

# NEWSLETTER

THE FRIENDS OF  
THE SOLDIERS OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE  
MUSEUM



SPRING 2018

## NEWS FROM THE MUSEUM



*Last year the City Council developed the public space between the Museum and the dock-side, much to the advantage of the Museum. The steps to the city centre have been widened to become a more important thoroughfare but, as yet, the restaurants in the warehouse buildings along side have not been developed.*

*The sphinx (both of them) have been retained and now sit either side of the entrance. The folding doors of the café, to the left in the picture, were funded by the Friends.*



*Part of the temporary display of the RGH, 'From Qatia to Aleppo'. The case not only gives the curious story of Capt. Lloyd-Baker's sword, but also tale of Capt Wykeham-Musgrave's camera that got him a court-martial but also the images that inspired the panels on the RGH War Memorial.*

## REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE FRIENDS OF SOGM

This year is seeing significant changes in the Museum. As The Rifles move out of the building the Museum takes on responsibilities for the funding of the services and for maintaining the building. As the Board Chairman, Lt Col Rob Dixon, explains on the next page, we also welcome the new Museum Director and a senior volunteer, both of whom come to us from the City Museum. There is no doubt that SOGM has an increasing footfall and is doing well compared with other small museums. We look forward to the plans for the future development

We have a volunteer team which is growing in numbers and many find the tasks a sociable and enjoyable time to spend a few hours a week. However we need more volunteers to help run the various aspects of the Museum and, if you have some free time and a desire to help our busy team please see the Directors Report, see if anything appeals to you and get in touch with her.

Our financial state is good and we were able to contribute £5000 to the replacement of the cafe windows with folding doors. The wooden frames were rotting and needed replacing so the addition of these folding doors makes the café area a more attractive venue on a summer's day. We will continue to give grants to the Museum to attract visitors to the north end of the Docks now that the City Council is planning to renew the building alongside the Museum. The steps to the city have been widened to attract a greater flow of tourists and we have salvaged the Victorian Docks Post Box from the steps to act a donation box!

The event calendar has a few entries for your diary. The launch of General Robin Grist's book, '*A Gallant County*' takes place in the Museum on April 18<sup>th</sup> and we look forward to seeing many Friends attend for the book signing; please note that there will be a discounted purchase price. No admission or ticket requirement will be necessary, just visit the Museum between 1100 and 1400 hrs.

The Badminton Friend's Lunch (or 'Rest from Shopping') will again be taking place in the Yeomanry Marquee on Thursday May 3<sup>rd</sup> during the Badminton Horse Trials, booking for this is through the Friends Hon Secretary (see advert).

On Friday July 6<sup>th</sup> the Friends and the SOGM Board are holding a joint 'Summer Reception' on the new terrace outside the Museum. This attractive space was developed last year by the City Council and there is no doubt it will be to the advantage of the SOGM. The purpose of the Reception will be to encourage more members to the Friends and entertain them and those who the SOGM Trustees believe will be influential in developing and ensuring the future of the Museum. We also look forward to seeing the Museum Patron again and briefing him on future plans for the space vacated by The Rifles office. Do support this party.

The Friends Autumn Lecture, now a popular and well supported autumn event, on October 19<sup>th</sup> 2018 will be given by Lt. Gen. Sir John Kiszely KCB MC. He has, just this month, heard that he has been awarded the Duke of Wellington's Medal for his book '*Anatomy of a Campaign, The British Fiasco in Norway – 1940*', which will be the subject of his talk.

I look forward to seeing you at all these fund-raising events, but please bring potential Friends along with you!

**Lt. Col. Ralph Stephenson TD.**

## REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SOGM BOARD

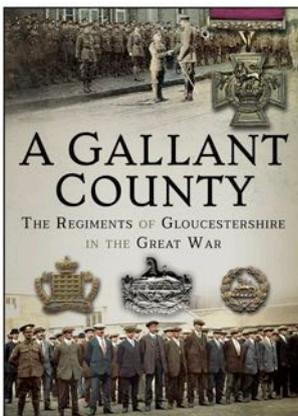
I would like to welcome Vicki Hopson who has taken over from Chris Chatterton as our Museum Director. She comes over to us from the Gloucester City Museum so has a wealth of experience in managing the many challenges that face small museums in these tough economic times. She is well known in City circles so has fitted in very easily. For very understandable family reasons Chris Chatterton has decided to move his family to Perth in Western Australia. We thank him for holding the fort for the last 3 years and raising our profile locally, particularly with his regular spots on Radio Gloucestershire and his excellent book 'Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum in 100 Objects' – if you have not yet bought a copy hurry to the museum shop as they are selling like hot cakes and make an excellent memento.

The special exhibition on The RGH in Palestine, 1916 -18, has been well received as it has as usual been very professionally put together and is a proper tribute to this little-known, but victorious, campaign. It will run for the next few months until the autumn when we intend to replace it with 1918 The British Counter Offensive which won the War.

I am delighted that we have strengthened our team of archivists with David Rice and his volunteers, also from the City Museum, who are sorting out our archives, preserving and carefully logging everything we hold and enabling the digitisation to be handled professionally. Joe Devereux and Peter Rostron continue to handle the enquiries that never stop coming in and we are grateful for their support. We do possess fascinating archives going back to the 17<sup>th</sup> Century and being able to make them more accessible will have a significant commercial impact in the revamp of the Museum.

Behind the scenes planning for the next phase of the Museum Development continues apace. We welcome back Nik Boulting as our guide and mentor for this. We will have submitted our application for a Resilient Heritage Fund grant by the end of April. If successful this will fund the necessary professional services such as architects surveys and audience development plans to finalise the business plan with which to kick off the full HLF application and be the foundation for our own fundraising. We aim to have more detailed plans available for Friends to see at The Friends Reception at the Museum on Friday 6 July. We hope to see as many of you there as possible. Thank you for your continued support: together we will ensure that SOGM can stand alone as a commercially successful enterprise.

