

THE BRIDGE

Produced by Elmore Parish Council
February 2020 Issue Twenty-Three



From the Editor

It never ceases to amaze me how the material for **The Bridge** comes together. Only a few days ago I was thinking that the 23rd Issue would be a bit thin but now I am wondering how I am going to fit everything in, so I am going to keep this bit as short as possible. Suffice to say that this issue is concerned mainly with some of the oldest Elmore families: the Watts and the Camms. Sadly we lost two members of the Camm family in 2019, cousins Jim and John both of whom farmed in Elmore. Also John Field continues with his accounts of local men who fought in the WW1 and survived, this time two members of the Watts family. Read on.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir,

Many of us are or are about to be connected to the Gigaclear fibre optic high speed broadband service to the house. I was connected in the middle of December 2019 and so far so good. I have now connected to the Vonage voip service which enables me to use the fibre cable service for telephone calls without the need for the BT old wire system. My connection to Vonage retaining my old BT number was easy and very efficient with excellent progress updates from Vonage. The connection was made ahead of the target connection date.

We did have a couple of power outages in December so we lost the broadband service and thus telephone. I did have back up with my mobile phone.

The combined service of fast broadband and telephone so far costs me about £5 more per month than the painfully slow landline package. All of this would not have happened without the continued pressure from Elmore Parish Council and in particular Chairman John Field. It has been a slow and frustrating process since the failed promises made by the regional Director of BT to provide a faster service throughout

Elmore at the public meeting held in Elmore Village Hall nearly six years ago. It was most frustrating when Longney benefited from these BT promises while Elmore had to continue with the existing copper wire system.

I want to use **The Bridge** to thank Elmore Parish Council for providing the continued pressure to get high speed fibre broadband to each house in Elmore.

I hope all residents in Elmore will express their thanks to our Parish Council.

Could I now ask the Parish Council to apply pressure on the mobile service providers as we are in an extremely poor service area throughout our village.

Colin Ellis, Farleys End.

John Robert Camm

1942 - 2019

John was born on 18th February 1942 at the District Nurse Home, Clarence Street, Gloucester, to Barbara and Harry Camm. Apparently it was a very cold day when he came home and his aunts made sure all the fires were burning in the house so it was warm enough when he got there.

At that time Harry and Barbara Camm lived at Bridgmacote and John lived there for his first 18 months until the family moved to Elmore Farm where John stayed for the rest of his life until he was moved to a nursing home for the last two years.

Harry and Barbara had a daughter, and so John a sister, Sue, who married Richard Merrett and lived at Packthorne Farm, Whitminster. Sue had a son, George.

Unfortunately John's father died in 1955 when John was only 13 years old. His mother carried on the farm and John farmed with his mother until she died in 1997. John then lived on his own until 2017 when he moved to Chestnut Court. John loved farming and always enjoyed a day at Gloucester Market catching up on the local gossip.

John Cutter

Editor's note This reference to John's enjoyment of local gossip stirred many memories for me and my family. We bought Rose Cottage in 1981 when we were living in Stonehouse in accommodation provided

by my employer, so only came to Elmore on occasional weekends and in the holidays. During these times a trip to Elmore Farm became very much part of our enjoyment of the village and the childhood memories of our children especially going into the old cobwebby shed where John stored the eggs, potatoes and honey he had for sale. It is part of our family lore that John always seemed to know more about us than we did. THJ

Jim Camm

21st July 1943 – 8th November 2019

This is the script of the Eulogy given by Jim's daughters Liz and Emma at his Memorial service in Elmore Church

We will all remember Jim as a bit of a character. He was someone who could lean on a gate for hours chewing the cud. He always loved a good story, so here is a little of Jim's own story.

He was born on the 21st of July 1943 at 'The Shop' in Elmore. His mum and dad, Ivy and Bill, named him James Charles. When he was 6, his brother Christopher George came along. Together they lived at Weir Farm, Elmore.

