

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

EDITORIAL

This issue of *Between the Lines* contains a fine selection of contributions from our members, which is most gratifying. Indeed, because I have received so many contributions I have decided that the issue warrants an index to the articles as follows:

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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 December/January issue of our Newsletter is Sunday, 5 November. □

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

James Brazier
WFA East Kent Branch Newsletter Editor

Till The Boys Come Home: Postcards Collection go to a Better 'Ole' – in Canterbury

As Bruce Bairnsfather's most famous cartoon declares, 'If you knows of a better 'ole, go to it', so we believe that we have found a 'better 'ole' for our three unique albums of the original postcards used to illustrate the second, 2014, edition of our book, *Till the Boys Come Home: The First World War Through Its Picture Postcards* (TTBCH).

They have been donated to the enthusiastic Mark Connelly, Professor of Modern British History, Head of School of History, Centre for War, Society and the Media, School of History, University of Kent, Canterbury.

Mark is extremely knowledgeable and interested in the First World War and, through his association and friendship with Dr Dominiek Dendooven (who obtained his PhD in history from the University of Kent in 2018) has an active interest in Ieper (Ypres). We first met Dominiek during our early days of battlefield touring in the 1970s when he worked with the In Flanders Fields Museum - where he is still curator and researcher - and we have remained friends ever since.



First visit of Professor Mark Connelly with Dr Dominiek Dendooven, Tonie and Valmai at Oak House

We met Mark last year when we started donating our comprehensive collection of the works of Bruce Bairnsfather - including original cartoons, letters, photos, magazines, collections of his pottery (mainly by Grimwade's), metal ware (e.g. car mascots), etc. to the University. He first came to visit us with Dominiek. We then became reassured that any donations we made to the University, through Mark in particular, would be appreciated and actively used for his students and local schools, rather than stuffed away in a cupboard, never to be seen again as often happens.

The three albums we therefore donated contain 710 postcards and illustrate the themes of :

- The Nations & the Men who Went to War;
- Propaganda: Patriotism & Hatred;
- The Reality - The Men, The War at Sea, The War in the Air;
- Humour & Sentiment;
- Back at Home: Women at War;
- Pin-ups & Heroes;
- Silk Cards; and
- Welcome Home.

A selection of the varied postcards illustrated in *Till the Boys Come Home*:

a. Local interest:



KENT. 'The Doorway of England.' Printed in Faversham

(Note: The text on the above postcard is a parody of Psalm 84:10: "I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of God than dwell in the tents of the wicked" - Ed.)



'Ramsgate Air Raid, May 17th, 1915. Damage at Albion Place and some of the Bombs.' (This particular air raid on Ramsgate is also covered by articles on pages 15 and 16 of this issue of *Between the Lines* - Ed.)

b. Random postcards of character - of interest, value and rarity



'English Minister Grey. Warmonger and Mass-Murderer'. Vitriolic German cartoon about Sir Edward Grey. Artist Hermann Lorch



'William the Bloodthirsty', artist Alberto Martini



His Highness Maharajah Sir Pratap Singh who commanded forces in Flanders 1914-15



'The Red Baron', von Richthofen



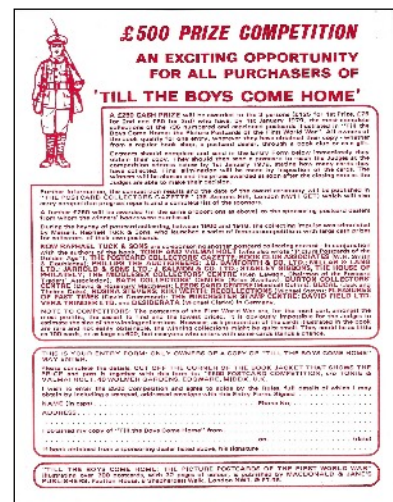
Italian soldier, artist Umberto Brunelleschi



'So Obvious'. Artist Bruce Bairnsfather



Actress Miss Vesta Tilley in Khaki

Embroidered card. Sir John French
1914-1915£500 Prize Competition (£125 for 1st Prize,
£75 for 2nd and £50 for 3rd)

We have also donated a copy of our book *Picture Postcards of the Golden Age: A Collector's Guide*, which explains the importance and value of many of the themes of the postcards in TTBCH, e.g. military, portraits, topographical, humour, sentiment, artistic interest, etc. Mark also took some of our detailed tour books which formed the basis for our battlefield guides e.g. to Gallipoli plus some of our battlefield guide- books and maps.

Professor Mark Connelly receiving a postcard album of
Till the Boys Come Home, with Tonia and Valmai

When our first edition of *Till the Boys Come Home* was published we, together with publishers Raphael Tuck & Sons, J.D. Bamforth, Stanley Gibbons and other postcard specialists, initiated a competition to find the owner of a collection of the most postcards illustrated in the book.

To our delight, one of the prize winners was none other than James Brazier, who, currently, as readers will know, is the editor of the WFA East Kent Branch newsletter *Between the Lines* and a long-time active and respected member of the local branch.

Personally we have known James for many years, dating from the time he was working as an accountant for Dover District Council in the 1970s with Valmai's father, Joseph Williams, Headmaster of Northbourne C of E school, serving as a Councillor with Dover DC. From then on we became firm friends, especially as we were early members of the WFA and friends of John Giles - as was James, who worked closely with John from the beginning. John lived near to us and used to come and use our copying machine for WFA newsletters, etc.

Dinner party at
Oak House with
James Brazier
and Margery
Giles in 1980

In the March/April 2017 WFA Bulletin we wrote an article on our extraordinary friend, Richard Dunning, who is sadly unwell and was unable to go to his beloved Lochnagar Crater this 1 July. In that article we showed pictures of a dinner party at our house in 1980 at which John and Margery Giles were present – as well as James Brazier. □

Tonia and Valmai Holt

A Man of Kent

This is the story of a Canterbury and Kentish icon. Canterbury was the home of The East Kent Regiment known as The Buffs. The icon starts out as a painting, becomes a pub sign and now is a bronze statue in the Cathedral precincts. It has become the abiding image of The Buffs and, specifically, The Buffs of the First World War. The icon's origins lie in a watercolour painting by Lady Elizabeth Butler (1846–1933), which she entitled *1914, A Man of Kent* ("The Buffs"). She produced it for an exhibition of 1919, at the Leicester Galleries in London. Butler was a well-established painter of military subjects focusing on the British soldier. Her heyday had been in the 1870s and '80s but she continued to work as an artist throughout her life.



*A Man of Kent, Elizabeth Butler, 1919, Watercolour,
Princess of Wales' Royal Regiment*

The painting was bought by Major-General Sir Guy Bainbridge (1867–1943), who had served in The Buffs in the 1890s before transferring to the Egyptian Army. He went on to command cavalry in the 2nd Boer War and, from 1915, led the 25th Division on the Western Front. After a spell as Director of Infantry in 1919, he commanded the 1st Division in Ireland in the immediate post-war years. He retired in 1923, following a riding accident but remained heavily involved in various Buffs associations. The Regimental Committee was set up in the same year, with Bainbridge as its Chairman. On his death in 1943, *A Man of Kent* passed to his wife. At this point the trail of ownership, for me, goes cold. At some

point, the painting came into the possession of The Buffs and its successor regiments up to, and including, the Princess of Wales' Royal Regiment. I have not been able to establish when this happened, but in 1972 it was The Buffs which gave permission for the image to be used as the pub sign.

