

BETWEEN THE LINES

Newsletter of the East Kent Branch of The Western Front Association

Charity Registration No. 1093915

No. 73 April/May 2023



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)

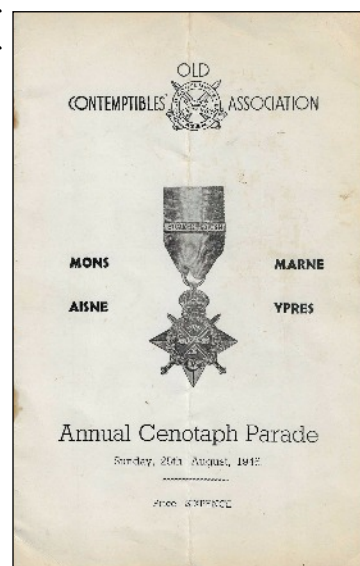
Richard Young
Edward Holman
Rachel Wilsdon
Rob Newman

EDITORIAL

This issue of *Between the Lines* contains a number of articles including one of the Old Contemptibles' Association (OCA) which, at one time, had a number of branches throughout our area. That article features a number of items of OCA ephemera not dissimilar to the front cover of the programme illustrated on this page for the Annual Cenotaph Parade that was held on Sunday, 25th August 1946 - just a few days after VJ-Day. That programme has on its front cover the 1914 Star together with the all-important Clasp with which, I am sure, all our members - whether or not they collect medals - will be familiar.

Also in this issue of *Between the Lines* is another article by Richard Young on the adoptions of the devastated villages of France by towns in the UK. This time, Richard tells how he first became involved in researching the adopted villages with the adoption by Folkestone of Morlancourt in 1920. That led to him accompanying Bryan Lewis on their many visits to many of the adopted villages and to Bryan writing the definitive book on the British League of Help.

Members of our Branch are 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. What I hope to achieve is a Newsletter which contains a wide mix of articles, anecdotes, photographs, postcards, etc. Come on everyone, put your pen to paper and tell a story which will interest and stimulate others to contribute similarly to *Between the Lines*. Together, we could produce the best WFA branch newsletter in the country! Contributions should be sent to me in M/S Word with accompanying images attached as JPGs. The deadline for contributions (articles, letters, queries, etc) is Sunday, 28 May for the June/July issue. □



The front cover of the programme for the Annual Cenotaph Parade of the Old Contemptibles' Association held on Sunday 25th August 1946

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

James Brazier
WFA East Kent Branch Newsletter Editor

The Old Contemptibles' Association in East Kent - and beyond

In the last issue of our Newsletter, I contributed an article on The Salient Circle which was a Great War veterans' association based in Whitstable. When founded in 1959, most of its members were "Old Contemptibles", that is survivors of the First British Expeditionary Force, formed from the regular army, which served in France and Flanders between August and November 1914.

In this issue of our Newsletter, I thought that I would put together an article on some of the former local branches of the Old Contemptibles' Association.

The Old Contemptibles' Association (OCA) was formed in 1925 and, like old soldiers, the Association 'faded away' in the 1990s. Initially, membership was restricted to holders of the 1914 Star but, over time, others could join the Association. In later years, other persons who had a deep interest in the Great War could apply to become Patrons of the Association.

In the article, I shall trace the history of the OCA in Thanet which began in 1928 when the *Thanet Advertiser & Echo* dated 27 July reported that it was proposed to start a branch in Margate and district *to promote and maintain the spirit of the 'Contemptible Little Army'*. It gave the name and address of the organiser as Mr A.R. Manton of Legion House, St John's Road, Margate and asked all residents in Thanet in possession of the 1914 Star (*and the all-important clasp*) to get into communication with him.

The next report in a local paper was one in the *Thanet Advertiser & Echo* dated 4 January 1929 (reproduced opposite). In that report, it stated that the Margate & District Branch met every Friday evening at the George & Dragon Public House (now the Quart in a Pint Pot Public House) which is located in Charlotte Place, just around the corner from Legion House.

Readers of this press report will see that a 'beautiful standard made by the Royal School of Art Needlework was to be presented to the Branch by a Mrs Watts (née Cantwell) of Garlinge in memory of her brother, Driver Cantwell RFA, an "Old Contemptible" killed in action. The staff of the standard bore an inscribed silver plate. The standard was to be presented to the Branch at its inaugural dinner to be held at St George's Hotel, Cliftonville on Thursday, 24 January 1929.

The following Sunday (27 January), the standard was dedicated by Padre N. Landreth, Chaplain of the Branch, at the Wesleyan Church, Cliftonville. That church is now a Coptic Orthodox Church known as St Michael and St Bishoy Church. I did make enquiries about the standard some 30 years ago but no-one at the church knew anything about the standard or its whereabouts.



A Patron's membership certificate of the Uxbridge Branch of the Old Contemptibles' Association

OLD CONTEMPTIBLES.

MARGATE'S BEAUTIFUL STANDARD.

On the 24th January, following a dinner at St. George's Hotel, Margate, in connection with the newly-formed Margate and District Branch of the Old Contemptibles' Association, there will be presented a beautiful standard made by the Royal School of Art Needlework.

The Old Contemptibles, of course, are the survivors of the Expeditionary Force, which the German Emperor of 1914 referred to as "French's contemptible little army." They bore the brunt of the fighting in the early stages of the war and undoubtedly saved the situation at a most critical time.

The banner has been presented to the Margate and District Branch by Mrs. Watts (nee Cantwell), of Garlinge, in memory of her brother, Driver Cantwell, R.F.A., an "old contemptible" killed in action. The standard is of silk and every stitch has been made by hand. The staff bears an inscribed silver plate.

It is expected that the branch will have present as guests at its opening (synchronising with the dinner) officers of high military rank, including Field-Marshal Sir George Milne and General Uniacke, who will be supported by the Mayor and Mayoress of Margate (Alderman and Mrs. E. Coleman).

All Old Contemptibles in the district are asked to join the branch, and particulars may be obtained of the honorary secretary, Mr. R. Manton, 123, Ramsgate-road, Margate, or of the chairman, Capt. F. A. Brisley, of Eversley, Norfolk-road, Margate. The branch will be pleased to welcome any "recruits" at their meeting nights, held at headquarters, the George and Dragon Hotel, each Friday.

There are no subscriptions of any kind, and the only qualification for membership is the possession of the 1914 star and clasp "August 5th—November 22nd."

In the near future the committee hope to canvass Ramsgate as part of the district.

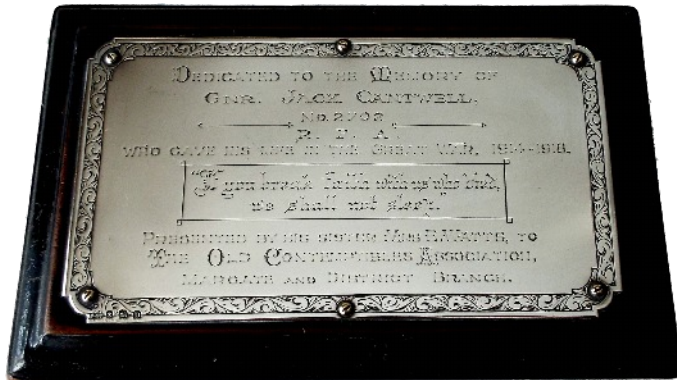
The dinner and presentation on the 24th will be followed by a concert and dance. It is anticipated that the attendance will number about two hundred.

On the following Sunday the standard will be blessed and dedicated at the Wesleyan Church by the Rev. Norman Landreth, C.F., the honorary chaplain to the branch.