The farm at that time was a traditional mixed farm, with “a bit of everything” going on. Growing up, Jim was given his first job at the age of 3, collecting eggs. By the time he was 14, he was working on the farm full-time. The farm gradually became mainly dairy, and this was probably a good thing because Jim always said that sheep only had two ambitions in life – either to escape or die. He moved to Hollow Farm in 1968 when he married, and he had two children, but sadly his marriage ended some years later. Jim always worked very hard on the farm, and he kept the farm neat, tidy and well organised.

As a youngster Jim was interested in many things, but in particular he had a very keen interest in the world, he even got a First in Geography when he was at Quedgeley Secondary School. His desire to see the world was one of the many things that he shared in common with his partner Di. He had met Di at a Riding Club dinner and dance. He loved to tell the story of how he had seen her there and asked her to dance. The fact that Di loved baking and Jim loved eating cake helped things along.

Together Jim and Di trotted around the globe. They went to many far flung and exotic places, and they planned each trip in fine detail, even spending months learning how to eat with chopsticks before they went to China. Jim was fascinated with how people around the world lived, he was very interested in the different farming methods, and he would love to try all of the local delicacies, no matter how revolting they looked.

When travelling, Jim would send lots of postcards, even to his favourite pub, the Anchor at Epney. He loved sending postcards and letters, and he did a lot of writing in general. He was always making lists, writing memos, and he kept a very detailed diary every day. He was a prolific letter writer, as many people will remember. He even had a letter published in a national magazine once. The magazine was the Farmer's Weekly. And the letter was bemoaning DEFRA. Jim always found it amusing to refer to DEFRA as The Department for the 'Eradication of Farming and Rural Affairs'.

Another thing that Jim really enjoyed was driving. His first car was a Singer Chamois. He was quietly proud to be an advanced driver. It was important to him that his daughters learned to drive too. From an early age they would sit on his lap whilst doing the steering wheel and the gear stick, going up and down the farm lane.

Despite Jim's driving skills, he did have one memorable accident when he was working on the hill at the back of the farm. He would tell the story of how the grass was long and it started to rain. The grass got slippery, and so did the tractor. The tractor decided to see what it was like to roll sideways once or twice. The story always ended with him declaring "and I hung on tight and prayed to the NFU!"

Jim had a dry sense of humour, and he liked good clean fun. The Elmore Village Players was right up his street. Every year he would organise tickets for "the gang" to go and join in with the heckling.

In 2007 the brothers sold the farm, and Jim retired. He was very glad that Hollow Farm had gone to a local lass, but he was also very glad to

be able to take life at his own pace at last. Jim and Di moved to the nearby village of Moreton Valence.

In the past, his family had always given Jim the nickname of 'Gnome', because he often wore a woolly Gnome hat, and he was always outside doing something. This didn't change with retirement, he carried on being a Gnome. There was a big garden to mow, a field to keep on top of, and fruit trees to prune. He found a new hobby of growing garden plants and flowers from seed which he really enjoyed doing, and the greenhouse was always the first place to look for him.

When Jim was diagnosed with Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma in 2010, he didn't feel sorry for himself, and he didn't really let on to people how poorly he was. Like other brave people living with this type of diagnosis, and with a bit of Gloster Farmer grit and determination thrown in, he kept on doing as much as he could.

Jim moved to Moreton Hill Care Centre in 2018. He took to life there like a duck to water, and he enjoyed the unlimited supply of cake on offer. Di moved to Moreton Hill in 2019 and at the time he said that he couldn't think of anything better than to be joined by his 'Twinkle-toes'.

On the 8th November 2019, Jim passed away. Peacefully in his sleep, he moved on to his next chapter. So, it's time to say "see you anon Jim" - we wish you happiness and contentment'.

From the Parish Council

Elmore's Contribution to Offset Global Warming?

It has been suggested that we could make a small contribution to offset the effects of global warming by planting some trees in Elmore. If you feel you have the space, as well as the necessary energy, to plant a tree in your garden then the Parish Council would be prepared to offer you a tree for that purpose as part of a community project. The type and number of trees has yet to be determined but if you are interested then please get in contact with The Clerk at: elmore.parish@hotmail.co.uk

Local Elections on 7th May 2020

In previous editions of this magazine we have made reference to the fact that all the Parish Councillor seats are due to be contested in the local election this year which is due to take place on Thursday 7th May.

