

English duo looked into settlers' pasts

By David McIver
of The Rosetown Eagle
A book as a First World War centennial project led two researchers from England to visit Rosetown last week.

David Middleton and Bill Pinfold stopped at the museum on Sunday and visited the library archives on Wednesday. Their time here was part of their endeavour to learn more about five men who served in the First World War who were all originally from the villages of Bottesford and Muston in Leicestershire. All of them died in the war.

The five had settled in Canada and joined the Canadian army so the two researchers made the trip to Canada, and here because two of them settled in or near here.

"We wanted to find out how these men lived, what did they do," Pinfold said of their trip.

The villages, about 100 miles north of London, are in the Vale of Belvoir. The Belvoir school district was south of McGee. Thomas Calcraft, another settler from the Vale of Belvoir (pronounced beaver there), gave the school district that name, Pinfold said.

That district is where one of the five, Frank Raithby, homesteaded. Raithby's sister married Calcraft, he said.

While all five tried farming, only Raithby stuck with it, Middleton said.

Another one of the five, Charles Pacey, lived in Rosetown and worked as a waiter, possibly at the Rosetown hotel, Middleton said.

The others - Charles

Quotable

"I believe that professional wrestling is clean and everything else in the world is fixed."

- Frank Deford, U.S. sportswriter (1938 -)



Margaret Henderson talks to Bill Pinfold of Bedford, England while her husband Lloyd speaks with another Englishman, David Middleton, at the museum on June 12. "Do they still make Doncaster butterscotch?" was almost the first thing the former war bride said to them, wondering about the confection made in her native Yorkshire. The visitors came to Canada to do research for a book on people from two Leicestershire villages who served in the First World War. One settled here and another, in the Belvoir area south of Piske. Eagle photo.

Bend, Arthur Gilling and Robert Turlinton Noble Page - ended up settling in Calgary or Saskatoon, Middleton said.

People from a certain district in the home country tend to go to where others from the same district are, Pinfold said. The hardship of getting a homestead going might have made that even more likely, in case they needed someone to lend them a hand, he said.

Bob White had taken the men to where Calcraft had farmed that morning.

"We're just amazed at how rough that land is, even now," Pinfold said.

Yet the men might have been the right type for homesteading rough land, based on their war experiences.

Raithby "was one tough young man," Middleton said. "And so was Charles Pacey for that matter."

Raithby first homesteaded at Parkbeg, west of Moose Jaw, in 1912 and abandoned that land for being too stony. He went to McGee and applied for and got another homestead, which he worked in 1913 and '14 and broke 45 acres, Middleton said.

In April 1915, Raithby applied for a \$25 loan for seed corn and tools. He had joined the army by then and "We think he was leaving provisions for people to look after his homestead," Middleton said.

He joined up, went to France, got wounded and was hospitalized, Middleton said. The large German advance early in 1918 caused many losses and Raithby, recovered, was sent back to the front line.

He won a Distinguished Conduct Medal in the Battle of Bourlon Wood. While mending telegraph wire, Raithby got wounded. He walked to the first aid post and got his wound treated. But septicemia set in and, because he'd had that before, he was susceptible to it and died, Middleton said.

Raithby's homestead reverted to the Rural Municipality of Pleasant Valley in 1933, he added.

Pacey joined the 103rd Calgary Rifles in 1914, "going through all the classic battles," Middleton said. He became a stretcher bearer and was killed on Vimy Ridge in 1916, the year before

the Canadians took the ridge.

As for the two visitors, Pinfold's involvement began with researching his own family. He also has a personal connection on Canadian trip, "because my Great Uncle Ted was the RM secretary down in Caron, (Sask.)," said Pinfold, who works in the field of bank information software.

For Middleton, a retired university professor who lives in Bottesford, it's more for the historical interest.

Of the five men, "We thought if the opportunity came, it would be great to go back where they lived and see the land and to compare it to where they came from," he said.

They were "very impressed by the wonderful range of heritage material on display and the community effort supporting the museum," Middleton said in an e-mail. They also had "a great visit" to the archive, where "Sharon (Clark) was most helpful," he added.

The book, *Lost We Forget: Bottesford and Muston in the Great War*, is to be published in the fall.

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The Centenary Project

The success of the Bottesford Community Heritage Group in their bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a grant of £34,100 will support a two-year community programme of research and events commemorating the centenary of the First World War.



This project provides opportunities for anyone living in, or connected with, Bottesford, Easthorpe, Normanton and Muston, to help in preserving the memory of the First World War.

Did a member of your family serve in the First World War? The Centenary Project will focus both on those who served from the four villages of today's Parish and those who served from families who live in the Parish now. Did the women in your family do war work in ammunition factories, public services or on the land? Do you have memorabilia e.g. photographs, letters, postcards, medals and personal belongings relevant to the First World War?

Commemorative biographies will be written about the people who served in the armed forces from the villages of the Parish: over 220 men including the 40 who lost their lives.

Concerts, bell ringing, heritage trails, school activity days and newsletters will recreate and illustrate the massive community effort that went into supporting soldiers at the front. In addition, exhibitions and publications will open a window on village life in a time of war. This will be made possible through the support and involvement of organisations including Schools, Scouts and Guides, U3A, Gardens Association, Churches and Chapel.

A significant feature of this project is that everything collected and recorded will be permanently accessible on the Bottesford Living History website: www.bottesfordhistory.org.uk



Bottesford Squad mobilisation - 1914. Photo courtesy of Christopher Harris



Village Voice reporter Sue Middleton with Margaret Taylor

The aim is to preserve the hidden history of the First World War - the family memories from those who live in the Parish now of the people who served from the Parish, including those on the home front who loved, cared and coped.

