

Moffattalia

The Journal of Clan Moffat UK



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Madam Jean Moffat of that Ilk

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Chairman's Report

It has been an interesting year as far as our committee is concerned. We have lost Hazel Crammond who has been one of the mainstays of the clan association for so many years. Paul Moffat has resigned as Treasurer, and will be replaced by Alison provided that her appointment is ratified at the AGM. Bunty Davies will take over as Treasurer but will have to give up the post of Secretary. We have decided to appoint Lesley White as the new Secretary, but again that will need to be ratified at the AGM. Betty Telford has been Acting Website Administrator for many years, and has at last been relieved of those duties following the appointment of Helen Mason. And, of course, as mentioned in the last newsletter, I have taken over as chairman following the resignation of David Kennedy.

The sad thing is that our committee is ageing and we are not attracting new and younger members. How to get new members is very problematic, and the best idea we have come up with is to join Facebook where we might be able to raise our profile. The last AGM was very poorly attended, so it may well be that there are some of you out there who have other and better ideas of how to go about getting new members, and I would be very grateful if any suggestions could be forthcoming. Re-reading some of the early newsletters, I was struck by David Kennedy Moffat's assertion that the our clan association was, in the early days, the fastest growing of them all. Sadly we seem to have flattened out, and without new and younger members we are doomed to shrink as older members begin to die off !

Your kinsman,

George



Clan Chief Madam Jean Moffat of that ilk



Dear Members,

Well it seems as though spring has sprung early. Today is beautiful as I write but I am well aware it is still February and a lot can happen in March! Most importantly for me and Robin is that we will be moving house! It has taken us a while to find a buyer and the right house to move to, but hopefully it will all go through next month.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as can make it in August for our annual get together and AGM.

I am very pleased with the fact that the Website is now up and running again and that we are on Facebook too. I would like to thank Helen Mason for getting it all going and think she has done a great job. I was keen to have a Facebook page as I am hoping that might attract more young people.

Also don't forget that we will have our American cousins visiting Moffat next year so if you can't make this year, do try and come next year. There will be several events to attend.

Spero Meliora

Genealogist's Report

The Database continues to grow, and the count as of the March 2019 Edition was at 42,460. The extra names consist mainly of spouses contracted during the period 1911-1939, and children born during this period. Actually, my own interest in genealogy was fired up when I came across an old photograph of the gravestone of my great-grandfather Alexander Moffat (1843-1902), his wife, his eldest son who died aged 24, and 3 infant deaths of which I was hitherto wholly unaware. No-one in the family could tell me where it was situated, although I felt sure it was too large to have been casually removed or destroyed. Consequently, I am delighted that my relative Helen Mason took on the case, and succeeded brilliantly, as she explains elsewhere in this issue.

On 20th December 2018, we said goodbye to Donald George Moffat, born Plymouth 26th December 1930, who just passed away. His was a prolific career as an actor in stage, films and television. He married actress Anne Murray in 1954; moved to USA in 1956; they had a daughter, Wendy, and a son, Gabriel, before divorcing in 1968. He later married actress Gwen Arner. Donald Moffat died six days before his 88th birthday in Sleepy Hollow, New York, of complications from a stroke. He is survived by his wife, four children, 10 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Another friend who has died is Andrew Moffat, of Hamilton, Lanarkshire. He passed away on 3rd January 2019, aged 79 after a long battle with cancer. He was very proud of his membership of Clan Moffat and left many pieces of memorabilia. Andrew told me that as a boy, he had a gut feeling that the Moffats had a clan and a tartan. He contacted the late Clan Chief, Francis Moffat, and was honoured by the invitation to tea with him and his wife at their house in Moffat. Andrew had had a colourful life, aged 15, he took a job as "messman" on a Greek tramp steamer the SS Poli, and subsequently joined the Royal Navy on a 10-year contract. He saw service in the Far East, India, South Africa and the Mediterranean. He was on the Icelandic Patrol during the Cod Wars. It was during his tour of duty in the Mediterranean that he met his first wife, Vassiliki, when the Greek he had learned aboard SS Poli came in useful. They married in Athens, 1963. After leaving the Navy, he and Vassiliki moved to Milton Keynes, but the strain of long hours as a security guard took its toll on their relationship, and after 18 years of marriage, they divorced. Andrew moved back to Scotland, and married Janet McWhirter in 1984, and they lived happily together for nearly 35 years. Andrew put pen to paper, and described the hardships of his early years, plus his exciting life at sea. This was published in the Clan Moffat Newsletter in October 2009, and will repay a second reading. Andrew painted a portrait of Clan Chief, Mme Jean Moffat, and asked his executor to pass it on to Jean. I am grateful to Andrew's niece, Debbie Neil (m.s. Moffat) for this information.

