

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

Trustees of the East Kent Branch:

Hazel Basford
Greg Bayne

Committee:

Hazel Basford (Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Speaker Finder)

Richard Young
Edward Holman
Rachel Wilsdon
Rob Newman

EDITORIAL

This issue of *Between the Lines* contains a range of articles including a number on Crested China models of war memorials in East Kent. There are also articles on the Comrades of the Great War - which was one of the four ex-servicemen's organisations which amalgamated in 1921 to form the British Legion - and The Ypres League featuring artwork by Sir Bernard Partridge.

I have to say that I was a little disappointed not to have received more contributions from our members. However, I was delighted to receive contributions from both Richard Young and Ed Holman relating to the repatriation of the fallen, and Richard also provided some interesting photos showing the pub sign that hung outside the former 'Man of Kent' public house in Canterbury. Richard also provided a photo of the grave of Major-General H I W Hamilton in St Martin's Churchyard, Cheriton, Folkestone; he was another of those who were repatriated during the war demonstrating that we have at least two repatriated servicemen in our patch - namely Lt Vernon Austin and Major-General H I W Hamilton. We certainly live in a most interesting part of our country and are surrounded by interesting stories just waiting to be re-told in our Newsletter.

Members of our Branch are again invited to contribute articles which relate to the Great War and, preferably, to East Kent. The articles do not have to contain thousands of words; even short articles will be most welcome.

Contributions should be sent to me in M/S Word with accompanying images attached as JPGs. Handwritten submissions are also acceptable provided they are clearly legible. The deadline for contributions (articles, letters, queries, etc) is Sunday, 23 July for the August/September issue. □

Contributions should be e-mailed to me at: [REDACTED]

James Brazier
WFA East Kent Branch Newsletter Editor

STOP PRESS

Just as this Newsletter was being prepared, news came in that Richard Dunning MBE, the owner of Lochnagar Crater, had recently undergone major surgery in hospital and is currently recuperating at home. Sadly, he will not be able to attend the 1 July ceremony at the Crater - the first year that he has not been at the Crater since he purchased it in 1978. I know that everyone will join me in wishing Richard a full and speedy recovery and we look forward to him attending the service next year. □

Folkestone's War Memorials in Crested China



The 1914-18 Road of Remembrance memorial stone



The plaque on the front of the Road of Remembrance stone



The town's war memorial was designed by FW Blundstone and unveiled on 2 December 1922. The china model made by the Arcardian China Co below is extremely prone to accidental damage! □

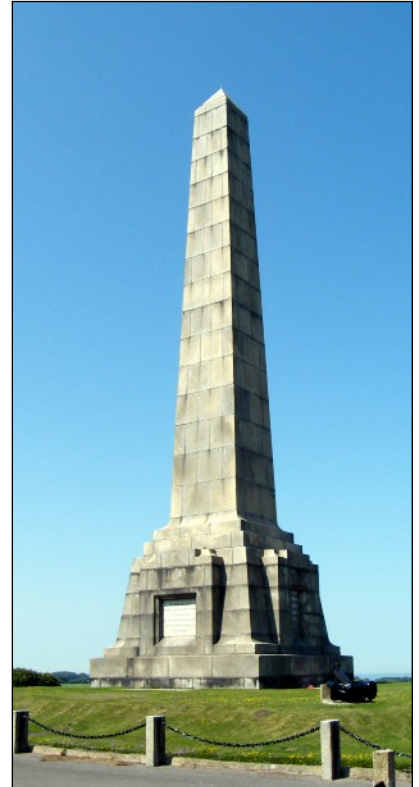


These fine Crested China models bearing the Folkestone crest were produced in Staffordshire in the 1920s

Dover Town War Memorial and The Dover Patrol Memorial in Crested China



Dover War Memorial still in its original location in the Garden of Remembrance outside Maison Dieu House. This Grade II listed building was designed by Dover-born sculptor Richard Reginald Goulden (1876-1932)*



The Dover Patrol Memorial at St Margaret's-at-Cliffe. There are other Dover Patrol Memorials at Cap Blanc-Griz Nez, France and in New York City



The Crested China model of Dover War Memorial was made by Arcadian China and bears the Dover crest. The model of the Dover Patrol Memorial bears the St Margaret's-at-Cliffe crest and is believed to have been made in Bavaria in the early-1920s

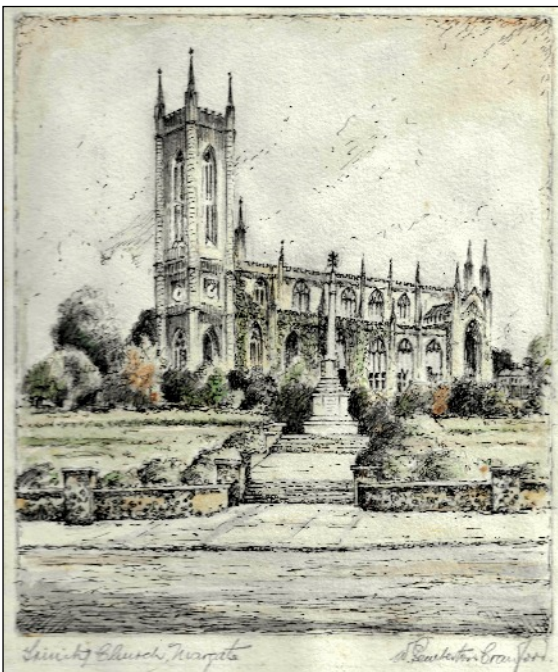
Margate War Memorial in Crested China



Crested China model of Margate War Memorial



Margate War Memorial (as photographed in 2007)



Pen-and-ink sketch (undated) of Holy Trinity Church with Margate War Memorial in the foreground

Margate War memorial was unveiled on 5 November 1922. It was erected in front of Holy Trinity Church as can be seen in the accompanying pen-and-ink sketch by Margate artist William 'Bill' Crawford. The sketch is not dated but is believed to have been drawn in the late 1950s. Holy Trinity Church was virtually destroyed by an enemy bomb on 1 June 1943 but it remained standing until a decision was eventually taken to demolish it around 1959. The bomb struck at 1:07pm when the church clock stopped forever, as depicted in this sketch. The serious damage to the church is not evident in this sketch although many of the windows on the south side of the church were blown out as can be seen in the sketch.