Please get in touch with the Centenary Project and let them know your family stories. Have your WW1 family memorabilia recorded for posterity. The Bottesford Community Heritage Group welcomes the involvement of volunteers and community organizations.

For further information, contact David and Sue Middleton at bottesfordww1centenary@gmail.com or call 842215. Look at the Bottesford Parish WW1 Centenary web pages on www.bottesfordhistory.org.uk and the Community Heritage Noticeboard outside the Coop on Queen Street. Follow them on Twitter: @BottesfordWW1 and facebook: BottesfordWW1Centenary

Commemorating the first casualties of the Great War – muffled bell ringing.

As part of the Bottesford Parish WW1 Centenary Project muffled bells will be rung on Saturday 1st November at 12 noon at St Mary's, Bottesford. This community commemoration will mark the centenary of a muffled peal rung in memory of the first casualties from the Parish in 1914.

Refreshments will be available in the Church from 11.30 – 1.00pm. Come and learn about bell ringing in Bottesford. The belfry will be open to the public and you will be able to have a go.

Bottesford Parish WW1 project 'People, Community and Memory' launch event

The official launch of this project was held in the Village Hall in September. The project's volunteers were very pleased by the turnout and would like to thank the speakers and helpers as well as both choirs (U3A and the primary school) for their delightful singing, and the WI for the lovely refreshments.



The group are keen to hear from anyone who has any family memories or memorabilia from WW1 that they would like to share with the project. For more information go to the web site: www.bottesfordhistory.org.uk or look at our Facebook page or Twitter feed (@BottesfordWW1). Or ring David Middleton on 842215.

Poppies

The British Legion has requested knitted poppies, which will be on sale for £2 each, at the same time as the 'ordinary' poppies. Marian Johnson of the Methodist church coordinated the appeal locally and thanks everyone for their sterling efforts.

Eighty-one poppies have been knitted at the time of writing.



The Muffled Peel

On 1st November at St Mary's Church bell ringers marked the centenary of the muffled peel that was originally rung to commemorate the first WW1 casualties.

Muffling involves strapping a leather cap to one side of the bell clapper to produce a distinctive contrast in the loudness and softness of sound. Nearly one hundred people attended this commemorative event organised as part of the Bottesford Parish WW1 Centenary Project.

There was a brisk demand for refreshments on offer within the church and belfry tours provided the opportunity to try ringing. Over 20 tried their hand and were invited to attend the regular Wednesday evening practices. Six people took up that offer, the hope being that this will help to sustain the long tradition of ringing in the Bottesford Tower.



2nd Bottesford Guides take part in the WW1 Project

Village life, particularly for girls in 1914, was the theme during the summer and the Guides were prepared for 'wartime activities'.

During this Autumn the girls washed and chopped vegetables for a soup cooked on an open fire – the taste test received mixed reviews - as did those for the 'Trench' cake made some weeks later! The girls have made 'no cook' chutney, learned to knit and have started to make a rag rug from old t-shirts and sweat shirts. Activities have included first aid and rolling bandages, sending and taking messages, code breaking and using a silent code.

On Remembrance Sunday a copy of Saint John's Gospel was given to the congregation at St Mary's church commemorating soldiers receiving a copy in 1914. The Guides have likewise received a copy.

During World War 1 the Guides raised money nationwide to help with the purchase of an ambulance. This year the 2nd Bottesford Guides are fund-raising to support the Air Ambulance.

Knitting and Spinning Yarns

The U3A Vale of Belvoir Knit and Natter group, coordinated by Denise Cave with assistance from Sue Wadsworth, has been working on recreating the garments sent to soldiers during the 1st World War.



Photo: Denise Cave, Ruth Wilkinson, Sue Nagy, Jane Roberts, Sue Dunsmore

The group researched WW1 patterns, worked out what they meant (the terms used 100 years ago are not used today) and knitted a variety of items. They spun their own yarn to produce the right colour of khaki for scarves, socks, baladavas, rifleman's gloves, and wrist warmers. To knit the socks and wrist warmers they rose to the challenge of using 4 needles!

Over 300 hours of voluntary work as part of the Bottesford Parish 1st World War Centenary Project demonstrated how much effort was needed to make the home comforts families sent out to those on active service. When the project is over the items will be donated to charities working with homeless people.

Re-dedicating the restored Bottesford Methodist Chapel 1st World War Roll of Honour - Sunday March 8th 2015

On the centenary of its unveiling, the newly conserved Bottesford Methodist Chapel 1st World War Roll of Honour was displayed and re-dedicated.

The Reverend Ian Mason introduced a short ceremony as part of the Chapel Sunday Service on the 8th March. He then read out the names on the Roll of Honour before moments of quiet reflection. Afterwards a capacity congregation retired to the Meeting Room to view a display describing the programme of conservation and its part in the Bottesford Parish



1st World War Centenary Project. The ceremony and display provoked lively discussion, with many commenting on how much it had increased awareness of the contribution made by Bottesford Primitive Methodist Chapel worshippers who served in the 1st World War. The conservation was possible with the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund and was carried out by Lorraine Finch (<http://www.lfcp.co.uk/>). An excellent Facebook page provides details of her meticulous work (www.facebook.com/LFCandP).

Another article from this group is on our 'Extras' page:

<http://villagevoice.bottesford.org.uk/blog-2/Downloads.html>



BOTTESFORD AND THE GREAT WAR



A look at how the First World War affected Bottesford, taken from the pages of the Grantham Journal 1914-16.

Selected and edited by Year 9 Belvoir High School pupils as part of the Bottesford Parish First World War Centenary Project.



Supported by
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THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME



HISTORY AND IMPACT ON BOTTESFORD AND MUSTON

Information selected by Belvoir High School Year 9 students and edited in association with the Bottesford Parish WWI Centenary Project



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