The Buffs' involvement with the painting dates from 1922 when Bainbridge allowed his regiment to make and distribute prints of it as part of the celebrations for their 350th anniversary that August. He also allowed its use as the frontispiece to Colonel Moody's 1922 *History of The Buffs, 1914–1919*. The *Kentish Gazette*, reviewing the book on January 12th 1923, stated that: "The story is fascinating—it stirs one's blood and makes one feel proud to be a Man of Kent, a brother, as it were, of the 'Man of Kent' of the coloured frontispiece from the wellknown [sic] painting by Lady Butler".

Since her first successful military painting, *The Roll Call* in 1874, Elizabeth Thompson, as she was at the time, immersed herself in the army and its life, receiving encouragement and assistance throughout her career. In 1877, she married Major William Butler, who became a Major-General in 1892. The marriage gave her further opportunities to study soldiers carrying out drill movements, on exercises and going about their duties. William retired in 1905 and died in 1910, leaving his wife with a run-down castle in Ireland and six children.

The coming of the war, in 1914, caused a shift in Butler's experience as a military painter and the mother of soldiers. Her eldest son, Patrick, was a Major on the staff of the 7th Division which was forming at Lyndhurst in Surrey; another son Richard, a Catholic priest, had joined the 2nd Royal Irish as a Chaplain. Visiting Patrick in Lyndhurst, Butler sketched troops on manoeuvres, just as when her husband was alive. In her diary for September 22nd 1914, she noted a difference from these earlier experiences: "This is *war*, and there is no doubt the bearing of the men is different. They were always smart, always cheery, *but not like this*. There is a quiet seriousness quite new to me. They are going to look death straight in the face" (author's italics). In much of her work, Butler had imagined and depicted men who were looking, or had just looked, death in the face, but hitherto her Napoleonic, Crimean and Afghan subjects had cushioned her temporally and geographically from the realities of war. With two sons in the army, Butler reflected she now "had to pass through the ordeal which became the lot of so many mothers of sons throughout the Empire". This was intensified when Patrick Butler was seriously wounded at Ypres in November 1914.

She travelled from Ireland to London to be with him whilst recovering in Guy's Hospital. In her diary, she described seeing volunteers for Kitchener's Army being transformed into soldiers: "One of the squads in the Green Park was supremely interesting to me one day, in (I am bound to say) a semi-comic way. These recruits were members and associates of the Royal Academy. They were mostly somewhat podgy, others somewhat bald. When resting, having piled arms, they played leap-frog, which was very funny, and showed how light-heartedly my brothers of the brush were going to meet the Boche". In her next sentence her amusement at the naiveté and physical imperfections of the Academicians vanishes: "Of the maimed and blind men one met at every turn I can scarcely write. I find that when I am most deeply moved my pen lags too far behind my brush".

The coming of the war surprised Butler commercially as well as personally. In 1913, she had set out to create an exhibition for 1915, celebrating the centenary of the Battle of Waterloo. By 1914, she had obtained a number of her earlier paintings on loan, and was working on new ones. She went ahead with her plans but, as she wondered to her diary: "Who will look at my 'Waterloos' now?". It was after 1915 that she turned her attention to the present war.

A Man of Kent is set in 1914 but was painted in 1919. Compared to many creative works from that period, it is something of an anomaly. Paintings, sculptures and writings from the immediate post-war years tend to reflect suffering, sacrifice and destruction, posing the question "why?" without answering it. *A Man of Kent*, presents someone unquestioning of the war he is about to fight; a position that is striking when compared, say, with the bitter irony of Wilfred Owen's poem *The Parable of the Old Man and the Young Man*, also about 1914:

... Then Abram bound the youth with belts and straps,
and builded parapets and trenches there,
And stretchèd forth the knife to slay his son.
When lo! an angel called him out of heaven,
Saying, Lay not thy hand upon the lad,
Neither do anything to him. Behold,
A ram, caught in a thicket by its horns;
Offer the Ram of Pride instead of him.
But the old man would not so, but slew his son,
And half the seed of Europe, one by one.

The Buffs and the Kentish press were happy with *A Man of Kent* as Butler presented him. She and Owen were producing art for different constituencies, different markets. Since 1874, Butler had been making the political point that the British Government and public failed to value the British

soldier regardless of his achievements; not surprisingly the army responded well to her for this. She continued in this vein but, over time, she came to be seen by critics and politicians as insufficiently supportive of Britain as an Imperial power. The public did not agree however: in 1917, 6,000 people were prepared to pay 8d a time to view her painting of *The Dorset Yeomen at Agagia, February 26th, 1916*. But the painting had already been commissioned and paid for by Dorset County Council, whose Chairman happened to be the Yeomanry's Colonel.

From the 1890s onwards there was a steady change in Butler's business: commissions from the British and Imperial Governments and from wealthy art lovers declined and were replaced by those from county regiments and the local authorities that supported them. Butler's recent biographer, Catherine Wynne, noted that, by the 1920s, she was experiencing financial difficulties. The nature and extent of these is not clear, but the relative failure of the 1915 Waterloo Exhibition cannot have helped. Butler's exhibition catalogues of 1917 and 1919 look very much like direct marketing exercises. They list many works with regiments in their titles. 1917 had: *A VC of the Welsh Fusiliers; The Black Watch on Aubers Ridge, May 9th; A VC of the Seaforths; A VC of the Irish Guards; A VC of the Lancashire Fusiliers; Trooper, Royal Irish Lancers; Scout, Lancashire Hussars; The London Irish at Loos*. In 1919, there were no VCs but regiments were well represented: *The Dorset Yeomen at Agagia, February 26th, 1916; Charge of the Warwick and Worcester Yeomanry at Huj, near Gaza, on the 8th November, 1917, Preceding the Fall of Jerusalem; The North Staffords, The Last Minute; 1914, A Man of Kent ("The Buffs"); In the Retreat of 1914; and The Royal Horseguards*.

Paintings for the London Irish, and the Dorset and the Worcester Yeomanries, were already commissioned but the 'Royal Horseguards' in 1914 had been completed speculatively. The regiment was not interested and Butler eventually donated the painting to Chelsea Hospital. Others, like *A Man of Kent*, were teasers hinting at narratives that invite fully worked up commissions.

Hinting at stories that viewers can expand for themselves is central to Butler's work: take *The Roll Call* from 1874 as an example. At the centre of the picture - <https://www.rct.uk/collection/405915/the-roll-call> - is the wounded sergeant calling the roll under the observation of his dead-tired officer; a man collapses in the snow whilst a comrade seeks to rouse him; another leans on his rifle in tearful exhaustion; a hatless, bearded figure stares vacantly into the

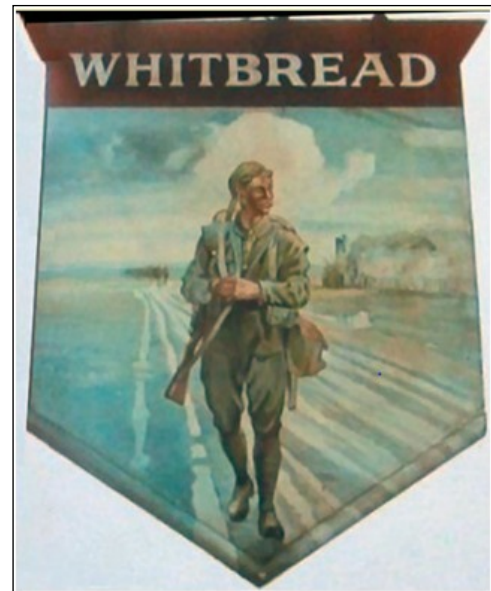
distance; a young, fresh-faced, guardsman holds himself rigidly to attention, hanging on desperately to what remains of his military discipline. Each is a snapshot telling an individual story within the whole.

