



# Newsletter

No. 6 January 2015

## • *From the Curator*

The anniversary of WW1 continues to generate large numbers of family history inquiries and 224 have been received since January, of which 63 have arrived since 1<sup>st</sup> September. The result is that our eight hard working volunteers who answer these inquiries (on a part-time basis) are currently overwhelmed and it is taking more than three months to supply the information. This is unsatisfactory and we need more computer-literate volunteers to help with this valuable work. No experience of family history research is necessary and training will be provided. Can you help – or do you know someone who can? Please contact John Paddock.

As far as volunteers are concerned, we have 25 altogether involved in researching the medal collection, cataloguing the backlog of museum objects and archives, maintaining the IT system, managing the merchandising, and acting as gallery attendants. This last function is another where we could use more volunteers. You will need an easy manner with the visitors and be able to learn something about the displays and the history of the regiment and to pass your knowledge on. This is a role especially suited to retired teachers, but this is not a 'requirement'. If you would like to give it a go, please talk to John Paddock.

We have now begun to publish excerpts from the 2nd Battalion War Diary on the Facebook page accompanied by images from the regimental photograph albums. Keep an eye on this if you are a Facebook user. Sadly, our presence on Twitter has stalled through lack of time. Again, assistance could be provided by a volunteer.

If you have been in the Museum lately you will have seen that the temporary exhibition on the battle of Gheluvelt opened on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014. The display is centred on the temporary display case and the remembrance section and includes the following: an Info-aktiv Interactive, a graphic panel and the James Prinsep Beadle painting of the 2nd Battalion's arrival at the Chateau at Gheluvelt (WOSWR M 134). We have managed to incorporate the Gilbert Holiday image of the rush over the Polderhoek and Major Hankey's notes made immediately after the engagement. The exhibition will close on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2015 to make way for a temporary exhibition on the Battle of Neuve Chapelle which is due to open on 10<sup>th</sup> January and run to the 31<sup>st</sup> March. After that, there will be an exhibition on Gallipoli to mark that campaign.

Museums Worcestershire currently have a temporary exhibition in the Art Gallery entitled ***World War I in the words of Worcestershire People*** (see the review on p.10) to which we have loaned:

- The Battle of Neuve Chapelle painting by Fortunino Matania (WOSWR 2008-151)
- The Wire cutters at Gallipoli drawing by Gilbert Holiday (WOSWR M128)
- The Patterson Archive – papers belonging to Private Reginald H Patterson relating to his service from 1914 to 1918 (WOSWR 2014-126-1 to 43)
- A German Machine Gun captured at Gheluvelt in 1918 (WOSWR M1048)

The last four months have seen the Museum and/or the Friends taking stands, manned by volunteers, at various outreach events:

- Family History Day at Sixways Stadium on 9<sup>th</sup> August (Trevor Wilson)
- Historical event in the church at Arley Kings on 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> October (John Wrightson)
- Pershore Family History Event on 30<sup>th</sup> October (John Lowles)
- The Gheluvelt Lunch at the Racecourse on 25<sup>th</sup> October (Mary and John Weager)
- WFRA centenary event in Gheluvelt Park on 31<sup>st</sup> October (Keith Jeavons and Mary and John Weager)
- The Dudley Great War Roadshow on 8<sup>th</sup> November (John Wrightson)

## • ***New Library Shelving***

The new library shelving, for which we have been given a grant of about half the cost (see Newsletter 5) by the *Army Museums Ogilby Trust*, was installed on Armistice Day 2014. A team of volunteers then spent three days unpacking boxes of books from the museum store and arranging them on the new shelves. At last the library is now available in its entirety to the researchers and the finding and checking of information is much easier. However, the library has many treasured records from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries that need skilled conservation and many books have been found to be in need of repairs to their bindings. Over the next few months we shall be quantifying the amount of work that needs doing so that we can apply for a grant to cover the conservation in 2015.