The crested china model shown above is unmarked but is believed to have been made in Bavaria in the mid-1920s.

There were numerous proposals for both the form of the war memorial and its location. Eventually, the present site was chosen but the first design in this location was for the memorial to be in the form of an Eleanor Cross. However, this simple cross is much admired as the town's war memorial although it no longer has Holy Trinity Church to act as a backcloth. □

For Ramsgate, a model of the Whitehall Cenotaph was produced in Crested China with a Ramsgate inscription on its base



Grafton China back-stamp and details of retailer:

**SOUVENIR FROM THE
"IMPERIAL BAZAAR"
ALBION HILL RAMSGATE
WHICH WAS TWICE WRECKED
BY ZEPH BOMBS ON
MAY 17th 1915 & JUNE 17th 1917**



The flags shown on this Grafton China model of the Whitehall Cenotaph are L-R the Blue Ensign, the Union Flag and the Red Ensign. Today, the Cenotaph is flanked on one side by the Royal Air Force Ensign, Union Flag, and Red Ensign on one side, and the Blue Ensign, the Union Flag and the White Ensign on the other side.



**Another Crested China
item bearing the
Ramsgate crest was this
model of a long-case clock
showing the time 3.25
with the inscription:**

**WORLD
WAR
1914 - 1919
—
PEACE
SIGNED
3.25pm
—
JUNE
28th
1919**



There is no manufacturer's mark on this model but it does bear the following inscription on its base:

**SOUVENIR FROM "IMPERIAL BAZAAR"
ALBION HILL RAMSGATE WHICH WAS
TWICE WRECKED
BY ZEP BOMBS ON
MAY 17th 1915 & JUNE 17th 1917**

Crested China items such as these were hugely popular from around 1900 to around 1930. There was a resurgence of interest in collecting them from around 1965 but, in more recent years, they have largely lost their appeal to collectors. However, military items such as the above continue to be collected by crested china aficionados.

JB

Remembering the Comrades of the Great War



Diameter 22mm

The women's section badge is quite scarce



Diameter 32mm



Diameter 25mm

The men's badge came in two sizes. It is believed that the larger version pre-dates the smaller version

Note the figure of Britannia in the above design



Comrades of the Great War - Peace Sunday



The above postcard shows members of the Ramsgate Branch of the Comrades of the Great War at Ramsgate & St Lawrence Cemetery on 'Comrades Sunday', 4th July 1920. 'Comrades Sunday' was the day set apart by the Comrades as a day of remembrance each year for those who had lost their lives in WWI (see extract from the Comrades' Constitution shown below). After a short service in the cemetery, wreaths were laid on the graves of the war dead. □

JB



The above photo shows the 14-feet high monument that can also be seen in the postcard view above. The monument is in memory of men of the Royal Navy who had served at Ramsgate during the First World War. It was dedicated on Wednesday, 13th March 1918

Comrades of the Great War

CONSTITUTION AND OBJECTS.

9. Anniversary Celebrations.

(a) *Peace Sunday.* To arrange Annual or other Church Parades to be held on appropriate occasions, such as Peace Sunday (the Sunday preceding the date of the Declaration of Peace) and Peace Day. All such celebrations should, if possible, include a Divine Service. On Peace Sunday or other days Deputations of Comrades might be sent to decorate the graves of men buried abroad. Every Post and Branch at home and abroad should take the opportunity of decorating the graves of the fallen buried in the locality.

REMEMBRANCE DAY.

COMRADES' PROCESSION AT RAMSGATE.

In remembrance of the men who fell in the war, a big procession, impressive in its meaning, made its way from St. George's Church on Sunday afternoon to lay wreaths on the graves of the service men buried in Ramsgate Cemetery.

Organised by the Comrades of the Great War, the ceremony was honoured by a large number of townspeople. The long procession included two bands—that of the Comrades and of the Orphanage boys from the Southwood Holiday Camp—the Mayor (Councillor R. W. Philpott), and some members of the Corporation, boy scouts, and Sunday school children carrying wreaths to place on the graves of their companions killed in the Sunday daylight air-raid; Comrades with floral tributes for their fallen brethren; and the nurses of the St. John Ambulance Brigade, who also paid a visit to the grave of the late Mrs. H. Hinds, formerly first officer at the Ramsgate V.A.D. The nurses also placed wreaths on the graves of the four soldiers who died at the Kent 2 V.A.D. during the war.

Passing through silent crowds in High-street and King-street, the procession made its way to the portion of the cemetery where a monument is erected to the memory of the men lost in the explosion on H.M. Torpedo Boat No. 4.

Here the hymn, "Jesu, Lover of my Soul," was rendered, after which the Rev. G. W. Ackroyd offered prayer.

In a short address, the Vicar of Ramsgate (Rev. E. L. A. Hertslet) said there was the danger, even after all we had gone through, that the lessons of the war would be forgotten in the present hurry of life, but the Comrades were determined never to forget the men who had laid down their lives while fighting beside them.

After the service, the Comrades placed wreaths upon the graves of nearly one hundred fallen service men.

In connection with the Comrades' remembrance day, Mr. W. Hollands, secretary of the Ramsgate branch, asks us to state that the wreaths given by relatives were duly placed as requested on the particular graves indicated, and their subsequent removal to other graves was altogether unauthorised, and was not sanctioned by the Comrades.

If any graves were overlooked, the Comrades regret the omission, but it must be remembered that the floral tributes were obtained entirely through voluntary subscriptions. In some instances there was no response to the appeal which the Comrades made, and the funds available only just sufficed for the number of wreaths obtained. Thanks are expressed to "The Piper Major" and his violinist, visiting Comrades, who raised £3 for the fund.

