Journal of the Southampton Local History Forum

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Southampton Local History Forum

Southampton Local History Forum is sponsored by Southampton Library Service. Membership is free and is open to everyone interested in the history of the city and its neighbourhood. A programme of evening meetings is arranged for the third Thursday of each month (August and December excepted) between 7.00pm and 9.00pm. Anyone interested in joining the forum should contact -

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The articles in the Journal are written by members of the Forum, to whom thanks are due. Contributions from members to future editions are always welcome.

Cover illustration: A group of servicemen relaxing in the garden of ‘The Chine’, a large house on Northlands Road, which was used as a ‘Soldiers’ Rest’ during the Great War.
Richard Preston

John Lawrence Milton (c1793-1869): "teetotaller, homœopathist and omnireligionist"

It is rare to start an article in this journal with a quotation (taken verbatim) from a Tasmanian newspaper - the Hobarton Mercury, 15 November 1854. It reflects the multifaceted nature of a man who touched the lives of three continents, and whose comet shone brightly but erratically over Southampton in the 1840s.

John L Milton (for as such he was always known) was born in the United States of America, to Archibald and Martha Milton. His age recorded at death in 1869 - 76 years - suggests a birth date of c1793. He was ordained into the Church of England on 24 March 1833. His early calling was as a missionary in Lower Canada for the London-based United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. He served in Terrebonne (now an off-island suburb of Montreal) and, between 1834 and 1835, at Rawdon, a settlement to the north. He later served as a missionary in the United States. The fact that Milton named his first residence in Southampton Oberlin House suggests a connection with the religious colony of Oberlin, founded in northeast Ohio in 1833 on the principles of the Alsace pastor and philanthropist Johann Friedrich Oberlin (1740-1826). The early colonists pledged themselves to the plainest living and the highest thinking. Oberlin College trained Christian missionaries for work on the American frontier.

The European leg of Milton's nomadic life began c1835, recorded in a list of residences provided for an insolvency petition printed in the London Gazette, 25 July 1843: the King's Arms, Palace Street, Liverpool; 5 Queen Square, Bartholomew Close, London; the George Hotel, Southampton; 18 Rue des Pyramides, Paris; 1 Delamotte Piquet Desinvalides, Rue Saint Honore, Paris; Boulevard Mont Parnesse, Paris (doing clerical duty); 9 Thanet Place, Strand, London; 7 Cecil Street, Strand (doing occasional clerical duty); Boulogne (tutor); Tours (officiating curate); Blois (chaplain); Denant [the last four in France]; Jersey; Plymouth; Stoke, near Plymouth (classical teacher); Exeter; Honiton; Lyme Regis; Weymouth; Wareham; Poole; Wimborne; Blandford (procuring subscribers "to a work about to be published by me"); New Street, Salisbury (lecturer); and late of the town and county of Southampton (doing clerical duty, publisher and agent for Morrison and Moat of the British College of Health). He is briefly glimpsed in Salisbury as publisher in February 1851 of a poem, printed on silk, in honour of Queen Victoria's first child: To the illustrious Princess Royal, Victoria Adelaide Mary Louisa, heiress presumptive to the throne of England.

We first find the Reverend Milton in Southampton on 3 October 1841, being entered into the Baptist church by the Reverend B H Draper at East Street Chapel. His missionary work had begun a new phase: to bring religion to the seamen of this rapidly-developing port. In January 1842 he established the National Sailors' Home and Evangelizing Society. It was to provide "every necessary comfort and advantage for seamen, their wives and children, their widows and orphans, their sick, infirm, and superannuated". The specific agenda included a bethel [seamans' church], boarding and lodging house, reading rooms, school rooms and library. Asylum was to be given to "the shipwrecked, the afflicted, and destitute seamen of all nations, and all denominations, on nearing the port of Southampton". Repose, protection and every
necessary comfort was to be afforded to the wives and children of sailors who were
away at sea. A prospectus was issued and a board of directors appointed. The nominal
list of officials included a president, vice-presidents, treasurer, corresponding
secretary, recording (or minute) secretary and chaplain. Evangelical prayer meetings
were held both on dry land and on board ship. A bethel was established in July 1842
in Milton's residence: 14 St Mary Street. Divine service, held three times on the
Sabbath and on Tuesday and Friday evenings, was signalled by the unfurling of the
bethel flag. Sittings were free. The services were open to all, recognizing "neither
Episcopalians, nor Baptists, nor Independents, nor Presbyterians, nor Wesleyans, nor
Friends, nor Plymouth Brethren, nor any other division of Christians, - but simply all
who love and obey the truth, as constituting the Church of Christ Militant."
Unfermented wine was used in the communion: Milton was forced to deny rumours
that tea and coffee were substituted. Subscriptions at the end of the first year were put
at £63.17s.

It was a sham. Meetings in support of the mission struggled to attract an audience,
and tended to end in disarray. In April 1842, Milton spoke at an open meeting in the
Long Rooms called by the Reverend Herbert Smith as part of his campaign to
establish asylums for the poor. Here, Milton "began to unfold views so distasteful to
Mr Smith that he left the chair". A novel experience no doubt for Herbert Smith, as it
was usually his religious views that caused offence. In December 1842, Milton
himself hired the Long Rooms. Speakers were to include " Ministers of the Gospel and
other friends of mariners, ... several captains and other gentlemen connected with the
seas". None appeared, leaving Milton alone on the platform. His audience, of about 30
labourers, was less than even Herbert Smith had attracted. After this debacle, the
Hampshire Advertiser announced - prematurely - that Milton, abandoning both his
premises and his promises, had last been seen en route to the Isle of Wight. The list of
officials was equally illusory. The Reverend George Stevens, Independent minister at
Totton, told The Patriot in November 1842 that his name appeared in the prospectus
as vice president not only against his will but before he knew that the society existed.
John Kellow, partner in the High Street grocers Kellow and Bienvenu, was nominally
treasurer. When asked by an investigating meeting to supply a financial report, he
replied "as he had never received any money on account of the Society, he had not
paid any". Apart from Simon Morwood, a school teacher of Bevois Street, who acted
briefly as recording secretary, the only official who appears to have taken any active
part in the society is its corresponding secretary and chaplain, viz the Reverend Milton
himself.

Nemesis came in the form of the society's first annual general meeting held on 6
January 1843 at James Withers' Temperance Hotel in Winchester Terrace. The
meeting was packed, largely with "the principal residents of the High Street",
doubtless worried that the integrity of the town was being put at risk. Milton was
forced to man the redoubt alone, supported by none of his ethereal officials. His
appearance an hour after the scheduled start suggests a reluctance to meet his critics.
Finance was the key issue. Milton antagonized the hostile audience by arguing that
the society was in his debt, subscriptions (after deduction of expenses) being £40
short of the £70 he claimed as salary. When asked to supply supporting vouchers, he
claimed to have left these at home. The elucidation of the treasurer, bearded in his
own shop by a member of the audience, is quoted above. In the words of the
Hampshire Advertiser, the society "was denounced as something more than useless,
and the secretary as more than a mystifier. The REVEREND Secretary retorted by an unorthodox expression, and took shelter behind a table. A series of resolutions was passed unanimously expressing lack of confidence in Milton as a person and dissolving the society with immediate effect. To avoid a resurrection of the "impost" in other towns, the notice of dissolution was widely published, including in The Times.

The list of those who proposed and seconded the damning resolutions comprised the elite of the High Street shopkeepers: George Laishley, draper; Edward Palk, chemist; Andrew Forbes and John Gray, booksellers; Sampson Payne, china and glass merchant; and Charles Rogers, draper. Behind all lay the invisible presence of the Reverend James Crabb, for decades an advocate of the spiritual needs of the poor and self-proclaimed sailors' friend. In 1836 he had established a bethel at the bottom of the High Street. He later found ready allies in his mission among officials of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company after its relocation to Southampton in 1841. He was allowed to hold services on board P&O ships whilst in port. Lieutenant Edward Nicholas Kendall, RN, agent to the company in Southampton, had been chairman of the annual general meeting. He often assisted Crabb in his services, giving out the hymns. Andrew Lamb, chief engineer to P&O, had moved the motion of dissolution. He was also a member of Crabb's Zion Hill congregation. Crabb objected to the scheme of the parvenu Milton on practical and personal grounds. It was unwieldy and over-elaborate. A seamans' home, in Crabb's view, should have the single object of keeping sailors who were between ships out of the clutches of 'crimps': unscrupulous agents who found lodgings and ships for seamen but often at the expense of all their money. It was also, as Crabb told his ally John Coupland, proprietor of the Hampshire Advertiser, a "bubble, in which self-interest appeared to be the object of support". As such, it compromised the work of others in the same field, and was an indirect threat to his unofficial position of sailors' chaplain in Southampton.

Milton believed that the meeting had no power to dissolve the society, for none of those who voted were members. Declaring that "a greater outrage has seldom been perpetuated against any individual", he called a fresh annual general meeting at his new lodgings (to which he transferred the name Oberlin House) at 19 South Front, Kingsland. A set of allegedly audited accounts was produced. John Coupland - to Milton "the wanton libeller" - sent along a reporter, who found but three visitors present, one an entire stranger. Persistency personified, Milton paid for an advertisement in the Hampshire Independent in October 1844 in an attempt to revive the dead. It was an essay on the theme of calumny. It only required the settling of his debt of nearly £70 to allow immediate publication of "a faithful and fearless Report of the Society". None was published. Few would have believed it even if it had been.

The Reverend Milton had a transcendental belief in the precepts of the Gospel. He declared himself a Rechabite: indeed to be a "chief Rechabite". A fundamentalist, ascetic, millennial Israelite sect, its members adhered to what had been established in the Wilderness period. Wine and other strong liquor was abjured. The use of unfermented wine in communion was a specific Rechabite instruction. Milton glorified in the outward symbols of the sect, parading a prodigious pair of whiskers and a fearsome moustache. An Old Testament prophet walking the streets of
Southampton? Or, in the words of the *Hampshire Advertiser* (December 1846), "an open-air brawler under the pretence of preacher"?

This impulse to religious martyrdom was given expression in his appearance before Southampton Insolvent Court in August 1843, owing debts of £13. He refused to take an oath on the Bible: "I decline to be sworn! I am a Christian minister, and on Christian principles I refuse! Christ says - 'Swear not at all'". His secular authority was a book of travels [not identified] by Captain Pickering in which a police court allowed the author to affirm. The court tried to save Milton from his obstinacy, partly perhaps because he cast such a sorry figure: his appearance, according to the *Hampshire Advertiser*, showing a better lining outside than within. His counsel offered the defence of claiming exemption as a Separatist, a sect in common with Quakers and Moravians allowed to affirm. Milton refused: "My religion is that of Christ. I have no knowledge of the Separatists". The Insolvency Commissioner tried to save Milton from gaol by offering to obtain bail in London. Conciliation was met with intransigence. "I rejoice that I have had this opportunity of bearing testimony to the truth, even if imprisonment or even death itself be the consequence". He escaped the gallows, but not a return to Southampton gaol. He was reported as still incarcerated in April 1844 in a petition to parliament from Staffordshire Baptists for exemption from the requirement of oaths. To quote again the ever-antagonistic *Hampshire Advertiser*, "The Insolvent Martyr!!"

December 1846 witnessed a second confrontation with the Reverend Herbert Smith. It was an explosive mix of two myopic religionists, the one a seceder from the Established Church and a believer in Primitivism, the other an advocate for the pre-reformed Anglican Church. The venue was the Royal Victoria Rooms, at a meeting called by Smith for the revival of the office of deacon in the Church of England. The *Hampshire Advertiser* reported: "Then a person calling himself Milton ... got up and abused Mr Smith and his Church too. Mr Smith said very neatly and properly, that if ever Mr Milton had been in the Church, every one of its members must rejoice that he no longer belonged to it. Then Mr Milton poured forth a torrent of abuse on Mr Smith, and Mr Yarnold [Reverend William Yarnold, Baptist minister] joined in the affray, the people meanwhile applauding, stamping, clapping, and roaring according to their fancies". The reporter left in despair after three hours.

A more considered attack on secessionists came in April 1847 with publication of *Marturia; or testimony against certain manifestations of Anti-Christ*. It was sold for 2d by C and J Rayner. *Marturia* has the same Greek root as martyr. This was prompted by a Nonconformist Society meeting in East Street Baptist Church - the very church in which Milton was entered in 1841 - calling for the disestablishment of the Church of England. Speakers included ministers of the main Baptist and Independent chapels in the town. An impression of the tract - which does not survive - is given by a notice in the *Hampshire Advertiser*. It is an attack on the "Liberty of Dissenters, demanding much, giving nothing". "The abuse is of but a mediocre character; what the object of publication may be, beyond selling, we do not learn from its content".

Purification lay at the core of Milton's religious creed. It also infused his embracement of the pseudo-science of Hygeism, an extreme form of medical botany. Hygeists believed that all illness derives from the impurity of the blood. Salvation comes
through systematic and violent purgation, induced by the application of vegetable remedies. For Milton, the cleansing of souls and the cleansing of bodies were symbiotic with a common justification in the gospels, following "the example of ONE who ever went about doing good to the bodies and souls of men". Milton was a disciple of James Morison (1770-1840), founder of the British College of Health, a medical school in London, and inventor of 'Morison's Vegetable Pills'. In late 1842, Milton was appointed by the then owners of the franchise, Morison, Moat and Company, general agent for Hampshire. He supplied 35 sub-agents, amongst who, as sub-agent for Southampton, was Henry William Larbalestier, perfumer of the High Street. Simultaneously Milton was appointed a general hygeian lecturer and became a practitioner of the hygeian system, authorised to use the initial PHS. He gave a series of lectures in Southampton contrasting false and real medicine. In December 1842 he was appointed one of three national judges for the annual Morison prize.

It was through Hygeism that Milton met his future wife. Emma Tomkins was a Hygeian practitioner - "a thorough Hygeist" in her husband's words - in and around Romsey. They were married, by the Reverend Draper, at East Street Baptist Church on 26 May 1842. Both were in their late forties. It was a union both medical and religious. Emma was the second daughter of James and Anne (nee Steele) Tomkins of Broughton House. Her mother's forebears included two pastors of Broughton Baptist Church as well as the evangelical hymn writer and poet Anne Steele (1717-78). Her father was from a prominent Baptist family in Abingdon, where Emma, born in 1796, was entered into what is now Oke Street Baptist Church. He moved to Bath, and then to Hampshire, renting Portswood House between 1809 and 1812. He later succeeded, through his wife, to the 800-acre Broughton House estate. The Baptist connection is continued through the marriage of Emma's elder sister Mary to Charles Carpenter Bombas in 1822. A lawyer - later Serjeant-at-law and leader of the western circuit - he is reputedly the inspiration for Serjeant Buzfuz in Pickwick papers. It says much for Milton's pariah status in Southampton that not even such respectable family connections could offer a veneer of respectability.

The honeymoon with Morison, Moat and Company soon ended. An advertisement was placed in the local press in May 1843 to caution that the Reverend J L Milton was no longer agent to the British College of Health. Sub-agents were to send their orders direct to the college. There is a suggestion that Milton may have been selling his own medicines under the guise of the college. By 1844 the Miltons have established their own independent Southampton Hygeian Dispensary at 1 Trafalgar Place, West Front. A full-page advertisement in the 1845 Post-Office directory, published December 1844, is reproduced below. Hygeian medicines were sold both wholesale and retail. Orders were taken from any part of the kingdom. Consultations on the principles of Hygeian pathology were given daily between 9am and 4pm. Mrs Milton personally attended female patients whose cases were of a delicate nature. "This is as it should be in all medical practice". The destitute were treated gratis as far as contributions allowed. "Mr Milton is happy in feeling that the practice of medical science, combined with the performance of his clerical duties, is in perfect accordance with the requirements of the Gospel".

We last find the Miltons in Southampton in April 1847, at a fourth address: 12 West Front, Kingsland. They next appear, on the 1851 census (taken in April), in Hull as lodgers at 24 Silvester Street, close to the present day Pearson Park. He is
described as 'Clergyman seceding from the Established Church' and his spouse as 'Minister's wife'. He had already set up his own chapel in the town - the Reformed Baptist Evangelizing Church - and published the first issue of a crusading journal, *The Marturia: or testimony of the Reformed Baptist Church.*

The confines of England were soon to be left behind. In November 1852, at the height of the Australian gold rush, Milton and his wife arrived in Melbourne on board the *Lady Eveline* from London. It may be an indication of new beginnings that both took almost ten years off their ages when registering with the immigration authorities. It had been a fraught voyage. Passengers and crew were quarantined for six weeks on arrival after an outbreak of smallpox, with two fatalities. Milton was sponsored in his new life by the Reformed Medical College of New York. Founded in 1829 by Dr Wooster Beach, the college promoted a system of botanical, herbal and native American remedies under the rubric of Reformed or Eclectic Medicine. Milton may have met Dr Beach during the latter's tour of Europe in 1848-9. Milton had a specific remit: to establish the Reformed Practice in Australia; to explore the medical botany of the continent; and to enhance the *materia medica* collections of the college by providing a *Herbarium* and "other interesting objects of Nature's history". Milton was armed with a diploma from the Reformed Medical College, conferring the title doctor of medicine (MD). The Reverend Milton was instantly transformed into Dr Milton, or "the so-called" Dr Milton according to his critics. Furnished with a good supply of medicine and books, Milton immediately undertook a tour of the goldfields. Here he was happy to find the inhabitants "well versed in Botany and other sciences". Steps were taken to establish a Medical Botanic Society for Australia. A clinic was opened at the Miltons’ home in Melbourne, with daily consultations and the double purgation of aperient vegetable pills and a medicated vapour bath.

Within eighteen months of arrival in Australia, Milton was visited by a ghost of his English past. Dr William C Moat, as partner in the firm Morison and Moat, had been partly responsible for the termination of Milton's agency in 1843. The partnership had been dissolved amid much acrimony in March 1851, and a subsequent Chancery injunction had forbidden Moat from using the Morison name. Moat subsequently
emigrated to Australia, and here set up in partnership with Milton, now "his esteemed friend". The two doctors - one a member of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, the other the holder of a college diploma - set up a practice in Milton's house, offering remedies based on vegetable compounds, medical vapour baths and the controversial new theory of electro-biology. The two initially shared platforms at temperance meetings and sat on a committee to help the unemployed. The partnership, however, soon broke up. By early 1855 Moat is in practice alone, setting up a network of agents to peddle 'Moat's Pills'.

The Miltons had arrived in Melbourne at a critical time in its history. The city was, as we have seen, in the grip of gold fever following discovery the previous year of rich alluvial deposits at Ballarat. Melbourne was transformed within months from a small pastoral community into a maelstrom of seething humanity. The population exploded from 29,000 in 1851 to 123,000 in 1854. Civil administration haemorrhaged. A letter in Hampshire Record Office (42M80/F8) from Alexander Stuart Waddell, captain of the Rattler, described the conditions on his arrival in Melbourne in January 1852: all is "disorder and confusion ... all classes have made a general rush to the mines ... there is not one constable or other police officer in either the Port or City". The Inferno indeed. To a man of Milton's fundamental christianity salvation could come only through the resurrection of the Apostolic church as first created by the Holy Spirit after the accession of Christ. He became a self-proclaimed minister in 'The Pentecostal or Primitive Christian Church, Unsectarian, Missionary and Aggressive'. The elitist title reverend was abandoned in favour of the more sparse designation VDM: 'verbi dei minister', minister of the divine word or preacher of God's word. As Dr Milton, VDM, he waged a relentless war against the powers of Satan and anti-Christ. It was ultimately to destroy him.

The mission was initially ad hoc. Prayer meetings were held, under cover or in open air, wherever an audience could be found: at the Houseless Immigrants' House, the Immigrants' Depot, the Female Penitentiary, among the "dwellers in tents" in Canvas Town, at Mrs Chisholm's Tent Ground near the barracks, under the Flagstaff, at the Eastern Market or on the wharf. Five services were held each Sabbath. A printer was advertised (February 1853) as ready, with his press and type, to join the Christian Church Mission on the goldfields. A more permanent structure was imposed in July 1853 when Milton became de facto chaplain to the City Police Court. A daily routine, lasting almost the rest of his life, was established. Early each morning - Sabbath-day, weekday, even Christmas day - he visited the nightly intake of prisoners in the cells of Swanston Street workhouse: "that loathsome den, where he beheld dirt, and blood, and bruises, and corruption - wretches actually piled up, heaped up together - while the stench was hardly endurable". Many were victims of a system that allowed all-night drinking licenses and tolerated the sale of alcohol to those already insensible through drink. Some saw the spirit of John Howard abroad. Later in the morning Milton accompanied the prisoners to the police court. He used the court as a poste restante and granted audiences each morning at 10am. He became part of a bold experiment implemented by the chief magistrate, the mayor of Melbourne John Thomas Smith. Those prisoners who took the pledge of abstinence were discharged, sometimes into Milton's care, on the understanding that re-offence would incur double the usual fine and double the prescribed term of imprisonment. Milton testified before the Temperance Committee of the Victoria Legislative Council in 1854 that about 1,000 of those arraigned for drunkenness had given him a written pledge of
abstinence. At times, and often to the amusement of onlookers, a verbal pledge was administered in open court.