Courtesy of the British Newspaper Archive

However, I was able to locate the silver plate that was once attached to the staff of the Margate Branch standard. It is mounted on a wooden plaque and is some seven inches wide and still has its original spring fittings on the back of the plaque. Sometime, in its life, it became detached from the standard's staff.

After the dedication of the standard, members of the Association together with representatives of the British Legion, the Territorials (probably a contingent from the 1/4th Bn, The Buffs) and others marched to Margate War Memorial, headed by the full military band of the British Legion. At the War



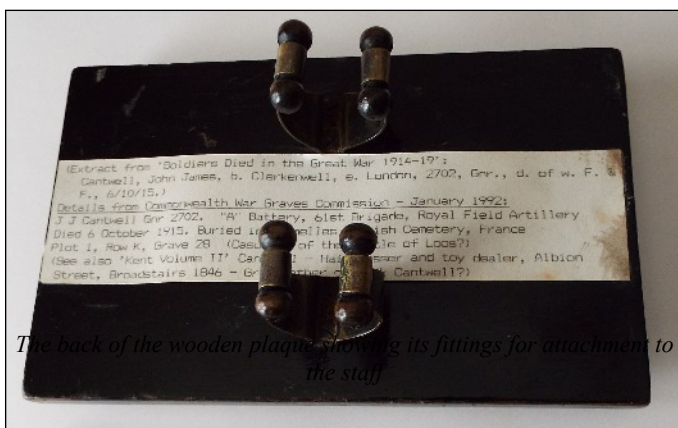
The engraved silver plate on its wooden plaque. The silver assay mark is for Birmingham 1928

This plaque was once attached to the standard of the Margate and District Branch of The Old Contemptibles' Association. The inscription on the plaque reads:

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF
Gnr. JACK CANTWELL,
No. 2702
R. F. A.
WHO GAVE HIS LIFE IN THE GREAT WAR 1914-1918.
"If you break faith with us who died,
we shall not sleep."
PRESENTED BY HIS SISTER MRS. E. WATTS, TO
THE OLD CONTEMPTIBLES ASSOCIATION,
MARGATE AND DISTRICT BRANCH

The quotation is from Lt-Col John McCrae's war poem *In Flanders Fields*

Inscription on the silver plate



The back of the wooden plaque showing its fittings for attachment to the staff

The back of the wooden plaque showing the spring fittings for attachment to the staff



The standard of the Canterbury Branch of the Old Contemptibles' Association hanging in Canterbury Cathedral. It is probable that the Margate Branch's standard was similar

Memorial, a wreath was laid in memory of the late Earl Haig, himself an Old Contemptible, who had died on 29th January 1928.

The *Thanet Advertiser & Echo* on 29 March 1929, reported that the Chairman of the Thanet [sic] Branch of the Old Contemptibles' Association, along with Pte William Cantwell (brother of Jack Cantwell) were among the British representatives who officially attended the funeral of Marshal Foch in Paris carrying with them in the funeral procession the standard that had recently been presented to the Margate Branch of the Old Contemptibles' Association by Mrs Watts, Jack Cantwell's sister.



An Old Contemptibles' Association car-badge in brass and enamel. The two photographs above show it both unmounted and mounted on a wooden base. There are no manufacturer's marks on it but it would appear to have been made in the 1930s



Members of the British Legion outside British Legion House, St John's Road, Margate - circa 1950. The building housed the British Legion Club for many years



A framed emblem of the Old Contemptibles' Association



The honours board listing the names of the former "Chums" of the Margate Branch



British Legion House, St John's Road, Margate - November 2015. Since this photo was taken, the property was sold and is now used as a hostel

Jack Cantwell was Gunner John (Jack) James Cantwell, No. 2702 Royal Field Artillery ("A" Battery 61st Brigade), born at Clerkenwell in 1894. In the 1911 Census, he is shown, age 17, living at Archer Street Chambers, Archer Street, Westminster with his family and employed as a Tailor (as also were his father, mother, his sister (Annie born 1892), and his brothers (William born 1893) and James (born 1896). The family are also shown living at the same address in the 1901 Census. Jack Cantwell was killed in action at the Battle of Loos on 6 October 1915. His grave is in Vermelles British Cemetery. He was aged 21. I have been unable to establish when his sister (Mrs E. Watts) moved to Margate or where exactly she lived in Margate.



A framed photograph of "Chums" of the Margate Branch outside The Mulberry Tree Public House, Dane Road, Margate in 1955.

Note that they are all wearing their WWI medals and their Old Contemptibles' Association badges

The three photographs above were taken inside the British Legion Club on Remembrance Sunday 2015 immediately after the service held at Margate War Memorial

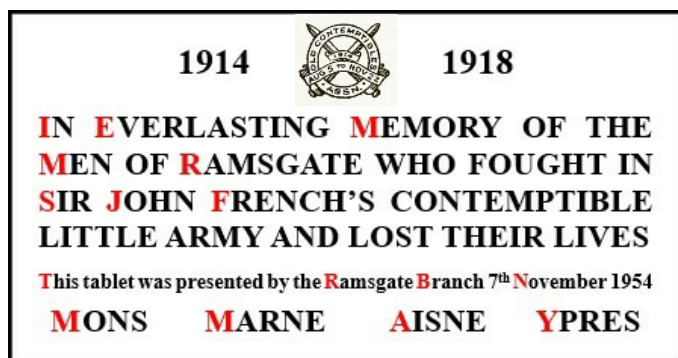


The *East Kent Times* for 3 May 1963 announced the plan to install a stained-glass window in St John's Church, Margate (the Parish Church). Three surviving members of the Margate Branch of the Old Contemptibles' Association wanted a memorial in the town before the Branch was finally extinguished by time. Of the three 'Chums', two were to die before the appeal was launched leaving Alderman Gordon Kirby (a former Mayor of Margate) to launch the appeal for £250 for the window.

The appeal was successful and the window was dedicated on Sunday, 26 April 1964 - 50 years after the BEF went into action at Mons, the Marne, the Aisne and Ypres in 1914. The window features a British soldier in prayer with battlefield crosses and the Menin Gate behind him. If you haven't seen this window, it is well worth a visit. It is a real gem.



Memorial plaque in St George's Church, Ramsgate



A transcription of the above memorial plaque in St George's Church, Ramsgate

Having told the story of the founding of the Old Contemptibles' Association in 1925, the creation of the Margate and District Branch in 1928 with that Branch's inaugural dinner being held in January 1929; the dedication of the Old Contemptibles' Association window in St John's Church, Margate in 1964; and the demise of Margate's British Legion House in 2020 which housed the relics of the former Margate and District Branch of the Old Contemptibles' Association, I feel that the story is complete. But, nationally, the story continues to this day.

The Old Contemptibles' Association carried out their act of remembrance at the Whitehall Cenotaph on 11 November each year up to 1993. Sadly, there were no Chums able to attend the Armistice Day service in 1994 and that is when the WFA came in to ensure that the act of remembrance each Armistice Day continued.



The front and back of the bronze Old Contemptibles' Association membership-badge. The issue of these badges was strictly controlled (see the embossed number shown on the back of badge illustrated above - 185 D). The design registration number (Reg. No. 726347), which can also be seen above, was registered in 1927

At eleven o'clock on Armistice Day 1994, the WFA carved its own piece of history as the traffic in Whitehall was brought to a halt - for the first time on that occasion since 1946.

