

BRADWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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Up-coming events

It is planned that on Tuesday 16th June at 8 pm in St Barnabas Church we will be holding a members' meeting. Any member who wishes can make a brief presentation (about 10 min) on a subject that holds their particular interest. If you would like to be a speaker please let John Monahan (01433 621728 ; john.monahan@tiscali.co.uk) know in advance to facilitate the organisation of the evening. Subjects may range from school life, to first day at work, to other areas of family history or beyond.

The Story of Tom William Elwood 4th Cavalry Field Ambulance RAMC

In early 2014 in anticipation of the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of World War I we advertised in the *Bradwell News* asking if there were any pieces of memorabilia dating from that time. We received a positive reply from Betty Bromley who was then living in Michlow Close in the far left corner. It turned out that she was in possession of a 'diary' kept by her Uncle Tom Elwood. The 'diary' was an extraordinary document and after I'd viewed it I advised her that it should be placed in the hands of the Imperial War Museum, but she was extremely reluctant to do so. She believed that if the keeping of it and its content had been known at the time Tom could well have been shot either by the British or the Germans. Even when I was talking to her she thought that the family name would fall into disrepute following the disclosure of the document. Of course the text and the sketches it contained had been fading so she had been transcribing the bulk of the text by hand. I was then able to take photographs of her transcriptions and of the sketches Tom had made. But I was using a fairly basic camera.

It is well worth recording the various sections of the work.

Section One deals with the time when he was sent to France in 1914 and runs up to his time as a POW. It should be said straight away that his holding as a POW in Germany was in direct contravention of Article 9 of the 1906 Convention that stated

that if medical personnel fell into enemy hands, they were not to be considered prisoners of war. The convention also stated that personnel should be returned to their own forces as soon as possible, or when they were no longer indispensable for the care of the wounded. Initially he was held near where he was captured when he helped care for the wounded of both sides – permitted under the convention.

Section Two takes the form of an (incomplete) essay on the history of the transport of the wounded in times of war.

Section Three consists of a series of sketches in Tom's own hand. They seem to be badly faded sketches of fellow soldiers and better preserved heads of beautiful ladies wearing tiaras and also one of a baby.

Section four brings another surprise because what is found is a series of recipes. Nothing to do with the many ways of using potatoes and their peelings! Instead we find instructions on how to make Boston Cream Cakes, Apple Snowballs and Topsy Cake. At the end of this is his sketch of a cupcake.

Topsy cake

Ingredients - 4 moulded sponge cake
which should be stale about 3 days
of sweet syrup or caramel sauce. (The
one described with any fruit should be
juice of 1/2 a lemon, 1/2 ounce of melted butter
& 1/2 oz of almonds, and crystallized fruit

Method - cut the bottom of the cake
until it is perfectly level, then prick it
all over with a knitting needle so that
the syrup or liquor can penetrate the
whole of the cake, carefully pour over
the cake whatever syrup or liquor you
taking care to let this go over every
part, then pour over the outside and
when this has set - blanch the almonds
split them in four and stick the cake
all over as follows, decorate with a few
crystallized fruits if required



Tom William Elwood was baptised on 3rd September 1893 in Aldershot where his Sheffield-born father Tom Rogers Elwood was a soldier. Tom William followed his father into to Army enlisting in 1911 as a bugler in the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC).

2091 L/Cpl Tom William Elwood
4th Cavalry Field Ambulance RAMC

Left for France from Southampton about 7th August 1914. Taken prisoner of war 26th August 1914 but continued to care for the wounded at the front. Later transferred via Brussels and Liege eventually to reach Lage II, Block 1 Rannbahn nr Münster Westphalia Germany by 9th December 1914 where he kept the 'diary'.

His subsequent history is uncertain but he must have been repatriated because he died in East Africa on Christmas day 1918 and is buried in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery in Dar-es-Salaam, now in Tanzania.

It is intended to add the various sections to our website over time. Some of the descriptions in the sections would (and will) contain a health warning as to content that is most horrific.

As was mentioned all of this material is in the form of mainly jpegs of text. It would be very helpful if any member has the software enabling them to convert jpegs of text into Word documents. If you have please let us know.