

THE TIGER



*"On Parade": The FOFT Armistice Tour Party 2019
at Zuydcoote Military Cemetery, France
(Photograph by Paul Bardell)*

**THE NEWSLETTER OF
THE LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND BRANCH
OF THE
WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION
ISSUE 97 – DECEMBER 2019**

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

Welcome again, Ladies and Gentlemen, to the latest edition of *The Tiger*.

Our Annual General Meeting this month finds the Branch entering its ninth year of existence, an anniversary made possible only by the loyalty of our Members and the continued contribution of the Branch Committee to the cause. There cannot be any doubt that the previous 12 months have been challenging for the Western Front Association as a whole, with the “fallout” from the sale of the Butte de Warlencourt last November causing many to speculate if the Association would survive the resulting negative publicity and loss of reputation.

At Branch level, the immediate aim was to minimise any potential impact on our own existence, a situation resolved with the apparent resumption of the “laissez-faire” relationship between WFA National and the Branch network, despite a particularly feisty Annual General Meeting last April. I await with interest the forthcoming Branch Chairs Conference next February to discover if the “working parties” recently created to consider the future running of the Association have actually been allowed to function as hoped, information I will share with you all in due course. More crucially, thanks to your own loyalty, attendances at Branch Meetings have continued at the numbers seen in 2018, and, even allowing for a few notable “non-renewals” of subscriptions, the number of WFA members across the two counties has remained constant.

Looking forward to 2020, opportunities to promote ourselves at local history fairs will continue to be maximised, with our presence already secured at two forthcoming events. I must take this opportunity to thank all those who have both assisted and supported us with our displays during 2019, which, once more, have proved fruitful in attracting more members to our meetings. On a national level, the Branch is now a Corporate Member of the Friends of St George's Memorial Church, Ypres, which, in the future, we see as a way to both support and collaborate with this group to mutual benefit over the coming years.

Equally important in promoting our Branch is our monthly Newsletter, which continues to be well-received and currently has a readership in excess of 220 across local, national and even international boundaries. In compiling “*The Tiger*”, Valerie & I are always receptive to any articles written by Branch Members which, as we near our 100th issue, continue to be welcome.

2020 will no doubt bring its own challenges and, as the principal carriers of the torch, your elected committee are determined to meet them. Your constant participation is very much appreciated and, of course, remains vital for the Branch to continue to exist. As Chairman may I thank you all for your support in what we are attempting to achieve, as we continue to remember the sacrifice paid by those we exist to commemorate. I remain confident that, once again, we will not be found wanting.

The Agenda for the Annual General Meeting will be forwarded to you with this edition of “*The Tiger*” and I am pleased to confirm the members of the present Committee all wish to continue in their present roles.

D.S.H.

PARISH NOTICES

FORTHCOMING BRANCH MEETINGS

The Elms Social & Service Club, Bushloe End,
WIGSTON, Leicestershire, LE18 2BA
7:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. (Approx.)

25th November 2019
BRANCH A.G.M.

Guest Speaker: **John Stanyard**
Great Uncle Fred and the 60th Battalion,
C.E.F.

The story of one of the presenter's relatives who joined up whilst on an extended visit to Canada and later fought in the Ypres Salient . . .



30th December 2019

Guest Speaker: **David Humberston**
Animals of the Great War

The roles of Animals in the Great War were many and varied and today many of their stories are often forgotten. As a tribute to the more maverick of their number, David recounts the stories of some of these unofficial combatants and the men associated with them.



27th January 2020

Guest Speaker: **John Doyle**
A Mountsorrel Marine in the Great War

Making a welcome return, John Doyle recounts the story of a Mountsorrel shoe worker whose Great War service in the Royal Marine Light Infantry saw him participate in some of the most arduous campaigns of that conflict.



OTHER DATES FOR YOUR DIARY . . .