**Lt. Col. Rob Dixon OBE.**



### **“A Gallant County” – the Book Launch The Regiments of Gloucestershire in the Great War By Maj Gen Robin Grist CB**

Pen & Sword Books Ltd. announce that the new book of the Gloucester Regiments in World War One will be launched at the Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum on April 18<sup>th</sup> from 1100 until 1400hrs.

. Robin Grist will be signing copies.

**All Friends and their guests are invited, no booking necessary.**

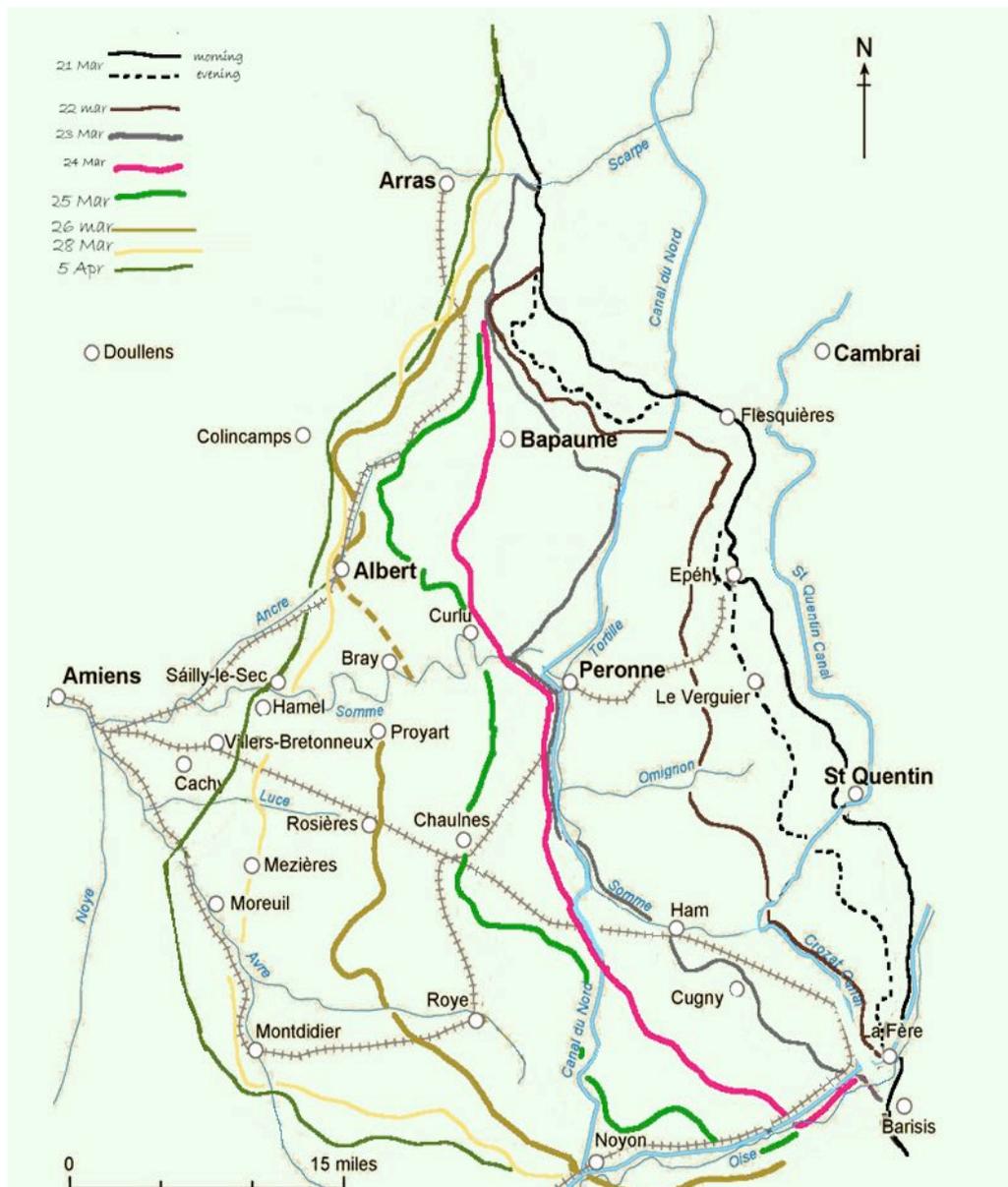
## THE GERMAN SPRING OFFENSIVE 1918

**“What is old Fritz doing? Behind the lines they are clearing certain areas of civilian inhabitants to make room for troops. The word has been passed to their soldiers, and comes to us through prisoners, that a blow will be made against us if their hopes of peace fail them. They count on settling with Russia so that if there is no general peace they will be able to transfer all their weight against the western front.”**

- *Daily Telegraph, London, 24 January 1918.*

The expected offensive started on March 21<sup>st</sup> 1918. My father, near Fremicourt, records in his own war diary “*Early in the morning Jerry started shelling with HE [High Explosive] and again in the afternoon. Had to pull back and spent the night in the open*”; the *Kaiserschlacht* (Kaiser’s Battle) had begun. It started with an artillery bombardment at 4.40am, the biggest barrage of the entire war with over 1,100,000 shells fired in five hours.

Planned by General Erich Ludendorff in four phases, the first, *Operation Michael*, was launched near St Quentin on a fifty mile front, where the British and French armies were weakest, with the intention of ‘rolling up’ the British flank from the south and forcing it back on the Channel Ports. The secondary, and smaller, phases striking further north (*Operations Georgette* and *Mars*), were designed to threaten the Allied ports in France and Belgium and divert defending forces from *Op. Michael*.



*The extent of Operation Michael March 21<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> April 1918*



*German troop formations concentrate in the wrecked streets of St. Quentin before the onset of Operation Michael on 19<sup>th</sup> March 1918.*

The Germans relied on its best and fittest troops, the ‘stormtrooper’ divisions, collected from all formations leaving these units without their best men, to advance rapidly, leaving British strong points to be taken by the follow-up troops. They were equipped with rations for a few days only and rapidly advanced beyond their supply sources, who were often struggling over bad terrain from the battles of 1916 and 1917. The Allies had also developed new tactics, learnt from the Germans in 1917; their defences were more widely spread, creating ‘defence in depth’. The front line, or ‘forward zone’ was thinly held, behind which was the ‘battle zone’ which held the bulk of the defending infantry in fortified redoubts to resist further penetration by the advancing troops. The rear zone held the supply dumps and the reserves, beyond the range of German artillery.