The City Police Mission was formally recognised in late 1855, evolving, under Milton's guidance, into the City Court and Model Farm Mission, the City Court Missionary and Female Reformatory Home Society, the City Court and General Christian Mission, and the City Court Evangelical and Philanthropic Mission. A wooden mission church was erected and a school for offending juveniles planned. The centre of operations was moved from the claustrophobic police court to the Miltons' residence at 77 Spring Street. Daily counselling sessions were held at 2pm and 6pm to complement the 10am court appointments. The house became a focus for the distribution of alms: cast-off garments for the destitute and prisoners just released from gaol; spectacles (donated by local opticians) to enable the poorly-sighted to read the scriptures and those evangelical tracts so freely given out by the mission; and loaves of bread in times of economic distress. In 1856 the mission house was transformed into a Female Reformatory, or Magdalene, as a refuge for vulnerable women and girls released from court. It was run, nominally, by a board of directors. Dr Milton appointed himself managing director and corresponding secretary. His wife became resident superintendent, aided by a matron and housekeeper. Emma's death at the home in July 1857 removed a spiritual helpmate and support. The reformatory housed up to eleven inmates, many being former prostitutes. Each shared the family table with the doctor "as though they had been my sisters".

Central to the existence of the City Court Mission was the backing of the two chief magistrates of Melbourne. John Thomas Smith, mayor seven times between 1851 and 1864 (the first five terms being consecutive), was mission treasurer and main financial supporter. He gave over £130 of his own money and donated the profits of an evangelical pamphlet published in 1858 - Three addresses by the Right Worshipful Mayor of Melbourne - to Dr Milton in order to allow him "the means of continuing his labors [sic] with a mind undisturbed by narrow cares". Evelyn Sturt, younger brother of the explorer Charles Sturt, gave Milton the full support of the magistrates' bench during his 25-year tenure as police magistrate of Melbourne. State officials - from the governor, lieutenant governor, colonial secretary to the attorney general - gave money to the cause. Many of the leading inhabitants of Melbourne similarly donated money and religious material. The aggregate income of the mission was estimated in the mid-1860s to be £5,400, with over 1,400,000 pages of evangelical tracts and 900 Bibles distributed in the city. Seed-corn in Milton's belief, to be sown as released prisoners moved across Australia.

The fundamental weakness of the mission was its reliance on the energy and direction of a man who, as we have seen from his time in Southampton, was deeply flawed. The burden fell unsustainably on him. He devoted hours of voluntary labour to the cause. He underpinned the mission financially, and by 1864 was owed £250, a burden he found "painfully oppressive". An attempt that year to obtain a state salary through his appointment as de jure chaplain to the City Court failed. The fabric of the enterprise started to unravel. The Female Reformatory closed within a year of its establishment, superseded by a larger, better organised and financially more secure Female Refuge. Its projectors ignored Milton at every stage, the Refuge committee issuing a public denial that it had any connection with the reformatory in Spring Street. Milton could only be philosophical: "I have laid the foundation and another buildeth thereon". The
entire executive committee of the City Mission resigned in 1863, and the original mission itself atrophied after illness forced Milton to retire from public life three years later.

The scenes that Milton witnessed daily in Melbourne can only have confirmed him in his belief that the great barrier to the spread of the gospel was drunkenness. A near universal theme, intruded into virtually every meeting at which he spoke and every pamphlet that he wrote, was "the mortiferous influence of the alcoholic system" and its consequences: "the murders, the suicides, the robberies, the diseases, the deaths, the poverty, the degradation, misery, loss of time, money, employment, character, and the multiplied crimes of almost every grade". Interrogating the prisoners in the police cells, he attempted to estimate the financial consequences of drink. From 578 replies, he put the figure at £150,000 per annum. The temperance movement was notoriously fragmented, and Milton spread his membership widely: the Total Abstinence Society, the Temperance General Debating Society, the Melbourne Good Samaritan Total Abstinence Society, the Evangelistic Total Abstinence Society, the Collingwood Teetotal Society and the Victoria Liquor Law League. Membership of the latter, advocating total prohibition on the model of the American Maine Liquor Law, brought Milton into a working relationship with a man he doubtless knew in Southampton. David Blair, agent to the league, had been a member of the triangulation staff of the Ordnance Survey between 1841 and 1851, and had obtained some local notoriety as a Chartist lecturer. Emigrating to Australia in 1850 he became a radical politician, champion of the Ballarat miners at the Eureka stockade (a short-lived rebellion in 1854 against police harassment over costly mining licences, bloodily suppressed but contributing to the early achievement of democratic government in Victoria), a republican, a founder member of the Australian League, and a newspaperman, described at his death in 1899 as the grandfather of Australian journalism. A unique form of conversion championed by Milton was the "gospel tea meeting". An account in the Argus of one such meeting, at the Melbourne Mechanics' Institute in May 1854, is worth quoting verbatim. Admission was 5 shillings. It was mischievously reproduced in the Hampshire Independent, 9 September 1854, for the delectation of those who remembered the "strange eccentricities" of the doctor whilst in Southampton some years ago.

"The programme of the entertainment was skilfully drawn up, and embraced "all the talent" in the city. Very few of the performers, however, made their appearance. Indeed, it was doubtful at first whether the performance was to come off at all. It was announced that tea should be on the table at half-past four; but at that hour the hall was empty, and neither the tea nor the Rev Doctor had made their appearance. It was six o'clock before a beginning was made, so that punctuality does not appear to form part of the Doctor's gospel. About seventy people sat down to partake of the hot water which the Doctor had the conscience to call tea. The preliminaries consisted of two psalms and a prayer. The cups began to clatter, and the rev gentleman warned the audience against ungodly conversation, which had the effect of putting a damper upon conversation altogether. The Doctor subsequently got upon the platform, cup in hand, and said he wished to introduce "a new order of things." Hereupon he began to discourse of salvation, alternately helping himself to a mouthful of tea, and helping the audience to a mouthful of gospel. Then followed the multum in parvo addresses, Mr David Blair leading off with a philosophical disquisition on geology and creation, and drawing out a little demonstration of feet worship, which Dr Milton denounced as
"Herodian idolatry", and inconsistent with the new order of things which he wishes to inaugurate, and which is to consist exclusively of tea and salvation."

The forces of drunkenness were confronted each quarter at the City Licensing Sessions, held at the City Police Court. It was a rare session that did not begin without a lengthy memorial from Milton calling for a moratorium on all new approvals. One such address - *Calamities that may be avoided* - published in 1863 can be read online at http://search.slv.vic.gov.au. Individual licenses were opposed whenever evidence of impropriety was found. Exchanges could be colourful, especially when Milton was pitched against John Curtis, a former reporter on the *Argus* and founder in 1851 of the weekly *Telegraph*, the organ of the licensed victuallers. A particularly lively encounter was reported in the *Argus* in December 1853, following an application by Curtis for a license for the Oxford Arms in Collingwood, supported by a petition several yards in length.

"Dr Milton opposed the application and presented a printed paper, in which the arguments against the sale of intoxicating liquor were reiterated at great length. The Rev gentleman, in his usual uncompromising style, opposed the granting of any new licence. The appearance of the Doctor was evidently gall and wormwood to the publicans and their friends, by whom the court was crammed to suffocation. Their fury increased as he went on, and ultimately forgetting altogether the respect to the majesty of law and authority, they burst into hissing, hooting, and other demonstrations of rage .... the court resembled the gallery of the Queen's theatre more than a place where magistrates were presiding.... Some of the curtains and the railings were broken down, and there was not a solitary policeman to keep order except [Sergeant] Hadley".

Four years later, Curtis cautioned the bench against placing reliance on the testimony "of such an individual as Dr Milton, ... whom personally he considered nothing more than an extensive vagrant, an imposter and a humbug (Shouts of laughter, completely destroying all decorum)". Exploitation of Milton's refusal to give evidence on oath was a more subtle form of counter attack. Given a generally sympathetic bench, however, he was usually allowed to affirm.

Prostitution, or to use its sanitised forms "the social evil" or "the Sin of Great Cities", was the twin Hydra to drunkenness. Milton had confronted it in three continents. "He had travelled much, and had long laboured in the cause". There was a clear contrast: love for the victims - "his erring sisters" allowed to share his table - and hatred for the system. Milton promoted a raft of "preventative, restrictive and remedial measures", aimed at making the life of the prostitute "painfully exclusive": forced to reside in a designated quarter of the city; prevented from self-exhibition either in the street or at their doors and windows; excluded from tap rooms and hotels, theatres and places of amusement. An official register was to be kept, recording the name of each convicted prostitute, her age, parentage, birthplace, former occupation, denomination, education, length of time in the country, mode of conveyance and time of entry into prostitution. Naive and impracticable, such draconian measures were never likely to attract widespread support. An attempt in 1861, in concert with David Blair, to form a committee of respectable gentlemen to put pressure on the state legislature failed. The one public meeting, held in the Mechanics' Institution, degenerated into confusion and farce, ended only when the Institution secretary turned the gas off.
The appearance of Lola Montez, the most scandalous actress and dancer of the day and now remembered as the eponymous heroine of 'Whatever Lola wants Lola gets', at Melbourne's Royal Theatre in September 1855 was an opportunity for the defence of public morality that Milton could not ignore. Centrepiece of the performance was the erotic 'Spider Dance', which had enthralled and outraged audiences throughout the world. Immediately the performance was over - at which it need hardly be said Milton had not been present - he requested the Melbourne bench, "in the name of an outraged community, of prostrated decency, and insulted morality", to issue a warrant restraining Madame Montez from a repeat performance. The bench demurred, requesting Milton, along with a competent colleague, to attend the next performance in order to provide evidence for an information. Montez responded with a letter to the *Melbourne Herald*, repeating her determination to proceed in order to test public opinion as to the propriety of her conduct. In the event, Milton was denied the confrontation he craved as Montez left for Geelong, forty miles away, before any warrant could be issued. It was reported from here that she had instructed her solicitor to prosecute Milton for defamation of character, but this fizzled out. Her only revenge was to incorporate "that old fellow" into her stage act. 

During the performance of the farce *Antony and Cleopatra* in her last Melbourne show, she alluded, amidst shouts of laughter, to Dr Milton as her future husband.

Milton had a very clear vision of the future of the British race and the inevitability of its colonial future. This stemmed from his belief in the Israeliitish origin of the Saxon race, a theory which originated with the Levellers of the mid-seventeenth century and was undergoing a revival in the 1850s largely through the writings of John Wilson. Contemporaries struggled to comprehend Milton's somewhat individualistic interpretation, which he tried to explain in a series of long and dense lectures - "as clear as liquid mud in a tumbler" according to the unimpressed audience of the Collingwood Christian Association in September 1854. His argument was based on unfulfilled Old Testament prophesies, and can be summarised as follows. The promises made by the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that the Jews shall inherit the earth have clearly not been fulfilled. It follows that the Saxon race, now so numerous over the earth and so powerful, must be those very descendants. However, as the Saxons and the present Jews are not the same people, the Saxons must be another set of Jews - to wit, the descendants of the ten lost tribes of Israel.

Promulgated during the Crimean War, the immediate relevance of this biblical reinterpretation was to guarantee British success in the conflict with Russia, with its natural corollary the certain restoration of the Jews to the Holy Land. More exponentially, it predetermined the global spread of the Saxon race and gave biblical justification to the expansion of the colonies. "The promises of the Hebrew patriarchs were now being fulfilled by the colonisation of America and Australia, the supplanting of the North American savages and the Australian aborigines by the English".

Colonisation of the largely unchartered territories of northern and north-western Australia was part of this irresistible Diaspora. It is symbolic that each member of the doomed 1860 transcontinental expedition of Burke and Wills from Melbourne to the Gulf of Carpentaria carried a small copy of the New Testament and the Psalter donated by Milton. Two years later he supported a joint stock company floated by the Melbourne projector John Hall to create a settlement, initially of 300 emigrants, at the
head of the Gulf of Carpentaria. Hall's 21-page pamphlet - *The colonisation of Northern Australia, Prince Albert Land; the first settlement Burke City on the Albert River the most likely gold country out of Victoria* - can be read at [http://search.slv.vic.gov.au](http://search.slv.vic.gov.au). Milton became a member of Hall's Northern Australian Colonisation Association, which he supported through a series of fund-raising lectures. The refusal of the government of Queensland to grant the association land killed the scheme, which was viewed by many as little more than a fraud. It evoked the paradise of Eden which Mr Scadder had sought on the banks of the Mississippi in *Martin Chuzzlewit*. John Hall now proposed a settlement in Western Australia - also designated Prince Albert Land - at Camden Harbour, the first settlement to be at Grey City (named after the explorer Sir James Grey). Squattages were to be rent-free for four years, promoted with the slogan "Homes for the Million. Land for Nothing". Milton was chairman of the committee appointed to assess the feasibility of the project. It was equally a predictable failure. As the *Perth Gazette* commented in May 1863: "The cause must be in the last stage of helplessness, when a benevolent old gentleman like Dr Milton has felt called upon to interfere".

The Christian Israelite Church was a Messianic sect founded by Bradford-born John Wroe in the 1820s, owing much to the earlier prophecies of Joanna Southcott. Members were vulgarly known as Wroeites. Melbourne was the church's stronghold in Australia and a major source of finance. The Wroeite's English temple, near Wakefield, built in the 1850s, was called Melbourne House and modelled on Melbourne Town Hall. Wroe himself died at the Christian Israelite's Sanctuary in Melbourne in February 1863 during a preaching and fund-raising tour of the continent. Milton was an implacable enemy of the sect, and in particular a secret penitential rite known as the "cleansing process". An opportunity to reveal its allegedly true nature came in 1863 when a recent apostate then living in Melbourne, Allan Stewart, gave what he claimed to be an explicit account of the ceremony. Whether or not the revelations - "revolting and demoralizing" to Milton - were apocryphal is a matter of debate, but Milton believed them and effectively became Stewart's publicist. A public meeting was called at St George's Hall in Melbourne, at which Stewart held a capacity audience of over 2,000 - all men - in rapt attention. A pamphlet was published - *The abominations of the Wroeites (or Christian Israelites) fully and completely exposed* - written by Stewart but edited by Milton. What purported to be a corroborative account of the rite, given to Milton on oath seven years earlier by Alexander Payne, was also included. The authorities saw the pamphlet as crossing a moral boundary. The offices of the printers, Messrs Abbott and Co, were raided by the police, who confiscated 2,000 undistributed copies. Lorimer Fison, the manager and sole representative of the firm then in the colony, was charged before the City Court with publishing an obscene work. It was the first trial for obscene publication in the state of Victoria. The court rejected the hapless Fison's defence that he was induced to incur the risk of publication by the affirmation of Dr Milton. Declaring the pamphlet to be of a most beastly character, the magistrates sent Fison to trial at a higher court. A surviving copy of the pamphlet in the State Library of Victoria (accessible through [http://search.slv.vic.au](http://search.slv.vic.au)) is marked Exhibit A in 'The Queen v Fison'. The offending passages, on pages 6 and 7, are highlighted. Later that year Fison, now an ordained Methodist minister, left Australia for Fiji, to follow a glittering career as missionary, pioneering anthropologist and journalist.
Political radicalism was a natural corollary to Milton's mission to the underclasses. He took pride in being "a working-man" and "the working man's friend". He believed in universal suffrage, the ballot, universal education, the ending of forced transportation and liberty of the press. During the economic distress in Melbourne in the mid-1850s, he helped to mobilise those thrown out of work. He convened a 1,000-strong open air meeting of the unemployed and chaired the committee set up by the meeting. His remedies included establishment of a central labour registration office, abolition of the gold diggers' licence fee and foundation of a working man's newspaper, The Operative. A report on the condition of the labouring classes of the city was commissioned. The committee of the unemployed evolved into the short-lived Working Classes Association, of which Milton was chairman. A report on the labour market was forwarded to England in an attempt to deter further mass immigration. On the great political issue of the day, the land question, Milton sided with the extremists. The poor man should no longer be excluded from his rightful property. The Crown Lands were to be unlocked, with allotments of between 50 and 100 acres sold at a ne plus ultra price of 5 shillings an acre. In cases of need, payment was to be deferred for ten or even twenty years. The government was to provide agricultural implements, paid for whenever the settler had sufficient funds. "That was his creed, and he was prepared to buckle on his armour, and war until it was accomplished".

A prototype was to be provided by the township of Maidstone, on the Saltwater River to the north west of Melbourne. A settlement was begun in 1858, financed by the sale of building allotments, under the banner "Every man his own landlord". James William Thompson, the projector who also owned the land, told the inaugural meeting that "his principal inducement in establishing a home for the people here, was that he had been with his friend Dr Milton through the dark by-lanes of Melbourne, and had seen how necessary it was that some means should be taken for providing the poor as well as the rich with fresh air and fresh water". Milton was subsequently elected on to the committee of management. However, as with John Hall later, Milton misjudged the character of the speculation. Ten houses only had been built by 1860, with no sign of the promised school and chapel. The land largely reverted to Thompson as the original owner, forfeited through the fraudulent levy of an annual fee which few could afford to pay. Milton led the campaign to obtain financial redress, but failed even to force Thompson to produce the estate books. The township was revived later in the century and now forms part of the city of Maribynong.

The projected establishment of a self-sustaining system of Model Farms encapsulates Milton's aspirations for his adopted country. The gaol was pursed for over a decade through a myriad of public meetings and pamphlets. It was the universal panacea; the most certain way to spread the message of the gospels. The farms were to be socially inclusive, embracing the whole gamut of those whom Milton saw as his moral constituency: immigrants, operatives, persons of both sexes out of employment, destitute and deserted children, juvenile and adult offenders, and erring females. Unemployment would be consigned to the past, paid work being guaranteed to immigrants on landing and to anyone thrown out of work. Skills to make individuals self-sufficient were to be taught. In the original proposal, 500 acres were given over to the teaching of agriculture and horticulture on "the most approved and scientific principles". Existing industrial schools were to be absorbed so that, in a telling example used by Milton, servants arriving in the country too ignorant to boil a potato or cook a joint would be thoroughly instructed in domestic economy. Strong drink
was to be prohibited, and no one under its influence admitted. Chapels were to be built, open to all irrespective of creed. Crime would be reduced by the absorption of the existing Juvenile Reformatory. It was re-labelled 'the Prince Albert Industrial Home Farm', after the death in 1862 of the Prince Consort. Any hope that the project might become the official colonial memorial was, inevitably, a chimera.

Eschatological preoccupations - the certainty of the Second Coming of Christ - dominated the last years of Milton's sentient life. His mind was turned by the prophesies of the Anglican clergyman the Reverend Michael Paget Baxter (later founder and editor of the Christian Herald) in Louis Napoleon, the destined monarch of the world, and future antichrist, published in 1861 but reissued throughout the 1860s and sent gratis to ministers in the distant colonies in 1865. Part of the apocalyptic paranoia that surrounded Napoleon III, the book foresaw the descent of Christ in, or shortly after, 1873, a consequence of the end of the War of Armageddon. It can be read at www.google.co.uk/books. Milton entered into a series of lectures in September 1866 entitled 'Anti-Christ, Napoleon, Armageddon, Second Advent, Millenium". The first offering was advertised as a discourse on the anti-Christ, the epiphaneia [the manifestation of Christ to the Magi], the resurrection, the great tribulation, the battle of Armageddon, the parousia [the Second Coming], the triumph, the millenium, and the closing scenes of the economy of grace toward the human family. The fare as offered, however, according to the Argus, was two hours of scathing censure on one and all from Baxter's critics, the Baptist preacher Spurgeon to the Melbourne daily press. Milton ended the lecture, without exhausting his programme, only when he saw his audience fast thinning. It was his last performance on the public stage. The remainder of his life was spent as an invalid, dependent upon charitable donations. In June 1868 he was admitted into the Benevolent Asylum. He died there on 17 October 1869, going "to his rest like one who, weary with protracted toil, falls into a welcome sleep". He is buried in Melbourne General Cemetery. It is the same cemetery in which John Wroe is buried.

