

CHANNEL ISLANDS GREAT WAR STUDY GROUP



**A Jersey Contingent Grave at Guillemont
Private John Vibert – D Coy, 7 RIR**

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Hello All

We're fast approaching that time when we remember the sacrifice made during the Great War and virtually every where since by British and Commonwealth forces. A picture below of Guernsey's Cenotaph in Smith Street, provided by Liz, should once again reinforce the need for remembrance, though I know that we are a captive audience in this respect.



The last Journal

Lancaster University: With regards to Lancaster University, at one stage it seemed that a WW1 course might not happen in 2006. However the latest that I have from Simon Jones the lecturer is that it may happen, and if so, would be based upon the following:

The Experience of Great War

We examine how soldiers endured the conditions and their responses in literature and art. We also focus on the 1917 Battle of Passchendaele and the controversies of shell-shock and the executions of soldiers for desertion. A session will look at sources for researching relatives who served.

This would be both for beginners and those who have attended previous courses.

I will keep you aware if anything further transpires, though I recognise that the University is a probably too far from the CI for a week to be spent in a lecture room.

E-Bay: I picked up on Liz' suggestion of EBay. I have been successful on a bid for a model of Frank Luke's SPAD XIII, but have not tried for any Great War memorabilia. I did spot a bid for an RGLI button which may have been Stuart's!

Flotsam of War: I hope that, like myself, you enjoyed Ian's *tour de force* on Officer's Steward George Cawley and I certainly came to the conclusion that there had been a cover up to disguise Q-Ship activities. I cannot understand otherwise the cause of death as drowning, since the lifeboat was floating and not swamped.

Based on the nominal rolls, Le Brun of Balmoral, St Peter and Du Feu of Ville au Bas, St Ouen had both appeared to have been Category 3 1st Battalion RMIJ men, who at the time may have been in the RJGB. If so, they had probably been stood down before Armistice since they are not listed in the RJGB's Nominal Roll at that date. Also, they are not listed in Jersey's Roll of Service, and my impression was that Ralph Mollet, its author, had been particularly accurate about RJGB service.

How did Goodyear come to the conclusion that the grenades were not service issue? What expertise did he have, and if not service issue, who in civilian life would use them? Notwithstanding, they would have proved useful if the lifeboat had been made to come alongside a U-Boat. One wonders if there were other weapons on board which were not accounted for. The lifeboat markings are interesting. 25 passengers for a 1400 tonne boat seems overkill. To me it suggests that it might have been made for a larger passenger ship and then pressed into use on Q.36 to be a decoy as Ian suggests. What did the markings mean?

Finally, was it Cawley? What of the hair loss? Another from Q.36 who was lost that day was a sailor called Smallman. It could have been any of the eight lost, since the identification was not positive. I hope that you can keep these stories coming Ian!

The Courcoux Men in the Great War By Barrie Bertram

Sometime ago I had started looking at my maternal grandmother's family – the Courcoux who came over from the St Carreuc area of Brittany in the 1870s. There were six male cousins that I sought to look at after having found that three had died during the Great War and that others may have served as evidenced in the Jersey Roll of Honour and Service. However, this was a piece of research that was put to one side until a later stage, only to be resurrected after a chance look at a "Soldiers Died in the Great War" CD in June. This was followed up with a very fruitful visit to the Green Howards Museum in Richmond, North Yorkshire in late August. The Archivist there, a Paul Cooper, was very helpful with material

There was Guillaume (or William), who died at the Battle of the Coronel on HMS Good Hope when Cradock with his older ships lost out to Graf Spee's battle squadron. The only picture I have seen of him was as a 14 year old boy pictured in 1898 in the St Lawrence Parish Millenium Book as a triangle player. He did not appear anywhere in the 1901 census and he may have joined the RN before then.