**MONDAY
25th
NOVEMBER
2019**



**W.F.A. BRANCH
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The Branch A.G.M. will take place at the beginning of our November Meeting.

**Agendas will be issued
with the December edition of "The Tiger"**

**TUESDAY
26th
NOVEMBER
2019
7.30 p.m.**



**Friends of
Leicester and
Leicestershire
Museums**

New Walk Museum,
53 New Walk
Leicester
LE1 7EA

**David Humberston
presents**

**THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES:
A PEACE THAT LOST A WAR**

Car Parking is available adjacent to the Museum and entry is by the front door (for staff security purposes)

Tea and coffee will be available beforehand
The lecture will start promptly at 7.30 p.m.

Visitors very welcome
£2.00 admittance charge

**SATURDAY
9th NOVEMBER
2019
to
SUNDAY
9th FEBRUARY
2020**



IN MEMORIAM
LEICESTER'S WAR MEMORIALS AT RISK

EXHIBITION

Newarke Houses Museum
20 The Newarke, Leicester LE2 7BY

Monday – Saturday
10.00 a.m. – 4.00 p.m.

Sundays

11.00 a.m – 4.00 p.m.

(Closed Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Boxing Day,
New Year's Eve and New Year's Day.)

**SATURDAY
25th JANUARY
2020**



AT RISK WAR MEMORIALS OPEN DAY

The Chancel,
Rear of All Saints Church,
Highcross Street, Leicester

11.00A.M. – 4.00P.M.

Visit www.atriskwarmemorials.co.uk
for further details

YOUR BRANCH IN YPRES . . .

Many Branch Members travelled to Ypres with Valerie & David's annual "Friends of Flanders Tours" Armistice Tour. Angela Hall once more laid the Branch wreath during the commemorations at the Menin Gate on the morning of 11th November, with other Branch Officials and Members present at the commemorations.

An account of the Tour itself will appear in a forthcoming WFA Bulletin, but a group photograph appears as this month's cover picture. Depicted below are some of the other highlights . . .



Dinah White with the official wreath of the "Old Contemptibles" outside St George's Memorial Church on Armistice Day morning



*Angela Hall pays tribute to Father Willie Doyle, M.C. S.J. at the Irish Memorial near Zonnebeke
(Photograph by Paul Bardell)*



*David Humberston addresses the Pilgrims at Perth Cemetery (China Wall)
(Photograph by Karen Barradell)*



*Malcolm Smith presents a kneeler depicting the Regimental Badge of the Royal Army Pay Corps to John Arnold at St George's Memorial Church, Ypres
(Photograph by Margaret Smith)*

Our Armistice Tour takes place annually between 9th & 13th November staying at the award winning Ariane Hotel, Ypres. If anyone would like further details please contact us at the usual email address foft@live.co.uk

A DECORATED CHEMIST OF THE GREAT WAR by David Humberston

Readers of *"The Tiger"* may recall my article in the March issue concerning Lieutenant Edward Frank Harrison and the Harrison Medal, inaugurated in his honour, by the Royal Society of Chemistry. A recent opportunity to visit the Society Headquarters at Burlington House, Piccadilly, not only provided the opportunity to photograph the Society War Memorial but also to uncover the story of another Great War chemist and the gallantry award he received.

The first name on the Memorial, shown right, was that of Dr. Andrea Angel, born in Bradford in 1877. The son of an Inland Revenue Supervisor, his maternal grandfather was an Italian refugee who, after ten years imprisonment on political grounds, later escaped to England. Andrea (sometimes referred to as either "Andreas" or "Andrew") was educated at Exeter and won an Exhibition to Christ Church, Oxford, where he graduated with a First Class Degree in 1899. Subsequently becoming an MA and a BSc, he then became a Chemistry lecturer at Brasenose and Keble Colleges before returning to Christ Church to run its laboratory as a Tutor and Lecturer in Chemistry. Active within the Chemistry Society (the forerunner of the Royal Society of Chemistry) Dr. Angel became a Fellow of the Society in 1905, writing a number of papers for the Society Journal. Married in 1904, he had two young daughters by the time War was declared in 1914.



