



# THE WAR GRAVES PHOTOGRAPHIC PROJECT



In  
association  
with the  
CWGC

## News from the Front line - Centenary Edition

August 4<sup>th</sup> 2014

With the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of WW1 now upon us I thought I would just like to say a few words of thanks to those that have helped us, as a project, to enable many families to find and remember those that gave their all.

We have come a long way since our website started in February 2008. I distinctly remember the meeting with the CWGC in 2007 at their HQ in Maidenhead when they agreed that we could work 'In Association' with them providing we photograph **all** of the Commonwealth war cemeteries and memorials. We had agreed to a timescale of four years so this was quite a challenge to a group of volunteers with just enthusiasm and a few early digital cameras in their possession.

At a recent get together of 'Old Hands' and, of course, 'New faces' at the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA) I conducted a presentation which looked back over six years of our work and even in that short timescale some of our images of the tours around France and Belgium looked quite dated. The presentation effectively did a tour of the world describing, through photographs, the many places that Commonwealth forces are buried or commemorated and concluded in a 'What's next' section at the end.

The 'Team' that support TWGPP have done themselves proud in actually photographing well over the 1.7 million Commonwealth war dead commemorations around the world and our total in archive stands at 1.8 million now that we are including all nationalities. This effort was recognised back in 2013 by the award of the CWGC President's Commendation for the contribution played by TWGPP volunteers as a vital component to the work of the CWGC and the public in their ongoing effort to commemorate the fallen.



This is becoming more evident now with the anniversary making a wider audience aware of what happened 100 years ago with many towns, villages, schools and organisations commemorating their war dead.

The next four years of the anniversary period includes many famous battles on land and sea which will hopefully be commemorated in the public eye so that those who fought and died in these engagements are adequately remembered in the media. WWI was not just The Somme, Passchendaele or Gallipoli but many other locations around the globe which should equally be remembered. Mention the likes of Kut, Asiago, Coronel, Salonika and many would raise a questioning eyebrow.

There are, of course, conflicts continuing around the world, more so at present it would seem, so access to a few CWGC cemeteries is still limited or restoration not yet complete but hopefully we may gain access to photograph in these areas in the future.

A glance at our 'Thanks' page will show the gratitude of the public that have found our site and benefitted from the service we provide or as one e-mail that has arrived literally as I write this " *I don't know if you have a section on the site for people's comments but I just want to say thank you, the photographs have just arrived and they are absolutely amazing. They are so emotive when you finally see a relative's resting place. It is only within about the last 18 months that I discovered my great uncle's contribution to the war and where he was buried. Keep up the good work.*"

We will continue to provide this service in the foreseeable future with the support and dedication of our volunteers. Too many to name as individuals but you know you are the photographers, researchers, re-namers, co-ordinators and organisations that promote our work.

With sincere thanks – Steve Rogers Project Co-ordinator

## Recent Commemorations

Having an office that is directly on the waterfront of Portsmouth dockyard is always a bit of a perk. This was made especially so during the recent 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorations of D-Day when one of the main national events was based in Portsmouth and the surrounding harbour.



Throughout the week ferries would leave the Commercial port carrying many veterans and those attending the Commemorations in Normandy. It was good to see the ships adorned in 'Bunting' and being escorted out by tugs with fire hoses forming a ceremonial display. Ships from foreign navies also came into port in preparation to sail out with the last ferries on June 5<sup>th</sup>. It was a novelty for me to see the 'SOMME' park alongside our office. Normally I travel to it (The Somme) but the regions namesake came alongside for the week so I took the opportunity for a photo shoot.



Her ships company did manage to fly the Union flag upside down on the day of arrival so being the diplomat and in my best 'Franglais' I let them know to prevent any diplomatic repercussions!

The weather held for a ceremony on Southsea common on the Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> which culminated on a sail past of the ships and a Red Arrows display which was particularly spectacular. For TWGPP, requests went up for a couple of days which is always the same when events like these are televised and it turns people's thoughts to those that served.

Of course weeks before the D-Day commemorations, April saw another ANZAC Day anniversary on 25<sup>th</sup> April.