There are 5 Councillor's seats available – if only the current incumbents stand for re-election and are the seats are not contested then they will be 'deemed elected'. If there are more than 5 candidates then an election will be held alongside the Stroud District Council (SDC) and Police and Crime Commissioner Elections.

If you are interested in becoming a Parish Councillor then Nomination Papers can be obtained from The Clerk from 11th February onwards and these must then be submitted to SDC by hand after 24th March and before 4pm on 8th April when nominations close.

Postal Votes: You are reminded that if you wish to vote but will not be here on 7th May or feel you cannot make it in person to the Polling Station in the Village Hall, then you can apply for a postal vote. The deadline for postal vote applications is 22nd April.

Hickory Dickory Dock

If the nursery rhyme, Little Jack Horner, provided little plot for last year's show, Hickory Dickory Dock seemed to provide even less, but this did not deter, Norman Robbins, who wrote the script for The Village Players' most recent panto. There was a time when pantos had a hero and a villain; nowadays it seems this is not enough so HDD sported The Wizard of Bong (Jake Gibson), The Sprite (Stella Gennard), The Black Imp (Megan Voyce) and a troupe of pixies. Faced with this lot, our hero, blandly called 'David' (Shauna Williams) had his hands full but was ably assisted by Fairy Queen Snowdrift (Amy Parkin) and even, for reasons it was difficult to fathom (sorry), King Neptune (Paul Gennard) and some mermaids. So, in the end, of course, the baddies were vanquished and all lived happily ever after.

For the second year running it was good to see the Elmore panto relying heavily on the younger members of The Players. Shauna Williams as David, made a good Principle Boy whilst Mary Foxtrot, his love interest, was ably played by Charlotte Roberts. Charlotte has a surprisingly mature singing voice which was well displayed especially in her solo number. Meanwhile Players stalwart, Sarah Younger, as Dame Foxtrot, was suitably gorgeous in her many extravagant outfits. Every panto needs a couple of gormless henchmen and these (Slap and Tickle) were ably played by Tom Gennard and Nick Phillips. Megan Voice was splendidly costumed as The Black Imp and made some dramatic entrances. It is nice that we are now told at the beginning of the show which of the troupes of youngsters (this year either the Ticks or the Tocks) were performing.

This was an enjoyable panto and Rachael Chamberlayne and Joanne Fisher are to be congratulated on their imaginative directing. The costumes were once again of the highest order and the set (designed and built by Colin Ellis and Paul Tucker) made the very best use of the restricted space available especially as a clock large enough to admit cast members had to be brought on and off the set. Lighting, FX, music and choreography also played a part in this impressive show.

Not often in these pages have the set designers had more than a passing mention but this year the 'Oscar' goes to Colin Ellis and Paul Tucker for their splendid work on a complicated set.

From a Churchwarden of Elmore

Although it now seems quite a while ago I just want to say thank you to everyone who attended the Nine Lessons and Carols service at Elmore on 15th December. For those who weren't there, if you haven't already heard from others, the church was without power throughout the evening. However, due to the expertise of certain people (they know who they are) the organ was converted to *people power* for the evening - with strong armed volunteers from the congregation pumping hard. As it was always the intention to hold the service in candlelight we were able to continue as planned. It was a joyful occasion, our choir excelled themselves and I've received much positive feedback.

So we begin this new year still '*in vacancy*'. As reported in the previous issue of 'The Bridge', the Diocese is starting another recruitment

procedure this month. The vacant post will be advertised in the Church Times on the Fridays of 17th and 24th January (and possibly on 31st January also). Interviews are set for 27th February. We of course hope there will be applicants and that among them, someone who our representatives (see last issue for names) will agree is the right one for us.

Dates for your diaries:

Good Friday 10th April. Fauré's Requiem will be sung by Elmore and Longney Church Choir in Elmore Church 6.30pm

Elmore is also to launch its first Music Festival on Friday 7th - Sunday 9th August.

