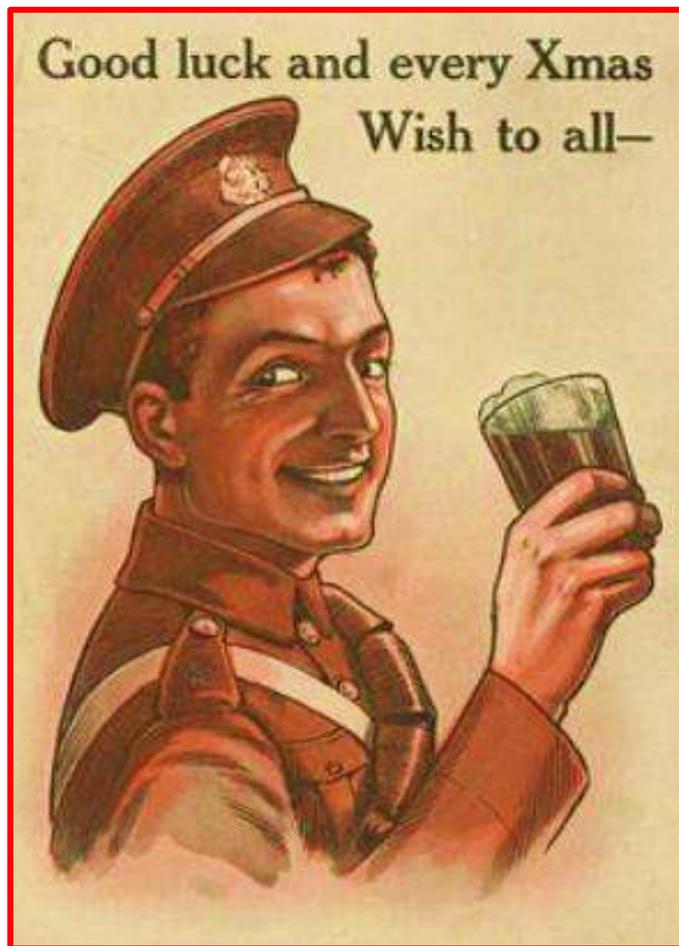


# THE TIGER



Good luck and every Xmas  
Wish to all—



**THE NEWSLETTER OF  
THE LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND BRANCH  
OF THE  
WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION  
ISSUE 110 – JANUARY 2021**

## CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

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

It was said in 1914 that “It would all be over by Christmas!” and, with the benefit of history, we are all aware it took five calendar years for that famous prediction to be realized! As our first “Covid Christmas” rapidly approaches, we find ourselves in a similar predicament, with ever lengthening periods of lockdown (of whatever variety) still weighing heavily on our shoulders and the logistics behind the mass vaccination programme delaying our anticipated release until at least Easter 2021 . . .

It is now ten months since it was possible to hold a Branch Meeting and, in their absences, the pages of “The Tiger” have been our main method of communication with our membership and readers. Many of you have sent complimentary comments about its content so now seems an appropriate time to thank all our contributors throughout 2020 for sharing their information with us. Readers will also see another “Branch first” in this issue, as we are reproducing an article originally published in the newsletter of our combined Irish branches, which we trust will be of interest. Whilst writing of *The Tiger*, a particular “thank you” must also go to Valerie for her outstanding editorial skills and dedication to the issuing of the newsletter ensuring that, each month, at least one piece of our normality is maintained.

2020 has also seen some changes in the hierarchy of W.F.A. Central and I was very pleased to receive, just before we went to press, a Christmas message from our new Executive Chairman, Tony Bolton, to share with our members and readers. This is reproduced directly below as requested and I welcome Tony’s optimism on the future of the Association. At Branch level I, too, remain confident that, given the levels of enthusiasm and support displayed by you all, in previous years, our Branch will return and continue to flourish when the time is right.

Valerie and I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and the Happiest and Healthiest New Year – roll on 2021 when, hopefully, we will meet again.

D.S.H.



## W.F.A. CHAIRMAN'S CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR'S GREETING



*Tony Bolton*

The Executive Committee and I would like to take this opportunity of wishing you, your Branch Committee and those who normally attend your branch meetings, the very best of seasonal greetings.

I am sure no one would argue that this year has been one of the most unusual, depressing and in many instances frightening that we have faced since the last war. Many older members and those with underlying health issues have been self-isolating for most of the year. Our inability to hold our usual branch meetings has been a cause for real concern. At various times through the year, it has looked as if socially distanced meetings could return but all such hopes have been dashed.

As I write this message another swathe of the country is heading for Tier 3 restrictions however on the positive side, I don't remember a time when people were actually looking forward to a job in the arm so enthusiastically.

Judging by the numbers of very positive and supportive emails received in the office, members have recognised the efforts of the Committee to try to compensate for the lack of branch meetings by the introduction of webinars at national level and indeed many branches have been equally active in providing local or cluster webinars. There has been a ramping up of all social media activity and to make sure that those members who chose not to use emails or the web are not overlooked a fourth edition of Stand To will be published next year. The result has been that the long term decline in membership has been reversed.

Whatever 2021 throws at us, the WFA is well positioned to continue to support members, the programme of webinars extends well into next year and whilst we all hope normality will return soon, the Committee are investigating ways in which it can help 'jump start' branch activities.

Once again all the very best wishes to all Branch Committees and members.

