

BETWEEN THE LINES

Newsletter of the East Kent Branch of The Western Front Association

Charity Registration No. 1093915



Founded by John Giles
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Trustees of the East Kent Branch:

Hazel Basford
Greg Bayne

Committee:

Hazel Basford (Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer)

Richard Young
Edward Holman
Rachel Wilsdon

Rob Newman (Speaker Finder)

EDITORIAL

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

Because this issue of the Newsletter is No. 75, I felt that it was fitting that it should contain an article on artefacts relating to the famous French *soixante-quinze* quick-firing field-gun. There are some nursing-related articles and articles on a number of other matters of local East Kent interest which I hope members will also find interesting. Once again, I have included images of some of the wide range of crested china models that were produced during the war including a number of models of Red Cross ambulances which, I am told, were occasionally sold during the war to raise funds for the British Red Cross.

Members who visited the exhibition "Beyond War - Visualising Peace" that was put on at The Beaney in Canterbury in November 2018 for three months to mark the centenary of the Armistice might remember Evelyn Buss' autograph album as one of the exhibits. Evelyn Buss was a nurse at Dane John VAD Hospital in 1917 and some of the entries by wounded soldiers were on display at that exhibition. Memories of that display prompted me to include entries in this issue of the Newsletter from another autograph album that belonged to another Canterbury lady: a Mrs Williams who was a voluntary 'helper' during the Great War at the Kent & Canterbury Hospital as well as at other hospitals in the Canterbury area. There are around 100 entries in Mrs Williams' autograph album and most are worthy of reproduction in our Newsletter. I have included a sample in this issue and propose to publish further entries in subsequent issues - space permitting.

I was pleased to receive three contributions from Hazel Basford and I had hoped to receive a number of articles from other members of our Branch but it seems that most members are reluctant to 'put pen to paper'. Please do send articles in for the next issue of our Newsletter as I fear that I shall not be able to fill up the Newsletter with only articles largely from myself much longer. Contributions 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 October/November issue of our Newsletter is Sunday, 3 September. □

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

James Brazier

WFA East Kent Branch Newsletter Editor

Somme 1st July 2023

Increasing numbers of people are coming back to the Somme. The fears expressed after the Centenary and during Covid that numbers would be greatly reduced when things started back up have proved to be unfounded.

While we were there over the last couple of months, we met many people who are 'new' to the Somme and to the Great War. They varied from people travelling through the area who stopped for a few days to 'have a look round', to a man who took up Family History during Lockdown and found he had war casualties on his family-tree. These are just two examples.

On the campsite we met a lovely family from Enniskillen who were visiting for the first time to find the grave in Mill Road Cemetery of one of two brothers killed during the 1st July attack. The other is on Thiepval. They were travelling in a large Transit van kitted out with a double-bed and had two teenagers with them. They were very emotional about their visit as they were the first family members to visit the area.

At Lochnagar on the 1st, we began at our normal time of 07:28 am but we had to contend with drizzly wet weather. Primarily, this affected the man who fires the maroon at 07:28. Normally, this is done remotely but, come the time, nothing happened. We then saw him leaping towards the maroon with a stove lighter in hand! The maroon fired and our friendly French pyrotechnician will be back next year!

The Somme Battlefield Pipe Band were shielding their pipes from the wet but their performance was as wonderful as ever.

The big difference this year was the absence of Richard Dunning, to whom we owe the Crater's

continued existence. Richard has been a constant presence on 1st July since he bought the Crater forty-five years ago and we felt his absence keenly. He is currently having hospital treatment. All our thoughts and best wishes are with him and we all long for him to be able to come back to Lochnagar soon.

The usual programme of ceremonies took place – at Contalmaison, Thiepval, Beaumont Hamel, Fricourt and Albert, to name just a few. Photos below at the British Military Cemetery (Albert Communal Cemetery Extension) and of a Scottish Pipe Band, in Albert on the evening of the 1st. □

Hazel Basford

*Re-enactors in Albert
Communal Cemetery
Extension
on July 1st, 2023*



*Scottish Pipe Band in
Albert during the
evening of July 1st, 2023*

Rolls of Honour in local auction

These two framed-and-glazed Rolls of Honour were included in a local auction held recently. As far as can be determined, they came from a business based at Dymchurch. The WWI Roll of Honour listed employees of Thornett & Fehr and the WWII Roll of Honour listed employees of Frank Fehr & Co which is believed to be the successor name of Thornett & Fehr. How strange that they should find their way to a local auction-house. I was the under-bidder for both lots. □

JB



Lochnagar Crater Walkway – July 2023

Many of you will know that the wooden walkway around the Lochnagar Crater at La Boisselle, originally laid in 2012, has been deteriorating over the last couple of years.

The ground below the walkway is the fallout from the explosion of the mine and not a flat surface. It undulates practically all the way round, but it is part of the battlefield and so has to be respected.

In 2012, the walkway was laid by two Friends of Lochnagar who spent every day working on it for three months. The wood was donated from England and taken over to the Somme.

Neither of these options are available now.

Weather conditions can be harsh, varying from all-day sunshine and 34 degrees in summer to freezing rain and snow in winter. I estimate that as many as three million pairs of feet may have walked on the old walkway over the years since 2012.

Something had to be done. After much debate, and looking at alternative solutions, the Trustees took the decision to replace the walkway and to employ a local contractor.



The WFA gave a very generous donation of £15,000 to get the work underway. The photograph above shows part of the completed first section.

The new walkway will be on one level, no steps albeit with slopes, which will greatly improve accessibility for people with mobility problems.

The commemorative plaques on ends of the boards of the walkway have been a very welcome and popular contribution, both to the story of the Crater

and to funds. The scheme remains open and existing plaques on the old walkway are being transferred to the new boards. Several schools have sponsored plaques for their pupils who were casualties of the war. A few weeks ago a school-trip brought laminated photographs to place by their plaques. For more information on the commemorative plaques, see:

<https://www.lochnagarcrater.org/support/lochnagar-commemorative-plaques/>

and for more information generally on Lochnagar Crater see:

<https://www.lochnagarcrater.org/>

Our Branch kindly voted at the June meeting to give £100 to the walkway appeal. This, together with other funds raised, enabled the next ten metres of work to be commissioned.

