

BETWEEN THE LINES

Newsletter of the East Kent Branch of The Western Front Association

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Committee:

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

Richard Young
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EDITORIAL

Welcome to our latest Branch Newsletter. Paul Barnett, who served as our Branch Newsletter Editor for a number of years before the Covid pandemic, has decided that he wished to stand down. In response to our Chairman's request, made at the Annual General Meeting held on 10 January 2023, for someone to step forward to fill the vacancy of Branch Newsletter Editor, I put my name forward and found myself duly appointed to the position. In offering to take on the position, I had stated that I wanted only to produce an electronic Newsletter to be e-mailed as a PDF to our members and that the practice of including verbatim (or detailed) reports of talks given to the Branch would be discontinued. Fortunately, those conditions were accepted by the members present. The new-look Newsletter will contain reports and contributions particularly relating to items of WWI interest in the East Kent area. Contributions to the Newsletter are invited from members of the East Kent Branch and should be submitted as a Word document together with any images which should be sent separately as JPGs with appropriate captions.

For those members who don't already know me, I was the WFA's first Treasurer (from 1980 to 1991) and then WFA Bulletin Editor (from 1993 to 2001). From 2005, I edited Margate Civic Society's Newsletter for fifteen years during which I produced 61 issues of their quarterly Newsletter. I stood down from that position on reaching the age of 80. On hearing Hazel's request for someone to take on our Branch Newsletter, I stood up and put my name forward. I feel sure that everyone will welcome the return of our Branch Newsletter albeit in a different form from previous issues. Of course, producing an electronic Newsletter will avoid the costs of printing, stationery and postage - all of which have gone up steeply in recent times.

I want the Branch Newsletter to represent the interests of our members and for our members to feel that they are part of it. Articles of local interest will be particularly welcome. So please do send in your contributions - whether long or short - they will all be welcome. It is planned to send out by e-mail the next issue of the Branch Newsletter towards the end of June. The deadline for contributions (articles, letters, queries, etc) is Sunday, 28 May. □

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

James Brazier
WFA East Kent Branch Newsletter Editor

The Salient Circle: a short history

by James Brazier

This article is one that I had intended to write some years ago for possible publication in the Friends of St George's Memorial Church, Ypres Newsletter but, once I started to compile the article, I soon realised that it was going to be too long for that Newsletter. So, when Hazel appealed for a new Editor for our Branch Magazine *Between the Lines* earlier this year, I thought to myself "Why not me?". If nothing else, it would prompt me to properly research The Salient Circle and to fulfil my long-standing intention of writing an article about that worthy organisation which existed from 1959 to 1968.

I first came across The Salient Circle in the 1970s when I was given an old postcard album containing postcard views of towns and villages in France and Belgium that had been published during the Great War. Most of the postcards had been censored by the removal of the name of the town or village and many had been annotated on the front of the postcard to record the year when that town or village had been visited by the original owner of the postcard album. I was told that the album had been found in a junk-shop in Whitstable in the 1970s but, more importantly, the album had the name and address of its original owner (written in the front of the album) - W. Holloway, 22 Argyle Road, Whitstable. At this stage, I must admit that I did no research on the album but I did keep it and its loose contents intact - which I am now pleased that I did. I could easily have removed all the postcards and ephemera from the album and simply disposed of the album: but I didn't. I kept thinking that one day I would try to research it. I did think, however, that W. Holloway had probably died in the 1970s and that the postcard album had been found amongst his effects and that was how it had come on to the market.

I will now "fast-forward" a quarter of a century to around 1995 when I found an old enamel badge on a dealer's stall at the Alexandra Palace Antiques Fair. The wording on the badge read "Salient Circle 1914 W 1918". I asked the dealer what he knew about the badge and he replied: "Nothing, other than what it says on it". So I bought it for a nominal sum thinking that, one day, I would see what I could find out about it. It was a few years afterwards that I discovered some loose press cuttings from *The Whitstable Times* and *Swalecliffe Press* in the old postcard album referred to above in which references were made to The Salient Circle. I had, at long last, put two pieces of the 'jigsaw' together. But I felt that I needed even more for me to determine what was The Salient Circle and who were The Salient Circle members.



*The Salient Circle white metal and enamel pin-badge
28mm diameter (no maker's mark)*

I now "fast-forward" another decade or so to 2018 when I visited Ypres on a day-visit with Margate Civic Society. Although I had visited St George's Memorial Church many times over the previous 40 years, I had never had the time to spend a couple of hours inside that splendid building to study the many memorials inside the church. Indeed, it was when I was reading some of the brass plaques on each of the chairs that I came across a chair in memory of W. V. Dawkins, Founder of The Salient Circle. I recognised the man's name and, of course, I was reminded of my pin-badge for The Salient Circle. So, I photographed the plaque and the chair before moving on to read some of the other plaques.



TO THE GLORY OF GOD
W. V. DAWKINGS
19313 COLDSTREAM GUARDS
DIED 14th MAY 1962
Founder
The Salient Circle, Whitstable, Kent.

Then, a few minutes later, I stumbled across a chair with a plaque in memory of A.G.Dawkins, Chairman of The Salient Circle. Not having come across that name before, I at first assumed that the name had been misspelt, that it ought to have read Dawkings rather than Dawkins and that A.G.Dawkin(g)s was in some way related to W.V. Dawkings. Again, I photographed the plaque and photographed both of the chairs which were in totally different locations within the church.



**TO THE GLORY OF GOD
A. G. DAWKINS
142495 THE ROYAL REGIMENT OF ARTILLERY
DIED 6th JUNE 1968
Chairman
The Salient Circle, Whitstable, Kent.**

It was at that stage that I finally decided that I really did have to research The Salient Circle and find out all I could about that long-forgotten organisation.

By coincidence, I had taken out a subscription to the British Newspaper Archive (BNA) at about that time and I decided to see what newspaper reports I could find concerning The Salient Circle on the BNA. I was overwhelmed by the number of reports that I found on the BNA and this article is the product of my research.



Chair in memory of W.V. Dawkings
Inventory Object No. Chair063



Chair in memory of A.G. Dawkins
Inventory Object No. Chair018

Whilst on the subject of the two chairs relating to The Salient Circle in St George's Memorial Church, I should mention that, in the course of my research, I discovered that there was a third chair in the church which was in memory of another member of The Salient Circle but the inscription on its brass plaque made no mention of The Salient Circle (see photograph below). This chair was given in memory of Albert Edward Crook who had died in 1966. The chair had been given to the church by his widow in 1967 - a year before the Dawkings and Dawkins chairs had been given to the church. Presumably, The Salient Circle members thought that it would be appropriate to give those two additional chairs to the church with suitably inscribed plaques.

When the two additional chairs were given to the church in 1968, it was reported in the *Whitstable Times* that it was hoped that all three chairs would be grouped together in the church. Perhaps, unsurprisingly, that intention seems to have now been forgotten by the church elders.

At this stage, I will draw attention to the magnificent digitised inventory of all the memorials in the church that has recently been produced by the Friends of St George's Memorial Church. If you have not yet accessed it, you really should so so. It is at:

<https://www.stgeorgesmemorialchurchypres.com/memorials/>

High-definition images are available for all of the memorials in the church. The Friends of St George's Memorial Church are to be congratulated for completing such a superb project. Well done!



Image courtesy of the Friends of St George's Memorial Church, Ypres - Inventory Object No. Chair173

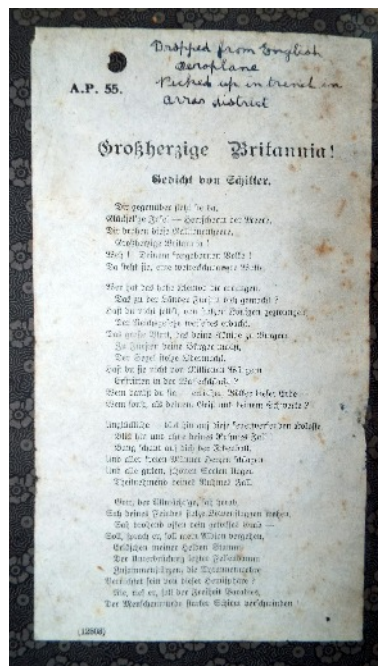
**7780 PRIVATE ALBERT EDWARD CROOK
1st BATTN. GLOUCESTERSHIRE REGT
WOUNDED 1914 YPRES
DIED 1966 CANTERBURY, KENT**

The postcard album which started my quest to discover what The Salient Circle was all about



Clockwise from above: the front cover; inside the front cover showing the two newspaper cuttings from The Whitstable and Tankerton & Swalecliffe Press; currency notes pasted on the inside of the back cover; a leaflet in German that had been dropped by a British aeroplane and had been picked up in a trench in the Arras district; and a close-up of a section of the inside front cover showing the original owner's name and address and the remains of a 1917 newspaper cutting on the 1/7th Middlesex Regiment at the Battle of Arras in 1917

Note the two newspaper-cuttings from 1960 regarding The Salient Circle



Photographs of W. Holloway's much-treasured postcard album containing his collection of WW1 postcards of ruins of towns and villages which he had visited during the war and also some WW1 ephemera. There are some 300 postcards in this battered old album, many of which have been censored by the deletion of the name of the particular town or village. Mr Holloway, at some stage, wrote on many of those postcards the name of the town or village concerned for his future reference. I kept the album intact for some 50 years. In many ways, the postcard album is a 'time-capsule' in which are locked many memories. I feel that the 'jigsaw' has now been completed.



