

# Marlow

## Welcome

Welcome to the latest newsletter from the Marlow Remembers World War One Association. A lot has happened over the last few months.

The undoubted highlight was the event organised jointly with the Woodland Trust in July to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the construction of the training trenches at Marlow Common.

We have also done much to highlight the contribution made by men and boys from Marlow as part of the ill-fated Gallipoli campaign that started in the spring of 1915. We published an article in the Bucks Free Press to coincide with the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of the campaign. We also focused on soldiers who fought and died at Gallipoli as part of our contribution to Heritage Open Day, with exhibitions at Bisham Church and Marlow Rowing Club.

On 7th May, we supported a commemorative service at the statue on the Causeway in commemoration of Charles Frohman who had close links to Marlow and who was killed 100 years ago when the RMS Lusitania was sunk. We also held a commemorative service on 23rd July in Bisham Churchyard at the grave of Gerald Le Thicke who died during the War.

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 key events over the next few months are the talk to Marlow Society Local History Group on 16th November and the War Memorials Survey Workshop on 28th November – please read on for further details.

Best wishes,

*Andy Ford*

Chairman MRWW1 Association

## Talks and Events

**16th November 7.30pm**

Andy Ford will give a talk as part of the Marlow Society Local History Group's programme entitled "Reluctant Recruits: Conscription in Marlow During the First World War".



Garden Room of Liston Hall, Chapel Street, Marlow, £3.00 [£1.50 for Marlow Society Members]

**28th November 9.45am–3pm**

War Memorials Survey Workshop, Booker Memorial Hall, Limmer Lane, High Wycombe. Part of the national programme to save the nation's memorials. Don't miss your chance to find out how to locate all your local war memorials, record their condition and make a positive difference to an important part of your local heritage.

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

# Trenches Heritage Day 12th July 2015

The First World War training trenches at Pullingshill Wood, Marlow Common, are one of the most visible and poignant reminders of the



impact of the conflict on the people of Marlow and the surrounding area.

They were dug by soldiers from the Grenadier Guards who were stationed in Marlow in the summer of 1915. To commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their construction, the Marlow Remembers World War One Association organised a heritage event, in partnership with the Woodland Trust on 12th July 2015. In planning the event, we had three broad objectives in mind:

- To provide a fitting tribute to the soldiers who dug and trained in the trenches before going to the Western Front, many of whom did not return to England
- To provide an opportunity for local people to find out more about the history of the trenches and their place in the heritage of Marlow and the surrounding area
- To enable people to have fun and enjoy themselves.

The event was attended by the Lord-Lieutenant for Buckinghamshire (Sir Henry Aubrey-Fletcher) and various representatives of local councils. It was also supported by local cadet groups and we were delighted, in particular, to welcome a detachment of the current



Grenadier Guards.

The day commenced with a moving open-air church service conducted by John Bustin.

After the service, members of Archaeology in Marlow conducted regular tours of the trenches which proved extremely popular. There were also a number of displays to bring to life the experience of soldiers in the trenches. Michael Eagleton had prepared an impressive collection of photos of troops in Marlow during the War. For the benefit



of the many younger people who attended there was also the re-enactment of a drill routine from the First World War conducted by an appropriately fearsome regimental sergeant!

It is estimated that approximately 250 people attended the event during the course of the day. Many of course were local residents of all ages, some who had played in the trenches in their youth and knew a lot already about the background; some more recent residents who were visiting them for the first time. Attendees also included people who had travelled from the Midlands and who had family connections with the trenches, as well as someone from Germany who was in the area on a business trip.



While heavy rain eventually curtailed activity later in the afternoon, this was a very successful heritage event that simultaneously entertained, informed and acted as a fitting tribute to the men who dug the trenches 100 years ago.

# Lusitania Commemoration 7th May 2015



The Marlow Society and the Marlow Remembers World War One Association jointly organised a ceremony to mark the exact 100th anniversary of the sinking of the Cunard liner Lusitania by a German submarine on 7th May 1915. This callous act without any prior warning resulted in the death of 1,198 passengers and crew. This incident helped shift public opinion in America against Germany and influenced the eventual declaration of war a couple of years later. Among the dead was the famous American theatre producer and impresario Charles Frohman,

whose encouragement and support for J M Barrie's play Peter Pan led to its immediate huge success in London and later round the world. Frohman was a frequent visitor to Marlow

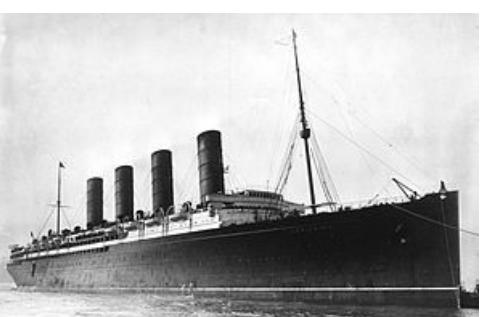
and greatly loved our town, so much so that he expressed a wish to be buried in our churchyard by the river.



