

Minutes of BMS 'ZOOM' Meeting of 7.1.2021. [19.35hrs till 20.57hrs].

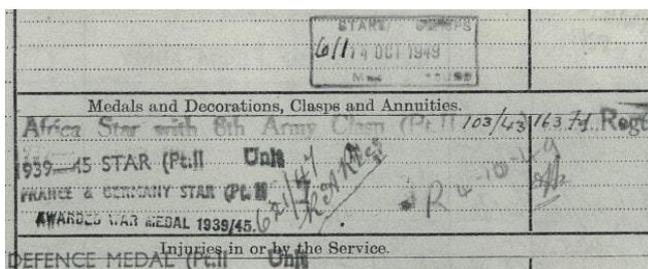
Eight BMS members and five guests enjoyed the recent Members' Own inaugural January 'ZOOM' meeting!

Medal groups were discussed as follows:

First up was a QEII Imperial Service Medal in original box, along with sporting trophies and memorabilia to Bombardier Sydney James Turner ['Jim'] of the Royal Artillery. In the sale were included many photos of the recipient. One, in particular, when Jim being presented with his trophies from the Kiel Week Inter-Unit Sports Championship on 31.8.1945. In this photo, he is wearing the Africa Star ribbon on his battle dress tunic. Subsequently, his records confirmed entitlement to Africa Star with VIII Army clasp, 1939-45 Star, France and Germany Star, British War Medal and Defence Medal. It is not clear whether his war medals were ever claimed but his full group [confirmed entitlements] is pictured below.



Above: Sydney James Turner medal group: left to right 1939-45 Star, Africa Star with 8th Army Clasp, France and Germany Star, Defence medal, 1939-45 War Medal and Imperial Service Medal [QEII].



Above: Sydney James Turner RA – confirmed medal entitlements.

He joined the territorial army aged 16 years in 1935 transferring to Royal Artillery. There followed a posting to India and then transfer to North Africa. He retired in 1973 in the role of storeman for the Ministry of Defence. One photograph shows Jim being awarded his ISM by Major James Herbert Samuel Majury CB MBE – who had had a distinguished military career with MID for Korea where he had been a POW.



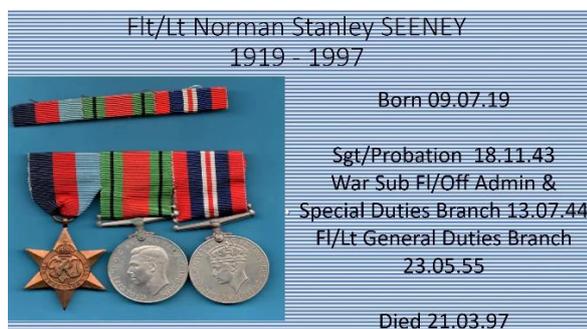
Above: Jim being presented with trophies by Brigadier A.J. Matthew 31.8.1945. [See text below].

In the presentation of sporting cup and medal photo [see above], these items are being presented by Brigadier A.J. Matthew., CBE, DSO. Many members commented on the photo in that he had a Royal Artillery [RA] cap badge but Yeomanry collar insignia which reflected that he had served in the Essex Yeomanry 8th Army Brigade CHECK*** Black Beret of 8th Army Brigade. Other contributions included that he had a white lanyard appropriate for Artillery and the Black Beret of Royal Armoured Corps. The damaged photo can be restored by computer technology. Attendees' observations of a simple photo had yielded so much information!!

Next up was a pin tray in the form of an Observer wing. This had been sold along with badges, buttons, his identity discs and professional pilot's wings and had belonged to Flight Lieutenant Norman Stanley Seeney [1919-1997]. His medals were 1939-45 Star, Defence Medal and 1939-45 War Medal. In the same purchase were his wife's medal [1939-45 War Medal] – his spouse was Elizabeth M. Seeney [Nee Mumford] Auxiliary Territorial Service [ATS]. Fl. Lt Seeney's later wartime role included service in the 'General Duties Ground Branch' and 'Special Duties Branch' [which could have included responsibilities of supplying SOE though precise details of his wartime service aren't yet known]. He served till 1955.



Above left: Pin tray in the form of an observer wing.



Above right: Details of and medals to Norman Stanley Seeney. 1939-45 Star, Defence Medal and 1939-45 War Medal.

