

Minutes BMS meeting at HIGB 2nd September, 2021:

1. Welcome: by Roger Bragger.
2. Apologies received: Z. Ballinger-Fletcher, A. Bostock, J. Carver, C. Mellor-Hill, D. Rees, J. Scott, P. Wilson, S. Mills and R. Painter.
3. Stats: Meal - 12, drinks - 10 and ONS - 1.
4. No new members.
5. Library Questions: No questions but M.Harrison announced later in the meeting and showed the Book recently gifted to the Society by Gill Loffet [the widow of one of the BMS's first Presidents Julian Loffat] entitled 'Recipients of the Distinguished Conduct Medal 1914-1920'. Secretary to send a note of thanks to Gill.
6. Functions/visits: None.
7. Committee points: None.
8. Tonight's meeting: Changed to 'Recent Acquisitions/Members' Own as per recent emails.
9. Next meeting on 7th October, 2021 'The Markham Pit Colliery Disaster 1938' by Paul Murray.

Recent Acquisitions/Members' Own [Part II]:

Secretary's note: for some of tonight's medals and recipients, there is mention of several in previous BMS minutes to which I refer as I go along. All available on the BMS website:

www.birminghammedalsociety.com .

Our first presenter had gone unashamedly and enthusiastically [mainly] French with a substantial number of recent acquisitions some of which were medallic and others militaria. The themes followed were 'French Revolution' and 'French Napoleonic' eras of 1789-1815.



Above: Montage of French medals from late 18th and early 19th century.

First up was the Légion d'Honneur to Ambroise Delamarre of the Imperial Guard. Although this medal was issued unnamed, there was much corroborative paperwork. Delamarre participated in twenty-five battles of which five were 'major encounters' [one of these being Waterloo where the Imperial Guard had 90% casualties] and also survived the Russian Campaign 1812 where 600k had started but only 100k were to return.

A medal named to Jacques Peyny [apologies if incorrect spelling] was shown which commemorated the 'Storming of the Bastille' 14th July, 1789. Only five or six examples are known to exist. About 700 were originally issued but the following year, the revolutionary government decided that these medals should be recalled [on pain of facing the guillotine] as it was not considered revolutionary to award medals to just one group...

The Légion d'Honneur to Cuirassier Major François Clement Chipault de Bezancourt featured next with his dress miniature the 'Order of the Two Sicilies'. [Apologies no photo].

There followed the 'Ordre de la Couronne de Fer' an award designed by Napoléon Bonaparte when he crowned himself King of Italy. This item was from the collection of Colonel Verly who had been Napoléon III's personal bodyguard. **[For more on the Ordre de la Couronne de Fer, please see BMS ZOOM minutes January, 2021].**



Above: Ordre de la Couronne de Fer. Note Napoléon Bonaparte only wears this medal and the Légion d'Honneur.

A Légion d'Honneur [awarded 1814] and a veteran's medal named to Lt. Louis Fournerat featured next. He had fought in several battles and had been wounded at the battle of Wagram. **[More information and photo in BMS ZOOM minutes April, 2021].**

A St Helena medal, a private issue for an Officer was shown. It had been issued to Lt Jacques Richelet of the 6th Cuirassiers – Richelet was another survivor of the Russian campaign 1812. His Légion d'Honneur would have been awarded in person by Napoléon Bonaparte after the Battle at Vauchamps. It is extraordinary to realise that these awards were worn in battle and in some of the major military events of the early 19th Century.

Moving to militaria, a display of Waterloo battlefield relics was shown which included a gorget and a Légion d'Honneur 'cordon' [a large sash on which a General would wear his Légion d'Honneur – this translates literally as 'lanyard']. As only six French Generals featured on the Waterloo battlefield, this is indeed a rare item as the total issued was only 125. [See **BMS ZOOM minutes January, 2021 for more information on Waterloo battlefield relics**].



Above: Montage of objects from the battlefield of Waterloo 18th June, 1815.