The next name was Robert Charles and he died at the start of the Battle of Passchendaele while serving with the 2nd Battalion, Yorkshire Regiment (now the Green Howards). I managed to get copies of his attestation record which showed

that he joined in May, 1905 as a drummer aged 14, weighing in at 69 lbs, being 4' 6" tall and having a sallow complexion! By the sounds of it, he seemed undernourished! Paul Cooper provided other material such as a copy of the war diary for the period that included Robert's death and the 2nd Battalion's history from the war's outbreak until the back end of 1917. Of particular interest was a photograph of the Battalion's Drums in 1913, and I enclose it below.



Lt Forsyth
Adj.
Drums 2nd Battalion 1913.

It is bit skewed on the page as there is some blank material on the left hand edge.

Paul and I had a debate as to who Robert might have been in that photograph, indeed, I thought that it might have been the Corporal two along from the Adjutant, Lieutenant Forsyth. However, Paul's opinion of that was that if he was only 23 he must have had a hard paper round! The Battalion was based in Guernsey between October, 1913 and September, 1914 at which time they had provided guards for various key installations, not least the telephone cable into Alderney from the UK. However, I now suspect that the photograph was taken at their previous location, Blackdown Camp because of the barrack block's style. Robert was awarded the 1914 Star.

Robert's brother John Henry died just after the close down of the Battle of Passchendaele while serving with the 2nd Battalion, King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry (KOYLI). And it was with this John that I discovered in the SDGW CD that he had previously been in Robert's Regiment - the Yorkshire Regiment. The JRoH&S lists a John as serving (and by implication surviving) in the Yorkshire Regiment but I had previously assumed that it was Jean Francois (see below). Clearly this was a duplicated entry. However, Paul could not offer much help as to when John attested other than sometime in mid-1916. The attestation records at that time had become somewhat untidier! But, subsequently checking on "The Long, Long Trail" I discovered a very good piece on the Training Reserve that came into being on 1st September, 1916. There it showed that the Yorkshire Regiment's 11th,

14th and 15th Reserve Battalions were absorbed along with some 100+ Reserve Battalions from other Regiments. The obvious explanation is that JH joined the Yorkshire Regiment, was absorbed into a Training Reserve Battalion, and then drafted to the KOYLI. But I've made wrong assumptions before!!!!

Robert had another brother George, he served with the Royal Engineers, but I have nothing on him other than the Medal Roll Index showing War and Victory Medals only.

My grandmother had two brothers, the first being Henri and I have several photographs showing him as a young man about town complete with snazzy waistcoat. His military service seems to have solely been with the 1st Battalion of the RMIJ. The data shows him as Class 2 in both 1913 and 1916. There is nothing to show that he continued with the RJGB in either the RJGB's Armistice Nominal Roll or the JRoH&S. Ralph Mollet was remarkably precise on the RJGB in it!

Lastly, I turn to my grandmother's second brother Jean Francois. I had obviously translated Jean to John in my early analysis but was clearly wrong. In his case I revisited an earlier discovery made in the Canadian war records having found the attestation records of Jack Francis Carcoux who had been born in Jersey in 1885. It was clear that these were the same man as some of my late mother's papers made reference to Carcoux (hence the original link). I paid far more attention to the evidence second time around, noting that Jean Francois had 2 years military service with 10 Company CASC and not the RMIJ as I had wrongly thought.

The other, more startling discovery, centred on his employment and address, namely Rideau Hall, Ottawa. It turns out that he was a chauffeur, and Rideau Hall was (and still is) the official residence of the Governor-General of Canada. The curious thing was that he was attesting in 1919 aged 34 with the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Forces, and I can only think that this was to do with driving Canadian VIPs at Versailles and elsewhere.

I have clearly more work to do on the Courcoux. Since my trip to Richmond I have discovered a couple more branches, one of which came to Jersey in 1910, and hopefully have traced Jean Francois's descendents in Edmonton, Canada from whom I await a letter.

A Letter from Elizabeth Morey in New Zealand

Received the following letter from Elizabeth a couple of days ago and thought that you would be interest to know that she very much enjoyed her visits to Ypres, Gallipoli and the Somme.