The infantry assault, beginning at 9.40 am and aided by mist and smoke had, by midday, advanced rapidly in most places and taken many prisoners, with the Allies conducting a difficult fighting retreat, often with scratch units of mixed battalions. It was these tired troops of the Fifth Army which prevented the line from breaking: *‘They fought a 38-mile rearguard action, contesting every village, field and, on occasion, yard ... With no reserves and no strongly defended line to its rear, and with eighty German divisions against fifteen British, the Fifth Army fought the Somme offensive to a standstill on the Ancre, not retreating beyond Villers-Bretonneux’.*<sup>1</sup>

Of the many Gloucestershire Regiment battalions in France it was the 2/5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> who contributed to this rearguard action. The 2/5<sup>th</sup>, reinforced by the disbanded 2/6<sup>th</sup> since February 1918 and defending the village of Beauvois from the German advance, were ordered to withdraw on the morning of the 22<sup>nd</sup> March.

<sup>1</sup> ‘A History of the English Speaking Peoples Since 1900’ by Andrew Roberts.

The 150 men of D Company 'held on to a line 2000 yards in length until 3.30 in the morning of March 23, holding up the whole German advance. All night the enemy tried to rush or to bomb this thin line of determined men, but it was not until the cartridges ran low that the British made their retreat, sneaking round the outskirts of the village which blazed behind them, and making their way to Longuevoisin where they joined their comrades who had already given them up as lost'.<sup>2</sup>



*German 'stoßtruppen' advancing in March 1918.*

After a failed attack on the village of Lamotte, where the Battalion suffered 200 casualties, the 2/5<sup>th</sup> held a thin line ten miles in front of Amiens. In 10 days continuous action they had lost 20 officers and 550 other ranks.

The 8<sup>th</sup> Bn. were rushed from reserve positions to counter attack the village of Doignies, fighting off three attacks by the Germans, this stand allowing the brigade to withdraw. It was in this action that Maj. Manley James was awarded the VC for his part in continuing to lead the defence and, although wounded, single-handedly taking control of a machine gun and keeping the enemy at bay until he was wounded again for a third time. He was eventually captured.

The 13<sup>th</sup>, a pioneer battalion, had been working on defensive structures behind the line; they were rapidly converted to infantry and fought a rearguard action around Peronne. Withdrawing still further and then digging in, they repulsed several frontal attacks by the Germans before being relieved on the 30<sup>th</sup>, by which time they had suffered 326 casualties. By the end of March the British line, although penetrated from time to time had held, but was driven back east of Baupame and Albert in the north and Montdidier in the south.

<sup>2</sup> 'A History of the Great War, The British Campaign in France & Flanders, Volume V Jan-Jul 1918' by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.



*German Reserves on the road to Albert, April 1918.*

In early April the Germans saw an opportunity to open an attack to capture Ypres and threaten the Channel ports; on April 9<sup>th</sup> *Operation Georgette* commenced as two German Armies attacked a weakened British First Army. The 1<sup>st</sup> Gloucesters, who had spent the worst of the winter's weather in the Ypres Salient, were moved on the 6<sup>th</sup> April, south to the La Basée Canal, where they occupied the village of Festubert. This was the southern limit of the German penetration and, early on the 18<sup>th</sup> April, 12 battalions of German infantry attempted to take the village from the Gloucester battalion. Every man, including the cooks, batmen and drivers, fought an intense battle on all sides of the village, front, flank and rear, reminiscence of the Battle of Alexandria, over a hundred years before, when the Back Badge had been awarded: *'It was a most desperate battle. The Germans tried very hard to annihilate the Gloucesters. They climbed up into the ruined houses to be able to snipe the men in the trenches, but the snipers were calmly shot one by one. They brought field guns up and tried to open fire over open sights at point blank range, but the gunners were killed by accurate rifle fire as soon as they stood up. The barrels of Lewis guns were worn smooth by the intensity of the fire.'*<sup>3</sup>

By late afternoon the Germans withdrew. The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was awarded a Bar to a DSO, 4 MCs, 2 DCMs, 2 Bars to DCMs and 24 MMs. The award of 24 Military Medals to a battalion in a single day is believed to be a record.

The 8<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters were in action again in April, holding the line in front of Messines when, on the 10<sup>th</sup> April, the Germans launched an attack which out-flanked the battalion, forcing them to fall back until a counter attack by the 19<sup>th</sup> Div. could be organized on the 11<sup>th</sup>. It was on this day, when the British situation was desperate, that Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig issued his famous Special Order of the Day:

<sup>3</sup> 'Cap of Honour' by David Scott Daniell

*“.....Many amongst us now are tired. To those I would say that Victory will belong to the side which holds out the longest. The French Army is moving rapidly and in great force to our support. There is no other course open to us but to fight it out. Every position must be held to the last man: there must be no retirement. With our backs to the wall and believing in the justice of our cause each one of us must fight on to the end...”*



*A British Lewis Gun team (regiment unknown) in action during the German Spring Offensive*

The 2/5<sup>th</sup>, in the 61<sup>st</sup> Division, whilst quickly assimilating replacements for the losses during the first couple of weeks of the offensive, were moved by train to the Ypres front, to Steenbeque and were rushed, on the 12<sup>th</sup> April, to oppose a German penetration which it repulsed. On April 18<sup>th</sup> an attack, pushing towards Bethune, was repulsed. A further attack on 23<sup>rd</sup> April was followed by an overnight bombardment which caused many casualties. In April the 2/5<sup>th</sup> lost 250 of its fighting strength, 108 of whom were killed. The battalion continued to rotate in and out of the front line for the next two months.

