

Best Wishes to All

More stories and letters from interment in Norway during WWI



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Introduction

In November 2022 my first book, *A Bare Chronicle of Existence – Stories and Letters from Internment in Norway during WW1* was published. It was the culmination of two years of research and writing however even before it was published, I came across more information, more letters and had met more descendants of men who had been on the ill-fated *HMS India*, and I knew that my time with this story hadn't ended. I created a website (<https://www.hmsindia.info>) as a way of dealing with the additional information that kept appearing in my inbox and supplemented it with social media pages but as I promoted the book through podcasts and word of mouth, it became obvious that I had to do something else with all of this additional information. In 2024 I began giving talks to a variety of different groups – philatelic societies, local and family history groups, Probus and U3A groups, basically anyone who was interested – and the interest these talks generated and the enthusiastic response from the audiences convinced me that I should continue with my research. I was also encouraged by the interactions I had with WW1 experts through podcast and magazine interviews. The story of HMS India and her men was so unknown and created so much interest that I couldn't let it go after just one book. So, after finishing work on my second book, *Pearced – A Trueish Story*, I committed myself to more research on the WW1 British internees at Jørstadmoen. I was fortunate to contact more descendants of men with interesting stories as well as finding so many new things through research in Norway and through Norwegian websites and I am so pleased to now present my latest research.

The story of the escapes

The ones who got away

In the three years and three months that sailors from *HMS India* were interned at Jørstadmoen, there was only one successful escape. There were various attempts that are mentioned in the British and Norwegian records and in the Norwegian papers and there was one attempt that almost made it but only two men escaped the camp and did not return or seemingly suffer any consequences for their actions. This chapter covers their story and the only other almost successful but, at times, comical attempt that unravelled at the final hurdle.

Able Seaman John William Boldero Grigson (Jack) and Shipwright Charles Clinton would probably have never known each other had they not both served on *HMS India*. Grigson was born in Cornwall and educated in Leatherhead before joining the RNVR and working as a clerk. Clinton was born in Lanarkshire, Scotland and was training as a draftsman. As on deck crew, they probably got to know each other in the first few months onboard as their roles would have been carried out in similar areas of the ship. The other connection between the two is the method by which they survived the torpedo attack on *HMS India*. Both men were in the minority who secured a place on one of the vessels from the *India* that managed to get loose and then be rowed to safety on the Helligvær Islands. Unbeknownst to them at the time, both Jack and Charles had parents who had written to the Admiralty to inform them that their sons who had been reported missing or drowned were actually alive and well. The Clinton's write on the 19th August that they have received a postcard from their son from the town of Bodo and he tells them "that we are safely landed in Norway. We have been treated very hospitably. Nothing has been too good for us. May be here for a fortnight but don't worry. We land first on an island called Hellevar (sic) and were taken to Mainland on Norwegian gunboat next day.¹" The parents go on to implore the Admiralty "we thought if this news were forwarded to you that perhaps some statement could be made whereby the minds of those less fortunate than ourselves could be relieved and maybe gladdened by this hope." Five days later, Canon William Grigson writes to the admiralty that he has heard from Jack who "speaks of being on the way to internment in Norway. He can hardly have been saved alone, but I know no particulars yet. There may be other anxious relatives who could be consoled. I conjecture that when the enemy recently seized the mails, letters from my son may therefore have been lost." Like the Clintons, Canon Grigson seems to be asking that the news of these men be released to give hope to other relatives. It may have taken longer to identify the men rescued on *India's* boats than those on the Gotland or the Saxon as they were in a different location to the rest of the rescued crew and so there may have been many family members waiting in Britain for news on their loved ones.

I wrote about Jack and Charles' escape in the first book. When first writing and researching, I was able to confirm that they had escaped on bicycle after sharing an arm band that Grigson wore when attending to business assigned to him by Commander Kennedy and that they had ended up in Scotland but I always felt that there was more to the story and was intrigued by the circumstances that led to both men being able to rejoin the war effort seemingly against the Hague Agreement and any agreements between the Norwegian and British authorities.

¹ From files found at the National Archives, Kew, United Kingdom. File numbers listed in references

Jack Grigson was the one who interested me most as he rejoined the war effort in quite a distinctive way and became a celebrated airman very quickly. I was very keen to find a living relative, if I could, and see if I could learn more about Jack's story. The genealogy website route wasn't coming up with much fruit so I continued to research Jack in other ways. Fortunately, his story, and that of his family, is one that is told in newspapers and online reports and so this was a good starting place.

