

THE TIGER



Homes for heroes by the sea . . .

**THE NEWSLETTER OF
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OF THE
WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION
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CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

Welcome again, Ladies and Gentlemen, to *The Tiger*.

Whilst the first stage of the easing of the “lockdown” still prevent us from re-uniting at Branch Meetings, there is still a certain amount of good news emanating from the “War Front”. In Ypres, from 1st July, members of the public will be permitted to attend the Last Post Ceremony, although numbers will be limited to 152, with social distancing of 1.5 metres observed. 1st July will also see the re-opening of Talbot House in Poperinghe. Readers will be pleased to learn that the recent fund-raising appeal for the House, featured in this very column in the May edition of *The Tiger* reached its required target and my thanks go to those of you who donated to this worthy cause.

Another piece of news has, as yet, received scant publicity but could prove to be the most important of all. In the aftermath of the recent “attack” on the Cenotaph, during which an attempt was made to set alight our national flag, I was delighted to read in the Press that: *a Desecration of War Memorials Bill, carrying a ten year prison sentence, would be brought before the Commons as a matter of urgency*. The subsequent discovery that ten years was the maximum sentence rather than the minimum tempered my joy somewhat, but the fact that War Memorials are now finally to be legally placed on a higher plane than other statuary is, at least in my opinion, a major step forward in their protection.

Whilst touching on the topic of “revised history” a recent newspaper article concerning a Great War submariner, Captain Guy D’Oyly Hughes, caught my eye. In the Great War, he was second in command of Submarine *HMS E11*, which achieved considerable success in the Dardanelles during the Gallipoli campaign. In June 1915 he was awarded a Distinguished Service Cross for his part in a patrol in which his Captain, Lieutenant Commander Martin Naismith earned a Victoria Cross, and the following August he was awarded a Distinguished Service Order after swimming ashore from the submarine with explosives and destroying part of the Constantinople-Baghdad railway.

As a Captain in the Second War, D’Oyly Hughes commanded aircraft carrier *HMS Glorious*, sunk with her destroyer escort of *HMS Arcadia* and *HMS Ardent* in the Norwegian Sea on 8th June 1940. 1,533 lives, including D’Oyly Hughes, were lost. In the subsequent enquiry, the competence of D’Oyly Hughes was called into question and he became the scapegoat for the loss of the three ships. Recent research has now revealed that D’Oyly Hughes was, in fact, following orders received from no less than Winston Churchill, an account welcomed by the Captain’s daughters, who now consider their late father exonerated. If history needs to be re-written, is this an example of how to correctly achieve it?

Finally, take care, stay safe and remain healthy until we can meet again . . .

D.S.H.

HOMES FOR HEROES BY THE SEA . . . **by David Humberston**

Even in “lockdown”, it is still possible to learn something! Passing one’s free time enjoying repeats of various popular quiz shows can, and in this case did, unearth a new fact worthy of further research. The answer to the question posed – “*Which of these three towns was built for returning Great War veterans?*” – could be guessed with comparative ease. The story behind the answer, however, was the genesis of this particular article.

In 1914, property entrepreneur Charles William Neville drove from Bexhill on Sea to Brighton and first saw the potential of building a “Garden City” on the open fields of the South Downs of Sussex. Purchasing 600 acres of land at £15 per acre from the Marquess of Abergavenny as the basis for his proposed seaside resort, Neville then divided the estate into building plots measuring 2500 square feet.

Neville, shown right, was certainly a mysterious character. Most sources agree he was born in 1881 as William Charles Neville Ussher, but disagree whether this was in London or Darlington in County Durham. At an early age Ussher emigrated to Canada and attended Toronto University before departing to Australia, when he began selling real estate. According to one source, whilst later prospecting for gold in New Guinea, he contracted blackwater fever and returned to England via Canada. By this time, for reasons unknown, he was now known as “Charles William Neville”, land developer and financier.



The outbreak of War in August 1914 brought unwelcome delays to the project, but in January 1916, Neville began to publicise his proposed development, launching a competition through the pages of the *Daily Express* inviting readers to offer a name for his new town. The winner would receive a plot of land valued at £100. Neville also made fifty further plots available as “consolation prizes”, each valued at £50, but with the proviso the winners of these paid a three guinea conveyance fee to Neville to transfer ownership of the land. With the competition proving immensely popular and attracting some 80,000 entries, Neville then increased the number of consolation plots to over 2,400. At a stroke he had created the opportunity to reduce his own holding, whilst creating a considerable income, particularly as his building company would then approach the new owners to sell them either a completed house or the materials to build one. The winning entry, offered by both Mr West of Ilford in Essex and Mr Kemp of Maidstone paid tribute to the Empire forces who fought so valiantly at Gallipoli in 1915: “New Anzac-on-Sea” was thus born.