Another Andrew Moffat in the news hails from Birmingham. He is a primary school teacher, and has pioneered the teaching of LGBT rights and equalities to children. In 2016, his school was rated by OFSTED inspectors as outstanding, recognising the importance of Andrew's project, commenting that the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength, the school is inclusive, and celebrates diversity. However, he is running into opposition from conservative Muslim parents, who feel that children are being taught about same-sex couples and gender identity at too young an age. Andrew was awarded an MBE in 2017 for his work in equality education, and now has been nominated as Britain's most outstanding teacher, and has been short-listed for a \$1M global education award. The prize was set up to highlight the important role teachers play in society, and the winner will be announced next month at a ceremony in Dubai, during the Global Education & Skills Forum.

It's always fun to follow the career of bubbly personality Scarlett Moffatt. Fresh from her triumph as "Queen of the Jungle", she is now getting invitations to feature on national television. I tuned in one evening to see her take a serious amount of money for charity on the show *"The Chaser"*. After a rocky start, Scarlett then found her form and could not be caught. She also appeared in *"Room 101"*, in which Frank Skinner invited her to put her pet hates into the dreaded Room 101. Crocs, for example, "Why ever", asked Scarlett, "have waterproof shoes with holes in them?" We also learned some weird events from earlier in her life. Such as when returning home with her friend Zoe, after a costume party which both had attended dressed as burglars, she found her own house had just been burgled. And having won a goldfish at a fairground, she dropped the package containing the fish, but it survived when Scarlett took it home in a conveniently handy bottle of ribena. She told all of this with a commendably straight face to Rob Brydon on *"Would I lie to You?"*

Colin Moffat,
Genealogist, Clan Moffat UK,
Kingston-on-Thames, February 2019

Secretary's Report

Bunty Davies

buntydavies99@gmail.com

This year's AGM will be held on the weekend of August 10th 2019 at 2.30pm in the Proudfoot Centre .

The committee meeting, for those involved, will be held at 10.30am at the Proudfoot Centre on the same day.

Our dinner this year will be at the Buccleuch Arms at 6.30pm for 7pm on Saturday 10th August. Lesley will again be organising this, but please contact me or Lesley at lesley.white46@gmail.com if you are interested. Lesley will send you a menu for the meal – we need to have numbers and choices by the end of June, please.

We are not trying to arrange anything else this year because of the following:-

Please remember that our 2020 meeting will be at the end of July, when the American part of Clan Moffat are proposing a visit. They will probably be here for a week, so we need to extend our weekend by at least a couple of days to meet and socialise with them. Please try to come and also to come up with ideas so that we can make it a good weekend for all of us.

Paul, our Treasurer, will be retiring this year, and also leaving the Committee. I have said that I would be willing to take on this job, if approved at the AGM, but then I would need to retire as Secretary. Fortunately, one of our committee, Alison Parfitt who was co-opted earlier in the year, would be willing to take this on, again if approved. If anyone else wishes to put their name forward for either of these positions, please let me know.

Hoping to see you in August

Bunty

Ecclefechan Butter Tart

For the Pastry:

4oz(100g) plain flour

2+half oz(60g) butter

1oz(25g) caster sugar

1 egg yolk

For the Filling:

1 egg

3oz(75g) soft brown sugar

2oz(50g) melted butter

1 dspn wine vinegar

4oz(125g) mixed dried fruit

1oz(25g) chopped walnuts

Preheat the oven to 350F/180C or gas mark 4

Make up the pastry first. Rub the fat into the flour, add sugar and make a well in the centre. Drop in the egg yolk and put your fingers into it and start bringing in the dry ingredients. It is important to keep the egg mixture together, kneading in the rest gradually, otherwise this type of pastry can be crumbly and difficult to handle. Knead with both hands to make a smooth, pliable dough which will roll out easily without cracking. The very slight heat from your hands helps to bring the dough together without 'oiling' it. Roll out and line an 8" (20cm) fluted flan case with the pastry and then greaseproof paper. Fill with baking beans and bake blind for 15 minutes.

In the meantime make the filling.

Mix the sugar, butter and egg together then stir in the vinegar, mixed fruit and nuts. Remove baking beans and greaseproof paper from the pastry case, pour filling into it and bake for 30 minutes. Serve hot or cold with cream or ice cream.

Recipe supplied by Pam Moffat

Reflections on life: 1885 to 1974

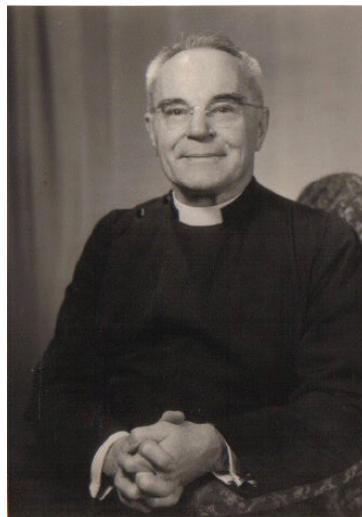
by Edward Knowler Moffatt MA, BD, 1971-73

