

BETWEEN THE LINES

Newsletter of the East Kent Branch of The Western Front Association

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Founded by John Giles
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Articles, etc for *Between the Lines* should be sent to me in M/S Word with accompanying images attached as JPGs. The deadline for contributions (articles, letters, queries, etc) for the next issue of *Between the Lines* is Sunday, 15th March 2025. □

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

James Brazier, WFA East Kent Branch Newsletter Editor



Welcome to another issue of *Between the Lines*. As I have received only two (shortish) contributions from members for this issue, I have exercised my Editor's privilege of including two rather lengthy articles of my own. I trust that members will pardon my indulgence on this occasion and I hope that it will encourage others to contribute to future issues of *Between the Lines*.

John Websper has contributed another interesting article on the Armistice Day train and its journey through Kent on Armistice Day in 2024 and Michael Lucas has written an article on Major-General Bertram Mitford and *The Wipers Times*. I feel sure that members will find these two articles most interesting and encourage other members to contribute something to our newsletter.

The major article in this issue came about when my wife, Sue, and I attended the funeral of Branch member Major Tonie Holt in early October. After the funeral, Valmai Holt and her family kindly invited everyone present at the funeral to Broome Park Hotel for a 'Celebration of Tonie's Life' which proved to be such a moving occasion. Before leaving Broome Park, I took the opportunity to take a few photographs of Broome Park because I hadn't visited the house for more than 40 years and I had forgotten much about the house during that time.

I must now admit to having had an obsession with collecting 'Lord Kitchener Memorabilia' over the last 60 years. My obsession has waxed and waned over the years such that, in more recent years, I have (almost) weaned myself off the collecting bug. Nevertheless, I have built up a modest collection of Kitchener-related artefacts. It occurred to me after returning home from Broome Park, that an article on Lord Kitchener - including his former home Broome Park and the huge range of Kitchener collectibles that were produced - might make for an interesting article for our newsletter, particularly as Kitchener had a number of east Kent connections.

Kitchener made a name for himself at the time of the Boer War and it is very evident that his image was to be seen throughout the country. He became an icon and was hugely popular with the British public although, once he was made Secretary of State for War on 5th August 1914, his popularity with politicians diminished as the war progressed. Indeed,

David Lloyd George, castigated Kitchener's managerial style by likening him to "one of those revolving lighthouses which radiates momentary gleams of revealing light far out into the surrounding gloom and then suddenly relapses into complete darkness". In my article, I don't detail Kitchener's remarkable Army service record as that can quite easily be obtained from various biographies and websites.

The range and number of Kitchener-related artefacts as can be seen from the illustrations in my article was enormous. There can hardly have been a home in the country that didn't have a bust or some other image of him on the mantelpiece or about the house. After his death, there would appear to have been a major surge in the production of Kitchener-memorial memorabilia.

Research into Kitchener for my article brought a number of unexpected revelations. I was most interested to find that on the night of the 1911 Census (Sunday, 2nd March 1911), Kitchener was staying at the County Hotel (now the Obode Hotel), 30-31 High Street, Canterbury. Also on that same Census return is shown Lt-Col Oswald Fitzgerald - Kitchener's ADC and Military Secretary. Lt-Col Fitzgerald also lost his life on HMS *Hampshire* a little over five years later. Lt-Col Fitzgerald's body was one of only two whose bodies were recovered (there were, in addition, twelve survivors from the incident). His grave is in Eastbourne (Ocklynge) Cemetery. Interestingly, the *Whitstable and Herne Bay Herald* reported in April 1911 that Kitchener had visited Canterbury, after leaving the Lord Warden Hotel at Dover, on his return from the Continent.

In July 1911, the *Dover and County Chronicle* reported that Kitchener 'had been appointed Minister Plenipotentiary and Consul General at Cairo' and that 'it had been hoped that his lordship would shortly take up his residence at Broome Park, near Canterbury, but that his new appointment precludes the possibility of his doing so for some years'. Sadly, Kitchener never did live at Broome Park although he did stay in an outbuilding during his occasional visits to the house during its renovations..

I remember being told by a WFA member - who was also a dealer in Great War medals - at a WFA meeting at the National Army Museum in the mid-1980s (as I recall) that Lord Kitchener's next-of-kin memorial plaque (or "death plaque") had recently sold for £1,000. So, I didn't need to look out for that particular "death plaque" when I scoured the markets! (At the time, the going rate for an 'other ranks' "death plaque" was considerably less than £10.) □

James Brazier
Newsletter Editor

Broome Park, Barham: former home of Lord Kitchener



The grand entrance to Broome Park



The imposing front-door porch



Showing the location of Kitchener's Blue Plaque



Horatio Herbert Kitchener was born on 24th June 1850. He was created Baron Kitchener of Khartoum and Aspall in 1898, and was henceforth known as 'K of K', or simply 'K'

The photos on this page and the following two pages are reproduced with kind permission of Broome Park Hotel



Kitchener's Coat-of-Arms above the front door

Broome Park is a Grade I listed building



The hotel reception desk in the great entrance hall showing the date 1635 in the ornate panelling



The rear elevation of Broome Park

Lord Kitchener's Coat-of-Arms incorporating his Motto "Thorough"



One of the pair of grand fireplaces in the great entrance hall at Broome Park. These fireplaces were installed by Lord Kitchener



A close-up photo of Lord Kitchener's coat-of-arms shown above the front-door porch of Broome Park



The coat-of-arms of Canterbury which incorporates three choughs - a bird much associated with Kent through Thomas Becket. Might it be that the three birds shown on Lord Kitchener's coat-of-arms are also choughs?