From the 10<sup>th</sup> April, the Gloucester's 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion, forming a Composite Battalion with the 13<sup>th</sup> Bn. The Sussex Regt, joined the Battle of Lys and earned the Battle Honour 'Kemmel', fighting around the Wytschaete area. They suffered 299 casualties, including 118 taken prisoner. The 12<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters, one of the battalions reinforcing the Italian Front, were ordered back to France, leaving Italy on 2<sup>nd</sup> April and taking up a position on the Lys Canal ten days later, adding strength to a weakened line. *Operation Georgette* was abandoned on 29<sup>th</sup> April.

*“The German Offensive was still not over. There were three more assaults for the Allies to deal with, which were all in the south against the French and Americans, who were beginning to make a difference. The Germans launched operation Blücher-Yorke on 27<sup>th</sup> May. It lasted eleven days until 6<sup>th</sup> June and four British Divisions were sent to reinforce the French, among them the 19<sup>th</sup> Division, which included the 8<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters.”<sup>4</sup>*

<sup>4</sup> “A Gallant County” Robin Grist



*Gassed troops of the 55<sup>th</sup> Division during the 10<sup>th</sup> April actions of the Battle of the Lys.*

These lesser offensives were launched by Ludendorff from May to July 1918, the most significant, *Operation Blücher-Yorke*, commencing on May 27<sup>th</sup>. The line between Soissons and Reims was penetrated, the Allies being taken by surprise, and the Germans assault troops advanced for six hours towards the River Marne. The 8<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters lost 3 officers and 45 other ranks before the Germans closed the action, having insufficient reserves to continue.

Victory was not achieved and generally the Spring Offensive is considered to have been a failure. Although it gave large territorial gains to the Germans they were unable to dominate and hold these areas and the extended length of the front line would have had to be defended with a depleting military strength. The infiltrating 'stormtroopers' had robbed units of their best trained men and the attrition of these troops was significant. In one month (21 March to 29 April) the Germans lost 348,000 men, the British losing 236,000 men in the same period. Although a relatively low figure, in World War One terms, 20,000 were killed and many more, some 120,000, were taken prisoner. In six months the overall strength of the German Army fell from 5.1 million men to 4.2 million, whilst the Allies looked forward to the million or so American troops arriving in France.

Assault troops leading the attack could not carry enough food and ammunition to sustain themselves for long enough and supplies had to be brought over the devastated landscape of previous battles. These forward troops, discovering the Allies dumps, delayed the speed of advance to enjoy rewards that were unavailable in the blockaded homeland which was on the verge of economical collapse. In addition assaults were not supported by mobile reinforcements, especially cavalry, and the lightly armed stormtroopers were vulnerable to well supported Allied counter attacks from fortified defensive positions.

The Allies had been shaken but not broken. The introduction of a unified command, following the appointment of Marshall Foch, and the arrival of fresh American Divisions led to the Germans being driven from the newly occupied ground, the collapse of the Hindenburg Line and eventually the collapse of the German Empire in November 1918.

## CAPT. CLAUDE TEMPLER, 1<sup>ST</sup> BN. GLOUCESTERSHIRE REGIMENT

It was towards the end of the Spring Offensive, in early June 1918, that the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion lost an extraordinary officer who had had a private audience with HM The King as well as the report of his exploits, from 1914 to 1917, being published in an official pamphlet by Field Marshall Sir Henry Wilson, as an example to all troops.

Claude Frank Lethbridge Templer was born in July 1895 in Dharmsala, Punjab, India, the son of Col. Henry Templer OBE, late of the 5<sup>th</sup> Punjab Cavalry. After education at Wellington College and the Anglo-Saxon School, Paris, he applied to RMA Sandhurst and was a cadet there when Britain declared war against Germany in August 1914. Shortly afterwards he received his commission and joined the 1<sup>st</sup> Bn. in November 1914.

Whilst reconnoitering an enemy position near Givenchy, in December 1914, he was taken prisoner: *“On the evening of December 20, 1914 my Battalion, forming part of the 3rd Brigade, 1st Division, then in Army reserve, left the billets at Outersteene and after marching all night arrived in the morning of the 21st at Bethune. I was in command of No. 3 platoon ('A' Company). We were informed that it was the mission of the Brigade to retake part of the positions recently lost by an Indian Division near Festubert.....*



*Capt. Claude Templer, 1<sup>st</sup> Bn  
Gloucestershire Regiment.*

*My Company, commanded by Captain Baynes, massed in the courtyard of a red farmhouse, 300 yards to the left of the main road and in front of trenches then held by Indian troops. My Colonel (Col Lovett) and a Staff Officer joined us there and I received my orders from them and from Capt Baynes.... The objective was then pointed out to me. I could see it quite plainly. It consisted of a line of trenches following a single line of poplar trees at a distance of roughly 800 yards from the farmhouse where we stood. When my platoon deployed and advanced it was quite dark..... We reached our objective; the trenches following the line of poplar trees. They were deserted. We followed these trenches in a left-handed direction.... When we had proceeded a few yards in this direction we were aware of another trench running diagonally and right handed to our trench. I watched it for a short time and as I neither heard nor saw anything I came to the conclusion that it was deserted...I jumped out of the trench I was then in and reached the new trench.*

*We seemed to meet with no opposition; no abnormal shelling or rifle fire. I then signaled the men to follow me and I remember hearing them leaving their trench. Instead of waiting for them, as I now realise I should have done, I resolved to make a personal reconnaissance before their arrival.... when I had covered about 50 yards I came upon what was probably a machine-gun shelter, consisting of a tunnel with thick logs as head cover. At this moment I noticed a figure some 20 yards ahead of me in the trench. As soon I raised my rifle and challenged, the figure retreated. It was too dark to ascertain the nationality of my target and it was too dark for a sure shot. I therefore decided not to raise the alarm by wasting a shot.*

*My next move was a fatal blunder. Instead of waiting for the arrival of my men I began to crawl forward through the machine-gun shelter. It was about 20 yards long. As soon as I put my head out of the other end I was stunned by something heavy (perhaps the butt of a rifle or a sandbag). When I regained consciousness I was lying in a German dugout”.*

He spent his first Christmas in a cattle truck on the way to Germany, with a lack of food, water and medical attention. He was first detained in a converted oil factory near Hanover-Munden from where he made his first escape attempt, with a party of Russian officers, staying at large for six days. He learnt a lot from his early attempts to escape, whether he was held in prisoner of war camps or civilian gaols. In all he made 13 escape attempts, the last one being successful. In addition to Hanover-Munden, he got away from prison camps in Torgau, Birg (twice), Magdeburg, Augustabad, from Burg Civil Goal (four times), the Fortress of Wesel, twice whilst travelling under escort between Wessel and Magdeburg.