With the traffic halted, the *Last Post* was sounded to herald a minute's silence followed by *Reveille*. Four wreaths were then laid - the first by Teddy Noyes on behalf of the Old Contemptibles' Association (to ensure the continuance of the Old Contemptibles' annual act of remembrance although there were no Chums present to witness the occasion). This was followed by the laying of the WFA wreaths at the Cenotaph for the very first time. The first of the three WFA wreaths was laid by Margery Giles, widow of the WFA's late Founder. The second WFA wreath was laid by John Terraine, the WFA's President and noted military historian, and the third WFA wreath was laid by Tony Noyes, the WFA Chairman. It was Tony Noyes who had initiated the re-instatement of the laying of wreaths at the Cenotaph on Armistice Day. Of course, Remembrance Sunday is still the national day of remembrance of the war dead but it is to Tony's credit that the date 11 November is increasingly being recognised as the day of remembrance by the 'ordinary people'. One only has to see how the WFA's service at the Cenotaph has grown since 1994. Last year (2022), there were roughly 250 WFA members and guests inside the cordon and some 2,000 members of the public, including people connected with the MoD, outside the cordon. I attended the first WFA service at the Cenotaph in 1994 and in the years immediately following. I watched it grow each year and was hugely proud when I watched the 2022 service via the WFA's website and could hardly believe how it had grown since Tony Noyes had initiated the WFA service back in 1994.

For the purposes of this article, I contacted Teddy Noyes who I had not seen since attending Tony Noyes' funeral in 2012. Teddy very kindly contributed the following:

I was a Patron of the Old Contemptibles' Association: in fact, I was also their last Vice-Chairman. At the time, Brigadier Sprake (who lived at Folkestone) was concerned as to who would place the Old Contemptibles' wreath in 1994 as Basil Farrer had died and the Brigadier wanted the Old Contemptibles to continue to place their wreath. He asked if I would do it and, naturally, I said yes. This was before Tony made any arrangements for the WFA. Subsequently, Brigadier Sprake died in the May, so it was just as well we had had thoughts on the subject. I have ensured the continuance of their Old

Contemptibles' plot on the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey and that a wreath is placed at the Cenotaph on 11 November each year. So, when Tony was formulating his thoughts about 11/11, I said that the Old Contemptibles had prior claim to the Cenotaph as they had been placing their wreath on the 11 November, with a bugler, for many years (I had attended each year since 1980), and the Old Contemptibles always had Chums present at the opening of the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey.

The Old Contemptibles Association produced a magazine (The Old Contemptible - two of its front cover designs are illustrated on this page) which was designed to keep the Chums in touch with one another. This magazine terminated in December 1975 due to financial reasons. After this, there were no further national meetings or 'get-togethers' but the London and South East Area was picked up by the various Patrons, and Brigadier Sprake (who was a Patron) began to organise outings for the branch members in his area. As this was popular with 'his' Chums, he then put a notice in the Soldier Magazine for other Chums to contact him and it snowballed. He was a friend of Sir Martin Gilbert and this contact led to HM Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother becoming the Patron-in-Chief of the Old Contemptibles' Association. At meetings of the Old Contemptibles' Association, held at the National Army Museum, we always had a Chum as the notional chairman (even though Brigadier Sprake ran the meetings!). When Brigadier Sprake died in May 1994, he was organising a service to be held at the Royal Hospital Chelsea in August 1994 and I had to stand in for him. Only one Chum was present on that day in 1994 - Chum Frank Sumpter, an in-pensioner of Chelsea Hospital.

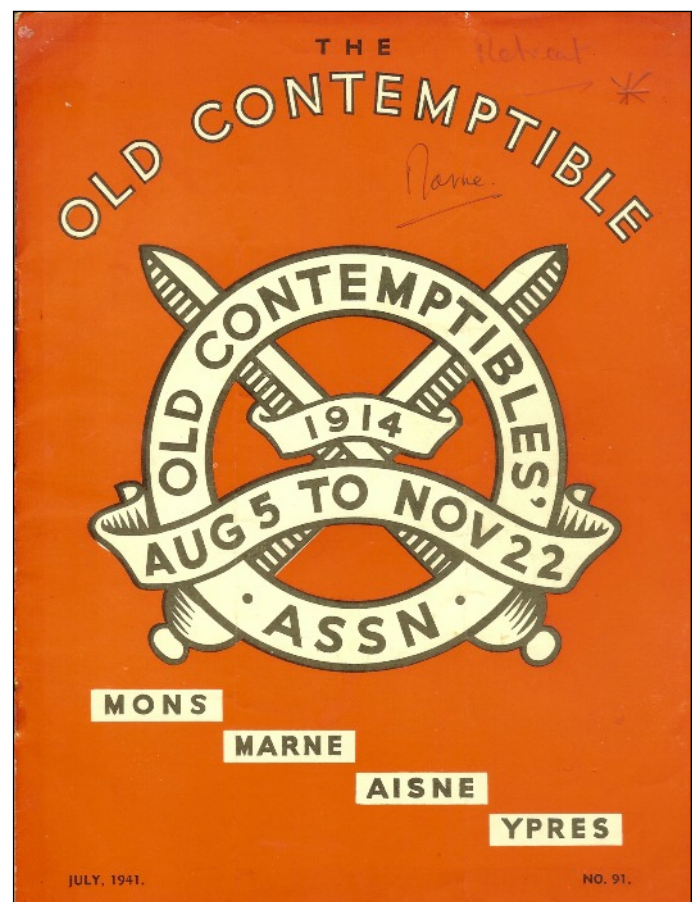
I always ensure that someone represents the Chums at the opening of the Field of Remembrance each year.

On day-trip many ago, the Chums visited the grave of Field-Marshal Sir John French* (in St Mary the Virgin Churchyard, Ripple) and planted on his grave a small rose in memory of him.

* Field-Marshal Sir John French, First Earl of Ypres and Viscount French of Ypres, served as Commander in Chief of the British Expeditionary Force in 1914. He was born at Ripple, Kent on 28 September 1852 and died at Deal Castle on 22 May 1925. The year 1925 was also the year that the Old Contemptibles' Association was founded. - Ed



The front cover of The Old Contemptible No. 32 - August 1936



The front cover of The Old Contemptible No. 91 - July 1941

OLD CONTEMPTIBLES' ASSOCIATION



Memorial Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving

and the
UNVEILING and DEDICATION of
THE "OLD CONTEMPTIBLES" WINDOWS

in
The Royal Garrison Church
of All Saints, Aldershot

Sunday, 28th June, 1959, at 3 p.m.

OFFICIATING CLERGY:

The Rev. W. D. C. Williams, O.B.E., B.A., Q.H.C., Assistant Chaplain General.
The Rev. H. V. Griffiths, M.C., C.F., (Rtd.)

and

The Rev. Kenneth J. Till, Senior Chaplain, The Royal Garrison Church and
Branch Chaplain, Aldershot.

OLD CONTEMPTIBLES ASSOCIATION

Patron: H.R.H. THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER

President: Field Marshal, Lord IRONSIDE, C.C.B., K.B.E., D.S.O.

Branch President: Maj.-Gen. Sir ROBERT H. HAINING,
K.C.B., D.S.O., H.M.L., J.P.

Branch Vice-President: Maj.-Gen. Sir E. BERTRAM ROWCROFT, K.B.E., C.B.

Branch Vice-President: Maj.-Gen. B. K. YOUNG, C.B.E., M.C.

MEMORIAL SERVICE of Remembrance & Thanksgiving

and the unveiling and Dedication of the Old Contemptibles Memorial
Stained Glass Windows in

THE ROYAL GARRISON CHURCH
OF ALL SAINTS, ALDERSHOT

Sunday, 28th June, 1959, at 3 p.m.

ORGANIST: KENNETH F. LOVEGROVE, A.T.C.L.

By the very kind permission of the Officers Commanding, the Bands of the 1st and 3rd Battalions Parachute Regiment, The Pipers Band 1st Battalion Irish Guards from Windsor, and the Buglers No. 2 Tng. Battalion R.A.S.C.

The Band of the 1st Battalion Parachute Regiment will assist on the Parade and play for the Service in Church.