Heavily influenced by the American “grid” system of planning, Neville’s original plans were for a series of “Roads” (running east to west) and “Avenues” (running north to south) named once more after prominent places in the War, with Louvain, Marne, Mons, Loos, Festubert, Salonica and Ypres Avenues all appearing. The ANZAC sacrifices at Gallipoli raised questions about the suitability of these names and, after a second competition, this time “won” by a Mrs Ethel Radford of Leicestershire, the name of the town was changed to “Peacehaven” on 12th February 1917, with the names of the Avenues and Roads abandoned, except for “Edith” and “Cavell” Avenues and “Anzac Close”.

By this stage, Neville's activities had caused more controversy; in particular his alteration to the rules of his first competition led to legal action by the *Daily Express*, who accused Neville of operating a fundraising scam. Neville sued for libel and after three years, the case was decided in the House of Lords in favour of the newspaper. The resultant publicity, however, had ensured the general public were fully familiar with "Peacehaven" and, with the release of the land commandeered by the Government for agricultural use in the War, building could at last begin. A series of promotional post cards, one of which appears on our front cover, were produced in the early 1920s by Gordon Volk, a commercial artist and son of the creator of the Brighton electric railway. By 1924, some 3,000 people were living in Peacehaven, including, as originally intended, veterans of the recent War. Their accommodation was often temporary housing that included old railway carriages and former Army huts, acquired from a camp at nearby Seaford. When the local council invested in water and electrical services, more permanent housing began to be constructed.



Peacehaven – Homes for Heroes by the sea.

One resident worthy of mention was composer Felix Powell who, in 1915 wrote the music to *Pack Up Your Troubles in Your Old Kit Bag*. His brother, George, provided the lyrics but unlike Felix, declined to serve in the War and became a conscientious objector. Felix befriended Neville, moved to Peacehaven and penned a further song, *Come to Peacehaven*, to further publicise the town. He joined the Peacehaven Home Guard in the Second World War and committed suicide, aged 63, in 1942 by shooting himself with his own rifle whilst on guard duty.

Another resident of note was Great War veteran Commander William Samuel Davenport, RN, who advised Neville that the Greenwich Meridian line ran through the town. An obelisk, commemorating both this fact and acting as a Memorial to the recently departed King George V was subsequently unveiled on 8th August 1936.

An early property owner was singer and comedienne Gracie Fields who, in 1933, converted a home in Peacehaven, originally bought for her parents five years earlier, into the Gracie Fields Home and Orphanage. The occupants were not, however, orphans, but children of entertainers who were away on tour. The building is now a care home for the elderly.

Charles William Neville died in 1960; his place in history, as one suspects he would have wished, secure as, to this day, Peacehaven, his town, remains the only British town or village named after "Peace".

THE MILITANT SUFFRAGISTS WHO SET UP ENDELL STREET MILITARY HOSPITAL (PART I) by Lynn Roffee

Fiona Murray and Louisa Garratt Anderson, both qualified Doctors and militant suffragists, were invited by the War Office to establish a Military Hospital in London during the First World War. Before the war, Murray and Anderson had no experience in treating men, let alone those who had been seriously wounded through battle. Their experience had been civilian-based, as they had previously only worked with women and children. This was due to societal limitations placed on the type of work women could undertake and at that time not treat male patients.

Located near Covent Garden, Central London, Endell Street Military Hospital was unique in that it was the first and only hospital that was entirely staffed by women. To understand how the hospital came about and the role these two women played in its development, it is important to delve further into the histories of these two pioneering women.

Flora Murray was born in Dalton, Dumfriesshire on 8th May 1869. She trained at the London School of Medicine for Women, the University of Cambridge and Durham University. She worked as a medical officer at the Belgrave Hospital for Children, then as an anesthetist at the Chelsea Hospital for Women. She was an active supporter of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, including being a member of the 1911 Census protest, organised first aid posts at marches, campaigned against forcible feeding of prisoners and was the physician to hunger-strikers after their release from prison, including Emmeline Pankhurst.



