

The Friends of St. George's Memorial Church, Ypres

Registered with the Charities Commission No. 213282-L1



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President:	The Rt. Reverend The Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe
Vice-President:	Lord Astor of Hever, D.L.
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Newsletter Editor:	Miss Lara Cruz McKeon
Life Members:	Michael Derriman and Mary Setchfield
Chaplain:	Reverend Richard Clement

No. 113

NEWSLETTER

July 2024



Plaque located in the North West Corner of the Church

Front cover image: ©IWM ART 2968

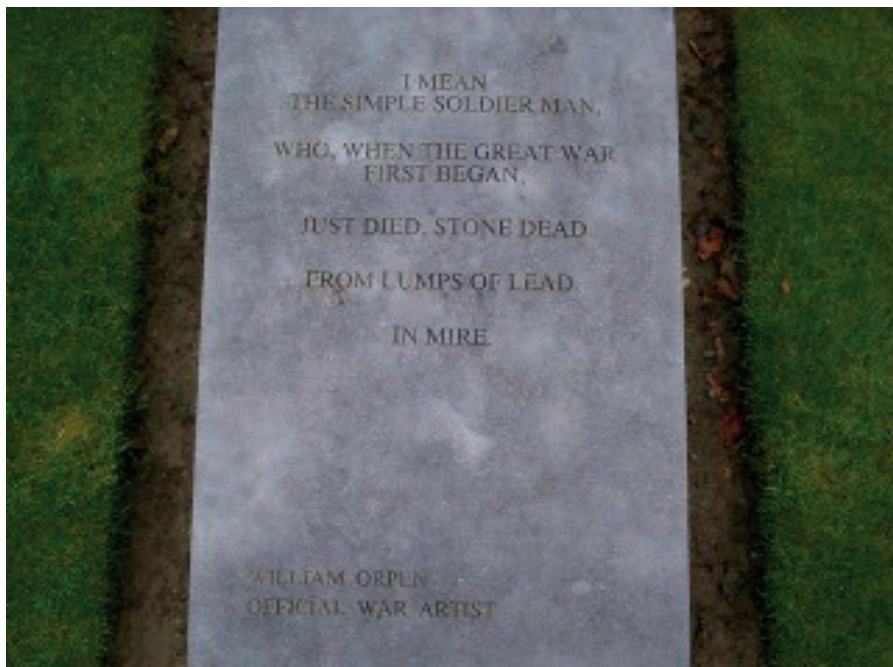


EDITORIAL

Dear Friends,

I hope that you enjoy the contents of the Summer Newsletter as usual. I am thankful for being able to continue with selecting art works for our front cover and analysing them for my editorial.

This has been selected from William Orpen, an Irish artist, who was the second artist to be appointed as a British Official War Artist. This piece was finished in 1917 and titled *The Household Brigade Passing to the Ypres Salient, Cassel*. The Household Brigade later became the Household Division. Orpen was formally known for his fashionable portraits of Edwardian high society, until his work in France made him one of the most prolific war artists. Due to his network of contacts, he was able to join the Army Service Corps with the rank of major and indefinite permission to stay on the Western Front. Other Official War Artists were only second-lieutenant and stayed in France for three weeks, mainly focusing on studies to create pieces on their return to England.

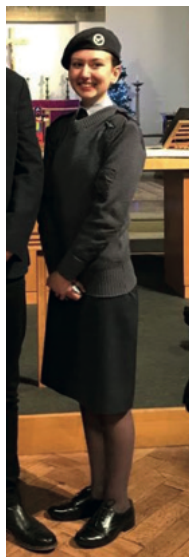




It is widely considered to have been completed in the style of post-Impressionism due to Orpen's use of colours and real-life subject matter. There is a particular focus of colour being used for expressive effect, but I would prefer to look at this as Impressionist-inspired (mainly because this was finished after Impressionist Era! Even post-Impressionism era was over at the start of the war...) as it was completed spontaneously outdoors 'on the spot' rather than in a studio based on sketches. This Impressionist style perhaps adopted to create a sense of nostalgia, but also the hope that these soldiers would return from the Front this way.

In 1918, Orpen was made a Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire, and all his art works were donated to the British government, which are now held in the Imperial War Museum.

Orpen represented the significant Irish contribution to the war effort, as did thousands of his countrymen. Today, he is commemorated with a stone plaque at the Island of Ireland Peace Park, which highlights the significance of peace and reconciliation. The camaraderie of North and South of Ireland is exemplified by Messines, the location where the 16th (Irish) Division fought alongside the 36th (Ulster) Division for the first time; Catholic and Protestant Irishmen side-by-side against a common enemy.



Lara Cruz McKeon
Editor



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT – JULY 2024

THE VICE CHAIRMAN BIDS FAREWELL...

Dear Fellow Friends— in advance of The Friends of St George's AGM in London in January, I wrote to our President, Bishop Robert in Brussels, to announce that after many years (27) as an Officer of the Friends, I had decided to stand aside as your Vice Chairman.

By way of an explanation (see below), I had also written to my fellow colleagues on The Friends Committee. As I say in my statement, the decision in its making had not been easy, but when all things were considered, I think the time was right for me (and for my dear wife, Heather, who has always generously supported me through my extensive tenure of office).

