In 2014, several local history groups in and around Stroud's five valleys (in Gloucestershire) joined together to research the events of the district during the Great War. Members of the **Five Valleys Great War Researchers**¹ came from:

**Amberley Archives** - contributed regularly to exhibitions and events, with particular interest in school pupils and what happened to their teachers (the researcher transcribed all the available school log books). Their research into Major General Fabian Ware (originator of what became the Commonwealth War Commission) will be part of our Peace At Last exhibition. The village has its own website here: [https://www.amberley.org.uk/](https://www.amberley.org.uk/)

**Chalford Parish Local History Group** - this recently-formed group of researchers [https://www.chalfordparishlocalhistorygroup.org.uk/parish/world-war-i/](https://www.chalfordparishlocalhistorygroup.org.uk/parish/world-war-i/) provided the editor of our book, who also wrote a blog throughout the centenary years based on many sources including original bound volumes given to us by our local newspaper, the *Stroud News and Journal*: [https://greatwarchalford.wordpress.com/2013/07/28/entering-the-past/](https://greatwarchalford.wordpress.com/2013/07/28/entering-the-past/)

**Minchinhampton Local History Group** - we much regret the death in 2020 of the representative from Minchinhampton. Di Wall was an active and effective Chair for our group and a superb researcher and teller of stories. Her research is currently inaccessible and the Society may close

**Nailsworth Archive** - it was a researcher from Nailsworth who launched the joint research project that became the Five Valleys Great War Researchers. The Society's website is here: [http://www.thenailsworthsociety.co.uk/](http://www.thenailsworthsociety.co.uk/)

**Randwick Historical Association** - contributed regularly to exhibitions and events: [http://www.randwickhistoricalassociation.org.uk/](http://www.randwickhistoricalassociation.org.uk/)

**Remembering Rodborough** - In 2014 Remembering Rodborough, a community-specific local history group, undertook to research the 60 names on the Great War memorial located inside St Mary Magdalene Church, Walkley Hill, Rodborough. Over the next four years the group involved the whole community in several projects, to everyone's satisfaction. Their research and activities are described here: [http://www.rememberingrodborough.org.uk/ww1-2/](http://www.rememberingrodborough.org.uk/ww1-2/)

**Stonehouse History Group** - produced a display about the Effects of World War One on Stonehouse. WW1 was also the main theme of their Journal Issue 4. They researched some of the soldiers on the war memorial and produced a display on 'Stonehouse Soldiers at the Somme'. For details visit the SHG website: [http://stonehousehistorygroup.org.uk/](http://stonehousehistorygroup.org.uk/)

**Stroud Local History Society** - since other researchers were separately recording the memorials in and around the town, SLHS concentrated on the effect of the war on Stroud's home front - industries, schools, society - the archive, and that of the wider 5VGWR team - is accessible through this webpage: [https://www.stroudlocalhistorysociety.org.uk/research/ww1/](https://www.stroudlocalhistorysociety.org.uk/research/ww1/)

**Woodchester Historical Society** - Woodchester is the location of the Wayside Cross - erected at the Dominican Priory in mid-1917 as a focus for grieving families and visited by many as the war

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¹ The 5VGWR logo uses a detail from an anonymous 18thC painting in the museum that shows the Stroud Scarlet cloth in rack fields above the town, merged with poppy fields for WW1, and a map of Stroud's five valleys
continued. There are several walks around this small hillside village, now including some that visit key places during WW1: [https://woodchesterhistory.weebly.com/lest-we-forget.html](https://woodchesterhistory.weebly.com/lest-we-forget.html)


Many started by researching the names on their local war memorials. The results were amalgamated in a district-wide database assembled by Steve Pitman of Remembering Rodborough. You can search the list, and several other archives from the project, here:

5VGWR Group Archive: [https://www.stroudlocalhistorysociety.org.uk/research/ww1/](https://www.stroudlocalhistorysociety.org.uk/research/ww1/)

**Our group events**

December 2014 - Stroud LHS concentrated on the home front, inviting stories from local residents in a series of drop-in sessions in the local library. The outcome was an SLHS exhibition called *Unintended Consequences* which toured the district libraries in 2014, was displayed in the Town Council window, and became part of the archive of the Five Valleys Great War Researchers.

