



STEP UP!

The STEP SHORT NEWSLETTER

100 Years Ago.....

STEP SHORT Registered Charity No. 1143305

December 2015

Mole Cafe - 2015 sign off.

The Mole Cafe was a huge success for Step Short and for Folkestone this autumn. Organised and reopened with less than two weeks notice, it was busy every day and proved to be a good fundraiser for the charity. Sir Roger DeHaan generously gave the invitation to Step Short and he was very happy with the Cafe. For the last weekend the Cafe was visited by re-enactors from the Royal West Kent Regiment who gave displays of drill and really made the Cafe come alive as it was in WW1. Just like their forebears, they signed the visitor book and enjoyed a good cuppa. The pictures tell the story of their visit. A great time was had by all!



MOLE CAFÉ—2015 SIGN OFF.	1
AGM AT THE GRAND—REPORT	2
GENEALOGY DAY—CHRISTMAS CARDS,-SCHOOL VISIT	3
BOOK REVIEW—COTTER VC, PARIS MEMORIAL	4

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**Step Short
AGM 13th
November at
The Grand
Hotel on the
Leas.
Summary
Report.**

The Step Short Annual General Meeting was held at The Grand Hotel on the evening of the 13th November. Chairman Damian Collins MP opened the meeting and after the minutes of the last AGM were signed off, gave his report. Damian said that although 2014 had been a huge year for Step Short, 2015 had also been very successful in many ways. He praised Paul Emden and Geoff Tolson for the management of the accounts when all the Arch expenses and obligations were settled. This had also included overseeing all the final snagging and completion works. Damian thanked Ann Berry and all those who volunteered to operate the Mole Cafe on the harbour arm that had been a great success over twelve weekends. Damian thanked all those who had kept the website running and who had produced and contributed to the newsletter. The focus will soon be on The 2016 Somme and the 2018 Armistice anniversaries. There was still a lot to do!

The Treasurer's report was jointly presented by Paul and Geoff. Paul dealing with the generation of the end of years accounts and the financial position. Geoff dealing with the current position. Paul stated that the final costs of the Arch had been around £800,000 and gave a breakdown of where the funding had come from. At the year end Step Short had £9k in the bank with no debts or liabilities. A healthy position. £5k had been ring-fenced for the statue of a soldier project. A big issue is that Shepway Council wants to charge us £1.8k rates for using the Hub in the Tram Road Car Park. A copy of the accounts will be available on the website when they are signed off. Geoff related all the current year fundraising and said that at present we have a good balance of £17k in the bank. A vote of thanks was proposed and seconded for Paul Emden's hard work as Treasurer over four very busy years.

Ann Berry gave a report of the Events Committees' work which had included keeping the Hub open from April to October giving thanks to Carl Plummer who organised the rota volunteers. Step Short had a successful boot fair in June that raised £1k. We participated in Anzac Day, Armed Forces Day, Canada Day, 5 days at the War & Peace Revival Show and organised the annual August parade. This years parade was organised by John Wiggell but he cannot do it next year. Debbie Jones raised money at the Capel boot fair, and Mark Simmons ran two successful Genealogy days at the Hub. Buglers Bryan Walker and Kevin Bradley had sounded the last post at the Arch through the year. The Royal British Legion had followed Step Short's lead and also held small parades at the Arch on the 1st Sunday of the month. The big success of the year was the Mole Cafe, which was a great fund raiser. For 12 weekends volunteers had staffed the cafe. There were many appreciative comments in the new visitors book. Ann said that there were two ongoing projects, the Statue and the Step Short Folkestone Tapestry. Step Short had been working with Shepway, Folkestone Town Council and Go Folkestone on designing historic signs to be erected on the Leas on the reverse of the KCC Information Boards. Examples were available at the meeting. John Bailey gave a short update on the Tapestry project for 2018. Thanks were passed to the Folkestone & District Historical Society and Alan Taylor for their work on the exhibition at the Library.

