

Tuesday 25th June 2024

Dear Friends

For regular readers of this column, it will come as no surprise that, having gone on retreat to Cornwall, this front page has an incident from it!

Milo the Marvelous Mongrel and I had walked for one and a half days. The first day took us from Newquay to Perranporth and, after surviving a very windy first night in the tent, we had set off for Portreath. The first day was seventeen very long, very weary miles. By the halfway point of the second day, we were on the cliffs just outside the beautiful Chapel Porth when I decided to sit for a while. We had watched the Kittiwakes perilously building nests on the sides of the enormous Cornish cliffs and had stroked the Shetland ponies used by the National Trust to keep the cliff tops clear. Milo was scared of them of course.

But what made me stop was a Chough (pronounced Chuff). When we were visiting this stunning part of God's creation, these incredible birds were nowhere to be seen. Ten or so years ago, they were reintroduced and now they are commonplace. But that doesn't stop them from being extraordinary! They are the Red Arrows of the Crow family, performing breath taking manoeuvres on the tops of the cliffs, they are stunning to watch. What made this one Chough stand out was that it was very bad tempered! Anyone who went near the cliff top would be told off by this grumpy crow, probably because it was protecting its nest a few centimetres below. When walkers came along, the bird squawked at them, flying directly at them, which was both hilarious and somewhat concerning due to the proximity to the cliff edge.

Milo and I sat for half an hour that Monday, watching...thinking...praying and thanking God for this unique experience. Surrounded by the sheer beauty of all He created, hearing the waves hitting the base of the cliff, meeting the people who wandered past reminded me that God is in all He has created. That we can see His hand in everything, even in a red billed black bird with a serious attitude!

Every Blessing,

Keith

Rev Keith Parr BSc MA (theo)

Keep reading to find out more about retreats and why Keith believes we all should take one!

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RETREATS

22 years ago, I had just joined Coventry Cathedral as Youth Minister. I was incredibly green, thought I was indestructible and that I had me and God sussed. So, when my boss told me that I had to take a retreat each year, I said 'do I have to?' He responded with 'take a retreat or you're fired' (with a big grin on his face).

I started researching what a retreat was. A retreat is time deliberately set aside for you and God. A time of prayer and Bible and quiet and thinking that has now become extremely precious to me - to the degree that it's non-negotiable. Usually, I take myself off to our little house in Scotland. This year I tried walking part of the Southwest Coast Path. How you retreat is down to you and finding what suits you, because what enables you to encounter God is really important. There are some things I believe are must-haves. A Bible, a book and some willingness to wait. This year I read the Book of Revelation, while reading a commentary on that Book, and as for the waiting, the Cornish cliff tops were great for that.

What I've found is that God speaks to me very clearly when I take myself away from the normal day-to-day. That week can guide the next year of both my ministry and personal walk with Christ. It blesses my Discipleship and because I have a very public ministry, my prayer is that it blesses my church. So, why not think about retreating? If you want some advice and guidance on what to do or where to go, be it solo retreat or a guided one, Karen and I would love to talk.

Keith

FOR INFORMATION

Keith and Karen are due to be on annual leave during July. As previously advised, Mr Arthur Meads (Esme's husband) will be leading our All-Age Service on Sunday 14th July and Louise Gilmartin will lead on 21st July. Our All-Age Communion Service will be on Sunday 28th July when Keith returns.

We are very grateful to all who are willing to lead our worship and prayers, read our Bible passages, take the offering plates around, display flowers, prepare Communion, play music, work magic with the IT, clean or maintain our premises, provide refreshments or open the Church for private prayer. We would grind to a halt without them! If you would like to help in any way, please have a word with a member of the Leadership Team (Keith, Tunde, Doreen, Beatrice, Lili, Ben or Julie).

PASTORAL CARE AND VISITS

If you would like to have a chat with our Minister, Rev Keith Parr, or would like him to visit you, please speak to him after the Sunday service, call him on 07999 027803 or email him at Minister@earlsfieldbaptist.org.uk. However, please call one of the Leadership Team if you need any help whilst Keith is on holiday.

ANOTHER MILESTONE!

