



Gallipoli 17-23 June

Catherine Jones

Six of the Thame Remembers team - Dave and Margaret Bretherton, Ian Jones, Allan Hickman, Mike Dyer and myself - travelled to Turkey to lay a wreath at the Gallipoli memorial at Helles Point in memory of two casualties from Thame. We had a couple of days in Istanbul to acclimatise, enjoy the wonderful sights of that city and to pick up the hire car before we set off for Cannakele, a five hour drive.

I have done more battlefields than is entirely normal for a woman of my age and I have visited war cemeteries in France, Greece, Italy, Belgium, Holland and Germany. Apart from the size or the view, the graveyards are poignant and wonderfully kept with a universally recognisable design but, despite their similarities, I can't help but have a few favourites and, in my opinion, the ones in Gallipoli are without compare. I had visited the battlefield there about ten years ago and, when I was offered the chance to go again, I jumped at it. The cemeteries at places like Tyne Cot or Serre No II on the Western Front have thousands of graves and thousands of visitors; people anxious to visit a distant relative or just to get an idea of the scale of the conflict. But some of the cemeteries at Gallipoli have precious few warriors buried there and, often, most of those are only 'Known Unto God'. They are difficult to reach up steep hills and yet, despite the fact that visitors to these must be numbered in tens, rather than tens of thousands, they are as beautifully tended and immaculate as their better known counterparts. And somehow, because of that, even more moving.



At The Nek, overlooking ANZAC Cove

Crosses Recently Delivered

21 June 2018

Private

William Ewen Hicks

Household Cavalry
David Bretherton
Helles Memorial,
Gallipoli, Turkey.

21 June 2018

Captain

Graham Chard Loader

Hampshire Regiment
Mike Dyer
Helles Memorial,
Gallipoli, Turkey.

27 June 2018

Private

Alfred Thomas Cross

Devonshire Regiment
Adrian & Ann Dite
Vailly British Cemetery,
Aisne, France.

27 June 2018

Corporal

Ralph Line

Queens Own Oxfordshire Hussars
Adrian & Ann Dite
Chauny Communal Cemetery,
Aisne, France.

27 June 2018

Captain

**Richard John Philip
Hewetson**

Loyal North Lancs Regiment
Adrian & Ann Dite
Vendresse British Cemetery,
Aisne, France.

We arrived in Canakkele on Wednesday 20th June after a long journey along a spectacular coast road down the Gallipoli peninsular. Our hotel was bijou and quaint and right in the centre – handy for the bars, restaurants and the ferry. From my room I could see the Bosphorus and the steady stream of cargo ships which tramp up and down it, between the Black Sea and the Aegean, with the added bonus of spotting the occasional school of dolphins. The next morning, Thursday, the weather was overcast and threatening with a forecast for storms later, but we crossed on the ferry and took ourselves to the Lone Pine Cemetery and 4th Battalion Parade Ground Cemetery before heading to the Helles Memorial. This last is on a headland and commands stunning views down to “Y” beach where the ill-fated River Clyde was shelled.



Lone Pine Cemetery on Gallipoli

The head stones in the cemeteries on Gallipoli look very different to those that we are used to in Europe, They are all set at an angle on a plinth above the ground.

At the memorial we laid a wreath to commemorate the lives of Capt Graham Loader (Hampshire Regiment) and Pte WE Hicks (City of London Yeomanry) both of whom have no known grave. After we'd done this the weather deteriorated further so we took shelter in a local hostelry down on the beach at Gaba Tepe and watched the storm rage across the straits as we sat in the dry,



Helles Memorial

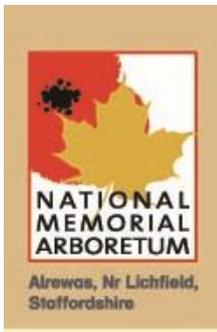
enjoying a cold beer and some excellent local food. However, as the storm drew nearer, the rumbling thunder made it difficult not to think of gun fire and how it might have been on the same beach, under frighteningly different circumstances, one hundred years earlier.

The storm passed, the rain stopped and we ventured out again to find the grave of Lt Col Doughtie-Wylie VC – the most senior officer to be awarded the VC during the Gallipoli campaign. As we found the location it began to drizzle again and Margaret and I sat in the minibus while the men ventured up the track. They reached the grave at the same instant there was a simultaneous flash and crash as another

storm broke directly overhead and torrential rain bounced knee-high off the ground. The men were drenched to the skin. We then drove to the Turkish museum where, during the hour we spent there, they were able to go from being ‘dripping’ to merely ‘sodden’.

The following day was a complete contrast – bright blue skies and warm sunshine. We took the ferry over the straits to visit Shrapnel Valley, The Nek, Plugge’s Plateau, Scimitar Hill, Anzac Cove and Suvla Bay. At The Nek it was possible to stand and look across a precipitous valley to The Sphinx – a near-vertical cliff-face – and get an appreciation of the brutal terrain the men had to fight over and for. It was very sobering. On a cheerier note the area was alive with butterflies and wild birds to say nothing of lizards and beetles and a large but (thankfully) timid snake which raced off into the undergrowth as I approached it. I don’t know who was more startled.

The day was rounded off with a swim in Suvla Bay before we caught the ferry back to Canakkele and a last supper by the water. It was a terrific and memorable trip and it was an honour to be able to tip one’s hat to some more brave lads who never made it home.



Arboretum Trip

A reminder about our coach trip to the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas in Staffordshire. There are still a few places left.

The coach will leave Thame at 8.30 on Sunday 22 July 2018 from the Town Hall, returning for approx 6.15.