From: Thanet Advertiser & Echo dated 10 July 1920
- Courtesy of the British Newspaper Archive

Dover's Gift to the King

WAR ANNIVERSARY!
August 4th.

DOVER'S GIFT TO THE KING

To the People of Dover,

At the instance of the Corporation, it has been decided that Dover should signalize the Anniversary of the Declaration of War by making a Gift to the King for the benefit of the

Red Cross Funds

and other War Charities of Great Britain and her Allies.

Such gift is to consist of **gold and silver jewellery or money** and handed entire to His Majesty.

As the metal will probably be melted down, a **broken brooch** will be as valuable as a perfect one.

To every person contributing a gold or silver ornament, or not less than 1/- in money, will be issued later a **bronze token or souvenir** suitably engraved.

The Mayoress, myself and others will be in attendance at the **Town Hall, on Wednesday, August 4th** and following days during the following hours, viz:—

11 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

to receive your gifts. Mr. A. J. Worsfold (Borough Accountant) has kindly consented to act as Hon. Treasurer.

I earnestly appeal to every inhabitant of Dover as an act of **personal self-denial** to give at least one gold or silver ring, brooch, chain or other article, or gift of money, however small, **to ease the suffering of our heroic wounded** and those of our gallant Allies.

I am confident your response to this appeal will be worthy of the occasion, **and worthy of your Town.**

EDWIN FARLEY,

Mayor.

For further particulars see Press and small bills.

Courtesy of the British Newspaper Archive

Dover Chronicle 31 July 1915

Over forty years ago, I came across this little bronze medallion in a junk shop. The wording PRO PATRIA 1915 and VILLE ET PORTUS DOVER on it clearly indicated that it was connected with the war but what was that connection? It took me until 2018 to discover what it was. In that year Dover Museum mounted an excellent exhibition to mark the centenary of the ending of the war and in that exhibition was an original letter sent in 1916 to accompany one of these medallions. It had taken me 40 years to discover its history. After a trawl through the British Newspaper Archive, I found numerous reports including the three shown on this page. In addition to the gold and silver jewellery given by the people of Dover, there were a multitude of other gifts donated as detailed in the accompanying report. □

JB

THE DOVER WAR GIFT.

Mr. Ernest Chitty, who organised the recent Red Cross War Gift to the King in commemoration of the anniversary of the outbreak of war, informs us that the gold and jewellery given by the townspeople has now been catalogued and packed by Mr. G. Wood, jun., of Messrs. Hart and Co., Jewellers, of Dover, and it will be forwarded to Messrs. Debenham, Storr and Son, Jewellers' auctioneers, of London, who have kindly agreed to sell it free of charge. In regard to the scheme by which every donor will receive a commemorative medallion, the contract has been placed with Mr. S. Leigh, of Dover, whose tender, the lowest, was accepted. The total amount of the fund is, of course, dependant on the result of the sale. Several further subscriptions have been promised with the object of raising the total to £1,000 if it is possible to do so. The benefit matinee kindly given by Mr. Harry Day at the King's Hall resulted in £5 being raised for the fund. The following is a list of the goods:—

43 wedding rings; 11 diamond rings; 78 keeper and mourning rings; 91 assorted stone rings; 15 signet rings; 126 broken gold rings; (gold) total, 464 rings.

261 gold and fancy brooches; 62 gold and fancy bracelets; 112 gold and fancy lockets and pendants; 97 gold and fancy Albert guard chains, necklets, etc.; 358 pairs of gold fancy and silver ear-rings; 42 gold and fancy pencils, watch keys, etc.; 13 pairs of spectacles; 26 gold watches; 21 pairs of gold and fancy links; 1 set of Jubilee coins; 17 gold coins; 1 gold medal; 66 gold and fancy scarf pins; 13 gold and fancy seals and keys; 8 pairs of gold sleeve links; 169 silver watches; 2 fancy watches; 16 metal watches; 780 silver brooches; 86 silver pencils, knives, etc.; 63 silver rings; 103 silver coins and medals; 620 silver, nickel and bronze coins; 1,114 copper coins; 263 silver thimbles; 319 silver bracelets; 75 silver lockets; 24 silver necklets and lockets; 41 silver necklets; 75 silver Alberts; 8 silver guards; 40 pieces of silver chain; 37 pairs of silver solitaires; 15 pairs of silver links; 1 Sheffield snuffers and tray; 13 silver waist clasps; 5 plated and silver waist bolts; 2 silver pepper grinders; 4 silver mounted cayenne pepper pots; 3 silver chate-laines; 1 silver cream jug; 2 plated soup ladles; 3 silver pin cushions; 2 silver hat-pin stands; 5 silver flower vases; 8 silver table and dessert spoons; 22 silver teaspoons; 4 pairs of silver sugar tongs; 13 silver salt spoons; 5 silver mustard spoons; 1 child's silver fork and spoon; 3 silver butter knives; 1 Chinese hand-bag; 13 silver match boxes; 6 silver stamp cases; 3 silver vinegarettes; 3 silver knuff boxes; 3 silver card cases; 2 silver cigarette cases; 2 silver flasks; 1 silver spectacle case; 4 silver rattles; 3 silver serviette rings; 14 silver crosses; 1 ivory cross; 1 silver Masonic emblem; 1 silver punch ladle; 1 other silver article; 2 silver combs; 13 American dollar bills (various amounts); 12 silver and fancy hatpins; 7 silver mounted bottles; 2 silver photograph frames; 5 bead ornaments; 41 gold and fancy studs; 3 loose pearls; 1 gold puzzle clasp; 28 silver stick and umbrella mounts; 3 coral necklaces; 26 broken silver spoons; 2 tortoiseshell boxes; 2 silver mounted button hooks; 4 silver sovereign purses; 4 silver buckles; 29 pairs of broken silver watches; 52 broken silver bracelets; 2 fancy hatpins; 1 coral necklet in case; 1 set mosaic brooch and ear-rings; 1 set coral brooch and ear-rings; 1 set silver salts and spoons; 1 ivory fan; 1 solid silver challenge cup; 3 silver plated cruets; 1 clarinet; 1 silver presentation trowel; 1 plated bottle stand; 1 glass cruet; 3 china ornaments; 1 marble clock; 1 wood clock; 437 gold and fancy sundries (not classified); 720 silver and fancy sundries (not classified); total articles, 6,835.