Enjoy a weekend of events at Elmore Church.

Highlights to include music, solo Bach by candlelight, coffee morning organ recital. Also, talks by local personalities and bell ringing demonstrations.

The weekend will culminate in a large choral event.

More detail will be given in the next issue of **The Bridge**.

Patricia (Pat) Buckland - Benefice Reader and Churchwarden at Elmore

Church Services for Elmore

Unless otherwise publicised the regular service pattern is:

1st and 3rd Sunday of the month – Parish Eucharist at Elmore 9.30am

2nd and 4th Sunday of the month – Evensong at Elmore 4.00pm

5th Sunday of the month – No service at Elmore

Elmore Baptisms, Weddings & Funerals

Baptisms - None to report Weddings - None to report

Funerals, Burials & Internment of Ashes

27th November - Memorial Service for James Charles (Jim) Camm

30th November - Internment of Ashes of James Charles (Jim) Camm

Notable Services in February, March & April

Ash Wednesday, February 26th - 9.30am at Longney
Holy Communion & Ashing

Sunday, March 15th - Lent 3
Elmore Short Eucharist and Annual Meeting 9.30am

Sunday, March 22nd - Mothering Sunday
Longney 'Storyteller' Eucharist 9.30am

Sunday, April 5th - Palm Sunday - Elmore Eucharist 9.30am

Sunday, 12th April - Easter Sunday - Longney 9.30am

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Baptism (Christening) or Weddings: Church Office 01452 720015

Our Website: www.elmorechurch.info Facebook: @ElmoreParishChurch

Church email address: church-office@gmx.com

Elmore WI

Happy New Year to Members old and new

We meet in the Village Hall on 2nd Tuesday in the month Time 7.30

Visitors welcome. Supper provided

Our upcoming talks are:

February 11th: the work of S.A.R.A (Severn Area Rescue)

March 10th: Suffragettes and Votes for women.

April 14th : Work of Sue Ryder Hospice.

Our annual Coffee Morning and Plant sale will be held on 23rd May
10am.

WI Recipe

Simple but tasty recipe for no crust broccoli quiche

Parboil Broccoli and cauliflower. Empty into oven proof dish. Sprinkle
with grated cheese

Cover with mixture of beaten eggs and milk.

Oven cook for approx. 35 mins until golden brown.

Recipes Please

I am told that the WI will not be providing any more recipes. If, like me, you have enjoyed making the dishes and have favourite recipes you would like to share through publication in **The Bridge**, please send them to the editor at rosecottage1818@gmail.com. THJ

Village Hall News

Happy New Year!

This year will see more refurbishment and upgrades (to be decided), including final improvements to Hall electrics.

Our Christmas Lunch was very well attended, raising a record £2038 for Hall funds. A most enjoyable and sociable event. Special thanks to Ann Littleton and her team, also to all involved with providing food, raffle prizes, together with logistic support on the day.

The Committee agreed to take a break from fundraising for this year. Demand for space in our Hall is steadily increasing, consequently, early bookings (or enquiries) are advisable. I look forward to hearing from you - 01452 721798 or pikelett@hotmail.com.

Many thanks to all users and supporters of the Hall.

John (Hardisty), Chairman

Walking for Health

The next walk in the area will take place on **Wednesday 5th February** starting from **Whitminster Village Hall**. Meet at 9.45am for a 10am start.

As ever, the walk can include stiles and muddy field paths, will be approximately 2-3 miles in length and should take a maximum of 1.5 hours.

Walks in the new year will take place on Thursday 12th March, Tuesday April 14th and Wednesday 6th May.

For more information, please call Nick on 01452 740265 or Keith on 07811 123700 or alternatively email Nick on nandanailsworth@yahoo.co.uk or Keith on kparry61@icloud.com



Citizen's Advice Stroud and Cotswolds – Winter Heating Payments

With Winter, heating our homes becomes ever more a constant worry for many of those in our communities. In order to help with some of the energy costs, the government allow a Winter Fuel Payment to every household with someone born before 5th April 1954 living there. The payments are tax free, not means-tested and paid to anyone who satisfies the criteria, irrespective of whether they work or not.