His final and successful attempt, in April 1917, with two friends, Captain Harrison and Lieut. Insall VC MC, was from an isolated bathroom building at the Strohen prison camp, north of Bielefeld, the worst camp, he says, that he was ever sent to. They carried biltong, bacon, porridge, chocolate and even a saucepan and solid methylated spirits with which to cook fresh vegetables, looted at night. They reached Holland on the tenth night of his thirteenth attempt, after nearly three years captivity.

Back in England he refused all employment at home and with the greatest difficulty persuaded the authorities to allow him rejoin his own regiment in France. During his leave he had the honour of being presented to HM The King, who warmly congratulated him on his successful escape. He rejoined the 1<sup>st</sup> Bn. on 29<sup>th</sup> March 1918 and was promoted to Captain in ‘D’ Company,

On the afternoon of 4<sup>th</sup> June, ‘D’ Coy. 1<sup>st</sup> Bn. moved from Cambrin, west of Auchy, to relieve ‘C’ Coy. That evening, as it grew dark, Capt Templer, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieuts. Mayall and Pullen and 100 men carried out a raid on the enemy’s outpost and support trench. In addition there was cooperation from brigade artillery, trench mortars and machine guns and a ‘smoke barrage’ was put down by the 12 men of the Royal Engineers, who also carried charges to destroy enemy dugouts:

*“The artillery barrage - which was perfect - came down at Zero and the raiding party left their assembly positions in two waves, the second wave leap-frogging the first wave at the 1st objective.....Here, however, about one-third of the second wave lost touch and direction owing to the smoke barrage from the North and to the clouds of dust made by bursting shells, drifting down on to the area and blinding the raiding party. The remainder reached their objective, bombed the dug-outs in the enemy second line and returned with two prisoners of the 209th Reserve Infantry Regiment, having killed many of the enemy. The enemy, who were unable to see their own S.O.S. lights owing to the smoke and dust, put down a barrage which was both light and wild.... Capt. C.F.L. Templer was killed by a stray shell whilst on his way back to our line....One Other Rank killed; one Other Rank missing; and 6 Other Ranks wounded.”*

An article, based on his report ‘*Behind Enemy Lines*’ was published in the RMA Magazine in 1920 and subsequently circulated throughout the Army “*with a view of assisting commanding and other officers in lecturing to their men on citizenship, for it records a splendid example of courage, self-sacrifice and determination.*”

*I am indebted to one of our volunteers, Jo Devereux, for providing me with this story – The Editor.*

Well 2018 has certainly started very well from the Museum's point of view. Lots of positive things happening at the Museum this year, and plans are taking shape very well.

The Gloucester City Council led Public Realm work immediately outside the Museum entrance has now been completed, with a small amount of 'snagging' work left to complete. The work has resulted in the Museum having a much more accessible frontage and offering a more welcoming approach to visitors. The external stone Sphinxes have been re-positioned to stand either side of the main entrance, which works very well. The outdoor space created as a result of this work will mean the area immediately outside the Museum is likely to be made use of for annual City-wide events, which will hopefully have a positive impact on Museum footfall. Even though we have had to contend with operating in front of building site for four months, we have worked hard to attract visitors and have still managed to achieve the target footfall for the year, which in the circumstances is quite a triumph. We have offered museum gallery trails during every school holidays, which has certainly been enjoyed by our younger visitors. The Museum shop is doing well and offering new, more appropriate lines of quality stock.

Staff and volunteers have attended various museum-focused training sessions this year, with many more opportunities available. The Museum is taking part in this year's Gloucester Resident's Weekend, with various specially arranged tours and talks taking place across the City from 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> April. We are also working on a programme of talks that will take place at the Museum during the Gloucester History Festival in September 2018.

As you will all be aware, the Museum has very strong links with South Korea, due to the role the Glosters played in the Korean War between 1951-53. A small delegation (including myself) will be visiting South Korea this coming April, to forge links with schools and to strengthen relationships with South Korean Museums. I look forward to updating you on the outcomes of the visit in the next newsletter.

We are very much looking forward to the year ahead, as it holds many exciting changes and opportunities for the Museum, and we thank you very much for your continued support. We are always in need of extra help and so if you think you may be able to spare a few hours a month with any of the volunteer posts below, please do get in touch.

**Volunteer Bookkeeper** - 5-10 hours per month

Responsible for organizing receipts and invoices, and inputting information into Sage software.

**Volunteer Coordinator** - 8-20 per month

Responsible for the overall coordination of volunteers.

**Volunteer Tour Guide** - 2-20 hours per month

Responsible for giving tours to visitors to the Museum, and perhaps through the city.

**Volunteer Education Officer** - 5-30 hours per week

Responsible for helping school tours through the Museum and offering sessions both at the Museum and at schools

**Volunteer Researcher** - 5-30 hours per week

Responsible for conducting research relating to the Gloucestershire Regiment and the Royal Gloucestershire Hussars

**Volunteer Museum Grounds Maintenance Person** - 5-20 hours per month

Responsible for the care and upkeep of the grounds around the Museum.

**Volunteer Social Media Officer** - 5-30 hours per month

Responsible for maintaining the Museum's social media accounts

**Vicki Hopson**

## REPORT FROM THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY AND TREASURER

As at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 the Friends have 359 members in all categories: 247 Life and 100 annual members including 12 overseas. Our finances remain healthy and we are well placed to continue our support to the Museum. We continue to receive one off donations from members and would like to say many thanks, all donations are most welcome. The proceeds of the Autumn Lecture 2017 exceeded £2000, thank you all for your support and donations on the night.

### **Subscriptions.**

Thanks to the frugal nature of your committee I am happy to announce that there is no increase in subscription for the year 2018/2019.