*Louisa Garratt Anderson (left)
& Flora Murray (right) in 1914*

Born on 28th July 1873, Louisa Garratt Anderson was born in Aldeburgh, Suffolk. Her mother, Elizabeth Garratt Anderson, was a founding medical pioneer who was the first women surgeon in England. Anderson, too, trained at the London School of Medicine and had been an assistant Surgeon at New Hospital for Women in London.

Anderson was politically active and interested in suffrage activities including being a member of London Society for Women's Suffrage, National Political League the London Graduates Union for Women's Suffrage and chaired its inaugural meeting and was Vice President of United Suffrage. Like Murray she was a member of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU). In 1910 Anderson, her mother and others joined Emmeline Pankhurst, in a deputation to the Prime Minister, who was putting forward the case for women to have the vote. Murray and Anderson both came from wealthy families.

On 4th March 1912, Anderson smashed a window in Rutland Gate, Knightsbridge London in protest at a speech made by an anti-suffragist Cabinet Minister. As a result, she was sentenced to six weeks' hard labour in Holloway Prison. The sentence was later reduced to one month following direct intervention by the Home Office. Her family also became involved as the following letter to the Prison Commissioners from Alan Anderson, Priors Hill, Aldeburgh, 1 Apr 1912 shows:

Gentlemen:

My sister, Miss LG Anderson MD, is I understand to be released from Holloway on Tuesday 9 Apr: her immediate family circle oppose her 'militant' methods of argument and desire to exercise their influence on my sister immediately after her release when she may be open to suggestion from those about her. If it were decided to free her before instead of immediately after the Easter holiday, she would have a few days of quiet with her mother in the country before she could resume her work and as the halo of martyrdom faded, she would be helped to regain her mental balance. If she is released immediately after Easter she will be (without any interval of quiet) the emotional centre of an excited circle and the object of much hero worship. We do not wish to labour the point but the holiday presents a chance of applying the right influence at a critical time - hence the suggestion.

I remain Gentleman,

Yours faithfully,

Alan G Anderson

Together Murray and Anderson founded in 1912, the Women's Hospital for Children located at 688 Harrow Road, London. It provided health care for working-class children. The pair were keen to train and educate women as doctors, and the hospital provided them with the opportunity to offer women doctors the chance to study and practice children's medicine. This could not be obtained elsewhere due to the discrimination women endured. Murray and Anderson adopted the Women's Social and Political motto - "*Deeds not Words*" as the hospital's motto.

When war broke out Suffragists suspended their campaigning and were keen to offer their services and to support the national cause. They also saw the war as an opportunity to be treated the same as their male colleagues. An agreement between the British Government and the WSPU was reached on the 10th August 1914, to release all suffragists from prison in return for the cessation of militant activities and to help the war effort. Many women had trained as doctors in medicine and surgery and wanted to give their services to the nation.

Murray and Anderson were two such women who wanted offer to help. They "*had had dealings with the Home Office, and had gained an insight into the cherished prejudices and stereotyped outlook of officials*". They believed their offer of help would be rejected by the War Office, as societal norms at the time were that women were not allowed to treat men. To have approached the War Office would have courted a rebuff, so instead they decided to approach the French, as reportedly, the French Army had insufficient surgeons and hospitals.

Shortly after war was declared in 1914, Murray and Anderson founded the Women's Hospital Corps (WHC) and on 12th August offered their assistance to the French Embassy in London. One of the secretaries there told them to speak with the President of the French Red Cross who accepted their offer within the week. The offer comprised women doctors, nurses and orderlies as well as the equipment to set up a surgical unit. Murray and Anderson made private appeals for money and help from wealthy friends and supporters. They quickly raised £2,000 (equivalent to £232,510 in 2019) within a fortnight. They spent a £1,000 on equipment and stores and recruited

a full complement of women staff; three young inexperienced doctors, eight nurses and three young inexperienced orderlies. The WHC designed a feminine and practical uniform which comprised a short skirt, with a loose, well-buttoned-up tunic, made of covert coating of a greenish-grey colour, and with a small cloth hat with a veil. In addition, there were four male nurses who accompanied the women. On 14th September 1914, the WHC left for Paris to set up a hospital for wounded soldiers.