Over the period of the “working weekend” at the end of May and in the couple of weeks before the 1st July when we were over there, we put out the donation buckets every day. Together with other Friends we welcomed many people to the site and told the stories of what had happened at the Crater and in the surrounding fields in 1916. This engagement brought in sufficient funds to enable a further ten metres of work to be commissioned.

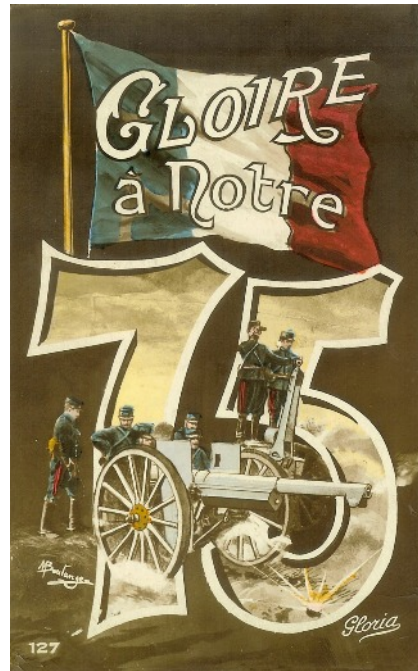
But there is still much to do. □

Hazel Basford



Replacing the walkway: there is still much to do

The famous French *soixante-quinze* quick-firing field-gun on French WWI postcards and brooches



These patriotic brooches were manufactured in gold, silver and base metal



Remembering Kent No 2 Voluntary Aid Detachment



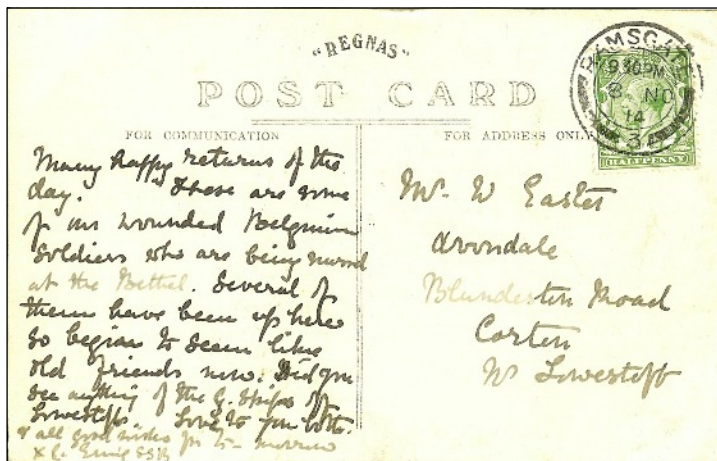
Postcard sent from Ramsgate and postmarked 8 November 1914. The message reads: "Many happy returns of the day. These are wounded Belgian soldiers who are being nursed at the Bethel. Several of these have been up here so begin to seem like old friends now. Did you see anything of the G. ships* off Lowestoft (?). Love to you both and all good wishes for to-morrow..."

The sign on the wall on the left of the photo reads:
Royal Sailors' Bethel, Mrs W. Ford

Note: * G. (German) ships refers to the Imperial German Navy raid on Great Yarmouth on 3 November 1914



The Royal Sailors' Rest (Bethel) on Harbour Parade overlooking Ramsgate Harbour. It was built in 1904 and is now a Grade II listed building. It was later used for a time as a hotel but is now flats



WORK OF THE DETACHMENTS

(Odd numbers are the men's, the even represent the women's detachments)

KENT 2, RAMSGATE, was formed from the Ramsgate Nursing Division of the St. John Ambulance Brigade and registered in 1910, being the first women's detachment in the county.

On the outbreak of war an appeal for funds was circulated, and preparations made for opening a hospital.

Early in October, 1914, the Wounded Allies Relief Committee arranged for the reception of wounded Belgians, and took over the "Royal Sailors' Rest," which had been placed at the disposal of the Government by the British and Foreign Sailors' Society to be used as a hospital with accommodation for seventy-two beds. The hospital was quickly prepared, the greater part of the extra equipment being lent or given by the townspeople.

On October 10th the first Belgian wounded to arrive in England were received, followed by men from the Expeditionary Force.

324 patients have passed through the wards.

The Hon. Surgeons—Dr. R. J. Archibald, Dr. Grace H. Giffen-Dundas, Dr. E. Fisk, Dr. G. E. Halstead, Dr. R. G. Hicks, Dr. T. G. Styan—have willingly given their services.

Commandant—MRS. A. GRUMMANT.
Medical Officer—DR. A. L. JOHNSTON.
Lady Superintendent—MISS E. M. SMITH.
Quartermaster—MRS. F. W. HINDS.

← This extract from the book "Kent's Care for the Wounded" reveals that Kent 2, Ramsgate was the first women's Voluntary Aid Detachment in Kent



Kent VAD brass button

→ The book "Kent's Care for the Wounded" was published in 1915. All profits from the sale of the book were given to the Kent County War Fund



The Kent and Canterbury Hospital and Dane John VAD Hospital - some pages from a Great War autograph album



Watercolour painting of the former Kent & Canterbury Hospital (demolished 1970s) in Longport Street, Canterbury by Canterbury-artist S. J. (Toby) Nash 1935

