

Welford and Weston Local History Society
www.welfordandweston.org.uk

Newsletter 18 - September 2014

“World War I - Exhibition”
at The Memorial Hall Welford on Avon
from 10:30 to 16:30
on Saturday 27th September 2014

Following on from the highly successful event at St Peter's Church on August 3rd, to commemorate the centenary of the start of the Great War, your local history Society is hosting a WWI exhibition on Saturday 27th September.

The highlight of the exhibition is probably the first public showing of the 60 letters written from Private Jim Matthews, in the period January to August 1917, to his mother Sarah. The family lived at Virginia Cottage, opposite the Bell Inn, where the road narrows. Fortunately for us she kept all these letters (most in their original envelopes) and you will have an opportunity to read them on the day. His writing in pencil is very legible. The letters are a poignant reminder of both family life in Welford one hundred years ago, as well as the realities of life on the front line. Jim Matthews died on 9th August 1917 'from his wounds'. At the time of his Army Service he was engaged to marry Miss Olive Hancox, who was a teacher at Welford village school. Miss Hancox never married.

There will be about ten other exhibits in the main hall. These tables will be manned by local people prepared to tell their story. These will include.

- Jean Stone talking about her uncle Edwin Hunt of Welford, one of those who died, and sharing archive information and memorabilia.
- Robbie Robinson sharing CDs from the sound archives of the Imperial War Museums, in which his father in law describes his army service including being taken prisoner.
- Jane Badcock describing how her female relatives worked as nurses behind the lines in France and the difficulties of communication at the

- time.
- Yvette Grundy explaining how her grandmother received news of the death of her husband in the war, not once, but on three separate occasions. Separately how Yvette's mother benefited from revolutionary knee surgery pioneered by a surgeon at the 'front'.
 - Ted Howell sharing anecdotes from the period, & letting you into a secret about who wrote the words to 'It's a long way to Tipperary'.
 - Derek Johnson sharing personal memorabilia from that time.
 - Doreen Walkden (or a member of the Dingley family) sharing photos & memorabilia connected with Capt. A C Dingley from Welford who died in the war.
 - Material used in the 26th September meeting including details of all the nineteen men who died, will be available for individual perusal, prior to being given to the school for their use.
 - Other WWI memorabilia from the local archive & other local sources
 - Welford Primary School sharing their work to date on this topic, including the wonderful art work first seen at the event in St Peter's on August 3rd.

The Memorial Hall will be decorated with some of the 200 or so posters that were created at the time, including some of the less well known ones. An additional outside exhibit (weather permitting) will share something of the life of primary school age children 100 years ago. For young people there will be a quiz sheet available to complete as you look around. Completed quiz sheets with all the correct answers will be eligible for a prize! And finally at selected times during the day you will be able to join in with the singing of some of the better known World War I songs. I'm indebted to David Sanders for taking the lead on this.

For more information please call Brad Plimmer on 750716, or contact via bradplimmer@btinternet.com