CLSG Remembers
The Great War 1914-1918
Foreword

This publication would not have been possible without the support of the parents, staff and pupils that contributed to the section on personal stories as well as the teachers who planned lessons and events based around the topic of the First World War.

This has been a fantastic project to oversee and it is a real credit to the passion, dedication and enthusiasm for all involved that this commemoration has evolved from a remembrance assembly into this comprehensive publication – a truly remarkable achievement. Collating all the touching stories about family members who played a role during the war, to reading the articles written by staff and pupils whose talents and enthusiasm never cease to amaze me has demonstrated what a special community we are.

This publication is dedicated to all members of staff that have taught at City of London School for Girls’ since its foundation in 1894, as well as all the pupils that have passed through its doors. In conjunction with the 125th anniversary of the school's foundation, I am proud that this publication embodies the achievements that defines the school. It is the school’s community, and in particular the collaboration between all governors, staff, parents and pupils which sets this school apart, and which will no doubt continue to drive us forward to greater things.

Michael Martyn
History Teacher

Contents

3 Foreword
4 Remembrance Assembly
8 CLSG during WWI
10 Articles on WWI by students and staff
24 Battlefields Trip Review
26 WWI: A Commemoration & War Poetry
32 Class Activities
38 Personal Stories
In November 2018, a group of Year 10 pupils led an assembly on remembrance the Tuesday after Remembrance Sunday. A two minutes silence was held and The Last Post heard. The following is what the girls learnt.

‘...we will remember them’

What are we remembering?

2018 marks 100 years since the end of the First World War. This year we are remembering the end of the war but more importantly all of the soldiers who risked and sacrificed their lives to fight for their country. World War One was one of the deadliest conflicts in the history of the human race. There were over 36 million casualties in which 16 million of these resulted in death.

Remembrance Day, also known as Armistice Day, commemorates the services of the soldiers, airmen and sailors who fought in the First World War. These heroic soldiers fought and died for our country. This day marks the end of World War one, at 11am on the 11th day of the 11th month, in 1918. This day is also a chance to honour and respect people who serve in the military today. To this day, we acknowledge the important roles of the men and women who risk their lives to uphold peace.

Why do we have Remembrance Day?

A two-minute silence is held at 11am to remember the people who have died in wars, both past and present. The first two-minute silence in Britain was held on 11 November 1919, one year after the end of the First World War. King George V asked the public to observe a silence at 11am so “the thoughts of everyone may be concentrated on reverent remembrance of the glorious dead”.

Although the first ceremony was held to commemorate the dead following the First World War, the anniversary is now used to remember all casualties of war. This includes World War Two, the Falklands War, the Gulf War, conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq and more. It is important to remember and honour the bravery and sacrifices that have been made and continue to be made on our behalf. We may not be where we are today without them. We must continue sharing the stories of the past so that lessons may be learnt from it. Lessons that enable us to grow and develop. Lessons that stop us from making the same mistakes. Lessons that help us to remember.

How should we remember these long ago events?

Currently we have many methods of remembering World War 1, some of which many of us practice annually. First of all we have our traditional two minute silence. In addition, the Royal British Legion (a charity providing financial, social, and emotional support to members and veterans of the British armed forces, their families and dependants) has created literature and audio-visual material for those wishing to hold their own Remembrance service: for example in a local community gathering.

Furthermore the UK consists of more than 100,000 war memorials which take many forms, including cenotaphs, plaques, gardens and books. Finally, the classic poppy (a symbol of remembrance and hope) is something that many of us have seen before whether that be on pins or as part of wreaths and is worn by millions. Every November people gather at the Cenotaph in London. It is a national war memorial and the focus for the annual Remembrance parade and service, in which the queen, the leaders of the country and armed forces take part. During the parade people lay wreaths of poppies at the foot of the Cenotaph.

This year as many of you may have seen on TV or maybe even in real life, Prince Charles did so on behalf of his mother who was watching from a nearby balcony. Following the National Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph, 10,000 people marched past the monument and through London, in tribute to those who served in the First World War. At 7pm on Sunday, 1,000 beacons across the UK were lit to mark the occasion. The moat of the Tower of London was also filled with thousands of lit torches as part of the installation ‘Beyond the Deepening Shadow: The Tower Remembers’.

Although a hundred years have passed and all the people who fought in the Great War have died, nobody has forgotten. People are planning new commemorations, new poppy fields are being planted, old war memorials are being cleaned up and new ones are built. Commemoration shows that we have not forgotten and that we are thankful for the peace we have.

Why are poppies worn?

The Red Poppy is quite a misunderstood symbol. It represents Remembrance and hope, not death - a common misconception - and is worn by millions of people. Red because of the natural colour of field poppies, not because of the blood spilt.

Wearing a poppy is a personal choice and reflects individual and personal memories.

During the First World War (1914–1918) much of the fighting took place in
Western Europe. Previously beautiful countryside was blasted, bombed and fought over, again and again. The landscape swiftly turned to fields of mud, blast and barren scenes where little or nothing could grow. Bright red Flanders poppies however, were delicate but resilient flowers and grew in their thousands, flourishing even in the middle of chaos and destruction.

In early May 1915, shortly after losing a friend in Ypres, a Canadian doctor, Lt. Col. John McCrae was inspired by the sight of poppies to write a now famous poem called ‘In Flanders Fields’.

After the First World War, the poppy was adopted as a symbol of Remembrance. McCrae’s poem inspired an American academic, Moina Michael, to make and sell red silk poppies which were brought to England by a French woman, Anna Guérin. The (Royal) British Legion, formed in 1921, ordered 9 million of these poppies and sold them on 11 November, to raise funds for its remembrance assembly at City of London School for Girls

Assembly at City of London School for Girls

which orchestrates the sale of poppies to raise funds for its remembrance work, has made no official opinion on the wearing of white poppies stating it is a matter of choice and that it ‘does not have a problem’ with people wearing the white poppy.

What were the experiences of war?

For the millions of professional, conscripted and recruited soldiers of the First World War, the years of 1914-1918 were filled with terrible physical and emotional experiences. The rise of technological advancements in the late 19th century had made artillery incredibly effective and new weapons such as poison gas and tanks created an atmosphere of constant threat. Combined with the unpredictability of war and the unfamiliarity of the trench experience, the life of a soldier was overwhelming and highly dangerous. However, fighting in the battlefields was the exception rather than the norm. For most men, life was a routine of work, rest, and recreation. Soldiers lived outside with limited shelter from the extremes of weather, and periods of rest were made difficult by the incessant noise of artillery and machine gun fire. Trench deadlock meant that a great deal of their waking hours were spent waiting around, smoking, writing letters or playing cards to deal with their boredom. The order to attack, or news of an enemy assault, changed everything.

Some 60 million soldiers served in the Great War, fighting all across the world from Europe to Africa, the North Sea to China and facing a huge range of new warfare. Spurred on by patriotism and resilience they ran through complex networks of barbed wire, through bomb shattered fields, and through ever lessening ranks, rarely making it to the other side. It truly was a “war to end all wars”, and a uniquely horrifying experience for all.

What was the impact of WWI in history?

World War One changed the world in many different ways, paving the way for how we live today. By November 1918, modern warfare had evolved immensely with countries using different methods of attack. The first tanks were invented during World War One due to the military working with industrialists and engineers, and there had been great losses on all sides. The war also caused great bitterness among many nations, and this meant that international relations over the coming decades weren’t as strong as they could have been, which greatly contributed to World War Two happening many years later.

However, not every effect of the war was bad. World War One also impacted the world in many positive ways. An example of this could be the resulting literature and the emergence of modernism. In the post-war era, many writers wanted to not only portray the war’s horrors, but also the profound effect that the war had on society and perhaps their own lives. The genre mainly focused on the lives of the characters and sought to wipe out of the romantic descriptions and nature present in novels written during or before the war. Examples of such novels include ‘Brave New World’, ‘Eyeless in Gaza’ and ‘All Quiet on the Western Front.’

The suffrage movement was also heavily affected by World War One, as many women did jobs that were normally occupied by men whilst they were away fighting. Many women workers (example) members of the land army, nurses or in munitions factories, despite the health risks involved from handling explosives. Due to the growth in women’s public roles, suffragettes and suffragists could be more aggressive and campaign harder for their cause, with women eventually gaining the vote in 1918 from the new Prime Minister David Lloyd George. For the first time in 1918, due to the Representation of the People Act, on the 14th of December all women over 30 and men over 21 could vote.

How has remembrance evolved over time?

Originally, WWI remembrance was just a minute’s silence incorporated into daily life. Many people did not find the minute’s silence disruptive to their schedules, and made the effort to adapt this minute of silence into their lives. This was during the years immediately subsequent to WWI. However, in the aftermath of WWII, this changed to a two minute’s silence and was held in a Church on the Sunday closest to November 11th, meaning it was celebrated on Remembrance Sunday rather than on Armistice Day.

‘We must continue sharing the stories of the past so that lessons may be learnt from it. Lessons that enable us to grow and develop. Lessons that stop us from making the same mistakes. Lessons that help us to remember.’

Having the minute’s silence in a church on the Sunday made it more of a disruption to everyday life and forced people to make more of an effort to participate, and so interest in marking Remembrance Day declined in the post-WWII years as conflict became more distant. Despite this decline of Remembrance Day and its commemoration in the post- WWII years, near the end of the twentieth century there was a resurgence of interest in the First World War. This was partly due to the declining numbers of veterans and the dwindling publication of various books concerning the conflict spurring people to make sure such world-changing devastation wasn’t forgotten and hence repeated.

This, and the UK’s involvement in more recent conflicts has brought the subject sharply back into focus, which has contributed to Remembrance Day being given a higher profile once more. The inclusion of the two World Wars on the National Curriculum also means a greater awareness of them among a new generation. In the 1990s the two minute silence (one minute for both wars) began to be held on 11th November itself again, regardless of whether it was a Sunday or not. Remembrance therefore became a more integral part of daily life on that day once more. And now we will stand whilst the last post is being played, then we will conclude this assembly with our two minutes of silence.
Life at City during WWI

How did CLSG contribute to the war effort?

Throughout the war, City girls were keen to support the lives of soldiers abroad as well as families at home. The school went to great efforts, organising and sending packages to soldiers each term; so called ‘tinned days’ were started in 1915, where girls brought in tinned foods, tobacco, hairbrushes and clothes for British prisoners of war in Germany. Sadly, these collections stopped in 1917, with the December Newsletter merely stating: “Unfortunately we are not allowed to send any more goods to our prisoners of war in Germany”. Although the reason for this is unclear, instances of theft were rising towards the end of the war and many packages ended up in the hands of German officers. Efforts were also made to support the wives of soldiers, who may have been struggling financially whilst their husbands were on the front. For instance, City girls knitted socks and mittens for babies during winter months, which were donated to Maternity Clinics. Concern was also shown for those soldiers returning home; school visits to the Red Cross hospital in Finsbury Square were made to welcome the “wounded heroes” and some girls volunteered at clinics during school holidays. Smaller, financial sacrifices were also made by the school. In 1916, it was decided that entrance fees collected at Sports Day and money spent on Sports prizes should instead be given to the Fund for the British Prisoners of War.

How was CLSG kept informed of the war effort?

Girls were informed on the progress of the war through a variety of mediums outside school, most regularly by listening to nightly radio broadcasts by the BBC as well as reading newspapers, though with the papers there was usually a three to four day delay between the action occurring and news reaching readers. In school though, students were still able to glean information on the state of affairs and experiences of soldiers on the front line through their regular communications with prisoners of war, who would send thank you cards to the girls after receiving food donations from the school. These postcards gave girls a unique perspective from soldiers living under difficult conditions and some of the men gave illuminating and often amusing insights, such as a Polish prisoner writing in December 1916 who wrote ‘I would be very happy if you would from time at time [sic] kindly send me a resembling parcel … same are bringing much delight and vivification into the life of a prisoner’. Another wrote ‘dear miss, would you care to accept a photograph of myself as a small souvenir?’. Girls also wrote to women on the home front including an old City girl and member of the Women’s Land Army in 1918 who revealed that the best work was ‘stock work’ with baby calves and shared anecdotes about the cows and horses that she had to tend to everyday.

Beyond factual information, the girls also engaged in a fair bit of ‘folklore’ and superstition surrounding the war, visiting a department at the ‘new war Museum’ and learning about the ‘wearing of charms and amulets’. These included the ‘woolly golliwog’, worn by Germans as ‘a kind of lightning conductor to attract and ward off the evil eye’. Though these bits of information seem to have been fabricated, they do show that the girls maintained an interest in the war even if some of their sources seem less credible.

A group of students looked at the archived magazines from 1914-1918 and established what life was like for the pupils during the war. Thank you to Alexandra Dixon, Shaina Sangha, Emily Thomas and Natasha Ross for these submissions.

Above and overleaf: A selection of photos from CLSG from around the time of World War I.
How did school life continue?

In the words of Miss Strudwick, the headmistress of City during the war, ‘although war makes special demands, the ordinary work of the School must be attended to’. This quote illustrates how school life continued as normally as was possible during the war. Prize Days continued and at each, Miss Strudwick alluded to the idea that everyone must do all they could to promote a good atmosphere at school and ‘carry on’ through the difficulties that war presented. The subject of the war was never forgotten or brushed aside; rather Miss Strudwick’s speeches convey the efforts made to not let war get the better of the students’ lives.

Everyday school life remained similar to that of the pre-war days: lessons were the same and societies continued to meet. Poems and stories were written and featured in the magazines, prominent subjects of which included London. However, towards the end of the war, the idea of reflection on the effects of war became common. School trips also continued to happen regularly, including visits to the theatre, museums, historical sites like the Tower of London and countryside. One such trip that reflected City’s attitude of perseverance through the challenges of war was a visit to a dance and gymnastics display which highlighted the ‘importance of work in relation to the contingencies of everyday life’ for the girls.

Girls continued to play sports during the war, namely badminton and hockey, with the teams playing matches against other local schools. At Sports Day events included balancing on flowerpots and unravelling complicated knots as well as standard running races. Sports Day in 1916 illustrates how the war did affect school life somewhat because the value of the prizes given was added to the Fund for the Prisoners of War. So, the war altered some activities that City undertook but the fundamentals of school life remained as similar as they could possibly be to the days before the war.