Compiled and Edited by Peter C. Moffatt, 2017

Abridged for Moffatalia by Colin Moffat, 2019

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Edward Knowler Moffatt was born 8.10.1885, Barnes, Surrey, and died aged 66 on 6.8.1974, Toronto, Canada. He was the great-grandson of William Moffatt (1773-1815), who had made his fortune in the merchandising and brokerage of tea. One of William's sons was George Moffatt, MP, (1806-1878) tea merchant and purchaser of Goodrich Court, Herefordshire. Another son was Thomas James Moffatt (1799-1863), also a tea broker, who lived in the City of London, and at Witney, Oxfordshire. At least two of Thomas' sons were tea brokers: William Early Moffatt (1828-1870) and Robert Moffatt (1841-1919). Robert and his wife, Grace Hyde, had 7 children, of whom Edward was the fifth. Edward's life was within the Anglican ministry. He emigrated to Canada in 1906, and went back to England eight years later to claim his bride, Annie Margaret Hyde, who had waited patiently for him to complete his education in Canada. Edward Moffatt crafted his memoirs between 1971 and 1973, after Annie's death. These beautifully handwritten autobiographical notes were filed in a box of papers. After his death, his youngest daughter, Doris Edith Moffatt (1924-2015) kept the papers buried in a box with other belongings. When she died, her niece and executor, Mary Beth Moffatt-Sinclair discovered the papers. I (Peter C. Moffatt) have had the pleasure of compiling, editing and annotating the text and adding available pictures, and publishing them privately in a limited edition, distributed within the family. It is regrettable that Edward's own children probably never got a chance to read his story. It is my hope that this account will prove interesting and informative to his grandchildren and great grandchildren in the future. We in Clan Moffat are grateful to Peter for permitting this abridgement of Edward's memoirs, over several issues of Moffatalia. Herewith are "these unpublishable memoirs" now published.



Rev. Canon Edward Knowler Moffatt MA, BD

Early Life

My father, Robert Moffatt of London, England born 1841, and my mother, Grace Hyde of Witney, Oxon, born 1848, were married in 1875 and went for their honeymoon to China, bringing back many treasures which fascinated me as a boy. I was the fifth child of this union, born at Caversham Lodge, Barnes on October 18, 1885. My baptism took place on November 18, 1885 in the parish of Barnes, Surrey.

I find only a very dim recollection of the first five years but can visualize myself writing a play and making Gilbert and our nurse Laura Marriott (a sweet and saintly girl) take part in its absurdity when we solemnly invited "the family" to be an audience. All I can say truthfully is that we did not need to act the part of two greedy little boys stuffing themselves at the table, served by Laura, and chanting a song of which the kindest Muse would disdain inspiration, entitled *Two Bonifacio's Eating Their Meal*.

I remember that my brother and I had to meet our elders every Sunday after breakfast and declaim a passage from Shakespeare or recite a poem, and then without book or prompter say the Collect for the Day. How fortunate I was to have as governess from six years old until nine a woman of high moral principles and stern discipline. She taught me how to see a connection between English, French and Latin, how to compare the differences and likenesses of three languages, even though one was ancient and two were modern. I had to be accurate with French regulars and irregulars and with Latin declensions and conjugations. Not one slip was permitted when I declaimed the purple passages of the Bard. Occasionally Mother would ask Miss Norris if she might be part of a lesson, perhaps to accustom me to hear my own voice in the presence of two exacting, if humane, critics.

At nine years of age I went to a Prep School in our neighbourhood where the headmaster, G. Vowles, taught me the elements of Greek, something of Molière and Racine, Caesar and Tacitus, Algebra, and Euclid. He prepared me for entrance exams to Merchant Taylor's School and I owed it to him and Miss Norris that my name headed the list of successful candidates and entitled me to a scholarship.

Perhaps one of the clearest remembrances of my early boyhood was the sight of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Procession. My father knew the partners of Philip's Atlas Company and secured a window of their premises on Ludgate Hill for the use of our family. I was not then 12 years old but many of the details of that wonderful march of empire have remained in my memory. It must have been my first genuine realization of the size and responsibility of the British Empire. So many parts of the world offering us glimpse after glimpse of British might, British order, and British know-how. So many neutral countries like France and the U.S.A. showing homage to the representative of all that vast conglomeration of peoples under one flag – a frail but dignified old widow whose passing-by we cheered vociferously.

Less than four years later I stood with my brother, Bob, and his future wife, Bessie, in Hyde Park to witness the passing-by of the same lady (the great Queen and Empress) as drums and fifes played Chopin's Funeral March, and we heard many say – (and how truly!) – “a great era is over. England will never be the same”.