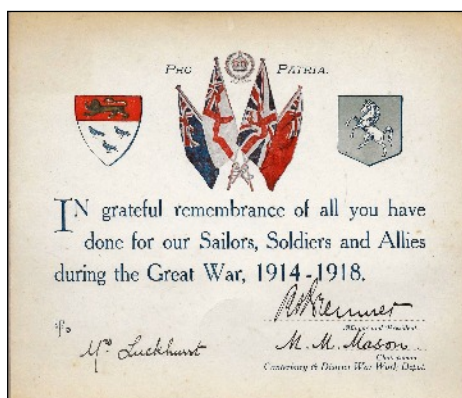
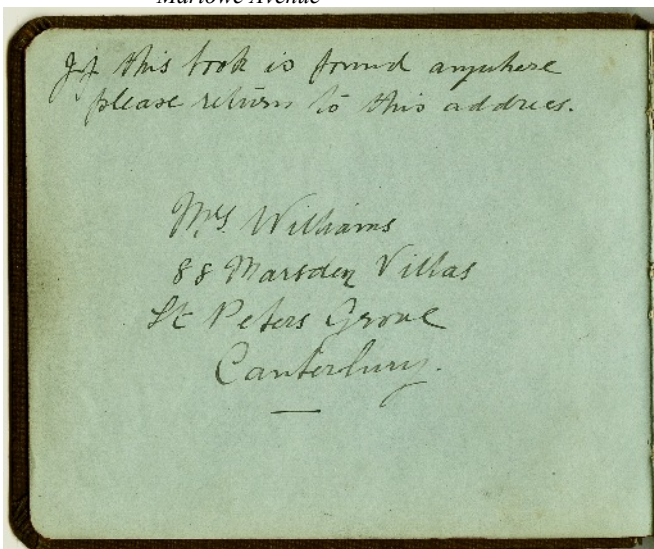
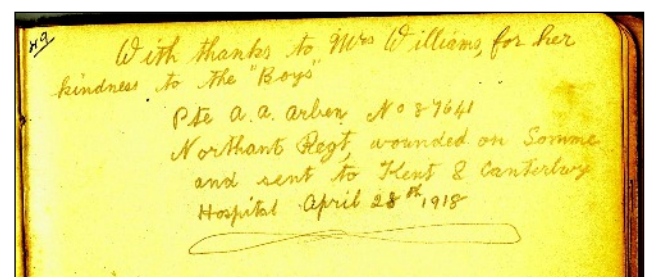
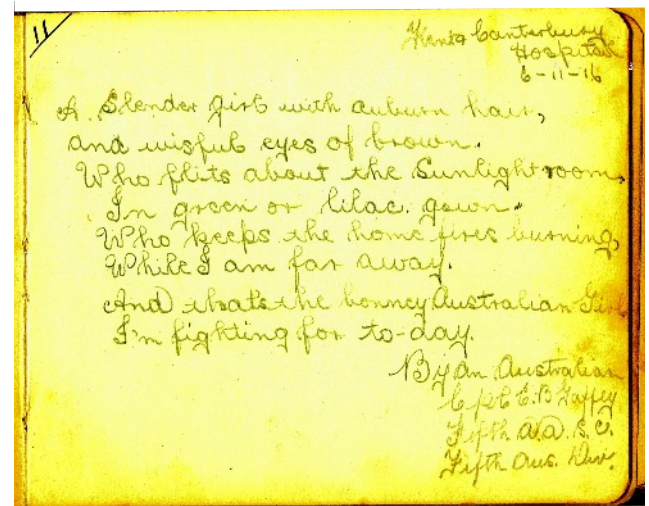
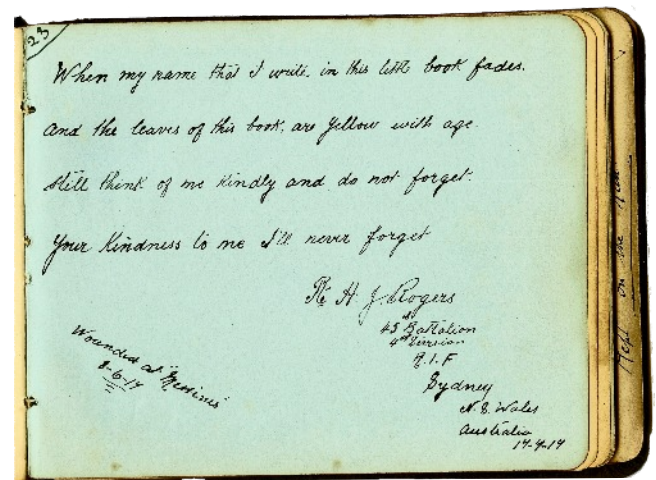


The cover of Mrs Williams' autograph album. A selection from the many entries in her album is shown below:



Dane John VAD Hospital
Dane John House, now Chantry Hall,
Marlowe Avenue

Mrs Williams' autograph album and a few samples of the many entries in it. Mrs Williams was a voluntary 'helper' at the Kent & Canterbury Hospital during the Great War. She also helped at the Dane John VAD Hospital. It is planned to include other entries in Mrs Williams' autograph album in future issues of Between the Lines



This card was given to a Mrs Luckhurst but it is most probable that Mrs Williams would also have been given one by the Mayor of Canterbury in grateful remembrance of her assistance given to patients in the local hospitals during the Great War, 1914-1918

Some First World War Nurses in Crested China



Seated Nurse

This is a particularly fine model especially of her dress

Nurse holding Bandages

Note 'The Victory of Justice' inscription



Models of 'A Friend in Need' and 'A Soldier's Friend'



Model of 'Nurse with Wounded Tommy'

Another seated Nurse

Models of WWI Ambulances in Crested China

During the Great War, many of the Staffordshire potteries produced Crested China models of military items including tanks, armoured cars and ambulances. Some towns - including Margate - sold these china models of ambulances to raise funds for the British Red Cross. At Margate, it is said that

china ambulances were sold for that purpose at 2/6d each although china shops in the town would also have sold them commercially. Models of ambulances in Crested China were produced in large numbers and can frequently be found at antique fairs today at around £30 to £40 each in good condition.



British Red Cross Society - St John Ambulance Association



Model of the Motor Ambulance Car given by the Staffordshire China Operatives



Bournemouth - showing Red Cross on back of ambulance



Potters Bar



Sandwich



Canterbury



Dover



Ramsgate



Margate

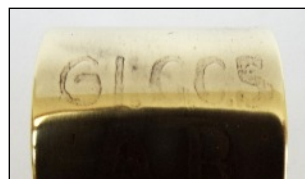


Maidstone



Gillingham

An unusual example of Trench Art and other Red Cross memorabilia



Two photos of the engraving on the candlestick handle. The photo on the left shows '61 C.C.S.' quite clearly whilst the one on the right shows the initials 'A.B.' which can just about be read. The candlestick has been much lovingly polished during its life resulting in loss of definition

Cut-down base of brass 18-pdr shellcase to make a candlestick souvenir featuring a Red Cross and engraved with personal details:

Q.A.I.N.S.R. = Queen Alexandra's Imperial Nursing Service Reserve

A.B. (On handle) = initials of nurse (sadly, her name is now forgotten)

61 C.C.S. = 61st Casualty Clearing Station (located at Dozinghem - a British invented name - one of several in the Poperinghe area - others included Mendingham and Bandaghem - set up during the summer of 1917 in readiness for the forthcoming offensive known today as Passchendaele or the Battle of Third Ypres)