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## • ***Captain Roger Eustace Cleverley***

*The son of the late Mr and Mrs Thomas Cleverley of Coventry, Roger was educated at King's School, Worcester. After leaving school, he was employed by Glenn's, the Outfitters, in Broad Street, Worcester, whilst living in Malvern. He was commissioned into the 8th Battalion The Worcestershire Regiment in 1937 and posted to C Company in Droitwich to organise recruiting with a Sergeant, a Corporal and a Section of soldiers. War was declared on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1939, recruiting became brisk and, very soon, they had sufficient men to form a Company: daily routine involved drill and weapon training. During that month, the whole of the Battalion paraded to lay up the Colours in Worcester Cathedral for safe keeping during the War, 2Lt Cleverley carrying the Battalion Colours. The account which follows is an abridged version of his diary (Accession no. WOSWR M 2031-5)*

The Battalion moved to Marlborough in October 1939 to join 144 Infantry Brigade, part of 48th Division. 2Lt Cleverley managed to find time to marry Barbara Hunt of Penrhyn, Court Road, Malvern, at Christ Church, Malvern, in November before the Battalion was posted to France in the December. The Battalion embarked at Southampton after Christmas and sailed for Le Havre; on disembarkation, 2Lt Cleverley was detailed to supervise the unloading of Brigade stores from three ships. This done, he was sent to Le Mans where, billeted in the Hotel Continental, he celebrated his 24<sup>th</sup> birthday. He then became Adjutant of a unit whose task was to organise billeting for incoming



Salisbury Plain 1938

units but, eventually, he was recalled to his Battalion in the small village of Moncheaux, some 18 kilometres from Douai. Halfway through a two-week Officers' Tactical Training Course at Aubigny-au-Bac, he was recalled to his Battalion as they were due to deploy some 7 or 8 miles in front of the Maginot Line. After a very wet ten days, the Battalion was relieved, moving back to Kédange but, a couple of days later, the Battalion moved forward of the Maginot Line again to a position three miles further forward than previously. Roger's Company came under fire on the first morning and they managed to defeat a German section with no casualties of their own. One officer, John Nicholls, led a night patrol into no man's land and removed a Swastika from the top of the church steeple which had been put there the previous night: that flag is in the Museum.

Shortly afterwards, the Battalion was ordered to a village five miles south of Brussels through which large numbers of refugees passed with their possessions in wheelbarrows, carts and anything on wheels. The Company then moved overnight to a village about two miles from Brussels. On arrival, they

received orders that the entire Battalion was to withdraw at 0700 hours the following morning, each Company taking a different route.

They marched throughout the day with ten minutes' rest every hour through seemingly deserted countryside and villages whilst competing with refugees for road space. They were machine-gunned by four German aircraft without casualties despite a number of strafing runs along the ditches in which they were lying; they took refuge in a house while some Gunners fired everything they had at the aircraft (they had spiked their guns and were withdrawing rapidly) and watched as one aircraft crashed but another flew back, dropped a couple of grenades on them and flew off. They rested until receiving orders to be at a particular cross-roads at midnight to meet transport. They made the RV only to discover that A and B Companies had left already leaving C and D Companies with no transport. A passing despatch rider told them that the Germans were quite close so they set off on foot; they stopped after two hours where the rest of the Battalion should have been: nothing, so they set off again – only to find that they had marched in a circle... They found that their maps were quite out of date. They continued to try to keep ahead of the Germans and marched for almost 10 hours. They were told that bridges ahead over the River Escaud had been blown but they were lucky to find one in the charge of a friend of 2Lt Cleverley's – a Lt Peter Downey of 2nd Bn Coldstream Guards – who delayed the blowing until they had crossed. It was at this point that both officers realised that they were fighting a rear-guard action for their respective Divisions and they also realised that they had no chance of keeping out of trouble. They settled in a wood for the night when some transport appeared: they unloaded the equipment and ammunition, climbed aboard and set off. At dawn, they stopped in a lane and then received orders to take a convoy of the Battalion's vehicles to Wez Velvain, some miles south of Tournai, where Battalion HQ was waiting. It was not an easy journey as the roads were clogged with refugees. They made it without incident and they collected some more of their Battalion's transport en route.

At about 0400 hours on 20<sup>th</sup> May, a small party of Gloucesters passed through their position. The officer in charge was a friend of Roger Cleverley's who said that the Germans were in the next village and that he was heading for Dunkirk about fifteen miles away to be evacuated with his soldiers. Orders from Battalion HQ had dried up so Cleverley had to start thinking for himself. At about 1600 hours, some Sappers (who were blowing bridges and roads as they went) reported that the Germans were about half a mile away. A runner was despatched to Battalion HQ but returned to say that they had gone. At 1700 hours, they were attacked. The Company Commander, Captain Graham Macdonald, visited to check the Platoon. He was never seen again. Suddenly, two enemy tanks

