

# CHANNEL ISLAND GREAT WAR STUDY GROUP



RGLI "Kneelers" – St George's Church, Ypres

## NEWSLETTER 7 APRIL 2006

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Hello All

Another two months have appeared to have shot by and it is time once again to assemble this newsletter. For me it has been a busy two months with a week doing research in Jersey and a fortnight on the Somme with an overnight trip to Ypres, both of which are reflected in two articles below. The first article reflects some of the news items reported in the Evening Posts of the day, and which today should remind us that those JEPs appear to be the best historical sources that exist, at least for Jersey. The second article can be loosely described as some “rambling about my ramblings on the Somme”! I was a little concerned that I was letting the newsletter become too Jersey-centric! To address this Liz Walton has responded with an excellent article on the “Hidden” memorials in Guernsey. It reflects some of her work that can currently be seen on her website for which she seems well ahead of the game.

I am probably holding myself as a hostage to fortune on two accounts:

First as part of improving the appearance I hope to have successfully bound this newsletter using “comb binders” – I cannot write that I’ve been successful and then try it – cart before the horse sort of thing.

Secondly, by the time you have received this, I hope to have got a letter off to the main island papers about whether there should be a CI Great War Memorial somewhere reasonably prominent in France and Flanders. By my reckoning some 2000+ men died in the service of the then British Empire and the CI does not have a visible equivalent of the Ulster Tower or the South Africa Memorial at Delville Wood. If you will forgive the awful pun, their commemoration is “buried” within the many British and Dominion Memorials.

On a more personal note, I was greatly delighted to have dinner with Ned Malet de Carteret and Ian and Paul Ronayne the night before I left Jersey. We talked long and hard about all things Great War and possibly attracted a few strange glances from nearby diners as we toasted the Jersey Contingent somewhat late in the evening. Regrettably I had to leave them to stay for a few hours longer for fear of turning into a pumpkin!

### **New Members**

I am pleased to add another two names to the fold this issue:

First, Roger Frisby who lives in Hoddesdon, Herts and who is also an website buff and has been working with Liz on the Ada’s War website.

Secondly, Evan Ozanne and is involved with the Torteval parish in Guernsy and is an ex-Army man with an interest in the historic WW2 fortifications in Guernsey and keen on learning more of the Great War.

Both have obviously been introduced via Liz and I’ve included their contact details on the updated list which accompanies this newsletter.

## **Postscripts**

This is just a brief section to tie up some loose ends from earlier Newsletters and add some photographs in support.

### **What Happened Then?**

In the last Issue I had speculated on the demise, during October 1918, of Privates Baudains, Brierley, Ecobichon and Robert, all of the RJGB. As it turned out, they were indeed all victims of the Spanish Flu pandemic and had died at the Military Hospital in Brighton Road, St Helier, an establishment that I suspect many people today are unaware of.

Scratching at the data in the JEPs a little deeper, it transpired that there were 224 deaths registered in Jersey during that month of which 137 were attributed to influenza cases and it would seem that the largest proportion of these were people less than 65 and older than 1 year old. As a comparison for other months that I noted, deaths were as follows:

Feb 1917 – 97, Dec 1917 – 55, Feb 1918 – 55.

Schools were closed during this period along with public entertainment areas such as West's Cinema and the Opera House. Meanwhile, previous editions (those around July 1918) of the JEP had reported on flu epidemics in Hull and Northampton.

It seemed however that the pandemic did not last overlong on the island, however, that said I did not venture into the 1919 JEP.

### **1926 Guillemont Photograph (Ian Ronayne)**

As you may be aware, the picture of the Jersey Company veterans at the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division Memorial unveiling at Guillemont in 1926 was published in the "Temps Passé" section of the Jersey Evening Post some weeks back. I am pleased to say that the JEP published my accompanying text almost word-for-word, including a brief and slightly muddled mention of the Channel Islands Great War Study Group. However, and really annoyingly, they left off my telephone number in the "please contact me if you can identify any of the men in the picture" bit. This meant that any potential respondents would need to write or E-Mail me with any feedback.

I can't be sure, but I think this may have been the limiting factor, and led to a somewhat disappointing five responses, including one was not actually linked to the Jersey Company. To be positive however, it does mean that I can add five names to the list of men identified (one contact had two) in the photograph. Regrettably, aside from identifying these men, the respondents had very little further information on these men's activities during the war, which was one of my goals. The one exception may be a late response from the grandson of RSM Jack Le Breton MBE. He was the senior NCO in the Jersey Company, and later in the 7<sup>th</sup> Royal Irish Rifles. He was also very

obviously the man who did most to maintain the identity and well-being of these men both during and after the war. His grandson tells me that he remains the “keeper” of the MBE today, and that also he will try to go through some old family stuff at some point, and see if anything remains in his possession relating to his grandfather’s experiences.

One of the respondents also told me that she had passed on all of her father-in-law’s possessions relating his WW1 experience to the local branch of the Militia (now the Jersey Field Squadron). However, my follow-up with them drew something of a blank; they sounded a bit unsure as to what happened to these items. I have a feeling it is in a box tucked away in some dusty corner ... or worse!

(Ed’s Comment – Perhaps on Ian’s last point a letter to the Field Squadron might be a wake up call? Any such memorabilia should go to the Archive or the Societe Jersiaise and maybe the JEP should also be contacted to encourage this. So much gets into private collections that it becomes “hidden” from public view)

### **Pour La Patrie**

Ian Ronayne’s article on the French Mobilisation of 1914 referred to “*A memorial established in the French Consul after the war was inscribed with the names of 165 Frenchmen from Jersey who fell “Pour La Patrie”*”, and in an accompanying E-Mail he made reference to it now being located at St. Thomas’ RC Church in Val Plaisant, St Helier. Unfortunately when he tried to see it, it was locked away in a chapel being used as a store following the closure of another RC church in Vauxhall.