One of the postcards from W. Holloway's album

So, having provided the background to my research, I will now write a few words about The Salient Circle which, I hope, members of our Branch will find interesting but first, the two newspaper cuttings about The Salient Circle that I found in W. Holloway's postcard album.

Both cuttings are from the *Whitstable and Tankerton & Swalecliffe Press* (to give it its full title at that time) dated 1 October 1960 and both letters were written by W.V. Dawkins. You will notice that neither cutting shows the date of publication of the two letters but, thanks to the BNA, the date was soon traced.

Who was W.V. Dawkins?

William ('Bill') Vanson Dawkins was born in Whitstable in 1893. His father (George Dawkins) was a master baker and Bill followed his father's trade and, in 1914, became a Freeman of the City of London in the Company of Bakers.

He enlisted in the Army (Coldstream Guards) in September 1916 and suffered a gun-shot wound in his right thigh from which he was subsequently discharged from the Army in April 1919.

In October 1918, his father George Dawkins, the senior partner in a bakery business in Whitstable died and his son, Sgt W.V. Dawkins was unable to attend his father's funeral due to him having been in a London hospital for a long time and not being well enough to attend his father's funeral. Bill Dawkins returned to the family's bakery business in Canterbury Road, Whitstable for the rest of his life. His wife, Mabel, died in 1935. He remarried in 1941. He had two sons from his first marriage and one son from his second. Bill Dawkins had both legs broken in the Rainham train crash caused by a V1 Flying Bomb (doodlebug) on 16 August 1944 when eight persons were killed. Bill Dawkins died in May 1962, aged 69. He founded The Salient Circle in 1959 to promote comradeship and world peace.

Who was A.G. Dawkins?

Albert George Dawkins was born in Lydden, Dover in 1898. He attested in May 1916 becoming a private in the 15th Bn, Middlesex Regiment, later transferring to the Royal Garrison Artillery. He served as a police officer with Dover Borough Police for many years until his retirement in 1949 resulting from his appearance at the East Kent Quarter Sessions at Canterbury when he pleaded guilty to four cases of forgery and four of fraudulent conversion. He became Chairman of The Salient Circle for both 1967 and 1968 when it finally folded due to declining membership.

& SWALECLIFFE PRESS, SAT

The Salient Circle on the Warpath Again!

To the Editor

Dear Sir,—The big increase in our membership in recent weeks has brought its problems. Delighted as we are to have found so many old Ypres comrades right here amongst us, we have still got to get together, to know one another, and so will all members—old ones, new ones and Ypres comrades who are still to join us—please note.

A get-together is to be held in the Congregational Minor Hall on Thursday, October 6th, at 6.30 p.m. Will all members make a special effort to get to know one another. I ask this specially because we have got such a lot of new friends to meet. We want them to realise that it is a very cordial welcome that awaits them.

This get-together will be an opportunity to tell members about all the plans for our first anniversary shell-hole supper to be held the last week in October. This increased membership brought super problems with it—real headaches. How does one cater for about 300 folk for supper? Reluctantly we had to realise that it was quite impracticable in Whitstable. But what a happy solution of the problem has come our way.

We are to be honoured guests of our new county regiment—The Queen's Own Buffs—at Canterbury Barracks. But our pleasure doesn't even end there. During the short lifetime of the Salient Circle we have had honour and respect poured on us, all of which we appreciate in full measure, but now we have the high privilege of associating ourselves with our new county regiment. Now we can stop all our arguments about whose regiment is the oldest while we proudly assert our active interest in this brand new regiment.

Ypres figures proudly on the colours of both The Buffs and of The Queen's Own West Kent Regiment. While we of the Salient Circle—just a few of the boys who survived—remain to tell the proud story of the sacrifice, of the determination, of the heroism of doubtless the bloodiest battles of all time fought in well-nigh impossible conditions.

We old boys don't glory in war—there's no glory in it. We hope rather that these fine boys who are making up the new regiment, while preparing to meet any demands that may be made on them, will enjoy a really full and happy life as soldiers and... dare we hope to suggest that, like the grand old battleship that is about to pass to the breakers' yards, they may never be called on to fire a single shot in anger.

It is hoped that all members will make a big effort to join us at our get-together and so know all the plans, etc., for the big night at the end of October. With happy surroundings, a beautiful meal prepared by the regimental cooks, music by the regimental band, a wonderful all round programme, excellent company, with both old and new comrades and a few friends of the Salient Circle (probably including some from Ypres)—well, doesn't everything promise to make up a wonderful evening?

Make sure to get your tickets promptly. They will be on sale at our get-together on October 6th. There may not be enough to go round, so don't delay securing your tickets quickly.

For the Circle,

Yours sincerely,

W. V. DAWKINGS.

62, Canterbury Road,
Whitstable.

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"Last Post" will Sound For 10,000th Time!

To the Editor

Dear Sir,—Now another matter of interest. Most readers will know now that our friends at Ypres have been seeing to it that the memory of the terrific sacrifice by our boys in defence of their town shall never be forgotten and that the Last Post is sounded every evening at the Menin Gate—a most impressive two minutes while all traffic stops.

On October 8th, at 8 p.m. the Last Post will be sounding across the fields of Flanders for the 10,000th time. A few friends from our district will be attending. A tape recording of the occasion is being sent to me. I shall be happy to make it available to interested friends.

Now another important announcement. Because a few—a very few—of our old Comrades who fought with us in some of those terrific battles of the Somme, by some mischance, never had the experience of being with us in the Salient, we want them, nevertheless, to join us. After all, we were fighting the same battles.

Now that clears the air. We want besides the fighting men, the nurses and doctors who did the hard fighting when our fighting days were done; those brave men and women who gave of their best when we needed it so badly. We would like to meet some of our old regimental chaplains again. In short we want to meet all our 1914-18 friends of the Western front.

I hope that that clears the air and removes those few anomalies.

Now a little bit of curtain raising—just a tiny bit. Our friends are arranging a marvellous menu for supper night; a Blighty supper such as we dreamed of in those tough days. We are going to start off with some "skilly"—you remember the stuff we got sometimes. Then that will be followed by a bit of bully and hard biscuits, etc., and then a regular wallop of sand bag pudding and again etc. But the big secret lies in the etceteras.

Our friends—the regimental cooks—are just enjoying themselves, planning big surprises for us. What "etc." stands for is anyone's guess, but I'm planning to leave plenty of room for a jolly good supper myself. I mustn't let out all the fun.

But there's another side when we turn the tables—we want help from every old boy who can add to the enjoyment of the evening and we would like to hear from him now—or any ladies who can help. We want to build up a programme for an evening such as never was before. An evening worthy of "The Salient Circle." Everyone help please. If you can't do any more—polish up your old soldier songs. One of our old lads has volunteered songs of the South African War but we are not celebrating that or the battle of Hastings this time.

A full muster on October 6th. Congregational Minor Hall, at 6.30 p.m., please. Dinner last week of October. All details October 6th, so don't be late.

On behalf of all the Salient Circle,

Cheerio Everyone!

W. V. DAWKINGS

Canterbury Road,
Whitstable.

The Salient Circle - A Chronology

How the Salient Circle began

Thanks primarily to the former Editor of the Whitstable Times and to the drive and determination of William ('Bill') Dawkings, it has been possible to plot the growth of The Salient Circle from its birth in 1959 to its demise in 1968 as set out below:

1959

Whitstable Times (WT) 5 Sept

Letter from Bill Dawkings (WD) inviting "boys" who had served in Flanders Fields with happy memories of those days and wishing to get together to remember those old pals left behind, to meet at the Toc H premises in Whitstable on 8 September

WT 19 Sept

Letter from WD having just "returned home from the first meeting of the Mud Larks - the boys who used to wallow in it, live in it, eat in it, fight in it and face death in it - in Flanders, over forty years ago". At that meeting, it was decided to arrange a "Shell Hole Supper" in October

WT 3 Oct

Letter from WD reporting on another meeting of the "old Ypres Salient survivors" and promoting the "Shell Hole Supper" to be held on 27 October

WT 24 Oct

Letter from WD inviting ladies who used to look after the "dashing young lads (aged 65-90)" during the war to the "Shell Hole Supper" on 27 October when "the 1914-18 lads of the Ypres Salient will get together, put the clock back forty-odd years and set out to recapture something of the comradeship of those days"

1960

WT 27 Feb

Letter from WD informing readers that, thanks to a concession by the Belgian Government, there would be no need for passports for the forthcoming trip to the battlefields

WT 5 March

Letter from WD providing more details of the next "invasion" of Ypres with special thanks to Mr Editor for giving space - week by week - for news of the "invasion" by The Salient Circle

WT 26 March

Letter from WD (writing as Secretary of The Salient Secretary) outlining the programme for a visit to Ostend, Ypres, Brussels and Bruges by The Salient Circle comprising Whitstable veterans of the Salient as well as a couple of Old Contemptibles from Canterbury and another couple from Dover in addition to other veterans from Sittingbourne and Margate.

