

Your Haslemere

The Newsletter of The Haslemere Society

Autumn 2023

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Chairman's Welcome

Chris Harrison

Welcome to our Autumn 2023 newsletter.



I couldn't resist replacing my usual, and now somewhat out of date, picture with this image of our latest attempt to plant a tree at the end of West Street, although, in truth, most of the hard work was done by member Peter Matthews who has kindly agreed to keep the tree watered.

Members will remember that the Robinia planted some 20 years ago by the Society died, and that the replacement cherry tree planted around three years ago also died. Having taken advice that the soil is uncontaminated and that a mountain ash should thrive well on the site we are having one final attempt.

We have also restored the original plaque at the site, found beneath later plaques, which commemorates the planting of a tree by visitors from West Paterson New Jersey in 1977 to celebrate the Queen's Silver Jubilee.

If anyone can resolve the mystery surrounding this visit, please do get in touch. The second plaque, on the front of the stand simply states that the Haslemere Society is responsible for replacing the tree in 2023.

Turning to the body of the newsletter, we have an article on our very successful trip to Winchester Cathedral written by our editor Gareth David which is followed by an article by trustee Howard Brown describing the role of the newly appointed tree wardens of whom Howard is one.

This is followed by an update on the progress of the Valewood beaver colony written by local area National Trust ranger, Dee Durham.



We are grateful to Clive Davidson from Transition Haslemere for a fascinating article on John Tyndall, one of the many intellectuals who chose Haslemere as his home in the late 19th century. I for one had not previously understood that Tyndall was the first person to fully understand the greenhouse effect.

It is evident that there is a great deal of confusion about the roles of each tier of local government, and our next article by trustee and former councillor David Dullaway sets out to explain the role of each tier.

If elected, Richard Mason will be joining us as a trustee at the forthcoming annual general meeting and shares the story of the Black Down Ridge winery about which we will be learning more at our 2024 spring meeting.

My wife Shirley provides another story in her series on the Lost Sons of Haslemere, and finally, no newsletter would be complete without Di Keeley's excellent summary of forthcoming events in the town and a topical cartoon on a subject that has been raised by many of our members from Simon Mackie.

Enjoy the newsletter.

Chris Harrison
November 2023

Society trip to Winchester Cathedral

By Gareth David



Following last year's successful outing to the Watercress Line, a sizeable group of Society members joined the Trustees for another enjoyable coach outing on Tuesday, 8 August, this time paying a visit to Winchester Cathedral for guided tours and lunch, followed by a visit to an exhibition charting the 1,000 year history of the Cathedral.

For those unfamiliar with its history, Winchester was the historic capital of Anglo-Saxon Wessex and the diocese of Winchester was the most powerful diocese in England after the Norman Conquest. In 1070, William the Conqueror installed his friend and relative Walkelin as the first Norman Bishop of Winchester.

The cathedral was built from 1079 to 1532 and is dedicated to numerous saints, most notably Swithun of Winchester. It is 558 feet long, making it the longest medieval cathedral in the world, covering an area of 53,480 square feet, which means it is also the sixth-largest cathedral by area in the UK, exceeded only by Liverpool, St Paul's, York, Westminster (Catholic Cathedral) and Lincoln.

Having taken almost 500 years to complete, the cathedral shows the development of the architectural building styles from the dramatic Norman work of the transepts, right through to the late Perpendicular Gothic work in the east end. It has a cruciform plan, with a long nave, transepts, central crossing tower, choir, presbytery and a lady chapel. The north and south transepts are the oldest unaltered sections of the present cathedral, constructed under the auspices of Bishop Walkelin from 1079 to 1098.

Among the numerous notable features highlighted by our guides was the 12th Century font. This black-coloured font is a rare survivor from a collection known as the Tournai fonts, dates from c1150 and is one of only ten fonts of its kind in England. It weighs 1.5 tonnes, is made from Carboniferous limestone from Belgium and was gifted to the cathedral by Henry of Blois.





Another highlighted feature was the tomb in the north aisle of Jane Austen, who died in Winchester on 18 July 1817. While there is no reference to her writings on the tomb, a later brass plaque, which was paid for from the proceeds of her first biography, describes her as "known to many by her writings".

Following our guided tours, members enjoyed a lunch in the Cathedral Café, then a chance to visit an exhibition called ***Kings and Scribes: the birth of a nation*** in the upper floors of the Cathedral's South Transept, covering its 1,000 year history and containing some of the Cathedral's finest treasures, including the magnificent 12th Century Winchester Bible and the 17th century Morley Library.



Morley Library is home to a collection of rare books, all of which were given to the cathedral by George Morley, Bishop of Winchester from 1662 to 1684, which still stand on their original 17th-century carved shelves. The Winchester Bible is regarded as the largest and best-preserved 12th-century Bible in England, with its text in the Latin of St Jerome and handwritten on 468 sheets of calf-skin parchment.

Your Trustees are keen to organise regular day trips and would welcome suggestions from members for places that they feel would make an attractive day out for members.

Protecting our local trees

By Howard Brown



Surrey Tree Warden volunteers seek to maintain Surrey's reputation as the most wooded county in England. The voluntary project aims to help improve the environment through communal tree planting, advice and maintenance.

With about 48% of the Haslemere area designated as woodland compared to around 22% across Surrey and just 10% nationally, active tree monitoring is required. Of this 33% (i.e. 761 ha) is broadleaf woodland and 15% (346 ha) is coniferous. About 85 ha (8% of the Haslemere Neighbourhood Plan) is listed on Natural England's Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI).

The woodland is shared between private landowners' gardens and estates; green areas such as National Trust and of course Waverley Borough Council, plus the tree / canopy along the highways, so owned by Surrey County Council Highways.

To support the tree management and general environmental work alongside green protection areas around Haslemere, the Society has linked to the Haslemere tree warden group, setup earlier this year through Transition Haslemere. The Tree Council focuses on getting more trees, of the right kind, in the right place and providing better care for all trees of all ages and inspiring effective action for trees.