I can confirm that it appears to be there, but it is virtually hidden by other material and not safely visible without a considerable amount of “lifting and shifting”. However, a statue and a panel to the St. Thomas’ RC dead are partially visible as can be seen from the photographs below. I am afraid that I find that the lack of viewing of a Great War memorial is difficult to reconcile when on one of St. Thomas’ church walls there is a Jersey Liverpool Supporters’ Club plaque to the Hillsborough dead though I do not wish to diminish the seriousness of that disaster.

Hopefully the current Church restoration will quickly proceed so that the Memorials are again easily seen.

And a further postscript from Ian:

I sent a copy of the article to a Mr Robert Perette, who is president of the Jersey branch of the “Ancient Combattant” organisation in Jersey. He was interested in the French community in Jersey in WW1, but knew nothing about it. I will see if he follows up or not.



### A Kiwi Soldier

Slightly belated after her article, a photograph of Elizabeth Morey and the grave of Private Charles Gillard, 1<sup>st</sup> Canterbury Bn, NZEF at St. Aubert British Cemetery in France. Keen-eyed readers may note that the wooden cross is not, from the UK standpoint, the traditional British Legion one.



## **A Voyage to Another Jersey** **By Barrie Bertram**

*As most of you know, I spent the best part of a working week in the Jersey Library during February going through the (Jersey) Evening Posts of the Great War period. It was truly a voyage back in time to an island that was so different from what we see today. Hence the title which sounds so much better than "A Week in the Life of Micro-Fiche Man"! My objective had been to look at the reported casualties but, not infrequently a particular article caught my eye and so off down another blind alley I travelled! Unfortunately, I did not meet my objective and I still have to visit the latter half of 1915 and the bulk of 1916. Nevertheless, I came away with some insight into what was going on and the recognition that, though unintentional, the reporters of that period have provided us with a great source of historical material worthy of detailed research. This article will I hope bring a few anecdotes to your attention and prompt you, if that is indeed needed, to go along and look at the micro-fiche yourselves. I apologise here if there is any chronological slips, if you had seen my notebook you would understand.*

Throughout the war, the JEP was a four-sided broadsheet newspaper providing a mixture of the latest war news interspersed with international, UK and local news. Unsurprisingly, much use was made of official government communiqués and reports from news agencies such as Reuters. There was a considerable amount of space devoted to advertising, whether it was inviting readers to buy tea from Katookella at 55 Halkett Place or to acquire "Harlene Hair Drill" so that they might also "banish hair poverty". A few advertisers would make use of soldiers' testimonials to sell their products and one could unwittingly read quite a lengthy article before getting to the sales' punch-line. This was a particular device of Bisson's in New Street, in terms of selling their Chemico waistcoat which, I was assured, would cause German bayonets to bend! Generally throughout the JEP the use of pictures was variable with none being displayed for several weeks at a time.

As well as commercial advertising the papers were used for official notices, and clearly the authorities would make use of the paper to hasten up the late delivery of potatoes to the military, to warn of artillery practice at South Hill, and advertise contracts to service the POW camp with provisions for example. I was minded to note that Ned Malet De Carteret's great-grandfather was chairman of the War Relics Committee set up to collect artefacts for the Museum!

Reports on States proceedings were substantial and one could even say having a quality not unlike Hansard with Acts such as the Military Service Act in 1917 being published in full, notwithstanding a mishap with one Article where the original English parliamentary text had been used, and not the one proposed by the States in its original French, and subsequently translated. All in all the JEP was a more serious minded publication designed to inform, and this was reflected also in the quality of letters. (One questions today's quality of JEP!)

Starting with the 1<sup>st</sup> July's JEP and it appeared that during the lead up to the War, very little was being reported on Austrian-Servian (sic) friction as it was later described. The Irish Home Bill was very clearly occupying a great deal of parliamentary time and the public's attention as a consequence. While there was a regular cover on the "Albanian Turmoil", the Calmette murder trial in France also featured frequently. There were strikes at Woolwich Arsenal and the Mersey Docks. Meanwhile, the JEP reported that the Fleet was at Spithead on 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> July assembling for a Naval Pageant in front of King George V, who subsequently led them off on fleet manoeuvres. This is of interest in that, on the fleet's return, the reservists who had been called up did not subsequently disperse to their homes but remained on stand-by in the event of mobilisation.

During July the Jersey Militia and the Victoria College OTC were embarking on their respective military training camps. On 20<sup>th</sup> July, 1<sup>st</sup> (West) Battalion would be going under canvas at Quennevais until the 29<sup>th</sup>, having been preceded by 3<sup>rd</sup> (South) Battalion and to be followed by 2<sup>nd</sup> (East) Battalion. The OTC was going further afield and on the 27<sup>th</sup> their Advanced Party sailed off to set up at Tidworth while the Main Party would arrive on the 30<sup>th</sup>! It is in the last week of July that the JEP appears to report for the first time on Austrian-Servian friction (on the 25<sup>th</sup>) when Serbia yields to Austrian requests and Russia mobilises. Austria's declaration of war is covered on the 28<sup>th</sup> but as late as the 30<sup>th</sup> any possible mobilisation by the French was described as wild rumour! However, late on the 29<sup>th</sup> the Lieutenant Governor called out the Jersey Militia the following day, an act that was apparently "jumping the gun" as no Order in Council had been issued at that time! They may technically have been the first British troops to mobilise (and that could have been regarded as a provocative military act)!

Mobilisation of the French reserves took place a few days after (as described by Ian Ronayne in the last issue of this newsletter) along with the British Army reserves. However, the recovery back to Jersey of the OTC appeared uncommented upon, while on 11<sup>th</sup> August horses were sought for purchase, which alongside men joining up, as such, an early impact of the war on the island's farming.

