

The WS Orchestra to stage a first this week



The WS Orchestra presents

THE GREAT WAR – A COMMEMORATION IN WORDS AND MUSIC

SPONSORED BY HBJ AND URQUHARTS

At the Signet Library, Parliament Square on 19 MARCH 2015 at 7.00PM

The event includes a dramatisation of Alastair Shepherd's research into the WS war dead 1914-1918

and

The Scottish premiere of *Sorrowful Dance* by Cecil Coles (1888-1918)

The W.S. Orchestra (WS stands for Writers to the Signet) is made up of practising and retired members of the W.S. Society.

Alastair Shepherd WS has researched the lives of those whose names are commemorated on the Memorial in the lower library. There were 227 Writers to the Signet and their apprentices who fought in the Great War, 42 of whom were killed in action.

The average age of the Writers was 34 and the apprentices, 26. Alastair has written a book, *The War Memorial of the Writers to the Signet*, narrating the brave and often poignant tales of these young men. Copies of this book are available on the evening at a cost of £10.

He told The Edinburgh Reporter about one of the most interesting finds in his research, Matthew Freer Rodger. Rodger holds the unique honour of having been married

after his death. He left behind his fiancée Nell who then had a baby in October 1916 who was registered as legitimate. An engagement ring had been presented. Mr Shepherd said: "Evidence was produced that Rodger frequently promised to marry her in letters from the front, and tried hard to obtain leave before the child was born. Sadly, he was killed in action just one week before the birth. It is to the credit of the legal system at the time that Lord Anderson granted a decree of declaratory of marriage and stated that it 'was a clear case.'"

TICKETS – TO INCLUDE REFRESHMENTS- ONLY £10, AVAILABLE FROM ALASTAIR SHEPHERD at ashepherd@hbjgateley.com or 0131 222 9832