

## Minutes BMS meeting 5.8.21

### At Holiday Inn Great Barr

1. Welcome: President Roger Bragger extended a most cordial welcome since our last meeting 17 months ago! As tonight's speaker John Scott was unavailable at short notice, we have reversed the September and August meeting titles. We are hoping John will be available for September's talk. **Also, some members were unaware of the last minute change to tonight's meeting so to allow those who *would* have spoken at a members' own/recent acquisitions, we will start the September meeting with a short section on recent acquisitions.**
2. Apologies received: Z. Ballinger-Fletcher, A. Bostock, J. Carver, C. Mellor-Hill, P. Murray, R. Painter, D. Rees, J. Scott, B. Symons, D. Walters and P. Wilson.
3. Statistics: Present 17, Meal 8, Drink 10 and overnight stay 3.
4. New members: – None.
5. Library questions:- None.
6. Functions/visits:- None.
7. Committee Points:

'Speaker organiser/secretary' role announced to be taken on by Martin Harrison. He already has a substantial number of talks [including the Drummond Lecture] for next year – Please advise Martin by email if you wish to give a BMS talk. He will also hold a number of talks in reserve for emergencies such as tonight.

Venue: HIGB is confirmed for our meetings till the end of October, 2021. Do we then move back to HI Bromsgrove? This will need to be reviewed/confirmed.

Subscriptions and Membership: M.Platt [treasurer] confirmed all membership subscriptions are paid up. I have not heard from or seen B. Benbow for almost two years but P.Knight has spoken to him recently.

Future Meetings webcast: Possibility web broadcast of live meeting suggested by D. Rees. I will message him about this.

BMS webpage: A reminder that much information is available for BMS members [and the public] on our BMS website at:

<http://www.birminghammedalsociety.com/>

There is a private members' section [I will forward password details in a separate email].

**Tonight's Meeting: Members Own and Recent Acquisitions:**

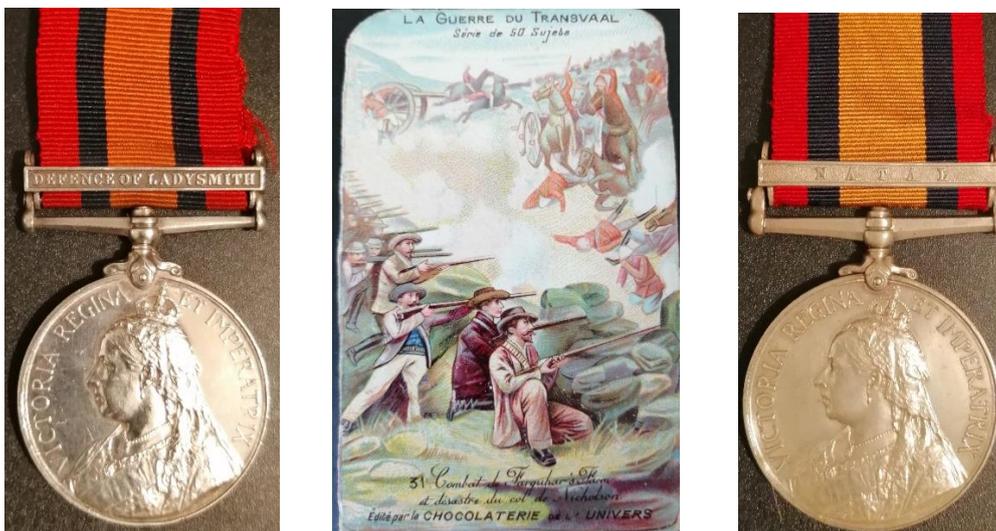
The first group circulated was the Salonika Military Cross [MC] and trio with MiD oakleaves to Captain F. A. Ninis, 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion Cheshire Regiment who died of wounds after the Battle of Pip Ridge September, 1918. [Ninis was the subject of the talk in our June 2021 ZOOM meeting].