Prior to my departure from ship building one of our team, who was an Aussie and served a 'Dog Watch' in the Royal Australian Navy, would knock up some ANZAC biscuits to celebrate the day. As he has moved on to pastures new I thought I would do the same using a recipe on the internet. Dead easy one might think but my dozen biscuits ended up looking like an ANZAC Pizza on both attempts. I am more successful throwing prawns on the Bar-B so will leave the baking to those down under who are obviously more domesticated than us 'Poms' ; )

**Publicity? Yes please!**

**Anyone for Pizza?**



Since the last newsletter, where I mentioned about means of publicity to prevent a too late request, we have had yet another where we could have fulfilled the request two years prior to the death of the daughter of a Gallipoli casualty.

“Dear Sir ,

I recently found a war grave photograph taken by yourselves for the War Graves Photographic project and wish to obtain a copy.....I would like the best readable photo as possible as it is for my mother.

I promised my grandmother on her 95th birthday that I would try my hardest to find her a picture of her father's grave after apologising for putting money in her birthday card as I didn't know what to get her. She had smiled and said, *'Silly girl, a card is enough, what do I want at my age?'* My suggestion of a rub down with the Sporting Life or a massage with Vick brought a laugh and then she said, *'If I could have anything I wished for, do you know what I'd ask for? A photo of my father's grave, and a way to send flowers I don't know where to send any or if the grave is even marked. He died when I was three you know, in the 1st World War, he was a Colour Sergeant in the South Wales Borderers, he fought in Gallipoli and he was killed on 9th August 1915, a couple of months before my 4th birthday.'* Then she took his army photo out of her purse and showed me it, saying *"he's buried at hill 60"*. Nan didn't know if he was in a cemetery or if he was buried where he fell, just that he was somewhere on Hill 60.



**Hill 60, Gallipoli**

She never had the opportunity to go out there and she wouldn't have known where to start looking and never had the money to do it. It broke her heart because she had her father stolen from her by war and couldn't even send him flowers on his anniversaries. She told me that if it was the last thing she ever did, find him and send flowers, she would die happy.... well, sadly she did die in 2010 aged 98 six weeks off of her 99th birthday. Up until a few weeks before her death, whilst she was still able to communicate, every time I saw her she would ask if I had any luck yet.

I found him recorded in the CWGC listings under his rank and regiment and also found a photo of the cemetery and a plan of the lay out. I gave her copies of these a couple of years before she died and she was comforted to know that he was in a proper grave in a proper cemetery not left where he fell somewhere all alone and forgotten about. However, she still wanted to send flowers so my partner's father, being a very well connected man Internationally through business, contacted a few people in Turkey to ask if they were near or could make the trip to lay flowers if we sent money and asked them to take photos of the grave and the surroundings for Nan. They all lived too far away, and one in particular told him that it was very remotely located, difficult to get to for him due to his mobility and health and so it couldn't be done for her. When my Nan passed away my mother said it was a shame she never got to see the actual grave but we put the photo of the cemetery and plan in her coffin with her along with the original photo of her father.

My mother asked me to carry on looking for his grave, hoping it might be online somehow and low and behold nearly four years later I clicked a link I hadn't noticed before on the CWGC site and found it.



It's too late to give to my Nan now but my mum still wanted me to look. She hasn't mentioned it since that one time so it will be a lovely surprise and comfort to her to have evidence of him definitely being a marked grave.

She is 76 now and probably not physically fit enough to make the journey there but if there is no way of sending flowers I now have found the photo and grave reference. I think maybe a visit from some of us younger ones may well be on the cards sometime in the near future for Nan's sake but for now, a photo will suffice.

Yours sincerely. Sharon Smith.”

We discussed the 'Publicity' aspects of the Project at the meeting at the NMA and had offers of help in trying to promote our service across the world. One would have thought that with the anniversary of WWI being so prominent in the media it would be relatively simple to get broadcasters and Press to publicise the service. Not so. Unless paying for advertising space we get zero response from the National newspapers to add just a short article to any relevant editorial.

The 'Readers Digest' have used some of our cemetery images in an article about research into unknown soldiers graves and 'Peoples Friend' magazine will be running an article about TWGPP in October prior to the Remembrance period of November. Mike Stonehewer is trying to garner publicity in a number of genealogical magazines and Bernard Warden endeavouring to interest the Royal British Legion Magazine whilst Dennis Boggs is promoting us in New Zealand.

Although suggested, I err against the likes of 'Twitter' or 'Face Book' mainly because I do not have the spare capacity to answer any queries via this media. However, I do know of other organisations that spend considerable time deleting inappropriate comments that are readily displayed. Something I can do without when time is at a premium!