- ← The interesting markings on the bottom of the 18-pdr shellcase show:
- that the shellcase was manufactured in 1917;
 - that it was manufactured by DCP Co Ltd = Dominion Copper Products Company (Canada); and
 - the shellcase was filled with explosives on 7 8 17 (7 August 1917) in Britain after transportation of the shellcase from Canada



The cap-badge of Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service Reserve (the photo has been taken at a slight angle in order to ensure that all the wording is clearly legible)

This manufactured Red Cross money-box bearing the dates 1914 and 1918 is believed to have been produced at the end of the war to raise funds for the British Red Cross



This photo shows the relative sizes of the artefacts



Two views of a Red Cross silver pin-cushion manufactured in 1914 - probably to raise funds for the British Red Cross. The British silver hallmark is that for Birmingham 1914 and its design was also registered (No. 641776) in 1914



More WWI nursing memorabilia



A delightful artist-drawn First World War postcard of a Red Cross VAD



Red Cross brassard dated 26 November 1914 - Sussex VAD 981



⇒ A post-WWII enamel badge worn by staff at Minster Hill House Hospital, Thanet



The above certificate was presented to Minster (Thanet) Military Auxiliary Hospital in gratitude for its work during the First World War. These certificates were presented by the Army Council to those buildings which were established and maintained as Auxiliary Military Hospitals during the First World War. There is provenance on the back of the picture-frame which relates it to the original Minster Workhouse building. After the war, the building continued to be used as a hospital until it was demolished in the 1990s (as I recall). The artwork on the certificate is particularly outstanding. An identical certificate can be seen in Quex Museum, Birchington: there is another at Great Dixter, Sussex.

⇒ This certificate was presented by the Joint Committee of the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St John of Jerusalem in England in recognition of valuable service during the First World War. It was presented to Mrs Ethel M. Weekes who is believed to have been born in 1895 at Camborne, Cornwall

Great War (Home Front) Souvenirs 1914-18

The badges/medals are representative only

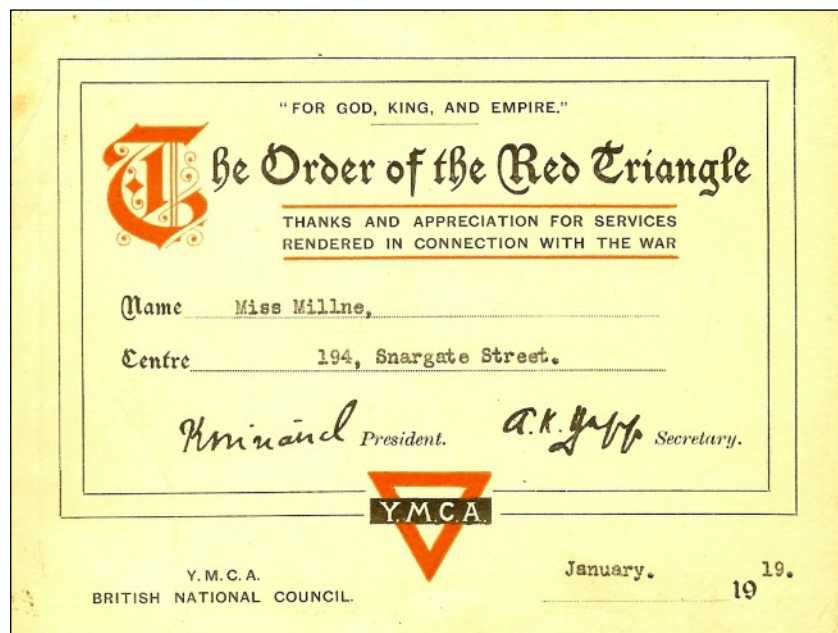


Note: This badge does not relate specifically to the British Red Cross and Cross of St John Central Work Rooms

The Central Work Rooms were provided with accommodation at Burlington House, London to organise the supply and distribution of night-shirts, gowns and bed-jackets to soldiers' hospitals around the country. All the work was undertaken voluntarily



Queen Mary's Needlework Guild comprised volunteers who made and supplied local War Hospital Supply Depôts with hand-made pairs of socks, handkerchiefs, ward shoes, roller bandages, pairs of pyjamas, shirts, mufflers, bags, treasure bags, pairs of mittens, slings, cushions and anti-vermin pants and anti-vermin shirts among other useful garments. There were branches of the QMNG around the country



Young Men's Christian Association pin-badge. Miss Millne was a volunteer at the YMCA Centre at Snargate Street, Dover

More certificates and badges



British Red Cross Society and Order of St John
pin-badge



Volunteer War Worker's pin-badge



Silver medal believed to have been awarded for
one year's service as a VAD nurse

Remembering the Royal East Kent Mounted Rifles



Set of (officers'?) Royal East Kent Mounted Rifles tunic brass buttons (four large, four small)



Sword sweetheart brooch with Royal East Kent Mounted Rifles brass button mounted on it (Silver hallmark: Birmingham 1915)



Photo taken December 2014

The remaining panel is inscribed
(as can be seen in the above photo):

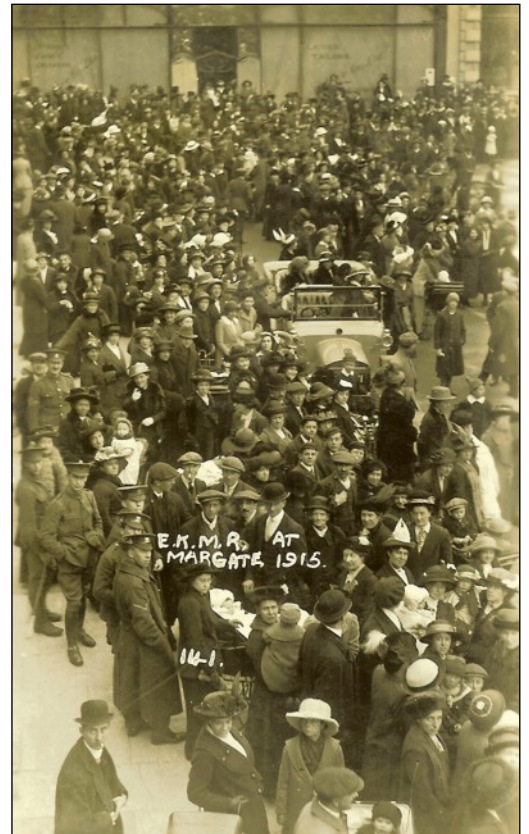
SOUTH AFRICA
1900 - 1901





Photograph of the Royal East Kent Mounted Rifles being received by the Mayor Margate in Cecil Square, Margate on Friday, 16 April 1915. The arrow points to 2/Lt Ronald Winch whose father Lt-Col G B Winch was the second in command of the 1st Regiment. 2/Lt Winch died, aged 20, on Sunday, 18 April after being shot on Friday, 16 April by a sentry at East Cliff, Ramsgate when his driver failed to give the correct password. A Court of Inquiry was held on Monday, 19 April 1915 when the sentry was fully exonerated

