

CHRONICLE

Issue 7 Winter 2014



WAR AND PEACE

Historical Association, Swansea Branch

Promoting History in South West Wales

Issue 7 Winter 2014

War and Peace

'GOOD-MORNING; good-morning!' the General said
 When we met him last week on our way to the line.
 Now the soldiers he smiled at are most of 'em dead,
 And we're cursing his staff for incompetent swine.
 'He's a cheery old card,' grunted Harry to Jack
 As they slogged up to Arras with rifle and pack.
 ... But he did for them both by his plan of attack.

Siegfried Sassoon

Our next issue will feature
 the 1960's. Articles and
 photos very welcome, 400
 words or more.

Please send to the editor:
 Margaret.McCloy@sky.com
 by mid-March 2015.

Thanks.

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The Historical Association would like to recognise the generous gift of books made by David and Margaret Walker to the Branch. David Walker taught at Swansea University for many years and was a recognised expert in Anglo-Norman and Anglo-Welsh history. He also had a distinguished role in the Church in Wales.

From the Editor

For once, I'm lost for words. I need to sit quietly and think. Editing this copy of Chronicle has been poignant, sad and caused me to remember my father who fought in WW1 In the Machine Gun Corps. He was only seventeen years old.

This Chronicle contains so many stories of young men's deaths, so many families feeling their tragic loss. I have been re-reading my books of poetry. Poems written not only by famous poets but also many written by ordinary soldiers in the trenches like those below.

*'Mid shell torn trenches and sudden death
A blinding flash, a friend the less'.
There was all the horror of the trenches
expressed in the soldier's poems:
'That hell that men called war, was death,
with all its fears...
Greater horrors than hell, on men was
turned, from a thousand guns, the earth
was churned'.*

Then there were the letters received by the families from those fighting in France.

'The boys out here, although they have been out here for about six months, speak well about things in general, so I don't think there is much to worry about...it's just like one big picnic, for we are as jolly a lot as you could find.'

Reassuring letters often followed by telegrams telling of death.

*'Many a chair is vacant,
Many a heart is aching for
he men who will not return'.*

The situation was not always good when the soldiers returned home after the war.



Little compassion was shown to them.

*My God, how lonely, lonely am I
In this great city of ours. Not a welcome nod
or a smile...
No one extends a welcome hand for me,
with a soul filled with tears...
The birds and the flowers of the
countryside, are more friends to me.*



Nor was there work for them on their return.

*Look at the men on crutches
Are they to be left to their fate?
o live by a barrel organ
Receive charity which they hate.*

The above excerpts were taken from poems in my father's notebooks. He was one of the lucky ones who returned.

Margaret McCloy

A Deeper Unrest

At first one hears only madness: a deranged cry from an age that had long since forgotten to count the ruinous cost of war. Then, slowly, the drumbeat of insanity yields to something more childlike; a whimper of yearning from a generation somehow locked in its room. Here, in a lurid blend of religious and sexual imagery, the frustrated voice of early 20th century militarism calls out from the edge of the abyss.

“I look forward,” writes young French nationalist Ernest Psichari in 1913, *“to the great harvest of Force, toward which a sort of inexpressible grace precipitates us and ravishes us.”*

He was not alone. As historian Margaret MacMillan recounts in *The War that Ended Peace*, her compelling examination of the origins of the Great War, Psichari was just one voice in a cacophony of restless discontent. As Europe’s long Nineteenth Century of relative stability wore on, its fragile status quo sustained by the checks and balances of power, amnesia set in. To many, the blessings of peace and prosperity had become a curse. Denied the chance to test their virility in battle, and filled with consequent self-doubt, a swathe of European youth chafed ungratefully at what one militarist sneeringly called *“this rotten, filthy peace”*.

Today, a whole brutal century on, such sentiments lie beyond the pale of mainstream thought. In the chastening wake of Passchendaele, Stalingrad and Vietnam, no serious person would rejoice in the advent of war. Yet the past is not entirely another country.

Those decades before 1914, when travel, culture, science and industry all flourished, were dismissed by German poet Stefan George as *“the cowardly years of trash and triviality”*. As Margaret MacMillan records, many intellectuals fretted at the spiritual gulf they saw – or thought they saw – opening up before them. Game shoots and grand hotels were no substitute for military prowess and national honour, or for the lost sea of faith lapping pitifully against Dover Beach. Yet if that world was all trash and trivia, what exactly is ours? If the Europe of *La Belle Epoque*, with all its energy and elegance, constituted poverty of soul, what of our own world of celebrity and sound bites, bleating and tweeting, shallow self-help and fleeting fame? Almost 70 years on from total war, and with even the Cold War receding in the rear view mirror, have we simply come full circle to reinforce an uncomfortable truth: that peace degenerates over time, and that familiarity with its blessings breeds contempt?

Not all the currents swirling around Europe in the early 1900s were bellicose. For every would-be warrior yearning for cold sharp steel, a counterweight voice was heard proclaiming the paths of peace. The dream of a world in which disputes would be settled in chambers and courtrooms, rather than on windswept plains, was already taking shape. But still, one is struck by the volume and ferocity of the storms that rumbled through those last golden summers of peace. Against a backdrop of frequent international crises, writers and artists whipped up a gale of their own, impelled by graceless ennui to bite the

bourgeois hand that fed them; workers and revolutionaries linked conspiratorial arms; anarchists, cloaked in cyanide fury, hurled bombs at the imperial and aristocratic elite. The long rest from war, it seemed, had enabled a deeper unrest to germinate undisturbed.

It is a pattern etched into the fabric of fallen humanity, harmonising with the hierarchy of our needs: security first, prosperity next and then the leisure to enjoy it – but a leisure which can so easily fall prey to the law of diminishing returns. For each advance raises the bar of expectation, increasing the scope for unhappiness when the new expectation is unmet. Once again, the long relative peace of 1815-1914 finds uncanny echoes in the long peace since 1945. The ripping up of ration cards; the return of Larkin's long queues for *The Oval and Villa Park*; the fuzzy, black and white pageant of the Coronation, prologue to a new Elizabethan age: all this must already have seemed quaint by the time the swinging 60s hit their stride. Yet today, in a world awash with opportunities undreamt of in postwar philosophy, we are once again mired in unease. Insecurity hovers above the bank vaults; institutions are distrusted; and for countries across Europe – Belgium, the UK, Italy, Spain – fragmentation seems just a heartbeat away. In consuming the peace cake, we have licked the icing of gratitude away. Like Pink Floyd, we have become comfortably numb.