Tony

Tony Bolton  
Chairman



## **What a Cracker!** by **Valerie Jacques**



The Christmas Truce is, perhaps, one of the most endearing stories of the Great War when, on a moonlit Christmas Eve, 1914, men of the British Expeditionary Force heard German troops singing carols and patriotic songs and saw lights and small fir trees along the opposing trench lines. Dialogue soon began and the following day British and German soldiers exchanged gifts, swapped rations, took photographs and played impromptu games of football. During this unanticipated lull in hostilities the fallen were collected and buried in joint services and essential repairs carried out to the trenches and dugouts.

Just a few days later a Private from Maryport, Cumberland, wrote home to his loved ones and, in his letter, he related how one of his pals had received a parcel from home. Amongst the contents was a box of Tom Smith's Crackers which they'd shared with four others. On 7<sup>th</sup> January 1915 his letter was published in *The Whitehaven News* and titled "*Fraternizing with the Germans*":

*It was a ripping parcel and we had a grand time over it. To crown all, one of the fellows sharing my "buggy hut" had a parcel on the same day and we combined and invited four more pals, one of whom had a box of Tom Smith's Christmas crackers sent out, which we cracked, and it added to the fun immensely. Christmas in the trenches! What a time? "Peace on earth, goodwill toward men." It is hardly to be believed, but nevertheless it is quite true that such was the case this Christmas. Who can realise it? It will astound everyone who hears about it, which everyone will do in good time. Of course I am speaking about the part of the firing line we are situated in. On Christmas Eve at four p.m. we had orders that unless the "enemy" advanced we were not to fire, and the same applied to Christmas Day.*

*Whether the Germans had the same order or not I don't know but no shot was fired on either side. On Christmas Eve we shouted "Compliments of the Season" to each other, and passed pleasant remarks. We sang the "Austrian Anthem" and they replied with "God save the King." On Christmas Day after service in the trenches, we went halfway and we shook hands, and had a fine crack with them. Quite a number of them speak English. I got one's autograph and he got mine, and I exchanged a button with another, and exchanged cigs and got cigars galore. Altogether we spent a very pleasant two hours with them, and found them a nice lot of fellows. Men, every one of them, and white ones, too. There is heaps more I should like to tell, but I know it would never get passed so it will have to wait.*

Over two generations previously, in the ninth year of Queen Victoria's reign, an adventurous young baker from London's East End found himself in Paris. This was 1846 and the young man in question was Tom Smith . . .

Born in Newington, then in Surrey, in 1823, Tom was the son of Thomas Bruce Smith, a grocer, and his wife, Priscilla, née Flight. At the age of just seven he began working in a local confectioner's shop which specialised in ornamental confectionary and gradually became a master in his craft. He experimented with new ideas and designs in his spare time and, by the mid-1840s, had opened his own shop in Goswell Road, Clerkenwell, London, where he produced elaborate wedding cakes and pastries. Tom was extremely creative and would often travel to different countries in his quest

for inspiration. He thus found himself at a Trade Exhibition in Paris where he was introduced to a French delicacy - "*le bon-bon*" – a small sugary sweet wrapped in tissue paper which was twisted at both ends (the origin of our traditional sweet-wrapper).

Tom brought the idea back to his bakery in London and used his own sugared almonds, also wrapped in tissue paper, which became a surprise Christmas hit! The following year he enhanced their appeal by inserting a love note (e.g. "*The sweet crimson rose with its beautiful hue, Is not half as deep as my passion for you. 'Twill wither and fade and no more will be seen, But whilst my heart lives, you will still be its Queen*") within the wrapper of the sweet (similar to \*fortune cookies) and later small toys, trinkets and jewellery. But his final inspiration came when he threw a log onto the fire which spat and crackled and he decided to investigate how he could add such a sound to his product.

By 1816 fireworks had become popular with a particular indoor favourite being Waterloo Crackers (no doubt produced to commemorate the famous battle of the previous year) which Tom would've known from birth. They were relatively easy to make using powdered glass for friction and explosive chemicals, including Silver Fulminate, with the sound originating from the detonation created. In 1861, having purchased the working concept of a "snap" from a chemist called Tom Brown who had, for many years, worked for the Brocks Fireworks Company, he introduced his "Bangs of Expectation". The new product was initially marketed as \*\**Cosaques* (French for Cossack) before the more familiar name of "Crackers" was eventually adopted.

The 1861 Census lists Tom Smith as living at Brontë Cottage in Hampstead. He described himself as a "*manufacturing confectioner employing seven men and 16 women*" but he would not live long enough to see his remarkable invention reach its full potential and give such pleasure to the

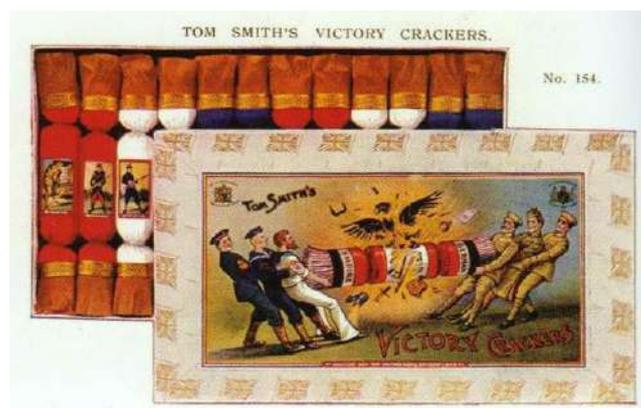
world all these years later. He died in 1869 at 320 City Road, London, aged just 46 from stomach cancer and was buried in Highgate Cemetery.



Following Tom's death the business passed into the capable hands of three of his six sons; Thomas, Walter and Henry. Under their stewardship elaborate hats made from fancy paper were added as were novelties and gifts sourced from Europe, America and Japan. Millions of crackers were being produced annually and it was not uncommon for the company to be manufacturing over 200 individual designs each season. By the 1890s sales of crackers were so successful that the company was employing 2,000 staff, many of whom were women, and was able to relocate to larger premises in Finsbury Square where a memorial water fountain, erected in 1899, stands to this day (see left).

