



Looking forward to 2026!

A new edition of the museum newsletter has been a rare beast in 2025. This has been due to changes in the way staff have been working and their priorities of work. In 2026, we would like to go back to a more regular monthly newsletter. To make this work, we will be looking at something more streamlined, although will continue to include an article about some aspect of the museum and its collections. The new version starts with this edition and we hope you approve.



- **Football in the Army:** We worked in partnership with the Football and War Network and Army FA to produce a temporary exhibition about football in the army. This was supported by a series of talks by leading football historians.
- **Remembrance with Myton School:** The Museum presented five assemblies at Myton School to over 1,500 students about the importance of remembrance. The school said that it raised awareness with students of the many different people who fought for freedom in the World Wars. The museum has seen a record number of school visits this year (ten visits and seven assemblies) which it hopes to build on in 2026.
- **Arts Society donation:** The museum received a £1000 grant from the Arts Society (Leamington Spa branch) to improve the storage of uniforms and headwear in the collection. The grant will be used to buy conservation storage boxes and to employ a conservator to do repairs on key items. Thanks to volunteers, the standard of storage and collections documentation has improved dramatically over the last few years and the collections stores have become effective spaces for conservation work, cataloguing and research.



Warwick Mayor Jackie D'arcy (left) visits the Football in the Army exhibition.

A New Look Friends Organisation

The Friends of the Museum organisation is being dissolved in its current format as an independent charity to come under the management of the museum trust.

This will create a more joined up approach between the Friends and the Museum and greater opportunities for funding and development. ≡

Battlefield tours 2026

The museum will be undertaking a new venture in 2026 to help to raise funds for its work. Secretary of the Friends of Museum Jon Davy, an experienced guide and military historian, will be leading six-day tours to France across key sites linked to the Royal Warwickshire Regiment in the First and Second World War.

Details of timing and cost are currently being explored. For those who would like to receive details about these exciting trips when they are confirmed, please contact general.manager@fusiliermuseumwarwick.com.



Exhibitions and Events in 2026

Across 2026, we are presenting a diverse series of exhibitions and associated programmes which reflect different aspects of the regiment and its history.



To help deal with the winter blues, a visually striking arts exhibition – *Following Threads: Exploring Embroidery Work of Victorian Soldiers* – launches in late January, with an accompanying talks programme in partnership with the Embroiderer's Guild UK. This will showcase exquisite embroideries created by members of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment while they resided in India.

After Easter, we have the exhibition *A Day in the Life of a Fusilier*, which will use photographs and original objects to reveal an intimate insight into the personal experiences of soldiers in the British Army today. Launching on 1st July, 110 years to the day the campaign started, *Stories Amongst the Carnage: the Royal Warwickshire Regiment & the Somme* will provide new insight into the bloodiest campaign of the First World War through personal stories of soldiers of the regiment.

The supporting talks programme will include some of the leading UK historians on the subject, Prof. Garry Sheffield, Peter Hart and Taff Gillingham. The Friends of Museum will receive a 20% discount on all events. To book tickets go to <https://fusiliermuseumwarwick.com> (please note that the events programme will go online at the beginning of December.)



A New Look Friends Organisation (cont.)

In 2026, the management of the Friends of the Museum will fall under the Museum organisation. Current and new members will continue to enjoy discounts on events and free admission into the museum.

However, there will also be several themed social events exclusive to Friends in the year and priority ticket booking on events, including our new battlefield tours launching in 2026.

More details will be sent out to members on this in the New Year when we will also be updating the Friends section of the museum website.

A.A. Milne and the Royal Warwickshire Regiment

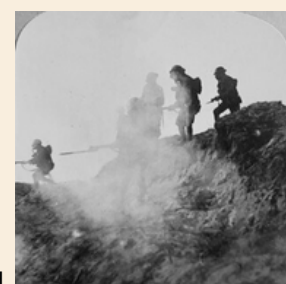
by Anne Morton

On the 100th anniversary of the publication of *Winnie-the-Pooh*, Museum Volunteer Anne Morton explores the WW1 career of A.A. Milne as a Lieutenant in the Royal Warwickshire Regiment.