The Hotel Claridge

The French Red Cross provided the WHC with a brand-new Hotel, the Hotel Claridge, located on the Champs Elysees, which they quickly turned into a hospital within 24 hours. Murray was the Médecin-en-Chef and Anderson was the Chief Surgeon. On the second day they took in 50 seriously wounded British officers; all in need of operations which began the same night. Faced with such a large number of patients and the sight of terrible wounds the women did not falter in dealing with men wounded in battle. What they lacked

in experience they had in enthusiasm, and displayed commitment in abundance. They worked well together, supporting one another and learnt as they went. The patients, both British and French, trusted the women doctors as much as male doctors. Murray wrote in her book that visiting representatives of the War Office were surprised to find it “*a model hospital*”. The wards had colourful blankets and flowers giving it a comfortable feeling and the men spoke well of the hospital and the care they received. Visitors were made welcome and there was occasional entertainment. Gifts were received from all over the UK which included socks, hot water bottles and supplies of “Woodbine” cigarettes. In the short time, Murray and Anderson had been running the hospital, the War Office had received many favourable reports of the WHC.

On hearing reports of heavy fighting and large numbers of wounded soldiers (approximately three thousand a day) being taken to Boulogne, the WHC sent three Doctors from Hotel Claridge to offer help. However, the authorities refused their help as they had “*ample staff and needed no volunteers*”. The women doctors, having quickly made friends with a matron of one of the hospitals, were shown around some of the crowded wards. The corridors were full of wounded men, unwashed and filthy on stretchers, with orderlies climbing over them. The men’s dressings often had not been changed for several days due to lack of staff. The following day an officer-in-charge, of one of the hospitals short of staff, asked for the temporary assistance of two surgeons from the WHC. The WHC gladly accepted the offer and two Doctors were attached to his staff, serving under the R.A.M.C. for six months. The third WHC doctor went to the headquarters of the Army Medical Corps, to ascertain if the WHC would be welcome if it established a hospital in Boulogne. A positive response was received though the WHC was told it would need to find its own premises.

On 1st November, Murray and Anderson set off from Paris to Boulogne to find suitable premises for a hospital, though all of the large hotels had already been let to the British Army. The only suitable accommodation was the *Chateau Mauricien* in Wimereux. Despite requiring a plumber, a gasfitter and a general clean, as well as furniture and supplies, by the 6th November the hospital was ready for occupation and by that evening ambulances were meeting the trains to collect the first patients. On the same day, as confirmed by the WW1 Service Medal and Award Roll, 1914

Star, the WHC had acquired a carpenter/splint maker who joined the team; there were always large numbers of compound fractures so he was kept very busy. It was in this hospital that one patient, a former Policeman, was recognised by a suffragist whom he had arrested in Whitehall. They both agreed to let bygones be bygones.

By January 1915, many severely wounded casualties began to be evacuated to England for further treatment. In Paris, Hotel Claridge had closed on 18th January 1915 mainly due to the difficulty in procuring coal. The rest of the staff packed up and joined the others in Wimereux. At that time the War Office was in the process of organising an additional fifty thousand hospital beds in England. Murray and Anderson decided they needed to meet with the Director-General and so they travelled to London to see him. They met with the Surgeon-General Sir Alfred Keogh, G.C.V.O., G.C.B., who offered them a large military hospital to run, under the R.A.M.C., which would mainly consist of women staff with a few R.A.M.C. men. The Doctors accepted the offer and returned to France the next day to close *Chateau Maurician*. They began packing up much of the equipment to take to London and the colourful blankets were included. On the 19th February 1915, Murray and Anderson and two others arrived in Dover.



Sir Alfred Keogh

On 18th February 1915, Sir Alfred Keogh, Director-General, Army Medical Services, spoke at a meeting at Sunderland House about the future of the WHC. He was quoted by *The Times* on 19th February 1915:

“He had received numbers of unsolicited letters from Paris and Boulogne, which stated that the work of women doctors at the Front was beyond all praise; it was an example of how much work ought to be done. So impressed had he been that he had asked two of the staff in Paris and Boulogne to come here and do bigger work, He had asked them to take charge of a hospital of 500 beds and, if they pleased, of a hospital of 1000 beds”.

Endell Street Military Hospital was set up in the former St Giles Union Workhouse, and by the spring of 1915 work had commenced on renovating and adapting it to meet the needs of a hospital. The hospital was handed over to Murray and Anderson on 22nd March 1915. It had 17 wards with 520 beds, later increasing to 573 beds during 1916. Three of the wards were kept for severe cases, and by August 1917 sixty beds were set aside for women who were ill and also as temporary accommodation for women returning from France.