Lord Kitchener's coat-of-arms above each of the fireplaces in the great entrance hall of Broome Park. Note his motto 'Thorough'

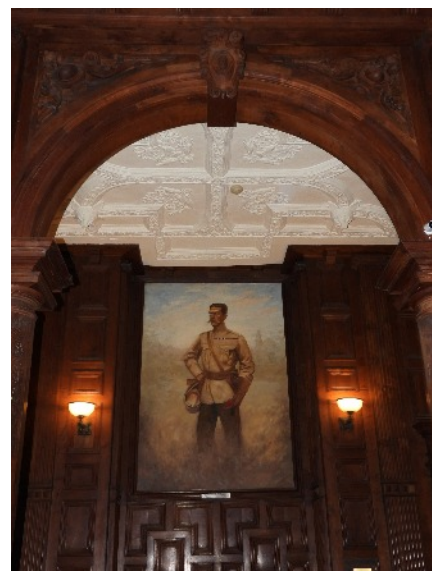


A close-up photo of Lord Kitchener's coat-of-arms shown on the crested china bust of him (see page 9)

Images of Lord Kitchener on display in the Great Hall at Broome Park



► This photo shows one of the images of Kitchener displayed in the Great Hall. The image is mounted on the wall at one end of the great hall



◄ Kitchener in full dress uniform. This picture hangs in the Great Hall immediately opposite the main entrance to the house



► The original of this oil-painting of Lord Kitchener by Sir Hubert von Herkomer is on display in the National Portrait Gallery

These images, which portray important incidents in Kitchener's life, are on display in the Great Hall at Broome Park



◄ Kitchener on horseback leading his troops in battle



◄ Lord Kitchener arriving by train somewhere in India (?) being met by a ruler

► 'The sinking of the Hampshire 1916' - this dramatic image hangs above the reception desk (see below) in the Great Hall



▲ A section of the ornate ceiling decoration in the Great Hall showing a camel - presumably as a symbol of Kitchener's time in the Sudan



A selection of busts of Lord Kitchener



Bronze bust sculpted by Sydney March - Height 225mm



Parian bust on a glazed base (Shelley China) - Height 127mm



Solid bronze bust (sculptor not known) - Height 150mm



*Crested China glazed bust of Lord Kitchener
Bearing Coat-of-Arms of Tintern Abbey*

- Height 105mm



Solid brass bust - Height 117mm



Glazed pottery bust - Height 115mm



Metal (pewter?) bust with internal thread - Height 98mm



Crested China bust of Lord Kitchener

bearing Worthing Coat-of-Arms

Inscription on back:

*Lord Kitchener of Khartoum/Field Marshall [sic] KG KP/Secretary of State for War/
Born 1851/Drowned at sea off the Orkneys/June 5th 1916*

- Height 125mm

More busts of Lord Kitchener



Parian bust on a glazed base (Shelley China) - Height 127mm



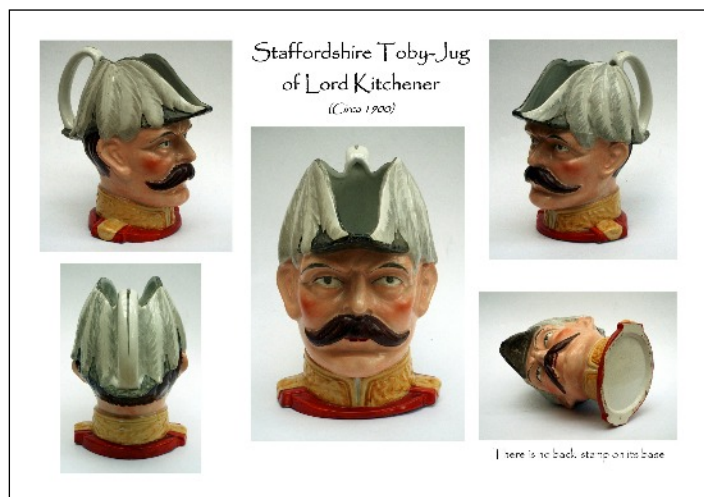
Parian bust (no marking - Height 130mm)



Parian bust with 'United we Stand' crest (H&L) - Height 170mm



Parian bust with 'Flags of Liberty' crest (Grafton China) - Height 68mm



Staffordshire 'Character Jug' of Lord Kitchener (Circa 1900) - Height 170mm



Parian bust (no marking) - Height 68mm



Glazed jug with handle at rear (but no pouring lip) - Height 165mm



'Treacle-glazed' character jug (with pouring spout) - Height 160mm

More busts, etc of Lord Kitchener



Spelter bust of Earl Kitchener on a marble base
(There is an imprint on the back of the bust 'AMW © 1915 USA')
- Height 180mm



Bronze relief of Kitchener
mounted on a wooden shield
as a wall-plaque
- Total Height 170mm



In Memoriam bone-china plate with 'LORD KITCHENER - DUTY UNTO THE END' text - Made by Collingwood Bros, England and dated 1916 (see backstamp shown above)
- Diameter 133mm