Dover Express 15 October 1915



Diameter 27mm

Commemorative medallion that was given to every-one who donated gifts to the King for the benefit of the Red Cross funds

DOVER'S GIFT TO THE KING

It is estimated that in cash and kind

We have now over £800!

Help us to

Make it £1,000 (clear)

The Mayor and Mayoress will attend to receive gifts just so long as there are givers.

IT ONLY NEEDS

2 Cheques for £25 10 Cheques for £5
5 " £10 25 " £2

or an equivalent in cash or jewellery.

EDWIN FARLEY, Mayor.
A. W. WHISTLER, Secretary.

Courtesy of the British Newspaper Archive

Dover Chronicle 21 August 1915

An eight-year-old puzzle

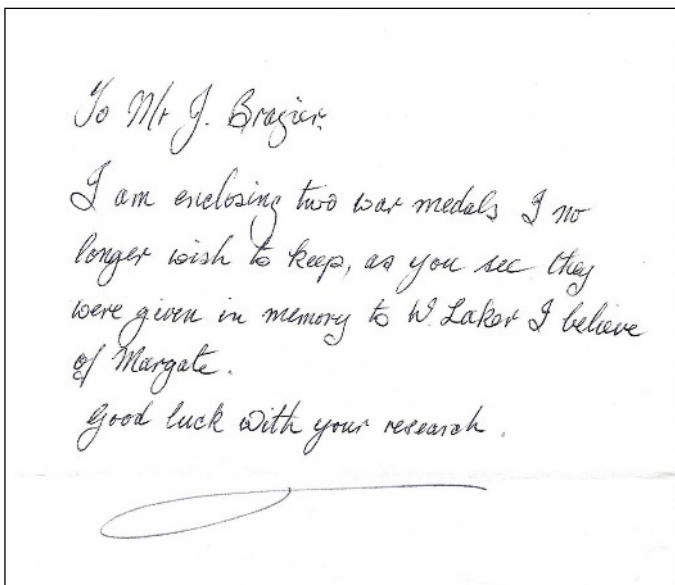
It was back in 2015 that I received in the post an envelope which contained the note shown below together with a 1914/15 Star and a Victory Medal - both with the correct ribbons attached. The letter was unsigned and there was no indication of the sender anywhere. At the time, I was Editor of the Margate Civic Society Newsletter and had undertaken much research on the names listed on Margate War Memorial. The name on both of the medals is shown as Pte W. Laker, East Kent Regiment. My immediate thought was that the two medals belonged to the W. Laker shown on Margate War Memorial. Indeed, the sender of the letter clearly believed the two medals to relate to a Margate man. However, on closer inspection, the service numbers shown on the two medals are different which led me to believe that they related to two different soldiers who not only had shared the same name but who also served in the same regiment. The service number on the 1914/15 Star is shown as 1086 whereas the service number shown on the Victory Medal is 3231.



*The 1914/15 Star with 1086 / PTE. W. LAKER / E. KENT R.
engraved on its reverse*

Laker who had served with the King's Royal Rifle Corps. So, that indicated that neither of the medals that had been sent to me related to the name of W. Laker listed on Margate War Memorial.

I looked up the two Buffs' soldiers on the CWGC Debt of Honour and found that the W. Laker (1914/15 Star) was buried in Etaples Military Cemetery, that he was the son of John Henry and



I then looked up the two soldiers on Ancestry and found:

- the W. Laker (1914/15 Star) was a William Laker who had subsequently been issued with a new service number - G/21476 and had died of sickness on 13 January 1917; and
- the W. Laker (Victory Medal) was also a William Laker who had been killed in action on 18 August 1915.

At that stage, I felt that I was making some progress although I had still hoped that one of the soldiers was the same W. Laker shown on Margate War Memorial. However, my earlier research into the names on Margate War Memorial had led me to believe that the W. Laker on Margate War memorial was a William



*The Victory Medal with 3231 PTE. W. LAKER / E. KENT R.
engraved around its edge*

Emily Fanny Laker of High Street, Ash, Canterbury and that he was a native of Canterbury. He was 26 years old at date of death and was shown as 'attd. 1st/5th Bn, Royal Sussex Regiment' (which, presumably, explained his new service number).

I then looked up W. Laker (Victory Medal) on the CWGC Debt of Honour and found:

- his name was also William Laker whose name is listed on the Helles Memorial, Turkey and that he was 'attd 2nd/4th Bn, Queen's Own (West Kent Regiment). Unfortunately, no additional information was provided by the CWGC.

I then looked at Ash War Memorial to see whether the name W. Laker was amongst those listed on it but it wasn't. I then looked at the names on the People of Canterbury War Memorial in the Buttermarket and was pleased to find a W. Laker listed on it. I am almost certain that he is the soldier from Ash (1914/15 Star) - but he might be the Victory Medal soldier who had the very same name.

That leaves me with the William Laker (Victory Medal) to identify whose name is on the Helles memorial. He is shown in *Soldiers Died* as having both resided and enlisted at Canterbury.

I did find a William Laker on the 1911 Census living in Canterbury aged 30 which means that, if it

is the same man, he would have been 34 when he was killed in action.