If anyone feels that they might have some joy with a local newspaper and would like a 'press release' let me know and I'll send one via e mail. [Steve]

### **The First Boy Scout - Story of the world's first Boy Scout who died a hero**

At the age of 15 young Musgrave Cazenove WROUGHTON otherwise known simply as 'Bob' to his friends and family became the world's first Boy Scout, and had a glittering career of success in front of him.

He was the son of William Musgrave Wroughton, and Edith Constance Wroughton, daughter of Henry Cazenove. His father was master of the Pytchley Hunt and they lived in a mansion in the country at Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire.

A close family friend was Sir Robert Baden-Powell, hero of the Siege of Mafeking during the Boer War, and when Baden Powell came up with the idea of organising a camp for boys to teach them the principles of leadership and teamwork, he turned to 'Bob' Wroughton to join him in his venture.

### **Young 'Bob' with his Mother and Sisters**





This first camp was to be held on Brownsea Island in Poole harbour in 1907 and from this event the world wide Boy Scout movement was born.

Bob was quoted as being a great help to Baden Powell and set a good example to other Patrol Leaders. His ideas on how to establish the fledgling scouting movement were sought by Baden-Powell.

Due to his leaderships skills a career in the Army was on the cards and he was commissioned in November 1913. When war broke out the following August joined the 12th Lancers where he received high praise for his courage under fire. His Major wrote of him that he was an "excellent soldier and can turn his hand to anything". Within a few weeks he had been mentioned in dispatches but his career was short lived when in October 1914 he was shot by a sniper on the Ypres Salient. He died of wounds shortly afterwards aged 23. He now lies in Kemmel Churchyard in Belgium

Baden-Powell wrote to his parents soon after the event: "I have felt as nearly as possible like a second father to him, and to read the little testimonies to Bob's character after all the hopes that I had formed of him, is the greatest possible comfort. I am so glad that he had made his mark already before he died."

### Lost and perhaps Found? – Karen Liew



I'm hoping you can help me with my query as I've tried writing to the CWGC (generic response and no option for follow-up) and the British Legion (referred me back to the CWGC) without success. There is a mass grave in my hometown, Miri (Sarawak, Malaysia) located next to St Columba School near the Gymkhana Club. Buried in it are prisoners executed by the Japanese during the war.

I believe at least one Australian soldier is buried here as I had read in the Singapore papers years ago that an Australian lady was looking for her father's remains in Singapore and Malaysia as those were his last known locations.

She was unsuccessful in her search at Labuan and Kranji, but I noted in the report that he had been posted in Sarawak. I then checked the grave at the churchyard and found someone bearing his surname (Bodestyne) - I emailed the lady to inform her but I never heard back from her either.

I've attached photographs of the grave for your reference - one bearing the names of the buried (my grand-uncle was among the executed and his name is the first Chinese name on the top left). As you can see, "Bodestyne" is listed in the middle row, right side of the names listed in English alphabets.

I am trying any means I can think of to confirm that the individuals buried there are listed in the relevant registers and that their families are aware of where they are. I hope you can assist as I'm not sure how else to go about this. Thank you.

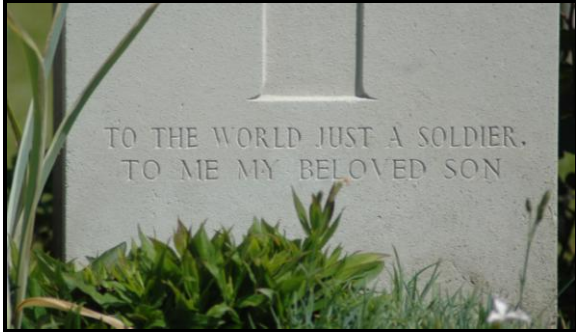


*By Steve – A Private John Stephen Bodestyne, 7532680 of No 1 Malayan Field Ambulance RAMC is commemorated as one of the missing of the Far East Campaign on Singapore Memorial. He was the husband of Chrysilda Bodestyne of Singapore. Karen returned to the memorial to take better pictures only to find the bronze plaque had been stolen – sounds familiar! Should anyone be aware of a Bodestyne family in Australia searching for lost relatives please contact Steve.*



## Headstone Details on CWGC Site

It was good to see that the CWGC are now including headstone details on the casualty pages. The family inscriptions can, in the majority, be very poignant or in some cases quite scathing of the authorities who have sent their loved ones to war. For those that have conducted the photography aspects of the project you will know that many of the inscriptions are obscured by foliage in the Summer months. We are often asked to determine what was written from a few visible letters so we can now direct those asking to the appropriate CWGC page.



