

NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS OF THE PASSAGE OF THE UNKNOWN WARRIOR THROUGH KENT ON 10th NOVEMBER 2020

The Whitstable Times and Tankerton Press of Saturday, 20th November 1920

THE UNKNOWN WARRIOR'S JOURNEY THROUGH KENT

The bringing of the nation's Unknown Warrior to England on Wednesday in last week was marked by poignant scenes, and on the way from Dover to London there were demonstrations of sorrow and respect at every stopping place.

The coach in which the body was conveyed to London was prepared at the Ashford Railway Works and was sent to London for final arrangement. It was lined inside with purple cloth and decorated with wreaths and festoons of dark green bay-leaves and palms, and with bunches of shaded pink chrysanthemums. On the ceiling were twelve panels of lattice work of bay-leaves, and at either end were masses of huge white chrysanthemums. From the ceiling hung electric lights made dim by hangings of purple silk. The adjoining carriage contained an immense number of floral tributes, some being so large that they required four and five soldiers to lift them.

The spirit of homage and reverence was clearly evident at Canterbury, a vast concourse of people gathering at the Canterbury East Station and all points of vantage in the vicinity shortly after 6 p.m. to witness the arrival and departure of the train. On the up platform were the Mayor (Councillor Wright Hunt), the ex-Mayor (Councillor James), Aldermen Wiltshier and Bremner, Mrs Councillor Wells, Councillors Russell, Stone, and McClemens, and a strong contingent of Comrades of the Great War and ex-Service men of Canterbury and district. As the train steamed into the station about 6.20 men bared their heads, and immediately the train came to a standstill soldiers with bayonets fixed alighted and formed a guard in front of the van containing the body, while the Mayor, followed by the other members of the Council, Dr Robinson, representing the Dean and Chapter, Brigadier General Brunner, Mr Robert Gardiner, and ex-Service men, approached the saloon carriage carrying the mass of floral tributes. To these the Mayor added a laurel wreath, bearing the inscription "A tribute from Canterbury". The Canterbury Branch of the Comrades of the Great War deposited another laurel wreath, while other ex-Service men did honour to an unknown comrade with a third tribute.

The simple ceremony concluded, the sentries sloped arms and marched back to their carriage. The guard's whistle sounded, and the train resumed its journey past the thousands of eager citizens, all eager to catch a fleeting glimpse of the coach.

The card attached to the Canterbury wreath bore, in addition to the inscription, the arms of the city, beautifully executed in colours by Alderman R.A. Bremner.

At Faversham a large concourse of the townspeople assembled on the platform. The Corporation was represented by the Mayor (Councillor E. Jenkins) and the Deputy Mayor (Sir Sidney Alexander), and a number of ex-Service men lined up in front of the funeral coach. As the train left buglers of the 3rd Faversham Troop of Boy Scouts sounded the Last Post.

At Sittingbourne due honour was also paid the Unknown Warrior by ex-Service men, and at Chatham, the Army paid its homage, a guard of honour being formed by 25 Royal Engineers and 25 men of the Royal Engineers and 25 men of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, who as the train left presented arms, whilst the Rev Dr Calnan gave the Benediction.

One of the V.Cs. who formed the Guard of Honour at Westminster Abbey on Thursday was Lieut.-Colonel Philip Neame, D.S.O., R.E., youngest son of Mr and Mrs Frederick Neame, of Luton Selling, near Faversham.

Whitstable Times and Herne Bay Herald of Saturday 13 November 1920

“AN UNKNOWN WARRIOR”

WESTMINSTER ABBEY, NOVEMBER 11th, 1920

The following lines by Sir Owen Seaman appeared in Wednesday’s “Punch”:-

Here lies a warrior, he alone
Nameless among the named and known;
None nobler, though by word and deed
Nobly they served their country’s need,
And won their rest by right of worth
Within this storied plot of earth.
Great gifts to her they gave, but he –
He gave his life to keep her free.

East Kent Gazette of Saturday 13th November 1920

FAVERSHAM. THE UNKNOWN DEAD.- There were wonderful manifestations of respect when the train conveying the body of the unknown warrior to London stopped at Faversham Railway Station on Wednesday evening. The Mayor (Councillor E. Jenkins) represented the Corporation, and Sir Sidney Alexander accompanied a large body of ex-Service men who were drawn up on the platform. The 3rd Faversham Troop of Boy Scouts were also present, and the buglers sounded the “Last Post” as the train moved out of the station.

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SITTINGBOURNE. HONOURING THE UNKNOWN DEAD.- The passing of the remains of the Unknown soldier from the battlefields of France on the way to London, for interment in Westminster Abby, was impressively marked at Sittingbourne railway station, on Wednesday evening. There was a large crowd of people at the station to witness the passing of the funeral coach and its escort, and the large crowd stood bare-headed until the train proceeded on its way to London. At Holy Trinity Social Club, at the suggestion of the Rev J.C. Eyre Kidson, complete silence was observed from the time the train entered the station until it passed the end of Dover-street on its journey.



Pathé News Item – silent preview of 5 minutes

You can view this silent footage by following this link:

<https://www.britishpathe.com/video/armistice-day-1920-aka-armistice-day-in-london>

