

Members' Research Projects - 06 November 2017.

There was a wide variety of subjects presented at the Members' Research Projects Meeting, all of which highlighted the interests and hard work of those who contributed. Six people contributed five topics, which were all very well researched and presented, and highlighted both known and little known areas of interest.

John and Jenny Rand: The Life and Legacy of Eglantyne Jebb.



Eglantyne Jebb

Eglantyne Jebb (1876 - 1928) was born in Ellesmere, Shropshire, to wealthy parents with a strong social conscience. Although she studied at Oxford and trained as a teacher, Eglantyne found that this was not her true vocation. She was more passionate about the welfare of children and in 1906 she published a book, 'Cambridge, a Study in Social Questions' based on her research into poverty in that city.

In 1913 she was asked to undertake a journey to [Macedonia](#) on behalf of the Macedonian Relief Fund. She returned shortly before the First World War broke out, and soon was drawn into a project organised by her sister, Dorothy, which revealed that everyday life in the enemy countries was far worse than government propaganda suggested.

As the war was coming to an end, and the German and Austro-Hungarian economies came near to collapse, it was clear to Dorothy and Eglantyne that the children of these countries were suffering appallingly from the effects of the war and the [Allied blockade](#), which continued even when an armistice was signed. A pressure group, the Fight the Famine Council, was set up in April 1919 to persuade the British government to end the blockade. In May 1919 this became a Relief Fund, which in time became the Save the Children Fund, now one of the major international charities.

The Declaration of the Rights of the Child, sometimes known as the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child, is an international document promoting child rights, drafted by Eglantyne Jebb and adopted by the League of Nations in 1924, and adopted in an extended form by the United Nations in 1959.

Eglantyne's sisters also made significant contributions to society. Dorothy helped and supported Eglantyne greatly with the work of the Save the Children Fund, while

another sister, Louisa, founded the Women's Land Army in 'The Great War' (World War One). Eglantyne died in Geneva in 1928 and is buried there.

The thoroughly documented presentation included photographs, documents and memorials and was a moving talk about a significant but relatively unknown British lady. For more information Google: **Eglantyne Jebb**.

Carol Clements: One of the Lucky Ones.



The 'Southern Queen'.

Carol's interest in this subject, the evacuation of Dunkirk, aka 'Operation Dynamo', came from a personal connection with the Skipper of the 'Southern Queen'. Using maps and photographs, she explained the situation leading up to the Dunkirk evacuation and the story of one 'little ship'. The 'Southern Queen' was a pleasure boat working out of Folkestone, which made three trips to Dunkirk and rescued over 300 men. Its Skipper was a man named Frank, a personal friend of Carol's. Frank, now in his 90's, was awarded medals for his contribution to both Dunkirk and the D-Day Landings and for bravery. Contemporary photographs of the beach showed the horror of the evacuation and Carol gave us touching details, emphasising the pathos of the situation.

Carol also read out a transcript of Frank's interview on the radio about his personal witness and first-hand experience of the events, which made for a very affecting and interesting story of a significant moment in British history.

For more information Google: **Southern Queen Dunkirk ship**.

Audrey Hobbs: A Lamb to the Slaughter.



A letter signed by Lady Jane Grey, as 'Jane the Quene'.

Audrey told the tragic story of Lady Jane Grey, (1537 - 1554), the 'Nine Days Queen', who, despite her youth and her exemplary character, became a victim of her high-birth status and the manipulative ambitions of powerful people. Rejected by her own snobbish, scheming mother at birth, Jane found affirmation and loyalty in the family nurse, who remained with her for the rest of her short life.

Through her mother, Jane had Royal connections and Audrey told the tangled tale of ambitious marriages, plots and counter-plots that led first to Jane being crowned Queen and nine days later being arrested and incarcerated in the Tower of London, where she remained for six months, until her execution. Her dignity and innocence, even in the face of death, left us with the strong impression that Lady Jane Grey was indeed a 'lamb led to the slaughter'.

Although Audrey showed contemporary portraits of key players in this tragic drama, no authentic portrait is available of Lady Jane Grey.

For more information Google: **Lady Jane Grey**.

Janice Evans: The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC).



Captain Eustace Jotham



Major-General Sir Fabian Ware



**A Commonwealth War Graves
Commission Cemetery.**

Janice talked about the founding of the War Graves Commission, which was set up by Major-General Sir Fabian Ware as the Graves Registration Commission in 1915. On 21 May 1917, the Imperial War Graves Commission was created by a Royal Charter, with the Prince of Wales as its President and Ware as its Vice-Chairman, a role that Ware held until his retirement in 1948. Janice spoke about the level of care taken at the War Cemeteries around the world, which are always maintained to the very highest standards. In total, there are War Graves for 1,700,000 Armed Forces personnel who died in the First and Second World Wars and other conflicts since then. Janice commented on the scale of the loss of life in both those wars and the conflicts since. She mentioned the CWCG Centenary Garden at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show this year, and ended by talking about Captains Eustace Jotham (1883 - 1915), the only Victoria Cross holder locally, who died in India, and whose commemorative paving stone is outside St Mary's and All Saints Church in Kidderminster.

This year marks the 100th Anniversary of the formation of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. They tend the graves of over 1.7 million men and women of the Commonwealth forces who died in two World Wars, within 23,000 cemeteries and memorials around the world. In Britain we have 300,00 war graves all having the Portland stone headstones.

In the Wyre Forest area we have 148 war graves to be found in churchyards and cemeteries of service personnel who died in this country of wounds or injuries received in the Great War or in World War 2.

The headstones are inscribed with the national emblem or regimental badge, rank, name of unit, date of death and age of each casualty. Many also bear a personal dedication chosen by relatives.

The graves of those who could not be identified in the World War 1 are marked with a tribute written by Rudyard Kipling; "A soldier of the Great War known unto God"

The enduring work of the Commission owes everything to the dedication of the founder Fabian Ware. He had worried about what would happen to the graves when the conflict finally ended, so in 1917 the work of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission began; taking responsibility to honour with a proper burial those for whom some corner of a foreign field was their last resting place. The Commission is also responsible for the Memorials around the world for those who have no individual graves.

The whole talk provided extremely detailed information and was very moving.

For more information Google: **Commonwealth War Graves Commission.**



Nita Crutch: The Battle of Bewdley.

A view of Bewdley.

Nita's contribution came from the personal recollections of her next-door-neighbour, as she recounted the events of the 'Battle of Bewdley' on June 30th 1940. The presentation was given without any notes, in a humorous and anecdotal style, and the story was similar to a 'Dad's Army' episode. There were many local details, eye-witness accounts and a hilarious denouement. This was a light-hearted and fitting ending to a most interesting, and often moving, afternoon.

For more information Google: **Battle of Bewdley.**



Audrey Hobbs, Nita Crutch and Carol Clements.



Janice Evans, Jenny Rand and John Rand.

Heidy Hague