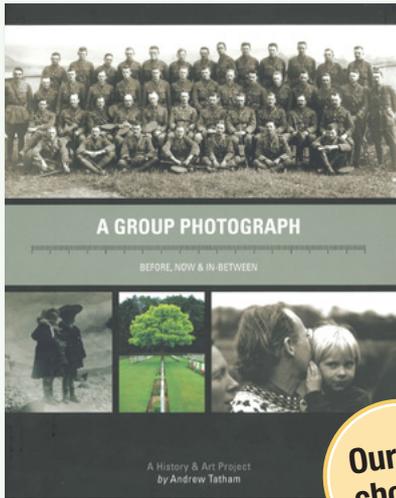


REVIEWS

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Our top choice!

A Group Photograph: Before, Now & In-between by Andrew Tatham

We've seen photos such as the one that inspired Andrew Tatham's book time and again: a cluster of soldiers (in this instance Army officers), in relaxed yet orderly rows; uniform, smart; buttons, shiny; moustached faces looking out at us – decent, tidy, fit and healthy. Andrew's photo shows 46 men from the 8th Battalion Royal Berkshire

Regiment, with his great-grandfather – their commanding officer – seated centre. So far, so good, but – as with anything related to the First World War – there's never anything ordinary about it, and even that which is familiar to us often has an unbearable poignancy, seeing it as we do through the lens of hindsight.

It was this desire to find out more about the men shown in the photo, to bring their stories to life, to remember them, that led to Andrew's 20-year exploration of each of man's past – his ancestors, his descendants and relatives, and his war experiences of course. 'What do you see when you look at this group photograph?' asks Andrew. 'Do you see soldiers ready to fight or victims of war? Who was thinking about them as they sat there?' On his quest to tell the full human story of each of these men Andrew has tracked down hundreds more photos of the men and their families, and unearthed memorabilia, letters and journals, which are woven into the account he relates.

This isn't the glorious tale of war – it's the memory of the very real effect it had on individuals. It's the story of Thomas

Allen, who survived being shot, bayoneted and gassed – and went spare when his son suggested joining the Army. It's the anguish of James Barrow's widow who was furious with him for signing up, and who never once visited his grave. It's of a baby born four days after her father was killed, and of a father who died, heartbroken at the death of his own son, and it's of a man (like many others) who 'always held onto a guilt that he had survived when so many others had not'.

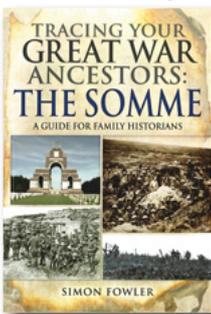
But despite all these tragedies, Andrew's account is somehow extraordinarily positive. It's clearly a labour of love, and is the result of him tracing a remarkable 46 family trees, which led to him being 'inspired by some extraordinary life stories that showed that individuals can make a difference even as the world is going mad around them'. And he advocates that we too go out into the world and make a difference for the better.

● ISBN: 9789090292786. RRP £20.80 softback (inc UK p&p). In Flanders Field Museum. Visit www.groupphoto.co.uk

Review by Helen Tovey

Subscribe to Family Tree? Turn to page 83 to enter our book giveaway.

Remembering the Great War Tracing Your Great War Ancestors: The Somme by Simon Fowler



Military genealogist and author Simon Fowler has come up trumps with this clear-intentioned and easily digestible introduction to tracing your British Army ancestors who fought on the Western Front in

France and Flanders in the First World War – primarily along the 60-odd miles of trenches between the Belgian border near Armentières and the River Somme. This is the third family history guide in a series, with the first two volumes focusing on ancestors who fought at Gallipoli and Ypres, and it is no less useful for those researching men and units. With jargon and records explained, and regular referral to key websites, this is another fantastically helpful hands-on guide for those starting down this path of research.

● ISBN: 9781473823693. RRP £12.99 paperback. Pen & Sword Family History.

We Shall Remember Them by St Werburgh's Great War Study Group

Produced by a small group of amateur local historians, who are all parishioners at St Werburgh's Catholic Church, Chester, this A4 book contains an impressive collection of biographies of more than 100 men associated with St Werburgh's who died in service during the Great War. *We Shall Remember Them*, which took nearly two years to produce, includes some ancillary historical material about life in Chester in the run up to WW1, showing how locals' lives were changed by the war. It's worth noting that it may also be of interest to those researching Irish families, or the role of Irish soldiers in WW1, as about 90 per cent of the men killed were of Irish descent. The ages of those lost varies greatly – interestingly, more over-age than under-age men died – and the carefully researched stories paint heartfelt pictures of lives before, during and even after the conflict. Illustrated with



photographs from contemporary local newspapers and provided by families of the fallen men – along with photographs of the military cemeteries and memorial gardens mentioned in the biographies – this is a wonderful well-researched tribute to the lost men of the parish and a goldmine for anyone with links to St Werburgh's Catholic Church.

● ISBN: 9781909817272. RRP £20 hardback, £10 softback (plus £3.50 UK p&p). Scotforth Books. Available from John Broadhurst via jbroadhurst1339@tiscali.co.uk or 01244 311374.

Gainsborough's War Story: The early years 1914 to mid-1915 by Peter E Bradshaw

This is the first of three books (ending at 1918) covering the war years in Gainsborough via the pages of the local newspaper, the *Gainsborough News*, accompanied by photographs loaned by photographs from local archives. Battalions mentioned include The Lincolns (1st and 2nd, 4th, 5th,