In terms of scale, there is no parallel between *The Roll Call* and *The Man of Kent*. However, the latter offers its own snapshot, and encourages the viewer to create an imagined narrative about this particular soldier and his context. He is walking across a waterlogged field ahead of his company; his attention has been attracted by something to his left, outside the frame. We know that fighting has taken place, as someone has shelled the building behind the figure; we might wonder what he is looking at, whether he and his battalion are under enemy observation and what might happen next. The figure, like others in the 1917 and 1919 exhibitions, is waiting to be transferred to a larger, commissioned work, telling a bigger story.

In the post war years *A Man of Kent* had only a transitory significance for The Buffs. He featured in the 350th anniversary celebrations and in Colonel Moody's history, but then disappears. I have been unable to find any further reference to him in copies of *The Dragon* of the 1920s. He gets a mention in the March 1932 edition although misnamed "Steady the Buffs". When reporting the death of General Bainbridge in October 1943, *The Dragon's* obituary makes no mention of the painting. The problem is that it offers no narrative beyond its marketing tease and soon goes out of mind, unlike Lieutenant Latham and Private Moyse, two figures who often appear in *The Dragon*.

Latham's story is that he lost his left arm and much of his face defending the regimental colours from French cavalymen at Albuhera in 1811; Moyse's is that he was captured by Chinese forces in 1860 and beheaded for refusing to make obeisance to their commander. Beside accounts in *The Dragon*, these stories were supported by regimental rituals: the July 1920 issue of *The Dragon* describes a parade of the 1st Battalion on Albuhera Day (16th May). At its heart was the silver memorial to Lieutenant Latham, "so that all might be reminded of the valorous exploits of the Regiment on this momentous occasion". *A Man of Kent*, for all the significance that was attached to him in the early 1920s, had no such mythic component until later and then probably not as Butler and The Buffs had imagined.

In 1972, *A Man of Kent* became a pub sign. Paul Skelton's excellent website <http://www.doverkent.com>, documents and illustrates two Man of Kent pubs in Canterbury. The first was located in Worthgate Place until the late 1960s when it was compulsorily purchased as part of the inner ring road



Original sign from *The Man of Kent*, Wincheap Green, Canterbury (from www.dover-kent.com)



Replacement sign from *The Man of Kent*, Wincheap Green, Canterbury (from www.dover-kent.com)

scheme. In 1972, Whitbread-Fremelin renamed the Station Hotel on Wincheap Green the "Man of Kent". The brewery approached the Queen's Regiment, which in 1967 had assimilated The Buffs, for permission to use Butler's image for the pub sign. This was duly given and the sign was produced at the brewer's studio at Watlingtonbury.

The 1960s and '70s mark a resurgence of remembrance of the First World War. 1961 saw the publication of Alan Clark's sensationalist book, *Lions Led by Donkeys*; the BBC television series, *The Great War*, had been the surprise hit of 1964, coinciding with the war's 50th anniversary; in 1965, Kitchener's moustache and imperious finger became fashion icons in London's Portobello Road and Carnaby Street; in 1969, Richard Attenborough directed a film version of Joan Littlewood's play, *Oh! What a Lovely War*; and in 1971, Martin

Middlebrook published his seminal work of oral history, *The First Day on the Somme*. Culturally, the war had become a curious mix of grandfathers' memories, Swinging London kitsch, avoidable tragedy, and a subject for popular study.

Although Whitbread's marketers used Butler's image to cash in on this trend, a version of the painting was now visible to the people of Canterbury and to visitors arriving in the city. It remained so until the early 1990s, when Whitbread got out of the brewing business, selling its tied houses, including the "Man of Kent". The original sign disappeared and was replaced with another. Although still based on Butler, aesthetically this was a different work and, curiously, appears to have transferred the figure from the Flanders of 1914 to the Dunkirk coast of 1940, without updating his uniform or equipment other than by giving him what appears to be a 1902 Brodrick cap.

The Queen's Regiment had, by then, been absorbed into the Princess of Wales' Royal Regiment but, despite the sign's inelegance and anachronisms, I am not aware of any reaction from either the regiment or the Queen's Own Buffs Regimental Association (QOBRA). The sign remained in place until after the Millennium when the pub was renamed "The Round House" and the sign removed. Now the QOBRA did object, and the sign was restored, although the pub remained the "The Round House". In 2008, it closed for good, and the sign disappeared, but the image had had over 25 years to establish itself in Canterbury and Kentish memory.

All versions of *A Man of Kent* are premised on place as much as on regiment. The pairing of county and regiment was a policy dating from the 1880s, often referred to as localism. It had been expected that a specific area would provide enough recruits for regimental needs. Outside of industrial cities, this never happened: even before the First World War, The Buffs had to recruit up into London to maintain numbers. Butler's *Man of Kent*, as a pre-war Regular, might have come from a Wealden cottage, or, equally, from Southwark; by the end of 1917, his successors would have come from anywhere in the British Isles. In 1919, regiments had been keen to reassert their local identity but, by 1972, when the pub sign came along, localism in the army was on the way out. There was neither an East nor West Kent regiment, and memories of wartime were dying out, to be replaced by memories provided by entertainments like those of Joan Littlewood and Richard Attenborough and by the historiography of tragedies like July 1st 1916.

In 2016, the sculptor, Peter Birkett, was commissioned by the QOBRA to make a monument



The Buffs Memorial, Peter Birkett, 2016, Bronze, Canterbury Cathedral precincts
Photo: John Drouot

to The Buffs 1572–1967. The statue was to be in the precincts of Canterbury Cathedral. Although The Buffs was a fighting regiment throughout its long history, the monument's location required that this be balanced with a more spiritual component. Birkett took Butler's *A Man of Kent* as his model but where her soldier is looking out for an enemy on his left, Birkett's man stares upward towards the Cathedral's Bell Harry Tower, beneath which is the Warriors' Chapel, home of The Buffs' War Memorial and Book of Remembrance of 1922. As in all the representations of the *Man of Kent*, the soldier's hands are folded in front of him, supporting his rifle by its strap but Birkett makes the posture appear prayerful, as if this man as well as being a soldier of The Buffs and a Man of Kent is also a pilgrim.

