Portsmouth Falklands Forces Sea Memorial, on the Royal Marines Condor, Arbroath memorial, and at a cairn memorial at the place he was killed, Falklands. He is believed to have been killed during the Battle for Two Sisters, possibly either by mortar fire or by friendly fire.



Cpl. Fitton's new memorial tablet



A handmade memorial to him in Goadby Marwood church (left) was replaced by a stone tablet (above) in 2010 by the Hose & Harby branch of the Royal British Legion, and thanks go to J Blundy and D Howley for information and photographs that are now included in our records.

The original memorial poster that has now been replaced

New recordings:

Since Issue 13, some of our recent recordings have included **school memorials** (3 at Ashby de la Zouch Grammar, and 1 at Humphrey Perkins in Barrow upon Soar). Please note that school memorials should be presumed inaccessible, and that you will need to make contact with their reception should you feel a need to visit a memorial inside a school. We are recording them so as to make the information more easily accessible to you through the website.

Right: WW2 memorial at Ashby Grammar School. This is alongside a WW1 memorial and WW1 roll of honour. Although we have not yet been able to transcribe all the names, they are all visible from photographs now uploaded to the website.



We have also added a better set of close-up photographs of the figures carved at the head of the **Market Harborough** war memorial in the Market Square, which are well worth a look at <http://warmemorials.leics.gov.uk> (WMP0745).



The (slightly eroded) figures at the head of Market Harborough's cross represent Justice, Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence, Hope, Charity, Faith and Obedience.

Listing News:

We are pleased to say that English Heritage have accepted the war memorial cross at **Swithland** in Charnwood onto its national list, at **Grade II**. A simultaneous application to list the adjacent war memorial hall was unsuccessful. This highlights that the consideration of listing war memorial buildings is likely to be weighted towards its qualities as a building, and not as a war memorial.

Whilst freestanding war memorials are usually accepted onto the list, other forms of memorial do not yet benefit from the same presumption in favour of listing. War memorials in, or within the curtilage of, listed buildings should, however, be protected by the listing of the building itself.



Swithland WW1 memorial Cross, Main Street

If you would like to get your local memorial listed, find out how on our webpage on listing at www.leics.gov.uk/warmemorials_listing

WW1 Survey – your chance to take part:

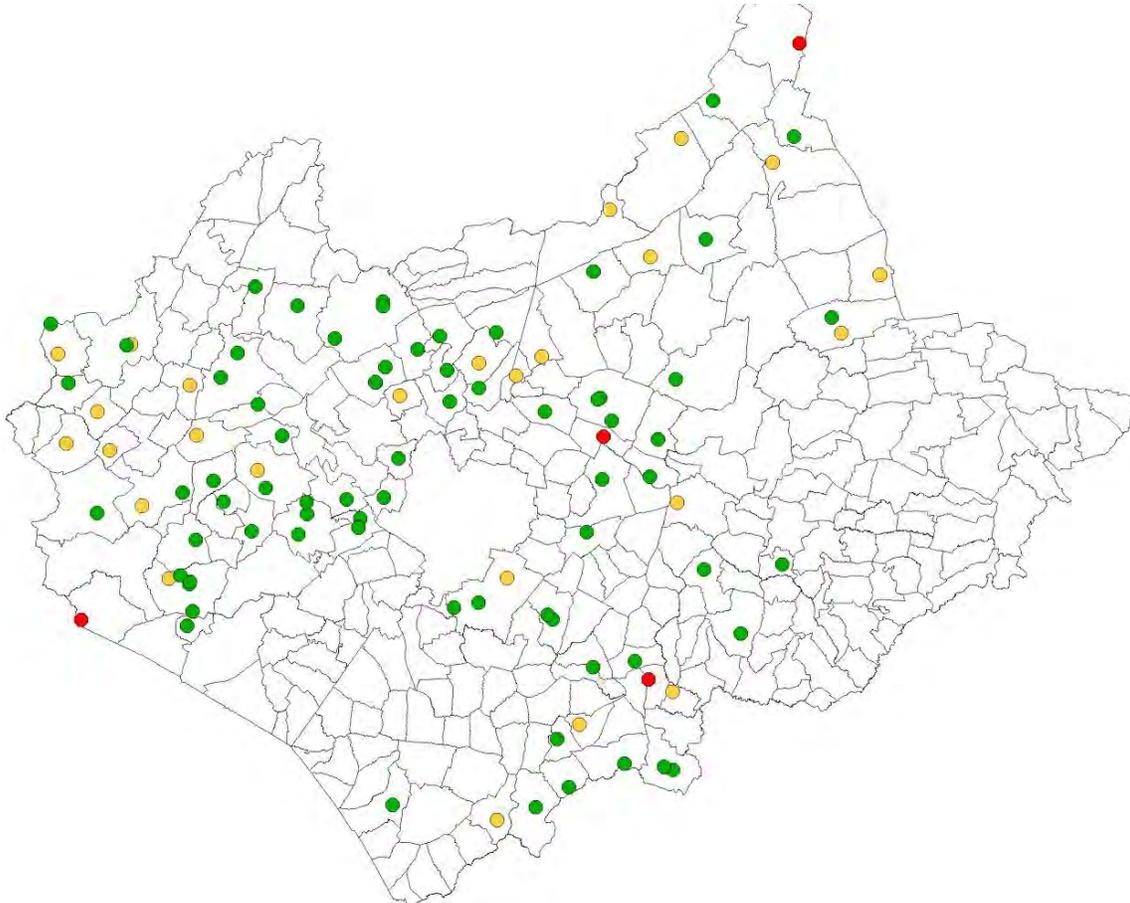
“WW1 Heritage Survey Centennial of the First World War (1914-1918)

In anticipation of the Centennial of the First World War (1914-1918), the World Heritage Tourism Research Network (WHTRN), an independent academic research group, is implementing an international survey project to learn more about present day reflections, views and perspectives regarding the First World War. We cordially invite your participation. Participants can take the survey once only. It should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. The survey is available in English, French and Dutch.”

Take the survey at:

<http://app.fluidsurveys.com/s/Centennial-Centenaire-of-the-First-World-War/>

Conservation news:



The map shows another 16 memorials surveyed since the last newsletter. Happily, this only identified one memorial deemed to be at risk (Church Langton) where the Parish Council are already well on the way to obtaining quotes for specialised restoration work. We hope to support Church Langton with a 50% grant in the coming months.

Other grants made with our 2011-12 funds include Barrow upon Soar and Oadby (London Road and North Memorial Hall pergola):



Can you help?

We have had a family history enquiry about a **Private George Elliott** 28581 of the **3rd Bn Leicestershire Regiment**. The Regiment is thought to be his only connection to Leicestershire, as he lived in and enlisted from Nottingham. He has not been found on any war memorials in Nottinghamshire yet, so our enquirer wondered if Leicestershire had any further information. Private Elliott was killed on 22nd March 1918 and is commemorated Arras, Bay 5.

Correction from Newsletter 13: Please note that the article enclosed in the last newsletter contained obsolete contact details for Meg Galley-Taylor. If you had been trying to reach her, the updated email address is meg@taylor.it

Thank you for your continued interest in the War Memorials Project,

Best wishes,

Elizabeth Blood

Heritage Support & War Memorials Officer

Leicestershire County Council

0116 3056187

liz.blood@leics.gov.uk

Room 400, Penn Lloyd Building, County Hall, Glenfield, Leicestershire, LE3 8RA.

www.leics.gov.uk/warmemorials



Soldier photographs shared by War Memorials Project supporters – thank you!