Winter Fuel Payments are paid automatically to those who qualify between November and December by The Department for Work and Pensions; all payments are usually by 13th January the following year. If you think you are entitled to a payment and you do not receive one, then contact the DWP before 31st March 2020.

Cold Weather Payments are another form of government help with energy costs for those household living on low incomes. Payments are only paid to certain means-tested benefits claimants when the average temperature of zero degrees or below lasts for seven consecutive days in any period from 1st November to 31st March. The Payments of £25 for any qualifying period are triggered automatically by The Department for Work and Pensions.

If you would like any further information about these issues or any other matter please contact Citizens Advice on confidential freephone-0808 800 0510.

Over this last year we have been celebrating 60 years in Stroud: Can you help us find 60 new donors for your local charity? An annual pledge of £5 per month can make a real difference. Please phone us on Freephone 0808 800 0510 for the necessary forms. Thank you.

The Patients Participation Group

(Frampton Surgery)

Do you need more support?

If you suffer - or care for someone - with a life-limiting illness, you can turn to the local charity Longfield Community Hospice Care.

Longfield offers a range of services to help people live well with their illness, enable them to die at home (if they choose) and support people who have been bereaved.

These services are all *free of charge* and include complementary therapy, counselling and bereavement support, day therapy, carers' services, positive caring courses, as well as a range of wellbeing workshops.

Please call 01453 886868 or take a look at www.longfield.org.uk

"A place of hope, help and laughter ..."

Private William Ray Watts (1892-1959)

William Ray Watts was born in Elmore on 24th March 1892 and was the eldest son of William Watts (1867-1937) and Mary Elizabeth Green (1886-1933). The 1911 Census shows that the family was living in The Weir on Weir Lane and there were 10 children in the family and by this time William was 19 and helping on the farm.

William had already joined the Army Reserve prior to WW1 and was serving with 2nd/1st Royal Gloucester Hussars (Yeomanry) (Army Number: 2780) and at the outbreak of WW1 he was aged 22 and was transferred to 1st/5th Gloucestershire Regiment and given a new Army Number: 242309.

The 1st/5th Battalion, The Gloucestershire Regiment was formed in Gloucester in August 1914. The unit moved on mobilisation to The Isle of Wight but thence to Swindon but very quickly on to Maldon in Essex, arriving there by the end of August 1914. As they were a

originally a Territorial unit they had to undergo a bit of refresher training so throughout the winter of 1914 this is what they did. On 29th March 1915 they embarked at Folkstone bound for France, landing in Boulogne.

However, in a letter home in September of 1915, William Watts told his family that he was still in England quartered 'near the East coast' and seemed to having a good time participating in the regimental sports, coming 2nd in the half mile, and 'nearly won' both the 100 yds and hurdles races!

Meanwhile, on 15th May 1915 William's unit had become part of the 145th Brigade, 48th (South Midland) Division which had concentrated near Cassel having marched the 48 miles from Boulogne. (Cassel is 20 miles south of Dunkirk and 5 miles from the Belgium border). This area of The Somme was quiet during the winter of 1915 on both the Allied and German sides of the line as troops fortified their positions and carried out training. It is unclear whether 1st/ 5th deployed with the remainder of the Division or whether the units were sent over to France separately.

Whatever the case, it would appear that Private William Watts didn't deploy with the remainder of the Division as he sent another letter home in May of 1916 telling his family that he was on the rifle ranges in Kent. Indeed, he then came home on leave and on 8th June 1916 he was the best man at his sister, Ethel May's wedding to Bombadier George Bates in Elmore Church. It would further appear that he was still serving with The Royal Gloucester Hussars (Yeomanry) as every reference to him in the Elmore Church magazine stated he was part of RGHY. After his short leave he would then have re-joined his unit and deployed to France with them; this was confirmed by a further letter home at the end of June which told his family that he was 'somewhere in France'. William Watts was referred to in the Elmore Church Newsletter as 'Shoeing-Smith' William Watts; a 'Shoeing-Smith' during WW1, as the name might imply, was a farrier responsible for the shoeing of the many horses in his unit – this would make sense as the 'Hussars' were a mounted unit.