Clearly, one aspect of my departure will mean that I will also no longer be a member of the St George's PCC. Being a member of the PCC has been an enjoyable experience over the years and one which brought me even closer to its people and the church I love. In recent times it was a real honour and a privilege to have been part of the important process, as a member of the interviewing panel, to firstly appoint Andrew McMullen (RIP) as our Chaplain and then, more recently, as a final action and responsibility (and, with an eye on the future life of the beloved community of St. George's) to appoint Richard Clement, as the new Chaplain to St. George's.

In many ways things will change and have changed in my daily routine as a result of standing down as Vice Chairman. However, what I have noticed is that there is not a day that passes when at some moment I still find myself thinking of or talking about St. George's Memorial Church. I guess the place, its mission and its people are engraved on my heart. I hope our paths will cross from time to time as they have done in the past.

Yours ever, Derek



Dear Friends—

in May 1984 I first walked into St George's Memorial Church as a new Friend. I loved it then; I love it as much today. For the past 27 years I have been an Officer of The Friends in one capacity or another serving under four Chairmen during that

time. This service has always struck me as a real privilege and one that I have been very proud to carry out. However, after very much thought, and it hasn't been easy, I have decided to stand aside (or 'sit down' as we say in Methodist circles) at the forthcoming Friends AGM and not to stand as your Vice-Chairman again. Meanwhile, I am thankful to you all (and those in previous times) for the greatest of friendship, love, wisdom and support over these past 40 years.

With every blessing, Derek'



DR DEREK GALLAGHER – AN APPRECIATION

Derek Gallagher joined The Friends of St George's Memorial Church, Ypres, in May 1984. In the autumn of 1997, he became a Member of the Committee and embarked on a period of unstinting Service as an Officer for the next 27 years. In December of that year he was appointed Honorary Secretary, a post he held until 2016, first working with my predecessor, Kenneth Sears, followed by myself. In the meantime, from 2014, he had become double hatted as Vice Chairman, before standing down from the Committee this year.



From the moment he joined, Derek has worked tirelessly for the Charity, promoting its work both in the United Kingdom, as a Committee Member, and in Belgium, as a co-opted Member of the PCC, to support and further the Mission of St George's. The benefits from and the impact of his Service to the Church at a time of dwindling congregations in an ever changing world have been immense. He has built up an amazing infrastructure of contacts, and his Reports and decisions on matters with which he has been concerned have been examples of exemplary clarity. The Friends have benefitted greatly from his experience gained from a long and distinguished career in the Police Service, and have continued to reap the rewards, both in his embracing new technologies to help promote St George's, and in keeping a strategic eye on the future. His ability to communicate at all levels has been of the greatest value, and the enormous respect in which he is, and has been, held over these many years, has been clear for all to see. He has that wonderful attribute of empathy in his approach to others, enabling them to feel wanted.

Outside of the many every day matters of importance to The Friends and to St George's, much of Derek's time has been involved in specific subjects and projects. In 2017, he played a major role in supporting a trial Project on behalf of The Friends, organised by the University of Kent, and titled Gateways to the First World War, which included post graduate student teams acting as on site stewards for St George's, with the aim of raising the profile of the Church, providing visitors with a deeper knowledge of the history and meaning of the Building. He has also supported its successor in the form of the recent series of seminars, organised last winter, and held at the In Flanders Fields Museum and the University, in their respective Cities of Ypres and Canterbury. In 2021, the Committee Working Party, of which he was a Member, identified one area that required special focus; that of securing the interest and involvement of the younger generation, both in The Friends and at St George's. He emphasised the need for a clear Youth Policy which addresses what is done for both young people within The Friends, and how St George's is assisted to attract young visitors, and to help with those visits. Further to that, he has now recommended a number of Objectives as part of a Schools Policy, which could perhaps run in tandem with the Youth Policy, which includes the appointment of a Schools Liaison Officer, with the principal aim of assisting schools to visit St George's in a co-ordinated fashion, with the assistance, where possible, of the Chaplain, and/or from Members of St George's itself, or of local part time



guides. He also highlighted the benefits of a system for the use of the Church facilities by visiting groups.

Lastly, his contribution over the past four years has been the pivotal role which he played as a member of the Selection Panels for the two recent Chaplains of St George's, where his vast background knowledge and subsequent advice proved invaluable through a period largely brought about by the Pandemic. He has also been Editor of the biannual Newsletter from 2014-21.

Derek's Mantra has always been 'let us deliver what we can deliver, and deliver it well.'

In all this he has been wonderfully supported by his immediate family, Heather, Claire and Phil. He and Heather are not in the best of health, hence his decision to stand down from The Friends Committee. We wish them both a steady recovery.

We will all miss him. As the late Lyn McDonald said in 1990, 'Memories matter. And perhaps memories of kindness most of all.' – A perfect testament to his wonderful work, and dedication to so many aspects in the life of The Friends and the Church.

THE CHAPLAIN

I am delighted to report that the Reverend Richard Clement has been appointed Chaplain of St George's, and is now in situ. He was the Chaplain at RAF Boulmer, Alnwick, Northumberland from August 2009 to March this year, and prior to his appointment at St George's he served as a Locum Chaplain in France. The Vice Chairman, Hon Secretary, Hon Treasurer and myself represented The Friends at his Licensing Service at St George's on 20th April, which was conducted by the Reverend Canon Stephen Murray, the Area Dean of Belgium and Luxembourg.

THE AGM

The AGM took place on 18th January, which is a change from the previous norm of December. Future AGM's will continue to be held in January, and the Constitution has been amended accordingly.

The Chairman welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending. He asked the Vice Chairman for the Opening Prayer.