Small brass tray featuring Kitchener within a laurel wreath - Diameter 90mm



Brass Kitchener 'In Memoriam' wall-plaque with message 'CARRY ON TO VICTORY' incorporated in the design
- Height 170mm



Parian bust with 'AUGUST 1914' imprinted on back
- Height 165mm



Bronze relief of Kitchener with inscription 'LORD KITCHENER/ DIED JUNE 6th/1916'
- Height 110mm



Brass relief (this is a similar - but larger - casting of Kitchener used in the wall-plaque shown above)
- Height 135mm

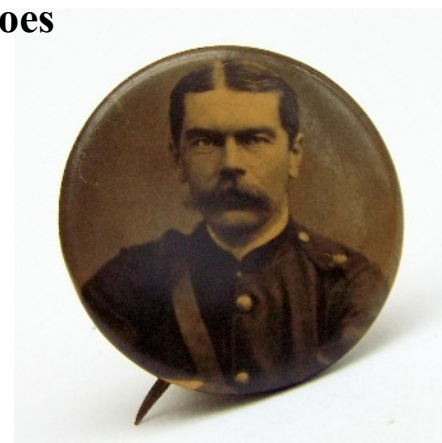
Yet more Lord Kitchener mementoes



*The above ceramic wall-plaque, manufactured by Ridgways, has the date '1914' incorporated in its backstamp
- Diameter 150mm*



Backstamp



*An early pin-badges (1890s?)
- Diameter 22mm*



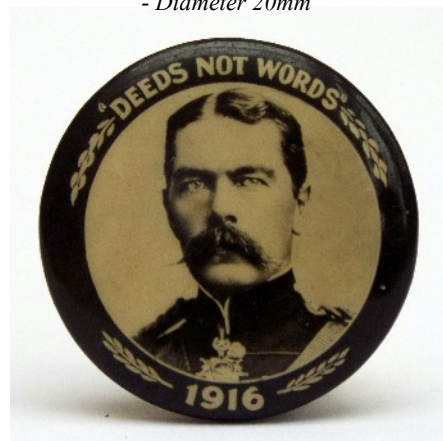
*Pin-badges manufactured by The Merchants' Portrait Co (Boer War period?)
- Diameter 22mm*



*Crested china parian bust of Kitchener bearing the matching Coat-of-Arms of Lord Kitchener incorporating his motto 'THOROUGH' reproduced on page 4. One the back of the bust is the inscription
'Lord Kitchener/W.G.Lawton - Sculptor/Copyright'
- Height 155mm*



*Silver brooch (hallmark: Chester 1914)
- Diameter 20mm*



*Badge mourning the death of Lord Kitchener
- Diameter 35mm*

Remembering the 3rd Earl Kitchener

The 3rd Earl Kitchener was a Vice-President of The Western Front Association from 1980 to his death, at the age of 92, in 2011. The 3rd Earl Kitchener was the son of the 2nd Earl Kitchener - who succeeded the title on the death of his half-brother (the 1st Earl Kitchener) in 1916 - and a great nephew of the 1st Earl Kitchener. When the unmarried 3rd Earl Kitchener died in 2011, the title became extinct. He had become the 3rd Earl on his 21st birthday succeeding his grandfather (the 2nd Earl Kitchener) who had passed away in his 90s in Kenya.

Your editor had the great honour of meeting the 3rd Earl Kitchener at the launch of the CWGC Debt of Honour held at New Zealand House in the mid-1990s. At that time, the 3rd Earl Kitchener frequently attended sittings of the House of Lords. I remember him as being a real gentleman.

A selection of Great War postcards featuring Lord Kitchener



This postcard design was based on one of Alexander Bassano's photographs of Lord Kitchener. Bassano was a London-based high-society portrait photographer



Postcard design by Florence Leicester - unusual in that it portrays Lord Kitchener smiling!



This is one of a set of six patriotic postcard designs by George Barrow. The others feature Jellicoe, French, King George V, King Albert and Joffre

Some of the many postcards featuring Lord Kitchener that were produced during the Great War: some patriotic; some humorous



Humorous postcard by Alfred Leete



This postcard design was by George Studdy, who is best known for his 'Bonzo the Dog' artwork



The 'Kitchener' range cooker was first launched in the 1830s

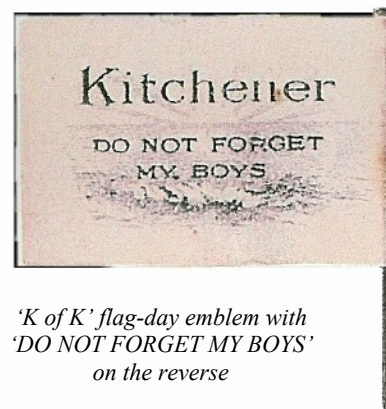
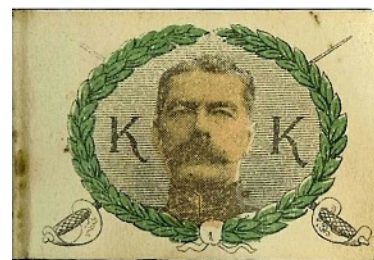
More mementoes of Lord Kitchener