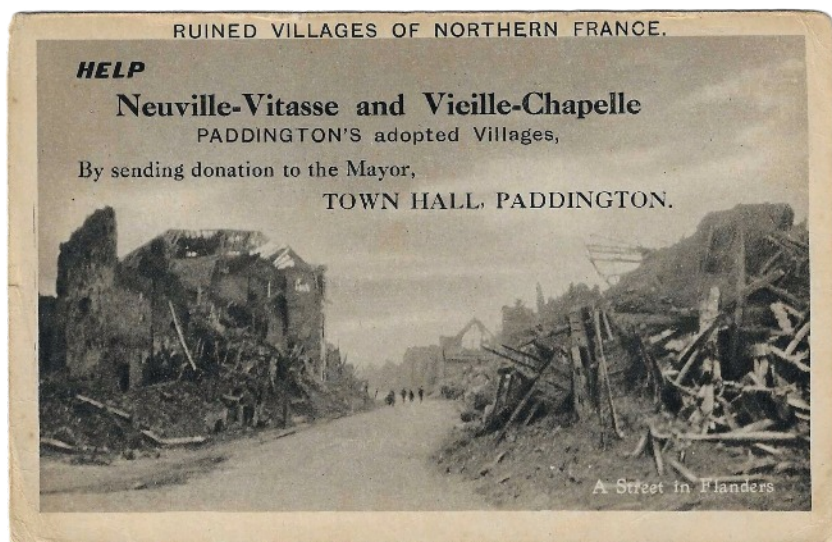
I then looked to see if either of the soldiers' Army Service Records had survived - but I couldn't find them.

So, I have identified three William Lakers from East Kent who all died during the Great War. The one from Margate served in the King's Royal Rifle Corps so he can be ruled out although it would appear that the sender of the two medals believed both of the medals to relate to the Margate W. Laker. Of the two other W. Lakers, both had a Canterbury connection and it is almost certain that it is the one from Ash, whose grave is at Etaples, whose name is listed on Canterbury War Memorial. But what about the W. Laker who was killed in action at Gallipoli? Is his name listed on any local war memorial? If you know the answer, I shall be delighted to hear from you.

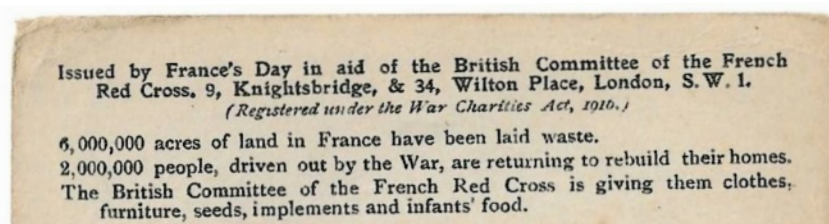
I have kept these two medals for eight years and would be delighted to pass them on to members of their families or to anybody who researches soldiers who served in The Buffs and feel that they can make more progress with researching the medals than I have managed over the last eight years. □

JB

More on the 'Adoptions' of French towns and villages



It would appear that this postcard was a generic postcard that was overprinted with the names of the adopted villages and their 'God-parent' as required. This is the only 'adopted villages' postcard that I have come across in more than fifty years of postcard collecting. Does anyone recognise the ruined buildings shown on the postcard?

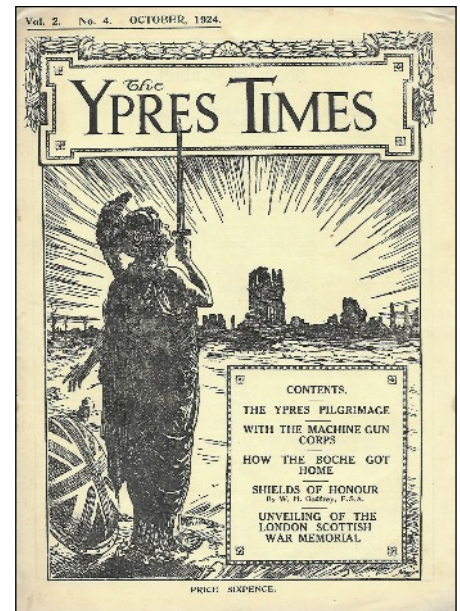


The printing on the back of the postcard shows that it was issued by France's Day in aid of the British Committee of the French Red Cross. Interestingly, there is no mention on it of the British League of Help.

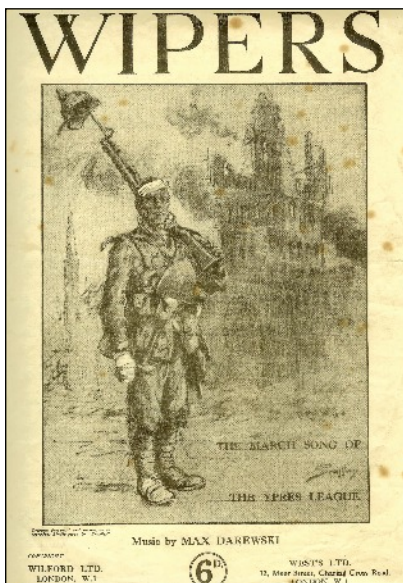
The Ypres League - a bricolage of memorabilia



This striking Ypres League membership scroll certificate was designed and signed by Bernard Partridge (Sir John Bernard Partridge [1861–1945]). He joined the staff of Punch magazine in 1891 and became their Number One illustrator. The design includes the figure of Britannia



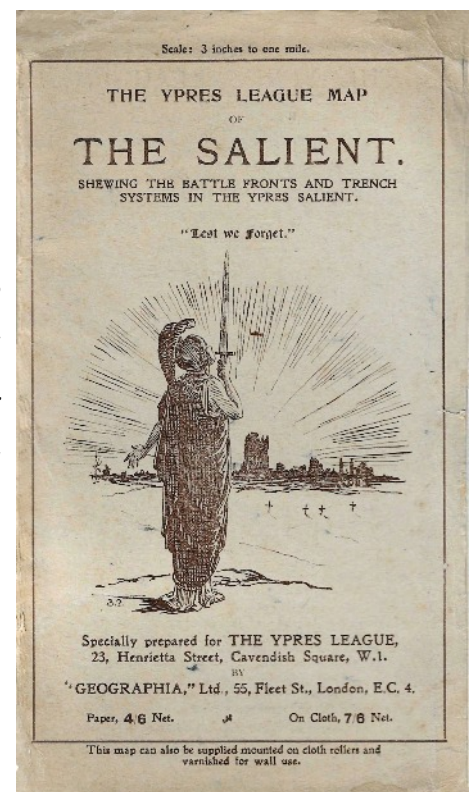
The front cover of The Ypres Times Vol 2 No. 4 - October 1924