WT 23 April

Letter from WD giving notice of the next trip to Ypres in three weeks' time with a full programme. It was planned that the party would not exceed sixty - restricted to "the old boys and their wives"

WT 28 May

Report on The Salient Circle's five-day visit to Belgium when a party of 64 flew from Manston airport to Ostend on 20 May. The flight took just nineteen minutes! The party took one thousand sticks of Whitstable rock to distribute amongst the children of Ypres. The party held their second "Shell Hole Supper", this time in the Cloth Hall, Ypres at which 128 sat down to supper. A highlight of the supper was the crowning of Mlle Simone Annoot as The Salient Circle "Queen". She was the daughter of M. Roland Annoot, the tourist attaché who was responsible for many of the arrangements of the visit. Simone Annoot was crowned "Queen" at the "Shell Hole Supper" with a tin helmet decorated with some greenery and carnations from the vases on the tables. The Burgomaster light-heartedly promised that the Queen's crown would be carefully and permanently preserved among the crown jewels of Ypres. The report on the occasion states that "the Burgomaster had not a complete mastery of the English language" and it would appear that Simone Annoot acted as translator on that, and many other future, occasions. She visited Whitstable a number of times and she frequently featured in newspaper reports on The Salient Circle during the 1960s. *(It is possible that some older residents of Whitstable still remember her)*

WT 18 June

Letter from WD regarding another get-together of Salient Circlers at the Congregational Minor Hall, Whitstable on 23 June and reporting that he had written to Queen Elizabeth II informing her of The Salient Circle's recent visit to Ypres and had received a reply containing Her Majesty's best wishes to members of The Salient Circle

1960 (Continued)

WT 10 July

Letter from WD reporting that the Salient Circle Queen would be visiting Whitstable for Carnival Week

WT 6 Aug

Report on expected arrival of "Queen" Simone at Dover the following day. There was to be a reception at Dover with a "Shell Hole Supper" before the party returns to Whitstable

WT 20 Aug

Report on "Queen" Simone returning to Ypres with good wishes for the bond that had been established between Whitstable and Ypres

WT 27 Aug

Letter from WD regarding the upcoming first anniversary of the first thoughts of getting the old Ypres veterans together and inviting others to join it

WT 1 Oct

Letter from WD announcing a get-together at the Congregational Minor Hall on 6 Oct to discuss arrangements for the first anniversary "Shell Hole Supper" when some 300 Salient Circle members and their wives together with expected guests from Ypres will be the honoured guests of the new county regiment - The Queen's Own Buffs - at Canterbury Barracks at the end of October (*this letter is reproduced in full on page 5*)

WT 1 Oct

Letter from WD regarding the 10,000th sounding of The Last Post at Ypres and rallying members to the get-together on 6 October (*this letter is also reproduced in full on page 5*)

WT 22 Oct

Letter from WD giving more details about the "Shell Hole Supper" to be held at Canterbury Barracks on 26 October when the Burgomaster of Zonnebeke would attend. The Burgomaster of Ypres was unable to attend but "Queen" Simone would be attending

WT 5 Nov

Report on the "Shell Hole Supper" held at Wemyss Barracks, Canterbury on 26 October attended by "Queen" Simone, the personal secretary of the Burgomaster of Ypres, together with many dignitaries

WT 24 Dec

Letter from WD stating that there are 220 old Ypres boys living in Whitstable and another 30 in neighbouring towns - all members of The Salient Circle. He also stated that the *Maires* of Arras and Cambrai had written to ask that their towns be included in a future itinerary of The Salient Circle's tour of the battlefields. He also reported that the next "Shell Hole Supper" would be held in the Cloth Hall, Ypres

1961

East Kent Times 22 February

Report seeking level of demand for a Thanet Branch of The Salient Circle to be established

Herne Bay Press 14 April

Details on the Ypres trip 22-28 were June announced which included the band of the 4th Bn, The Queen's Own Buffs and a contingent of young officers and NCOs from the Home Counties Brigade depot. A "Shell Fire Supper" in the Cloth Hall at Ypres was included in the programme. The average age of the Salient Circle members going on the trip was 74½ years

WT 29 April

Letter from WD regarding the "second invasion of Ypres" due to take place on 22 to 28 June. "These trips are not to be annual affairs. That we should have planned these two trips in succession was never anticipated"

WT 13 May

Letter from WD announcing that The Salient Circle had resolved to include in their party to Ypres a number of "Sons of the Salient" - a small contingent of Whitstable men whose father or grandfather had fought on the Western Front 1914/18 (*this action was probably because age was taking its toll and the number of veteran members of The Salient Circle was declining*)

Herne Bay Press 26 May

Mix-up of names

The newspaper apologised for giving the name, in its previous issue, of the organiser of the forthcoming Salient Circle pilgrimage to Ypres as a Mr Dawson rather than Mr W Dawkins (*which should, of course, have been Mr W. Dawkins*). *Mr Dawson was the Hon Secretary of the Friends of St George's Memorial Church who also happened to live in Whitstable but had no connection with The Salient Circle. The similarity of the three surnames was also the cause of confusion on other occasions*

1961 (Continued)

WT 27 May

Letter from WD reporting on progress with forthcoming Belgium trip including plans to meet a party of German veterans in Ypres

22-28 June “the second invasion of Ypres” by The Salient Circle took place

The Times 24 June

General report on The Salient Circle’s seven-day visit to Belgium making specific reference to ten Australians, one new Zealander, six Canadians and seven Irishmen being among the group who were to meet 22 German veterans for a short ceremony in the reconstructed *Grande Place* in Ypres

WT 1 July

Full report on the second Salient Circle’s “invasion” of Flanders

WT 9 Sept

Letter from WD announcing plans for one more trip to Ypres and reporting on the receipt of “a letter posted from HM Yacht *Britannia* telling of our very own Queen’s (*Elizabeth II*) great interest to hear of the recent reunion with German veterans on the battlefields of the First World War”

WT 23 Sept

Letter from WD announcing the holding of a second anniversary “Shell Hole Dinner” on 31 October at Wemyss Barracks, Canterbury when a number of dignitaries from Belgium would be present (*All tickets were sold within just a few days*)

1962

WT 28 April

Letter from WD - “I am just knocked out flat for the present but even commanding officers have to indulge in sick leave occasionally” (*Bill Dawkins sometimes signed his letters as Founder - or Secretary - and even General Officer Commanding of The Salient Circle. This was the last letter from Bill Dawkins that was published by the Whitstable Times*)

WT 19 May

Report on the death of William Dawkins, the founder, and secretary of The Salient Circle. He died in hospital at Canterbury on 14 May, aged 69. The report stated: “Three years ago, Mr Dawkins had the idea of gathering together the veterans of the Ypres Salient for a “get-together” supper, and in October 1959 the first of The Salient Circles’s “Shell Hole

Suppers” was held and attended by 36 old soldiers”. It was also reported that: “the treasurer of The Salient Circle, Mr Hollington of Ramsgate, will be taking this year’s party of veterans to Ypres in Mr Dawkins’ stead”

Thanet Times 19 June

Report on the recent visit of a party of about 80 veterans from The Salient Circle to Ypres led by Mr R.V. Hollington. The visit commenced on 1 June when the party was joined in Ypres by some 40 Germans from Berlin

WT 20 Oct

Report on the third anniversary “Shell Hole Supper” held at Wemyss Barracks on 13 Oct when a presentation was made to Mrs Dawkins, widow of the founder, in appreciation of all that he had done for The Salient Circle

1963

Thanet Times 2 April 1963

Report on the planned 12-day trip to the Ypres Salient commencing 21 June when they were to take two military drums to present to Ypres College band and the town band of Tielt. Nearly 80 members would be making the trip which would include a “Shell Hole Supper” in the Cloth Hall at Ypres (*This trip would be The Salient Circle’s fourth and longest annual pilgrimage*)

1964

During the early months of 1964, there were numerous reports in local newspapers of the twinning of Ypres with a Kent town. Ypres had offered to twin with Whitstable but the local council had declined the offer. Members of The Salient Circle pressed the council to reconsider its decision and, after much discussion, the council finally decided to set up a special committee to investigate the whole matter of twinning. In the meantime, Sittingbourne council approved their plan to twin with Ypres. So Whitstable, it would appear, was ‘pipped at the post’ due to procrastination by Whitstable council. With hindsight, it could be said that, thanks large to the endeavours of Bill Dawkins (as evidenced by this article), it would have been more appropriate had Whitstable accepted Ypres’ offer in the first instance. Aren’t local councils wonderful? Where would we be without them?