The Frohman Memorial was erected by his friends and admirers and has stood on The Causeway near the war memorial since 1924. A short service, ably led by Father Michael of St Peter's Church, was followed by poems read by the mayor Suzanne Brown, Martin Blunkell and Shaun Murphy of the MRWW1 Association.



Geoff Wood led this second part of the ceremony and linked the poems with a description of the ill-fated voyage. Our mayor laid a poppy wreath supplied by Shaun to honour the memory of all those who died and a second was laid to remember Charles Frohman.



Geoff included an imaginative account of the experiences of Charles Frohman and another passenger, Muriel Thompson, during the voyage. Muriel lived locally in Maidenhead and was returning from a holiday in Miami to her family home.

Her body was not recovered but she is memorialised in All Saints Churchyard in Maidenhead.

RMS Lusitania

# Marlow Heritage Day 12th September 2015

Once again the Marlow Society successfully co-ordinated an exciting programme as part of the national Heritage Open Days Scheme run by English Heritage. The morning of Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> September was somewhat overcast and wet but happily it cleared up later.



Marlow Rowing Club War Memorial

The Society's efforts were chiefly concentrated on showing off our brand new rowing club building assisted by MRWW1 Members and club members.

The top floor bar area and balcony were especially popular with visitors who could enjoy light refreshments outside whilst taking in the view.

Many visitors were surprised by the size of the air-conditioned gym on the lower ground floor and the facilities it offered.

Patricia Burstall ably showed visitors round the beautiful interior of All Saints, with visitors gasping at the quality and opulence of the Tudor memorials and stained glass.

This article shares some of the stories that we exhibited at the Rowing Club as part of the Heritage day

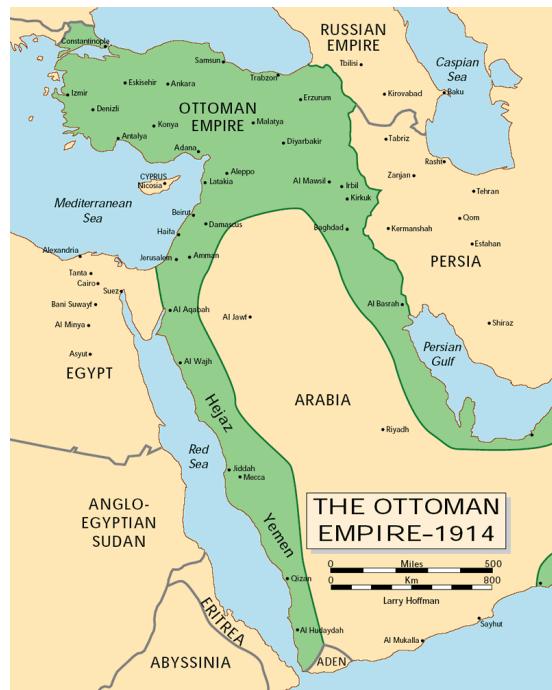
## The Gallipoli Campaign

The Gallipoli campaign was one of the most controversial conflicts of the First World War. From the spring of 1915 until early 1916, Allied and Turkish servicemen fought for control of a small strip of land in modern-day Turkey.

Over 110,000 on both sides were killed in the fighting.

The conflict came about because, in November

Map of the Ottoman Empire, 1914



1914, the Ottoman Empire joined the First World War on the side of Germany and Austria-Hungary. Its lands covered much of the Middle East as well as well as modern-day Turkey and its entry into the war was seen as a threat to the Allies.

The Allies, made up of British, French, Australian, New Zealand and colonial forces, attacked the peninsula of Gallipoli in modern-day Turkey in April 1915 to try and capture the capital Constantinople and knock the Ottoman Empire out of the War.