Before the Meeting got underway, all stood for a Minute's Silence, in memory of Jeanne Higgins (formerly Lomas-Desramault) who was the oldest living member of The Friends, and who had died aged 103. She had attended the School in Ypres in 1939.

The Chairman went on to welcome Mrs Marion Sumner, on her birthday, the widow of a former Committee and Life Member, and Lieutenant Colonel James Coleby who is a serving Officer in the Coldstream Guards.

He thanked Mr Brian Fawcett who was standing down from the Committee. After many years of loyal service. He had been the authority on the School Statistics and was committed to the remembrance of the Chinese Labour Force, who served in the horrific conditions of the Ypres Salient, and with very little recognition.

Dr Dominiek Dendooven has also stood down from the Committee as a Co-opted Member, a has moved across within the Cloth Hall in Ypres from The In Flanders Fields Museum to the Merghelynck Museum. He has been the leading advocate regarding a suitable appearance of the newly positioned utility boxes on the exterior wall of St George's. We shall nevertheless continue to look forward to his sartorial elegance on Armistice Day at the Menin Gate!

ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE – CONSTITUTION APPOINTMENTS

The following Officers were re-appointed for a period of 12 months:

Vice President - Lord Astor of Haver:

Proposed by the Chairman. Seconded by the Vice Chairman.

Chairman – Sir Edward Crofton;

Proposed by Mr McKeon. Seconded by Mr Humberston.

Hon Treasurer – Mr William Leetham:

Proposed by Mr McKeon. Seconded by Mr Humberston.

Hon Secretary – Mr Michael McKeon:

Proposed by Mr Leetham. Seconded by The Chairman.

Hon Membership Secretary – Miss Eve Speare:

Proposed by Mr McKeon. Seconded by Mr Leetham.



Re-election of Committee Members:

Mr David Humberston:

Proposed by Mr Divers. Seconded by Miss Jacques.

Miss Valerie Jacques:

Proposed by Humberston. Seconded by Miss Speare.

Mr Nigel Divers:

Proposed by Miss Jacques. Seconded by Mr Humberston.

Mr Christopher Sims:

Proposed by the Vice Chairman. Seconded by the Chairman.

Co-opted Members: Professor Mark Connelly and Mr John Arnold.

New Member:

Lieutenant Colonel James Coleby.

Proposed by the Chairman and Seconded by the Hon Secretary.

Mr Brian Fawcett and Mrs Jackie Tarrant - Barton were standing down.

Dr Dominiek Dendooven - a Co-opted Member, was standing down.

Minutes Secretary via Rodelle:

Proposed by Miss Speare. Seconded by Mr Humberston.

Investment Manager: Mr Peter Birchell at Rathbones.

Proposed by Mr Humberston. Seconded by Miss Jacques.

Hon Pilgrimage Secretary - New Appointment: Miss Valerie Jacques.

Proposed by the Chairman. Seconded by Mr Divers.

The Chairman thanked Mr Divers for all he had done over the years, along with Beryl and Alan Burgess. The Chairman asked Mr Divers to thank Beryl.

Miss Jacques expressed how deeply honoured she was to accept the Appointment, and wished to extend her heartfelt thanks for being entrusted with the responsibility.

FINANCIAL

Details of the Accounts will be published in the December Newsletter. The Value of The Friends Portfolio on 30th June 2023 (the end of the Financial Year) was published in the last Newsletter.



The new Membership Fees, to take effect from 1st July this year, were ratified and will appear in this Newsletter.

MEMBERSHIP

Miss Speare reported that the Membership stood at 382, the same as last year. As of 30th June the Membership stands at 388. I am delighted that this includes 8 recent joiners from the Pilgrimage. This is most encouraging and highlights the hard work put in by Valerie Jacques and David Humberston. What is now needed is for visitors to St George's to follow this example!

THE PILGRIMAGE

Miss Jacques gave a positive indication for the Pilgrimage to go ahead in May. Her full Report is included in this Newsletter.

I would just comment on the undoubted success, due to the Management, to back up what I have said in the previous paragraph. With the Household Cavalry Commemorations in full swing in Ypres at the same time, St George's was a busy venue hosting a full Presentation as part of their Programme of Events. It was a great weekend, and many thanks are due to the Home Team of the Chaplain, newly inducted and hitting the ground running, and Ms Carine Sinnaeve, the Churchwarden, for their efforts at making St George's so welcoming.

22nd APRIL MEETING - DR DEREK GALLAGHER

The Chairman took a moment to acknowledge Derek Gallagher's departure. His presence will be greatly missed, and The Friends will be forever grateful for his loyal Service.

TREASURER'S UPDATE

At the close of business, the value of The Friends Portfolio was £1,287,187.

LECTURE SERIES – SEMINARS

Following a review of the Lecture Series in Ypres and Canterbury which The Friends have supported financially, we are concerned that we could be straying too



far from the objectives of The Friends. Crucially it is imperative that these Seminars are productive for us, regarding the recruitment of new members.

It has therefore been decided, with the agreement of Professor Mark Connelly, that The Friends will not partake in sponsorship over the coming season, and that we will see how things go, now that the Chaplain is in post.

CONCLUSIONS

As always, my grateful thanks go to those on both sides of the Channel who work so hard to support The Church. The arrival of the new Chaplain has been a real tonic, and we all look forward to working with him and seeing the Community of St George's going forward with his guidance. We must be mindful of the two Centenaries in Ypres which are due to take place in this decade, those of the Menin Gate in 2027, and St George's in 2029. The years speed forward with silent tread! It is a nice coincidence that the trowel which was used at the laying of the Foundation Stone of St George's in 1927, has recently been handed over by Jeanne Higgins' son, Mawgan, and returned to the Church.

