

Birmingham Medal Society Meeting Thursday 7th December 2017

22 members present. Apologies received from Roy Painter & Jeff Cook.

The President opened the meeting and welcomed members, it was interesting that we were only the above two members short of a 'full house'.

He also welcomed Peter Howell who was attending as a guest; his collecting interest being the Royal Warwickshire Regiment in World War I.

The President also thanked Secretary Martin Harrison, whose last meeting it was tonight as he is moving to Thailand in January 2018. Mention was made of Martin's Presidency, the bi-annual conventions he had organised, the web site he had set up and latterly the secretarial role. Dr Chris Davies will be taking over as Secretary, although Martin will remain as the web master. *(Sec Note: Martin has offered to remain as a 'sleeping' committee member in order to administer the web site. He will also require regular updates in order to be able to keep it fully updated)*

Research Questions: When was the wording DUPLICATE or R commenced on replacement medals. Following some discussion there was no definitive answer – as one member had a QSA with R on the rim, but this could have been a much later replacement issue.

Chris Burns had recently sold a plastic BSA Badge/Button from a set of WWII overalls, the purchaser had then presented it to her mother who was suffering dementia. The button had surprisingly opened up a whole new world and the lady had recalled many hitherto unknown exploits from her war time service in the Factories.

The President then introduced the topic for the night, mini lecturettes and recent acquisitions.

Richard Perry: Showed a bilingual Victory Medal to Lt H F Roffe, South African Infantry. With the medal he had acquired a WWI Christmas tin, WWI trio ribbon bar and three pieces of paperwork – a PoW letter, platoon roll call book containing some useful information and finally a diary. Richard read some interesting extracts from the latter leading up to Roffe's capture and during his imprisonment.

Paul Handford: Showed three groups and claimed the record for the most recent acquisition as he had acquired it earlier in the day at DNW auction, although he was advised that the record for the most recent was still held by the late Doc Lloyd some years previously. The first group was a WWI trio to the Reverend Ernest Maitland Cooke BRC STJJ. The reason Paul was so keen to acquire this group was that he had purchased a photograph of the Rev Cooke in uniform some years previously, and it was a great achievement to marry them both up after so many years. During the drive back to Birmingham Su had researched Cooke on the internet and had uncovered much biographical detail including a photograph of him in later life and a newspaper article. Again proving the power of the internet. The second was a 1914 Star trio to Samuel Francis Peirson of the Friends Ambulance Unit. Paul had uncovered a photograph of Samuel plus details of his service from the 'Friends' web site. Samuel had joined the Army on 16th December 1915 been awarded his trio but these had been returned, only to be reissued in 1943, possibly for WWII service. His third offering was a WWI trio to Edward Bonville Fox Friends Ambulance Unit. Once again Paul had acquired a picture and service details from his 'friends' card and Edward was listed as a conscientious objector. Edward had been present at Ypres on 4 Feb 17 when the Cathedral had been severely damaged and within the lot were hundreds of fragments of the cathedrals stained glass windows. There was also much paperwork and diaries. A poignant group indeed.

Mick Atkinson: Ran through his collecting interests on powerpoint. *Heavies at Waterloo. Under the Guns of Aces.* He showed a group to Gilbert Budden who had been shot down by WWI Ace Herman Goering. He also ran through other medal groups he had who had been shot down by Blue Max winners. He also had a silver Karl Frederick medal (the only German medal to be named) awarded to STITCH a Gotha Bomber pilot. Mick showed many other medals to Germans but ended with a medal awarded to The Madman of St Malo, Col Van Aulock, Mick also showed a Pathe news reel clip of the surrender by Van Aulock. Sadly this brief précis does his talk or medals little real justice.

Paul Murray: Showed an Edward VII Royal Navy Reserve Decoration & South Africa Transport Medal pair to John Wallace. He also had the miniature group both sets fitted in a Garrards case. He had received paperwork with the group and ran through Wallace's service records who had been born in 1866 and died in 1912. The RD had been awarded in 1909 but not Gazetted until 1911.

Chris Burns: Showed two World War II Kriegsmarine caps that had arrived anonymously in the post. After having had them valued and re-valued it had been agreed they were copies made possibly in the 1960s for a film. Chris had no intention of keeping them and stated he would be selling them on, but was interested in who had sent them to him.