Dr. Angel, shown left, was eager to enlist but the requirement for chemists of his calibre to assist the War effort on the Home Front prevented him from doing so. In 1915, therefore, he joined the Brunner Mond Company to assist with their vital work for the Ministry of Munitions as Chief Chemist overseeing the purification of TNT. He worked in a former caustic soda works in Silvertown, East London, originally built in 1893, but left idle since production had ceased in 1912. The Company themselves opposed the purification work, regarded by their chief scientist as "manifestly very dangerous" particularly in view of the densely populated area in which the factory was situated. The Government, however, insisted otherwise and the factory began to purify TNT at a rate of 10 tonnes per day.

On the evening of Friday, 19th January 1917, a fire broke out in the roof of one of the upper rooms of the factory and George Wenborne, the senior worker on the shift, ran to inform Dr. Angel of the situation. Just about to dine in a cottage adjoining the factory, Angel abandoned his meal and entered the factory to view the fire for himself. Immediately realising that the blaze could not be stopped, he began to organise the evacuation of the munitionettes to a place of safety. After about seven minutes, fearing that not everyone had been evacuated, he re-entered the building. A huge explosion then ripped through the factory and it was later estimated that some 53 tonnes of TNT had ignited. The shock-waves of the explosion were felt all over London and Essex with the blast being heard as far away as Southampton and Norwich. It remains the largest single explosion London has ever experienced.



The Ruins of the Factory

With over 60,000 properties being affected by the blast, fatalities and injuries were inevitable. However, had the fire not occurred so late in the day and at the end of the working week, the number of fatalities and injuries would have been significantly higher.

Amongst the 73 dead was Dr. Andrea Angel, whom the following press coverage of the catastrophe hailed as “The Hero of the Great Explosion” on the front pages of the *Daily Sketch* and *Daily Mirror*. The former reported

that: *“He stood at his post of duty, sending out orders to police and firemen, helping women workers to escape, knowing that at any moment he might be blown to atoms. In the glorious records of our Army and Navy no deed of self-sacrifice greater was than this.”* The Editorial Column of *The Stratford Express* informed its readers that *“First and foremost, there is the heroic conduct of Dr. Angel whose body has at last been found amongst the ruins of the factory. Had he been a craven coward he might possibly have escaped with his life but, like a true English gentleman, knowing full well the potentialities of such a fire at the factory, he remained on the spot where he felt his duty to be.”*

His body, identified from its clothing by Angel’s widow, was laid to rest in a quiet ceremony at East London Cemetery, attended by only a handful of mourners. *The Stratford Express* later

reported that: “The service was of the simplest nature, except for the fact that the grave was lined with purple cloth. The utmost sercrecy was maintained. The cortege consisted of an open hearse and was met at the (cemetery) gates by the Mayor and representative of the Town Clerk’s department, together with directors of the factory. There were less than a dozen people in all, among them being the widow. There were floral tributes from the directors of the factory and its employees, one of single



daffodils ‘from his children’ and another of pink and red carnations ‘from his wife’. A wreath of laurels, was inscribed “The borough’s respectful homage” and tied with scarlet ribbon”.

His heroic actions were soon to be rewarded. On 22nd June 1917 The London Gazette announced that *“His Majesty the King has been graciously pleased to award the Edward Medal of the First Class to the representatives of Dr. Andrea Angel and Mr. George Wenborne, who lost their lives in endeavouring to save the lives of others. . .”*

The Edward Medal, named after King Edward VII, was instituted by Royal Warrant in July 1907, originally to recognise acts of bravery by miners and quarrymen in endangering their lives to rescue fellow workers and was issued in two classes; first (silver) or second (bronze). In December 1909, a further Warrant extended this qualification to encompass acts of bravery by all industrial workers in factory accidents and disasters, thus creating a second category. This latter category, in Silver, was the type awarded to Dr. Angel.