Despite wartime shortages during the Great War, crackers continued to be made with much of Tom Smith's advertising material being extremely patriotic with boxes of crackers featuring designs such as Union Flags, cheerful soldiers, nurses, jolly Jack Tars, military weapons & vehicles etc. all no doubt designed to promote national pride and patriotism. See, below left, the bright red crackers honouring nurses of the British Red Cross and their work with injured soldiers. A themed box

design from 1916, below right, honoured Britain's ally, France, whilst British Navy Crackers depicting a British destroyer and seaplane, designed in 1917, were a tribute to the maritime war effort and, at the time, cost 36 shillings per dozen boxes. "Patriotic Crackers" from the same year portrayed the Union Flag and emphasised the message of patriotism throughout the Empire. Other designs featured "Heroes of Empire" such as Lord Kitchener, Admiral Jellicoe, Sir John French etc. The 1918 Armistice saw "Victory Crackers" become particularly popular with each cracker bearing an image of a sailor or soldier from a different corner of the Empire. They had a frilled edge which was very popular in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and were, of course, produced in patriotic red, white and blue.



It is hard to imagine any of us spending Christmas Day without a tree, trimmings or turkey, sitting in a muddy trench with comparative strangers. The unique and extraordinary event of the Christmas Truce happened before the Great War became less personal and more industrialised and enabled them to reach out across "No Man's Land" although I'm sure that most of them would have far more preferred to be pulling a few crackers at home with their loved ones! I will most certainly be thinking of all the brave personnel from our Armed Forces this Christmas, especially those serving overseas, and everyone involved in defending our shores and our health.

### Happy Christmas one and all!

\* Whilst most sources state that Tom's idea of adding "love notes" to his crackers was inspired by the Chinese Fortune Cookie, records indicate that the fortune cookie was not invented until 1918. Tom was, therefore, many, many years ahead of this time! Incidentally, however, the "love note" theme also lives on in the delicious *Baci Perugina* chocolates, from Italy, produced since 1922.

\*\* Tom initially marketed his product as *Cosaques* as the word is said to originate from the cracking sound of whips made by Russian Cossack horseman.

**THE FRIZELLE FAMILY OF  
BALLYCASTLE, COUNTY MAYO  
(PART I)  
by Michael Nugent**

*THIS ARTICLE WAS FIRST PUBLISHED IN ISSUE 5 OF "DISTANT THUNDER",  
THE NEWSLETTER OF THE IRISH BRANCHES OF THE W.F.A. AND IS  
REPRODUCED WITH THEIR KIND PERMISSION*

In late 2019, I was contacted by a Johnny Frizelle who asked if I could carry out research into two of his relatives who he believed, had served in the Great War. To assist my research, Johnny forwarded items of family information and details of some research that he had already carried out.

When I sat down to start researching, it quickly became apparent that throughout the family, there was unsurpassed service to the Crown extending over a century. What amazed me was that as I researched one family member, I uncovered links to other family members that I was unaware of. When I had completed the research, I realized that there was a story which needed to be brought to the attention of a wider audience. Johnny Frizelle has given me permission to compile this article, for which I am indebted.

In the course of carrying out research, various spellings of the family surname were encountered, including Frizzell, Frizzel, Frizzelle and Frizzle as well as the accepted Frizelle.

**Sergeant William Frizelle 2738 Royal Irish Constabulary**

Although not the first family member that I researched, the patriarch of the family was William Frizelle. William was born at Limerick in 1823. He enlisted in the Royal Irish Constabulary in 1849, service number 2738, and in keeping with the Constabulary policy of posting recruits away from their home area, William was initially stationed in County Donegal. It was there in 1851 that he married Jane McNeely<sup>(1)</sup>, doing so at Ballyshannon. This necessitated a further transfer and William was posted to County Sligo where he was to remain for the rest of his service. From court records of the time, it appears that William was most diligent in carrying out his duties. William retired from the Police in the rank of Sergeant on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1875, most likely after completing 25 years' service. Records show that he was in receipt of a pension of £72 per annum, a not inconsiderable sum for the times. William died at Sligo in 1907 aged 84.

William and Jane had nine children, six of whom survived to adulthood. Two sons followed William into the ranks of the Royal Irish Constabulary. William Robert was born at Ballymote, County Sligo on 24 April 1864. Prior to enlisting in the ranks of the Royal Irish Constabulary he had been employed as a Draper's Assistant. William junior enlisted at Sligo on 10<sup>th</sup> October 1881 aged 17 and a half. Issued with the service number 47840, he was posted to County Westmeath in February 1882 however, his Police career ended later that year on 21<sup>st</sup> September, when he was discharged as 'Unfit for duty.'

**Sergeant John Henry Frizelle 36702 Royal Irish Constabulary**

William and Jane's eldest son John Henry Frizelle, was born at Sligo in 1852. The earliest available record for John relates to his appointment as a Constable in the Royal Irish Constabulary on 4<sup>th</sup> June 1870 with the service number 36702.

It is believed that John was first stationed in County Galway and it was there that he met his future wife. John married Caroline Matilda McNeice at St Joseph's Church of Ireland, Spiddal, Co. Galway on 10<sup>th</sup> October 1878. At the time of the marriage, Caroline was a Schoolmistress and was resident at Spiddal. John was transferred following the marriage to County Mayo on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1879.