The eldest of seven sons, Jack grew up in Pelynt in Cornwall, the first born of Canon William Shuckforth Grigson and his third wife, Mary Boldero Grigson. At the time of Jack's birth and throughout his whole childhood, Canon Grigson was the attending vicar at St Nonna's in Pelynt as well as being the Canon of Truro Cathedral. Jack was born in January 1893 and was followed by Kenneth in 1895, Wilfred in 1896, Lionel in 1898, Claude in 1900, Aubrey in 1901 and finally, Geoffrey in 1905. The story of the Grigson's became newsworthy as by the end of WW1 three sons had been lost (Lionel, Kenneth and Claude) and by the conclusion of WW2 a further two sons had lost their lives (Jack and Aubrey). Wilfred died in an aircraft accident less than three years after the end of WW2 leaving only Geoffrey. Geoffrey was a writer and poet who gained some notoriety in Britain in the post war years and it was through his daughter, Sophie, that I was able to get in contact with Simon, Jack's son. I organized a meeting with him and knowing that he did not have a lot to add to the story, I decided it was time to pull all of the strings of my research together to present to him and chat about.

Jack joined the RNVR in 1913. News and incidental reports have him involved in the defence of the Siege of Antwerp in August 1914 – "He marched to Ostend, carrying with him several Belgian refugees' children."² He signed on to *HMS India* on the 13th April 1915. The Grigson family were informed that Jack had not survived the sinking of *HMS India* and his brother, Geoffrey, writes of being told by his father of Jack's drowning and his father's reaction to the news – "I have a recollection of his (Canon Grigson) movement, stumbling and uncertain – he told me and my two brothers there that Jack, his first born, had been drowned. I see him now moving in and out of doors, still that stumbling uncertain movement, during the rest of that day, the wateriness and redness of his eyes, as sorrow caught at him again"³. The good news of Jack's survival was perhaps miraculously communicated to his father at the very moment that he was conducting a memorial service for his son. The West Briton & Cornwall Advertiser Truro reported on the 26th Aug 1915 that "a memorial service was being conducted at Pelynt Church on Tuesday for Able Seaman J.W.B Grigson, who was reported drowned on *HMS India*, when a card was put in the hands of the vicar from his son, dated August 16th, eight days after his ship was torpedoed. Able Seaman Grigson was a R. NV reservist, and one of the members of the ill-fated ship *India*". It goes on to say "On the postcard, Able Seaman Grigson states that he is at present at Hellivaer (sic) (a small island about 20 miles to the NW of Bodo), where many of the bodies of the crew of the ship have been washed ashore and since been buried, and is on the way to be interned until the end of the war. Able Seaman Grigson accepted a commission in the flying corps, which he was to have taken during the present week." This final sentence may go some way to explain Jack's movements after his escape.

John William Boldero Grigson's Navy records describe him as 5ft 8 ½ inches with brown hair, blue eyes and a fair complexion.

In September 1915, once the *HMS India* survivors and now internees, are settled at Jørstadmoen, Jack Grigson is mentioned in a document written by the commander of the camp. The Norwegian commander acknowledges that Commander Kennedy is allowed three men from the camp to have unrestricted

² West Briton & Cornwall Advertiser, Truro, 19th Aug 1915 – British Newspapers Archive www.britishnewspapersarchive.co.uk

³ Grigson, Geoffrey (1950). *The Crest on the Silver*. The Cresset Press, London. P73

movement in and out of the camp so that they can work for the Kennedy. The men are Able Seaman John Attwood (to work as a 'printer', I think this might mean writer/scribe/secretary) as well as Private Cyril Rex to be a servant and Jack Grigson to be assistant printer and librarian. The document reads that "they had privately given Commander Kennedy their word of honour, one might call it, as gentleman, not to abuse the freedom shown them." Commander Kennedy had also personally vouched for all three men assuring the Norwegian Authorities of their trustworthiness. A similar document from the same period states that Kennedy had requested "permission for his two lettermen and servant, Cyril Rex, to pass to his office in the old corps commander's residence to help him with writing and office work, etc.". It would appear that it was January when Grigson, along with Leading Seamen Penton, White, Beynon and Ware as well as Cook's Mate Allen, Lance Corporal Phillip and Attwood, were given their seals or crowns to wear to formally acknowledge the permission that had been granted to leave the camp without an accompanying armed guard.