The newly-built offices of the Argus in Melbourne. Ultra Liberal and advocating the immediate independence of the Australian colonies, the newspaper had a daily circulation of 10,500. David Blair, formerly of Southampton, was sub-editor

The Illustrated London News, 29 October 1853, p 372
Milton's life is a journey through a vale of tears. In Southampton, he was an outcast, a pariah, regarded as little more than a fraudster. Respectable citizens combined to drive him out of town. He endured months of self-inflicted imprisonment for debt. In Melbourne he met adversity at almost every turn. There were times when he was given a police escort home from the City Court. The Mission House was firebombed in 1857, prompting the *Melbourne Herald* by-line "BLOWING UP DR MILTON". Observers remarked that he often looked worn out. Financial distress was a constant companion. As early as 1854, only two years after his arrival in Melbourne, he was reported to be penniless, and he died in indigent circumstances. His last work - *The Macedonian cry, "Come over and help us"*, published in 1865 - is an essay on unfinished work. It can be read at [http://search.slv.vic.au](http://search.slv.vic.au). Yet, and this is the great difference with his time in Southampton, in Melbourne Milton was part of the fabric of city life. He was a regular invitee to the governor's annual levee, a stock character in the local press, a target of the satirical *Melbourne Punch* and member of a range of local societies from the Victoria Phonetic Association (of which he was one of the founders) to the Acclimatisation Society, promoting the introduction and naturalisation of fauna and flora from around the world. Whenever laid low by illness, relief funds were established to supply him with the necessaries of life, food and money, and even the occasional luxury. Organized by the police magistrate Evelyn Sturt, the sergeants and constables of the city police force were especially generous. Other donations came from the spectrum of local society: £5 from the governor, £2 from Mr Justice Molesworth, £1 from the teachers of Victoria Grammar School all the way to 6d from Master Price and "postage stamps as the widow's mite". His admittance to the Benevolent Asylum was a final act of charity.

Digitised copies of the *Argus* - available through [http://www.nla.gov.au/](http://www.nla.gov.au/) - give modern observers a far clearer view of the antipodean life of Dr Milton than was granted to his contemporaries in England. It may be apposite to end with a quotation from the issue of 15 February 1856. The final sentence could no doubt stand for every town in which he served.

"Dr Milton is a man whose benevolence of intention we have no right to question, and it is so seldom that we meet with men whose life is dedicated to other than personal objects, that we feel disposed to think well of any one who sets an exceptional example in this respect. But to speak the plain truth, Dr Milton's judgment is so bad - he is so eminently wanting in discretion and common sense - that we often wish he was exercising his charitable impulses somewhere else than here".

I wish to thank Vicky Green for her advice in the writing of this article.
A G K Leonard

Captain Charles Fryatt: "Pirate Dodger" Hero of World War I

"A wonderfully impressive scene was witnessed in London when the body of Captain Charles Fryatt was conveyed in procession through the streets of the city for the memorial funeral service at St Paul's Cathedral."

So the Hampshire Advertiser described the occasion on 8 July 1919, when "for the first time London saw in a state ceremonial officers and men of that great service, our mercantile marine."

Southampton-born Charles Fryatt had been acclaimed as a national hero for his exploits in 1915-16 as master of the SS Brussels, one of the Great Eastern Railway steamers which maintained services from Harwich and Tilbury to Rotterdam throughout the war (the Germans occupied Belgium but not Holland, which remained neutral), running the gauntlet of enemy attacks, especially by submarines based mainly at Zeebrugge and Ostend.

Captain Fryatt became the best known of the "pirate dodgers", making at least 143 such trips before his capture by the Germans in 1916 and his execution as a "franc-tireur" because he had earlier resisted arrest and sinking by a German U-boat, which he had boldly tried to ram.

The German authorities evidently intended his death to deter the masters of other British merchant vessels from similar actions within the waters surrounding Great Britain and Ireland which they had designated as a war zone. In the event, the shooting of Captain Fryatt had effects the reverse of those envisaged by his captors. It was widely denounced as "judicial murder" and served only to strengthen British determination to defy the German blockade.

Figure 1. Captain Charles Fryatt (1871-1916)

Southampton Childhood

Charles Algernon Fryatt was a native of Southampton, where he spent the first twelve years of his life. Born 2 December 1871 at 6 Marsh Lane, he was the second son of Charles Fryatt, described in census and parish records as a "mariner", and his wife Mary Jane Brown Fryatt, née Percy.
Then in their early thirties, they had probably come to live in Southampton not long before the census of 1871 recorded Mrs Fryatt and her two children at 60 Anderson's Terrace in St Mary's parish. Charles Fryatt was then away from home, following his maritime occupation. The 1881 census noted him as having been born at Canvey Island, Essex, while his wife's birthplace was given as Holy Island in Northumberland. Their first two children, named John and Elizabeth, aged six and one respectively in 1871, had been born at Ramsgate and Harwich. Charles and three further children were added to the Fryatt family in Southampton between 1871 and 1879.

The Fryatts moved house several times during this decade, probably to secure better and more spacious accommodation. They were living at 72 Lower Canal Walk when Charles Algernon was baptised by the curate of St Mary's on 6 March 1873 - some fifteen months after his birth. Although this had been duly registered on 8 January 1872, the delay seems to have created confusion, causing his date of birth to be taken in some quarters as 1872. Previous editions of the Dictionary of national biography gave this date but it has now been corrected to 1871 in the current edition.

The Fryatts continued living at 72 Lower Canal Walk for some years but then made quick moves to addresses in Cambridge Street and York Street, before settling at 7 Alfred Street, Newtown, where they were listed in the directories of 1878 and 1880. They moved house again before the 1881 census recorded the family living at 22 Trinity Terrace - presumably the last in their sequences of addresses within St Mary's parish. Charles Fryatt was at home there on census night, with his wife and five children; Sophia Bessie, baptised in 1877, had evidently died in infancy. The Fryatt's eldest son John, then 16, was already following his father's occupation, likewise described as a mariner.

Young Charles Fryatt attended the old Holy Trinity National School in New Road (built in 1853, closed in 1910), until he transferred to Freemantle C E School in March 1882, consequent upon his family having then moved from "down town" to that developing suburb (not actually brought within the borough until 1895).

The Fryatts' new home in Queens Road, Freemantle, seems to have been styled Cyprus (or Cypress?) Cottage. The 1884 edition of the Southampton directory, evidently compiled the previous year, listed Charles Fryatt, mariner, at number 33 Queens Road.

Renamed Queenstown Road in 1903 to eliminate duplication of such street names, it seems to have retained its original pattern of house numbering but modernisation and redevelopment have since obscured the identity of the Victorian "cottage" (one of a pair of semi-detached houses?) where Charles Algernon Fryatt once lived.

The Freemantle School register, preserved in the Southampton Archives, shows that he was admitted to that school on 14 March 1882 and left on 22 October 1883. The DNB continues to state that C A Fryatt "first attended the Freemantle School in Southampton", whereas he had previously been a pupil at Holy Trinity, probably from 1876. In his book about Captain Fryatt, Mr M G White transposed the sequence of his attendance at these two schools, with confusing result.

Charles Algernon Fryatt continued his education at the Corporation Free School in Harwich, the port to which his father moved the family home on entering the service of the Great Eastern Railway based there.

Charles Fryatt senior spent the rest of his sea-going years with this company, rising to become chief officer on its vessels running service between Harwich and Tilbury and various ports in Belgium and the Netherlands.
His second son attended the nautical training college on the Thames, HMS *Worcester*, and then served on several merchant ships before joining the GER as an AB seaman in 1892. Marrying a local girl, Ethel Townend, in 1896, he helped her raise a family of seven children while living at a house in Dovercourt, seemingly held on a tenancy from his employers. With them he worked his way up through the shipping grades to become a ship's master in 1913.

**Submarines and Gold Watches**

Captain Fryatt's first command that year was SS *Colchester* (on which his father had earlier been chief officer) and then SS *Newmarket*. It was the policy of the GER to rotate captains around its fleet, so in 1914 he became master of the SS *Brussels*. She was a 1,380 ton twin screw steamer built in 1902, an up-to-date vessel able to carry 164 first class and 88 second class passengers.

Following the outbreak of war, the GER steamships were taken under the control of the Admiralty. They continued to operate services between Harwich and Holland; its neutrality precluded the arming of British ships serving its ports, which had therefore to rely on seamanship and speed to elude German submarines.

Captain Fryatt's first notable encounter with the enemy was on 2 March 1915, when commanding SS *Wrexham*, a 1,414 ton vessel then on charter to the GER from the Great Central Railway company.

Bound for Rotterdam, she was chased for forty miles but making up to 16 knots, thanks to valiant efforts by engineers and crewmen, she dodged shoals and mines to evade her pursuer and reach port safely.

The GER chairman and directors presented her captain with a gold watch, inscribed "as a mark of their appreciation of his courage and skilful seamanship on March 2, 1915".

A fortnight previously, the German authorities had designated the Channel and waters around Britain and Ireland as a war zone, declaring that "every enemy merchant vessel found in it will be destroyed without it always being possible to warn the crew or passengers of the dangers threatening." British ships were therefore liable to be sunk without warning or without those aboard having time to get into lifeboats - as happened with the 5,000 ton British ship *Falaba*, sunk off the south coast of Ireland on 28 March 1915, when 104 persons lost their lives.

On the afternoon of that same Sunday, the *Brussels*, to whose command Captain Fryatt had been transferred, was making another hazardous voyage to Rotterdam when she sighted the German submarine U 33 heading towards her near the Maas lightship.

Captain Fryatt knew the fate awaiting his ship if she obeyed the signal to stop, also that he could not match the speed of this new attacker, so he boldly ordered the *Brussels* full speed ahead straight at the submarine, firing off rockets as he went - to call for aid and give the impression of guns.

His intent was to force the submarine to disengage and submerge, even to ram her. The *Brussels* may have struck a glancing blow to her conning tower or periscope as she went down. Thereafter, the *Brussels* safely made top speed into harbour at Rotterdam.

Reports of Captain Fryatt's refusal to give up his ship gained him general acclaim and commendation. The master of the *Brussels* received another gold watch, "presented by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty in recognition of the
example set by that vessel when attacked by a German submarine on March 28, 1915."

The Admiralty also sent a vellum certificate, presented to him on its behalf by the Mayor of Harwich, expressing "their marked approbation of the manner in which you carried out your duty when attacked by a German submarine."

These "well-merited awards" were announced in the House of Commons by the Secretary to the Admiralty on 28 April and the Admiralty also wrote to the railway company praising "the highly courageous and meritorious conduct" of the masters of its steamers running between Harwich and Rotterdam, which "reflected credit on British seamanship."

While British government circles had no doubt that international law fully entitled merchant vessels to resist arrest or sinking, the Germans took a different view of such "civilian" defiance. Publicity for his awards made Captain Fryatt a marked man in their eyes and sealed his fate when he later fell into enemy hands.

There was also speculation that the Brussels - and perhaps other GER vessels - may from time to time have carried persons, papers and materials relating to British intelligence activities directed against Germany from the Netherlands, as well as diplomatic mail to and from the British embassy there.

Capture and Execution

For more than a year Captain Fryatt continued running his ship in and out of Rotterdam on voyages that were dangerous but without particular incident, until on the night of 22/23 June 1916, when homeward bound from Holland with Belgian refugees and a cargo of foodstuffs aboard, his ship was surrounded and captured by German destroyers - evidently with benefit of good intelligence about the steamer's movements.

Captain Fryatt had time to order destruction of papers before leading his crew in disciplined acceptance of their capture and comforting the distraught Belgian passengers. The Brussels was taken as a prize into Zeebrugge and her crew were sent to spend the rest of the war as prisoners in the Ruhleben camp near Berlin.

Postcards from them duly reached their families, likewise from the five stewardesses who were separately interned near Hanover until repatriated in October/November. All reported themselves well and asked for parcels. The last message from Captain Fryatt, sent from Ruhleben on 1 July, was received by his wife at Dovercourt on 29 July - by which time he was dead.

From mid-July there were reports through Holland that he was to be court martialed. On behalf of the British, the American ambassador in Berlin (the United States was still neutral, not entering the war until the following April) made enquiries and representations, trying to ensure his proper defence on the basis that he had acted legitimately in self-defence. However, the German authorities refused to delay the court martial, for which Captain Fryatt, together with some of his crew, were brought back to Bruges.

A German officer, Captain Neumann, a lawyer in civil life, was appointed to defend the accused but his role must have been marginal to the proceedings at Bruges town hall on 27 July, which were, of course, conducted in German and put Captain Fryatt at further disadvantage, even if an interpreter was present.

His official commendation by the British Admiralty was evidently held against him but the famous gold watches to which reference was also made could not be produced as evidence, since he had left them in safe keeping at home.
The trial lasted only an hour or two before Captain Fryatt was sentenced to death. Barely two hours later - some city aldermen having been hastily summoned as witnesses - he was shot against the wall of the Aurora Gardens, a court near the Kruispot in Bruges where the Germans had previously executed Belgian civilian resisters.

Outrage

A large official poster was displayed in Bruges, announcing in German, Flemish and French - in the name of Admiral August von Schroder, commander of the Flanders Marine Corps - that "the English merchant navy captain Charles Fryatt of Southampton, although not part of the enemy armed forces, attempted on 28 March 1915 to destroy a German submarine by ramming it. This is why he was condemned to death by the judgement this day of the court martial of the Marine Corps and has been executed. A perverse act has thus received its punishment, tardy but just."

Figure 2. The trilingual poster issued by the German Admiral commanding the Flanders Marine Corps, announcing the execution of Charles Fryatt on 27 July 1916. The original (of which an example is held in Southampton Archives) measures 18 by 25 inches

The trial, with its predictable outcome, must have been instituted by high-level political decision in Berlin but the execution of Captain Fryatt proved a political misjudgement, arousing horror and condemnation as "deliberate murder" in neutral countries as well as among the Allies.

The German authorities themselves may indeed have had second thoughts about it, for The Times stated in July 1919 that a telegram from Berlin ordering postponement of the execution arrived in Bruges half an hour after it had been carried out. The Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith, hastened to express to the Commons on 31 July his government's "utmost indignation at this atrocious crime against the laws of nations and the usages of war." First Lord of the Admiralty, Arthur Balfour, said pointedly "doubtless it is their wrath at the skill and energy with which British
merchant captains and crews have defended their lives and property under their charge that has driven the Germans into their latest and stupidest act of calculated ferocity - the judicial murder of Captain Fryatt; ... they were resolved at all costs to discourage imitation."

The tide of public feeling was exemplified by a big protest meeting that filled Trafalgar Square on Sunday afternoon, 6 August, at which a letter from Mrs Fryatt was read. She herself received a message from King George V conveying his "heartfelt sympathy and deepest indignation and abhorrence of this outrage", along with many more in similar vein.

Captain Fryatt became even more of a national hero as his story was widely publicised in newspapers and pamphlets.

Notable among the latter was the account produced by Hodder & Stoughton as an illustrated 48 page twopenny booklet, boldly titled *The Murder of Captain Fryatt*. This was issued anonymously but a recent reprint in the United States has curiously accorded its author the pseudonym Charles Algernon, taking the forenames of its subject.

The Great Eastern Railway company promptly granted his widow - left with a son and six daughters aged between 2 and a half and 18 - a substantial life pension of £250 a year, while the Government enhanced her pension under the Board of Trade insurance scheme for merchant seamen. At Ipswich on 20 September 1916, Mrs Ethel Fryatt of 55 Oakland Road, Dovercourt, was formally granted probate of the will of her late husband, whose effects were precisely valued at £1,073.16s.7d.

**Post-War Honours**

Captain Fryatt's body had been buried by the Germans in the cemetery at Assebroek, an eastern suburb of Bruges, with a simple wooden cross over his grave.

After the war, on 4 July 1919, his body was solemnly exhumed and ceremonially returned to England for further honour to his memory. After lying in state at Bruges, where thousands lined to pay their respects, the coffin was carried aboard HMS *Orpheus* to Dover; it lay there overnight in the same carriage that had earlier brought to London the body of Nurse Cavell.

Next day, 8 July, it was taken by special train to London and drawn on a gun carriage to St Paul's cathedral for a widely attended national memorial service.

The body was then conveyed in procession to Liverpool Street station and taken by another special train to Dovercourt, to be carried in another procession to All Saints cemetery, where, with full military honours, the burial service was conducted by the Bishop of Chelmsford.

The GER provided a Portland stone memorial over Captain Fryatt's grave - at the northern end of the churchyard, overlooking Parkestone Quay. It was inscribed in memory of the "Master of the Great Eastern steamship *Brussels* illegally executed by the Germans at Bruges on the 27th July 1916; erected by the Company as an expression of their admiration of his gallantry."
Figure 3. In the early 1920s several Belgian publishers issued series of postcards featuring various aspects of World War I. Among those produced by the Brussels firm of J Revyn was this one, inscribed in English, French and Flemish "The SS Brussels sunk near the extremity of Zeebrugge-Mole, and her heroic Captain Fryatt, who was captured on the 23rd June 1916 and shot on the 27th July 1916."

The SS *Brussels* had remained at Zeebrugge after her capture, used by the Germans as an accommodation ship. Sunk in October 1918 to block the harbour entrance, she was raised in August 1919 and reconditioned, to be sold off by the GER for re-use during the 1920s in a very different capacity - as a cattle carrier (see Postscript below).

Figure 4. Another postcard from J Revyn, numbered 13 in a booklet of 20 detachable cards, depicted "The SS Brussels set afloat again and her heroic Captain Fryatt."

The proceeds of her sale were contributed by the GER to the fund earlier set up by the Mayor of Harwich to provide a lasting memorial to Captain Fryatt. Its outcome was the Fryatt Memorial Hospital, officially opened in April 1922 - by the GER chairman Lord Claud Hamilton, who was handed the silver key by 11 year old Charles Fryatt, only son of the acclaimed sea captain.
The first memorial to him at Liverpool Street railway station was unveiled in July 1917, donated by the Dutch branch of the League of Neutral States, inscribed "from the neutral admirers of his brave conduct and heroic death." In 1922 this was incorporated into a memorial to all the Great Eastern men killed in the war.

There is a "Captain Fryatt" public house at Parkestone, Harwich. More distant memorials prompted by his execution in 1916 included mountains named Mount Fryatt and Brussels Peak in the Jasper National Park in the Canadian Rockies and a Fryatt Quay in a 1917 harbour development at Wellington, New Zealand, which later lost its identity within a modern container terminal. Rediscovered by chance in 2010 in Australia, a replica of the watch presented to Captain Fryatt by

Figure 5. This card from a publisher in Bruges, A Brusselle, shows the column commemorating Captain Fryatt erected beside the "Wall of Execution" in 1922 by the English Convent in Bruges

the Admiralty in 1915 was presumably created in connection with the Australian film The Murder of Captain Fryatt made in 1917. Its owner presented it to the Imperial War Museum, thus prompting Fryatt’s descendants likewise to donate the original, along with the watch earlier presented to him by the Great Eastern Railway company.

Captain Fryatt's Belgian connections, through his captivity and execution, gained him national acclaim, highlighted by posthumous awards of the Order of Leopold and the Belgian Maritime War Cross.

Memorials at the "Wall of Execution" where he and others were shot by the Germans during World War I, in the Hof van Aurora at Bruges, included a carved stone column simply inscribed "Capn. Fryatt Charles (sic) of Southampton died for his King and Country on July 27, 1916, at the age of 44." This was provided by the English Convent at Bruges, erected in 1922.

It was complemented by a wall plaque bearing inscriptions in English and Flemish around an outline of the SS Brussels. The text states "SS Brussels belonging to the Great Eastern Railway Company & commanded by Captain Fryatt was captured by the Germans on the 22/23rd June 1916 near the Schouwen Bank. This plate belonging to the SS Brussels has been offered by the British War Office."
The ship's executed Master is also recalled by a street in Zeebrugge, Kapitein Fryatt Straat - briefly restyled Azores Straat by German occupiers in 1940-45 but duly reinstated after the end of World War II.

Meanwhile, on 12 September 1936, another memorial plaque had been formally unveiled in a ceremony at the English Church of St Mary in Bruges. It was subscribed for by various British individuals and organisations, including the LNER (successors to the GER) and the Imperial Merchant Service Guild. .... "To the memory of Charles Fryatt, Master of the SS Brussels, condemned to death and shot in this city July 27th 1916 by the enemy in occupation. His body was conveyed to England in HMS Orpheus July 6th 1919 and laid to rest in Dovercourt. The Mur des Fusilles near the St Kruispoort marks the scene of his execution."

The English Church in Bruges closed c.1984, when this plaque was transferred to the Provinciehof (Town Hall).

In July 2006 the 90th anniversary of Captain Fryatt's death was marked by an exhibition in the Guildhall at Harwich and a civic service at All Saints Church, Dovercourt. A happy outcome of similar commemoration at Bruges was the presentation of a replica of the 1936 plaque to Freemantle School, where it was formally unveiled on 26 January 2007 by Mrs Doris Stewart, a great niece of Captain Fryatt.

This is his only memorial in Southampton, his birthplace and childhood home. Perhaps the centenary of his death will prompt some civic commemoration in July 2016?

Postscript: SS Brussels

The Brussels was a 1,380 ton twin screw passenger steamer, built and engined by Gourlay Brothers & Co Ltd of Dundee in 1901-02 for the Great Eastern Railway, to operate on its Harwich-Hook of Holland service. She provided accommodation for up to 164 first class and 88 second class passengers, at a high standard of comfort, with a service speed of 14 knots.

