CHANNEL ISLANDS
GREAT WAR STUDY GROUP

Chemin-des-Dames
16th April 1917

JOURNAL 13
APRIL 2007

Hello All

In Issue 12 I led off with a reminder, not that I suspect that it was totally necessary, of a number of 1917 anniversaries. On reflection, the listing of Vimy, Arras etc. was rather Anglo-centric, and ignored the fact that French were battling as well. The choice of the statue of a *poilu* in a somewhat garish shade of *horizon bleu* will, I hope, remind us of their sacrifice at the Chemin-des-Dames and numerous other battlefields ranging from the Swiss border up to the Channel coast.

The Battles of Vimy and Arras were conducted, at French instigation, by the British to draw off German forces so that Nivelle's "lightning" assault at the Chemin-des-Dames would prove successful within 48-72 hours. As we know, success did not come and the battle became a slogging match as all others were. Nivelle, much admired by Lloyd George and others, was soon replaced and the French Army during May and June of 1917 suffered a number of mutinies, which, fortunately for the allies, remained secret. French military leadership in terms of troop morale had been poor, and the signs were already evident during the previous year at Verdun, when troops would bleat like sheep as they headed to the front!

French Reservists on SS Alberta – August 1914 (Courtesy JEP)

Throughout the war, the battles by the French would be of great relevance in the Channel Islands, since somewhere between 2,500 and 3,500 French reservists would leave to rejoin the French colours as the above picture from the JEP of 4th August, 1914 shows. Their contribution is as much a part of the Islands' heritage as is that of the British Islanders since many had married and settled in the CI, and would, if they were not killed, return at the cessation

of hostilities. Undoubtedly reports of French casualties would be studied in the Islands as much as those of the British!

Anyway down to business. We get off with a flying start to this Issue (the pun is deliberately intended!) with an article by Liz Walton on the operations during the GW of the French Seaplane Squadron based at St Peter Port. Meanwhile Ned Malet de Carteret recounts his visit to Cambridge and the 3rd Harold Ackroyd Memorial Lecture. I follow this all up with some more of my French Ramblings and Peter Tabb has provided a couple of Book Reviews on Q-Ships. As ever, there are also the various odds and ends.

Hopefully, so soon after getting back from France, this Journal will not appear to be too much of a jumble, and as ever, thanks to those who have contributed articles and other input.

SPECIAL NOTICE

The Guernsey Museum Service will be holding an exhibition entitled *Cambrai 1917* at Candie Museum and Art Gallery from 3rd November until (probably) the end of February 2008, though the brochure still says to the end of December 2007.

It will feature some of the exhibits from their permanent collection currently held at Castle Cornet, plus information that our Group is supplying, and some historical re-enactments. There should also be online access to the Group's website from special computer terminals in the Museum. This would allow visitors to the exhibition to search for information with assistance on designated days from Museum staff or Group members. There should also be an opportunity for visitors to contribute their own material, as the Museum Service's new director, Dr Jason Monaghan is keen to establish a database of photos of Guernseymen who served and has made a scanner available for this purpose. Some educational material for Secondary schools will also be produced. I will pass on more information as I get it. Meanwhile if you have internet access, see http://www.museum.guernsey.net/, where you can download a leaflet with information about all of the temporary exhibitions.

From Liz Walton

Membership News

This Journal I would like to welcome Julie Sykes and Oliver de La Fosse as the latest new members, although you have already received their contact details about a month ago.

Although Julie now lives in Yorkshire, her great-grand-father, George Le Sauvage, was from Guernsey and served with 2nd Yorkshires, being KIA on 2nd August, 1917. Coincidently he served with one of my forebears, Robert Courcoux, who was KIA the same day, and both during the early stages of

Third Ypres! She and her family are interested in all aspects of their ancestors' service in both WW.

Oliver, another Guernseyman, has had an interest in creative writing for many years, and is off to do an MA in English and Writing in the autumn. Much of his work to date has been set in and around the CI, and his latest project is a short story about a soldier in the RGLI during the Cambrai offensive, and in particular the German counter attack in Masnières. In really trying to portray the way that he thinks that a young Guernseyman (though he could quite as easily be a Jerseyman or an Alderneyman) might feel and react in that situation he has become quite fascinated by the Islanders' participation in WW1. This is an interest he wants to keep ticking over.

Postscripts

This is a brief section to tie up some loose ends from the earlier Newsletters and Journals and to add some photographs in support if appropriate. However, for this Issue I have to report that; (a) it has been rather quiet or (b) I've missed something in my Inbox!

Seaplanes at the Castle Emplacement
By Liz Walton

Despite reporting many other aspects of the war, Guernsey newspapers of 1917-18 carry no mention of the fact that there was an active French seaplane base on the island, located at the Castle Emplacement. Davis[1] states that this was because of the "mild form of voluntary censorship instituted at the outbreak of the war".

[1] Davis, E.V. *Sarnia's Record in the Great War (reprinted from "The Star"),* Date of publication unknown, Priaulx Library Collection, Guernsey

A *Weekly Press* of the period carries a photograph with the caption "Well known aviators", noting that "These aviators who have a wide circle of admirers in Guernsey, kindly posed for a GWP photograph at the Hotel de France". However there are no clues as to nationality, except possibly that it is the Hotel de France, nor are they in distinguishable uniform. Newspapers from immediately after the Armistice do carry reports and pictures of the French aviators, their machines and their base, together with details of their activities during the war years. The *Weekly Press* of 7th December 1918, for example, carries a major article on its front page entitled "Guernsey-French Seaplane station", which consists of an overview of the base and its work.

These seaplanes were not the first aircraft to visit the island, as Davis reports that in August 1916 Guernsey saw its first "aerial visitor" of the war, which took the form of a "British Dirigible airship". The visit was said to have caused much alarm among elderly ladies (of both sexes) who believed it was a Zeppelin raid. The airship came in from Jersey over Castle Cornet, and flew along to St Sampson's before disappearing in the direction of Alderney. From April 1917 onwards, visits from the air became much more numerous. A French aircraft was seen "racing down the Little Russell from the direction of Cherbourg" before it swung round opposite the town and returned in the direction from whence it came. In the following week, several others visited, all taking the same route. However, on 24th April, 1917 one came down from the usual direction, but "turned to face the wind when opposite Soldier's bay and gracefully alighted on the sea near the Castle. It then taxied into the Harbour and moored near the Model Yacht Pond, after which the crews were rowed ashore."[2] After a brief stay, the plane returned to Cherbourg, but several more visited in the following week. One was landed at the White Rock, having been damaged, and it stayed there for several days under guard while being repaired. A week later, the same seaplane broke up in the air over Cherbourg, killing its pilot, Petty Officer Drouet.[3] His death is reported in the *Weekly Press,* a week later, under the same photograph but again with no mention of the fact that he was anything more than a visitor to the island. The report notes that "Returning from a flight he was caught in an air-eddy and, being unable to straighten his machine, fell from a height of 600 ft".

These seaplane visits were the forerunners of the establishment of a base, agreed by the French and English governments but run by the Aviation Maritime Française. This unit was formed just before the war, but grew very rapidly so that by December 1916 it had 110 seaplanes and other aircraft, plus another 40 in reserve and a staff of about 1,000 trained men. It continued to grow through 1917, and was further strengthened when America entered the war in April 1917.[4] The journey from Ushant to Calais can be made within sight of the French coast except for the portion between Tréguier, in Brittany, and Guernsey. There were already aviation centres in Cherbourg and Tréguier, and a station in Guernsey would establish a link between the two, and form part of the "Patrouilles Alliées de Normandie".

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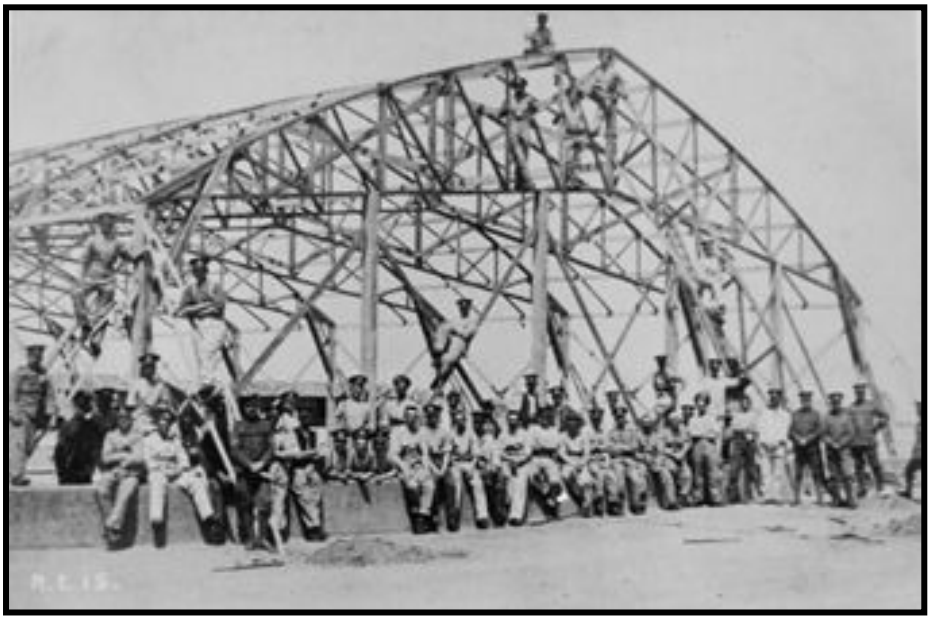
[2] Ibid.
[3] *Guernsey Weekly Press,*
[4] Morareau, L. Feuilloy, R. Courtinat, J-L, Le Roy, T. and Rossignol, J-P, (eds) (1999), *L'Aviation Maritime Française Pendant la Grande Guerre,* Paris, Ardhan.

A Ministerial Dispatch, dated 21st February, 1917, from Paris to the Vice Admiral, Commander in Chief of the Naval prefect at Cherbourg stated that it had been decided to create two new permanent "postes de combat", (PCs) one at Dieppe and the other in Guernsey. The Guernsey station would form an annexe of the Cherbourg Aviation Centre, and was to receive a permanent section of two or three seaplanes, each commanded by a Pilot Officer, and with an observer. Other personnel assigned to the base were to be a Second Master Mechanic, three Quartermaster Specialised mechanics, three Seaman Mechanics, one Seaman Radio TSF, one Seaman Gunner, one Seaman Specialised, one Seaman Carpenter and one Seaman Signaller. There were also to be two or three non-commissioned pilots. The Guernsey station was to have responsibility for patrolling the area of sea between the island and Tréguier, but they also covered the seas around Alderney and Les Casquets, along with British, French and later American seaplanes based in Cherbourg.