One can press the point too far. The insouciant militarism of 1914 is yesterday's tale, as remote from the present as the empires that fuelled it. In the UK, the dribbling back of coffins from Iraq and Afghanistan has inspired a new reverence

for those fallen in battle that the Great War centenary has only served to intensify. 'Lest we forget' has become the sober mantra of the day. Nor is it true that the course of fate is strictly determined. Just as, in 1914, the nations and their leaders had choices right up until the eve of war, so today we are not obliged to let trash and trivia fill the horizons of peace. But history is salutary in its warnings. No civilisation has endured for ever; and many, like Rome, have declined before they fell, imploding on a diet of corruption and complacency – and war. The West, with its liberal democracy fashioned from centuries of tradition, is attempting to buck a powerful trend.

It may yet succeed. But first we must settle it in our minds that peace and stability are not primarily the path to some glittering prize – they are the glittering prize itself. In her final book, *Statecraft*, the late Baroness Thatcher ruminates upon the opportunities afforded by the end of the Cold War. In the West, it had become fashionable to talk about a 'peace dividend'; the freeing up for social expenditure of capital which – in that short, tranquil span between the fall of the Berlin Wall and the fall of the World Trade Centre – no longer seemed necessary for defence.

But the lady saw it differently. Such fond, utopian dreams – so reminiscent of the immediate aftermath of the war to end all wars – were dangerously beside the point, she insisted. For what politicians all too easily forget is that the only real peace dividend is peace.

Richard Nye

A Great War Swansea Pot Pourri ...

When writing about Swansea's experience of the Great War it is difficult to know where to start as the impact of that searing conflict affected the town at all levels.

From the earliest days of the war the Swansea Corporation found itself at the centre of the war effort on the home front. Alderman T.T. Corker, Swansea's mayor in 1914, came to the fore with an early appeal for volunteers for a town battalion, a unit that eventually became the 14th battalion of the Welsh Regiment and saw service on the Western Front from December 1915 until the signing of the armistice. Corker died suddenly in 1916, worn out it was said by his exertions in support of the war effort. His son, Frank, was killed in action a few months later while serving in the battalion his father had helped to raise.



The Swansea Battalion went on to take part in the 1916 Somme Campaign where it played its

part, at a heavy cost, in the capture of Mametz Wood. Writing twenty years after the war an officer of the battalion remarked that though the battalion did a great many things during the war the hardest thing it ever did was attack Mametz Wood

The industries of the town were also affected by the war with the docks trade falling from 7.2 million tons in 1913 to 4.2 million tons in 1917, the fall resulting from, amongst other things, coal and finished metals that would normally have been exported from the town to the wider world being diverted for use by the military and leaving Britain from other ports. When the bulk of the Swansea trawler fleet was requisitioned by the military for mine-sweeping duties the gap was happily filled by a number of Belgian trawlers that arrived at Swansea having fled from the advancing German army. About 700 Belgian refugees found support and shelter in the town during the war, about two thirds of them being women and children.

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**POTATOES! POTATOES!
POTATOES!**

GOOD NEWS FOR SWANSEA
HOUSEWIVES.

We are now receiving huge consignments of
the Best Varieties of
ENGLISH-GROWN TABLE POTATOES,
and these will be Sold at Minimum Prices.
Deliveries to any part of the Town.

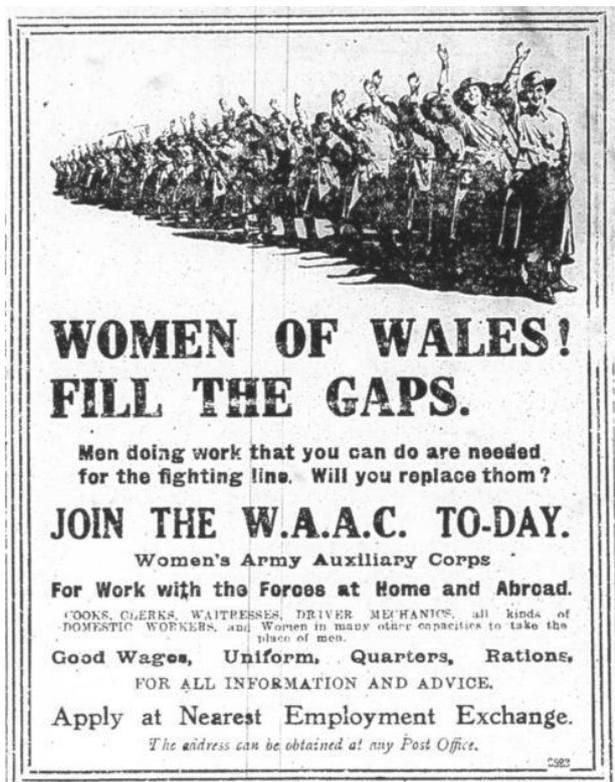
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From the outset of the war the question of food supply become an issue of great importance since the Britain of 1914 imported a huge amount of its foodstuffs. There were immediate

allegations in the town of food hoarding and profiteering with several Swansea businesses having their windows put through by angry mobs. The priority in food provision given to the armed forces and the actions of the German submarine fleet affected the supply situation. Flour, sugar and potatoes were frequently in short supply in the town and in the later years of the war the rationing of key items was introduced to ensure a fairer distribution of what was actually available and to avoid angry scenes at the local shops.



As is well known the loss of men to the armed services was at least partly offset by the utilisation of a previously untapped pool of female labour though this was not without its problems.

Many male workers were horrified to find that not only could women be trained to perform their work but that fact itself also brought the now non-essential male worker under the interested gaze of the military and the apparatus of conscription. Women for their part experienced an enhanced view of their own capabilities and proved reluctant at the war's end to revert to their more traditional roles of

home maker or domestic service drudge.

The granting of limited voting rights in 1918 was an important step on the road to female emancipation and some reward for the effort made in support of the war effort.

The press of the time reported that about 15,000 Swansea men served in the armed forces during the war, a figure that is hard to verify with any precision due to the mode of record keeping then prevalent and the ironic loss of over half of the detailed Great War service records during a Second World War German bombing raid.

What is certain is that when it was unveiled in 1923 the cenotaph at Swansea remembered over 2,200 men (and a small number of women) with a link to Swansea who had died during the conflict. More recent research indicates that actually perhaps 2,800 men and women with a link to Swansea might have died. Families were required to send in to the Swansea Corporation details of their lost loved ones for inclusion on the cenotaph and it is likely, for a wide range of reasons that this was not done in a large number of cases.

Even what constituted a 'Swansea man' is open to debate with both the town's Victoria Cross winners (William Fuller VC and George Prowse VC) not actually having been born in Swansea! As was the case with communities throughout Great War Britain the people of Swansea stuck tenaciously to the task of laying the groundwork for the successful prosecution of the war.

The filling up of the ranks, the tragic loss of loved ones in action, the constant worry about those still at the front, the food shortages and the undertaking of unfamiliar, and frequently dangerous, roles at home and abroad were all grimly accepted as being the price of victory in what was seen as a just war against a militaristic Germany.

We can rightly look back on the actions of our Swansea forebears with pride.