Alan Alexander Milne (1882 – 1956) was an English writer famous today for his creation of Winnie-the-Pooh. Yet until the bear's first adventures were collected and published in 1926's *Winnie-the-Pooh*, a children's book which brought him immense critical and commercial success, Milne was probably best known as a playwright.

Born in Kilburn, London, Milne grew up in the Henley House School run by his father. He later attended Westminster School and then Cambridge, where he wrote for and edited *Granta*, graduating in 1903 with a BA in Mathematics. After university, Milne continued to write, contributing to the satirical magazine *Punch* and later becoming its assistant editor. A pacifist before 1914, Milne responded to Kitchener's call for volunteers because, as he later wrote, "...this (I thought with other fools) was a war to end war." He was commissioned in the 4th battalion of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment in February 1915. Stationed at Golden Hill, Isle of Wight, Milne wrote in his autobiography that "through a variety of accidents I became a Signalling Officer" – a role involving the construction of means of communication, such as telephone wires.

After some weeks of training at the Southern Command Signalling School, Milne thought he "...really knew something about it, with the result that I was kept at home as an Instructor..." Milne had just finished writing his first play, *Wurzel-Flummery*, when he was attached to the 11th battalion RWR and sent to France for the Somme offensive on 20th July 1916. The battalion already had a Signals Officer (S.O.), but it was anticipated that by working with him, Milne would gain valuable practical knowledge of the theory he'd been teaching. Milne's unit was to take part in the attack at 12am on 12th August 1916. On 10th August, while running out a communication line (telephone wire), S.O. Harrison was seriously injured by a 'whizz-bang' (a light shell fired from a smaller calibre field gun) so Milne had to take over as S.O.



At 4am on 11th August, Milne and his team carefully put down a line in a ladder formation to withstand sabotage. Yet the Germans pre-empted the Allied bombardment with one of their own. Almost immediately the line went down, and H.Q. became isolated. Rapidly learning on the job, Milne, with his team, were sent out to run another line: "...no laddering now, no textbook stuff, it was just dropped anywhere."

On 12th August 1916, behind an Allied barrage, Milne's infantry platoon left the front-line trenches to attack. As the barrage lifted and the platoon advanced, they came under intense German machine gun fire. None of Milne's men got to within 20 yards of the German trenches. Of the 11th battalion, around 60 were killed and over 100 wounded. Of the five officers who led the attack, three were killed and two severely wounded. After this action, they had a quieter week at the town of Loos before travelling southwest to Doullens for a week's rest.

It was here one warm November day, while walking between communications stations to see how messages were getting through, that Milne's legs became heavy. The distance between stations seemed more like miles instead of a few hundred yards. At lunch time, he fell asleep in H.Q. and the next morning had a temperature of 103F (39.4C). An ambulance was called to take him to a Casualty Clearing Station, by which time his temperature had risen to a dangerous 105F (40.5C). Ten days later, Milne was in Southampton and transferred to a hospital in Oxford. After Christmas he rejoined the Regiment on the Isle of Wight and then transferred to Fort Southwick. A signalling school was to be set up and divided into four Companies. Milne oversaw one of these. Although only 35, Milne found he tired easily. His wife, Daphne, persuaded him to see the Medical Officer, who sent Milne to Corsham military hospital, following which he spent six weeks convalescing at Osborne. Following a succession of Medical Boards and their recommendation of 'sedentary work', he was kept on Home Service and given a job in the War Office, in Intelligence, writing propaganda. In Milne's words, "It was the only work for which I was medically fit."

It would be some time before the cause of Milne's high fever, and its debilitating effects on him, would be understood. Called 'trench fever' by the troops, this name would subsequently be adopted by the medical profession. How they discovered the causal organism of this disease which affected between 350,000 and 500,000 Allied troops is a fascinating story... and one to be told in a future newsletter.