The Edward Medal (Industry), shown right, was only awarded on 188 occasions, making it one of the rarest British Gallantry Awards. The Medal was discontinued in 1971, when surviving recipients were invited to “exchange” their award for the George Cross.



In addition to the Edward Medal, Dr. Angel was also awarded a Carnegie Hero Trust Fund Medal “*for heroic endeavour to save human life*”. Established in Britain in 1908, the Trust was originally founded in America four years earlier and funded by an endowment from the Scottish philanthropist and Steel magnate, Andrew Carnegie. The purpose of the Trust was to provide payments to individuals who had been injured or financially disadvantaged as a result of undertaking an act of heroism or, in fatal cases, to provide for the family or other dependants.



Post-war, Dr. Angel was also commemorated on the War Memorials of Exeter School, Christ Church College, Oxford and, as stated above, the Royal Society of Chemistry, who also honoured him during its 175th anniversary commemorations in 2016 by naming him as one of the “*175 Faces of Chemistry*”. All the fatalities of the explosion were also remembered on the Silvertown War Memorial at the Royal Wharf, which also commemorates seven men who fell in action abroad. The site of the destroyed factory remained empty for nearly a century and was cleared for a residential redevelopment in 2014, with the construction of the Royal Wharf development beginning a year later. As part of the development, the memorial was removed from its original location near the road, restored and then re-erected in 2016, as shown left, closer to the River Thames.

A final tribute was paid on 14th July 2018 when a blue plaque was unveiled at Dr. Angel’s former residences in Oxford. From 1905 to 1917 Dr. Angel lived with his wife, Mary Letitia, and daughters Marion and Heather, at Park Villas, Banbury Road, first at No. 17 (1905–1912), and then in the adjoining house at No. 15 (1912–1917), where the plaque was installed. Guests at the unveiling included Duncan Rabagliati (whose great-grandfather was the brother of Dr. Angel’s mother), members of his family and dignitaries from Oxfordshire County Council and Christ Church College.



Dr. Martin Grossel, Christ Church Chemist, concluded his address that afternoon by stating “*I hope that this plaque will also serve to remind passers-by of the many acts of civilian heroism on the Home Front in the First World War*”.

May I echo that sentiment and also say it is my intention to feature further civilian fatalities of the Silvertown Explosion in future articles for our Newsletter.

I would like to thank the receptionist of the Royal Society of Chemistry for allowing me to photograph their War Memorial and gifting me a copy of “Pro Patria”, the Roll of Honour of the Society. I am also grateful to Mr Duncan Rabagliati for answering my query regarding his relationship to Dr Angel.

ON THE NOTICEBOARD



The advertisement features a red background with the text "2020 CALENDAR" in large white letters. Below this, it says "THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION" in white on a dark blue horizontal band. To the right is a white silhouette of a woman in a long coat and hat, standing on a pedestal that holds the WFA logo. The logo is circular with a blue border and contains a red and white design.

Priced at **£10**, the 2020 WFA Calendars are now on sale and can be purchased either at our forthcoming Branch Meetings (whilst stocks last) or via the “Shop” Tab on the WFA national Website: www.westernfront.com

GREEN PLAQUE AWARDS UPDATE

Further to last month’s “The Tiger” we have now been informed that the green plaques for both John Cridland Barrett V.C. and Robert Gee V.C. will be unveiled in the New Year. The Branch will also included the official “list” of invitees for both events, so further information will be provided when available

THE WESTERN FRONT WAY



Readers may be interested to learn of *The Western Front Way*, a new long-distance walking route from the French Alps in the South to the Belgian coast in the North. *The Western Front Way* offers walkers a special environment, a beautiful landscape shaped by compelling human stories.