Thus on 30th March 1917, Ensign de Vaisseau Douillard of the Aviation Maritime Française arrived in Guernsey, and a meeting was set up with the British government and local authorities, to find a suitable site for the base. The Castle Emplacement was chosen, and the Commanding Officer of the British Garrison was able to put 100 men at Douillard's disposition to help build the base[5]. First of all a heavy wire fence was built all around the base. The Model Yacht Pond was drained to form a site for one of the four hangars, and a double row of accommodation huts for the aviators was built between the Harbour and the Model Yacht Pond.

The hangers were Bessoneaus, built of metal frames bolted together, then covered with heavy green canvas tied to the framework through brass eyelets. Special buildings for aviation fuel, oil, and storage for the station's reserve of ten bombs and 2,000 machine gun magazines were also required.



Men of the RE working on a Hangar

[5] Taylor, K, *The French Seaplane Base in Guernsey,1917-1918,* in Journal, Channel Islands Specialist Society.

It was originally intended that the seaplanes, or hydravions, would come ashore on specially strengthened ramps previously used for launching boats, but it was eventually decided that they would be lifted out by cranes, so a hand operated crane was built on a nearby slipway[6]. The work, including the installation of water supplies and electric light, was carried out by the Guernsey Company of Royal Engineers, "assisted by a few French bluejackets", under the supervision of Ensign de Vaisseau Séguier then Ensign de Vaisseau Dauvin

All of this took another month, with materials for the sheds and the seaplanes being brought over by barge from Cherbourg.[7] They arrived packed in huge boxes, and were then assembled in Guernsey. When the work was completed, a party of about 100 men, consisting of Officers, Petty Officers (who were employed as observers) and mechanics also arrived from the Centre d'Aviation Maritime (CAM) at Cherbourg, on the barge Corail, which was pulled across by an armed tug. Flight Lieutenants Bruzon and Le Parmentier arrived in July 1917 to further assist with preparations, which included "the installation of a wireless apparatus.

On 29th July, 1917 the decision was taken to upgrade the Guernsey PC to CAM status. It was one of three centres which together comprised the Patrouilles Aeriennes de Normandie, the other two being based at Cherbourg and Le Havre. By then the base was said to be equipped with a total of twelve FBA 150s, nine of which were armed, and by September the number had risen again to 16, with 12 being armed. In addition there was a 12 m. vedette and a flat bottomed boat, plus a truck and a touring car. In January 1918 the air fleet increased to a total of eleven Telliers and ten FBA.s, and by July 1918 it had thirty seaplanes in all. There was some discussion as to whether the base should be equipped with a balloon look-out post, but on 18th October, 1917, Ensign 1st Classe de Vaisseau Ducuing[8] noted that such a project was unrealistic, because of space restrictions caused by street lights, and telegraph and electricity lines, to say nothing of pedestrian and vehicular access on the causeway.

The centre was officially opened in August, 1917, (3) with Ensigne de Vaisseau 1st Class Pierre Lecour-Grandmaison as Commandant from June 1917 to April 1918. He was succeeded by First Lieutenant Jacques Flandrin. Other officers at the base were First Lieutenant Yves Maheas, pilot, Lieutenants Réné de St Maurice, pilot, Henri Boissan, observer, and Marcel Le Parmentier, observer, Second Lieutenant Maurice de Rodellec du Porzic, observer, and Engineer Officer Dousselin. Regular patrols were established immediately, with seaplanes working in pairs from dawn to dusk. Initially they used pigeons trained to carry back information, but soon they were all equipped with radios. The pigeons lived in a special caravan on wheels at the base, and their trainer, a French soldier, was part of the staff.

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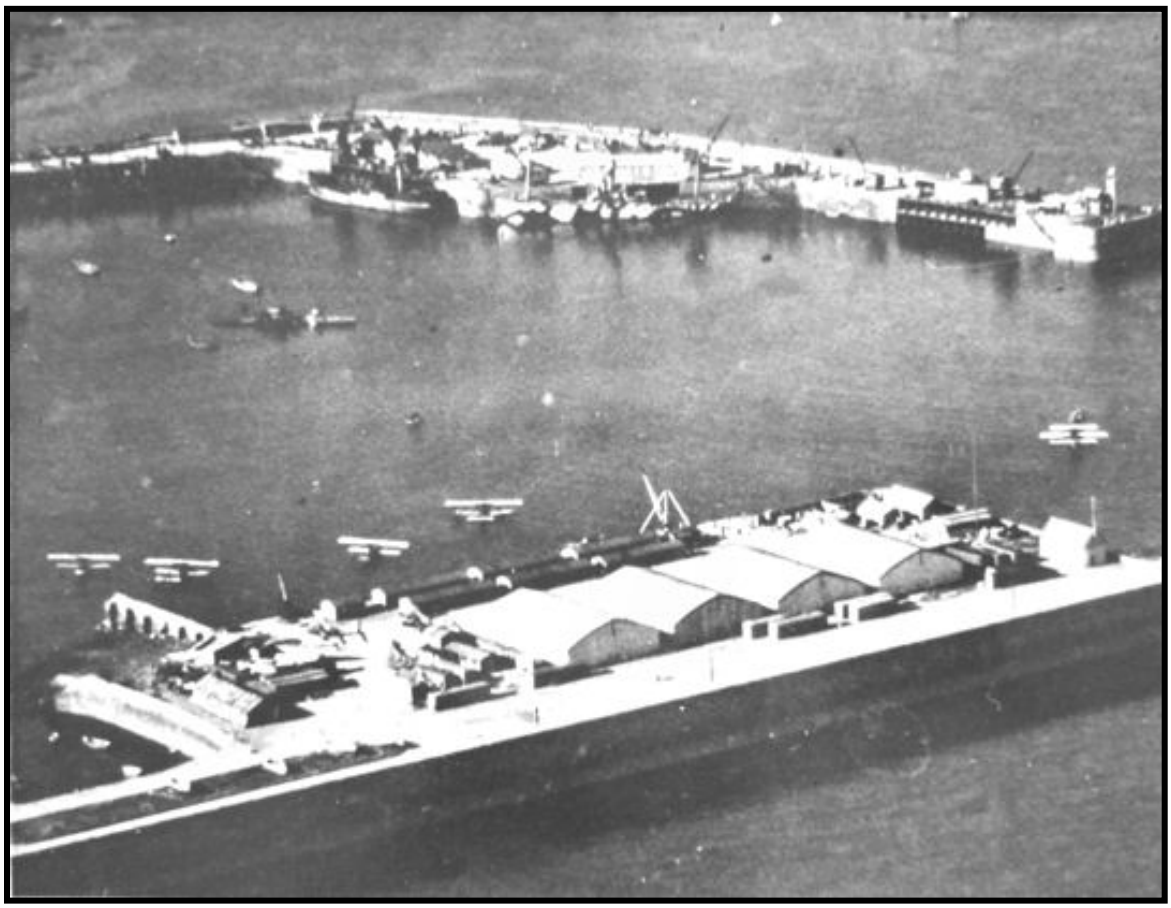
[6] Davis, E.V. *Sarnia's Record in the Great War (reprinted from "The Star"),* Date of publication unknown, Priaulx Library Collection, Guernsey.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Davis, E.V. *Sarnia's Record in the Great War (reprinted from "The Star"),* Date of publication unknown, Priaulx Library Collection, Guernsey.



An aerial view of the seaplane base. Four French biplanes and an Italian triplane can be seen, as well as the hangars and the crane used to launch the seaplanes.

The planes themselves are described by Davis as being "mainly biplanes with a single boat shaped float," though a few Lévy-Besson 200 triplanes[9] were brought over in August 1918 "but were not much used" be cause of their poor performance. The biplanes were mainly Tellier 200s and FBAs, with some Georges Lévy 280s arriving just before the Armistice. The Telliers were 200hp single engined hydravions, carrying two 52 kg bombs, and they could be fitted with a single machine gun at the front of the fuselage. These bombs were supposedly specially designed for attacks on submarines either on the surface or diving, but their special underwater fuses were not always reliable[10]. Initially they were just carried on the planes and thrown out by hand, but from 1917 onwards planes were fitted with special holders under the lower wings which were operated by means of cables from the cockpit. From 1917 seaplanes based in Guernsey carried the distinguishing letter 'G'.[11] They could carry a crew of two or three men on a four hour patrol at

[9] Morareau, L, Feuilloy, R., Courtimat, J-L, Le Roy, T and Rossignol, J-P, (eds)(1999) L'Aviation Maritime Pendant la Grande Guerrre, Paris, ARDHAN, p.119

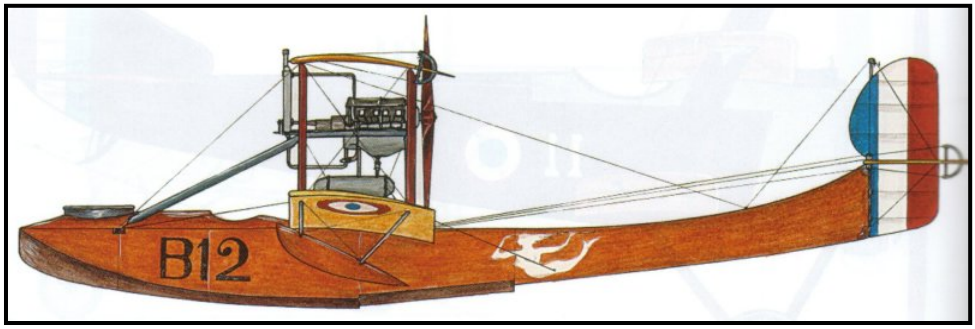
[10] Ibid, p.427

[11] Morareau, L, Feuilloy, R., Courtimat, J-L, Le Roy, T and Rossignol, J-P, (eds)(1999) L'Aviation Maritime Pendant la Grande Guerrre, Paris, ARDHAN

130kph and could climb to 2,000m in about 16 minutes at full power. Telliers were mainly used for combat, while FBAs were used more for reconnaissance.