**Photo above left:** Capt. F.A. Ninis MC and Trio with MiD.

**Photo above right:** Photo dated April, 1915 of 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. F.A. Ninis.

Next shown were items relating to the South African War [‘Second Boer War’]. First, a Queen’s South Africa [QSA] single bar ‘Defence of Ladysmith’ to No. 180 Trooper J. D’Hotman Natal Mounted Rifles [NMR] - he would have been a defender of the more open south-east perimeter of Ladysmith during the famous siege.



**Pictured above left to right:** QSA single clasp ‘Defence of Ladysmith’ to Tpr J D’Hotman NMR ; Collectable Card with image of ‘Battle of Farquhar’s Farm ; QSA single clasp ‘Natal’ to Pte C.Wilson KIA at the Battle of Farquhar’s farm.

A QSA single bar Natal to an early casualty was shown next to No.175 Private C. Wilson 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion King’s Royal Rifle Corps [KRRC]. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion had been posted from India in

September, 1899. Wilson was KIA at the battle of Farquhar's Farm 30.10.1899 [Nine KRRC were KIA there]. The action at Farquhar's farm is now called 'The Battle of Modder Spruit'. The latter can still be known as the 'Disaster at Lombard's Kop'. The 30<sup>th</sup> October, 1899 was dubbed 'Mournful Monday' following the disasters at 'Lombard's Kop' and 'Nicholson's Nek' [also now known as the 'Battle of Tchengula'] just before the investment of Ladysmith on 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 1899.

The QSA would be issued with the single bar 'Natal' if no 'battle' bar or bar 'Cape Colony' were issued.

Next shown was a French Chocolate box collectable picture card by 'Chocolaterie de L'Univers' – It was number 31 in a series of 50 images from 'La Guerre du Transvaal'. The picture is very stylised showing the British Army [still in Redcoats!] under attack from a line of very smartly attired Boers forces. It references 'Mournful Monday' as 'Combat du Farquhar's Farm et désastre du col de Nicholson'.

Next up was a Spion Kop casualty trio of medals to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Lancs Fusiliers comprising a Queen's Sudan Medal with Khedive's Sudan clasp 'Khartoum' with QSA single clasp 'Relief of Ladysmith' to 4794 Surname 'Whitehead' – initial 'J' on the Sudan pair and 'C' on the QSA. There are two Private 'J. Whiteheads' listed as Spion Kop casualties [their numbers 2568 kia and 2262 wounded] On the Spion Kop monument to the fallen, 'J. Whitehead 2568' and 'C. Whitehead 4794' are listed.



**Photo above left:** Queen's Sudan, QSA clasp 'Relief of Ladysmith' and Khedive's Sudan clasp 'Khartoum' to Lancs Fusiliers Spion Kop casualty Whitehead.

**Photo above right:** Naming on the Whitehead medals showing 'J' and 'C' - see text.

With the medals was a letter from June 1900 written by Lt. Col. C.J. Blomfield [the 2nd Lancs Fusiliers CO taken prisoner at Spion Kop] as a POW when in Pretoria. It was a reply to a David Barnes of 70, Seymour Road, Bolton, the brother of 'C. Whitehead' and explained quite definitely that another POW there had seen C. Whitehead 'shot through the head' and killed at Spion Kop 24<sup>th</sup> January, 1900.



**Photo above left and right:** Envelope containing Lt Col Blomfield's reply to David Barnes brother of Charles Whitehead

There are no electronic papers re: Charles Whitehead but using the 'Ancestry' website and searching the name and address of 'David Barnes' did reveal a younger brother 'Samuel Barnes' [born 29.9.1873]. 'Ancestry' information states he was killed in South Africa 24.1.1900. Samuel Barnes is commemorated on the Barnes family headstone in Weaste Cemetery, Salford. The headstone states 'Samuel Barnes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Lancs Fusiliers who was killed at Spion Kop in South Africa 24<sup>TH</sup> January, 1900 aged 27 years'. There is no 'Samuel Barnes' on the Spion Kop monument. This remains a fascinating 'work in progress' as there is not any obvious reason why Samuel Barnes' would have enlisted under the alias 'C. Whitehead'. [My thanks to S.Handford for help with this ongoing investigation].

