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David's labour of love unearthed life stories of a local rugby club's wartime heroes

Shoebox full of documents sparked years of research

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DAVID BOHL, historian of Sefton Rugby Union Football Club, has carried out an enormous amount of research since his predecessor, the late AG Daley, presented him with a shoebox of historical documents to be scanned.

He explains: "I was intrigued by a school exercise book containing the committee minutes from 1912-1926 - one page, written in 1919, listed the names of 13 players who had fallen in the Great War. As I retired from the bits and bytes of computer consultancy, my spare time was spent delving into online family history websites and conversing with World War I experts all over the world.

"The end result was a book published in 2004 - Sefton Rugby Union Football Club, Alias The Aliens. Since then, Liverpool's new Central Library has become a brilliant resource and the ease of research in this resplendent building has enabled these decorated and mostly forgotten men to be unearthed."

Of the start of the West Derby-based club, he says: "The merry band of schoolteachers crossed the whitewash for the first time in 1907 and as none of them were native to the city they decided to call themselves The Aliens.

"Over the next five decades, at least 30 of the members had their names listed in the London Gazette for honours received."

The complete Sefton archives can be found at home.btconnect.com/seftonrucf/the_archives.html and

here we reproduce some of David's fine work ...

■ **Dr Eduardo Martinez Alonso KGM** (born 1903 Vigo, Spain, died 1972, Vigo)

The son of the Uruguayan Consul in Liverpool. Became a GP but moved to Spain. One of his patients was Queen Ena, the British wife of King Alfonso. During World War II, he worked for the Special Operations Executive and helped British and Allied servicemen escape back to England. It operated from a cafe in Madrid, rather like a Spanish version of 'Allo, 'Allo. For this, he was awarded the King George Medal for Courage in the Cause of Freedom and the Polish Gold Cross of Merit.

■ **Prof Duncan John Sloss CBE MA LLD** (b.1881 Liverpool d.1964 Oxford)

A lecturer at Liverpool University, became Professor of English Literature at the new Rangoon University, Burma. In 1937, was appointed vice-chancellor of the University of Hong Kong. When Japan overran Hong Kong, he was interned at Stanley Camp, where he risked his life smuggling messages in and out of the prison. Awarded the CBE in 1947.

■ **Capt Frederick James Haney MC DFC** (b.1886 Widnes d.1969 Sussex)

Schoolteacher. Awarded the Military Cross in World War I for conspicuous gallantry with the Royal Artillery. Awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross in World War II as Sq/Ldr with RAF. During 1940, it became almost impossible for pupils to put in the necessary hours night flying to qualify as pilots. In May, he suggested night flying could



■ Dr Eduardo Martinez Alonso KGM

take place during daytime, and started experimenting with filters. Combinations of filters produced night-time effects during the day.

■ **Lt Tom Paterson Owens CBE** (b.1888 Liverpool d.1968 Dargle, South Africa)

Lt in Kings African Rifles, 1918, chasing the elusive Germans out of East Africa. Governor of Borstal Institutions and awarded CBE in 1951.

■ **Leonard Walter Brockington CMG QC LLD DCL** (b.1889 Cardiff d.1966 Calgary, Canada)

A schoolteacher, moved to Canada in 1912 and became a lawyer. Entertained Winston and Randolph Churchill when they visited Calgary and became chairman of the Canadian Broadcast Corporation before

WWII. Delivered radio broadcasts for the BBC during the war and was advisor on Empire affairs to the Minister of Information. Awarded the CMG (Companion, of the Order Of, St Michael and St George) in 1946.

■ **Major John Simpson Foulkes DSO** (b.1890 Stockport d.1946 Liverpool)

Major in Manchester Regiment, awarded Distinguished Service Order at Ypres in 1917 while wounded. Fire insurance businessman.

■ **Col Frederick Joseph Behn OBE TD** (b.1902 Liverpool d.1975 Isle of Man)

West African Merchant. Lt-Col in Royal Signals in WW2, awarded OBE in 1945 in recognition of gallant and distinguished services in North West Europe.

■ **Dr Stanley Dumbell MA OBE** (b.1896 Liverpool d.1966 Wallasey)

Registrar of Liverpool University. Lt in Royal Flying Corps 1918, RAF Training Branch in World War II. Awarded OBE in 1952.

■ **Dr John Edward George McGibbon OBE** (b.1893 Liverpool d.1959 Liverpool)

Surgeon Lt Royal Navy in WWI, commissioned Flt Lt in WWII, placed in medical charge of the personnel serving the balloon barrage over Liverpool (which prevented bomber attacks). Thoracic surgeon, vice-president of the Royal Society of Medicine. Awarded OBE in 1939.

■ **John Douglas Johnstone OBE** (b.1885 Carlisle d.1959 Stoke)

Headmaster of Home Office

School in Staffordshire, awarded OBE in 1934.

■ **Cmdr George Gilmour Armit MBE** (b.1887 d.1966 St Andrews, Scotland)

Ships engineer on RMS Laconia. Lt on HMS Bacchante in WWI. Commander in the Royal Canadian Navy in WWII. Awarded OBE in 1945.

■ **Lt Col William Kingsley Arrowsmith MBE** (b.1905 Bradford, died 1945 W.Europe in accident)

Lt-Col with Royal Artillery in WW2, served in North Africa, Sicily, Italy, and also Western Europe. Awarded MBE in 1945 and Mentioned in Despatches (MiD).

■ **Capt. Robert Wilkie Jones MC and bar** (b.1883 Liverpool d.1945 Liverpool)

Schoolteacher. Won the Military Cross twice in WWI for conspicuous gallantry with King's Liverpool Regiment.

■ **Major Charles William Wingrove MC and bar** (b.1889 London d.1976 Chester)

Won the Military Cross twice in WWI for conspicuous gallantry with Royal Lancaster and Royal Warwickshire Regiments.

■ **Col. Edward Maxwell Morrison MC and bar** (b.1911 Ormskirk d.1993 Clwyd)

Won his second Military Cross in WWII with the King's Liverpool Regiment on the D-Day landings. Lifetime military career and Liverpool councillor.

■ **Capt John Robson Whittle MC** (b.1893 Liverpool d.1990 Devon)