Dear Barrie

I have now been home from my trip for three weeks and finally attempting to catch up on some emails and letters. Many thanks for your email of 4 August and for two others that were waiting for me to read properly on my return. Although I read your August email before I left home, I didn't get the chance to reply to let you know my itinerary. Thank you for including me in the CI Interest Group and for sending the backdated Journals. I have not yet received the Journals but I appreciate you may have sent them by surface mail and will probably be here in a few weeks. I'll let you

know when they arrive. As I said, I have been home three weeks and fully recovered from a wonderful trip – tiring, very hot, but great. I made the most of every minute of the day and it took me a week of very early nights after I got home to get back to normal again.

I started with three nights and two full days in Singapore. I enjoyed Singapore and saw nearly everything on my list (Second World War memorials, churches, Changi etc). It was extremely hot but I stayed in a very good hotel and ate in the café at the hotel, which meant I didn't have to go back out in the heat in the evening to find somewhere to eat. The museum at Changi and the little chapel that they reconstructed a couple of years ago, was the highlight of those few days.

On to London for ten days and that was great. I had plenty of time to do and see everything that I wanted to. I love London (my third visit) and walked and walked. Up and off early each morning and made the absolute most of the time. My niece, who was working just south of Kendal (and shortly to start a new job in London) came down for three days and it was lovely to have the time with her.

Then two fellow WFA friends from Auckland (John and Betty Scrimshaw) and I went to Gallipoli, which was fantastic. The peninsula is much bigger than I had imagined and the terrain much more rugged, steeper cliffs, deeper gullies and lack of ground cover. No photos can show the terrain accurately. We went on a Holts Tour with Chris Pugsley as the tour leader and he was an excellent guide. We also had a Turkish military historian to give the Turkish perspective. It was very hot and very exhausting – we did lots of walking in the heat – but more than well worth while. Gallipoli is a very special place to all Kiwis and to walk along ANZAC Cove and see where all the action took place (both at the ANZAC Area and the Helles Area) was a dream come true. Istanbul has some wonderful old buildings (we had two days in Istanbul at the end) but as a whole, Turkey is not a country that I think I will ever return to. It is very big, dry and brown, very scruffy, hot, and probably an enormous culture shock to me!

After a couple of days in London to catch our breath (during which I was off out and about as usual!), we (John, Betty and I) went to the Western Front (WF) battlefields (my third visit) – three days in Ypres, two days driving from Ypres to the Somme via Le Quesnoy, and nine on the Somme. John has an fantastic knowledge of the WF battlefields, especially the Somme, and it was great just driving around, visiting cemeteries and memorials, having the time to sit and ponder at cemeteries and memorials, walk in the woods, and discuss the actions in the area with John. My first two visits to the battlefields were really just an overview and I couldn't wait to return. Needless to say, we “did” Ypres and the Somme in detail!

We met other WFA members while on the WF. A couple from south of London were also staying at Varlet Farm and we had many a long chat together. Another man joined us one night, but I have forgotten his name or which branch he was from (it was at the end of a very long day, and my brain wasn't working as well as it should have been). We rented a house in Flers for the first six nights on the Somme and then stayed at a B&B in Flers for the final three nights. The house is owned by WFA member Rory Newsome and he advertises it in the Bulletin (Dinnaken House). It was absolutely perfect, highly recommended. The B&B is owned by Peter and Hilary Smith (an English couple who have been in Flers for about a year) – Peter is also a WFA member. The house is full of military books, pictures, memorabilia – a

delight and also highly recommended! One day Peter was taking a group from the Suffolk Branch on a Flers walk and when he told them that some NZ Branch members were in the area, they invited us to tag along. A great morning's walk.

And now I am home and everything is pretty much back to normal again. Doesn't take long! I have spent the last three weekends keying in my diary (nearly 100 A4 pages long so far) so that my family can read it and I've had all 19 films (nearly all 36's) developed and they are waiting to be put into albums and labelled. Sounds like a good Christmas holidays project.