My best wishes go to all our readers.



Floreamus
Edward Crofton
Chairman



CHAPLAIN'S REPORT

Dear Friends,

I feel very privileged to have started in the post of chaplain of St George's Memorial Church in Ieper/Ypres. I moved here in early April, and I was very pleased indeed to have a delegation from the Friends of St George's Committee attending my licensing service on 20th April and then to meet a number of the Friends on the Annual Pilgrimage in early May.

To introduce myself: I was ordained in the Cathedral in Bury-St-Edmunds 18 years ago, having worked in a number of different jobs prior to ordination training, mostly in local government and latterly in Social Services in Suffolk, working with adults with physical disabilities. My first degree was in theology and religious studies at Bristol University in the 80's, and I trained on the Eastern Region Ministry Course which is based in Cambridge, including starting on a Master's degree course. After ordination I served my curacy in Framingham with Saxtead in East Suffolk- We had a baby son born just before my ordination, and it was a lovely place to be with great people (including Ed Sheeran's family) where I learnt my trade! Sadly, I am now divorced but my son, Edward, is now 18 and just finishing his A levels prior to going to university to study law in the autumn (all being well)!

During my curacy I explored a sense of calling to chaplaincy in the Royal Air Force, and managed (somewhat to my surprise!) to get through the officer selection process. I finished my curacy in summer 2009 and started as an Officer Cadet at RAF Cranwell. I can't say that I much enjoyed basic training, especially as a person of more mature years with no previous military background or experience, but it certainly set me up for life and ministry as a chaplain in the RAF, having been through much of what everyone joining the military goes through as a recruit!

I served as a chaplain for a total of just over 14 years and was posted to a variety of RAF Stations in the UK as well as serving overseas several times, including in Afghanistan, the Falkland Islands and a number of places in the Middle East (mostly based at Akrotiri in Cyprus). On deployment, I often found myself working closely with the Army, as well with the Navy in the Falkland Islands. I served for several years in Scotland and ended my career at RAF Boulmer in Northumberland, a really beautiful part of the country.



As I write this article, I have been here just over 2 months, although it seems longer! It has been rather a baptism of fire, with some very big events happening including ANZAC Day (which involved saying prayers at a number of different memorial events, as well as the Last Post Ceremony in Ieper) and a wonderful visit from the Household Cavalry, culminating in a very moving ecumenical service in St Martin's Cathedral with their Padre and other clergy from the town. However, there have also been school visits, other smaller events, community engagement and then simply meeting visitors to the church, as well as leading Eucharist services on most Sundays.

It is a huge privilege to be the chaplain of St George's which is such a remarkable church, and I am working with the Churchwardens and PCC to maintain and improve things here. The numbers of visitors are (I think) back to pre-Pandemic levels, and I am quietly hopefully that attendance at Sunday services is also on the up, although it is perhaps too early to say. We provide an opportunity for worshipping God in English in Ieper, which is not only for our faithful but very small core congregation but also for visitors and for those living in Ieper from a variety of countries, for whom we provide a warm welcome and a service in English!

I look forward to meeting many more of the Friends of St George's in due course, and I wish you all every blessing.



Reverend Richard Clement



ARMISTICE DAY 2024

Friends are reminded that the Armistice Day Service in St. George's takes place on Monday 11th November 2024, starting at 09:15 – those attending are asked to be in their seats by 09:00.

Paper tickets are no longer issued. For those wanting to attend, please email your request to Mr Christopher Sims (Chaplaincy Warden) at:
sims.christopher@hotmail.com





THE FRIENDS OF ST GEORGE'S PILGRIMAGE 2024

It was with high expectations that The Friends of St George's arrived in Ypres to commence their Pilgrimage! By coincidence, representatives of the Household Cavalry were also "in town" and the colourful spectacle of their visit and the re-dedication of their Memorial at nearby Zandvoorde (on the centenary of its original unveiling) would provide a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for all who would witness it, particularly The Friends, to whom a special invitation had been extended.

Our first full day on the battlefields began with an explanation by Tour Guide David Humberston of the steep learning curve encountered by the British Expeditionary Force of 1914 as they attempted to defend the town from larger German armies advancing towards them. A visit to Ypres Town Cemetery Extension allowed us to pay tribute to many who fell in October 1914, particularly those killed by the shelling of Hooze Chateau on the 31st October. Also remembered was Prince Maurice of Battenberg, a grandson of Queen Victoria, mortally wounded four days earlier and, significantly, Charles Sackville Pelham,



Lord Worsley, a Lieutenant in the Royal Horse Guards commanding a machine gun section when they were overrun and killed on the outskirts of Zandvoorde on the 30th October. The body of Lord Worsley (shown right) was later recovered and reburied in Ypres and the Household Cavalry Memorial to their fallen of 1914 was subsequently erected on that spot.

Visits to Gheluvelt village, to discuss the heroics of the 2nd Worcestershire Regiment in saving the line, and the excavated trench lines at Kasteelhof 't Hooghe, stretching around two large underground mine craters from 1915 and 1917 followed. Roadworks forced us to abandon a planned visit, but an impromptu visit to Vancouver Corner and the Canadian Memorial known as "The Brooding Soldier", commemorating the fallen Canadians of April 1915, proved to be a worthy substitute. Designed by veteran Frank Clemensha, and unveiled in 1923, this simple but powerful statuary is a particular favourite of Pilgrimage Secretary Valerie Jacques and was runner-up in a post-war competition to design Canada's national Great War Memorial. The winning entry was to be seen later...