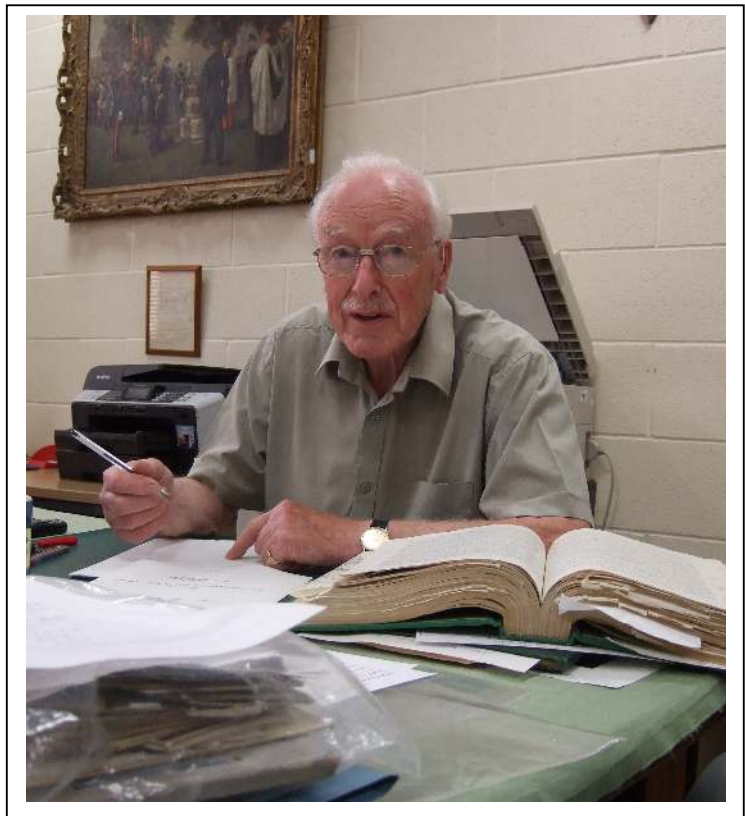
appeared and opened fire; infantry appeared from behind the tanks so Cleverley's Platoon opened up with their small arms – no match for the tanks. Roger Cleverley was shot in the leg and fell into a trench: a soldier was injured in the stomach and fell across his legs. Four more tanks had appeared and the Platoon had run out of ammunition (they had started with only 10 rounds each...). The enemy troops were a Squadron and Company of Waffen SS Toten Kopf, commanded by Kapitän W Mohnke: their policy was to take no prisoners so the commander and one other went round shooting the wounded, including 2Lt Cleverley. Others who were not wounded were rounded up: some were herded into a barn whilst others were taken with some Warwicks and Norfolks and herded into another barn into which grenades were thrown, killing most of them: the infamous 'Wormhoudt Massacre'.

With a bullet in his lower back near the spine and another in the leg, he lay in the trench all night, unable to move: he was joined by a terrified little dog who kept him company. He was found the next day, 28<sup>th</sup> May 1940, by troops of the German second line and taken to a German field dressing station in a nearby farmhouse. A German doctor dressed his wounds, carried him upstairs and put him to bed. He slept peacefully – he had no idea for how long as he was somewhat delirious through loss of blood and lack of water – until he was placed on a stretcher and taken by ambulance to Boulogne Hospital. This was over-full so the driver took him to Camiers, about 20 kilometres away. So started Roger Eustace Cleverley's years as a Prisoner of War. *To be continued .....*



## • **Volunteer Gallery**

Pat Love is the longest serving researcher in our current volunteer team having started helping out at RHQ at Norton Barracks in July 1985 when he took early retirement from his career as a school-master in Cheltenham. At first he took on whatever was needed, but gradually he gravitated towards the family history inquiries which are now the main part of his contribution to the museum. Before becoming a regular weekly volunteer Pat researched the volunteer elements of soldiering in Worcestershire and wrote ***For Battle Prepared: The Worcestershire Volunteer Infantry and Local Militia 1778-1816*** (1985) that is available as a bound typescript in the Museum library. As this deserves to be more widely available, the Friends are looking into the possibility of publishing it on CD. Pat has also written ***For a Worthy Purpose: A History of The Worcestershire Territorial Force and Volunteer Battalions 1908-1920*** and this is now being edited also with a view to publishing it as a CD. But that is not all, as there are two other partly written projects: ***Trouble in the Wind: A History of the Worcestershire Territorial Battalions 1920-1967*** and ***Defence not Defiance: A History of the Worcestershire Rifle Volunteers 1859-1908***. He has also contributed a number of articles to ***Firm*** and to ***Firm and Forester*** over the years.