I was interested in your email about the visit to Haig's home. Last year we had a visit by Jack and Sandra Sugden, who have a home a few minutes drive from the Haig home, but who seem to spend most of their time at their home in Spain. Jack and Sandra came to a couple of meetings and we took them to lunch one day and to visit one of our members who has a wonderful little museum in the basement of his house, mainly of Scottish regiments. (Jack and Sandra were visiting family in Auckland and were here for a couple of months.) Anyway, Jack talked to us at one meeting about Haig and it was very interesting, left us all to make up our own minds about Haig.

In one of your emails you have a query about the location of barracks in Alderney. Have you solved this problem? If not, you could contact the Alderney Society (I am a member), probably through their website: www.alderneysociety.org. If there is no email link via their website, the Alderney Society's postal address is: Alderney Museum, The Old School, Alderney, CI GY9 3TG.

The editor of the Alderney Bulletin (the journal of the Alderney Society, published yearly) is Trevor Davenport and he is a military historian and author. I'm not sure what he knows about the First World War, but he is a mine of information about Alderney military history.

I have a few newspaper cuttings from the Guernsey Weekly Press, from the paper over the last 10-15 years. A friend in Auckland was born in Guernsey and her mother used to send the Press to my friend and her fellow CI family history researchers to share. If you would like copies of the articles, I'd be happy to post them to you.

Did you know that there is a First World War conference being held at Oxford University in April next year? After the conference, Holts Tours are taking a tour to the Somme and Verdun – I have never been to Verdun. I am very tempted to attend, but will have to wait and see how things pan out over the next few months. Several copies of a pamphlet were posted to me from Oxford University and if you would like more information, I can send one on to you – or you can contact the University.

That's it for now. Thanks again for keeping me in the loop re: your CI research.

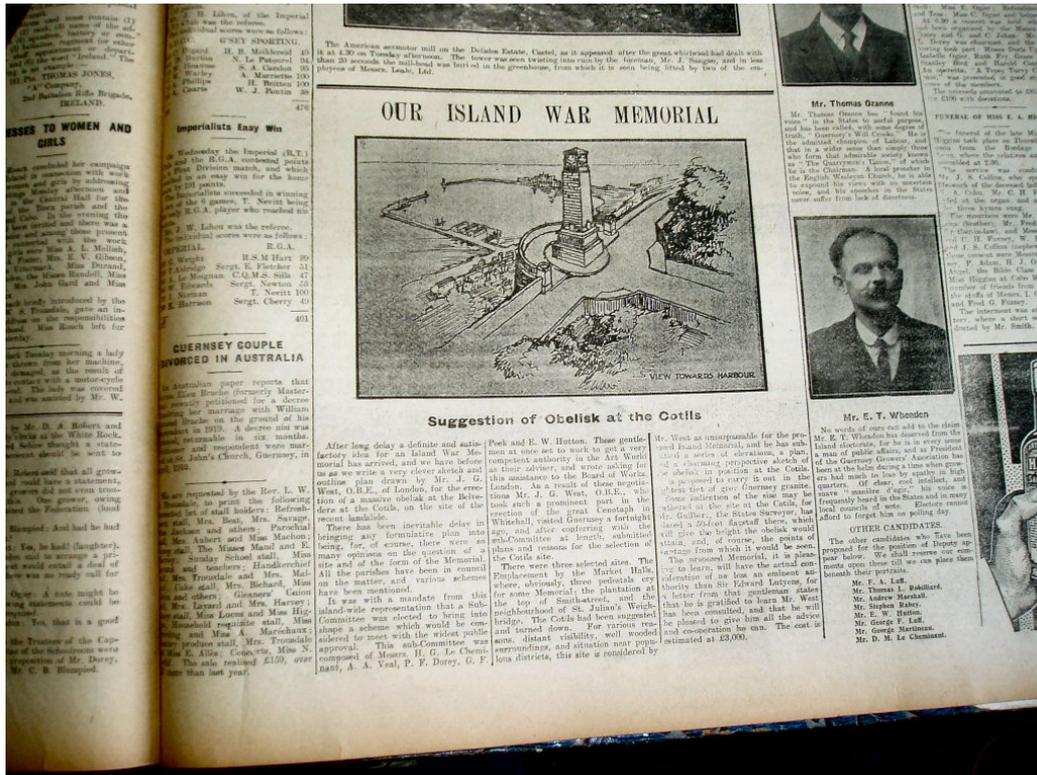
*Regards
Elizabeth
9th October, 2005*

1st (West) Battalion RMIJ Nominal Rolls

With a number of other personal projects on the go at the present time my effort seems to have ground to a halt in this area. I must pick up on it again in early November when I have finished with organising an orienteering event.