Between 1879 and 1889, John and Caroline had five children:  
William Robert, born 16<sup>th</sup> October 1879 at Knox's Street, Ballina, Co. Mayo  
Frederick John, born 15<sup>th</sup> May 1881 at Ballina  
Edith Jane, born 31<sup>st</sup> March 1883 at Castle Road, Ballina  
George Henry Herbert, born 5<sup>th</sup> March 1886 at Newtown Cloghans, Co Mayo  
Archibald, born 21<sup>st</sup> July 1889 at Swinford, Co. Mayo.

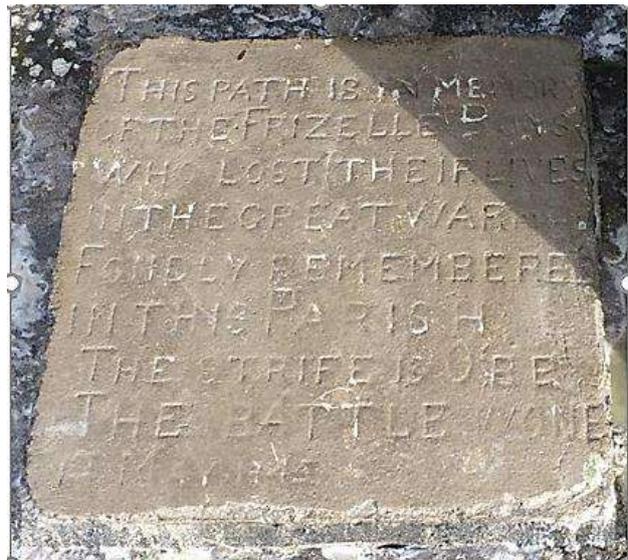
During this period, John was promoted to the rank of Sergeant on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1884. Records indicate that unfortunately Caroline died in 1895. Following Caroline's death, John continued to serve in the Royal Irish Constabulary until 1<sup>st</sup> December 1900 when he retired having completed 30 years' service. On retirement, records indicate that John was in receipt of a yearly pension of £53-14-08. The 1901 Census of Ireland shows John as resident with his son George and a Housekeeper at North Gate Street, Athlone.

On Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> May 1908, John was married for the second time. He married Belinda Laing, a Spinster and Lady Farmer from Killala, Co. Mayo, at Ballinglen Presbyterian Church, Killala.

The 1911 Census of Ireland shows the couple as resident at Ballinglen, Ballycastle, Co. Mayo. At that time, John is described as a Farmer

When originally contacted by Johnny, he mentioned a memorial path at the Parish Church at Ballycastle, a photo of which he kindly forwarded to me (shown right) (2).

When he initially contacted me, Johnny was unsure as to who the 'Frizelle boys' named on the path were and whether they were brothers or cousins. This started me off on the military side of the research, where I discovered that three of John and Caroline's sons had served in the Great War.



### **Second Lieutenant Archibald Frizelle, 75th Brigade Royal Field Artillery**

Archibald was the youngest of John and Caroline's children, being born on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> July 1889 at Swinford, Co. Mayo. Following his mother's death in 1895, Archibald appears to have resided with his paternal grandparents. The 1901 Census of Ireland shows him as resident with them at Wolfe Tone Street, Sligo.

Archibald was educated at Ranelagh School Athlone and Mounjoy School, Dublin. Records indicate that he was also a member of Wanderers Rugby Football Club, Dublin. Although no emigration records survive, research shows that Archibald emigrated to Canada in 1910 and was

employed by the Department of Railways and Canals, Dominion Government of Canada, as a Transitman and Leveller on the Hudson Bay Railway from 1910 to 1914.

Following the outbreak of war, Archibald returned to the United Kingdom and enlisted in the Irish Guards, being posted for training to Warley Barracks, Essex. He was attached to the 3<sup>rd</sup> (Reserve) Battalion Irish Guards and issued with the service number 7956. By October 1915, Archibald had been promoted to the rank of Lance Corporal and at that time he applied and was recommended for a commission. In his application, Archibald requested a commission to a Howitzer Battery of the Royal Field Artillery. His application was successful with notice of his appointment to the rank of Second Lieutenant in the Royal Field Artillery being published in the London Gazette of 8<sup>th</sup> November 1915.



*Second Lieutenant  
Archibald Frizelle*

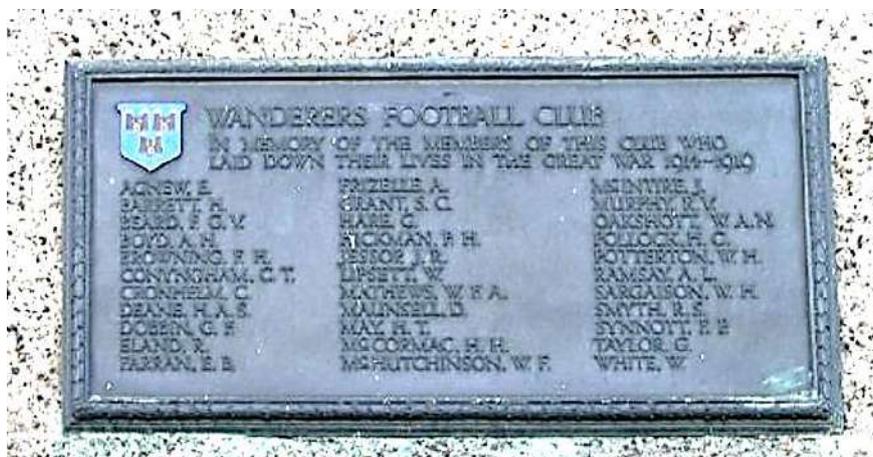
Following training, Archibald was posted to 75<sup>th</sup> Brigade Royal Field Artillery. This Brigade formed part of the Divisional Artillery for the Guards Division. 75<sup>th</sup> Brigade were equipped with Howitzers. These guns fired a high