See following page for copies of press reports



Above and on right: A selection of postcards recording the visit of the Royal East Kent Mounted Rifles to Thanet on Friday, 16 April 1915 with such a tragic outcome



The plaque in memory of 2/Lt Ronald Winch mounted on the wall of the former Ramsgate Hospital

Members of the public awaiting the arrival of the EKMR outside what looks to be Bobby & Co Ltd's department store in Margate

RECRUITING MARCH,

OFFICER FATALLY SHOT BY SENTRY AT RAMSGATE.

On Friday last the East Kent Mounted Rifles left their encampment near Canterbury and proceeded on a recruiting march along the Kentish coast. One of the earliest stopping-places was Margate, where the regiment was accorded a civic reception in Cecil Square. Thence the march was continued to Ramsgate and it was after a recruiting smoking concert in the evening that a tragedy occurred with fatal consequences to one of the yeomanry officers, Lieut. Roland Winch being shot by a sentry as he was returning in his motor to his billet for the night.

It transpires from a letter written to his friends in Sheerness this week by a member of the regiment that Lieut. Winch's car was the second one to pass the sentry.

At the inquest held at Ramsgate General Hospital on Monday—Lieut. Winch died there on Saturday morning after receiving every care and assistance that medical skill could provide—it was stated that Lieutenant Winch and other officers were returning to their hotel after a recruiting meeting when their car was challenged in the darkness. A policeman and two civilians distinctly heard repeated challenges, but the car did not stop. The sentry fired at the wheels, but the shot went five inches higher than intended, and Lieut. Winch was hit.

Captain Meyer, of the Liverpool Regiment, mentioned a recent order against the use of motor-cars by military officers at night when not on duty. He said there had been several reports in Kent of military motorists disregarding the challenges of sentries.

The jury returned a verdict of "Death by Misadventure," and exonerated the sentry from blame. They suggested a better disposition of the sentry posts, and said that sentries should be provided with lights.

Officers of the Liverpool Regiment said that the sentry acted strictly according to instructions.

TRAGIC DEATH OF LIEUT. WINCH

An inquest was conducted at the Ramsgate General Hospital on Monday morning on the body of the late Second-Lieutenant Ronald Winch, of the Royal East Kent Mounted Rifles, of Boughton Place, Maidstone, who was shot by Pte. Finn, of the 2nd 7th King's Liverpool Regiment, now stationed in the town.

Reserve Constable Simmons stated that on Friday, April 16th, he was near the kiosk on the East Cliff, and there were two sentries close by. A motor car was seen approaching, and the sentry Finn said, "Here comes a very bright light." Witness pulled out his torch and the car stopped. Another car came along, and the sentry cried "Halt!" three or four times. The car did not stop, and as it was passing the bend the sentry fired. After that the car stopped.

Pte. Finn, of the 2nd 7th King's Liverpool Regiment, stated that he had been ordered to halt suspicious people and motor cars. At about 10.20 on the night in question a motor approached, and he halted it. The second car then approached, and he called to it to halt four times. He thought that the occupants must have heard the shout. They did not stop, and in another second they would have been past. He fired, intending to hit the wheel, but had no time to take a deliberate aim. He had been supplied with a different kind of rifle since mobilisation, and was not used to it. After he had fired someone said "Help! I'm shot." In his opinion there was no other way of stopping the car than firing at it. He had not been placed under arrest since.

Pte. Ainsworth, also on sentry duty close by, corroborated.

Mauris Nauchitel, a Russian, who resided some distance away from the scene, stated he distinctly heard the challenge from his balcony, and Herbert Weeks, a postal clerk, also deposed to hearing the challenge when he was at least 75 yards away.

Lieut. De Laune, of the Royal East Kent Mounted Rifles, was in the first car with Lieut.-Colonel Winch, deceased's father. They heard the challenge all right, he said, and also heard the second car challenged. The second car, however, may not have heard it.

Lieut. E. S. Dawes, of the R.E.K.M.R., stated he was driving the second car. He saw nobody and heard nothing until he heard what he thought was a tyre burst from the other car. Lieut. Winch called out, "Oh! Oh! I'm hit." Witness extinguished the lights on the car, fearing that someone had fired from the bushes near by.

Lieut.-Colonel Winch identified the body as that of his son. He said he was returning from a recruiting meeting when the accident occurred. Personally, he felt no vindictive spirit, but thought the sentry's beat an improper one.

Dr. Fisk stated the bullet had entered deceased's back, gone through the hip-bone, and come out in the front of the abdomen. Death occurred on Sunday morning at 4.15 a.m.

In reviewing the evidence, the Coroner said he would first like to express sympathy with Lieut.-Colonel Winch in his sad and unexpected bereavement. Lieut. Winch, he pointed out, was serving his country, and it was during his service to his country that he died, even as it would have been if he had been struck down by a German bullet. Pte. Finn was also serving his country, and he was prepared to do his duty, whether at Ramsgate, at the Front, or wherever he was required to do so. The sentry was faced with the problem that if the car did not stop when he challenged it, what was he to do? He made his decision, and if it had been carried out as he intended the accident would not have occurred. The jury were not there because the sentry had fired, but because the bullet did not go low enough. Instead of striking the wheel it struck the Lieutenant. There was no reason to believe that Pte. Finn was not doing his duty to his country in any way that he ought not to have done.

The jury returned a verdict of "Death from Misadventure," expressing the opinion that no blame was attached to the sentry. They also thought that if it be necessary to stop and search any motor cars along the front in the dark some readjustment of the sentry duty was desirable. The jury also desired to express sympathy with Lieut.-Colonel Winch in his sad loss.