The way traces the rough line of the Western Front. We invite you to walk from plaque to plaque (there are over 200 of them) visiting the key sites along the route. Thanks to the support from the Belgian tourist offices the whole path in Belgium will be marked with plaques and way-markers by November 2019. An outline of the Western Front Way route is available on www.thewesternfrontway.com

REFLECTIONS AND REMEMBRANCES

PART II

by Roy-Anthony Birch

The Roll of Honour created to compliment the service for Fallen journalists, with which I ended last month's article, bore the names of members of The Press Club and of London journalists, together with their Fallen relatives. The name of Leslie Coulson was among them. The son of a leading Fleet Street columnist, London-born Leslie was a reporter with *The Evening News* and later, assistant editor of *The Morning Post*. He joined 2nd/2nd Bn. London Regiment (Royal Fusiliers) as a private within weeks of Britain's entry into the War and had been posted abroad by December 1914. Having recovered in hospital in Egypt from wounds sustained during the Gallipoli Campaign, he was promoted Sergeant and sent to France in 1916, now attached to 12th London Regiment (The Rangers). He was mortally wounded during an attack on Dewdrop Trench in The Battle of Le Transloy and died on October 8th 1916 aged 27. His poetry output was modest; tending to be reflective rather than redolent of the more graphic "front line" imagery of war. The following single stanza, a complete poem in itself, may indeed be seen as offering a longer-term rather than an instant "capturing the moment" perspective, with the inextinguishable forces of nature mirroring the innate resilience of humanity itself. For such a perspective to be offered by one imbued with front-line fighting experience is surely remarkable, and most especially in a poem thought to have been written during Coulson's service on the Somme: -

WAR

Where war has left its wake of whitened bone
Soft stems of summer grass shall wave again,
And all the blood that war has ever strewn
Is but a passing stain.

I hardly need dwell on what is now almost routinely characterised as "*the slaughter*" on the opening day of the 1916 Battle of The Somme, save to say that even here, July 1st was not entirely devoid of Allied and indeed British successes. Neither ought the Campaign overall to be summarily dismissed as a futile venture. (We recall the tenacity of our own "Fighting Tigers", for example, in helping to clear the enemy from Bazentin-le-Petit Wood and village from 14th-17th July; albeit at unprecedented cost). Grim and eternally haunting as many reflections were, I offer these possibly surprising responses, taken from *A Summer Day on The Somme*, broadcast on BBC Radio 4 on 26th July 1976. One interviewee remarked: "*looking back, I don't regret for one instant; I wouldn't have missed the experience there for anything in the world. It was a wonderful experience and I am only too thankful that I came out of it alive after that first day on the battlefield*". Another contributor echoed many of his contemporaries – Siegfried Sassoon was foremost among them, who placed "their war" in its historical and indeed its geographical context: "*I feel rather glad that I was there; something rather like Henry V at Agincourt. It was, to my mind, the most interesting day I've ever had. It was, of course, the first real battle that I'd ever been in. Later on, I was in a few more, which didn't really impress me half as much*".

I offer these testimonies to suggest the diversity of reactions to fighting in general and in the particular regarding The Somme; even from within the cauldron of major industrialised warfare.

Yet with just over 5,700,000 Britons serving in the Army during the War (Richard Holmes *Tommy* p. 138), we ought not to be surprised at the extraordinary divergence of opinion or, to invert the argument, we ought perhaps to be more bewildered by the persistence of what I call “the misery myth” of WW1 battlefield experience. Even for individual veterans, views may have been susceptible to subtle changes or oscillation, if not to outright reversal, depending on subsequent experience and or sober reflection; pointing to the folly for present-day students of succumbing to neat and compact tunnel-visioned perspectives: blinded to all but the currently fashionable or most convenient “truths” about the War.