It wasn't until that spring of 1916 that more intensive fighting took place. The first major battle was The Battle of the Somme, which started on 1st July 1916 and 1st/5th Battalion, The Gloucestershire Regiment were involved in this first major offensive on the Somme. This was to be a large-scale Allied offensive against the German Front Line astride the Somme River. The British Army attacked north of the river, the French Army attacked south of the river. The battles lasted for a gruelling four months and were carried out in several phases with many thousands of casualties on both sides of the wire.

The start of the battle was preceded by a week-long artillery barrage but the question that remained was whether the British infantry could cross no-man's-land before the barrage lifted. It was a race with death run by nearly 60,000 troops. The whole Allied force, made up of closely packed waves of men, was to be launched together, without determining whether the bombardment had really paralyzed the resistance or damaged the German defences. Under the Fourth Army's instructions, those waves were to advance at 'a steady pace' symmetrically aligned, like rows of ninepins ready to be knocked over. The necessity of crossing no-man's-land at a good pace, so as to reach the parapet before the enemy could reach it, was not mentioned. Yet to do so would have been physically impossible, for the infantryman was so heavily laden that he could not move faster than a slow walk. Each man carried about 66 pounds (30 kg) of equipment, a load that often amounted to more than half the soldier's own body weight, which made it difficult to get out of a trench, impossible to move much quicker than a slow walk, or to rise and lie down quickly, never mind getting up again should he slip in the mud. The whole advance was further hampered by the conditions underfoot with thick mud and many shell holes. Consequently, withering German machine gun fire cut down the lines of slow walking and exposed troops. This resulted in 20,000 men being killed in action on that first day of this battle!

The 1st/5th Battalion, The Gloucestershire Regiment was also involved in the Battle of Pozières (23rd July – 3rd September). Although this attack was classed as a victory the aftermath was less so as it became the focus of German efforts to regain the ground they had lost. In the

fighting around Pozières the 48th Division suffered 2,844 casualties from 16th – 28th July and 2,505 more from 13th August. The 1st Australian Division lost 7,700 men, the 2nd Australian Division had 8,100 casualties and the 4th Australian Division lost 7,100 men.

The 1st/5th Battalion The Gloucesters again saw action in 1917 during the Third Battle of Ypres which lasted from 21st July until 3rd November; this battle included the well known Battles of Passchendaele. During the Passchendaele battles the three battalions of the 'Gloucesters' that were involved suffered a total 1,186 casualties.

At some stage during August 1917, William Watts was evacuated from the front line with trench foot and was in a convalescent home but by the middle of September he had re-joined his unit. The 1st/5th Battalion hardly had time to draw a breath before they were shipped off to Northern Italy with the remainder of their Division in order to bolster the defence against the Austrians in that sector. It fought on the Asiago Plateau (15–16 June 1918) and the Battle of Vittorio Veneto. The Elmore Church Newsletter was being sent to those soldiers overseas (who had paid their subscription!) as 'Shoeing-Smith' William Watts was reported in the Church Newsletter as enjoying the news from home whilst in Italy.

By October of 1918 William's unit had returned to France. In January of 1919, 'Shoeing-Smith' William Watts came home on leave but returned to France. At some stage during that year he was discharged from the Army and came home to Elmore. Indeed, some of the Elmore soldiers, particularly those in far-away places, didn't return home until the end of 1919.

William Ray Watts married Violet Marion Newman (1893-1974) on 30th April 1924 in Elmore Church – at that stage William was aged 32 and Violet was aged 31; she was a teacher living in Ivy House in Elmore. After they married they lived firstly in the village of Cowhill near Thornbury but by the early 1950s they were living at Middle Street Farm in Eastington.

William Watts died on 31st March 1959 aged 66 and his wife, Violet, died on 2nd June 1974 aged 81 and at that time she was living at 19 Osbourne Avenue in Tuffley.