It seems that at about this point the fog of war began to descend. Clearly the JEP, and all other newspapers, did not have any embedded reporters as we seem to enjoy (?) today. Much war reporting was therefore achieved by the release of official communiqués and invariably well after the event. A particular example of this was the British-German Naval battle off the Coronel in Chile when it seems that definitive British reports took more than a week to reach the paper. Undoubtedly that, in part, was due to the total absence of British survivors from HMS Good Hope and HMS Monmouth and the obvious distance. At the human level, casualty details from the Battle of the Coronel were also slow with, for example, JT Le Vesconte's death not appearing in the JEP until February 1915.

Undoubtedly, and with regards to casualty reporting in particular, the nature of the battles in France and Flanders added to the confusion and delay in letting

those at home know of the loss of a loved one. The death of Captain Ernest Briard of 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Norfolk's was probably the first Jersey death during the war on 24<sup>th</sup> August, but at first he is reported as missing, and then subsequently as a POW some months later. Later on the JEP starts priming the reader that the POW report may be erroneous and we now know via the JRoH&S and the College Book of Remembrance that he was KIA. Numerous MIA were reported only to be confirmed very much later as KIA. There are, however, a few happier stories going the other way where a man reported killed is subsequently found alive. One particular case that must have caused severe emotional swings was that of Private Edward C Baillie of the Jersey Contingent who, on 16<sup>th</sup> August 1917 was reported dead. His officer had clearly seen the body and so had RSM Jack Le Breton who wrote a letter back to Edward's parents in Jersey. It was about a month or so later that Edward's father, recognising the handwriting, received a letter addressed by Edward stating that he had been injured and was now a POW. The letter was in part written by Edward, and it was continued by an Australian fellow POW because Edward had apparently incurred head and eye injuries. Unfortunately it appears that Edward subsequently died of those wounds on 20<sup>th</sup> September.

The Militia had, as been mentioned earlier, mobilised and there was much discussion initially on the lack of interest by the British government in their being used as a stand alone battalion. On reflection this can be attributed somewhat to Kitchener's aversion to Territorial Forces, preferring the New Armies route. However, there remained the need for the island's defence, and in terms of military thinking it may have been of a much earlier German occupation than that experienced 25 odd years later (after all, Erskine Childers' "Riddle of the Sands" had highlighted the risk of an emerging German Navy and capability to land troops ashore). A little fanciful? Maybe, but after initially deploying depots, bases and lines of communication facilities at Le Havre, Rouen and Boulogne to support the BEF on a west to east orientation, following the retreat from Mons and the southward movement of the BEF, these facilities became exposed. As a consequence, they were redeployed to St Nazaire and Nantes thus requiring longer sea journeys and increasing the risk of submarine action. Had such circumstances continued it is possible to see that the islands' position could have greatly contributed to protecting the shipping lanes. According to the JEP, much later on (in 1918), the threat of invasion had sufficiently receded to allow the authorities to offer up Bonne Nuit Barracks for rent!

As the war settled into its static routine, the JEP highlighted the subsequent request for Jersey troops to form a unit, and it was clear that by this time some caution had set in before the Jersey Contingent set sail to Ireland on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1915. There was much adverse comment at the struggle to make up numbers, a point I'll leave to Ian for some detailed comment in the future.

Throughout the period, the JEP was reporting on servicemen who had returned to the island on leave, clearly reflecting the fact that some form of military travel control was being exerted at the Harbour. It also seems obvious that there was some military tourism in that a number of Canadian military personnel took their leave in Jersey, and not necessarily having any links with

the island. Edward McLinton had an extended leave in June 1915 to have an operation.

While I have previously noted that women were never listed in the JRoH&S, the JEP showed that throughout the war Jerseywomen were contributing to the war effort in their own way through service with the VAD, FANY, WAAC, and later, the QMAAC. Alongside the lists of men on leave, women who were serving at hospitals and units in the UK or in France and Flanders were recorded as coming home for rest. The first name that I picked up on was an Ida L Amy who was serving with the Women's Emergency Committee. As to the omission of women's names from the JRoH&S, it appeared that this should not have happened as highlighted in an article on 25<sup>th</sup> September 1918 which implied that the British Red Cross Society should have collated such a list. Whatever happened to that list one must ask? Meanwhile, at least one woman, a Miss Purkiss, was reported as having died whilst working in munitions.

In an earlier newsletter Ian Ronayne had written of George Cawley being washed ashore in a boat in 1917, but it seems that the JEP was frequently reporting on bodies being washed up on the coasts of Jersey, sometimes in the most gruesome fashion (the reporting that is). Undoubtedly as in the case of an unidentified Norwegian sailor many of these resulted from U-boat activities. However other tragedies were being reported such as the Bon Secours drowning tragedy at Portelet Bay in July 1915, where eight students of the Jesuit college lost their young lives (talk about good supervision and health and safety). Two particular items caught my eye. First, a young girl, surname Le Chevalier and from St. Martin lost both her feet in accident at home! Secondly, in early 1917, Emma Gilbert aged 50 was given 15 years penal servitude for causing the death of Clara Grandin through performing an illegal operation on her. Gilbert was described as an illegal practitioner while poor Clara was the wife of a James Gibson, at that time a POW! One can only guess at the nature of the operation performed!

Tragedies on the mainland occasionally fed through, a tram in Dover coming downhill and losing its brakes with 11 dead and 34 injured in 1917, while the railways in the UK could not have been safe in 1916 with 1066 dead and 5589 injured. There were no shortage of murders either it seems with a number of "khaki on khaki" killings occurring in barracks!