Bernard Lewis

The Crimson Shadow of Mametz Wood

Where so many Welsh soldiers were slain in the First Battle of the Somme has cast some of the sacrifices of other soldiers from Wales into relative obscurity.

What these other men did may, perhaps, be known to their descendants. We honour them, of course, in the respectful way that we remember all of The Fallen. But it is difficult not to feel that their contribution has, at times, become a mere footnote in the story of the First World War, and sometimes not even that.

I feel sure you won't have heard of my great uncle Trevor Jones. He was 22 when he was killed serving as a Secodn Lieutenant with the 14th Welsh (Swansea Pals) at Epehy in September 1918.

Epehy is a battle as unnoticed as Trevor even though it took the lives of nearly 500 men from the Welsh battalions of the 38th Division. I have yet to read a poem or see a play that salutes the particular tragedies of the combatants at Epehy. History passes over them, lightly, as authors head for familiar grounds.

Using old newspapers, war diaries and travelling by train through France, I have formed my own account of Trevor's war. With him as my guide through the ranks of those I think of as The Overlooked, my eyes have been opened to the catastrophic immensity of 1914-18.

Trevor, a graduate of Bristol University, had been a teacher in Merthyr Tydfil before enlisting in 1917. He became an officer cadet with the 14th Welsh, the Pals unit that had been raised by Swansea Mayor T.T. Corker. After training in

Hampshire he departed for France in December 1917.

At the Front he joined up with the 17th Welsh, The First Glamorgans. They were known as a Bantam Battalion because the soldiers were smaller and lighter than the Army had previously admitted. This change had been forced by the need for men and the terrible losses of the campaign. But these smaller recruits still had to carry standard kit and weapons. A number had been miners. They may have looked on France as an escape.

It was moving for me to find Trevor's name in the War Diary of the 17th among the archives of the military museum at Brecon. It seems unjust now, but the activities of officers were recorded by their regiments while, on the whole, those of other ranks weren't. This means it is significantly easier to find information about, for example, a captain than a private. Trevor spent two months on the Front Line at or close to the front at Croiselles in the Pas de Calais region. During this time his battalion rotated in a shift system in the forward trenches with its sister unit, the 18th. They faced artillery and sniper fire in trenches which at times were flooded or had collapsed. Night patrols were sent into No Man's Land.

In late February 1918 Trevor's battalion ceased to exist as an independent unit. I am not entirely sure of the reasons but erosion of its numbers may have been a factor. He was transferred to the new 9th Entrenching Battalion which included men from the South Wales Borderers and the Monmouthshire Regiment. The battalion marched to Arras in northern France and began work on defences. They were shelled and suffered casualties as the Germans launched their big counter-offensive, Operation Michael, made possible by Russia's withdrawal from the war after the 1917 Revolution. In April 1918 Trevor was transferred back to the 14th.

In late summer 1918 Trevor was granted leave

and returned to his family's home in Abercynon near Pontypridd. His father Edmund was a butcher and his mother Margaret was known for being involved in civic affairs. Trevor's sister, my grandmother, later recalled him walking through the rooms of the family home as if he knew he

pardon granted to 306 British Empire soldiers executed in similar circumstances. Some 10,000 soldiers are commemorated there, Vis-en-Artois is small compared with some cemeteries and memorials.



Artois Cemetery

might not return. He re-joined his unit in France in September 1918. Five days later he was killed at Epehy during the Allied push known as the Hundred Days' Offensive.

Trevor is commemorated at the memorial and cemetery at Vis-en-Artois near Arras. His remains have not been found. His name is carved in a stone panel where he is in good company. Among those commemorated at the peaceful, sunlit site are three winners of the Victoria Cross: Corporal Allan Lewis, Chief Petty Officer George Prowse and Serjeant Frederick Riggs. In recent years the name of Private F.C. Butcher, who was shot at dawn aged 23 for desertion, has been added following the mass

Trevor is also commemorated on Abercynon war memorial. His elder brother Edmund was wounded at Salonika but survived the war as did his younger brother Austin who served on a minesweeper.

I have no image of Trevor (whose full name was Victor Trevor Jones). Perhaps somewhere he is looking out of a photograph, with his comrades. Twenty two for ever.

Giles Rees

George Arthur Evans

8.8.97 to 9.2.1932



NIEPPE. - L'Eglise bombardée par les Boches depuis le 24 Juillet 1915
The Church bombarded by the Boches since the 24th of July 1915

Postcard showing the destruction of the church at Nieppe

Written on the back are the words:

'The church showing what the Hun can do to destroy everything that comes his way'.

This postcard was sent home to his family by George Arthur Evans. Arthur was born in 1897 and brought up in Oxford Street in Swansea. He attended Rutland Street School where he studied until he was aged 14.

He was then apprenticed and learnt his trade as a shoemaker. Later he served as a soldier in the trenches in both France and Belgium. Whilst there, he suffered from pneumonia and was sent back home. When he had recovered from his illness, he

returned to the front in France where he suffered from double pneumonia and was sent home again. On recovery he was sent back to France where he remained until the end of the hostilities. He fought at both Ypres and Nieppe.

A young German soldier bidding farewell to his ladylove.

He too, like the British soldiers, probably thinking he would be home before Christmas.

The editor would like to thank everyone who sent in postcards and articles for publishing in this issue, without them we would have no magazine. Much of the writing is very poignant and sad, especially the piece written by Rosemary Crahart about her grandfather.

At the time of writing she is in hospital and we wish her a full recovery.



Heute scheid ich.

Still die Tränen, laß mich scheiden,
muß nun für die Ehre streiten, -
Streiten für das Vaterland,

“With the cries of the boys filling the air and their blood mixed with the rain”

These are two lines from the poet Hedd Wyn, the bardic name for Ellis Evans. He was born in 1887 and worked on his father’s farm in Meirionydd. He joined the Royal Welsh Fusiliers and fought in France in the Battle of Passchendale.

It was in 1917 that he died during the Battle of Pilken Ridge. Six weeks before his death, he entered a poem in the Eisteddford. His ode ‘The Hero’ dealt with the realities of war. The Bard’s Chair is awarded to the best entry of a poem in a strict verse form that is written in Welsh. His ode earned him the Bard’s Chair but by the time of the Eisteddford, Hedd Wyn had already been killed in battle.

That year the bard’s Chair was draped in black and has since been known as the Black Chair. His home has been secured for the nation by the Snowdonia National Park Authority and is open to the public by appointment.



Hedd Wyn

An elegy written by Robert William Parry lamenting the death of Hedd Wyn.

Gadael gwaith a gadael gwŷdd, -- gadael ffridd,
Gadael ffrwd y mynydd;
Gadael dôl a gadael dydd,
A gadael gwyrddion goedydd.

Gadair unig ei drig draw! -- Ei dwyfraich,
Fel pe’n difrif wrandaw,
Heddiw estyn yn ddistaw
Mewn hedd hir am un ni ddaw.