Guernsey Seaplane G17

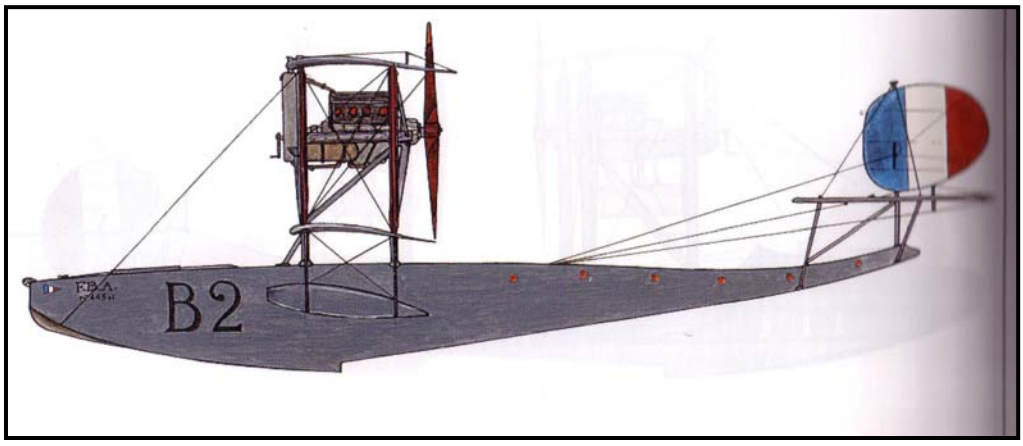
Visiting British seaplanes, such as the one piloted by a Guernseyman, Lieutenant MR Banks, RNAS, second son of Mr and Mrs TB Banks of High Street, had double floats and so could be distinguished from the single-floated French ones based on the island. The French Navy had ordered ten Telliers even before trials were complete, in November 1916, then another hundred at the beginning of 1917 and two hundred more at the end of the same year. However, production was slow and was taken over by Cherbourg Arsenal. Shreck and Donnet-Denhaut were also producing similar machines at the same time. These machines were all dependant on wind conditions, and the base had to send up “miniature balloons” at regular intervals, to test the strength of the wind in higher altitudes.



Hydravion de combat Tellier 200 CH – 1916
(Tellier 200hp combat seaplane, 1916)
Picture courtesy of ARDHAN

Envergure (wingspan) :	15.60m
Surface portante (aerofoil) :	47.00 m^2
Longueur (length) :	11.83m
Hauteur (height) :	3.60m
Moteur (engine) :	Hispano-Suiza 8Ba de 200ch
Poids à vide (net weight) :	1,150 kg
Poids en charge (gross weight):	1,795 kg
Equipage (crew):	Deux ou trois hommes (2 or 3 men)
Vitesse maximale (max. speed) :	135 kph
Autonomie (endurance) :	4h
Armement (weapons) :	2 bombes de 52 kg, Une mitrailleuse avant. (2 x 52kg bombs, a machine gun in front.)

(from *Les Hydravions d'Alphonse Tellier*)



Hydravion de reconnaissance FBA H, biplane, 1917
(FBA H reconnaissance seaplane, 1917)
Picture courtesy of ARDHAN

Envergure (wingspan) :	14.72m
Longueur (length):	9.92m
Hauteur (height) :	3.10m
Surface portante(aerofoil):	40.00m²
Equipage (crew) :	3
Masse a Vide (net weight):	984 kg
Masse totale (gross weight):	1,420 kg
Motorisation (engine):	Hispano Suiza 8Aa de 150 Ch.
Vitesse maximale(maximum speed):	150 km/h
Autonomie(endurance):	456km

The stretch of water between Guernsey and England was the scene of much German submarine activity at this stage of the war, and the focus of the war at sea was largely on the destruction of U-boats and the protection of merchant vessels. From 1917 a convoy system was introduced, whereby ships for English ports were formed into convoys west of the Scilly Isles and were escorted by British naval ships up the channel, travelling close to the English

coast. Similarly, vessels for French ports were assembled into convoys at Ushant and were escorted up the Channel by French warships. The role of the seaplanes at this stage of the war was to patrol the convoy routes and warn shipping of any danger. This over-flying also made the U-boats submerge to great depths and so be less able to attack quickly. Protection of convoys became an increasing priority, replacing general reconnaissance work to a large degree, though the latter was reinstated in 1918 as the U-boat threat lessened.

There were strict regulations on the use of bombs by seaplanes, listed in a Circulation Ministérielle of 1st December 1917, stating that they had to be dropped from a height of 200m and noting the advantages of dropping more than one bomb at a time, spaced at 20 minute intervals, so to practise accuracy the Guernsey seaplane base crews used to throw bags of cement at a rock just outside St Peter Port harbour[12], apparently without any great accuracy. In addition, a seaplane taking a shortcut across the parish of St Pierre du Bois accidentally dropped one of its half hundredweight bombs into a field near Passiflora, creating a crater and destroying glass in surrounding greenhouses. Fortunately there was no reported injury or loss of life. However the crater is still marked by hawthorn bushes[13]. Despite these setbacks, the squadron seem to have built up to being a great success, and the Guernsey centre is described as being "très actif". They started on 9th August, a month after they were commissioned, by spotting a floating mine near the harbour mouth. On 13th September, 1917, G3 and G7 dropped three bombs on an enemy submarine 13 miles NE of the Casquets, and signalled its location to British boats patrolling nearby.[14] On the 27th September, there was another attack on a submarine which had just submerged. Other U-boats were seen by patrols from the Guernsey station, which were however unable to attack them for a variety of reasons, mainly related to the weather, and on 17th November, GT7 and G10 sighted a submarine but it dived before they could attack. However by using flags they were able to signal its presence to the British.

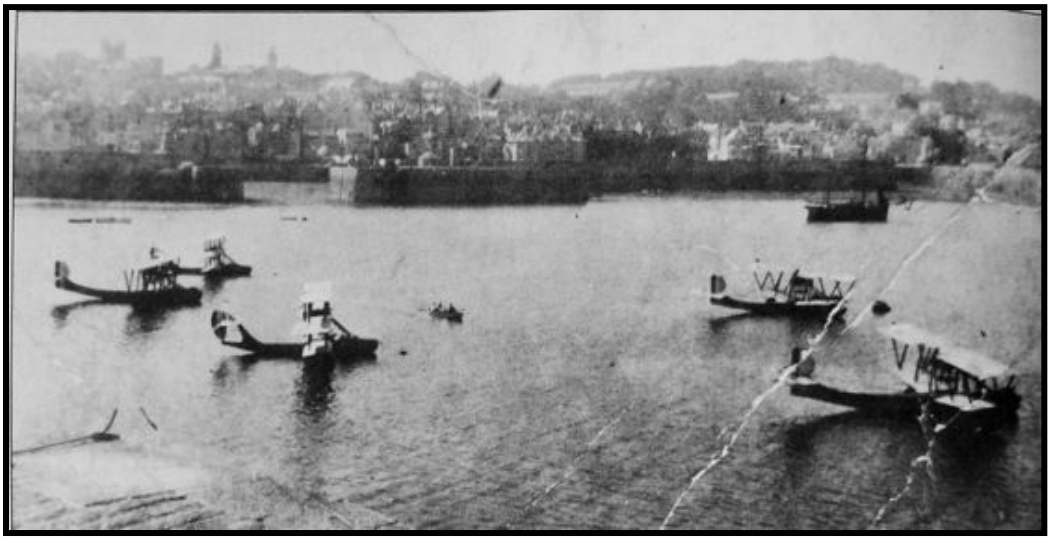
Bad weather was a real problem, because the seaplanes, heavily loaded with bombs and fuel, found it difficult to take off. They needed a longer run than was available within the harbour and had to try to take off in the swell which prevails outside the harbour mouth, which meant hitting into the waves with considerable force as they gained speed. Davis also described the problems that occurred once the seaplanes had taken off: "With the winds blowing from the SE to West or North, the air is, under the lee of the island, full of holes and waves just like the sea when it is rough…..The machine tries its best to fly but it is buffeted about in all directions, and seems to be always on the verge of a side-slip, which is likely to be fatal when it does occur at a low altitude". Fog

[12] Taylor, K, *The French Seaplane Base in Guernsey,1917-1918,* in Journal, Channel Islands Specialist Society.

[13] De Garis, M. interview with author, 22 Feb 2007

[14] Morareau, L, Feuilloy, R., Courtimat, J-L, Le Roy, T and Rossignol, J-P, (eds)(1999) *L'Aviation Maritime Pendant la Grande Guerrre,* Paris, ARDHAN

caused difficulties, as they had no means of calculating where they were except by line of sight. The aviators had to wear special thick clothing, especially in cold and wet weather, as they had no other protection from the elements. Landing in rough weather always carried with it the risk of capsize or damage to the hull. December 1917 was particularly difficult, with the vedette being lost on 9th December,[15] and roof of the hangars being badly damaged by strong winds. In addition, the Commander of the Normandy Squadron was unable to supply the torpedo boat which the base required.



Seaplanes in the Outer Harbour at St Peter Port

However, despite these difficult operating circumstances, on 30th January, 1918, a newly laid minefield was spotted, and on 31st January one Tellier and one FBA left the base at 10.10 am and soon sighted a submarine south of the Hanois lighthouse. They were only carrying one bomb each, because sea conditions meant that they had to take off in a very short space. They soon spotted a submarine, but needed to identify it carefully, as a French submarine was operating in the area. By the time they had a positive identification, the enemy submarine had begun to dive, but they fired on it and scored two direct hits. It was seen attempting to come up five times before heeling over to port "at an angle of more than 45 degrees" and disappearing amid patches of oil.[16] These and other successes meant that by February Lieutenant le Cour-Grandmaison was able to recommend Ensigne du Vaisseau Merveilleux du Vignaux for the Croix de Guerre with Palm, for being an officer with 177 flying hours, who, on 13th September, 1917, attacked a large submarine, and on 17th November stayed in the air for six hours and made an enemy submarine go under water twice. On 31st January, 1918 he again attacked a large submarine, causing "grave damage which may have caused the loss of this vessel".[17]

[15] Taylor, K, The French Seaplane Base in Guernsey,1917-1918, in Journal, Channel Islands Specialist Society.

[16] Morareau, L, Feuilloy, R., Courtimat, J-L, Le Roy, T and Rossignol, J-P, (eds)(1999) L'Aviation Maritime Pendant la Grande Guerrre, Paris, ARDHAN

[17] Taylor, K, The French Seaplane Base in Guernsey,1917-1918, in Journal, Channel Islands Specialist Society.