The significance of such a 'simple' WWII trio [or even the 1939-45 Star and War Medal pair] is that they could be the only awards a soldier received [if injured or killed] for service at Dunkirk, Norway and many other significant actions [eg Commando raids]. The full listing of 5 pages of 1939-45 Star 'Qualifying Special Areas' [for service of one day] is available from Dave Seeney.

A LSGC to the rank of Armourer Sergeant E. Parsons 1st Volunteer Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment was shown next. This had been sold with an Officer Helmet plate and a shooting badge.

Next shown was a picture of Napoleon Bonaparte wearing his medals, the Légion d'Honneur and the 'Ordre de la Couronne de fer' [*see inset in the picture below* – medal with yellow and green ribbon].



Napoleon had crowned himself 'King of Italy' in 1805 – with the ancient crown of Milan [it is said to have a nail from Christ's Cross forged in it].

The 'Ordre de la Couronne de fer' [this translates as 'The Order of the Iron Crown'] was issued in three types 'Grand Cross Knights' [these are the rarest: to dignatories for example]; to 'Commander Knights' [Napoleon wears one of these] and the third [commonest] type to 'Ordinary Knights' in silver. Overall, they are exceedingly rare as only several hundred were issued across all three classes which has to be seen in the context of an Army of 2,000,000!

This 'Ordre de la Couronne de fer' recent acquisition is still awaiting delivery!!

Next, there was a montage of relics which had been on the field of battle at Waterloo including a somewhat battered Légion d'Honneur, a notebook from a Corporal's course and a red sash known as a 'Cordon'. From such a sash would be worn the Légion d'Honneur of a General. The provenance of the items was explained in a letter dated 1831 from a nobleman when he'd originally purchased them from a Waterloo veteran.



Above left: Légion d'Honneur.



Above right: Montage of Waterloo relics [see text for more info].

The next items relate to Private RJ Edwards Shropshire Yeomanry, later to become the 10th Battalion Kings Shropshire Light Infantry. Private Edwards was KIA in France 20th September, 1917.



Above left: Great War pair and Death Plaque to Private RJ Edwards.



Above right: Medals and items from a nascent collecting theme of 'The RAF in Afghanistan'.

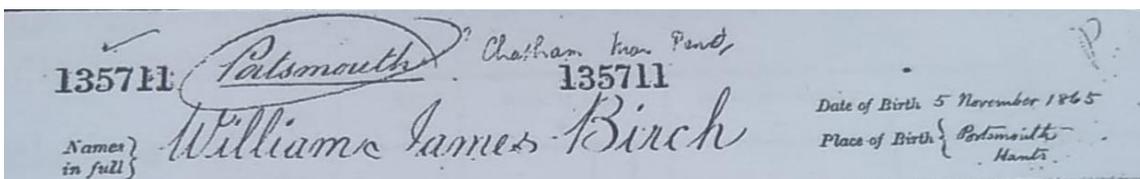
Our next items were from a purchase of a shoebox of medals many of which were to the Navy.



Above: Shoebox of items!

The group in question were a WWI trio with a Naval LSGC to a William James Birch born 1865 who'd attested in 1885. He was a stoker and PO on the vessel HMS 'Loderer' one of the 'Q' ships of WWI. The 'Q' ships were apparent innocuous merchantmen but were fitted with concealed heavy armaments and manned by the Royal Navy. This 'Loderer' then became named the 'Farnborough' and then changed again to the 'Q5'. Q5 had been involved in the important anti-submarine action on 17th February, 1917 action against U83 in which the Commander Captain Gordon Campbell had been awarded the VC. Of the crew of 40 or so, all but ten received recognition in the form of DSO, DSM or MID. Campbell's medal group was sold at auction for £840k in 2017.

Birch had the condition 'Tabes Dorsalis' as reason for being invalided – Medically speaking, this is a condition of Spinal Syphilis which affects neurological function of the legs [another consequence of Syphilis is discussed later]. He didn't survive long after the diagnosis and died at the age of 53 years.



Above group of photos: Details about and Medals to William James Birch - WWI Trio and Royal Naval Long Service and Good Conduct Medal.

Next up were the medals to Charles Reed. The naming was unusual on the British War Medal [BMW] and Victory Medal [VM] in that his BWM was named to F.30036 A.C.1 RNAS [Royal Naval Air Service] and VM named 230036 A.C.1 RAF - This is usually the 'other way around'. It is explained by the fact that, in 1919, he was aboard the aircraft carrier HMS Furious for 45 days [transport of replacement aircraft in the Baltic] qualifying him for the VM.