The image of *A Man of Kent* has had many roles. In 1919 it was part of Butler's hopes for further paintings as well as a reminder, for The Buffs, of their wartime record. In 1972 he welcomed the thirsty traveller; he had also, probably, come to represent the British soldier as the helpless victim of Old Men and incompetent Generals. In 1990 or so, he was time-shifted to 1940. In 2016, he came to symbolise both the 395-year existence of The Buffs and the centenary of the First World War. For me, he represents a late, and very minor, work of a significant painter of the late 19th/early 20th centuries and, thanks to Peter Birkett's interpretation, a man of war walking at peace, alongside the millions of pilgrims who have come to Canterbury Cathedral over the centuries. □

John Drouot

Remembering 2/Lt Benjamin Handley Geary VC (1891-1976)



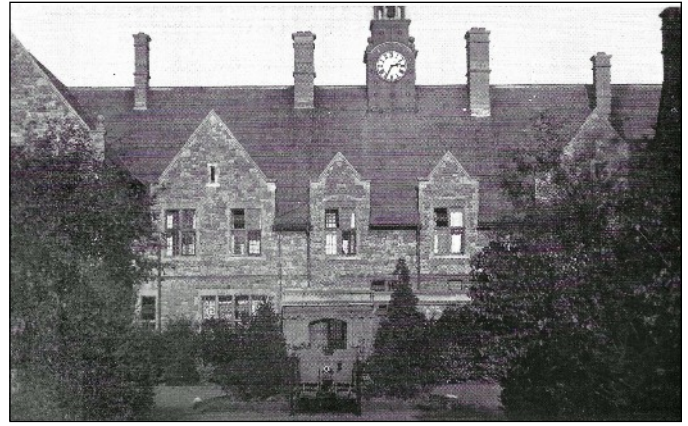
Benjamin Handley Geary shortly after the award of the Victoria Cross

The photograph (on right) shows the German field-gun that was presented to St Edmund's School, Canterbury at the end of the First World War by the War Office in honour of Benjamin Handley Geary's VC, as they did to some other schools. The field-gun was delivered to Canterbury West Station and pulled up St Thomas' Hill by

the boys. It was placed in the middle of a flower bed in the main clocktower entrance but was removed in 1933 to make the entrance more accessible to motor vehicles which were then increasing considerably in number. It was also of course when memories of war were not exactly being encouraged. What happened to it is unknown.

Benjamin Handley Geary was born at Streatham, London on 20 June 1891. His father at that time was Perpetual (or Vicar) of Christchurch, Herne Bay which he held from 1864-1874. Sadly, he died at the age of 52 and was father of 11 children, the youngest of whom, Handley, had yet to be born. Geary attended Dulwich College Preparatory School and was 12½ when he was elected to the Foundation of the Clergy Corporation and went to St Edmund's in January 1904. He was an outstanding athlete and games player, finishing as Captain of football, Vice-Captain of cricket and Captain of gymnasium and sports. He won the Music Instrumental Prize for three years 1907-1909 and the Stocks Memorial Prize for Mathematics in 1909 and 1910, and in 1910 he was awarded a Watson and Wagner Exhibition to Keble College, Oxford, worth £100 a year. His time at Oxford saw him playing rugby, cricket, tennis and golf which led him to a Pass degree. He took a teaching job at Forest School in Essex from 1913-1914, took his BA in 1914 and his MA in 1918.

Following the outbreak of war, Geary was commissioned into the 4th Battalion, the East Surrey Regiment on 15 August 1914. He went to France on 26th September and posted to the 1st Battalion (14th Brigade, 5th Division). He won the Victoria Cross at Hill 60, near Ypres in Belgium, for his part in the action there on 20-21 April 1915, an involvement



St Edmund's School, Canterbury with the German field-gun in front of the clocktower entrance before the gun's removal in 1933

which ended for him when he was rendered unconscious by a bullet which entered his left eye and went out through his right temple. He was officially declared blind although he did retain blurred vision through his right eye, and his hearing was also seriously affected. (In fact, he would never say that he "won" the VC, but always insisted that his men won it, and it was awarded to him.)



An artist's impression of Hill 60 action, together with Geary's V.C. and other medals. The date of the painting is unknown, but it is certainly before 1927.

He was promoted to Lieutenant on 1 September 1915. His VC was gazetted on 15 October and was presented to him by King George V at Buckingham Palace on 9th December. He visited the school on 29 October 1915 and the next day he was "carried" by the boys according to ancient custom. The headmaster gave a day's holiday in his honour.

His citation for the VC reads:

Benjamin Handley Geary, 4th Battalion (attached 1st Battalion) the East Surrey Regiment. For most conspicuous bravery and determination on Hill 60, near Ypres, on 20 and 21 April 1915, when he held the left crater with his platoon, some men of the Bedfordshire Regt and a few reinforcements which came up during the evening and the night. The crater was first exposed to very heavy artillery fire which broke down the defences, and afterwards, during the night, to repeated bomb attacks, which filled it with dead and wounded. Each attack was, however, repulsed, mainly owing to the splendid personal gallantry and example of Second Lieutenant Geary. At one time, he used a rifle with great effect, at another threw hand grenades, and exposed himself with entire disregard to danger in order to see by the light of the flares where the enemy were coming on. In the intervals between the attacks, he spent his whole time arranging for the ammunition supply and for reinforcements. He was severely wounded just before daylight on 21 April.

Towards the end of 1915 he was sent to Eastbourne Convalescent Camp where he organised recreations and on 30 September 1916 he was back in France as Squadron Recording Officer to the Royal Flying Corps. Finally, by devious means (there was no way by which he could have returned to active service in ordinary circumstances), he managed to rejoin the 1st Battalion, the East Surreys on the Fronte del Piave on the River Piave in Italy in January 1918. He remained in Italy until June and was appointed Acting Captain on 29 April, and then, following his final home leave, was transferred to France where, in August 1918, he commanded a company at the Battle of Albert. He was severely wounded on 21 August at Achiet-le-Petit, being hit three times, once in the stomach, by enemy fire and was not expected to live. However, again he defied the odds.

He then received a call to the ministry and went up to Wycliffe Hall, Oxford to train for the priesthood. Once ordained, he married Christina Woakes in 1922 and had two sons. He served in various churches, was appointed Temporary Chaplain to the Forces, 4th Class with the rank of Captain in 1923. He was seriously injured in a car accident and afterwards he

had personal problems which led to him never again exercising his vocation as a priest. He went to Canada where he went into the insurance business before being appointed to the Ontario Security Commission and, in 1937, he became involved with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind.

In the Second World War, despite his efforts, he was forced to remain in Canada and had various roles in training. He was finally discharged on 27 December 1946. In 1947, he became Sergeant-at-Arms of the Ontario Legislature, retiring from that position in 1972. He visited England on various occasions during his retirement which was very busy and on one occasion he visited his old school. Only weeks before his death, he met her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II at a reception at Windsor Castle on 21 April 1976. He died at Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, on 26 May 1976 and is buried in St Mark's Anglican Church Cemetery, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario. He was aged 85.

St Edmund's School can indeed be proud of the only one of her sons to have been awarded the Victoria Cross.

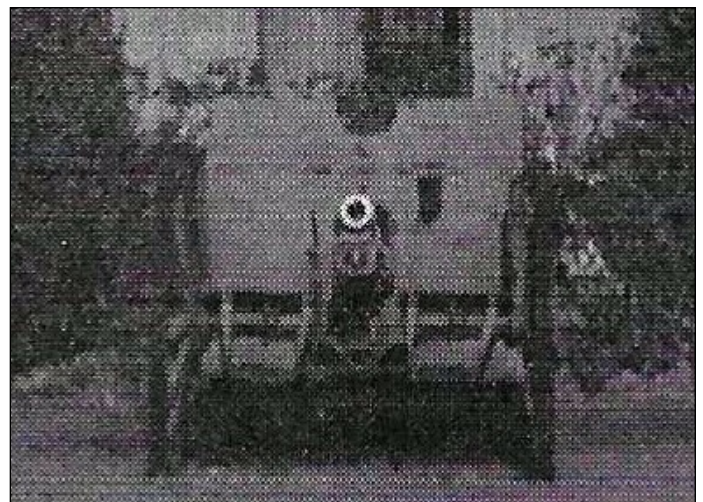
In addition to his VC, he was awarded the 1914 Star with clasp, British War Medal, Victory Medal, Canadian Volunteer Service Medal 1939-1945, Coronation Medal 1937, Coronation Medal 1953 and the Canadian Centennial Medal 1967.

