

BETWEEN THE LINES

Newsletter of the East Kent Branch of The Western Front Association

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Founded by John Giles

Inaugurated 11th November 1980

This issue of *Between the Lines* contains another fine selection of contributions from our members - which, again, is most gratifying: it also contains two seasonal articles. Please do keep on submitting articles for publication in *Between the Lines*. We live in a most interesting part of the country where there is so much to write about relating to the Great War.

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Articles, etc for *Between the Lines* should be sent to me in M/S Word with accompanying images attached as JPGs. The deadline for contributions (articles, letters, queries, etc) for the Spring 2024 issue of our Newsletter is Sunday, 17 December 2023. ☐ Contributions should be e-mailed to me at: [REDACTED]

James Brazier, WFA East Kent Branch Newsletter Editor

The Savoy Fairs – Christmas 1916, 1917 & 1918

Christmas at any time can offer difficulties, and I can imagine that in wartime the season has the potential to be very difficult indeed. I recently came across a series of events, during the First World War, that look as though they were anything but difficult, at least for those who could afford them. These were the Savoy Fairs, held at the Savoy Hotel in London in the first week of December between 1916 and 1918. The Fairs were fronted by various society ladies, but the hard work was done one Mrs Burn, operating from the Empress Club in Piccadilly: more about her later.



Savoy Fair 1916

The Savoy Fairs were the Christmas Bazaars to end all Christmas Bazaars. Each year, a number of charities benefited: in 1916 proceeds were split between St Dunstan's Hostel for Blind Soldiers and Sailors, and the Emergency Voluntary Aid Committee of the Empress Club; in 1917, it was the Children of Soldiers, Sailors and War Workers and the Emergency Voluntary Aid Committee of the

Empress Club; in 1918, the beneficiaries were the Central Prisoners of War Committee of the British Red Cross Society, the Order of St John of Jerusalem in England and, once again, The Emergency Voluntary Aid Committee of the Empress Club: we know that the target in 1918 was £20,000.

The King and Queen were patrons of the Savoy Fairs, although they never actually attended themselves, sending along the glamorous Princess Patricia of Connaught to perform the opening ceremony. Looking at the newspapers from the time, the Fairs rapidly became society events. Members of the nobility and wives of senior officers turned out to work

on stalls: in 1916, the Duchess of Marlborough ran a Curio Stall; in 1917 Lady Beatty, as an Admiral's wife, sold what were described in one gossip column as "woollen comforts for sailors". Ladies from the leafier parts of Surrey organised collections of antique silver, pictures, jewellery or furniture to be sold at the Fairs.



*Savoy Fair Opening Day 1918
Princess Patricia (second right) and Mrs Burn*

In 1916, four horses were donated and later sold at Tattershalls in Newmarket for 175 Guineas: it is not clear whether the beasts had actually put in an appearance at the Savoy prior to this. Each year, stars of the West End Stage performed numbers from their shows, waited at tables or served on stalls; the bigger children from Mme Parepa Sherwood's Dance Academy in Hampstead carried out Eurhythmic exercises, whilst the little ones performed Fairy Rounds. The Bands of the Life Guards, Welsh Guards and the Royal Garrison Artillery played for concerts; there was dancing every day from 3 o'clock until 7:30pm and, each day Cafes Chantants were opened. On each opening day, Chelsea Pensioners turned out to form Guards of Honour.

In 1916, what was described as a "War Book" was produced, with contributions from the King and the Tsar and autographed letters and photographs from the leaders of all Allied Armies and Navies. Sir Douglas Haig wrote on his page: "It does seem to me to be a very fitting thing that a special effort should be made for our soldiers and sailors who sacrificed their sight". 1917 saw the sale of two hundred books each autographed by its author: H. G. Wells wrote in his, "My best wishes to the brave men of St Dunstan's who must fight against darkness all their lives to keep the lamp of liberty alive."



Two posters for the Savoy Fair 1917 for the Welfare of the Children

As the Fairs grew in popularity, so Mrs Burn learned how best to market them. In 1916, the event ran for three days from Wednesday 6 December to Friday 8 December and the cost of admission was five shillings per person for all three days: the price including tea. In 1917, it ran for four days from Wednesday 5 December to Saturday 8 December with prices varying from day to day: Wednesday and Thursday were still five shillings but Friday was half a crown and, Saturday, a shilling. Mrs Burn had clearly spotted that the “quality” were not interested in attending towards the end of the week but that there was still a demand from the less privileged. No doubt the noble stall holders sent along deputies on the socially less popular days.

The Empress Club was established in 1897 as a Mayfair club for women and was named after the Queen Empress herself. The Emergency Committee was a wartime body dedicated to raising funds for the welfare of the troops. It is, perhaps, best known for its “Tubs for Tommies” campaign to raise money to purchase baths and soap for soldiers at the Front. The Emergency Committee continued into the peace, sponsoring a house at the British Legion Village near Aylesford. I have not been able to find out too much about Mrs Burn: indeed she was generally referred to in the press as “Mrs James Burn”, her husband’s name. Regardless of the aristocrats fronting the Fairs, it was Mrs Burn who did the



“Tubs for Tommies” poster

legwork. She was ready to try any scheme to raise funds for soldiers, including something somewhat akin to the National Lottery Scratch Cards. In the event, official obstruction meant that it was only allowed to operate for a single day and, by the time all the costs were taken into account, it barely cleared a profit.

The Savoy Fairs are another complexity in the ever-growing story of the First World War. The 1917 Fair opened on Wednesday 5 December when, according to the CWGC database, 674 British and Imperial soldiers and sailors died the same day all across the world including a good few men who died in Mesopotamia and around Cambrai that day, as did three men from the Nigerian Carrier Corps and the crews of three merchant vessels. These people would all have died, whether or not the great and the good of London Society had started their Christmas celebrations at the Savoy that day. It is tempting, however, from the twenty-first century, to see the

efforts of Mrs Burn and the aristocratic members of the Savoy Fair Committee as their way of denying the realities of the war. A deliberate fabrication of a cosy Christmas spirit for the elite, whilst elsewhere men and women, were dying. Perhaps to some extent this was what was happening, but at the same time each person will have had a degree of personal involvement in the war: sons, husbands and brothers somewhere in the fighting; a mantelpiece full of letters of condolence from Commanding Officers and comrades; a close friend who would never be the same again.

At the same time they will have known that, as with all Christmas entertainments, what they were engaged in was mostly glitter and illusion. On the 5 December 1917, once the speeches were over and the Chelsea Pensioners had finished flirting with the chorus girls; once the ladies and gentlemen of the Press had made their notes and taken their pictures, and the various duchesses had come out from behind their stalls and gone their various ways, there were four days effort ahead to put on the show for those people paying their entrance fees. And at the end of it, in 1917, a number of children’s charities would be better off and perhaps a few people would have a story to tell of buying a glittery knick-knack from her Grace the Duchess of Marlborough. Today, we might prefer the celebrity-based egalitarianism of the fund-raising telethon to the glitz of a high society “bring and buy” sale, but the three Savoy Fairs were no different: a way for people to have a sense they could achieve something positive in a chaotic and distressing world, and to have a bit of entertainment at the same time. □

John Drouot



Plaque on house at British Legion Village, Aylesford

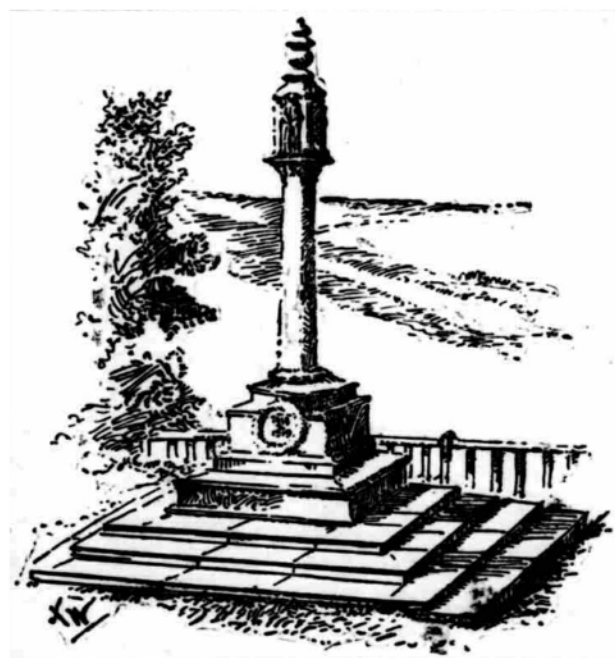


The Dining Room at the Empress Club

Knowlton War Memorial (WMO/161152)

In 1914, the *Weekly Despatch*, London had announced that a memorial cross was to be erected in the village which sent the greatest number of recruits to the Army in proportion to its population before 28 February 1915. It also reported that a request had been sent by the *Weekly Despatch* to Aberdeen asking for a supply of granite for the memorial and that the Aberdeen Granite Association had generously agreed to supply the granite free of charge.

