

## ***Return to Gallipoli***



**By Steve Rogers**

It's not often we go on a city break and miss out the cemeteries. The likes of Venice, Rome and Prague have very interesting cemeteries for the budding taphophile, all worth a visit.

So it was no different when we considered a city break to Istanbul that we decided that having travelled so far we might as well incorporate a detour, albeit 400 miles, to the Gallipoli Peninsular. Helles memorial was due to have been reopened after two years of restoration so it seemed an ideal time to capture the new panels on camera.

A TWGPP team had visited in 2009 and stayed at **Eric Goosens** 'Gallipoli Houses' so with many recommends we opted for that location in the centre of the Gallipoli battlefields. Eric had advised us that as we were at the very end of the season the weather could be unpredictable but also the weekend we planned to be there was a National holiday so it could be busy in the area. With that advice we contacted the new CWGC supervisor in Cannackale, David Bennett, who informed us that for the holiday period Helles Memorial would be closed with no access to the section that was currently still boarded up due to unfinished work. Having watched 'Midnight Express' a few years back I decided that climbing fences was not a good idea with the potential of getting apprehended by Turkish authorities so something might have to be arranged.

Flight out pretty uneventful but that was due to spending a full 2.45 hours queuing at BA's Terminal 5. The first time I have ever missed a full English whilst waiting for the flight!



Car hire no problem but ground to a halt within five minutes of leaving the airport on Istanbul's equivalent of the M25 car park. Should have remembered it was a National holiday! It is recommended that four to five hours be allocated to get from Istanbul to Gallipoli but even with the holdup we made it to Gallipoli houses in exactly four hours. Apart from one bit of road which was a patchwork of various shades of tarmac I was amazed at how good the roads were and so little traffic. It was actually a pleasure to drive.

Halil was there to greet us at Eric's and we were soon settled in for the evening. We had a lovely room with a view of a minaret and a fat cat named Obama waiting to come in via the patio doors.

On Eric's advice and the fact that the weather was very clear albeit a bit windy we decided to head up the coastal road and re photograph the cemeteries of Shell green, Shrapnel Valley, Ari Burnu, amongst others, and were quite surprised that we were the only ones in the area.