

Minutes of the Birmingham Medal Society Thursday 2nd June 2016

The President opened the meeting at 1930h and 16 members were present. Apologies received from Mick Atkinson, M Brown, Dahlia Harrison, Terry Harrison, Roy Painter, Mark Platt, Jeff Taylor.

The President also welcomed Brian Benbow a former member who was visiting on holiday from New Zealand.

A reminder was given about the Mini-Convention to be held at the Knowle RBL this coming Saturday 4 Jun 16. Secretary Martin Harrison confirmed the final numbers and who would be displaying for the Presidents Cup or completing a 10 minute talk.

The formal business over the President introduced the subject for the evening WHAT MAKES MY MEDAL / GROUP SO SPECIAL.

Philip Wilson – a Zulu war Medal 1879 especially having seen the film Zulu with Michael Caine. He explained his first medals were those given to him belonging to his Grandfather and this was the catalyst for his future interest. He also has his Father's medals, and he recalled the full sized medals in a box in a drawer and never worn, but the miniatures nicely mounted and preserved for social occasions.

John Barker – Showed two groups of medals to the Hemms family, a farming family from Herefordshire. Hemms was his mother's maiden name and the medals he showed would have belonged to his uncles had they survived World War I. The first group to Lt Donald George Hemms were the 1914-18 British War Medal, Victory Medal & Death Plaque. Donald had been killed in Action on 22nd March 1918. The second to 2nd Lieutenant Cyril Hemms were the Military Cross, 1914-18 British War Medal, Victory Medal and Death Plaque and he died of wounds on 27th March 1918 five days after his Brother. A third brother Hubert, who was not called up during WWI was killed in a horse riding accident in 1929, leaving two daughters, John's mother and an Aunt. John has full books of research on both brothers giving details of a family life in a small village. One anecdote was that the Postmaster in the village who would normally deliver the death messages, refused to do so for the second Brother as it was so soon after the first and too upsetting for him and so he asked an assistant to do it on his behalf. John finished by stating that this hobby makes sure we know about the people whose medals we collect, and it is often the small intimate details that are not generally available that make it so interesting.

Paul Handford – Paul showed a powerpoint display and included James Williams – an MC 1914 Star Trio who had been in the British Red Cross Convoy and later a Lieutenant in the Army Service Corps. The second group were Archie Mansell Lewis and Air force Cross and 1914 Star Trio, who had been a BRC Chauffeur in France during 1914, he had also later been commissioned into the RGA and then the RFC where he had won his AFC. He had a son John Mansell Lewis who was KiA during WWII and buried at Kranji war Cemetery in Singapore. The third group were to Wilfred Chivers, also a Chauffeur and BC Orderly and later a pilot in 32 Sqn Royal Flying corps. He was KiA on 17th August 1917 whilst flying a DH5. Paul explained he had bought this group originally as a BRC member only, and it was whilst researching that it came to light he was also an RFC casualty and commemorated on the Arras Memorial.

Paul Murray – Showed a very nicely framed group of medals to his Grandfather, Harry Lowes Murray consisting of the MBE, BWM, VM, Defence Medal and related Home guard Badges. Harry had taught at Loughborough School for 45 years and been in the Leicester Battalion of the HG during WWII as a Major. He had been a Company Commander and 2i/c the Battalion. His MBE had been for services to the Home Guard.

Roger Bragger – Showed a group to Allan Lanman MBE, AFC, QSA 1914 Star Trio with MiD, RN LS&GC. This person had been in all three services. Roger explained that this was an enigma wrapped in a mystery and research was very difficult due to the numerous spellings of his name. He had literally during an idle moment googled and researched under as many different versions of Lanman as he could think of which had eventually yielded much further information.

An interesting evening with some unusual groups of medals and associated detailed research.

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