Alfred Leete's original design for the cover of London Opinion



Recruiting poster based on Alfred Leete's original design



'K of K' flag-day emblem with 'DO NOT FORGET MY BOYS' on the reverse



China model of Lord Kitchener with his 'pointing finger' (It is believed that this model was probably made in the 1980s) - Height 115mm



Ogden's cigarette card



Hand-carved wooden face of a British soldier (Lord Kitchener?) on a wooden stand - possibly made by a prisoner-of-war - Height 115mm



Crested china jug with the Union Flag and 'BRAVO! KITCHENER'S ARMY' (Probably dating from 1914)

Lord Kitchener medals and ceramic plaque



- Diameter 36mm



The above silver medal by the French medallist J. P. Legastelois was issued as a memorial to a national hero in 1916



- Diameter 32mm



The above medal is numbered 17005.
Does anyone know what it is?



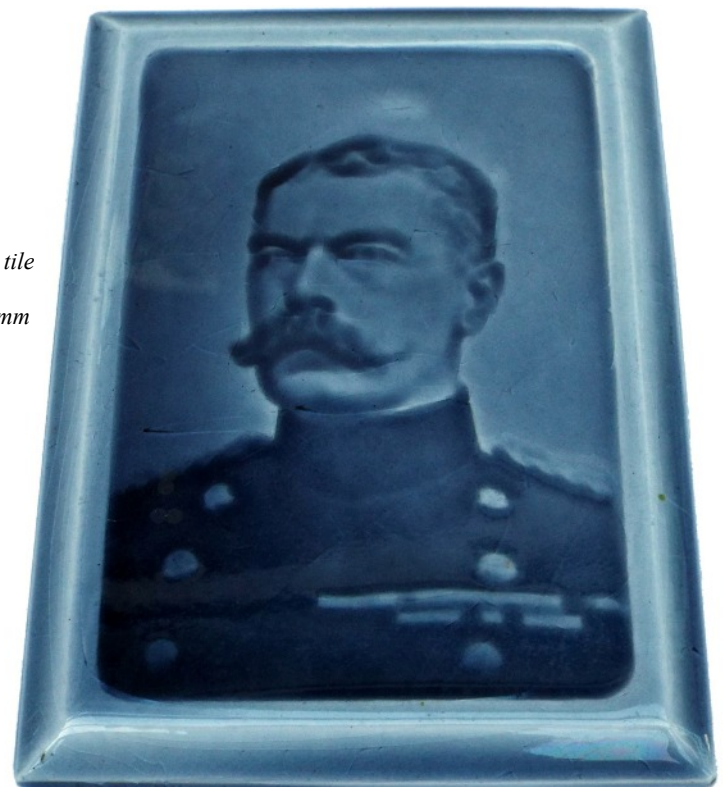
- Diameter 50mm



The above medal by the Swiss medallist Henri-Édouard Huguenin was issued as a memorial to Lord Kitchener



This ceramic tile measures 140mm x 90mm approx

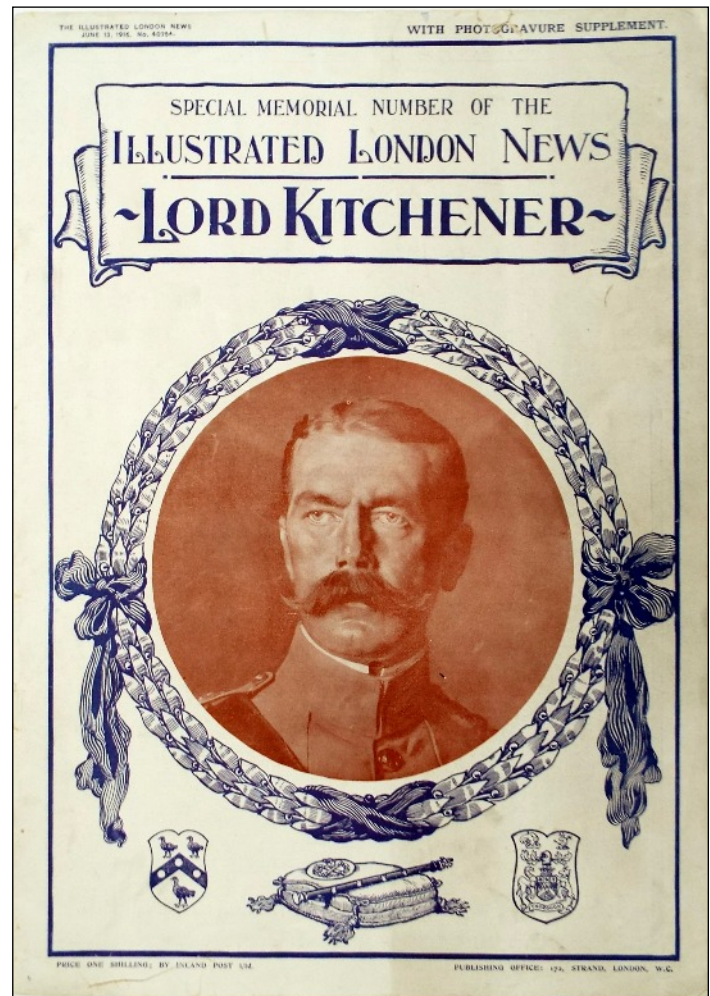


Patriotic ceramic tile made by Carter's of Poole and dated November 1914 featuring Bassano's portrait of Lord Kitchener. The front of the tile has been photographed at an angle to avoid light reflection

Lord Kitchener - a selection of mourning mementoes



Lord Kitchener had a cast, or squint, in his left eye said to have been caused by sand getting into his eye when he was in the desert. It is said that he gave the impression of looking through you when speaking to you.