Keith and Karen moved to Earlsfield on 23rd June 2021 – where has the time gone? We take this opportunity to say 'thank you' to them for their love, ministry and outreach in Earlsfield and beyond. Please keep both Keith and Karen in your prayers along with their children Nathan, Natalie, Natalie Lisa and Iona and the rest of their family.

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RENDEZVOUS

At our meeting on Thursday 6th June, it was “eye’s down and look in” – yes, we played bingo! We didn’t have cash prizes but rather a small chocolate biscuit, a popcorn or crisp puzzle (these are ideal if you are really good at puzzles and like a challenge) or, for the first full house. There was a packet of biscuits. Who needs a cash prize?!

We welcomed two new faces, one of whom was someone I’ve been asking to come along since we started the Club last year – I think it was the Bingo that finally tempted her! Let’s hope we see her again.

We decorated the hall with ‘Union Jack’ flags and bunting as it was the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day landings. We wanted to show that we remembered it as it was an important day in history. Many of us weren’t alive then (and, without this event, many of us probably wouldn’t be here now) but some of our Rendezvous members were there, even if they were only children at the time.

Keith gave his talk relating to numbers as we were doing the bingo and then related it to the D-Day landings, which was very poignant. I know we covered the wars at school but I never knew that the D-Day landings was nearly called off due to a school that had made up crosswords for the paper and used secret code words that they had heard from the soldiers at a base near their school! (see “The Crossword Puzzle which nearly spelled the end for D-Day at the end of this newsletter.)

Our next meeting will be on **Thursday 4th July** when we will be having a scone with cream and strawberries (or strawberry) :)

If you haven’t yet been before, why not come and join us?

Dawn Smith



BUSY SUNDAYS

We are now able to come together to worship our Lord in three ways on Sundays:

11.00 am Morning Worship is held at EBC every Sunday with communion included on the 3rd Sunday of the month. The service includes praise, prayer and Bible teaching. This service is also available on Zoom for those unable to attend in person. Joining details are elsewhere in the newsletter.



11.20 am “BLAST!”(Believe, Learn And Seek Truth) – our Sunday School for primary school aged children meets separately during Morning Worship.

COMFORT

6.30 pm “COMFORT” – an evening meeting for about an hour for people who have questions about the Christian faith and those who want to spend a quiet time with our Lord in prayer and meditation.

Everyone is welcome to come along to the Morning Worship and/or to **COMFORT**. Obviously, **BLAST!** is for children!! Introduced at the beginning of May, there are now around ten people who regularly come to **COMFORT** – why not come along too?



“The Lounge” is run by three Christian organisations active in Wandsworth:

- Keeping Families Together
- Earlsfield Baptist Church
- Youth for Christ

Meeting every Thursday during term time, The Lounge offers some space for the young people who pass our doors every school day to come and be together, and to hear about Jesus.

If you feel able to help, we would love for you to join us (subject to DBS and training).

**Please continue to pray for all these activities,
the people who lead or assist and all those who attend**

If you have any concerns or wish to make constructive comments on these events, our regular services, house groups or any other activities at EBC, please have a word with Keith or one of the Leadership team or drop them a note or an email. We don't know how you feel unless you tell us!

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ALL AGE COMMUNION SERVICE: SUNDAY 28TH JULY AT 11.00 AM

On the third Sunday of each month, our service, which will include Communion, will be for **all members of our Family – young and old**. Please come along to worship our Lord with all members of our Church family.

The Sacraments (bread and wine) are usually served to those in Church but if you are joining the Service by Zoom, please have your bread and wine available.



MISSION FOCUS FOR JULY:

“HOME MISSION”

As a member of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, Earlsfield Baptist Church has always supported Home Mission by giving up to 5% of our general income if possible - £100 per month and the remainder from our Mission Focus Communion offering. If you are able to give, please use the envelopes provided in church during the month of July. Thank you.

THE HISTORY OF HOME MISSION

"It is false economy to starve an Andrew Fuller!"

It's the 1912 Baptist Assembly and General Secretary, JH Shakespeare, is in full flow. Citing the early plight of the great 18th century Baptist theologian, Andrew Fuller, he explained how Fuller's salary from his church at Soham was "inadequate to provide for the expenses of a rising family... He was greatly depressed and nearly brought down by sorrow and sickness to the grave."

Andrew Fuller, of course, as all those present knew, had played a key role in the founding of the Baptist Missionary Society. He was "the greatest theologian we had at the end of the 18th century."