Murray was given the honorary rank of Lieutenant Colonel whilst Anderson was given that of an honorary Major. They were attached to the Royal Army Medical Corps and received equal pay to Army doctors. Murray was the Doctor-in-Charge/Administrator and Anderson was the Chief Surgeon. However, they were not given a commission and did not wear an army uniform nor were they issued with badges of rank. The all women staff included surgeons, doctors, a pathologist, an ophthalmic surgeon, a radiologist, anaesthetist, dental surgeon, dispensers, 36 nurses and orderlies. The women orderlies were all young and were the largest group. At its peak there were approximately 180 people were working in the hospital. The R.A.M.C. had a detachment comprising one NCO and 20 men. Later, 14 of those men were replaced by women.

TO BE CONTINUED

ON THE NOTICEBOARD

WFA CENTRAL “WEBINAR”

A recent communique from David Tattersfield at WFA HQ may be of interest to Members:

The WFA have recently been experimenting with a series of interactive members quizzes which have proved very successful. This was undertaken via 'zoom' which enables people to 'meet up' with other participants using a PC, lap top, ipad etc.

These have proved popular and a first webinar has now been held which involved Gary Sheffield giving a 45-minute talk on Major General Hugo De Pree entitled 'In Haig's Shadow'.

Anyone wishing to view this can do so by clicking on the link below

<https://youtu.be/eZVXHrP95og>

A VIRTUAL OPEN DAY



AT RISK WAR MEMORIALS

With the cancellation of the forthcoming At Risk War Memorial Open Days, readers may wish to enjoy a virtual visit to All Saints Church by viewing a film created by the City Museum Service in connection with The Newark Houses Exhibition held earlier in the year.

The film can be found by activating the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EgI9kbQSmlo&t=2s>

Further information about the project and its resident memorials can be found on

www.atriskwarmemorials.co.uk

BEDDING DOWN AMONG THE BLOOMS by Roy-Anthony Birch

As I resumed my research for what is, in effect, the third part of my continuing series on matters agricultural, botanical, and horticultural and the bearing brought upon them by the so-called “Great War”, I discovered that the Royal Horticultural Society’s Great Spring Show was first staged in the grounds of the Royal Hospital Chelsea in 1913; just in time, some might have quipped, for it to be “nipped in the bud” almost before it had “taken root”. But such attempts at a pun at Chelsea’s expense, either then or subsequently and by those supposedly in the know, were entirely baseless. For the blossoming of what is now universally seen as the world’s most celebrated floral festival was only moderately impeded by the upheavals of 1914-18, and even then, only for the two seasons immediately preceding the Armistice, when there were no shows.

The R.H.S.’s inaugural Spring Show was held at their gardens in South Kensington in 1862 on the site now occupied by London’s and indeed the National Science Museum. The move to Chelsea was secured largely through the influence of Sir Harry Veitch (1840-1924), a widely respected horticulturalist and nurseryman, steeped in those pursuits through involvement in the Chelsea branch of the family business, James Veitch & Sons, founded in Devon in 1771 and continuing to trade from its present-day headquarters in Exeter. The earliest Chelsea Hospital shows would have attracted many of the leading country house owners and what might be called “trendsetters” of the day, together with their head gardeners, all intent on probing the latest innovations in plant cultivation and landscaping etc., while hoping to acquire some of the exotic specimens sent or brought by enterprising collectors from all parts of the globe; often by men on wartime service in the field.

In my review of the Flower Show and Fete held at Leicester’s Aylestone Road County Cricket Ground in August 1917 (see “THE TIGER” issue no. 102 pp. 11-13), I wrote of “*the inalienable love of nature and of gardening carried by so many officers and men to the Front: servicemen for whom, as therapy, . . . the answer did indeed lie in the soil*”. And this was certainly true, if not more so, of men engaged in static campaigns on the Western Front and beyond, where actual fighting occupied only a comparatively small percentage of life in the line – hence my reference to campaigns rather than to fighting, with its implication of periods of relative and uninterrupted calm. Thus, for many, love of nature and feelings of innate proximity to the soil received practical expression in the nurturing of wild or domestic flora to create their own flower beds or borders, literally within reach of, if not actually in, the trenches which, in turn, transversed many domestic gardens.