**Leaving labour, leaving land -- leaving meadow
On the hill; leaving field and wooded stand,
Leaving daylight, leaving rill, and
Leaving all the green world lost behind.**

**His honored chair abides alone -- the empty arms
orever reach: in silent speech they long
To hold the bard, and beckon home,
His song unsung, the peace that will not come.**

As it looked to me; France and Belgium 1917



The following extracts come from *As it Looked to Me: France and Belgium 1917*. It was written by William (Pat) Murphie, (1895-1967) who served as a second lieutenant in the Royal Scots, 27th Brigade, 9th Scottish Division in France and Belgium. These recollections were passed to me by his grandson, Andy Murphie, and will be offered in full to the War Museums in Edinburgh and London. William Murphie's recollections cover the period 25 April to 11 September 1917. They were probably written up in 1966.

What is offered here is his record of his earlier experiences.

Setting Off, 4/4/17

En route for France. Edinburgh to London; 2/6d extra for seat in Pullman at Victoria. Reported at Folkestone. Double destroyer escort to Boulogne, crossing without incident. Stayed the night at Hotel de Londres. I was in difficulties with my new leg boots, now on my feet over 24 hours. Douglas, who had ordered a half-pint beer, and who was now in his shirt, had managed to pull one off, and fell spread-eagled on the bed. At that precise moment the waitress appeared. With no sign of embarrassment whatever she said 'Votre biere, monsieur', and retired. Obviously we are not in Scotland any longer.

Training, 27-28/4/17

Marched to the 'Bull-ring' in double-quick time and by a fire-eater of a staff sergeant for final 'line' instructions e.g. going through an underground gallery thick with chlorine gas so as to test our gas masks.

The 'Bull-ring'; bayonet fighting from a fanatical Tyneside Scottish sergeant, whose favourite order for the final job was, 'Get him in the pawn-brokers'. Marched off the parade-ground in full fighting kit, complete with steel helmet to the accompaniment of a brass band playing a 'Rifle' quick march, and through 9 inches of sand.

Moving Up, 30/4/17

Left for St Pol by train. Warning against careless talk at new sidings, Etaples:

***There was an old owl who lived in an oak
The more he saw, the less he spoke
The less he spoke, the more he heard,
Soldiers should imitate that bird.***

French troop train, some coaches marked '40 hommes' or '8 chevaux'

Remarks heard en route:

'Edinburgh cable-cars travel quicker.'

(On hearing a cock crow) *'Thank God, that cock crows in English.'*

(With bitter sarcasm) *'La Belle France.'*

(Song, most mock-pathetically rendered) *'I wanna go home.'*

Detained at Savy, where we were put up in tents. It was a most miserable camp, so much so that one would quite willingly move on.

First Action, 6/5/17

Get orders suddenly to leave for the Battalion in the line. It was broad daylight. Some real thrills on the way up. Shells followed the track quite

closely the nearer we got to the trenches. Was rather sickened by the sight as well as by the smell of some dead Bosches whom we could not very well avoid. Reported to Lieutenant Colonel W.D. Croft, D.S.O., 11th Battalion. The Royal Scots in the reserve line. I incline to think that my name did not appeal to him as a Royal Scot. Shelled heavily for five hours during the night. Was a bit excited at first, knowing the shelling was a bit close, when I got a whiff of cordite. At 'stand-to' in the cold grey dawn Darling (the company commander) hailed me. 'How do you like the WAR, Murphie, my boy?' My reply does not matter. 'I should advise you to take out your soul - there may be a few spots on it - give it a polish up. The Great Quarter-master may demand it before another dawn. C'etait ca'. And he marched along the trench*

Must say that I'd rather fight in the open than lie helpless under this continuous bombardment.

7/5/17

One officer killed, one officer wounded this morning. Was fearfully cold before 'stand-to' but breakfast bucked me up a bit. Got round my section of the trench and got to know the men and my platoon sergeant, William Dawson, an Aberdonian, a phlegmatic type and well worth while. Must try to copy him. Watched the observation balloons on both side of the line. Have a tremendous respect for these fellows up there at 1000ft with no protection, a sitting duck for any fighter and for all the hours of daylight. That's cold courage.

Up there it would seem Richtofen's Circus have the upper hand. These 'Red-bellies' come out of the blue and the R.F.C pilots plummet to the ground. It doesn't help the infantry in the line to watch this daily. Meantime the O.B's do their stint till dusk. 'Old C--k and Balls' the men called them because in certain winds the balloon suggested male genitals. Day on the whole quiet. There followed the trench routine, the posting of sentries, the passwords for patrols, rations and the collection of mail and the censoring of letters etc.

8/5/17

From midnight to 6am plastered by enfilade fire of whiz-bang and hardly any of our guns replied. It was my first experience of a real heavy bombardment. It may seem off, but I was quite indifferent because it seemed to me that however much the Hun threw over - and he threw plenty - a well dug, well sited trench did give protection, unless in the event of a direct hit.

5/6/17

Day lovely for the boys going over. Good luck to them. By way of surprise zero hour is at eight o'clock in the evening. Very pleased to get mother's letter with a photograph of wee Nancy.** 'Contact' plane came over with streamers flying, the Bn had taken its objective. Great stuff.

*William Young (Will Y. Darling) Darling (1885-1962) has not strayed into narrative from Blackadder. From these recollections he comes across as an inspirational officer in terms of action and the morale of his troops. He went on to earn the Military Cross, a knighthood, and later became Lord Provost of Edinburgh. He kept in touch with his comrades in arms.

** wee Nancy being John Law's mother.



John Law - as a tribute to his uncle, and with thanks to Andy Murphie.

There were hundreds of us in the queue trying to enlist.

'I'm nineteen', I lied.

The sergeant signed me up and a few days later my travel warrant arrived. Ma made me fish paste sandwiches and I was off to Grantham to start my training. Our campsite was in the grounds of Belton House, the biggest house I'd ever seen. It was strange at first but I soon stopped being homesick, got used to the routine and made a good friend called Joe.

The sergeant, a crotchety man from Kent, worked us hard, trying to turn us into soldiers. We were a mixed bunch, trying to learn how to survive in a war.

I'd never ridden anything except a rusty old bicycle, but I was chosen to learn to ride a motorbike. I was thrilled.

Once I'd mastered riding my motor bike over the rough ground without falling off, they taught me to fire a Vickers machine gun. This was mounted on the side car of my motorbike. There was a lot to learn, changing barrels and how to strip the gun. You needed good eyesight too. They told us machine guns would change the way that wars were fought, we'd replace the mounted cavalry.

There were only eighteen motorbike and side car combinations in the whole army, I felt really proud. The motor bike riders dressed differently to the others, they supplied us with leather gaiters, goggles and waterproof coats. Good job I didn't know then that sixty two thousand of the Machine Gun Corps would be killed or injured. They called us 'The Suicide Club'. I had six weeks of training and then they shipped me over to Camiers in France to join the 3rd Battery Motor Machine Gun Services.