Pat Love served his National Service with the RASC in 1953-5 after being deferred for several years and was commissioned in 1954. He then became a schoolmaster while serving a year in the Army Emergency Reserve. Having decided to join the TA, he went along to join the Yeomanry but discovered that it was about to be amalgamated. Nothing daunted, Pat joined the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Worcestershire Regiment and was posted to A Company in Dudley under the command of Major Jock Bannister. In 1958 Pat married and moved to teaching at a school in Cheltenham and, as a result, he was transferred to D Company of the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion at Evesham under the command of Major John Bailey. Pat assumed command of D Company on St Valentine's Day in 1964.

Then, in 1967, the TA and AER were re-branded as the Territorial and Army Volunteer Reserve and 7<sup>th</sup> Worcesters were disbanded; Pat found himself out of a job so he transferred to the Royal Corps of Transport (within the TAVR) and commanded a Movement Control Staff Increment. As a Lt Colonel, he had to retire from the TAVR in 1978 at 50 having earned the TD and bar.

- ***From the Archives: "Better than statues"***

The casualties of World War 1 far exceeded the number of poppies recently displayed in the moat of the Tower of London. As more information comes to light with the commemoration of 1914 and, in particular, the Battle of Gheluvelt, it is evident that many of those who did return home were left with irreparable broken bodies and shattered minds.



*Sir Arthur Carlton (artist unknown) Worcester Guildhall Collection*



*Lt. Francis E Myddleton-Gave, killed at Gallipoli, and Captain Gerald Ernest Lea (right) in 1913*

As part of Worcester's War Memorial to the fallen, a plan was devised by the Lord Mayor, Alderman Arthur Carlton, which would be not only a tribute to those who were killed but also to those who returned, and that was the erection of homes for seriously disabled soldiers and sailors from the City and County of Worcester, a plan strongly supported by Lord Coventry and Lord Beauchamp.

A newspaper article in the archives describes how by means of entertainments, pageants and donations, a sum of £14,650 was raised and by 1922, twelve comfortable homes of varying sizes were erected in the aptly re-named Gheluvelt Park to house twelve disabled men and their families, the first being opened by General Lord Rawlinson on 13<sup>th</sup> July 1920. The maintenance of these homes was dependent on subscriptions given by thankful citizens and by funds raised in various ways, which included a generous legacy bequeathed by Sir Arthur Carlton. At this time no one thought that another World War would follow so quickly, but after 1945 Airmen and other servicemen were also included in the scheme. Needless to say, there was always a long waiting list.

One very significant contribution came from Judge Harris Lea, whose son, Captain Gerald Ernest Lea of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, was killed on the Tilleul Heights on 14<sup>th</sup> September 1914, aged 37. He had been regarded as 'one of the best officers of the Regiment' and his loss was 'deeply felt. A man of very charming personality, a fine soldier and a graduate of the Staff College, he would have gone far, had he survived.' (see p.18 in H FitzM Stacke, *The Worcestershire Regiment in the Great War*). The Lea family paid for the building of one of the houses in its entirety.



Applications for these homes dating from August 1920 to August 1970 can be found in the museum archives, together with copies of the Rules and Regulations for the residents. Rule 11 forbade the keeping of pigs on the premises and inebriation was strictly frowned upon! Many of the applicants were double amputees and had many other disabling conditions to cope with, such as osteo-arthritis, loss of vision and hearing, and lung complaints; one particularly pitiful applicant with very shaky handwriting was quoted as having 'war nerves' but, sadly, this application was turned down. Even when applications were strongly supported with doctors' letters, many were inevitably rejected as twelve homes were a mere drop in the ocean for the many deserving cases. Evidence from the archives shows that some applications were presented to the committee more than once, spread over a considerable period of time, and are yet another illustration of the enduring misery brought about as a result of the two wars.

- ***Regimental Historians: Captain H FitzM Stacke MC***

The history of the Worcestershire Regiment has been the subject of several books covering different time spans or individual battalions, together with a number of biographical or autobiographical reminiscences and diaries, but none are consulted as much today as Captain Stacke's ***The Worcestershire Regiment in the Great War***. This is particularly true of the present when the centenary of 'the war to end all wars' is causing many people to research their ancestors who were involved.