Was I accident prone as a boy? A football shirt was nearly my undoing when its dye caused such an infection that I wasted away during eight weeks and was brought back to health by means of yeast, applied externally and internally and by bluestone. Another time I bathed in a forbidden pool and paid for my disobedience with a swollen leg that our G.P. thought would have to come off. It was then that my beloved cousin, Rachel Bean, who was a nurse, came to tend me during the crisis. Incidentally I may say that sixty years later she left me half her small estate. On a third occasion, I cycled down a hill by Barnes Bridge, lost control and ran under the horses of a bus which passed over me, but not its wheels. The police picked me up and took me to the nearest M.D. and drove me home where our own G.P. found me a mass of bruises, but only a rib or two cracked and a broken toe. I also had all the usual childhood diseases plus a distressing bout of jaundice, but the Lord delivered me out of all.

Religion in Childhood and Adolescence

Prayers every morning during the first seventeen years of my life! Possible they might have been termed conventional or stereotyped, but such regularity in approaching the Lord God has its effect on the young. At home and at school we never started the day's duties without prayer and thanksgiving. Nor was such worship just a mechanical effort, for its value was for us children re-enforced by the teachings of mother and governess, school master and priest, and not a little by juvenile perceptions of the quality of those people's lives.

My father and mother took us to Church and sent my brother Gilbert and me to Bible classes each Sunday afternoon where I learned the elements of the Christian faith from The Rev. P.H.O deWaal, whom we boys affectionately called “Phodew”. Later I joined the choir at St. Michaels Barnes, whose rector The Rev. Reginald Wright taught us the beauty of the Catholic Faith.

The school chapel at M.T.S. was small and could not accommodate even half the 500 pupils, but we had daily prayers and certain religious services in the Great Hall. In St. Barnabas Chapel, I was confirmed at the age of 14 by Dr. Winnington-Ingram, then Bishop of Stepney and Bishop-elect of London, a man of God indeed, loved by the boys for his friendliness and palpable sincerity. It was after my first Communion that I thought of Holy Orders but I was very young and quite unfitted to make a decision. However, I joined the classes in Hebrew in which all pupils expected to read later for the Ministry.

The Fall: 1902

My father was a fine athlete, skilled in boxing and in sculling, was a strong walker and often took me for long traipses. I admired him for his physique but more for his simple goodness and candour. Yet he failed us through his very simplicity. He was not fitted for business life. He had been an ensign and then a lieutenant in the Royal Navy and at age 14 had been in the Crimean War. Before 1860 he sold his commission to take his elder brother's (Thomas') place in the firm established by their father at 38 Mincing Lane in the City of London. The firm prospered for more than thirty years but my father had given generous credit to many different persons and wiped off many bad debts. The inevitable happened. He was declared bankrupt and the fortunes of our family sank low.

Our mother urged us to look out for ourselves. She had been a gracious chatelaine entertaining a multitude of relatives. She was reduced to a small suburban maisonette where she tried to care for my father and Muriel. Five of us had to go out from the home. I was in Sixth form hoping to sit for a scholarship to St John's College, Oxford when my father's sudden fall put an end to school life. I was taken as a junior clerk at 17 by the firm of Geo. Sandeman & Co of St. Swithins Lane. I worked in the counting house and sometimes in the vault, and learned a little about bookkeeping and a little about dock life. On a tiny salary, I had to pay for board, lodging and clothes. Somehow, I managed but I must confess that my spiritual life suffered, and for a year or two was in danger of being ship-wrecked. It was my mother and a cleric whose name eludes me (but I see his face after nearly 70 years) that brought me back to a sense of Divine Upholding, and to the Church that has given me so much.

In those years 1904-05 I slipped into dozens of London churches, seeking assurances from on High. Sometimes the building was empty of people, but usually there was a Presence, whether or not the Reserved Sacrament was there. I must have avoided the perils of Godlessness by this peripatetic search for houses of God in which (I felt) I could regain full trust in Him.

Establishing a Life in Canada: 1906-1913

I left Sandman's early in 1906 and emigrated to Canada in a cattle boat, and worked for a few months as a checker with Dominion Rubber Company in Montreal. In June 1906, I went west to Elkhorn, Saskatchewan to meet my brother, Robert and my cousin, Willie. If ever there was a Verdant Green on the prairies it was I. Everything about a farm was new to me, and during my first year, working for my cousin Willie or for George Cole, I made as many egregious mistakes as would embarrass a modern computer. However, in three and a half years I learned to ride, drive a team, plough, harrow, seed, milk cows, tend to stock and gear, use an axe, make hay, and do many chores reasonably well. In some ways those years have been of real value to my ministry.

There was time in the winters to keep alight the flickering flame of mental culture. I met a few clergy. They were not numerous at that time in Saskatchewan or Manitoba, but more than one of those I conversed with urged me to consider the fields white until harvest, and looked upon my easy reading of the Greek New Testament as a sign from Heaven. One of them wrote to Archbishop Machray in Winnipeg. Correspondence followed with his successor, Archbishop Matheson. I was invited to an interview, the result of which was my registration as a Matriculant at St John's College, Winnipeg in 1909. Matriculation presented no difficulty but enrolment in Seminary classes proved to me that Theology was to be a mental challenge. Ways and means? The S.P.G. gave me a yearly grant of \$300, my dear mother in England scraped a gift now and then from her slender purse and I eked out a living and paid my fees by part time teaching in the St. John's School for Boys.

