



The Fusilier Museum

WARWICK

Newsletter | July 2026



Getting Out There! A Month of Community Outreach

June and early July 2026 have been extremely busy for the staff and the volunteers at the museum. June started with our most successful talks event in some time with over 55 attendees coming together at Alderson House on D-Day to hear personal stories about soldiers of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment. A couple of weeks later and we were manning a stall in Warwick Market as part of the Queens Royal Hussars Freedom Parade celebrations. A week on and it was another stall at the Armed Forces Day at the Pump Room Gardens in Leamington. The Saturday after that was another well attended event at Alderson House marking the 110th anniversary of the Somme after a busy fortnight putting a new exhibition of the Somme together. All in all, we are very tired but satisfied! Between all these events we had made a connection with 100s of people doing what the museum does best – to bring the history of the regiment to a public audience. Now, where's that deckchair so I can take a nice nap!

'Voices From Normandy 1944' – A very special day of emotion & recollection

This talks event to mark D-Day was led by Museum volunteer and author of 'Action Rear', Chris Cox, with poignant and memorable contributions from family members of soldiers of the regiment who were at the Normandy landings. The event was supported by members of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment WW2 Reenactors group who displayed kit and uniforms from the period. Feedback from the audience after the event showed that they had been particularly moved by the powerful testimonies of the soldiers recounted by family relations aged between 7 and 80 years old. Our thanks for all involved including Northampton Chambers who sponsored the hire of the room. The event raised a good amount of income to help support the museum charity.

The Somme 1916 Revisited – expert perspectives on this major campaign

A month later and the same excellent venue at Alderson House was host to a talks event marking the 110th anniversary of the outbreak of the Somme offensive. We were delighted to have keynote speaker Professor Gary Sheffield, biographer on General Haig and author on many aspects of the Great War. Gary, Visiting Professor at Kings College London, gave insightful observations about the events of 1916 and their wider significance to the outcome of the First World War. WW1 author and battle tour guide, Alan Reed presented a tour of the Somme heritage trail, pointing out areas of particular interest. The event concluded with a double presentation by Royal Warwickshire Regiment enthusiasts and collectors, Paul Jaques and David Vaux who identified individual soldiers of the 1/8th Battalion who served at the Somme and showed to the audience medals and memorial plaques belonging to some of them. This formed a memorable conclusion to a fascinating day of discovery. Our thanks to our individual sponsor and all the speakers for their contributions which formed a fitting commemoration to the 110th anniversary of the Somme.



The museum's stall at Warwick District's Armed Forces Day 2026



Attendees and WW2 reenactors at the D-Day talks event

Days out in Warwick and Leamington

A market stall at Warwick Market on 20th June and again in Leamington Pump Room Gardens on 27th June, were a great opportunity to promote the museum to the wider community. A shop and raffle also helped to generate a bit of income for the museum charity. A particular highlight of Armed Forces Day was a firing demonstration of historical guns (with blanks) by members of Royal Warwickshire Regiment reenactors group which quickly drew a crowd to that part of the park!

Somme 110 Film Project with Mark Ellis

The museum has been very lucky to gain for free the services of freelance film maker Mark Ellis. The Fusilier Museum Warwick team had previously worked with Mark on a film commission for Leamington History Society exploring the town during WW2 (see [Leamington at War](#)). Mark recently approached the museum with a proposal to do a short video about Somme 110 to develop his skills to create films in a YouTube format. The finished result is about to be launched and will consist of original film footage and images interspersed with comments by Prof. Gary Sheffield and the three volunteer curators on the Somme 110 exhibition. It is fantastic for the museum to have such high-quality digital content that can be used to promote the museum's collections and family research service, so a big thank-you to Mark! View the film [here](#).