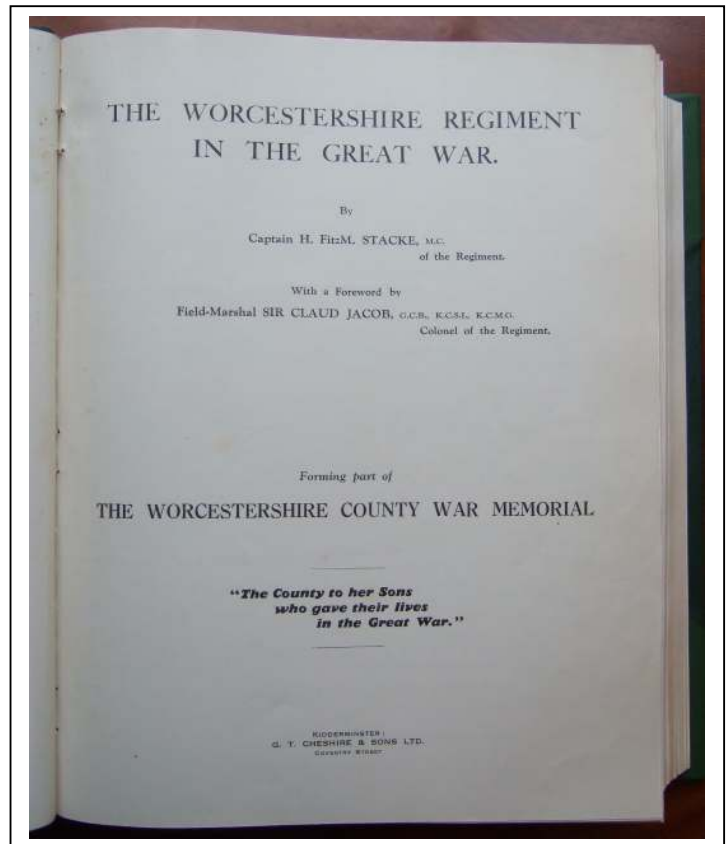
Henry FitzMaurice Stacke was born on 9 March, 1891, and after his school-days at Beaumont he went to the Royal Military College, but at Sandhurst there was a shortage of accommodation and his time as a cadet was spent at Woolwich, where a company was on detachment. In October, 1910, he was commissioned into the Worcestershire Regiment (in which he was known as Frank to his friends) and posted to the 1st Battalion, then stationed at Parkhurst on the Isle of Wight. In 1913 he went with the Battalion to Egypt, where he commanded the platoon detached to serve with the Camel Corps at Abbassia, then moved to France with the Battalion after the outbreak of 'war.



Henry FitzMaurice Stacke, Cairo, 1913

The unit arrived in the Neuve Chapelle area in November, 1914. In the following January he was wounded, but was back with the Battalion before the March battle, on the eve of which he led a reconnaissance patrol into the enemy-held area. (It was typical of his modesty that in his History the patrol commander is identified only by the initials 'H.F.S.' in a

footnote.) At the Battle of Neuve Chapelle the CO, Lt Col E.C.F. Wodehouse, DSO, was one of the nine officers killed, which no doubt accounts for the fact that Lieut Stacke did not receive a gallantry award for his patrol. He was one of the ten officers wounded. His wound was serious, and required a long convalescence during which he completed his **Notes on Regimental History**, which took the story of the Worcestershire Regiment to the end of 1916 and included some interesting appendices in its 83 pages. The book, with three colour plates, was published in 1917 at 2/6d.



It was in May 1917 that Captain Stacke returned to the front as Adjutant of the 4th Battalion. In August, at the Battle of Langemarck, he was again wounded and awarded the MC. At the end of 1917, when he was serving with the 5th Battalion in Essex, his services were requested by the Secretary of the Historical Section of the Committee for Imperial Defence. In January, 1918, therefore, he began work on compiling an official diary of the war. The project was soon considerably expanded and proved to be an exacting task which occupied the whole year, except for a month in the autumn when he was with the War Office. In December, 1918, he was appointed Secretary of the Battles Nomenclature Committee, work which lasted until July, 1921, when he rejoined the Regiment, in the 2nd Battalion, having been awarded the Belgian *Croix de Guerre* the previous year.

Frank Stacke must have begun to compile his history of the Regiment in the war years almost immediately after the completion of **Notes**, working entirely in his spare time. The text was completed while he was at the Staff College in 1927-28. During these years he was also contributing