'What do you think about listening to the Padre, Cliff' Joe said. 'He's got a meeting in the field

this afternoon'?

The young Padre gathered about fifty of us together; we sat in a circle on the long grass to listen to his words. He sought to reassure us, young men, away from home.

We hadn't yet experienced the rat infested

'God loves you,' the padre told us, 'not a hair of your head will perish.'

We wanted to believe him.

trenches and the foot rot, which happened when we moved away from Camiers. It was here that we learnt how to hide our guns in bushes and dig trenches which soon filled with rain and turned to mud. The machine guns we used, fired five hundred rounds a minute and the ammunition was heavy.

Our four days of active duty on the front line made us feel utterly exhausted. On our four, reserve days, away from the front, we had to carry equipment, food and water to the front line. Joe and I hated carrying the giant rolls of barbed wire; even with two of us carrying them on sticks, we'd still get cut to bits. Our four days of rest, were heavenly; if we could find an abandoned cottage in a bombed village we would sleep inside. Most of our time was spent sleeping.

The war changed for me, one day while out on patrol, I got caught in crossfire and my leg was shattered.

When I came to, I was lying on a stretcher, the sun shining on my face. A hospital train took me to Etaples where I ended up in the 20th General Hospital. My war was over, I never saw Jo again, never knew if he lived or died.

C. Arthur

James Henry and World War 1

There are, understandably, many tales of the First World War at the present time, tales mainly of horror, of slaughter, of unimaginable death and destruction. It seemed a miracle that any of the men that went to war at that time managed to survive.

My grandfather, my father's father, did not survive, but his is a different tale, a different tragedy.

James Henry was a Cornishman, living in north Cornwall with his wife, Maud, and their four children. He enlisted in the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry and was sent, with his battalion, to Northumberland to guard the coast when the local soldiers went to France, and it was here, alone in a tent in Cambois, near Blyth, in the summer of 1915, that he shot himself. His wife had left him for another man, taking their children with her, and he was unable to face the thought of life without them.

I was aware from an early age that the man I knew as my grandfather was my father's stepfather, and as an adult working in County Hall in Swansea I used the scant knowledge I had to start my research in the Archives there.

I had the help and guidance there that pointed me in the direction of Blyth Library in Northumberland and it was from here that I received photo-copies of newspaper cuttings dating from 1915 reporting the 'painfully tragic death of Lance Corporal James Crahart'. The report was quite explicit with regard to the obvious, visible effect of the shooting, but also gave the reason why he had taken his own life.

A later edition of the paper reported on his 'impressive military funeral'. James Henry's coffin was mounted on a gun carriage and covered with the Union Jack on which was placed his cap and belt. The cortege was headed by a number of officers and the Cornwall Light Infantry band playing the 'Dead March'. About 40 or so soldiers took part in the procession.

I wondered at such a funeral, especially for a suicide, and came to the conclusion that it could have been a case of 'if it happened to him, it could happen to me'.



In the summer of 2001, I drove to Northumberland to find James Henry's grave in a cemetery in West Sleekburn, a task that seemed virtually impossible when I saw the size of the grave-yard. However, perseverance paid off and I found the grave with its simple War Office headstone.

In Blyth, I found a florist's shop and, in spite of it being a busy Saturday afternoon, when I explained what I wanted and why, they made me a small wreath. I returned to the graveyard, put the wreath on James Henry's grave, and then, although I'm far from being a sentimental person, I sat on the grass at the side of his grave and talked to him. Then I got back into the car and drove home to Wales.

I later discovered that the date on which I found my grandfather's grave was exactly 86 years to the date of his funeral.

Rosemary Crahart

Enigma B207

Hitler's Cipher Machine?

Since the 1970s, when the secrets of Bletchley Park and the part it played in the breaking of German military and diplomatic codes and ciphers in the years leading up to and during World War Two were revealed, you will find few if any, sentient beings in the western world who remain unaware of the star role played by Germany's most ubiquitous cipher machine - Enigma.

Enigma was not a single device however but existed in numerous forms and variations - both civilian and military. The most widely-used example from this large Enigma family was Enigma I (*Modell I*) - that's an alphabetic 'I', not a Roman 'one' ... commonly known as the 'Service Enigma'. It was used primarily by the German army (*das Heer*) and air force (*die Luftwaffe*). The German navy (*die Kriegsmarine*) - was a prolific user of Enigma - particularly among the Atlantic U-boat fleet. However, it used a somewhat more complex machine and operational procedures than did the other services. The military variants were developed from the original Commercial Enigmas developed shortly after the end of World War One. These it was hoped would help business communications to burgeon in the years following the Great War.

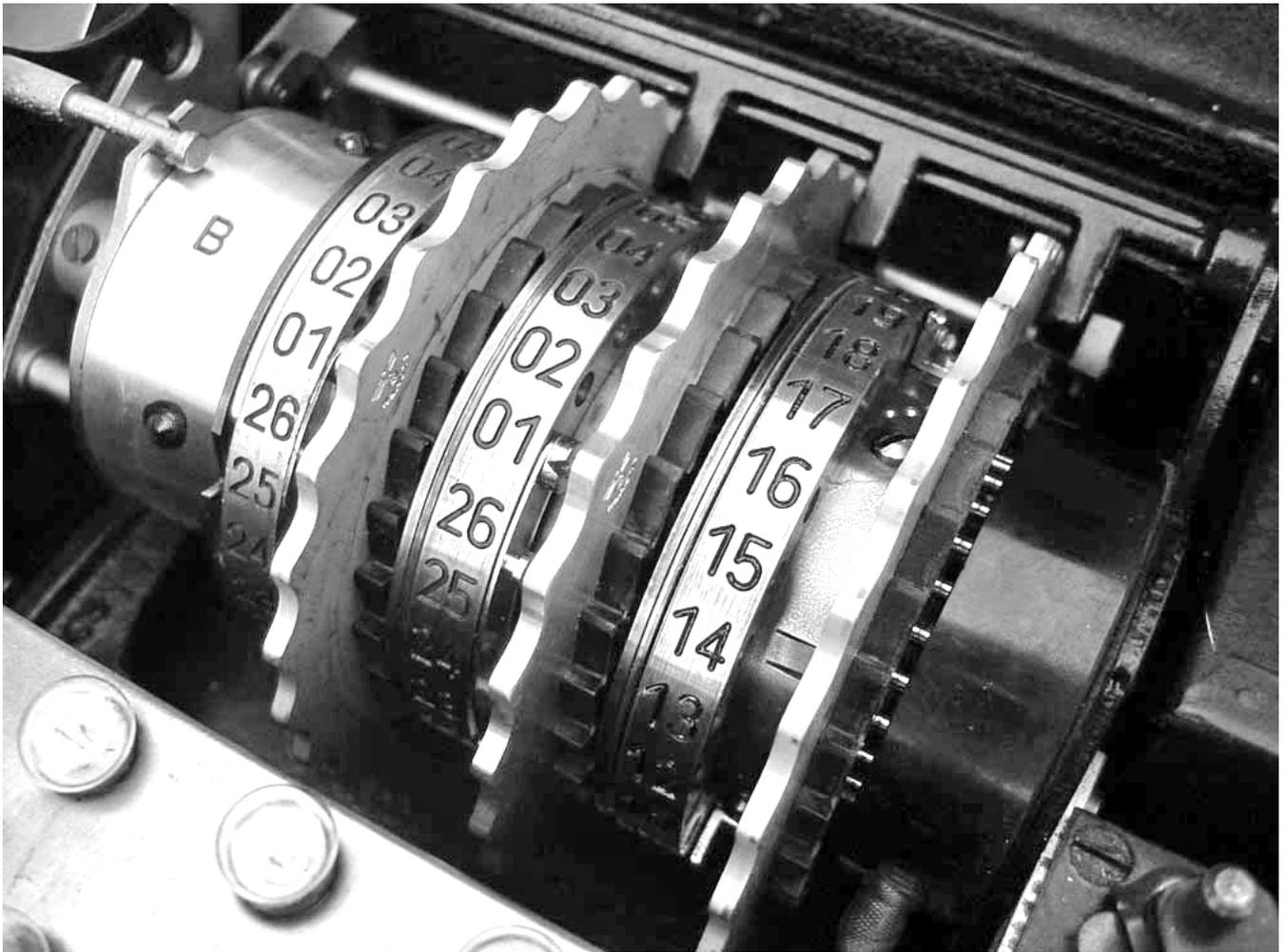
Enigma also played an important communications role in the Spanish Civil War when a number of modified Commercial Enigmas were sold by Germany to Franco's side of that conflict. At this point in its development carried a serial number beginning with an 'A', regardless of model number, which can lead to more than a little confusion when researching their individual histories. Following a change in about 1936 the various serial number prefixes began, at least in part, to reflect the model differences and from this point on all machines carrying an 'A' serial number were either army or air force. Naval machines carry an 'M' prefix.