In March 1916, the *Aberdeen Daily Journal* reported that the “bravest village” cross had been awarded to Knowlton, Kent (between Canterbury and Deal) and that the village of Mennock (misspelt as Mernock) in Dumfriesshire had been awarded the second prize - a bronze medallion. That report also stated that Sir George Frampton RA, the well-known London sculptor, had been selected as the designer of the cross.



An artist's drawing of the memorial



The unveiling of Knowlton War Memorial on Saturday, 6 September 1919

The memorial cross at Knowlton was unveiled on 6 September 1919. Lord Northcliffe*, to whom the *Weekly Despatch* belonged, was unable to attend the unveiling due to illness; he had undergone surgery only a short while before the date of the unveiling ceremony.

Today, Knowlton is amongst a small number of “thankful villages” around the country that had lost none of their menfolk whilst serving their King & Country in the Great War.

The Knowlton Memorial Cross (now often referred to as Knowlton War Memorial) was listed at Grade II earlier this year. It is also listed on the War Memorials Online website. □

JB



Knowlton War Memorial - photographed August 2013
More photos of the cross are featured on the following two pages

* Alfred Harmsworth (later Lord Northcliffe) had a home (“Elmwood”) at Reading Street, in the parish of St Peter’s. In addition to the *Weekly Despatch*, he also owned the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Mirror*. He was created Baronet of Elmwood in 1904 and, in the following year, he was raised to the peerage as Baron Northcliffe of the Isle of Thanet (“Elmwood” was located only 500 yards from North Foreland - after which the name of his title originated). In 1918, Harmsworth was created Viscount Northcliffe, of St Peter’s in the County of Kent for his service as the director of the British War Mission in the United States. - Wikipedia

More photographs of Knowlton War Memorial



The front of the monument with a portrait of King George V and Queen Mary



The right-hand side of the monument



The back of the monument



The left-hand side of the monument



This photo shows the crown resting on a cushion and a cross at the top



*A close-up photo of the sculptor's name
- George Frampton RA on Knowlton War Memorial.
George Frampton is best-known today for his statue of Peter Pan, installed in Kensington Gardens.*



Knowlton was the winner of The Sunday Despatch competition for "the bravest village" and Mennock (a small village in Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland) was winner of the second prize which was a bronze memorial plaque seen in the accompanying photograph taken by my friend, the late Colin McIntyre. Colin served as the WFA's Publicity Officer in the 1990s and wrote the book How to read a War Memorial. He lived in Chelsea.

There are reports that The Sunday Despatch also awarded a third prize to a village in the Orkney Isles but no trace of it has yet been found.

*Mennock War Memorial,
Dumfries and Galloway
WMO/168570
Photo: Colin McIntyre*

Studies of the detail on Knowlton War Memorial



The reaper on the left and the husbandman on the right



The husbandman sowing seeds representing Peace (* a person who cultivates the land; a farmer)*



The figure of the reaper representing Literature, Art and Industry



A khaki-clad figure of a soldier representing the Defender of the weak

Studies of the Knowlton War Memorial Figures

Note: The sphere above the figures represents the world. On top of the sphere is a cushion supporting a crown and the crown is surmounted by a cross



The figure of Justice representing Right over the enemy of mankind

THIS CROSS WAS ERECTED IN HONOUR OF THOSE TWELVE MEN OF KNOWLTON WHO OUT OF A TOTAL POPULATION OF THIRTY NINE ENLISTED PRIOR TO MARCH 1915 AND BY THEIR PATRIOTIC ACTION WON THE WEEKLY DISPATCH BRAVEST VILLAGE COMPETITION

The Buffs' War Memorial, The Warrior's Chapel, Canterbury - Mourning and Identity

On the 14 September 1920, some 200 members of The Buffs Past and Present Association met in a London Hotel to dine, drink and meet comrades - current and former. In the Chair was General Sir Arthur Paget, a former cavalryman, in his role as Colonel of The Buffs. In the inevitable speeches, Sir Arthur proposed that a third Buffs Cottage be built, between Ramsgate and Broadstairs, as a memorial to The Buffs killed in the Great War. That building, with its two existing companions would have housed two retired Buffs, from the 1st or 2nd battalions, together with their families. His proposal was greeted with great acclaim, especially when he offered to double whatever was collected for the memorial fund that night. An account of the dinner, headlining Paget's proposal, appeared in a joint October and November 1920 edition of The Buff's journal, *The Dragon*.

It must have come as a surprise to readers of the December *Dragon* when they saw that the memorial to the dead of The Buffs was to be a oaken screen, called a reredos, featuring the figures of St George, St Michael and St Paul and placed behind an altar, below the east window of the Warriors' Chapel in Canterbury Cathedral. The paper stressed that the



Drawing dated 1920 by W. D. Carøe from the March 1921 issue of The Dragon for the proposed reredos. It is possible that, at the time it was drawn, the wording had not yet been agreed; also the figures aren't exactly as they turned out in the end

memorial would be "in keeping with the rest of the Chapel, and [would] not interfere with any ancient stonework". There was no explanation of the shift in the regiment's thinking from a utilitarian memorial on Thanet to a symbolic one in the heart of Canterbury Cathedral. The January 1921 *Dragon* gave further details, including the budget (between £500 and £700), the name of the architect, W. D. Carøe and the news that the names of the dead would be inscribed in a book of vellum, which would rest alongside the reredos. The carver of the reredos was to be Nathaniel Hitch who had cast the bronze figure on The Buffs' Boer War memorial.

The walls of the Cathedral's aisles were already well covered in war memorials to the dead of regiments which had been stationed in Canterbury during the nineteenth century; the east window of the Warriors' Chapel commemorated The Buffs who had fallen in the Crimea. Further off, in the Dane John Gardens, was the memorial to the regiment's and the Yeomanry's Boer War dead. Until that war, the dead had been exclusively professional soldiers; men who had chosen, or been driven by circumstances, to make a career in the army. Their prime loyalty was to their comrades and the regiment that held them; when they died, it was this self-contained world that mourned and this was reflected in the monuments. Their families may also have grieved, but such mourning could well have begun from the moment of enlistment. Field-Marshal Sir William Robertson (1860-1933) joined up as a private in the Lincolnshire Regiment. He recounted, in his autobiography, that his mother's response was, "I would rather bury you than see you in a red coat". Regardless of actual death, a recruit was probably lost to his family. There was an ambivalent relationship between the rest of Britain and the army, summarised by Kipling in his poem *Tommy*:

"For it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' Chuck him out, the brute!"

But it's "Saviour of 'is country" when the guns begin to shoot;

An' it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' anything you please;

An' Tommy ain't a bloomin' fool - you bet that Tommy sees!"

