



No. 1

2025

The Christmas Truce 1914

By The Editor

I have been fortunate enough during the years I have been retired to go on a number of cycling holidays. That has included two tours of the D-Day beaches. That was significantly more poignant than I expected, to stand on Juno beach where my father landed with the Canadians. I have also cycled the Somme area and Ypres. All of these were with an excellent historian, Andrew Date who really brought the stories of the people involved to life. One of the advantages of cycling is that you can get to areas which may not normally be seen if you were in a car. Of course all of the tours were at times sombre and deeply saddening.

When you actually see the rows and rows of graves in the beautifully kept cemeteries it does bring home the futility of war, particularly for the ordinary man/woman.

On our cycle tour, based around Ypres, in 2017 (was it that long ago, gosh) we cycled south into France to Amentiers. This area was known as the forgotten front although there were still terrible losses during the war. Just across the border in Mesen or Messines, in Belgium, is the Christmas Truce memorial, which commemorates one of the most extraordinary events of that war at the first Christmas in 1914. It is estimated that all along the front

100,000 British, French, Belgian and German soldiers climbed out of the trenches on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, talked, told jokes and swapped keepsakes. The British brought Bully beef, rum and cigarettes, the Germans sausages, coffee and cognac.

At one place a Guards battalion officer brought out a bottle of best rum saying "Well my lads, a Merry Christmas to you! This is damned comic isn't it". The bottle of rum didn't last very long! Oswald Tilley wrote back to his family: "while you were eating turkey, I was talking and shaking hands with the very men I had been trying to kill a few



The Sculpture in Mesen (Messines) by Andrew Edwards

hours before. It was astounding!" It is very sad to reflect that a few days later he would go back to trying to kill these men and the bloodbath would go on for another 4 years.

Of course the truce was unofficial and both high commands were against it. The truce was not reported in the press for a while, presumably the British government tried to prevent it. However it was reported in the New York Times on 31st December. Then it was printed in the British papers with photographs. Most of the papers editorials were positive about the truce, the Times commenting on the "lack of malice" and the Mirror commenting on the "absurdity and tragedy" of the situation.

The memorial in Mesen shows a German and British soldier shaking hands. It was sculpted by Andrew Edwards. He is famous for a number of statues including Brian Clough and Peter Taylor at the Derby football ground, Alex Ferguson at Aberdeen football ground and the Beatles at Pier Head in Liverpool.

Why is the statue at Mesen? On Christmas Day in 1914, 3 kilometers south of Mesen near the village of St. Yvon one of the most famous events of the impromptu truce occurred; the British and Germans played a football match in no man's land. It wasn't the only place where this happened, but it is the only one with a memorial. Some of the matches were played with a tin can or a rolled up sandbag as a football wasn't available. Extraordinarily the soldiers actually filled in some of the shell craters to get a flatter pitch to play on! At St. Yvon there is a memorial at the location of the match, now a farmers field. Here there is a plaque describing the event and a cross. On the cross it states: "The Khaki Chums Christmas Truce" and underneath "1999, 85 years, Lest we Forget". Did some very old veterans come back?

Tommys War, <https://tommyswar.co.uk/>, sadly now closing down, did do a vignette celebrating the Christmas Truce and my modelling friend Kevin Jarrett displayed his version at the BMSS show in 2023.

Although, as I commented earlier these cycling holidays at

times were quite sombre they were also a great pleasure. Certainly cycling, what are now, quiet country roads was a major part of the pleasure. But more importantly it was sharing the experience with friends and learning together about the past.



Figure 2: The cross at the location of the football match on Christmas Day 1914



Figure 3: Tommys War model by Kevin Jarrett at the BMSS Annual Show in 2023.

Canterbury Cathedral

By Ralph Weaver

A note from the official guide states: *The Warriors chapel, also known as St Michael's or the Buff's chapel, or the Holland chapel, is built off the south west transept. It has strong historical links to the Royal East Kent Regiment, often referred to as the Buffs. The original Norman chapel was rebuilt in 1439 to provide a suitable resting place for Lady Margaret Holland and her husbands.*

The recent article by James Opie in the Bulletin was very opportune as I had recently been to Canterbury Cathedral and visited the tomb which contains the remains of Edward, the Black Prince. As James wrote the helmet crest and surcoat are displayed above the memorial, but these are later copies, the original items are on display in the crypt below.

What is of interest to members is the chapel containing the tomb of Margaret Holland and her two husbands (married not

simultaneously of course, but consecutively!) This chapel has for the last two hundred years been dedicated to the memory of The Buffs, the Third Regiment of Foot of the British establishment. There are other tombs within the chapel, many military figures and connections with the regiment, but sadly the gates leading into the chapel are kept closed, except for official functions, which makes observation difficult. What can be discerned quite clearly are the regimental standards displayed in the upper part of the chapel. As members will be aware British army regiments replaced their colours with different designs over the years and many of the old colours can be found here. It is possible to take photographs of the colours from the entrance to the chapel, lighting is reasonable for digital cameras. An interesting group of colours carried during the Crimean campaign is displayed against and end wall, but unfortunately



too dark to be able to see any details. Many churches and cathedrals serve as the repositories for no longer current regimental colours and it is always worth a look if you are visiting, Southwark Cathedral on the south side of the River Thames also has an interesting display.



