



Welcome

Welcome to the latest newsletter from the Marlow Remembers World War One Association.

The highlight over the last few months was the event organised jointly with the Marlow Society Local History Group where we listened to recordings of interviews from the late 1980s of Marlow people who remembered the war.

On Easter Sunday we held a remembrance service at the grave of Leonard Roberts who is buried in Marlow, to coincide with the 100th anniversary of his death in the War. This is the first of a planned series of commemorative events for those who died in the War and are buried in or near Marlow.

We have also continued with our programme of displays at Marlow Museum, tracking events from the War as they affected Marlow people 100 years ago. We are also continuing to exhibit those displays at other venues in the town.

Looking ahead, the highlight of the next few months will be the Trenches Heritage Day on 12 July, organised in collaboration with The Woodland Trust and Archaeology in Marlow – you can read more about that in this newsletter. We hope to see you there for what promises to be a fascinating journey back in time!

Please do check our website <http://www.marlowww1.org.uk/> for further details of these and other events and activities.

Best wishes

Andy Ford

Chairman MRWW1 Association

Talks and Events

12 July – Trenches Heritage Day – a day of activities at Pullingshill Wood, Marlow Common to commemorate 100 years since the digging of the practice trenches

23 July – Commemorative service at the grave of Gerald Le Thicke in Bisham Churchyard

14 September – Commemorative service at the grave of Ernest Sutton in Marlow All Saints' churchyard

16 November – Evening event on Research into the Soldiers from Marlow organised jointly with Marlow Society Local History Group



British troops fighting at Gallipoli, courtesy of Imperial War Museum

Trenches Heritage Day

The practice trenches at Pullingshill Wood, Marlow Common are the most powerful local physical reminders of the First World War.

These were constructed in the summer of 1915 by troops billeted around Marlow before they went to fight on the Western Front. They are still visible today and give a strong impression of what life was like for a soldier in the First World War.

To commemorate the 100th anniversary of their construction, we are holding a Heritage Day on Sunday 12 July. This is being organised jointly with The Woodland Trust and Archaeology in Marlow.

Highlights include:

- Guided tours of the practice trenches
- An opportunity to meet a soldier from the War (well, a re-enactor at least!)
- Exhibitions about the trenches and of soldiers' equipment
- An opportunity to try out a real life World War One assault course!

We want this to be an experience for all ages that is both educational and enjoyable. So please do come along!

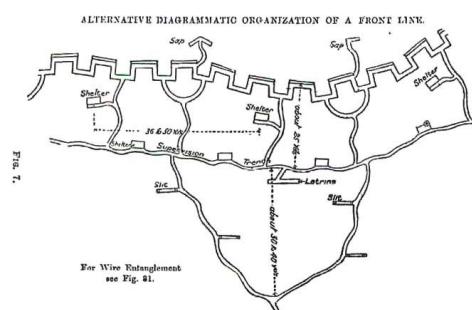
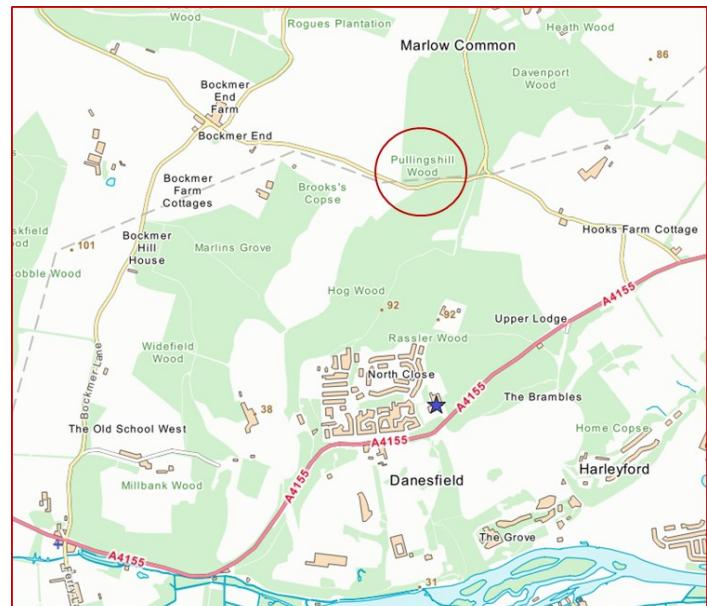
We are starting the day with a march past by local cadet units and a remembrance service by the trenches. The site opens to the general public at 11.45am, with activities finishing at 3pm. All activities are free.