We have used some of these inscriptions and photographs submitted by families to produce a short musical video which emphasises the work we do. If you would like to view it, the piece is embedded on our home page under 'Latest News' and is labeled 'If You Wait'. Go to full screen, select high definition on the tools logo and turn up the volume & play.

Alternatively, use this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mpLYrjXQYqE>

Music courtesy of 'London Grammar'

Whilst on the subject of headstones, many of you are assisting with the revisits programme where we are returning to photograph cemeteries where the stones have been re-engraved. This enables us to provide a much clearer image to those requesting. Obviously the programme to do this, by CWGC engravers, is spread out over a number of years as there are so many but during a recent holiday to Northern Italy we noticed that the cemeteries on the Asiago Plain are having their original hand carved headstones replaced with machine engraved ones.

### Machine & Hand carved headstones

To me, some of these hand carved ones are works of art and it seems a terrible shame that they will probably be destroyed. To an amateur genealogist, like myself, to have one of these in my family memorabilia would be a prized possession. We did note that in Montecchio Precalcino all but one of the 400+ headstones had been replaced with new so it may have been an 'Oops' moment when Lance Corporal Sidaway's stone was either broken on arrival or forgotten off the nominal roll!



The downside of visiting during renovations is that headstones are not always fully in position. Having read Vera Brittain's book 'Testament of Youth' Sandra was looking forward to visiting Edward Brittain's grave in Granezza Cemetery only to find it wedged into its support bracket. 'C'est la vie' as they say in Italy.

**Edward Brittain, front left, and other headstones waiting for final positioning in Granezza**

## Sad Passing of Edward Leslie Norris

We were sorry to hear of the passing of Edward Leslie Norris (ex Rhodesian Air Force) who died on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2014. Eddy, as I knew him, used to run a website dedicated to the Old Rhodesian Air Force (ORAF) and would often encourage his team of readers to help out TWGPP wherever they could and include articles from our newsletters in theirs. Our condolences were sent to his family at the time.



## Tracking down lone graves in Algeria



In a previous newsletter we mentioned that Susan Hunter had managed to track down an individual grave to a sailor in Bougie cemetery in Algeria. One can imagine that Algeria may not be one of the easiest countries to travel around in but Susan mentioned that she was going to be driving past a place called Constantine where we did have one individual buried. As the site was quite large and only one 'Brit' amongst many French we were lucky to be able to get a hand drawn map of the plot from the CWGC office in the Mediterranean. This was just as well as he was not commemorated under a CWGC headstone.

Although the cemetery was meant to be open at the time Susan and her colleague Colin had found the gates firmly shut (been there, done that!) but got the guardians of the Muslim cemetery opposite to contact the keeper of this cemetery who did return and gave them access and helped find the grave.

So Chief Officer Thomas Cundy Row, from Penzance in Cornwall, who had died of wounds he received when his ship, SS Tremorvah, was in action with a submarine probably had his first visit, other than 'official', in the 97 years he has lain there.

Another larger cemetery in Algeria, that of El Alia, has had a return visit by Karima Ali Arroum who managed to find the majority of previously missed ones or those that had been missing for restoration. That now completes El Alia.