The network was set up to protect trees in the area and help raise awareness of the importance and value of trees to the local community in order to deliver a local tree strategy, some originating from the Haslemere Neighbourhood Plan, which was written to support the Local Plan which is listed in the national planning policy to protect trees alongside local planning and development.

As an ongoing action the Tree Warden group will determine how trees can be better protected in their surrounding environment as we need to understand when trees are healthy, when they are in distress and which are classified as ancient woodland and finally, which ones provide habitats for specific wildlife.

To succeed, the Tree Wardens cannot work in isolation so teaming with the Society and the local council tree officer based at Waverley a strong network can be established. Some of the focus is where individual trees or groups of trees have a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or specific mature trees are under threat.

Tree Wardens are monitors so are not armed with chain saws, TPO orders or spare replacement trees, however they are able to provide support and advice on how to proceed. Sadly, Tree Wardens have minimal power but are established to help, but cannot legally enforce any specified action.

The Haslemere Tree Warden group is now six strong and have nearly completed the comprehensive training. The initial task is embarking on an initial walk-around the mapped area this autumn to determine the stock and its health.

To ensure an ecological balance the group is now reviewing hedgerows as a secondary skill and further linking to Haslemere Biodiversity Group and the new Bee-Line nature path, an insect motorway, which passes and diverges straight through Haslemere.

Beavers are thriving at Valewood

By Dee Durham, National Trust Area Ranger



Since their introduction in early 2021, the National Trust rangers have been blown away by the amount of positive change the beavers have brought to their hidden valley in the South Downs. True to the phrase "busy as a beaver", over a dozen new ponds have formed because of damming along the stream, in some places widening the channel by up to 10 metres.

These ponds are holding back tonnes of sediment that would otherwise have travelled downstream. The stream has also been diverted in places through the meadows, creating a braided water-meadow effect during periods of high flow and encouraging wetland birds such as kingfisher, heron and snipe.

The beavers' engineering has created an explosion of edge habitat suitable for all kinds of freshwater and riparian wildlife. We continue to monitor the site, and look forward to seeing even more positive results as the beavers' activity expands.

The life and times of John Tyndall

By Clive Davidson



John Tyndall, the scientist who first explained why the sky is blue and demonstrated that carbon dioxide has a greenhouse effect in the atmosphere spent the last decade of his life in Haslemere. He was born in 1822 in County Carlow, Ireland and from humble beginnings rose through his own determined efforts to become one of the most significant intellectuals of nineteenth-century Britain.

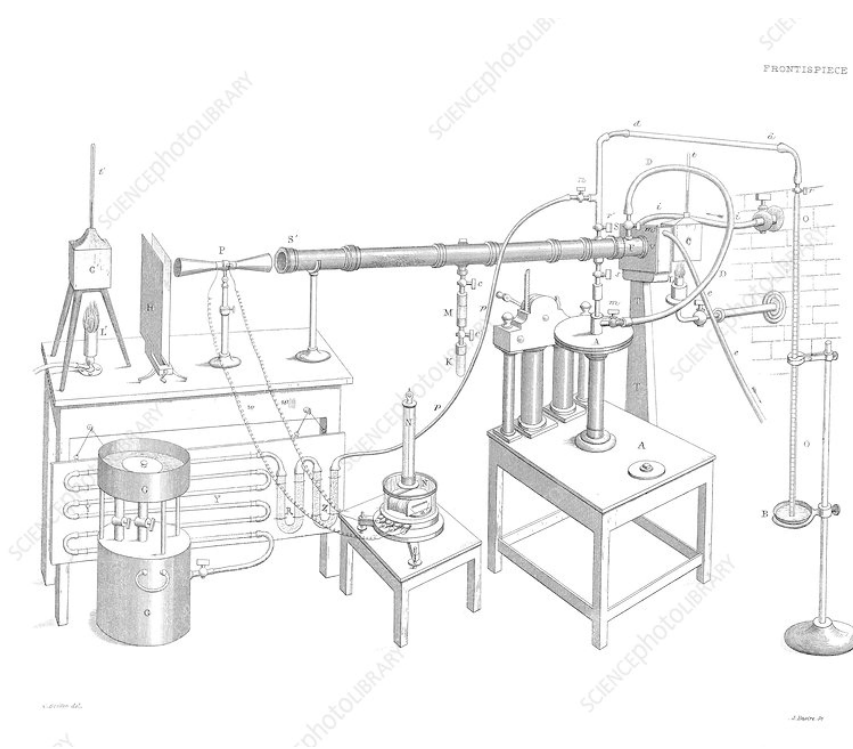
Not only was he one of the foremost experimental physicists of his age and a passionate advocate of scientific understanding, he was at the heart of social, cultural, religious and political debates of the time. His friends included Michael Faraday, Thomas Huxley, Thomas Carlyle, Charles Darwin and Sir Alfred Lord Tennyson. He was also a pioneering mountaineer; the first to stay overnight on the summit of Mont Blanc and to traverse the Matterhorn.

Tyndall began his working life in land surveying, moving to England in 1842 to work for Ordnance Survey. His interest in experimental science led him to Germany to study under Robert Bunsen for two years. Back in London, his initial research was into magnetism and the structure of glaciers. He quickly gained a reputation as a rigorous and innovative experimentalist, engaging with and sometimes challenging the leading physicists of the time.

He became a fellow of the Royal Society, Britain's most prestigious scientific body, at a young age and was appointed professor of natural philosophy at the Royal Institution. He wrote and lectured extensively and was a gifted and charismatic teacher. His public lectures and scientific demonstrations were hugely popular and attended by prime ministers and royalty.

Tyndall had a long-held fascination with the absorption and radiation of heat, even before his work with ice and glaciers. Other scientists had looked at heat in relation to liquids and solids and speculated on the behaviour of heat in the atmosphere. Tyndall set out to explore the exact nature of heat absorption and radiance in gases. In 1856, an American amateur scientist, Eunice Foote, had shown that carbon dioxide and water vapour could absorb heat (a key aspect of what has become known as the greenhouse effect), although there is no evidence that Tyndall knew of her work. He did, however, hold that women were incapable of scientific creativity.