Les Cotils

Liz found the following piece in an old Guernsey Weekly Press at Priaulx Library.



It is likely that this may have been overtaken by the Cenotaph in Guernsey since the position would have been marvellous with respect to the view, but access would have been difficult for individuals and events such as Remembrance Parades?

Liz is currently following this up with Eddie Parks at BBC Guernsey.

A Visit to Bemersyde

A party of some 30 of us WFA members from North Lancashire and Cumbria went to the Borders region of Scotland on 17th September to visit Bemersyde – Douglas Haig's house and afterwards to Dryburgh Abbey, where he and his wife is buried (alongside Sir Walter Scott and family members). Although they are not very good because of bad weather, light and my lack of skill as a David Bailey, I have included a couple of photos.

We were shown around the house by the current Earl, Douglas' son born in 1918!

The Earl himself is quite different from what one would have expected. First, he himself served in the last war with the Royal Scots Greys and was captured at the Battle of El Alamein. He eventually wound up being held in Colditz and is only alive

today because a German General did not follow Hitler's orders in executing/murdering him because of who he was as the Allies progressed into Germany! FM Alexander's son was also at Colditz and was another such candidate. After being disabled out of the Army in 1945 or 1946, he took up art, becoming a contemporary painter.



Bemersyde House

It is clear that he has been troubled over the years by the criticism levelled at his father, much of it surely unfair, and one can only too readily sympathise, as I think he has been too much of a gentleman to refute his father's case solely out of emotion. Now, he feels that as more comes to light in terms of papers, research and so forth, and that history's assessment of his father is becoming more balanced and reasoning. He did not discuss much of Douglas' life and I think that most of us were a bit disappointed about this aspect.

As to the House, much of it is given over to paintings, both of the current Earl's work and other artists, much of it contemporary. The House itself is nothing outstanding architecturally, but is well placed overlooking the Tweed. I must admit to being honest in saying that there was very little of the art which I would have given wall space for, even the Picasso! Shades of IWM North!!!! However, there were some works by Paul Maze, a French WW1 liaison ex-soldier whose name occasionally pops in books on WW1 and I liked those.

On the really plus side in terms of art, there was a piece given by Sir William Orpen to Douglas showing him being given the Order of the Thistle by George V at Cassel, and it appeared to reflect Haig's very private nature since there were no other individuals in the painting. Another of Haig, by Sir William Gillies I think, hung over a fireplace and his tired eyes in it and the facial sadness so much reflected what must have been the strain of being C-in-C.

One or two people expected to see every room plastered with memorabilia and militaria. The House is a home and not a museum and there were comparatively few artefacts, the flag that flew on his Roller, a Sudanese spear, photos and other personal items. I think that if there was much, it is now in Huntly House in Edinburgh.

Notwithstanding, going there and meeting the current Earl, I could not but come away with having encountered a strong sense of history.



Graves of FM Sir Douglas and Lady Haig

Personal Bits

Ned has left Collins-Stewart and his E-Mail is now:

nedmaletdecareret@hotmail.com

He has recently visited the RBGW Museum and had the following to report:

I had a very enjoyable time at Salisbury and the Lucknow Band Beat The Retreat on the lawn in front of the Wardrobe with the Cathedral in the background and the grey storm clouds behind it. Typically the rain came down, but not too hard - even so tough for the bandsmen.

There are 7 VC's on display at the museum, shortly to be replaced by replicas.