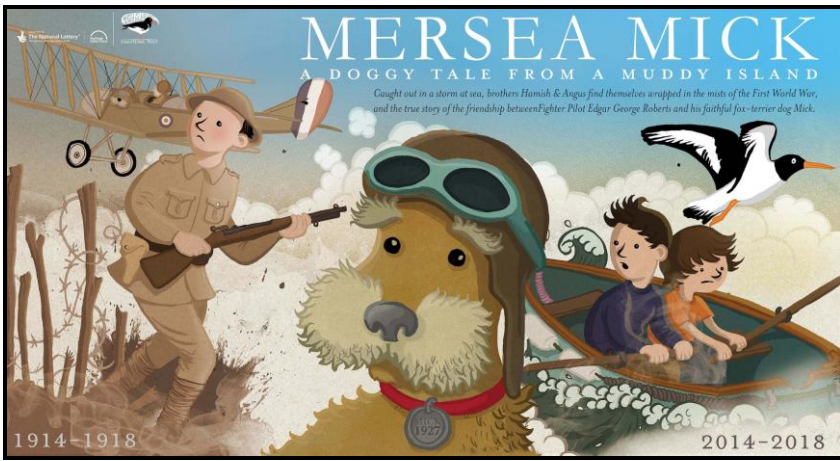


## Mersea Mick-A Dogs life

'Mick' the fox terrier was owned by local pig farmers Percy and Edgar Roberts. The brothers signed up at the outbreak of the First World War and Percy, who joined the army, was killed in the trenches in March 1918 (commemorated on Arras Memorial). Meanwhile, Edgar joined the Royal Flying Corps – forerunner of the RAF – and took Mick with him. Both survived the conflict and when the dog died in 1927 Edgar buried him in a cliff-top wood near the family's Ivy Farm.

It was the chance discovery of an old jar on the beach at Mersea Island in 1988 that revealed the story of the fighter pilot and his canine companion. The jar, containing a 1919 penny, a letter, and a faded photograph, had been buried in 1927 at Mick's woodland grave on Second Lieutenant Edgar Roberts' Ivy Farm. With the passage of time the cliff-edge grave had been disturbed and the jar ended up on the beach.





The story it revealed was used by local author, Veronique Eckstein, to create the children's book 'Mersea Mick' and now the story will be used by Mersea Island Tales Educational Trust as the basis of a multi-media project to help teach schoolchildren about the First World War as the conflict's centenary approaches. The project will transform one of the farm barns into a replica WWI mess to be used as an all-weather education centre that will take

visitors on a journey from life on an Edwardian farm to the history of the War and the involvement of the Roberts brothers and Mick. An exhibition display in the barn will also be portable so it can be transported to schools in support of their projects on the history of the War.

## New Cemetery in Poland

In an earlier newsletter we mentioned the fact that Lidzbark Warminski Cemetery in Poland was being restored after very limited access to it since the Second World War. The thirty nine men buried here had been alternatively commemorated on a memorial in Malbork cemetery some 75 miles away. Fortunately for TWGPP, Christine Connerty of the CWGC in Belgium had been invited along to the rededication ceremony and offered to take some pictures for us.



The headstones are all displayed on site now thanks to Christine. Other views do indicate that there are other foreign nationals buried in the same location so we hope to obtain these at a later date.

## A Poignant Discovery - by Anne Edwards



We ('driver' hubby, 'admin' brother and I) visited Secqueville en Bessin cemetery in Normandy to take photos of the 99 Commonwealth headstones. There was also a small area of German graves and I photographed these as well. As we went along the line, one of the headstones was for Karl Bartsch and Les, (the admin man), ticked him off on the spreadsheet. Next to him was Karl Barsch but he was not listed on the spread sheet. The cemetery log kept on the site did not include his name either and recorded 16 known graves and 1 unknown whereas there were 17 known headstones.

Not far away is the large German cemetery at La Cambe with an excellent visitor centre where they undertake to search for any casualty so we took our information there. The administrator called up all the records that he had online but there was no trace of a Karl Barsch with these dates of birth and death. He was most grateful and said that he would refer it to H/Q in Germany to investigate.

We could only assume that when the initial list was drawn up it was thought that the name had been included twice and he was crossed off. At the time of Karl Barsch's death in the battle for Caen my father was in No 6 Commando and fighting on the opposite side but I can't help but feel for the family who may well have been searching unsuccessfully for 70 years to find their son.



## Private JW Crockson – Lost due to information – Nick Hare

I've been lost in France many times in days when the CWGC had directions which seem to be have been written up "when Adam was lad" Using my French speaking girlfriend, on one occasion, in a small village, asking a local, the French woman replied 'which one'. It's a fact that cemeteries are a 'growth industry! So I was pleased to read the article in the autumn 2013 newsletter mentioning cemetery name changes, the 'In from the Cold Project' and generally an effort being made to update and make accurate information. As Steve & Derek know I have doggedly written to the CWGC saying 'the directions are wrong, there are no more Germans buried in this CWGC cemetery, etc.' I have had some success, but the wheels of the CWGC move slowly as Derek and I know with regard to the Ipswich Cemetery complex. I was flabbergasted to get a CWGC reply once when asking why outdated and false directions still appeared above a modern Google map. The reply was – 'well we had put something in the gap'

'Mind the gap' as they say on the Tube but given the British tradition is to bury close to where they fell, the onus has to be on accuracy. In addition, as the CWGC is a definitive source of information, if it does not change when information changes or is updated, it runs the risk of becoming outdated.