Next up was a group of medals to the 38<sup>th</sup> Foot [Staffs Regiment] consisting of Crimea medal [three clasps 'Sebastopol', 'Inkermann' and 'Alma'], Indian Mutiny medal [1 clasp 'Lucknow'] and Turkish Crimea medal to John Nagle. Nagle was born in Ireland, joined the 80<sup>th</sup> foot in 1853 transferring to the 38<sup>th</sup> to serve in the Crimea and India. He died in Colchester in 1912.



**Photo above left:** Medal group to Cpl J.Nagle [details above].

**Photo above right:** Single Crimea medal to Cpl G. Newton [details below].

There followed another Crimea medal single clasp 'Sebastopol' to the 38<sup>th</sup> Foot to 3585 Corporal George Newton who was wounded in the first assault on the Redan. There was some information but little detail of his career. He was entitled to an Indian Mutiny medal and clasp 'Lucknow'. More information might be available after a trip to the PRO to view muster rolls and possible change of regiment!

Next up was a single Meritorious Service Medal [MSM] to James Dewe of the Royal Army Service Corps [RASC]. His MSM was awarded for service in North Russia June, 1918 to June, 1919. Dewe retired from the Army after 22 years' service in 1920. He had attested in 1898, served in the South African War [RASC] being entitled to a QSA 3 clasps 'Cape Colony', 'Transvaal' and 'Orange Free State' and King's South Africa [KSA] with 2 clasps 1901,1902. He re-enlisted after a three month break in 1902. All his subsequent service was in Great Britain [MiD 1917] apart from the time spent in Russia 1918-19 [where he had volunteered to go]. He reached the rank of Staff Sergeant-Major and is entitled to the Long Service Good Conduct [LSGC]. Dew was also awarded the 'Russian Medal for Zeal' and a St Stanislav neck badge. [These are non-gazetted awards but are mentioned on his service papers and a contemporary 1921 medal roll]. The process of re-uniting this group has started!



**Photo above left and right:** MSM obverse and reverse awarded to J. Dewe RASC [with apologies for picture quality].

There followed a Great War Pair to Lt Frederick Martin Wray of the Royal Engineers. He initially had enlisted as a private in the Royal Fusiliers. Before the war, Wray had been a school teacher so was offered a commission in the Royal Engineers. His specialist knowledge of Chemistry led to this transfer where he served in 'O' special company [gas cylinders] moving shortly after to the Special Factories section. Prior to 1917, chemical weapons used by the British Army were of French manufacture. However, the French workers had a reputation for unruliness and drunkenness which led to the plant [near Calais] being taken over by 250 Special Company troops June, 1918 to February, 1919. Subsequently, Wray's more distant relatives had contacted the member and photos were exchanged.



**Photo above left:** Top left is Pte F Ray in this group of Royal Fusiliers.

**Photo above right:** Lt F. Ray having been commissioned into the Royal Engineers.

Next up was a CBE [Military 1956] group to the Special Operations Executive [SOE] to Brigadier Dennis Robert Guinness. The initial purchase was an isolated unnamed CBE – but in its presentation box was a slip of paper with the recipient's information. Obtained slightly later and separately were the recipient's other awards including a named General Service Medal to a Colonel! However, there was little information about the officer except that he'd served in the SOE. The miniatures were also obtained. Guinness' father had married an American whose great, great grandfather had written the words of their national anthem 'Star Spangled Banner'.



**Photo above left:** Military CBE to Brigadier D.R. Guinness.

**Above right:** Full size medal group and miniatures to Brigadier D.R. Guinness comprising 1939-45 Star, Burma Star, Italy Star, Defence Medal, 1939-45 War Medal with MiD oakleaves, GSM with clasp S.E. Asia 1945-46 and Coronation Medal 1953.

There followed a General Service Medal [GSM] clasp 'Arabian Peninsula' to 1352 Private Suhail Mohammed of 'B' squadron SAS? It came in its original box with an issue and receipt voucher stating the soldier 'was a deserter'. There was a lot of discussion of how such a medal would have been issued in the circumstances but once again, much interest was generated by a document that somehow has survived the passage of time!!



