



2014-18

The Main Feature

Season 39 - Issue 5

screening 8.11.18

Tonight's double bill starts with a film from local film group Circle Eight. The following background to these notes beautifully illustrates how links that we never knew about somehow come together when it counts...

Our long-time projectionist, John Myall, is a member of Circle Eight. They produced this documentary to pay tribute to the contribution of the people of Guildford to the war effort. When it was already booked for tonight's presentation, a member of WNCC who belongs to the West Surrey Family History Society spotted an article in their newsletter by one of the contributors to *Guildford in the Great War*, David Rose. He kindly agreed to an edited version appearing in this edition of *The Main Feature* – see page 2.

Guildford in the Great War



Circle Eight's locally acclaimed documentary, produced to mark the anniversary of the start of the First World War, recalling how the town's everyday life changed during the four years of hostilities between August 1914 and November 1918.

The film also recalls the 492 men from Guildford, who enlisted for active service on the Western Front and never returned to their home town.

**Narrated by
MATTHEW ALEXANDER**

If you are planning to visit northern France or Belgium you can visit some of the cemeteries maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) and other locations linked to Guildford's sons. Some of these towns and villages are on the railway line from Brussels to Ypres (Ieper).

Vlamertinghe Military Cemetery (burial place of Captain Francis Grenfell from East Clandon, first officer to be listed in the London Gazette for a VC awarded in World War I); **Tyne Cot** (the largest of the CWGC cemeteries) – as with the Menin Gate in Ypres, this cemetery is a memorial to men who have no known resting place; **Poperinge** (where 2nd Lieutenant Eric Poole, suffering from shell shock, was shot for desertion in 1916. His grave is in the New Military Cemetery); **Bapaume Post Military Cemetery**, resting place of Percy Parsons from St Catherine's, near Guildford; **Thiepval**, where Percy's brother Thomas Parsons is buried, near Reginald Oakley, son of the editor of the Surrey Advertiser - they died at the Somme in 1916; **Serre Road Cemetery No. 2** is the cemetery used for the closing shot.

We can highly recommend attending the evening ceremony at the Menin Gate in Ypres. The scale of the memorial is humbling and the ceremony moving in its simplicity. Be there early, the crowds are huge and the road closed well before the start time of 8.00pm.

GM / IM

The following is an edited version of an article published in 'Root and Branch', the newsletter of the West Surrey Family History Society, vol 45, no. 2, September 2018. It is used by kind permission of the author.

Great Uncle Charlie's First World War death plaque - by David Rose

I knew of my Great Uncle Charlie Tubbs from a young age when my dad pointed out his name to me on the war memorial in Guildford's Castle Grounds. He was paternal grandmother's brother.

Charles worked for a local grocer and enlisted with the Queen's (Royal West Surrey) Regiment in 1915. He died on October 2, 1918 of mustard gas poisoning in a field hospital in Dieppe, France.

Charles had a younger brother, Bill, who lived with his family in Woking Road, Guildford. His son, Les, who never married, lived in the same house all his life and died about eight years ago.



In 2016, out of the blue, I received an email from a Sally Robinson of Camberley, asking whether I was a relative of Charles Tubbs, as her husband, David, who is a builder, had dug up a plaque with his name on it while renovating a house in Woking Road, Guildford, a few years previously.

Their daughter, Ellie, had undertaken some research and found military details of Lance Corporal Charles Tubbs and discovered he came from Guildford. Further internet searches by her traced him to a film about Guildford during the First World War made in 2014 by the Circle Eight Film Group, in which I am featured talking about men from Guildford who enlisted during the war and mentioning my Great Uncle Charlie.

Ellie then traced me via The Guildford Dragon NEWS website that I write articles for and that is how I received the email.

I quickly emailed back explaining my family link. A reply came back saying they would like the plaque to be returned to me as it is part of my family's history.

Of all the many items, old pictures and so on I have in my collection as a local historian relating to the Guildford area, this has to be one of my most treasured possessions.

David Robinson explained how he was working at the house in Woking Road on behalf of its owners Guildford Borough Council, and while digging in the front garden to remove an old fish pond, the plaque was found, buried quite deep in the soil. Of course, it was the same house once occupied by Bill Tubbs and his son Les.



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The Levelling was made possible through the iFeatures program, which was Creative England's low budget filmmaking initiative supported by the BBC, the BFI and Creative Skillset. Applications are welcome from filmmakers who have an interest in telling stories set in the English regions (outside of the M25).

They awarded Hope Dickson Leach funding off the back of a string of well-received shorts—one of which, *Silly Girl*, was co-written by Ellie Kendrick, the lead actress in tonight's film. However, while the funding was the gift she had been waiting for, the budget was still fairly modest and forced her to shelve some potentially more elaborate (read: expensive) scripts. Ultimately, though, she believes 'this was a brilliant project for me to just go back to basics and kind of think, OK, what do I really love and think is important about cinema?'

"On the face of it, this could have been a story that took place anywhere. It is a universal enough experience. But to lift the story beyond a simple drama – to make it cinematic – I wanted the context to work with the content. I wanted a world where the themes and challenges of the personal story were reflected – possibly even created – by something larger than the family. Just as I was developing this idea, the floods of 2014 happened."