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 25th 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, having failed to achieve their objectives. By then, over 120,000 servicemen from Britain and its Empire had been killed, wounded or were missing – including Ewart Linley Wells, Henry Haddon and Jack Langley from Marlow Rowing Club.

The stories of these three local men have been compiled based on research by Jan Caddie, Sue Norton and MRC members Mary Lou Stephenson, Belinda Ford and Andy Ford.

# Marlow Heritage Day 12th September 2015

## Henry Haddon, 1886 - 1915

### Royal Bucks Hussars

Many men from Marlow and Buckinghamshire died on the same day (21st August 1915) when their regiment, the Royal Bucks Hussars, took part in an operation to capture Scimitar Hill.

The Hussars were an old volunteer regiment who were meant to serve only at home. However, by early 1915 the British Army badly needed reinforcements from outside the regular ranks so called upon men in reserve regiments such as the Royal Bucks Hussars.

### The Battle of Scimitar Hill

The regiment left England in April 1915 and were first sent to Egypt for training before landing at Gallipoli in August.

On 21 August, they were part of a force ordered to capture Scimitar Hill from the Turks. While they initially made good progress, 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 Hussars had to bunch together to avoid the fires. This in turn made them easy targets for the Turkish machine-guns. Of the 321 Hussars officers and men who started the attack, 140 were killed or wounded. Among those killed on that day was Sergeant Henry Haddon.



Scimitar Hill today, courtesy of The Gallipoli Association.

Henry was born in Hampstead in 1886. By 1911, he was living with his mother and siblings in Holland Road, Marlow where he was employed as a clerk in the offices of the Wethered brewery in the town. He joined the Hussars some time before 1914 and had three brothers who also served during the War,

one of whom won the Military Cross.

Henry was a keen and active member of the rowing club before the War. He was also Hon Secretary of Little Marlow Cricket Club, with whom he played regularly. That is why Henry is commemorated on memorials in the parish churches in both Marlow and Little Marlow.



Henry was initially reported as missing following the attack on Scimitar Hill and only later presumed to have been killed in action. Like many others from the Royal Bucks Hussars, his body was never found and he is commemorated on the Helles Memorial in Gallipoli.



Helles Memorial, Gallipoli courtesy of Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

# Marlow Heritage Day 12th September 2015

## Jack Langley, 1881 - 1915

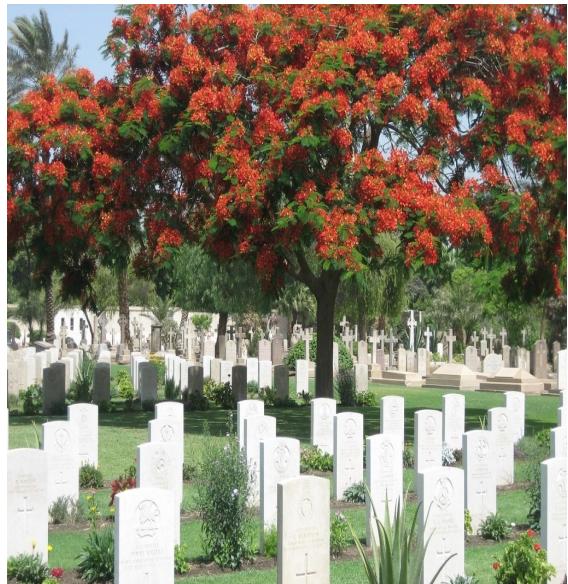
### Sickness at Gallipoli

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



Private Jack Langley



Cairo War Memorial Cemetery, courtesy of Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Jack was born in Marlow in 1881 and was a student at Sir William Borlase's School between 1889 and 1894. He was subsequently an active member of the Old Borlasians Committee. He was an accomplished long distance runner and footballer, playing on occasions for both Marlow and the Old Borlasians.

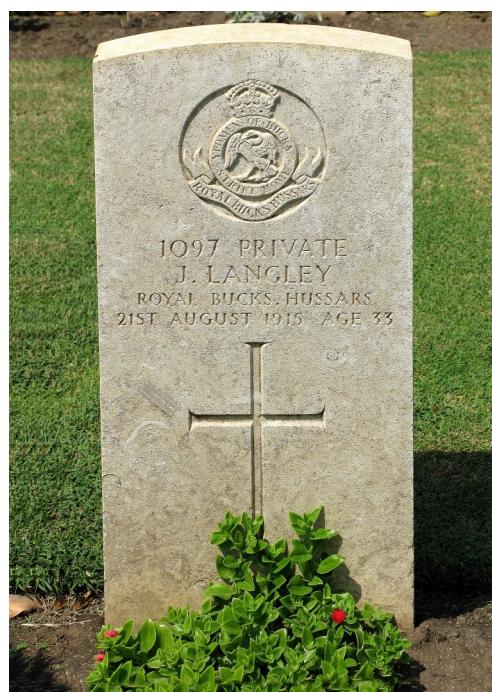
He enlisted with the Royal Bucks Hussars for the South African War in 1900 and served there. He re-joined the regiment when the First World War broke out in summer 1914 and went with Henry Haddon to join the Gallipoli campaign in April 1915.