Explosive shell in an arc, targeting enemy dugouts and defensive structures. Archibald arrived in Belgium on 24<sup>th</sup> March 1916 and was posted to B Battery. At the time, the Brigade were at Ypres, Belgium. From information available, it can be established that 75<sup>th</sup> Bde were in action near Vlamertinghe, a small village two miles west of Ypres at the end of April. The war diary for 1 May 1916 states: *HQ returned to advanced wagon line at Rome Farm Vlamertinghe. Batteries remained in action.*

Archibald was killed in action on the first of May, having been with his unit for only five weeks. Research indicates that he was the only member of 75<sup>th</sup> Brigade killed that day. He is buried at grave I.A.20 at Vlamertinghe Military Cemetery. The family arranged for the inscription, 'Deeply mourned by father, sister and brothers' to be placed on his headstone.

Archibald's sacrifice is commemorated on War Memorials and Rolls of Honour at Mayo Peace Park, Castlebar, Ranelagh School Athlone, Wanderers Rugby Football Club, Dublin (shown below) and at Holy Trinity Church, South Woodford, London, along with his brother Wm Robert

(3).



## Private William Robert Frizelle 9573, 2nd Battalion Irish Guards

William Robert was John and Caroline Frizelle's eldest child, born on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> October 1879 at Knox Street, Ballina, Co. Mayo. Little is known of William's early years and in fact, he does not appear on the 1901 Census of Ireland or on any census in the United Kingdom.

The 1911 Census shows William as resident with Daniel and Martha Dollard at 46 Dagnan Road, Balham, London. His occupation is given as Schoolmaster (Private) not currently in employment. The Dollards were originally from Dublin. Daniel Caulfield Dollard was an Artist and Martha had been born Martha Duigenan, her father being a Surgeon. They were married on 16<sup>th</sup> February 1904 at the Roman Catholic Pro Cathedral, Dublin and at the time of the marriage were resident at 57 Mountjoy Square, Dublin. This was an upmarket location and residence to Politicians, Literary, and Artistic figures.

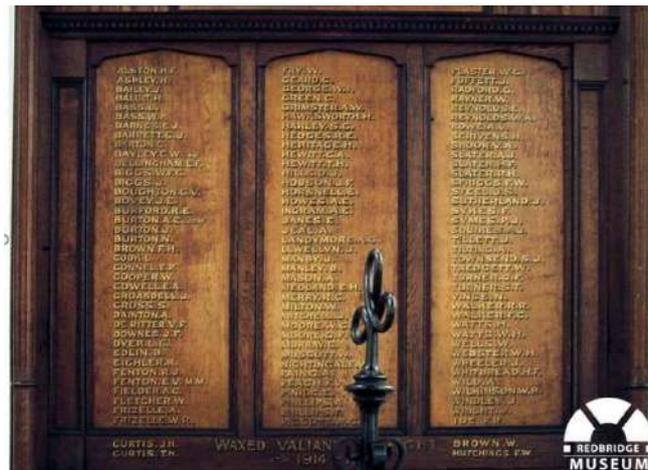
William appears to have formed a relationship with Martha and the couple had a daughter, named Martha Frizelle-Dollard, born on 11<sup>th</sup> October 1915 (4). Although they never married, William and Martha resided as a couple from this time. The 1915 Street Directory shows William as resident at 28 Church Lane, Tooting, London, and on the 1918 Electoral Register, William and Martha are listed as resident at 46 Alexandra Road, Wanstead, London (5).

It is believed that William enlisted in the Irish Guards sometime late in 1915. Issued with the service number 9573, he was posted to 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion in September 1916. He saw action with the battalion at the Third Battle of Ypres and the Battle of Cambrai in 1917. By April 1918, the battalion were in action near Hazebrouck, northern France countering the second phase of the German Spring Offensive. On 12<sup>th</sup> April, the battalion took up positions near Vieux-Berquin six miles south-east of Hazebrouck. Unfortunately, the battalion war diary has no record of the events of 12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> April however, the official history of the battalion records the events:

On the morning of 13<sup>th</sup> a message was received that the enemy had broken through the Grenadier Guards positions between Vieux-Berquin and Le Cornet Perdu. No 3 Company dispatched at once with orders to counter attack and fill the gap. No more was heard of them. They went into the morning fog and were either surrounded and wiped out before they reached the Grenadiers or were totally destroyed with them.

Unfortunately, William, a Lance Corporal in this Company, was one of those killed. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission records that 38 men from the battalion were killed in action on 13<sup>th</sup> April (6). Of these, only five have a known grave. William, along with the majority of his comrades is commemorated on the Ploegsteert Memorial to the Missing (7). In addition, William's sacrifice is commemorated on the Mayo Great War Memorial and, along with his brother Archibald on the Roll of Honour at Holy Trinity Church, South Woodford, Essex. This was Martha's local church.

From my research, I believe that these are the 'Frizelle boys' referred to on the memorial path at the parish church at Ballycastle.



*Roll of Honour Holy Trinity Church*

**TO BE CONTINUED**

## THE MOUNTBATTENS AT WAR (PART I) by David Humberston

According to popular legend, the first appearance of the chequerboard sponge cake wrapped in marzipan known to this day as “Battenberg Cake” was created in 1884 to celebrate the marriage of Prince Louis of Battenberg to Princess Victoria of Hesse, one of the many granddaughters of Queen Victoria. Whilst food historians now offer other explanations on its origins, the fact remains the name of the cake has long survived that of the Royals it purportedly honours, as will be explained shortly. Another suggestion that the four squares of the cake supposedly represent Prince Louis and his three brothers can now be discounted and the original recipe called for nine squares of sponge instead of the modern version, which contains only four!