They have quite a good collection - including 19,000 photographs - all the War Diaries are now on line as will be many photos

I mentioned Paul “signing up” last time, his E-Mail is: paul.ronayne@jerseymail.co.uk

While his address is:
47 Ville Du Bocage
St Peter
Jersey
JE3 7AT

Meanwhile, you can see what he looks like from the picture overleaf where he is standing in the roadside on the outskirts of Ginchy which saw the Jersey Contingent in action as D Company, 7th Royal Irish Rifles. Meanwhile, his brother Ian is also shown in front of the 16th (Irish) Division memorial at Wytschaete, near Ypres. Both pictures were taken on their recent visit to locations in France and Flanders where the Contingent served, (I’ll have to learn how to cut pictures down!) and you can read the account of their visit below.



Paul Ronayne – Ginchy 2005

**In the Tracks of the Jersey Company
France and Belgium Trip 2005
By Ian and Paul Ronayne**

With only one exception, we have managed to fit in an annual trip to the battlefields for the last nine years. I am pleased to say that despite commitments at home, this year did not become another exception. However, home commitments did mean that time was going to be tight; and so some detailed forward planning, and a good deal of driving, was demanded if we were going to make the most of our time away. The plan was to follow in the footsteps of the Jersey Company, a contingent of three hundred men that left the Island in 1915 to serve with the 7th Battalion, the Royal

Irish Rifles. We had two and bit days, to visit their battlefields and billets - and of course, three nights to enjoy the hospitalities of France and Belgium!

A five hour drive up from St Malo ended in the famous town of Albert. Accommodation was pre-booked in the Hotel De La Basilique, and we also had our evening meal in their restaurant. Both were excellent and can certainly be recommended. The same compliments cannot be endowed on the "Trois Pigeons" bar across the road from the hotel ...but that is enough about that. So, up bright and early the next day (well bright-ish and early-ish), the first stop was the Thiepval Memorial. Most of the Jersey Company men who died on the Somme have no known graves, and so this is their memorial. Finding them on one of the pillars, it struck as somewhat odd to see Jersey surnames amongst the thousands of others.

Leaving the memorial (and the new visitor's centre) we headed across the Albert-Bapaume road for a brisk walk around the High Wood area, before heading to the "Poppy" for lunch. After this, it was on to the main location for the day. The Jersey Company, along with the rest of the 16th (Irish) Division, only took part in the Battle of the Somme once: in September, 1916. The location was Guillemont / Ginchy, and therefore that was our destination. Parking at Delville Wood, we walked down from the village of Longueval to Guillemont. The 7th Battalion, Royal Irish Rifles had been stationed in the latter village for a couple of days and nights. At the time, it was reportedly only recognisable because *"the shell-holes were a whiter colour by reason of the homes which had been ground to powder"*. It must have been a terrible affair. Thirteen Jerseymen were killed, and dozens wounded, by the constant bombardment and sniping. On a September's afternoon in 2005, the situation back then cannot really be imagined; the village now is a sleepy collection of undistinguished buildings, with sounds of life limited to the occasional tractor, and the omnipresent barking of dogs. At least to commemorate the events of 1916 there is a memorial cross to the 16th (Irish) Division next to the village church. There is also a large cemetery a little way up the road towards Trones Wood; it contains the only member of the Jersey Company with a grave in the area. Rifleman John Vibert was aged 22 when he was killed on the 6th of September; his brother, who was also a member of the Company survived, only to be killed at Ypres the following year.

From Guillemont, we took the sunken road up to Ginchy. This short, but emotive, walk took us through the front lines in which the 7th Battalion, Royal Irish Rifles had waited between the 7th and 9th of September, 1916. They were poised for an assault on the nearby village of Ginchy, but had to wait in shallow trenches for two days whilst the bombardment went in. The fields now are empty, but the here and there the tell-tale lumps of rusting metal belies the battles that once raged here. The village of Ginchy seemed even quieter than Guillemont - if that is possible - and no memorial is sited here to mark the passing of hundred of lives; amongst them a further seven men of the Jersey Company.