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What were pupils’ experiences of war?

Although it might appear that as students in London the experiences of the war had been limited, the school magazines tell a different story. In the magazine from December 1915, a student writes about her holiday experiences in northern France, S. Malo. In the article, she describes the orders of mobilisation and streams of men going to sign up as well as a middle-aged man who came thinking that ‘his class was not wanted’ until he was told that everyone was needed. The student goes on to describe the general rush for the boats in order to return to England.

In April 1918, there is an article entitled ‘My escape from Germany’ written by Winifred M. Gillard. Gillard discusses the need for her to leave Germany after her ability to move around was limited until she was told that everyone was needed. The student goes on to describe the general rush for the boats in order to return to England.

Yet Gillard explains the difficulties in this in that ‘No passenger trains were running’.

It is interesting that although Gillard explains that ‘I am no heroine’ because she had not thought to blow the train up, she still manages to hide that she is English to German officers who are on the lookout for an English spy. Gillard then describes that she finally arrived at the frontier but then didn't have a military passport but manages to accost a British officer and persuade them to give her a military passport which allowed her to finally get to England. Although these two articles are clearly anomalies in the magazines during the war period, the two close experiences of City Girls with the war are interesting in understanding that City Girls were privileged in their ability to travel abroad and were exposed during the war time to dangerous, and potentially exciting, experiences.
The First World War changed the image of warfare for many reasons not just because of its global scope. It was the first time that war between countries was so static resulting in the trench system which scarred Belgium and France. It was the first time for several new technologies: aeroplanes and tanks as well as bombs and high impact artillery. But it was also the first time that Britain had tried to mobilise the whole nation in the service of war. Conscription was introduced in January 1916 and this led to some dilemmas.

What should be done with those who had a moral objection to fighting? It was recognised that some groups such as the Quakers were opposed in all circumstances to taking the lives of others and they were allowed to become conscientious objectors. But this opened the door to those who did not have a fixed objection to warfare but merely did not want to risk their own lives. So the decision was made to make them obey army orders. They tried to break Grey's will by throwing a live bomb at his feet after removing the pin and demanding he threw it when ordered. Grey stood perfectly still and calmly when the bomb was hissing at his feet and the officer who threw it ran for cover.

"After successive days of worsening treatment, Gray was stripped naked, a rope tightly fastened around his abdomen and he was pushed into a filthy pond and held under the water eight or nine times in succession. The pond contained sewage. Gray stood perfectly still and calmly when the bomb was hissing at his feet and the officer who threw it ran for cover."

This is from an account by one conscientious objector: Howard Marten

"We were confined to our cells for three days on 'punishment diet': four biscuits a day and water. There were eleven of us in a cell that measured 3.6m by 3.3m."

"Some objects were tortured to make them obey army orders. They tried to break Grey's will by throwing a live bomb at his feet after removing the pin and demanding he threw it when ordered. Grey stood perfectly still and calmly when the bomb was hissing at his feet and the officer who threw it ran for cover."

This subject can be further explored by reading To End All Wars by Adam Hochschild which examines the stories of those who protested against the war in Britain, both men and women. The book brings out the deep divisions in society. Often families were divided including, most bizarrely, the Commander-in-Chief of the British Army, Sir John French and his sister, Charlotte, who was utterly opposed to war. This book shows the bravery and integrity of those who felt, not "My country right or wrong" but rather "The world is my country".

Conscientious Objectors

By Mrs Brice

The Nurse of the Mediterranean

By Ailish Coleman

In 1915, France and Britain started new campaigns at Gallipoli in Turkey and Salonica in Greece in an attempt to break the stalemate Europe’s armies were reaching on the Western Front. On top of combat casualties from these new fronts, of which there were tens of thousands, the conditions and climate in the Mediterranean meant malaria and dysentery were rife among the soldiers. The solution to all of this was the unassuming and tiny island of Malta.

Located close enough to both Gallipoli and Salonica, but also separated from both by a barricade of sea, the British territory of Malta made an ideal safe-haven for vulnerable soldiers. The first batch of patients arrived there from the battlefields of Gallipoli in March 1915, but would hardly be the last. 57,991 sick and wounded soldiers came to the island seeking medical care as a result of the disastrous campaign which lasted for eight months. At Salonica, the allies were forced to enter trench warfare as they tried to help the Serbian forces oppose the Bulgarian army. The fighting there dragged on, during which a further 78,130 soldiers made the journey to Malta’s hospitals.

Throughout World War One, 27 hospitals were frantically opened in Malta with a peak of 25,000 beds for soldiers in April 1917. Rest and recuperation for soldiers in recovery there were considered as serious as medical care, as so many needed ongoing care. Tea rooms which hosted weekly concerts were opened in May 1915, serving around 50,000 men during the course of the war, and in October of the same year a gymnasium in the capital of Valetta was converted into a facility with a library, a bar, billiard tables and a theatre stage, which was visited by over 80,000 soldiers. Wounded soldiers from the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (Anzacs) also had a recreation centre built for them nearby in November by the Australian Red Cross. Malta was significant for the Anzac forces as the Gallipoli Campaign was the first any of them were involved in, meaning many of them were sent to the island for recovery after their first ever taste of war.

Malta was a major hospital island until April 1917, when the allies cut down on the numbers of troops being sent there because the Germans had begun sinking ships headed to the hospitals with submarines. Nevertheless, by the end of World War One Malta had gained the nickname of “the Nurse of the Mediterranean” as a result of how many it had accommodated and cared for.
The Christmas truce of 1914:
What actually happened?

By Mr Martyn

The Christmas truce in December 1914 has always been something that has piqued my interest. How did it happen? How did it work in the middle of war? How did people feel about it?

When watching the Sainsbury’s advert in 2014, which portrayed the supposed Christmas truce of 1914 between British and Germans along the western front in a romanticised way, with joyous music, a calming atmosphere and clean landscape, it got me thinking about the actual reality of this truce compared to the distorted image that I had had in my mind for over a decade. I had heard about in passing throughout my education, but the advert got me thinking about the actual events of this truce and what the experiences really were and how it came about. It seemed unlikely that there was some kind of comradery for this one day in such a horrific arena of war on the front lines of the trenches.

I listened to a range of witness testimonies as well as read a range of articles on the subject to get a clearer idea of what took place and the reality was different to what I had previously thought. I learnt that there were no organised football matches along the front lines and football was simply one of many uncoordinated activities that took place on Christmas day of that year. Other members of the allied forces such as the French were shocked by the interaction between the German and the British, demonstrating the unusual nature of the encounter. In fact there were many, short truces along the front before December to allow each side to collect their dead and wounded and not just this one at Christmas.

The events that led to the supposed football matches across the western front was the fact that although this was a battlefield, the seasons still continued to behave normally. The ground was covered in snow, making the land serene with a bitter cold adding to this atmosphere. It was clear that the war was clearly not going to end by Christmas, which was the original hope, so it was...
important for the High Command to keep morale up on the front lines. They did this by ensuring that Christmas at the front was as relaxed as possible, sending gifts to the front to boost morale. Ironically, some of these gifts were given to German soldiers when they met in no man’s land which wasn’t High Command’s intention. Although the horrors of trench warfare should not be ignored, there was a chivalrous undertone to these truces allowing both sides to tend to the dead and wounded. Ironically, the famous December truce was one of the last of its kind as command at home were concerned that fraternising with the enemy could lead to men questioning the war and potential mutiny. This was a real concern due to the fact that the British army only had a small standing army and relied on volunteers. High Command responded harshly, issuing orders that such events could not take place and any man would be court martialed if they were seen to be instigating any type of activity. The fact that trench warfare got worse with events such as the Somme highlighting the brutality of the war meant that this was unlikely to happen again regardless. The news however of this truce did reach home and has been re-told in different ways over the years through media and film. The fact that it was mentioned in the last ever episode of Blackadder highlights its notoriety.

It is important to note that despite this truce taking place, it didn’t occur throughout the Western Front and many battles were continuing such as the Battle of Yser, with lives being lost. The Battle of Yser was key as it ensured that the allies retained some part of Belgium which meant that the Germans weren’t able to progress any further. There were even occasions where men emerged from there trenches thinking there was a truce only to be shot down. The truce started with the Germans singing carols in unison with the British responding leading to a sing-off of sorts. This culminated in both armies emerging from their trenches and meeting in no man’s land exchanging gifts, smoking and even playing a bit of football. **The truce started with the Germans singing carols in unison with the British responding leading to a sing-off of sorts. This culminated in both armies emerging from their trenches and meeting in no man’s land exchanging gifts, smoking and even playing a bit of football.**

Women were also encouraged to adopt it to retain their femininity due to their sudden occupation of ‘male’ vocations. Perhaps the most recognised change women enjoyed in the aftermath of the war concerned their civic rights. 1918 marks both the centenary of the end of the war and of the passing of the Representation of the People Act, where women (over the age of 30 and possessing property) were eligible to vote for the first time. There is a common assumption that the struggle for female enfranchisement was won by 1914 and historians often dismiss the war’s significance in precipitating female enfranchisement. Many people see the suffrage campaigners’ truce with the government on the outbreak of war as an acceptance of their victory so the war’s significance has often been overlooked. Undoubtedly the campaigners’ actions prior to the war brought the idea of enfranchisement onto the national agenda, however the significance of their actions during the war should not be overlooked.

Essentially the war provided exceptional circumstances that gave female suffrage campaigners the opportunity to redefine conceptions of British citizenship from being based solely on manhood to the idea of national sacrifice. Groups, particularly the suffragettes, used their notoriety to draw attention to British women’s patriotic service (often at the expense of being referred to as ‘heroic sacrifice’). This served to shame men who hadn’t enlisted and therefore in their eyes did not contribute to Britain’s war effort. Even so, they were still entitled to vote while devoted women whose dedication was often perceived to be invaluable were not. This was central to disrupting the idea of British citizenship based on manhood.

People disagree about the extent to which the war changed things for women, but the idea that women’s lives were irreversibly changed in the decades following the war is widely accepted. Even though the Restoration of Pre-War Practises act of 1919 meant
The most important function performed by aircraft was aerial reconnaissance. In the early months of the war, planes fitted for this purpose lacked guns and were purely constituted for observation. In the late summer and autumn of 1914 they were used to important effect by the British at Mons (to give notice of a German outflanking movement), the French on the Marne (to counter-attack between the German First and Second Armies) and the Germans at Tannenberg (to warn of the Russian advance). As the western front hardened into two opposing trench systems after the Battle of the Marne, reconnaissance focused on spotting enemy artillery, fixed positions, troop movements, and supply lines. As army commanders began to appreciate the usefulness of reconnaissance sorties, aircraft were fitted with two-way radios and effective automatic cameras rather than relying on an observer’s verbal reports and scribbled notes.

It did not take the combatant nations long to realise that if one can observe the enemy from above, one can also strike him. Early reconnaissance aircraft were superseded by planes with fixed, forward-firing machine guns. A French engineer devised an interrupter gear, subsequently adopted by Britain and German planes, which allowed a pilot to fire through the propeller. In 1915, monoplanes were replaced with quicker and more manoeuvrable biplanes such as the FE2 (Britain) and the Nieuport (France). As well as attacking ground targets, fighters had to be adept against enemy aircraft and observation balloons. The greatest threat to fighters quickly became other fighters, and tactics developed to account for this. The so-called “Fokker Scourge” of 1915 was repelled by Anglo-French formation flying, the creation of elite units, and by adopting one type of aircraft rather than a miscellany for individual squadrons. The most gifted pilots sometimes flew solo or in pairs, where possible attacking from above and behind and preferably out of the sun. Out of this were born the “knights of the air”, brave and skilful fighters whose airborne feats made them national heroes. Others had daring manoeuvres names after them. Max Immelmann, a German pilot, became famous for the Immelmann Loop, which involved the attacking pilot diving past the enemy, pulling up into a near-vertical climb, turning sharply and then diving for a second time. Over the western front, the fortunes of the combatant fleets was dictated largely by the development in technology. In 1916, the German Fokker Eindekkers were superseded by nimble French Nieuports and Spad XIIIis; these in turn were bettered by the German Albatros D series with their twin machine guns and Daimler engines. Further strides were made in 1917, in which the legendary British Sopwith Camels and German Fokker DvIIs came into operation. Eight until the end of the war, both sides strove for better designs to best their opponents.

Ultimately, with both sides achieving approximate parity in quality of aircraft in 1917, Britain and France achieved control of the skies over the western front through sheer weight of numbers as aircraft production outpaced Germany’s by two to one. Ironically, the best fighter of the war, the steel-framed German Fokker DVII, appeared too late to make a real difference: it was heavily outnumbered by the Allies’ SE5As, Sopwith Camels and Spads. When Ludendorff’s Spring Offensive briefly threatened to overwhelm British and French ground forces in 1918, Allied fighters helped to wrestle back the initiative by targeting advancing German troops and artillery and disrupting already precarious lines of supply and communication.

While the influence of combat aircraft to military operations in the First World War pales in comparison to that of the Second World War, there is no doubt that control of the air was an important facet of overall strategy. The rapid improvements in technology attest to the emphasis that commanders on both sides attributed to control of the air.

By Mr FitzGerald

By Mr FitzGerald
The War that Stopped a War

By Alexandra Dixon

In the summer of 1914, Ireland stood on the precipice of civil war. Irish Unionists and Nationalists were poised to fight each other over the imposition of Home Rule (a limited measure of self-government) by the British. The outbreak of war in Europe, however, temporarily defused the crisis. Ireland's two rival paramilitary groups put differences aside and marched to join the British army, united against a common enemy.

The contentious issue of Home Rule was a divisive matter in Ireland. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Home Rule consistently secured the support of the vast majority of Irish voters. However, in the north-east province of Ulster, there was vehement opposition. Unlike in the rest of Ireland, Protestants comprised the majority of the Ulster population. They feared that Home Rule would place authority in the hands of a Catholic-dominated Dublin Parliament and would undermine the Union between Great Britain and Ireland.

In December 1910, a hung Parliament in Westminster gave the Liberals a precarious majority in the House of Commons. John Redmond, leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, offered his support to the Liberals in return for the introduction of a third Home Rule Bill. With the balance of power at Westminster as it was, Home Rule had become inevitable; Asquith passed his Home Rule Bill on 11 April 1912.