William was the elder brother of Frederick Watts and Horace Watts, both of whom fought in the Great War and survived. He was Michael Watts' uncle and although born in Elmore, after his marriage he didn't live in Elmore. Although he had many family ties to the village.

Private Frederick Elias Watts (1896 - 1950)

Frederick (Fred) Watts was born on 17th November 1896 in Elmore. He was the son of William Watts (1867-1937) and Mary Elizabeth Green (1868-1933). The 1911 Census shows that there were 10 children in the family and Fred, aged 14, was already working on the farm; at that time the family lived at The Weir in Elmore.

Fred Watts was aged 18 at the outbreak of WW1 - he initially joined the 10th (Service) Battalion, The Gloucestershire Regiment and allocated the Army number 25066.

The 10th Battalion was formed at Bristol in September of 1914 as part of Kitchener's New Army and attached as Army Troops to 26th Division. The unit moved from Bristol to Salisbury Plain but by November 1914 was in billets back in Cheltenham. They returned to Salisbury Plain in April of 1915 and in the summer of 1915 the unit was mobilised for war and sent to France, landing there on 8th August.

On 17th August 1915, 10th Battalion, The Gloucestershire Regiment was transferred to 1st Brigade in the British 1st Division. The first major engagement for the Battalion was during the Battle of Loos (25th September – 28th October), during this period the Allies suffered over 56,000 casualties. The winter of 1915 was a muddy affair and not many engagements took place as large-scale movement of troops was almost impossible.

Not much is recorded about the activities of 10th Battalion, The

Gloucestershire Regiment during the early part of 1916 but their first major battle of that year was The Battle of Albert (1st - 13th July 1916). The plan was to capture the German line along a 14-mile frontage so an artillery barrage started seven days prior to the attack but actually left most of the German defences intact. The first day of the offensive was the most disastrous one recorded to date for the British, with some 57,000 casualties in that very first day which amounted to 40% of the total strength of all those units involved.

One would assume that the units would be given some time to recover and regroup but this was not to be the case as 10th Battalion was committed to the Battle of Bazentine Ridge on 14th July; the relative ease with which the British achieved their objective during this battle was not reflected in the casualty figures which amounted to 9,100 on that day. The Battle of Bazentine Ridge was the start of the Second Battle of the Somme and seemed to merge with the many others that followed. The Battle of Pozieres which was another slog in the mud lasting from 16th July to 3rd September. Although this battle was somewhat of a success, once again the Allied success also came with a hefty price tag of casualties. The Australian 4th Division led the assault and suffered 2,844 casualties from 26th – 28th July and a further 2,500 between 13th August and 3rd September.

The Battle of Flers-Courcelette began on 15th September 1916 and ended on 22nd. The Anglo-French attack of 15th September began the third period of the Battle of the Somme but by its conclusion on 22nd September, the strategic objective of a decisive victory, had not been achieved. The infliction of many casualties on the German front divisions and the capture of the villages of Courcelette, Martinpuich and Flers had been a considerable tactical victory but the German defensive success on the British right flank, made exploitation and the use of cavalry impossible. Tanks were used in battle for the first time in history and the Canadian Corps and the New Zealand Division fought for the first time on the Somme.

Arrangements were begun immediately after Flers-Courcelette to follow up the tactical success which, after supply and weather delays, began on

25th September at the Battle of Morval. The village of Morval as well as several others were captured in what would appear to be a victory but 5,000 allied casualties tells another story as it brought the total casualties for the Allies during September of 1916 to 135,000!

Fred Watts was wounded in the leg on 3rd October 1916. However, the records don't show that his unit was involved in any particular battle at that time so it is highly likely that he received a piece of shrapnel in his leg during one of the many artillery bombardments on the British trenches.

After convalescence Fred was posted to 1st/4th Battalion, The Gloucestershire Regiment; which at that time was part of 144th Brigade in 48th (South Midland) Division. So he was now in the same Division as his brother William.

From March until November 1917, 1st/4th Battalion was involved in the Third Battle of Ypres which involved the following main offensives and caused the German Retreat to the Hindenburg Line; engagements included: The Battle of Langemarck, The Battle of Polygon Wood, The Battle of Broodseinde and The Battle of Poelcapelle.