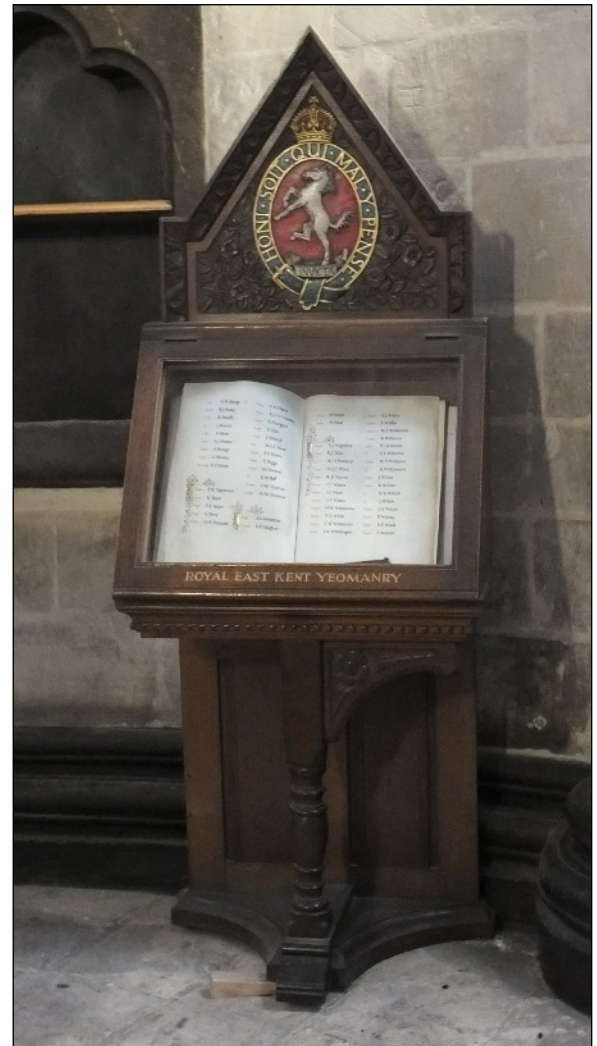
The funeral took place at Boughton Monchelsea, on Wednesday.

Other Memorials to Officers and Men of the Royal East Kent Yeomanry (Royal East Kent Mounted Rifles) to be found in East Kent



Plaster wall-plaque in memory of Captain Charles Hatfeild - hanging inside the tower of All Saints Church, Westbrook, Margate reading:

CHARLES HATFEILD L.D. M.C.
Captain in the East Kent Yeomanry. Killed in action
September 21st 1918 - aged thirty-one



The Book of Remembrance of men of the Royal East Kent Yeomanry in Canterbury Cathedral



Brass tablet in memory of Captain Robert Montefiore Sebag-Montefiore mounted on an inside wall of the Montefiore Synagogue at Ramsgate reading:

This tablet was erected by the Ramsgate Congregation
to the memory of
Captain Robert Montefiore Sebag-Montefiore
[Royal East Kent Mounted Rifles]
who died at Alexandria Nov 19th 1915 [12th Kislev 5676]
in the thirty-fourth year of his age
from wounds received at Gallipoli in the service of his King and Country.



Belgian Refugees in the First World War - Some Snippets

Some 250,000 Belgian refugees came to the UK during the First World War. Large numbers arrived in 1914 and 1915 and returned to Belgium after the Armistice.

A number went to Birtley, County Durham, where a new town (named Elisabethville - after Queen Elisabeth of the Belgians) was built to house them. The Belgian men there were employed in a munitions factory nearby.

Some Belgian refugees spent time in East Kent towns during the First World War as evidenced by the report published in the Kentish Times (see below) despite the Government's restrictions that no boats carrying Belgian refugees were to land at Ramsgate until permission had been granted to do so. How the present Government would love to be able to issue similar restrictions to other refugees today!



From: *East Kent Times* - 25 November 1914

Courtesy of the British Newspaper Archive



BIRMINGHAM SUPPORT
FOR BELGIAN REFUGEES
pin-badge incorporating the
Belgian Flag sold in support
of Belgian refugees

Diameter 19mm



Hand-carved wooden wall-plaque (tray?):

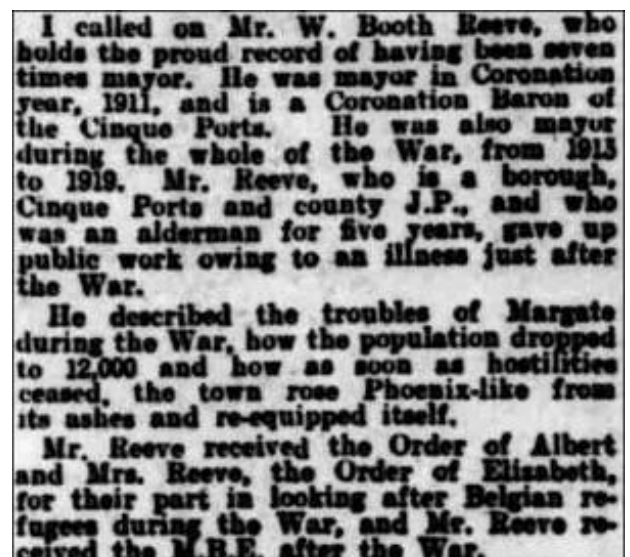
BELGIAN REFUGEES SANDAL

1914/15

L'UNION FAIT LA FORCE
(UNITY MAKES STRENGTH)

Diameter 425mm

Sandal is an area within Wakefield, Yorkshire, where a number of Belgian refugees were provided with accommodation in the early months of the war by the local authority. It is thought likely that this plaque was made to help raise funds for the refugees. A similar plaque is illustrated on page 251 of Jane Kimball's tome *Trench Art: An Illustrated History*. □



From: *The Kentish Express* - June 26 1936

Courtesy of the British Newspaper Archive

East Kent Regiment (The Buffs) medals - update

In the last issue of *Between the Lines*, I told the story of the two medals awarded to two different William Lakers and I offered them to any of our Branch members who were interested in researching them. I brought them along to the June Meeting and Peter Amory very generously offered to make a donation to any charity that I chose for the two medals. Of course, I chose the WFA East Kent Branch and