On 4th March, 1918 two seaplanes each dropped two bombs on a suspicious looking wake, and on 4th April, the squadron, under its new Commander, Lieutenant Flandrin, former first lieutenant to Lieutenant le Cour-Grandmaison, found another minefield, this time near Jersey. However a detailed look at one action[18] gives a better impression of what the seaplanes actually did. On 23rd April G5 and G8 were reconnoitring the route of a convoy escorted by *Bernicle* and *Les Baleines*, two French patrol boats, when they saw "un objet grisâtre, de forme allongée, avec écume sur l'avant" (a greyish object, of elongated shape, with foam ahead of it). It was waiting off Jerbourg Point, St Martin's, but submerged on their approach. At 13.45 G8 dropped one bomb on the wake, but noted no effect so G8 landed on the sea near to *Bernicle* and signalled by pointing where the submarine had been. At the same time they sent two pigeons back to the centre to inform staff of its presence. The convoy was rerouted then the two patrol boats went in the direction shown them by the seaplane. G8, the section leader took off again and then thought he spotted a periscope a couple of times but was uncertain, so landed on the sea again next to a small fishing boat and asked if the crew had seen anything suspicious. They said no, so he took off again. Meanwhile G12 and G6 arrived, having received the information sent back by pigeon. G12 spotted a long white 'V' shaped streak on the water, near to the two patrol boats, and because the sea was so calm they could then sea the dark shape of the submarine beneath. They dropped two bombs on it at 14.55, and the patrol boats opened fire at the same time. G8 then arrived on the scene and dropped its second bomb, while G5 dropped another two. As was the case with so many attacks on submerging submarines, no definite proof of destruction was available, but the submarine was not seen again and floating debris was seen in the area. It was also noted that porpoises had been seen around the submarine, and two of them were killed in the attack.

During May 1918, there were five attacks by Guernsey based planes on German submarines, all of which caused substantial damage or destruction. Early in the same month, the seaplane squadron sighted a German submarine in time to warn a convoy of 41 French ships which were just about to enter the Channel. Another incident on 6th May saw two seaplanes attacking a German submarine near the Roches Douvres before it could attack a Cherbourg to Brest convoy, and on 18th May, two seaplanes dropped bombs on a submarine which had been attacking an English convoy south of the Cornish coast. All of this activity caused the U boats to move further away from the island, but the seaplanes also moved further afield, working over the open sea. On 31st May, on a fine calm day 30 miles west of the Hanois they chased off a submarine which was shelling a becalmed English sailing ship, Dundee P14, travelling from St Malo to Portsmouth. They were spotted by the submarine, which began to manoeuvre and at 7.45 they dropped two bombs from a height of 100m at the moment when its turret disappeared under the water. Pilots reported that the submarine disappeared straight down, so they circled the area for about twenty minutes when they noticed a huge oily residue on the surface of the sea. The seaplanes then landed on the sea near to the sailing ship, to check that all was well before returning to base. The

[18] Morareau, L, Feuilloy, R., Courtimat, J-L, Le Roy, T and Rossignol, J-P, (eds)(1999) L'Aviation Maritime Pendant la Grande Guerre, Paris, ARDHAN, p.116.

ship's captain reported that no-one was wounded, and that it would do some repairs before continuing on its way.

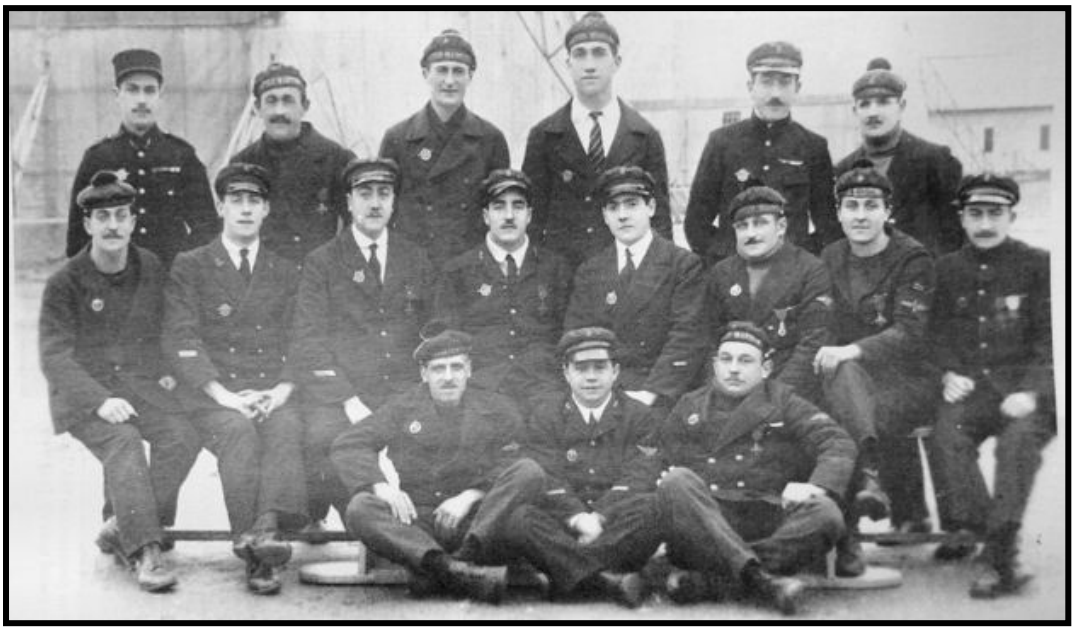
On 8th June, they dropped three bombs on a submarine before it could attack a big American convoy 15 miles NE of the Casquets, and on 4th July, they bombed a submarine 8 miles to the North of Alderney. On 8th July, 20 miles to the West of the Hanois lighthouse two seaplanes dropped 4 bombs after seeing a periscope, and they also warned two convoys in the area, by telegraph rather than pigeon this time. There were similar attacks on 17th and 30th July, and in August, there were four more attacks, on 9th, 11th, 24th and 30th. These were made more difficult as the Germans had begun to camouflage their vessels to make them look like Allied submarines. There was little flying in September and October, because of poor weather and also submarine activity came to a close in the months leading up to the Armistice.

As a result of these various activities, several French pilots and observers based in Guernsey were awarded the Croix de Guerre and other honours. In March 1918 SM Mécanicien Victor Lambert, pilote, was awarded a citation a l'Ordre le l'Armée, QM Cannonier Pierre Gregoire, Observateur, received the same award and Ensigne de Vaisseau Classe 1 Noël Merveilleux de Vigneaux was made Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur for his leadership in as well as receiving a citation a l'Ordre de l'Armée. QM Mécanicien Emil Chapin, his observer, received the same citation plus the Médaille Militaire. The Croix de Guerre was also awarded to the station as a whole, for 25 attacks on enemy submarines and the discovery of three minefields, all between 9th August 1917 and 30th August 1918. Carpenters at the station made a wooden model of it, which they fixed to one of the barracks at the base. Davis also reports that many Jersey people spent their summer holidays in Guernsey in 1917 and 1918, because they wanted to see the flying boats!

The French airmen seem to have been welcomed by the people of Guernsey, as they are described in newspapers of the time as having " a wide circle of admirers in Guernsey", or being "our gallant airmen". Also, a wedding took place at the church of Notre Dame du Rosaire in St Peter Port between one of the French contingent, Quartier Maitre Emile Chapin of Rennes and Miss Leah Badaire, only daughter of the owner of the Hotel de France in the Plaiderie, St Peter Port, on 3th April 1919. The bridegroom is described as being " …the proud possessor of a Military Medal and Military Cross bestowed on him for sinking a submarine in January 1918". Also Pilot Officer LV Lambert eventually became the French Consular agent in Guernsey in the 1960s.

Before the French aviators left the island in 1919, a dinner was held for them at Moore's Queen's hotel, hosted by Mr Gervaise Footitt Peek. There was music from the Santangelo group, and the room was decorated with French and English flags. After the toasts, Mr W. D. Murdoch, speaking in French, proposed the health of the men of the Aviation Maritime Francaise, "who had done so much in safeguarding our shipping and our coasts". He also complimented them on their good behaviour, and said that "he was sure their merry faces would be missed in the streets of the town". (5) In return, M. le

Commandant Flandrin thanked Mr Peek for his continuing support since their arrival on the island, when his launch had brought the first aviators to shore, and he also commended the general kindness of the people of the island. A photograph taken at the base when it was disbanded in 1919 shows QM Observatory Korean, SM Piloted Sylvester, QM Observatory Gregorian, QM Observatory Riches, SM Pilots Gamin, Decoct, Lambert and Bathe, QM Observations Chapin and Berets, SM Observatory Licit, Sgt Piloted Pilchard, QM Observatory After, QM Pilots Radisson and Desnoyelles, SM Pilote Clot and QM Observateur Massol as being the non commissioned staff still there at that time.



Seaplane base personnel in 1919, at decommissioning of base

When the aviators left the island early in 1919, their base was dismantled and the buildings auctioned off. The *Star* of 4th January, 1919 states that "At the insistence of M. de la Chapelle, French consular agent, Mr CA Hawkins, auctioneer, of the Rohais, St Peter Port, held a sale of various sheds and cases belonging to the Aviation Maritime." A previous advertisement for the sale gave the dimensions of these as 1 shed, 68ft by 16ft, in two compartments, 1 shed, 24ft by 12ft, with stone walls, 1 shed, 68ft by 16ft, with 54 cupboards, 3 sheds, 68ft by 16ft, each containing six rooms, 3 sheds, 68ft by 16 ft, each containing 26 cupboards, 1 shed, 68ft by 16ft, 1 shed, 21 ft by 16 ft, with two compartments, 1 shed, 18 ft by 16 ft, with two compartments, 1 petrol shed with 48ft stone front wall (about 20 ft wide) and iron door; five large cases (33ft by 8 ft) suitable for sheds. All the sheds are boarded on the top and covered with Ruberoid roofing, boards 1 in x 7½ins, posts 2 ins x 5 ins; old iron, firewood etc." This shows the considerable size of this "secret" base.

The sale attracted a crowd of 250 people, men and women, many of whom were growers. Prices were said to be good, with large sheds realising between £94 and £114, and smaller ones achieving £18 to £82. The cases sold for between £10 and £18 each. I had been told by several local people

that one of the hangars was used by Fruit Export at Les Banques, prior to the Admiral Park development, as a store and overflow car park, but Vaudin (6) confirms from company records that, though the building was a former hangar, it came from Cirencester, having been demolished on site and reassembled in Guernsey by Fruit Export workers. The seaplanes themselves were taken back to Cherbourg on the barge that had brought them over when the base was built. (6), though three of them were still there, in a canvas hangar, at the time of the sale and apparently attracted much attention from the crowd.