Note the two small coats-of-arms near the bottom of the front cover



Memorial services for Lord Kitchener were held throughout the country. The above Order of Service was for the service held at Weston-super-Mare on Tuesday, 13th June 1916 - exactly one week after his untimely death



A 'K of K' (Kitchener of Khartoum) memorial plaque

Hollybrook Memorial and Cemetery, Southampton



Photo: James Brazier

These two photos, taken around 30 years ago, show a general view of the Hollybrook Memorial at the rear of Hollybrook Cemetery and a close-up of the panel commemorating both Lord Kitchener and Brigadier-General Wilfred Ellershaw (aged 44) both of whom perished when HMS *Hampshire* hit a mine off the Orkney Islands and sunk on 5th June 1916 with the loss of 737 men.

In total, almost 1,000 servicemen who died in the seas around the United Kingdom during the Great War, and have no known grave, are remembered on the Hollybrook Memorial.

In addition, more than 600 volunteers of the South African Native Labour Corps lost their lives in the sinking of the SS *Mendi* off the Isle of Wight on 21st February 1917. Their names are also commemorated on the Hollybrook Memorial.

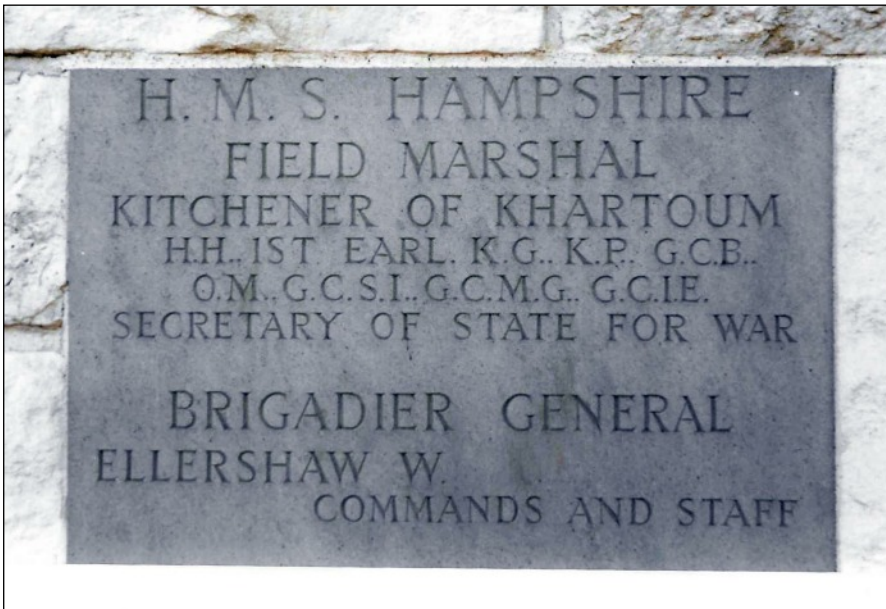
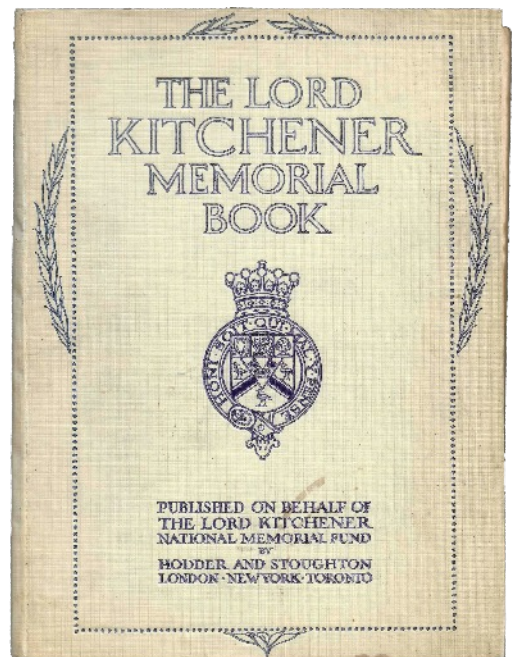
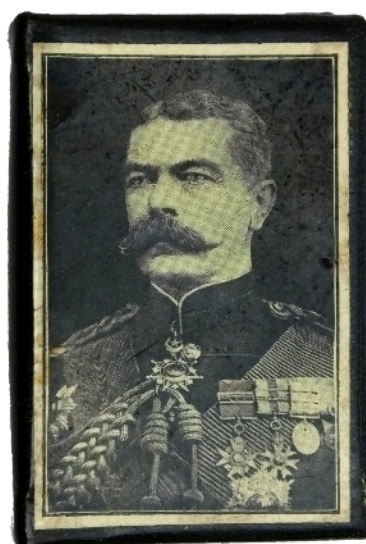
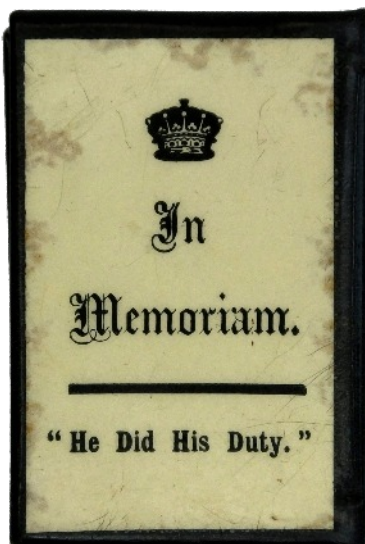