This former relationship between the country and the army was changed by the First World War. Living, fighting and dying on equal terms with the professional soldiers of the Regular Army were Territorials, semi-professionals from the prime regimental recruiting area; "Kitchener's Men", who had volunteered for the duration only, again often on a local, profession or ethnic basis; finally, there were the Conscripts, men who had not elected to serve but who, from 1916 onwards, had been compelled to do so by law. Over the course of the war, these non-Regulars, came to make up the majority of the army, bringing with them different family connections and different loyalties from those of the pre-war Regulars. Where many pre-war regulars had joined for the limited benefits of army life, wartime non-Regulars had either joined under compulsion or because, to varying extents, they believed in Britain's cause.

Continues

Sir Arthur's proposal was for a utilitarian memorial: one that offered a benefit to the living as a reflection of the sacrifices of the dead. In a civic context this was viable: a new hospital wing, a library, a recreation ground or bandstand, but who was to benefit from the new Cottage? The speeches at the September dinner saw the coining, by Major General Lynden-Bell, of an unofficial motto for The Buffs, "Once a Buff, always a Buff": a phrase that encompassed non-Regulars as well as Regulars but The Buffs' Cottages excluded non-Regulars. A more significant difficulty was that grief for The Buffs' dead was not limited primarily to the regiment; it extended to the parents, wives, sweethearts, children and siblings of all those non-Regulars who had never dreamt of being a Buff before 1914.

Possibly Sir Arthur had no experience of these changes. He had held no field command during the war, acting instead as an overseas envoy and organising London's air defences. In 1917, after his son was killed in action, he had withdrawn for much of his time to his villa by the Mediterranean. Among his audience in the Cannon Street Hotel were senior officers who had been on active service throughout the war and who knew differently. The speed with which the plan for the reredos was formalised suggests that these men may have taken the Colonel aside after the dinner, and explained that the dead of The Buffs had to be memorialised through something more universal and accessible than a further pair of houses, for Regular soldiers only, on a road on the Isle of Thanet.

The tale of the two war memorial plans demonstrates how the war changed the way that Buffs had to think about themselves. Theirs was now a history of Regular, Territorial and Service battalions, each with its own stories, survivors, roll of the fallen, and its toll of grieving comrades, families and civilian communities. To be effective, a utilitarian memorial would have had to offer a material recognition of their losses to all these; the more feasible alternative was a symbolic memorial in a communal space that invited meditation upon what had been lost.

The solution that evolved between The Buffs, the Cathedral and Mr Carøe, the architect, was a representation of the triumph of good over evil; equating the men who served in The Buffs during the First World War, with the angels, saints and martyrs of the Christian cosmos. On the left, of the reredos, is St George, a martyred Praetorian Guardsman, patron saint of England and protector of helpless womanhood. In the centre, St Michael: the archangel commanding the heavenly armies; victorious over Lucifer and the rebellious angels, casting them down to Hell. On the right is St Paul, whose soldierly credentials are less obvious. *The Dragon's*

explanation of his presence is that he is patron saint of the City of London, where The Buffs originated in 1572. However, he may have another reason for being on the memorial. In his Second Letter to Timothy, Paul wrote that he had "fought the good fight": his life as a Christian has been a constant spiritual battle to which he remained faithful. Furthermore, according to tradition, he was executed with a sword, a soldier's weapon and, albeit tangentially, suffered a soldier's death.

The August *Dragon* contained a description of the unveiling ceremony in the Cathedral, on 31st July 1921. It was conducted jointly by the Dean and General Lord Horne, who had commanded the 1st Army from 1916 onwards. Lord Horne's address summarised The Buffs' war record battalion by battalion, Regular and non-Regular: "all serving, all nobly maintaining the discipline and the traditions of their regiment, all inspired by the spirit of The Buffs. All this, but not without loss. Twenty-eight thousand men passed through The Buffs during the war; 5,684 gave their lives. One in each five men was a casualty!"

The impact of the shift in The Buffs' wartime demographic was reflected in another way, which the senior officers at the September dinner had not anticipated. From January 1921 onwards, *The Dragon* listed the donations to the Fund, headed by £50 from General Paget. By March, the Fund was doing sufficiently well that Major Crookenden, the Honorary Secretary, was able to tell the *Kent Gazette* that "My Committee wishes me to add that in the event of more money being subscribed than is necessary for the erection of the memorial, such surplus fund will be dedicated to the endowment of a Cottage Home for ex-Buffs": alas he was over optimistic. The deadline for each *Dragon's* publication was the middle of the preceding month. By mid-June (deadline for the July edition), the fund was £250 short, with the unveiling due in six weeks. The editor noted some contributions that were expected from various sources but also asked the battalions to dig into their funds to make up the rest.

In the August *Dragon* appears a triumphal set of accounts, showing that the shortfall had not only been covered but exceeded thanks, in part, to contributions from battalion budgets. *The Dragon* attributed the struggle to collect cash to a spate of industrial action, from April 1921 onward, led by the miners, railwaymen and dockers. Perhaps there was something in this, but there is another possibility. The Buffs Memorial was one of many being commissioned all over the country. In Canterbury alone, funds were being sought for memorials at city and parish levels. Each nearby village wished to remember its dead, as did schools and bodies like the

Kent County Cricket Club and the Cathedral Change Ringers. Many individuals had personal reasons for being drawn to contribute to more than one memorial, wishing their beloved dead to be commemorated in each of the contexts that framed their brief lives but whose grief exceeded their cash supplies.

Looked at today, The Buffs' War Memorial sits at the eastern end of the chapel, half hidden by the tombs of Lady Margaret Holland and her husbands. Their tombs displaced that of Archbishop Stephen Langton which was moved to the eastern end, half in and half out of the chapel: his feet straddled by the altar supporting The Buff's reredos; his head resting the other side of the chapel wall. The view of the Memorial is further hampered by the railings that close off the western end of the chapel. Beyond specific periods of remembrance the memorial is notable, today, for the daily reading of names from the Roll of Honour, which now includes the dead of The Buffs and successor regiments since 1918. In the 1920s, when remembrance was a constant experience for the families and friends of the dead, the Memorial was less of a background object in people's minds.

The memorial was more than a source of remembrance, it was also one of those icons that Richard Holmes wrote of in *Tommy* (2004), as having steered regimental identity over the centuries and

which conveyed an idea of The Buffs that could not have been envisioned in 1914. It made Regulars and non-Regulars equal, and elevated them from mourned, lost members of the regiment to Christian martyrs who sacrificed themselves for the glory of God and the defeat of evil. For all his undoubted good intentions, General Paget's proposal could never have achieved this. □

John Drouot



The Buffs War Memorial in Canterbury Cathedral. In this photo, the figure of St George on the left is partly hidden behind a candle-stick, St Michael is in the middle and St Paul is on the right

The following photographs of the four Buffs Cottages at Broadstairs were taken in May 1993



Buffs Cottages (now 59, 61, 63 & 65 Rumfields Road, Broadstairs)

Photographed May 1993



Note that, since these photographs were taken, the front windows have now all been changed and that the water-hydrant sign is located in front of Numbers 59 & 61 Rumfields Road



Remembering Lt-Colonel Richard Nelson Bendyshe, RMLI

Richard Nelson Bendyshe was born in Woodstock, Ontario, Canada on 18 January 1866, the eldest son of Nelson Bendyshe and Charlotte, *née* Brodrick. Richard Bendyshe was the great nephew of Admiral Lord Nelson, Lord Nelson's sister being his great-great-grandmother. He was educated at The King's School, Canterbury from 1879 to 1882 after which he entered the Royal Military College, Sandhurst. In 1885, he was commissioned as a Lieutenant in the Royal Marine Light Infantry. He was promoted Captain in 1895 and Major in 1903. In 1893, he was serving on HMS *Hibernia* (Malta). In 1895, he was Assistant Musketry Instructor in Chatham. From 1896 to 1901, he was Adjutant to the Plymouth Division. From 1901 to 1906, he was Staff Officer Chatham Division and, from 1908 to 1910, he was drafting Officer for the Plymouth Division. In 1910, he retired with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel and joined the Reserve of Officers. On the outbreak of war in August 1914, he took charge of the Wireless Station at Lochboisdale, South Uist, Outer Hebrides, Scotland with the rank of Major but applied to join the Royal Marine Brigade and was appointed to the Deal Battalion and was part of the Royal Naval Division that was involved in the siege and withdrawal from Antwerp in October 1914. On 1 March 1915, the Battalion sailed aboard the SS *Alnwick Castle* from Plymouth, originally for East Africa but this was cancelled, and they were diverted to the Dardanelles where it joined the Royal Naval Brigade at Lemnos. On 24 March, the Battalion went to Port Said to reorganise and, whilst there, he took over command of the Battalion. It was at Mudros 11-12 April and 17-24 April on Skyros for training in landing operations. On 29 April, the Battalion landed on the Gallipoli Peninsula where it relieved the 6th Battalion Australian Imperial Force on Gabe Tepe. It was on 1 May 1915, whilst inspecting the

position, that he was accidentally shot and killed by one of his own sentries. He is buried in Lone Pine Cemetery (Plot 111, Row D, Grave 6).