*Prince Louis Battenberg  
& Princess Victoria of Hesse*

The sons of a morganatic marriage between Prince Alexander of Hesse and Countess Julia von Hauke (later awarded the courtesy title of Countess of Battenberg), the Battenberg brothers were all handsome, charming and well regarded by many of their “more Royal” cousins. Two of the brothers, Louis and his younger brother Henry (whose story will be told in Part II of this article) married a granddaughter and daughter of Queen Victoria, whilst a third brother, Alexander, briefly ruler of the fledgling state of Bulgaria, was prevented from marrying yet another granddaughter, Princess Victoria of Prussia, only after objections from the conservative court at Berlin proved insurmountable.

Prince Louis faced no such issues; in 1868, at the age of 14, he had joined the British Royal Navy as a cadet aboard *HMS Victory*, thus beginning a career that would see him rise steadily through the ranks, culminating in 1912 with his appointment, on merit, as First Sea Lord.

The marriage of Louis and Victoria was blessed with four children; two daughters, Alice (born in 1885 and named after her maternal grandmother) and Louise (born in 1889) followed by two sons, George (born in 1892) and, belatedly, Louis (born in 1900). In 1903, Alice, diagnosed with deafness in her childhood, married Prince Andrew of Greece, fourth son of King George, the brother of our own Queen Alexandra. During the Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913, Princess Alice became heavily involved in nursing, for which she was awarded the Royal Red Cross in 1913. The last of her four daughters was born in June 1914, two months before the world was engulfed in War.



*The Battenberg children: George,  
Louise, Alice & Louis*

The outbreak of War in August 1914 brought the Battenberg family many problems, the first being the strong possibility of separation. Two of Princess Victoria's younger sisters, Ella, Grand Duchess Serge and Empress Alexandra, wife of Nicholas II, had married into the Russian Imperial Family and Victoria and Louise were in St Petersburg on a family visit when War was declared. A problematic journey home via Stockholm, Bergen (Norway) and a journey on the final ship from that port to Newcastle saw the party reach England on 16<sup>th</sup> August. It was the last time the three sisters would ever meet, as both Alexandra and Ella would be murdered by Bolshevik revolutionaries in 1918 . . .



*Prince Louis of Battenberg,  
First Sea Lord*

Of more immediate concern was the anti-German hysteria growing amongst the British public. Prince Louis, with his German ancestry and a wife whose sister Irene was married to the Kaiser's brother, Henry of Prussia, the Commander-in-Chief of the German Battle Fleet, found his position under increasing attack in both leading newspapers and amongst the members of elite Gentlemen's Clubs, where resentment against him was openly encouraged by Admiral Lord Charles Beresford, a long time Naval adversary. Despite the support of First Sea Lord Winston Churchill, public opinion, particularly after a series of Naval reverses which concluded with the British Navy's embarrassing defeat at the Battle of Coronel, demanded change and Churchill asked Louis to resign on 27<sup>th</sup> October 1914. The Prince, broken in spirit by the request, obliged the following day and, despite being made a Privy Councillor by King George V in a public display of support, retired to the Isle of Wight with Victoria, where they would spend the remainder of the War.

If the father's participation had come to an end, that of his children very much continued. Prince George had followed his father into the British Navy, enrolling as a Cadet at the Royal Naval College at Dartmouth. By February 1914, he was a full Lieutenant, serving onboard *HMS New Zealand* when the War commenced. George was soon to see active service as the ship played a part in the Battles of Heligoland Bight (28<sup>th</sup> August 1914) and Dogger Bank (23<sup>rd</sup> January 1915), in which *New Zealand* contributed to the sinking of *SMS Blucher*. At the Battle of Jutland (31<sup>st</sup> May/1<sup>st</sup> June 1916) the *New Zealand* fired 420 twelve-inch shells, the largest number of any ship taking part in the battle. Despite this, only four shells were credited as successful hits, with the ship only being hit once herself. On 15<sup>th</sup> November that year, George married Countess Nadeja de Torbay, daughter of Grand Duke Michael of Russia. The couple would later have a daughter and a son.



*Prince George Battenberg*

Princess Louise, having initially supported the *Soldiers and Sailors Families Association* and *Smokes for Soldiers and Sailors*, later enlisted in the Red Cross and served as a nurse at the French Military Hospital in Nevers and later at a hospital at Palaves, near Montpellier. Awarded the Royal Red Cross and *Médaille de la Reconnaissance Française*. The latter, The Medal of French Gratitude, was awarded to express the gratitude of the French Government to those who came to the aid of the injured, disabled or refugees, or to those who performed an act of exceptional dedication in the presence of the enemy.

Prince Louis Junior, known in the family as “Dickie”, had also joined the Navy and to his great disappointment was not present at Jutland. A broken leg just before the passing out examinations in 1916 saw him temporarily incapacitated and it was not until 19<sup>th</sup> August that year that “Dickie” would join the conflict, serving aboard *HMS Lion*, Admiral Beatty’s flagship, in the pursuit of the German fleet intercepted en-route to bombarding Sunderland. He would subsequently serve on board *HMS Queen Elizabeth* and *HM Submarine K6*.



