

**BMSGH Bromsgrove**  
**Branch Briefing**  
**Editor: Mike Fisher**  
**Tuesday 11th February 2014 at 7.45 p.m.**

**A talk entitled:**  
**“The Home Guard of**  
**World War Two”**  
**by Malcolm Atkin**

The World War Two 'Dad's Army' is now well known. Few people, however, realise that World War One had its own version - the Volunteer Training Corps - which established units in many towns across England, including Bromsgrove.

The government had a somewhat ambivalent attitude towards them - fearing at the time before conscription that membership might be taken as an excuse not to join the fighting services.

Nonetheless, they provided valuable military service in digging defences, guarding vulnerable points and even later manning coastal artillery. This was vitally important as Britain remained under the threat of invasion until 1918.

The VTC cost the government very little as the volunteers were obliged to buy their own weapons, ammunition and uniforms! They also provided community services in serving as hospital orderlies and acting as 'greeters' and guides to soldiers in transit.

They were, however, a vocal and independent force, and memory of them undoubtedly shaped the attitude of some in government to the re-emergence of the Home Guard concept in WW2.

### **Findmypast will have Staffordshire records**

Just before Christmas an announcement appeared on the Staffordshire Archives website which indicated that an agreement had been signed with findmypast to digitise 3,400 parish registers from 1538-1900, around 250,000 wills and other probate documents for the Diocese of Lichfield and Coventry from 1521-1858, and about 180,000 marriage licences dating from 1617-1900.

### **Red Cross to digitize Great War volunteer records**

Almost a quarter of a million people volunteered for the Red Cross during the 1914-18 war, and plans are in hand to digitise all of the index cards held at the organisation's London headquarters, with the first batch becoming available online by August.

P.T.O

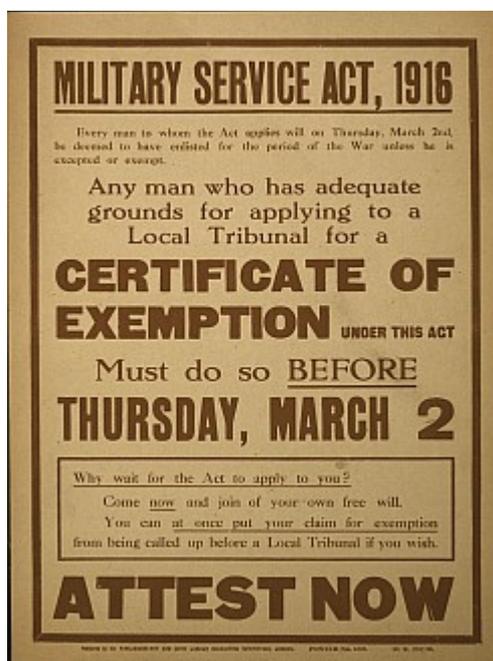
Appropriately, the Red Cross is recruiting 100 volunteers to help with the project, which is being supported by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

## **Do you have multiple copies of photos on your computer ?**

If you do and you are using Windows then try the free “*Awesome Duplicate Photo Finder*” program.

As you may know I have thousands of postcard/old photo images and it can find duplicates that have the same view with different writing on, black and white to coloured and different angles of the same view. It grades the match and you can set the percentage from 100% (exactly the same) down to a level to suit you. You can select which copy to delete and having compared thousands, it works for me !!

## **Was your ancestor exempt from serving in WWI ?**



Neither of my Birmingham grandfathers served, one worked for the Council and one ran a grocers shop and they fathered children during the war. How do you find out any information ?

Regards  
Mike Fisher

*For our March meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> we are inviting all to bring along their World War One and Two memorabilia!*