Lt-Col R. N. Bendyshe's grave in Lone Pine Cemetery, Gallipoli

An Australian officer, who witnessed the event, left the following account:

Colonel Bendyshe was being briefed by the 6th Battalion AIF Commanding Officer, Colonel McNicholl, who was accompanied by a runner named Ward. The two men squatted on their haunches in front of a group of Deal men while McNicholl underlined the importance of saving ammunition by only firing at clear targets. The two COs then moved to another group and began repeating the same information when one of the Deal men began to stare hard at McNicholl - who was unshaven, heavily tanned and was wearing a torn and tattered uniform, in direct contrast to the smart Englishman next to him. Bendyshe spoke to the man who, by now, was beginning to straighten up and said: "Don't stand up man, your head will be over the parapet". The man said "Yes, sir" and raised his rifle to his shoulder and fired at Colonel McNicholl, but the bullet missed him and struck and killed Colonel Bendyshe. Pandemonium broke out with men running in along the trench, towards the spot, firing wildly. An English Sergeant-Major and two men were shot. Colonel McNicholl was attacked with bayonets, one he deflected with his hand, another went through his tunic entering at the button and out by the shoulder grazing the skin and another which left a triangular hole in his left sleeve. Another Sergeant took charge and shouted at the men



*The King's School, Canterbury WWI War Memorial
Lt-Col Bendyshe's name is the third one in the first column*

to get back to the parapet. They knocked McNicholl to the bottom of the trench onto his back, the Sergeant telling the nearest man: "Put your bayonet on his chest and if he speaks a word pull the trigger". They then searched their spy [sic] prisoner and removed his notebooks and revolver and tied his hands and blindfolded him and marched him under armed escort down a communication trench. The first man they met was the 6th Battalion's Adjutant whose language on recognising his Commanding Officer "was in the finest tradition of the AIF." McNicholl was given morphia for the wound in his arm by Dr Black of the 6th Battalion, AIF, then escorted to the beach area where he was attended to by Naval Division doctors.

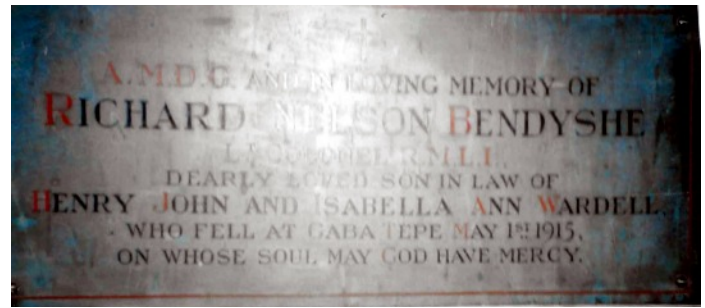
The circumstances of Lt-Colonel Bendyshe's death were the subject of a Court of Inquiry by Colonel Parsons.

However, there is another account of the death of Bendyshe which is a little different:

The 6th Battalion AIF was to take over the trenches held by the Deal Bn Commanded by Lt-Col Bendyshe. Lt-Col McNicholl with Bendyshe and his Regimental Sergeant Major with some runners went for a 'recce'. It was nearly finished, and they had rounded a corner when the Marines started shooting at them. Lt-Col Bendyshe and the RSM were both killed. The Marines charged with bayonets fixed and, fortunately, McNicholl was not stabbed. McNicholl ended up with cut hands from grabbing at the bayonets. They carted him off to the beach, bandaged his hands and gave him some sedatives (probably a bottle of rum). He stayed there the night and returned in the morning to his unit. The RSM cannot be identified at present.

It can be assumed that 12th Platoon of "C" Company, Deal Battalion were responsible for opening fire on the two Commanding Officers as 2/Lt Raymond Humphrey Quill RMLI and his (12th) Platoon were returned to HQ the following morning, although 2/Lt Quill was returned to his trench. The Platoon involved in the incident were, no doubt, required to give evidence at the Court of Inquiry held at Brigade Headquarters at 9:30am on 1 [sic] May 1915. (2/Lt Quill went sick with diarrhoea on 11 July 1915 and was invalided home on 20 August 1915. He retired in 1950 as Colonel R H Quill CBE DSO MVO RM.)

In a letter written after Bendyshe's death, by Bendyshe's sister-in-law, she stated that Bendyshe was little deaf and may not have heard the challenge.



Lt-Col Bendyshe's memorial tablet in St Peter's Church, Bekesbourne

So, what did happen? Did the scruffy appearance of Lt/Col W. McNicholl cause some of the Marines to think that he was a spy? Did Lt/Col Bendyshe fail to answer a challenge? We shall never know.

On 15 August 1893, Bendyshe had married Eleanor Margaret Wardell, the daughter of the Reverend Henry John Wardell, the Vicar of Bekesbourne, near Canterbury. The service took place in the Parish Church at Bekesbourne, the officiating clergy being the bride's father, the Revd J. H. Carr (Vicar of Adisham) the Revd Dr Maclean (Warden of St Augustine's College, Canterbury who had two sons killed in WW1, both old boys of The King's School, Canterbury) and the Revd Frederick Godden. Bendyshe's widow and their two children went to live at Barrington Hall, Cambridge. Bendyshe had



*Barrington Hall, Barrington, Cambridge
Photo: Ed Holman*

inherited the estate, which had been the seat of the family since the reign of Edward III, from his uncle in 1914. Bendyshe's two children: John Nelson (later a Lieutenant in the Worcester Regiment) born on 29th July 1894 and Margaret Charlotte born on 1st November 1900.

Lt-Col Bendyshe is commemorated on The King's School War Memorial and in both Barrington and Bekesbourne Parish Churches. □

Ed Holman

NB: Richard Young has kindly written an addendum on Lt-Col W. McNicholl - see page 12

Addendum by Richard Young to the article by Ed Holman on pages 10 and 11 'Remembering Lt-Colonel Richard Nelson Bendyshe, RMLI'

Research into the 'Col McNicholl' referred to in the accounts of Col Bendyshe's death quoted in Ed Holman's article reveal that the Australian officer's name was actually Col McNicoll rather than Col McNicholl. I found the following information on that officer which members might find interesting:

Lt-Col Walter Ramsay McNicoll

Lt-Col Walter McNicoll had trained as a teacher before the war and was active in the Victoria Militia which was incorporated into the AIF in 1914. He commanded the 6th Battalion, 2nd Australian Brigade at Gallipoli and, after the tragic incident with Bendyshe, he was seriously wounded during an infantry charge in the Second Battle of Krithia on 8 May 1915. He was found on the battlefield that evening by Charles Bean, then a war correspondent, later Australia's official war correspondent. Charles Bean returned at night with a stretcher party. McNicoll was invalided to Alexandria where an operation to remove the bullet in his abdomen was

unsuccessful. He was then transferred to London where a second operation finally located and removed the bullet in his abdomen. After a year's recuperation in Melbourne, McNicoll was promoted to Brigadier-General and was given command of the 10th Infantry Brigade of the 3rd Division from December 1916 until the Armistice. The Brigade was part of numerous actions on the Western Front including Messines, Ypres, the Somme and Amiens.