He also had the Special Constabulary Medal with 'Great War Clasp' [His service 1914-1917 in the Special Constabulary entitled him to this clasp] and 'Long Service Clasp 1931' along with St John's Service Medal with Clasp [1932] and Metropolitan Special Constabulary Medal 1914.



Above: Medal group to Charles Reed comprising left to right: BWM, VM, Special Constabulary Medal with 'Great War Clasp' and 'Long Service Clasp 1931' along with St John's Service Medal with Clasp [1932] and Metropolitan Special Constabulary Medal 1914.

Next up was a Royal Naval LSGC [Edward VII] to John ['Henry'] Rowe who was born in Somerset in 1870. He'd joined the Royal Navy in 1886 and in 1900, he joined the coastguard as a boatman and was posted to Scotland. He had two sons in 1903 and 1907 respectively. One son died in 1916 in the Orkney Islands from Influenza, Endocarditis and Otitis Media. In Endocarditis, usually heart valves were damaged by the condition known as 'Rheumatic Fever' and the damaged valves were then prone to infection – these conditions are extremely rare in the modern era].

Rowe was invalided from the Service because of mental illness – he died at the Somerset and Bath Asylum on 5th November, 1918 as a result of Pulmonary Tuberculosis ['TB'] and 'General Paralysis of the Insane' [this is another consequence of advanced Syphilis which he'd contracted some 2 years before]. His LSGC, awarded in 1905, is his only award as, although he was entitled to a BWM and a Silver War Badge, neither was claimed. [Apologies as no suitable photo].

Three groups featuring Silver Jubilee medals [SJM] were shown next.

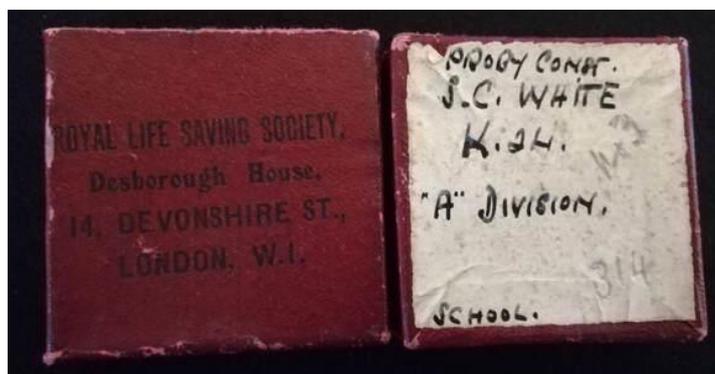
Constable Donald Edward Griffin Royal Navy and Metropolitan Police who, it emerged, resided at 'Wray House' [now called 'Crown House'] a Police married quarters accommodation - The designer of 'Wray House', Gilbert Mackenzie-Trench, was also the designer of the famous blue Police telephone box more usually called the 'Tardis'!! The BBC's trademark for the Tardis was challenged by the Metropolitan Police in 1998 but after court proceedings, was retained by the BBC – on the grounds that the Tardis would be recognised as a space time machine in the modern era rather than a Police telephone box of increasing scarcity!!



Above Left: Medal group to Donald Edward Griffin. From Left to right 1939-45 War Medal, SJM and Police Exemplary Service Medal [PESM].

Above Right: The 'Tardis'

The penultimate group shown belonged to Superintendent Stanley Charles White of Strathclyde Police – his medals included the SJM and a named bronze life-saving medallion from 1946 [in original box of issue].



Above: Royal Life Saving Society Bronze Medallion and box of issue to Stanley Charles White.



Above: Medal group to Stanley Charles White: Left to right: Defence Medal [DM], 1939-45 War Medal [WM], SJM and PESM.

Finally, a group to Special Chief Inspector Frank Lambert Wilson of Merseyside Police was shown – Only ten Special Constabulary Officers on Merseyside were given the SJM.



Above: Medal group to Frank Lambert Wilson comprising left to right: 1939-45 Star, France and Germany Star, DM, WM, SJM and Special Constabulary Long Service Medal clasp 'Long Service 1970'.

Secretary thanked all for presentations and discussion which had been brisk throughout and very interactive!

Our next meeting will be 4.2.2021 by Roger Bragger entitled 'Henderson Research'. Meeting will open for registration at 19.00hrs and meeting will start at 19.30hrs.

Meeting closed at 20.57hrs

Chris Davies BMS Secretary. Typed 25-31.1.2021

With my usual apologies for any errors and my thanks to all for the use of their photos/access to Website information, Powerpoint slides and Photos.