On a much lighter note, the JEP occasionally reported on concerts being provided for the staff at the POW Camp. Pursuing the POW line, it was also reported that some 600 Germans were to be returned to the mainland to work on farms in England in February 1917. Although the Albert Pier itself was sealed off, the promenade above was not, and sightseers were treated to these POW arriving on two trains from the west of the island, carrying their belongings in sacks as well as, in some cases, chairs and musical instruments. But to complete this picture of British brutality, a German working party had been made to load on their heavy baggage which had been delivered to the harbour previously and which included scenery from the camp theatre!

The Military Service Act, after a delay, came into being on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1917, to be effective a month later, and as mentioned was promulgated in the JEP. It had a number of effects. First as expressed, men between the ages of 18 and 41 were deemed to have enlisted into the forces as of 25<sup>th</sup> March. At the same time, the Militia ceased to exist and the Royal Jersey Garrison Battalion came into being. However, there appears to be little in the JEP to give substance to the creation of the RJGB and 110 Company RGA which seems to be the rump of the former RJA. An article on 28<sup>th</sup> February does however cite the Militia as being disbanded with the names of 118 men who are considered fit for duty on the island and in a number of cases those names appear on the RJGB's Armistice Nominal Roll. Subsequent editions saw more men added to those 118. Incidentally, when the German POW departed, a party of 3 officers and 100 men of 2<sup>nd</sup> (Home Service) Battalion North Staffords turned up for garrison duty. Hopefully further research will show whether or not these were the same 100 men that were subsumed into the RJGB (with regimental numbers 880 to 979).

In the intervening one month period men were still able to enlist voluntarily, but with the implementation of the Military Service Act, there came the need for Tribunals to assess the medical fitness of individuals, and their personal circumstances and commitments. With the growing manpower crisis in the British Army, the military were keen to wrinkle out as many men as they could while there remained the consideration that businesses and farms still had to be run. The JEP reported, virtually verbatim, the proceedings at the Tribunals which were based on the Militia Battalion areas of East, West and South, as well as the Central Tribunal intended for appeals. Some of the proceedings were amusing and not a little mirth or sarcasm crept in.

There was for example, the Jersey-born son of a French soldier who, with his mother, used the excuse that he was the only male to run the farm business but having the military authorities discover that father had been discharged and was back in the island. Mother and son raged at the tribunal when this was discovered but father sat through the proceedings quite calmly! A John Pallot farming in Trinity tried to get his son Hedley exempt, but was reminded that he had eight sons none of whom were serving even though a picture had been attached to the paperwork showing six young men in uniform. Hedley eventually went on to serve in the MGC. Lastly, a 23 year old who was still taking exams at Oxenford House School in St Lawrence pleaded that he was not very fit and in any case, he doubted that military rations would suit him!

In some of the Tribunal reports one could sense the tension in the room between the military, who wanted all the men they could get for the front, and the other tribunal members who saw that services, farms, businesses and utilities still had to function. So much so, that the States' Greffier produced some detailed figures at the outset of 1918 and which are condensed below:

a. Period 23<sup>rd</sup> February – 24<sup>th</sup> March 1917

b. Period 25<sup>th</sup> March – 31<sup>st</sup> December 1917

Enrolments – Army & RN	1634
Medical Rejections	419
Army Reserve	313
Relegated to Reserve	35
OTC	5
Mercantile Marine	152
Exempt as States Employees	24
Exempted by Tribunals	1557
Total	4139

However, there were also cases reported of individuals going off to England and within a few days of commencing their training, being on the next boat home as unfit for military service! This drew some adverse criticism as to being wasteful by the JEP. As a general point, the problem of medical categorisation was fairly widespread, and while the Army required A1 men in the front line, it was found in the 1918 battles that men rated with B fitness levels performed far better than had been expected. Throughout the war also, the OTC at Victoria College continued to function and provide military training to those who would become officer candidates in their turn.

It became clear while viewing the JEP that the impact of the Act is worthy of a more detailed study to understand the reasons behind those who were exempt.

Crime did not vanish when patriotism appeared! 71 year old Frank Le Gallais (of the Le Gallais Furniture and Removals company) died in May 1917. Some months later, a headline “The Recent Extensive Robberies” informs us that 7 of his staff and a member of the RJGB, a Lance Corporal FW Brown, were awarded between 2 and 12 months prison with hard labour for taking and selling on furniture. Undoubtedly, the inheritors did a stock check after Frank died! Brown was awarded 2 months and was still in the RJGB at Armistice.

Entertainment and sport were regularly commented upon with Mary Pickford films being popular and sports matches between various garrison teams or the schools. Success at sports in the Army also was reported on and Sgt EW Cake was featured under the headline “Jersey Sergeant’s Splendid Success” in that he came in 1<sup>st</sup> in the 100 yards Open and 100 yards Men, with his team also coming 1<sup>st</sup> in the 300 yard Relay. However, there remained room for improvement when he could only finish 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Three-Legged Race and a poor 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 100 yards Gas Helmet race!

Getting to the object of my research, it helped in that it cleared up some conflicts I had noted before coming and also, highlighted a number of names that were omitted from the JRoH&S. In the latter case, the JEP carried a number of casualties in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Devonshires who had been the garrison battalion until shortly after the war’s outbreak and therefore should be discounted. So, in that respect there seemed to be a social link reflected.

However there were other names which I need to work through in some detail. With regards to the conflicts, I was able to reaffirm the data contained in the JEP. Some additional facts emerged. For example, I found that Garnet Cory Burton had resigned his commission on health grounds, becoming the publican of the Gloucester Hotel, subsequently dying of ill health at 33. Thomas Condon appeared "to have taken leave of his senses" and climbed onto the railings of the mailboat in moderately rough seas going from Jersey to Southampton and then going overboard even after an attempt at restraint by a steward. I could not understand why Captain Coutart de Butts Taylor had also served as Sgt CE Collins, 17<sup>th</sup> Battalion RWF, until a small piece in the JEP informed the reader that he had been cashiered on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1916 for being AWOL! Lastly, Lieutenant Colonel Cubitt Rundle died at the POW Camp, presumably while attending German patients. I still have work to do in this area as a number of reported deaths are not matched by CWGC entries.