For further information, please contact michaelahyde@uwclub.net.



Parking

Please note there will be no space for parking at Marlow Common on the day. Instead, parking is available at Danesfield School, from where it is a very pleasant 10 minute walk through the woods to the trenches. So please do park there and follow the signs to the trenches!



Research and Museum Displays

With the help of the Heritage Lottery Fund we are producing and exhibiting displays at Marlow's museum to commemorate the changing nature of the war. Displays are being changed every three months and each will focus on three key areas:

- The effect of the war on Marlow, society and the people left at home
- The story of one or a small number of the combatants killed in the war, timed to coincide with the 100th anniversary of their death
- Key events from the war and how they involved or affected local people

The first of these displays was erected in time for the centenary of the outbreak of war, at the beginning of August 2014 and we have changed the displays every three months since then. The latest display was erected at the beginning of May.

The current display has the following three themes:

- **The sinking of the Lusitania.** The Lusitania was a luxury British ocean liner which set off from New York on 1 May to sail to England. Despite rules safeguarding non-military ships, she was torpedoed seven days later with the loss of almost 1,200 crew and passengers. American public opinion turned against Germany as a result of this event and towards joining the war on the Allies side.
- **Charles Frohman.** Charles was the leading theatrical manager of his day and produced plays in both London and New York, the most famous of which was Peter Pan. He was very fond of Marlow and visited regularly during the years before the war. A passenger on the ill-fated Lusitania, Charles sadly lost his life when the ship went down in May 1915.

- **William Nottingham.** William, or Wim as he was known, came from Marlow and was killed, aged 40 at Ypres on 1 May 1915. William's grand niece regularly demonstrates lace making at Marlow Museum and has generously lent some of his memorabilia to the museum for display.



*William Henry Nottingham
Courtesy of Pamela Johnson*

This display will be on show at Marlow's museum until the end of July when a further display will be erected.

Marlow Museum's winter opening hours from November to February are: **Sundays 2pm to 4pm.**

Summer opening hours from March 1st to the end of October are:

Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays 1pm to 5pm.

The Museum can also open by special appointment for groups, schools, etc.

The Museum can be found just in front of the Court Garden Leisure Centre, Pound Lane, Marlow.

Please go to <http://marlowmuseum.wordpress.com/> for further details.

Commemoration of Leonard Roberts

5th April 2015

A service was held on Easter Sunday, 5th April 2015, at the grave of a young soldier who lost his life in the war and who was the first serviceman to be buried in a Marlow cemetery. At midday and with the sun trying to break through the clouds, a small group of people from the Marlow Remembers World War One Association gathered around Leonard Roberts' grave to hear the Rev John Bustin commemorate his life. Shaun Murphy from the Royal British Legion told us about Leonard's life and we learnt that Leonard was working as a Carter at Harleyford Farm when war was declared, having moved there from Kingsclere, Hants, the family home. At the outbreak of war Leonard enlisted with the Royal Berkshire Regiment, embarking for France in November 1914. Sadly, he returned home to Marlow to recover from illness or injury and died on 5 April 1915. He was buried in a military grave in Marlow Cemetery.

To conclude the commemoration two members of the group read a poem each. The first of these poems, 'A War Memorial' was particularly poignant having been written by George Cubitt who lived in Marlow before joining up to fight in the war. After the reading of the second poem 'Here Dead We Lie' by A.E. Housman, Jamie Farrell, a student in Marlow, placed a commemorative cross by the headstone before the Rev Bustin concluded the proceedings. Also placed by the headstone was a photograph of Leonard and a small rose.



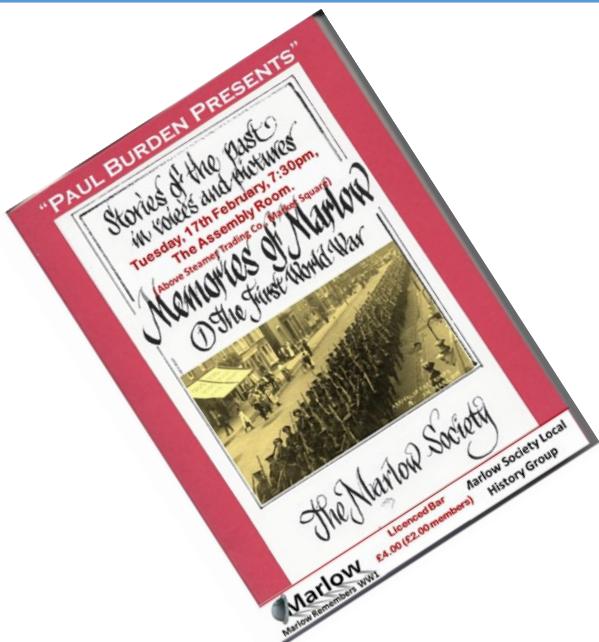
Very few of the war dead are buried in local cemeteries; most are buried in the fields of war where they died. To commemorate those who are buried in Marlow and the surrounding villages Marlow Remembers World War One will hold short services at each grave on the anniversary of their deaths. Further information about these services will be available on our website and newsletters.