Peter's generous donation for the two medals was passed on to Hazel. Since then, David Gruber has located the Pensions Records through the WFA website for each of the two men (see below) and Peter has informed me that he is making enquiries about the William Laker who lived at Ash. I hope to be able to publish further information on Peter's research of these two soldiers in due course. □

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

Name <u>Laker Wm</u>		Regimental No. <u>3231</u>		Case No. <u>227</u>	
Regiment <u>West Kent T.F.</u>		Rank <u>PT</u>		Date of notification of death <u>5.9.15</u>	
Form 104-88 received <u>15.9.15</u>		Date of notification of death <u>5.9.15</u>		Form 104-76 received <u>27.9.15</u>	
Date and cause of death <u>18.8.15. Killed in Action.</u>					
Widow <u>Miriam</u> , <u>5 Grey Friars Cottages</u> , Date of birth <u>14.7.82</u> , <u>Stour St. Canterbury. Kent.</u>					
Children:—					
Name	Date of birth	Date of expiry	Remarks		
<u>Violet May</u>	<u>4.7.02</u>	<u>4.7.18</u>	<u>50 & 2.2.16.</u>		
<u>William James</u>	<u>11.3.05</u>	<u>11.3.21</u>	No. for whom S.A. is paid <u>William James at present in Ashford Industrial School.</u>		
<u>Alice Maud</u>	<u>4.10.06</u>	<u>4.10.22</u>	<u>Increase Widows pension by 2/</u>		
<u>Joseph</u>	<u>4.8.11</u>	<u>4.8.27</u>	<u>Decrease Widow's pension by 2/</u>		
<u>Daisy</u>	<u>24.10.12</u>	<u>24.10.28</u>	<u>2/ week with effect from next payment in respect of Alice Maud, now in the Victoria Patriotic School.</u>		
<u>Ernest</u>	<u>20.6.14</u>	<u>20.6.30</u>	<u>Pension of 2/ for this child should now be paid quarterly in arrears to the Royal Patriotic Fund Corporation.</u>		
<u>* Ethel Mary</u>	<u>1.3.16</u>	<u>1.3.32</u>	<u>Noted for Nov.</u>		
Pension <u>26/6</u> { <u>24/6 for widow & 5 children.</u> <u>2</u> a week from <u>6.3.16</u> <u>2/ for William James, not issuable at present.</u>					
Date awarded <u>4.3.16</u> . If refused, reason _____					
Papers _____					
(9 33 108) W 13947—517 20,000 3/15 H W V (P 1760/1) G. 15/251 14336—4797 20,000 12/15					



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

Name <u>Laker William</u>		Regimental No. <u>1086</u>		Case No. <u>11/PP/4717</u>	
Regiment or Ship <u>East Kent R.</u>		Rank <u>Private</u>		D.P. <u>11/PP/4717</u>	
Documents received from Paymaster. <u>Form S. SP. 1109. & B/L 1/6/20.</u>					
Date and cause of death <u>13/January 17. Broncho Pneumonia</u>					
Dependant <u>Mrs Emily Fanny Laker</u>					
Address <u>High St. Ash. Kent.</u>					
Relationship <u>Mother.</u>					
Pension <u>a week from</u>					
Date awarded _____ If refused, reason _____					
Papers _____					
F12208 47401/2553 100m (12) 3/19 J.P. up 159 13241 7472/2407 200m (12) 5/19 <u>DNB 4-6-20</u>					



The Glove Waistcoat Fund

I found this postcard at a Postcard Fair many years ago and puzzled over its history. The postcard showed that it had been published by a Canterbury photographer but nothing more. It was not until I searched on the British Newspaper Archive that I discovered what the history of the 'Glove Waistcoat Fund'. The two newspaper reports reproduced below provided me with the answers.

Presumably, Canterbury was targeted because of its leather tanneries at that time.

**OUR DUMB FRIEND
COLLECTS FOR THE
GLOVE WAISTCOAT FUND**

COMFORT FOR OUR BRAVE
FELLOWS AT THE
FRONT

**MARY, AGED 106 YEARS, ASKS
YOU TO BUY A POSTCARD
OF HER TO HELP THE
FUND:-
PRICE TWO PENCE**

*Postcard published by
STRINGER, PHOTOGRAPHER, CANTERBURY*

The text on the front of the postcard

'Mary' presumably, was a child's doll dating from around 1810. I wonder whether she still exists. □

JB



The fund-raising postcard

Correspondence.

**OLD GLOVES AND LEATHER FOR
SAILORS' AND SOLDIERS' WAISTCOATS**
To the Editor of the Kent Messenger.

Sir,—May I kindly use the "Kent Messenger" to convey my best thanks to all who have so generously responded to my appeal for old kid gloves, leather and fur, to be used for making waistcoats for our soldiers and sailors, and also for the pennies, which amounted to £12? One thousand five hundred pairs of old gloves have been sent to me, which have been forwarded to the "Glove Waistcoat Fund," Ladies' Territorial Committee, 75, Chancery Lane W.C. The Glove Waistcoat Fund has been enabled, by the kindness of friends in all parts of the world, to make last winter and this, nearly 11,000 windproof waistcoats for soldiers and sailors out of cast-off gloves, pieces of soft leather and fur linings. This winter the plan of asking the recipients to pay the actual cost of linenette used and payment made to the sempstress, etc., has worked so admirably that it has become a self-supporting industry, excepting only for the windproof material itself. The Committee has now no need to ask for money, but begs very urgently for further supplies of old gloves and leather, to enable them to meet the heavy demands for these garments from camps on the East Coast and ships in the North Sea. The men are waiting for the waistcoats; over sixty women who cannot leave their homes to work in shops or factories are employed in making them. The Ladies' Territorial Committee has asked me to continue acting as receiver in this neighbourhood and I trust this further appeal will be seen by many, and that more bundles will be sent to me for this patriotic work.—Yours truly,

(MRS.) MARY RICHMOND.
Greenhithe, Kent

From: Kent Messenger - 18 March 1916

Courtesy of the British Newspaper Archive

GLOVE WAISTCOAT FUND.
To the Editor of the "Kentish Gazette and Canterbury Press."

Dear Sir,—May I ask you once again to insert in your paper further particulars concerning the "Glove Waistcoat Fund."