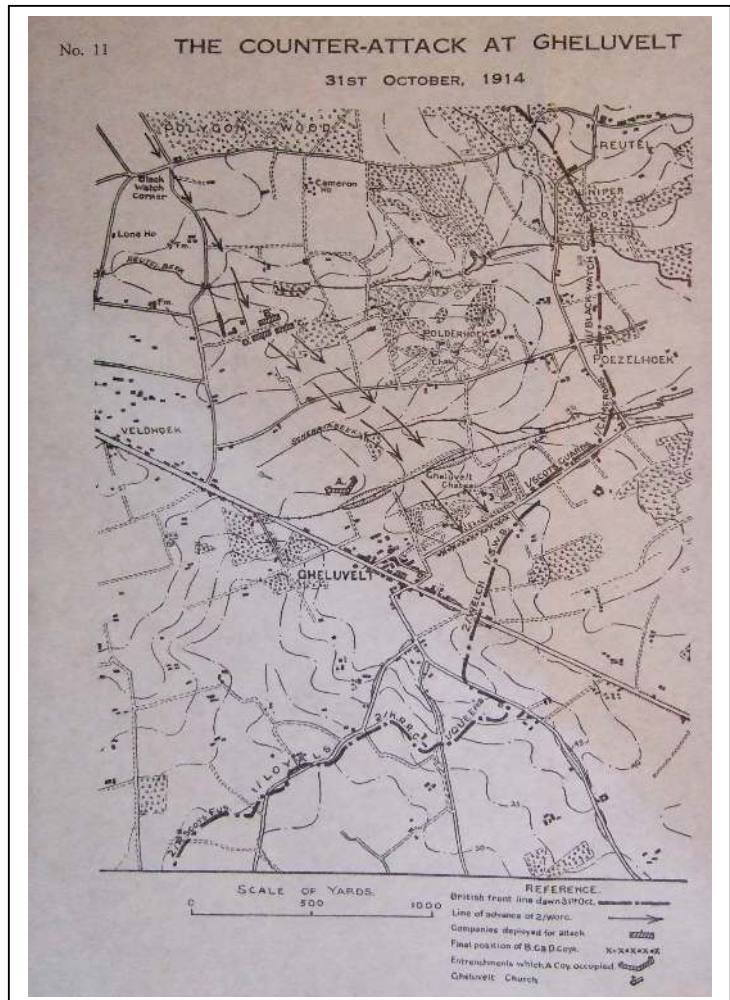
articles to *The Green 'Un* (the Journal of the 2nd Battalion, although in all but name it became the Regimental Journal) and he continued to write for *FIRM* after this succeeded the former publication in November, 1927. Stacke began a four-year stint at the War Office in 1928 and also married in that year. In 1931 he became Brevet-Major, then substantive.

The publication of his History in 1929 attracted notice far outside Regimental circles; it confirmed what was already known of his conspicuous talents, immense energy and wide knowledge of the Army in general. The book is remarkable not only for the meticulous detail but also for 127 folding maps, numerous illustrations, and detailed appendices, and now commands a high price in the antiquarian book market, although those who want a working copy will find that there is a modern re-print.

In 1932 he returned to the Historical Section to write the volume of the Official History dealing with the war in East Africa. He was willing to do this and the Regiment agreed to loan him for two-and-a-half years. Again, this work demanded considerable skill, for operations in East Africa had been very complicated and the available maps were poor. To obtain as complete a view as possible of events in that theatre, Major Stacke had made contact (evidently as early as 1930) with Hauptmann L. Boell, the German historian of the campaign (fought in what had been a German colony), with whom he established excellent relations.

Towards the end of 1935, knowing that he was to sail to join the 2nd Battalion in China during the approaching troping season, Major Stacke spared no effort, labouring long and late, to finish his work and even giving up his embarkation leave to complete it. Three chapters remained to be done and he was noticeably tiring, but he resisted all well-meant appeals to spare himself. Shortly before he was due to sail, he was in the Naval and Military Club, when he suddenly collapsed. He was taken to the Millbank Military Hospital, but died within a few hours on 15 November 1935, without regaining consciousness. He was only 44 and had, as his obituary put it, (*FIRM* 7 (4) (January 1936) 404-6) 'literally worked himself to death in the service of his Country'. Apart from those of his qualities alluded to above, the obituary also stressed 'his charm of manner, his utter unselfishness and modesty which caused him to disclaim any credit for himself in anything that he did, while, on the other hand, he would be quick to praise and thank those who rendered him any aid, however trifling.'

Apart from the formal obituary, *FIRM* (vol. 7 (4) January 1936) 401-404) carried a long appreciation by the Colonel of the Regiment, Field-Marshal Sir Claud Jacob, in which he quoted a tribute to 'Major Stacke's work from the head of the Historical Section, Brigadier-General Sir James Edmonds. From Germany, too, came a letter from Hauptmann Boell to Sir James Edmonds, expressing the writer's personal sense of loss and asking for a photograph of 'our late friend'. Perhaps that, as much as anything, would have pleased the generous spirit of Frank Stacke.