Photo: James Brazier



"The Lord Kitchener Memorial Book" that was published on behalf of The Lord Kitchener Memorial Fund in 1916



These three images show the front, back and spine of an 'In Memoriam' match-box cover that was manufactured shortly after the death of Lord Kitchener "He Did His Duty"

The Memorial to Field-Marshal Lord Kitchener



The Lord Kitchener Memorial by John Tweed - in bronze and on a Portland stone pedestal and platform - is in Horse Guards Parade and is set against a stone screen abutting the garden wall of Nos. 10 and 11 Downing Street. The Memorial is a Grade II Listed Building

John Tweed also sculpted the Rifle Brigade Memorial in Grosvenor Gardens, Westminster along with a number of other war memorials around the country. The Rifle Brigade Memorial is listed at Grade II*.

The Kitchener Memorial was unveiled on 9th June 1926 by HRH The Prince of Wales. Today, the memorial can give the impression that it has been tucked away from the gaze of the general public. □

James Brazier



This statue has to be one of the most imposing in London yet it can only be found by someone determined to find it!
(All photos taken July 2013)



Inscription at base of memorial: ERECTED BY PARLIAMENT



*Sculptor: John Tweed - 1926
(John Tweed was regarded by many as Britain's equivalent of Auguste Rodin)*

‘General Mitford’ and *The Wipers Times* by Michael Lucas

Among Major-General Bertram Mitford’s claims to fame has been that ‘General Mitford’ was played by Michael Palin in the TV film about that most famous of humorous trench newspapers, *The Wipers Times*. Ian Hislop did, however, write to me that ‘We gave the sympathetic general the name ‘Mitford’ because he is one of the



several thanked in the *Wipers Times* for supporting the paper... the character was obviously meant to be a composite of those in HQ who did appreciate Wipers!’

The Wipers Times, first appeared with an edition dated 12 February 1916. It was edited by officers of 12/Sherwood Foresters, 24th Division’s pioneer infantry battalion, then based in the Ypres Ramparts. Its name was to change on occasions for the rest of the war, to fit in with the division’s current location. It included contributions from various members of the division and became very popular. The editor and deputy editor were Captain (later Lieutenant Colonel) ‘Fred’ Roberts and Lieutenant (later Major) ‘Jack’ Pearson. On 23 February, Roberts and two of his officers gave Mitford and another officer dinner. Mitford’s HQ was, at this time, also in the Ramparts at Ypres. From various examples in his diaries at the National Army Museum, one can see Mitford’s liking for cartoons. Indeed, he commissioned a humorous Christmas card for his men, not only for 1915, but also for 1916. This latter was from the talented Private Edward Cole of 9/East Surrey. Presumably Mitford took in good part the reference to his HQ and senior staff, Captain Nelthorpe and Major Fox (Brigade-Major and Staff Captain, respectively), in a spoof advertisement in *The Wipers Times*’ 12 February edition as, ‘The old firm of Nunthorpe, Cox and Co., are still going strong. Their splendidly staffed offices in the Ramparts are always open to the public for business. Best odds always on offer.’ Mitford later recorded having Lieutenant-Colonel Humby, CO of the Sherwood Foresters, and Roberts, to dinner on 11 March to discuss *The Wipers Times*. ‘Nunthorpe, Cox and Co.’ as a firm of bookmakers was continued as a running joke for some time. Furthermore, the names of Mitford and Nelthorpe, more or less, (‘General Bertram Rudolphe de Rogeram, Earl of Loose’, and ‘Lord Reginald de Knellthorpe, his son’) were used in *The B.E.F. Times*’ ‘splendid new serial’, “Narpoo rum”. This was a Sherlock Holmes spoof, running from 1 December 1916.

Mitford had recognised that *The Wipers Times* was good for the troops’ morale and lent it his support, as did the Division’s CRE, Brigadier-General Craven. The Division certainly needed a boost to its morale, as it had taken a terrible beating at Loos, on only its second day at the Front, on 26 September 1915. Mitford’s 72 Brigade, alone,

had suffered more than 2,000 casualties from a strength of around 3,600. The previous divisional commander, out of his depth, had been encouraged to resign. Major-General John Capper, his successor, had seen raising the troops’ morale as a priority, especially as they had been unfairly blamed by the High Command for failing to break through, although facing impenetrable wire and enfiladed on both flanks.

Not all senior officers were so positive about *The Wipers Times* and its successors. Lieutenant-Colonel ‘Jack’ Peirs of 8/Queen’s, wrote in 1919 to his former RMO, Captain Lodge Patch, a major contributor to *The B.E.F. Times*, successor to *The Wipers Times*. He said that Major-General Daly, who had commanded 24th Division in 1917-18, liked to refer to Roberts and Pearson as Lenin and Trotsky!