Since September 20th, 1915, I have received from the local depôts:—1,208 pairs gloves, 52 chair covers (leather), 26 skins, 17 belts, 17 bags, 4 furs, 4 muffs, 3 fur coats, 1 sofa cover, endless pieces of fur and leather, also £11 0s. 8d. in cash.

I wish to return my best thanks to those who have contributed. Further gifts will be much appreciated by

Yours truly,
DORA PAGE,
Hon. Local Sec.

February 9th, 1916.

From: The Kentish Gazette and Canterbury Press - 12 February 1916

Courtesy of the British Newspaper Archive

Presentation of a Mark IV Female Tank to the City of Canterbury Peace Day 19th July 1919



Postcard published by J. G. Charlton, Photographer, 14 Mercury Lane, Canterbury

CANTERBURY—TANK PRESENTED TO CITY.

There was a full round of festivities at Canterbury on Peace Day, the programme commencing with the presentation in the Ancient Moat of a female tank, by Major-General Sir Colin Mackenzie, on behalf of the National War Savings Committee. The Mayor and Corporation, the Dean and Mrs. Wace, Colonel Ryder and officers from the Garrison attended, and the interesting ceremony was witnessed by thousands of citizens, most of whom assembled in the Upper Dane John Terrace immediately overlooking the Moat. The General heartily congratulated the city on the large sums of money it had raised for the various War Loans and on the splendid record of service it had shown during the war. The Mayor, in receiving the tank, mentioned that many Canterbury families had had six, seven and more sons serving in the war, besides daughters who were married to men in the forces. An officer and fifty men of "The Buffs" provided a guard of Honour to receive the General on his arrival and a contingent from the 5th (Royal Irish) Lancers were also present.

(The above report is extracted from a fuller report on Canterbury's celebrations of Peace Day in 1919)

From: Kent Messenger - 26 July 1919

Courtesy of the British Newspaper Archive

This superb postcard view shows the Canterbury tank in Dane John Moat on Saturday, 19 July 1919. It is believed that the photograph was taken from the city wall. It can be seen that the tank was mounted on a specially-constructed concrete base after having been driven under its own power from Canterbury East railway station. The War Office had advised that great care be taken in driving the tank from the railway station because of its weight and possible damage to underground sewers and water supply. A number of tanks were awarded to towns throughout the country in recognition of their contribution towards the War Savings campaign during the first World War. In addition to Canterbury, tanks were also awarded to other towns in East Kent, namely Ashford, Deal, Faversham and Folkestone.

Canterbury's tank was accepted by Dr R. A. Bremner, Mayor of Canterbury, on behalf of the City. It is believed that it was scrapped in 1940.

Most tanks were scrapped before the Second World War. The tank at Ashford is the sole surviving presentation tank for the whole of the country. For many years, it was utilised as an electricity sub-station but is now under a specially-constructed shelter and its body is maintained in good order. If you haven't seen it, it is well worth a visit. □

JB

The Three Crosses at La Boisselle 1916

Only a few days after 1st July 1916, a Captain in the Divisional Staff of 34th Division was ordered by Major-General Ingouville-Williams to place three crosses on the battlefield in memory of the Division. Their casualty rate was the worst of any of the divisions involved. Many of the dead still lay where they fell.

Captain G. E. F Pollard, in peacetime a bank manager, wrote in 1926 “undoubtedly he had it in his mind to commemorate the Division. The exact spot on which to place them he left to my discretion. The holocaust on that day was appalling and it was borne entirely by the Infantry. I placed the crosses ... where the majority of the bodies were found.”

The inscription on the plinth of each wooden cross read: “Here lie buried the gallant Men of the 34th Division killed July 1st, 1916.”

He further wrote “Sergeant Scott, of the Tyneside Scottish, a wonderfully powerful man both physically and mentally, carried the crosses from Becourt Chateau to the spots on which they were erected. It would not have been wholesome to use transport.”

Captain Pollard, himself an infantryman, added to his account: “...realising what I was in those days I have always looked on those crosses as commemorating the three infantry Brigades.”

In 1926, there was a Pilgrimage to La Boisselle by veterans of the Division to unveil the Divisional memorial in the village. This was reported in *The Chequers*, an annual publication by the Divisional Officers' Club. They found two of the wooden crosses remained. Sitting on the edge of one of the big mine craters (it is not clear which) they could see one of the crosses.

A year later it was reported that “the remains” of the two crosses had been placed alongside the 34th Division memorial and treated with preservative. It was also said that as the crosses were commemorating the two Tyneside brigades, they had been offered to Newcastle Cathedral who: “...unfortunately, did not see their way to giving them house room, which we cannot help regretting.”

By 1929, the last remains of the crosses had completely rotted away.

I have found no record so far of the original positions of the three crosses. IWM photograph Q.1055 is a panoramic taken by Ernest Books in September 1916. A cross is on the left and the



*One of the three crosses
Source of photo: The Chequers*

description says that on the right is chalk thrown up “by big mine”. It also says the cross was 20 yards to the left of “the roadway on the hill crest overlooking the giant mine Crater, Becourt Wood, Sausage Valley.” The photograph probably has some distortion due to the panoramic element, so nothing absolutely certain can be said about the position.

Trying to find out more has led me to discover that memorials to individuals and groups proliferated during and after the war as individuals, military groups ranging from platoons to battalions sought to commemorate their lost comrades. Many were placed in cemeteries where they lay, others were on the battle-sites, such as La Boisselle.

In the 1920s, as the War Graves Commission developed and undertook the work to ensure the long-term nature of commemoration, the future of the wooden memorials was a problem. Maintaining them was deemed beyond their remit. The military groups that had placed the memorials were gone – disbanded or elsewhere. Long lists survive in the CWGC records, together with correspondence concerning their fate.

I am trying to find out more. Once again, the Great War has opened yet another fascinating story and research trail to follow. □

Hazel Basford

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)

August

No meeting

5 September

Christina Holstein

'Verdun: The Left Bank'

3 October

Carole Hope

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

7 November

Mark Harris

'Harwich Submarine Flotilla in the Great War'

5 December

Peter Hart

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

All are welcome

WFA branches are entirely self-supporting. A donation towards the expenses of the meeting is very much appreciated

For further details, please contact:

Hazel Basford

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



THE WESTERN FRONT ASSOCIATION

Founded by John Giles. Inaugurated 11th November 1980

Registered Charity No. 298365



...and I end this issue on a humorous note with these two WWI comic postcards!