Note: A ceremony to mark the twinning of Ypres with Sittingbourne was held in Ypres in July 1964. A second ceremony to mark the twinning was held in Sittingbourne in May 1965

1964 (Continued)

WT 20 June

Report on the Salient Circle's 50th anniversary-of-the-Ypres-Campaign pilgrimage comprising 42 veterans and 22 ladies. The group met up with a party of 60 Germans in Ypres. The pilgrimage was regarded as a fitting tribute to the circle's founder, Mr W.V. Dawkins. As usual, a "Shell Hole Supper" was held in the Cloth Hall at Ypres (*This was The Salient Circle's fifth annual pilgrimage*)

1965

WT 15 May

Reported that a group of veterans from The Salient Circle had travelled to Dover to greet the 140-strong contingent from Ypres who were on their way to Sittingbourne to repeat the twinning ceremony that had been held in Sittingbourne the previous July. It was also reported that a party of members of The Salient Circle had left on 12 May for their annual pilgrimage in Belgium (*This was to be The Salient Circle's sixth annual pilgrimage*)

WT 30 Oct

Report on The Salient Circle's anniversary "Shell Hole supper" held at Howe Barracks, Canterbury. It was also reported that no guests from Belgium were able to attend the occasion

1966

Herne Bay Press 3 June

Report on The Salient Circle's annual pilgrimage (3-18 May). On 13 May, Queen Elizabeth II, Prince Philip and the King and Queen of the Belgians attended a service held in St George's Memorial Church. Soldiers from the Belgian Army and veterans from The Salient Circle and other organisations formed a guard of honour along the route to the Belgian War Memorial where Queen Elizabeth laid a wreath. Civic receptions for the pilgrimage party were held at Zonnebeke and Knokke. A "Shell Hole Supper" was held in the Cloth Hall (*This was The Salient Circle's seventh annual pilgrimage*)

1967

WT 9 June

Report on the Circle's annual pilgrimage with only 20 members and three wives in the party which was regretted as the pilgrimage marked the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Third Ypres. The Chairman, Mr Albert G. Dawkins, on behalf of members of The Salient Circle, presented a drum to Zonnebeke Town Band bearing the Salient Circle badge and inscribed "Zonnebeke 1967 -

Remembrance - 1917 Passchendaele" in a short speech about how drums had through the ages been used to convey messages to rally forces (*This was the eighth annual pilgrimage*)



The presentation on 28 May 1967 by the Chairman of The Salient Circle, Mr Albert G. Dawkins (in centre wearing medals), of a military drum bearing the badge of The Salient Circle, to the Zonnebeke Town Band (Mr Albert G. Dawkins died 8 June 1968)

1968

WT 28 June

Report of a party of German WWI veterans being met at Dover on 27 June by members of The Salient Circle when they paid their goodwill visit to this country

Herne Bay Press 23 Aug

Report that The Salient Circle will leave for their annual pilgrimage to the battlefields on 24 September. During their visit, two chair plaques in St George's Memorial Church are to be dedicated: one in memory of Mr W.V. Dawkins, Founder of The Salient Circle and the other in memory of Mr A.G. Dawkins, Chairman of The Salient Circle

Herne Bay Press 18 Oct

Report on the annual pilgrimage... and on "one other outstanding memory - members had the pleasure of meeting Mlle. Annoot, Salient Circle Queen since 1960, as happy, as radiant and as kind as ever!" (*This was the ninth annual - and final - pilgrimage of The Salient Circle*)

I could find no further newspaper reports about The Salient Circle except for one in the *Whitstable Times* for 16 May 1985 when everyone was getting ready to celebrate the 40th anniversary of VE-Day. But people in Whitstable, 25 years previous to 1985, were getting ready to recall another war - the Great War - with the start of a new invasion of Flanders by members of Whitstable's Salient Circle. Today, the Salient Circle is forgotten. I hope that this article will re-awake interest in that once very worthy organisation. □

JB

The Salient Circle's "Shell Hole Suppers"

These were a feature of the get-togethers by The Salient Circle organised by W.V. Dawkins and there is a wonderful description of the "Shell Hole Supper" that was held at Wemyss Barracks on 26 October 1960 as reported in the *Whitstable Times* dated 5 November 1960. The following extract from that report indicates the flavour of both the supper and of the occasion:

"Everything was deliciously prepared and symbolised days now long passed when the fighting men had to make the best of things.

The menu said: "Bully and biscuits". They were there, but also were eggs and chips and bacon and mushroom and liver, etc - a mixed grill.

The menu also said: "Sandbag Pudding à la Bayonette". The pudding that was served was just delicious, but in the old war days it meant crushed and soaked biscuits, one or two crushed cakes that

mother had made and packed so lovingly, only to arrive in powder form after the postal people had done their worst. A tin or two of syrup is available perhaps a tin of condensed milk or some grated chocolate. And for a pudding cloth? Usually a new sandbag filled the bill, and was usually cooked in a petrol can.

Usually, someone brought a bayonet with which to rip open the sandbag, and on Wednesday there were shiny bayonets at the ready!

There was coffee, and fruit from "Charlie" to follow, and "Fremlins" - the generous gift of the brewers. Biscuits had been given by Messrs Lowes of Sittingbourne.

During the meal, the band had played well-known tunes..."

...and a jolly time was had by all - just wonderful!

These three further 'snippets' throw more light on William 'Bill' Vanson Dawkins, the founder of The Salient Circle. He was, indeed, a most remarkable man whose name and his deeds deserve to be remembered. □

VICTORY CAKES

Made by the Boys who helped to Win the Victory.

Just imagine those delicious cakes—plenty of sugar, plenty of fruit and plenty of eggs, etc.—that have only been a memory during the last few years.

Just try and remember the pleasure they gave—just that tempting slice for lunch or tea—and then you have

VICTORY CAKES

and every one is made by the boys who sacrificed so much to make such tempting cakes possible once again. And when you know that Mr. W. V. Dawkins is personally superintending their manufacture, you will be doubly assured of their excellence.

Special arrangements have been made for them to be delivered quickly to

Messrs. Dawkins,
OF CANTERBURY ROAD,
where you can obtain your cake week by week.

Varieties.—

Marzipan and Raisin, Sultana, Mixed Fruit, Cherry and Citron, Marzipan, etc.

Advertisement in *The Whitstable and Tankerton Press*
- 10 May 1919

Courtesy of the British Newspaper Archive

Happy Ending to a Search

A TALE of a soldier and a baker's daughter had a happy ending this week—43 years after they first met in Flanders.

The soldier was Mr. W. V. Dawkins, now organiser of the Whitstable Salient Circle, a group of veterans of the 1914-1918 war who recently returned from a five-day visit to Ypres. When Mr. Dawkins was in Herzelle 43 years ago, the local baker caught influenza and, so that people did not go breadless, Mr. Dawkins, with the aid of the baker's 20-year-old daughter, dealt with the day's supplies.

Since then, he has made many unsuccessful attempts to trace her and had given up hope until the recent visit to Ypres. Then, without warning, he was called from watching his companions play bowls and introduced to the baker's daughter, now 63. Carrying a spray of orchids (Mr. Dawkins' gift) she accompanied the Salient Circle on the day's tour.

Kentish Express - 3 June 1960

The British League of Help: Canterbury, Morval and Lesbœufs

The British League of Help owed its conception in 1920 to M.Marcel Braibent, *Conseiller General* of the Ardennes with the aim of asking towns in Great Britain “to adopt each a devastated town or village in France, and to give it such sustained and sympathetic encouragement as a god-parent is wont to afford to his god-child.” So, these towns and villages became *marraines* (godmothers) to their French counterparts. The Executive Committee was formed from the three great Anglo-French organisations: the Anglo-French Society, the Association of Great Britain and France, and the Entente Cordiale. Among the earliest adoptions was that of Verdun and certain of the devastated villages of the Meuse valley by the City and County of London.

It was in March 1921 that Colonel Powney, who had visited the devastated areas of France, came as a representative of the British League of Help to Canterbury and spoke of the advisability of the city adopting the villages of Morval and Lesbœufs. (The choice of British towns and villages was generally made of regiments who had fought in the area. The Buffs, the East Kent Regiment, had distinguished themselves there in September 1916.) It was agreed to call a public meeting on 13 April. The meeting was addressed by Colonel Powney and Major Fox, illustrated with lantern slides. It was agreed to adopt Lesbœufs and the neighbouring village of Morval and to afford help to the inhabitants as much as possible during the time of their present distress. Relief should come in the form of clothing etc. (At that time, Combles had been adopted by Portsmouth.)