In November 1917 the whole of 48th Division was transferred to northern Italy to strengthen the resistance in that sector and was engaged in various actions including; The fighting on the Asiago Plateau and The Battle of the Vittoria Veneto.

By the 4th November 1918 the 1st/4th Battalion had advanced into Austria and had reached at Baselge de Pine, north east of Trenk in central Austria and the war ended while they were there.

Fred Watts was discharged at the end of the war and returned home to The Weir in Elmore where he continued to farm with his father, William. On 28th April 1929 Fred married Elsie Mary Smith (1907-1998) in Haresfield and they had 3 children, Douglas (b. 1930), Jean Elizabeth (1933-1993) and Frederick Michael (b.1941).

In 1929, the same year that he was married, Fred Watts moved into Elm Farm where he continued as a farmer until he died on 17th March 1950 aged 54. His eldest son, Douglas took over the running of Elm Farm aged 20, his second son (Frederick Michael (Mike Watts) was only aged 9 at this point. Fred's widow, Elsie, moved at some stage into 'Leightons' next door to Elm Farm and lived for a further 48 years and died aged 91 in 1998.

1st Elmore Guides

Over the past term 1st Elmore Guides have been busy doing lots of activities. We have been to the Body Shop in Gloucester where we had indulgent hand massages, make overs and a shopping spree. We held our Christmas Party at Cattle Country with 1st Elmore Brownies. The Guides have also participated in team games and achieved the Girl Guiding Explore Level 4 Skills Builder. The Patrol Leader and Patrol Seconds organised a great evening of Christmas crafts and games. This past term has been fun, and we are all looking forward to our next term where we will be celebrating Fairtrade Fortnight, World Thinking Day, International Women's Day and much more.

If your daughter is interested in joining Guides please call Catherine on (01452) 678181 or Louise 07936192104.

1st Elmore Rangers (formally 1st Elmore Senior Section)

Over the last term 1st Elmore Rangers have done an array of activities. We created Christmas decorations at HobbyCraft in Gloucester (there was a lot of glitter involved). As part of the Girl Guiding Future Girl badge we made beeswax 'cling film' - the wraps we made are reusable and reduce our use of plastic. Along with this we also made some no-bake cookie cake pops for Gratitude Week. The girls also had a popcorn and movie night. We finished off the term with ice skating at Gloucester Quays. We are looking forward to seeing what ideas the unit has for the next term.

If your daughter is interested in joining Rangers please call Catherine on (01452) 678181 or Louise 07936192104.

1st Elmore Brownies:

This term we start with making bird feeders to hang in our gardens, then for Burns night we are designing our own individual tartan. We are continuing with our Unit Activity Challenges to complete two of the themed badges we have been working on over the last couple of terms. For Thinking Day we are sending postcards to Cyprus to link with our Cypriot Brownie friends. We are making pancakes, Easter cakes and Easter craft. We are holding a night for each Brownie to bring a friend where we will have various activities for the girls to try.

If you would like your daughter to join 1st Elmore Brownies please contact Jenny on 01452 722444 or 1stelmorebrownies@gmail.com."

Fly Tipping and Potholes

There seem to be more potholes in our roads every time we venture out, damaging our tyres and threatening the possibility of injury to cyclists and horse riders. Elmore is also used as a dumping ground for other peoples rubbish. You can get the council to repair potholes and remove rubbish by reporting them to Gloucestershire Highways and Stroud District Council respectively. The easiest way to do this is the visit the Parish Council's website; www.elmoreparish.co.uk. Choose 'useful links' from the strapline and then choose the service you want.

New Contact

There is no room in this issue of **The Bridge** to include the usual contacts list but there is only one change since the last time it was published. Our new MP is Siobhan Baillie and she can be contacted as follows.

Email; siobhan.baillie.mp@parliament.uk

Phone: 020 7219 3000

This phone number will get you through to the House of Commons. Just ask for Siobhan Baillie's office and you will be put through.