web address: <http://www.marlowww1.org.uk/>

Remembrance
Crosses May
2015

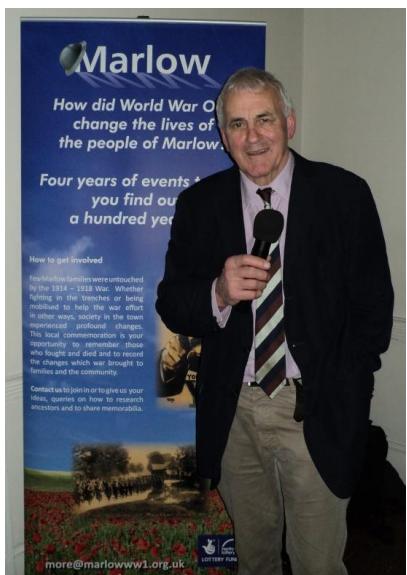


Memories of Marlow



Michael Eagleton and Paul Burden jointly presented a very effective and interesting remembrance of the First World War, using voices and pictures from the past, on the evening of Tuesday 17 February. Their 'Memories of Marlow – the First World War' was extremely well received and the Assembly Room in Marlow was brought to life as almost 70 people streamed through the doors. There was standing room only in the end. The event which had been organised and promoted jointly by the Marlow Society's Local History Group and Marlow Remembers Word War One, was introduced by Martin Blunkell, chairman of the Marlow Society. Martin explained that the evening would be split into two parts, starting with Paul replaying and talking about some of the audio interviews he had held 25 years ago with members of the older generation. Paul had wanted to preserve the experiences of an older generation which would otherwise be lost. Then, Martin explained, Michael Eagleton would present photographs from the war period, finishing with photographs of the Assembly Rooms in a former era. Paul introduced the audio part of the evening with a recording of a local man, Percival Plumridge, who was born in 1909 and whose earliest memory was leaning from his bedroom window and 'hearing a newspaper boy running down the street shouting 'War declared''. Paul picked out a number of themes from the war years, and

played recordings to illustrate and illuminate the messages. He focused on the well defined class structure of the period, and contrasted the voice of Annie Rockell, living in a household of 11, with that of Evelyn Light whose father was a vicar and who went to garden parties and croquet parties. Then there were the memories of the men going off to war and the soldiers training locally and being billeted in Marlow. Food and fuel were rationed but people living on farms had better access to fresh produce – Dick Kimber was recorded saying his family killed two pigs a year which kept them in 'fat bacon'. Many men, of course, did not return and Evelyn Light remembered that all her boyfriends were killed in the war; she never married as a result. And another woman, Elizabeth Harman recounted the story of asking General Higginson for money so that she could visit her injured husband in hospital. He refused, telling her that she 'ought to save'. After a short break, Michael Eagleton took the lead, starting by sharing his memory of an indomitable Evelyn Light, who was friends with his mother. He then showed a number of photographs from the war period, talking us through them and bringing the era to life. There were photographs of a training camp at Bovingdon Green from before the war and of soldiers building a bridge across the river. Then there were Territorials congregating in Marlow around John Langley, the Chairman of the Urban District Council, before they left for war. Michael put up various images of the camp at Bovingdon Green, including one of the Butchers shop, where the men were smoking! Michael finished his photographic account of the war years with images of the decorations in the High Street at the declaration of peace and the opening of the war memorial in 1920.



Marlow Remembers Gallipoli

The 25th April marked the centenary of the Gallipoli campaign, one of the most controversial conflicts of the First World War. Across the globe, commemorative events took place to remember the more than 110,000 Allied and Turkish servicemen who died in the fighting on a small peninsula in modern-day Turkey.