Map no.11 in 'Stacke'

## • **A Man and his Medals: Colonel A C Johnston**

Nearly everybody who has served in the armed forces will have enjoyed the opportunities offered for sport and none more so than Alexander (Alec) Colin Johnston (1884-1952) who joined the Worcestershire Regiment in November 1903 and retired to the Regular Army Reserve of Officers in 1938. He subsequently carried out valuable Staff service during WW2 for the Foreign Office.



During WW1 Alec Johnston was awarded a DSO and bar, an MC, a Croix de Guerre with Palm, and a Brevet Majority. He was mentioned in Despatches five times and wounded four times. His medal group in the museum (WOSWR:M 391) includes a 1914 Star and bar trio with MID oak leaves, a WW2 Italy Star, a Defence Medal and War Medal, a 1935 Jubilee Medal and a 1937 Coronation Medal. The Museum also holds three volumes of his manuscript WW1 diary for the period August 1914 to September 1919 (WOSWR:M 729).

An appreciation of Alec Johnston's life appeared in *Firm* (20 (1) (April 1953) 8-10) where he was portrayed in cricket whites and described as 'quite the best all round games player the Regiment has ever known'.



He played cricket, hockey and soccer for the Army; he was a scratch golfer before WW1 and was still playing off 11 after the War, despite a sniper's bullet at Passchendaele that left his right leg four inches shorter than his left.

*Regimental Cricket Week 1913*  
*Back row: A N Other, T H Hughes, A S Nesbitt, R E Vyvyan, C V Beresford. Seated: ? ? Palmer, H A Fulton, A C Johnston, E F C Wodehouse, W E Sykes, E L D Brownell. Front: P D Harding, F F Smythe (Photo Album 102, page 12)*

But it was cricket for which he was best known playing for Hampshire (1902-14), the

Gentlemen (v. Players) and the Regiment. In 1910 he made 1000 runs for Hampshire and in 1912 he was, for a while, top of the First Class batting averages making two centuries in one match against Warwickshire. Between the wars he captained the Regimental team until he retired in 1937 aged 53.

After retiring from the Army, Alec Johnston immediately threw himself into organising the 1939 World Rover Moot at Monzie in Scotland that was attended by 35,000 Rover Scouts from 42 countries. Then, when he retired for the second time after WW2 became honorary secretary of the tennis club at Hook Heath where, according to *FIRM*, "he worked like a galley-slave doing navy's work to save the club money". Alec Johnston died on 27<sup>th</sup> December 1952, aged 68.

## • ***Exhibition Review: World War One In the Words of Worcestershire People***



***Trench cello made by Reginald Paul Quelch. Museums Worcestershire Collection***

Reginald Patterson of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the Worcestershire Regiment. Here wonderfully conveyed in a remarkable collection of letters, documents and memorabilia all intact, maybe because he survived and lived to be ninety. All these items are quietly portrayed but loudly convey a moving testimony of the times.

Everyone will take away their own personal memories from this exhibition.

A good candidate is the fascinating 'Trench Cello' made by Reginald Quelch from an oil can and shaped wood (see illustration) and played by him in the trenches of the Western Front. Today it could be a showpiece of modern art. However, if you listen to the recorded music it can create played by cellist Steven Isserlis, it sounds astonishingly melodious. It must have been a joy for those who heard it played and proof of the resourcefulness, skill and artistic endeavour of soldiers caught in the most demanding and anxious of situations.

This retrospective came together from a wide variety of different resources, including those of the Mercian Regiment Museum, which were researched by volunteers who unearthed a personal view of Worcestershire folk during World War One. We are in debt to all who contributed. The Museum has put on a fine exhibition that informs, is often very moving and opens a valuable, personal door to a piece of dramatic history. The exhibition runs until 14 March 2015.

This presentation at the Worcester City Art Gallery and Museum possibly does not have the same visual impact as previous centre piece exhibitions. The contents are predominantly framed around smaller, less showy details, but here lies its strength. The power is found in the writings of poems, diaries, and letters; the personal possessions of ordinary people, plus contemporary paintings and photographs. All are brought together to give an intimate portrayal of people living through extraordinary times one hundred years ago.

Even in the large screen Pathé News feature, a popular part of the exhibition, there is a peculiar intimacy in seeing the silent moving images of yesteryear. With people captured on film busily doing everyday things, such as the bustle of many women on the move, men training with horses for military duty, curious children looking to camera and on display frame after frame, we witness the wearing of a vast array of hats; all very individual and clearly no one left home without one!