Unionists in Ulster, led by the likes of Edward Carson and James Craig, resolved to resist this in every way they could. On 26th September 1912, Craig rallied 500,000 opponents and commissioned a firm statement of Unionist identity which became known as the Ulster Covenant. It declared that "Home Rule would be disastrous to the material well-being of the whole of Ireland".

By 1913, many gave practical form to their opposition by joining the Ulster Volunteer Force, a militia comprised of over 100,000 men. As a counterbalance to the UFC, Nationalists armed themselves and formed the Irish Volunteer Force in Dublin. As Home Rule edged towards ratification in 1914, Unionists gained momentum; the two paramilitary forces were implacably poised to fight.

Within six months, they were indeed fighting, but on the same side and against a common enemy: Germany. But why were these men prepared to lay down their arms and become allies?

One very practical reason was that the British army was organised such that it could expand rapidly by calling upon Reservists who had agreed to enlist in the event of war. Many of the Reservists in Ireland were men who had joined the UFC or IVs due to their knowledge of firearms. On the outbreak of World War One, they were called up to their battalions, sometimes with men of a rival group.

Most Unionists and Nationalists were also personally loyal to the Crown. Members of the UFC, although willing to resist Parliament, sympathised with the objectives of the war, especially given the threat it posed to other smaller nations, such as Catholic Belgium. Others were simply after adventure, like Tom Barry - later to become a noted IRA commander - who enlisted "to see what war was like, to get a gun, to see new countries and to feel like a grown man".

As well as individual reasons, there were also formal political reasons for deciding to enlist. On the outbreak of war, both Redmond and Carson offered their support and that of their armed militias to the British government. But, they were perhaps also aware of the opportunity to advance their own political ideals; there was a need to retain influence within the British Government to shape the terms of the Home Rule Act, which was suspended during war.

However, the closing of internal divisions in Ireland during World War One was shown to be a superficial affair; civil unrest in Ireland was not averted during the War and the Nationalist enthusiasm for the British army did not survive. A small minority of separatist republican radicals, angered at the suspension of Home Rule, saw an opportunity to establish a republic in Ireland. This led to the insurgency known as the Easter Rising in 1916; its violent suppression by the British would spark a growing sympathy for the nationalist cause and the politics of Sinn Féin. This would lay the foundations of the war of independence and the Irish Civil War in following decade.

When Northern Ireland plunged into the Troubles, any sense of a common history was forgotten. Republican veterans became ashamed of service in the British Army and Unionists were ignorant of the role Catholics played in the War. It was only when politics began to change in the mid-1990s that people began to confront the difficult reality of this shared past, the rediscovery of which is vital in understanding the complexity of Ireland's history.
The death-blow for Britain's aristocracy?

By Mr Murray

A s a student, I read with a shock that the transfer of land ownership after WW1 was only equated in all recorded British history by the Norman Conquest and the Reformation of the 16th century. In popular opinion, the country house lifestyle - as epitomised in fiction by Dowton Abbey - of endless house parties and limitless servants was brought to a juddering halt when the servants and sons went off to fight in 1914 and never returned. A visit to Lanhydrock House in Cornwall now owned by the National Trust serves as an example. It was for 400 years the home of the powerful Agar-Robartes family and in 1914, Lord Childen had nine children who survived into adulthood: the future of the estate seemed secure for generations to come. The bedroom of the estate seemed secure for now owned by the National Trust parties and limitless servants was Downton Abbey – of endless house lifestyle - as epitomised in fiction by the Reformation of the 16th century. In the Norman Conquest and the in all recorded British history by the nobility was that of a military elite, a warrior caste. Amidst increasingly strong political, economic and social headwinds since the 1880s, the First World War seen as an outstanding chance to prove the usefulness of their class in an age of burgeoning democracy. To take but one example, the Egerton Monument in Chester Cathedral memorialises the 13 Grey-Egerton family members from Oulton Park who were killed during the First World War. Vera Brittain's Testament of Youth speaks movingly of how her world was overturned: she lost her brother Edward, her beloved fiancé Roland Leighton and many from her circle of friends. Her youthful autobiography has come to symbolise the experiences of a so-called “lost generation”. These individual tragedies notwithstanding, a dispassionate look at the records shows that this was actually the minority experience: 80% of all British and Irish peers and their sons made it back alive to carry on in positions of power and influence. Nonetheless, the loss of fully a fifth of a tight-knit and self-sustaining elite cannot be dismissed out of hand. Not since the Wars of the Roses in the 15th century had so many patricians died so suddenly and so violently. We are familiar with the trope of “Lions led by donkeys” - the idea that the lives of brave Tommies were callously tossed away by ineffectual generals, safe behind lines. The numbers do not bear out this interpretation. One in five of the hereditary elite died as opposed to one in eight for all members of the fighting services. Why? The patricians were mostly either professional soldiers or the first to volunteer. Of the latter, most were junior officers below the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel who were rapidly posted to the front line where they shared the hardships of trench life with their men and led them over the top into battle. The men mixing with the ranks in the front line and the large numbers of aristocratic ladies serving as nurses and auxiliaries made the patrician class seem less remote from their countrymen and women but paradoxically, less intimidating and less Olympian – a separate identity and mythology being an essential characteristic of hereditary nobility. The apparently iron-clad sense of effortless superiority and self-confidence was fundamentally damaged by the scale of the losses: the myth of permanence and indestructability was impossible to sustain. To understand the origins and mythology of aristocracy requires a long-term overview. Since the collapse of the western empire in the 5th century in the face of sustained barbarian incursions, the dominant political system for the next thousand years was one of feudalism. The king in theory owned all land in his kingdom but would grant this to his leading supporters in return for regular military service. The system had worked well in post-Roman Europe because it exchanged land for military support without recourse to the need for money – in the nascent barbarian kingdoms of the Franks, Lombards and Anglo-Saxons, trade and systems of government were not advanced enough to enable the use of coinage or taxation. Thus, in return for the ownership of land and a tied peasantry to work it on their behalf, a separate military caste of hereditary nobility had a duty to serve their king and protect their territories. From such origins the self-sustaining myth of hereditary aristocracy that long outlasted the need for actual armies led by barons in support of monarchies apparently appointed by God and ruling by Divine Right. In Britain, after the turmoil of the Civil War and the Glorious Revolution in the 17th century aristocracy was still hereditary but was essentially ruling on behalf of an aristocratic and gentry elite that was still firmly based on land ownership: on an aristocratic Constitutional monarchy. Paradoxically, even as from 1750 onwards the country became steadily wealthier on the back of trade and the manufacturing of the Industrial Revolution, aristocratic landowners enjoyed a huge surge in wealth from the iron ore and coal beneath their land and the unstoppable rise in the value of their land in the booming towns and ports around Britain. A self-justifying mythology existed to explain this continued dominance. The business of government was a complex one, requiring high levels of education and an understanding of the classical world and its traditions of rule. Only a class that was independently wealthy based on the land and did not have to work for their living - the true mark of a gentleman – could attain the necessary expertise and disinterested professionalism to run a country effectively. By contrast, those who possessed no assets and had no education therefore had nothing to lose in choosing extreme solutions. The long shadow of the French Revolution still hung over 19th century politics. Whilst the damage inflicted on the ranks of the aristocracy was significant and the destruction of the myth of invulnerability played its part, there are also other less romantic but no less significant factors involved in the decline of the British aristocracy. Britain had experienced a long and only gradual move towards democracy in the 19th century. Until 1832, only property-owning men could vote: in other words, 10% of men and therefore only 2% of the adult population. Parliamentary power was still – as it had been for hundreds of years – in the hands of the land-owning aristocracy and their gentry nominees. The first two Reform Acts of 1832 and 1867 did not fundamentally alter this but significant change was to come in 1895. As David Cannadine put it, “The Third Reform Act created a new and very different representational structure for the whole of Great Britain and Ireland, in which the cities and suburbs were pre-eminent and in which a working-class electorate possessed the dominant voice.” The electorate, whilst still all male, doubled to more than 6 million at the same time as the distribution of Parliamentary boundaries was redrawn to significantly increase the representation of large urban areas like Manchester, Birmingham, Glasgow and Greater London. Whilst this was nothing like universal adult male suffrage, for the first time ever a majority of men enjoyed the vote and at least two-thirds of them were from a working class social background. The privileged position enjoyed by hereditary land-owners that had been propped up by their control of politics was henceforth under severe threat. From 1885 onwards, once a clear majority of voters were working men in urban areas, the policies offered and pursued by more “left-wing” Liberal governments sought to end the dominance of land-owning elites. A survey published in 1876 still proved just how dominant was the control of land by this elite. As Cannadine explains, a quarter of all land in England and Wales was owned by 710 individuals, three-quarters of the British Isles was in the hands of less than 5,000 people and twelve men between them possessed more than four million acres. At the time, Britain had a population of some 30 million. It was thus widely believed
that Britain had a more concentrated and monopolistic ownership of land than any other country in Europe - even more than tsarist Russia. Successful governments sought actively to break up the great estates and pass ownership to tenant farmers by limiting rents, ratcheting up death duties and increasing taxes payable on agricultural land. It is unsurprising that left-leaning Liberal governments in pursuit of working-class votes and increasingly threatened by the appearance of the much more left-wing Labour party in 1900 should raise money by targeting inherited wealth. What is much more surprising is that the more right-wing Conservative party chose not to defend the landed interest as they might have been expected to do as they also felt the pressure of democracy.

Culminating in the Liberal Reforms of 1880 – 14, the introduction of policies like state-funded old age pensions and working-class votes and increasingly threatening by the appearance of the much more left-wing Labour party in 1900 should raise money by targeting inherited wealth. What is much more surprising is that the more right-wing Conservative party chose not to defend the landed interest as they might have been expected to do as they also felt the pressure of democracy. Culminating in the Liberal Reforms of 1880 – 14, the introduction of policies like state-funded old age pensions and working-class votes and increasingly threatening by the appearance of the much more left-wing Labour party in 1900 should raise money by targeting inherited wealth. What is much more surprising is that the more right-wing Conservative party chose not to defend the landed interest as they might have been expected to do as they also felt the pressure of democracy.

So in the face of these long term structural factors, how far can the First World War be blamed for the breaking of the aristocracy’s long dominance of British politics and society? Since the 1880s, a change in the treatment of land tax and death duties reduced the financial clout of the traditional land-owning elite. However, behind this lay the fundamental shift caused by the expansion of the voting franchise meaning that political power moved steadily towards the middle and working classes, swamping the influence of the aristocracy. Set against a generation of aggressive challenge, was the romantic story of noblesse oblige and heroic patrician self-sacrifice during the war just a myth? It is clear that the land-owning elite saw the conflict as a way to justify their existence and prove their sovereignty. A mortal rate of 20% as against 12% for the British armed forces as a whole tells its own story but still, 50% of gentlemen survived the war. The First World War was in fact more important in terms of a loss of mystique, invulnerability and self-confidence amongst a class that had dominated in Britain since the Norman Conquest. In combination with a broad-based assault on their dogged control of political power and a determined undermining of their hereditary wealth and land ownership, the events of 1914-18 proved their all-too-human vulnerability and shattered the myth of their iron-clad superiority. The supreme irony is that as a result of a conflict in which they gave so much to prove their relevance and validity to their country, Britain emerged in 1919 blinking into the new world created by the destruction of so many long-established European empires with the electoral franchise now including some 90% of the adult population and a much more determined attempt to pursue policies which benefitted the common man who had given so much in defence of the country. It was to be only a gradual process but with hindsight, it became clear that the mythology of aristocratic pre-eminence had been subtly but irreversibly undermined.

The House of Lords Chamber as drawn by Augustus Pugin and Thomas Rowlandson for Ackermann’s Micromausum of London (1808–11)

Upper North Street School Air Raid, June 1917

By Caroline Moss

The first day-light air raid on London took place on June 13th 1917 and had tragic consequences. In Poplar there was a Council School called The Upper North Street School. The girls class was on the top floor, the boys class on the middle floor and the infants class on the bottom floor, this having fifty pupils. Fourteen Gothas dropped bombs which went through the upper floors finally exploding in the infants classroom. The two female teachers in charge of the class got everyone who had not been killed by the immediate impact out of the building. They heroically helped others to get the bodies out of the rubble. In a panic local mothers searched the rubble for their children. When found, their bodies were removed as soon as possible and taken to the mortuary. The injured were cared for in the local hospitals. In total eighteen children were killed, sixteen of whom were between the ages of four and six. Mr Will Crooks, the mayor at the time, expressed the sorrow of the people of the East End and said the children had “truly suffered for their country.”

On 20th June one of the biggest funerals seen in London was held for the children. Fifteen were buried in a mass grave at the East London Cemetery and the remaining three privately. Siblings in the school at the time of the bombing bravely attended. In June 1919 a memorial was erected in Poplar Recreation Ground on which the eighteen names were inscribed. They are remembered from this, by the local people and their bemoaned families. It was an event which would sadly be repeated many times in the future.
On Thursday the 14th of June a group of city girls met at 4:45am outside school, ready to set off to France. After a quick train ride under the English Channel and a short drive through France we had arrived in Ypres, Belgium.

The first day was consisted of a journey around Ypres visiting different Commonwealth War Grave Commissions memorials. We visited four memorials in one day and learnt all about how and why they were. Each English graveyard looked almost identical, this was because they thought it right to represent everyone as equal, despite nationality, rank or religion. Each grave had a body and each body had been found within a few hundred metres of the grave. Those graves without a body read: ‘a soldier of the Great War known unto god.’ Visiting the memorials helped to show the huge loss of life over such a short amount of time in such a small space of time, although it is impossible to comprehend due to the transcendent qualities of the event. In addition to this, we visited a German memorial, immediately it had a darker feel to it, each stone read multiple names and the ground was nowhere near as well kept, this was due to the lack of German money following world war one. Finally, we visited a replica of the German trenches in Bayernwald, here we learnt about the formation of trenches and the differences in shape and location. In the evening we had dinner and then went to a memorial service at the Menin Gate memorial in Ypres, this moved us all and we even participated in laying a reef.