After capture by the Germans in June 1916 the Brussels remained at Zeebrugge, in use as a submarine depot ship. She may have been damaged during the British raid on 23 April 1918 but her later sinking in October was effected by the Germans to obstruct the harbour.
The Brussels settled on an even keel but filled with mud, which made her recovery a complicated lifting operation for the Admiralty salvage experts. This was safely carried out on 4 August 1919, which happened to be the fifth anniversary of the outbreak of war.

Refloated and patched up, the Brussels was towed away by British and Belgian tugs, to reach the Tyne on 20 May 1920 and receive a civic welcome from the Mayor of Jarrow.

Her GER owners put her up for sale and she was bought by J Gale & Co Ltd of Goole, to be sent in March 1921 to Henry Robb Ltd of Leith for adaptation to serve a new function in the Dublin-Preston cattle trade.

Instead of passengers carried in comfort, the Brussels now had capacity for 600 cattle and 1,000 sheep. In this mundane capacity, she made her first trip for the Dublin & Lancashire Steam Ship Co in September 1921.

In 1923 she was taken over by the British & Irish Steam Packet Co Ltd, in line with whose naming policy she was restyled the Lady Brussels. She made her last crossing from Dublin on 19 April 1929, to go from Preston to a breakers' yard at Port Glasgow.

Meanwhile, the Brussels had been replaced in the service of the Great Eastern Railway from January 1921 by a 2,950 ton steamer named SS Bruges. She was transferred in 1923 into the London & North Eastern Railway, eventually to be sunk off Le Havre in June 1940.

Acknowledgements

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I am now particularly obliged and grateful to the maritime and railway historian Ben Carver for generously sharing with me the products of his extensive researches into the whole Fryatt story, its background and context and memorials world-wide - compiled for a future publication ahead of the centenary commemorations of Captain Fryatt's death in 2016.

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In order to understand Boniface, born Winfrith or Wynfrith or Winfred, one has to look at the conditions prevailing in England and Continental Europe before and around his time, the latter part of the 7th and the first half of the 8th century. By about 410 AD Roman rule of Britain was at an end. The European mainland and Britain were affected among other factors by large scale movements of people. The Saxons, Angels and Jutes penetrated Britain in search of new land. Across the Channel the Goths had moved in, originally from the north, Gotland, and divided into the Ostrogoth and the Visigoths. A Germanic tribe, the Franks, came to the fore in what is now France but at times dominated areas as far east as Thuringia. The Vandals, another Germanic tribe, briefly took centre stage in the Iberian peninsula and from their kingdom in North Africa conquered hard-pressed Rome, only to vanish completely from history. These great movements of whole populations were known as the Völkerwanderung. Contemporary written records are scarce; everything is somewhat vague, steeped in narration and legend which pervaded the whole epoch. Communications were difficult, particularly where the Romans had not established roads, and much of the land was forested.

The problems of the age, as of all ages, were the struggle for existence, the fight for physical domination and power, and the hegemony of ideas. The great difference is the technology then available and the timescale against which events were played out. It was a time of religious turmoil when the Church of Rome under the Papacy fought for supremacy over the many other beliefs and interpretations of beliefs. It was the time of struggle for the establishment of Christianity in a still pagan world in which the people largely followed the faith of the ruler. On the horizon, Islam was establishing itself in the Near-East and spreading into Europe. It was then, in the latter half of the 7th Century, that a man appeared who was to have a considerable influence not only in his native land, but on a large part of Western Europe.

St Boniface

The West Saxons had penetrated westwards to colonise and mix with the local Britons and Winfrith was born into a wealthy Saxon family living near Crediton, near Exeter, Devon, about 675-680. Early on his father sent Winfrith to be educated to the monastery at Escanceastra (Exeter). At that time this was the only way for young boy to receive an education. It was said that he was a beautiful child and given the name Boniface by the Abbot. Winfrith chose when he was quite young, a life dedicated to the monastic world. This was very different from what it was to be when monasticism became more organised. From Exeter Abbot Wulfhard sent the 20 year old Winfrith to Abbot Winbert at the monastery of Nhuscelle (Nursling) in the newly established see of Winchester. The exact site of the monastery, destroyed by the Danes in 1006, is unknown, but is believed to have been near the site of the present church in Nursling. By the time he was 30, when he was ordained, Winfrith seems to have been an important, learned monk and schoolmaster, who, among other tasks composed a Latin grammar and taught at the school attached to the cathedral. He was renowned for his diligence, devotion, knowledge of the scriptures, and his preaching. Daniel, the Bishop of Winchester, and Winfrith became friends and Winfrith was sent to Canterbury at the request of the archbishop, in the service King Ine of Wessex.
By 716 Winfrith had decided to go to Friesland to do missionary work there under Willibrord who was based on Utrecht and who was trying to convert the pagan Frisian Saxons. The king of the Frisians, Radbod, was a violent man and at war with Charles Martel king of the Franks. Missionary work of any significance was almost impossible and Winfrith decided to return to Nursling. The old Abbot had died and the monks offered the office to Winfrith, but he declined as he felt his calling was to be a missionary on the mainland of Europe.

In 718 he left Nursling for the second time, never to return. He travelled with other Anglo-Saxon pilgrims to Rome, carrying a letter to the Pope from Bishop Daniel of Winchester which indicated that Winfrith was his friend and commended him to the Pope. The party of pilgrims landed near the present le Touquet and made their way across Frankish lands where they were well cared for in the monasteries. They crossed the Alps into the Lombard territory of northern Italy where they were made less welcome. The journey must have been about 1200 miles and taken many months.

Pope Gregory II received him kindly and entrusted him with missionary duties ease of the Rhine and gave him the name of Boniface. His commission read as follows:

"Gregory Letter of Pope Gregory II to Boniface, 719. Gregory, Servant of the Servants of God, to the Devout Priest Boniface. Knowing that thou hast from childhood been devoted to sacred letters, and that thou hast laboured to reveal to unbelieving people the mystery of faith, . . we decree in the name of the indivisible Trinity, through the unshaken authority of Peter, chief of the Apostles, whose doctrine it is our charge to teach, and whose holy see is in our keeping, that, since thou seemest to glow with the salvation-bringing fire - which our Lord came to send upon the earth - thou shalt hasten to whatsoever tribes are lingering in the error of unbelief, and shalt institute the rites of the kingdom of God... And we desire thee to establish the discipline of the sacraments, according to the observance of our holy apostolic see."

Boniface was to follow strictly the Roman rites; he was always very orthodox, submissive to St Peter and his vicar. Gregory asked him to discover what was happening in the parts of Germany only loosely under the control of the Franks. Irish monks had been converting in Germanic territory and were following the Celtic rites which meant, among others, that they were using different baptismal customs and keeping different pascal dates not conforming to the conclusions of the Synod of Whitby. Furthermore Celtic rules were less defined and more subject to the ideas of the individual missionary. At Whitby it had been decided in 663-664 to follow the Roman rites and ally the faith in England more closely to that of Rome.

In the meantime King Radbod had died and Boniface returned to Frisia to help Bishop Willibrord who had intended to ask Boniface to become his successor in the north. But this was not to be. Boniface felt that he was not old enough to take Willibrord's place and that he would be of more use, at that time, in Hesse and Thuringia. He went back through Amöneburg in Hesse, where he converted the local princes, twins by the name of Dettic and Devrulf, built a church there and reported his activities to the Pope in Rome. He was recalled to Rome by the Pope to explain in more detail what he planned to do.

In 722 he made the long and somewhat dangerous journey back to Rome for the second time. There he accounted to Gregory and detailed his beliefs in writing. Gregory was so impressed that on St. Andrew's day in 722 he appointed Boniface roving Bishop for all the German lands. Since the support of the secular power was of great importance, Gregory also wrote to Charles Martel, then the most powerful ruler in Western Europe asking him to give his aid to the missionary work.

Boniface returned north and continued his teaching among the Hessians and
Thuringians. Miracles were an important aid in converting people from pagan gods. Many of the people of Hesse were converted by Boniface to the Catholic faith. They were confirmed by the grace of the spirit: and received the laying on of hands. But there were some, not yet strong of soul, who refused to accept, wholly, the teachings of the true faith. Some men sacrificed secretly, some even openly, to trees and springs. Some secretly practised divining, soothsaying, and incantations, and some did so openly. Others, who were of sounder mind, cast aside all heathen profanation and did none of these things, and it was with the advice and consent of these men that Boniface sought to fell the Thor Oak, a tree of great size, at Geismar. The man of God was surrounded by the servants of God. When he would cut down the sacred tree behold a great throng of pagans, who were there, cursed him bitterly among themselves, because he was the enemy of their gods. And when he had cut into the trunk a little way, a breeze sent by God stirred overhead, and suddenly the branch top of the tree was broken off, and the oak in all its huge bulk felt to the ground. And it was broken into four huge sections without any effort of the brethren who stood by. When the pagans who had cursed did see this, they left off cursing and, believing, blessed God. Then the most holy priest took counsel with the brethren: and he built from the wood of the tree an oratory, and dedicated it to the holy apostle Peter.

Under the protection of Charles Martel, Boniface preached successfully in Hesse, Bavaria, Westphalia, Württemberg, and Thuringenland. Large numbers were baptised by him. He asked for and received missionaries from England to assist him. A good many came from Wessex. In fact he had never lost his close connection with England and Anglo-Saxon monks. In 731 Gregory II died and Boniface despatched monks to Rome with letters for the new Pope, Gregory III, who sent the monks back with letters and relics of the Saints to put into the new churches built as converts were made. They also brought back a very special gift for Boniface, a pallium, a white scarf with six crosses on it, as worn only by Popes and Archbishops. The pallium was a token of the spiritual authority of the Pope. Boniface, the Archbishop, for that he had now become, was now in a strong position to shape the church as he thought necessary and in agreement with the Pope.

In the meantime in 732 at a point somewhere between Tours and Poitiers Charles Martel, master of the Frankish kingdom, defeated Moorish invaders from Spain in a battle that proved to be the turning point in the advance of Islam into Western Europe, and prevented further incursion of the Moors into Frankish lands.

In 738 Boniface visited Rome for the third and last time. In Rome he was joined by the Anglo-Saxon brothers Winnebald and Willibald with whom he maintained a close acquaintance. He returned north as papal legate. In due course he made Mainz the centre of ecclesiastical activities in Germany and set about reshaping the church in the various components of his far flung territory. By this time he had gathered around him a number of monks and nuns from England, many from Wessex. He established them throughout his territory. Lull, the most important of his helpers, was born in Wessex. He became a monk of Malmesbury and as a cousin of Boniface joined him as a young monk. He was, in time, to become Archbishop of Mainz. Sturm, another of his missionaries, became abbot of Fulda. The Benedictine abbey he founded in 744 became the favourite abbey and missionary centre of Boniface. Its school was one of Europe's important seats of learning during the early Middle Ages. Tecla, another of his English nuns, was made abbess of Kitzingen. Lioba, her cousin, became abbess of Tauberbishofsheim. Walburga, sister of Willibald, became abbess of Heidenheim. She had trained under the Abbess Tatta at Wimborne in Dorset. Her name because her saint's day happens to fall on the first of May, coinciding with the
witches revels, became associated with the Earth Goddess and witches. Now her name is perpetuated in the Walpurgis night and the meeting of the witches on the Brocken in the Harz mountains. The example of linking Walburga with witches, illustrates that pagan ideas sit only just below the surface to this day.

Boniface and his missionaries fought a constant battle not only for the conversion of the pagans in his territory but against the half-converted Christians and those whose doctrinal teaching ran counter to that of the church. Throughout his life his command of language, his oratorical skills and his compelling spirituality enabled him to convert many thousands of pagans.

His next important work concerned a reorganisation of the church in Bavaria and a reform of the Frankish church which required massive changes. With Odilo, the new Duke of Bavaria, Boniface created at least four new Bavarian bishoprics at Salzburg, Passau, Freising and Regensburg and, with the tightening of the rules in Hesse and Thuringia, shaped the church in Germany in the way he intended.

After the death of Charles Martel in 741, Boniface presided over five reforming councils in the Frankish lands convoked by Martel's heirs Carlemann and Pepin. Here no council had been held for many years, bishoprics were often vacant, sold or given to unsuitable laymen, and between 741 and 747 Boniface managed, often against strong opposition, to effect his reforms.

Apart from condemning the prevailing abuses, the Rule of St. Benedict was made the basic code for all Carolingian monasteries. At his last synod, after Carlemann had entered a monastery in Rome and Pepin was sole ruler of the Franks, Boniface anointed Pepin King, in the name of the Pope. This established the practice of anointing kings. By now according to tradition Boniface was well over 75 years old and he decided to hand the Archbishopric of Mainz and thereby the leadership of the Church in the Eastern part of the Frankish German Territory to Lull. He himself returned down the Rhine to Frisia to end his days among the people of his first missionary activities. He not only reclaimed the part of the country earlier evangelized, but penetrated with some success into the still pagan north east Frisia. He was killed and martyred in 755 near Doccum by a band of pagans whilst awaiting some neophytes for confirmation. It is said that he held up a book possibly Ragundrudis' Codex which is now in Fulda and still bears the tear marks of the weapon with which he was struck. His body was recovered and carried by land and water first to Utrecht, then to Mainz and on to Fulda, the place he had chosen for himself as his last resting place. Fulda became a place of veneration and pilgrimage.

Though he never returned to England after 718, he kept in touch, engaging in correspondence with King Ethelbald and Archbishop Cuthbert, and drew missionaries from Wessex to assist him.

So Winfrith, the Saxon boy, the monk of Nursling, Friend of Bishops and Popes, the Apostle of Germany, became a church dignitary whose achievements and influence have prevailed for over 1200 years.

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THANK YOU MRS BROWN! The ‘Soldiers’ Rest’ in Southampton during the Great War. 1914-1918. The ‘Chine Helpers’ in War and Peace.

On the way to France.

On August 4th 1914, Great Britain declared war on Germany. Almost at once, the troops of the British Expeditionary Force began arriving in the port of Southampton prior to embarkation for France. The city was far from prepared to receive them. Hurried camps were set up on the Common, the large tree filled park that bestrides the London road to the north of the ancient walls. The camps were primitive with few facilities and it was raining. On August 8th three ladies out for a walk, Mrs Harrison, Mrs Rowland and Miss Edith Lancaster, observed soldiers in the most uncomfortable state, some using the backs of others as desks in the rain trying to scribble farewell letters home.

Not far off stood the Avenue Hall, a spacious building of the local Congregational Church. The ladies hurried there and asked whether some shelter, provisions and comfort could be accorded the men. Before the following Sunday morning service the church deacons were consulted, the idea warmly approved, arrangements made and the hall thrown open to the men the same afternoon. To their great surprise, the soldiers, fatigued from long route marches, found writing tables, stationary, books and magazines and a warm welcome from a team of willing workers. The hall continued open day after day.

The men were often arriving in the port from considerable distances and sometimes had had little food for hours; once this was realised one or two lady helpers began bringing provisions and soon meals were provided regularly. The work rapidly developed in relation to need; stationery, food, tobacco, cigarettes and stamps were supplied and one day no less that 3500 letters were written, stamped and posted. Later, the Post Office took on the job selling stamps to the men. Quickly other comforts appeared, socks, shirts, gloves, mittens, vests, and boracic ointment.

The incoming troops were either camping under rough conditions or billeted in bare, empty houses taken over for the purpose. Conditions were bleak and although the national mood was enthusiastic for war, driving men into the recruiting stations, the real taste of soldiering was one of disorientation, loss of family, departure from wife and maybe small children or from distressed and loving parents. Not yet having had

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1 The details of the work done at Avenue Hall come from an undated, privately published, illustrated pamphlet costing 2/6 published soon after the end of hostilities. It was entitled ‘A Record of Five Years Work. August 1914–August 1919. Avenue Hall for Soldiers and Sailors. Southampton. This comprises the report given by Rev H.T. Spencer. Hon Secretary, on the last meeting, Jan 22nd 1920. Photos by Miss Analise Robinson. The two Miss Robinsons lived latterly in an untidy house just up the road from The Chine, both spinsters left behind by the war. They were noteworthy to me as a child since, as one of them aged, she could only be led walking backwards to or from Sunday matins by her forwards progressing sister.
time to build up that companionship that service engenders, many men and boys experienced loneliness and loss as well as excitement about adventures ahead.

Regiments of all description were passing through the town exceeding the capacity of the billeting arrangements so that, at the request of a commandant, hundreds of men were sometimes sleeping in the hall as the cold, wet nights of autumn were coming on. A striking feature of army life at the time was the lack of vehicular transportation. Movement on foot was the standard procedure. Whole regiments route marched to the port, coming down the Avenue across the Common. Workers at the hall attempted to feed the men as they passed. Someone would ride north to meet the commander asking for a halt at the hall where tea, coffee and some food would be handed out during a three or five minute pause. If a seven-minute pause was granted, horses and mules could be watered too. Sometimes, when a halt could not be called, maybe a ship was waiting, the food and drink was handed to the men on the march, cups being retrieved several hundred yards down the road or returned on passing trams. Someone wrote, “It was rather sporting to carry a tray full of filled cups high up for a mounted man and encounter a restive horse or an arm too eagerly stretched out. Many helpers found it made little difference to their state of moisture whether it rained or not.”

Occasionally, a whole division came through. Tables were placed along the road as far as Winn Road and portable boilers set up to deal with a whole battalion of infantry or a train of artillery at once. One day 3500 bags of bread butter and cakes were prepared over night. In July 1915 the work began at 4.30 am and ended at 1 or 2 pm. The impression made on the men was deep and echoes of gratitude kept coming back over the Channel. At Christmas, a great party was arranged for whoever was around at the time.

The letter writing was far from easy for some of the men and some helpers became willing amanuenses. On one hot day one lady was asked to write, “Dear Martha – I be a-sweating. I hope you b’ aint a-sweating same as I be. So, no more at present. Your loving husband Dick.” One man rushed in, gave an address on a piece of paper and was rushing out.”Hey –What do you want me to say?” asked the helper.”Dunno – do as you like!” and off he went. The lady rose to the occasion.

Opposite the Avenue Hall, another road turns off to the southwest. Large, even stately, mansions with handsome gardens, a bowling green, tennis courts and a cricket ground then lined Northlands Road. Near its southern end stood a house of four stories set in a large garden of great beauty spread over three layers. The upper part near the road was a rose garden. At a slightly lower elevation, behind a long Wisteria hedge, lay a long lawn leading up to the main house with a dove cote for white pigeons at one end, while, down a steep wooded incline, the grounds extended along a narrow valley bedding a stream, rockeries and a tennis court. This little valley resembled the so called ‘chines’ of the southern coast of the Isle of Wight, so the house was named ‘The Chine’ It was the property of my grandparents, Councillor, later Alderman Frederick Robson Brown JP, a business man in the city (E.Brown & Son Ltd) Maud his wife, their teenage daughter Georgina and Rodney her young brother. Alice Hurrell (née Bennet), Maud’s mother, a kind and gentle old lady, also lived with them.

At some stage early in the war, my grandparents decided to open the ground floor of
their house and especially the spacious garden room at the end of the long lawn as a place for rest and relaxation for soldiers staying in the city. I am unsure when this actually began but they must have been inspired by the example of Avenue Hall, to which they both subscribed. Many of the grateful letters they were to receive from soldiers were written in 1917 so the ‘home from home’ was certainly fully operating in 1916. The earliest photo of a Chine soldier is dated January 1915, five months after the start of the war.

The Soldiers’ Rest.

On arriving at The Chine, having heard of it doubtless from his pals, a soldier would have opened a pair of wooden gates and walked up a short drive towards the front door porch of the house. To his left, flights of stone steps led down beyond the line of wisteria trees to the lawn below with its pigeon cot and white doves. The lawn was surrounded at one end by a rhododendron shrubbery and tall oaks, and, at the other, it led up to the terrace with the large basement ‘garden room’ of the house beyond. This room was the main place in which the men found refreshments and company; while up the basement passage was a smaller room where there were tables for letter writing and magazines. Another room appears to have been a kitchen and a place for stores. There was a washroom and toilet. In the summer months, when it was fine, tables were put out on the terrace and lawn. Several photos show soldiers relaxing there, chatting or reading. Beyond the dovecot was a putting green where the men could practice their golf. Some photos show the men sitting in groups up the tall flights of steps and in other parts of the garden. I suspect individuals were sometimes invited to the main part of the house, perhaps for the private supportive conversations that seem to have been a speciality of Maud Brown and evidently also her daughter, both of whom also helped with letter writing. The men evidently told their wives of help received in this way and there are several letters from wives expressing thanks for the help given their husbands at The Chine.

As at the Avenue Hall, The Chine appears to have been open to the men everyday. A camera and photographer were present and the men had their photos taken and printed as postcards to send home. A large collection of these survives as a key part of this archive. The workload must have been considerable and soon many people, always described in our documents as ladies or gentlemen, participated as the “Chine helpers”. The majority appears to have been women, wives of local gentlemen, who saw an opportunity to assist the men of the nation who, as became increasingly clear, were being called upon to make previously unimaginable sacrifices.