Colossal and incalculable losses were of course an irrefutable reality. Likewise, the physical and psychological suffering of countless survivors and of those who cared for them; all too often for a lifetime. Like his fellow-poet, friend, and protégé, Edward Thomas (1878-1917), the American Robert Frost (1874-1963) is not usually categorised as “a war poet”. But if this, from 1916, is not a war poem, in the sense of emanating from the War; I don’t know what is: -

NOT TO KEEP

They sent him back to her. The letter came
Saying . . . and she could have him. And before
She could be sure there was no hidden ill
Under the formal writing, he was in her sight,
Living. They gave him back to her alive -
How else? They are not known to send the dead -
And not disfigured, visibly. His face?
His hands? She had to look; to ask
“What is it dear?” And she had given all
And still she had all - *they* had; they, the lucky!
Wasn’t she glad now? Everything seemed won,
And all the rest, for them, permissible ease.
She had to ask “What was it dear?”

“Enough; yet not enough. A bullet through and through,
High in the breast. Nothing, but what good care
And medicine and rest and you - a week,
Can cure me of, to go again”. The same
Grim giving to do over for them both.
She dared no more than ask him with her eyes
How was it with him, for a second trial.
And with his eyes he asked her not to ask.
They had given him back to her; but not to keep.

There is often so much to be gleaned from the re-reading of almost any poem. Depths that may be hidden at first sight in stanzas such as these are likely to be revealed on their revisiting. The line “*And not disfigured, visibly*” shows an insightfulness that might indeed be expected of a poet, while the essence of Frost’s verses overall highlights the tension between the warrior, knowing it is his duty to “go back” and is perhaps more willing than his partner to see that duty done, but leaving for the other the sometimes near impossibility of reassembling the remnants of a life now irremediably changed.

Mercifully, there came the time when men were not summoned to return; when, to do again (or “over”, in New Hampshire parlance), the same “*Grim giving*” would not be required. No longer would be seen the taking of men back for a second, third, or umpteenth time, sometimes for their service to be meaningfully recognised, should they return: but more often, in a land supposedly “Fit for heroes”, - not. Unalloyed rejoicing was not in evidence on every side in November 1918, neither on the Home Front nor in many a now less than foreign field. Many of those whom Sassoon, for one, witnessed “*making fools of themselves*” at Armistice, were more likely than not to have experienced little of the hardships of the War. Those who had seen suffering and sacrifice at first hand were perhaps more likely to have been at one with Lady Diana Manners (1892-1986), daughter of the 8th Duke of Rutland; styled Lady Diana Cooper following her marriage to Alfred Duff Cooper (Viscount Norwich) in 1919. She trained as a V.A.D. at Guy’s Hospital in London and continued to nurse there and at the hospital established by her parents at their London home in Arlington Street, throughout the War. These were Lady Diana’s recollections of Armistice Day 1918: -

For four-and-a-half years, we had prayed for the War to end. As we saw its swift approach and the enemy scattered, the relief and exultation possessed us fully. Yet when it came, for me and for countless others, it was a day of deep deep mourning. Our losses seemed to crowd out the triumph. I remember searching for a way to celebrate victory as I had for so long expected to do, and finding no way better than to sit with a dejected heart and, I hope, a cheerful face, in some shaking pandemonium of a restaurant until the earliest moment when I could sneak out through the hysterically happy surge into the quieter byways and still darkened streets to a house where I knew I must find the same sad spirit as my own. The bells that were to announce the Germans landing on our island clanged for days in gratitude of victory, and with them, as the days passed, hope began to flicker and then to blaze on new horizons. No-one imagined that the Armistice was not peace. But Armistice was slow-footed and war work droned on. The patients in my hospital did not pick up their beds and walk, but from now on, we wanted their quicker recovery, since release would no longer mean a return to the lethal trenches.