The next day we woke early, proceeding to have breakfast and then driving to the South of France to the Somme. Here we learnt about the battle on the 1st of June in multiple locations. Visiting the British front first and learning about their tactics and use of weaponry to their advantage. We then saw German fronts and the tragic losses caused by the explosive mines. The largest location we visited was the Newfoundland memorial, here we saw the trenches exactly as they had been during the war. This helped us to grasp what it would have been like and how it may have felt.

This trip was hugely informative and interesting for those doing GCSE and not, the guides and teachers were immensely helpful and overall we had a time we will always remember. Learning about battle tactics, weaponry, communications, and trench life helped us to comprehend this incomprehensible point in history that little bit more. I’m sure everyone would recommend this trip.
Sons of mine, I hear you thrilling
To the trumpet call of war,
Gird ye then, I give you freely,
As I give your sires before,
All the noblest of the children I in love and anguish bore.

Free in service, wise in justice,
Fearing but dishonours breath;
Steeled to suffer uncomplaining
Loss of failure, pain of death
Strong in faith which sees the issue and in hope that triumpeth.

Go, and may the God of battles
You in his good guidance keep:
And if he wisdom giveth
Unto his beloved sleep
I accept nothing asking, save little space to weep.

Name: William Noel Hodgson
Born: 3rd January 1893
Died: 1st July 1916

Hodgson volunteered for the army on the outbreak of the First World War but remained in England training for the first year before being sent to the front lines.
The Height of War

Trench warfare dominated the First World War with neither side making much progress. The living conditions in the trenches were horrific and experiences were horrific at points and dull at others. The once beautiful landscape in France had been turned into a battlefield. From September 1914, with the German troops failing to advance, the Germans dug in, followed by the French and the British. This was where the war was fought over the next few years. The Battle of the Somme was the culmination of a plan designed to break through the German front line to end the stalemate on the Western Front. The idea was the cut through the barbed wire and take the German trenches with the help of aerial support, however the reality was that the barbed wire was harder to cut as anticipated and cloud cover prevented the aircrafts to spot artillery. The Battle started on the 1st July 1916, after a week of artillery bombardment designed to destroy the German defences, with the infantry emerging from the trenches to cross no man's land. On the first day of battle, the British Army suffered its biggest loss of the war with almost 60,000 casualties including 20,000 dead. The battle lasted until November 1916 with a total of over 1 million casualties from all sides. The British gained 10.5km from the Battle of the Somme. This poem was written in the early months of 1916 and Seeger is reflecting on the contrasts between Spring and where he finds himself experiencing trench life. His reflection demonstrates the sense of waiting which was prevalent at this stage of the war.

I have a rendezvous with Death

God knows 'twere better to be deep
Pillowed in silk and scented down,
Where love throbs out in blissful sleep,
Pulse nigh to pulse, and breath to breath,
Where hushed awakenings are dear . . .
But I've a rendezvous with Death
At midnight in some flaming town,
When Spring trips north again this year,
And I to my pledged word am true,
I shall not fail that rendezvous.

The Home Front

For the loved ones who remained at home during the war, there was an equally important role to play. The mobilisation of the Home Front was impressive, ensuring that Britain could supply the front lines with the resources they needed as well as send letters and gifts to the front lines to keep the morale of the soldiers up. 1917 was a critical year as none of the allied offensives achieved a major breakthrough despite causing serious casualties to the Germans. The importance of success lay in sustaining the effort and keeping morale up with American troops coming with reinforcements from June. Families were apart for the usual holidays such as Christmas and Easter which would be hard for all and the little parcels that were sent at these times were of significant value. This poem expresses the importance of the letters and parcels sent to the front lines as well as ends with a sense of foreboding at the harsh realities of war.

Easter Monday

In the last letter that I had from France
You thanked me for the silver Easter egg
Which I had hidden in the box of apples
You liked to munch beyond all other fruit.
You found the egg the Monday before Easter,
And said, 'I will praise Easter Monday now —
It was such a lovely morning'. Then you spoke
Of the coming battle and said, 'This is the eve.
Good-bye. And may I have a letter soon.'
That Easter Monday was a day for praise,
It was such a lovely morning. In our garden
We sowed our earliest seeds, and in the orchard
The apple-bud was ripe. It was the eve.
There are three letters that you will not get.

About the poet

Name: Alan Seeger
Born: 22nd June 1888
Died: 4th July 1916

Seeger was an American poet who died during the Battle of the Somme whilst serving in the French Foreign Legion.

About the poet

Name: Eleanor Farjeon
Born: 13th February 1881
Died: 5th June 1965

Farjeon was a poet and children's writer who was good friends with Edward Thomas, a fellow poet who died on 9th April 1917.
The End of World War One

By the autumn of 1918, Germany’s allies had collapsed and there was an increase in desertion within their army. The situation in Germany was worsening with growing demands for peace as well as social demonstrations. There were concerns about these revolutionary protests amongst the ruling class, set in the context of what had happened in Russia in the previous year. Germany’s leader, Kaiser Wilhelm II bowed to pressure and accepted that an armistice was necessary. This was signed on the 11th November 1918. The reaction to this was one of mixed emotions. Euphoria and relief as well as enormous sadness at what had been lost in the struggle for peace. The difficult task was to create a lasting peace out of the ruins of war and this fell to the politicians of the victorious countries. To balance the calls of harsh punishments to rebuild with the restraint to ensure that no resentment was borne out of the agreement was going to be a challenge. The message of forgiveness is one of importance and this poems calls on people to remember that all countries experienced loss and all soldiers fought on the idea of protecting their country. It also notes the need for reflection and the ability to move on and start afresh.

Reconciliation

When you are standing at your hero’s grave,  
Or near some homeless village where he died,  
Remember, through your heart’s rekindling pride,  
The German soldiers who were loyal and brave.

Men fought like brutes; and hideous things were done;  
And you have nourished hatred, harsh and blind.  
But in that Golgotha perhaps you’ll find  
The mothers of the men who killed your son.

About the poet

Name: Siegfried Sassoon  
Born: 8th September 1886  
Died: 1st September 1967

Sassoon was an award winning poet who was decorated from bravery on the Western Front. His work was a focal point for dissent on the continuation of war and a critic of the message from the government.

CLSG Remembers: The Great War 1914-1918
Economics

In Year 13 Economics, students learnt about how the First World War brought to a close a period of globalisation and crippled the belligerent economies with debt. We focused on how this debt led to the demise of the gold standard and used this to understand the benefits and disadvantages of the collapse of exchange rates to each other. We saw that the debates around the gold standard at the time of great relevance today when looking at the UK and discussing the extent to which we should worry about the gold standard at the time are of great significance. We focused on how this led to the demise of the gold standard and used this to understand the benefits and disadvantages of fixing exchange rates to each other. We also discussed how the benefits and disadvantages of the gold standard led to the demise of the gold standard and used this to understand the benefits and disadvantages of fixing exchange rates to each other.

Class Activities

A range of subjects took time to look at the First World War and how it related to their subjects. These are the activities that happened in lessons...

Chinese

In our Chinese history lesson on Monday, we learnt about the Chinese Labour Corps by reading short biographies of Chinese workers who participated in WWI. Between 140,000–200,000 young Chinese workers built railways, loaded and unloaded ships, and carried out many other jobs after long and dangerous journeys to Europe from China, during which many died. Despite their vital contribution to the war effort, the Chinese Labour Corps got little recognition, and Chinese workers were even painted out of a commemorative painting showing all the nations who joined the war. It was a great opportunity to learn about the Chinese workers who suffered so much during the war, yet are largely unrecognised for their contribution.

by Tabitha Rubens

Biology

Year 8 looked at the diet of a First World War soldier and calculated calories, looked at possible areas of deficiency. As Year 9 were studying the Nervous System in Biology they spent a lesson looking at the causes and effects of Shell Shock on the soldiers in World War I. The students looked into why life in the front lines might have triggered these psychological and neurological effects and why the doctors of the time found it so hard to define and treat. They then went on to look at how the phenomenon of Shell Shock influenced the study of neurology and psychology and how it changed people’s perceptions of ‘madness’. Finally, they considered how Shell Shock was treated then and how PTSD is treated now with some rather surprising discoveries (marijuana and ecstasy have been shown to be very successful at relieving the symptoms of PTSD).

by Alexi Iffdon

History

Year 7 looked at different accounts of battles and how the nature of warfare changed over time. We first studied accounts from Hastings and Waterloo and discussed how warfare was seen and then compared them to accounts from the First World War. We thought about whether the recent battles were really much worse because of new technology or whether the ways the wars were written about was different because so many more men were involved and they could all read and write.

by Alexi Iffdon

Year 8 had two lessons devoted to learning more about the First World War as well as comparing it to the English Civil War. In the first lesson we started by doing a card sort in which we had to decide whether the different aspects and dangers on the cards corresponded to the English Civil War or the First World War. There were lots of differences in areas such as weapons, warfare and communication and we later did a piece of written work to consolidate our learning on this. We focused on the advances in technology and their impacts in the First World War as well as the dangers of hand-to-hand combat in the English Civil War. We also had a class discussion about this after we had discussed in groups. Towards the end of the lesson we watched a video showing some of the tactical moves of the different Divisions in the First World War and the battles that were fought throughout the war and compared this to how warfare was conducted during the Civil War. I think that the two lessons were a great way to incorporate the First World War into the topic of the English Civil War and it was very interesting to compare the two.

by Maya Kermisch

In the week leading up to the centenary of World War One, in Year 9 we learnt more about why we say WWI was a ‘world’ war. Often, in the media and in school we focus on what happened in our nation: what the war was like for those who were left behind; how women were finally able to show themselves as valuable members of society and how the aftermath affected the average person’s life. Though these are important topics, we rarely take a look outside Europe when it comes to the war. However in our centenary lessons, we were able to broaden our knowledge of how many countries from across the globe took part in sacrificing their lives on the war front, harvesting and delivering natural resources for troops or filling in labour jobs at ports and railways. While it is hard to estimate exactly how many colonial subjects were involved in the war due to voluntary contributions, we can assume that about over four million non-European men were involved in combat and non-combat roles. Unfortunately we do not always appreciate what great sacrifice the empire made to keep Britain safe. Perhaps this centenary is a chance to remember and honour the unspoken heroes that have fought bravely together and alongside us to fight for peace in the world of tomorrow.

by Amelie Wessel

Chemistry

Year 8 looked into the life and work of Fritz Haber, a German chemist who worked for the German army during WWI. As part of his work, he came up with the idea of releasing highly toxic chlorine gas into the enemy trenches, resulting in thousands of casualties. This chemical development is in stark contrast with his earlier work in 1908, when he invented the Haber process – a chemical reaction that produces ammonia, which is then used to produce nitrogen-containing fertilisers.

Without fertilisers, it is thought that farmers today would only be able to sustain about half the world’s population. Fritz Haber was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1915 for this work, as it was felt by the awarding body that this process qualified as being ‘the greatest benefit to mankind’. There are some who argue, however, that his prize was not deserved, and that instead he should be held responsible for the tremendous loss of life during WWI due to chemical warfare. The students in Year 8 wrote a letter to the Nobel Prize awarding body, explaining their views, as to whether Fritz Haber (below) should remain a recipient of this most prestigious award.

In recognition of the centenary of the First World War, our Year 10 class discussion was based around its legacy and lasting effects. Topics ranged from political changes such as the collapse of monarchies, rising nationalism and the development of women’s rights to the haunting psychological effects that war had. We also discussed the rise of technological advancements and new weaponry and how this has been carried over into the modern day, most prominently in the Second World War. We ended with some insight as to how our world today is impacted by these early 20th century ideas, and the danger of extremes in countries of political turmoil.

by Jolie Chen

German Chemist and Nobel Prize winner, Fritz Haber.
For and Against Fritz Haber’s Nobel Prize

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to outline my view on the Nobel Prize to Fritz Haber. He is the man who has truly met Alfred Nobel's criteria of ‘the greatest benefit to mankind’.

He invented the fertiliser, which resulted in feeding the present world population of 7 billion people. Without his invention, we would only be able to feed 4 billion people; 3 billion will not have enough food to survive. His development of ammonia synthesis meant he had been working towards the greater good. He had in mind the possible future for his people and the world.

However some may argue he had killed countless with his chlorine gas alone and therefore he did not deserve the Nobel prize. They state his ‘contribution’ to the German army resulted in torturous deaths of many French soldiers and other innocent bystanders in WWI. Some also argued Haber’s work on chemical warfare made his wife (Clara Immerwahr) turn against him and committed suicide 10 days after the first gas attack in Flanders, Belgium. They think this was an unnecessary death and a loss for the chemistry development that such a young and talented woman should meet her fate this way.

Here I must argue against that point. Although Haber’s chlorine gas shell invention was not the most ingenious of his works, he did it for his country, for the goodness of his people. I am sure you will agree with me if you were in that situation as well. As for the number of death the gas attack resulted in, it was very depressing but if you think about the good the fertiliser brought this world, you will be grateful to Haber.

In 1914, at the outbreak of WWI, Haber was put in charge of releasing a highly toxic chlorine gas capable of killing large quantities of soldiers, into the adversaries’ trenches. In 1915, 150 tons of gas was released killing at least 100 000 people from both sides. The gas became toxic as it entered the human body and reacted with the water molecules in their skin that is because it produces hydrochloric acid and hydrogen chloride gas as they bond. So evidently, Fritz Haber’s invention for the war effort did not fit Alfred Nobel’s idea that the awards should be presented to those who provided ‘the greatest benefit to mankind’.

On this band, Mr Fritz Haber has greatly deserved this award due to his numerous benefits to mankind, the main being his discovery of how to create fertilisers. A fertiliser is a chemical or natural substance added to soil or land to increase its level of fertility. In this case, making the ground far better and more efficient at growing crops. This meant that we were capable of feeding the vast fractions of the global population that without the fertiliser—would most probably starve. However, although obvious at the time, Haber did not realise its severe danger to the environment. Furthermore, there is another possible reason as to why awarding Fritz Haber a Nobel Award for Chemistry and for the benefit of mankind is incredibly problematic.