After the war, he returned to teaching and then stood for the Federal seat of Werriwa, but resigned before the end of his term when he was appointed Administrator of the Mandated Territory of New Guinea from 1934 to 1942. He was knighted for his work organising relief efforts after the 1937 volcanic eruption that nearly destroyed the Territory capital, Rabaul.

Sir Walter McNicoll's decorations included CB, DSO, CMG and the Croix de Guerre (Belgium). He was also Mentioned in Despatches. □

Richard Young

A photograph from the archive



Members of the East Kent Branch of the WFA at the Home of Aviation Memorial at Eastchurch on the Isle of Sheppey in August 2005

Bruce Bairnsfather's 'Old Bill' - A 'Falstaffian' figure?

The WFA Bulletin No 125 dated September 2023 contained a most interesting article on 'Old Bill' by Thomas Small - the editor of John Rafferty's book *In Search of Old Bill: The Life of Thomas Rafferty* which was published last year. John Rafferty is a great-nephew of Thomas Rafferty and has a family interest in his great-uncle and he is to be congratulated for putting such a convincing case for his great uncle to have been the model for Bruce Bairnsfather's character of 'Old Bill'.

Bairnsfather's cartoons featuring 'Old Bill', 'Bert' and 'Alf' are legendary with 'Old Bill' being regarded by some as "The Man Who Won The War". All three - 'Old Bill', Bert' and 'Alf' - were Old Contemptibles which probably goes a long way to explaining the characters' sense of humour and their appeal to Bairnsfather as a cartoonist.

Something that had not previously occurred to the author of this article was Thomas Small's claim that 'Old Bill' was a 'Falstaffian' figure. Indeed, if one considers the stoneware jug of Falstaff illustrated on this page, one can certainly see the similarity between the two fictional characters of 'Old Bill' and 'Sir John Falstaff' - albeit their having been created some centuries apart.

The book makes the case for Thomas (who, confusingly, was known as 'Pat') Rafferty to have been the model for Bairnsfather's 'Old Bill' but the book would have benefited from better proof-reading before it was published. Ouch!



This Bairnsfather 'Old Bill' character jug made by Beswick Pottery, circa 1920. Old Bill's rotundness, his joviality and his fondness for a drink are similar to those attributes of Sir John Falstaff



Stoneware character jug made by Jacob Furnival & Co (1845-1870) featuring the jovial Shakespearian fictional character of Sir John Falstaff sitting with a drink in one hand a stick in the other hand to form part of the jug's handle. The design of this jug was registered in December 1845. Sir John Falstaff appeared in a number of Shakespearian plays but he is best remembered for his role in Shakespeare's Henry IV



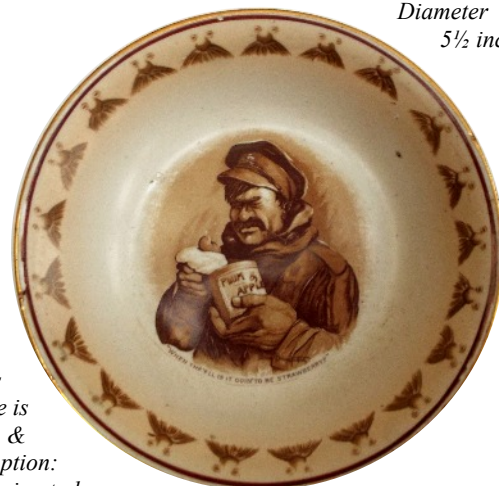
This Old Bill character jug is thought by some to have been manufactured in the 1940s rather than in the 1920s.

Diameter
9½ inches



A hanging wall-plate made by Grimwade's Pottery featuring Old Bill holding a rum jar and a mess tin with the caption: "I likes me drop o' rum" with battlefield scenes around its border

Diameter
5½ inches



A bowl also made by Grimwade's Pottery. This one also features Old Bill but this time he is holding a tin of plum & apple jam with the caption: "When the 'ell is it going to be strawberry?". Note the image of Old Bill's walrus moustache around the rim of the bowl. These two examples of Bairnsfatherware reflect Old Bill's love of drink and food - just like equally fictitious Sir John Falstaff!



A brass Old Bill motor-cycle mascot



A portrait of Old Bill often found on Grimwade's Bairnsfatherware pottery



A brass Old Bill motor-car mascot mounted on base of a British 18-pdr brass shellcase to make an ashtray

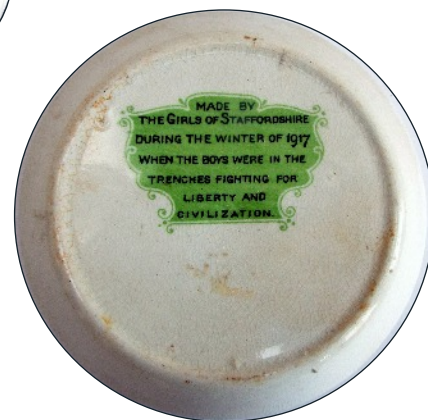
An Old Bill fund-raising badge sold by the Surrey Red Cross in 1979 - the same design was originally used by the Surrey Red Cross in 1918



Machine-made brass ashtray with a cast figure of Old Bill and Bruce Bairnsfather's impressed signature



Hand-hammered brass dish with an image of Old Bill smoking his pipe



Many items of Bairnsfatherware have this patriotic backstamp which reads: "Made by the Girls of Staffordshire during the winter of 1917 when the Boys were in the trenches fighting for Liberty and Civilisation"

It is generally believed that L/Cpl Thomas 'Pat' Henry Rafferty was the model for Bairnsfather's 'Old Bill'; that Pte Bert Rawlins was the model, somewhat confusingly, for 'Alf'; and that Pte William Biddulph was the model for 'Bert'. Sadly, both L/Cpl Thomas Rafferty and Pte Bert Rawlins were killed in action on 25 April 1915 during the Second Battle of Ypres. In addition, Pte William Biddulph suffered a bullet wound to his left arm during that same action and was discharged as being unfit for duty: he was awarded the Silver War Badge. Consequently, for all three real-life characters, their war service ended on that same

fateful day along with 166 other soldiers of the 1st Bn The Warwickshire Regiment who also died that day. Neither Thomas Rafferty nor Bert Rawlings has a known grave and their names are both inscribed on the Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing, Ypres. One of the many Bairnsfather cartoons featuring 'Alf' and 'Bert' that were reproduced on Bairnsfatherware pottery was: "Give it a 'hard 'un Bert. You can generally 'ear 'em fizzing a bit first if they are agoin to explode!" as illustrated below. It is one of my favourite Bairnsfather cartoons. □