For my final poem, I stay with the dazzling social circle wherein Lady Diana Cooper was unreservedly acknowledged as *the* supreme beauty and into which she had indeed been born; where an irrepressible joie de vivre and no small amount of notoriety ruled the day, until the War brought some sobriety and at least as much mourning here as elsewhere. Members of the Asquith family were habitués of the circle, with Lady Cynthia Asquith (1887-1960) penning numerous portraits of literary and theatrical luminaries, painters, and politicians, naturally, in her wartime diaries, begun in 1915. In 1910, Lady Cynthia (née Charteris) had married The Honourable Herbert Asquith (1881-1947), second son of Prime Minister H.H. Asquith (1852-1928) by his first marriage, to Helen Melland (d. 1891).

Lady Cynthia was to suffer the loss of many close relatives and friends. The first anniversary of Britain’s entry into the War, for example, brought news of the death of The Hon. Gerald William “Billy” Grenfell (8th Rifle Brigade and younger brother of Julian) who had been killed on July 30th 1915 aged 25. Of his death, Lady Cynthia wrote “*It’s the first that has been much more than vicarious to me. . . . It is the end of one’s youth, all this. Soon one will hardly remember who is alive and who is dead. . . . the division becomes narrower and narrower*”. Even now, one is moved by the poignancy of Lady Cynthia’s diary entry for 30th August 1915, when she received a note from Billy’s mother, Lady Desborough, together with the last letter that Lady Cynthia had written to the deceased. This was one of just two items of correspondence retrieved from Billy’s tunic pocket: the other was from Lady Desborough herself.

The death from dysentery of Lord George Vernon (Derbyshire Yeomanry), in Malta in November 1915, was another grievous blow, as was that of Lady Cynthia's youngest surviving brother, 2nd Lieutenant The Hon. Yvo Charteris (1st Bn. Grenadier Guards), who was killed in October 1915 aged just 19. But the cruelest cut of all came on the historic 1st July 1916, when the family received official confirmation of the death of Captain Hugo Francis Charteris, Lord Elcho, (Royal Gloucestershire Hussars), firstborn son of the 11th Earl of Wemyss and Lady Cynthia Asquith's eldest brother. He had been killed at Katia on 23rd April 1916 aged 32, and is now commemorated at Jerusalem.

News of the loss of this most beloved and irreplaceable sibling had been given to Lady Cynthia by her husband, Herbert; a Lieutenant with the Royal Field Artillery, who had first crossed to France on Friday 23rd April 1915. He escaped what could have been serious injuries in June, avoiding the loss of an eye or permanent facial disfigurement on going forward to man the guns. In the event, he was little more than grazed by a shell splinter and received only bruising to the lips and damage to two teeth; promptly repaired at home. Far more traumatic was the psychological damage sustained in August, when he returned home "*feeling that he would crack up*". He showed some of what became the familiar signs of shell-shock, with quite uncharacteristic outbursts of violence - smashing ornaments etc., and with a volatility that belied his usual placidity. Equilibrium was gradually restored, however, chiefly via the correcting of proofs for his publisher Sidgwick & Jackson, who issued what many regarded as the finest war poem to date. What appears below is the author's revision of a piece first written c. 1912, but which became instantly popular - even a "sell-out" on its release just before Christmas 1915. I commend it to you now as a Valedictory Salute to those whose service and sacrifice we must always remember: not only today, but for Remembrance Tides yet to come.

THE VOLUNTEER

Here lies a clerk who half his life had spent
 Toiling at ledgers in a city grey,
Thinking that so his days would drift away
With no lance broken in life's tournament:
Yet ever 'twixt the books and his bright eyes
 The gleaming eagles of the legions came,
And horsemen, charging under phantom skies,
Went thundering past beneath the oriflamme.

And now those waking dreams are satisfied;
From twilight into spacious dawn he went;
 His lance is broken; but he lies content
With that high hour, in which he lived and died.
And falling thus he wants no recompense,
 Who found his battle in the last resort;
Nor needs he any hearse to bear him hence,
 He goes to join the men of Agincourt.

CONTACT US



Leicestershire & Rutland

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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.

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

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

Friday 13th December 2019

“We very much value your continued support”

EXPLORE, LEARN, SHARE