In 1914 at the outbreak of WWI Haber was put in charge of the development of raw materials for the German war effort. Haber was enthusiastic about working for what he saw as his patriotic duty. This led on to him coming up with the idea of releasing a highly toxic chlorine gas capable of killing large quantities of soldiers, into the adversaries’ trenches. In 1915, 150 tons of gas was released killing at least 100 000 people from both sides. The gas became toxic as it entered the human body and reacted with the water molecules in their skin that is because it produces hydrochloric acid and hydrogen chloride gas as they bond. So evidently, Fritz Haber’s invention for the war effort did not fit Alfred Nobel’s idea that the awards should be presented to those who provided ‘the greatest benefit to mankind’.

To conclude, I believe that although Haber’s invention of fertilisers was a lifesaving one, even that was not completely perfect due to its effect of the environment. In addition, Fritz Haber’s work during the war only resulted in thousands dead and an unforgettable idea that even led his own wife to commit suicide. So over all I think that the award should not have been presented to Fritz Haber although he should still have gained recognition for his invention of the fertilisers.

Yours sincerely,
Rose Cameron

Dear Nobel Awarding Body,

It has come to my attention that Mr Fritz Haber was presented with a Nobel award for Chemistry in 1918. Although this award is final and your committee resolute, it does not mean that the matter of high controversy is not important.

Against

Art

On the 8th of November Year 8 made cyanotypes in art to remember the First World War and the soldiers who gave up their lives for ours. The cyanotypes were composed from botanical illustrations of poppies, and poems written by poets and soldiers, for example the poem Anthem for Dead Youth by Wilfred Owen. We learnt about the significance and the true meaning of poppies as well as how they were made in the past. We also looked at how contemporary artists like Cornelia Parker have commemorated the war in their work. The poppy is a symbol of remembrance and hope, its red colour comes from the natural colour of poppies. It is important for us to remember that the poppies are not a symbol of death rather a symbol of new life, hope and resilience. During the First World War the fields in which the soldiers fought turned into mud instead of the lush green grass that grew before. However bright red Flanders poppies flourished in the middle of the chaos and destruction and grew in their thousands. A Canadian doctor and soldier called John McCrae wrote a poem called In Flanders Fields about the poppies. After the publication of his poem the poppy became a symbol of remembrance. Our cyanotypes were composed of poppies and war poems. A cyanotype is a type of camera less photography that relies on the sun and light sensitive paper to create an image. The images that are made are ethereal and delicate. They create an image. The images that are made are ethereal and delicate. They create an image. The images that are made are ethereal and delicate. They create an image. The images that are made are ethereal and delicate. They create an image. The images that are made are ethereal and delicate. They create an image. The images that are made are ethereal and delicate. They create an image. The images that are made are ethereal and delicate. They create an image. The images that are made are ethereal and delicate. They create an image.
RPE

As part of our whole-school, cross-curricular commemoration of the Centenary of World War I, the RPE Department asked many classes in Year 7, 8 and 9 to engage in some philosophical and ethical inquiry about the nature and purpose of war.

Students were asked to look through a gallery of photos, statistics, poems, art, individual stories and comments from thinkers and politicians. Later, in groups, we asked them to identify the questions which these images had provoked. Our students devised some thought-provoking and poignant questions, for example, “is war necessary to keep peace?” or “is war justified at any cost?” They swapped questions with other groups and conducted a silent debate on paper.

The quality of the verbal and written discussion was impressive; students were able to begin to consider the horror of war and weigh up the cost of freedom in World War I. They considered the role of women, the sacrifice of the soldiers, the role of those who sent troops to war and also asked whether peace was achievable in the light of the continuing presence of war in the modern world.

Maths

As well as solving some normal Maths questions set in the context of WWI, such as calculating the volume of trenches by modelling them as prisms or trying Maths exam questions from the early 1900s, pupils and teachers took the time to explore a variety of other topics relating to WWI.

Some classes used the website gapminder.org to watch the changes to average life expectancy and income over time, quickly noticing the dramatic drop in life expectancy in European countries in 1914 and then globally in 1918. Go to the website and see it for yourself!

Further exploration revealed significant changes in other years, allowing pupils to identify wars that they hadn’t previously known about.

Other classes deciphered coded messages using a variety of ciphers and discussed the reasons why it was so important to both come up with secure means of communication for the UK and also to find ways to crack enemy codes. Pupils really enjoyed the codes, which “felt quite authentic and like something that might actually have been used at that time.”

Library

In the library, there was a display of red, white and purple poppies which were made by both staff and pupils in their lunchtimes. The librarian Ms. Trevor also selected a fantastic range of books related to WWI to give the pupils an opportunity to read more around the subject.

Prep

The Prep department were invited to participate in Together, A UK-German Centenary Creative Arts Project. The project provided the opportunity for young people aged 9-16 from the UK and Germany to work in partnership, or independently, to produce poetry, art or songs inspired by our shared history.

Cecilia Fenton won the 9-11 age group poetry category with her poem, ‘Let’s Always Remember’, written in the summer term of Year 4:

Condemn the echo’s rumours,  
The fragmentation of hearts.  
My crippled body lures,  
The idea of war parts.

Replaced with hope, unity, peace,  
That war like this comes not again.  
A field’s red and green flecked fleece,  
Devour remembered pain.

Both sides live together now,  
Best friends and next-door neighbours.  
The numbers that fought for us, wowl  
And the women’s labours.

Remember these souls for years to come,  
E’en the frostbitten feet that were numb.

In the Library’s World War 1 book display

1914 advertisement by Alfred Leete, featuring then Secretary of State for War, Lord Horatio Kitchener
Personal Stories

We are grateful to the staff, students and parents who have shared their stories from relatives who played a part in the First World War from both sides of the conflict. These remarkable narratives are a reminder of the far-reaching ways in which the war affected individuals and their families both on the front line and at home.

CLSG Remembers: The Great War 1914-1918

Richard Brindle Wilkinson (1886-1966) was a Chaplain (a clergyman attached to a regiment) with the 18th Field Ambulance, in the 6th Division, during the First World War. He was commissioned as a chaplain to the Forces in April 1915. He was sent to France almost immediately after receiving his commission.

In addition to his duties as a chaplain, he also worked in the ambulance corps. Although he wasn't fighting as a soldier, he was still working at the front line, helping the wounded. He also held church services (including many funerals) and would often comfort wounded or dying men. He made many friends during the war, several of which he sadly lost.

He was very affected by what he saw and the cost on human lives. He wrote in his diary about life in the war; “This is a strange life, a life of vast contrasts. The peaceful life of the country and the deadly ravages of war. Men die and pass into the great unknown yet others live and eat and drink. Human nature is very forgetful.”

He later wrote about a house he was billeted in which had a beautiful garden. However, he confesses that the beauty of the garden was lost on him after he was told by the owner that a British soldier had been shot for desertion there. “The bullet marks on the wall speak more than flowers... I was reminded of a row of graves in the churchyard at Rouen where lie six French soldiers shot for desertion. The deepest graves ever dug.”

He set up a field hospital just behind the front line to look after the many wounded soldiers from the Battle on the Lys. For this he was mentioned in Despatches. At the end of the war he was given an O.B.E.

He left the Army in June 1919 and married Mary Bretherton in July 1919. She had worked as a member of the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) at the Ducie Avenue Military hospital in Manchester, looking after wounded soldiers between 1915 and 1919.

CLSG relative: Great Grandfather of Bella Wilkinson

Details of military service:
- The Battle of the Somme (July-November 1916)
- The Battle of Arta (April 1917)
- 3rd Battle of Ypres (July-November 1917)
- The Battle of Cambrau (November 1917)
- The Battle on the Lys (April 1918)
- The Advance to Corteau (October 1918)
- Cologne after the armistice

Rev. Richard Wilkinson

Alfred Hadland was was born on 8th February 1882, and lived in Forest Gate in East London. He married Maud Cowlyn (born 1886) in 1910, but she died only three years later in 1913, in childbirth, giving birth to their son, Collis, who was later fostered by the Mailes family. The next year, 1914, Alfred volunteered and joined the 1st Battalion of the Northamptonshire Regiment as a private. He was killed on 9 May 1915 during the Battle of Aubers Ridge, and is remembered on the Le Touret Memorial. The Battle of Aubers Ridge is considered to be an unmitigated disaster for the British Army, with no ground won and no tactical advantage gained. It is very doubtful if it had the slightest positive effect on assisting the main French attack fifteen miles to the south. Of the 1st Northamptonshire Battalion, 560 men, of whom 17 were officers, were casualties on 9 May.

As a personal note, both the names Stanley and Hadland live on in Amy’s cousin, Stanley Hadland (born 1997).


Details of Military Service: Western Front

Alfred Hadland

CLSG Remembers: The Great War 1914-1918
Leo Klebanow

Leo Klebanow was born in Russia and emigrated to New York City USA at age 14. He joined the US army in 1917 and was deployed to France. While serving as a corporal in charge of runners for the 307th Infantry, 77th Division, at Chateau du Diable, near Fismes in France, he showed extraordinary heroism. On 27 August 1918, during an attack after several runners failed to deliver an important message, Corporal Klebanow voluntarily carried the message through heavy machine gun and shell fire. He returned through the same danger and then led reinforcements forward, allowing the company to successfully resist a counter attack. Earlier the same day, under direct machine gun fire, he went to the aid of a wounded soldier, bound up his wounds and carried him to safety. For these acts of bravery he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

On the night of 4 September 1918 he was severely wounded on a congested road by an exploding shell that killed nearly all of his companions in his detachment. Despite this, Corporal Klebanow directed the evacuation of the wounded and kept the road open for traffic. For this act of heroism he received First Oak Leaf Cluster award.

He was hospitalised in Paris for four months with deep shrapnel wounds in his chest. He died at the young age of 40.

Ian Anderson Clarke

I found a bible at my grandmother’s house and inside it said, “Ian A. Clarke, September 1914”, so I realised this bible must have been the one my great grandfather had taken to war with him. Fortunately, my Great Aunt, his daughter, had written a family history document so I already knew that he had fought with the 4th Battalion of the Gordon Highlanders. I looked up records online and I found out that he was recruited to be a Second Lieutenant on the 2nd of September 1914. I also found a war diary and found the date of the first time he was injured, June 16th 1915, in Valmeringhe. During fighting in the woods, seven men were killed, forty-six wounded and one was missing. From my Great Aunt’s records I found that he had three injuries and the third one did permanent damage to his leg, leaving him with a condition known as “dropped foot”.

Throughout his time in the war he was also made a Lieutenant then a Captain and finally a Major as well as receiving the 1914-15 Star, the Victory medal and the British War medal. He very sadly died because of his third injury in 1939 when my Grandpa was only three years old, however he will never be forgotten and I will always be so grateful of what he did for me and his country by laying down his life for generations to come.
George Holliday

George Holliday and his best friend Sam Middleton went off to war together in 1915. They made a pact that if anything should happen to Sam, George would look after Sam’s wife Fannie. Sadly, Sam was killed on 23rd April 1917. On George’s demobilisation at the war’s end, he came home to keep his promise to Sam: Fannie and they were married in 1919. George served with 528 Company Army Service Corps as a driver (of horse-drawn vehicles) in both the UK and France. The photograph (see left) shows him in August 1915 at Clipstone Camp, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire; on the back of it he has written, “My favourite uniform”. In 1917 George was transferred to the 6th City of London Battalion (Rifles) as a Rifleman. Fighting in France, the 6th City of London, as with many other battalions in the Great War, suffered heavy loss of life. Due to this, it was amalgamated with other battalions and became the King’s Royal Rifle Corps. George was serving with the “KRR” at the time of his demobilisation.

On 21st August 1918 (at twenty past five in the morning) Great-granddad George went ‘over the top’ near the village of Bucqouy in the Somme area. The fighting was to last for about 5 days and his unit (13th Battalion Kings Royal Rifle Corps) took over 300 casualties (from a total of a little under a thousand men). Here is an abridged description of the start of the attack taken from the Battalion war diary:

“By 4.30 a.m. all Companies had reported themselves in position….As the fateful hour approached each moment became more intense. The Tanks working into position seemed to our straining ears to be making a hideous noise, and the covering noise provided by MG fire alone, did not seem really enough to drown it. Every minute we expected the counter preparation. The morning light showed up, but slowly owing to the thick mist……..The minutes now pass quickly. Zero minus 5 minutes and not a shell from the enemy! Not even a light. Had they already gone back? Zero minus 2.5 minutes, and the battle had commenced on our Northern flank.

Whizz! Crash!!! and down it came a magnificent barrage, full and beautifully placed. Surely nothing could live in such a rain of fire. Zero plus 5 minutes, and our men began to move forward. Still no sign of the tanks. It was an anxious moment for wire imperfectly cut might easily hold up the attack. However the attack was launched, and there it was. At zero plus 8.5 minutes one tank was seen to follow, and what became of our supporting tanks has not been discovered. The mist seemed to thicken heded no doubt by the smoke in the barrage.”

George Miles

My grandfather was conscripted and fought in World War I. He was shot through the chest by a bullet that missed his heart and lungs. The story goes that he wrote home saying, “Dear Mummy, Good News! I’ve been shot”. From what I can tell, he suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder for the rest of his life.
William Henderson qualified as a doctor from Aberdeen university before the war. Before the outbreak of war he practiced as medical officer on a yacht in the Mediterranean. He served as a medical officer (doctor) attached to different regiments on the Western Front. He was reprimanded for being too familiar with the soldiers because if they were in distress he would put his hands on their shoulders and talk directly to them. Officers were supposed to never lay hands on a soldier.

Edward Lewis

Edward was born in 1882 and enlisted in 5th (Earl of Chester’s) Battalion of the Cheshire Regiment a Territorial Force unit on the 6th May 1908. B Company was based in Chester. He remained with the 5th battalion throughout his military career. During the War a 2/5 Battalion was formed for home service after which the 5th battalion is sometimes referred to as 1/5th Bn and by 1914 he had made Corporal. The 5th Bn was deployed to France in February 1915, but he had blotted his copy book by then due to the story below.

He was incensed that his medals (WWI medals had your name, rank, number and regiment engraved into them) showed him as a Private, because he had got into a fight in a chip shop in Oswestry before being sent to France and was demoted from Corporal to Private prior to embarkation. He had started the war as a Corporal and was a Sergeant by the end but the medals used your rank on arrival in France.