Major-General R. A. Bramwell-Davis, C.B., D.S.O., G.O.C. Aldershot District has kindly consented to take the salute and inspect the Parade.

G.O.C. Parade: General Sir Rbt. H. Haining, K.C.B., D.S.O., J.P.

Parade Commander: Maj.-Gen. Sir E. BERTRAM ROWCROFT, K.B.E., C.B.

Staff Officer: Maj.-Gen. B. K. YOUNG, C.B.E., M.C.

ALDERSHOT BRANCH

Chairman: S. C. OTHEN.

Vice-Chairman and Treasurer: Chum HOLLOWAY.

Hon. Secretary: W. N. SMYTHE, 106, St. Michael's Road, Aldershot.

Chum R. G. Caseley (Exeter), Association Chairman.

Chum A. W. Hinton (Dorking), Association Vice-Chairman.

Chum C. H. Cribbles, M.B.E. (Leeds), Treasurer.

Chum Capt. Douglas Pegler, General Secretary.



"OLD CONTEMPTIBLES ASSOCIATION" (ALDERSHOT BRANCH)

MEMORIAL
DEDICATION
SERVICE

JUNE 28



ROYAL
GARRISON CHURCH
ALDERSHOT

1959



MONS
MARNE

AISNE
YPRES

Chum Frank Selby Whiston,
Military Mounted Police.

Chum George David Clarke,
1st Dorsetshire Regiment

Chum Peter Henry Dart,
Royal Engineers & Signals

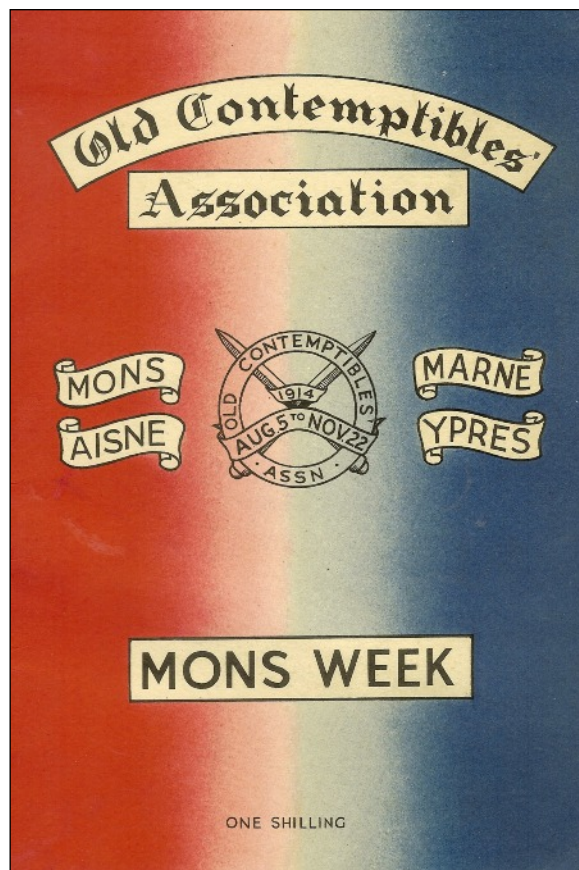
*The Old Contemptibles' Association (Aldershot Branch) Memorial Windows in the Royal Garrison Church, Aldershot
unveiled by Field-Marshal The Lord Ironside GCB, CMG, DSO on 28 June 1959*

An historic photograph



The scene at the Whitehall Cenotaph on Armistice Day 1994 - the first occasion that the WFA held a service at the Cenotaph. Some of the WFA members who attended that service can be seen on the right-hand side of the photo. The group of four, whose backs are to the camera, are (L-R) Teddy Noyes (Patron of the Old Contemptibles' Association), Margery Giles (widow of John Giles, Founder of The Western Front Association), John Terraine, (President of the WFA) and Tony Noyes (Chairman of the WFA)

Note: The front cover of the Old Contemptibles' Association publication shown on this page replicates the colours of the ribbon that was worn with the 1914 Star (also known as the 'Mons Star').



The front cover of the programme for the Annual Cenotaph Parade of the Old Contemptibles' Association held on Sunday 28th August 1949. 'Mons Week' was a nationwide appeal for public donations to help to assist Chums in need

Old Contemptibles' Association - gone but not forgotten

Remembering the Chums

With very special thanks to Kathy Stevenson for her write-up of the 1994 Cenotaph service published in the February 1995 WFA Bulletin and to Teddy Noyes for her invaluable contribution shown on pages 6 & 7. □

James Brazier

OUR BADGE.

ITS USE AND ABUSE.



THE Badge of our Association is the "Hall-Mark" of the man who has faithfully served his Country and came under enemy fire between the dates of August 4th, 1914, and November 22nd, 1914. It is issued to every member upon production of his credentials; i.e.—"his Discharge Certificate stating he has been awarded the '1914 Star and Clasp' and he must be 'in possession of that Clasp.'" No amount of money can buy membership, every member is genuine and we claim to be the most exclusive and select Old Soldiers Association within the Empire.

Many of those who have joined us have failed in their obligations to meet Association dues and although they do not attend our meetings or parades yet they are still proud to wear this "Hall-Mark" of Service. The recovery of the Badge is a delicate matter but sooner or later their conscience will bring them to realise the position.

Our National Executive Council have control of the use of the Badge and sanction must be obtained prior to its use in any form other than its use upon Association business. Branch Secretaries are the guardians of its use in their own districts and can help a great deal by the observance of this principle.

Let it be clearly understood that permission must be sought from H.Q. before it may be used in the form of its design or replica for any other purpose than Branch property. This includes such items as Presentations, Cups, Memorials, etc., which are on exhibition outside the Association.

We trust all Chums will help to maintain the correct use of our Badge.

E. W. F.

FORGIVENESS IS BETTER THAN REVENGE.

Remembering Field-Marshal Viscount French of Ypres - leader of the British Expeditionary Force in 1914

At the WFA's AGM to be held at the National Army Museum on 22 April, Lady Lucy French OBE and Lord Aster of Hever are due to be appointed Vice-Presidents of the WFA. Lady Lucy French is a great-granddaughter of Sir John French and it is most fitting that she should be made one of our Vice-Presidents. In the early days of the WFA, both Earl Kitchener and Earl Haig were also Vice Presidents of the WFA. Those who attended the WFA service at the Cenotaph last November, or who watched it 'streamed', will have seen that Lady French was one of the dignitaries who attended that service. I feel sure that all members of the East Kent Branch of the WFA will welcome her appointment as a Vice-President of our esteemed Association.

I have been unable to establish whether Sir John French was ever a prominent member of the Old Contemptibles' Association but I do know that he was President of the Ypres League from the date of its founding in 1920 until his death in 1925, which was - of course - the year that the Old Contemptibles' Association was founded. □

JB



*Patriotic postcard design by
George Barrow*



This imposing marble bust of Sir John French is still in its original location directly opposite the entrance to St George's Memorial Church, Ypres. In 1924, Sir John French had launched an appeal to build an Anglican church in Ypres. In 1925, Sir John French died and the following year an order was given to sculpt a bust of the late Field-Marshal. The foundation-stone for the new church was laid by Field-Marshal Herbert Plumer in 1927 and the construction of the church was completed in 1929. The marble bust of Sir John French was sculpted by an American sculptor - Jo Davidson (1883-1952). He had studied sculpture at the Art Students League in New York and at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris.