Shakespeare was invoking Fuller because he had moved a motion to adopt a new scheme: the Ministerial Settlement and Sustentation Scheme, and the accompanying Sustentation Fund which would pay for it. The fund would enable central financial support for mission, particularly to support the ministries of small churches which could not pay a stipend.

It proved a masterstroke: Shakespeare's Assembly address was 'rapturously received' according to Ian Randall in *The English Baptists of the 20th Century* and the resolution passed unanimously. Not everyone was in agreement with this new direction for the denomination, but effective mission was the goal and Baptists responded with their pockets too. Just two years on, Shakespeare was able to announce 'with enormous satisfaction' that the initial funding target of £250,000 (around £29m today) for the **Sustentation Fund** had been reached. The Fund would produce an annual income of £15,000 to help cash strapped churches pay their minister a stipend, as well as fund other denominational initiatives. This initial capital would be supported with annual offerings of £5,000. In 1917, more than 460 grants to ministers were made. Sustaining and supporting ministry from shared funds had become an integral part of Union life.

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Churches needed to act together

This was a key marker in the story of Baptists Together Home Mission, but in many ways the story can be traced back much further. Baptists have always been a missionary people. Believers' baptism and Christian discipleship are personal responses to hearing and believing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. **It is the duty and privilege of every Baptist church to bear witness to this Gospel in deed and word.** But from the start it was clear that individual churches could not adequately fulfil this call from God on their own, and therefore they needed to act together.

Historically, one of the principle ways they did this was through their associating together with other Baptist churches, which enabled them to support each other and to co-operate in this missionary enterprise.

Another way of working together in mission and evangelism was through societies established specifically for that purpose. The Baptist Missionary Society, formed in 1792, was the most famous of these, but there were others devoted to mission at home.

A Baptist Home Missionary Society began its life in London in 1797, and over the years supported many itinerant evangelists. The Baptist colleges, which were themselves expressions of co-operation between the churches, also sent their students out to preach as part of their training. There was a biblical imperative behind this co-operation: on the one hand, the strong helping the weak, and also local churches reaching out to support one another. These are principles laid down in the New Testament.

A national strategy for the dawning of a new century

As the 19th century drew to a close, many began to feel that the different ways in which churches co-operated in mission at home, through associations, societies and colleges, should be better organised. There needed to be a national strategy to cope with the demands of the modern world. The obvious way of doing this was through the Baptist Union.

Under the dynamic leadership of Shakespeare, General Secretary of the Union between 1898 and 1924, a series of reforms were undertaken with the aim of enabling churches to work together nationally, rather than in the somewhat piecemeal way of the past. Money was raised for the Union to support church planting and other missionary initiatives: the first major project he undertook was the promotion of what was called a **Twentieth Century Fund** for the denomination. The goal was to raise £250,000 for evangelising and church extension, student scholarships, a new Baptist church house in London, and educational and other projects.

Despite this being a massive target, the churches responded to the fresh challenge put before them. In 1902 the fundraising campaign was successful, not so much 'due to old loyalties as to new enthusiasm', noted Ian Randall in *The English Baptists of the 20th Century*. 'This Fund was an astonishing achievement and signalled Baptist denomination renewal.'

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Over the next few years, processes for ensuring that ministers were properly trained and paid were put in place; various different funds were amalgamated and put under the stewardship of the Union; a new order of deaconesses to engage in urban mission was established; a scheme to facilitate the movement of ministers between churches was set up. ('The number of new initiatives at the beginning of this century makes breathtaking reading', wrote David Coffey in *The Home Mission Story*). So that these initiatives could be sustained, an annual financial appeal to the churches was made (the Sustentation Fund) – and here we have the official beginnings of Baptists Together Home Mission.