There are two records on Forces War Records of him with conjunctivitis in April and May 1915. The records are a bit confused; the second almost certainly has a typo of 1916 rather than 1915. The two records are exactly a month apart so is there possibly a case of the two records being conflated or was he told to come back a month later? However, they do place him in Flanders in the period. By now he has climbed back to Lance-Corporal.

There is something akin to a boarding card from 1917. This seems to accompany a passage from the Convalescent Depot Havre for Lance Corporal Lewis (5th Cheshires) via the Hospital Ship Asturias. The date is unfortunately unfilled but there is a ‘...17’ pre-printed so we have rather rashly assumed that it was in 1917. However, HS Asturias was torpedoed on 20 March 1917 en route from Avonmouth to Southampton and although not sunk was regarded as a constructive total loss and not used again during the war so if there was a passage it was prior to that date. We are not aware if he was wounded during the conflict, so we assume he was suffering from some fever (most likely) or just possibly was he accompanying wounded German PoWs?

He became a Sergeant and Provost Sergeant i.e. head of the Regimental (as opposed to Military) Police for his battalion. A bit of a turnaround! Although his 14-15 Star, War Medal and Victory Medal all show him as a Private (i.e. his rank on arrival in France) his Territorial Efficiency Medal awarded in 1919 shows him as a Sergeant and he remained with the territorial army after the war.

CLSG Relative: 
Great Grandfather of Cassie Chambers

Details of military service:
Fought in Ypres, Belgium
Horatio ‘Harry’ Teasdale lied about his age and joined up at 15 to fight in the Great War as he “didn’t want to miss the excitement.” He was born in 1900, and was one of 250,000 underage soldiers who joined up. His father George, also fighting in the war, was consequently surprised to meet him in German East Africa.

Harry encountered pygmies and, being a dab hand at languages, learnt to speak Swahili whilst he was out there. He contracted jiggers, which was the local name for a disease in Africa whereby a worm enters under your toenail and travels up your leg. The locals made an incision and removed it with a matchstick.

Both Harry and his father George survived. Harry had six children, and was a doting father. Harry was a great story-teller and told stories which were so funny, Celestine’s grandmother cried with laughter; “Don’t say any more - it’s making my stomach ache.”

He later fought in Afghanistan and worked as a spy. On one occasion he hid from the enemy under the running board of a train, clinging on for a great number of miles. He became Chief of Police in New Delhi, India and received the King’s Police Medal for bravery, arresting Sapper Henry Hart, an army deserter who had killed two British Army officers deputed to arrest him. A biography was later written about him.

Salomon Poliakof was born in Russia in 1889 and emigrated to Paris with his parents at the age of four. He and his parents became French citizens. Salomon studied to become a rabbi. After completing his studies, he joined the French army as an army chaplain. Although no details of his service have been found, he must have shown acts of heroism, as he was awarded the Croix de Guerre for his service in WWI.

He went on to become the Grand Rabbi of Geneva from 1936-1945. After the war he returned to France as Grand Rabbi of Lyon and served to help displaced persons and the Jews that survived the camps returning to France. Several of his siblings and their families perished in Nazi Germany. He died in Versailles at the age of 69.

Alfred Henry Jones went to Chester, the county town of Cheshire to sign up. When he came home and told his parents his mother was very upset. His mother went to the regimental headquarters but it was too late and he had to go. He was sent to France where he was gassed, which was thought to lead to his pernicious anaemia, which affected his health for the rest of his life. Right up to his death, he was never heard to speak of the war.
Albert Thorogood was 17 when he enlisted in the Navy and according to the requirements of seaman grade of “Boy 2” he needed the consent of his parents with a condition of 12 years of service in order to join. He started his navy career on May 29, 1912 being posted on the training ship, HMS Ganges at a time when recruits were increasing. From July 1912 to Jan 1913 Albert was assigned to the HMS Roxburgh and promoted to “Boy 1”. This seaman grade applied to boys aged 16-18 years who had served 9-18 months with proficiency in seamanship and having at least one good conduct badge.

He was on HMS Lancaster as Able Seaman when war was declared in 1914. HMS Lancaster was deployed to search for German commerce raiders and protect convoys and then later used as a blockading force in 1915 to close the English Channel to German traffic. In 1915 Albert was sent for training and assigned to HMS Dolphin, the home of the Royal Navy Submarine Services, Hampshire.

In July 1916 he was aboard submarine Sub B XI. This British B-class submarine housed very small crews and was among the first to put to sea in 1914. Crews could be underwater for months at a time with cramped space. The crew were on permanent shifts as the subs had to be manned 24 hours a day. He served for two years aboard the submarine HMS Adamant from Oct. 30, 1916.

On Nov. 11, 1918 Albert was assigned to the HMS Dolphin, the Royal Navy submarine service base, Gosport. He was here for three months until Jan. 20, 1919 after the war ended. He left the Navy on March 27, 1925. He had served for 12 years and was ranked Leading Seaman, equivalent to army or air force rank of Corporal.

Alice Wise's Great Grandfather, Leonard Dent, fought throughout the Great War in the 4th Dragoon Guards, starting as a Second Lieutenant and eventually becoming a Major. He received the DSO and the Legion D’Honneur and was mentioned in despatches several times. He was also gassed, but fortunately not badly, and lived to the age of 99.

The following is a true story.

Lieutenant Dent (as he then was) was serving in the trenches and he and his men often caught glimpses of a German company runner going up and down the enemy trenches opposite. At one point, Lieutenant Dent took a shot at him, but missed and the runner continued about his business. It was only many years after the war that Lieutenant Dent found out which German regiment was stationed in the trench opposite and that a certain soldier had served with that particular regiment, often acting as a company runner. This soldier had survived the war and become very well known. It’s quite possible that this was the person Lieutenant Dent tried to shoot. Who was he? None other than Adolf Hitler.
My uncle Arthur joined the Royal Flying Corps on leaving school at the age of 17, and was an observer. After the war he gained a pilot's licence and was a professional pilot for the rest of his life. In the Second World War he was a test pilot who flew just about every plane there was. I remember him as a big, generous man; he was always the biggest presence in a room.

**Arthur Holland**

My uncle Charles joined up in 1915 after leaving school at the age of 19 or 20. He was wounded, and on recovery spent the rest of the war in the Royal Flying Corps/RAF.

**Charles Holland**

Stanley Prescott lived in Eccles, Lancashire and volunteered in 1914 as a teenager. He joined the Rifle Brigade as a private and served on the Western Front from January 1915, serving first in France and then in Belgium including Ypres. He was shot through the shoulder, but recovered and returned to fight again. He was also gassed in the trenches. Towards the end of the war he served in the Labour Corps. He won three service medals - the Inter Allied Victory, the British War medal and the 1914-1915 Star, which are still in the family. After the war, he moved down South to work as a designer at Ford's in Dagenham, and lived in Upminster, Essex. He died in the 1950s from leukaemia, and there was thought to be a link between this and having been gassed. Apparently, like many others, he would very rarely speak about the war as it was too traumatic, although he did tell how his best friend was shot next to him and how he shot back immediately to avenge his friend, and how he gave a very young officer who had been shot a drink of water and comforted him in his arms as he died. His only child, Coryn Hadland, was born in 1926, and her daughter Lucy Hadland was born in 1965 so sadly never met him. Strange to think that he was born in the 1800s and his great granddaughter Amy was born in the 2000s.

**Stanley Prescott**

Frederick Webb was a Lance Corporal in the Royal Horse Artillery (Queen's Bays). On the 1st September 1914 they were camped at the village of Néry, near Compiègne in France, when the German Cavalry surprised them and killed many men and horses. Frederick Webb and 6 others manned the three machine guns. They didn't have time to set up their guns so Frederick was firing a machine gun placed on his knees. Their action held off the German attack and weakened the German cavalry that was on its way to the Battle of the Marne. Frederick was mentioned in dispatches after the action at Néry and survived the war.

**Frederick Webb**
Fanny Mellor, more affectionately known as ‘Nanna’, was born in 1898 in Levenshulme, Lancashire. An only child, her parents were William Henry Mellor and Anne Florence Purcell. She married Harold Marshland in 1919 and had 3 daughters. She survived both world wars and died in 1980 at 82.

Before she was married, my great-great-grandmother worked in munition factories during WWI. The factories were situated far away from workers homes, so women often had to get up at 4am to commute and arrive at work around 6am. During the day, the work included filling bombs with hazardous materials, which not only was heavy and repetitive, not to mention extremely dangerous, but was also something requiring concentration and care. The workers had to wear severe, plain clothing, with hair tied back and no jewellery. The working day was 12 hours, ending at 6pm, with only one ten-minute break. By the time they had got home, it was late and they were exhausted, not to mention the respectable women were not allowed to stay away from home, so after the working day, Fanny would have to help her mother at home at the end of the day. During WWI, the Factories Act and Trade union were suppressed, meaning women were paid £2 a week, which today is worth between £110-244, however this was half what men were paid.

Nanna used to get very angry when she heard about the exploits of the Suffragettes. She believed they actually held up progress in getting the ‘Vote for Women’, because it was actually women like her who had won the vote, by working hard in jobs previously done by the men at war, proving that women are not empty-headed, hysterical and foolish - a different view from one generally perceived regarding the Suffragettes!

George Perry

On the 15th August 1915 submarine HMS E8 joined the Baltic Flotilla supporting the Russians against the Germans. E8 completed a number of daring and successful attacks over the months at sea but on the 22nd October 1915 enemy activity was so intense that the Captain of the E8 new something important was about to happen.

As the morning broke a three-funnelled cruiser came over the horizon escorted by two destroyers, one on each bow zig-zagging at speed to in search of submarines. Moving closer and as stealthily as possible E8 finally had a small window of opportunity to strike. With a single torpedo from 1300 yards E8 released a single Torpedo and 60 seconds later there was a terrible explosion and a volcano of burning debris erupted from the stricken warship. E8 went deep and eight minutes later when E8 came to survey the scene the cruiser had completely disappeared.

His victim was the 9,500 tonne Prinz Adalbert that led to the Germans to withdraw temporarily all their capital ships from the Baltic.

Chief Petty Officer G Perry was personally decorated with the highest Russian military order by Czar Nicolas of Russia for his work in the Baltic Sea and for the sinking of the Prinz Adalbert.
Conscription was never introduced in Ireland but many Irishmen served, often as part of dedicated Irish regiments. Catholics such as our great-great-great uncle did enlist in large numbers even though most Irish volunteers were Protestant. Some Catholic volunteers enlisted to show their support for the concept of self-determination for small nations and to further the cause of Home Rule; others to show their patriotism towards the union with Great Britain. John Nugent had enlisted before the war in 1912, as soon as he was old enough to, and joined the Royal Munster Fusiliers, an Irish regiment that had long been a source of pride in his home area. It had only non-conscripted soldiers throughout the War.

John was wounded on the 2nd of Sept. 1918 when Canadian and British forces attacked the Drocourt-Quéant Line, part of the German defensive Hindenburg Line. He died from his injuries the following day, one of 350 Fusilier casualties from that attack. John is buried in the Ligny-Saint Flochel British Cemetery near Averdour in France. His headstone shows the Bengal Tiger cap of the Royal Munster Fusiliers, standing out in rows of headstones showing Canadian Maple Leaves. He had married earlier in 1918 but his widow Ellen moved to Co. Down following his death and became a resident of Northern Ireland following Partition in 1922, while his parents and siblings were in the new Free State of Ireland.

For a long time the history of Irish First World War soldiers was overshadowed by what happened in Ireland in the five years following the Armistice – the War of Independence, Partition and then a Civil War in the new Free State. The Irish soldiers who had fought in the Allied Forces were often overlooked when the story of the new nation was being formed. The Royal Munster Fusiliers was disband on Independence in 1922 but a monument to the Regiment was unveiled in Tipperary in 2005 by the President of Ireland as a gesture of reconciliation towards those who served in the War, and new monuments to Irish soldiers are now in the War Cemeteries. Descendants of the Fusiliers have now set up a society to remember the service and sacrifice of the Regiment, and several of our relatives have visited John’s grave with this group, often searching out graves of other Limerick soldiers who ended up far from home.
Uncle Armar joined the Grenadier Guards in August 1914 when he left school. He went to the front in 1915 and fought around Ypres. He won the Military Cross at the Battle of Festubert in May 1915 “for showing conspicuous gallantry and ability” when he took over command of a group of men when all the other officers had been killed or wounded. In August 1915 he was himself badly wounded and sent home to recover. When he was better, in April 1916, he was sent back to the front. The Battle of the Somme started in June 1916 and he fought in it. He survived until the 12th September 1916, when he was killed in an attack around the village of Ginchy on the Somme. He was only 20. Nine days later his father wrote to Armar’s aunt:

“This general epitaph I think sums up his character: ‘The best of soldiers, the cheeriest of companions, and a perfect tiger in the fight.’ He was killed at 4.30pm on September 12th and I and Claire were having tea with the Johnsons at Ardglass. Buried behind the lines at Ginchy with all his brother officers present.”

My grandfather died before I was born but my grandmother had a Turkish shell which was filled with jagged pieces of rusty shrapnel which we would sometimes unscrew and investigate. My grandfather had picked up this shell, which had failed to explode, on the Gallipoli peninsula. My grandfather, Charles O’Brien, was an Irish doctor and enlisted in the RAMC in 1914 and quickly became a temporary Captain. At the outbreak of the war he was working in the Chesterfield Royal Infirmary. This was his first post after graduating from Trinity College Dublin. He originally served in the navy and then transferred to the Royal Army Medical Corps. When the allied forces were withdrawn from Gallipoli, he volunteered to stay behind with the wounded. In fact, because the evacuation was so successful, everyone was taken off safely. He then served in Mesopotamia. My grandfather was awarded the Military Cross for his bravery. He made it safely back to Chesterfield in the late Spring of 2019.