The following paragraphs introduce a break

in the numbering of the Model I Enigma that occurred when in about 1937 a small number of machines appeared, carrying a 'B' prefix to their serial numbers for ease of use and at the risk of perhaps increasing the model/serial number confusion described above I will label this small group of machines - only twenty-four in all - as 'Enigma B' though they were in fact all modified Enigma I machines.

A very special version of the Service Enigma is seen in this B-series of machines. Only twenty-four of which were made, serial numbers B201 to B224. The machines have wheel and plugboard markings in red (as distinct from the normal Service Enigma where such markings are in black). The internal wiring of B207 has been determined to be very different to that of a standard, run-of-the-mill army machine. The senior engineer of the original manufacturer, *Willi Korn of Heimsoeth und Rinke* (H&R) - in 1937 the only fabricator of Enigma machines - said during an interview with a US Army interrogation team [in 1945?] that it was his belief that these special Enigmas were used at the various locations of Hitler's Headquarters (*Führer Hauptquartier*). Hitler had a mobile communications unit that accompanied him on his special train (*Führersonderzug*) and this unit may have used some of these machines. To date only one 8-series machine is known to have survived the war: B207, manufactured in 1937, which is in the collection of the National Cryptologic Museum (NCM) at Fort George G. Meade in Maryland adjacent to the headquarters of the National Security Agency (NSA), it is currently undergoing minor restoration and is expected to be on display to the public shortly.

B207's 1937 manufacturing date is interesting. It suggests that these particular machines were in use early, even before Hitler built any of his many headquarters. However, the deployment fits with the date for the extensions to and modification of Hitler's home in the Bavarian



Alps, the *Berghof* which was finished in 1936. As Hitler began to use the *Berghof* more frequently it is likely that a more secure communications channel - one that could not be intercepted and read by regular *Wehrmacht* users - was established.

Another clue to the use of this machine can be found in a letter from Army Headquarters dated 11 May 1942. It concerns the urgent repair of Enigma machine B201 assigned to the cipher office of The German High Command *The mystery deepens with a Top Secret and very urgent order for two B-series machines in 1943.*

On 15 May 1943, H&R received a letter from the German High Command with an order for two cipher machines for an unspecified but very special connection purpose. For the two machines with the serial numbers B222 and B223 changes were required that were subject to exceptional secrecy. The changes could only

be made in the presence of an official from the Army's High Command. Furthermore, the acceptance tests of the machines had to be performed with the standard *Wehrmacht* army wheels and reflector installed, the special wheels could not be left with H&R after they had been wired. This level of secrecy was indeed exceptional.

What happened in May/June 1943 that brought about such a special, private and secure communications link?

That question is still open. The question remains unanswered ... for now.

David Hamer

David served in Britain's Royal Air Force in an intelligence role. He now lives in the USA and is on the executive committee of the National Cryptologic Museum in Fort Meade In Maryland USA and is a world authority on the Enigma machine. (Ed).

On the Somme with my Great-Granddad

The Battle of the Somme in 1916, is probably one of the best known battles of the First World War. The 60,000 casualties on the first day alone earned it the name as the bloodiest day in the history of the British Army. But the Battle of the Somme did not end after that first day, it continued until 19 November 1916.

Friday, 15th September 1916, was a landmark for the British army on the Somme as it was the first time tanks were used. While certainly cumbersome and not overly effective the tank was something that had never been seen on the battlefield before and this fact alone spread enough fear through the enemy. On this day the objective was the village of Martinpuich, the line from the village to High Wood and High Wood itself.

The 15th division, the Scots, faced the strong line of defences in front of Martinpuich. The division, which consisted of the Highland Light Infantry, Scots Borderers, and Scottish Rifles, swarmed over the German defences and although the German barrage was heavy, the advance was so swift and the close fight of the trenches came so quickly, that the German barrage was less effective than it had been in the past.

The advance was more notable when it is taken into account that the men of the 15th division had, for six unbroken weeks, been in the line, digging, working, and fighting while continually under shellfire. While some Germans within the village put up some resistance the Allies were comfortably in Martinpuich in time for breakfast.

Her one wish, like so many young children in the war years, was for her daddy to be with her. She hardly remembered her daddy, having to rely on what her mum and three older sisters told her about him, but she felt luckier that her younger sister, Maud, who was not quite two years old and could not remember daddy at all, he was

simply the man in a photo on the mantelpiece.

Daddy was 16904 Private John Joseph Etherington of the 10th Battalion (Scottish Rifles). Unknown to Winifred, her sisters and

Hundreds of miles away in the small village of Escomb in Northumberland, on the same day that Martinpuich was captured, a little girl, Winifred Etherington, celebrated her fourth birthday

their mum, daddy had been part of the assault on Martinpuich and was, very sadly, one of the 28 casualties from the 10th Battalion on that day.