Following lunch at the ever-welcoming *Koklikoo Bistro* in the grounds of the Passchendaele Memorial Museum at Zonnebeke, early afternoon visits to Perth Cemetery (China Wall) and Zillibeke Churchyard (“Aristocrat’s Corner”) preceded the rededication of the Household Cavalry Memorial at Zandvoorde, where we met amongst others The Friend’s Chairman, Sir Edward Crofton and family. Edward is believed to be the only living son of a Great War Cavalry Officer.



The Cavalry departs the Menin Gate

Visits to the village Churchyard, where four more Cavalrymen rest, Zandvoorde Military Cemetery and the German Command Bunker on the village outskirts completed our itinerary for the day. Upon our return to Ypres, we were treated to a concert by the Household Cavalry Band and the Pipes and Drums of the Earl Haig Band. Resplendent in their uniforms, the Bands and four mounted Cavalrymen – one in Great

War uniform - later marched to The Menin Gate to participate in The Last Post Ceremony, where wreaths were laid.

The third day of our visit, Sunday, began with a visit to view the many memorials in St George’s Memorial Church itself, where we were warmly greeted by the new Chaplain, Reverend Richard Clement. The highlight of the morning was undoubtedly the special Service of Matins, held in St Martin’s Cathedral due to the large number of additional attendees. The occasion was enhanced by the stirring music of the Household Cavalry Band, whilst a sermon delivered by the Dean of Ypres and a trumpet fanfare from the heights of the Cathedral were other memorable highlights.



The Band of the Household Cavalry marches to Ypres Cathedral



Edward Crofton, wearing his own and his father's medals



An optional excursion was offered for the afternoon which included visits to pay our respects to the fallen in the cemeteries in and around Ploegsteert Wood. Beginning at Prowse Point and Mud Corner, we visited the three beautiful cemeteries within the Wood itself and honoured the men who rest in their peaceful confines.

Violets were left in Toronto Avenue in memory of Roland Leighton's poem, Villanelle, written there to his sweetheart, Vera Brittain, in 1915. A cross was laid at Rifle House Cemetery on behalf of Emma, Lady Crofton, at the grave of her great-uncle, Captain Ernest Dashwood, 1/4th Ox & Bucks Light Infantry.



*Valerie Jacques
remembers
Roland Leighton
with Violets at
Toronto Avenue
Cemetery*

*RIGHT:
David Humberston
at Rifle House
Cemetery*



The following day, the Pilgrims crossed the border into French Flanders, where our first visit was a request for Peter Armory to pay his respects to 2nd Lieutenant Maurice Basden of the Royal Flying Corps. This was a visit thwarted the previous year due to roadworks, but on this occasion no such problems were encountered.

Our next visit was to the Canadian National Memorial at Vimy, the ridge upon which it stands being captured at such great cost by Canadian forces in early April 1917 at the beginning of the Battle of Arras. Here the magnificent Memorial to Canada's loss overlooks the Douai Plain, its twin columns and decorative statuary standing on Hill 145, the highest point of the Ridge and commemorates those Canadians who fell in France and have no known grave. The winning entry in the National Competition mentioned earlier, Walter Allward's memorial was also the only War Memorial unveiled by our King Edward VIII during his brief reign in 1936.



At the Arras Memorial to the Missing, Elaine Merryfield laid a wreath honouring her great-uncle, Private Arthur Ratcliffe, 8th Battalion, Leicestershire Regiment, who is commemorated amongst some 34,800 of his comrades. A separate column, the Flying Services Memorial, also records the names of nearly 1,000 gallant aviators who again have no identified resting place. Private Ratcliffe fell in action on 3rd May 1917 whilst taking part in an advance towards the village of Cherisy, where Elaine and husband Greg were also able to leave a Cross to further honour her ancestor.

LEFT: Elaine Merryfield remembers Arthur Ratcliffe

The village of Monchy-le-Preux, containing four Great War Memorials, was the penultimate visit of the day. Taken by British and Empire forces in April 1917, one memorial is a Bronze Caribou, marking the Newfoundland Regiment's assault on nearby Infantry Hill, and the subsequent defence of the village by the so-called "Monchy Ten", nine of whom belonged to the Newfoundland Regiment. A second remembers the role played by the 1st Battalion of the Essex Regiment and the Essex Yeomanry in the capture of the village, this standing adjacent to the village War Memorial, which records the local Fallen, and pays tribute to the role played by the Isle of Wight in the financing of the reconstruction of the village. Nearby stands an impressive monument to the men of the 37th Division, who fought here in 1917 and who were commanded by Major General Edward Gleichen, a descendant of Queen Victoria's half-sister and a distant relation of Emma, Lady Crofton. Sculpted by Edward's sister, Lady Feodora Gleichen, the memorial depicts three helmeted soldiers standing in a triangle upon a suitably engraved plinth.

Our final visit of the day was to the grave of Albert Ball, right, of the Royal Flying Corps, killed in action on 7th May 1917. A fighter pilot of the highest calibre, his solo assaults against enemy aircraft earned him 44 "kills", five Gallantry awards and the Freedom of his home city of Nottingham, all before he was legally able to vote. Awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross, Ball was buried in the German Extension to Annœullin Communal Cemetery and was remembered by the laying of a wreath by Paul Bardell.