Thus eighteen months after its arrival, the seaplane base no longer existed. Its existence had never been reported during that time despite the fact that it was a major construction that brought over 100 French airmen to the island, and its existence undoubtedly saved the lives of many sailors and helped essential foodstuffs to get through to Channel ports. It was also reported that no member of the crew of the Guernsey station was killed in action

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Benches For The Wounded
By Liz Walton

Mrs Marie de Garis is the author of the history of the parish of St Pierre du Bois, a book of Guernsey folklore and, most importantly the standard Guernsey French Dictionary. She was born in 1910, and wanted to talk about her childhood memories of the Great War. She said that after 1917 there were so many wounded men on the island, most of whom had no means of transport, that the authorities put benches at various places along main routes, where the men could rest before continuing their journeys. These were

painted green, and had a plaque on them saying that they were for the use of wounded soldiers only. She mentioned one at Le Bourg in the Forest, another at the Hougue Fouque in St Saviour's, and a third at Plaisance in St Peter's. She also said that as a small girl she used to sit on them and feel very naughty because they were only for the soldiers. An appeal for information on BBC Guernsey brought in details of a couple more - one on the Forest Road and another in Colborne Road, St Peter Port.

The original benches are of course long gone but there are still benches at most of these sites and they were obviously not put there for admiring the view as they are on main thoroughfares.

A Bench on the Forest Road

A search of the Douzaine records for St Pierrre du Bois, held in the island archives, yielded the following:

"Avril 1918. La Douzaine a décidé de placer quatre bancs de la longueur de six metres (suivant plan) un dans chaque vingtaine pour l'usage des soldats blessés, aux frais de la bourse d'amélioration."

Translated, this says that in April 1918 the Douzaine decided to place four benches, each 6 feet long, following a plan (which wasn't in the records), one in each vingtaine of the parish, for the use of wounded soldiers, to be paid for from the improvement budget. It would be interesting to know if this was just a Guernsey initiative, and also if it was island-wide. Hopefully we'll have more on this later.

Editor's Note: What else is there in the Islands in similar vein to these Benches. I noted from an old JEP for example that the Jersey States set up a

War Relics Committee in 1917 to “collect bits”. I wonder what they actually received and where it might now be.

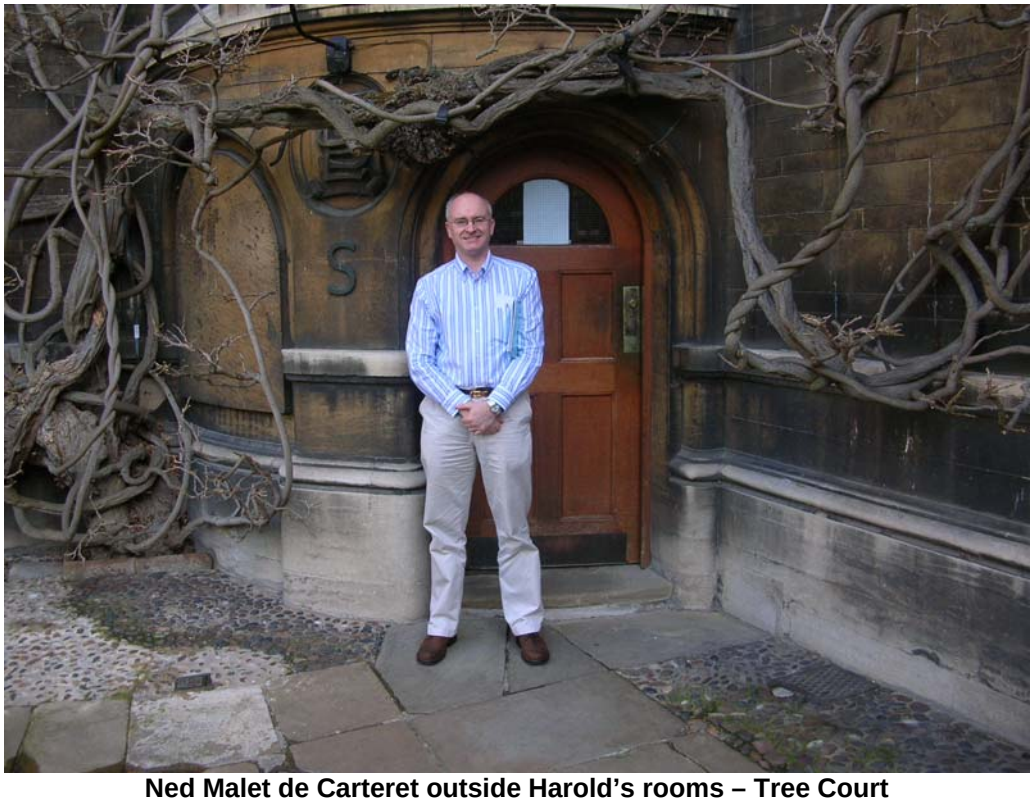
3rd Annual Harold Ackroyd Memorial Lecture
given by Professor Sir John Walker
In the Bateman Auditorium, Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge
on Thursday, 8th March, 2007

I arrived in Cambridge at 4.15pm having been driven by Christopher Ackroyd and his lovely wife Alex from Bristol, a journey of some four and a quarter hours. We had travelled on a lovely sunny March day. A hurried change of clothes was made at the Crown Plaza hotel followed by a short taxi ride by Christopher and I to Caius College. Dropping off his Fellows’ gown at the Porters Lodge we made our way to the Fellows Sitting Room and Dining Room to ensure that the dinner place names would be correctly addressed by the catering staff. Christopher had invited 19 people for a private dinner after the lecture.

We then took a walk to Tree Court, Room S9, to see if we could gain entrance to Harold’s old rooms to view his memorial plaque but unfortunately, the occupant an undergraduate named Williams was out. We re-visited it the next morning, but to no avail. So instead I will show a picture of Christopher Ackroyd taken in 1984.

Christopher Ackroyd with Harold Ackroyd’s memorial plaque in 1984

We then went to the lovely chapel, to see Harold’s name first by entrance date (1896) on the list of the War dead wooden Board of Remembrance on the left of the chapel foyer. I couldn’t go in as the Choir were practicing. The Chapel is oblong in shape and looked simple to me. The Choir Christopher tells me is one of the best in Cambridge.



Ned Malet de Carteret outside Harold's rooms – Tree Court

We then went to the Bateman auditorium, where we found the Director of Studies, Dr Julian Sale and Professor Sir John Walker setting up his Apple Mac. Christopher plugged in his memory stick into the said PC.

All was set, and we chatted before the guests arrived, learning of Sir John's connection with the research laboratory founded in 1927 where Sir Frederick Hopkins continued his studies into the discovery of Vitamins. He won the Nobel Prize for Medicine in 1929. We have a condolence letter to Mabel from Sir Frederick's wife, as he was a close colleague of Harold's from 1910-1914 whilst they were studying at Downing College Research Laboratory in Cambridge. Where Harold's research papers went to is a mystery, we wonder if Sir Frederick ever saw sight of them.

The hall gradually filled up, I estimate there were 50 medical undergraduates from the College (over 60% were non-white, mainly Indian and Chinese students). Caius has the largest number of medical undergraduates, some 90, and is the pre-eminent college for reading medicine at Cambridge. At just after 6 pm, Christopher Ackroyd started the lecture by giving a seven minute resumé of Harold Ackroyd's life.

Sir John then presented his lecture – "Life Giving Energy", which was all about his life's work in discovering ATP – how the cell membrane breaks down food and turns it into the energy that drives our every function. There were plenty of colourful slides, formulas and experimental photographs, while he also generously named all those colleagues that have worked with him in his discoveries. He won a ¼ Nobel Prize for his work in this field of biochemistry in 1997.

In his laboratory, the LMB (Laboratory of Molecular Biology) was Professor Fred Sanger a double Nobel prize winner and discoverer of the DNA sequencing code.

The Lecture's Attendees sitting in Eager Anticipation

Christopher Ackroyd commencing the lecture

At 7 pm, and following the lecture, we adjourned upstairs for a well earned glass of wine before making our way to dinner. The new Master of the college then joined us, Sir Christopher Hum, who has just retired after a career in the Diplomatic service. His final posting was as the UK ambassador to the Peoples Republic of China from 2002-2005. He spent over 20 years in China.

A splendid meal was had and I had the opportunity to chat to all 3 scholars, the first a Chinese national, Miss Zi Wie Liu, the second a Jain Indian, Mr Arpan Mehta from Birmingham, who told me that it was really special for the undergraduates to be able to hear such august speakers as Sir John. Lastly, Elizabeth Maughan an English student (who had missed choir practice!). All of them said to me how honoured and proud they were to have received this award, I was quite taken aback. Christopher Ackroyd then ended the evening by presenting Sir Christopher with a presentation case containing a replica set of Harold Ackroyd's medals.

Christopher duly signed Lord Ashcroft's book "Victoria Cross Heroes" for him and kindly asked me to add mine. I then presented a CD ROM full of memorabilia and two enlarged photographs of Harold and the medal presentation at Buckingham Palace on 26th September, 1917 to Harold's wife Mabel and his five year old son, Stephen. Sir Christopher was rather taken aback, but showing his great career skills - he had already found Harold's reference in the book and he read out Harold's citation to us. I then concluded the evening with some extraneous information about Harold's exploits.

The following morning Christopher and I returned to the College and duly took some more photographs and had 20 minutes with the deputy Development Officer – one Mick Le Moignan from St John's in Jersey!!

They have, over the past four years, raised £10.5 million from 2,000 Cians for the building of a new hall of residence – the Stephen Hawking Building (he is a Fellow of 40 years standing), to be opened in April by the Duke of Edinburgh. Professor Hawking is unable to attend because he will be undertaking space training in the US!!

Miscellaneous information:

Alex Ackroyd's grandfather, Corporal Mark Anderson won the MM at Lillers on 21st March, 1918, where a Casualty Clearing Station was located. He was in the RAMC. His medals are proudly on display in their home in Clifton, Bristol.

Amazingly for me also, Alex Ackroyd's mother, Rosemary Jephcott was a Leading Aircraftswoman (LACW), one of eight WRAF personnel, in 617 Squadron (Dambusters) based at RAF Scampton in Lincolnshire during WW2. She died on 29th January, 2005, aged 82. During the days before she passed away she was talking to Alex about Wing Commander Leader Guy Gibson VC and her wartime memories!

They have three wonderful photographs, two of the full Squadron with Lancaster bombers in the background, and one of her with a Lancaster behind. Her memoirs have not yet been located, but they are known to exist.

More French Ramblings
By Barrie Bertram

March has become a regular spot in the Bertram household to take a couple of weeks break in France, and 2007 was no different, though the trip was extended by a few extra days to be spent in the Verdun area at the outset. As ever, it became a case of so much to see and so little time to do so.