The first centenary is upon us, the second not far off, but what happens afterwards? Will these become forgotten sites? So my request to you reader is this, if you have noticed inaccuracies in the places you have visited, tell the CWGC. If there is more information on the gravestone please tell someone.

Of course nothing is perfect but that is no reason not to try and make things better. Remember that folks who search for relative often do not have all the information. I remember finding my uncle 60 years after his death and doing a kind of 20 questions with my Mum to establish it was him.

So why the title? Well CROCKSON, is a case in point and quite an interesting one too. Maybe the project has brought him in from the cold, maybe not. He was a WW1 Prisoner of War (PoW). Whilst the Allies had an agreement with China to supply labouring corps which worked on the Western Front, records show they were in Estonia on the Eastern front, too.



Germany did not utilise labour corps but used Allied PoW's in this role. I found a Romanian PoW cemetery in Northern France a few years ago, the occupants of which had been put to work by Germany.

Prior to going to try to visit Crockson's grave in Lithuania I had photographed the CWGC Latvia cemetery, mainly British PoWs put to work on the Eastern Front.

I failed to find Crockson and his colleague Private A. Bunting in Klaipeda (Memel as was) due to CWGC directions being vague, inaccurate and well out of date. The Old Vittener Cemetery lost its name as the last Germans fled but it is still the CWGC reference. It is known now as Kariu Kapi in Lithuanian.

To mitigate to some degree the problem, having followed World War 1 through the Baltics, with the German advance out of East Prussia, Klaipeda (Memel) and Konigsberg (Kaliningrad) it was an open war. You will find small German cemeteries in village churchyards that remain undisturbed. However, in cities of the Baltics the Soviets bulldozed lots of German cemeteries putting, as in the case of Vilnius, a fairground on top of the German cemetery and it appears the same thing happened in Klapeda, which is now a Sports Stadium with an open field aside it. But it appears the Soviets left the grave of Bunting. *The memorial to Crockson was maybe added afterwards- Note a memorial.* This headstone states that Crockson is buried in the German Cemetery in Swzali (Schaulen). Sounds as if Swzali is in Africa doesn't it?

The internet is a wonderful thing, but you see now how bad information can become 'gospel' and replace the actual facts.

The German cemetery in Siauliai is a green field, headstones removed, with just a plaque designating that it is there. I have seen it on the German equivalent of the CWGC, the VDK. *Crockson is buried some 200 kms east of his memorial*

He most probably died here as Siauliai is on a major trading route between northern Lithuania and Bauska in southern Latvia, the logical German advance north in WW1 towards Latvia and Riga.

But there is an ironic twist to this story of 'information'. Most years the British Embassy in Riga, Latvia commemorate Armistice Day with others from the Diplomatic community at the CWGC cemetery in Jelgava. I know this as Latvian friends of mine, who accompanied me on both cemetery visits, work for their foreign offices. I read on the internet that the British Embassy in Lithuania decided to follow that of its Latvian counterpart some years ago. A ceremony in a Cathedral in Vilnius and then drive to Klaipeda for a wreath laying ceremony in the open field where Bunting is buried and Crockson has a memorial.

It would appear that in their drive westwards they drove past Crockson's resting place, probably within a stone's throw, to lay a wreath on a memorial 200 kms to the west rather than in the field where he lays.

Information's a wonderful thing when accurate and up to date. It is one reason why, when photographing sites, I notice a discrepancy I alter the spreadsheet given. *It is always interesting to note that gravestones can have more info than is on a website. I do it also, as in the case of my own family, because folks tend not to remember the obvious details but the more obscure ones. I remember once helping a German looking for his father, we found him, but only because his Spanish wife remembered 25 years before, when they last visited, looking at a particular stone wall in that cemetery, strange what folk remember?*

It always surprises me that the CWGC spreadsheets sometimes contain some details for Germans which their counterpart, the VDK, does not show. I also find it interesting that these two organisations seem not to be linked so closely given that many, from both sides, are buried in each other cemeteries. *Crockson is a case in point.*

One day I will take another journey down the dusty roads of The Baltics and see Crockson's graveyard, or see if the Soviet bulldozer may have noticed him, or see if he was reinterred in the site Germans used for none military enemy combatants, again in the town of Siauliai.

