

The Dover War Memorial Centenary

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Practically as soon as the Armistice was signed on November the 11th 1918, people up and down the country had a strong desire to remember and honour those who had given their lives during the four years of conflict in the Great War.

In Dover, the citizens were eager to raise money to build a befitting memorial to honour their own dead. The town started a fund and, on the 2nd May 1919, a "Heroes Memorial Flag Day" was held to raise money for the memorial, the design of which still hadn't been decided upon.

On Friday 9th May 1919, an article was published, in the *Dover Express*: "The Mayor has certainly rightly interpreted the wishes of the people of Dover that the Memorial to the men, women, and children who have been killed in the war should be a simple monument erected in an open space, such as the front of Maison Dieu House, with all the names of the fallen as a reminder to the inhabitants of Dover for all time and every day of those who paid the great price."

A letter written to the *Dover Express and East Kent News*, published on the 16th May 1919, suggested that a Dover War Memorial could be built in the meadows in Pencester Road. "Perhaps laid out as gardens with paths and seating and in the centre a building with a central tower could be built in which the Zeebrugge bell could be hung. All to be named Memorial Gardens perhaps?"

On the 22nd December 1922, a list of the donors to the fund was published for the first time.

There was a meeting held in the council chambers in January 1924 to discuss the

suggestion which had been made to substitute the original proposed Memorial and build a Maternity Home instead. After much debate it was agreed that the scheme for the Memorial should go ahead and plans for the Maternity Home could be considered at a later date. £1000 was the amount that they thought they would need to pay for the memorial, and they were still short. Councillor East said he would get designs from a couple of old students at the Dover School of Art, Mr Richard Goulden and Miss Margaret Winsor. He would submit these designs initially to the committee in February at the next meeting and then show them to the general public to let them make a decision. As they say ... "The rest is history."

By Friday 16th May 1924, £579 0s 2d had been raised for the memorial after a £100 donation was received from Dover Harbour Board.

One hundred years ago this month, on a fine, fresh afternoon, a ceremony was held in front of Maison Dieu House, the Jacobean Mansion alongside the Dover Town Hall. It was Wednesday the 5th of November 1924, and an immense crowd of people had gathered to witness the unveiling ceremony of the new Dover War Memorial, which was performed by Sir Roger Keyes, the British Vice-Admiral. The dedication ceremony was conducted by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Randall Thomas Davidson.

In attendance were a large number of Clergymen, including the Archbishop's Chaplain and a representative from the Salvation Army. In the front of the memorial a guard of honour of the 2nd Battalion of the Green Howards was drawn

up. On the right side of the house stood the Mayor, the Town Council officials, the Aldermen and the Councillors. On the left side were the officers of the garrison, Lady Keyes, Major Aster, the Archbishop of Canterbury's wife, Mrs Davidson, and the commanders of the 2nd Battalion the Green Howards and of the Worcester Regiment.

The choir, numbering over one hundred people from various Dover church choirs, was situated on the south side. On the north side were detachments of the Royal Navy, the Royal Marines and the Royal Airforce. Army brigades, battalions, and various batteries were represented, including personnel from the Buffs, the British Legion and Tramways Staff.

On the platform behind these were the relatives of those whose names were depicted on the Memorial, many holding beautiful floral tributes. The representatives of ex-Servicemen and the Dover Prisoners of War were accommodated on the roof of the Police Station just behind the relatives. Ticket

holders were allowed to stand on the pavement just in front of the Memorial and had a good view. The roofs and windows of all the houses surrounding the site were crowded with people and the whole area as far back as Ladywell was covered with spectators.

Sir Roger Keyes thanked the people of Dover for the honour of inviting him to unveil the Memorial and made a heartfelt memorable speech, finishing with the words, "Pass not this stone in sorrow but in pride. May you live as nobly as you died." He then pulled the cords that released the White Ensigns that surrounded the Memorial and revealed it in all its glory.

The Archbishop of Canterbury then dedicated the Memorial to the honour and glory of God "We dedicate this Memorial to the honour and glory of God: and in loving memory of all those whose names are recorded thereon. Amen."

The Memorial.

The monument consists of a central symbolic feature, a life-size bronze figure of a youth reaching to grasp a flaming cross. At his feet, a tangled mess of thorns representing the difficulties faced on the path of life. His hand enveloped in flames is symbolic of self-sacrifice and devotion. The statue stands on a central pedestal which bears inscription, "TO THE GLORIOUS MEMORY OF THE PEOPLE OF DOVER WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES FOR THEIR COUNTRY IN THE GREAT WAR." Walls of granite either side of the plinth bear names on metal plaques.

The whole Memorial stands in a Garden of Remembrance. Another stone within the flower bed is inscribed "THIS MEMORIAL WAS ERECTED BY PUBLIC SUBSCRIPTION FUNDS COLLECTED FOR DOVER PRISONERS OF WAR BEING ALSO GIVEN AS A THANK OFFERING BY THOSE WHO RETURNED SAFELY."