In 1859, Tyndall developed a breakthrough piece of equipment – a highly sensitive differential spectrometer – and devised a series of clever experiments to demonstrate definitively that the atmosphere could trap heat. He went much further than Foote, showing that carbon dioxide (CO₂) and water vapour not only absorbed heat but could radiate it out again, thereby explaining how the atmosphere is warmed by the presence of these gases – what we now call the 'greenhouse effect'. As Tyndall put it: "The atmosphere admits of the entrance of solar heat; but checks its exit, and the result is a tendency to accumulate heat at the surface of the planet".



Tyndall's Differential Spectrometer

Tyndall immediately understood the implications. Variation of the proportions of atmospheric gases "must produce a change of climate", he wrote. CO₂ from the burning of fossil fuels had been accumulating since the Industrial Revolution, although it took until 1938 for Tyndall's prediction to be verified.

Temperature data gathered from around the world showed that global temperatures had risen in line with the increase in atmospheric CO₂ from human activities. The accelerating rise in CO₂ since then has brought us to our current climate crisis.

This ground-breaking work is recognised in the University of East Anglia's Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research being named after him. Tyndall's work also had a profound impact on the development of meteorology and our modern understanding of the weather and its

patterns. His earlier work on glaciers and his adventurous mountaineering led to the naming of glaciers, mountains and even craters on the moon and Mars after him.

Goethe, Newton and others had speculated on the possibility that the sky's colour might be due to particles in the atmosphere affecting white light from the sun. The question intrigued Tyndall but it was not until 1868 that he set his mind to answering it conclusively.

Once again, he created innovative apparatus which showed the scattering of light by particles, such as water vapour in air, which is now known as the Tyndall Effect. Tyndall concluded that "any particles, if small enough, will produce both the colour and the polarization of the sky". We now know that the particles in question are molecules, scattering light to create the blue colour.

Tyndall continued to investigate the atmosphere and the factors affecting the passage of light and heat and, later, sound. He demonstrated that the air is full of dust and that this is largely organic and, later, that it includes bacteria and pathogens, supporting Louis Pasteur and Joseph Lister and the development of germ theory and antiseptic surgery.

He devised a method of sterilisation, known as Tyndallisation, and advised miners, stonemasons and others to wear masks and invented a respirator for firemen. He was a vigorous champion of blue skies research free of commercial interest, shunning patents for his discoveries.

Tyndall engaged in many of the major public debates of the time. He argued forcefully and at the highest levels that science rather than religion could explain life and the natural world. He was an unrelenting critic of organised religion but not an atheist: he believed that poetry could eventually meet human emotional and spiritual needs. Although he showed concern for the conditions of working people, he had no time for democracy.

He avoided party politics, except later in life when he supported the Conservatives, largely because of his opposition to Home Rule for Ireland. He also had disparaging views on race, vocally supporting Edward Eyre's brutal suppression of the Jamaican rebellion in 1866, backing the Confederates in the American Civil War and agreeing that Thomas Carlyle's view of former slaves as inferior, lazy savages simply "expresses the facts of nature". And in spite of long friendships with many intelligent women, he never accepted they could be intellectual and creative equals.

Tyndall was compulsively social, moving in the upper echelons among eminent scientists, philosophers, poets, novelists and aristocrats. But he was self-conscious about his humble Irish origins and lack of wealth and did not marry until he was 55. His wife Louisa Hamilton was more than 20 years his junior. (He had fallen a couple of times for younger women over the years.) Tyndall always found solace and relief from stress in nature and outdoor exertions – he loved the Alps and visited almost every year – so the couple decided to move out of London.

They chose Hindhead to build a house, attracted by opportunities for walking in the then wild countryside and proximity to their friends the Tennysons (Tyndall was a lifelong lover of poetry). He wrote to a friend: "This region to me is very glorious. Heather knee deep; gorse lately all ablaze, but now sobering down; pinewoods with their 'waterfall tones' when the wind blows through them; far horizons with finely sculptured hills intervening"

Tyndall employed another noted Haslemere resident, JW Penfold, to design their new home. His house is now surrounded by a housing estate, which would have been anathema to him. He was not the friendliest of neighbours, buying adjacent land at inflated prices to

prevent it being developed and building a 30-foot screen shaped at the top like an Alpine range to shield him from nearby stables.

Tyndall struggled with ill health all through of his life and particularly insomnia in his later years. Hamilton administered his medications, including chloral hydrate, to him to help him sleep. Tragically, one day in 1893 she confused his dosage, which killed him.

After his death, Tyndall quickly faded from the limelight. (Interestingly, he did a number of investigations into 'lime light', a form of intense illumination.) His broad and pioneering experimental work in classical physics, including magnetism, force and heat, was overtaken by revolutionary theories and discoveries in radioactivity, relativity and quantum physics.

He was buried in the extension to St Bartholomew's graveyard in Derby Road. Although today his achievements, like his grave, are somewhat neglected, his work on the greenhouse gases that underpins climate change science marks him out as a figure of not only historical but also contemporary significance.

As Sir Roland Jackson says in his biography 'The Ascent of John Tyndall', he was "a complex, often contradictory figure, who embodies the intellectual excitement, the disputes, the prejudices, the tensions and the opportunities of the nineteenth century world".



Understanding the layers of local government

By David Dullaway



You should complain to the Council! Indeed, but which Council? Across England local government is made up of local authorities (such as London borough councils, county and district councils, metropolitan district councils and unitary authorities) and local parish and town councils, as well as thirty-one police and crime commissioners, four police, fire and crime commissioners, and ten national park authorities. So exactly who do you talk to?

In Haslemere the situation is comparatively straightforward; the Local Government Act 1972 divided the country into metropolitan and non-metropolitan counties, and Haslemere is within Surrey, which is one of the latter. All such counties are covered by one county council and several district councils. Haslemere falls under Surrey County Council and Waverley district council.