JB



Width of plate 10 inches



Diameter of plate 5¼ inches

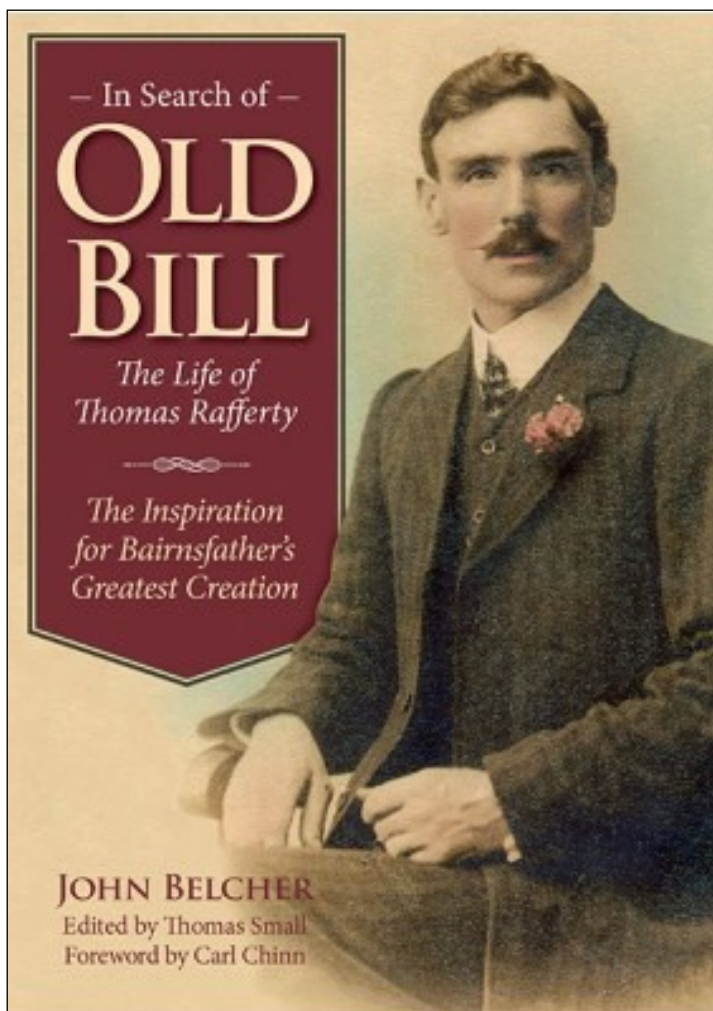


Diameter of bowl 9½ inches



Diameter of plate 7¼ inches

"Give it a good 'ard 'un Bert. You can generally 'ear 'em fizzing a bit first if they are agoin to explode!"



The cover of John Belcher's new book In Search of Old Bill: The Life of Thomas Rafferty



Crested china figure of Old Bill with caption: "Yours to a cinder - Old Bill"- made by Carlton China



Pottery character figure of Old Bill with pipe in mouth and text around the base reading: "Who told ye that one?"



The base of the pottery Old Bill character figure jug shown left bearing Bruce Bairnsfather's signature on its base

With grateful acknowledgements to Tonie and Valmai Holt, authors of *The Biography of Captain Bruce Bairnsfather: In Search of the Better 'Ole* (published 2014), for their help with this article

War Trophies on View at Ramsgate and Margate during WWI

THE THANET ADVERTISER AND ECHO, JULY 29, 1916.

WAR TROPHIES ON VIEW

AT ST. LUKE'S SALE.

The garden sale of work which took place at St. Luke's Vicarage on Thursday afternoon, proved a profitable and an interesting affair from the point of view of both buyer and seller. With attractive stalls and continuous and well organised entertainments, a delightful time was spent by a large crowd of visitors.

The sale was opened by Mrs. Pryor, of Margate.

(Intermediate paragraphs not reproduced)

During the afternoon two Canadian concerts were given which attracted large crowds.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of the afternoon was Miss Whiting's collection of war relics. These were placed in the dining room of the Vicarage, and an intent crowd walked round the tables examining the unique collection. The relics had been sent home to St. Luke's parishioners from sons, husbands and brothers at the war.

Our far-flung battlefield was fully represented in those relics grim or pathetic. Here was a cruel looking knife, taken from the body of a Turk; or a piece of the gasbag of the L 15; there a German officer's coat and belt; and some barbed wire from Loos. Pampas grass from India, gas helmets, shrapnel of every description, large pieces of a Zeppelin, enemy weapons of every description, queer Indian ornaments or the darts known as "silent death" which Zeppelin commanders drop from their gasbags. Each collection was grouped separately, in most cases with the photograph of the sender. Wives were eager to show their husbands' relics, fathers their sons'. It was a room full of romance. By way of contrast, some relics from Waterloo were also on show.

And one on a centre table stood alone. It was a small piece of shrapnel, found in the centre of St. Luke's aisle one Sunday afternoon, and that trophy, at least, was brought to St. Luke's straight from the hand of the enemy.

THE THANET ADVERTISER AND ECHO, NOV. 8, 1918.

GENUINE CAPTURED

GERMAN WAR TROPHIES

Are now on offer at Bobby & Co.'s High Street and Cliftonville Establishments.

Independent of their value as trophies, these relics, which are to be had at very low rates, make artistic wall decorations.

* Rifles	-	-	25/-
Steel Trench Helmets	-	-	5/-
Bayonets, plain	-	-	5/-
" saw back	-	-	7/6
" brass handle	-	-	7/6

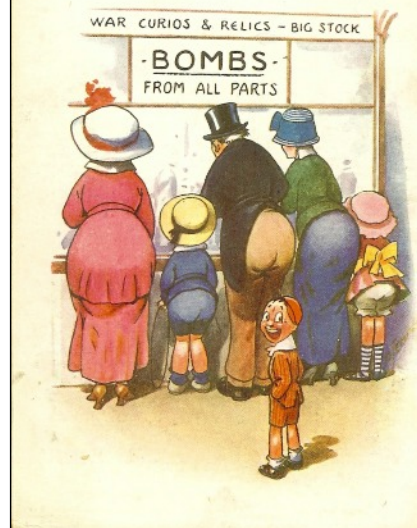
Other Trophies—Breast Plates, Gas Masks, Very Pistols, etc., are expected, and will be advertised shortly.

* It should be noticed that the Rifles have been rendered harmless by the removal of the strikers.

BOBBY & Co., Ltd.

High St., Margate, & Northdown Rd., Cliftonville

It ain't always them as looks
hardest as sees most!



Although neither of these WWI comic postcards are signed by the artist, it is believed that they were both drawn by Doug Tempest who was a prolific comic artist for Bamforth & Co, postcard publishers



War Trophies came in all shapes and sizes

Whilst searching the *British Newspaper Archive* for reports on War Trophies, your editor came across the following report in *The Grantham Journal* dated 11 September 1915:

FASHION FOR WAR TROPHIES.

RINGS MADE FROM SHELL CASES.

There is a considerable vogue for war trophies just now, both among the Belgian soldiers and our own men. A certain difference is to be noticed, however; while the English soldier prefers to retain his shell or bit of shrapnel as far as possible in the original state it came to him, the Belgian appears to have a perfect passion for giving souvenirs to every one who is kind to him, and consequently has to divide up his spoils in small sections, generally fashioning them into something that can be worn or used.

What are known as "bagues militaires" or "bagues boches" are to be seen worn by many Belgian refugees; the Belgian soldiers make them in the trenches from the aluminium found in German shell-cases, which they smelt and pour into little moulds made in hollowed-out potatoes or other roots. These rings are then decorated in various ways, some being shaped as marquise rings with insets of copper also got from the shell, and others formed with buckles like guard rings. The ornamentation made with the rough implements available is often very beautiful. "Yser" is found on many, and the initials of the giver or the recipient. The great disadvantage of these rings is that, the metal being soft, they very quickly wear out. Inkpots and other things are also made from the shells by the Belgians. A soldier recently fashioned a Maltese cross from three German bullets.

The English soldier views these things more grimly, and is not willing to let the war relics lose their character. An officer just back from the front has had a German bullet, which penetrated his shoulder and came out by his wrist, mounted in gold and made into a charm, but not altered. Others have had rough pieces of shrapnel which have struck them mounted in gold wire; for tiny fragments a little gold cage has been made. German shells have been mounted to serve as dinner gongs, and the base of a shrapnel case turned into an ash tray; a cigar-box, too, has been constructed from a German helmet, with the Prussian eagle on the lid.



Three aluminium trench art rings believed to have been made by Belgian soldiers. The one on the left is engraved '1914/1915', the one in the middle reads 'YSER R.H.' and the one on the right is engraved 'YSER 1914-15'



Close-up photo of one of the above rings - it is believed that the initials R.H. were either those of the maker of the ring or the recipient of the ring. The ring depicts an Prussian eagle (representing the German Army?) being caught by a snake (representing the Belgian Army?)



Close-up of the Prussian eagle



Close-up of the snake entwining the ring

Illustrations from the Brazier Collection



Another example of trench art made by a Belgian soldier - a paper-knife made from the copper driving-band taken from an artillery shell. The paper-knife is engraved "Souvenir de L'Yser" on its front and on its back the Belgian soldier has engraved his name and rank

More Yser Trench Art Souvenirs



Cartoon showing Belgian soldiers making trench art rings in the trenches (see also page 18)

Some examples:



1914 - 1915



YSER R.H.