Professor Gary Sheffield on the 110th anniversary of the Somme



2026 Programme: July - September

In this issue, we look at the period through the summer holiday to September. These include the recently open Somme 110 exhibition with nearly 130 objects exploring the Somme offensive and the part played by the Royal Warwickshire Regiment and the second in a series of talks events linked to Somme 110, with well-known historians Taff Gillingham and Peter Hart. Heritage Open Week from 11th September till 19th September, includes a free talk about the famous Birkenhead Disaster of 1852 which inspired a generation of Victorians

Big News for the Summer – The Museum will be free to enter!

Following on from the debate outlined in the last issue of the newsletter, the Museum Trustees have agreed to extend our little experiment in free admission to the whole Summer holidays. Make sure to spread the word!

Exhibition: Faces From The Somme - The Royal Warwickshire Regiment in 1916

1st July – 2nd December 2026.

(Admission included in museum ticket).

To mark the 110th anniversary of the Somme Offensive, this exhibition presents individual stories of soldiers of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment displayed through many diary entries, photos and nearly 130 objects.

The exhibition displays the uniform and equipment of rival combatants, the fate of the regiment on 1st July 1916 - the bloodiest day in British Army history - the individual journeys of soldiers and officers who served during the conflict and the aftermath of the Somme. Rather than tell a comprehensive story of the Somme Offensive itself, this exhibition aims to reveal some of the human stories hidden behind the significant injuries and fatalities in the conflict.

Included in the exhibition are special handouts on six lives effected by the Somme. These resources invite visitors to follow the lives of these individuals before, during and after the Somme offensive.

Faces From the Somme: Stories of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment in 1916 | The Fusilier Museum, Warwick



Talks event: Somme Stories – Life on the Frontline 1916

26th September 11am- 3:15pm

The second in our series of talks events marking the 110th anniversary of the Somme offensive, focuses on the lives of soldiers on the frontline during 1916. Former head of the Imperial War Museum Oral History Project and popular author, Peter Hart explores six lives of soldiers who experienced the Somme, Taff Gillingham, WW1 author and cofounder of @GreatWarHuts, a groundbreaking WW1 visitor centre with original barracks, delves into the equipment used by the soldiers at the Somme, and finally, members of the museum team pick up on some of the individual stories of Royal Warwickshire Regimental soldiers who were part of one of the most significant campaigns of the First World War. For more details and to book tickets, go to [Somme Stories - Life On The Frontline 1916 | The Fusilier Museum, Warwick](#)



Faces of the Somme Exhibition



Hébuterne trench at the Somme

Heritage Open Week (HOW)

11th September – 19th September, 10am – 5pm

As part of a celebration of the nation's heritage, the museum is offering some special events and activities over the week of 11th – 19th September.

HOW Family Activities: How to be a WW1 Soldier

11th September – 19th September, 10am – 5pm

During Heritage Open Week, there will be special family activities in the education space at the museum. Related to the museum's temporary exhibition on the Somme, young people will be invited to find out what it was like to be a soldier in the trenches of First World War. These activities are free and suitable for children up to the age of 12 years old.

HOW Talk: The Birkenhead Disaster of 1852

18th September, 1:30pm – 2:30pm

Historian and collector, David Seeney will recount the remarkable tale of the sinking of the Birkenhead as it was completing its journey taking troops and their families to South Africa. On that ship were 60 members of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment. What happened as the vessel was going down became the stuff of folklore and commemoration. In this illustrated talk, David will also be presenting original artefacts connected with the Birkenhead Disaster. The museum also contains original material connected to the sinking as well as a spectacular model of the Birkenhead as the last lifeboat had left. As part of Heritage Open Week, this is a free event which is suitable for all. No booking is required.

For event bookings go to fusiliermuseumwarwick.com
or call us on 01926 258288

Give Way to the Right

by Barclay Lane

Museum volunteer Barclay Lane recounts his experiences on the museum's first official battlefield tour of the Somme in Northern France.

I ordered my passport a few years ago. I can't remember why, but probably for easy identification purposes, and with the vague hope that I might go on a Battlefield Tour one day. Vague because I didn't want to go on one of the familiar, mainstream tours. I wanted more.