The War Memorial, Dover

Seven hundred and twenty-one people were commemorated at the unveiling ceremony in 1924. More have been added since.

The Sculpture

What of the man who designed and sculpted the highly accomplished Memorial Sculpture?

He was Richard Reginald Goulden, born in Dover on 30th August 1876 and baptised on the 1st October that year in St. Mary the Virgin Church, Cannon Street, Dover.

He was the third of four children born to John James Goulden, 1841-1879, and his wife Charlotte Wright, 1843-1911. In 1871 they had married in Ducklington, a village and civil parish on the River Windrush 1 mile (1.6 km) south of Witney in West Oxfordshire.

John James had trained as a journeyman cabinet maker as shown in the 1861 Census, but he opened a bookshop, stationers and printing business in Dover in 1865. In the 1871 Census it reveals the business is at 176 Snargate Street in Dover.

Tragically on the 8th October 1879, John James Goulden died, aged only thirty-eight years. He was buried three days later in Cheriton Road Cemetery in Folkestone. He



Dover War Memorial, Floodlit

left behind a wife and four small children. Algernon Arthur, the youngest, was only nine months old. John James Jr. was seven, Harriet Cicely five and Richard Reginald three years old.

Charlotte carried on the business until 1902. In the 1891 Census her eldest son John James, eighteen years of age is an assistant in the business. Richard and Algernon are both scholars at Dover College.

Richard completed his education at the Dover School of Art, where he won a scholarship to the Royal College of Art in London. He studied both architecture and sculpture and whilst there he won a travelling scholarship for sculpture.

In 1901 Richard, now twenty-four years old, can be found lodging in Dover at no.10 St. Martins Place. He is working as an art teacher at a school.

On the 21st December 1908, Richard married Muriel Olive Cecilia Gant at St. Luke's Church in Chelsea. Richard's occupation is given as a sculptor and his wife as an artist.

In the 1911 Census the couple are living on the Fulham Road with their baby daughter Wilma. They are recorded as being visiting art teachers, painters and designers.

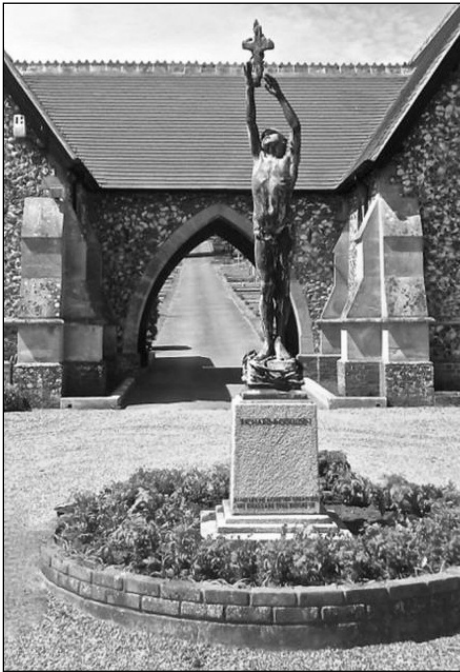
Then along came the war and Richard served with the Royal Engineers in France. He was mentioned in despatches on the 30th April 1916 and promoted to temporary Captain. He was injured shortly after and sent back to England to recover, spending some time in Brightlingsea, having been appointed Adjutant to the Australian Engineers. Eventually he moved back to London to command a special emergency corps.

When the War ended, Richard resumed his previous work. He was in great demand producing War Memorials throughout the country including the one at The Supreme Court in Westminster and those at Crompton and Brightlingsea.

In 1921 Richard and Muriel welcomed a baby son, Richard Michael, into the world.

Very sadly on the 6th August 1932 Richard Reginald Goulden died aged fifty-five years old.

He was buried at Newhaven Cemetery. As a tribute to him and his fine work, a replica of the bronze figure of youth which features on the Dover War Memorial was made and erected at the cemetery's entrance.



Replica of Dover War Memorial at Newhaven Cemetery

Throughout his lifetime Richard Reginald Goulden had produced many magnificent memorials, statues, bronze reliefs, fountains and panels. Between 1903 and 1932, his works were exhibited in the Royal Academy. Due to his untimely death, his widow, Muriel, undertook to design the panel of 70 further names which were added to the Dover War Memorial in 1934.

Muriel died in a nursing home in Oxford on the 10th October 1955, aged seventy-two.

Today one hundred years after the ceremony to unveil and bless the Dover War Memorial, this moving and highly accomplished monument still stands so eloquently, still bears witness to the tragic impact of war. It keeps the fallen forever in our hearts and minds. We gather at it every Remembrance Day and Remembrance Sunday....

It is a tangible and lasting tribute.

Their name liveth for evermore.



Dover Society Wreath