When I took this photograph of the memorial in 2018, there was a large notice towards the bottom of the memorial relating to the installation of new bells in the church. Consequently, my photograph does not show the complete memorial. The missing words on my photograph are: THIS BUST AND TABLET ARE ERECTED TO HIS MEMORY BY HIS OLD COMRADES. The full text on the tablet can be seen on the Friends of St George Church on-line digital inventory - <https://www.stgeorgesmemorialchurchypres.com/memorials/>

Sir John French's memorial is Inventory Object No. Plaque065. Do take a look at this superb inventory which contains high-definition photographs of every memorial in St George's Memorial Church

Patriotic parian busts of Field-Marshal Sir John French - from the early days of the Great War

The inscription reads:

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
JOHN DENTON PINKSTON FRENCH
FIRST EARL OF YPRES AND VISCOUNT
FRENCH OF YPRES

FIELD-MARSHAL IN THE ARMY
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE
BRITISH EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

BORN AT RIPPLE, KENT
26 SEPT 1852



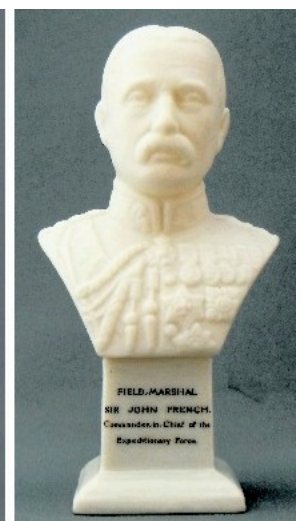
This 40-year-old photo shows my wife, Sue, at the grave of Sir John French in Ripple churchyard



Parian bust of Lord French wearing a bicorne hat on a glazed base with The Flags of Liberty crest (Grafton China) with 'FRENCH' inscribed on reverse 125mm high



Parian bust of Sir John French (bare headed) (H & L) 170mm high bearing United we Stand crest with flags of Britain, France, Belgium and Russia and with inscription on reverse 'By G. S. Chadwick, Copyright Oct 2nd 1914'



*Parian bust of Sir John French on a glazed base (Shelley China) 127mm high bearing text:
FIELD-MARSHAL
SIR JOHN FRENCH.
Commander-in-Chief of the
Expeditionary Force.*

The Adopted Villages - a further report from Richard Young

In the last issue of *Between the Lines* (No. 72), I contributed an article about the adoption, through the British League of Help, of the villages of Lesbœufs and Morval by the City of Canterbury in the 1920s.

In this follow-up article, I take the story back to the beginning of how I, as a member of the Harvey Pals, became involved in researching the 'Adopted Villages' starting with the adoption of the village of Morlancourt by Folkestone in 1920. That led to my researching the adoption of both Lesbœufs and Morval by the City of Canterbury, visits by the Harvey Pals to those villages (and, later, other villages) and finishes with my meeting the author Bryan Lewis and accompanying him (as translator) on his many trips to France following up all of the adoptions under the British League of Help scheme which terminated with his published-privately superb book *The British League of Help*.

The adoption of Morlancourt by Folkestone

In 1992, a letter arrived at the offices of Shepway District Council from a former Folkestonian, a Mr S Page, then resident in Eastleigh, asking for information about the adoption of the small French village of Morlancourt by Folkestone in 1921. The person who dealt with the enquiry was the father of a boy at the Harvey Grammar School and he passed on the letter to one of my colleagues, John Botting, with whom Bill Westall, John Herbert and myself formed a group of First World War enthusiasts which we named the Harvey Pals. For some forty years, we visited the battlefields of the war until old age prevented the annual visits. John did some research in the Folkestone Library and, armed with this information, we made our way to Morlancourt in October 1992 in order to find whether there were any remains



The Harvey Pals (L-R: Richard Young, John Herbert, John Botting and Bill Westall) on the Somme - circa 2005

(See also John Herbert's ditty at the bottom of page 20)

of the help given by Folkestone. We arrived at the *Mairie* but, unfortunately, the Mayor's Secretary knew nothing about the subject. However, soon the Mayor arrived, alerted by phone, and listened with interest. We were aware that Folkestone had, among other things, paid for the restoration of the water supply to Morlancourt in the years after the war and we discovered that this had involved the construction of two water towers. Improvements to the system some years later had led to their demolition but, to his credit the Mayor had had the foresight to photograph them, copies of which we were able to see and have photocopies made. As he had not been in office at the time of the demolition the Mayor did not know what had happened to the marble plaques which has embellished the towers recording the link with Folkestone. A few phone calls soon revealed that they were only yards away in the adjoining store. With sleeves rolled up we assisted in the removal of sundry gardening equipment and other bits and pieces and, having blown the cobwebs away, brought the plaques into the light of day. One commemorated



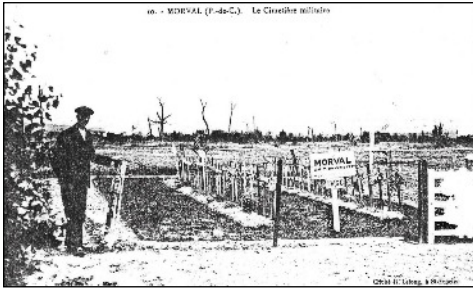
The Mayor of Morlancourt (wearing a light jacket) with the Mayor's Secretary standing outside the building in the village in which in 1993 were stored the two large historic marble plaques shown in the photo. See also close-up photos



The inscription on this marble plaque reads:
MORLANCOURT à sa BIENFAITRICE
LA VILLE DE FOLKESTONE
1924



The inscription on this marble plaque reads:
FOLKESTONE à MORLANCOURT
AVEC L'EXPRESSION DE SA SYMPATHIE
1914-1918



Morval British Cemetery - postcard view from the 1920s showing the original wooden crosses. M. Galvaire, who was the Maire of Morval's Secretary during the Great War, is shown standing on the left of the picture



Morval British Cemetery - photo taken in 1993 from the same spot as the 1920s' postcard view



This group of children, playing in front of Morval school in the 1920s, includes Mme Jean D'Hollander (wearing white dress) at around 12 years of age

the gift and the goodwill of the people of Folkestone and the other recorded the appreciation of the people of Morlancourt. The weathering of the plaques made the photographing of the memorials difficult, however. The Mayor was as pleased as we were with the way events had turned out and a most cordial atmosphere prevailed. Returning to the office, champagne was uncorked and the ancient links between Morlancourt and Folkestone toasted. Hopes were expressed that those links might be re-forged. The Mayor assured us that a full report would appear in the region's quarterly bulletin. His final gesture of goodwill was to lead us to the sites where the water towers had stood.

Postscript. An invitation was given to Morlancourt to send representatives to the summer air show at Folkestone but I am not sure that any visit was made.

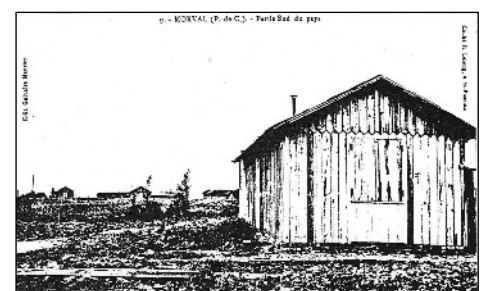
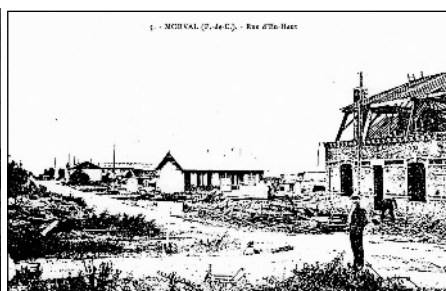
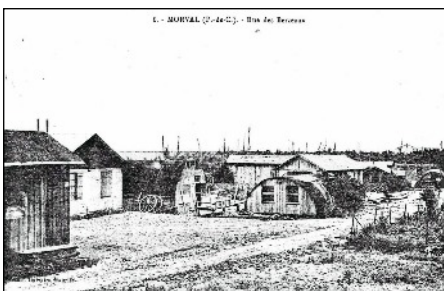
The adoption of Lesbœufs and Morval by Canterbury