When Mitford left 24th Division in March 1917, to take command of 42nd Division, he was given quite a write-up in *The B.E.F. Times* of 5 March ‘Once again we say goodbye to a Brigadier, this time to our oldest friend in the Division, Gen. B. MITFORD, C.B., D.S.O., who was with us in the beginning. What an age ago it seems now since a mob of aspiring and perspiring embryo soldiers used to perform wonderful feats under his skilful guidance on the Sussex Downs. How well we came to understand the terrors of war during those final rushes on Chanctonbury Ring! In addition to the regret of losing a Divisional friend, the editorial staff has also to mourn the loss of one of the first supporters and helpers of our paper. Gen. MITFORD assisted at the inception of the “Wipers Times”, and has ever since given the greatest help possible. The whole Division bids him God-speed, and our congratulations and good wishes are none the less hearty if with them are mixed the natural regrets one feels at losing a good pal.’

This article is derived from my book, *The real ‘General Mitford’*, which includes the appropriate source references. Further details for the book can be found on the website: royalsaxonarmy.co.uk. □

Michael Lucas

STEAM-HAULED ARMISTICE DAY TRAIN 2024



Armistice Day train at Minster (Thanet) - Monday, 11th November 2024

Photo: John Websper

The Railway Touring Company again marked Armistice Day by repeating last year's tour of Kent with a steam-hauled charter train. Last year, the train visited the Medway towns and the Isle of Sheppey. On this occasion, the itinerary included Ashford and

a stopover at Canterbury West before a homeward journey via Deal and the Kent coast line. The train was hauled by a different member of the Black Five class. Number 44871 is a loco with a distinguished history. Built at Crewe in 1945, twenty years later on

11th August 1965 it was involved in the very last steam service from Carlisle to Manchester, under British Rail colours. It is now privately owned and has a regular slot on the steam service that runs on the picturesque highland line between Fort William and Mallaig.

The top picture shows the train at Minster where it is negotiating the 5mph speed restriction from the down to the up line in order to access the route to Sandwich and Deal, whilst the bottom picture shows the train soon after arriving at Canterbury West. □



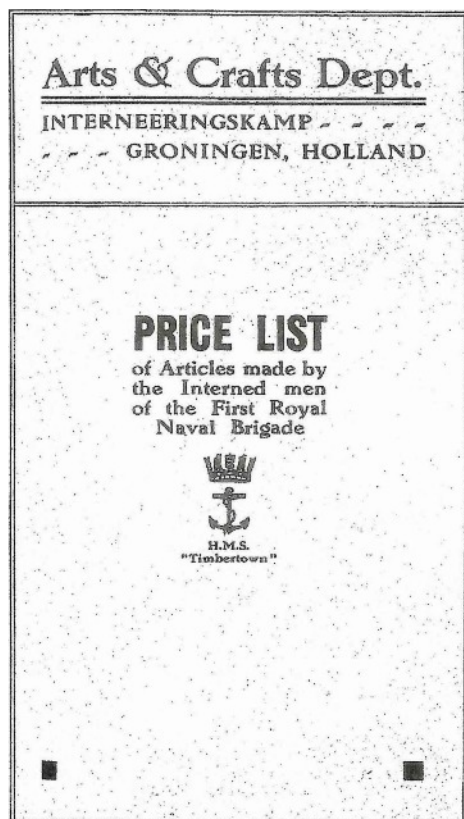
Photo: John Websper

Armistice Day train arriving at Canterbury West Station

John Websper

“HMS Timbertown”, Groningen, Holland

I found the Price List below (ADM 116/1318) at the Public Record Office many years ago, before it was re-named The National Archives, and I thought that members of our Branch might find it interesting. The full Price List consists of 14 pages but I have shown only the first three of those pages here. On the following three pages of our Newsletter, are illustrated a few of



the wooden objects that were made by members of the 1st Royal Naval Brigade who were interned at at Gronigen from October 1914 until the end of the war. What makes some of the wooden objects even more interesting is that, ten years ago, photographs of the RND men were found in the Rotterdam City Archives identifying each of the men - as many of the wooden objects bear the name of the man who made them. A number of such objects are shown in the following three pages. They are considered to fall within the term ‘Trench Art’.

FOREWORD

The articles in this catalogue are made entirely by men of the 1st R.N. Brigade interned at Groningen. These men have now been interned more than two years and the relief, both physical and mental, afforded by this work is of incalculable value in helping the men so employed to keep up their spirits in the face of misfortune, and to avoid the effects of depression which begin to be noticed as soon as men become idle. These articles are offered to the public with the assurance that the workmanship is of the first quality, and that all prices are based on the cost of production. Purchases, however small will be greatly appreciated and will be of direct assistance in relieving the tedium of the position in which these men are unfortunately placed.

REV. W. J. CUMPTSY,
CHAPLAIN.

NOTICE

Articles from this catalogue can be ordered in Fumed Oak, American Walnut or Satin Walnut. Purchasers are, however, strongly advised not to order in Satin Walnut as this wood cannot be guaranteed against warping. Standard designs are painted or carved on the lids of all boxes and frames, except those having paintings under glass on the lids; Ships' Crests, Regimental Crests, Private Crests or Monograms can be supplied in place of these standard designs at a slight extra charge.