The case for accurate updating of information is clear. I am sure the case of Crockson, is far from unique but it would be nice to think that in this centenary year, a marker can be placed there, as is not uncommon in CWGC cemeteries to see the engraving 'buried near this spot'. Then at least the information on the website could be accurate and in Crockson's case, as I am sure with many others, not only would Crockson have come in from the cold but we would, as the poem says, know that there is a **'Corner of a foreign field that is forever England'**.



## A World Cup Perspective – Steve Rogers

Given that since the last newsletter the World Cup (Football) has been and gone I was intrigued to receive some photographs of a Footballer's Memorial at Longueval, France which seemed appropriate to this edition of the newsletter. I am not sure how long it has been there but I do not think I have seen it before on my travels to the Somme.





We have all heard of the football match during the Christmas truce of 1914 and Captain Wilfred "Billie" Nevill, a company commander in the Surrey Regiment, who wanted to give his men something to take their minds off the slaughter as they kicked footballs towards the German front line on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916. This memorial commemorates the Footballer battalions of the Middlesex regiment who I am sure were true 'footballing heroes'. Private Jack Borthwick of Millwall FC, who was wounded, is quoted on the memorial as saying 'This is worse than a whole season of cup ties' when referring to the battle of the Somme. A true sense of humour. How things have changed. Nothing like the overpaid 'Prima Donnas' we have representing our country (England that is) and only when they feel like it. I could spit sawdust when the term 'heroes' is used in the same sentence when referring to Football players these days. As you can guess, I don't 'do' football!

## Helping a Friend – Never Again!– Phil Bourner

The hunt started in Beckenham Cemetery in Kent for a grave that I had been looking for, for some time. Able Seaman Sidney Trevor Wingrove, of the Royal Navy, was listed as being buried in this cemetery. A friend who had been working on another friend's family tree for him had asked me to see if I could assist in finding this relation's grave that he believed was buried in Beckenham, a cemetery that covers over 44 acres. Why do we do this?

I had been to Beckenham Crematorium and Cemetery on a number of occasions with no luck in finding the grave.

Like all volunteers who have worked on The War Graves Photographic Project, I hate not being able to find a grave so arranged another day of going round and looking. I have found some interesting graves in this cemetery including WG Grace the world famous cricketer.

However, on the day that I finally found the grave I was looking for, I was lucky, or as the picture shows on the right, some may say unlucky to ask one of the groundsmen if he could tell me where the grave was as I had the reference number from the Commonwealth War Graves website, Sec W4, grave 19833.



The groundsman looked at me and laughed and asked if I had any gardening tools with me! I looked at him and told him that I do not even do the gardening at home. He then said that I would need some and said that he would arrange for me to borrow some. He then got onto his little golf cart and asked me to follow him.

We then arrived at a blackberry bush and he said "here you are mate, this is what you are looking for", jaw dropped and rebounded of the floor a few times and I asked him if he was joking and he replied "No".



It appears that quite a few years ago, the grave was visited by a family member and they put a small blackberry bush onto the grave and this is what it looks like now!"

Two choices then become apparent, first do I inform my mate that I have found the grave but he will have to clean it up, second one, you know who cleans it up.

Well I thought I would start and if it was too much then I would just return the tools to the groundsman and walk away. After an hour of hard work and two diet coke breaks, not that I need to diet (much) the grave was starting to come through and I thought to myself that I was getting somewhere, but not too fast.



I cannot believe how much work all us volunteers are prepared to do to help friends or to push a project to a conclusion. By 11:30am I was really getting somewhere and could actually read the headstone and thought to myself, why did the family just not get a Commonwealth War Grave Headstone? At least that way somebody would have kept the area cut back!

Like all people who are working hard for a cause I took the time to take pictures of my achievements. By 3:25pm I had achieved my task for the day and had finally cleared every part of the blackberry bush from the stone and decided that my friend's family could come in and clean up the rest if they wished to and took a nice clear photograph and decided to hand the tools back to the groundsman.

I remember now why I do not do gardening at home, my back aches, my legs ache and I have even caught the sun for the first time in a number of months. However, another one found and on we march to complete as many as possible.....



The Red Arrows over Portsmouth on the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D Day

Articles for the next newsletter, due in December 2014, should be sent via e mail to [steve@twgpp.org](mailto:steve@twgpp.org)



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