On 27 April 27, it was reported that 11 sacks of wheat-seed had been forwarded to Lesbœufs and Morval for autumn sowing. It was resolved to forward a grant of £200 to Lesbœufs towards the cost of a motor threshing machine and to send £100 to Morval towards the cost of restoring the water supply.



Morval - site of the church which was never rebuilt. One of the church bells was recovered from the ruins

Another gift was sent by Ryder and Stone, the seed specialists, of seven useful varieties of vegetable seed. In May, Major and Mrs G.W.Harris and Mr and Mrs R.G.Barrett visited Lesbœufs and Morval, accompanied by the *Comte de Naleche*. They found that the people were housed in Nissen huts made of war material with whole families living in one room. (In 1993, Mme D'Hollander, who was one of the first children to return with her parents, said that the conditions were very unpleasant in the Nissen huts - oppressively hot in summer and very cold in winter.) They discovered that the immediate needs were for calico, knitting wool, and materials with which to make clothes. Boots and slippers were urgently needed and there was a shortage of fruit trees and poultry. Seeds in season would be very welcome also. The *Curé*, Abbe Freville, was also seeking money to rebuild his churches. (He served both villages, but the church in Morval was not subsequently rebuilt.) It was notice that the inhabitants had reclaimed much of the ground and were working from daylight to dusk in its cultivation. They had, however, far from obliterated the traces of the battle: huge shell-holes were still visible, whilst shells (the explosion of which was constantly going on), rifles, equipment and derelict war material littered the ground. For miles around there was nothing but a desolate, treeless waste. Nearby was a British cemetery, decorated with the flags of the two countries, in which lay buried men of the 38th (Welsh) Division, killed in the fighting in August and September 1918 in the vicinity of the two villages. The most immediate need was still water, for the villagers had to go more than a mile to obtain it each day.

Meanwhile, money was being raised in Canterbury by a variety of ways, most notably by a subscription list and door-to-door collections, but dances and



Morval Mairie, school and church - circa 1924



Lesbœufs Mairie built 1926 - photo circa 2006



The water-tower and unrestored war memorial at Lesbœufs

entertainments also provided further money with which help could be given. (It should be emphasised that although the Mayor headed the committee to raise funds, no money was given by the City Council.)

In September 1921, another visit to the two villages discovered that 240 of the inhabitants had struggled back to Lesbœufs and 50 to Morval. Although the church at Morval was just a heap of rubble, one of the three bells was found and salvaged. The services were being held in an Adrian hut, somewhat larger than a Nissen hut. The Pastor of the French church in the crypt of Canterbury Cathedral had undertaken to devote the proceeds of the offertory at their Harvest Festival to the fund. In November, the Canterbury Farmers' Club collected £25- 10s and purchased fruit trees at 4/- each. 700 fruit trees were ordered from Angers, in the Loire valley. (Meanwhile Bailleul and Nieppe had been adopted by Bradford, Hébuterne by Evesham, Thiepval by Tonbridge, Mezieres by Manchester and Vouziers by Glasgow.)

By April 1922, Lesbœufs had received cash towards two-thirds of the cost of a threshing machine, the balance coming from the French government grants. Morval had received £167 toward the provision of a water supply. 800 fruit trees had been given, £20 of wheat and gardening seeds and clothing. In July, a further visit revealed that little rebuilding had been redone due to a lack of government grants. Many inhabitants had not yet returned, but many cafés existed and the bells of the churches of both villages had been found. The population of Lesbœufs was then 600, that of Morval 200 and there were 41 children on the school books. The Morval school was very small - only six pupils - but £10 had been spent on library books. 99% of the fruit trees planted had survived, but further gifts of pear trees would be appreciated. The wells had been dug, 60ft deep, worked by a windlass and bucket.

In April 1923, Lesbœufs had received £133 for urgent needs, the church and the school. In addition, it had received a threshing machine, pipes for the water supply, wheat seed, fruit trees and a reaper and binder, totalling £634- 2s.3d. Morval had received

£355-1s.6d for its water supply, the church, wheat seed, pipes, fruit trees, clothes etc. The Morval water tank and pipes had been laid, but the well cleaning was unfinished. A final appeal to raise further sums was made and another £28- 2s.6d. was collected.

In March 1924, a final meeting was held in Canterbury when it was reported that the total money received amounted to £1,174- 4s.9d. It was stated that the water supplies had been reinstated, a threshing machine and a reaper and binder had been purchased. Letters had been received by the Mayors of Morval and Lesbœufs, M. Debray, Mayor of Morval, writing to thank the Committee for the restoration of the water supply. Of the money raised, Lesbœufs had received £637 and Morval £467, the balance being sent shortly. Canterbury was not the only source of finance for Morval, however, for the village had received help from the canton of Cognac, the *Département* of the Charente and a number of villages in the same *Département*.

Postscript

In 1927, on 11 June, the Canterbury local paper, the *Kentish Gazette*, announced that Miss E. Hodson, Secretary of the Canterbury French Villages Relief Fund who lived in Oaten Hill House, Oaten Hill, had been awarded the *Légion d'Honneur* and the *Médaille d'Honneur* by the French Government for her work. □

Richard Young

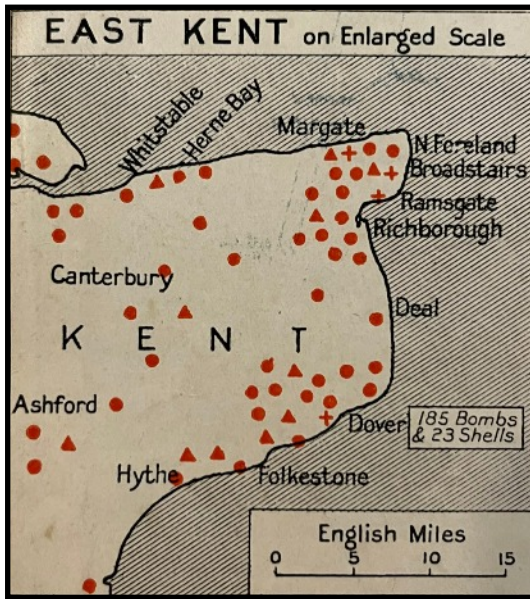


The restored and rededicated war memorial at Lesbœufs



Plaque near the base of the restored war memorial recording the presence of the Mayor of Canterbury at its rededication in 2006

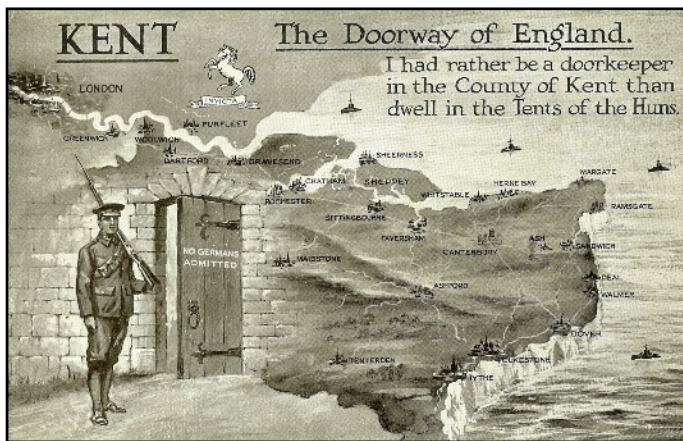
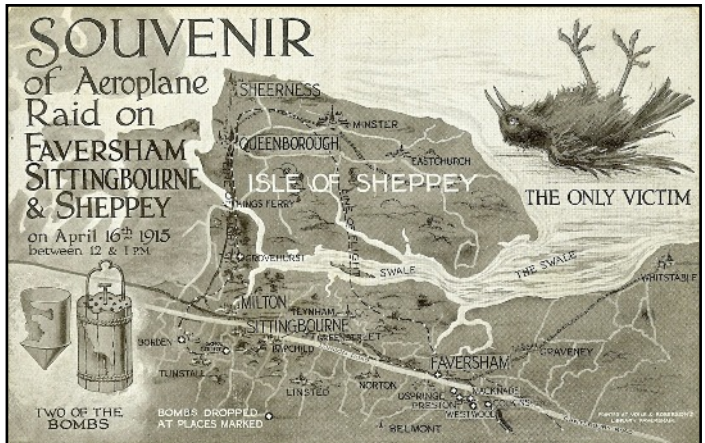
Raids on East Kent during the First World War



Our Chairman, Hazel Basford, was given a Harmsworth atlas which included some First World War information. Loose inside the atlas was a sheet about raids which has this inset on East Kent. Circles are aeroplane raids, triangles are Zeppelin raids and crosses are naval bombardments.