In April 1923, with other members of the British Legion, he attended the unveiling by the Prince of Wales of the tomb of the Belgian Unknown Warrior.

His VC is in the Canadian War Museum, Ottawa. □

(With acknowledgements and grateful thanks to Jock Asbury-Bailey, author of the booklet about Handley Geary VC and a former Master at St Edmund's School)

Richard Young



A close-up photo of the German field-gun that stood in front of St Edmund's School

Remembrance Time at Sturry

One of the theoretical benefits of computer technology has been the greater ease with which the casualties of the First World War can now be researched. As far as Sturry is concerned it was not quite such a simple exercise. It has been possible, though, to compile some sad statistics about the village's losses.

The adult population of Sturry (that is, both men and women) in 1911 was 1,227, and was probably very little different when the Great War broke out on 4th August 1914. By 7th September that year more than 50 men had enlisted, (including eight of the 25 men employed by Leonard Ashenden at the quarry). By early 1915, 78 men had joined up, and already three had been killed, three wounded and one was a prisoner in Germany.

By 1918, some 167 men over 21 years of age were recorded in the Sturry Electoral Register as being servicemen absent at war. (Those aged between 18 and 21 who served with the armed forces were not listed, being too young to have a vote and their number can only be conjectured.)

A further 30 men of Sturry were recorded on the war memorial, although there are others not so commemorated, including Albert Asprey, Frank Dunn, and Edgar Stokes who appear as casualties in the published study of graves in Sturry churchyard. These rather cold-blooded statistics must never be allowed to obscure the reality of the bereavement, national as well as local, and the personal hardship suffered as a result of their deaths but it would certainly seem that Sturry men did more than its bit. At least, a third of the adult male population went to war.

A wooden memorial to the casualties was erected in 1918 on what was then glebe land and is now the garden in front of 3 The Orchard, Mill Road. This was in the form of a wayside shrine with a crucifix, beneath which were the words from Lamentations Chapter 1, verse 12: "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?" This, more widely known as a quotation from John Stainer's oratorio *The Crucifixion*, is a markedly unusual inscription for a First World War memorial, comprising words somewhat removed from what has become to be known as "the language of consolation".

This temporary memorial was removed in 1921 when the land was sold for building and has since been lost sight of. As well as the names of those who had died, this first memorial carried the names of those who had served in the war and survived. They were not displayed on the second memorial ((nor, indeed, it would seem, recorded) which was erected

in 1921 at the entrance to Sturry Churchyard from Church Lane with the more customary inscription "To the Glory of God and in grateful remembrance of our Glorious Dead 1914-1918". This is constructed of stone, and it is remembered that for many years Lord Milner used to send one of his staff to scrub it each week, stressing the great importance of this being done.

In contrast to the smaller villages of Westbere and Fordwich the names of those who had served and survived were not listed in the church, although a framed sepia illustration, very much in period, showed Christ looking down on soldiers on the battlefield and hung on the south side of the nave in St Nicholas Church until sometime in the early 1960s. It, too, would appear now to have been lost sight of.

Still extant, though, on the south side of the nave, is a brass memorial to Elsie Madeline Bates who "was killed when on leave, after devoted service to her country in France, December 1917. This tablet is erected by her comrades of the Millicent Sullivan Ambulance at Calais". (The Duchess of Sutherland had established a hospital during the invasion of Belgium which was known under this name.) Miss Bates, a VAD nurse, whose home was in Sturry, was killed by a bomb while visiting Essex.

A study of such details of those killed as are available (not all the names are recorded on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's web-site), naturally shows a preponderance of soldiers who served in The Buffs (The East Kent Regiment) including such familiar old Sturry names as George Baker, Ernest J. W. Bubb, P. Divers, Henry Gammon, Walter Hogben, Charles H. Jones and Charles Peel.

What is noteworthy is that five Sturry men died whilst serving in the Royal Navy, while others joined the North Lancashire, Cambridgeshire, Warwickshire, and Royal Sussex Regiments, the Lancashire Fusiliers and the Royal Garrison Artillery. William Pretty, a sergeant in the Grenadier Guards, had been a postman here before the war and can be clearly seen in the photograph on page 105 of *Sturry - The Changing Scene* (1972).

Something slightly surprising was that four of those killed were in their forties, including William James Kearney, a sergeant in The King's (Liverpool Regiment), who had served in the South African Campaign. Two Broad Oak men died far from home - G. W. Baker at Amara, Iraq and William Keen of the 2nd Loyal North Lancashire Regiment which went as part of the India Expeditionary Forces to German East Africa. He was killed in an almost forgotten action at Tanga, an important town and port

on the coast of Tanganyika, now Tanzania), in November 1914.

Another man from an old Broad Oak family, Lieutenant Hubert John Ingleton, and Arthur Jesse Neaves (the only casualty to have an official war grave in Sturry churchyard), both shared the poignancy of dying a matter of days before the Armistice on 11th November 1918.

It is not easy, with incomplete information, to establish how the dates of death conform to the national pattern of casualties but the disastrous losses of the battle of the Somme in 1916 are not reflected on the memorial. And, of course, not all of those with Sturry connections are commemorated here - the name of Lady Milner's son by her first marriage, George Cecil, is on a monument elsewhere; while, in the words of Ecclesiasticus Chapter 14 verse 9, "Some there be, which have no memorial". □

Kinn H. McIntosh and Jan Gaskell

Names inscribed on the front
of the war memorial:

G. BAKER	R. COURT
W. BAKER	P. DIVERS
W. BENTLEY	G. ELVEY
A. BOURNE	W. FAGG
A. BOURNE	J. FARRIER
C. BOWLER	J. GAMBRILL
E. BUBB	H. GAMMON
S. CHAMPS	L. HILLS

Names on the right-hand
side of the war memorial:

W. HOGBEN
H. INGLETON
C. JONES
W. KEARNEY
W. KEEM
E. MARSH
A. NEAVES
C. PEEL

Names on the left-hand
side of the war memorial:

D. POOLEY
P. POUT
W. PRETTY
W. STEWART
S. TURNER
A. YOUNGS

Sturry War Memorial in St Nicholas Churchyard



The above photographs (taken on 16th November 2013) show a total of 28 names on Sturry War Memorial. It would appear that the names A. NEAVES and C. PEEL were added subsequently to the erection of the memorial as they are not shown in alphabetical order - Ed.

Remembering Captain Harry Brocklesby Bartram, "E" Bty, RHA



Capt Bartram's funeral procession in Dover en route from St Mary's Church to St Mary's Cemetery on Saturday, 19 September 1914. Judging by the houses in the background, it appears that the procession is shown proceeding along Maison Dieu Road



This photograph is believed to show the funeral procession going up Park Avenue towards the cemetery. The soldiers are territorials from the Royal Field Artillery and the Royal Sussex Regt

I bought the two postcards above in the 1970s when I was working in an office on Maison Dieu Road, Dover and, on occasion, used to frequent the town's junk shops during my lunch-breaks. The two postcards simply caught my eye and I thought that, one day, I might be able to find out more about Capt Bartram and why his funeral was held in Dover. Well, it took me nearly 50 years to find the answers!