Pictures:

Above: Picture from Canterbury Historical and Archaeological website

Left: View of the upper part of the chapel

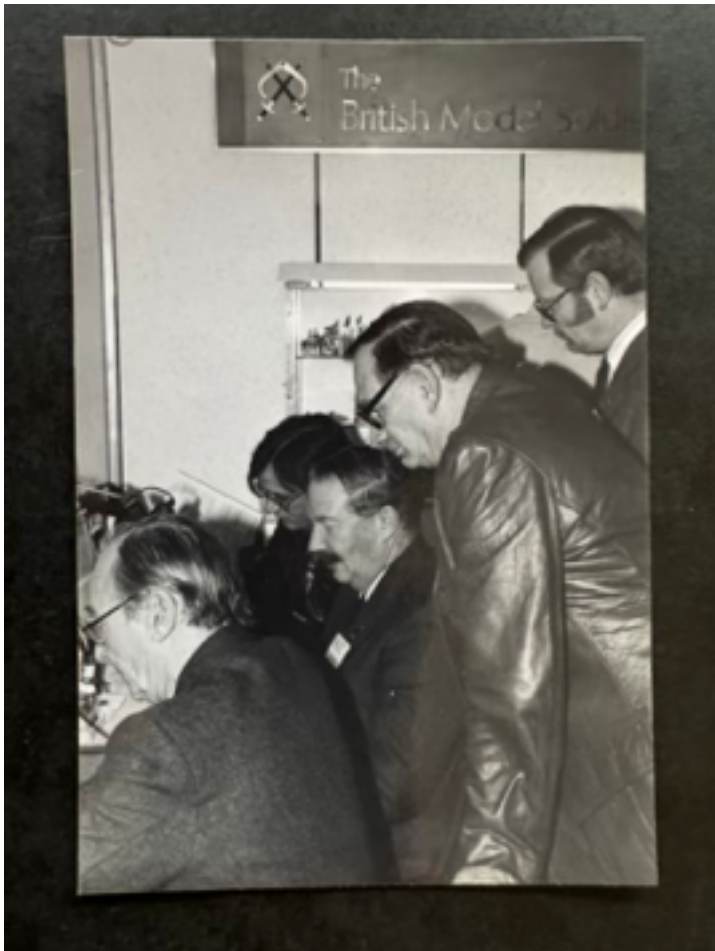
REMEMBER THE MODEL ENGINEERING EXHIBITION?

By the Editor



I am sure many of us remember the Model Engineering Exhibition? Sadly no longer an event in London, although I believe there is an event in Birmingham. I remember going when it was held at Alexandra Palace and also I remember it being held at Sandown Park Racecourse one year. I was given some photos that, I think, go back to the 1970's when the Exhibition was held at Wembley Arena. At the time the BMSS had, a very nice, stand at the Exhibition. I have scanned in three of the black and white photos which are shown here.

Do some members remember those days and recognise anyone in the photos?



BITS AND PIECES

By The Editor

This Bulletin Extra is slightly thinner than usual as I don't have enough articles to fill it. I have plenty of articles, certainly more than enough for the quarterly Bulletin hardcopy. The problem I have for the Bulletin Extra is having shorter articles. Also I have to manage the number of pictures in the articles on the Bulletin Extra as I have to limit the overall file size so that it can be issued by email. Perhaps an option for the future is for the Bulletin Extra to be available to download from an internet transfer service like Wettransfer or even from our website. That would allow the Bulletin Extra to be a larger file size allowing better quality pictures, more of them and longer articles. I would be interested in the members thoughts.

Whether we like it or not we live in a electronic technical age where a significant amount of communication is "on-line". I have significant reservations about platforms such as X (was Twitter) and Facebook. If they are used with respect for other people and are honest then they are of great benefit, but unfortunately that is not always the case. However, they are a large number of Facebook groups dedicated to modelling and they can be interesting and helpful for modelling. The Society has its own Facebook page and I would encourage members to use it. It does allow us to share our thoughts on modelling, show off our models and seek advice. We are all getting older and it does allow us to stay in touch if we can't travel to club meets or shows. You have to create a Facebook account, and join the BMSS Group, but that is not too difficult. Below are instructions on how to do it.