County and district councils have separate but overlapping roles. Surrey County council is responsible for running the largest and most expensive local services such as education, social services, libraries, main roads, public transport, fire services, Trading Standards, public waste disposal and strategic planning.

Waverley district council is responsible for local planning and building control, local roads, council housing, environmental health, markets and fairs, refuse collection and recycling, cemeteries and crematoria, leisure services, parks, and tourism. Waverley also collects our council taxes, regardless of who finally spends the money.

The split is not always clear, but essentially the more local or day-to-day the issue is, the more likely it is that Waverley is the right council to talk to, and often the best starting point.

Haslemere also has a third council all of its own: Haslemere Town Council. Town and parish councils are something of an oddity; they were created by the Local Government Act 1894,

based on the Church of England's parishes, and nothing much has changed since then. They are not really part of the local authority structure described above, and their only specific statutory function is to provide allotments.

However, under the Localism Act 2011, Haslemere Town Council has a "general power of competence" which broadly allows it to do anything an individual can do provided it is not prohibited by other legislation. In particular it provides litter bins, oversees the Christmas lights and carol services, funds local charities and has picked up some tasks that used to fall to Waverley, such as managing local green spaces and providing public toilets. In practice, the town council is the first port of call for ultra-local activities not covered by Waverley.

Once we know who to talk to, *how* do you talk to the council? If you have access to the internet all of the councils have good websites covering their services and these are generally the best place to start. Waverley's is www.waverley.gov.uk and Surrey's is www.surreycc.gov.uk. The town council's website is haslemeretc.org, phone number is 01428 654305, and the Town Hall, in the middle of Haslemere High Street, is open Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

Finally, you can speak to your local councillor. There are 18 town councillors covering the whole of Haslemere, including Hindhead and Beacon Hill, six local Waverley councillors and one local Surrey councillor (John Robini, who sits on all three councils). Their names are on the council websites.

Blackdown Ridge Winery: Haslemere's hidden gem

By Richard Mason



"Our red wine is so popular we sell out every year. Quite an achievement for an English red wine", says Lucinda Colucci business development manager at Blackdown Ridge Winery. Now I thought winery was an Americanism for vineyard, not so. Lucinda enlightens me. "Our winery is where the grapes are not only grown but then turned into wine on the premises ensuring they don't get blended with 'foreign' grapes."

Lucinda continues "Our red wine has really put us on the map. The Triomphe grape we harvest has dark red skin producing a red juice much like blood. The colour is fantastic and the flavour amazing. Smooth and velvety, dark cherry flavours mingling with a plum like flavour, quite unique giving a medium to full body flavour."

Nestling on the slopes of Blackdown Ridge the winery is almost invisible. Yet it's Haslemere's little gem and surprisingly few locals know of its existence. The winery is run with a dedication that comes from a passion to do something well. It was the vision of Professor Martin Cook, a world-renowned consultant histopathologist, specialising in melanomas, who in 2010 at the age of 69 organised the planting of 16,600 vines on ten acres of his south-facing hillside below Blackdown Ridge.

Its first harvest was in 2013 but the following year the professor brought the wine making in house to control the quality and to make his hobby viable. Besides the red wine Lucinda lists other wines "Bacchus, Sauvignon Blanc for still wines, Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Pinot Blanc, so a wide variety which again makes us unusual. Being a winery is also rare because of the approximately 800 vineyards in the UK there are only 168 wineries and we're probably the smallest.

Everything is done by hand, which maybe old-fashioned, but is quite authentic. I prefer less mechanisation. We pick the grapes by hand which helps quality control as you go along. And we whole bunch press because we pick whole bunches as opposed to individual grapes shaken off by a machine. The result is a flavour that's buttery with woody complexities."

Lucinda's story like the winery is unique. Formerly the professor's secretary at the Royal Surrey Hospital a life-changing opportunity arose when calamity struck eight years ago. The wine maker left to pursue a promotion and the professor's wife also left. He needed help fast. Lucinda was fascinated by Professor Martin's hobby and decided to apply for the

vacancy in the winery. She knew nothing about wineries. Lucinda recalls applicants for the job having marketing skill and wine knowledge.

"But despite other applicant's flashy CVs Professor Martin knew that he could trust me and I'd always give 100% of my ability. And that was more important to him, to have somebody constant. It's been a lovely learning curve, an easy decision that I've never regretted for a minute. Even in lockdown when I was pretty much working alone the vines still needed specific maintenance like 'bud rubbing'.

This is taking off buds that are sprouting lower down to encourage further growth up the plant to produce the grapes. It is backbreaking work involving squatting. Yet doing this in lockdown in beautiful weather I felt lucky compared to others who couldn't so easily be outdoors. And I was doing 16,600 vines."

Although Lucinda is the only employee there is outside help. "We have a viticulturist, who is a contractor providing seasonal workers for things like bud rubbing and of course the harvest. From September we are lucky to be assisted by a consultant winemaker, Emma Rice, who became the first woman to win the UKVA Winemaker of the Year twice. Our harvest yield predictions for this year look good, so we're expecting a good crop although not outstanding."

Meanwhile Professor Martin, now 82, is still working full-time and you can view his hobby because Lucinda conducts wine tours by appointment, which can be arranged by contacting admin@blackdownridge.co.uk or by calling 07908 989566 www.blackdownridge.co.uk



**Lost Sons of Haslemere: Corporal Arthur Frank Furlonger
(25 Jun 1892–1 Dec 1917) 91616 - "H Battalion" - Tank Corps**

By Shirley Harrison



The Furlonger family arrived in Haslemere from Chiddingfold in the middle of the 19th century. Arthur's grandfather Walter ran a butcher's shop in the High Street, pictured below on the right with the blinds down on a hot summer day, probably in the 1870s:



The men on the left are mending potholes in the road with chippings of locally quarried chert.