The JEP was also quite graphic in the reporting of the injuries and casualties. One would know that an individual was very seriously ill, that a leg had been amputated, or that there was shrapnel in the lungs. Several of the Jersey Contingent who were killed on 16<sup>th</sup> August 1917 occupied the same shell-hole. There were a couple of gunshot wounds to hands that would have looked suspiciously like self-inflicted wounds, I would have struggled to understand how a right hand could have been injured with an explosion in a rifle, not least because it is very difficult to fire it left-handed (I am left-handed and have fired the SMLE, quite comfortably, right-handed)!

In conclusion, that is the account of my "voyage", one that I found too short but one that I hope to repeat very soon! Since coming back I have contacted the British Library in the (what turned out to be) forlorn hope that they loan out micro-fiche copies of the JEP to university and public libraries. As I with this article and also Ian and Liz have previously demonstrated in earlier articles, there is a wealth of history waiting to be revealed, and undoubtedly there will be many surprises. The micro-fiche at the Library is a great resource.

### **Guernsey's "Hidden" Memorials By Liz Walton**

War memorials are probably the most numerous of all public memorials in Britain and Europe, and can be found in almost every town and city across the areas that were affected by the two World Wars. Most of them were erected in the period immediately after the First World War when there was a huge public demand for permanent monuments to commemorate men who had died for their country but whose bodies lay elsewhere, according to principles agreed with the Imperial (now the Commonwealth) War Graves Commission. It was as if bereaved families and communities hoped that a public monument would provide a focus for their grief, in the same way that a grave in a local cemetery would have done.

Guernsey lost over 1,000 men out of a total island population of about 40,000 and consequently has a relatively large number of memorials. Besides the Bailiwick memorial at the top of Smith Street in St Peter Port, and the ten

parish memorials, other associations, workplaces, churches and schools felt the need to commemorate their own people who had not returned. However, over the years, buildings have undergone changes of use, or have been knocked down and replaced, and their memorials have either been relocated elsewhere or replaced within the new building. The term “hidden” is not strictly accurate in relation to the ones described below, as all are accessible to the public, and are not concealed in any way. However, they are in unexpected places so that most people either pass them by without a second glance.



The Checkers Superstore in Admiral Park, a modern development between Les Banques and Le Bouet in St Peter Port, is not a place where one would expect to find a memorial to those who fell in the Great War. However between two pairs of sliding entrance doors is a copy of the St Peter Port Parish Memorial. The original, a single satin walnut panel listing in gilt the names of parishioners who had fallen in the Great War, with a holder for flowers at the base, was unveiled with great ceremony by the Lieutenant-Governor in January 1917. It was constructed by Mr J Smith, Sanitary Engineer, and the names were inscribed by the sign-writer Mr E.J. Dene. The *Weekly Press* of February 1920 describes how it was rebuilt (by the same people) and enlarged to form a triptych, as although the first shrine had allowed half a panel for the addition of names of any future casualties, by 1920 two more panels were needed to accommodate them, making a total of approximately names. Like its predecessor, it was erected on the gable of Le Riche's Stores at the bottom of Smith Street in St Peter Port. In 2002, the Le Riche group merged with another Channel Islands company to form CI Traders Ltd, who now own the Checkers Superstore, hence its placement. It is the third version of the memorial, the previous one having begun to disintegrate, but it is very similar to its predecessors. It is one of a pair- its

matching partner resides in the entrance hall of St Peter Port Constables' Office in Lefebvre Street.

Another memorial that is largely unnoticed despite its striking appearance is the one commemorating Old Boys of the States Intermediate School. It can now be found in a small lobby at the Les Varendes entrance to the new Grammar school building. The original was in the old Boys' Intermediate School (which became the Boys' Grammar School), in Brock Road, and the head boy used to read the names on it every Remembrance Day. According to Jurat Alan Bisson, the last headmaster of the Boys' Grammar School, when they moved the merged boys' and girls' schools to the new premises, a deliberate decision was made to take the memorial with them, as the Remembrance day ceremony had been such an important part of the school's tradition. Several of the names on it also occur on the Elizabeth College memorial, as the Intermediate School did not have the equivalent of a 6<sup>th</sup> form, so boys would move on to the college for further studies. This memorial was erected on its current site in 1985, when the new school opened. Many of those named on it, such as Captain FW Arnold, Sergeant EA Hotton, Company Sergeant Major F Bachmann, and Private AH de Jausserand, fell on the same day, 1<sup>st</sup> December 1917, at Cambrai.



Just inside the front door of Frossard House, the main States Offices in the Bordage, is a small, highly polished (and hence difficult to photograph) brass plaque commemorating six States employees who died in the Great War. This was moved to its current position when the States Offices moved from what are now the Tourist Board premises on the North Esplanade in St Peter Port. Again, most people pass it by without a second glance. In fact, the staff members on the front desk a few feet away from it were unaware of its existence, and had to phone a long serving member of staff to find out where it was!

The plaques that originally stood in the Catholic churches of St Yves in the Forest and St Magloire at L'Islet are slightly less accessible than those mentioned so far. When the churches were deconsecrated, the memorials were removed and they are now combined on a single memorial in the Presbytery gardens, behind St. Joseph's Church in St Peter Port. The gardens are private, but access was given readily on the basis of a telephone call to the presbytery. The gardens are an oasis of quiet above the rooftops of St Peter Port and form a fitting setting for the memorial, which includes the names of several members of the French Army.