Captain Harry Brocklesby Bartram was the only son of Canon Henry Bartram (1849-1934), one-time Vicar of St Mary the Virgin Church, Dover. Canon Bartram had earlier served for a time as Vicar of Ramsgate - but I will get around to that later in this article. Canon Bartram's wife had died whilst he was at Dover and her grave is in St Mary's Cemetery, Dover. Capt Bartram had previously served in the South African War.

The two newspaper reports from *The Dover Express* and *East Kent News* reproduced on this page provided many of the answers that I was seeking. In the second report, there is an interesting mention of Capt Bartram's Battery firing the first gun in the campaign so far as the British Army was concerned.

DEATH OF CANON BARTRAM'S SON

It was with the deepest regret and sympathy for Canon Bartram and the family, that news was received in Dover last week of the death in a Military Hospital, of Captain Harry Brocklesby Bartram, only son of Canon Bartram and the late Mrs. Bartram, who died in 1909. Captain Bartram, who left a widow and several young children, was not very well known by the Dover public at large, as he was serving with his corps, the Royal Horse Artillery at distant stations during the majority of the time that Canon Bartram was Vicar of St. Mary's. After the death of Mrs. Bartram, Canon Bartram paid a long visit, for his health's sake, to South Africa with Captain Bartram, who was serving there, and he visited with him a number of the battle fields of the South African War, in which Captain Bartram had not, however, served. He joined the Royal Horse Artillery in March, 1900 and was appointed a lieutenant in April, 1901, and captain in February, 1909. In the present European War he fought in the battles of Mons and Cambrai, and subsequently, owing to privations sustained in the campaign, he had to go into hospital suffering from gastritis. He was brought home to the Alexandra Hospital, Cosham, and there he died on Wednesday, September 16th. Three days later would have been his 37th birthday, and on that day it was decided that the funeral should take place at Dover, in the same burying place as his mother. The body was brought to Dover on Friday, being met at the station and taken to St. Mary's Church by the Dover Royal Field Artillery.

From *The Dover Express* 25 September 1914 (part only of report)

Courtesy of the British Newspaper Archive

THE LATE CAPTAIN BARTRAM.

Canon Bartram in a letter to a friend has thus described the sufferings which his son, the late Captain Bartram, experienced. They (he says) were 36 hours without food and when they received it there was no time for a proper meal. There was continuous fighting, day and night, in that long but glorious retreat which ended on Sunday, August 30th, when he collapsed with gastritis and was put into the ambulance. Want of food, rest and sleep had done their work, and he now had to endure the added agony of nine days in ambulances and motor lorries from the front to the coast, sick all the time. It is an interesting fact that the battery to which the late Captain Bartram was attached fired the first gun in the campaign so far as the British Army was concerned.

From *The Dover Express* 2 October 1914

Courtesy of the British Newspaper Archive

I was thrilled to learn about my two postcards showing Capt Bartram's funeral but my journey of discovery was to take me back a further 20 years to my schooldays in the early 1950s.

Having failed my eleven-plus examination in 1951, I was sent to St George's Boys' Secondary Modern School at Ramsgate. It was a church school (with strong links to St Georges's Church, the parish church of Ramsgate) and was located in a Victorian building totally lacking its own sports grounds. However, the school had good teachers and the school had a good reputation locally.

On my first day at the school, I was told that I had been allotted to Bartram 'House'. There were three other 'Houses': namely White-Thomson, Herstlet and Crawfurd. I was told that the four 'Houses' were named after leading Church of England clergymen but we were not told anything further - as I recall - about each of the four clergymen. The only time that the 'Houses' were used was at the annual sportsday events. It was my first introduction to what today would be referred to as tribalism: it was an attempt to encourage competitiveness through teams.

It was whilst I was researching my Capt Bartram postcards that I accidentally discovered who my secondary school 'House' (Bartram) was named after. A true example of serendipity!

Thanks to *Ancestry*, I discovered that Canon Henry Bartram (1849-1934) had served as Vicar of Ramsgate (St George's Church) earlier in his life before becoming Vicar of St Mary's, Dover. So, I had tracked down who Canon Bartram was and his connection with my school. My curiosity aroused, I then decided to see whether I could track down the other clergymen after whom the 'Houses' at St George's School had been named. I found that White-Thomson House had been named after Canon Leonard Jauncey White-Thomson (1863-1933) who, before becoming Vicar of Croydon, had served as the Vicar of St Peter-in-Thamet Church, Broadstairs - so that identified White-Thomson. The next I identified



Bartram 'House', Form 1A, St George's Boys' School, Ramsgate (1951) - can anyone spot me?

was Canon Edward Lewis Hertslet (1877-1936) who from 1909-1914 was Resident Chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury. Having identified three of the four clergymen after whom the 'Houses' were named, I then found that I was unable to positively identify the fourth clergyman - (Canon?) Crawfurd despite the unusual spelling of his name. Still, three out of four is not bad - particularly as I had known nothing about any of them previously.

To think that I had those two postcards in my postcard collection for nearly 50 years and that my research of them in 2023 had taken me back a further 20 years to my schooldays was most unexpected!

I will end on a personal note by mentioning that, before I left St George's Boys' School in 1958, I was encouraged by the Headmaster to sit a number of GCE 'O'-level examinations, which I did and passed in five but, importantly, failed the English Language paper. After leaving school, I re-sat the English Language paper and - I am pleased to report - passed. Having achieved a reasonable number of GCE 'O' levels I was then encouraged by my employers to study for the examinations of the Institute of Municipal Treasurers and Accountants - and I never looked back again.

But at least I now know who Bartram was and of his sadness in losing his only son in the Great War. □

JB

Zeebrugge Raid graves in St James' Cemetery, Dover

This early photograph, reproduced as a postcard, shows the temporary wooden grave-markers at the graves in St James' Cemetery, Dover of those officers and men who fell in the Zeebrugge Raid on St George's Day (23 April) 1918. St James' Cemetery adjoins St Mary's Cemetery at Dover. In addition to these graves, there are also fifteen graves in St James' Cemetery of unidentified men who also fell at Zeebrugge on that fateful day. □

JB



Postcards recording the Zeppelin Raids over Ramsgate:

1 - The Bull and George Hotel, High Street, Ramsgate



Caption to postcard:
Bull & George Hotel,
Ramsgate,
wrecked by
Zeppelin
bombs,
17/5/15 -
Clock
stopped at
1:47am