Arthur, or "Curly" as he was affectionately known, was born on 25th June 1892 in East Street, now Petworth Road, Haslemere. It hasn't changed that much, other than it was perfectly safe then to walk down the middle of the road:



East St, about 1895

He was one of eight children, but one son died in infancy. The family were Congregationalists, and would have attended the chapel in Lower Street. His father William, who ran a cab company, died in 1909 when Arthur was 17. His mother Mary took over the business, with her oldest son William as manager, and helped by Arthur.

In the early years, the cabs had been horse drawn flies, but by the second decade of the 20th century they were also using motor cars. By the time he was 18, Arthur was not only driving a motor cab, but was also a skilled enough mechanic to be involved with the maintenance of the vehicles.

In January 1914, when he was 21, Arthur married Mary Jeffery, and they settled in King's Road. They had no idea that their happiness was to be soon interrupted so brutally. When war was declared, Arthur was understandably reluctant to leave his new wife, and was not one of those who enthusiastically enlisted right away. His mother, who was relying on her sons to keep the business running smoothly, also needed him to stay in Haslemere.

Two years later, in January 1916 the Military Service Act was passed, introducing conscription for the first time, for men aged 18 to 41; but it was not until the second act was passed in May that married men were also obliged to enlist. Arthur and his brother William could no longer avoid the inevitable. It must have been particularly hard for Arthur and Mary, as their first child John was only three months old.

Being able to drive and maintain a motor vehicle was a useful skill to the army, and Arthur enlisted in the Royal Marine Artillery, at Eastney Barracks near Portsmouth, as a driver. He didn't stay long, however, and was transferred in December to the Machine Gun Corps, Heavy Section, at Elveden in Suffolk.

It was here that battle training and testing of the first tanks was being carried out. It was said to be the most secret place in England at the time. The Corps was renamed the Tank Corps on 28th June 1917. For his remaining time in England Arthur worked as a tank instructor.

Evolution of the tank



A medieval knight in full armour was effectively a living tank, being practically invulnerable to the weaponry available. Once efficient gunpowder as a missile propellant was invented, a suit of armour could be penetrated and became nothing more than an encumbrance.

Over the next centuries, many attempts were made to design a self-moving vehicle, with sufficiently thick armour plating to protect the crew, and a workable weapon system to attack the enemy.

In 1487, Leonardo da Vinci came up with a design for a fighting machine that could move in any direction and was equipped with a number of weapons. He wrote to his patron Ludovico Sforza:

I am building secure and covered chariots which are invulnerable, and when they advance with their guns into the midst of the foe, even the largest enemy masses must retreat; and behind them the infantry can follow in safety and without opposition.

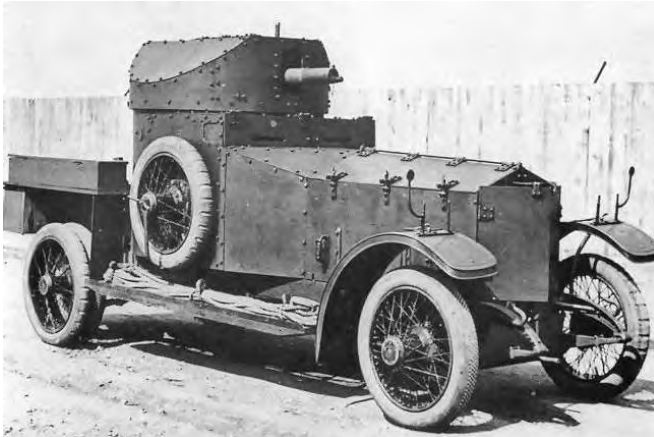


The wooden covering was reinforced with metal plates, and slanted to deflect enemy fire. The problem was getting it moving. It was propelled by four men turning cranks attached to gears. No working prototype was ever built.

In 1599 Simon Stevin is supposed to have built two "land ships" for the Prince of Orange. They were small battleships mounted on wheels. They didn't catch on.



Moving forward to the Western Front in August and September 1914, armoured cars had been used with considerable success.

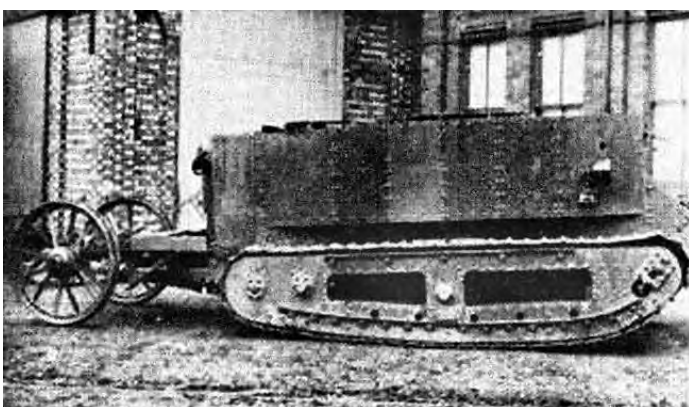


They were built on a Rolls Royce Silver Ghost chassis, but needed a good road surface to be driven on. Something else was needed to get a man across the cratered, sea of mud that was of no-man's-land, and through the barbed wire to attack the enemy trenches, and at the same time protect him from shells and bullets.

In October 1914, Lt. Col. Ernest Dunlop Swinton suggested that an armoured car on caterpillar tracks and armed with both a gun and a machine gun, would be able to do just that. The concept of the modern tank was born. Backed by Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty, the Landship Committee was set up in February 1915.

It proved difficult to come up with a suitable name for the mechanical beast which didn't give the game away to the Germans about what was being developed. "Caterpillar machine gun destroyer", "land cruiser" and "landship" were deemed too obvious. For a while the new weapons the codeword "water-carrier" was used to hide its true purpose. The initials WC of the latter were considered ridiculous, so "water tank" and eventually simply "tank" was used instead.

The first experimental, prototype tank, the unfortunately named "Little Willie" was not wholly satisfactory. Its shape rendered it incapable of crossing trenches.



Little Willie, note rear steering wheels

Names suggested for the next version were "Big Willie" and "Mother", before the more prosaic "Mark I" was settled upon when it was demonstrated to the Landships Committee in February 1916. The Mark I was rhomboid in shape, had a low centre of gravity, and a long

track length, which allowed it not only to cross broken ground, and brush through barbed wire, but to climb the parapet in front of a trench, and cross a trench up to 11 ½ feet wide.