The memorial to the old boys of Les Vauxbelets College takes a somewhat different form. I spent some time walking around what is now Blanchelande School, looking for a conventional memorial, and eventually found a granite



wall with a flower bed by the Rues Frairies entrance. The wall is engraved with a gold star and the motto "Signum Fidei" – a sign of faith. It goes on to say that Les Vauxbelets Memorial Playing Fields are dedicated to the memory of Les Vauxbelets College who fell in both wars. There are no names inscribed on it.

Other island memorials remain so well hidden that I have yet to find them. Les Landes Chapel in the Vale apparently had one- but I can't find any trace of the chapel, let alone the memorial. Ebenezer Church in Brock Road, St Peter Port is currently being renovated and is unsafe to enter. The contractors are looking for information about its memorial, pictured in the *Weekly Press* of 18<sup>th</sup> August 1923 and said to have been erected on the right hand side of the pulpit. A *Weekly Press* of January 1919 has a photograph of a memorial erected in the Castel Parochial Schools in memory of men of the parish who

fell in the Great War. No-one at the school, the education office or the douzaine could give me any information about it, and it is not the same as the Parish memorial, which is currently to be found inside the church of St Marie du Castro, to the left of the main entrance. The idea of war memorials is that they stand in perpetuity but in the case of some of these, this seems to have meant less than 90 years. That is why we need to record them now, before any more disappear.

### **Jottings from France and Flanders By Barrie Bertram**

One does not really go to the Somme in the middle of March for fine weather and so it proved. Week one was cold and wet with our car becoming muddy, while week two became mild and wet, and the car even muddier! Getting back, one could quickly contrast the green of England with the brown-ness everywhere back in France.

However, there seemed going around the various locations that there was a sense of renewal and repair. A number of the monuments were undergoing work of one form or another – Vimy Ridge where the monument was under polythene wraps still (as it was in October), the Menin Gate and Thiepval where the list of names were being cleaned, and the Ulster Tower and the South African Memorial also being improved upon. It seemed also that the gardeners were to be found everywhere. Tyne Cot is currently being “added to” in terms of new paths and a Visitor’s Centre on the outside of its perimeter – this probably being finished in September, while the cemetery adjacent to 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division’s cross at Wytshaete (see Ian Ronayne’s picture in Newsletter 4) is being re-walled.

I would say that many headstones are in need of renewal, suffering from weathering and thereby causing difficulty in reading the inscriptions. Where they have become broken, the CWGC have been replacing them with new computer-inscribed stones which have an excellent definition. Replacement of every stone with the new standard would be both a mammoth task and costly. Teddy Colligan (the Ulster Tower warden (?)) recounted that the CWGC stonemasons were refurbishing inscriptions at Mill Road Cemetery in Arctic conditions early this year by working in tents over the headstones with portable heaters, undoubtedly beyond the call of normal duty!

With regards to this year’s Somme 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorations (and I suspect those for Passchendaele next year when 40 plus events are being planned), anybody planning to visit during that, should be aware that security will be a major consideration to be factored in with movement being heavily controlled and even the key sites being included in an exclusion zone (sounds a contradiction!). Royals including the PoW, Princess Anne and the Duke of Gloucester are likely to be present along with Jacques Chirac and other French notables. One possible consideration is that attendees would be bussed in having parked up at the Airbus plant at Meaulte near to Albert.



Most of you will recall my plea for help before the trip as to Jersey's adopted village which Ian advised us as being Soyecourt. As you can see from the photographs, I found the village and Jersey's help to it being acknowledged on the foot of the monument.

The village is a typically nondescript one and the church adjacent to the monument was unfortunately locked so that I was unable to see if there was anything further as regard to the support that was provided. A small wood, Bois de Wailleux, fenced off north of the village by the football pitch, contains the remains of a trench system taken by the French Army in 1916.

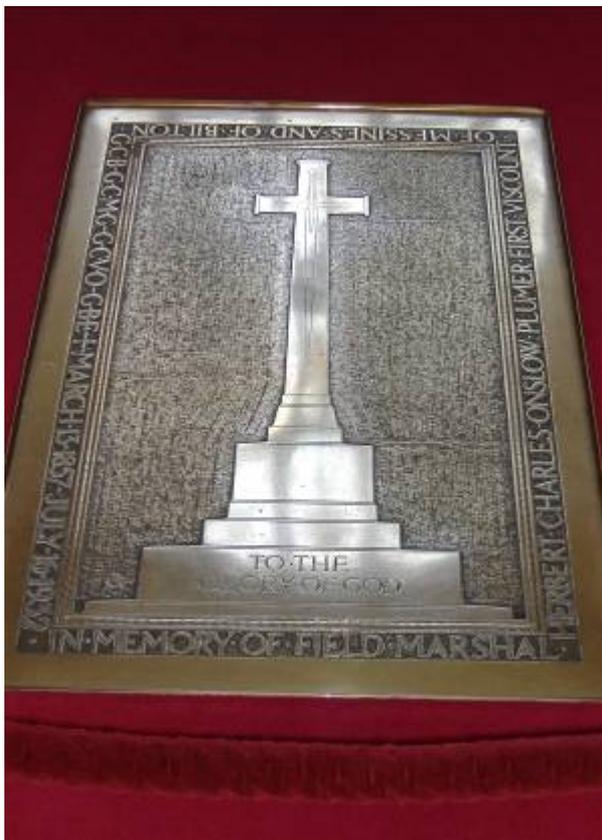


There is also a website: [www.soyecourt.com](http://www.soyecourt.com) that can be checked out.