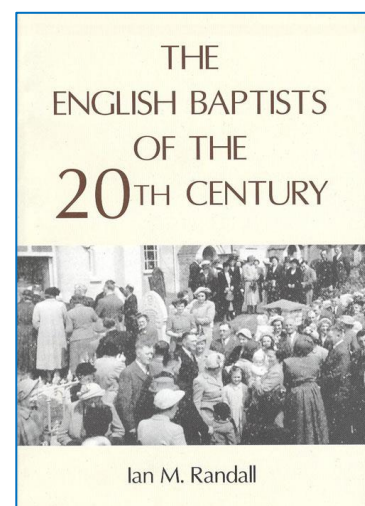
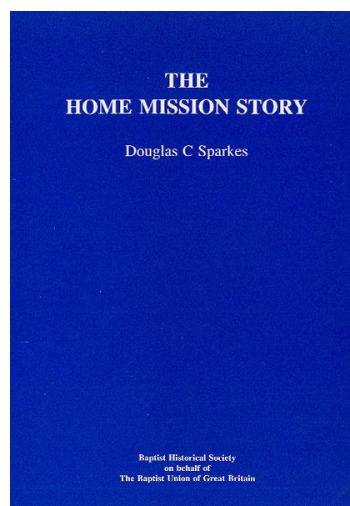
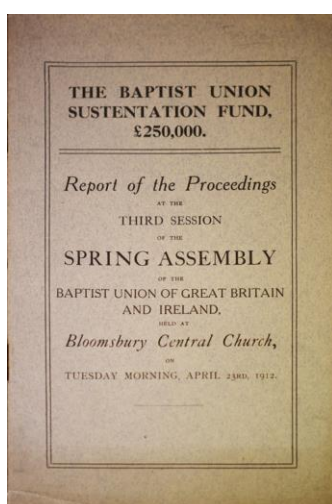
Developments across the years

The annual appeal has continued ever since, consistently adapted to meet the challenges of the day. In the 1940s, it became the new **Home Work Fund**, which aimed to secure uniformity of treatment for all Associations and an agreed ministerial stipend for those in receipt of grants. In 1970 it became the **Home Mission Fund**. Its scope has broadened into the 21st century: Home Mission grants are now made by Associations – a change which arose from the 2012 Futures Process – with a renewed focus on mission.

Douglas Sparkes, author of 1995's *The Home Mission Story*, stated that throughout the history of Home Mission 'it has not been possible consistently to sustain the level of income to meet demand.' Factors have been the general economic climate impacting on church finances, alongside an emphasis on the local church overriding concepts of responsibility for other churches.

'Over the years, Home Mission in its various forms has achieved so much', he concluded. 'So much more could be accomplished if it was given in all places the priorities that Baptists ought to accord it.'

This article by Baptist Minister, Peter Shepherd, first appeared in the Autumn 2019 edition of Baptists Together magazine.



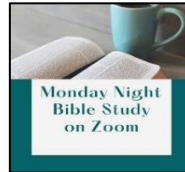
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We would love to get everyone involved with one of these groups. A new Alpha course is being planned – please speak to Keith if you are interested. If you are willing to hold a small group in your own home, please speak to Keith.

MONDAYS

7.30 pm to 8.30 pm. Zoom joining details are sent out by email each Monday.



EVERYONE IS WELCOME TO JOIN THIS ZOOM CALL

TUESDAYS

We continue to meet at the **Manny Dartin's Café** at **11.00 am** for our Tuesday group. Open to all – please come and join us. They serve tea and soft drinks too if coffee isn't your thing!

The **Manse House Group** also continues to meet weekly on **Tuesdays** at **6.00 pm** at 27 Ellerton Road, SW18 3NG. Discussions on any subject or topic that arises. It's relaxed and informal. If you struggle to get up the hill, please let us know and we will happily run an EBC taxi service (particularly after the meeting to get you home safely.)

WHEN OUR DOORS ARE OPEN, PEOPLE COME IN!

Our Church is open to all whenever possible at different times during the week for an hour or so. Please drop in for a cuppa and a chat or to spend a quiet time with our Lord.



SUNDAY SERVICES

Thank you to everyone involved in preparing for and leading our Sunday services. They don't 'just happen'. **If you would like to be more involved (ie not just "Sunday Christians" by leading our prayer times, reading the Bible passage, singing or playing an instrument, please speak to Keith. All help would be gratefully received – don't be shy!**

Please be encouraged to come in person to Sunday services in Church at 11.00 am so that you can physically meet others in our Church Family. However, all services continue to be available on Zoom if you are unable to attend in person. Here are the joining instructions:

- **Join Zoom Meeting from computer or device**
 - <https://zoom.us/j/98894345143?pwd=eUdkNWJFakl2Q044V1JBZEdrMFh1dz09>
 - Meeting ID: 988 9434 5143
 - Passcode: 769098
- **Dial in from landline phone – standard rates apply**
 - 020 8080 6591 or 020 8080 6592
 - Meeting ID: 988 9434 5143 followed by #
 - Participant number: this can be bypassed with #
 - Passcode: 769098 followed by #

These details are also used for our Monday Zoom Bible Study Group so keep them handy!