Having been to Morlancourt and seen some of the results of its adoption in 1920 by Folkestone, led John Herbert and I to the Canterbury Public Library - the Beaney Institute, now the House of Art and Knowledge - and we trawled through back copies of the *Kentish Gazette* which provided all the information that produced the article in the last newsletter. I then decided to write to the Mayors of Lesbœufs and Morval. The Mayor of Lesbœufs, M. Francois Roche, replied in January 1993. He said that it was very difficult after such a long time to find any information, but nevertheless in the centre of the village there was still an old water tower which had been constructed along with the water system which

provided water to the whole village. Evidence of this system is still found when work is undertaken on the current water system but there is no plaque or other commemoration of the gift from Canterbury. He sent photos of the water tower which still stands as evidence of Canterbury's gift to its godchild. The letter to the Mayor of Morval produced a letter from 82-year-old Mme Jean D'Hollander. She wrote that she had learnt of my letter to the Mayor of Morval and was sure that I would be pleased that it had awakened in her old and dear memories:

"My parents were the first to come back to Morval after the war. They even lived there alone for a certain time. In 1920, the year we returned, the summer was scorching. Our accommodation, a Nissen-style hut of corrugated iron, was a real oven. I was eight years of age. The village and the surrounding area were still as they were after the Battle of the Somme and the 1918 fighting. It was then that, in view of the sacrifice of so many of your soldiers, Morval having been taken into your hearts, you became interested in it.

My parents having died a long time ago, I still have my childhood memories which were marked by the seriousness of our situation. I remember that the adoption of Morval by Canterbury moved them very much and brought was indeed comfort to them. With moving concern, the village was indeed aided financially by the making of a well as you stated in your letter. The arrival of clothes and materials brought much pleasure. But it was with unbounded enthusiasm and with love that were planted the fruit trees, specially selected for our region. Some still exist in the village fields.



Three early postcard views of Morval taken in the 1920s showing some of the corrugated iron buildings being used for housing at that time

I can't forget either a parcel of presents, for the children especially, sent for Christmas 1921 or 1922. For me the present was a money-box covered with shells, a precious souvenir that I lost when we had to leave in 1940.

In thanking you for your many kindnesses, I can assure you that our gratitude to your heroes has remained steadfast in the heart of the inhabitants of Morval.

Each year on the 11th November, after a spray of flowers has been placed on the village war memorial, those taking part then proceed to the British cemetery to lay a similar tribute at the foot of the cross and in silence they remember.

But added to the tribute expressed by Morval is that of the French nation. A perpetual tribute since it is carved in stone, in both French and English, there to be read and understood by all, for it draws itself to our attention as we enter the cemetery.

I myself often visit your loved-ones who have remained with us. Many were struck down in the full-bloom of youth - 18 or 19 years of age - and others were almost as young. What grievous sacrifice!

Facing the open landscape, site of the generous and terrible fighting, my grateful prayer joins them in their sacrifice and in their glorious eternity. Morval does not forget!"

A most moving letter, I think you will agree.



Mme Jean D'Hollander (front left), Maire de Morval (behind Mme D'Hollander) with Mme Delmotte (on right) daughter of M. Galvaire, the Mayor's Secretary during the Great War who is pictured on page 12 in front of Morval British Cemetery. The others in the photo are officials of Morval

This led us to decide on our next trip to the Somme, to visit Morval again in 1993. A further letter and a phone call meant that we met the Mayor and Madame D'Hollander and other interested inhabitants in the Town Hall where we were shown photos of Morval in the after war years and learnt more about the life of the people who returned to the devastated villages in the 1920s. Morval was rebuilt and life returned to normal for most of the people who lived there.



Mme Jean D'Hollander with the Mayor of Canterbury (Cllr Clive Wake) during the Royal British Legion to Morval in 1996

After our visit in 1993, there were two more visits of delegations from Canterbury. In 1996, the Mayor of Canterbury, Councillor Clive Wake, on a visit organised by the Royal British Legion and the RBL Travel Department, met Madame D' Hollander and a photo appeared the following week in the *Kentish Gazette* with some of the words from the letter that she wrote to me. Relatives of those who fought in the Battle of the Somme were in the party which was met by the Mayors of Morval and Lesbœufs. A large crowd gathered to meet the coach of veterans and a generous buffet was provided for the 46-strong party and villagers at the school hall in Lesbœufs.

Services of remembrance were also held at the two village British war cemeteries conducted by the chaplain to the RBL, the Rev. George Glew, whose own father was a casualty of the Somme.

At the buffet reception, the Mayor of Lesbœufs, M. Etienne Debrueque, said that over 70 years had passed and many of those who had lived through the hardship had gone. It was true that time erases many things, but the military cemeteries were a reminder that many British soldiers had given their lives to

defend France. It took events like this visit to remind younger generations that a few decades ago Canterbury came to the aid of their grandparents to start a new life in a village destroyed by war.

There was yet another visit to the adopted villages in 2006 when the Canterbury's Lord Mayor, Councillor Pat Todd, visited the villages, and this was marked by the inauguration of the restored war memorial in Lesbœufs. The visit was also marked by a gift of 100 Queen Cox apples trees which replicated gifts made in 1920 and 1921. Some of these original trees were still in existence in 1993 but were then close to the end of their life. Canterbury Worldwide Fruit offered the 100 trees and Robert Balicki was there to hand them over on behalf of the company. Councillor Todd said that his first idea was to give around ten trees to Morval and Lesbœufs, but following the very kind donation by Mr Balicki they were able to do so much more. The delegation from Canterbury received a very warm reception on their arrival and Councillor Todd said that nearly every villager turned out to meet them. As a result of this visit plans were being made to invite the Mayors of both villages to Canterbury in the near future.

On a visit to the Somme by the Harvey Pals in 2007, we called in at Lesbœufs hoping to view some of the 100 apple trees donated during the previous visit of Councillor Pat Todd in 2006 that were given to the inhabitants and reported on BBC television. Knocking at the door of a house opposite the newly restored war memorial, we persuaded the bemused lady who answered the door to allow herself to be photographed beside her two trees. Apparently, the trees had been offered to any inhabitant but not all wanted one which we thought was rather sad.



One of the residents of Lesbœufs standing beside her two 'Canterbury' Queen Cox apple trees that were planted in 2006 - photo taken in 2007

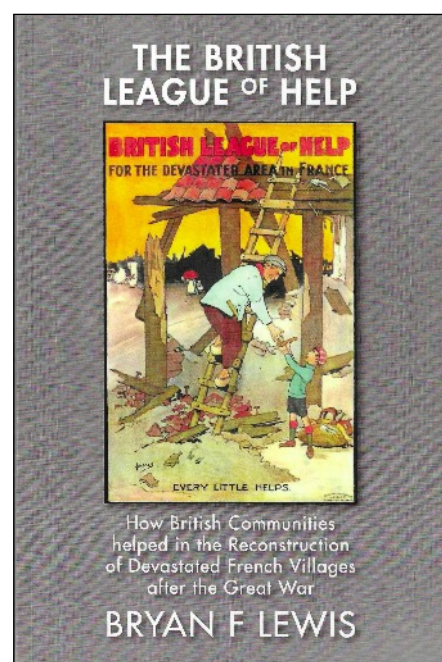


The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress (Pat & Barbara Todd) with on extreme right, Robert Balicki from Worldwide Fruits and French villagers

So, the first visit to Morlancourt was followed by our visit to Morval and Lesbœufs where we met the Mayor and Mme D'Hollander amongst others (rather low key). Who would have thought that our visit would lead subsequently to two civic visits by two Lord Mayors with receptions by the Mayors of both villages and speeches in English and French? And all of this as a result of a simple enquiry to Shepway District Council about the adoption of Morlancourt in 1920 by Folkestone.