In September 1910, I was enrolled as a student in Arts at the University of Manitoba, and admitted as a future candidate for Holy Orders in St. John's Seminary. There had been queries about my past. What had I been doing for three and a half years in London and three and a half years on the prairies? My fellow seminarians were dedicated young men who had either gone straight from college to theology or had been exercising a useful lay ministry up north or out west or in urban centres. I had just been a clerk and a farm worker. Had I a genuine vocation? I know now that the Archbishop and his council took wise precautions that no mere hireling should creep into the fold. A good deal of ink was used on Episcopal paper and sent to London and to Western clergy before the authorities were satisfied that I had not blotted my copybook. Before the end of 1910 I was pronounced worthy of a place in the seminarist ranks, and a very fine band of tutors (in Arts and in Divinity) took me in hand: Dean Coombs, the Canons Murray, Phair, and Matheson, and Walter Burman. It was largely owing to them that I took a first class in Classics (B.A.) and a first class in Biblical Studies in 1913. Later I wrote my thesis for the University of Manitoba and became a Master of Arts. In 1920, I wrote the General Synod examinations and was granted a B.D. by the same University.

From 1900, the provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan offered farming prospects which were readily acceptable to Canadians, Americans, and Europeans of whom perhaps 33% had Church of England affiliations. The supply of priests could not match the flood of new settlers who were taking up homesteads and buying land. To bring the ministrations of religion to these people, whether they were bachelors or families, it was necessary to use laymen. Most of us were at college from September 15 to May 1 and had four and a half months in which we could serve the Church of the Prairies. We were briefed beforehand and put under the care of a priest who lived reasonably near our spiritual domain, but often the priest was unable to visit us more than once or twice, and we had to carry on without much supervision.

I would say Matins and Evening Prayer, conduct house prayers, minister to the sick, pay dozens of visits using various means of transport - bicycle, pony or a pair of mules. Reading sermons, even those of famous preachers was not found as helpful as simple, direct talk on the Gospel truths, and God alone is judge as to whether our discourses were an aid to the souls. I was sent to Morris, Manitoba, to Carroll, Manitoba and to Shellmouth, Saskatchewan in which places I was called "the minister" though officially our title was student-missionary. Two requirements of "the minister" are outstanding in my mind – one was the organization of choirs, for children and adults; the other was to share in the work of harvest. This latter demand was easy for me to obey – I had an advantage from those early years of toil on farms. The average settler would show many a kindness to the young student but usually expected him to be "green" about practical matters. This was often incorrect, and if a man could prove himself useful with farmyard chores or with handling of horses he would rise in the estimation of his host, and perhaps his spiritual ministration would be enhanced.

My summer among the Indians on Lake Manitoba was an eye-opener – and sometimes an eye-closer when the mosquitoes attacked in their thousands. The Indians and the Metis were truly hospitable and kindly, ready to share all they had, including their skills. They had, as I see it in retrospect, a childlike faith and reverence for the Lord of the Universe that was evident in their attitude in Divine Worship. The "half-breed" interpreter became my friend and gave me a sense not only of the words of the hymns and prayers used by my flock, but also of the characters and sentiments of the tribe. This experience stood me in good stead when I was appointed to Fort Qu'Appelle, a district surrounded by several reservations.

Dna Report

I have very little to report this time around. Family Tree DNA has, in the past, bombarded me with notifications, all sent to my i-Pad e-mail address which I have then had to forward to my laptop e-mail address so that I could save them into a Microsoft Word file (the i-Pad doesn't have a hard disk, so everything is saved in the "cloud"). However I haven't had anything from them for several months, and I can only conclude that there are very few people having their DNA tested these days.

However, I have received notifications from Family Tree DNA about my own matches as they find new ones. I had an e-mail from them only today with a new match found on 28 February, in the name of one Colin Cahoon. Looking down the list there are people with names such as Macaulay, Morgan, MacTaggart, with a lot of Kirkpatricks, but mostly Calhoun/Cahoon/Colquhoun and various other spellings of that name. What is most noticeable is the complete lack of Moffats! I will have to take this up with Colin to find out if he comes across links with the Calhouns in his genealogical researches.

A Moffatt in France

Introduction

My story is going to cover my experience of researching my Moffatt ancestors, my work with Colin Moffat and my discovery of an intriguing WW1 story involving my Grandfather William and his brother James Moffatt, (my Great Uncle). This led me to the Royal Munster Fusiliers Association and to the author Professor Hedley Malloch, and a book Hedley is writing (publishing date summer 2019) about the "Iron Twelve" in France in WW1. Having found me as the link to the Moffatt family, an invitation was extended to me from the Mayor of Iron to attend the 11 November 2018 Armistice Commemoration service and to meet with the descendants of the families involved in the story.

My Ancestry Work: Road to Discovery!

