

## **Birmingham Medal Society Meeting Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2017**

Present: 20 members, apologies received from Roy Painter, Terry Harrison, Dahlia Harrison, Pat Knight & Bill Walton.

The meeting followed the AGM and the President opened by welcoming new member Richard Perry. He also announced a 'Jayne Austin Fashion & Militaria in War' Exhibition at the Lord Leycester Hospital cost £12.00, and Antelope Day on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2017 at which BMS would have a stand.

John Barker asked a research question about commercial air accidents and how long until records released. The consensus was that it would be 75-100 years dependant upon circumstances.

He then asked Paul Handford, on behalf of his co-judges, Mark Platt and Roger Bragger to announce the President's Cup 2017 winners, which had been judged between the AGM and this meeting.

Paul explained that 10 minutes was not long enough to do the four exhibits full justice. A lot of work had been put into them and longer time was needed, this added weight to the discussion during the AGM for holding a stand-alone President's Cup event. He said all the judges agreed in their marking which had been remarkably similar.

**Joint Third** – A Gallant Railwayman at Sea – Dave Seeney. Only A Side Show – John Scott

**Second** – The Africa General Service Medal to the Royal Navy – Ken Weston

**Winner** – London Calling – The Yangtze Incident – Martin Harrison

The president then introduced the topic for the evening - **Recent Acquisitions.**

**Mick Atkinson** – Single British War Medal to 2 Lt Henry Lea Tomkies RFC. He gave a detailed breakdown of Tomkies life and Squadrons. On 25 Aug 1917 he had taken off on a close offensive patrol engaged in combat and was seen to go down. His body was found badly burnt and it was possible he had jumped from his burning aircraft. He was possibly shot down by Karl Emil Schaefer who was awarded the Pour Le Merite for shooting down this aircraft as part of an aggregate total.

Waterloo Medal to Cpl William Emmott of the RHG He had also found a picture of Emmott and service records and papers showing he had seen action in Vittoria, Toulouse and Waterloo. His funeral was held at Tardebigge and 7000 people had attended.

**Dave Seeney** - produced two Royal Warwickshire Regiment Home guard medallions. The first an 18<sup>th</sup> Warks medallion for the Womens Auxiliary Home Guard, presented at Coventry Hippodrome to the recipient on 3 Dec 1944 in front of 500 people. The second a 44<sup>th</sup> Battalion Warwickshire / Birmingham medallion to Lt Findolin.

**Chris Newton** – produced two items, a Naval General Service Medal 1793 to William Upcott Drummer RM HMS Nyadd. Chris gave details of Upcotts life including the fact he had seen action at Trafalgar. The second was an Edward Medal for Mines & quarries to John Thomas Baker. Again Chris gave a detailed breakdown of the action and Baker's life.

**John Scott** – produced a group – Defence Medal, British War Medal 1939-45, and General Service Medal with clasp 'Cyprus' to Squadron Officer Ann Blythe-Miller on the PMRNS. He also had her ARRC2nd Class awarded for services in Aden and her ARRC 1<sup>st</sup> Class awarded in Cyprus.

He explained that Ann has nursed John Hannah VC when he had been shot down and the group came with a lot of photographs and nursing badges.

**Paul Handford** – gave a powerpoint presentation on Stanley Balch, WWI 1914 Star trio He had been a chemist and druggist and served in France in the BRC & StJJ entering France 10<sup>th</sup> August 1914. Researching the internet Paul had found a photograph of the recipient in a June 1919 copy of The Druggist & Chemist from a web site in the USA! This also gave an account of Balch's war time experience - proving once again the power of the internet.

**Martin Harrison** – showed a trio of medals awarded to Harold Edward Pryor SBStJ. Serving Brother of the Order of St John, Defence Medal and Special Constabulary Medal with four clasps dated 1942, 1946, 1955, 1965. Whilst not rare, it is scarce to see this many clasps on the SC medal. Martin explained the problems he had encountered finding the SBSt J on the London Gazette web site but had eventually found it by placing 'serving brothers' into the search field. He had also built up a basic biography of Harold from Ancestry.

**Ken Weston** – a 1914 Star trio and SWB to Jerome Delitis from Stornaway who had served in the Gordon Highlanders. Ken gave an account of the recipients life and service and concluded by stating that that Delitis has been medically boarded due to haemorrhoids! The second group was to a J W Thomas Shipwright RN who was in the Aboukir on 'The Night of the Three Cruisers' early in WWI when she was sunk together with the Hogue & Cressy. Thomas was one of the lucky ones to be rescued but later sadly died of TB in May 1915, having been invalided in March 1915. He is not recognised by the CWG Commission as he died after leaving the service.

**Philip Wilson** – Showed two groups both from the Warwickshire Yeomanry one to SQMS Heather who died of wounds and is buried in Warwick, the other to SQMS Dennis Dukes who was awarded the 1939-45 Star, Africa Star with 8<sup>th</sup> Army clasp, Italy Star, Defence Medal, British War Medal 1939-45 and Efficiency Medal. There was also a superbly detailed photograph album with the Dukes group and a pair of HQ/SWQS cufflinks.

Thus ended a packed evening and the President reminded all of the next meeting Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2017 World War 1 – Members Own