For those of you who pay for your membership annually may I remind you that membership is due in June and can be paid as follows:

*By cheque made payable to 'The Friends of the Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum' forwarded to the Friends at the Museum address 'Custom House, 31, Commercial Road, Gloucester, GL1 2HE'.*

*Over the internet through the Museum website at [www.soldiersofglos.com](http://www.soldiersofglos.com) – follow the link to the Friends' page on the Museum's Home page.*

*By Banker's Standing Order. To save having to write cheques, pay for postage, or remember that you need to renew your subscription annually, why not complete a Banker's Standing Order Mandate? Please contact me should you require a blank mandate.*

*Bank Transfer to the Friends bank account – Lloyds Bank, Eastgate Street, Gloucester. Sort code – 309348. Account Number - 01371982 Account Name - Friends of the Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum. Please remember to add your name and or membership number in the reference box.*

***Annual rates are £20 single, £30 couples and £10 for juniors. Conversion to Life membership is for a single payment of £200.***

**Patrick Smart**

### **Dates for your diary 2018**

**April 18<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Book Launch – 'A Gallant County' at the Museum**

Maj. Gen Robin Grist will be signing books for your purchase. There is no need to request entry – arrive between 1100 and 1200. The Lord Lieutenant will be present from 1220.



**May 3<sup>rd</sup>**

#### **Friends Lunch in the Yeomanry Marquee – The Badminton Horse Trials.**

Please request places by notifying the Hon Sec: [simoncolbeck@msn.com](mailto:simoncolbeck@msn.com)  
All Friends and their guests are welcome, please pass this information to your friends and relations. Cost of lunch tbc.

**July 6<sup>th</sup>**

#### **The Museum Board and Friends Summer Reception - The Museum**

to see the new Dock refurbishment and the ideas for the development of the Museum. The Museum Patron will be attending this evening. Invitations will be sent to you in due course

**October 19<sup>th</sup>**

#### **The Friends Autumn Lecture 2018 – Chavenage House, Tetbury.**

This years speaker will be Sir John Kiszely KCB MC who will present an address entitled "The British Fiasco in Norway 1940". Invitations will be included in your Autumn 2018 Newsletter

## Bristol Blue Plaque unveiling - 8<sup>th</sup> November 2017

**2<sup>nd</sup> Lt HARDY FALCONER PARSONS (30 June 1897–21 August 1917)**  
**14<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment**

**On 8 November 1917 on Bristol's Durdham Down, the Rev. Ash Parsons, Hardy Parsons' father, was presented with the Victoria Cross by King George V. Exactly 100 years later, a Bristol Civic Society blue plaque was unveiled at 54 Salisbury Road, Redland, Bristol – the house where Hardy Parsons was living before he received a commission during WW1.**

Around 100 people attended the commemorative event, including some distinguished guests: Cllr Lesley Alexander, Lord Mayor of Bristol; Colonel Andrew Flint, Deputy Lord-Lieutenant for the County and City of Bristol; The Very Revd Dr David Hoyle, Dean of Bristol; Major General Robin Grist, CB OBE and Louise Grist, representing the Gloucestershire Regiment, Brigadier James Daniel SOGM, Lt Col Rupert Clements, Major Andrew Morris and cadets from the Bristol University OTC.



*2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. Hardy Parsons (left) and (above) representatives of the Rifles and the Lord Mayor of Bristol, Cllr Lesley Alexander, who unveiled the Blue Plaque.*

Hardy Parsons was a Second Lieutenant in the 14th Gloucesters and on 21 August 1917 was commanding a front-line trench near Vendhuile, France. A German attack forced back the troops holding Hardy's post but he refused to retreat and single-handedly fought against enemy flamethrowers, rifles and grenades. He continued to hold the post against the enemy's 'liquid fire', despite being badly burned, until a British counter-attack could be launched. He died of his wounds that day and was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross. He is buried in Villers-Faucon Communal Cemetery.

At the unveiling of the Bristol Blue Plaque to mark Hardy's association with the city, the medals and cap badges of the military personnel glinted in the autumn sunshine. It was a deeply moving occasion, encapsulated by the haunting rendition of the *Last Post* by buglers from the 1<sup>st</sup> Rifles in Chepstow and the Salamanca Band of the Rifles from Exeter. Robin Grist read the Exhortation.

Local historian and Fiend of SOGM, Clive Burlton and military historian Jeremy Banning organized the occasion and thanks are due to residents Chris and Jill Chart for agreeing to the commemorative plaque being placed on their home.

**Clive Burlton**

**New Books (available at the Museum Shop) :**

'A Gallant County' by Maj. Gen. Robin Grist, describes how the Gloucestershire Regiment's six battalions in 1914 expanded to twenty-four, sixteen of which, together with the Yeomanry of the Royal Gloucestershire Hussars, fought on all the Allied Fronts in the Great War.

The Gloucesters, who already had more battle honours than any other regiment, won another eighty-two. Over 46,000 men served in the two regiments during the War. Twenty-five Military Medals were won by 1st Gloucesters at Festubert on one day in April 1918, a record for a single battalion.