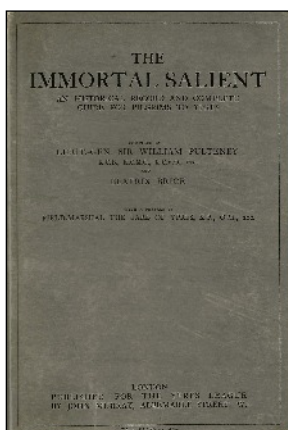
The Ypres League was founded in 1920 - branches continued until the 1940s

The Ypres League three-inches-to-one-mile map of the Salient is superb. It opens up to some 45 inches wide and 32 inches tall. The cover design is based on Bernard Partridge's artwork. (Map published 1922)

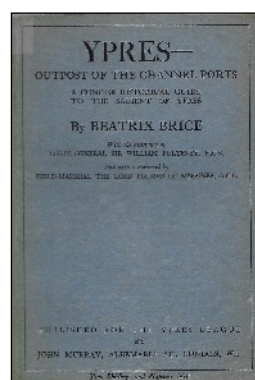
The artwork used for the front cover of The Ypres League's March Song WIPERS is by Charles (Snaffles) Johnson Payne [1884-1967]. Note the ruins of the Cloth Hall in the background. (Sheet music published 1925)



Below: Two early guidebooks published by The Ypres League



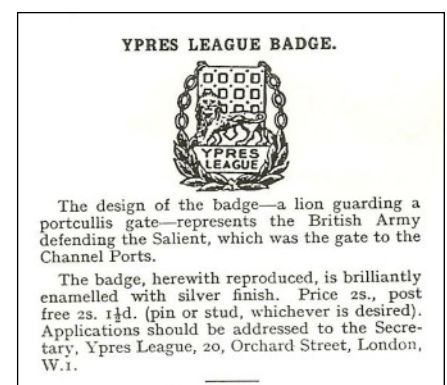
Published 1925



Published 1929



This button-hole bronze and enamel badge is believed to be a later version of The Ypres League badge (see advertisement)



The story of two crucifixes brought back from the Western Front

On 10 April this year, my eye was caught by a report in *The Times* regarding a crucifix that had been brought back to England after the Battle of the Somme and was to be returned to the French town from where it had come over a hundred years ago.

On reading that report, I was instantly reminded of a similar (although smaller) crucifix in All Saints Church, Birchington that too had been brought back to England during the Great War.



The crucifix in All Saints Church, Birchington that was brought back from the Western Front during the Great War. The oak cross is approximately 25cm tall

In this article I will provide some of the background story to the Birchington crucifix and compare its story with that of the crucifix to be returned to France later this year, as reported in *The Times*.

There is much sadness in the story of the Birchington crucifix. It was given by a Roman Catholic priest to a gassed soldier from Birchington who was laying on a stretcher amidst the ruins of a bombed Catholic church. The priest had picked up the crucifix from amongst the rubble on the church floor and had given it to the soldier. The soldier was Gunner Edward Joseph Knott from Birchington.



The crucifix mounted on the wall above the pulpit in All Saints Church, Birchington

Edward Joseph Knott was born in Birchington on 18 October 1877, the son of William and Susannah Knott. He married Catherine Gascoigne de Jaquest in 1910. Catherine's mother was Russian and her father was French. A daughter, Eileen Emily Agnes, was born on 27 September 1915. The family lived at 3 Manchester Villas, Crescent Road, Birchington and Ernest Knott is recorded as being employed as a Carman. He enlisted in the Royal Field Artillery (154337) on 1 August 1916 at the age of 29 and left for France on 28 December 1916 with "D" Bty, 307th Bde. In October 1917, he was in a dug-out at the front when he and five others were gassed. Shortly afterwards, he was brought back to Blighty and spent some time in a London hospital. After discharge from hospital, he returned to Birchington to visit his wife, Catherine, and his two-year-old daughter, Eileen, before returning to France. It was whilst he was at Birchington that he gave the crucifix to his wife for safekeeping.

A second baby, Elsie Joan, was born on 13 October 1918 but, sadly, the mother caught influenza and died on 1 November 1918 aged only 33 leaving four-year-old Eileen and seven-week-old Elsie.

Continued on page 13

Gunner Knott was sent back to France only to be struck down with pneumonia just three weeks later. With the damage already inflicted on his lungs from the gas attack, he died on 30 November 1918 and was buried in St Sever Cemetery Extension, Rouen, France. He was aged 31, leaving two orphaned young children. What a tragedy!

In 1945-46, Eileen - then the owner of the crucifix - felt that it ought be in a more suitable place than in one of her cupboards, so she took it to the Vicar of All Saints Church, Canon Granville Sharp, who asked a local undertaker and cabinet-maker, William Moss, if he would make an oak cross on which to mount the crucifix, which he duly did. The crucifix was duly blessed during a Eucharist Service soon afterwards and was hung above the pulpit in All Saints Church where it has remained for over three-quarters of a century - and long may it remain there.

The story of the other crucifix as related in *The Times* is quite different although it too was taken from the rubble of a destroyed church. In this instance, the crucifix was taken by a British Army chaplain from amongst the rubble of the church at Doingt-Flamicourt, 30 miles to the east of Amiens and just to the south of Péronne. The oak cross in this instance is some 56cm tall. Coincidentally, just like the Birchington crucifix, it too was given to an All Saints Church, this time in Tinwell, Rutland.

The idea of returning the crucifix to the French town of Doingt-Flamicourt is said to have come from

sixteen--year-old Jonno McDevitt who was in the congregation in All Saints Church, Tinwell, on Remembrance Sunday in 2018. The priest had talked about the crucifix and McDevitt asked: "Shouldn't we send it back?" At that stage, the parishioners had not been aware that Doingt town and the church that had once housed the crucifix; had been rebuilt. The Diocese of Peterborough subsequently granted special permission for the crucifix to be returned to France but the necessary arrangements were delayed by the pandemic until this year.