Two views of "Two Wheel Moorings"

A few nights were spent at a B&B at Dun-sur-Meuse, run by an English expatriate couple, Ian and Carol Moore, and called "Two Wheel Moorings". Aimed mainly at the biker fraternity, they do take four-wheelers and located next to the bridge and the war memorial is readily noticeable and convenient to a variety of dining facilities in Dun.

It is well worth the stay for a few days at 40 Euros a twin room per night. Ian has acquired a few items of GW interest and we had an interesting evening looking at postcards of Dun both pre- and during the GW and discussing the merits of various rifles. Located at the bridge, there are the readily available options of heading down the Meuse's left bank and the battle areas of the Argonne, Cote 304 and Mort d'Homme.

Alternatively one can head straight down the right bank to Verdun and the battle areas around Vaux, Fleury and Douaumont. The bridge itself was destroyed by US Forces but later replaced and dedicated to the US 5th Division that regained the area late in 1918.

Unsurprisingly, French cemeteries abound, ranging from the massive Douaumont Cemetery and its accompanying Ossuary to a number of smaller (can a cemetery with 4000-5000 crosses be considered small?) ones dotted around. However, the Moores did highlight Brieulles-sur-Meuse to me, for there, amongst French crosses (and some Belgian and Russian graves also) is contained a solitary CWGC headstone for a 371063 Sgt Frank Stowell of the Post Office Rifles who died on 7th July 1918 aged 26 and who came from the Bristol area.

The accompanying picture shows Stowell's solitary headstone amongst all of those French crosses. However, it is somewhat curious that a British soldier is buried so far from the recognised British operating areas in the GW, and certainly there does not appear to be any evidence that might suggest the PO Rifles were here. So why was he buried here? Was he attached to French or US forces? Or had he come to the area on leave or for training? Even so, Brieulles was in German hands until late-October. Had he been taken POW, and if so, would he have not been taken back to Germany? A puzzle indeed!

Any thoughts???

Just to the west of the US Meuse-Argonne Cemetery is the village of Romagne sous Montfaucon. If members are in the area and have the time, they might like to visit a small museum "Romagne 14-18" set up by a Dutchman called Jean Paul de Vries who has, over many years collected material from the Argonne battlefields. In the words of his brochure:

"14-18 THE GREAT WAR"

Millions of men left home to fight for the fatherland. On the home front the women did the best that they could to keep their communities going. Millions of victims, humans as well as animals, lost their lives: hundreds of square miles of countryside were destroyed and complete villages erased, never to be rebuilt. It was a war that went beyond the limits of endurance for both man and animal.

But the day-to-day life of soldiers was not just about warfare. They passed much of their time behind the front line. In the encampments and the occupied

villages, daily life went on. There was drinking and eating, music making and even art. There was time for personal hygiene, letters to home and for visiting friends in the field hospital. Here you will find the life of the ordinary soldier displayed over 260 square meters: For the men and the animals who, for four years, did the "impossible".

Romagne 14-18 shows in a touching way the different personal aspects. A personal story is hidden behind each object, the silent witnesses. In this way the passion of Jean-Paul de Vries developed from a private collection to be this extensive permanent exhibition.

Many of the artefacts show the ravages of time spent lying in fields, yet they are still of considerable interest and bring a different dimension to the face of war, specifically looking at the everyday minutiae faced by soldiers irrespective of nationality. Entry is free though contributions (say 5 euros per head) are welcome and details can be found on www.romagne14-18.com. J-P also advises that the Channel 4 "Timewatch" programme will be researching in the area in the not too-distant future.

An all too brief interlude saw a visit to Montmedy. It is a hill castle that dominates the Chiers and Thonne valleys and has existed since the 1220s, although it was upgraded by Vauban in the 1650s and would later see service in both World Wars.

It is a remarkable structure with the armouries, barracks, magazines, etc all still in place but very sadly the site has been badly neglected with buildings removed, for safety reasons no doubt, and the impressive church and existing houses are also decaying rapidly. It seems regrettable that the French seem to be doing little to preserve this piece of their heritage which would very likely come with a £200M+ price tag to achieve!

Barracks at Montmedy

As an aside, the castle has a Museum for the French painter, Jules Bastien-Lepage (1848-1884). Sadly we did not have time to visit, especially since the visit I have been told that he had painted in Jersey (Can this be confirmed?). Ah well, next time!

Visiting the US Meuse-Argonne Cemetery just before 5 pm is a little strange in that concealed loudspeakers (located in the trees for all that I saw) crackle into life. A recorded volley of rifle shots is heard followed by "Taps". This is followed a few minutes later by a carillon (right word?) playing the "Battle Hymn of the Republic". The Cemetery is, typically for US Cemeteries, pristine

in its appearance and well-cared for, but to me it lacks the individuality of those of the CWGC.

Following the few days at Dun, we cut across country to pick up the Autoroutes that would take us to the Somme. Even after six months away, it is amazing how quickly old routines are re-established in terms of roads where the *Déviations* haven't progressed or the short cuts.

A proportion of the time spent on the Somme was aimed at photographing various headstones and memorials related to Islanders, along with the Cemeteries and Memorials themselves. Not all went to plan, as Vimy and Arras which were being cleaned up for ceremonies on 9th April, and were taped off in certain parts. However, some 200-250 photographs were still taken with some 160 CI GW dead and these will be appearing on the website as and when I feed them in to Roger Frisby. Access was also denied at Thiepval, however that was for repairs to the roof. I confess to the thought that I might take a step-ladder on future photographic sorties to cope with the names engraved at the top of memorial panels.

While "having camera, will travel", it seems that I run the risk of finding well-decorated water towers. To follow on from the one that can be seen at Pozieres (see Journal 11), this tower is on the outskirts at Bullecourt, and commemorates Australian sacrifice in that phase of the Battle of Arras.

The other visit of note during our time in France was to the Historial located in the citadel at Peronne. This is an old favourite, and in particular, I enjoy the "pits" with the personal equipment lay-outs (the British one containing the types of item that I had been issued with in 1959!). The Historial is presently running an US propaganda poster exhibition "Wake Up America!" which will continue until late May and will follow this up with "Animals at War".

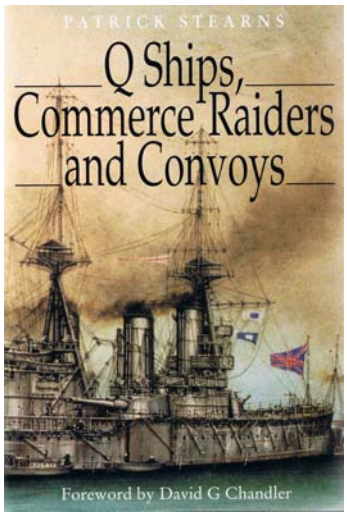
On current plans that was probably my only visit to the Somme this year, and our autumn visit to France will see me in Brittany (the gîte accommodation already having been booked).

St. Saviour's War Memorial in Jersey

It appears that the St Saviour's parish in Jersey has agreed to spend £14,000 on a new cross to be placed in the field of Remembrance. It will be interesting to see if they will have the names of the dead engraved (see Journal 10).

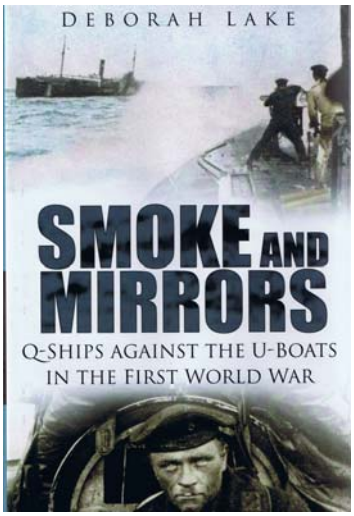
Book Reviews

A "Q-Ship Double" by Peter Tabb



Q Ships, Commerce Raiders and Convoys

by Patrick Stearns
(Spellmount Ltd) - £25.00



Smoke and Mirrors, Q Ships against the U-Boats in the First World War

by Deborah Lake
(Sutton Publishing Ltd) - £19.99

Ian Ronayne, in his excellent article on the flotsam of war on Great War CI, tells the story of Officer's Steward 3rd Class George Cawley whose body was found drifting in a lifeboat in the surf of Jersey's St Ouen's Bay on 11th April, 1917. The unfortunate Cawley was a member of the crew of HMS *Q 36*, a Special Services decoy vessel whose role was to lure enemy submarines to the surface – most such vessels were scruffy tramps or sailing ships and supposedly not worth an expensive torpedo - so that they could be sunk by hidden guns and which was sunk by enemy action.

The mystery that surrounds the demise of Steward Cawley – that despite being found adrift in a lifeboat he was deemed to have drowned and that his ship which he had clearly abandoned did not sink when it was supposed to have done – is worthy of the of the mystique that surrounds the vessels whose Royal Navy pennant numbers were preceded by the letter Q.

In *Q Ships, Commerce Raiders and Convoys*, Patrick Stearns introduces us to the shadowy world of the 'ship that is not what it seems'.

The idea of ships masquerading as innocent merchantmen in particular was a concept well known to the privateers of Jersey and Guernsey in the 17th and 18th centuries who would happily run up French or American colonial colours in order to get close enough to their quarry to capture them by boarding. Although making mention of such privateering activity, Mr Stearns begins his narrative with CSS *Alabama*, the most successful commerce raider of the American Civil War which during a twenty-two months' world cruise captured

64 Union vessels and destroyed 55 of them. *Alabama* was eventually brought to book a few miles off nearby Cherbourg when Capt. Raphael Semmes challenged a former Naval Academy classmate, Capt. John Winslow of the USS *Kearsarge*, to a 'duel of ships'. It was not an equal contest; *Alabama* was a merchant ship fitted with hidden guns while *Kearsarge* was a regular warship, and the Confederate raider went down after a gun duel of just 90 minutes.

Q Ships were the British Admiralty's response to the threat of the submarine. At first submarines were still bound by the same 'Cruiser Rules' that had governed the behaviour of *Alabama* – merchant ships were to be stopped and searched and only destroyed if they were carrying a cargo for an enemy. And at first German U-boats obeyed the rules but while on the surface they were vulnerable and the Admiralty decided that they would employ ships that could fight back with concealed guns. These ships would also carry a buoyant cargo so that they could actually survive being torpedoed (in fact very few did, they just took longer to sink). In the absence of other anti-submarine measures (hydrophones, Asdic and depth-charges had yet to be invented) the Q Ship seemed to be a good idea at the time but relatively few were successful although their often very ingenious captains were rewarded with a hatful of Victoria Crosses between them when they did succeed. However the number of submarines sunk was relatively small.