We will arrive in good time for the daily 11 am service and then everyone is free to explore the Arboretum.

During this visit we will be laying our final Crosses for the Thame Remembers project; one for each of the two men who we do not know their resting place; that is J L Castle and H T Wilson, and another for Private Harry Eele who is buried in Pakistan.

The National Arboretum is a huge beautiful garden of remembrance covering over 150 acres and with over 300 memorials for many organisations. For the less able there is a mini-train to help you get around. There is also a cafe on site but we would advise taking a packed lunch to picnic in the grounds.

If you wish to book one of the few places left please ring Mike 07973440229 or David 0184215178. The cost is only £10 and you may pay by cash or cheque.

Janice's Story

In August 2014 I read in the Thame Gazette about the Thame Remembers Project to deliver a cross to the grave or memorial of every person named on the War Memorial in Thame, wherever in the world that may be. I thought what a wonderful thing this would be to do. I always knew that my uncle (Dad's brother) was killed in World War One, but had no more information until my sister visited Thame Museum when the Project was first on display. While looking around she noticed a record search and entered our uncle's name and up came Company Sergeant Major Cecil Amos Witney, 2/4th Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry died 7 April 1917 and was buried at Vadencourt Cemetery, Maissemy and remembered on Thame War Memorial.



Thame Remembers were asking if anyone could help to deliver a cross and if so to get in touch, unfortunately I didn't have a passport at the time but a friend was going on a trip on a Hesketh motorcycle in September and his first stop would be St Quentin, close to where uncle Cecil was buried. He offered to find the cemetery and would be honoured to place the cross on our behalf.

On his return he gave me the photographs that he had taken and said how emotional he always feels when visiting the war cemeteries and that I should visit myself to understand the feeling. As requested by Thame Remembers I took the photographs of the cross laying to Thame Museum and received a certificate recording the accomplishment, which has now been framed.

I did more research on my uncle and decided to get my passport and I am happy to say that last year I went to his grave on the 100th anniversary of his death, 7 April 1917. Arriving at Vadencourt Cemetery, out in the countryside so quiet and peaceful, immaculate grounds, then the sadness came over me. So many rows of white headstones, so many lost lives and this was just one cemetery. There were several people from the British Legion laying wreaths and two gentlemen looking for their relative's grave. We then came to my uncle's grave, the sun was shining on the white headstone, I read the inscription, and yes tears were shed. I was so happy to be with him on this day and so sad that we never got to know

Cont. overleaf

Diary dates

22 July 2018
Arboretum Coach Trip

11 Aug to 19 Dec '18
Thame Remembers
Exhibition
Thame Museum

11 to 15 Sep 2018
'O What a Lovely War'
Players Theatre
Tickets from the
Theatre

21 Oct 2018
Thame Remembers
Book Launch
5pm. Barns Centre

9 & 10 Nov 2018
Thame Remembers
'Ten Tommies from
Thame'

Players Theatre
Tickets available from
10 July

11 Nov 2018
Remembrance Sunday
11am
Remembrance Service
7pm
Beacon Lighting

Ten Tommies From Thame

We are delighted to announce details of our upcoming revue at Thame Players theatre, to take place in the build up to Remembrance Sunday which, this year, also marks the centenary of the Armistice.

Thame Remembers

present
in collaboration with Thame Players

“Ten Tommies from Thame”

Friday 9th and Saturday 10th November at 7.45pm

The Players Theatre, Nelson Street, Thame
Tickets £6 from Spear Travels, Greyhound Walk, Thame,
Tel: 01844 217228 or online from www.thameplayers.co.uk



Thame Remembers is a commemoration project within Thame Museum Trust, a registered charity. Thame Players is an amateur company and a registered charity.



At the end of August 1914 the Thame Gazette carried an article recording how ten men from Thame, all reservists, took themselves off to Cowley Barracks to report for active service.

Research by the Thame Remembers team has filled in a lot of background, enabling us to present their subsequent experiences, and individual fortunes, into a stage play which explores the impact of war on them and on their families back in Thame.

‘Ten Tommies from Thame’, written by the Thame Remembers team and with dialogue by our very own local author, Catherine Jones, and featuring some of our own volunteers amongst the cast, will appear for two nights only on Friday 9th and Saturday 10th November. Tickets at £6 each (no concessions) will be on sale from 10th July, available from Spear Travels in Greyhound Walk or through the website www.thameplayers.co.uk.

We are expecting take up to be fairly brisk so do get in early.



This newsletter is printed and published by Thame Museum Trust and distributed free to all

This paper is intended as a digest of news items about the Thame Remembers project to keep the people of Thame up to date with what is happening.

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Janice's Story (continued)

him and tell him how proud the family are of him. I now understand what my friend meant about the emotions and feelings you get. So many cemeteries, large and small, all kept clean and tidy, so many lives lost. I really had no idea until I saw for myself, not only the graves and the memorial



walls with so many names but the terrain where they were and trying to imagine what it must have looked like a hundred years ago, and how the young men must have felt. Seeing the wood and copses where holes still remain from the shells and the Omignon river that they had to cross. So much to see and this was just in the area that we managed to cover.

I am so pleased that I made this journey, although very sad. It is something that I will never forget and will forever give thanks to those who lost their lives for us. If anyone is thinking of visiting the war graves please do make the trip. I know that it will be an experience that you will never forget.

Janice Tapping

Thame Remembers is a project of Thame, Oxfordshire to commemorate the centenary of World War One by researching those from Thame who fell in all conflicts worldwide, and remembering them by placing a Thame Remembers Cross on their grave or memorial wherever in the world that may be. If you feel that you can help please contact Dave on 01844 215178.