In June 2023, representatives of All Saints Church, Tinwell will return the crucifix to Doingt. It is believed that the crucifix was brought to England by former Chaplain Percy Hooson in 1916 before he subsequently took up an appointment at Tinwell 16 years later. A worshipper at the church said that Percy Hooson had placed it on the church altar whilst he was at Tinwell.

Neither of the crucifixes is listed on the War Memorials Online website. I feel that a case could be made to add the Birchington crucifix to War Memorials Online as a memorial to Gunner Edward Knott, RFA. What do other members of our Branch think? □

JB

With grateful thanks to Jennie Burgess, Birchington's Parish Archivist, for providing information on the Birchington crucifix and to The Times for the information on the Tinwell crucifix

Recent reports in *The Times* on CWGC developments

On 1 May 2023, *The Times* carried a report that the CWGC were looking to expand Loos British Cemetery to accommodate up to 700 sets of human remains which are expected to be discovered when the construction of a new canal through the heart of the Western Front is undertaken. The CWGC consider that there are at least 100,000 soldiers that have yet to be recovered of which up to 700 sets of remains are on the canal's route.

All discoveries will be carefully excavated and photographed *in situ* before being taken away for examination. Every effort will be made to identify the each of the remains and each soldier will be buried with full military honours. Work has already began to expand Loos British Cemetery where 1,200 extra graves will also accommodate other discoveries from recent construction projects.

The process will take years and no burials are anticipated until autumn 2024.

Clearly, this will be a huge task for both the CWGC and the Ministry of Defence. Further details of this development can be found on the web.

On 27 May, *The Times* reported that the grave of an unknown pilot killed in the Great War had been re-dedicated after he had been identified by a Ministry of Defence investigation. The pilot has been identified at 2/Lt William Wallace Hutton who was serving with the Royal Flying Corps and killed on a bombing raid in Belgium on 28 October 1917 during the Third Battle of Ypres. He was aged 23 years and from South Africa. His grave in Larch Wood (Railway Cutting) Cemetery, Belgium now bears his name. Previously, his name was on the Arras Memorial. □



Two Crested China caps: one bearing the Royal Flying Corps crest and the other with the inscription "MODEL OF R.F.C. CAP"

Lt Vernon James Austin



Lt Vernon James Austin

Vernon James Austin was born in Birmingham on 21 November 1893 and was baptised at St John Ladywood on 29 April 1896. He was the only son of Herbert Austin KBE who founded the Austin Motor Company in December 1905. His mother, who was born in Melbourne, Australia, was Helen (née Dron). He had two sisters, Irene born 1891 in Melbourne, Australia and Zeta born 1903 in Birmingham. After attending St Cuthbert's School, Malvern, he went on to the King's School, Canterbury 1907-09 where he was a member of the Officer Training Corps. It was expected that he would enter the family business. The 1911 Census gives his occupation as an apprentice at a motor-car company but he was also determined to join the military and on 26 January 1912 was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant into the Special Reserve of the Royal Artillery. He was preparing for a race in Russia, organised by the Automobile Club of Russia, when war broke out.

On the outbreak of war, he was promoted Lieutenant and after training at Bulford Camp on Salisbury Plain landed in France on 11 August with 22nd Battery, 34th Brigade RFA in support of 2nd Infantry Division as part of 1st Corps commanded by General Sir Douglas Haig. The division was involved in the Retreat from Mons in August 1914, the Battle of the Marne 6 - 9 September and the Battle of the Aisne 13 - 16 September 1914 after which it was transferred to the Ypres area where it saw action in the First Battle of Ypres 19 October - 2 November 1914.

By 26 January 1915, the Division was holding the line near La Bassée. He and his commanding officer Lt-Col Henry George Sandilands, also an ex-pupil of The King's School, were returning from a reconnaissance at about 11:30am when he was shot in the side of his chest by a sniper and died a few minutes later.

At the time, repatriation of the fallen had not been prohibited. On 6 February 1915, his body was brought from France to Folkestone from where it was conveyed to Canterbury by motor-hearse. The coffin was placed in the Chapel of the Holy Innocents at Canterbury Cathedral where it was attended by the Revd Canon Mason, the Revd C R L

McDowall (the Headmaster of the King's School) and a guard of honour from the school's Officer Training Corps. A short service was held at which the deceased's father and a few personal friends were present.

It was his father's wish that the body be interred in St Martin's Churchyard, Canterbury.

The funeral took place with full military honours. The procession headed by a firing-party from the 3rd Cavalry Brigade stationed in Canterbury and was followed by the band of the 3rd Reserve Cavalry Regiment made its way through Burgate to Longport to St Martin's Church. The coffin, which was borne on a RHA gun-carriage, was covered by the Union Flag on which was placed his officer's sword. Vernon Austin's mother did not attend the funeral

The Revd W L Greene and the Revd C R L McDowall conducted the service during which was the choir sung the hymn *Oft in danger, oft in woe*. At the graveside, a large crowd was assembled to witness the committal which concluded with the



Lt Vernon Austin's original wooden grave-marker now in the Memorial Chapel at the King's School



Close-up of the metal plaque on Lt Vernon Austin's original wooden grave-marker. (Photo also shows the paper card with the hand-written tribute from his comrades)



*Vernon Austin's headstone in
St Martin's Churchyard,
Canterbury*

firing of three volleys over the open grave and the sounding of the *Last Post*. The grave is situated to the left of the path leading north from the West Door. Inside the church is a plaque presented by the employees of the Austin Motor Company. His original wooden grave-marker was presented to the King's School and is displayed in the school's Memorial Chapel. A handwritten paper card

attached to the wooden grave-marker reads: "The last adieu from comrades on the battle field". He is commemorated on the King's School War Memorial. Also on the Moseley Rugby Club Memorial (Birmingham) which, in the early 2000s, was restored and reinstated at Ashfield Cricket Club (Birmingham).