Zöe Everett (left) and Valerie Jacques (right) with fellow wreath-layers at The Menin Gate



Paul Bardell remembers Captain Albert Ball

Having returned to Ypres, a wreath was laid on behalf of The Friends, at The Menin Gate during The Last Post Ceremony by Valerie Jacques. She was accompanied by Zöe Everett, who placed her wreath in remembrance of her great uncle, Private William Whitehouse of the 3rd Battalion, Worcestershire Regiment, who is commemorated there. David Humberston recited “The Exhortation”.

With minimal delays encountered at the Port of Dunkerque, the Pilgrims journeyed home, with many old acquaintances renewed and new friendships forged. The contribution made by our Valerie Jacques, David Humberston and Driver Mark Weston must be acknowledged, as must be the considerable enthusiasm displayed by our first-time travellers. Thanks also to all those who elected to become a Friend of St George’s Memorial Church because of their visit.

If anyone would like to express interest in next year’s Pilgrimage, even at this early stage, please do not hesitate to contact our Honorary Pilgrimage Secretary, Miss Valerie Jacques at foft@live.co.uk

Photographs by Paul Bardell, Karen Barradell, David Humberston and Brian Roffee



The Friends of St George's Lapel Badge



We would like to remind you that an enamel lapel badge that represents Friends of St George's Memorial Church, Ypres is still available. It is an exclusive design, inspired by a Friend (the illustrator, Tim Godden) and expertly brought to completion by Mark Frost (Graphic designer).

Please drop a note to the Secretary at mmckeon@aol.com if you wish to have one sent out to you.

We would appreciate a contribution of £2.00 to cover postage and packing. The most efficient way of making this contribution would be to make an electronic payment to our bank account:

Account name: The Friends of St. Georges Memorial Church Ypres

Sort code – 30.95.74 Account number – 00252832

To our Friends based outside the UK, please get in touch for specific instructions.



CHURCH LIFE

I would like to thank Christopher Sims for keeping me updated throughout the year and providing many of the photographs and information in order to complete this section.

Earlier in the year, Professor Mark Connelly of the University of Kent hosted guided tours of St. George's following a successful series of lectures held in both Ypres and Canterbury.





A Dedication Service was held on 17th March for the Memorial Plaque, recently installed in St George's Church, for all the Old Etonians (OE's) who gave their lives fighting in the Ypres Salient and on the Western Front. A good number of OE's, many of them descendants of those War dead, attended the Service, which was taken by the School's Conduct, the Rev Steven Gray. A Colour Party from the current CCF took part in the Ceremony, and Henry Nicol, a School Piper, played a lament. The Vice Provost, Peter McKee, read a lesson, and Alastair Roberts, a former Scholar at Eton, read an extract from Julian Grenfell's poem, Into Battle. We were very grateful for the help given by St George's for this Service, with which Eton has for long had strong links.

Words from Andrew Robinson, Hon. Secretary of The Old Etonian Association







On 27th March, St. George's welcomed a performance from Rhos Male Choir, one of Wales' leading male voice choirs. As always, we are happy to see St. George's included in trips for performers as well as school visits.





On 19th April, another plaque was installed on behalf of St. Andrew's College – Dublin.



20th April was the licencing service for St. George's new chaplain, Rev. Richard Clement, of which several Committee members were also in attendance for.







St. George's welcomed Acadia University Singers from Nova Scotia, Canada on 2nd May. They set out a performance commemorating the 109th anniversary of John McCrae's poem "In Flanders Fields".





June saw a unique baptism take place, as well as a blessing for Eugenie and Brian.





REMEMBERED WITH HONOUR

*In the twelfth of our series featuring those commemorated in
St George's Memorial Church, Ypres, we remember...*

CAPTAIN WILLIAM CHARLES RAIT KERR, D.S.O. & CAPTAIN SILVESTER CECIL RAIT KERR

In our previous article in this series, we featured a trio of brothers lost in The Great War who are amongst those commemorated in St George's Memorial Church. In this piece, we feature further siblings, remembered upon adjacent plaques in the pews at the northwest corner of the Church. Captains William and Silvester Kerr were the eldest two sons of Sylvester Rait Kerr, who was born near Dundee in 1849. In 1878, Kerr senior inherited, from his uncle, Rathmoyle House in King's County, Ireland, some 45 miles west of Dublin, an estate that specialised in cattle and horse breeding. He was a prominent member of the King's County Farmers Association and also served as High Sheriff and Deputy Lieutenant of the county. In 1885, he married Mary Isabel Hutchinson, daughter of Major General Charles Scrope Hutchinson, Royal Engineers, Chief Inspecting Officer for Railways between 1892 and 1895.