Creating a Facebook account is quite simple! Here are the steps you can follow:

Using a Computer:

1. **Download the Facebook app:** Get the app from the Google Play Store (Android) or App Store (Apple).
2. Open the Facebook app and tap '**Create New Account:**' Follow the prompts to get started.
3. **Enter your details:** Fill in your first name, last name, mobile number or email (I would suggest email), new password, birthday, and gender.
4. After entering your details, click the "**Sign Up**" button.
5. **Verify your account:** Facebook will send a verification code to your email or mobile number. Enter this code to verify your account.
6. **Set up your profile:** Add a profile picture, cover photo, and any other information you'd like to share. (if you so wish, you only enter what you are comfortable with)

Using the Mobile App:

1. **Download the Facebook app:** Get the app from the Google Play Store (Android) or App Store (iPhone/iPad).
2. **Open the Facebook app and tap 'Create New Account':** Follow the prompts to get started.
3. **Enter your details:** Provide your name, birthday, gender, and mobile number or email. (I would suggest email)
4. **Create a password:** Choose a strong password that you'll remember.
5. **Verify your account:** Facebook will send a verification code to your email or mobile number. Enter this code to verify your account.
6. **Set up your profile:** Add a profile picture, cover photo, and any other information you'd like to share. (if you so wish, you only enter what you are comfortable with)

Once your account is set up, you can start adding friends, sharing updates if you wish, and exploring Facebook!

We suggest, if you desire no one else to post on your profile or see your posts, to follow these steps;
When on your facebook homepage,

Click your profile picture in the top right of Facebook. Select Settings & privacy.

Click Settings.

Click Profile and Tagging in the left column.

Next to the setting Who can post on your profile? click Edit to the right. Select an audience (example: Friends or Only me) from the dropdown menu.

This can also be done for all the other options below, if required.

Profile and tagging

Viewing and sharing

Who can post on your profile? Friends

Who can see what others post on your profile? Friends

Hide comments containing certain words from your profile ▼

Allow others to share your posts to their story

If you create a public post, anyone on Facebook can share it to their story. If you tag someone in any post, they can share it to their story. Their story will include your full name and a link to your post, and will be visible for 24 hours. They control who sees it.

Tagging

Who can see posts that you're tagged in on your profile? Friends

When you're tagged in a post, who do you want to add to the audience of the post if they can't already see it? Friends

They'll be able to see these posts in places such as Feed and search.

Joining the BMSS Facebook page;

At the top left of the screen you will see a magnifying glass icon with the words 'Search Facebook'. Click in this field and type British Model Soldier Society
Press enter

By pressing **Join Group** you will be able to join the group, comment on posts and add posts.

Toy Soldiers

I received the following from Renato Forte which I hope is of interest to the Toy Soldier collectors:

I mentioned at last night's zoom meeting that I had come across a couple of online archives which I found of interest - namely:-

Old Toys: The Heyde Archive - **Altes Spielzeug: das Heyde Archiv** - <https://altes-spielzeug.info/>

and

"Old Toy Soldier" Magazine Archive - <https://oldtoysoldier.com/archive/>

The Heyde Archive, as the name suggests, is purely on Heyde Toy Soldiers. To make the most use of it, one has to register. This only takes only a day to have your membership confirmed.

The "Old Toy Soldier" Archive consists of PDFs of all or most of their issues which one can download. It is not only of interest to American readers but also to BMSS members.

Support model soldier shows! Support model soldier traders!

BMSS Diary 2025

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|-------------|---|
| January 17 | Zoom Meeting - Artillery & Transport , 5pm-7pm. All members will automatically be sent a link via email to access the meeting. |
| February 1 | North Surrey Military Modelling Group Show. Banstead Community Hall, Park Road, Banstead, Surrey SM7 3AJ. 10am to 4pm. |
| February 7 | Zoom Meeting, pre AGM. All members will automatically be sent a link via email to access the meeting. |
| February 22 | Annual General Meeting by Zoom. 1pm-5pm All members will automatically be sent a link via email to access the meeting. |
| March 7 | Zoom Meeting, pre Auction. All members will automatically be sent a link via email to access the meeting. |
| March 21 | Auction - St Saviour's Church Hall Pimlico. SW1V 3QW. Details to be confirmed |

"Bulletin" Schedule 2025

| Issue | Copy Date | Publication |
|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Bulletin Extra No.1 | 6th January | Early February |
| Bulletin No.1 | 3rd February | 17th March |
| Buletin Extra No.2 | 7th April | Early May |
| Bulletin No.2 | 6th May | 16th June |
| Bulletin Extra No.3 | 23rd June | End of July |
| Bulletin No.3 | 21st July | 2nd September |
| Bulletin Extra No.4 | 15th September | Mid October |
| Bulletin No.4 | 6th October | 17th November |

BMSS Logo clothing



How to Order: We have set up an arrangement with JANCRAFT for clothing with an embroidered BMSS logo badge, a similar design to the existing letterhead and pin badge shown on the left.

Individual members can contact JANCRAFT for clothing orders – preferably by email so that our contact, Julian, can reply with a cost and payment details. You can also contact him by phone. Members should give the item code* and delivery address with your email contact where possible and a mobile/telephone number.

*All the details of the types of clothing, sizes and colours are shown on JANCRAFT's on-line catalogue. Find it at www.jancraft.com This also includes the code number for each item in the catalogue. Then you need to specify the colour of your choice and the size.

JANCRAFT address is: [3 High Park Avenue, Wollaston, Stourbridge, West Midlands DY8 3NJ](https://www.jancraft.com)

Email address: mail@jancraft.com **Telephone:** 01384 396226.