Having a rare opportunity of some spare time, and a plea from my cousins to research the family tree, I began my work. I was reliant on conversations we had many years ago with our relatives and recalling memories, some recalled quickly others not! What I did know? That we originally came from Scotland in the mid- 1650's at the time of the Plantation of Ireland. Our ancestors settled in County Longford and eventually also Westmeath. Having found via the internet that there was a Clan Moffat, I decided to join immediately and discovered the Clan had a genealogist Colin Moffat, who at this time was interested in tracing 'those Irish Moffatts'. I learnt very quickly that evidence is vital, certificates necessary. Due to a piece of misinformation at the start of my journey, I began to follow a family member – but a different line! Colin in his research put me 'back on track' and steered me to my Birkenhead family (Great Grandfather Matthew Moffatt who moved from Ireland in late 19th century).

Using the results of my DNA test, I found my Irish cousins. After contact with them I discovered that in 2014 they had held their own 'Moffatt Clan Reunion' in Mullingar – nearly 70 family members attended. (I should have started my research sooner!). A booklet created by them gave me valuable family information and pictures and contacts in this country and also in Ireland.

Returning to my Birkenhead family I knew that my grandfather William and his older brother James were in the Royal Munster Fusiliers together. The younger brother John had joined The Royal Cheshire Regiment. I contacted the Royal Munster Fusiliers Association (RMF were disbanded in 1922 due to the heavy losses in WW1). A request for my home telephone number by the RMFA as they had 'extensive' information for me, alerted me to the fact this was not going to be straight forward. Shocked by the story that unfolded, knowing that the family were not fully aware of the whole story, I was asked by Adrian

Foley of the RMFA to make contact with Hedley Malloch who was writing a book about the Iron Twelve which included my great uncle, a 'probable' leader of the group. They also sent me various helpful documents which I was not in possession of and aided my family history research.

The Story

Colin Moffat the Clan genealogist wrote an article in the October Moffatalia 2017 about the little known battle of Etreux and what occurred in August 1914 at the retreat from Mons. I am now going to expand on the story and fill in with a little more detail.

Hedley's book which will be published in summer 2019 is titled: **"The Killing of The Iron Twelve: An account of the Largest Execution of British Soldiers on the Western Front in the First World War "**. The story of the Iron Twelve and the retreat from Mons has been a well kept secret. Six hundred and fifty soldiers fought against six Battalions of Germans soldiers for 24 hours at Etreux, allowing the BEF to return to the UK. The casualties were high, and being out of ammunition 250 soldiers surrendered in an apple orchard at 9.30pm in the evening of 27 August 1914 in Etreux. They were praised by the Germans for their 'supreme bravery', the odds against them were 6-1. One of those survivors was my grandfather William Moffatt who became a prisoner of war in Senne for four years.

The Sambre canal ran through the town of Etreux and James (my great uncle), was separated from his brother at this stage and the rest of the RMF by the canal. He together with four soldiers from 2nd Royal Munster Fusiliers, five 2nd Connaught Rangers and one 15th Kings Hussars retreated into the fields and woods, as so many did when separated from the main body of soldiers. Eventually they came to the village of Iron and were found and taken in and hidden and looked after by two families the Logez who owned a mill and the Chalandres who had a small farm, from the end of August 1914 to the end of February 1915. They were now deep behind enemy lines. Escape would be difficult.

James and the soldiers in Iron were looked after well by the people of Iron. There were however two betrayals, one was in December 1914 but was a 'botched job' by the Germans. The second which proved fatal involved a love triangle in the village and this was in February 1915. The Germans alerted, arrested the soldiers as well as the farmer Vincent Chalandre, his wife and son and Mme. Logez and her daughter. The soldiers left quietly, in uniform, and unarmed. They were taken by cart from Iron and paraded through the streets of Guise to the cheers of the town people, who were pleased to see the British soldiers, much to the annoyance of the Germans. They were taken to the police station, interrogated, tortured and at 3am in the morning of 25th February 1915 they were taken to the top of the castle in Guise by the back entrance, and executed along with Vincent Chalandre (the farmer who hid the soldiers).

James and the soldiers had been making plans to escape. Their hideout in Iron was known to Edith Cavell, who was instrumental in getting many 'abandoned soldiers' in France back to the UK. Edith Cavell was a British nurse who had secured a post of Matron in a Brussels hospital. She resolved to help the British soldiers escape to Holland (a neutral country), but later in 1915 she was arrested, put on trial and executed by the Germans for aiding the soldiers. Her death caused international outrage. For James and his group their escape would have meant 31 miles of travel to the safe handover point at the Chateau in Bellingines in the north of France on the Belgium border. In Iron they were deep behind enemy lines, which made plans for their escape via Edith Cavell's route very difficult, particularly under curfew conditions, and unfortunately this was not achieved before they were captured.