My subsequent visits to the adopted towns and villages with Bryan Lewis

Subsequently, I accompanied Bryan Lewis on his research into the British League of Help and the restoration of the devastated towns and villages which led us to the Somme and across France as far as Verdun, visiting small villages and large towns, all of which had been helped by generous donations from Britain and in many of which there remained tangible evidence of these gifts. □



The front cover of Bryan Lewis' book The British League of Help which tells how British communities helped in the reconstruction of the devastated French towns and villages after the Great War. The book was published privately in 2014

More Souvenirs of the Great War

The Spring 2020 issue of *Between the Lines* contained an article by your new Editor featuring a number of souvenirs which mocked the Kaiser. In this issue of *Between the Lines*, your new Editor features a few more souvenirs which fall into that same category along with a selection of souvenirs relating to the downing of the German Zeppelin L-15 off Margate on 1st April 1916.

The range of Great War souvenirs that were produced during the period 1914-1918 is extremely wide and, today, such objects are often to be found in junk shops, flea-markets and at antiques fairs - unwanted and unloved.

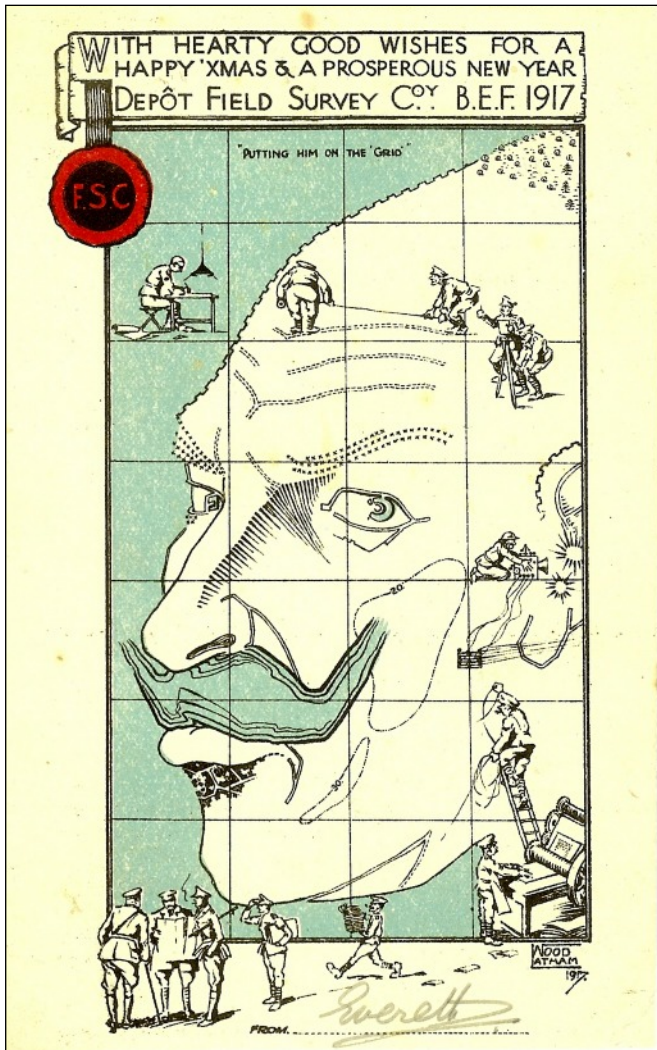
There was a time when virtually every household in the country would have contained at least one souvenir or memento of the Great War. With the passing of time and the current fashion for de-cluttering, so many of those objects have now been discarded.

I hope that you will find the souvenirs illustrated in these articles to be as interesting to you as they are to me. If you have any souvenirs of the Great War, please do share them with our members by contributing an article on them for the *Between the Lines*. □

JB



This bronze ashtray features the Kaiser walking into the Belgian frontier and coming to an abrupt stop with his sword about to cause him a very nasty and painful injury. The bronze is unsigned - presumably to safeguard the sculptor in the event of German occupation



This cleverly-drawn Christmas card from 1917 shows the Kaiser being 'put on the grid' on a map of the Belgian coast by engineers of the Depot Field Survey Company, British Expeditionary Force



A German shell fired into Margate in 1917

A selection of souvenirs of the Zeppelin L-15 brought down in the Thames Estuary off Margate on 1st April 1916



A brass ashtray bearing the inscription: ZEPPELIN L-15 DOWNED 1916 MARGATE with a Duralumin cut-out in the shape of a Zeppelin in the centre inscribed L15

All of the metal souvenirs illustrated on this page are believed to have been made from metal salvaged from the L-15. Most were sold during the Great War to raise funds for charities such as the British Red Cross



The above pendant in the form of a German iron cross bears the inscription:

L15
ZEPPELIN
1916



The above pin-badge bears the inscription:

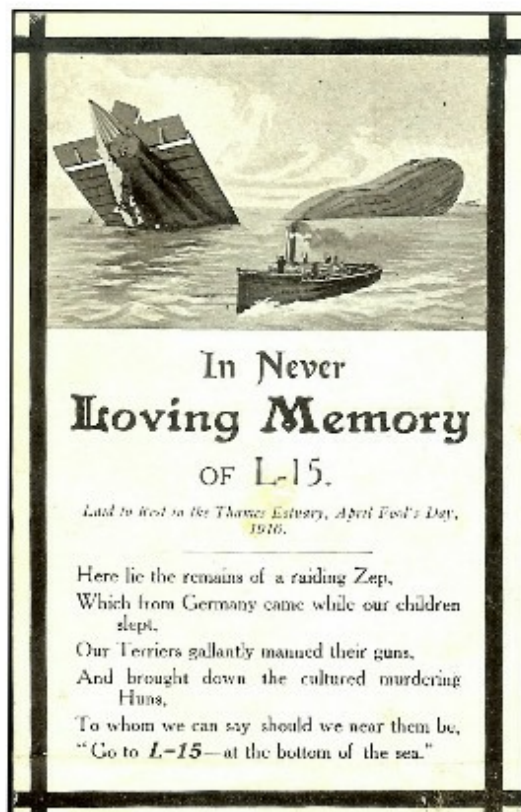
L15
MARGATE
ZEPPE



A pin-badge bearing the inscription: ZEPPE MARGATE in the form of a Zeppelin with its back broken with flames rising from it



*This brooch in the shape of a Zeppelin bears the inscription:
ZEPP L15
THAMES 1.4.16*



A dark-humour postcard 'In Never Loving Memory of L-15' which was: 'Laid to Rest in the Thames Estuary, April Fool's Day, 1916'

Great War Peace Commemorative Souvenirs given by East Kent towns



Card given to Mrs (Elizabeth?) Luckhurst at the end of the war

⇐ This paper token of thanks was given to a Mrs Luckhurst at the end of the Great War by the Mayor of Canterbury (who was also the President of the Canterbury & District War Work Depot) and the Chairwoman of the Canterbury & District War Work Depot. It is almost certain that whatever duties Mrs Luckhurst performed during the war, they would all have been carried out entirely voluntarily. It is believed that Mrs Luckhurst lived on Whitstable Road.