**ISSUE & RECEIPT VOUCHER**  
 Army Form G. 1033 (Small—in Pads of 100)  
 Voucher must accompany stores if practicable  
 Office Stamp (See footnote)

(Feb '63)

ISSUE Voucher No. & Date		RECEIPT Voucher No. & Date	
Account		Account	
Issued BY <b>B Sqn</b>		Issued TO <b>REC'D OFFICE</b>	
Authority for issue		Date & Mode of Conveyance <b>6-2-63</b>	
Signature (See footnote)	Sheet No.	No. of Sheets	Carriers/Convey Note No. & Date

Leger Folio (1)	Catalogue or Part No. (2)	Section or Sub-Section (3)	Qty. (4)	Description and Marks on Packages (5)	For Store Depot Use Only						
					S. (6)	R. (7)	D. (8)	U. (9)	Rate (10)	Value £ s. d. (11)	
		DESIGNATION									
		<b>GSM + CLASP</b> <b>(In respect of 1352</b> <b>SUHAIL MOHD) who</b> <b>is a deserter)</b>	<b>1</b>								

NOTE.—On original and triplicate forms, the stamp and signature will be those of the consignor; on duplicate forms, those of the consignee.

**Photographs above:** Top left; Suhail Muhammad's GSM with single clasp 'Arabian Peninsula'. Top right – the box of issue. Below: the official receipt dated 6 Feb '63 stating 'who is a deserter'.

Next shown was a Women's Voluntary Service medal with long service clasp in its original presentation box. This would represent 15 years for the medal and another 15 years for the clasp.



**Photo above left and right:** Women's Voluntary Service medal and 'long service' clasp. Obverse and reverse.

The next item concerned a memorial plaque [photo below] named to Francis Banes Richards which had been brought to a member in his voluntary capacity at Tamworth Heritage.



In 2017, the member had bought the medals to Major The Honourable Arthur George Villiers Peel [the grandson of Sir Robert Peel] and had started work on the 'Peel' family tree [now a tree with 38k names].

The name 'Francis Banes Richards' features on the 'Peel' family tree with the relationship being 'the brother-in-law of the first cousin twice removed of the husband of the first cousin twice removed'! It turned out another BMS member at our meeting has Francis Banes Richards' WWI medal group!! Another local contact had the medals to his brother Sapper W.E.Richards who'd survived the Great War.

Also discussed were other WWI medal groups of several Peel family members namely the Bramwell's, Hunter's and Richards' all from the Tamworth area.

Francis Banes Richards had survived the Western Front but returned from France very seriously ill being admitted to and dying in a Cardiff hospital. Richards was buried in Glascote Cemetery. It would appear the plaque had been left at the Cemetery at some point and had been found by the caretaker there.

Next shown was a single Afghanistan medal 1878-80 with single clasp 'Kandahar'. It was named to Surgeon Major C.H. Harvey who was attached 'E' Battery 'B' Brigade Royal Horse Artillery [RHA] at Maiwand 27<sup>th</sup> July, 1880. Charles Hamilton Harvey's career and widespread postings were discussed in detail including his conspicuous gallantry at Maiwand and during the return to Kandahar. His actions saved many lives after which he was MiD along with three other officers.



**Photo above left and right:** Obverse and reverse of the single Afghanistan medal clasp 'Kandahar' issued to Surgeon Major C.H.Harvey attached 'E' battery 'B' Brigade Royal Horse Artillery.

'E' Battery 'B' Brigade RHA had significant losses in these actions: KIA 2 officers and 19 OR and wounded 2 officers and 14 OR but their gallantry led to the awards of two Victoria Crosses and eight Distinguished Conduct Medals [DCMs]. Harvey went on to serve in the Egypt campaign being promoted to 'Brigade Surgeon' and becoming 'Principal Medical officer of the 'River Column'. He was involved in the action at Kirbeka. He was again MiD and was awarded a 3 clasp Egypt medal and Khedive Star retiring in 1886 with the honorary rank of 'Deputy Surgeon General'.

Finally, an unnamed but rare Khedive's Sudan medal with single bar 'Bahr-El-Ghazal 1900-1902' was shown which is pictured immediately below.



C. Davies  
BMS Secretary  
Typed 25-28.8.2021

[My thanks to all contributors for use of photos and my usual apologies for any errors or omissions].