The Great War also saw the revival of the deep sea commerce raider, particularly by the German Navy, disguised merchant ships fitted with large calibre guns (usually 4- or 6-inch) or even lone warships who would prey on unescorted merchantmen. Britain had the largest merchant fleet in the world with hundreds of ships dispersed right across the globe. Ships sailing alone were very vulnerable and the cruiser *Emden* and the disguised raiders *Wolf* and *Möwe* showed how successful, and deadly, a lone raider with a resourceful captain and all the world's oceans to lose himself in could be.

The convoy, introduced reluctantly by the British Admiralty late in 1917, proved to be the best defence against the submarine and surface raider alike and Mr Stearns takes us from the Great War to the next global conflict when Germany once again turned to the U-boat and the surface raider to strangle Britain while the Royal Navy's blockade of the North Sea once again sought to do the same to them.

The Admiralty even revived the concept of the Q Ship in 1939 but the *Unterseebootewaffe* of the *Kriegsmarine* never did play the game by the Cruiser Rules and the Q Ships were directed towards the open oceans with the objective luring German surface raiders into combat. Since the regular *Kriegsmarine* units engaged in commerce raiding were mostly pocket or full sized battleships it is perhaps fortunate that this was one *ruse de guerre* that wasn't progressed. The fate of HMS *Rawalpindi* and HMS *Jervis Bay*, both armed merchant cruisers (former passenger/cargo liners equipped with up to ten 4-inch guns), when they met up with *Scharnhorst* and *Admiral Scheer* resulted in both being sunk with a huge loss of life. Similarly had the hurriedly converted merchantmen met with the disguised German raiders, all of which

were fast, heavily armed and masters of their trade, the result might well have been what happened when the 6-inch gun Royal Australian Navy cruiser HMAS *Sydney* met the converted cargo liner *Kormoran* and in the ensuing gun duel the Australian vessel was sunk with all 645 hands.

Mr Stearns was a serving officer of the Royal Navy and his depth of experience and his love for the service is evident. His style is scholarly and rather didactic and students of naval operations in the Great War will certainly be significantly better informed once they have read the book but they won't have been too excited by it, despite the promise implicit in the title.

An altogether more readable and compelling book about the Great War Q Ships has been written by Deborah Lake. *Smoke and Mirrors, Q-Ships against the U-Boats in the First World War* is a much racier work that takes us much further into the often murky world of the 'special service' ships and this book reads like a thriller which, unlike its companion, I didn't want to put down.

Both books are leavened with quite a lot of general Great War history and, like Patrick Stearns, Miss Lake explains how and why the Admiralty adopted tactics that they themselves frequently denounced, particularly since the success of the Q Ships depended on the enemy following the 'rules' while their adversary often didn't. There is no doubt that many of the captains of the Q Ships, all regular officers but mostly relatively junior in rank, were an inventive lot. Their vessels were small – U-boats, it was believed, even if they were not following the 'cruiser rules', were much more likely to surface and attempt to sink a small ship by gunfire rather than waste an expensive torpedo – and were slow and deliberately scruffy. The crew, often supplemented by Royal Marine sharpshooters, were dressed like sloppy civilians and one 'skipper' was accompanied by his 'wife', evidence of her presence being her knickers on a washing line. One CO even 'blacked up' a member of his crew since it was assumed that the German Navy would know that there were no coloured men in the Royal Navy, whereas they were quite common amongst merchant crews.

Battles between Q-ships and submarines were often angry and vicious and although many victories were claimed by both sides, many submarines, believed to have been sunk because they sustained such apparent damage, actually managed to limp home while supposed cargo ships did not actually sink once shot at or torpedoed because their buoyant cargoes fulfilled their function and often kept them afloat enough for them to be towed to safety.

Miss Lake tells us about *Baralong*, the Q Ship that sank two German U-boats and allegedly fired on escaping crews, supposedly in retaliation for the women and children who were killed when the giant Cunarder *Lusitania* was sunk without warning by U-20. In this book *Baralong* assumes the diabolic persona that would later be applied to the disguised German commerce raiders of the Second World War although only one commanding officer of those was ever arraigned for war crimes, the rest being very gentlemanly pirates. Despite German protests the *Baralong* Affair was brushed hastily under the

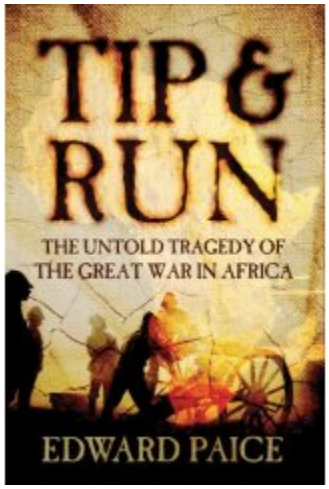
Admiralty's carpet and her commanding officer, Lt Cdr Godfrey Herbert, an experienced submariner himself, returned to the submarine service.

Miss Lake details the frustration of the Admiralty and ultimately Parliament when the German U-boats began sinking commercial shipping at an unsustainable rate after the declaration of unrestricted submarine warfare and the means of combating the U-boats were just not available. The Admiralty resisted introducing the convoy system for merchant ships (the convoy system had long been used by warships for self-protection but they were disciplined and able to hold station and not the bunch of unruly civilians that most merchant captains were deemed to be) until the iron fist of the U-boats was very close to throttling Britain's throat. Instead the Admiralty mounted raids on the U-boat bases, the most famous, although largely ineffective, being the raid on Zeebrugge. Eventually Premier Lloyd George got fed up and told them to get on with it; convoys were assembled and losses dropped dramatically. With the introduction of the convoy, early depth-charges, air cover by fighters and dirigibles and primitive underwater listening apparatus (still crude in comparison with what would be available in the next lot), the day of the Q Ship passed and Miss Lake cites many instances of the last of the breed sailing fruitlessly up and down, praying for U-boats to show themselves and being disappointed. The Channel Islands keep cropping up since much Q Ship activity went on in our waters, one such confrontation taking place only eight miles west of Guernsey. She even makes mention of HMS *Q 36*, the former SS *Peveril*, albeit the reference is fleeting. *Peveril* was fitted out in February 1915 but was 'slow and lethargic' and lasted only a few weeks before being returned to 'trade'. However she was re-commissioned as *Q 36* in February 1917 but was sunk by a U-boat off Gibraltar in November that year. Miss Lake doesn't mention the action of 30th March, 1917 in which it is believed that somehow George Cawley died.

Long-toothed ship-watchers of the Channel Islands will also remember the *Result*, an auxiliary trading schooner that was a common sight in the harbours of St Helier, St Peter Port and St Sampson's until the 1960s discharging cargoes of guano. In the Great War *Result* was also known as *Q 23*, a deckhouse and bulwarks concealing several 12-pdr guns and even a brace of torpedo tubes. She fought an inconclusive duel with U-45, taking hits herself and damaging the submarine but both safely returned to port

Although nowhere near as wide-ranging at Patrick Stearns' book, *Smoke and Mirrors* is a more gripping read which is perhaps not surprising since Miss Lake is also a novelist and makes good use of her story-telling skills.

Just why Q Ships were called Q Ships is itself something of a controversy. Mr Stearns advances at least three theories – the Q came from Queenstown (now Cobh) in southern Ireland where many of them were fitted out and based, the Q was an un-issued Admiralty pennant letter or Q stood for 'question', a recognition of the enigma that these vessels undoubtedly were.



Tip & Run
The Untold Tragedy of
The Great War in Africa

By Edward Paice
(Weidenfeld & Nicholson, £25.00)

For many of us the way that the Great War was fought in East Africa is not something that we normally read about or study, invariably being far more interested in the conflict as it was fought on the Western Front, those comparative few miles across the English Channel. I am certainly guilty of that focus and it was a highly positive literary review in the Times a few months ago that made me spend my money on this book. In doing so, I have not been disappointed as Edward Paice has produced a very pacy read (Sorry, another pun intended). Although I have read it once, it merits at least two visits, one to gain the gist of the everyday experiences of the various units that were engaged, on both sides and irrespective of their race, i.e. whether they were European, African or Indian. The other read is to look at the movement of those units as they battled the length and breadth of East Africa.

In reading the opening chapters I found myself confused with the apparent lurch to war in these opposing colonies, and the haphazard nature of how the units were being formed from the Europeans within those colonies, and the lack of cohesion from the governments in Germany and Britain. However, the penny drops when the situation regarding communication difficulties, the area and the relatively small number of forces employed is appreciated, for this is to be war at its most mobile and by comparison, the Western Front appears to be a far more “civilised” theatre of war.

Paice looks at the characters involved. The early leadership on the British side is found somewhat wanting and ill-equipped to succeed at offensive operations at the outset. The landing at Tanga was evidence of that with the reverse experienced by the Indian Expeditionary Force made up of British and Indian units, with the first actual troops not landing for a full six hours after the convoy had anchored offshore having just arrived from India. Later on Smuts, who led the British forces is similarly criticised for being over-optimistic with his troop dispositions, timings and his readiness to “spin” success declaring victory in East Africa at the beginning of 1917. For a while this declaration would hamper his successor, von Deventer, who would initially struggle to get the resources, and it proved convenient for Smuts to have become a member of the Imperial war Council in March of that year.

Smuts’ “spin” has to be seen as keeping South Africa sweet as, some 15 years, after the Anglo-Boer (South African) War, that country’s political landscape still reflected the divisions between those who supported membership of the British Empire and those opposed.

On the German side, Von Lettow-Vorbeck fighting on internal lines of communication and country that the Germans were familiar with for much of the time, had the tactical advantage, though he would concede that there were times when a different strategy would have brought allied success.

Paice reflects the conditions that troops encountered and the logistic nightmare of keeping troops fed, watered and watered in the extreme climate were paramount. Disease and sickness were prevalent, and in comparative terms the Germans succeeded far better that the allies. To some extent this was as a result of a sizeable medical party having been doing research in German East Africa before the outbreak of war. After the Armistice, the British constituted an inquiry into the medical services, the conclusions being lost! Death through diseases such as dysentery and blackwater fever, exacerbated by malnutrition, was twelve times higher than those lost to enemy action on the British side with an overall figure thought to be well in excess of 100,000. Units meanwhile would regularly be able to muster 20-30% of their fighting strength due to illness.