Its top speed was 3.7 mph, a brisk walking pace, with a range of 12 miles. They came in "male" and "female" versions, the male having two 6-pounder guns and four machine guns, and the female having just six machine guns. Each tank was crewed by an officer and eight other ranks, four of whom were involved in driving, steering and gear changing, and the rest with firing the guns.

The environment was incredibly cramped and unpleasant, the petrol engine taking up much of the space inside. Ventilation was inadequate, and the air contaminated with carbon monoxide fumes and cordite. Temperatures inside could reach 50 degrees centigrade. The fuel tanks were in a vulnerable position inside the cabin, with calamitous results if there was a direct hit.

It simply wasn't possible to know how well the Mark I would perform in a battle without testing it in a battle, and that was what happened at Flers-Courcelette, part of the Somme offensive, on 15th September 1916. It is a measure of the Mark I's mechanical unreliability that 49 tanks were initially deployed, but only 25 actually reached the starting line. Only 15 were reliable enough to take part in the attack. Overall, however, they proved to be surprisingly successful, duly terrifying the German troops, one of whom described them as *"spewing death, unearthly monsters."*



Mark I at Flers-Courcelette

Continuing Arthur's story

The Mark II and Mark III were improvements on the Mark I but not ever used in combat. By the time Arthur arrived at Elveden, the Mark IV was in development, and went into production in May 1917. At 28 tonnes it was a much more heavily armoured version of the Mark I, and didn't have the rear steering wheels which had proved to be useless. It had shorter barrelled guns, and the fuel tank was on the outside making it less likely that the crew would be burnt alive. It also carried a compass, oddly omitted from the Mark I. In total 1,015 were built, 420 male and 595 female.



Mark IV

The Mark IVs debut on the battlefield was in a minor but successful role at Messines Ridge in June 1917, but later in the summer they became bogged down in the mud at the Third Battle of Ypres. Arthur was not involved in these battles, but arrived in France at the tank training ground at Wailly, near Arras, in September. Almost 400 tanks from the 9 battalions of the Tank Corps gathered in preparation for a major offensive at Cambrai. This was to be the first time that a mass wave of tanks was to be used in military history.

1917 had been a difficult year for the British on the Western Front. Small territorial gains at Arras and Ypres had come at a terrible price in the number of casualties. The Germans had abandoned a large area in the spring when they retreated eastwards to the Hindenburg Line, but their new frontline was a seemingly impregnable mass of deep, wide trenches, concrete fortifications and barbed wire.

New tactics would be needed for the British to break through, and the tanks were to be the vital key. Their job at Cambrai was to smash through the German lines, with the infantry following behind, and cavalry in reserve to exploit any major breakthrough. The ground was open, rolling downland, with few shell holes and little mud, so in theory perfect for tanks. The date was fixed for November 20th.

Arthur was in "H" battalion of the Tank Corps, which on the day of the battle would have had 36 tanks available, with 6 held in reserve in case of mechanical breakdown. Each tank in the Corps had its own name, and in "H" battalion they all began with H. Most were suitably belligerent, such as Hadrian, Havoc, Hydra, Hector and Huntress; but there was also Hilda, Harrogate, Harlequin and Hyacinth. Unfortunately, we don't know which was Arthur's tank.

The tank build-up in the two days before the battle had to be achieved in utmost secrecy to ensure that the Germans were taken completely by surprise. They had arrived with their crews by rail under cover of darkness at the Plateau siding near Albert. Torches and lamps were used sparingly to avoid detection by the enemy, and even cigarettes banned. Engines were tuned up and "fascines" fitted to the tank roofs. These were huge bundles of brushwood to be deployed to fill trenches to make them easier to cross. H battalion was then entrained again to Ytres, where they disembarked for the second time.



Tanks with fascines

The tanks moved slowly with their engines barely ticking over to reduce noise. From Ytres, Arthur and the rest of H battalion moved closer to their kicking off point for the battle, again in darkness and as close to silent as a tank can be. They spent the night, and most of the next day, hiding and camouflaged under netting in a small wood two miles south of Metz. The wood was officially called Dessart Wood, but the men called it Horseshoe Wood as it was liberally strewn with hundreds of these apparent emblems of good luck. As darkness fell again, they set off in a fine drizzle four more miles to the start line, where they tried to snatch a few hours sleep inside the tanks.

At a very early hour on the 20th November Arthur was up and preparing breakfast. One officer described how *"sausages were sizzling on a Primus stove on the platform behind the engine, and mugs of hot tea were handed round"*.

H battalion was right in the centre of the whole line. Their objective was Ribecourt and then, if successful, Flesquieres Ridge and Nine Wood. One tank, "Hilda", was warming up its engine when its crew was surprised by a knock on the door. The Tank Corps Commander, Brigadier General Hugh Elles had decided to join them. He proceeded to go into battle with his head and shoulders sticking out of the hatch, flying the regimental flag. This became something of a tradition for the Tank Corps.



Hilda after the battle

At 6.30am the preliminary artillery barrage began. There is a vivid account by the officer in command of "Hadrian" of what happened next:

"Just before half-past six the barrage commenced, the guns reverberated like incessant thunder claps, and we started off. Our first bump came fairly soon. We climbed a bank, crashed through the hedge on top and came down heavily on the other side. Our tank weighed some 28 tons. When it lurched it threw its crew about like so many peanuts, and they had to clutch on to whatever they could when we were going over uneven ground.

"The perfect tank driver would balance his tank on the top of an ascent and let it down gently at just the right moment. But even perfect drivers got excited, and it was a good thing that tanks then had a maximum speed of only three miles a hour. When we'd crossed the frontline trenches our infantry followed us. The enemy had been taken completely by surprise and the sky in front was lit by his coloured SOS lights.