How the Story was Kept Alive

In 1919, after four years of silence for the families with regard to what happened to the eleven soldiers, their families were eventually informed that they "failed to surrender themselves as a concealed soldier". Of course this was not the complete story. The fact was the British Government felt the awful truth of the execution was not palatable for the families involved. Politics intervened as well, fear of retribution if this case was highlighted could have destabilised the German government, as communism was raging in Europe.

Thankfully as other soldiers returned home, the story of the soldiers in Iron was passed on. The RMF were determined not to forget what had happened in Iron. They ensured its survival by putting in print the story. After the war there were two French documents that appeared in the late 1920's *Les Onze Anglais d'Iron*, an unsigned pamphlet, and a notebook by A Migrenne called *Le Carnet d'un Guisard Pendant la Grand Guerre*: a notebook of a Guisard during the great war which also helped to keep the story alive.

In the UK in 1928, in the *World Wide Magazine*, an article appeared by Herbert A. Walton called the "The Secret of The Mill". This was a detailed account giving full details of what really happened in Iron and Guise, together with pictures of the Mme.Logez and Mme. Chalandre, of the execution site, the remains of the mill that the Germans burnt down and also miraculously a scrap of paper with the names and home addresses of the eleven soldiers, hidden under a stone near the burnt out mill and discovered later, an obvious sign the soldiers did not want to be forgotten. Another article was written in the magazine later by Derek Smith "Shot By the Enemy". Thereafter every twenty years, details of the story were reproduced by the RMFA to keep the story alive.

In 2000 Hedley Malloch took up the baton to bring the story together in a book. He is Chair of the Memorial Fund, Honorary member of the RMFA, and taught Management in

Business Schools across Europe, having been awarded a PhD by Glasgow University. Hedley's own grandfather was in the RMF in WW1 and returned home. He had heard about this story, and when he moved to Lille in 2000 he went to Iron to continue the research, including raising funding for the memorial stone in Iron, dedicated not only to Iron Twelve but all involved in the fight for peace.

In 2014 there was a commemorative 100th Anniversary ceremony. It was attended by various French and Irish dignitaries as well as 36 members of the RMFA, including Hedley Malloch who was instrumental in fund raising for the memorial stone. It lasted most of the day visiting all the sites, including an exhibition in Etreux. They travelled from Etreux to Iron to Guise, and finished back in the 'apple orchard' in Etreux where the soldiers surrendered at 9.30 pm on 27 August 1914.

My Trip to Iron in November 2018, for the Commemoration of the Armistice

During 2018 I had a lot of contact with Hedley to pass over information I had about James and my family, what we cousins could recall.

I had made arrangements to visit Iron with Hedley over Armistice weekend, and to attend the Commemoration service in Iron. I met Hedley and his wife Fiona in Lille and we had a full itinerary for the Sunday 11 November. We headed to the north east of France, the Aisne area, and arrived at Le Grand Fayt where in 1914 the army commenced defending the Sambre canal, whilst retreating from Mons. A memorial stone commemorates this site where the battle started on 26 August 1914. The Germans by this time were on the opposite side of the Sambre canal eventually cornering the RMF in Etreux, as the bridge in Etreux had not been blown up. The message from HQ not to hold the line and to retreat did not get through to the soldiers. Their Officer Major Charrier therefore had decided they must continue to defend and fight. They could have retreated as they were at least half an hour ahead of the Germans, but instead fought bravely against overwhelming opposition.

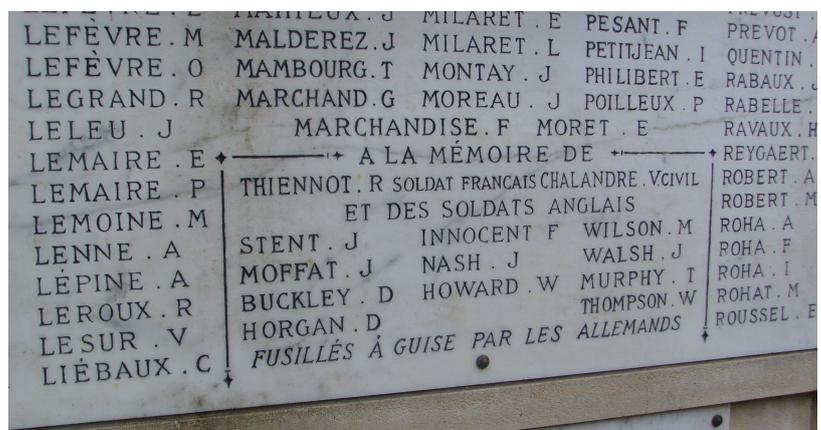
We then drove on to Etreux Cemetery, originally the apple orchard where the dead soldiers were buried. The land was purchased at the end of the war by the parents of a British soldier. This was handed over to the War Graves Commission and is maintained by them today. Grandad (William Moffatt) was now a prisoner of war until the end of 1918. A.W. Awdry (of Thomas the Tank Engine fame), lost his brother here in the battle. A look over the cemetery wall, towards the Sambre canal and it was easy to imagine the Germans bearing down on the town, which must have been a frightening sight. We continued on to Iron for the Commemoration Service in the Civic Hall at 11.30, for all who fell in WW1. All French soldiers lost, including the British soldiers, had their names read out followed by a personal message from the President. The French national anthem followed: La Marseillaise.