The prime initiator of these endeavours was my grandmother Maud Mary Brown, then in her prime and developing marked skills in inspiring others to join her in charitable projects, providing the basics of location, organisation and the tactful but quite forceful leadership of which her dominant character was fully capable. Married to a prominent Southampton citizen, the owner of the leading food emporium in the city centre, a councillor soon to be made Alderman and the son of a well known influential father once the Sheriff of the city, Maud was well placed to do the tasks she set herself, not only in relation to the soldiers during the war but afterwards, as we shall see, supporting major efforts in medical charity among poor children. It is important for me, her grandson, to explore these very positive characteristics of my grandmother and the contributions she made to the life of the time when charitable work depended very much on individual initiative and will.

Maud Mary Hurrell had been a country girl from Southminster, Essex. Her father and two uncles came from a farrier family but specialised in the skills of what was
becoming veterinary surgery. William Asbey Hurrell was one of the first students at the RVC London. Maud’s father died young when she was still a little girl and her mother, Alice née Bennet, moved in with Uncle Willie as his housekeeper. There is nothing to suggest that there was more to their relationship than this as ‘Uncle Willie’ seems to have been a scholarly bachelor, a devoted Christian who travelled the country not only as an esteemed vet but also to visit and study church architecture. He was a kindly man doting on his little niece who very much returned his affection. Yet, from all accounts, the little girl was very much spoilt by his indulgence and her mother's gentle kindness. This seems to have enhanced a wilful and demanding spirit that, having a shaky un-fathered psychological base, was to become increasingly temperamental when disturbed by attempts at discipline or by frustration. In later life, this became a family problem.

At Herons gate School, Maud became close friends with the daughter of a moneyed London socialite and was to spend much time in town being somewhat fêted in a social circle. When that lady died, or withdrew her friendship – it is not clear which – Maud had increasingly to find her own way. She met Frederick Robson Brown in the Channel Islands, where she was on holiday and he was attending a business conference, perhaps a Rotary event. They fell in love and on marriage she moved into his influential family circle in Southampton. The beauty of home they eventually created, The Chine, with its spacious layered garden and the graceful well-furnished rooms in the house, reflected the considerable taste she had acquired. Willing to share her good fortune with others, she made many friends and she showed a generous disposition to all. When Fred Brown stood as an independent in a city ward she went door to door contributing greatly to his election to the council.

Georgina, Maud’s daughter, was a teenager when war broke out. Quickly she found a place in her mother’s team. Warm hearted, attractive and good looking, with an open friendly manner she was a good listener, empathising easily with others and soon became a favourite among the men. She seems to have been successful in helping young soldiers with the wartime emotional distress that was often so easily ignored in those times. Letters often express in formal tones the affection soldiers had for this young girl. ‘Georgie’ had ability; she soon became a leading figure in the team, the secretary, initiating meetings, keeping records in her bold round hand. She helped her mother unstintingly in many ways.

Surviving documents show the manner in which Maud’s team of ladies organised themselves. Most of these papers are written in my mother’s bold round hand, which changed hardly at all in her lifetime. Handling these papers and other ephemera of the period seems to bring me literally into touch with those times and is a moving experience; as if the person concerned was sitting beside me. The papers show that rather than working on an ad hoc basis, Maud had decided that the Soldier’s Rest needed to be run by rules understood by all. So on September 13th (1915?) at 3 pm the Ladies’ Committee held a meeting. Maud took the chair initially but handed it over to the local vicar of St Mark’s Church down the road, a Mr Bates. This seems a conventional politesse, because the church does not seem to have had any direct role

in management, apart it seems from recruiting helpers. On a further nod to the church, The Chine rooms were known as St Mark’s Soldiers’ Rest. The meeting agreed rules for lady and gentlemen helpers to follow, with each one proposed, seconded and duly passed. An odd feature of the records is that while there is an extensive list of lady helpers there is not one of gentlemen, bar the treasurer, Mr Brookman. Maybe he was in charge of the gentlemen of whom there must have been several as their duties showed.

A final typewritten copy of the rules reads as follows.

**Duties of Lady helpers.**

1/ Hours of Duty:  
(Sat. and Sun. only) 12.45-2.30  
3.45-6.0  
5.0-10.0

NB Ladies should be present five minutes beforehand, so as to be able to commence duty punctually.

2/ Only Lady helpers on Duty according to the Rota (or their substitutes) to serve at the Buffet (Gentlemen Helpers are responsible for the return of used china etc in the other rooms).

3/ Ladies to give at least 2 day’s notice of their inability to attend at any time, when the Ladies’ organizer will arrange for substitutes. In a special emergency, Lady Helpers should inform the Ladies organizer as early as possible.

4/ The Ladies’ Organizer will arrange for one of the Lady helpers to be in charge each evening. The Lady in Charge to be responsible for:

1. Marking attendance of Lady helpers.
2. Collecting the 3d subscriptions.
3. Appointing one Lady helper to be is sole charge of cigarettes and stamps.
4. Arranging the work of other Helpers.
5. Reporting Breakages to the ladies’ Organizer. It is expected that Breakages will be replaced or paid for by the Lady Helper concerned.

5/ It is hoped that Lady Helpers will subscribe 3d each week to meet the increases in prices and so enable the carrying on of the ‘One Penny Canteen’

Ladies Organizer Mrs F. Brown. Deputy L. Organizer Mrs Hybart. Secretary Miss G. Brown.

There is then a reference ‘(See Rule 10)”but no further rules have been found in the typed documents. A pencil note asks “Where is rule 10?” There is a separate piece of paper hand written in another, unknown hand marked COPY. It is headed General Rules and begins surprisingly with number 7 which is a repeat of rule 4 above. Rule 8 reads “That the sub-committee arrange for monthly ‘notes’ of helpers, both of ladies and gentlemen, to be pasted up on a special board, and their names entered in separate attendance books, together with the time of duty. Then we find 9/ that all vacancies in the present notes of helpers shall be filled by members of the congregation of St Mark’s and all communications from them to the Committee shall be addressed to the President and given to the Secretary. And finally 10. That the Lady Helpers elect from their number a Ladies’ Organiser, who shall be responsible for the management of the Refreshment buffet and for making out the monthly rota of Lady Helpers. To assist her the Lady Helpers shall also elect a Deputy Ladies Organiser, and a Secretary; the
latter to keep the minutes of their meetings which shall be held quarterly before the meeting of the General Committee or when summoned by the Ladies' Organiser. So, all becomes clear.

The Gentlemen Helpers also had a list of Rules.

Duties of Gentlemen Helpers.

1/ Hours of Duty. Weekdays. Except Saturday. 6-8 pm 8-10 pm
   Saturdays 4-6 pm 8-10pm
   Sundays 4-6 pm 7-10pm.

2/ At the commencement of each afternoon or evening, be responsible for the Recreation and Quiet Rooms being heated, lighted and ventilated. Games available in the Recreation broom and Writing paper in the Quiet room; also prepare for use the small tables and chairs in the Refreshment Room.

3. Return to the shelf provided, all used china from the recreation and Quiet rooms, and regulate the heat.

4/ Explain to the Guests when necessary that the recreation Room is the place for Music, Concerts and Games; and the Quiet room for Writing and Reading, and that there are pegs provided for coats. In the events of the Quiet Room being full, the small tables in the Refreshment Room may be used for Writing but not for Games.

5/ At 9.30 pm extinguish the heating apparatus, put away the games, tidy tables and chairs, so that the floor can be properly swept next morning, close the windows and doors, and put out all lights. This applies to both Recreation and Quiet rooms and to the small tables in the Refreshment room.

6/ It is hoped that all Gentlemen Helpers will contribute 3d.a week to meet the increase in prices and so enable the ‘1d Canteen’ to continue.

The refreshment room, as we have seen, was carefully managed along with the games and rest rooms and my mother as secretary retained the several cashbooks and accounts from these operations. Money matters were checked and audited by Mr Brookman, ‘Brookie’, a family friend, possibly a former employee at E. Brown and Son. He was known as ‘Tresh’ for treasurer and the account sheets are all duly checked and signed by him at the bottom. He was clearly both careful and meticulous. ‘Treshe’ remained a close family friend into my childhood, and I remember him well. The accounts are worth looking giving detailed information about how the Soldier’s Rest was managed; the commodities provided the men and their costs as well as the balance sheets of the project over several months, particularly 1917-8 (See Appendix).

The Soldiers Rest was open to all troops and it seems that the existent visitors book may not cover all parties that came to The Chine. Unlike the Avenue Hall that

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3 That is a canteen where something can be bought for one penny, i.e. very cheap.
4 See’A Tale of Two Houses”.

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specialised in troops passing through the town The Chine seems to have received most usually those who were billeted here for some time. In particular, we find the signatures of numerous signallers of the Royal Garrison Artillery (RGA). It seems there was a signalling school in the town training the men prior to departure for France. Signallers were particularly important for the artillery in the days without wireless. They often crept up in front of the trenches towing their telephone lines behind them and lay out spotting for targets for the guns and noting the origin of enemy fire. This was a dangerous job as many accounts have told. After training, signallers appear to have been billeted in austere ‘forts’ near Fareham prior to crossing to France.

When the Americans began arriving, they too found their way to The Chine although they left few signatures. One fascinating piece of card provides the berth number and ship's name whereby the man concerned reached Britain. It must have been his berth allocation card. His name and address are scribbled upon it as he presumably hurriedly left it as his calling card at The Chine.

A particularly noticeable feature of these signatures is that they are almost all of ‘the other ranks’, no officers and few NCOs. Officers would have of course have had their messes elsewhere in the city, perhaps in hotels. The men would have been without comfort had not ladies such as Maud and her helpers not strode on stage to help. However commanding Officers were well aware of what was happening and there are several letters of recognition from a commandant to Maud (see further below).

Letters from Soldiers.
Apart from the Avenue hall pamphlet, the account books, details of rules and numerous portrait and group photographs, the little archive contains a bundle of mostly hand written letters almost all of them expressing gratitude for the kindness experienced at The Chine. Clearly, whatever went on there meant a very great deal to the men. Often referred to as ‘a home from home’ The Chine clearly provided the men with a homely respite from billets, military training and the oncoming transfer to the front, which, after all, was a mere stretch of water away. These are more than mere thank you letters written to a rather upper class grand-dame who ‘did them good’ – as an American recommendation was to say. There was heartfelt feeling here, gratitude for comradeship and caring feminine warmth that is often not only expressed by one man but also sent by several signing the letter together. The language, although markedly polite and respectful in the manner of the time, has a personal edge, clearly speaking to a familiar and caring person. Some of the letters have been filleted (probably by Georgina); only the expressions of gratitude remain as if the rest of the letter had been too personal or involving confidences that had best be removed. Others remain lengthy and full of description. Most are addressed to Mrs Brown but several quite intimate ones are for Miss Brown. Fred comes in for thanks too now and again. Some of the most moving come from wives whose husbands had either been killed or who were far away at the front. The husbands had told them of The Chine and they wrote to say thank you for the treatment shown to their men there.

On Active Service.
Letters from men on active service, especially perhaps from France were all subject to careful censorship. Several of the surviving envelopes are stamped ‘Passed by Censor’ and some are official, printed envelopes subject to censoring at the base rather than regimentally at the front. These Green printed envelopes had several notes for guidance on the front cover. “Correspondence in this envelope need not be censored Regimentally. The contents are liable to examination at the Base. The following certificate must be signed by the writer: - I certify on my honour that the contents of this envelope refer to nothing but private and family matters – Signature, name only -- “And also,”(Several letters may be forwarded in this Cover, but these must be all from the same writer. The cover should be addressed in such case to the Base censor)."

Of course, all this censoring meant that few references to the actual struggle at the front are given in the letters. A few hints sidle through and the longest letter is actually a wonderful description of Christmas in the trenches and the kindness of a junior platoon commander. This intense censorship contributed to the strange failure of people at home to understand the extraordinary privations and horrors to which the men were subjected at the front. Only after the war had progressed for many months did any realisation of the terrors of trench warfare penetrate the public conscience. There are of course many accounts from officers of these events and they form a background to what our correspondents with The Chine were going through.5 It appears from these letters that the signallers of he RGA were billeted at the forts in the hills behind Portsmouth before being drafted to France and several letters come from there. They all seem to have felt much deprived after the joys of The Chine.

Gunner W A. E Knight, in straightened circumstances at Fort Fareham awaiting a draft to France, writes on Sunday November 4th 1917. He is sorely missing the puddings he enjoyed at The Chine and regrets that “Pudding cannot be sent by post” in the parcels he has received. He compares the various canteens at the forts such as Wallington with Fareham coming off worst. He signs off ”The Pudding Boy“, so evidently his love of such a dish was well known.

Herbert P Hains appears from a surviving Chine photograph to have been a pleasant easy-going fellow. The topics he covers reflect the family atmosphere the Browns created around the men when they were at The Chine and the very personal interest they took in them. With some imaginative spelling and punctuation, he wrote his first letter to The Chine from Fort Elson near Gosport on Sept 16th 1917 when it seems a part of a draft about to go to France. He was replying to a letter from Mrs Brown and thanking her for an invitation and the “pleasures we have had at your beautiful garden --- I only think that my own home could give me greater pleasure therefore --- my gratitude and thanks are more than words can express. --- Only this morning on returning from church some of the boys were saying how they would miss their Sunday tea (i.e. at The Chine). With regards the shooting test we had quite a nice time ---Sgt Hailes choosing the best range we did well, all the boys were so sorry when their 15 rounds were over as it was not till then that they began to like rifle firing, we all wished there were another 15 rounds to fire. Sgt Hailes displayed many kindnesses towards me during his short stay here. It was so good of him getting my brother off duty on Tuesday to see to my sister, as I know how upset she was. So glad to know she came back to The Chine after we left, as I know it would cheer her up. Well and

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my dear little friend Rodney is terribly busy. I can imagine him doing his home lessons and not hidden away down the rear garden not to go to bed – ah well- I shall often think of the night we went after nuts tell him and hope the nut on his bicycle is all right now. I shall be looking forward to his letter tomorrow. Have to stay in the fort for today we have a few tomatoes so I shall make a few sandwiches and as we have to have all meals outside fine weather we shall have to try and imagine we are on your beautiful lawn but I am afraid these big basins we use here will end our imagination. - -- Expect to leave on Tuesday - will write when settled. It will be best not to write until you here from me again.”

Hains next wrote to the Browns on Christmas day 1917 from the trenches. Again made colourful by numerous spelling eccentricities, his long account of Christmas lunch in a dug out, pencilled in a light clear hand, makes an intriguing read.

France. Christmas Day. 25/12/17.

Dear Mr and Mrs Brown

Well here we are, Christmas morn which as come with a fine clear and bright sunny morn making us all feel quite light and happy apart from all our separations which is against our grain on Xmas time. Well to begin with, I must thank you so much for this most delightful parcel, which I have just opened. It is really kind of you all, and so thoughtful, candels and soap which are so difficult to get out here, we get plenty of army issue soadr and now about this fairy cake it is really looking to nice to eat, with its fluffy edges, but we shall have some for tea.

I am pleased to say there are every prospects of a good day having begun with an excellent breakfast of Cold boiled pork, bread butter, tea and plenty of it about 3/4 lbs of pork each, which was really lovely.

Dec 26th/12/17.

Well here I am again we are living in a dugout with two Sgt, one which makes me quite a good father and is awfully deasent well he compelled me to give up writing in his company yesterday morning as they wanted all to chat and have a sing song so he took my pad away. I have only just by luck found it again so I shall carry on with the proceedings of our dinner that had been well arranged by out section officer a Mr Paget son of Bishop Paget of Preven and a relative of the old Bishop Paget of Oxford. Well he is one of the funniest chaps one could ever meet, and as I have not told you in open letter before, but I have left the Bty 6 and am some miles forward very near the line there are only about 20 of us up here and have a fine time Mr Paget being our officer and visits us every day calls us his fighting section and considers everything should come forward to us anything we want he gets it for us and looks after us well even to sending us loads of fire wood up well of course the other officers don’t quite like this so poor old chap he does get into some miserable scraps with one and the other but still he carries on quite unconcerned. So for dinner he got us a big rib of beef about 18-20lbs a piece of shoulder of pork about 10lbs and gets both roasted with apple sauce, cabbage, mashed potatoes, HP sauce, and served up at 12.30 sharp. He arranged it in a dugout big enough for all to have dinner together at 12.15 came 3 gallons of Ale for the men and didn’t they cheer.

Well the Sgt taped the first jar and he, Mr Paget, drank the first cupful with a short address, in which he said he was tired of the war, he had been in the infantry 18

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6 Battery
months out here and wounded and came out again with a commission7 when he joined us 2 months ago, but still he said he had read of the latest trouble in England about Mr Lloyd George and he thinks he is right not to give in to Germany’s offer of peace, which was cheered and seconded by a Bm8 who said that he had been out here three years and had a family of five children and he felt sure that although we chaps grumble and grunt out here, about peace weather at Germany’s offer or not if votes were given to the tommys in France weather please at Germany’s proposals or at ours the tommys would vote to carry on until he is beaten to the ground and the three years of hard fighting and the average of our dead in the field brought to a great Victorious Peace. Well that put the hat on it cheers and ‘here here’ like a lot of jubilations, a Sgt finished the toast with the best of luck to all out dear friends and families at home trusting the new year to bring our Victorious Peace, and by next Xmas that all may be home again. I tell you it brought many tears to several of the married men, but were soon forgotten by a good heaped dinner two servings and then hot pudding and sauce until we all felt to full to eat any more was impossible.

Of course, the Ale was gong rather low the men getting rather lively so Mr Paget gave a song which continued all the afternoon with deserts of nuts, dates, apples, cigars and chocolates sent by Bishop Paget of Priven.

My friend and I being TT9 left the company to attend to our duty on the telephone in our own dugout a few yards away.

Then 4.15 tea you would have laughed we couldn’t eat our plum pudding from dinner. And now tea, well it was served a thick slice of bread about to butter 1/2 cheese; we all sighed for it could not be eaten. I felt if a pin was stuck into me I should go pop BANG with that in comes the 2nd Sgt and the officer quite gay for a cup of tea. We had a good fire and the tea nice and hot then I brought out my cake you sent me and offered it all round. We were still drinking tea and just managed half the cake so you see how hungry we all were. It was realy delicious, and my friends told me I was to convey to the sender of the cake their Complements and wishes of peace and prosperity n the New Year.

Well tea over and all feeling a little happy we began whist, patience and crib, but ended in all the songs we knew from Home Sweet Home to Rag time Cowboy Jo. Then they began to miss the accompaniment so we riged up a sort of gramophone with the telephone getting the chap at the exchange to take interest and listen in at the receiver, he got quite excited and returned the compliment with a song from his end we keeping the preste swich down heard it all right and quite filled the space for a gramophone that continued for some three hours with selections of whistling and songs through the comb and piece of paper.

Then came the tales that made you shudder, some made you weak with laughter, one poor chap told us of how after the war he is going to be married and instead of building a house he is going up to some bank and dig a few dugouts, one for the wife, one for himself, one for the children, one for the pigs, one for the fowls, all in a row and get a few boxes to sit on, an old petrol tin with the side out as a washing bowl and an old bucket with a few holes in for the fire place, two long poles and two short ones nailed together four legs and some netting wire over it for their beds. Now what do you think of that for a happy home. My poor sides were sore with laughter the way it

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7 i.e. commission
8 i.e. Bombadier
9 Teetotallers – i.e. not taking alochol.
was all explained and arranged. Oh and a little camouflage to conceal how any time he wanted to get out without being noticed by his wife (oh ah oh) Well 9.30 came suppertime cold pork roast then bread and butter and some cocoa et Lait \( ^{10} \) very delicious with a peppermint drop afterwards or as some of our boys call them (BULLS-EYES).

Well I think I must change the subject now and turn to your letter of 15/12/17 which as usual I was very pleased to receive the other contents being so pleasing. I realy must thank you for the real perfect photo of dear old Chine it is a beautiful photo I have looked at it so many times since I have had it and thought how many times I have enjoyed myself on that very lawn. I also notice the new doors which I must say look exceedingly smart, Ah but how quiet it all looks how beautiful and peaceful after all these ruins over here, though the trees are all bare it is a beautiful photo and will go nicely with the other three I have. Please thank the Rev H R Bates for his very kind wishes for Christmas and the New Year also return the compliments with the greatest of prosperity for the Church and Parish in the New Year.

I am so glad to hear you are having the old boys up for Christmas and trust you had an excellent time and favourable weather Out here it rained Xmas eve, the sun shone all Xmas morn, the afternoon sleet, the evening 4 ins snow and thick blizzard. Well I expect you will be surprised to here that if all goes well I hope to be in England for 14 days in about 6 or 8 weeks time perhaps before if a bit of luck comes this week and continues for a while. It will be delightful to be able to see you all again.

I hope you are quite well as it leaves me at present after a nasty cold in the head. Well I think I have told you all now for present. I do hope you will not be boar with this lot but having a few green envelopes, I thought you would be pleased with our Christmas History.