While the campaign is often associated with the role of the Australian and New Zealand armed forces, the Allied forces also included French, British and wider Imperial soldiers and sailors in their ranks. Seventeen men and boys from Marlow and the surrounding area were among those killed during the nine months of fighting.

The Ottoman Empire had joined the First World War on the side of Germany and Austria-Hungary in November 1914. At that time, its lands covered much of the Middle East as well as modern-day Turkey. Its entry into the war was seen as a threat to the Allies, especially Russia and Britain whose Empire at that time included Egypt.

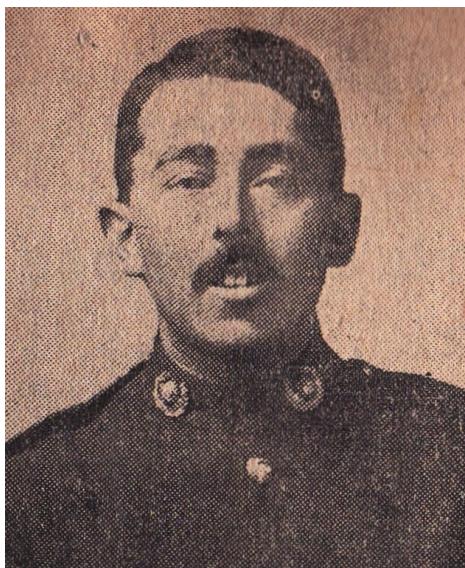
The Allies initially launched a naval campaign in February 1915 to try and capture Constantinople and therefore take the Ottoman Empire out of the war. When that failed, they landed troops on the Gallipoli peninsula, 200 miles from Constantinople with the hope of quickly marching on the city.



Lieutenant-Colonel Owen Godfrey-Faussett

However, the Allies were underprepared, lacked the right resources and were poorly led. They had also badly underestimated the resilience of the Turkish troops who faced them. Right from the initial landings on 25 April, the Allies suffered heavy casualties in repeated attacks across rough terrain on well-defended Turkish positions. They made very little progress and eventually withdrew their forces in January 1916. By then, 120,246 British, 35,623 Anzac, 27,169 French, 4779 India and 142 Newfoundland troops had been killed, wounded or were missing.

One of the early casualties was Lieutenant-Colonel Owen Godfrey-Faussett who had been born in Marlow in 1867 and was related to the Wethered family. A career soldier and a veteran of the Boer War, he was the commanding officer of the 1st Battalion, Essex Regiment at the time of the Gallipoli landings. He was reportedly called out by name by the Turkish troops and shot as he climbed from his dug out.



Private Sherry Clancy

Another early casualty was Sherry Clancy from Cambridge Road in Marlow. He was employed before the War as a gardener and then a chauffeur. He enlisted as a private in the Royal Marine Light Infantry soon after the War started and was killed on 4 May. He is commemorated on the Helles Memorial in Turkey, along with the names of five other men from Marlow who died during the campaign.

Marlow Remembers Gallipoli



Helles Memorial, courtesy of Commonwealth War Graves Commission

His elder brother James was also killed later in the War in fighting in France.



Scimitar Hill today, courtesy of The Gallipoli Association

Three men from Marlow died on the same day in the campaign when their regiment, the Royal Bucks Hussars, took part in an operation to capture Scimitar Hill. The Hussars were a long-established volunteer regiment as opposed to being part of the regular army. Although they were initially intended to serve only at home, many volunteered for overseas service and, in any case, the British Army increasingly needed reserves from outside the regular army given the very large number of casualties already incurred during the War.

The Royal Bucks Hussars left England in April 1915 and were first sent to Egypt for training. They landed at Gallipoli as reserve forces on 18 August and were almost immediately thrown into the fighting. While

they seemed initially to make good progress in their attack on Scimitar Hill, they were eventually driven back in the face of heavy shell and machine-gun fire. Much of the scrubland over which they had to cross had caught fire in the shelling and the soldiers had to bunch together to avoid the fires. This in turn made them easy targets for the Turkish machine-guns. Of the 321 officers and men who started the attack, 140 were killed or wounded.