My other grandfather, William Craig who was born in 1896 was also at Gallipoli as a soldier. He was barely 18 when he enlisted into the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. He too was sent to the Dardanelles and while there was promoted from private soldier to sergeant. After the Dardanelles, he was transferred to the Indian army and selected for officer training. At the time of his discharge he had the rank of Captain. He started his medical training in Glasgow after discharge.
Images to accompany personal stories

Top Row (Left to Right)
1: Johan Lorensen (page 82)
2: Jewish Legionaries on Camels in Giza, Egypt (Samuel Wolfson fourth from the right) (page 79)
3: Armar Lowry-Corry (page 58)
4: Leo Klebanow (see page 42)
5: Certificate of service, belonging to Robert Towers Smith (page 71)

Middle Row
6: Frederick Webb (page 53)
7: Johann Baumann (page 63)
8: Georges Petit (page 72)
9: Ralph Henderson (page 76)
10: Charles Holland (page 53)

Bottom Row
11: Edward Lewis (page 46)
12: A portrait of Leonard Dent (page 50)
13: The medals awarded to Alfred Henry Jones (page 49)
14: Joseph Burgess (page 67)
15: A greetings card featuring John Brown (page 75)
Dame Leila Paget

Aunt Leila didn’t fight in the War but she had a pretty interesting time. Her husband was a diplomat and before the War had been posted to Serbia. Leila ran a military hospital through two Balkan Wars at that time. When the First World War broke out, her husband stayed in London but she went back to Serbia (a British ally) and set up a new Red Cross hospital in Skopje (which is now in Macedonia). She was in sole control and dealt directly with the Serbian government over all matters relating to the hospital. She became quite famous and when she got typhus it was reported in the papers that she was dead! However she recovered and managed to persuade the authorities to open an isolation block, with Austrian prisoners who had the disease, looking after patients. In October 1915, the Bulgarian army advanced on Skopje and Leila decided to stay put with the hospital even though the Serbian army retreated. She was taken prisoner but persuaded the Bulgarians to let her carry on looking after the sick. All refugees of whatever nationality were looked after. After the war the Serbian government awarded her the highest honour available for a woman – the Grand Order of Sava, which was presented to her by King Peter. A street in Belgrade is named after her! When George V introduced the GBE (Dame Grand Cross) for women, she was in the first group of women to receive the honour. My middle name is Leila after her!

Peter Lambird

My Great-great Grandfather was a gunner in WWI. Unfortunately, he was killed on 12th March 1918 while serving his cannon when a shell fell in the pit, killing him and two more of his comrades instantaneously. He was buried outside Ypres. A telegram was sent informing his wife, son and daughter of his death, and some letters were also sent from his commanding officer and the Chaplain, all of which, including the telegram have been recorded in my grandfather’s novel ‘See the Old Lady Decently’. Here is an excerpt of one of the letters:

“Your husband was not only a fine Gunner and a good companion, but he was also a splendid character and one worthy of the highest esteem.”

Johann Baumann

Johann was 16 years old when he was recruited into the Imperial Austrian army to fight in WWI. He spent most of the war fighting in the Italian front and in particular in the Isonzo battles. Johann was then recruited again for the WWII which he also survived. He reached the level of Hauptmann in the Austrian army and was awarded the Kriegsverdienstkreuz mit Schwertern (The War Merit Cross) at both 1.Klasse and the 2.Klasse (first and second class). After having survived both wars, Johann refused to talk about these two wars in the family. He came back home with Malaria after the end of WWII and died from it a few years later.

We attach a drawing of himself in the Austrian WWI mountain uniform that he himself drew, a university identification card from 1919 and an Austrian WWI bond that his family paid in 1917 to support the Austrian army.
**Thomas Kinsman Sherborne**

On 14th April 1889, in Brockley, Thomas Kinsman Sherborne was born to Thomas Taylor Kinsman and Marion Sherborne. He had a younger sister, Marion, and served in the British Army at the rank of Rifleman within the London Regiment.

The Movements of his Battalion were:

- Sept 1914- Formed in London and then moved to Haywards Heath to join the 174th Brigade of the 58th Division.
- May 1915- Moved to Norwich and then Ipswich.
- April 1916- Moved to Foxhall Heath, near Ipswich and then to Sutton Veny.
- 25.01.1917- Mobilised for war and landed at Havre and engaged in various actions on the Western Front including
  - 1917- The pursuit of the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line, then the Battle of Bullecourt, after which was the actions of the Hindenburg Line, followed by the Battle of the Menin Road Ridge, next was the Battle of Polygon Wood ending with the Second Battle of Passchendaele.

Thomas sadly died of his wounds on 28th September 1917. We have the Memorial Death Plaque of WWII, which was sent to relatives to commemorate the dead, he was also eligible for, and we may have the Victory Medal and the British War Medal. Thomas is buried in Flanders. My father, uncle and grandfather went to see his grave in 1994.

**Thomas Alfred Barratt**

Thomas Alfred Barratt enlisted in the Territorial Army in October 1914 at the age of 27. He enlisted as a signaller in the Regular Army in September 1915 and arrived in France on 1st January 1916.

Thomas repaired signals just behind the front lines and was sent all across the Western Front attached to numerous different regiments. At the start of the war he was on horseback but later the signallers changed over to motorbikes.

On 1st May 1917 he was awarded the Croix de Guerre by the French as they sometimes did with Allied soldiers.

His citation said, "zealous and faithful telephone operator has specifically distinguished himself during the battles in April and May 1917 repairing telephone lines under heavy bombardment".

He had been wounded on 14th April 1917 but remained on duty and was promoted to Lance Corporal on 28th April 1917.

He was hospitalised for unknown reasons on 31st May 1918 and he recovered to end the war at Asiago in Italy.

**CLSG relative:**

Brother of the Great Grandmother of

Kate Robinson

Details of military service:

Rifleman in the London Regiment. Died in action in 1917 and buried in Flanders.

**CLSG relative:**

Grace Clifford, Great Granddaughter

Details of military service:

Western Front,

France, Asiago, Italy

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64  CLSG Remembers: The Great War 1914-1918

Thomas Alfred Barratt
Joseph Burgess, a ‘jobbing docker’ by trade was already in the TA when war broke out on 4 August 1914. It is suspected he used his established membership of the TA to seek a vacancy in a regular army battalion that was going to France. Rifleman 67093 Burgess J ended up in the 3rd Battalion Rifle Brigade which landed in France on 10th September 1914 (the date he qualified for the 1914 Mons medal.)

On Sunday 15th August 1915 Joseph’s luck ran out. He was manning a trench in the front line of the central sector of the Ypres Salient, near the remains of a village called Hooge. It was a relatively quiet day in the line, if such a thing existed with the Germans on three sides of the British Army, slinging all manner of artillery at it. He and his mates had just had what passed for breakfast and were cleaning their rifles. Suddenly a shell landed right in amongst their group, killing two of them outright. Joe Burgess died ‘laughing and joking with a fag in his mouth,’ so wrote one of his mates to his widow.

The principal battle Joseph was involved in was Second Ypres, when the German army in April 1915 made a major effort to reach the North Sea / English Channel coast. The British Army held firm. That particular battle is renowned for the first ever use by the Germans of poison gas in warfare, in this case phosgene gas. Joseph’s life is commemorated in three places: First, he has a headstone in Sanctuary Wood Cemetery, close by Hill 62 on the eastern side of Ypres in Belgium. Second, his name is listed on an ‘old rugged cross’ war memorial in the grounds of the Hawksmoor building of Christ Church, Spitalfields. And finally, his name is inscribed on a roll of honour dedicated to officers and men of the Rifle Brigade situated in the left hand aisle of Winchester Cathedral.

Henry Beckett Holland

Petty Officer Henry Beckett Holland 54531 C.G. HM White Oak, Royal Navy had retired, but in 1914, at the age of 60, was called back into the Royal Navy from the coastguard service to help train the new recruits responding to Kitchener’s call. Married at St Mary’s to Emma when he was 25 he was a seaman in the Royal Navy like his father James. Henry had volunteered for active service at the start of the Great War and was promoted to Petty Officer because of his previous experience and service on HMS White Oak, which was an important ship. HMS White Oak saw extensive service during the war as the tender to the Flag Ship of the Grand Fleet. She was at the Battle of Jutland and had the distinction of having the same commander all her career. She was 4 knots faster than the rest of her class. White Oak carried King George V to Scapa Flow and Lord Kitchener from Scrabster to board HMS Hampshire. Distinctive in her white paint, the White Oak carried the German rear admiral, Admiral Hugo Meurer from the cruiser Konigsberg to surrender on the 15 November 1918 to Admiral Beatty on board HMS Queen Elizabeth, in the Firth of Forth. Doubtless the crew would have been hand-picked, so it is a testimony to Henry Holland that he was among them. While training new recruits in Poole, Henry slipped into the water between two boats and was crushed. He died on the 18 May 1915 aged 62 and is buried in St Mary’s Churchyard, South Hayling Island.
Harold Marshland

Born on 8th of March 1894 in Altrincham, Cheshire, to George and Florence Marshland (nee Percival), Harold Marshland had 3 brothers and 2 sisters. He married Fanny Mellor in 1919, and lived through both world wars, and died at 68. During the war, he joined the 1/5th Cheshire Regiment of the British Army, rising to the rank of Corporal.

The movements of the Battalion Territorial Force were:
- 04.08.1914 - Stationed at Volunteer Street, Chester as part of the Cheshire Brigade of the Welsh Division.
- Aug 1914 - Moved to Shrewsbury, then Northampton and then Cambridge.
- 09.1914 - The Battle of Mons and subsequent retreat, followed by the Battle of Le Cateau and the Affair of Crepy-en-Valois, then the Battle of the Marne, after which was the Battle of La Bassée and Messines 1914, finishing with the First Battle of Ypres.
- Feb 1915 - Mobilised for war leaving the Welsh Division and landing at Havre.
- 09.02.1915 - Joined the 14th Brigade of the 5th Division and engaged in various actions on the Western Front.
- 29.11.1915 - Became Pioneer Battalion of the 5th Division.
- 13.02.1916 - Transferred to the 56th Division as a Pioneer Battalion.
- 1916 - The diversionary attack at Gommecourt, then the Battle of Ginchy, followed by the Battle of Flers-Courcelette, after which was the Battle of Morval, finishing with the Battle of the Transloy Ridges.
- 1917 - The German retreat to the Hindenburg Line, then the First Battle of the Scarpe, followed by the Battle of Langemarck, next was the capture of Tadpole Copse, then the capture of Bourlon Wood and the German counter attacks.

Harold was wounded on 13th September 1917 and was entitled to wear a Wounded Stripe. This was given to wounded service men to stop women accusing them of cowardice, and any man not away in the forces (which was perceived to be a disgrace), women would give a white feather.

Griffith Thomas

Griffith Ap Thomas was born in 1893 and was a blacksmith in Anglesey when he enlisted at the age of 23 in 1916. According to the UK, Royal Air Force Airmen Records, 1918-1940 he was an aircraft mechanic and was posted to Salonica at the Macedonian front in 1917. He left the RAF in December 1919 and received the British War Medal and Victory Medal. He sent postcards to his sister Maggie who was an avid collector. He sent her a photo postcard of himself in uniform and one from Salonique in July 1918.
Louis Moss was born in January 1894. Before the war Louis was a medical student at the University of Leeds and at the outbreak of the war he volunteered to join the army. Around this time, there was a demand for more doctors in the Navy so he transferred across. He was a Sergeant sub Lieutenant and was part of the Dover Patrol that travelled around the coast to places such as the Orkney and Shetland Islands. One of the tasks that the Dover Patrol was tasked with was preventing German supply ships from using the English Channel meaning that the German ships would have to find another route which delayed them. After the war, Louis resumed his medical training at Guys and qualified as a doctor, treating many theatre stars in his Charing Cross practice. He trained to be a Rheumatologist and had practices in Harley Street and Wimpole Street and was one of the first doctors qualified in acupuncture in Britain, bringing Chinese techniques across to the UK. He also wrote books on the subject and was regarded as a pioneer in this field. His brother Harry also fought in the war in the army and was present when General Allenby liberated Jerusalem in 1917.

Robert Towers Smith was also at the Somme for the last part of the battle (probably Ancre Heights) – as a Volunteer with the Cheshire Regiment for some 2 ½ months. He was 37 at the time and was by day a cotton trader in Liverpool. Given that a large proportion of the UK male population fought at the Somme this is maybe not so surprising.

He received thanks on behalf of the King a few years later. The ‘stamped’ signature by, yes, Winston Churchill but could not have been processed until 1919 when he became the Secretary of State for War. I’m sure he was a very proud man indeed! The signatures are identical.

Daniel Arnold Clifford enlisted on 31st October 1915 at the age of 20 in the Army Service Corps (Mechanical Transport).

He arrived in France on 25th February 1916. He delivered ammunition to the Front and collected the wounded and took them to the dressing stations at the rear. He drove a lorry that ran on solid tyres and had acetylene lamps for headlights. He was always just behind the lines driving back and forth and was at many major battles including the Somme, Vimy Ridge and Passchendaele.

In March 1916, shortly after his arrival in France, he bumped into his brother John, a sergeant in the Machine Gun Corps, at a place called Cerisy. As he learnt later, ten minutes after he left, his brother’s position was overrun by the Germans and John was captured and spent the rest of the war as a POW.

Daniel had four sets of leave during his service when he came back to England from the Front, which was quite common practice.
Georges Petit

Georges was born in 1882 in Colleville-sur-Orne on the Normandy Coast and completed his three-year military service in October 1901 to 1904 with the 129e Régiment d’Infanterie at the Kleber barracks in Le Havre. He was called up in August 1914.

The regiment was in action in the first battle of the Marne and the records of the International Committee of the Red Cross holds documents in which it is clear that Georges was captured between 10 - 15th September 1914, while the 129RI were in action near the village of Brimont, just outside Rheims.

He was taken as a prisoner and recorded initially, on 20th September 1914, being held in a camp near Autreches. By 27 January 1915 he was being held in the Chateau Brimont, the site his regiment had been attempting to capture from the Germans when he was taken prisoner. By 6th June 2015 Georges was in a ‘ville en bois’ in Darmstadt, and eventually he was transported to the prison camp in Quedlinburg for soldiers, located in the province of Saxony, to the South-west of Magdeburg, in the region of Boode.

Prisoners from the camp were sent in labour units to work in quarries, factories and farms. Work detachments were also sent to local mines and munitions factories where the men were employed as cheap labour.