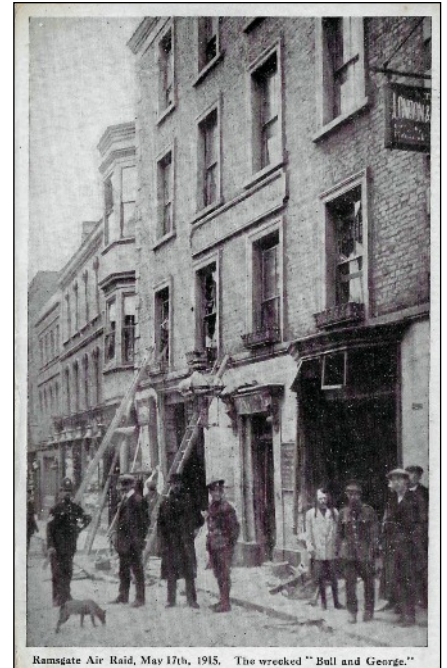
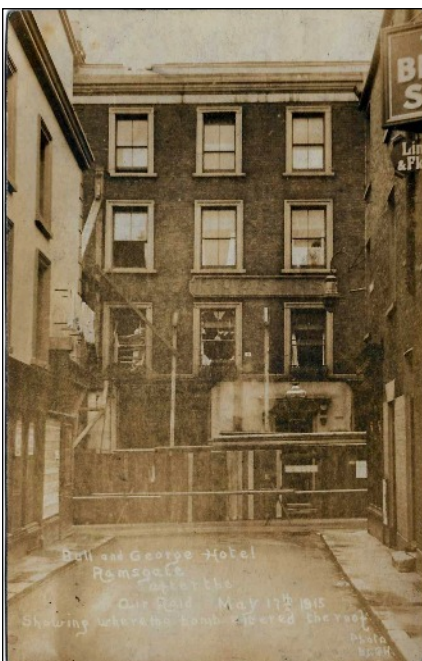


This postcard depicts an artist's impression of the Zeppelin night raid on 16/17 May 1915. It shows the Zeppelin in flames but, of course, that never happened. The Zeppelin was LZ38 and this was the first time that British airmen had come to grips with a Zeppelin. At 1:35am on 17 May 1915, LZ38 crossed the coast near Margate. This was also the first time that a defending pilot had actually seen a Zeppelin. The bombs dropped on the Bull & George Hotel stopped the clock at 1:47am. A couple staying at the Hotel died of their injuries sustained during the bombing.

The "Imperial Bazaar" on Albion Hill was also bombed in that same raid - see the following two pages



These postcards show the extent of the damage to the property with one indicating the actual room where a husband and wife were killed



Postcards recording the Zeppelin Raids over Ramsgate:

2 - The "Imperial Bazaar", 6 Albion Hill, Ramsgate

(Twice bombed by Zeppelins on 17 May 1915 and 15 June 1917)



← Mr Frederick France, aged 67, of "Lilly's Imperial Bazaar", 6 Albion Hill, Ramsgate standing in the doorway of his bombed shop following the Zeppelin raid over Ramsgate on 17 May 1915 when the rear of the shop was badly damaged (see postcard below). Note the signage above the shop-front announcing that nothing in his shop was over 5½d (or, possibly, even over 3½d). It is very doubtful that this price limitation continued after the war - or even after the May 1915 bombing!

→ Mr France surveys the bomb damage to his property but recognises the business opportunity to have his photograph taken amid the damage with a view to selling postcards showing the damage as souvenirs of the air raid. It is most likely that these two photographs were taken on the same day and, possibly, immediately following the raid judging by the policemen holding back the children with their inquisitive faces shown in the above photo.



Mr France also sold Crested China souvenirs with a backstamp referring to the "Imperial Bazaar" being twice wrecked by Zeppelins. An example of such Crested China is shown on the following page of this Newsletter.

← The caption to this postcard shows that this photograph was taken some two years after the above photographs as it refers to both the Zeppelin bombing on 15 May 1915 and the Zeppelin bombing on 17 June 1917. This postcard shows Mr France standing at the back of his shop which is crammed full of wooden spades - and indeed, everything else that visitors to Ramsgate would want for their holidays at the seaside. A row of shaving-brushes can be seen on a shelf on the right of the photo and a jumble of buckets for the beach can be seen on the floor. Indeed, every square inch in the shop seems to be filled with beach paraphernalia or souvenirs for visitors to take home with them. A true bazaar! □

Edith Cavell Memorial, St Martin's Place, London and a Crested China souvenir model of the Memorial sold at the "Imperial Bazaar", Ramsgate



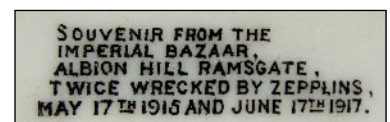
The memorial was unveiled by Queen Alexandra on 17 March 1920. At the top of the memorial is the figure of a nurse and infant figure. The words near the base of the memorial: "Patriotism is not enough. I must have no hatred or bitterness in my heart" were added in 1924 following a request from the National Council of Women of Great Britain and Ireland

(Above photos taken October 2013)



Three views of the Willow Art model of the Edith Cavell Memorial. The model bears the Ramsgate crest and has both the "Imperial Bazaar" inscription and the Willow Art backstamp on its base. The model omits the word 'Fortitude' which is on the back of the actual Memorial

This Crested China model of the Edith Cavell Memorial would have been manufactured after 1919



Note the misspelling of 'Zeppelins'

The Leggett Memorial at Cheriton

In St Martin's Churchyard, Cheriton where the repatriated body of Major-General H. I. W. Hamilton is buried, there is an interesting memorial erected by Lieutenant-Colonel Frederick Octavius Leggett to the memory of his three sons who were all killed in the Great War.

The first to die was the youngest, Lt Alan Randall Aufrere Leggett, aged 21, educated at Tonbridge School who was killed in action at Armentières on 31 October 1914 whilst serving in the 1st Battalion North Staffordshire Regiment. He had been appointed to command the Machine Gun section on about 22 October. He had already distinguished himself when Major Maher of the Leinster Regiment had reported:

"2/Lt Leggett (his promotion to Lieutenant was gazetted after his death) sent with a platoon to support, by steadiness and good leadership held up an attack and by well-considered action enabled him to resume the offensive and drive back the enemy."

He was Mentioned in Dispatches in January 1915.

His two elder brothers (educated at Wellington College) were both killed in July 1916. Major Wilfred Noel Leggett was killed on 14 July 1916 whilst commanding a siege battery and had been awarded the DSO and Mentioned in Dispatches three times: he is buried in Martinsart British Cemetery. His brother, Major Henry Eric Goodwin Leggett, died in St Omer Hospital on 30 July 1916 having



The Leggett Memorial in St Martin's Churchyard, Cheriton

commanded an artillery battery in 188 Brigade: he is buried in Longuenesse (St Omer) Souvenir Cemetery.

What is particularly interesting about the three brothers commemorated by the memorial is that the body of the youngest son had been repatriated in 1914 before the 1915 ban on bringing back bodies to the United Kingdom. So, there are two of the small number of repatriated bodies in a small Kentish cemetery. The three are also commemorated by the Chancel Screen and Memorial Cross in St Martin's Church, Cheriton, dedicated to their memory.

Footnote

An interesting grave in the same cemetery is that of Captain Lewis Arthur Drake-Brockman, RMLI attached to the 4th Bn Karelians, who was killed at Karelska Maselga (Russia) on 10 May 1919. He is/was buried in New British Cemetery, Murmansk (Sp. Mem B8). He was the holder of the Order of St Stanislas 2nd Class with swords and the Order of St Vladimir 4th Class with swords. Can we assume that he was commemorated in Murmansk Cemetery (where there is a special memorial to him) and his body brought back to St Martin's Cemetery? He had close connections with this church and a relative was once the Vicar. □

Richard Young



The Leggett Memorial in memory of Lt Alan Randall Aufrere Leggett, North Lancashire Regt



The stone in memory of Capt Lewis Arthur Drake-Brakeman, RMLI, in St Martin's Churchyard, Cheriton

The Grave of Field-Marshal Viscount French of Ypres

In a recent article in *Between the Lines* No. 73, James Brazier mentioned the grave of Sir John French in Ripple and wondered what state it might be in today.