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PRAYER TEXTING

Please also join the Prayer Texting Group. Just text **07579 796157** – no name needed – and your number will be added to the distribution list. You can also phone this number from your landline and leave a message. Prayer requests are circulated daily to all in the distribution group, quite often with a ‘thought for the day’ too. No other action is required from you – you only need to pray! Please keep all your Church Family in your prayers and perhaps contact them by phone or letter or card to let them know you are thinking of them.



Thank you for your support of the recent appeals from Amelie and Louise. So far, Amelie raised just under £1000 (£200 target) for The Little Princess Trust by having her plaits cut off and Louise doubled her target by raising £700 for Mind by taking part in the London to Brighton Bike Ride.



PATHFINDER DOGS – Partnering blind people to independence

<https://www.pathfinderdogs.org/fundraising/recycling>

Please save your plastic bottle tops and used postage stamps for this charity. Place them in separate bags and drop them into the tub in the Church foyer. Lesley sends them to the charity and has recently received a letter of thanks as set out below.

A reminder that old postcards (with their stamps) can be sent to Mission Aviation Fellowship. Ask Julie for details or put them in the tub in the Church foyer.

AND FINALLY The article mentioned in **RENDEZVOUS**

“The Crossword Puzzle Which Nearly Spelled The End For D-Day”

To end WWII in Europe, the Allies planned a massive assault on Normandy, France, in 1944. Over 5,000 ships, 1,200 planes, and almost 160,000 men were poised to invade Europe from the British Isles, when something almost put a stop to it – a series of crossword puzzles.

It all started with the Dieppe Raid on 19th August 1942. Dieppe is also in Normandy but further North, which was where over 6,000 Allied troops, mostly from Canada, attacked at 5 AM. They had four main goals: (1) to prove that it was possible to capture a slice of Nazi-occupied Europe, (2) to boost Allied morale, (3) to gain intelligence, and (4) to destroy coastal defenses and other sensitive installations.

They failed. By 3 PM, almost 60% of the invaders had been killed, captured, or were fleeing back to Britain. So, of course, the Allies wanted to know why.

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The likeliest explanation was that the Germans had been warned of the attack. But how? Suspicion fell on *The Daily Telegraph*, a British paper still in business today. It wasn't that the broadsheet gave advanced notice of the invasion... at least not openly.

But they did (and still do) have a crossword puzzle section, and that's where suspicion fell. Because two days before the Dieppe invasion, the clue, "French port" was given. And the solution was "Dieppe," given the following day – the day *before* the invasion.

Coincidence? Military Intelligence, Section 5 (MI5) didn't think so, so they looked into it. It turned out that the man responsible for the crossword section was Leonard Sydney Dawe – the headmaster of Strand School. Given that Dawe was a veteran of WWI and that nothing linked him to Nazi Germany, MI5 concluded that it was just that – a chilling coincidence.

The Strand School for boys in south London no longer exists, but when the Germans began their bombardment of the city in 1939, Strand was moved to Effingham in Surrey – close to where many American and Canadian forces were based. Believing that the war was turning in the Allies' favour, the Third Washington Conference (also called the Trident Conference) was held in Washington, DC in May 1943. It was there that plans for an Allied invasion of Sicily, France, and the Pacific were discussed.

The French invasion was called Operation Overlord. It was to take place on 5th June 1944 and involve a series of joint sea and air landings along the Normandy coast. Rather than mass themselves at one spot, however, they were to land at five different areas according to nationality.