It is, perhaps, not too far-fetched to suggest that in the nurturing of these impromptu and almost semi-private gardens, men were at least sub-consciously creating a protective hinterland against the brutalising aspects of the War. Experience dictated that even modest undertakings such as these - or a fair number of them, would prove sufficiently resilient to survive and eventually, perhaps, to flourish; even if the men did not. Of such was the life-affirming quality of nature overall; even its quintessential quality; greater even than the life-enhancing spirit which sustained the soldier-gardeners in their far from irksome task.

The fact of so many soldier-gardeners being countrymen by upbringing is often, now, too readily forgotten. Even the untold tens of thousands who gravitated to the cities to seek employment pre-1914 would doubtless have counted themselves countrymen at heart; erstwhile denizens of

the soil whose knowledge of native flora and fauna was unlikely ever to have left them. Sons of the landed gentry and their circle were at least as likely to be at ease in identifying varieties of flowers etc. common to both France and Flanders and to England. Prime Minister Asquith's eldest son Raymond, for one, compiled a list of such "varieties in common" for his wife Katherine (née Horner), while serving on The Somme, drawing especially on memories of the flora in and around Mells Park at Frome in Somerset, country seat of his in-laws Sir John and Lady Horner, "*a stone's throw from one of the finest country churches in England*". (Raymond was killed in action on The Somme on 15th September 1916, while his brother-in-law, Edward Horner, ten years Raymond's junior and the Horner's eldest son, was killed at Cambrai on 21st November 1917 aged 28).

Lists in letters such as that from Raymond to Katherine are cogent reminders that the staging of "A Great Spring Show" was and is far from confined to Chelsea. A former sub-editor of *The Garden*, for example, serving in the Western Front trenches in 1915 wrote of wild cowslips cuckoo-pint and celandines being transplanted from nearby fields and ditches, and of soldiers laying red brick and clinker paths to delineate their plots, "*suggestive of an Italian garden*". (Cuckoo-pint or wake-robin – *Arum maculatum*, refers specifically to the spotted orchid but is often applied to others of that genus and, as here perhaps, to lilies). One private, meanwhile, recalled a trench barely 50 yards from the enemy; its walls bedecked with basketry and trellises from which nasturtiums hung in profusion to give "*a homely atmosphere*", especially at the intersections.

Another account described the enclosure of a tent within an artificial heart. We read that a border of boxwood defined the outline of the "heart", with the idea being "*that the crimson of many blossoms [presumably skirting the inside of the "heart"] shall blend to give a suggestion of passion and loyalty and suffering*". Primroses, daffodils, and narcissi, close by, were soon "*blossoming in plenty. Lilies followed; arums and Solomon's-seal and then forget-me-nots, pansies, and violas*". (Solomon's-seal apparently encompasses certain species from a particular genus of the lily family, having small dangling greenish flowers).

Just as the holding of "Great Spring Shows" is not confined to Chelsea, so the sending of letters home and the wealth of diary entries from men relishing local flora were not confined to those on The Western Front. Far from it. If anything, contemporary accounts and later reminiscences from those serving in Gallipoli offer still richer pickings: surprisingly so, perhaps, for any who recall or imagine only the barren and windswept wastes of the Peninsula and the almost unremitting squalor that troops had to endure. All too often, perhaps, we see the 1915 Gallipoli landscape as if in an overexposed photograph: the earth itself parched and near whitened under an unrelenting sun; the vegetation and any such greenery frizzled and pale as if scorched into submission. But this is more descriptive of the Peninsula in high summer, in August say, at the time of the Allied offensives against Chunuk and Sari Bair.

Springtime in Gallipoli, by contrast, is far more akin to British conditions, albeit warmer on average probably, with soil and climate combining to yield an abundance of trees, flowers, and shrubs, on the hillsides and in the ravines; even sometimes on the very hilltops. The name of one of the most prominent and indeed most famous topographical features on the entire Peninsula continues to evoke these botanical riches, although "Rhododendron Ridge" (and "Spur") are now generally agreed to be something of a misnomer. The name is said to have originated through British servicemen misidentifying what were subsequently thought to be oleanders (a.k.a. the rose-laurel). Yet even this seems not to have satisfied everyone, regarding the plants true identity. In

his *Gallipoli* (B.T. Batsford, London 1965), author Robert Rhodes James recalled a conversation from 1962 in which Mr R.J. Alexander, CWGC's chief representative at Gallipoli, asserted that "*he had never seen oleanders on the Peninsula*" and that these undeniably crimson blooms "*were almost certainly a small bright red flower which grew in profusion early in the summer*". Surely, anyone could have seen that much for themselves and probably still could. Mr Alexander's observations and Mr Rhodes James's anecdote appeared to do nothing whatsoever to settle the question of identity: if question there remains!