From Ginchy it was a short walk back to Delville Wood, and back in the car. Leaving the Somme battlefields, we had a final visit planned before that night's stop in Cambrai. In November of 1917, the remnants of the Jersey Company, now serving with the 2nd Battalion, Royal Irish Rifles, took part in an attack on the village of Moeuvres during the Cambrai offensive. The route up to this location took us through a number of the villages that had served as billets during the days leading up to the attack. They are quiet hamlets now, but the back then, it is possible to imagine the whole area teeming with men and machinery in preparation for the

assault on the Hindenburg Line. Mouevres turned out, not unexpectedly, to be another quiet village. Unfortunately, some dodgy navigation on the way up had served to limit the time remaining that evening, and so the exploration was limited to a look round the CWGC cemetery in the village, and some fleeting glances at the countryside from the car. A more in-depth visit will have to wait for some other day. We did leave a few minutes before heading into Cambrai for a quick detour to the Louverval memorial to the missing of Cambrai. Interestingly, this fine site has a significant CI connection: in addition to three Jersey Company men commemorated here, there is a large contingent of RGLI on a panel nearby.

After a quiet night in Cambrai, we set off the next morning somewhat brighter, and somewhat earlier. We shot down the motorway in the direction of Arras. After rounding Vimy Ridge, and dropping onto the Lens ring-road, we hit our exit at the village of Loos. The Jersey Company had first gone into the trenches here on New Year's Eve, 1915, and then spent the next eight months gaining experience in this "quiet" sector. During this time they unfortunately suffered numerous "quiet" casualties. Amongst them were thirteen men who were killed, and now lie scattered across a number of cemeteries in the area. Five of them are in Bois Carré Cemetery, which lies just behind the frontline trenches in front of German held village of Hulloch. In a heavy rain storm, we stopped at here to pay our respects, before going on to the town of Vermelles. During the war it lay just behind the trenches, and was the location of a major Casualty Clearing Station (CCS). It was established in the ruins of the town Cemetery and, not unusually, had a burial ground attached. Today this large Cemetery is called Vermelles Chateau Cemetery, and is the resting place of the Jersey Company's Second in Command. Captain George Mitchell was a twenty-four year old Scotsman who had been just gone into the trenches when a sudden barrage descended on the night of the 1st April, 1916. Along with several other men, he was wounded, and carried back to the CCS at Vermelles. He died that night – either on the way back or at the chateau – and was buried in the attached cemetery. A short, but evocative, description of these events exist. The burial was carried out in the darkness, and with some of the Company gathered around; it must have been a traumatic experience given the proximity of the lines and the nearby CCS. Standing in same place some eight-nine years later in lovely sunshine and surrounded by green grass and roses, it was hard to relate to the events of the past.

Moving on to follow the plan, the next part of the trip was a zig-zagging drive around the rear area billets of the Loos front. The men had been stationed in many of the villages behind the lines here, and their names had become familiar to us. How much resemblance they bear to the places the soldiers would have known, is impossible to say now; but it was good to put a place to a name. After lunch in pretty grim café, in a pretty grim town (name available on request), we headed on up towards the Belgium boarder and the next location to be visited: Messines Ridge. The 7th Battalion, Royal Irish Rifles had come here after the Somme battles, to rest and rebuild after the terrible casualties. We had chosen a route that took us first through their principle out-of-line billeting areas: the villages of Locre and Kemmel. On the outskirts of the latter is Kemmel Chateau Cemetery which shares the dubious honour with Bois Carré Cemetery of having five Jersey Company men buried in it.

From here a rather circuitous route took us to the village of Wytschaete and the second 16th (Irish) Division memorial on the Western Front. Wytschaete, or more specifically the countryside in front it, was also the location of the trenches in which the Jersey Company spent most of their time between October, 1916 and June,

1917. However, in contrast to the well visited Somme battlefields, this place was not particularly familiar to us, and so some 21st Century magic was needed in the form of a laptop PC and a trench maps CD in order to pinpoint the location of the British trenches. Ah, how times have changed! Job done, we managed a quick drive round the area of Maelstraade Farm and Petit Bois to get our bearings. But, with time running out, we had to settle for this superficial look at this very interesting area. It will have to wait for another visit to do it any justice.