This camp received the visit of ICRC Spanish delegates on January 15, 1917, on this date, there were 3,419 prisoners including 1,127 French, with a detachment named Gewerkschaft Ludwig II. The camp was planned to hold 12,000 prisoners but at the end of the war there were 14,400 captives. Photographs of the camp show a very orderly and pristine collections of huts and various posed scenes of men queuing to use the rudimentary shower block. The later increase in numbers would have meant that any such facilities would have been put severely under pressure.

Georges experience in the camp left a very strong mark on him. In his later life he always insisted on using the knife and fork which he had in prison. We have a couple of postcards from Adjudant Petit 129ème Gelangenau Lager Quedlinburg.

On 9 August 1919 Georges wrote a series of post cards from Mainz, he was waiting for his papers to come through. Finally his permission arrived, he immediately left Mainz. He finally returned to France in August 1919 and immediately travelled on to London to be reunited with his older sister Jeanne.

Ernest Marcham

Ernest was born in 1883 and was a married father of five children. His eldest daughter Emily (1906 -1996) was Mr Codd’s great grandmother. Ernest fought with the Royal Dragoons in the Second Battle of Ypres when the Germans first used poisoned gas on the Western front on a large scale. During this battle he sustained a head wound and was returned to Roehampton hospital for treatment. Pieces of shrapnel remained imbedded in his skull for the rest of his life. Emily always said he was never the same again. He died of a lung complaint in 1922 at home in Rotherhithe, London, aged only 39 years.
**Thomas Owen Williams**

Thomas Owen Williams born 1891 - 1976, Morfa Nefyn, Caernavonshire, Wales. Tom was the youngest of three sons whose father, Thomas Williams, was lost at sea when his ship, the SS North Durham, went down with all hands in 1893. His mother, Laura, was left to bring up three young sons with a small income from the rent of family lands and several houses. Tom went to school from aged 8 to 11 although as he was from a Welsh speaking family and the lessons were in English. Tom’s older brother, Griffith, went to sea on a sailing ship aged 12. It’s not remembered what Tom did although local stories are of boys aged 11 having to take a horse and wagon load of milled corn from their village to Caernarfon which is almost a 50 mile round trip.

During WWI about 460,000 British horses were requisitioned by the military with many ending up on the front line. Some of these horses came from farms in Wales and only understood commands in the Welsh language. Consequently the Army had to conscript Welsh farm boys, who knew how to handle horses and more importantly, could communicate in Welsh with the Welsh horses. Cassie’s great great great uncle Tom, aged 22, ended up with a team of Welsh horses on a gun crew in Belgium/France.

After the war in 1919 Tom got married in Liverpool to a Welsh lady. In the 1920s Tom returned to his home village, Morfa Nefyn, where he raised two daughters and two sons.

**Lieutenant Herbert Vineberg RFC**

Nine members of my extended Canadian family enlisted to fight in WWI. Luckily, all of them survived the war.

They included Lieutenant Herbert Vineberg (1899-1966), who, although Canadian, served in the Royal Flying Corps (RFC), which later became the RAF. He married a second cousin of my great-great grandmother, Maude Silver. His obituary says:

“Herbert joined the Army at the outbreak of World War One and later transferred to the Royal Flying Corps. He was awarded the Air Force Cross, when as pilot-navigator, he headed a crew which flew non-stop from Baldonnel aerodrome near Dublin, to Northolt aerodrome near London. He flew Winston Churchill during World War I; he also knew many of the flying ‘Aces’ of that war period. He served through all of World War One, and joined the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1939 as a Link trainer instructor during WWII. He also worked with the Canadian Jewish Congress and was instrumental in obtaining chaplaincy services for Jews in the armed services.”

**John Brown**

My great grandfather, John Brown, was a funeral director and coffin maker, and led the burial of the 1st Australian soldier to die in Weymouth hospital 1915.

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CLSG Remembers: The Great War 1914-1918
My great grandfather Saverio Dominijanni fought in the First World War as Telegraphist. At home his father was the Manager of the local Post Office so he knew how to telegraph. Saverio’s job was to receive the messages at the telegraphic station in Cortina d’Ampezzo, on the Italian Dolomites, and take them to the Italian Army local Headquarters on the front line. In order to do this he had to run for a long time under the bombings and the snipers’ fire, amongst the bodies of dead soldiers. There was another soldier who shared this job, however when messages had to be carried during the night then my great grandfather had to do it as his colleague was afraid of the fumes coming from the dead bodies scattered on the path.

Once Saverio remained stuck in the snow and got pneumonia. Towards the end of the war an Austrian sniper wounded him while he was carrying messages to the headquarter, he fell as almost dead, he had lost a lot of blood so they thought he was dead but a doctor realised his heart was still beating and stopped his comrades who wanted to put him on the cart carrying the dead, he gave my great granddad a blood transfusion, when Saverio recovered he was sent home and after the end of the war he was decorated with the medal of the military value of the order of Vittorio Veneto.

Ralph Henderson (born on the 15th August 1897) was a wartime volunteer who joined the 26th Battalion London Regiment (Artist’s Rifles), after deferral, on 21st December 1916 and was posted to the 2/28th Battalion London Regiment. After training, he was commissioned into the Royal Field Artillery, Special Reserve and sent to France on 2nd November 1917 to join 64th Brigade, RFA, part of 12th (Eastern) Division. This was a wartime raised Field Brigade equipped with four batteries of 18-pounder QF field guns. He served with them at Cambrai in November-December 1917, where the division successfully attacked the German line near Banteux, gaining several miles to reach Sonnet Farm and Lateau Wood. He was awarded the French Croix de Guerre for braving enemy fire to rescue injured soldiers. His mother received a letter in February 1918 notifying her of his death, and a second one apologising for the error. In March 1918, when the German Offensive began, the division was rushed to the Somme, where it engaged the enemy in and around Albert and, later, Aveluy and Bouzincourt Ridge. In September, 1918, he was moved to the Hindenburg Line near Nurbu, fighting alongside the American 27th Division. He was injured in September 1918, suffering abrasions and contusions to the face, and admitted to a New Zealand Stationary Hospital. He recovered to rejoin his unit and served until the end of the war. He was demobilised on 28th January 1919 with the rank of Lieutenant and rejoined the Admiralty where he remained throughout his career, never speaking of his wartime experience for fear of reliving even a scintilla of its horrors.
Samuel Wolfson arrived in Glasgow around 1896 at the age of 3 with his parents Solomon and Nechi who were Jewish-Polish-Russian immigrants. There was a huge number of Jews who emigrated to Scotland at this time. Samuel was the oldest of thirteen children, three boys and ten girls, one of them being my great grandmother Rosie but he was the only one to be born before the move to Scotland. Their family name before arriving in Scotland was Pikorny but when Solomon was being interviewed by the immigration officer on arrival in Scotland, he was asked what his father’s second name was and replied Ze’ev, his middle name, rather than his surname. Ze’ev corresponded to the word wolf so the officer decided that as Solomon was the son of Ze’ev, he should be called Wolfson and a new family name was born when they arrived in Scotland. The Wolfson name now is synonymous with philanthropy, largely due to the Wolfson Foundation, which was set up by Samuel’s younger brother Sir Isaac Wolfson, as well as the Charles Wolfson Foundation which was set up by Samuel’s other younger brother Charles which also supports many good causes with a focus on education and healthcare. Charles also volunteered during the war whilst he was underage.

Samuel left school at the age of 12 and a few years later went on to serve in the British Army in the First World War and became a Sergeant-Major, the highest rank he could reach in the Royal Scots. He first served in France and then as part of the Jewish Legion, a battalion of the Royal Fusiliers who volunteered to fight in the Gallipoli campaign against the Ottoman Empire after most of his regiment were wiped out in Flanders. Samuel was very religious and prayed with his tefillin (which are a set of small black leather boxes containing scrolls of parchment inscribed with verses from the Torah) every morning. In the trenches in France, his commanding officer would call out, “Be quiet while the Jew-boy is saying his prayers!” Another story was also uncovered many years after Samuel died, where Samuel whilst in the trenches in the Somme was told to get low in the trenches as the shelling was very heavy. Convinced that his end was near, he stood up, put his tefillin on and began to pray in Hebrew. He thought he was going to meet his maker and he decided to do it with dignity. When the shelling eventually stopped, all but three people in the trench were killed and somehow Samuel was one of them.

Samuel survived the war and went on to marry and have three children. He went on to live a life that centred around his religious beliefs, most likely tied to his experiences during the war.

Reginald Penkivil Weekes

This is my great grandfather’s first cousin. He was the only child of Dr Reginald and Mrs Ida Weekes who lived in Modbury, Devon. Penkivil trained as a pilot in 1916 and was sent to France on April 17th 1917. He served for only three weeks when he was killed in an air accident on May 7th 1917. His plane burst into flames upon landing and he was killed instantly. He is buried in the war cemetery at Chocques, in France. Penkivil’s father, Dr Reginald Weekes, was a medical doctor and was also called up to serve in the medical corps in the First World War, unlike his son, he survived it.
Ernest Frederick Spencer was one of four children of his father, Charles (a highly skilled cabinet-maker), descendant of a Huguenot refugee, and mother, daughter of a family who built ships on the Thames. His mother, Ada Mackrow, was of Dutch and Jewish origins. He was born on the 5th June 1895.

He joined the militia/Territorial Army and was attending an annual camp training as a trooper in August 1914, when war was declared. His first regiment, in the Cavalry with Duke of Cambridge's Middlesex Hussars, was sent to Egypt/Palestine as part of 9th Division, and were dismounted. At some time he was involved in desert training/action and then headed for Mesopotamia.

Fortunately for all his subsequent offspring, he did not land at Gallipoli in 1915 on the first wave. He landed much later at Suvla Bay, and was soon joining the ANZACs in the trenches, very close to the Turkish trenches. It seems that there he did something that demonstrated great courage, and both self-confidence and initiative. A machine gun some way behind his trench was knocked out by the Turks. Without any orders he jumped out of the trench, rushed back to the gun, loaded, aimed, fired – and kept on doing so until more gunners arrived.

The report to GCHQ, Cairo, persuaded them to record a Mention in Despatches. More importantly, he was sent straight back to England for officer training. The death-rate among subalterns in France was very high, and many platoons/troops were being led by NCOs. He was commissioned into the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, and posted to France. He was wounded in the leg, and gassed, and had yet more spells in hospital with enteric problems. It’s possible that he met his first wife (as a nurse/VAD) in a hospital in France at the time.

Once the tank had made its first appearance in France (as part of the Machine Gun Corps that were founded on October 1915) there was a massive effort to produce more tanks, and train more officers and NCOs to drive them. He was one of those selected and went to Bovington Camp, Dorset. But he quickly strained his heart so badly (trying to start a tank engine all by himself) that the RAMC declared that he was unfit for any further active service.

He then spent many months doing what many other soldiers did towards the end of the war – farming. We believe that large numbers of officers were sent to command/lead/organise large gangs of ORs (i.e. including those found guilty of dereliction of duty) planting and harvesting food crops – to mitigate the effects of the U-boat successes in the Atlantic, which nearly cost us the war. He remained in uniform until well after the war had ended.

He picked up some valuable mechanical skills and later raced at both Brooklands and Le Mans, for the legendary Woolf Barnato, as part of the Bentley Boys that won Le Mans 24-hour race from 1927 to 1930 - albeit as an un-credited shift driver”. He passed away, aged 49, on the 2nd February 1944.

A special thank you to Uncle Tony for much of this information about Ernest.
My great-great-grandfather was called Johan Lorensen and he was a German soldier during WWI.

This was very much against his will though, as he was Danish. He hated the Germans and desperately wanted them to lose the war. Between 1864 and 1920 the southern-most part of current Denmark, where Johan lived, belonged to Germany, but most of the people who lived in those parts were Danish. They had been fighting Germany in recent years, so to be called up to fight with Germany against another nation was very much against their will.

Johan was called in on a number of occasions to be assessed to see if he was fit and well to become a soldier, but the first couple of times he was lucky enough to be sent home again. Finally, in March 1916, he was called in again, and October admitted to drinking several cups of very strong coffee beforehand in order to appear dizzy and unwell, the military doctor deemed him fit to fight and sent him home. While in training camp in Beverlo in Belgium to become a soldier, Johan was 26 years old at this point and had a wife and a 2-year-old daughter at home.

Once he finished his training he ended up in France, near Reims. His first job was as a post sorter and distributor. He soon tired of walking for miles every day delivering the mail so he requested another job and instead became the general's horse mail so he requested another job and ended up in the post office. He was a keen photographer and a 2-year-old daughter at home.

During this time he also wrote some articles for a newspaper in Flensburg in Germany. The articles were in Danish and he was briefly accused of being a spy as no one understood what he had written, but when he translated the text into German for his superiors he managed to persuade them that the articles were in no way harmful to the German military, which they weren’t. That would have been too dangerous and stupid of him.

Johan was a keen photographer and he had brought his camera with him. He had to be very careful not to be seen with his camera, however, as that could be seen as spying and could potentially be very dangerous for him. He did manage to take some photos whilst being away at war, which he developed when he got home.

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Johan was awarded the Iron Cross medal. However, he felt very strongly against this and refused to receive it, stating that he did not feel he deserved it and that other military personnel were much more deserving than he was. Still, it was an offence to refuse the Iron Cross so he was sentenced to a 3-day prison term as a result. In the last minute this was, however, changed to a slightly longer kitchen duty sentence, which Johan was thrilled about, as it also meant a delayed return to the front line.

When the war ended, it was a long and tiring journey back home again. He returned to his family home on 17 December 1918 at 3pm. When he walked through the door his 4-year-old daughter screamed in fear and hid behind the sofa. She did not recognise this dirty, rugged and bearded man who absolutely terrified her. She took a long time to believe that it was indeed her daddy who had come home. He looked nothing like the man on the photographs on the mantelpiece.

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Johan was very traumatised by his experiences during WWI. He was one of 350 men from a small town who went to war for Germany and 390 of them never made it back.

Johan was a grocer and for the rest of his days he served the family members of the men who didn’t come home. This constant reminder meant that he could never quite forget about the brutality of the war, but he never spoke about it to anyone.

How do I know all this? When Johan was 60 years old he found his notes and the photographs he took whilst he was at war and he typed up a diary about this awful time. This diary has now been donated by my family to a museum in Denmark.