Private Jack Langley

In addition to the dangers posed by the Turkish forces, the Allies had to contend with a range of illnesses brought on by the climate, scarce water supplies and poor sanitary conditions. It has been estimated that at least 145,000 British servicemen fell ill during the campaign, sometimes with fatal consequences. On the same day that his regiment was attacking Scimitar Hill, Private Jack Langley of the

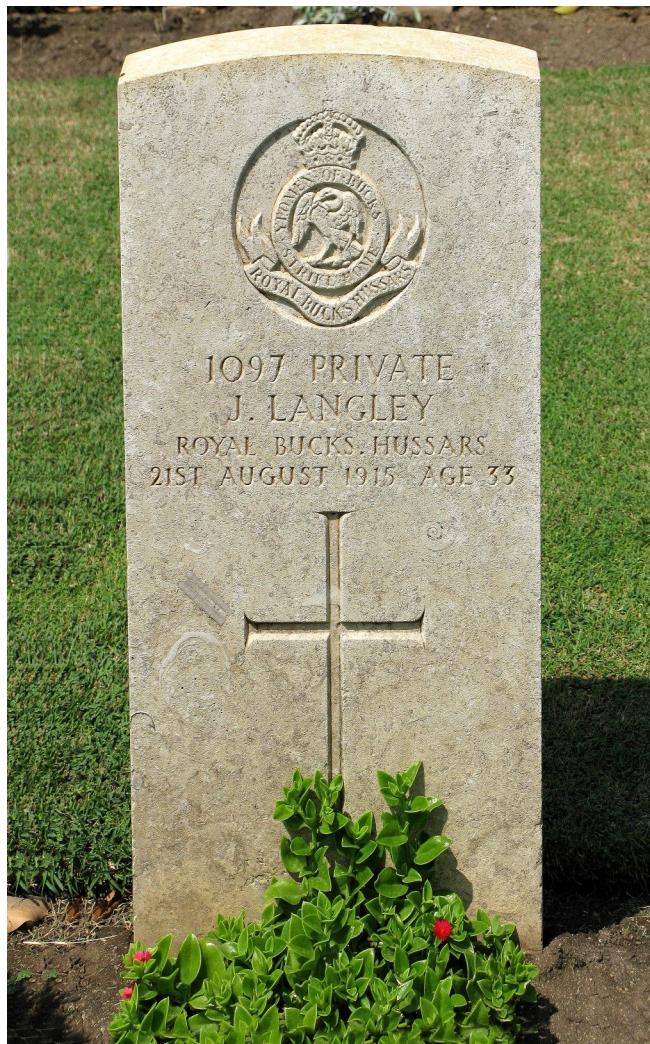


Cairo War Memorial Cemetery, courtesy of Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Marlow Remembers Gallipoli

Royal Bucks Hussars died of pneumonia in hospital in Cairo. He is buried in the war memorial cemetery there.

Jack was born in Marlow in 1881 and had been a student at Sir William Borlase's School between 1889 and 1894. He was a member of the Old Borlasians Committee and a keen member of Marlow Rowing Club. On hearing of his death, the club flew its flag at half mast as a tribute to "the memory of one of the many gallant members who answered the call", praising Jack's "generosity, high spirits and readiness for any harmless fun".



Jack Langley's grave in Cairo War Memorial Cemetery, courtesy of the War Graves Photographic Project.

His father, also called Jack, was a JP and Chairman of Marlow Urban Council. He also subsequently chaired the Appeals Tribunal which, from March 1916, heard the cases of those men from Marlow who appealed against being conscripted into the army. He was subsequently to lose another son, Walter, who was killed on the Western Front in August 1916 and a stepson, Hedley Foster, who was killed the following year.

Another casualty of illness was the youngest soldier from Marlow to die in the campaign. William North from Station Road was just 15 when he died from enteric fever on 30 September. Before the War, he had been working in a hatter's shop in the High Street and was clearly under-age when he enlisted in March 1915 as a Rifleman in the 8th Hampshire Territorials (Isle of Wight Rifles).

Like many of those who were wounded or became ill at Gallipoli, he was evacuated by ship to return to hospital in Egypt. However, he died on the journey on board HM Hospital Ship "Glenart" and so, like many others, was buried at sea. The matron on board the ship wrote to William's mother describing him as a "a dear boy and so good, and both Sister and I were very fond of him and it was heartache to both of us when he went". William kept a short diary of his time during the campaign which was printed in the South Bucks Free Press the following year.

All the men and boys mentioned in this article are commemorated on the war memorial in All Saints' Church in Marlow.

Marlow Remembers World War One is an association that has been formed to research and commemorate how the conflict affected the people of our town.

For more information, please go to <http://www.marlowww1.org.uk/>.