There is no date shown on the map. The map shows a Zeppelin raid over Margate but that is not supported by other records of raids on East Kent. □

Postcard of
aeroplane raid
on 16 April
1915
See also
postcards
below of
bombs
dropped
during that
raid



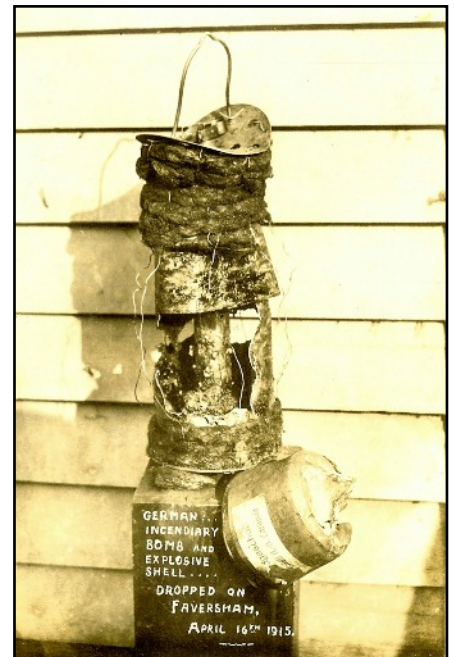
The text on this postcard is a parody of Psalm 84:10: "I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of God than dwell in the tents of the wicked"



Postcard of German Army Zeppelin LZ38 on raid over Thanet 16/17 May 1915

These postcards are from the Editor's collection

Postcard of German incendiary bomb and explosive shell dropped on Faversham - 16 April 1915



Postcard of German incendiary bomb dropped on Faversham - 16 April 1915

A Broadstairs bereavement

- 2nd Lieutenant Norman Henry Stockdale, The Lincolnshire Regiment

Norman Stockdale was born on 21 December 1886 in Kensington, London. He was educated at Framlingham College, where he served in the Cadet Corps. In 1914, he was working as the Hotel Manager at Morley's Hotel, Trafalgar Square, London. He enlisted as early as 8 August 1914, joining the 1/2nd County of London Yeomanry. He served with them at Gallipoli from mid-August 1915 to late-November 1915 as a private, apart from some weeks away with sickness.

In 1916, he was in Egypt and was commissioned on 2 April into the Lincolnshire Regt. This followed his application in July 1915, which gave 'Holmdene', Broadstairs, as his permanent address.

In the summer of 1916, 6th Lincolns, with which Stockdale was serving, moved with 11th Division from Egypt to France. The division was sent to the Somme in mid-July. Initially, however, it was simply undergoing extensive retraining to fit it for fighting on the Western Front. As such, it was not in any major engagement before September. However, as the battalion war diary records, it then came into the line near Ovillers. On 17 September, the Lincolns took over the whole of Constance Trench and at 10am made a bombing attack on Joseph Trench. However, the enemy was encountered in force and the attacking party was driven back. The Germans subsequently counter-attacked Constance Trench, but were beaten off. The Lincolns had lost that day two officers and eleven ORs. killed and two officers and thirty-three ORs had been wounded. Among the dead was Norman Stockdale.

The B.E.F. reported incorrectly to the War Office that a '2/Lt. T.W. Stockdale' had been killed on 18 September with 6th Lincolns. Stockdale was unmarried and there was a delay in notifying his

widowed mother, Bessie, living at 'Holmdene', Broadstairs.

His death was reported in the *Times* of 29 September, but the War Office delayed advising her as there had been a doubt over the identity of officer concerned, and also as the next of kin was initially unknown. Mrs Stockdale wrote to complain on 1 October that there had been no official notification and, instead, enquired for details of both her sons who were serving in the Army. Stockdale's surviving War Office file at the National Archives, as with most deceased officers, is mostly about his estate. There are several letters from his mother. Her son's executors advised that the will be not proven, with the agreement of the beneficiaries, as there were insufficient funds. His will was dated 1913, but he had cancelled his £1,000 life assurance policy when no longer able to keep up the payments. Only £3- 13s. 0d. was outstanding from the Army through the Army Agents, Cox & Co. Mrs. Stockdale accepted the legal advice, which allowed her to inherit her son's personal effects. His younger brother, aged 22, was a lieutenant in the West Kent Yeomanry, attached to The Buffs and serving in Palestine. He seems to have survived the war. There were also four sisters, two of them living locally: one (unmarried) at 'Holmdene' with her mother, and another (married) at 'The Lodge', The Vale, Broadstairs.

Norman Stockdale is buried at Aveluy Communal Cemetery on the Somme. □

Sources - chiefly Stockdale's file at TNA- WO339/61398. Also, 6th Lincolnshire War Diary at TNA- WO95/1817/2

Michael Lucas

Some early British Legion celluloid badges from the 1920s



Member's badge

Button-hole badge - diameter 1 inch



*Badge worn on British Legion's
1928 Pilgrimage by members of "C" (Wales) party*

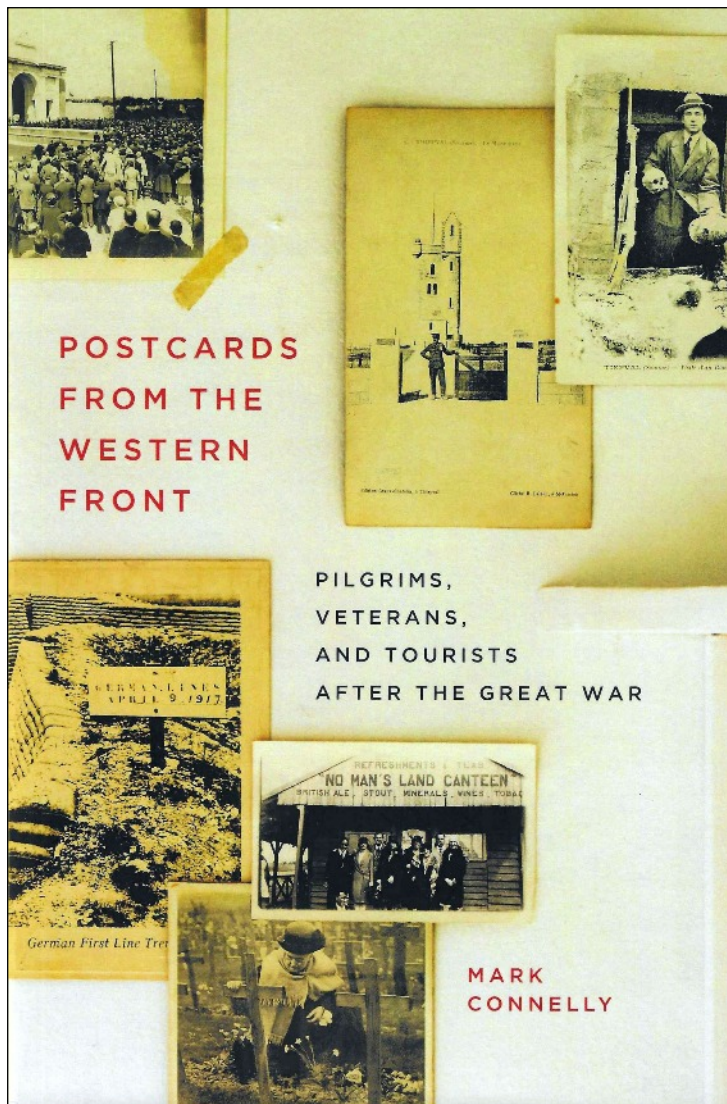
Pin-badge - diameter 1 1/4 inches



*Believed to be a badge to indicate
that the wearer had visited the War
Graves with the British Legion*

Pin-badge - diameter 1 1/4 inches

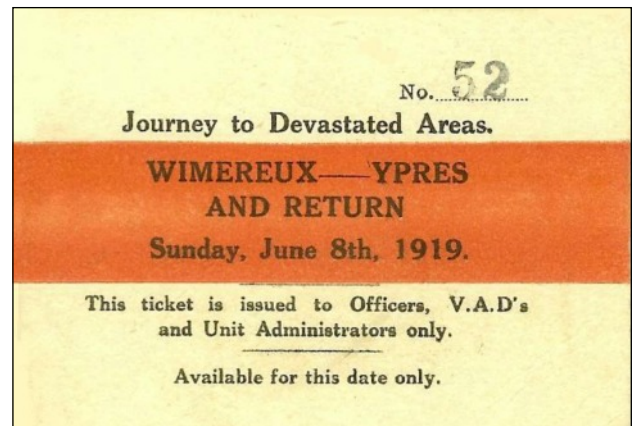
An authorised ticket to the Devastated Areas from 1919 kept as a souvenir