The Waterloo Medal/ Two clasp ['Vittoria' and 'Toulouse'] Military General Service Medal [MGSM] to Andrew Hartley featured next along with a portrait of the recipient [less his left arm] and wearing his medals. Hartley lost the arm during a cannon live firing display accident. After the mishap, the King had made him a Military Knight of Windsor. He is buried in Herefordshire at a church where his son had been the vicar. [for more on Andrew Hartley, please see **BMS ZOOM minutes April 2021**].

A painting [circa 1800] of a Marmeluke Dragoon Plet was shown. Some six years after the portrait had been painted, he was awarded the Légion d'Honneur for capturing an Austrian Standard. There followed a French bearskin hat badge and finally a selection of 'retroussés' from the period of the French Revolution. 'Retroussés' were fabric badges attached to the turnbacks of tunics.



Above left: Portrait of Marmeluke Dragoon Piet.

Above right: French bearskin hat badge from early 19th century.

Next up was a humble Victory Medal [VM] with a story which linked to recipients of other medal groups involved in the same incident namely, the sinking of HMS Hermes 31st October, 1914. Number 200605 Matthew Driscoll PO 2RN had joined the Navy aged 16 years and amongst other vessels, had served on the cruiser HMS Hermes from 25th August, 1914. [Interestingly, this ship, commissioned in 1899, had been fitted temporarily with seaplane launch capability in 1913 and led to the development of the dedicated aircraft carrier HMS Ark Royal in 1914]. HMS Hermes had been torpedoed 31st October, 1914 whilst in the Dover Straits. Coincidentally nearby, was the SS Invicta with two escorts and all three ships went to the assistance of Hermes which was sinking fast. On board SS Invicta was the 1st Anglo-Belgian Ambulance Unit. Their staffing included a Dr Fox whose medal group was shown next. Matthew Driscoll was to survive this but twenty-two personnel from HMS Hermes had died. **[For more on Dr G.R. Fox , please seen the Miniconvention minutes July,2019].**



Above left and right; WWI trio and Belgian 'Ordre de la Couronne' and photo of Dr G.R.Fox.

Another BMS member had assisted in the re-unite of a World War I trio by drawing attention to the sale notice of a single British War Medal [BMW]. A pair of medals 1914-15 Star and VM to William Woodyer Buckton, Royal Engineers [RE] British Red Cross [BRC] and Order of St John and Jerusalem [OSTJJ] had already been purchased. His VM was named to Captain W.W. Buckton so when W.W. Buckton's British War Medal [BWM] came on the market, 'the rest as they say is history'! [Apologies no photo].

Buckton's career was in engineering pre and post WWI. In 1912, he had been involved in the development of a power station for Harland and Wolff Shipbuilders. Between 1914-18, he was a volunteer ambulance driver in charge of 68 ambulances at the Dunkirk HQ. In 1914-15, he worked to re-establish the water supply at Ypres after it was imperilled during a typhoid epidemic. His engineering skill was even put to use in designing a flash screen for the eighteen pounder gun! Much of this information was taken from his obituary notice of 1940 as it does not feature in the Friend's Ambulance Unit [FAU] records.

In the book 'The Grace of Forgetting' by Geoffrey Winthrop Young [a famous mountaineer and contemporary of Buckton], there is reference to the Ypres water purification emergency and Buckton's role where it states 17,000 gallons of treated water was supplied daily. Both civilians and the military were the beneficiaries.

A FAU photo from 'The Friends Ambulance Unit 1914-19' shows a named staff group photo of the Sacré Coeur Civilian Hospital, Ypres featuring both Buckton and Young amongst many others.

Next up was a Meritorious Service Medal [MSM] BWM and VM to 168759 Driver William Mark Hurst. The reference book for the MSM issued 'For Gallantry in the Performance of Military Duty' is written by Major J.D. Sainsbury T.D. The MSM for gallantry 'not at the Front' was introduced in October, 1916. There are also the 'Albert Medal' and 'Edward Medal' awards for specific life saving gallantry. The MSM had set a 'gallantry precedent' in 1848 when 'meritorious service' could include gallantry or devotion to duty.