*Prince Louis Battenberg, 1916*

In July 1917, King George V finally bowed to public pressure to relinquish his German surname and adopt that of “Windsor”. Simultaneously all the King’s British relatives were asked to adopt “anglicised” names and therefore, from the 14<sup>th</sup> of that month “Battenberg” became “Mountbatten”, with the now former Prince becoming Marquess of Milford Haven, Earl of Medina and Viscount Alderney in early November. Victoria now ceased to use her own title of “Princess of Hesse” and the three younger children assumed courtesy titles of “Lord” and “Lady” as befitting the issue of a Marquess. George, however, adopted his father’s second title and became known as the Earl of Medina. Whilst the younger generation accepted the situation, their father was more reticent. He would later write in a London guest book: “*Arrived Prince Hyde, Departed Lord Jekyll.*”



*Princess Alice of Greece, 1907*

The one member of the family unaffected by this change was Princess Alice of Greece who, by this time, had more important matters to consider. Prince Andrew’s eldest brother, Constantine, had become King upon the assassination of his father in 1913. Attempting to follow a policy of neutrality during the War, he came into conflict with his Prime Minister, the magnificently named Eleutherios Venizelos, who saw advantages in joining the Allied cause. Deadlock followed, to be broken by the arrival of the British and French Navies to blockade Athens into submission. When one French vessel emphasised the point by dropping some shells onto the Royal Palace, Alice and her daughters were amongst those obliged to seek shelter in the Palace cellars until the danger ceased.

The taste of the Greek people for periodic revolution and change of regime once again resolved matters and King Constantine was forced to abdicate on 11<sup>th</sup> June 1917. Prince Andrew was dismissed from his post in the Greek Army and the Royal Family departed for exile in Switzerland. Alice and her family settled in Lausanne, where a visit was received from “Dickie” in 1919 as soon as circumstances permitted.

Whilst “Dickie” was then able to return with news of his sister, his mother, Victoria, anxiously awaited confirmation of the fates of her two sisters, Empress Alexandra and Grand Duchess Ella. Whilst news of the murder of the Empress and her children was received in September 1918, it was not until 9<sup>th</sup> November – two days before the signing of the Armistice – that Victoria learned for certain that Ella had also perished nearly four months previously. Amidst their grief, there were also financial problems to consider. Investments in pre-war Russia were lost and the sale of property in post-war Germany failed to realise a true value. The Marquess had never really recovered from his departure from the Admiralty in 1914 and, despite the joy of the birth of two

grandsons (one being Prince Philip of Greece to Princess Alice) lifting his spirits, his enforced retirement remained a burden. The former Prince Louis died unexpectedly whilst staying at the Naval & Military Club in Piccadilly, London, on 11<sup>th</sup> September 1921. After a funeral at Westminster Abbey, he was buried in the churchyard of St Mildred's Church, Whippingham on the Isle of Wight.

Victoria, now the Dowager Marchioness, would outlive her husband by nearly thirty years, becoming a valued matriarch to her ever-expanding family. Her eldest son George succeeded his father as 2<sup>nd</sup> Marquess of Milford Haven and continued his career in the Royal Navy until he retired in 1932. In December 1937, George fell and broke a thigh. Unusually, the bones refused to heal and bone cancer was subsequently diagnosed. Unaware of his condition, George died in a London Nursing Home on 8<sup>th</sup> April 1938, aged 45 years. This was the only occasion in her long life that Victoria was ever seen to shed tears . . .



*The Dowager  
Marchioness of  
Milford Haven, 1937*

Whilst George is comparatively forgotten, his brother “Dickie”, now Lord Louis Mountbatten, is most certainly not. Married to the wealthy heiress Edwina Ashley in 1922, he enjoyed a brilliant military career, becoming Supreme Allied Commander South East Asia in 1943. Appointed Viceroy of India four years later, he would also oversee the end of British rule and the partition of “British India” into India and Pakistan. Most satisfying of all was his 1954 appointment as First Sea Lord, the position held by his father in 1914. In August 1979, the then Earl Mountbatten of Burma was assassinated by the IRA when a bomb was planted on his fishing boat in County Sligo.



*Louise of Battenberg  
in nursing attire  
during the War*

In 1923, Victoria was delighted – and relieved – when her daughter Louise became engaged to the widowed Gustaf Adolf, Crown Prince of Sweden, whose first wife was Victoria's own cousin, Princess Margaret of Connaught. The couple wed on 3<sup>rd</sup> November that year. In October 1950, Louise and her husband became Sweden's monarch upon the death of her father-in-law. After a number of years of bravely suffering ill health, Louise died aged 75 in 1965.

Another royal wedding of even greater significance came in November 1948, when Victoria's grandson, Philip, married Princess Elizabeth Windsor, our present Queen. Philip's mother, Princess Alice, had survived further periods of exile, bouts of mental illness and the collapse of her marriage, not to mention the dangers involved in shielding Jewish friends in Athens during the German occupation of Greece in the Second World War. In her final years Alice resided quietly in Buckingham Palace, where she died in 1969.

By the time of her grandson's marriage, Victoria was plagued by arthritis and would tell her friends without complaint that her brain, still razor sharp, had outlived “her useless old body”. She lived to see the birth of her great grandson Charles and his sister Anne, before passing away at Kensington Palace on 24<sup>th</sup> September 1950. Four days later, she was buried beside her beloved husband at Whippingham on the Isle of Wight.