We were stood by the Civic Memorial and the memorial stone dedicated to the Iron Twelve which are placed next to each other, and laid our wreaths and remembered those lost. We felt it was important that they were not forgotten and we should ensure that they will always be remembered. The monument to the Iron Twelve was carved by a firm called Feelystone in Roscommon Ireland, and the bronze plaque was designed by Seamus Connolly in Ireland, thereby maintaining the connection with Ireland. Inside the Civic Hall champagne and cake was served, and we met members of the Logez and Chalandre family. Afterwards we were invited back to the home of a member of the Chalandre family for more champagne and lunch. (Excellent!) There we sat, grandchildren and great grandchildren of the people involved in the tragic story, French and British remembering them.

Afterwards we saw the site of the mill and farm which were burnt down as an act of reprisal against the French village, their incomes being lost. The Germans had removed every nut and bolt from the mill and sent it to Germany. Then on to the cemetery in Iron to see the graves of the two women who looked after the soldiers, Mme. Logez and Mme. Chalandre and daughter Germaine.

From Iron we travelled on to the town of Guise, to the Police station where the soldiers were interrogated along with members of the Logez and Chalandre family. The soldiers were tortured and then taken at 3 am in the morning on 25th February 1915 to the top of the Chateau in Guise and executed, together with Vincent Chalandre the farmer. The village suffered greatly by the loss of the mill and farm, and the two families involved were imprisoned, with devastating consequences to various family members. The principal German Officer deciding their fate was the Kommandant in Etreux, Richard Von Waechter.

After this, we visited the civic memorial in Guise where the Iron Twelve are remembered along with the French soldiers of both World Wars. From here we then had a trek up to the Chateau in Guise - the chateau is built on a hill and has now been taken over by a local history society.



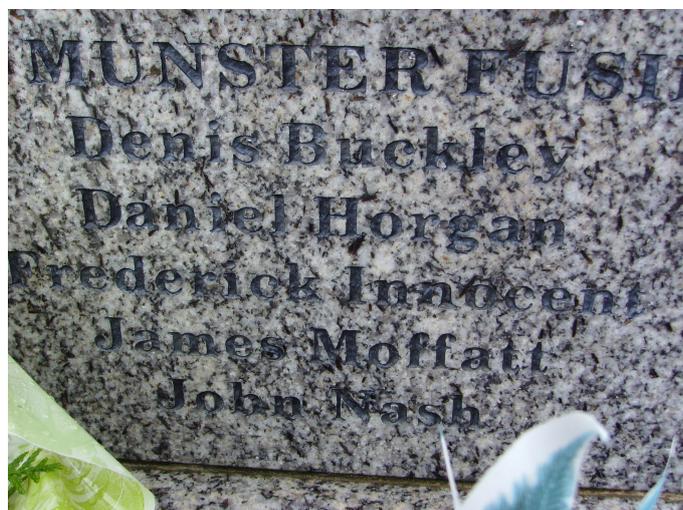
It was not lost on me that Mary of Guise was the mother of Mary Queen of Scots, who married James V of Scotland.

At the entrance to the chateau there is a board dedicated to the British soldiers and explaining what happened to them. The Chateau is partly in ruins, referred to in a previous article in the 1920's as 'grim', years later I felt it was forbidding, not a pleasurable experience. I was only allowed to go onto the execution site at the very top of the chateau on my own, with a volunteer and the resident guard dog (not on a lead or tethered!) which didn't add to what was a poignant moment for me.

Lastly we visited Guise cemetery to lay wreaths and sprays. There is a communal grave dedicated to the soldiers.



In 1920 the bodies were dug up from the execution site in the Chateau and reinterred in a communal grave in the cemetery. Vincent Chalandre was buried separately, but buried with military honours. After the war the British Government awarded Vincent Chalandre a silver medal and two bronzes were awarded to the Logez, mother and daughter, and to the Chalandre mother and son for their bravery in hiding the soldiers, a letter accompanied was written by Lord Curzon.



Summary

My research brought me in contact with many people from different countries and different walks of life. I could not have believed from the start of my research how much I would discover about my Moffatt family, and what resources came to me. I would encourage everyone to research their family trees, and pass down to and involve the younger generations their family history. Record what you find. Never has ancestry as a subject been as popular as it is now. You don't know what you are going to uncover and learn, and there will be varying surprises along the way as I have found. What did I learn from my weekend away and research, don't give up on the family research however daunting. I have learnt that despite our personal feelings and different cultures, these don't divide us, what is more important is human compassion and understanding the impacts of disloyalty and betrayal, overcoming these to discover the truth.

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If you are interested in Hedley's Book if you contact me I can send a pre order sheet with 25% discount