Winifred Etherington married Sydney Taylor in 1932 and had three sons, Raymond, Geoffrey and Alan. Raymond is my dad and in 2005 we visited Martinpuich and the Thiepval Memorial where Private John Joseph Etherington is commemorated on Pier and Face 4 D.

Unfortunately, his military records were destroyed during bombing in the Second World War; however his medals can give us an indication of his service. He received the George V coronation medal which indicates that he was either a regular soldier or a reservist in 1911.

He also received the 1914 Star and the 1914-1915 Star which indicates he was part of the BEF at the start of the war. His widow was presented with the Victory Medal of 1918.

My great-granddad was 35 years old when he died, one of thousands who died leaving behind a widow and young family.



When I was younger I could never understand why my Nana never wished to celebrate her birthday, but as I grew older I can understand. Nana never manage to go to Thiepval to pay her respects, so I went on her behalf.

Harry Patch, the last veteran of the First World War, once said that while 11th November is the nations' Remembrance Day, everyone has their own Remembrance Day and my family's day is on 15th September.

Liz McSloy



An early model British Mark I "male" tank, named C-15, near Thiepval, 25 September 1916. The tank is probably in reserve for the Battle of Thiepval Ridge which began on 26 September. The tank is fitted with the wire "grenade shield" and steering tail, both features discarded in the next models. Photo by Ernest Brooks.

HA Swansea Outreach Programme

If you belong to an organisation that would like one of our panel of speakers to give a talk, please contact us at haswansea@ymail.com, or telephone 07522 320848.

Forthcoming talks

Tuesday 10 February 2015, 2pm, at Morriston Library, Rhian Rees will speak on '**Gwrysydd: the story of Daniel James, the poet who wrote "Calon Lân"**'.

Tuesday 3 February 2015, 7pm, at the Maesteg Sports Centre/Library, Colin Wheldon James will speak to the Llynfi Valley Historical Society about '**Dr Joseph Parry: a Welshman of Note**'.

Thursday 26 February 2015, 7pm, at the Welfare, Ystradgynlais, Rhian Rees will speak to the Ystradgynlais Heritage Society about '**Gwrysydd: Y Dyn Ei Hun**'.

Tuesday 3 March 2015, 2pm, Lynda Bryant will speak to the Morriston Library Local History Group on '**The Rebecca Riots**'.

Thursday 5 March 2015, at the Grenfell Room, The Institute, Lime Street, Gorseinon, at 3pm, John Ashley will speak to the Llŵchwr Historical Society on '**Buffalo Bill's Wild West in Swansea**'.

Friday 13 March 2015, 2.20pm at the Trallwn Community Centre, Peter Rees will speak to the Llansamlet Historical Society on '**Monasticism in Medieval Wales**'.

Tuesday 17 March 2015, Colin Wheldon James will speak to the Swansea Probus Club on '**Health and Death in 19th-century Swansea**'.

Some of the subjects available for talks:

The Founding of Medieval Swansea.

Swansea Castle.

The Life and Times of Gerald of Wales.

Health and Death in 19th-century Swansea.

The Life of Welsh Composer Dr Joseph Parry.

The Role of the Supernatural in the First Crusade.

The Church in the Middle Ages.

Science, Superstition and Study in the Middle Ages.

The Normans in Wales.

Social history topics, local history research and family history research.

Buffalo Bill's Wild West in Swansea

The White Rock Project.

Why study history?

Naval Warfare in the First World War.

Swansea: the Metallurgical Centre of the World.

The Industrialisation of South Wales.

Monasticism in Medieval Wales.

Swansea and The Three Nights' Blitz ~ Admiral Lord Nelson and the Swansea Connections.

Gwrysydd: the Story of Daniel James, the Poet who Wrote 'Calon Lân'.

The Rebecca Riots.

The Mackworths of Neath.

The Tudors and the Stuarts.

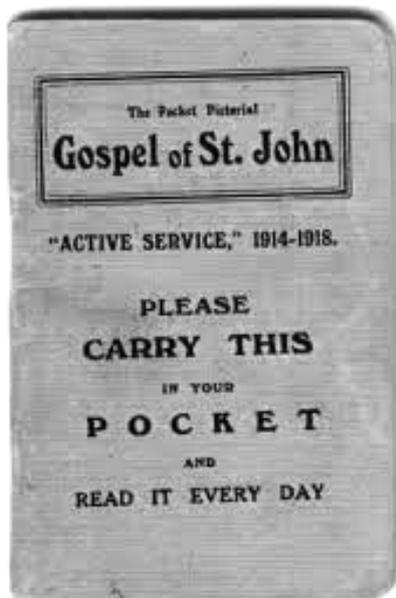
Temple of Peace

The Temple of Peace in Cardiff was designed by architect Sir Percy Thomas, and was opened on 23 November 1938. It was a gift from Lord David Davies of Llandinam (Montgomeryshire) to the Welsh people. He wanted it to be “a memorial to those gallant men [and women] from all nations who gave their lives in the war that was to end war” and so it was dedicated to the memory of the loss of life as a result of the 1914 - 1918 War.

The trigger ... the accepted trigger for the 1914-1918 war was the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria, heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary by Yugoslav nationalist Gavrilo Princip in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914. Within weeks the major powers were at war and the conflict soon spread around the world.

“I ask you to put your trust in God”.

Message from Lord Roberts to the soldiers.



The Scripture Gift Mission distributed millions of copies of The Gospel according to Saint John to the troops in WW1. It was one of very few items, available to be read, that was allowed to the soldiers.



Christmas Gift Tin

In 1914 money was raised by Princess Mary, then 16 years old, to give a gift to sailors and soldiers. An ad was put in the national press and enough money was collected for a Christmas Gift Tin. It was to be ‘a gift from the nation’. Inside were cigarettes, tobacco, a Christmas card and a photo of Mary.

Non-smokers and boys received a tin with packets of sweets and a bullet pencil. Quite why a young boy receiving a bullet would be cheered up at Christmas, is a mystery. The boxes made from brass created a shortage of the material. On the lid of the tin are roundels with the names of our allies: France, Russia, Belgium, Japan, Montenegro and Serbia.

Christmas Truce ... was a series of widespread but unofficial ceasefires along the Western Front around Christmas 1914. German and British soldiers crossed trenches to exchange seasonal greetings and small gifts of food and souvenirs. There were joint burial ceremonies and prisoner swaps.

Remembrance poppies ... have been used since 1921 to commemorate soldiers who have died in war. Inspired by the war poem ‘Flanders Fields’ they were first used by the American Legion to commemorate American soldiers killed in that war (1914–1918). Today, they are mainly used in the UK and throughout the Commonwealth to commemorate their servicemen and women killed in all conflicts since 1914.