Time passed. A trip with a retired Lieutenant Colonel fell through. It remained on my bucket list. Then Jon Davy, Secretary to the Friends of the Fusilier Museum, and retired fast jet pilot with the RAF wandered into the Museum. Did we think the offer of a Battlefield Tour to France for the Museum, and the Friends was a good idea? Attractive rates, an additional experience for the Friends, and a financial boost for the Museum.

I darn near ripped his arm off. And frankly, so should you.

Jon's a tour guide with decades of experience in taking people round Battlefields. What did we want? Ypres, The Somme, Normandy? Spoilt for choice, I advocated for The Somme. And so it was that after volumes of information and preparation Jon, Carol, Graham and I arrived at Peronne, south of the Albert / Bapaume road. Accommodation at a very reasonable price with the lovely Sophie. Very continental. Very French.



Cemetery at Serre



Deborah, Mk IV tank

A whirlwind, five day scout of the battle and much more ensued. Loos, Serre, Albert, Beaumont Hamel, La Boisselle, Mametz, Bazentin-le-Petit, Longueval, Fesquieres west of Cambrai, Thiepval, Beaumetz and more. Famous names, famous places. All the while, reviewing the interventions by the Warwicks. Cemeteries, memorials, tracing the resting places of the fallen, family members and more, museums, and a favourite of mine, the role of tanks.

Jon's knowledge was more than up to the task. A unique feature, he personalised the tour to accommodate our preferences and requirements. He went 'behind the scenes' at the Newfoundland Park, and busted the myth that the antipodeans won the war! It's amazing what a few shell craters can tell you, and he literally mapped the progress of the whole battle.

Little things, I loved 'Le Tommy' café/bar/museum in Pozieres. The artifacts in the 'Historial de la Grand Guerre' were stunning. And the wreck of the Mk IV tank, Deborah, destroyed by German field artillery with the loss of five crew members was sobering. But for me, most of all, the memorial at Thiepval. The names of hundreds of missing Warwicks engraved on tablets across the walls. Oh my...

Are you wondering why this article is entitled 'Give Way to the Right'? I lost count of the number of times we said it. Ignore it, and you live your life in peril. French roads test the unwary.

Jon's going to stage another trip next year. I'm not sure where to just yet, but I know you'll find fun people, enlightening times, and expert commentary. As they say in the North, "Think on..."



Barclay, Carol and Graham at the Péronne Communal Cemetery Extension

Impressions of Thiepval

by Maria Karolak

Work experience placement Maria Karolak recalls visiting the Thiepval Memorial at the Somme.

Many exhibitions and sources of information on the Somme Offensive are characterised by startling statistics of casualties, injuries and great losses. When overwhelmed by the huge casualty and injury details of one of the greatest losses of British Military history, it can be easy to dismiss that these were individual people.

The Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of the Somme stands out in its distinct ability to ground a person, its sombre atmosphere and graven memorial arch covered with over 72,200 names of soldiers and men who lost their lives serving in the Somme posing as a reminder of all the individual tragedies and lives ended in this battle. It is in memorial to missing British and Commonwealth servicemen who died in the Battle of the Somme with no known grave, emphasising the brutality and violence of the battle which left so many men forgotten.



Thiepval Memorial in Somme



Grave of an unknown Royal Warwickshire Regiment soldier

From a personal experience, the memorial grounds were able to teach me to see history from a more compassionate and understanding perspective and served as a reminder that soldiers are equally individual people with families, friends and lives who deserve to be remembered and their stories kept alive. The memorial holds indescribable significance in commemorating individual men who bravely served and importantly preserves their memory as more than a statistic, bringing emphasis to their bravery and highlighting the independent experiences and suffering that every single soldier would have gone through.

Maria was one of four work experience placements with the museum this Spring. Each, did a range of museum work including collections management, research, marketing and learning resource development.