In an early edition of our *Major & Mrs Holt's Battlefield Guide to the Ypres Salient* we show a picture of this grave with our granddaughter Rebecca (Becca) Wise, then eight years old, placing a poppy wreath on the grave. At that time we believe that members of the Royal Marines, stationed in Deal, kept the grave tidy.



Becca Wise placing poppies on Field-Marshal French's Grave in St Mary's Church Cemetery, Ripple (Photo 2003)

John Denton Pinkstone French was born in 1852 at Ripple Vale House, which was sold by the family in 1874 and is now a school. His father, Captain John Tracey French, was always conscious of his Irish ancestry and the family's homes in Wexford and Roscommon. He died in 1854 after a strenuous career in the Navy. John Denton had six sisters and their mother died in 1861, leaving them to bring up their young brother. They were all powerful women and sent their young brother to Harrow School.

French then joined the Royal Navy in 1866, mainly because of his father's career, but soon found that life on the sea was not for him. He therefore, much to his sisters' disapproval, resigned from the Navy to join the Suffolk Artillery Militia in 1870 for two years. In February 1874, he joined the 8th Bn (Queen's Royal Irish) Hussars, probably because of his family's history in Ireland, soon transferring to the 19th Bn Hussars, enjoying being with horses – and the company of women.

The 19th Bn moved to Ireland in 1876, French serving so well there that he was promoted to Captain in 1880. There then followed a period of campaigns in different countries, starting with Egypt in 1884 when he took part in the Sudan Expedition to relieve Major-General Gordon. In 1885, he was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel and, returning to the UK, spent several years in England. In 1891, French was posted to India. There he

had a colourful period, including almost being dismissed for his adultery with a fellow officer's wife and being put on half pay.

French served in the South African War from 1899-1902, taking part in most of the important battles, sometimes with distinction, sometimes to the disapproval of Kitchener (qv) and other officers. He was appointed Lieutenant-General in 1902. After his return to the UK, he was appointed Inspector-General in 1907 and, in 1913, became Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

When the First World War broke out, French directed the first British major engagement in October 1914 from his HQ on Mont Cassel, moving to St Omer on 24 October. French's appointment was despite Sir Douglas Haig's doubt about his ability – 'In my own heart, I know that French is quite unfit for this grand command at a time of crisis in our nation's history'. This despite the fact that in 1899 Haig had lent French, who often became nearly bankrupt, £2,000 – a large sum of money in those days.

In 1918, Field-Marshal French was created a Viscount and promoted to Commander in Chief of the United Kingdom, retiring as a Field-Marshal in 1921.

In June 1922, French was created Earl of Ypres and received a retirement grant of £50,000 (today worth around £35 million) in recognition of his service.



Patriotic postcard of Field-Marshal Sir John French

In 1924, Sir John French made an appeal for a British Church to be built in Ypres. In March 1929, St George's Memorial Church in Ypres was dedicated and a bust of Field-Marshal Sir John French, First Earl of Ypres, faces one as the Church is entered. The twin pulpits also commemorate French.



Field-Marshal Earl Kitchener



General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien



General Sir Douglas Haig

French died of cancer of the bladder in Deal Castle (where he had been appointed Captain of the Castle in 1923) on 20 May 1925. He was cremated at Golders Green and the ashes lay in state at the Guards Chapel, Wellington Barracks. At his funeral service in Westminster Abbey, his pallbearers included his sometime adversaries Haig, Robertson and Smith-Dorrien. He was then buried in the non-military St Mary the Virgin Cemetery in Ripple, near the home where he was born.

Although his service career was probably more, rather than less, successful, French's private life was somewhat torrid and he was often described as a 'colourful character'.

In 1875, French married 'the daughter of a tradesman', Isabella Soundy. At this stage he was still a subaltern and therefore the marriage was regarded as non-acceptable and was probably kept a secret. The couple divorced in 1878, and, it was said Isabella was paid off by French's brother-in-law.

In 1880, French married Eleanora Selby-Lowndes, known as 'The Belle of Bletchley' and it is thought that she never knew of his first marriage. The couple had three children: son Richard; daughter Mary, who was accidentally suffocated by her nurse; and a second son, Gerald - yet they gradually drifted apart.

French continued his affairs with society ladies and in 1915 he started a relationship with the elegant Mrs Winifred Bennett, wife of a British diplomat. He wrote to her daily and on the eve of the Battle of Neuve Chapelle he wrote to her: 'Tomorrow I shall go forward with my war cry of 'Winifred'.

In fact, French was a man who, throughout his military career, veered from being loved and admired to being scorned and, according to Lloyd George, who called him a 'far bigger man than Haig', felt he had 'Fallen by the daggers of his own comrades.' French and Kitchener were both obstinate personalities and

Kitchener varied from approval to disappointment of him, both in the Boer War and in WW1. Smith-Dorrien had a continuing feud with French and objected to his womanising and Sir Hubert Gough called him 'an ignorant little fool' in 1916. Yet Churchill always admired him. In 1915, he wrote to French: '...our deep friendship, though begun late, has grown strong and deep'. In 1921, in *Great Contemporaries*, he wrote: 'French was a natural soldier. Although he had not the intellectual capacity of Haig, nor perhaps his underlying endurance, he had a deeper military insight.'

The career of this controversial man makes an interesting study and, for what must be the very best biography of John French, we heartily recommend *The Little Field-Marshal: A Life of Sir John French* by our dear friend Richard Holmes, who sadly died of cancer on 30 April 2011, aged 65.

On 6 August 2023, we returned to Field-Marshal French's grave at Ripple and once more Becca laid some poppies in his remembrance. □

Tonie and Valmai Holt



Becca Wise placing poppies on Field-Marshal French's Grave in St Mary's Church Cemetery, Ripple on 6 August 2023

(All images kindly supplied by Tonie and Valmai Holt)

Margate College as German Officers' PoW Camp in WWI



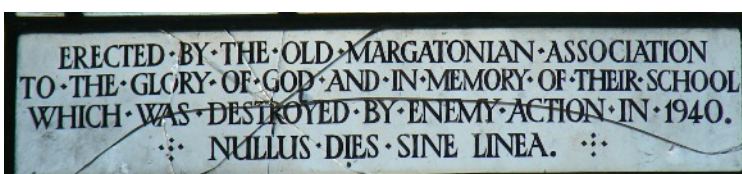
This postcard view shows Margate College as a German officers' prisoner-of-war camp from 1917 to the start of 1919. Note the barbed-wire and the guard-house



This photograph shows the remains of Margate College after the bombing by enemy aircraft in 1940



Close-up of the Margate College memorial window in St John's Church, Margate.



The text at the bottom of the Margate College memorial window

Margate College opened exactly 150 years ago this year. In 1917, when Margate was suffering from enemy air raids, the College was evacuated to Hale (between Farham and Aldershot) and the building was used as a prisoner-of-war camp for German officers up to the end of the war. After the war, the College returned to Margate until the outbreak of WWII.

In 1940. The Margate College building was destroyed as can be seen from the accompanying image. The College stood off Hawley Street and the site is now College Square Shopping Centre. □



Margate College memorial window in St John's Church

JB



Margate College "Old Boys" War Memorial - now in Margate Museum

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)

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]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

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



The Buffs cap badge

WWI comic postcard by Lawrence Colborne