The destination for our last night was Ypres, and the Albion Hotel; the latter again thoroughly recommended. The Last Post ceremony was duly observed, together with an enormous crowd who packed out the Menin Gate. It was amazing to think all these people were here to remember events that took place almost a century ago!

Most of the final day was destined to be spent getting from Belgium to St Malo. However, given that we were on a late boat, we had an hour to spare in order to visit the scene of the Jersey Company's attack on the 16th August, 1917 during the Third Battle of Ypres. Frezenberg was the location, with the advance planned towards Zonnebeck alongside the Ypres-Roulers railway line. However, the all too depressingly familiar disaster occurred; the attack quickly bogged down with heavy casualties well short of the objective. The day ended with a strong counter-attack by the Germans which sent the remnants back to the starting line. For a time, it looked a bit disastrous for us too, with time running short and question marks over the correct location. At last however, we seemed to find the spot and looked out across a peaceful field towards an objective that was probably a five minute walk today, but was five hours of hell back then.



Ian Ronayne – Wytschaete 2005

With time pressing, we had to leave Frezenberg in order to spend the final minutes of our visit at the Tyne Cot Memorial. Like the men who died on the Somme, most of

the Jersey boys killed at Frezenberg have no known graves; their names are simply carved with thirty-thousand odd others on a wall in the largest British War Cemetery in the world. Rest in Peace. With a few final snaps, that was it. We headed back to the car, and a seven hour journey back to Brittany. Need to be planning next year....

Guillemont 1926

Ian has also been good to send me the following photograph of the dedication of 16th (Irish) Division memorial at Guillemont in 1926. As you can see the cross is the same as that at Wytschaete. There is, standing directly above the Bishop's mitre in uniform, Lt-Col William A Stocker who as Major led the Jersey Contingent in France and Flanders for a time before returning to take charge of the POW Camp. Also in the picture there are some 20 former members of the Contingent to Colonel Stocker's left and right. I'll also E-Mail or post an A4 version which has much better detail. As I understand it, he has another showing another showing Colonel Stocker and the former members in a group photograph, with dare I hope, the names?



Enfin

I was surprised to notice a Service Dinner article in the Daily Telegraph a few weeks ago to see that the outgoing Lieutenant Governor of Guernsey was the guest of honour at a dinner given by the Royal Alderney Militia. I understand after scouring the internet that it is a civil defence organisation using the Militia name set up by a former SAS Colonel!

Elizabeth mentioned the Oxford University event. I have seen the brochure and it has some well known speakers, Correlli Barnett, Major-General Julian Thompson, Dr Gary Sheffield and the like. However, the price is just under £400 though the University will feed you well!

Recently I have made contact with two people, Martyn Glass and Gary Sparkes, who had posted queries on the WFA website regarding great uncles Robert Hicks Brown and John Emile Hebert respectively. Hopefully, I have successfully given them some tips regarding further information sources. In Robert Hicks Brown's case, he is buried at Gonnehem a few miles NW of Bethune and I plan to take a few photos to E-Mail Martyn Saturday week. Robert Hicks Brown seems to have joined in early-1917 and I suspect that he was conscripted at the ripe old age of 39 and probably because he was unmarried. John Emile Hebert was a volunteer who died five days into the Somme Battle and is remembered on the Thiepval Memorial. The JRoH&S lists him dying the previous year!

Looking ahead, I will be trying to get the last Journal out this year 7-10 days before Christmas. Contributions as ever will be greatly appreciated and I don't mind them appearing as manuscript, as you see, I am not adverse to "cutting and pasting" your E-Mails. As previously advised, I off to Mailly Maillet on the Somme for a week this Friday. Hopefully, I can get some good photographs from my explorations which will include a day out in Ypres.

Regards to all
Barrie Bertram
13thOctober, 2005

Postscript: Fully Revised and Renamed as a Journal on 12th June, 2008.