"It was a weird but impressive sight. The whole corps of 350 tanks was taking part and we were right in the middle of the battle line. On either side of us, as far as the eye could see, monstrous tanks, like prehistoric animals, each carrying an enormous bundle on its head, were advancing relentlessly. The noise inside Hadrian was deafening; it almost drowned out the noise of the barrage, and speech was practically impossible."



Mark IV tank destroying barbed wire at Cambrai

The first day of the attack was a spectacular success for the whole Tank Corps. By 9am the breach in the Hindenburg Line was 5 miles wide. As far as H battalion were concerned, Ribecourt was taken, and at about 11am the signal was given to return to their rallying point. By this time they had been shut up in their suffocating machines under fire for many hours, and Arthur and his crewmates would have been physically and mentally shattered.

The following day, the Tank Corps was back in action. By 4pm the British army had advanced seven miles, the most rapid advance of the war so far, and the first time that the deadlock of trench warfare had been broken. Church bells rang out in London in celebration. 4,000 German prisoners were taken. This was the moment when fresh troops should have poured through, but there were not enough mobile infantry reserves available to exploit the situation, and the cavalry were not able to advance either.

Over the next few days the battle began to fall flat and tank units became increasingly disorganised. Tank losses had been heavy, and 179 of the 378 fighting tanks were out of action. 65 of them had been destroyed, and the rest ditched or broken down. By 27th November the crews of H battalion had been reduced to such a state of exhaustion that along with B, D and G battalions it was decided to withdraw them.

This withdrawal was nearly complete when a great German counter-attack was launched on the morning of 30th November. At this point H battalion didn't have a single tank of their original 42 in working order, but by 2pm their mechanics somehow had twelve ready for action.

The following day, starting at 5.30am, their task was to repulse the Germans who had reached the woods south east of Gouzeaucourt, in support of the Grenadier Guards. This proved to be very difficult for what was left of the battalion, and was to cost Arthur his life. The tanks arrived late, delayed by a sunken road that they were unable to navigate. Four tanks, including Arthur's, were knocked out by direct hits from guns on the ridge above the wood. The wood was cleared of the enemy troops, but when the tanks tried to enter the village of Villers-Guislain they had to withdraw after being subjected to heavy fire.

When the battle of Cambrai finished on 5th December, the British had relinquished most of their gained ground. Both sides had lost about 40,000 men.

So ends Arthur's story. The news reached Haslemere a few days later in a letter from his comrade, Corporal Thompson, who had himself been wounded. He stated that the tank that they had both been in had a direct hit from an enemy shell. Arthur had died instantaneously, blown to pieces, a detail that he perhaps should have spared the family.

Arthur has no known grave. He is remembered on the Cambrai Memorial at Louverval. Unveiled in 1930, it commemorates over 7,000 servicemen from Britain and South Africa who died in the Battle of Cambrai and whose graves are not known.

Postscript

Arthur's widow Mary never remarried. She died in 1973. His son John was a pilot in the RAF in the Second World War. Arthur's brother William served in the Royal Army Service Corps and survived the war. One of Arthur's nephews was an officer in the Royal Artillery in the Second World War and was awarded the Military Cross in Burma.

When Arthur's mother died in 1934, an addition was made to his father's memorial, in what is now called the Derby Road Cemetery, carved in the shape of an open book. The two pages read:

In loving memory of Mary Furlonger wife of William Furlonger who departed this life July 20th 1934 aged 72 years.

Also of their son Arthur Frank Furlonger who died November 1917 aged 25 years.

The whole memorial is in a state of sad disrepair, overgrown with long grass and weeds, the cross fallen. There is an epitaph beneath the obscuring ivy on the cross:
"Until the day break, and the shadows flee away"



Sources

Tanks in the Great War, by Brevet-Colonel J F C Fuller, DSO (1919), Naval & Military Press

Tanks and Trenches, edited by David Fletcher, 1994, The History Press

Battleground Europe, Flequieres, by Jack Horsell & Nigel Cave, Pen & Sword Books

Farnham, Haslemere & Hindhead Herald, 8th December 1917

Surrey Advertiser, 8th December 1917

www.freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com, submitted by Emerson Furlonger

www.Tank100.com, website of the Tank Museum

Forthcoming events in Haslemere

Compiled by Di Keeley

We are fortunate in Haslemere to have an extremely wide and varied range of clubs, societies and other activities. We have briefly listed forthcoming events of just some of these. Further information can be obtained from the respective websites. Details are those available in October 2023

Haslemere Museum www.haslemeremuseum.co.uk/whatson/whatson.html

Some, but not all events have an entrance fee and need to be booked in advance.

- **Exhibitions:** *Images of Haslemere: Watercolours by John and Edward Hassell.* 3rd November – 23rd December.
A picturesque view of the local area before the age of the railway.
- **Cards for Good Causes:** 20th October – 13th December. Charity Christmas cards sale.
- **Creative & Wellbeing Workshop:** *A crafty Christmas.* 21st November 7-9 pm. Join artist Diana Burch for a fun evening of Christmas-related arts and crafts
- **Tea and Talk:** Join the Museum's new curator, Sam Tabner as she shares what she has discovered about items from the Museum's ethnology collection. 29th November 2.30 pm

Family Events & Workshops:

- **Elmer & Wilbur:** listen to the story; make your own patchwork elephant; find the elephants hiding in the galleries. 3rd November 1.30-2.30 pm
- **Firework and Bonfire Evening:** Saturday 4th November 6.30 pm. Firework show (7.30); food; mulled wine, a bar and hot drinks
- **Marvellous Marsupials:** 5-11 years. To coincide with World Numbat day. Exploring the world of marsupials; related arts and crafts. 4 November 10.30 am-12.00 noon
- **Snail Trail:** Follow the story of one snail's trail around the garden and then make a trail of your own. 17th November 10.30- 11.30 am
- **Gruffalo:** Listen to the modern classic story and then make your own Gruffalo picture; find characters from the story in the museum's galleries. 1st December 1.30-2.30 pm
- **Good Ol' St Nicholas:** 5 -11 years. Learn about this Saint and some of the associated traditions from around the world. 2 December 10.30 am – 12.00 noon.
- **Visit Santa:** Santa will be at the Museum as part of the Christmas market. Visit him and receive a small gift. 3rd December 11 am – 3 pm
- **Christmas Decorations:** listen to a festive story and make a decoration to take home. 15th December 10.30- - 11.30 am
- **Haslemere Mummers:** Performance of a traditional play. 20 minutes of family fun 16th December 11 am.
- **Christmas Crafts:** 5-11 years. Make a variety of creative Christmas crafts to take home. 19th December 10.30 – 12 noon
- **Santa's Traditional Victorian Parlour:** Visit Santa to relax in his Victorian parlour 16, 20, 21 & 22 December 10.30am – 4.30pm. 23rd December 10.30- 2pm
18th December 10.30 -12 pm: special opening for families with a child who has additional needs such as an Autism Spectrum condition.