Of course, throughout this campaign a large burden fell upon the Africans. The forces of the colonial powers would all largely consist of *askari* and for the Germans, the Belgians and the British they performed exceptionally as soldiers, with, in the latter case many of the King's African Rifles gaining gallantry awards such as the DCM. However, with some of the African tribes coercion would be applied, particularly by the Germans, either to furnish new recruits or bearers, the latter to ensure that the supplies could be brought forward with the fighting columns. A unit, of say 800-900 men, on the march would require about 2,500 bearers and these invariably attracted a number of camp followers in terms of wives and children. The population that did not "enlist" would also suffer hardship with the troops requisitioning food or, in the Germans' case, conducting a "scorched earth" policy and raiding settlements for food and vital medical supplies such as quinine. As if the war was not enough, East Africa was not safe from the Spanish Flu epidemic and many tens of thousands of Africans, debilitated by the war's ravages, would succumb.

The contribution of the Belgians and the Portuguese are also looked at. The Belgians are regarded as militarily competent although their willingness to work with the British and South Africans is less adequate. Much of this stems from the distrust as to how colonial Africa might be parcelled up following the war. The same distrust exists with the Portuguese who are lacking in any form of competency and who, in part, suffer from political placemen in command positions. Portugal was during this period undergoing a number of political upheavals. That the Kaiser wished for Germany to retain its "place in the sun" is a continuous theme that runs through the book and clearly is the motivation for Von Lettow-Vorbeck and his subordinates, and it seems clear that they would have long continued whilst Germany itself was fighting on the western Front. As news of events in Germany such as riots, the fleet's mutiny and the Kaiser's sudden exit to Holland, the Germans in East Africa were rather shocked, and probably felt let down.

There is so much that is described in “Tip & Run” and with my comments so far, feel that I have not even scratched at the surface, so much so that I probably would amend my views that it should be thrice-read! Paice has produced an outstanding work that, in some 400 pages ranges the length and breadth of East Africa. For me it goes some way to explaining why there are Jerseymen who are today buried or commemorated in Voi in Kenya and in Dar-Es-Salaam in Tanzania. As is to be expected, the book contains a number of maps, and additionally a glossary of frequently used African words, appendices on various ORBATs and a dramatis personae.

I would conclude that the book conveys to me the impression that whilst Von Lettow-Vorbeck’s progressively smaller force was never going to win, the allied forces were not going to defeat him without considerable effort. This is a book well worth getting hold of.

Regret to Inform…
A Follow Up from Ian Ronayne

The following text is based upon a last-minute E-Mail from Ian which I have only slightly amended. While expanding on EFV Briard’s family and early life, I think that it also ably demonstrates that we just about retain a very tangible link with those who went through the Great War and those who did not return.

When I recently attended a Societe Jersiaise History Section meeting I was fortunate enough to meet a chap called Guy Dixon who announced that he was in fact the great nephew of Captain Briard. I was delighted to be able to supply him with a copy of my article, and in return he provided several facts on the background to Ernest in the Island:

He was always called “Victor”. He never used Ernest that Guy had ever heard, in fact he was called Victor to no doubt avoid confusion with his father, who was called Ernest.

His second christian name was that of his grandfather, the merchant and ship-owner, Felix Briard, (Orange and Briard, at one time of The Esplanade, 1836 - c.1900). Felix Briard`s home was “Waldegrave”, near Beaumont.

A further influence in Victor Briard`s early life was his great uncle, former Master Mariner, Captain Peter Briard. On retirement, after many years at sea, he joined the family firm above and was elected Jurat, then Lieutenant Bailiff.
It was to these two men, and indirectly to Peter Briard senior their father and to his Orange relatives that Victor owed his expensive education. Ernest Briard, his father, did not make any great fortune as he died too soon.

Bulwark House is mentioned but “Rochebois”, St Aubin, further up Bulwark Hill, is where Victor lived just as long.

This was the home of his mother’s family, the de Gruchys, having been until his bankruptcy the home of Jurat WL de Gruchy, (Victor`s maternal grandfather), who prepared there his "Ancienne Coutume de Normandie".

Victor was one of the “leading lights” of the St Aubin Swimming Club. Living latterly just above the beach opposite St Aubin’s Fort, with rights of access directly down onto the beach, he can scarcely have not swum, fished and sailed!

His poor, frequently bereaved mother, (a fine, spirited, old lady), was Guy’s great Aunt. Guy remembers her well; a woman with a fairly indomitable spirit, which she most certainly needed!

Her brother, GFB de Gruchy, only married in his late 50s. As a result, his children, (born between 1917 and 1922), were in age, young enough to have been the children, not the first cousins of Victor and his siblings. The last of Victor’s first cousins, Guy’s aunt, is still living in Jersey.

Website Workings
By Roger Frisby and Barrie Bertram

Progress remains steady on the website, and there are a number of topics to report on since Journal 12:

The Jersey Roll of Service, letters ‘A’ to ‘M’ have been added, with the target of ‘N’ to ‘Z’ being completed by mid-June. A few more names are emerging, and these will be incorporated as they arise and if already posted on a list, will be part of a blanket update in late-June/early-July.

An article on Victoria College has now been posted. However, it currently lacks for pictures. Similarly the bulk of Victoria College’s Book of Remembrance has been added, but still needs the Roll of Service and List of Awards added. In doing some associated research, Barrie managed to get pictures of a stained glass window in a SE London church to Major Kriekenbeek and a picture of a missing face from Hereford Library Service. A small problem in data transfer has resulted however, in that some gothic script has inadvertently become Greek!!!

Liz Walton’s excellent article “Guernsey’s Lost Generation” also features and all 28 pages can be printed off, while the “Fighting Families” is steadily growing along with details and photographs that can be found attached to a number of names in the Rolls of Honour.

Mark is working away at the RGLI nominal roll and is estimated to be about 40% complete.

At the risk of “drinking the Group’s own bath water”, I am hearing from various members that others who have visited the web site are quietly impressed.

Additional material no matter how small is always appreciated and if there are any subject headings that could be added, don’t hesitate to come forward with your ideas. Also, please highlight any typos or factual errors that you may spot.

Out and About

Ian Ronayne was recently in London visiting the National Archive while researching the Jersey Company. Impressed with the facilities, he came away with a considerable amount of information.

Roger Frisby will be visiting the Somme in late-April/early-May. Liz Walton will be there at that time, while Steve Bailey will be visiting Ypres and Etaples in mid-May.

Ian and Paul Ronayne's May trip this year is a return to Verdun.

I'm giving a presentation on the Channel Islands and the Great War to my local WFA branch here in North Lancs in July. While much sooner, during the week 22nd–29th April, I will be found tied to the Jersey Library's microfiche every weekday morning! During the same week I shall be looking to get some ideas on how to assemble information on the French servicemen from Jersey.

Ned Malet de Carteret will be at Ypres in August, with particular regard to commemorating the 90th anniversary of the death of his great-grandfather, Captain Harold Ackroyd VC (see Journal 6)

Odds and Ends

Guernsey Museum

It is good to note that the Guernsey Museum Service is having a Great War exhibition later this year and that they have sought support from us. Liz has stepped up to coordinate any input and it is hoped that members who can give some measure of support do so. Russell Doherty will also be involved. I am also sure that members, if they are able to, will visit and I am currently planning to make it in November.

In light of Guernsey's efforts, I had E-Mailed Senator Mike Vibert in the Jersey States suggesting that the Jersey Museum Service might do likewise in 1918 as an "Armistice 90" commemoration. His response was unfortunately in the negative since it appears that Jersey Museums have set plans until 2011 and the GW would not feature until 2014! I shall not comment further.

Arras and Vimy

Having noticed the preparations while in France, I cannot say that I have seen anything on television and only a small article in the Times on these battles. Have the media become "Somme'd out" or are they keeping their powder dry for Passchendaele?

Publicity

There have been a number of successes in Guernsey with various snippets on the local radio, is there something that can be done with BBC Jersey?

French Interest

Having said we need more publicity, a French genealogy group in Coutances, Manche department who are have been pointed in our direction with regards to possible involvement in a Seminar they are proposing in November 2008. It is early days and having sent a “holding” letter, will be following this up in May. Hopefully there will be more information to pass in the next Journal.

Enfin

Well, another sizeable Journal is about to “hit the presses”, or at least find its way onto the website. I must admit I was a little sceptical of achieving it as, being between trips to France and Jersey, I seem to have been in one of those phases that one would experience in the military, certainly during the “exercise season” when one got back from the ranges at Hohne or Fallingbostel, unpacked vehicles and equipment, cleaned everything, went home bathed and scrubbed, and back out again a few days later on further exercises, having re-packed and re-victualled (and certainly making sure that there were enough crates of beer in the back of the canteen truck!).

So again thanks to the contributors, and for everyone, I hope that in reading this Issue, we have kept your interest up.

As almost a STOP PRESS contribution, I have added, without amendment, an E-Mail received from Mark Bougourd. I’ll leave people to judge, but to me, it is very reminiscent of the Great War “Death Penny”.

Regards
Barrie H Bertram
14th April 2007

Journal Issue Dates For 2007

Proposed dates remain as follows. I’ll try to keep to the schedule but will have the table on the website so that you can read any updates that might arise. At this stage the most likely candidate for change will be Issue 16.

Issue	Month	Articles To BB	Posted Web/Mail
12	February 2007	10th	15th
13	April 2007	10th	15th
14	June 2007	10th	15th
15	August 2007	10th	15th
16	October 2007	10th	15th
17	December 2007	10th	15th

Barrie,

I would like to bring the attention of a petition that is to award a Memorial Cross or similar to those that paid the ultimate sacrifice in the service of Queen and Country, during current conflicts. (I have signed up to this already), and believe it might be an idea to advertise this in the Journal or create a link to it on our website?

We (CI Study Group) could take a fairly neutral stance on this on our website, but leave the reader to decide and visit a link to the petition, should they wish to do so, what do you think?

We the undersigned petition the Prime Minister to create a system of formal recognition for those serving in our Armed Forces who are killed in war or peacekeeping zones, on exercise or through terrorist acts.

In the UK during both world wars the next of kin of members of our armed forces who had been killed were given a citation bearing the King's signature. Now there is no similar formal recognition. Our troops are fighting alongside those of the United States where formal recognition of being killed in action is given through the Purple Heart. In Canada and New Zealand a Memorial Cross is presented to the mother and widow/er. It is time our country again had formal recognition of those who die for Queen and Country.

Submitted by Rita – **Deadline to sign up by: 11 September 2007** – Signatures: 83”

http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/Sacrifice/

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Mark.