

## Birmingham Medal Society Meeting Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2017

15 members present plus 1 guest = 16.

The President opened the meeting and welcomed our guest, Alan Quinney. He hoped Alan would enjoy the evening and join the Society in due course.

Apologies received from John Barker, Chris Burns, Paul Murray, Andrew Bostock & Roy Painter.

The President also reminded members who had not yet paid their subs, they were now overdue.

Research questions. Roger Bragger asked if a WWI Silver War Badge could be issued if the recipient was not entitled to actual medals. The answer being yes, in the same way a Death plaque would have been.

The topic for the evening was introduced – *Bring & Buy, Recent Acquisitions, Mini Presentations*. Member **Dave Holland** had bought along a selection of medals, badges and books for sale, and **John Scott** a small selection of Army Lists.

**Mick Atkinson** – showed a single British War Medal awarded to John Hassall Cross, who was born in 1889 in Liverpool. During WWI he had enlisted into 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion Royal Northumberland Fusiliers. He was later Commissioned into the Royal Flying Corps serving with 32 Sqn flying DH2s.

He had been part of the ambush at Bapaume on 11 Mar 17 when six DH2s were on line patrol and amused by German Albatrosses. All six were shot down or crashed. Cross had headed back to the British lines to escape but was intercepted by Lt Stenglin and crash landed at Eaucourt, L'Abbey. He made it back to British lines and later survived 'Bloody April' 1917 when 316 RFC personnel were killed or missing.

In May 1917 he was sent on medical leave due to flying fatigue and later flew 400 hours as a ferry pilot transporting aircraft from the UK to France.

Following the war he worked as a Naval Architect at Furness Shipbuilding Co, served in the Home Guard during WWII as Company Commander 19<sup>th</sup> Battalion Stockton on Tees and died in 1971

Mick's talk was backed up by a power point presentation showing photographs of the various personalities involved in his talk. He also explained that he was now going to preserve his medal collection research by means of power point presentations rather than paper records. These can be updated as required and provide a paper free method, and can be backed up regularly.

**Chris Newton** - Showed a Queens & Kings South Africa medal pair to Sergeant A G Gooch Royal Field Artillery. QSA clasps **Cape Colony, Rhodesia & Transvaal**. KSA **1901,02**. Gooch was attached to the 9<sup>th</sup> Ammunition Column and the New Zealand Artillery SAF Imperial Troop. He was mentioned in despatches on 23 Jun 02 by Lord Kitchener. He is one of only 16 entitled to the combination of clasps 15 if you remove one that was forfeit. One of only 10 for the KSA. Very rare to this Regiment.

Gooch also fought in WWI in the Royal Engineers, sadly his 1914-15 Star trio is missing, and would only be named as RE. Gooch contracted dental caries, the scientific term for tooth decay or cavities. It is caused by specific types of bacteria, that produce acid destroying the tooth's enamel and the layer under it, the dentin – very painful. He also suffered rheumatism in the knees and hips and was discharged on 18<sup>th</sup> July 1916.

**Dave Seeney** - Showed his personal recently acquired Nijmegen March Medal with the clasp 18 on it, Dave's 18<sup>th</sup> time competing in this arduous exercise.

Dave also showed an Africa General Service Medal to the Royal Warwickshire Regiment to Lieutenant Charles William Cartwell Crook one of 18 British Officers to be awarded the ASM with clasp **Kissi 1905** as part of the West Africa Frontier Force. The Kissi campaign was a British expedition to bring the local warring tribes to heel. The medal had previously been sold by Spinks in 1982.

Crook had been a medical student but dropped out to serve in the South Africa War. He was commissioned in 1900 in the RWR and wounded. He had various postings including Transport Officer for the Kissi Field force and on the Governor's Committee for medical work.

Sadly he died in Sierra Leone in October 1906 when he slipped and fell off a hammock bridge into a deep river and despite attempts to rescue him, drowned.

Dave explained his QSA & KSA were missing from the group. Tragically Charles' three brothers were all killed in action during WWI and his sister Olive Louisa who has also seen nursing service during WWI was killed in a V1 attack in WWII whilst attending a church service in the Guards Chapel in London. Charles' father was a Chaplain in the Crimean War and his uncle had earned the VC.

**Paul Handford** – showed his most recent acquisition following his beloved theme of civilians on the Western Front WWI.

The group awarded to Pelham Mervyn Gainsford Tombs consisted of a Knight of Grace of the Order of St John, WWI 1914-15 Trio, 1911 Coronation Medal St John reverse, St John Service Medal. Bene Merenti Medal, Sacred Sante Medal Lateran Cross, Chevalier du Devoir and Volunteer Medal Francais. In addition there was a Propaganda Society of Portugal Medallion and Portuguese Lisbon Geographic Society Members Medal. There were also a number of photographs of Tombs.

Paul had not yet conducted much research on Tombs, apart from what the religious versions were awarded for. No doubt this group will form the basis of a future talk.

**John Scott** – Explained he had had this group of medals for the last 20 years, and had located some notes he had started making 16 years ago. He decided to finish the job especially now that so much more was available on the internet.

The group were made up of a Baronet's Badge – engraved Boulton of Totteridge, CBE awarded 1918, CVO awarded 1913, OSt J, British war Medal 1914-18, 1911 Coronation Medal and awarded to Captain Sir Harold Edwin Boulton Bt 2<sup>nd</sup> Baronet, born in Charlton then part of Kent, and described as an English baronet, songwriter and philanthropist.

Born 1859 educated at Harrow and Balliol College Oxford. Commissioned 2<sup>nd</sup> Own Queens Cameron Highlanders Retired from the Army in 1893 but in 1914 aged 54 appointed as a Captain on the City of London Rough Riders Territorial Force. His Medal Index Card shows him as serving in the RAMC and the BWM had been made for visits to France.

Harold had also been a renowned song writer and had penned the words to the Skye Boat Song. He held a number of positions within other societies including Chairman of the Queens Institute London and Commissioner of St John in Canada.

John acknowledged that having re-opened his research he had actually opened a 'can of worms' and there is much more research yet to be done.

**Martin Harrison** - Reminded everyone about the single GSM 'Canal Zone' he had recently acquired awarded to Alan Charles Huxstep killed in action during the Canal Zone incident and shown at BMS during the May 2017 meeting. Martin had subsequently taken John Scott's advice and with the authority of the soldiers relatives had taken delivery of an Elizabeth Cross engraved with Alan's service details. Martin said he would be visiting Alrewas on 11 Nov 17 to pay his respects to Alan.

Martin Harrison then summed up each speakers presentation and this turned into an interesting debate on many of the groups or related topics.

One particular point that arose from Paul's *Propaganda Society of Portugal Medallion* was how the Germans during WWII had corrupted certain words or actions previously deemed acceptable. The word propaganda before WWII and Joseph Goebbels involvement had meant literally *propagating the faith* – hence the title of the religious medal, whereas nowadays it has quite a different and sinister meaning. The swastika and Nazi salute had also all been corrupted by the NDSAP.

The president closed the meeting and thanked all the speakers or an excellent, interesting and diverse evening. He reminded everyone that the next meeting was Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> September Gallantry at Sea by Dave Seeney.