Haslemere Natural History Society www.haslemerenaturalhistorysociety.org.uk

- **Lectures**
Virtual presentation on Zoom: The Earthworm 13 January 2024
In the Night: Britain's nocturnal wildlife 3 February 2024
Swallows and martins 9 March 2024
- **Field Meetings:**
Winter Birds at Farlington Marshes 18th November 10.30 am.
Winter Birds at Frensham Great Pond 2nd December 10.30 am

Haslemere Town Council www.haslemeretc.org

- **Full Council meetings:** 16th November
- **Amenities meeting:** 30th November
- **Planning and Highways:** 9th November; 7th December
- **Grants:** 6th November
- **Infrastructure & CIL:** 30th November

The Arts Society Haslemere www.theartsocietyhaslemere.org

- **Study Day:** The Serious Business of being Funny – Giles the cartoonist . 7th November
- **Marie Bracquemond:** The Unknown Impressionist. 21st November
- **In The Frosty Season:** How the Romantics Invented Winter 5th December

Haslemere Musical Society www.hmsoc.org.uk

- **Centenary Concert** – Haslemere Hall. Chorus & orchestra. Beethoven; Mozart; Osgood
2nd December 7.30 pm
- **Come and Sing:** 3rd February 2024
- **March Concert:** 2nd March 2024
- **May Concert:** 11th May 2024

Haslemere Gardening Society: www.haslemere-gardening-society.co.uk/events

- **Talk:** Cottage Gardening. David Standing, former head gardener at Gilbert White's garden at Selborne. 22nd November 7.45 pm
- **Excursion:** Christmas Outing see the winter lights at Wisley. 13th December

Farmers' Market: First Saturday of every month. Haslemere High Street, 10 am – 2pm

Haslemere Christmas Market: 3rd December 10 am- 4 pm

Rotary Charity Fair: Haslemere Hall. 18th November 10 am – 3 pm

Concerts at St. Christopher's Church: www.hhhconcerts.org.uk

Lunchtime, afternoon and evening concerts

- **Mengyang Pan (piano):** 4th November 7.30 pm
- **Edward Leung (piano):** 19th November , afternoon concert 4pm
- **Sitkovetsky Trio:** 9th December 7.30 pm
- **Consone Quartet:** 27th January 2024, 7.30 pm
- **Chloe Piano Trio:** 16th March 2024 7.30 pm
- **Philip Berg (organ):** 27th April 2024 7.30 pm

Lunchtime Piano Series at 1 pm

- **Victor Braojos:** 14th February 2024
- **Damir Durmanovic:** 15th February 2024
- **Gabriele Sutkute:** 16th February 2024

Haslemere Hall www.haslemerehall.co.uk

- **Cinema screenings:** The Old Oak (15th November) The Great Escaper (10th & 22nd November) The Miracle Club (29th & 30th November) Golda (1st December)
- **Events via satellite:** Live screenings from the Royal Opera; Royal Ballet; Sadlers Wells.
- **Live Music:** Various from rock bands to classical
- **Live Theatre:** Pantomime 12th – 20th January 2024

Haslemere Repair Shop [Repair Café — Love Haslemere Hate Waste](#)

Volunteers repair a range of items, from electrical tools, bikes and clothing. Book on website

Haslemere Art Society www.haslemereartsociety.co.uk

- **Tuesday Group:** at the Museum: drawing and painting in a variety of styles and mediums 2-4
- **Café Sketching:** Lion's Den Cafe, Haslemere. Third Thursday of the month, 10-11 am.
- **Plein Air Painting:** Spring and Summer
- **Annual Exhibition:** 11th-21st October, Haslemere Museum

U3A Haslemere www.u3asites.org.uk/haslemere/contact

The Haslemere U3A has 60 active groups – check with the website.

Haslemere Library www.surreycc.gov.uk/libraries

Open 9.30- 5pm Tuesday – Saturday. Booking necessary for most events.

- **Library Direct Home Library Service** for vulnerable members of the community.
- **English as a Second Language Group:** Every Tuesday from 10.30 – 11.30 (free, no booking required)
- **Pebble Rhymetime:** For babies and toddlers – sharing nursery rhymes, action songs and percussion music. Wednesdays 10-10.30 am
- **Storytime:** Age 2-5. Fridays from 10 -10.30 am
- **Reading Groups**
Chatterbox: For children aged from 7. One Saturday a month 11.10 11.50 am . Check with library for dates.
Adult Reading Group: Group 1: First Wednesday of every month from 2.30 – 3.30 pm
Group 2: First Thursday of the month from 2.30 – 3.30 pm
- **Digital Buddy:** Help using the internet; IT related problems etc. Fortnightly on Tuesdays 10 – 12 noon. Book in advance

Remembrance Sunday

12th November. 11 am War Memorial, Haslemere High Street

Christmas Carols

14th December 6.00pm–7.30pm, Haslemere High Street

Sorry Madam
- The Haslemere Post Office has been close for some time.
But you can go online - Google Royal Mail, sign in, pay with a card
or Pay Pal, print your label or use your QR code to pay for it at
the Royal Mail Delivery office in King's Road Industrial Estate.
It's all very simple!