Well thank Miss Brown so much for her kind letters. I will write in a day or so again. I hope Rodney had a good Xmas and a full stocking. Did he hang it up this year? Well I really must now come to a close to catch the mail so with my best wishes and many thanks to all I must conclude

Yours very sincerely Herbert P Haines

A very different perspective comes from a group of four letters written between 1917 and 1928 by a skilled pianist and accompanist who will have played at many of the impromptu concerts arranged for the men at The Chine and Avenue Hall and who probably accompanied my mother singing. His first letter comes from Fort Fareham after leaving The Chine and a few days before embarkation for France.

**Gunner C.G Weller 160407** writes: Dear Mrs Brown, As there is only limited writing accommodation here and no one rushing about looking after our comfort as at The Chine, I am writing this little letter on the wall, so you must kindly excuse deficiencies. – We have been moved here at very short notice from Fort Elson, but I think we are here for a few days, at any rate! - I am so sorry to say it will be impossible for us to come to you this weekend as no passes whatever are being granted from here. ……Au revoir was so much easier to me than Goodbye last Tuesday – I am afraid I made a rotten little speech, but believe me, Mrs Brown, since you and yours have made me so very welcome at The Chine, and have done so much for me, it has been as nearly at Home to me as any place except my own could possibly be. - Army life now is a dreadful hardship to me, and I don’t mind admitting

\(^{10}\) i.e. milk- from the French – ‘au lait’.
it. – It does not do for me to think too much of The Chine, for I get so depressed that I
don’t feel up to any duties whatever. Our next meeting must be postponed until after
this beastly business is disposed of, and I need hardly say I look forward to seeing you
and Southampton again only second to being reunited to my own little family. – We
have been much on the go since Tuesday. We have “smelt powder” in the sense that
we fired 15 rounds each on Wednesday and the Sergeant may have reported to you
that the results were very good. – Yesterday and today have been nothing but
marching to and fro for medical inspection, change or rather reduction of kit, pay
books (no money for some time I fear), identification discs, haversacks, water bottles,
bandoliers etc. The march with equipment this afternoon from Fort Elson to Fort
Fareham was nearly the last straw to break your young camel’s back! Oh dear, I wish
I were at The Chine now, but it can’t be helped. – We are forbidden to disclose any
knowledge we may have, or think we may have, of future movements, so you must
pardon my omission on this score. ---I shall never forget your kindness, and know
your good wishes go with me.
Yours very sincerely and gratefully Cyril Weller.
11/10/1917.

Cyril Weller’s next letter is from France. On Tuesday 30th October.

My dear Mrs Brown (and family), I must apologise for not writing you before but I
find myself in such a veritable Inferno that letter writing seems impossible. I never
conceived how really terrible War really is until my arrival here – I have been very
near to death, and my steel helmet has justified itself more than once. I am not doing
any signalling but am helping serve my gun to the best of my uninstructed ability.
Carrying heavy shells through a lake of mud with dozens of guns blazing away
around you is a very different life from the dear old Chine, which we all miss more
than we can possibly express to you dear good friends. I have been parted from friend
Nelvey (spelling?) whose battery number is 24 (my address is 160457, Siege Battery
284, BEF, France)- I should not think there is a Piano for miles, so even Harry
Lauder’s 11 Pianist (excuse my conceit) must content himself with thinking music
instead of playing it. Heigh ho, please God I shall get back to it some day. Well, dear
friends, I must close sending you all my best wishes, and once more most sincere
thanks for all you have been to me. ---- Should be glad to hear from you anytime. ---
Believe me yours gratefully and sincerely, Cyril Weller.

On November 15th 1917, Gunner Weller was in a more cheerful mood. Maybe this is
because he is writing to Georgie in a very friendly way recalling common cultural
interests. Georgie played the piano and had specialised in recitation gaining a bronze
medal for elocution. Clearly, they had had lots of chats together for he addresses her
as “My dear Miss Georgie” and thanks her for her letter, which must have been very
chatty. “How do you find time to write such splendid letters? Keep it up for goodness
sake! I have been truly touched by your and your dear mother’s solicitude for my
welfare and am pleased to say I am beginning to settle down to the life, the mud, the
work and other circumstances. Granny’s soap has had to be used though I had hoped
to retain it as a keepsake; still it is dong good work.” He jokes about the new troops
coming to The Chine and as for the Americans -“well, didn’t I tell you they were a
grubby unshaven lot?” He congratulates her on her Bronze medal and tells her. “Still,

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11 The famous Scots singer and music hall entertainer of the period.
just go on being your charming self, and follow your own bright principle of “Carry on”! He regrets he has not been able to help her with her music and tells her of the artistes he has “played for” (i.e. accompanied); – Miss Violet Oppenshaw, Mr Charles Tree, Mr Walter Hyde. “Selwyn Driver”, the man at the concert she has mentioned, “is a personal friend and I have often nearly died of laughing at his sketches. Did he do that ‘Hush not a sound’ (Bang Bang!)?” He regrets that a collective letter of thanks to Maud and all at The Chine was not well written ‘due to circumstances’. He ends” Yes, we can procure nothing here and if you can send me some writing material I shall be very glad to have it. Thanks for the offer.” As a PS he adds –”A kiss for Granny – I know she will not be offended”

We do not know whether Weller corresponded further with The Chine during the war. There are no further letters in the extant collection until 1928, ten years after the end of the war, when he is back into his musical career and writing on headed notepaper. The heading is ‘The Weller-Langton Orchestras and Concert Direction’ with his name to the right addressed at 1 Ravensbrourne Road, Bromley Kent and his partner’s name to the left; Arthur Langton, MBE of Chiswick, (violin). Down the left of the page is a column entitled ‘Orchestras, Dance Bands and Artistes of every description’ for concerts, banquets, dances and cabarets at ‘Society and Diplomatic Receptions’ etc. He seems therefore to have gone into the business of supplying musical entertainment on quite a big scale. There are two letters of the same date, 11th November 1928 (the Armistice Day of red poppy fame). The first to Mr Brown suggests that the enclosed letter might be placed in the local newspaper if it so pleased. He says “Things go fairly well with me – I am not particularly rich or down right poor but just carrying on quite comfortably with the same happy family – just the wife and little daughter who was a baby of two years when I was quartered in Southampton.” The enclosed letter intended for the ‘Echo’ but addressed to ‘Mr Brown, Mrs Brown and family’ reads as follows: “The 10 years anniversary has inevitably called up memories of ‘SOUTHAMPTON’ to my mind and I would like to feel that at least one of your ‘khaki Protégés’ sends again his sincere thanks to you and to other good friends in Southampton for the great and very successful efforts you made in those years for the comfort of Tommies who trained there. What fine cheery times we had in the garden of The Chine? What excellent little concerts we had at the same happy rendezvous. Also at the Church Hall at the corner of the Common! Also at the other hall down the road beyond the ‘Stag Gates’? Many of the boys who enjoyed your hospitality and that of other Southampton residents are now no more: some returned to ‘Civil’ life crippled or blinded, some found themselves ‘out of a job’ and with another Campaign to fight, some returned safe and sound and have successfully picked up the threads of commercial or professional life; but I think all, were they able to do so, would like to pay a tribute of grateful and appreciative remembrance to the kindness displayed to them by you and your fellow townsman during their passing sojourn in Southampton. Never was individual and collective hospitality and encouragement better offered or more appreciated.”

One of the worst horrors of the Great War was the use of gas on the battlefield. 15029 Gunner Fred Newton (spelling uncertain in script) of 160 Signals Battery suffered this fate and, soon after the war, wrote about it to Mr and Mrs Brown from the SS Cormorant in the port of Antwerp (envelope dated 22 Sep 1919).

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12 We do not know whether this was ever sent to the Echo or otherwise publicised
“This is a very belated letter from one of the boys who once enjoyed the hospitality of The Chine in the summer of 1917. I was included in the draft who left Southampton in the middle of September and wrote to you once. Sometime, later, about November I believe, I received a very nice letter, which Miss Georgina wrote in return mentioning amongst other things that two boys, one whom I remember was Hildredth, was gassed. --- I met many of the old S.H.S.D boys in the subsequent few months, one or to of whom you may remember, Malory for one, Manuel, Costain and Oh! Too many to go through.

Manuel, who you may remember, was an exceptionally tall boy who played cricket for A company, seemed to follow me around. I met him first in St Omar I believe, later I came across him several times on the Somme last year, but I was amazed when, after being gassed myself last August, going to hospital in Glasgow and eventually to Crownhill (spelling?) convalescent Camp, Manuel as camp orderly took my name and particulars in the usual way on entering the Camp.

While in France, my battery 160 Signals, was the one to which the former Sgt Major Oakes of ‘Q’ and latterly ‘D’ company, though reduced to Sergeant, was sent. In the battery, he had nothing to do with signals. Eventually he was wounded in the thigh in a particularly fierce ‘strafe’ of Fritz one night in the period following the retreat in March 1917. That was outside a little village named Bresk, lying just off the Albert-Amiens road. What terrible days some of those names recall.

Another of the old “Chine” adherents, Albert Cork, was also gassed the same night as I, though I think that he suffered a far worse dose than I, poor lad. Through being gassed, more than anything, I was demobbed in February this year, returned to business, but found that my chest would not stand city air (my home is in Manchester) and on doctor’s advice I went to sea. Now I am assistant steward on a ship making a fortnightly trip between Manchester and Antwerp and I find that the sea air has improved my health, as I believe nothing else could. Of course, I am not feeling my old self but that will come in time I suppose.

On reviewing my stay on the other side, (and though it was not very long we had a rather rough time) I am thankful that I got off so lightly. An elder brother, whom I met at??? (spelling?) near Ypres in November 1917 and who had been in France since November 1914 with Kitchener’s army, went through with just one trivial wound and a younger brother, in the ‘Young Soldiers’, did not land out until it was over. All three of us (there are no more) made home quite safely. Now that it is all over and by many people almost forgotten, it may seem unusual for me to write to you now. The last time I was home, while rooting through some old letters, I came across one which you sent to mother accompanying a photograph of the draft I was in. I had not seen it before and that was what prompted me to write, though it has been my intention times uncountable.

I have often wondered what the average Tommy’s life would have been without the kindness which was to be met with at such places as ‘The Chine’ but more particularly there, a far as RGA Signals were concerned anyway. Thinking over old

13 Clearly there is an untold story here.
times with one of my comrades of those days whom I dropped across in Manchester recently, the question came; “Do you remember ‘The Chine'? They were good to us there.” I do and for the sake of those memories please accept the very best wishes and thanks of yours very sincerely
Fred Newton. (33 Zachariah St. Howard St.?? Manchester)"

There was a policy of recruiting troops from specific towns so that they all served together. While this certainly created comradely units of ‘Pals’ the results could be disastrous when the toll of war eliminated virtually complete regiments at a go leaving a whole town profoundly grief-stricken at the loss of most of its men. The men always found strength in the presence of comrades and, in some letters; the importance of having a friend serving in the same unit is mentioned. This is especially true of Gunners Roper and Tyrer, old friends from the same town, both married and with families. In his several letters, Roper always mentions his friend Tyrer so that the letter is virtually a joint one. The first of four letters from Gunner Roper is to Georgie. It is a mere end-script as the main part of it has been removed – presumably being in some way confidential. He has just left for France,” We all felt leaving dear Mrs and Mr Brown and yourself yesterday and shall never forget all your great real kindness to us all while in Southampton. The sweet sound of the click of "The Chine‘ gate is still ringing in our ears.”

On February 17th 1918, he is ashamed at not replying sooner to Maud for "your most beautiful helpful letter to Gnr Tyrer and myself at Christmas time. It is truly kind of you to take this continued interest in we of the RGA and we should indeed feel really hurt if you even thought of placing some other boys in front of us. ---We in our dug-out often and often ask, ‘How would you like to have been at The Chine today?’ Yes Mrs Brown, they were happy days, truly the thoughts of them must make you and yours most happy.” His wife is a ‘brick’ and she and son are doing well at home in Westcliff while; “We two old friends are both very well and going on I can say A1, and really appreciate much being together, for we share (each) other’s joys and sorrows. It makes such a difference being with those one knows. --- We are both very fit and as happy as position allows --- This is Sunday, it is hard for us to keep going with the days and our mind will go back to your beautiful garden on Sunday evenings, they were perfect and I do hope it may be our good fortune to once again be with our beloved ones to spend an hour or so with you there.”

On 11th 1918 with the war at last on the wane, Roper again tells Maud she is not forgotten and how they remember happy hours spent at “our Chine.” He is again quite possessive and asks her not to forget that the boys of his draft were “your first love”! He continues, “We have been out just on a year and with every confidence hope to be home in a week or so for leave. Both Gnr Tyrer and myself have kept wonderfully well, our worst trouble seems too be home sickness, and somehow or other time does not seem to heal that, but much has been to our favour and its been a great joy to have kept together. We are all delighted at the news and do feel now we may claim to have the end in sight. --- We know how thankful you feel at this great turn of the tide, for the lads will we feel sure soon start marching not down from the Common but up to the Common.”

On February 26th 1919, Gunner Roper again writes to Maud from 115 Hamlet Ct Rd, Westcliff to say he cannot return to civic life without writing in thanks for all he
Mr Roper never forgot his experience of The Chine. During World War II, he wrote again twenty-four years after the war, at Christmas time 1942 from 14 Alexandra Rd, Southend, once more recalling his experiences at The Chine and wishing the Browns well. The note in the archive accompanies a small gift and reads “Mr, Mrs and Miss Brown were so very kind and beautiful to we lads training for 1914-18 war at Southampton that at this Holy season when our dear country is again facing so nobly its dangers, one at least would write to say Thank you. And as I know you have some good object particular to your own hearts may I send oh such a tiny gift towards it. --- B. Roper of R.G.A.

Indeed the memories of those who had been at The Chine were often long. A cutting from the Southern Daily Echo saved among the letters, is headed “He came back to say Thank you”. “The hours Mr Wright spent in the gracious house and beautiful garden became some of his most treasured memories--- Last week, 32 years later, Mr Wright, who lives at Wally Range, Manchester, was in Southampton again. He had tea at The Chine and, at last, told Mr and Mrs Brown what their war time hospitality meant to him.” He told the Echo” I am hopelessly lost to express properly what kindness given with such sincerity means to one who treasures kindly actions” That must have been in 1949 or 50, the cutting has no date on it.

Not everyone had a tough time. On June 13th 1918, Horace C Higham of 203 Siege Battery could consider himself a fortunate man. “The weather is simply beautiful and the (French) country is looking at its very best. We are not in the present activity but are still snugly ensconced in the village we arrived at three months ago. It is quite a pleasant spot with many trees. We live in the cellars of the ruined houses, which, although inclined to be damp, can be made comfortable enough. Our dwelling has attached to it a fine garden, which has been stocked, quite recently, with all kinds of fruit trees, raspberry canes, currants of all kinds, strawberries. There is the promise of a lot of fruit but the chances of any of being allowed to ripen are rather hopeless. We rather consider ourselves the occupiers, if not the owners of this delectable property, but of course, we cannot keep anybody out, especially as there are countless ways into the garden. We have given up all hopes, although I have my meals there from breakfast onwards. So you see we do not spend our whole time in mortal combat, as a matter of fact my sole lethal weapon is nothing more deadly than a telephone exchange. Not that I am thirsting to get at the foe, as you know, I am a man of peace and devoted rather to the liberal arts.”

Sydney Crevald writes to Georgie ”Dear Miss Brown” on 18th January 1918.” At present we are out on rest, some little distance behind the line and here have been various other batteries here as well and The Chine has been well represented – Bdrs Lea and Batterell and Gnrs Anderson, Booth and Bradbury are amongst those whom you would probably remember. We came out on rest the day before Xmas and had a fairly decent time for Xmas. We had a good Xmas dinner and officers arranged a concert for the evening so we enjoyed ourselves as much as possible. The weather has been rather bad since Xmas. We had about 3 weeks hard frost and snow, which broke
a few days ago. The day before yesterday, we had a terrible rainstorm. The wind and rain were terrific and last from the afternoon until next morning with the result that a lot of the low-lying country round about is flooded. Today the snow fell heavily all the morning and it has been bitterly cold, it changed to rain in the afternoon and is feeling slightly warmer now.”

He tells her that he tried to write before but was so cold "my fingers were too cold to hold the pen. I know it will please you to know of the ways in which your efforts are still effective out here. I have met signallers in many strange places under strange circumstances and wherever it is I can almost always count on one at least of them who has spent pleasant evenings at The Chine and that is sufficient introduction and soon we have forgotten our surroundings in exchanging recollections of those happy days”

One of the more unusual documents in the collection, returned duly signed from a 2nd Lieutenant J.E Nichols then serving in France (Field Censors pass on the envelope), is a declaration of acceptance of the duties of a godfather. The original document is in the form of a certificate written in Georgie’s hand. It reads:

“I, the undersigned, hereby declare that I have promised to become the sole Godfather of - Pompom - Jellicoe, and I agree to accept all responsibilities appertaining to such office. I bestow upon my Godson the name of -- Pompom – (it being my privilege to do so) and I approve of his other name Jellicoe, which has been given him by his God-mother (Mrs J Williams). Given under my hand this 29th day of October 1916. Sealed (fingerprint on wax) and signed: J. E. Nichols 2/Lt R.F.A.O.O.32nd Brigade R.F.A. 14
Witnessed Cv1 Vallentine. Lt. R.F.A. Adj. 32nd Brigade R.F.A.
GOD SAVE THE KING”

This document has a note attached; ”To Miss G.M.Brown. Please find attached completed and returned as requested. Signed J.E Nichols 2/Lt. R.F.A. 29.10.1916”

This interesting document is an early indication of Georgie Brown’s interest in cases of child poverty in Southampton. She was later to become a heartfelt supporter of Dr Banardo’s homes for orphaned children. The paper, seemingly prepared with a solicitor’s advice, can only refer to the ‘adoption’ by willing godparents of an abandoned Southampton or perhaps Portsmouth foundling for whom no parents had been traced. A Mrs J Williams had agreed to be the Godmother and had chosen the name of the then famous Admiral Jellicoe as suitable surname. Second Lieutenant Nichols (who might have been a distant relative of the Browns as this was a well known Southampton surname related to the Browns – see family tree) agrees to be the Godfather of the little boy and gives him the name Pompom – inserted in different script into Georgie’s document. The Adjutant of his unit is the witness (note the adjutant is a Lieutenant, quite a low rank for this military role, suggesting perhaps many casualties in his unit). Sadly, we have no further information regarding Pompom or his Godparents.

Sometimes a group of men clubbed together to send a collective letter of thanks and, in this case, Xmas wishes were signed by no less than nine soldiers and sent from Egypt (2nd November 1918. Tent 26.44 Coy. AOC. Base Depot. Alexandria.),” ---now

14 2nd Lieut = Second Lieutenant. Lt= Lieutenant. R.F.A = Royal Field Artillery.
that we are in a foreign land we think about you, we also miss the comforts you supplied – believe us to remain,“ Sgt Chamber, 2Cpl Methewson, Ptes Whitcott, Smith, Scott, Conway, Watson, A. Martin and Meredith, C, 010444.

Wives and families.
The men’s letters have often shown that they were sometimes visited by wives or relatives while awaiting draft – not only at one or other of the holding forts, but also at The Chine. Clearly, they were received with as much kindness as the men. In addition, however, there are letters from wives and family directly to Georgie and Maud Brown expressing their appreciation of the resources they were making available to husbands and fathers. The men had evidently reported on their visits to The Chine to those at home and it had been a relief to them. There are fifteen letters of this category in the archive.

Due to security controls, censoring, military discipline and natural self restraint born from comradeship in combat, the men’s letters rarely revealed how they actually felt personally about the war in any depth, although the deprivation, depression and loneliness are often mentioned obliquely. The mothers and wives left at home were under fewer constraints yet a comparable quiet resilience and courage comes through. Their vocabulary is less cautious however and strong feelings of loss, attachment and love are movingly apparent making these letters the most touching to read in the archive.

Two of the envelopes have black edges denoting a grievous loss and the writing paper is likewise so marked around the rim. Mrs E.M Ashman of School House, Pampisford, Cambridgeshire writes on Jan 5th 1919. “Dear Mrs Brown- It is in great sorrow I write to thank you for the Xmas card you sent to my husband and to tell you he died from shell wounds in France on Sept 26th. I received a Telegram on Oct 2nd with the awful news. I had heard from him only a few days before, he seemed so cheerful and full of coming home again - but alas ---The loss of my dear one is a terrible and bitter blow to me, one I hardly know how to bear. We were so happy, it seems so utterly cruel, but I have to be brave for baby’s sake, which he has left me to tend and care. He was so looking forward to seeing her. Dear Mrs Brown, my husband told me all about you and your great kindness to him, please accept my very grateful thanks. Pen cannot word all I would like to say or feel. I am sure you brightened many what would have been very lonely hours for him and you will for ever have my gratitude ---What a great relief it is to feel the war is at last over but I fear it leaves many of us to grope through life with broken hearts.”