I took the opportunity either to visit or stop at places I had never been to. Before visiting Soyecourt, I visited the Australian Memorial and the Museum in the school at Villers-Bretonneux. Unfortunately again, the Memorial building was locked, but the Museum is a nice little one and worth visiting.

Having been to Ypres numerous times over the last 10 or more years, I actually paid my first ever visit to St George's Church. The number of commemorations of the various divisions, regiments and individuals is sizeable and the effort put into producing the very colourful 200+ "Kneelers" was considerable. It contained two RGLI examples which are shown on the front page of this edition while others are shown below.



The Church's foundation stone was laid by Sir Herbert Plumer in July 1927. He is commemorated by the brass plate (5 foot x 3 foot (?)) in the chancel as shown here as well as his heraldic arms.

I looked at the various Memorials to the missing at "Plug Street", Tyne Cot and Louveral to note that the latter mentioned the RGLI by name while the two others made reference to CI Militia though they clearly were RGLI men who were missing.

A number of CI graves were spotted, including Le Maistre and Le Cocq, both DCLI, at Hooge Crater, Bewhay in Devonshire, Ozanne in Ramparts at Ypres and Laurens of 7 RIR at Brandhoek New, a few rows along from the grave of Captain Noel Chavasse, RAMC, the double VC winner.



Poperinghe was also on the itinerary, and it could not be visited without a call to Talbot House, although it nearly was hampered by the Friday morning market and the weekend carnival kicking off and the resulting parking difficulties. As I am sure, most are aware that it provided a haven for troops out of the Salient for most of the Great War, and today retains the features that the men of 90 years ago would have instantly recognised. For my own part, in Talbot House I felt that I had experienced a sense of being more close to the Great War period than anywhere else I have visited on the Western Front. The chapel in the eaves of the building surely remains a place for quiet reflection and is well worth the perilously steep ascent.

A new feature apparently is the new entrance in the side street which provides access via an exhibition of the life in the camps and billets behind the front lines. There were many thousands resting at any one time away from the trenches in front of Ypres and their routine must surely merit a book of its own, while based upon the camp lettering, there must have been at least some 16 sizeable tented and hutted camps ranged around Pop!

Visiting the House also gave substance to "As dim as a Toc H lamp" a phrase that I have resorted to many hundreds of times in my army career and, I confess, since. However, I learnt of a new expression - "Reading one's shirt", from the exhibition and I'll let others work it out! No need for answers on a postcard.....!

As an aside, the Hotel Belfort in Pop's market square does a very good fixed price lunch.



I realised while in France that the grave of "Inky-Bill" (Major General EC Ingouville-Williams, the GOC of 34<sup>th</sup> Division) was at Warloy-Baillon, only a few miles from my gite and so this resulted in another call. As most are aware, Inky-Bill was killed on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 16 carrying out a reconnaissance just south of Mametz Wood. It was alleged that his reconnoitre was in fact a trip to do some souvenir-hunting!!!

Although I have looked and never seen it documented, Ned advised last time that his mother was a Jerseywoman. Unfortunately, the CWGC cemetery entry only records his father's name, General Sir JWC Williams. Inky-Bill was 54 at the time of his death, and by the time the CWGC documented the details after the War it is likely that his mother was dead.



Among the British graves at Warloy-Baillon there could be found some 150+ French graves from the early part of the War. It was noticeable from the register that a number of names appeared Breton. I spotted one of a Huet, a name that was found on the island and the picture above shows the grave of Joseph Ecobichon, a surname mentioned in "What Happened Then?" Any relation I wonder?

So overall, an enjoyable trip, one that I hope I can to some extent repeat this October.

## **Book Reviews**

### **Passchendaele: The Sacrificial Ground (Reviewer Ian Ronayne)**

(Nigel Steel & Peter Hart - Cassell Military Paperbacks - ISBN 0-304-35975-0)

This fairly recently published book covers the Third Ypres, or Passchendaele, Campaign of 1917, including the offensive at Messines Ridge in June that year. In format, it make use of the same principles established by Lyn MacDonald in books such "Somme" and "They Called it Passchendaele": that is accounts of the actual participants in the battle are stitched together by a narrative that provides context and analysis.

The structure of the book divides this often complex and confusing campaign into logical sections, which correspond by and large with the various individual battles undertaken during the offensive. Each section is liberally interspersed with a number of original narratives based on the accounts of men who actually fought, or were involved, in that element of the offensive. These accounts serve to bring a human perspective to the story, accentuating and contextualising the thrust of the section in terms of what happened, and why. Accounts are included from men of all ranks; from Field Marshal to Private, and from participants on both sides. But, the majority come from British soldiers up to the rank of Major; the German perspective is limited to a few high level comments from General Ludendorff.

The positive aspects of this book are first and foremost the accounts provided by the men that were actually there. Graphic, thought provoking and often moving, they manage to convey to the reader the sense of hopelessness and awfulness that marked much of this terrible battle. The accounts are well chosen, and in reading, give the impression that they were written at a time when the events could have been clearly recalled. At the same time, they are presented in a contemporary style that makes them easy to comprehend some eighty years after the battle. The general description of the campaign, from concept to conclusion, is also clearly written and presented, and provides a good overview.

Less positive is that the general narrative between the personal accounts was just that: rather too general. It appeared somewhat superficial in its analysis and conclusions, lending itself to perhaps a first time reader on this subject, rather than someone looking for a more in-depth evaluation. Also, as mentioned, it is largely a one-sided account of the battle; the actions and

impact on the German army are mentioned, but not presented in the same depth as for the British. Finally, at times it also managed to overdo the amount of space devoted to the participant's accounts, and this regrettably meant that at times it became a bit tedious and long-winded.