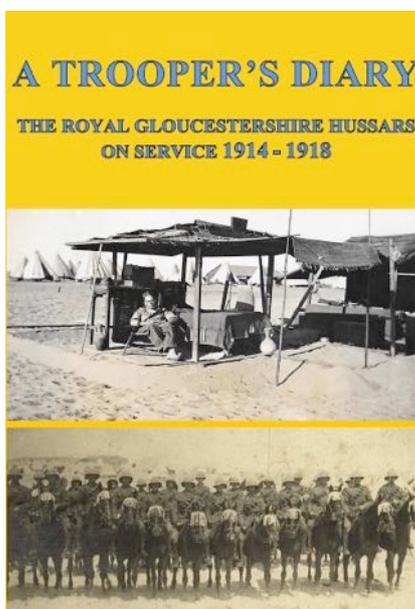
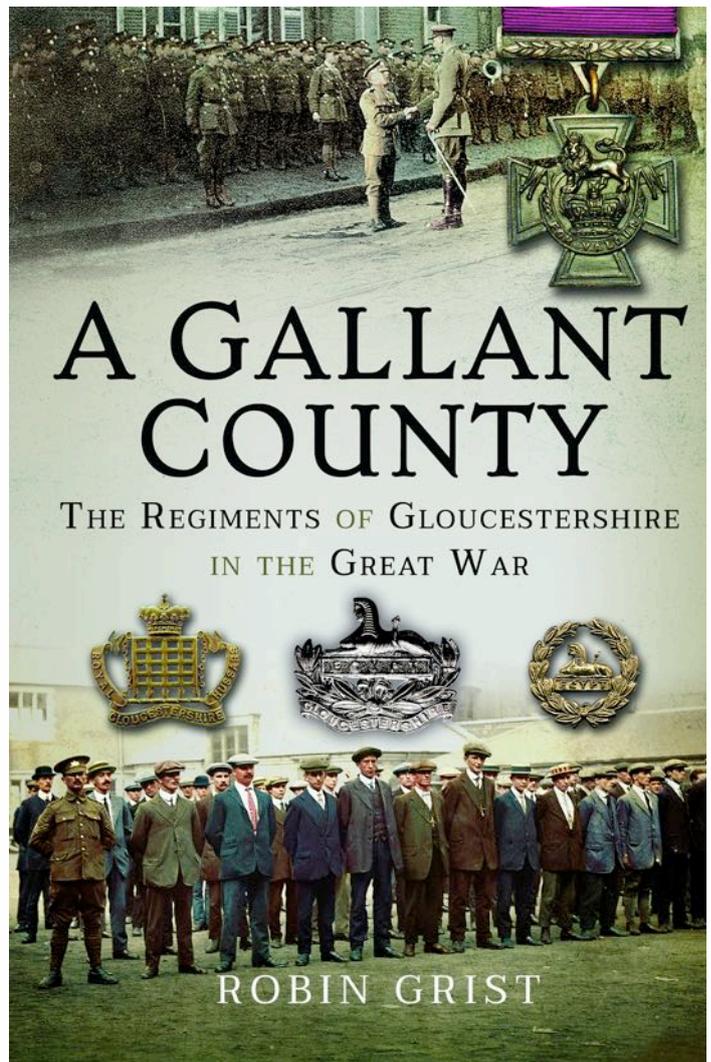
1/1st RGH were one of only two English Yeomanry Regiments to fight from Egypt, through Palestine to Aleppo in Gen. Allenby's victorious cavalry campaign.

A Gallant County captures the contrast between the mud of the Western Front, the horrors of Gallipoli and the sand and heat of the Middle East, as well as periods of intense fighting interspersed with relaxation and entertainment. The author paints the picture of infantry and cavalry in the different theatres.

The use of personal accounts and descriptions of individual and collective gallantry make this a superb record of the outstanding contribution of Gloucestershire and Bristol to victory. It will also enable those whose ancestors joined either the Gloucesters or the RGH during World War One to gain a better understanding of what happened to them.

*The normal price will be £25 but the Museum will offer Friends a price of £20 + £3.99 p&p.*

*You can pre-order a copy from the Museum at this introductory price by telephoning the shop or purchasing it online via the museum shop. Please state that you are a Friend of the Museum.*



This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of 'A Troopers Diary' published by the Museum, but has new information about the author of these reports of the actions of 1RGH, 'a Journalist at the Front', written for the *Gloucester Journal* and published fortnightly in that paper from August 1914 until late 1918.

The editor, Lawrence Birkin, not only followed a clue to the identity of the author but tracked down members of his family to confirm that the author had served in "A" Sqn of the RGH. This edition has new photographs, some of them of the yeoman himself, as well as new lists of WW1 serving personnel.

*The book is available from the Museum shop for £10, (plus £ 3.99 p&p if purchased by phone or online)*

## MAJ. GEN. SIR FABIAN WARE KCVO. KBE. CB. CMG.

**"How we commemorate the First World War is almost entirely down to this man Ware. Ten or twenty years ago there was still a fragile link to the First World War with living survivors but if you think about it now, all we have left are those graves and cemeteries."**

*- David Crane speaking at the Edinburgh International Book Festival. August 2014.*

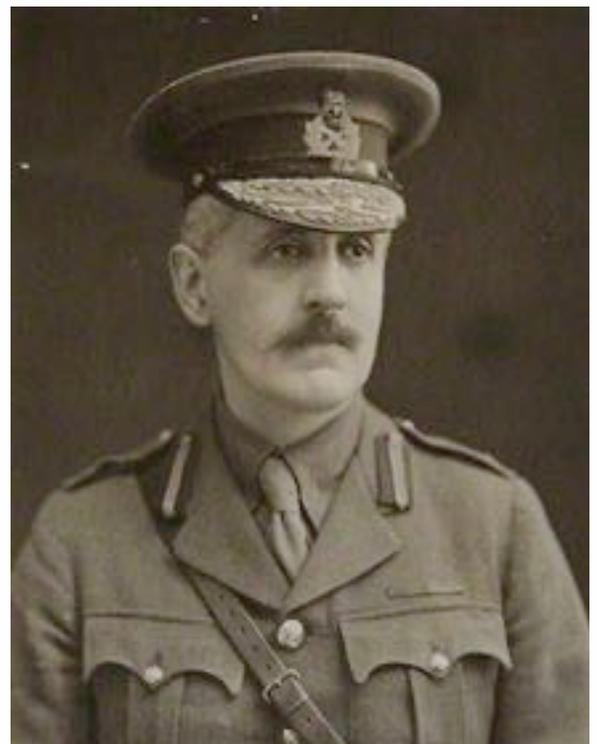
As the Centenary of the 1918 Armistice approaches, one man who has given an everlasting legacy to the memory of the dead in World War One should be more widely remembered, especially in Gloucestershire, where he lived, in the latter years of his life, and is buried.