Broadly speaking, the Gallipoli Campaign lacked those periods of stasis to which I alluded earlier. Certainly there was plenty of "digging-in" – of what General Sir Ian Hamilton, C-in-C Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, called "*this accursed trench warfare*", but opportunities for relaxation – to put significant distance between oneself and the enemy, were decidedly scarce. Dips in the Aegean - which were not the stuff of legend, were nevertheless only for a comparatively lucky handful, while the very idea of creating one's own garden would have been met with derision. Even so, during the Second Battle of Krithia (6th–8th May) to take a not untypical example, men still found time to admire their "natural" surroundings; doubtless a welcome diversion from the death and degradation so close at hand. Captain Cecil Faber Aspinall (later Brigadier-General Aspinall-Oglander C.B. D.S.O. etc.), a member of Sir Ian Hamilton's General Staff, captured the about to be shattered tranquility of all he surveyed; -

"The grassy slopes that crown the cliffs are carpeted with flowers. The azure sky is cloudless; the air is fragrant with the scent of wild thyme. In front, beyond a smiling valley studded with cypress and olive and patches of young corn, the ground rises gently to the village of Krithia, standing amidst clumps of mulberry and oak; and thence more steeply to a frowning ridge beyond, its highest point like the hump of a camel's back. Away to the right, edged with a ribbon of silvery sand, lie the sapphire arc of Morto Bay, the glittering Dardanelles, and the golden fields of Troy. . . . As far as the eye can reach there is no sign of movement; the world seems bathed in sleep. Only high on the shoulder of Achi Baba, a field of scarlet poppies intrudes a restless note. Yet in half an hour, that peaceful landscape will again be overrun by waves of flashing bayonets, and these will be the last moments of hundreds of precious lives".

A hideous number of precious lives were indeed lost in yet another futile engagement. Yet during the comparatively uneventful lull before the Third Battle of Krithia (June 4th), another of Sir Ian's staff officers, Major Guy Dawney, wrote "*The Gallipoli Peninsula is really lovely just now; you never saw such a carpet of wild flowers. Very many of them are quite new to me, but there's a lovely thing like a small and very dainty winter rose, and a sort of grape hyacinth and hundreds of others. The variety and colour are really astonishing*". Lt.-Col. Skeen, staff officer to Lieutenant-General Birdwood (Commander ANZAC Forces), was similarly enchanted, writing to his wife: "*There has been a succession of beautiful days ever since we landed; the sea like glass and the hillsides covered with flowers and trees. . . . Some of the flowers are really beautiful. A thing just like a white wild rose grows all over the hills, and in a field in front of the trenches is a mixture of marguerites and poppies which we must imitate in our next garden*".

Before long, however, the later General Sir Andrew Skeen's thoughts were turned to conquest of the still seemingly unattainable Sari Bair Ridge; key to the Allie's command and subjugation of the Peninsula. We will touch on that next time and pay tribute, amongst others, to a Leicestershire man whose boundless enthusiasm for all things botanical remained with him to the end.

CONTACT US



Leicestershire & Rutland

YOUR BRANCH COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

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Vice Chairman, Treasurer & Website

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Angela Hall
Events

Roy-Anthony Birch
Promotion & War Memorials

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Greg Drozd - *Hinckley*
David & Karen Ette - *Loughborough*

Branch Website Address:
www.leicestershireandrutlandwfa.com

Branch Twitter Address:
[@WFALeicester](https://twitter.com/WFALeicester)

We thank once again those readers who contacted us following the production of previous issues of *The Tiger*. Your comments are valued and welcomed and we are always open to suggestions as to what you, our readers, would like to see included/excluded.

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Anyone wishing to submit material is more than welcome to contact us by e-mail at: foft@live.co.uk

The deadline date to ensure inclusion in your next edition of *The Tiger* is:

Friday 17th July 2020

“We very much value your continued support”

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