Lt Vernon James Austin was awarded the 1914 Star, the Victory Medal and the British War Medal. □

Ed Holman



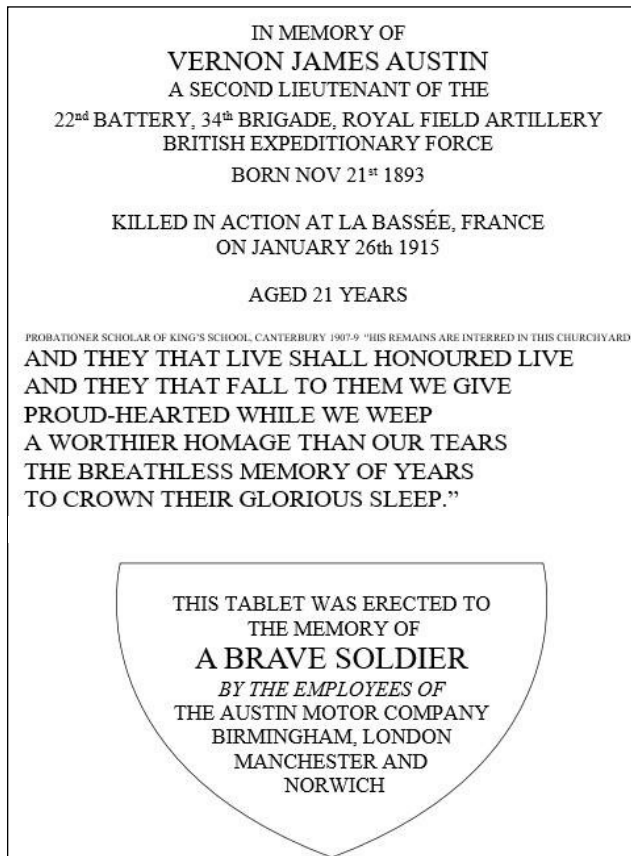
The Memorial Tablet to Lt Vernon Austin inside St Martin's Church. The tablet was erected by the employees of the Austin Motor Company. There is a replica of this tablet in the Austin Royal British Legion Club at Northfield, Birmingham. The replica was previously at the Austin Motor Company at Longbridge, Birmingham: it was relocated to the Austin Royal British Legion Club in 1943



The King's School, Canterbury WWI Memorial Tablet



Vernon Austin's name on the King's School WWI War Memorial tablet. The names are shown in date order of leaving the school



The inscription on the Memorial Tablet in St Martin's Church

Repatriation of the Fallen

Richard Young writes:

I have a list of 24 soldiers whose bodies were repatriated to Britain and, surprisingly, Austin's name is not amongst them. The ban which prevented further repatriations was brought in during April 1915 although *Maréchal Joffre*, the French Commander, had given an order banning French repatriations in March 1915. The opportunity to have a body brought back was obviously open only to those wealthy enough or having influence to have this done. Looking at my list more carefully, I found two men whose bodies were brought home respectively in June and September 1915. Clearly, the rules were broken and there is no definitive list of those whose bodies were repatriated to Britain, that I know of. There are several famous names on the list that I have and one that is not on it.

The Unknown Warrior is one and others are Field-Marshal F S Roberts; Lt-General J M Grierson; Lt W B Rhodes Moorhouse VC; Flight Sub-Lieutenant R A J Warneford VC; Captain J A Liddell VC and Lt W G Gladstone - grandson of the former Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone - whose repatriation caused something of a storm.



The grave of Maj-Gen H I W Hamilton in St Martin's Churchyard, Cheriton

One repatriated body, which is not on the list that I have, is buried in East Kent, viz that of Major General H I W Hamilton who was killed action on 14 October 1914 at La Couture, France, and who was buried in St Martin's Churchyard, Cheriton, Folkestone on 20 October 1914. I should be interested if anyone knows of any others. □

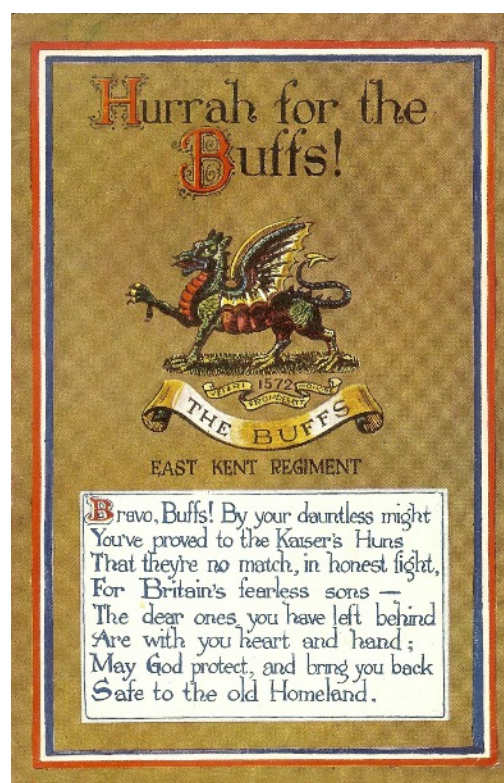
Photos of the old pub sign for the former *Man of Kent PH* (now *The Round House* and converted into flats), Wincheap Green, Canterbury



Above photographs by Richard Young - circa 1990



The image above shows that the Whitbread pub sign was based on Lady Butler's painting of A Man of Kent (shown on right)



WWI postcard showing The Buffs' cap-badge

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)

6 June

John Harris (a CWGC volunteer and experienced guide) in place of Sarah Nathaniel who has, unfortunately, recently broken her foot and is unable to travel from Worthing where she lives
'The CWGC'

4 July

Steve Roberts
'Analysing the 1916 film *The Battle of the Somme*'

August

No meeting

5 September

Christina Holstein
'Verdun: The Left Bank'

3 October

Carole Hope
'Across the Divide. An Irish padre of the Great War, Fr William Doyle (S.J.) MC'

7 November

Mark Harris
'Harwich Submarine Flotilla in the Great War'

5 December

Peter Hart
'Somme Success. The RFC and the Battle of the Somme'

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]

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THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

Founded by John Giles. Inaugurated 11th November 1980
Registered Charity No. 298365