Gareth Jones Exhibition and Lecture

“Gareth Jones’ reporting of famine was indeed ethical and courageous, for, he not only challenged the might of the Stalinist repression, disregarded personal safety, and sacrificed personal and professional advancement, but he paid the ultimate price for his profession when he entered into hostile territory in 1935”. So wrote Professor Ray Gamache of Kings College, Pennsylvania, in his published book: Gareth Jones: Eyewitness to the Holodomor. In this book he claims that Gareth Jones, was an ‘eye witness to truth’ of extermination by hunger in 1932/33, when the famine left nearly five million dead. In copies of Gareth’s dairies, which we were privileged to see in the Historical Association’s exhibition, he wrote:

‘I stayed overnight in a village where there used to be 200 oxen and where there are now six. The peasants were eating the cattle fodder and had only a month’s supply left’.

The New York Times published a denial by Walter Duranty, of Jones’ writings, stating that ‘Russians hungry, but not starving.’ Again, in his diaries, Jones wrote ‘Everywhere was the cry, “There is no bread. We are dying”’.



Trevor Fishlock, Andrew Green, Margaret McCloy and Arnold Rosen
[Royston Kneath, Swansea Your Story]

On the 18th October 2014, the Historical Association showed the award winning film, Stalin, Hitler and Mr Jones that documents the short tragic life and mysterious death of Gareth Jones. All those who watched the film agreed with the Guardian summary ‘A dense, powerful, moving film’.

Gareth was an investigative journalist for the Western Mail in the 30’s and also a Foreign Affairs Advisor to Lloyd-George. The film was preceded by an introduction by TV presenter and journalist Trevor Fishlock and a talk by Arnold Rosen. Besides the showing of the film there was a large exhibition of memorabilia collected by Arnold Rosen. This included letters from Lloyd George, pages from Gareth’s dairies that were sent back from Inner Mongolia after his death and many distressing photographs showing the poignant condition of life, lived by the peasants, in Russia and Germany.

The afternoon meeting included a most rewarding question and answer session between Trevor, Arnold and the audience. Amongst the audience of distinguished guests was the Mayor of Barry, who despite the fact that Gareth had been born there in 1905, had hitherto no knowledge of this intrepid journalist. He was keen to rectify this and asked if the Historical Association could mount the exhibition in the Barry museum and show the film on a running loop. This is a project for the New Year and hopefully it can be tied in with a visit to historical societies in the Barry area.

The HA would like to thank Ian Smith for the great help given by him and the staff of the Waterfront Museum.

2015 Branch AGM

The 2015 Branch AGM will be held at Sketty Hall, 11.00 Saturday 7 March.

The AGM will be followed by a chance to relax and meet socially.

Nominations for committee and officers must be delivered to the Executive Secretary by 21 February.

The nomination form is included with this Chronicle, and copies are available from the officers and committee members.

There are vacancies for 2015, so do consider making your contribution to one of the most active and vibrant branches in the country!

The Historical Association Swansea Branch
Promoting History in South-West Wales
c/o National Waterfront Museum
Oystermouth Road
Maritime Quarter
Swansea SA1 3RD
www.haswansea.org.uk

Committee and Officers Nomination Form, 2015/2016

- All candidates, nominators and seconders must be current members of the branch.
- The Treasurer must on election be or become a member of the full Association. The branch may pay the fee.
- Self-nomination is not allowed.
- The committee consists of the Chair plus up to 12 members including the Vice-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer.
- The committee and officers will be elected by a show of hands at the AGM.
- In the event of a tied vote the Chair has the casting vote.
- Nominations must be received by the Secretary in person or at the above address by 21 February 2015.** Nominations will not be accepted after this date.
- The AGM is 11.00 on Saturday 7 March 2014 at Sketty Hall.

Candidate: _____
Nominator: _____
Secunder: _____

Nominated for:

Committee

Chair Vice-Chair

Secretary Treasurer

The Historical Association is incorporated by Royal Charter
Registered charity number 1120261
Branch Officers: Chairman: John Law, Branch President: Ewanfa Professor Rhys A. Griffiths,
Executive Secretary: Eddy Jones, Treasurer: Raymond Soames, Vice-Chairman: Alan Ashley

Burns Supper, 24th January 2015

Sketty Hall, Saturday 24th January 2015, (7.00 7.30). £27 members £30 non-members.

Fund Raising Raffle – excellent themed prizes (wee discount if tartan worn!)

Starter

Vegetable Scotch broth served with Pearl Barley & Fresh Herbs.

Appetizer

Traditional Haggis with Caramelised Shallots, Neeps & Tatties and a Ruby Port flavoured Jus.

Main Course

Lemon & Dill Crusted Wild Scottish Salmon served with Pan-fried Langoustines,
Fresh Wilted Greens & a Crab and Saffron butter sauce.

Dessert

Raspberry & Vanilla Cranach served with Fromage Frais & White Chocolate Shavings.

Highland Shortbread Biscuits and Scottish Malt Whisky or Drambuie
Coffee / Tea & Mints

Book: John Law, 10 Penlan Crescent, Uplands. Swansea. SA2 0RL or email law.easton.john@gmail.com

HA Swansea Branch Programme 2015

Talks on Saturdays at 11.00, National Waterfront Museum

24 January, 7.00pm for 7.30pm

Burns Supper, Sketty Hall. Tickets: £27 (members; £30 (non-members). There may be a wee discount if tartan is worn.

31 January

Robert Protheroe-Jones, **Working for Victory: Welsh Industry and the Great War.**

14 February

Glenys Davies, **Working for Victory: Researching Avenging Angels, a novel of World War One.**

21 February

Dr Daniel Blackie, **The Buried History of Disability in Britain's Coalfields 1780-1880.**

28 February

Ray Savage, **World War 1: The War at Sea.**

7 March

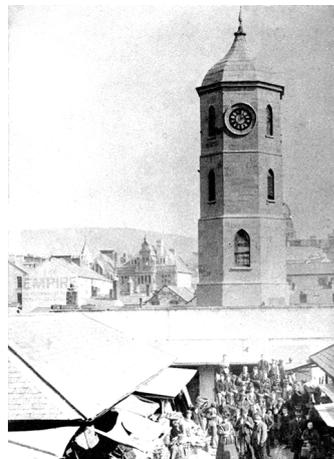
Branch Annual General Meeting and Spring Social, Sketty Hall, 11.00.

21 March

David Mitchell, **The Tower Clocks of Swansea.**

28 March

Dr Steph Mastoris (Head of the National Waterfront Museum), **Punch and the Great War.**



Membership Form

Name

Address

.....

.....

Phone

Email

Individual membership: £10.
Concessionary membership: £5.
Family (household) membership: £15.
Student (to 30 September 2015): £5

Cheques to *Historical Association Swansea Branch:*

Membership Secretary
Historical Association
156 Chemical Road
Morrison
Swansea SA6 6JQ

www.haswansea.org.uk