In conclusion, I would recommend this book for a newcomer to this campaign: it would provide a clear overview and understanding of the battle, and does well in the way it divides the campaign into identifiable and digestible chunks. The use of personal accounts also adds an exciting and thought-provoking element to the narrative, something often missed in other "more serious" books. However, readers wanting a more in-depth analysis of the campaign, or who are looking for something new, may be disappointed.

**Call To Arms: The British Army 1914-18 (Reviewer Barrie Bertram)**  
(Charles Messenger – Wiedenfeld & Nicholson - ISBN 0-297-84695-7)

The growth of the British Army and the improvements it underwent during the course of the Great War can be described today as a major achievement of organisation and administration. This book sets out to record key factors in that achievement. By and large, it is a very good book, and the author has blended fact and anecdotal evidence quite skilfully. I was particularly impressed with the Annex which described the many types of battalion created at various times during that period.

However, the book is not without criticism. First, for a book focused on organisation, structure and change, there is no use of illustrative devices such as organisation charts, tables or graphs to present data such as recruitment figures, maps, and timeline charts to show activities at different points of time and their interaction. Second, the book does not deal with many of the logistic aspects that were required to sustain the army in the field, such as getting material from "factory to frontline". Third and finally, there is a loss of sharpness in later chapters compared to the early ones. The final chapter "The Verdict" is almost too light in summarising the rest of the book and the success achieved.

Setting aside those criticisms, at the outset it reminds us that the Army was focussed on maintaining the overseas garrisons of some 74 infantry battalions and that the equivalent number of home-based battalions were under strength as a result of this commitment and poor pre-war recruiting figures. With older reservists rejoining the colours and the home battalions at the war's outbreak in a not necessarily "fit to fight" condition, it may have been that the BEF was more "contemptible" than even the Kaiser had presumed!

Recruiting is well covered ranging through Kitchener's New Armies, the Derby Scheme and then conscription which became effective law in February 1916. The need for labour in the rear echelons had never been addressed in the pre-war planning of the BEF in France, again, because of the empire garrisoning ethos and the ease in obtaining local labour. Initially dependent on French resources, the book describes the evolving need for the British to provide its own, culminating in the Labour Corps who had taken in many

soldiers downgraded in fitness through wounds and sickness from prior front-line service.

In a number of cases, the author uses particular regiments to show the changes to their Battalions as war progresses while new equipment also meant the formation of new corps and units such as the Machine Gun Corps and the Tank Corps. There are chapters on women at war, discipline, welfare and morale, officer selection and training, the staff, and the medical services. And who but the British Army could come up with a Military Massage Corps?

The book is underpinned by a 17 page bibliography and a useful annex on medical categories.

Overall, the book is readable and Messenger should be congratulated on that. However, as mentioned earlier, it is a shame that he did not go the extra mile with organisation charts and the like. Well worth it at the Amazon price, it just squeaks in at the RRP of £30.

### **Out and About**

A reminder that Gary Godel will be visiting Gallipoli during the period 25<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> May.

A reminder that Liz Walton will be in France and Flanders as from 25th April. Some will have seen her request for interesting sites to visit around Ypres. Please contact her directly.

A reminder that Paul and Ian Ronayne have a longer trip to France following the route of the Jersey Contingent planned for May, allowing them to spend more time at Ypres and possibly also a day at Verdun.

For my part, I'm next in France in the latter half of June in the Seine Maritime department. I may venture as far as Rouen again to visit St Sever Cemetery! My planned visit to France in May has been postponed.

Ned Malet de Carteret will be in London late in June, attending the VC remembrance service at Westminster Abbey on the 26<sup>th</sup>. He would welcome someone videoing it.

I don't want to over-commit Paul Ronayne into doing so, but he may be looking to organise a summer evening ramble at Blanche Banques in St Ouen's Bay to look at the old POW Camp area there. Subject to confirmation!

### **Odds and Ends**

#### **A Useful French Website (Ian Ronayne)**

One of the respondents to the article in the JEP was someone who had been searching for information on a relative who had been killed whilst serving in the French Army in WW1. She had exhausted all avenues, and still had no

details on his war service. I said I would try to find some more information for her, and through a web forum, came across the site below.

<http://www.memoiredeshommes.sga.defense.gouv.fr/>

The site is provided by the French government, and provide fantastic detail on Frenchmen killed in the war, or subsequently dying and being provide a war pension (this was the situation for the respondent; she though he had been killed in the war, whereas in fact he died from his injuries in 1926!). Well worth a look and a bookmark.

### **Victoria College Book of Remembrance**

Though not directly related, the one for WW2 is now on the website.

### **Ian's Ronayne's Book on the Jersey Contingent**

Ian is progressing with this and I'm currently in the process of reviewing and providing feedback on his Chapter 7, the first that he is broadly happy with! He will be pleased to note that I've treated myself to a suitable bookmark for his finished product at the Ulster Tower.

### **A Bantam's War**

Our North Lancs talk on Monday last (3<sup>rd</sup>) about a bantam soldier who served with 17<sup>th</sup> Lancashire Fusiliers. I was lucky enough to win a disk of his war diaries from late 1915 to Armistice. Very interesting from a number of aspects and I'll be happy to loan it for others to copy.

### **Enfin**

Again, thanks for the contributions and feedback where appropriate. Looking ahead, the next issue will follow shortly after the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Jutland and will hopefully include a related article as well as a book review from Ned. There may also be a Jersey POW Camp article from Paul.

Hopefully those who are undertaking trips (Gary, Liz, Roger, Paul and Ian) will also find time to jot a few lines on what they see and do.

Lastly, I am a little behind the curve on a "green paper" regarding the web-site discussion for which I have some very useful input from Roger. I shall work on it in the next few days with the aim of getting it to people for their comment/input by post or E-Mail the Tuesday/Wednesday after Easter.

Regards  
Barrie H Bertram  
10<sup>th</sup> April 2006