Hurst's citation explains that, in February, 1919, there had been an ammunition explosion at Westphalia where Dvr W.M. Hurst and L/41044 Gnr C. Baynton of the London Division Ammunition Column, RFA had prevented the spread of a fire between ammunition sheds. Fourteen civilians were killed and forty-two were wounded in the incident.



Above left: BWM, VM and MSM to Wiliam Mark Hurst [Obverse].

Above left: Hurst's entitlement to the MSM - with 'Gallantry' written in manuscript.

Many gallantry MSM's in Great Britain relate to live weapons training e.g. mishaps with grenade throwing practice.

Next up was a Long Service Volunteer Force Medal [Queen Victoria] to Major T.G. Ewen of the 1st Lancs Volunteer Artillery awarded in 1895. He'd been commissioned into the Forfar Volunteer Artillery in 1876 achieving his final rank of Lieutenant-Colonel of the Lancs and Cheshire Royal Garrison Artillery. He was awarded the Diamond Jubilee Medal 1897, a Coronation CB in 1911 and a Territorial Decoration in 1920 just before retirement. It is not clear if he was awarded the Coronation Medal 1911 but this can be checked against the medal roll.



Above left and right: Obverse and reverse of Long Service Volunteer Force to Major T.G.Ewen 1st Lancs Volunteer Artillery.

A Mayoral Medal issued to Margaret M.L. Horbury of St Edmundson Borough near Bury St Edmunds featured next. [Mayoral medal pictured below] Our member was able to obtain the recipient's photo from the internet.



Next up was a Golden Jubilee and Ambulance Long Service pair to Stephen McVittie shown with a photograph of him at his retirement in 2011. [Apologies no photo].

The next group of medals shown was awarded to Senior Officer G. Allardyce featuring the Prison Service Emergency Duties Medal. This is an impressive recent medal with elaborate scroll suspender. The medal is made from rhodium plated cupro-nickel [not silver]. Allardyce had worked in HMP Feltham.



Above photo: Left to right [Obverses] Golden Jubilee Medal, Diamond Jubilee Medal and Prison Service Emergency Duties Medal to G. Allardyce.

Another development in the tribute to Herbert Mowle Kendal British Ambulance Committee [BAC] was discussed next to emphasise the benefits of sharing information. His medal group of three items was a BWM, VM and Croix-de-Guerre with silver star. After a long and pain-staking investigation, he was established as KIA in May, 1918 but his body was never found. He is now commemorated on a separate new column on the war memorial at Soissons. Pictures of the addendum to the War Memorial in Soissons were shown. A further photo of Kendal had been obtained from the Manchester Tennis and Racquets club.

After some cold telephone calls were made to two members of the Kendal family to which the initial responses had been cautious, the member was then rewarded with some good dialogue, another photo and other information. The new photo circa 1917 and taken in Paris was of Kendall in uniform [itself a mixture] was shown. It was also revealed that once Kendal had been reported missing, his wife always believed he would return to the extent she left the back door unlocked for years in the hope of this. There has been much recent BMS discussion about the advantages or otherwise of information in the public domain but this example shows benefits.

[For more information on Herbert Mowle Kendal, please see BMS minutes December,2018]



Above left: Medals to H.M. Kendal – Left to right BWM, Croix-de-Guerre with silver star and VM.

Above right: Latest photo of Herbert Mowle Kendal taken in Paris 1917.