The eldest of their four sons was William Charles Rait Kerr, seen right, who was born on 6th August 1886. Educated at Rugby and the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, he was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Royal Field Artillery in July 1907, becoming a Lieutenant three years later. Departing for the Front in August 1914, with the First Division under Sir Douglas Haig, William served with his Battery in the Retreat from Mons and in the subsequent Battle of the Marne and the Aisne. During this period, he would be Mentioned in Despatches and also receive a Distinguished Service Order, the latter for "*Gallant conduct in bringing up a gun to within two hundred and fifty yards of the enemy in a wood and blowing down a house in which the enemy were working a machine gun.*"

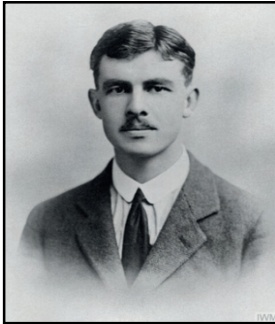


By November, William and his Battery were participating in the desperate defence of Ypres as the German attempts to capture the town intensified. According to one source:



"At Veldhoek, four miles east of Ypres, his Battery having gone to the rear to rest and refit, he was in charge of a gun, placed in a forward position for a special purpose. He had handed over his duties to his relief and was making his way back from his observation post when he was shot through the head by a sniper, on 10th November 1914. He was 28 years of age."

His body was buried beside his gun, but the site was subsequently lost and today William is commemorated on the Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing.



The second son, Sylvester Cecil Rait Kerr, was born on 14th October 1887. Like his brother, he was educated at Rugby and the Royal Military Academy and was commissioned as a Lieutenant in the Royal Field Artillery in 1910. After service in both South Africa and India, Sylvester was at home on leave when War broke out and spent some weeks training men before being promoted to Captain and departing for the Front in early November 1914. Originally serving with "G" Battery, of the Royal Horse Artillery, he was subsequently transferred to 41st Battery of the Royal Field Artillery. In April 1915, he was given command of a Trench Howitzer Battery, with which he went into trenches on the outskirts of Ypres, near the hamlet of Wieltje, at a position known to the troops as 'Shelltrap Farm' on 6th May. Sylvester was later reported to have "worked his guns magnificently", and was engaged in bringing bombs up to his guns when he was shot through the head by a German sniper on 13th May, a day the British positions came under heavy attack, as the following account illustrates:

"Your son was posted in the trenches to the left of a building, named by the troops 'Shell-trap Farm,' which was about the hottest part of the line, and his duty was to assist the infantry in keeping back the enemy from sapping up to the farm buildings, and to endeavour to blow up their saps.

The enemy's shelling was so intense that, time after time, the trench mortars were silenced and the crews buried, but they were dug out and started again, and the crews refused to be relieved. The severity of the fighting may be judged from the fact that 'Shell-trap Farm' was lost, and retaken with the bayonet, three times in twenty-four hours."

Sylvester was 27 years of age and was buried in the trenches near to where he fell. Post-war, his grave could not be located and his name appears on the Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing, as shown right. The brothers are

ROYAL HORSE AND ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY	
MAJOR	BTY S/T MAJOR
RALLIE G	BULL G J
PARTEUR W R M C	FRAMPTON J
	STAMMERS C S
CAPTAIN	
COCHRANE D J	BTY QMR SER JT
FITZ G G	BURGE A W
GRIFFIN A U M	
PLAYFAIR HON	SERJEANT
L G H L	ALLTOFT J H
RAITKERR S C	ARMOUR R T
RAITKERR W C DSO	BROWN G E
WARD C F	CREMER C
WOODHOUSE A J	DALE W E
	ROGGE A L E M J



also remembered on the War Memorial at Rugby School and in St George's Memorial Church.

The two younger brothers would also serve in The Great War in the Royal Engineers. The fourth son, Edmund Rait Kerr, ended the conflict with a Military Cross, whilst the third son, Rowan Scrope Rait Kerr earned both the same award and a Distinguished Service Order. Again educated at Rugby and Woolwich, Rowan, seen right, was commissioned in 1910 and served in France with the 3rd Lahore Division in the opening year of the War. Wounded at Neuve Chapelle that same year, from February to June 1915, he was Aide De Camp to



Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Lawson, G.O.C. Northern Command and then commanded a Field Squadron of Royal Engineers in France until September 1917. He ended the War as Adjutant to the 3rd Royal Sappers and Miners and retired from the Army with the rank of Colonel.

In July 1922, Rowan inherited the family estates at Rathmoyle upon the apparent suicide of his father, a man now deeply troubled by the events in Ireland who declared that he *"suffered great persecution, both himself and his servants; that people wanted to put him out of his land and residence; that he would not submit to tyranny and chose the short way."* A talented cricketer, in 1936 Rowan became Secretary of the Marylebone Cricket Club (M.C.C.) until 1952, nine years before his death. An acknowledged expert on the laws of the game, he left his complete collection of Wisden to his only daughter, Diana, who in turn became the first Curator of the M.C.C. and was one of the first elected lady members in 1999. At the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, Diana was 21 years old and drove ambulances in London, Cambridge and Cardiff during the Blitz.

Whilst the gallantry of this family is recorded in many places, their sacrifice is particularly remembered at St George's Memorial Church, where plaques to both their fallen, William and Silvester Rait Kerr can be found.

CAPTAIN WILLIAM CHARLES RAIT KERR, D.S.O.
57th BATTERY, ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY
KILLED AT VELDHOEK
10th NOVEMBER 1914

CAPTAIN SYLVESTER CECIL RAIT KERR
41st BATTERY, ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY
KILLED NEAR LA BRIQUE
13th MAY 1915

Above: The commemorative plaques to the two brothers in St George's Memorial Church, Ypres

"Their name liveth for evermore"

Valerie Jacques & David Humberston



The Friends of St George's Memorial Church, Ypres,



Our Prayer

O Lord Jesus Christ in whose name
The St George's Memorial Church
in Ypres is dedicated.