(Yser 1914-15)



Five views of a British 18-pdr shellcase, dated 1916, decorated with poppies within an artistic border and 'YSER'

Heritage Day at the Powell-Cotton Museum, Quex



The WFA stall at the Heritage Fair held at the Powell-Cotton Museum, Quex, Birchington on Saturday, 30 September 2023. The stall was manned by Michael Lucas, Steve Ifield, Rachel Wilsdon and Hazel Basford. The Heritage Day attracted a good number of visitors making the day well worthwhile. Our thanks to the members who promoted our Branch and to other WFA Branch members who looked in during the day in support of the event



The WFA stall displayed a number of publications relating to the Western Front and this WWI brass shellcase, filled with artificial poppies, which made a very attractive display for the WFA stall. The inset image was the poster design that was used throughout East Kent for promoting the Heritage Fair and featured 'our Hazel' prominently



This brass trench art artillery shellcase attracted a lot of interest at the Heritage Fair. The above close-up photograph shows the fine decoration on it with the unusual painting, in black, of the years 1914 and 1918 and, in red, of the name YSER. The original markings on the base of the shellcase had, at some stage, been removed making identification of the shellcase (its calibre and its year of manufacture) and its country of origin uncertain. The shellcase was approximately four inches in diameter and around 14 inches in length. Perhaps one of our more knowledgeable collectors-of-artillery members can identify it. Clearly, this item of trench art was made after the war had ended and it was probably made to sell to pilgrims or visitors to the battlefields who wanted something to take home with them as a souvenir or memento of their visit to the battlefields

The Kentish Belle “ARMISTICE DAY” Tour



The Kentish Belle ready to leave Victoria Station
Photo: Steve Casey



Bahamas eases the train through Queenborough Station towards the Sheppey crossing
Photo: John Websper

On Armistice Day 2023, a commemorative steam-hauled charter train, *The Kentish Belle*, toured many of the numerous rail lines in Kent. Departing from London (Victoria) mid-morning behind the former LMS Jubilee-class locomotive *Bahamas* 445596, the nine-coach train was headed for Sheerness, but not by the direct route. Passing through Sevenoaks and Tonbridge, the train turned onto the Medway Valley line at Paddock Wood and headed for Strood. Here the train reversed and, for the next stage of its journey through the Medway towns and on to Sheerness, it was hauled by a former BR- class 47 diesel.

This was a fitting stopover to mark the Armistice as the Isle of Sheppey has a distinguished history from both world wars. It was here in the early years of the 20th century that the development in British aircraft began to take place. Pioneer aviators such as Brabazon, Rolls and Short were all involved on the island. In addition, the strategic position of the Royal Naval dockyard at Sheerness was vital to the Royal Navy. It was from there that, in November 1914, was witnessed the self destruction of HMS *Bulwark*, a dreadnought battleship with the loss of more than 700 lives.

Leaving Sheerness at 1:30pm, the Armistice train made its way off the island to rejoin the Kent coast mainline at Sittingbourne. Passing through Faversham and Canterbury, it tackled the steep gradient towards Shepherdswell in fine style before dropping down to Dover.

The next section to Folkestone - the major embarkation port for the army in WW1 - brought a change of scenery whereby passengers were able to look across the English Channel to Boulogne on a fine autumn afternoon. How many remembered that this stretch of line was closed for much of WW1 following a major earth slip at The Warren in December 1915?

Leaving Folkestone, the train turned inland passing on the left the site of the former Shornecliffe Garrison.

Beyond Ashford, the train headed for Maidstone and the challenging ascent of the North Downs.

The final stretch back to Victoria Station through the capital's suburbs followed the route taken a century earlier by another steam-hauled train conveying the body of the Unknown Warrior. A fitting conclusion to an historic commemoration. □



Bahamas name plate. Designed by William Stanier it was built in 1935 for the London Midland Scottish Railway (LMS). Withdrawn in July 1996 as the steam era ended. Purchased from BR by a preservation society and commenced running steam Heritage tours in 1972
Photo: John Websper

John Websper

Fortnum & Mason's Tommy's Tin 1914 - 2014

It seems that charity shops have largely replaced the junk shops that existed in every town until around thirty years ago. Today, every high street has a good number of charity shops and you never know what you might find in them. Unlike yesterday's junk shops, today's charity shops are spotlessly clean and everything in them is equally clean. Most items are very sensibly priced and you can be sure that anything of a vintage nature will have been looked up on the web to determine its value. Nevertheless, occasion 'finds' can be picked up in charity shops at very reasonable prices. And, of course, all sales support the respective charity.

A recent 'find' of mine was this Fortnum & Mason's Tommy's Tin dating from 2014. It is very loosely based on Princess Mary's Christmas 1914 tin which was initially given to 'every sailor afloat and every soldier at the Front'. Tommy's Tin originally contained two blocks of chocolate, a pack of playing-cards and an informative leaflet. Unfortunately, the chocolate had been consumed by the time the tin came into my hands! It is understood that some 7,000 of these Tommy Tins were sent in December 2014 to every man and woman in the armed forces on active service around the world as a thank you for their bravery and service. □

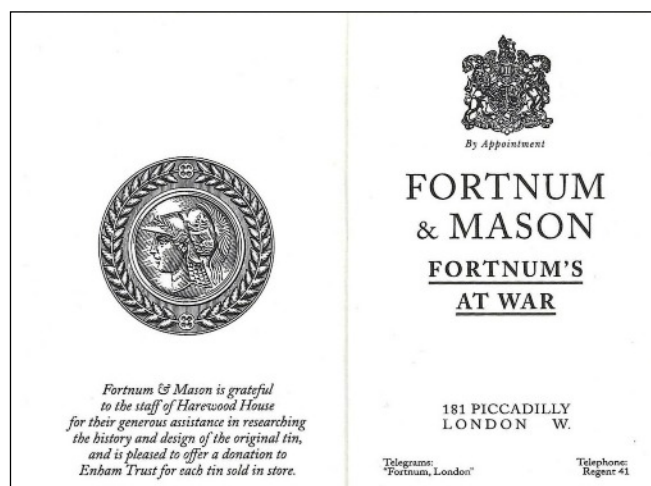
JB



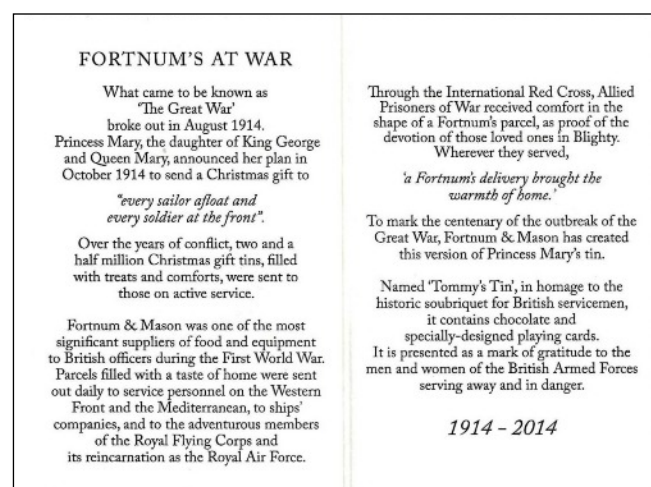
The remaining contents



The pack of playing-cards still in its original wrapper



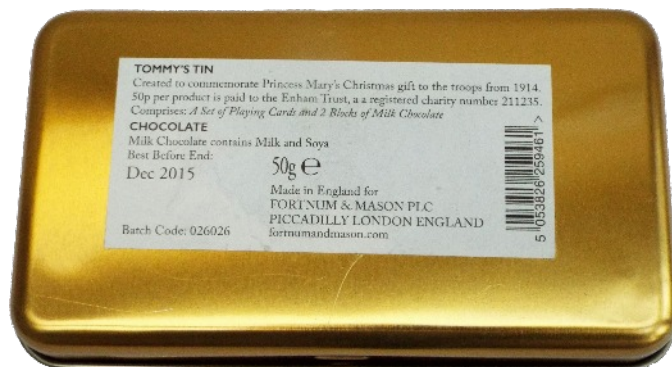
The front and back of the informative leaflet inside the tin