John Scott: Showed an Ambulance Service LS&GC Medal 2011 to Arnold Arthur Radcliffe, together with a related Association of Chief Ambulance Officers medal. The LS medal has not thus far appeared on the market very often.

Tony Sturgess: Made one of his rare but welcomed talks showing an India General Service Medal with North West Frontier clasp, and India Mutiny Medal with Defence of Lucknow clasp, to John Stevenson 32nd Foot Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry.

Andrew Bostock: Made an ever rarer appearance stating he had been in the right place at the right time when he had acquired medals disposed of by a relative of the recipient. He showed a WWI trio, 1911 Coronation, East & West Africa Medal with Benin 1897 clasp and RN Long Service Medal, together with a Death Plaque and scroll. The recipient had been a member of the Honour Guard at the Coronation of HM King George V and was killed in action in HMS Endeavour on Thursday 12th December 1918, and buried at Mudros Cemetery, Greece. His headstone is inscribed DUTY WELL DONE. (*Sec note: Name of recipient was not taken*)

Reg Cook: Showed a WWI pair and death plaque to John Jones 9th Battalion RWF. With the medals were a photograph of Jones, Badges, a diary and paperwork including letters written to his mother. There were also some poignant letters written to his younger sister Doris just before he was killed. He left £4.00. One of many sad stories of World War I.

Ken Weston: Showed three sets, plus an example of every Police Exemplary Service Medal awarded. The first was a Police LS Medal to Sgt John Carol Simonds. Ken also explained that Simond's paperwork, a lot of it, had also been listed separately on E-Bay and that he had acquired some of it. He had established that he had joined the Met in 1955 as PC 142199. He was ex Royal Artillery having joined in 1949. He ran through some of the long career of Simonds and was pleased he had been able to prevent the medal becoming anonymous, thanks to the paperwork. Secondly was a death plaque to Donovan Waldegrave Carter. His only WWI entitlement was a BWM which had never been claimed and he had drowned whilst swimming. Ken read an extract from a newspaper article containing the inquest report. Thirdly he showed another death plaque to Horace Gray of the Royal Engineers who had been killed in an explosion in an experimental factory whilst working for the Ministry of Munitions Inventions Department. There were some papers and a detailed letter of condolence around Gray's death that proved very interesting and added a real insight into the events leading up to the explosion.

Martin Harrison: Showed a 39-45, Africa, Italy Star, Defence & War Medal, Medal for Long Service & Good Conduct (Military) and an Imperial Service Medal to a Thomas Henry Francis Hampton Mechanic Sergeant Major RASC. With the medals came a sports medallion named to Hampton as a Boy soldier. There was also a photograph and some papers with the group enabling a reasonably detailed biography to be built up. Martin explained that this was not a rare group, but scarce as it contained medals for two full time careers back to back, the latter in Ministry of Defence, Army Apprentices College, Chepstow as a Civilian Instructional Officer Grade III, representing 52 years in total. For more details see Martin's web site [Martin Harrison Room 405](#).

Chris Davies: Talked about the Skelly family medals. Firstly he showed to Samuel Skelly 1st Gordon Highlanders who had been awarded the DCM, Egypt Medal with Suakin 1885, El Teb Tamaii, the Nile 1884-85 clasps, Khedive's star and the India General Service Medal with Relief of Chitral clasp. He ran through a brief biography and stated that Samuel had died on 29th March 1927. Secondly he showed Samuel's son's medals, Lance Sergeant Frederick Samuel Skelley, that Chris had seen advertised for sale and had purchased. These were the India Medal with clasp Punjab Frontier 1897-98, WWI 1914 Star trio and the Army LS&GC Medal. The medals came with photographs and paperwork. Frederick has interestingly been a PoW during WWI and partially repatriated on 18 Nov 18. He also talked about a second son, whose medals he did not have, Thomas Bernard Skelley who was killed in action on 5 Aug 17 aged 39.

Philip Wilson: showed a book, which was for sale – Before the Echoes die Away – and discussed the reorganisation of the Royal Warwickshire Museum in Warwick with the Yeomanry Museum merging with the Royal Artillery Regiment.