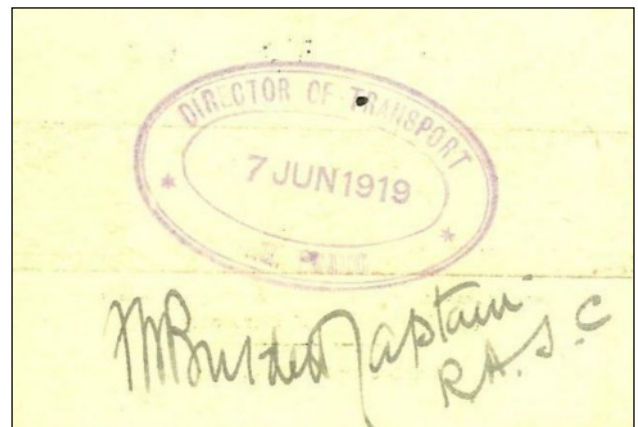
The Branch was privileged to be given a talk by the author, Mark Connelly, at its January meeting. Mark makes reference to the need for travel passes to the Devastated Areas in his book (above) which is thoroughly recommended and can be obtained from Amazon



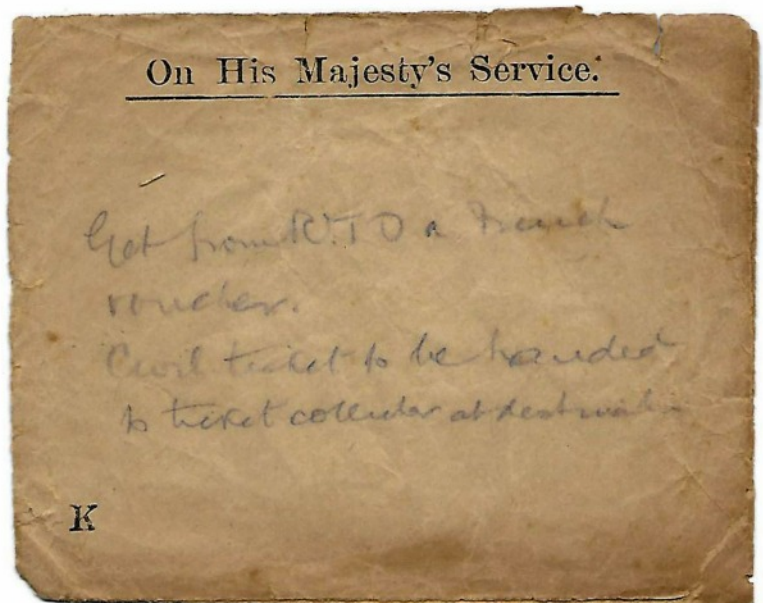
This photo was in the same envelope as the travel pass. Presumably, it shows the RASC Captain at work in his office



Front of ticket



Back of ticket



Handwritten note on front of envelope:

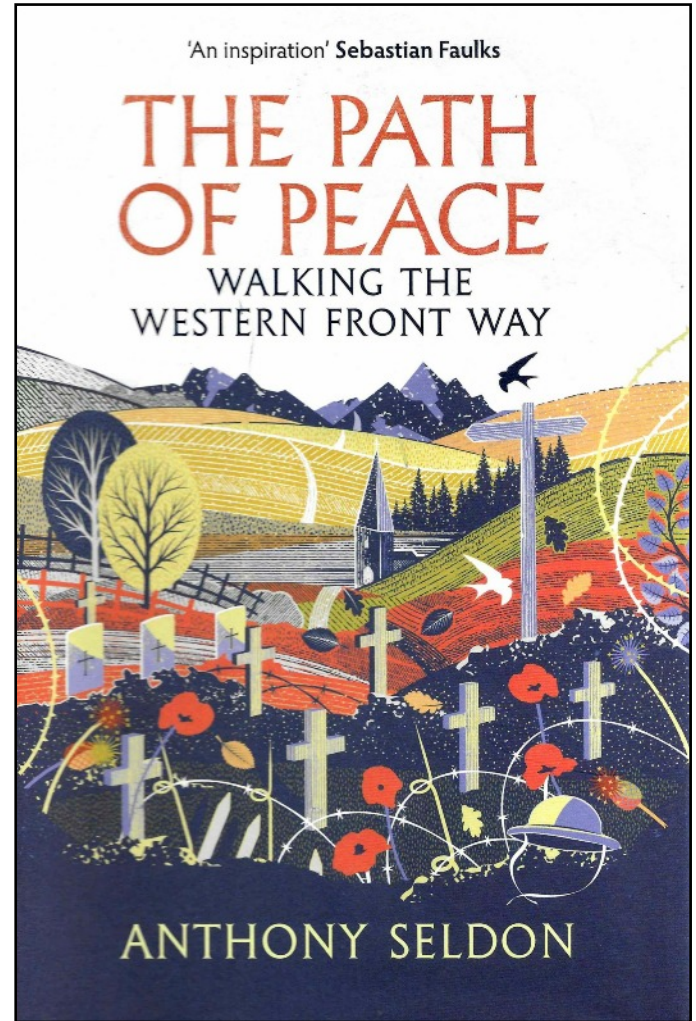
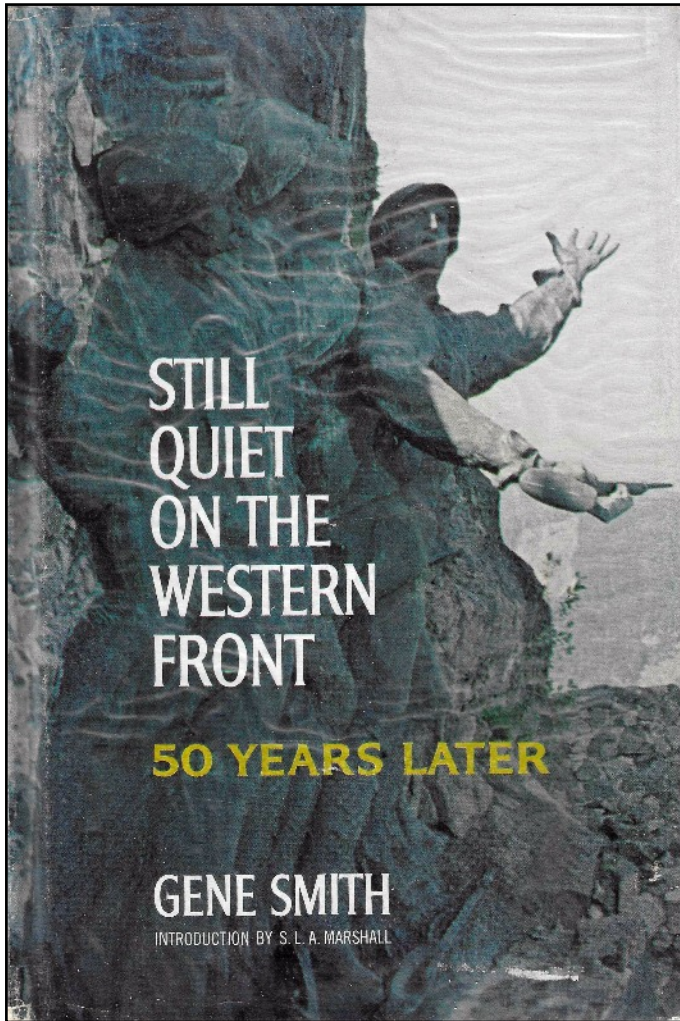
Get from RTO* a travel voucher
Civil ticket to be handed to ticket collector at destination

*RTO = Railway Transport Officer?

Note: The Army Service Corps was granted the prefix 'Royal' in November, 1918. Can anyone transcribe the signature on the back of the ticket? □

Pack up your troubles and walk, walk, walk!

Two books on a similar theme yet written nearly six decades apart



This book was published in 1965 by William Morrow & Co, New York. The book is illustrated with photographs that originally appeared in an exhibition at the Imperial War Museum London which opened in 1964 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the start of First World War.

In this relatively short book, the author - an American - revealed what he found after travelling more than 2,000 miles along the former front lines. I encountered this book for the first time when I first borrowed it from Margate Public Library in the late 1960s. I subsequently re-borrowed the book and took it with me on my early trips to the former battlefields. The author had captured the atmosphere of so many important locations along the Western Front from the Swiss border to the Belgian coast. It took me very many years before I was to find a second-hand copy in a book-fair in Surrey. It was the first time that I had seen a copy of the book since I had last borrowed it from Margate Library in the 1970s! I was thrilled to find a copy to add to my library and wasted no time before I read it again.

If you ever see a copy of this book, do get it. You will not be disappointed. □

JB

Whereas Gene Smith's book contains only 108 pages (of which 44 pages are illustrations), this new book by Anthony Seldon (published in 2022 by Atlantic Books, London at £20) is 350 pages long including a relatively small number of photos and maps. Nevertheless, both books successfully capture the atmosphere which the former battlefields still possess but Anthony Seldon's book takes much longer to read.