Fabian Ware was born in Clifton, Bristol in June 1869, to parents who adhered to the austere teachings of the Plymouth Brethren, giving him 'a gloomy childhood'; he was removed from his prep school because he was made cricket captain and was thereafter tutored privately. He attended London University without graduating, but he obtained a degree from Paris in 1894. The next ten years were spent teaching and as an occasional inspector of schools for the Board of Education. This was followed by a period as Acting Director of Education for the Transvaal, which later also included the Orange River Colony. In 1905 he entered the Transvaal Legislative Council as Director of Education, under Lord Milner. The same year he was invited to become Editor of the *Morning Post*, having been a contributor for some years, and a short while later he became a director of the Rio Tinto Company, a metal and mining corporation.

When war was declared in August 1914 he attempted to volunteer for the Army, but "*at 45 years of age I am apparently too old to fight. Well, I'm not going to sit idly by. I am determined to do my bit*" and, with Lord Milner's assistance, he had a "*...profitable meeting with Lt. Col. Stewart of the British Red Cross.... I am to take command of a mobile unit in France. It is noble work*". By September 1914 his mobile Ambulance unit, consisting of privately owned cars sent out to look for wounded and escaped prisoners, was in France.

After visiting a British cemetery, in October 1914, Ware expressed concern about the official mechanism for recording the graves of those killed and the state of preservation of burials. He, with Lt. Col. Stewart, agreed that the Red Cross should "*provide funds for a more robust system of marking graves*".

Ware petitioned the British government to establish an official agency to oversee the locating and marking of British war dead, and to acquire land for cemeteries. The Imperial War Office agreed and created the Graves Registration Commission. His diary states "*2 March 1915. Great news received – the mobile unit has been recognized by the British Army. The Grave Registration Commission is formed*". In May, the Graves Registration Commission ceased to operate an ambulance service and in September 1915 was made an official arm of the British Army.



*Maj. General Sir Fabian Arthur Goulstone Ware*



*Haphazard graves “with inscriptions to preserve rough records, are already in danger of being obliterated”.  
By October 1915, the new Graves Registration Commission had over 31,000 graves registered.*

created by Royal Charter on 21 May 1917. Initially use had been made of local graveyards but, with these become short of burial space, Ware negotiated to acquire land in both France and Belgium for new British cemeteries. This was followed by three major steps in the development of the Commission; the concentration of some 160,000 isolated graves, the concentration of the very small cemeteries into larger ones and indentifying the missing, estimated at over half a million. Shortly after the end of the war the numbers were staggering: ‘128,577 re-internments in the first fifteen months of peace, a further 76,073 over the next eighteen months and 38,000 more over the following three years.’\*



*Above - one of the first ‘experimental cemeteries’; an extension to the Community Cemetery at Forceville, Somme in 1921. The wooden crosses have been replaced by headstones.  
Left – a Graves Registration Unit in the 1920s retrieving the dead for reburial in the new cemeteries.*

\* ‘Empires of the Dead’ – David Crane. Harper Collins 2014.



*In May 1922 King George V visited several cemeteries in an event that became known as ‘The King’s Pilgrimage’ celebrated in a poem and a book by Rudyard Kipling. It was intended to encourage other travellers and relatives of the dead to make their own pilgrimages to the Western Front. The wooden crosses have not yet been replaced by stone. In addition to Sir Fabian Ware (holding the papers) the Royal Party included Earl Haig, the Right Honourable Sir Frederick Ponsonby, Col. Clive Wigram and Maj. R Seymour.*

*“The spirits of the mighty army of the dead seemed to marshal .... come to receive the homage of the King, for whom they died, and to hear that in the land which they saved their names will live evermore”  
- closing words of the book “The King’s Pilgrimage” by Frank Fox (.1874-1960)*

Most cemeteries in France & Flanders follow a similar design, enclosed within a low wall giving the feeling of a traditional, quiet garden and a register of graves in contained in a small cupboard within the stonework near the entrance. Most cemeteries have a Cross of Sacrifice designed by Sir Reginald Blomfield, one of the three principle architects; Sir Edwin Lutyens designed the Stone of Remembrance for the larger cemeteries and the third architect, Sir Herbert Baker, designed the largest British war cemetery, Tyne Cot Cemetery, at Passchendaele, in Belgium.



*The Cross of Sacrifice, left, represents the faith of the majority of the fallen, based on the medieval crosses found in English churchyards with the bronze sword reflecting their military service.*

*The Stone of Remembrance, right, in cemeteries of more than 1000 graves, is engraved with the words “Their Name Liveth for Evermore” and the shape avoids any religious reflection and commemorates ‘those of all faiths and none’.*



details of the death are given except the date. Where the remains have not been identified the stone carries the words of Rudyard Kipling, the appointed literary advisor, “*A Soldier of the Great War known unto God*”. The gardens and flower borders around the graves were treated as an integral part of the design and traditional cottage garden plants and roses, suggesting the gardens of home, feature in the borders surrounded by lawn paths. The cemeteries around the world feature landscaping and planting appropriate to the topography and climate.

‘*The Immortal Heritage*’, an account of the work of the commission, was published by Ware in 1937; the threat of further war was looming and future battles would damage many of the cemeteries. The outbreak of the Second World War saw him appointed Director of Graves Registration and Enquiries at the War Office, whilst continuing in his role as Vice-Chairman of the Commission.



*Sir Fabian Ware retired to this cottage in Amberley, near Stroud, where he died in 1949*



*Sir Fabian Ware is buried under a simple War Grave Commission headstone in Amberley churchyard.*

He retired to the Cotswolds, living in Amberley, a small village on the edge of the Nailsworth Valley, tucked below Minchinhampton Common. He died on 29 April 1949, two months before his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, at home in Amberley and is buried in the local churchyard. His grave has a CWGC style headstone and is maintained by the Commission. There are also memorial tablets to him in St George's chapel, Westminster Abbey and in Gloucester Cathedral. He was appointed CMG in 1917, CB in 1919, KBE in 1920 and KCVO in 1922. He was a Chevalier and later a Grand Officer of the Legion of Honour and held the Croix de Guerre; and a Commander of the Order of the Crown of Belgium.

The IWCG changed its name to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in 1960 and is now responsible for 1.7 million Commonwealth war dead in 153 countries in 23,000 separate burial sites and the maintenance of these and more than 200 memorials worldwide

**Lt. Col. Ralph Stephenson TD.**