December 2014 Addenbrooke's Hospital - the local radio station in Cambridge broadcast the hospital choir singing a *vesper hymn* in St Mary's Church. The hymn had been written in 1917 by a Stroud soldier being treated at the hospital, and found in an old diary in 2014. The congregation included members of Jack Smith's family thanks to very speedy collaborative research!

June 2015 Brimscombe – *The Stroud District and its part in the Great War* - over a weekend, including talks, slideshows, demonstrations and displays by several local organisations. The visitor who travelled furthest came from New Zealand, having written a book about three brothers from Brimscombe who had been killed in France.

July 2015 Museum in the Park - *Innovations and Technology* display of Stroud's WW1 industries by SLHS in partnership with the Museum, which focussed on a different WW1 topic for each year.

Nov 2015 Old Town Hall, Stroud – a small display to accompany a performance of ‘*Gallipoli – A Forgotten Story…. Or Two*’ by John Bassett of Spaniel in the Works, a Stroud theatre group.

July 2016 Bedford Street Congregational Chapel Rooms – a 2-day exhibition: *Five Valleys Men at the Battle of the Somme*.

Feb 2017 *Book Launch* Old Town Hall - our book! commissioned and published by the History Press, was finally ready. Money raised by book sales funded our displays and exhibitions.
Nov 2018 – **The Stroud Valleys in the Great War** - a week-long exhibition in the Museum in the Park, Stroud - new material added to earlier research, rolling slideshow and a poppy waterfall.

June 2020 - **Peace at Last** - an exhibition planned to show the work of Fabian Ware KCVO KBE CB CMG, a retired Major General who in 1915 started what became the Commonwealth Graves Commission, and to celebrate the many memorials that were erected after the Great War, including the Peace Wing extension at Stroud General Hospital. This exhibition had to be postponed because of the coronavirus lockdown.

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**The Stroud District and its part in the Great War 1914-1919**

at the Studio Room
Inside Football Industrial Unit 2
Briscombe Port Industrial Estate, Stroud GL5 2QQ.

Local Research and History groups will be displaying their work about the people and trades in the Stroud District during the Great War.
The Royal Flying Corps re-enactment group will be displaying in period costume.
There will be displays by Cotswold Canals Trust (Phase 1b), Cotswold Wardens
and the History Press.
If you have any family souvenirs of 1914-19 please bring them along
to the exhibition to show to the history groups.

**Saturday 13th June 2015**
10 am – 5 pm

11 am - Tina Blackman from New Zealand will open the exhibition, giving a talk about her new book, *The Three Uncles*, the story of the Cole brothers from Briscombe, who went to the battlefields in France.

**Sunday 14th June 2015**
11am – 4 pm

2 pm - Choice of two guided walks
Meet outside the exhibition at 2pm.
Cost for each walk adults £3, children free.

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**The Five Valleys and the Great War**

Our local history groups are researching soldiers from the Five Valleys during the Great War, and what life was like for those who stayed at home.

**Friday 13th November 2015** 6.30-9.30 pm
in the Old Town Hall, The Shambles, Stroud

**an Exhibition**

and, in this centenary year of *Gallipoli*.

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**The Stroud Valleys in the Great War**

**1916 - 2016**

**Five Valleys men at the Battle of the Somme**

a memorial Exhibition at the Bedford Street Congregational Chapel

10am - 1pm
Fri 1st/Sat 2nd July 2016

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**Stroud’s Home Front 1914-1919**

Since May, our community-based project has been researching the effect of WWI on our town. We have found intriguing stories and some unexpected results. Our research continues but we are showing

**Our first exhibition: UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES**

for the month of November

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**The Stroud Valleys in the Great War**

**a free exhibition of local 1914-18 stories, photographs and artefacts, to commemorate the centenary of the Armistice and the end of the War**

by the Five Valleys Great War Researchers

**Saturday 3rd to Sunday 11th November 2018**

at the Museum in the Park

(open Tuesday-Friday 10-4.30; Saturday and Sunday 11-4.30)

supported by our local history societies and