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Photo source: www.royalnavaldivision.info Groningen Internment Camp

This superb photo shows men of the 1st Royal Naval Brigade at work in the Arts & Crafts Department at HMS Timbertown, Groningen. The sailors are engaged in making wooden articles, including picture-frames and small wooden boxes, which were then sold in shops in Antwerp, London and elsewhere. The object of the workshops was to occupy the men's minds during what turned out to be more than four years' internment in a neutral country. □



Reunited after more than 100 years!



The photograph of
A.D. H. H. Hale, Collingwood
Battalion First Royal Naval
Brigade found in the Rotterdam
City Archives in 2014

See website:
www.navalbrigade.nl/en/



Text copied from above website:

In the spring of 2014, photos and personal data of nearly 1,500 British Naval Infantry of World War I were discovered in the Rotterdam City Archives. The photos were taken probably at the end of 1914. In the light of the commemoration of World War I this unique material has been digitized. It is now available on this website.



Reunited after more than 100 years!



The photograph of
Sgt I.J. Basting,
Hawke Battalion found in the
Rotterdam City Archives in 2014

See website:
www.navalbrigade.nl/en/



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In the spring of 2014, photos and personal data of nearly 1,500 British Naval Infantry of World War I were discovered in the Rotterdam City Archives. The photos were taken probably at the end of 1914. In the light of the commemoration of World War I this unique material has been digitized. It is now available on this website.



Reunited after more than 100 years!



The photograph of S. L. Ward
found in the Rotterdam City
Archives in 2014

See website:
www.navalbrigade.nl/en/



Written in ink near the base of
the back of the picture-frame:

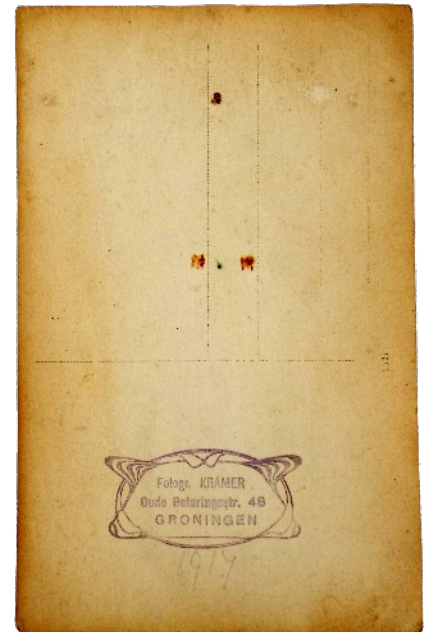
*Made by British sailor whilst
interned in "Timbertown"
Groningen, Holland during
the Great European War.
Seaman S. L. Ward, Hawke Battn*

Text copied from above
website:

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Not all of the wooden objects made at Timbertown show the names of the men who made them on them. Perhaps the labels on which the names were often shown have been removed at some time during their lives. Both of these wooden objects display hand-painted charming images of Dutch children - a popular design of the time. Interestingly, the picture-frame, with the paisley material as a backing, has the title 'Groningen R.N.D. 1914-15' whereas the wooden box simply shows 'R.N.B.'.



This Groningen picture-frame bearing the Royal Engineers regimental crest and dated 1915 contains a postcard photograph of two unidentified Sappers. On the reverse of the postcard is the Groningen photographer's stamp with an address in Oude Boteringestr. Around 30 Royal Engineers were interned at Groningen along with some 1,500 men of the Royal Naval Division. Perhaps one, or both, of these Sappers made the picture-frame. I like to think that they did.



This Groningen picture-frame was made by men of the 1st Naval Brigade interned at Groningen. This picture-frame bears the date 1916 and the Flags of the Allies - Great Britain, Belgium and France - all hand painted. The picture-frame contained this photo when I acquired it some years ago but it is not known whether the two soldiers were ever at Groningen. As far as I have been able to determine, the only soldiers interned at Groningen were a small number of Royal Engineers. The soldier sitting on the bench appears to be showing overseas service stripes on his right arm (four years' overseas service?). If anyone is knows what the significance is of the decoration worn on his left arm is, please let me know. The soldier perched on the arm of the bench is wearing a number of badges on his left arm. Again, if anyone know what those badges signify, please let me know.

Unfortunately, there is nothing on the back of the photo to identify where the photo was taken or who the soldiers were.

There is a wealth of information on HMS Timbertown on the web. There is a 59-minute documentary which can be found by Googling HMS Timbertown - BBC ALBA Documentary. Much of the documentary is in Dutch with English sub-titles. It is not available on iPlayer and was last broadcast in 2019. However, it is highly recommended although it largely based on men from the Isle of Lewis, Outer Hebrides.

This article is in memory of the late Tony Froom, a long-time member of our Branch, who had an extensive knowledge of the RND

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)

2025

7 January

Tom Isitt: 'Riding in the Zone Rouge'

4 February

James Brazier: 'Trench Art'

4 March

Peter Hart: 'Flashbacks from the Front'

1 April

Simon Keable-Elliott: 'Robert Keable, utterly immoral WW1 Chaplain?'

6 May

Marietta Crichton Stewart: 'The Welsh Walter Mitty – life & adventures of a lieutenant, 6th Welsh'

3 June

Tony Bolton: 'Mobilisation – the 18 days, 5-22 August 1914'

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



THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

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