There has been talk of establishing a Western Front Way reaching from the Swiss border to the Belgian coast for a number of years. This book should ensure that such a pathway will finally be created. I believe that a designated pathway from the Belgian coast to the French border has already been marked with direction signs and it is hoped that the route through France will be established in the not too far distant future.

Seldon's book is a most interesting read but it is unclear whether he actually walked the entire 400 miles of the Western Front Way. He made a number of fascinating and most interesting diversions along the way and he is congratulated to have completed the task that he set himself to accomplish at the age of 69.

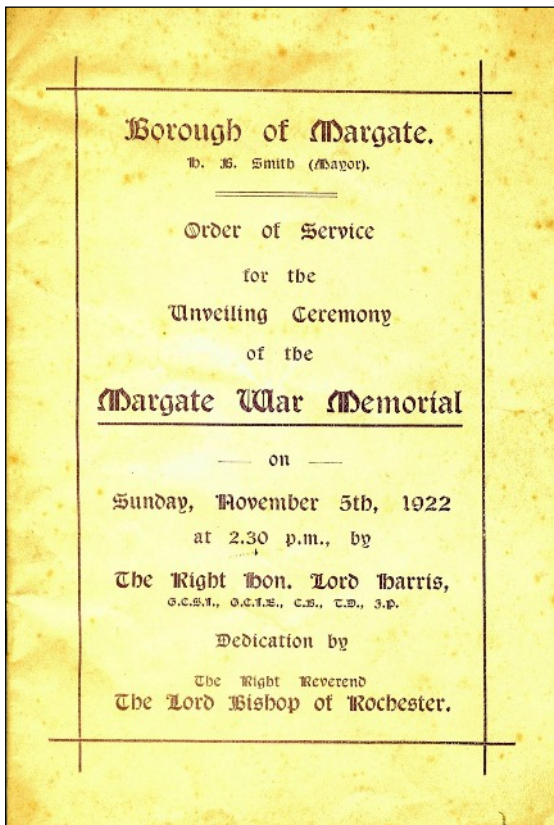
This book is highly recommended. □

JB

Margate War Memorial - 100 years after its unveiling on 5 November 2022



The scene at Margate War Memorial at its unveiling



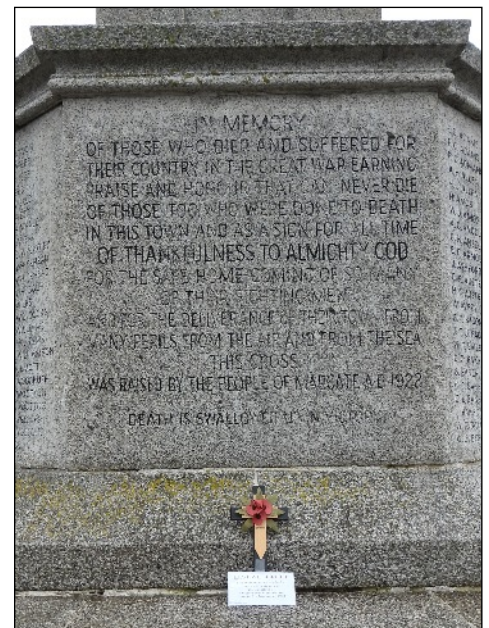
The front cover of the Order of Service for the Unveiling Ceremony on 5 November 1922

The unveiling of Margate War Memorial on Sunday, 5 November 1922 was a most important day not only in the lives of the Margate families who had lost loved ones in the Great War but also for the large part of the population of the town who attended the ceremony. There were also civic dignitaries, representatives of the armed services and clergy from all of the religious denominations in attendance at the service.

One hundred years later, there were just two individuals present at the war memorial - myself and my wife, Sue. □



The wooden cross and in memoriam card laid at Margate War Memorial on 5 November 2022



JB

The solitary wooden cross and in-memoriam card at the war memorial on 5 November 2022



These two photographs were taken on 5 November 2022 - exactly 100 years after the war memorial was unveiled in 1922. The discarded wreaths seen above were from the Remembrance Sunday service held at the war memorial in 2021. After reporting the neglected state of the war memorial only days before the 2022 Remembrance Sunday service was to be held, the area was eventually tidied up

Report on the Annual General Meeting held on 10 January 2023

Thirty-seven people were at the AGM meeting on 10 January, a record attendance since the restart – and quite remarkable for an AGM. But it shows everyone's concern for the Branch and commitment to make it a success.

Since a shaky start in April 2022, meetings have gone ahead without serious problems. Numbers are still about half of what they were pre-Covid but more familiar faces have come back, maybe not to all the meetings but it has been good to see them. We will go from strength to strength.

Financially the Branch is in good shape. We made a loss of just £6.90 in 2022. Many WFA branches are in financial difficulty and the Association is making available Covid-recovery grants to help them get going again. We won't be applying for this as we have a good financial cushion to carry us forward.

We do need more help to run the Branch, however, and I am pleased to say that we have some new Committee members. Rachel Wilsdon is looking after the raffle table and our Facebook page. Local social media can play a big part in publicising our activities and we hope to make the most of this. Rob Newman also offered to join the Committee. The Committee are having a get together soon to discuss

the work-sharing which will ensure the Branch runs smoothly. Although not on the Committee, Steve Ifield is helping run our refreshment kitchen at every meeting, for which everyone is very grateful.

At the AGM, Peter Gausden retired from the Committee. Peter and Margaret were amongst the large group of WFA members who enthusiastically turned up to our very first meeting at Chartham in February 2001. They have been stalwart members ever since, both playing important roles in helping run the Branch. We hope that they will be able to attend some meetings in future when they will be assured of a very warm welcome.

The Accounts for the last three years have been audited in one go this year, so we are now all up to date. As ever, we are grateful to Greg Bayne for doing this for us. Our annual returns to the Charity Commission are also up to date.

So we can look to the future, confident that we can continue to meet, to share our interest and further our knowledge – while all the time fulfilling our most important objective, that being – We Will Remember Them. □

Hazel Basford
Chairman

Postscript: The Salient Circle and The Western Front Association

Whilst I was researching The Salient Circle for the article in this issue of the Newsletter, I was constantly reminded of the parallels between the two organisations. Bill Dawkins had the idea in 1959 of founding what became known as The Salient Circle and John Giles founded The Western Front Association in 1980 - just 21 years later. Both Bill Dawkins and John Giles lived in East Kent although John did not move to Guilton Mill, Ash from outer London until around 1970 - some eight years after the death of Bill Dawkins and around two years after The Salient Circle had folded.

Having known John Giles for around five years before he founded the WFA, I suspect that he had no knowledge of The Salient Circle but, of course, I cannot be sure. But both Bill Dawkins and John Giles were determined to ensure that the memory of those who had served on the Western Front during the Great War was preserved for others to remember. The major difference between these two gentlemen was that Bill Dawkins had served in the Army during the Great War whilst John Giles's had served in East Africa during in the Second World War (although John's father had served in the Great War at Le Cateau).

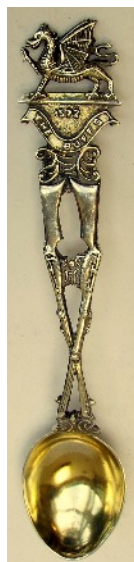
So, where is this all leading I hear you ask? Well, when I first saw the brass plaques in memory of members of The Salient Circle in St George's Memorial Church, Ypres I thought to myself: "Why isn't there also a brass plaque on a chair in the church in memory of John Giles?" After all, John had a strong attachment to St George's Memorial Church and, indeed, the Memorial Service in honour of the life of John Giles was held in St George's Memorial Church on Sunday, 17 May 1992.

Consequently, I would like to propose the following wording as a basis for consideration:

TO THE GLORY OF GOD JOHN GILES DIED 15 December 1991 Author and Founder of The Western Front Association (Founded 1980)
--

What do our Branch members think about the idea and/or the wording? Should the WFA East Kent Branch take the lead or should the proposal be passed to the National Executive Committee for consideration? □

JB



A Buffs silver teaspoon design incorporating two rifles - probably a rifle-shooting prize

Remembering The Buffs



The fine Buffs and East Kent Yeomanry Boer War Memorial in Dane John Gardens, Canterbury - unveiled 1904



The painting A MAN OF KENT by Lady Butler



A selection of Buffs badges and brooches



Sculpture by Peter Birkett: A MAN OF KENT in Canterbury Cathedral Precincts - unveiled by Queen Margrethe II of Denmark on 11 September 2015

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)

7 March

Michael Lucas

‘The Real General Mitford’

4 April

Marko Gassic

‘What really happened in the Balkans in 1914’

2 May

John Tanner

‘Nonne Bosschen - 11 November 1914’

6 June

Sarah Nathaniel, CWGC South-East

‘The CWGC: a deeper look’

4 July

Steve Roberts

‘Analysing the 1916 film *The Battle of the Somme*’

August

No meeting

5 September

Christina Holstein

‘Verdun: The Left Bank’

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]