Grant that its life and worship
may ever abound to your greatest glory;
And that as The Friends we may do our part,
by prayer and offering,
To strengthen its witness to all the world;
Who with the Father and the Holy Spirit
live and reign ever One God.

Amen.



To: The Honorary Membership Secretary, The Friends of St. George's Memorial Church,
Ypres, 32 Fulwood Walk, London SW19 6RB

I wish to become a Member and enclose/ or have arranged electronic payment/ bankers order
of £..... as my first subscription.

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Address

.....

Postcode

Email

Telephone

Date

By signing below, you are confirming that you are consenting to The Friends of St Georges
Memorial Church, Ypres holding and processing your personal data for the following purposes
(please tick the boxes where you grant consent):

☐ To keep me informed about news, events and activities about The Friends of St Georges
Memorial Church, Ypres

I consent to the church contacting me by ☐ post ☐ phone ☐ or email.

Our communications are typically (but not limited to) our newsletter, which is published twice
per year.

Signed:

Dated:

Where you do not grant consent, we will not be able to use your personal data; (so for example
we may not be able to let you know about forthcoming activities and events); except in certain
limited situations, such as where required to do so by law or to protect members of the public
from serious harm. You can find out more about how we use your data from our "Privacy
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You can withdraw or change your consent at any time by contacting the Membership
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Note: All membership fees are regarded as a minimum donation.

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Overseas Joint Couples	€25 per year
UK Corporate Membership	£25 per year
Overseas Corporate Membership	€30 per year
UK Life Membership	£300
Overseas Life Membership	€250
UK Joint Life Membership	£450
Overseas Life Membership	€300
Overseas Joint Life Membership	€450



Bankers Order Form

To (name & address of your bank)
.....

Please pay to Lloyds Finsbury Circus sort code **30 95 74** account number **00252832**
For the account of The Friends of St George's Memorial Church Ypres

the sum of £..... (amount in words)
on (date)
and annually on the same date thereafter until further notice.

Kindly mention reference: Gift Aid

Account holders name

Account Number Sort Code:

Signature Date

Electronic Banking

Account name: The Friends of St. George's Memorial Church Ypres

From Great Britain:

Sort code – 30.95.74
Account number – 00252832

From outside Great Britain:

IBAN – GB75 LOYD 3095 7400 2528 32 BIC – LOYDGB21027



**Gift Aid Declaration in favour of
The Friends of St. George's Memorial Church Ypres charity number 21382-L-1**

Donor title forenames

Family name

Address

Postal town Post code

Telephone number in case of query

I wish to donate to The Friends under the Gift Aid scheme as follows:

The enclosed donation of

All donations I make to The Friends from the date of this declaration until further notice.

I confirm that I pay income tax and or capital gains tax at an amount at least equal to the sum mentioned above in each relevant tax year and that the amount of tax that all gifts made to charities does not exceed the total tax paid. I understand that VAT and council tax do not qualify as taxes.

Signature date. / / 20

This declaration may be cancelled by you in writing at any time. Please advise The Friends of any change of address and should you no longer pay income or capital gains tax. Regular payments may be made by banker's order.



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We respect your right to privacy. Our data policy adheres to the principles of the General Data Protection Regulation and summarizes what personally identifiable information we may collect, and how we might use this information. This policy also describes other important topics relating to your privacy.

Information about our visitors and/or Friends is kept confidentially for the use of St George's Memorial Church and the Friends of St George's Memorial Church. We do not pass names and addresses or other details to any other person or organisation.

Full details of our policy are displayed on our website and is also available from our Membership Secretary. To exercise all relevant rights, queries or complaints please contact the Membership Secretary at 32 Fulwood Walk, London SW19 6RB or by email: plusnet32@espeare.plus.com

DATABASE UPDATE

Dear Friend, we are continuing the process of updating our membership database and have had a number of requests to consider sending future editions of The Friends newsletter electronically. If you would like to receive the newsletter and other occasional communications such as updates on St George's Memorial Church via email, please send your email address details to the address below with a brief note giving us permission to contact you via email. You can rest assured that these details will not be shared with any other organisation.

In the event that we do not hear from you, we will continue to send the Newsletter by post with pleasure; likewise if there are any details that we may not have correct or any other queries on your membership, please feel free to contact us and help us to keep our records up to date. Alternatively, please write to: Miss E Speare, Membership Secretary, 32 Fulwood Walk, London SW19 6RB.

Please keep our Membership Secretary up to date with any changes to your communication preferences and we thank you for the excellent response to our circular concerning GDPR. If you haven't responded to this, it is never too late!

ST. GEORGE'S WEBSITE

The new St George's website, developed through support of The Friends, has been up and running since June 2017. It contains up to date news and information about St George's activities, events and contact points for The Friends. Or you can easily find yourself at any time inside St George's by taking a 360 degree tour of this beautiful church.

So, one good way of keeping in contact with St George's is by visiting its website on a regular basis.

www.stgeorgesmemorialchurchypres.com

PUBLICITY FOR ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH

One of the objects of the Association of the Friends of St. George's Church is "To promote interest in and knowledge of St. George's Memorial Church in Ypres". An effective means of bringing St. George's Church to the notice of people in the United Kingdom is through local newspapers, magazines and local history societies. Church magazines are usually looking for articles and will often welcome articles about St. George's and The Friends. Local history societies and similar organisations often welcome talks in which St. George's and The Friends are mentioned, bringing the church and the Friends to a wider audience. We hope our members will grasp any opportunity that arises to engage in such publicity.



There but not there.