"As I was developing the idea the floods happened and they offered a context for the story that made it larger than it was. The film is about a family who don't communicate and the damage that does. It's about how enormous crises happen and we are offered a chance to change the way that we function or carry on and risk them returning."

She has huge respect for farmers and pays tribute to the real-life farmers that helped during the film's production. "It's a really difficult industry to be in," she says. "I wanted to make sure the complexities of that were in the film...it's not straightforward."

The film presents a raw unflattering view of the countryside. It might surprise those viewers fed on a diet of period dramas, or urbanites who are used to seeing such social realism closer to home.

Cast and crew got stuck in learning how to milk cows (Kendrick was particularly adept), and learning about a working farm's schedule (which includes a lot of time cleaning up cow excrement). Working with animals also had its challenges, especially on a modest budget."

The director stated "My relationship with nature isn't like you see in films which is all beautiful and gorgeous and people making love in the grass. I love it, but it's a much more primal space, and much more visceral. There is mud, there is dirt, there is life, there is death."

Ellie Kendrick said "I think it was really important in this film to have as much nature as possible, from the murmurations of the birds to Milo the dog" – a Somerset local, apparently – "and, of course, the beautiful hares. They are some of my favourite sequences of the film, possibly because I'm not in them and I don't have to look at my own mug. I think whenever you see nature or animals onscreen, it can really elevate a human story into something almost mythical."

"It was very important to Hope (Dickson Leach)" Kendrick says, not just to make it feel more genuine but because "you can't really recreate that area anywhere else". She also recalled that the cast and crew worked with a local action group, FLAG – Flooding on the Levels Action Group, and also shot the film on a real farm. "We shot on an actual working farm. The farming clothes, the overalls my character wears are actual farming gear".

Hope Dickson Leach recalled "The first time I went down and talked to some of the farmers, they were telling me about the death of all the wildlife, how there were owls falling out of the sky because they were starving – all the small animals had drowned – and it was so post-apocalyptic. But then six months later you go back and it's all back again. There's something really extraordinary about that kind of rebirth because, whereas our lives are so finite and so defined by our own experiences and the choices we've made, nature doesn't care and it just comes back.'

'I've been trying to get a feature done for a while. When I got on the set, if there was anything that ever went wrong, I would sit there and I'd go 'Stop it! Stop complaining! You've been fighting so hard to do this for so long. Just do it...and love it!'

Comments and reactions to: **Bar Bahar**

Score	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
	~	~	1	3	3	7	8	10	8	1	2	
No of reaction slips received =	43								Average Score = 6.26			

Thank you. Great choice for OWW. Great film. Fantastic soundtrack! **Great soundtrack!**
The liberation of Palestinian women? But how realistic? *I am not clever enough to understand*
Too loud, not enough time to read subtitles. Like watching paint dry! **Very well made**
Another unnecessary and unpleasant film with no conclusion *Don't talk to me about relationships*
What an unhappy ending - 3 lonely and unhappy girls **Superb**
Wissam should be castrated and then thrown off the balcony
Brave and instructive film, characters well defined and convincing
Brave film - Powerful in its intention and caused controversy
Sympathetic and engaging portrayal of non-conformity
Not the happiest of families but then it was quite typical
Complex narrative of Arab/Israeli, as never been told before
Interesting and not sure what I missed through not knowing the culture
Very difficult to rate this film without considering it within the Palestinian context
Nothing new! The only surprise was the amount of dope they smoked
3 young women share a flat, a lot of smoking ensues. Slightly dated with one dimensional characters - not much to challenge
Curious but ultimately uninvolved and rather pointless. Never have so many cigarettes been consumed to such little dramatic effect!
Fascinating insight into a world about which I know nothing. Interesting to imagine - and hope for - a better world thanks to strong women who show courage
Another good choice of film for OWW. Encapsulated well what it must be like not fitting into the culture and religion of one's family
Well done the Committee in finding such an unusual and stimulating film
Great strong female character. It's important this film was made in Israel. Our first film in this club - will definitely come again!
Lots of connotations of the "In Between" title as the film progressed - liked the short
Sympathetic and engaging portrayal of non-conformity - the short was fine by me
Loved the short - ordinary people getting on

As mentioned on the night, one member was unhappy with the short, which was made by Nuseir Yassin, a Palestinian from the town of Arraba, which is now within the borders of Israel. The member saw it as "highly political, presenting a particular viewpoint on an extremely contentious issue, while framed as wholly objective and incontrovertible". They suggested an alternative viewpoint could be read here EAPPI UK & Ireland Blogs and gave these links to highlight the criticisms others have made of by Nuseir Yassin:

- <https://www.middleeasteye.net/columns/nas-daily-normalising-israel-minute-time-1100208746>
- <http://thedailycougar.com/2018/04/19/nasdaily-misconstrues-conflict/>
- <https://mondoweiss.net/2017/12/palestine-native-informant/>

Position	Film	Average Score
1 st	Darkest Hour	8.08
2 nd	L'homme du train	6.71
3 rd	Bar Bahar (In Between)	6.26
4 th	Phantom Thread	5.16

**Next on
22 November:**

"This beautifully crafted character study pulls off most of the tough stuff it attempts with that extra dose of feeling, perspective, and poetry"

"Inspirational, insightful, and reaffirming of the critical importance and impact of music, competent teachers, and opportunity on our lives."