### "An extremely popular rower"

He was also a keen member of Marlow Rowing Club, having competed regularly before the War. His obituary in the South Bucks Free Press reported that "he was not a polished oarsman and was a trifle lacking in the necessary stamina for hard racing, but his keenness made up for those deficiencies. His generosity, high spirits and readiness for any harmless fun made him very popular with the select circle known as the "Rowing Club Boys".

He was first chosen to represent the club in a clinker four crew in 1909, and won his first open event at Reading Regatta. In 1910, he was in another clinker four crew that won at Bourne End Regatta and in the following year he rowed in the eight that won the Junior-Senior Eights Challenge Cup at Marlow Regatta.

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".



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

# Marlow Heritage Day 12th September 2015

## Ewart Linley Wells, 1884 – 1915

A Borlase schoolmaster



Second-Lieutenant Ewart Linley Jones was the first of the three Marlow Rowing Club members to be killed at Gallipoli.

He was born in Bedford in 1884, one of 11 children to Albert and Emily Wells. His father was an architect, who ultimately settled in Hastings. Ewart attended Richard Hale School in Hertford and then King's College, London where he obtained a Classics degree in 1905.

Ewart's association with Marlow probably began in 1908 when he joined the teaching staff of Sir William Borlase's School. Sadly, we know very little about his association with Marlow Rowing Club.

### Emigration to New Zealand

We do know that he left England for New Zealand in 1913 and was appointed as a schoolmaster at Wanganui Collegiate School in May 1914.

When Britain declared war on Germany in August 1914, the New Zealand government followed without hesitation and many men quickly volunteered to join the army.

### "A very gallant soldier"

Ewart enlisted as a Second Lieutenant in the Wellington Regiment in January 1915. In April, his regiment left New Zealand by sea to support



*The summit of Chunuk Bair, Gallipoli*

the Gallipoli campaign, arriving there the following month. On 8 August, his regiment was one of a number sent to capture the hill of Chunuk Bair. In fighting that lasted all day, the Allies took the hill, but with a terrible loss of life. Out of the 760 men of the Wellington regiment who had reached the summit, 711 had become casualties, including Ewart. The Allies eventually withdrew from the hill two days later.

There was initially confusion about what had become of Ewart, but it was later confirmed that he was killed in action, his company commander, calling him as "a very gallant soldier who had shown himself just what an officer ought to be."

Ewart's body was not recovered and his final resting place is unknown. He is commemorated along with Over 850 other New Zealander soldiers on the Chunuk Bair Memorial.



*Chunuk Bair Memorial, Turkey*

# War Memorial Workshop

This is to let you know about the War Memorials Workshop taking place at Booker Memorial Hall, Limmer Lane, High Wycombe, HP12 4QS on **November 28th, 9.45 – 15.00** as part of a national programme to save the nation's memorials. Don't miss your chance to find out how to locate all your local war memorials, record their condition and make a positive difference to an important part of your local heritage. This event is being organised by Civic Voice and is supported by a number of local history groups including Marlow Remembers World War One.

The project covers war memorials of all ages and types, and volunteers are needed to record those that are in good as well as poor condition.

**Free** places can be reserved at the workshop by visiting <http://www.civicvoice.org.uk/get-involved/events/> and following the links.

Refreshments and a light buffet lunch will be provided free of charge.

If you have any queries about the workshop please contact Anna Wilson at Civic Voice ([Anna.wilson@civicvoice.org.uk](mailto:Anna.wilson@civicvoice.org.uk))

You can find out more about the War Memorials Programme at [www.civicvoice.org.uk/campaigns/war-memorials-/](http://www.civicvoice.org.uk/campaigns/war-memorials-/)



© Copyright [Colin Smith](#) and licensed for reuse under this [Creative Commons Licence](#)