Heather de Souza thanked the committee for their work and they then stepped down. After a show of hands, Geoff, Ann, Damian and Mark were re-elected to their posts of Treasurer, Co-Chair, Chairman and Secretary respectively.

Under AOB—The matter of more people being needed for the Mole Cafe in 2016 was raised (see page 4).

Photos copyright John Bailey—2015





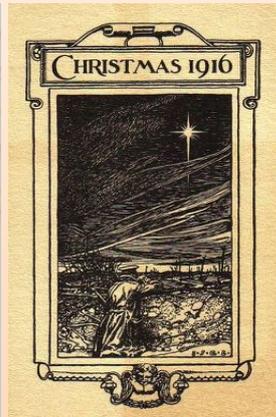
October Genealogy Day



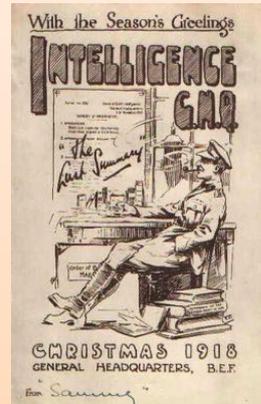
Jubilation as Marc Simmons finds family history data for one of our visitors. This was the second genealogy day of the year and Step Short has been able to find many records to assist people trace their ancestor's military history, medals and links to the Great War. Being able to search the Mole Cafe visitor books is always of great interest.

These days have been very popular and with higher numbers of visitors anticipated in the summer of 2016 we will try to run them again.

“It will be over by Christmas” That was the sentiment in 1914. However Lord Kitchener was right and a long war ensued that embraced 5 Christmas seasons. The troops were however determined that cards would be sent home from the front and many units had their own cards printed. Here is selection from various Corps, Divisions and Regiments 1915-1918.



*Happy Christmas to all
Step Short Members*



School Visit ! Step Short received a visit from the Mundella School year six pupils who visited the Garden of Remembrance and the Commemorative Arch. After a walk down the Road of Remembrance they visited the Step Short Visitor Centre where they researched some information on Walter Tull, the first black officer in the British Army. They completed a questionnaire about Folkestone's Great War history, then after receiving gift packs had some refreshments and returned to school.



Book Review—Forgotten Hero Corporal William Cotter VC



A chance encounter with a relative of Corporal Cotter led local historian Eamonn Rooney to research and write a book about the man and his family. William Cotter was born in Sidney Street Folkestone in February 1882. After a short period at sea in 1900-1901 he enlisted in the Army at Canterbury. His army career took him to Ponna in India, Crater in Aden with periods in Shornecliffe Camp. His army career was peppered with bouts of illness, ill-discipline and misconduct, frequently losing his corporals stripes. In 1905 he lost an eye in a street fight when he intervened to help someone. A glass eye was fitted at “public expense”. Leaving the Army in early 1914 he joined the reserve where he was liked and appreciated. When war broke out in August he immediately rejoined the Buffs, leaving for France in early September. The book details how Cotter distinguished himself in action in December 1915 and that he was recommended for the Distinguished Service Medal. It was in March of 1916 Cotter took part in the attack on a major German fortification, the Hohenzollern Redoubt where despite terrible wounds he led his men bravely in the attack which led to his Victoria Cross. The book also details the content of letters written nursing sister Katherine Luard who wrote home about Cotter’s last hours, the memorial to him in Sandgate and details of the family receiving his VC.

Eamonn has also conducted research on Cotter’s other family member’s military service including his father Richard Cotter who was at Rouke’s Drift (Zulu Wars). The book is a fascinating insight in the Cotter family, William Cotter himself and how he was recognised locally and nationally. The book is available direct from Eamonn Rooney at £4.60 including UK Postage, for International rates please contact Eamonn to check. Eamonn can be contacted direct via email—edmund44@outlook.com

The Mole Cafe NEEDS YOU



**Volunteers are needed for next years cafe opening—please contact Ann or Heather.
01303 278644 (A)
01303 269181 (H)**



On Monday 16th November Step Short Members laid a wreath at the Arch to commemorate those who died in the terrorist attack in Paris on the 13th.