Also on the larger scale is the "Neuve Chapelle 1915" oil painting by Fortunino Matania. There is no photographic copy that can convey the same impact as the original painting, as one sees first-hand the detail, the colours, senses the action, breathes the tension and becomes caught in this gripping moment of conflict.

In the more unobtrusive parts of the exhibition you learn about prisoners of war, soldiers cutting through barbed wire to create lanes of attack, identity cards and rationing, nursing and the use of saline infusion, those shot for cowardice or desertion and the lives and experiences of those like Lieutenant Corporal



***Voluntary Aid Detachment Nurses' Uniform. Museums Worcestershire Collection.***

## • *The Gheluvelt Centenary and the Centenary Dinner*

On Friday 31<sup>st</sup> November, 100 years to the day after the Battle of Ghelevelt when the 2nd Battalion of the Worcestershire Regiment plugged a hole in the English Line of Defence at the Belgian village of Gheluvelt, the City of Worcester celebrated the occasion with the unveiling of a new memorial stone in Gheluvelt Park to remember all ranks of the Worcestershire Regiment who lost their lives in battle. The stone was unveiled by Mrs Julia Brotherton, the granddaughter of Major Edward Hankey who led the counter attack in that fateful battle. This ceremony was followed by an act of Remembrance at the Interpretive Feature for the Battle of Gheluvelt. Guards were provided by detachments of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalions of the Mercian Regiment and music by the Band of the Royal Logistics Corps.



*The Deputy Mayor of Gheluvelt, Mrs Sabine Vanderhaeghen, with Mrs Julia Brotherton*



*1st Battalion the Mercian Regiment*

*Private Derby XXX was also on parade*



The ceremonial events were followed by a fair in the park where the Royal Artillery and the Mercian Regiment, together with various organisations related to military affairs, such as The Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Association, The Western Front Association, The British Red Cross, and SAFA all had stands. The Museum Volunteers manned a stand promoting membership of the Friends and another selling museum merchandise, which was very successful, and our display on the Battle was much admired.

*John Weager manning the Museum Shop*



In the evening the Museum held a gala dinner in the Guildhall, hosted by our chairman, Mark Jackson and with Professor Sir Hew Strachan as the after-dinner speaker for which he took the subject *The First World War: Commemoration or Celebration?* The event marked the launching of a fund-raising campaign aimed initially at endowing the salary of the Curator and Assistant Curator. The dinner was attended by 170 guests. Background music was supplied by the Saxophone Quartet of the Band of the Royal Logistic Corps. The evening was a great success and murmurings were heard to the effect that it should become a regular event in the Worcester Social calendar.



*Lt Col Patrick Holcroft LVO OBE, Lord Lieutenant of Worcestershire, Sir Hew Strachan, and Monsieur Pierre-Yves Dumont, First Consul at the Belgian Embassy.*



*His Honour Judge Robert Jukes QC with Lt Col Mark Jackson OBE, Chairman of the Museum Trustees.*

## • **The 2015 Programme**

**PLEASE SUPPORT THE LECTURES AND BRING YOUR FRIENDS BUT PLEASE BE AWARE THAT IN FUTURE ENTRY FOR NON-MEMBERS WILL BE £5 (to include a drink).**

### **Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2015 7.00pm Dancox House**

Mark Rogers will give a lecture entitled *My Grandparents, The Worcesters, and the Great War*. Mark Rogers' interest in the Worcestershire Regiment stems from the fact that both his grandfathers, and two great uncles served with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion. The centre piece of the talk is a recording made in 1981 of his paternal grandfather's experiences, parts of which will be heard during the talk. He vividly recalls his experiences in the trenches, including describing how he saw two men win the Victoria Cross, and how he served under an officer who had already won it. The experiences of other relatives also feature, including how two of them lost their lives.

**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2015 AGM of the Friends at 6.30pm followed by a 'Show and Tell' at 7.00pm** when half a dozen members will display and discuss items from their own collections ranging from regimental badges to Victorian period muskets and musketry. More details in the next Newsletter, but please note the timings.

### **Future Events**

Have you any suggestions for speakers for future programmes – either by yourself or somebody who you have heard elsewhere. Any subject relevant to the history and tradition of the Mercian Regiment and its forebears, or to the museum and its collections will be welcome. Please contact Andrew Oddy at Dancox House or by email [waoddy@googlemail.com](mailto:waoddy@googlemail.com)

Contributors to this Newsletter: John Barker, Ian Higgins, Pat Love, Andrew Oddy. Patricia Oddy, John Paddock, and Bob Prophet

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