The inside of the informative leaflet contained in the tin



Showing the fine detailing of the lid of Tommy's Tin

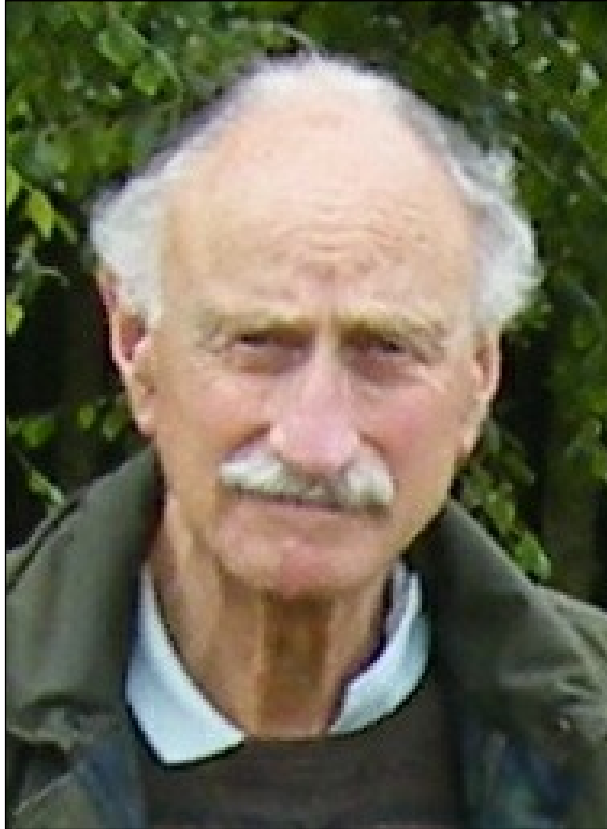


The original label still on the bottom of the tin.
A number of Tommy's Tins were also sold by Fortnum & Mason.
This tin would appear to be one of those sold by Fortnum & Mason

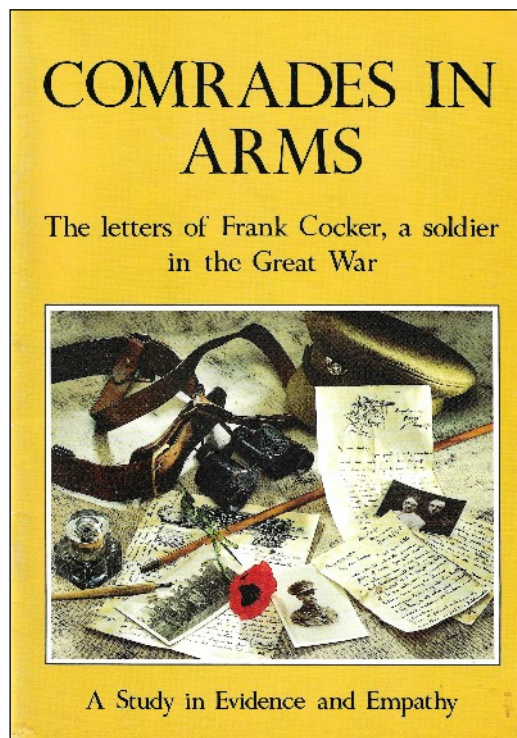
Obituary - William J. ('Bill') Westall 1933-2023

Bill joined The Western Front Association in 1981 shortly after it was formed in 1980. He was educated at Kelly College, Tavistock (where his father was Headmaster) and at Queen's College, Cambridge. Before going to university, he did his National Service as an officer in the RASC. On coming down from university, he entered the teaching profession and taught at a school in Sandbach, Cheshire before being appointed Head of History at the Harvey Grammar School, Folkestone. Whilst there he took a full part in out of school activities: notably the under-14 hockey team, which he coached, and dry-slope skiing which he coached with Peter Thomas. There was a dry-ski slope at the Folkestone Sports Centre and Bill and Peter coached numerous boys to such a high standard that the school team twice won the English Schools Team Championship. A number of the boys they taught became ski instructors themselves here and abroad.

The Western Front became very important to Bill and soon he was taking school parties to the battlefields in France and Belgium in addition to many visits with his teaching colleagues John Botting, Richard Young and John Herbert plus John's wife Barbara. Calling themselves the Harvey Pals, for nearly forty years they visited the battlefields. When someone suggested in 1983 going to Gallipoli, Bill was even more enthusiastic than ever for his father, Rupert Westall, had been a 15-year-old midshipman in the pre-Dreadnought battleship HMS *Goliath* which sank in Morto Bay off the Gallipoli peninsula.



Bill Westall - photo taken on the 2012 East Kent Branch battlefield tour



The front cover of Bill Westall's book *Comrades in Arms: The letters of Frank Cocker, a soldier in the Great War*

From his father's obituary: *'When Goliath was torpedoed on the night of 12th May 1915, instead of heading at once for the upper decks, Westall went in search of his inflatable Gieves waistcoat. The ship went down within four minutes and took Westall with her. He came to the surface, puffed some air into his waistcoat, and swam about in the darkness singing songs and shouting slogans to encourage the other survivors, until he was picked up after an hour. It was he said later, "very brave for a little boy"'. Bill's father remained in the Navy until 1922 when he retired with the rank of Lieutenant Commander, later becoming a schoolmaster after attending Queen's College, Cambridge.*

Bill was a voracious collector of books on the First World War and was the inspiration for the many trips that the Harvey Pals made to the battlefields, providing masses of information and maps for each expedition. In addition, he spent many painstaking hours making large numbers of excellent military models of all kinds, some of which I still have.

Bill was a regular attender of the early WFA meetings held at the National Army Museum and continued to attend WFA East Kent Branch meetings from his home at Folkestone. In later years, he reluctantly restricted his attendance at our Branch meetings to the summer months because he didn't like driving in the dark.

Bill wrote the book *Comrades in Arms* published by Tressell Publications in 1988.

He was unmarried and died at his niece's home in Basingstoke on 7th November 2023, aged 90. Bill will be sadly missed by all who knew him. □

Richard Young

Future meetings:

Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month at The Hall, St Andrews United Reformed Church, Watling Street, Canterbury CT1 2UA
7:30pm start (hall open from 7:00pm)

5 December

Peter Hart

‘Somme Success. The RFC and the Battle of the Somme’

2024

9 January

Charles Fair: ‘The changing character of the London Territorial Force 1914-1918 - the case of the 19th (County of London) Battalion’

6 February

William Franklin: ‘Remembering ‘Bungo’ (Field-Marshal Julian Byng)’

5 March

Greg Baughen: ‘An independent RAF - inspiration or aberration?’

2 April

Tom Greenshields: ‘Leaders - the British Army NCO in the Great War - a reappraisal’

7 May

Tony Bolton: ‘Mobilisation. The 18 days - 5-22 August 1914’

4 June

Meghan Kelleher: ‘The Commonwealth War Graves Commission’s enquiries’ files’

2 July

Marietta Crichton Stewart: ‘The Welsh Walter Mitty - life and adventures of a lieutenant, 6th Welsh’

August - no meeting

3 September

Phil Sutcliffe: ‘The Somme: April - September 1916 through the eyes of a foot soldier’

1 October

Peter Hodgkinson: ‘The 4th Army in the Battle of the Selle, 17-31 October 1918’

5 November

Viv Newman: ‘Regina Diana - seductress, singer & spy’

3 December

Mark Connelly: ‘Not so silent nights: the 1914 Christmas Truce’

All are welcome

WFA branches are entirely self-supporting. A donation towards the expenses of the meeting is very much appreciated

For further details, please contact:

Hazel Basford

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
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