The other letter fringed in mourning black does not refer to her loss but rather to a visit made by Marjorie Nixon James of The River House 3, Chelsea Embankment, London SW3 on Feb 11th 1919.” --- It is so nice to have seen where my dear man spends so much of his time - & the kind friends who have made the very trying conditions of army life so much more ‘possible’ by their consideration and the attractions such places as the Rest Rooms at The Chine afford.” She refers to the serious ‘flu epidemic of the time and wishes ”you will all keep free from any further attacks of this terrible flu.”

Mrs Capon of 105 Plashet Grove, East Ham. London E 6 writes to Georgie on Oct 26th 1917 about her visit to The Chine. “Dear Miss Brown, Thank you ever so much for your cheery little note, and will you thank your mother for the snapshot. --- Mr
Capon looks rather serious, generally he has a smile, but he felt it terribly at parting, but we are trusting to providence to be reunited in the near future, which I hope will not be long." She thanks Mr and Mrs Brown for the good times her husband had at The Chine and goes on: “I accompanied him several times, whilst I was staying in Southampton, to the concerts and one evening you impressed me very much when you sang (God save our men). I shall never for get it”

On July 17th 1917, Annie Wilcocks wrote from 14 Hubert Place, Lancaster. “I have heard so much about you and your wonderful kindnesses to the soldiers, from my husband.---He told our little daughter you had taken a snapshot of ‘Daddy’ for her very own and how she’s looking forward to having it – you will know my husband is now in France (at the Base) --- My Husband did so appreciate it (your kindness) and so did I – before this dreadful war we were never parted – he never used to leave me for an hour alone, after his day’s work was done, we were companions as well as wife and husband. My long long prayer is that he may safely return to me – in Gods good time.”

Catching the evening post, Mrs E. Abbott of 109 Pitchford Street Stratford. London E.15 writes on Aug 31 1917 (postmark) to thank Georgie for a photograph. She goes on, "Gunner Abbot is my only son and such a dear good boy he is to us that I feel it very much to have to give him up to the Army. I think they ought not to have taken him as he has an invalid father for 14 years and I also have a very bad leg, but this is a terrible war. I do trust please God it will soon be over and my dear boy spared to me. He was very down on leaving home. My son had told me about the lovely garden and how kind you were to them and I am sure he was very grateful for it; he says he felt it very much leaving, it was very touching. I am very pleased to know he is with a nice lot of soldiers as he is very steady and I was afraid some might tempt him. --- Yours sincerely E. Abbott. In a NB added in Georgie’s handwriting is the following: "Gnr Abbott later won the MM for great bravery."

From 12, Claribel Street, Princes Park, on writing paper headed J. Melvey. Tenor Vocalist (crossed out), we have the following note. “Dear Mrs Brown just a little note to thank you for your kindness to my Daddy. I’m crocheting some curtain bands for mother’s Xmas present love from Edith XXXXXXXXXXXXX some for Mr BrownXXXXXXXX”

Other wives and mothers express themselves similarly in the restrained and respectful language of the times.

Writing on July 23rd 1917, and sent by the morning post on July 25th Margaret Birchall thanks Georgie for a ”kind and comforting letter” and photograph of Edward (her son I think). She mentions “the motherly care which Mrs Brown gave him during his stay in Southampton. Edward told us all about it and of the deep interest Mrs Brown so very kindly took in him --- It was his first thought at home after greeting us.”

A further letter reads; “It is a splendid work to help the men over what is to the majority a dreadfully trying time. Personally, I shall always carry the memory of the Band and lawn and trees and the wind just stirring the casement curtains and all the

15 XXX stands for kisses!
khaki figures dotted about. It is all so sad and yet there is great beauty to be found. I sincerely hope for everyone’s sake it will come to a speedy end” (D.M Lawrence from 26 Milkwood Rd, Herne Hill. London SE on Nov 5th (i917?))

And again; “I am sending you this afternoon a tea cloth, and shall be very pleased if you will kindly accept it as a little appreciation for your kindness to my son during his stay in Southampton and hope you will like it. My daughter has made and worked it and his young lady has done the crochet work.--- When Richard came home on his last leave he brought me a large photograph of the group in your garden. I have had it framed and it has made a lovely picture which will be very nice for him if he is spared to return --- I am so thankful to let you know that my sons in France are all keeping well ---” A Haston of 10 Heaton Rd, Lostock.Bolton. Oct 1st (1917?)

“Dear Madam --- I hope you will not think it presumptuous on my part in writing to thank you for your previous kindness and hospitality to my son ---We also hope with you that he may be spared to return safe, as being the only son we have felt his loss very keenly, for a better and more dutiful son could not have been given to parents than he has been to us and we feel that any kindness or consideration you have shown him and others has been personally given to us --- Hopting this dreadful war will soon be over ---and that you may long be spared to minister to the needs of others in this war and after. We have the honour to remain Mrs and Mr Kay. 278 Edge Lane Droylsden, Manchester. 27th October 1917

“I know my husband will be very sorry to leave Southampton. I can assure you I shall be too, for I feel he is safe whilst he is in this country. His love and devotion for me is boundless and no husband could be kinder or more thoughtful for his wife. I only wish that circumstances could have been such that I could have been able to be at Southampton too, but instead I am in Business.” Mrs Bruce Smith. 27 Outram Rd Alexandra Park. London N22

“Dear Mrs Brown, --- I hear in all his letters how welcome you make him and different little kindnesses you show him almost daily and it is a great comfort to me to think he has such good friends while compelled to be away from me. ---The separation is hard to bear in any case but mine is made much easier by the knowledge of your goodness. --- I enclose a happy ‘snap’ of our little girly with some wounded boys, who were being entertained at the friend’s house where we are staying. She is such a blessing and comfort to me these terrible times that I feel I cannot be sufficiently thankful to God for His great gift. ---I am just longing for her Daddy to see how she has got on since he went away.” Nora Wheeler. Ingleside. Bocking’s Farm, Clacton on Sea. Sept 20th 1917.

Americans.

When the Americans came over they were certainly invited to The Chine but we have no records in any detail of their visits. Cyril Weller refers to what must have been a somewhat negative comment in Georgie’s letter to him (above p 19). Probably, for the most part, they had their own ’rendezvous’ in town and their own resources. Never the less, American troops had been informed of The Chine as the following typewritten slip from the US Consul makes clear:
THE CHINE
Northlands Road
Soldiers Recreation Rooms
(Off the Avenue, Foot of Common. Mr and Mrs Brown.
At the above house, all Americans will find a real welcome. There are rooms provided for Reading, Writing (Stationery provided), Cards etc. Concerts are frequently given by local talent. American papers and magazines are provided by the American Y.M.C.A. Sandwiches, Pies, Fruit and other light refreshments of a solid and liquid nature can be obtained at about two cents each. -in English money.
Open from 5.0 pm to 9.30 pm daily. Sunday –all day. Refreshments 4.30 pm
Mr and Mrs Brown and their many voluntary helpers do everything they can for the Boys, - and do it good!

One of the most interesting of the ephemera in the archive is a pink coloured card on the back of which an American serviceman (rank not given) has scrawled his name and address. He was William Ellis Ames of 104 US Inf, Headquarters Co. Signal Section. 26th Division. 52 Brigade. American Expeditionary Force whose home address was 30 Partridge Avenue, Somerville Mass. USA. dated Sept 27th 1917. He seems to have been in a hurry for the card on which he wrote is one he was given on embarking on the ship that brought him to Europe telling him where to find his berth on board and when and where to eat. This brief memento evokes a strong sense of his probably over-crowded voyage under military discipline and at risk from submarines. As with many of the letters, to hold it in hand seems to take one back almost personally into those times. Voyage over; this was to him just a scrap of paper on which to write an address. Nearly a hundred years later it survives! We know nothing more of him or his mates. The front of the card reads:

S.S. LAPLAND
KEEP THIS CARD
Your quarters are in
COMPARTMENT G.

You will occupy one berth.
You will mess in 217. Forward Dining Room. Section G. 2ND SITTING

Commanding Officers’ acknowledgements

We have seen that The Chine was a home from home for many soldiers on their way to France. Officers were rarely involved but this does not mean that the commanding officers were unaware of what the Browns were contributing to the welfare of their men. On 5th November 1917, written from Astor House, Banister Road, a rather curious note came to The Chine. It may have accompanied a gift because it is not a
letter in normal form. It reads, “On behalf of all ranks of the detachment, Royal Defence Corps, Southampton, Lieut Colonel J.H Christie tenders his best thanks for the hospitality offered to the men in the Reading-Recreation rooms at The Chine.” The ink fades away towards the end of the last sentence but no correction was made as if it was written in haste.

The recreation rooms were closed on May 10th 1919 and, in recognition of the occasion, the CO of the Royal Army Ordinance Corps (RAOC) writes from The Coliseum, Southampton on that date:

“My dear Mrs Brown,

I note that today you are closing the Soldiers' Recreation and Writing rooms at your house and I feel must show (in some inadequate manner I feel) my gratitude and appreciation as Comm. the R.A.O.C for the immense benefit and kindness which you and your husband and daughter have given so ungrudgingly to our men - and others - during all the years that you have housed the Institution - nor must I forget the Committee of Ladies who have so very kindly assisted you in your work - I have heard so many expressions of gratitude from our people. It was not only the rooms and the comforts they found there - material comforts I mean - that the men appreciated so much but it was the personal way in which you all devoted yourselves to getting into the men’s private lives. So many of them had been dragged away from comfortable homes and from their wives and children that they felt very acutely the aridness of the billet house. This you made up for at The Chine. You have all done a great work if you will allow me to say so and have formed as rallying point for the men in many an hour of loneliness, depression or want of sympathy – and as a result many have I feel sure had help in ‘fighting the good fight’-

I am sure you enjoy the gratitude of many-

With kind regards yours sincerely C.J. Alment (? Signature difficult to read)”

This warmly sincere acknowledgement underlines what has been apparent in the letters from the men and accounts for the depth of their gratitude. Maud Brown and Georgie together with Fred Brown supplied what today we would consider psychological support through informal ‘counselling’, during a war in which such concern for the welfare of troops was barely considered. There can be little doubt that it was this kindness of heart in listening to and understanding the restrained distress of a variety men and boys (often following that up in letters to the front) that comprised the deep contribution that the Brown family offered to men about to face the near unendurable face of war in the trenches of France.

Indeed, it transpires that the Colonel felt this contribution so personally on behalf of his men that he made two representations to the authorities recommending the award of an OBE to Maud. Eventually a copy of his letter of recommendation reached Georgie's files in an OHMS envelope addressed to Mrs Brown dated 11 February 1920. In the Colonel's hand, it reads:

“Copy-
To Mil.Sec. Southern Cd (i.e. Military Secretary, Southern Command)
With ref to our telephone conv’ this morning’, I venture to submit a second representation on behalf of Mrs Maud Mary Brown (but not at her request) for recognition of her admirable and highly appreciated work for the rank and file during some three years.
As practically the last survivor of the Southampton garrison (as it was late in 1917) it devolves on me to see that the excellent work done by Mrs Brown and her husband and a small staff of ladies during nearly the whole war shall be duly represented. I made a previous representation on this matter a year ago, but I learn from you that it cannot be heard (sp?) and Mrs Brown's excellent services have thereby failed in evoking military commendation and it is this mischance that I am now endeavouring to correct.

I have only been three times in Mrs Brown’s house, the first two occasions to inspect the recreation rooms and the last to felicitate her on the good work done, when the place was finally closed.

All the rooms were in Mr Brown’s handsome house and the fine garden was also at the men’s disposal. Every day the rooms were open, regardless to a considerable extent of the sacrifice of family privacy and the rooms given up were excellently suited to the purpose. Not only that but the personal as well as the social side was greatly cultivated and Mr Brown would play cards etc with the men whilst all were encouraged to confide any domestic difficulties and family matters of interest to their kind helpers.

I have had numerous proofs of the way these family men torn from their homes turned to this comfortable and friendly club.

Mr Brown is a leading local merchant of Southampton and must have sacrificed a great deal of his home comforts all these years the house was open.

Needless to say, Mrs Brown had no knowledge of my previous representation on her behalf. It was forwarded by me in secret and it was only a few weeks ago when I feared her services had been entirely overlooked and when I desired to show that at least one CO appreciated her work.

I very earnestly hope that her services will now be rewarded in some slight measure (admission to the Order of the Brit Empire)

Col; C.J. Anent (signature uncertain).

Since no OBE was awarded, we can only assume that the good Colonel’s representations were, as he suspected, insufficiently supported or in some way inadequately directed. Yet, the work of the Brown family was acknowledged from another source, the highly influential Southampton figure, Sir Sydney Kimber, who on 15th November 1918 had just become Mayor of the city. He writes from the Mayor’s Parlour, Municipal Buildings, Southampton:

“Dear Mrs Brown,

It is extremely kind of you to write us such a nice letter of congratulation, and the Mayoress and I are very glad to get it.

We continually hear from one and another, and particularly from Mr Ryder, the great success that continues to crown your efforts in connection with ‘Our Boys’ at ‘The Chine’. When the whole thing is over, the memory of the great work you have done and are doing, at the present time, will be a great possession to all of you.

With our kindest regards

Yours sincerely

S.G. Kimber. Mayor.

It seems however that the AOC Commandant’s interest in The Chine did not cease with his request for some recognition of the work at The Chine. The speech opening a fete at The Chine in August 1920 (or 1921?) in support primarily of finance for a window giving thanks for peace to be placed in St Mark’s Church seems clearly composed by him. The Colonel was ultimately unable to be present himself and his
text has been re-worded to this effect and presumably read aloud on his behalf. He
describes his intention of offering the workers at The Chine "a few words of thanks on
behalf of he thousands of men who passed through The Chine during the war. --- It is
some comfort to me to know how universal was the gratitude of those you helped and
that in possibly thousands of cases thanks have been given you personally here and
there by the men who derived such solace and recreation from the rooms at The
Chine. --- I know that could those you befriended be present today they would be very
pleased to know that their officers had on their behalf taken the advantage of a public
opportunity to act as their unofficial spokesman --- When I first came to
Southampton in November 1917 in the course of my enquiries I asked about the
men’s recreation rooms and I was told they had none but did not need any as they had
the YMCA in Ogle Road and The Chine social Centre. Naturally, I asked what The
Chine was, and was told of the very kind hospitality so freely given by Mr and Ms
Brown in their beautiful house and of the unselfish service of those ladies who
attended on the soldiers. I resolved at once to go and visit The Chine and both I and
Major Davenport were charmed with the cleanliness and brightness of the recreation
rooms and, afterwards, with the invariable pleasure which any reference to The Chine
gave to its habitués. Their tongues were quickly unloosed. Most of these men you will
recollect were middle aged and family men uprooted from their peaceful surroundings
and thrown into billet houses with an entire absence of peace or quiet or of course
anything home-like. Many of them have told me of the haven of rest they found The
Chine to be and I was more than touched to hear from some of them of the personal
and human atmosphere which existed here where not only their confidences as to
domestic matters were sympathetically encouraged, and this gave them great pleasure,
but further that when their families were able to come to see them they were proud to
bring them along and present them to you kind people. --- As one of the Ordnance
men once said when making a little speech, "When things go wrong in the Army we
say ‘Thank God we've got a Navy but when things go wrong with we soldier boys in
Southampton we say ‘Thank God, we’ve got a Chine.” He concludes by referring to
"Mr Brown coming down so kindly to teach them Parlour games” and to the special
"Sunday evening Service full of reverence and welcome, regularly held here by your
vicar, Mr Bates, who has had special opportunities of learning at first hand elsewhere
the special loneliness and difficulties of men serving in the ranks.”

The Colonel was happy to hear that the work of The Chine would continue in other
directions now that the war was over. And it is to these that we may now turn.

Lord Mayor Treloar’s Cripples Hospital at Alton, Iron lungs, child patients in
need of support and other charities.

Lord Mayor William Treloar of London, a philanthropic Cornishman whose father
had set up business in the city, was the founder of an important hospital dealing
mainly with non–pulmonary tuberculosis at Alton north of Southampton. Its
supporters eventually claimed it to be the best in the world because of the essential
long term, health-renewing support it gave to child patients suffering from this and
other causes. Maud Brown had known of the hospital in 1914 because we have a
programme for a fête in The Chine garden supporting it in that year. When the need
for working with the troops came to an end, Maud began looking for other targets for
her charitable disposition. It was this hospital, very much a novel venture at the time
and much in demand among the poor families of the Southampton and Portsmouth
slums, that attracted her attention and she suggested to her band of helpers that they began collecting funds through activities designed to support it. With their characteristic enthusiasm and inventive genius, The Chine Helpers set to work. Their work-load was considerable and took several interrelated forms. Apart from fortnightly meetings at The Chine, straightforward collections by appeal to the public and notable Southampton citizens, Maud devised a novel method of collection carried out by children in support of those less fortunate than themselves. Quite small ones became hard workers in the cause and, partly because of their age and sweetness in appeal; they contributed well to the funds. The extensive Chine grounds became home to fetes more or less annually in summer at which military bands and orchestras played, stalls were manned, amusement gardens constructed, singers sang and children from the Miss Bird’s dancing academy performed. Sometimes the large lawn became a theatre for a summer evening performance of Shakespeare’s ‘A Midsummer’s Night’s Dream’ by professional players, the wooded auditorium being lit by coloured lights suspended in the tall trees. Then there were ‘At Home’ gatherings of the interested, collectors and various distinguished local people; held at first at The Chine but later at the large South Western Hotel near the docks. A feature of these events was an introduction to the event and it’s purpose by someone concerned with the hospital, at an early event, one of them being Sir William Treloar himself and always, notably, the ‘winding’ of The Chine Clock.

I am not sure to whom among the ladies the invention of Chine Clock may be attributed but it may well have been my mother, Georgie Brown. It consisted of a strong cardboard clock face a yard in diameter with black numbers on a white background and long hands that could be turned. Every minute represented one pound. It stood on a high blackboard stand before the assembled company. Donors stood up and moved the hands revealing their donation. A characteristic happening, of course, was the turning of the minute hand by one or more of the child collectors or by parents on their behalf – one was as young as three. It was an ingenious and productive device well admired in all the newspaper reports.

Georgie Brown, as secretary to the Helpers, kept many documents including invitation cards, Southern Daily Echo news reports, letters, old programmes and other ephemera and it is from the especially comprehensive newspaper records that we

16 Lord Mayor of the City of London in 1907, Sir William Purdie Treloar, had created a fund to build a hospital and teaching facility outside the city of London for child sufferers from non-pulmonary tuberculosis especially of the spine, a common ailment in the early 1900s. In 1907, Queen Alexandra opened a fete in aid of the fund at the Mansion House. Treloar’s Cripples’ Hospital and College was established in Alton, Hants in 1908. In 1948, the National Health Service took it over, 75% of its funds being absorbed by the state. The Trust purchased a new site nearby to continue the education of physically disabled young men and in 1965 a school for girls was likewise opened. The schools were amalgamated in 1978 as Lord Mayor Treloar College and became co-educational. The college continues to develop today but the hospital was eventually closed, its operations being dispersed among modern NHS facilities elsewhere.

17 The” Clock” survived in dilapidated form in storerooms at Tudor Wood until the sale of the house in 2002. Maud’s great grandchildren were intrigued by it.
know how this charitable endeavour worked, where and when. We know which orchestras and bands played, who conducted and who sang, what company of actors gave their time to present theatre and which notable local persons sponsored the occasions or opened them. The essay-length news reports are written in a literary, journalistic style of the period, very different from the brief notices in journalesque such an event might get today and showing very clear ‘deference’, acknowledging ‘class’, essentially wealth, contrasts among those named. A focus on ‘charm’ is noticeable to a modern reader; a somewhat sentimentally detailed touch to descriptions of children and of certain aspects of an occasion, such as would hardly figure – perhaps regrettably - today. Indeed, the expressive vocabulary and prose construction in these reports, as in the letters, suggests a public writing ability that compares favourably with what might be similarly expressed today.\¶

In 1922, the Echo noted that Alton Hospital was the only one to which children suffering from tuberculosis of spine, joints or bones could be sent, some 35 Southampton children being treated there. The idea and practice of using The Chine Clock was being established, Mrs Brown expressing the hope that it would never stop ‘ticking’. By 1924, some £400 had been raised for the permanent endowment of a Chine Helper’s Cot at Alton. The use of the ‘clock’ was begun at an annual event in memory of the recent death of Lord Mayor Treloar and funds in excess of those needed for the cot were given to Shirley Children’s Hospital, Free Eye Hospital, Waifs and Strays Society, Sunshine Home for Blind Babies, Highfield House Hostel and St Mark’s Mission to Children.