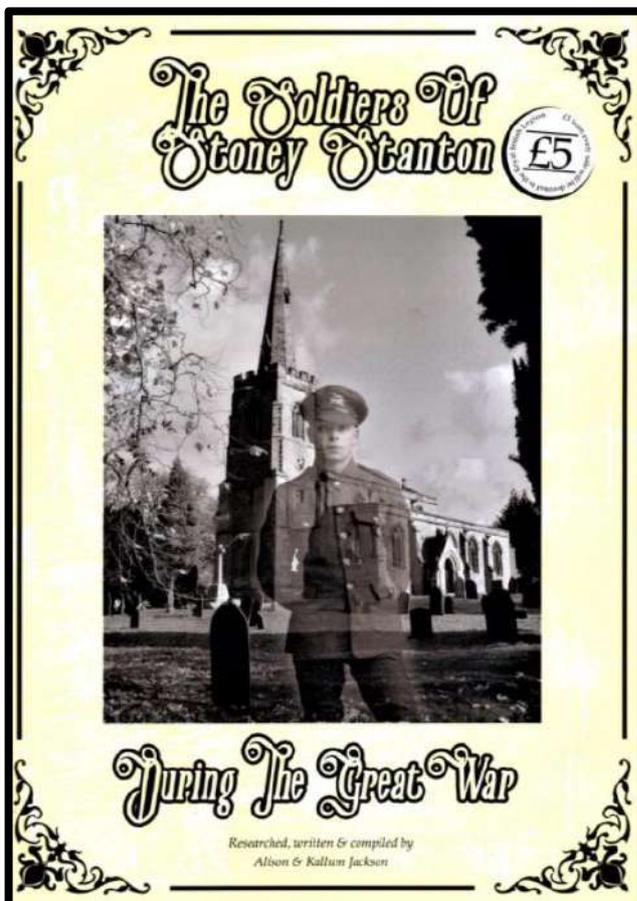
## ON THE NOTICEBOARD

### ONE FOR THE BOOKSHELF?

Greg Drozdz, our Hinckley representative, has made us aware of the following book, which may be of interest to members. Greg writes:

*When it is convenient, please could you publicise this in the newsletter?*

*It's a snapshot of life in one of the county's innumerable working class industrial villages during the First World War. The book brings to life the lives of men who fought in various branches of the armed forces and who returned, seemingly to lead quiet lives. Not that there is not tragedy here, there is. There is even a tangible village link with "Woodbine Willie" - Rev Geoffrey Studdert Kennedy MC.*



*The book, which was written by Alison and Kallum Jackson, was first published in September 2019 but has only just found its way to me via the Christmas stocking! It is lavishly illustrated and within the cover price of £5, £1 is to be donated to the Royal British Legion.*

*Copies can be obtained via: [generationgenealogy@gmail.com](mailto:generationgenealogy@gmail.com), from whom payment details can be obtained.*

## ROY BIRCH WRITES . . .

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I very much doubt that I am alone in finding that these seemingly endless weeks and months of lockdown have forced me to take stock of various aspects of life; Yes: I know that sounds rather serious, and in many ways, it is. Having had time to reflect especially on all those things that good old “circumstances beyond our control” have prevented me from doing – and not only myself of course, I find that there is so much to do and an ever diminishing amount of time in which to do it. Leaving aside, for the moment, the impossibility of “getting a man in” for the interior decorating, for example, there is the stockpile of research which continues to haunt me and await my attention; much of it arising directly out of my past “TIGER” articles.

On that same point, I wanted you all to know that even this very week, I have received a lovely letter - one of the most satisfying ever, from a gentleman with whom I have been liaising in a particular area of research; CRICKET, not unnaturally! Thinking he might be interested, I also sent him a back copy of “THE TIGER” and I must tell you that he expressed himself both impressed and delighted, not only by my own contribution, but by the entire newsletter.

Moreover, and this is what I really want to share, he said how marvelous it was – or words to that effect, that people in groups such as ours continued to research and remember the First World War. He in fact congratulated us on continuing to do this work, albeit, as he put it, “under the radar”, which was the only point with which I might have quibbled, preferring instead to think that our efforts were slightly more visible than that! But of course, they are. Otherwise he would never have found us via the branch website! So a little pat on the back for us all, I think.

As to the future, I also wanted you to know that, because of my rather intimidating backlog of research, I will be making slightly less frequent appearances in “THE TIGER”. But fear not: this is neither “Au Revoir” nor “Adieu”; more a “See you later”. I will actually be concentrating on my already extensive research into two of our local war memorials; those from the former Bridge Road School and The Wyggeston Boys Grammar. Naturally, I would be delighted if anyone would care to collaborate in either of these endeavours or to forward any information which they think might be of interest. With regard to the Wyggeston, while paying due tribute to Messrs. Harrison, Paramor, and Varley, for their compilation of the booklet published to accompany the Act of Commemoration held at what is now The Wyggeston and Queen Elizabeth I College, in November 2018, my aim is simply to supplement their material by tracing the history of the WW1 memorial from its first incarnation at The School’s original home in Highcross Street, and by compiling biographies of some of the School’s Fallen. Any of the booklet’s authors might also be interested to know that I have already been able to fill in several of their quite understandable gaps - their “Unknowns”, and hope in time to be able to fill in the remainder. So, if for once I might allow myself a cliché, “Watch This Space”. As they say, “You can’t keep a good man down”. No; nor me neither!

Keep well: take care; very best wishes and a Happy New Year to you all,

Yours  
R.A.B.

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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.

All articles reproduced in this newsletter are accepted in good faith and every effort is always made to ensure accuracy of the information given. It should be noted however that the opinions expressed by the contributors are not necessarily those of the Editor, her associates or the Western Front Association. The Editor reserves the right to amend, condense or edit any article submitted although the full version will be available, via e-mail, upon request.

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

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

**Friday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

*“We very much value your continued support”*

***EXPLORE, LEARN, SHARE***