Most towns presented their school-children with souvenirs of some sort at the end of the war. The certificate shown below was presented by the Mayor of Margate to Miss Amy Chapman who would have been aged nine in 1919. It is quite likely, however, that the certificate was not presented until the early-1920s. Other towns presented Peace medallions to their school-children such as the medallion awarded during

the town's Peace Celebrations in 1919 by the Mayor of Ramsgate, H.C. Child. Other towns gave children decorative commemorative china mugs (sometimes showing the name of the town concerned) or basic medals or medallions. □ **JB**



Certificate given to school-girl Amy Chapman at the end of the war



Demarcation Stones

Western Front Demarcation Stones, also known as *Bornes du Front* and *Bornes Vauthier*, are monuments erected in France and Belgium to mark the limit of the German advance during the First World War. The stones were the idea of sculptor Paul Moreau-Vauthier, a veteran of the war, and were erected between 1921 and 1930. - *Wikipedia*

This postcard shows the Demarcation Stone to be found at Hell-Fire Corner on the Menin Road just outside Ypres. This Demarcation Stone has been moved a number of times following traffic accidents on what is now a very busy roundabout at Hell Fire Corner. The Demarcation Stone was still there the last time I visited the area and long may it survive. The Holts' model (the brownish model shown below) is a copy of the Hell-Fire Corner Demarcation Stone (albeit being only some five inches tall compared with the actual Stone which is around three feet six inches tall). The postcard is thought to date from the 1960s.

It was originally intended to erect over 200 Demarcation Stones but only 118 were ever erected and some of those were destroyed in WWII. A full listing of the locations of those that have survived is available on the web. A number of these Demarcation Stones in Belgium were provided by the Ypres League in the 1920s. □

JB



A selection of photographs comparing two models of the Demarcation Stones to be found in France and Belgium. The ceramic model bears an interesting Sèvres backstamp incorporating the year date 1921. The Holts' reproduction is solid and believed to have been produced in the 1980s. Both are some five inches tall.



Signature of Paul Moreau-Vauthier, Sculptor
(Can also be seen in the image directly above)



Markings at bottom of the front and the back of the modern reproduction model



La Borne de Terre Sacrée



LA BORNE DE TERRE SACRÉE



L'émotion que nous éprouvons lorsque nous nous retrouvons aux endroits du Front où nous avons combattu ne pourra jamais s'éteindre dans nos cœurs. Les heures rouges se renouvellent dans notre esprit avec la même intensité qu'au moment où nous les avons vécues. Les plus terribles images comme les plus magnifiques se heurtent pêle-mêle et il s'en dégage une vision sublime que seuls les êtres qui ont lutté dans le tourment peuvent avoir.

Auprès du trou d'obus que le temps n'a pu encore effacer, nous demeurons silencieux, figés par le souvenir..... Emportés loin du monde dans un rêve très doux de gloire et de tristesse infinie.....

Nous nous rappelons que là est tombé Celui que nous faisons reciter, le Camarade de Combat, l'Ami, le Frère. "Il est tombé à cette place !" un beau matin en pleine attaque, en pleine furie, alors qu'à demi fous nous défendions pied à pied la parcelle de Terre que nos Pères nous ont laissée en garde. Il est Tombé là. Et nous le recevons couché, les bras en croix, baignant la Terre de ses larmes blanches..... en un dernier Hommage!

Rappelons nous. Ces moments nous les avons vécus..... les larmes ne coulaient pas, nous regardions la mort! C'était un peu de nous qui disparaissait avec l'être que nous aimions. Et, dans un éclair, nous songions à ceux qui communièrent en Lui; la mère, le vieux père, sa femme et les bambins insoucients..... la petite sœur qui, le soir tricotoit le maillot de laine pour qu'il ait chaud l'hiver dans sa tranchée..... Oh! nous songions à eux et notre souffrance augmentait en pensant à celle qu'ils allaient connaître.

Cette émotion, je l'ai ressentie à nouveau, à Verdun, il y a quelques mois lorsque j'y retournai pour la première fois depuis la guerre. J'ai revu l'Endroit Terrible. Et l'idée m'est venue de conserver un peu de cette Terre Sacrée où nous avons souffert et où nous les avons vu mourir. Cette Terre demeurera pure et renfermée dans une Borne que j'ai conçue, elle perpétuera le Souvenir des Morts Glorieux, dans la Famille, à travers les siècles.

J'ai pensé que tout homme ayant ressenti ces émotions voudrait posséder dans son foyer ce Symbole Sacré, qu'il vénérerait et regarderait comme un beau Livre dans lequel ses fils apprendront à lire les malheurs de la guerre et la Grandeur du Sacrifice.

GASTON DEBLAIZE.
Auteur de l'idée et Créateur de la Borne.

TERRE SACRÉE

La Terre Sacrée est recueillie sur les champs de bataille de l'Argonne, Aisne, Alsace, Artois, Belgique, Flandres, Lorraine, Marne, Somme, Verdun et Yser en présence d'une Délégation des Gueules Cassées ou d'Anciens Combattants.

Les Bornes renferment une parcelle de Terre Sacrée du Secteur indiqué, elles sont cachetées sous la surveillance d'un Contrôleur de l'Union des Gueules Cassées et renfermées dans des écrins. Chaque Borne est accompagnée d'un certificat Officiel, attestant l'authenticité de la Terre Sacrée, signé par le Colonel PICOT, Président de l'Union des Gueules Cassées.

PRIX IMPOSÉ DE LA BORNE (en terre cuite) 15 frs. pour la France, Franco domicile 17 fr. 50.

Adresser les Correspondances, Demandes de Renseignements, Mandats, Chèques, etc. à "Borne de Terre Sacrée", 156, Boulevard Magenta, PARIS (X^e)

La Présentation de la "Borne de Terre Sacrée" est sous le contrôle permanent de l'Union des Gueules Cassées, Propriétaire des droits d'Auteur de M. Deblaise, lequel en FAIT DON à la Maison de retraite de Moussy-le-Vieux.

RECOMMANDATION IMPORTANTE. — Prière de bien spécifier le Secteur du prélèvement de Terre que l'on désire.

France - fr. 15.00 - Franco 17.50

LA BORNE DE TERRE SACRÉE

1914 • 1918

A LA MÉMOIRE DES MORTS DE LA GRANDE GUERRE AUX MUTILÉS AUX COMBATTANTS

Officiellement délégué pour cette Mission, je certifie que La Terre Sacrée contenue dans cette Borne a été prélevée à

Donauumont (Meuse)

Le 30 Août 1927

Le Président des Gueules Cassées.
G. Deblaise
Colonel Picot

Le Délégué
J. Dominé

IMP. H. BOUQUET - PARIS



Height five inches approx



Commemorative terracotta monument designed by Gaston Deblaise: inscribed **VERDUN** on the front and **CETTE BORNE RENFERME UNE PARCELLE DE TERRE DE SACRÉE DE VERDUN** on the back, **1914** and **G. DEBLAIZE** on one side and on the other side **1918**

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)

2 May

John Tanner

Nonne Bosschen - 11 November 1914'

6 June

Sarah Nathaniel, CWGC South-East

'The CWGC: a deeper look'

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

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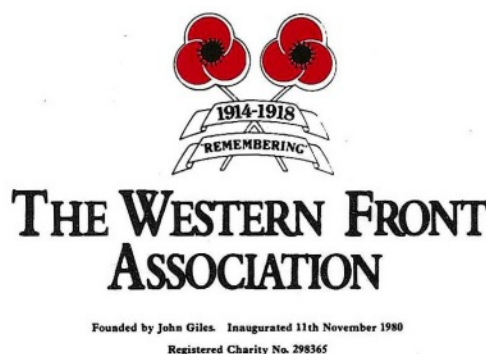
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AN END-NOTE

The following ditty was written by John Herbert as a tribute to the Harvey Pals (see Richard Young's article on pages 11-14 of this issue of *Between the Lines*):

*Age does weary them, so we're told,
Do the Harvey Pals grow old?
But to quote a well-known sage,
They "immature with age"*
(with apologies- Harold Wilson's comment on Tony Benn)