On June 4th 1924, the presentation of funding for The Chine Helper’s Cot was made in Alton bringing the total donations there up to £500. The Echo reported, “The company then adjourned to a solarium in which The Chine Cot is to stand and there, in the sunlight, stood the cot about to be endowed, a Union Jack draped over the rails at the head, and a tiny smiling patient between the sheets. This was three-year-old Wilfred Parkenson of St Mary’s, Southampton, who, 15 months ago, had been taken to the hospital by Mrs Brown apparently a helpless case. The progress made under the natural (outdoor sunlight) and artificial healing influences of Alton is remarkable and hopes are entertained of a complete cure. Grouped at the back of the solarium were half a dozen cots containing other little Southampton children. Miss Florence Treloar stood by the isolated cot and, while the curly headed inmate murmured to himself, she spoke the formal words of endowment. --- Canon Lovett dedicated the cot ‘to the glory of God and for the healing of little children’ and pronounced the benediction and afterwards placed his hands on each of the other Southampton patients and blessed them. ---The little mites in the spinal babies’ ward entertained the visitors with action songs as they lay, in many cases strapped to their beds. Other children were lying outside the wards in the sunshine bronzed and smiling and all industriously engaged in basket making, needlework or some similar occupations. Chocolates, pictures and other things dear to the child mind were showered upon them by

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18 The preserved Echo articles, often covering the best part of a page, were published between 1922 and 1932 covering a decade of consistent charitable endeavour by Maud and Georgie Brown and their Chine Helpers. The articles are dated: 1922 : Oct 26th. 1923: Oct 24th. 1924: March 5th, June 7th, Dec 12st and Dec 6th. 1925:Nov 27th.1926:June 23th, Dec 10th.1927: July 8th,July 18th,Nov 27th. 1930: March 29th and 1932 April 20th.

19 He appears again below as a child supporter.
sympathetic visitors who only tore themselves away from the small patients with
difficulty to inspect the college, where 50 crippled lads were being taught leatherwork
in all its branches, tailoring or boot-making.”

On March 4th the same year, The Chine Helpers arranged a large communal party for
poor Southampton children at the Albion Schoolroom, St Mary’s Street. “The little
guests came in batches, accompanied by the teachers by whom they were chosen, and
they sat at the long tables gazing wistful eyed at the delicacies provided thereon, until
the last company arrived, and they were bidden to feast. Iced confections and
sandwiches disappeared with amazing rapidity … It was while the guests were thus
busily engaged that a woman, whose care-worn face was eloquent of the struggle for
existence, approached one of the organisers and, with a pathetic glance at her three
young children, asked, ‘Can they go in? Mister.’ The gentleman hesitated before
replying, but the woman appealed again with such earnestness, which was not
assumed. ‘Do let them in, Mister,’ she said eagerly, ’they’ll have a good meal inside.
There’s nothing for them at home!’ The children passed to happiness and plenty
within.” After the feasting, Professor W.H Woodley presented a Punch and Judy show
and then Father Christmas arrived. “Each child received a gift from the tree. Finally,
Father Christmas produced a doll of such size and beauty that every little girl held up
her hand as though to clasp it. By the desire of the children it was given to a girl of
seven years who for four years was a patient at Treloar’s hospital. At the end, bags of
fruit were freely distributed. The Chine Helpers had visited over 1000 children over
Christmas and given a gift. All this was at the initiative of Maud Brown and her
indefatigable daughter.”

At a meeting at The Chine on Thursday December 3rd, 1924 the clock hand moved
forward by two hours and seventeen minutes yielding £137, again little ones often
reached out their ‘tiny hands’ to move it. A medal system for the children was
introduced with the Mayor, Alderman McDonnell, presenting bars to their medals to
nine children after a second year of service and new medals to eight more. The
Treloar’s representative stated that 94% of children at the hospital were cured and in
the last year, the figure had been 96%. A new development was the provision of light
lamps (UV) that were needed in greater numbers and two new wards (for lupus and
isolation) were needed. Among other statistics, he reported that 79 cases have been
received from Southampton. Only 16 –17 children could be admitted per month and
there were 85 on the waiting list. In all 2841 children had been cured.

On November 27th 1925, Mrs Brown invited over 500 people to the Atherley Cinema,
Shirley, where the ‘Alton film’ depicting the work of Treloar’s was shown. Sir Henry
Gauvain, the chief medical officer at the hospital, was present and gave an
explanatory talk to the various great and good of the town assembled there (names
listed) and a little boy ex-patient gave a speech saying he had learnt boot making and
if anyone needed his services he would be delighted. Other children received medals
and bars. The Mayor (Councillor Silverman) gave a speech and Mrs Foster-Welch,
Senior Bailiff, seconding, said she was ashamed that more help was not given
generally from Southampton.

On June 26th 1926, The Chine Helpers held a garden fete at The Chine. Some £200
was distributed as a result to Treloar’s, the Hampshire Girls Orphanage, Children’s
Hospital, Waifs, Strays Society, and the Sunshine Home for Blind Babies. “The
Southampton Local History Forum Journal

grounds of The Chine were converted for a while into a fairyland with hundreds of
coloured lanterns shedding a multi- coloured glow from the surrounding trees. Stalls
were profusely stacked with produce and children in fancy dress gave dancing
exhibitions … A fortune teller in a small bower, was tucked away amongst the trees
… A military band and a local orchestra performed and Mr Rodney Brown organised
a Bagatelle competition.“

On December 10th 1926, the Southern Daily Echo reports on the reception given by
Maud Brown at the South Western Hotel with The Chine clock in action again.”
There was a pathetic touch to the proceedings in that one contribution of £1 was made
by a little boy named Jimmy, who was the first child to occupy The Chine Cot at the
hospital and who has been completely cured of a tubercular disease. Miss Florence
Treloar, the daughter of Sir William, presented medals to children. The Sheriff
(Councillor Mrs Foster-Welch) remarked that there were some fifty children involved
in making collections and that Mrs Brown wanted to raise that figure to one hundred.
Again, the mayor (Alderman P.V. Bowyer) and other local dignitaries were present in
numbers. Apart from Treloar's hospital, no less than 22 other children’s charities were
benefiting from funds raised by The Chine Helpers.

In July 1927 a further garden fête was organised at The Chine with funds going to a
long list of charities. A special feature of the fête was the announcement that sunlight
lamps were to be donated to two Southampton hospitals. “Mrs Foster Welch was to
have opened the fete but she had been delayed in London so the fête was opened by a
little party of toddlers in smart summery dress from the Nazareth Homes forming a
ward of honour along the crazy pavement of the rose garden where four little maids
(names given) stood around the sundial looking attractive in the frills and flounces of
Victorian dress. The little girls opened the fête by a graceful curtsey and salute. The
sunny hours in the evening put everyone in the right mood to buy from the loaded
stalls under their trellis of roses. On the tennis court at the lower part of the garden
was a miniature amusement park (organised by Mr Rodney Brown) made gay with
flags and bunting where a variety of competitions and games had been arranged to
tempt people into try to win a prize. Here … people were so thick that it was at times
difficult to pick a path.“ At a dancing display by the pupils of the Misses Bird “the
little dancers emerged from behind thickly leaved bushes and trod their dainty,
fascinating measures in a sylvan glade where dove-cot and sun bathed foliage created
a setting of irresistible charm. The love-lorn shepherdess and her swain seemed to
have stepped right out of the picture books to delight the crowd, who also took
pleasure is seeing baskets of roses buds come to life in the persons of little pink
dressed dancing girls.”

On November 30th 1927, at a further reception given by Alderman and Mrs Brown at
the South Western Hotel, The Chine clock ticked again, the project aiming to provide
UV lamps for a “Chine corner” in the hospital. Viscountess Burnham together with
Miss Florence Treloar opened the occasion, Lady Burnham saying that at the hospital
“cheerfulness was the very air the children breathed and happiness was the secret of
the common life. When one went there, one felt how much body and mind went
together and how good the rays of the sun were for both. The ancients were not so far
wrong when they worshipped the sun and in a real and better sense they were all sun-
worshippers (at the hospital) now.” The Mayor again presided (Councillor Mrs
Foster-Welch) and gave thanks.
At further receptions at the South Western Hotel in March 1930 and 1932, The Echo again reported that Time was money as The Chine clock ticked again. Present was a little Southampton boy, Wilfred Parkinson who came forward with £1 having being admitted at the age of two, his life hanging by a thread. Alderman Mrs Foster-Welch referred to the debt Treloar’s hospital owed to these charitable activities and Sir Henry Gauvain spoke of the way public attitudes towards cripples had changed. “In ancient times, they were malign objects … of ridicule and evidences of Divine wrath.” He referred to the use of UV light in the treatment of Lupus, a terrible disease that ate away noses, lips and eyelids of children. Light cured this, after which surgical repair was possible. The hospital now treated all kinds of cripple not only those suffering from tubercular diseases. One little girl (no name given) had left the hospital after two and a half years going on into higher education and gaining a BSc with first class honours and was now doing research at the London School of Economics.

By this time, Georgie Brown had become Mrs Herbert Crook following marriage in 1929. At the reception in 1932, the author of this essay, aged 16 months, was the first to move the hands of the clock! Viscount Burnham presiding said that The Chine Helpers inspired by Mrs Brown and her daughter had raised around £2000. Nearly 200 children from Southampton had been treated at Alton. “At one time all cases were dealt with personally by The Chine Helpers but for the last year or two this important work has been merged with the public medical services of the borough and excellent arrangements made whereby the surgeons from Alton attend the municipal clinics in Southampton to ensure … efficient after-care.” He referred to The Chine workers four bed Ward at the Hospital and said, “Having known Sir William Treloar well he thought of him as one of the greatest benefactors of humanity this century has known.” Little Wilfred Parkinson was again present. His case had been especially severe on admittance but, three years later, he had left Alton and now played like all other schoolboys. Other past patients also contributed to the raising of funds.

In July 1931, the Chine Helpers had gathered at Treloar’s Hospital in Alton for the dedication of a ward in the hospital that was to bear their name ‘The Chine Helpers Ward’. The glowing account in the Echo says that the ward would stand as a memorial to the work of the helpers and of Mrs Brown. In all the Chine Helpers had raised £5000 for children’s charities since the end of the war through their various efforts, among which the activities of the “Chine Children’s Collector’s League” organised by Georgie Brown (now Mrs Herbert Crook) were also educationally

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20 The Chine Helper’s party comprised. Alderman F.R. Brown JP & Mrs Brown, Councillor & Mrs H.C. Crook, Mrs Dashper, Mrs G.H. Bishop JP, Mrs Downie, Mrs Edney, Mrs Fellows, Miss Rogers, Mr Rogers, Mrs Jardine, Mrs Kinnell, Mrs F. Locke, the Misses Lancasheer, Mrs Morgan, Mrs Nelson, Mr & Mrs T.A. Ponsford, Miss Pearce, Mrs Stranger, Mr & Mrs Stevens, Mrs Mason, Mrs Harding and Mrs Moody.

21 In 1929, my mother married Herbert Charles Crook of a Woolston business family (Lankester and Crook Ltd) who was likewise very involved in charitable care mainly through directing the ‘Old Folks’ organisation of the Woolston Wednesday Football Club that once a year took the elderly and infirm of the working class areas of the city, mostly Woolston near the docks, on a days charabanc outing to somewhere in the
significant for the young people involved. The hospital at the time was in a state of
conversion from wooden buildings to brick and stone. The Helpers’ ward stood in the
newly completed Connaught block. The ward looked out over fields and woodland
and it had a bright colour scheme with tiles over a fireplace depicting animal and
birds. Folding doors opened to a veranda enabling the ward, as was the case with all
others, to become healthy open-air rooms used in the fresh air treatment of
tuberculosis. The name tablet was set over the fireplace. Again, in the company of
the local great and good, the helpers were warmly welcomed and thanked before
being shown around the hospital. Several Southampton children were visited and
expressed their happiness. "From the boy’s wards came a babble of twenty tongues.
Every boy appeared to be having the time of his life. One daring blue-eyed youngster
caused a good deal of laughter by asking for a flower from a lady visitor’s hat."

After 1932, there are no longer any similar reports in the Echo collection and the
reason for this is perhaps indicated in Lord Burnham’s speech at the 1932 reception.
The extreme need for the type of highly personal charitable endeavour shown by
Maud and Georgie Brown and their inspiration to others was no longer so essential in
the alleviation of slum poverty and illness. Social concern had passed to the public
institutions of the municipality and medical referrals were being taken over by
publicly funded institutions in a new way. Maybe the financial administration of
Treloar’s Hospital and its supporting needs had also changed in form. There were
additional reasons. Maud had tripped over one of her long dresses falling down stairs
and broken a leg, which took a long time to mend and very much preoccupied her
daughter in caring for her at the same time as she was starting her family. This alone
was sufficient to take up much of Georgie’s time although nannies were employed in
those days to help in such situations. Probably, both of them may have felt it was time
to let the leadership of such work pass to the public institutions. Through the influence
of Alderman Brown JP they were doubtless in close contact with the town council and
this gave them some confidence in such a move. Georgie was soon acting
independently from her mother, taking up activities in support of Dr Banardo’s
Homes for orphans in a big way. She continued this work into her old age after the
Second World War and was to receive an inscribed crystal goblet in recognition of her
services.

Even so, Maud's enthusiasm did not diminish and in 1938, doubtless in part relying on
her reputation from her well-known work, she made a major public appeal for funds
to present ‘iron lungs’ to Southampton hospitals. An iron lung was a mechanical bed
that, through regular, appropriately adjusted movement, took over for a time the
functioning of the chest muscles in breathing, thus saving many lives in various cases
of paralysis. On 4th November 1938, the Echo reported a generous response to Mrs
Brown’s appeal with a complete list of donations by Rotary Club, Southern Railway,
firms and individuals ranging from £52 to eight shillings. The collection raised
enough funds for two iron lungs for the Isolation Hospital and two oxygen tents for
the Children’s Hospital.

Conclusion.

New Forest or similar country location. He warmly supported my mother’s efforts.
For a short period he was a Councillor for Woolston.
This account of the philanthropic work of my grandmother and mother in Southampton over nearly thirty years between 1914 and the start of the 1939-45 World War has depended on the careful preservation by my mother of documents describing the methods of management and publicity employed in the enduring efforts of the Chine Helpers group which they led. There can be no doubt that the letters received amply demonstrate the great personal value that many ordinary soldiers and their wives experienced through exposure to their kind thoughtfulness throughout the horrors of the 14-18 turmoil. In deciding to carry on this work after the war, focussing on the much needed care of poor children mostly from the slums of the period, they revealed their sensitivity to the general neglect of welfare for poor people and children prior to the advent of greater political concern for the unfortunate. This little study may therefore be of interest to those researching the personal aspects of charitable care for the stressed, the poor and sick over this period. The extensive library of portraits of soldiers may delight those who may be able to recognise some relationship with the men concerned, and the literary style of journalistic reporting in the Southern Daily Echo reveals much about attitudes of the time. Although I prepared this account firstly for family interest, I believe it also has a place in the social history of my hometown, Southampton.

APPENDIX: The Archival material

The materials upon which this account is based comprise an archive formerly kept by my Mother, Georgina Crook. They consist of:

1. Photo album of the Chine soldiers, families etc
2. Visitors’ book with signatures, addresses and regimental affiliation.
3. Exercise book detailing sales from stores at the Soldiers Rest at The Chine.
4. Two exercise books with accounts and balance sheets of the Soldiers Rest.
5. List of attendance by ladies of the Chine Helpers.
7. Miscellaneous ephemera. programmes, fêtes, invitations, notes etc

The Photo Album is a possibly unique, comprehensive collection of personal portraits of soldiers and one sailor, mostly in uniform, together with group pictures of the men relaxing in The Chine garden, playing clock golf, pictures of the Chine itself and some family groups. Many of these have a note or so on the back giving some information but many are unsigned. This album will be used for a further project. All or most of these men were shortly to be drafted to France to face the rigours of the war.

The Visitor’s Book. An interesting set of entries show how the men originated from all over the nation. Detailed addresses are given. Most are soldiers of the Royal Garrison Artillery (RGA) and many were signallers. There are however others including Lieutenant Gutteridge of the Leicesters, a distant family relative, killed in the assault on Mametz Wood in the Somme, which was visited by my son and I in 2008. There are few officers but a number of NCOs. Most of the men give their rank as Private soldiers or gunners.
Sales and Accounts. These exercise books show what supplies were sold and how much of each at the afternoon and evening sessions at The Chine and also the cost of the items. The balance sheets show the expenditure over a period. The accounting book labelled “Helper’s book, Stores, St Mark’s Room”, shows that the commodities provided were quite basic and included: coffee, coffee essence, tea, cocoa, milk, nestles powder, bread, butter, cake, rock cakes, biscuits, pastries, pots of (meat/fish?) paste, garibaldi biscuits, ginger biscuits, boxes of matches, bananas (occasionally), coconut cakes (rarely), margarine (rarely). It is noticeable that cigarettes were very rarely on sale although some were donated on two dates. Furthermore, few pictures of men smoking are to be found. Most of the donations were cakes and pastries, Victoria buns, lard cakes.

Apart from one or two items, the lists of commodities sold remain invariable throughout the accounted period showing what it was that the men evidently preferred. The books magazines and writing materials provided, all of which are mentioned elsewhere, are not listed. In some photos, men are seen relaxing in chairs reading in The Chine garden near the dovecot.

The accompanying table shows the sales of supplies and their cost per afternoon or evening during a sample of contiguous days in March-April (year uncertain, probably 1917). Afternoons were simple, the men taking cups of tea or cocoa with milk. On a Sunday, cake, bread and butter were also consumed in the afternoon. More supplies were sold on evenings of the same days and included cake, bread and butter, some biscuits, paste cakes and buns. Curiously, jam is not listed. The values of the outgoings are listed per occasion and on the sampled occasions never exceed one pound. Each afternoon or evening is totalised and the sum received placed at the bottom of the list and signed – usually BB, meaning Mr Brookman. From today’s perspective, the quantification is bizarre with pounds (lbs) and ounces (oz), pints, and fractions of loaves. (Remember! Sixteen ounces make one pound and fourteen pounds make one stone. There were twelve pennies to a shilling and twenty shillings made a pound. The arithmetic was demanding!)

The accounting book runs from March 29th till July 18th, each afternoon and evening meticulously accounted for in a variety of hands including those of Maud and Georgie. During our sampled period March 29th onwards (5 days), the sums taken were averaging 3s 6d afternoons and 11s 3d evenings. Near the end of the period (July 14-18th) the sales have increased, the average being 5s 4d afternoons and £1.5s 5d evenings. Some slightly more adventurous items appear on the menu near the end of the period – ginger beer, a cucumber, a lemon, golden S (syrup?), but in general, the supplies are very constant in kind throughout. One evening 36 rolls and salads were sold, the take that evening being £2.1.0.

At the end of the book, there is a complete day-by-day list of all donations in kind given by named helpers for sale to the men. To begin with, these donations were mostly cakes, pastries, some cigarettes, biscuits, a bottle of coffee essence, flowers, watercress, postcards, and then an increasing number of prepared salads. Many people put a lot of effort into this; the names are mostly Mrs with a scattering of gentlemen and several Masters and Miss.

Given that Fred Brown owned one of the largest food emporia in Southampton, it is perhaps not surprising that strictly disciplined balance sheets week to week were maintained for the Soldiers Rest by his daughter. Between March 18th 1917- April 21st 1918, we have complete statements covering varying periods. There are additional
separate balance sheets in what must be Mr Brookman’s handwriting. The balance for the first 20 weeks was below £10 per week but thereafter rose to around £15 approximately. The rise in turnover during that period was therefore relatively small. Hardware was of course required. There is a list of cups (20), plates (24), saucers (17), basins (4, perhaps bowls?) Jugs 1 and spoons (19) purchased over two occasions. These figures appear to be in dozens – hence perhaps 240 cups, 288 plates, 204 saucers, and 228 spoons. Accounts in Georgie’s hand between December 1917-March 1918 show 6 tables at 6/6 bought from Foy’s shop in Shirley, 16.6d spent at Boots, around £3 at Dibbens, 6 covers (chair?) from Permain at 1s.9p. each, around £10 for gas and electric (sic), a casement (meaning?) from Shepherd and Hedger for £1.15.6p, and “extra washing” - 5s. There are also accounts for some chairs (deck?), stationary, pads, beeswax, curtains, paper cloths and Ronuk (a polish?).

It must also be remembered that there was rationing in force during this period. This affected The Chine project mainly with respect to supplies of sugar and jams. Among the papers are some government documents granting Mrs Brown permission to obtain certain supplies of these commodities for the use of the men.

**Attendance charts.** Clearly, Maud Brown took an interest in the regular attendance of the ladies at the Chine Helpers meetings. Those with total attendance at all events are especially listed. The books are maintained over several pages in my mother’s bold round hand.

**Table.**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>UTILISATION OF BASIC SUPPLIES ON A SAMPLE OF FIVE AFTERNOONS/EVENINGS</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>AFTEENOONS</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Cocoa</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Cake</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Bread</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Butter</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Other items listed on these days were biscuits, paste, small cakes, buns.

**Total cash receipts** | 2/11p | 3/6p | 3/4p | 3/3p | 4/8p | 1/2f | 14s/8p | 7d/7p | 6d/9p | 19s/3p |