A memorial plaque to Reginald Dennie Ellis featured as a spontaneous chance purchase just before a return ferry trip from the Isle of Wight. Ellis was in the 1/4 Lincs Regiment. He had been KIA at Lens 8th June, 1917 and is buried at Loos Cemetery. Born 1888, he was a native of the Isle of Wight and was educated at Dulwich College where he was a member of the Shooting VIII. He had worked in land surveying before being commissioned on 29th August, 1914. In September, 1915, he had been wounded and rejoined the regiment 27th October, 1915. On 13th October, 1915, the Lincs regiment had suffered extensive casualties in the assault on the Hohenzollern Redoubt [KIA 13 Officers and 385 OR] an event Ellis had missed.

In Ellis' final action at Lens on 8th June, 1917, he had sustained a leg wound when moving up the line to the forward trenches. He insisted on joining the assault even though he could have sought medical help, however, minutes later, was KIA by a shell.



Above photo: WWI trio to Captain Reginald Dennie Ellis of 1/4Lincs Regiment KIA Lens 8th June, 1917.

By curious coincidence, this story is another 'reunite' success as the Dennie Ellis WWI trio appeared on the market some twelve months later! Also sold in the same lot were some miniature medals comprising a two bar Military Cross [MC], WWI trio and Defence Medal [DM]. The recipient for this group is not yet established.



Photo above: As yet unattributed miniatures sold with the Dennie Ellis WWI Trio – In themselves a remarkable group with Military Cross with two clasps!

A British Empire Medal [BEM] to The Honourable Madeleine Balfour was shown next. It has impressed naming and was awarded for services to the Red Cross. Madeleine Balfour was mentioned in a book 'The Dodger' by Tim Carroll where appreciation of the Red Cross Parcels is expressed to 'Madeleine B'. 'The Dodger' is the story about Sir Winston Churchill's cousin who was

an escaper in WWII. Photos of Madeleine Balfour were shown. As an award, the BEM can show a good deal of size variance sometimes by as much as 2mm.



Above left: Ladies BEM [left] and gentleman's BEM [right] obverse.

Above right: Ladies BEM [left] and gentleman's BEM [right] reverse.

Two more BEM's followed. The first was an engraved example to Sgt John Murdo Maclean for his services in of the Stornoway Home Guard. The final BEM was to Miss Annabel Jacobs for the achievement of collecting of £26,000 for National Savings. Miss Jacobs was also a suffragette. However, she is not listed in either 1901 and 1911 census data. Is it possible that she was detained at his majesty's pleasure? – In the event of civil disobedience, an individual would not be counted in census data.

The next group was a WWI pair with a Naval Good Shooting Medal [George V] 1911 for the twelve-pounder quick firing cannon. The group was awarded to AB Harry Leighton RN. It was noted that the George V Good Shooting Medals issues are rarer than the Edward VII obverse and that such medals became increasingly uncommon with the increases in the range of ship's guns.



Above left and right: Obverse and reverse of WWI pair with Naval Good Shooting Medal [George V obverse] issued to AB Harry Leighton – See text.

A WWI Trio, Naval MSM and Volunteer [Queen Victoria obverse] Long Service Medal featured next issued to Chief of Signals G.F. Harris at Southampton Service. He had been recalled for WWI – it was noted that some of these recalls might not have been effective with the rapid progress in weaponry and vessels in the early 20th Century.



Above higher photo: G.F. Harris WWI trio, naval MSM and Long Service Good Conduct group of 5. [obverse]. **Above lower photo:** Reverse of Harris group.



Pictured Left: Naming on G.F.Harris' 1914-15 Star.

Finally, a Transport Medal clasp '1899-1902 South Africa' was shown. It was named to 'H. Daniels in Command'. Only medals to Captains of ships were named to the individual with 'in command' stated. In total, these number 105.



Above left and right: Obverse and reverse of the Transport medal with clasp 'S. Africa 1899-1902' issued to 'H. Daniel in Command'.

President Roger Bragger thanked all for their contributions and another successful meeting which closed at 21.35hrs.

Typed 5-18.9.2021

Chris Davies

BMS Secretary.

My usual apologies for any omissions, errors and typos and my thanks to those who have sent me photos for use in these meeting notes.