The Americans were to land at two places. The first was on the left bank of the Douve estuary – codenamed Utah Beach. The second was the stretch which included Sainte-Honorine-des-Pertes, Saint-Laurent-sur-Mer, and Vierville-sur-Mer – referred to as Omaha. The British were also given two landing sites – the first along Saint-Aubin-sur-Mer to Ouistreham (Sword Beach), as well as the strip from Arromanches-Les-Bains, Le Hamel, and La Rivière (Gold Beach). As for the Canadians, they were assigned the stretch from Courseulles, Saint-Aubin, and Bernières (Juno Beach). To ensure the quick off-loading of cargo, portable bridges called "Mulberry Harbors" were built. Ships would tow these to France, assemble them at sea, then drive equipment onto the beaches. Since the invasion was massive, there was no way to keep it a total secret from the Germans. The solution, therefore, was to keep them guessing as to exactly when and where the invasion would take place.

So the Allies launched Operation Bodyguard. This was a series of diversions which convinced the Germans that Normandy was simply a distraction, while the main invasion was to take place elsewhere. Although the Germans bought it, they didn't want to take any chances. As a result, they stretched their forces thin in a desperate attempt to cover all of their bases. To keep them at it, absolute secrecy was vital.

Then, in February 1944, one of *The Daily Telegraph's* crossword answers was "JUNO." The following month, it was "GOLD," and the month after that, it was "SWORD." Coincidence? MI5 thought so. But when the next puzzle included the clue, "One of the US," they began to wonder. The next day, the answer given was "UTAH." Now they started to worry. As soon as the May 22nd edition came out, MI5 anxiously grabbed a copy.

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Scanning the crossword section, they found yet another suspicious clue – “Red Indian on the Missouri River.” And what was the answer given the next day? “OMAHA.” So now they were thinking, “Hmm...”

It got worse. The May 27th edition had another damning clue – “Big-Wig.” And the answer was? “OVERLORD.” The clincher came on June 1 – four days before lift-off. The solution to 15 Down was “NEPTUNE.”

The MI5 hadn't bothered talking to Dawe about the Dieppe incident, but now they had no choice. They arrested him at his school to the astonishment of the students and staff, before bundling him into a car. They then banned the paper's next publication in case “DDAY” appeared in the next crossword. Dawe was released *after* the invasion but refused to speak about his ordeal till 1958. He admitted that they did turn him “inside-out,” and had D-Day turned into another Dieppe, he might have been shot. So was it all just a coincidence? For many years, everyone thought so... at least till 1984 when Ronald French (a former student at Strand) came forward.

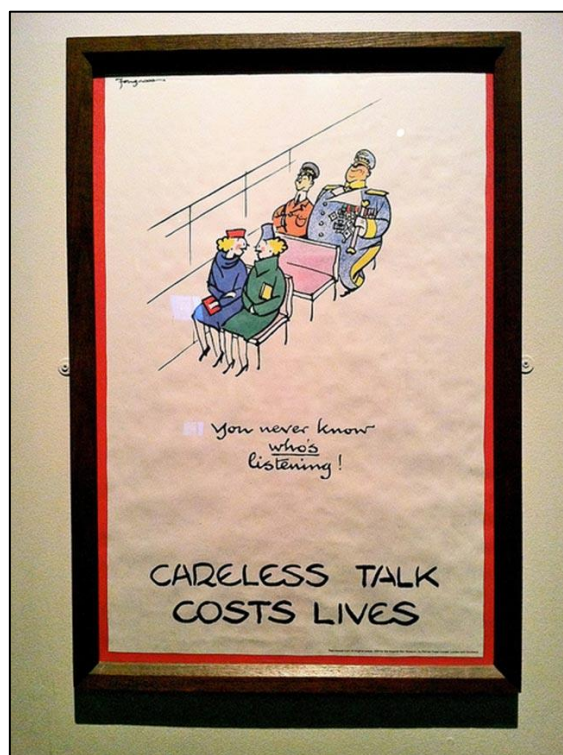
Dawe *didn't* create crossword puzzles, apparently. He instead had students arrange words on a grid, and when he was satisfied, provided clues to solve them by. Then he'd send the finished work to the paper, taking credit for the work.

According to French and other former students who later came forward, *everyone* in Surrey knew the code words. How? Because they all hung around the Americans and Canadians.

French didn't know what the words meant, only that the servicemen often said them. So when told to work on the crossword puzzles, he included the codes. After his release, Dawes confronted French and accused him of putting the entire country at risk.

Despite their own secrecy, the MI5 had apparently forgotten to tell the army to keep their mouths shut.

Feb 20, 2018 **Shahan Russell, Guest Author**



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