The first public acknowledgement of his escape from camp is written up in the Trondhjems Adresseavis newspaper on the 21st May 1916. The article claims that the information has been sent to them via a private telegram, and they report that Jack Grigson "was wearing civilian clothes under his uniform. He had probably taken this off immediately and then somehow managed to smuggle his uniform into the camp to the non-commissioned officer, who had then passed with the red crown". It goes on to say "all trains have been examined on departure from Kristiania, but no trace of the escapees has yet been found. None of them knew Norwegian and it is therefore likely that they will be caught relatively soon." There are obvious inaccuracies in this report, and it shows that the command at the camp, as well as the papers, had little idea how the men had escaped and where they had gone. The Aftenposten paper of the next day released information on Grigson himself saying "he is of medium height, slender build, has fair hair, a narrow prominent sideburn, a narrow face, and a smooth beard. He also speaks Norwegian quite well (in contradiction to the previous report which stated that neither man knew Norwegian)." The papers kept up a regular commentary on the escape for the next few days and on the 27th May an interesting article appeared in the Buskeruds Amtstidende newspaper that shows a slightly different side to Jack Grigson. The subtitle of the article is "When the caretaker stole kisses from the ladies in the coffee shop" and it begins by explaining that Commander Kennedy spent a significant amount of time in Kristiania (Oslo) and that he had Grigson with him and the young Grigson apparently spent all his free time at the coffee shop. *"The many young girls there had an attraction for him that was impossible to resist. He showed his admiration for such a very shy girl. He especially chose a few, whom he tried to get close to as often as possible, and he showed incredible perseverance. They often showed him the door. But then he made a fool of himself and didn't understand anything. Sometimes it was one or another of the female guests who became the object of his admiration. Either he sat down at the same table and tried to strike up a conversation, or he sat down at the nearest table and stared at his victim. Then it was the Kaffistova guests who were delighted that others also got to know Mr. Grigson. He spoke a fair bit of Norwegian but spoke some Swedish.*

One day he set a record at Kaffistova. A young, beautiful lady came in, and Mr. Grigson was immediately on the spot. He used all his skills to be able to hit on the beauty, but his advances were received coolly. Then the lady went to the phone and called her friend to arrange a time for them to meet. Meanwhile, Grigson crept up behind her. He put his arms around her and gave her a soft kiss on the middle of the mouth, so that it could be heard throughout Kaffistova, and just as clearly at the other end of the telephone line, where his friend was standing.

There was, of course, a great uproar, and one did not quite know what to do, for this was a gross breach of neutrality, which besides the customer caused a breach between two benevolent powers, namely the young lady and her friend at the other end of the line. However, it ended up that nothing was done about it. You got to take Mr. Grigson for not being sane.

Mr Grigson has not yet been to Kaffistova after his escape from Jørstadmoen. But if he comes to Kristiania on his flight, he will hardly be able to pass by Kaffistova."

It is hard to know whether this was a touch sensationalist as the escape had been making the papers on a daily basis and seems to have been creating a high level of interest in Lillehammer and Kristiania.

The reporting became more fact based again late in May when an article on the investigation being held at the internment camp revealed that "nothing has come to light that sheds light on the matter. One has no more hope of seeing the two Englishmen in this country." (Aftenposten 31/05/1916). More light was shed on the matter by the papers in mid-June when two papers reported that Jack Grigson and Charles Clinton had made it to Scotland. They reported that a letter had been sent to a Mr Helleberg, a sports shop owner in Lillehammer. The letter accompanied two bicycles and requested that repairs be made to the bicycles, if required and a further letter was included to be passed on to the owners of the bicycles. This second letter apologising for the rudeness shown in the "borrowing" of the cycles. Aftenposten reported that "As far as the magazine is aware, the Englishmen have not sent any message to their superiors." Three days later Aftenposten updated the story saying, "It now appears, however, that they have made their way across Sweden" and that the bicycles "have arrived here from Stockholm via the Kongsvinger customs station. The escapees have therefore been in Stockholm, and from there they may have obtained a ship's passage to Scotland."

The Norwegian Archives have a series of reports taken from other internees and the Norwegian guards and officials dated from the 24th June 1916. The report note that at the muster that took place at 9pm on the evening of the 19th May 1916, two internees were missing. They had been present at the morning muster and the Norwegian guard had changed at 11am meaning that the thought was that the men had escaped between the hours of 12 midday and 6pm. The report states "The commander of the guard said that telephone calls concerning the incident were made to various bus companies and railway offices in Fåberg, Hamar, Østbanen, and the sheriff in Elverum, the police in Kristiania who were to contact the police in Bergen, Trondhjem and several border towns. Patrols have been dispatched."

Five other internees are questioned about their knowledge of Grigson and Clinton's movements - Able Seaman John Attwood, Boy 1st Class Joseph Magill, Private Cyril Rex, Petty Officer Arthur Tanner and Ordinary Signaller Cyril Wooliford. All men claim to have known nothing about the escape or the plans made prior to it. Wooliford stated, disagreeing with the guards' reports that, "he assumes but is not sure that Grigson left the camp before 11.00 in the morning, Clinton he does not remember seeing on Friday 19/5. It is not excluded that they could be let out from the camp without a crown on their arm." Cyril Rex says he didn't see either man however "He thinks it is very difficult to get out of the gate without a crown on his arm." Tanner informed that "He saw Grigson at the latest at 9.15. He believes that Grigson left shortly after the rollcall. He cannot say whether he had a crown on his arm. He has handed out four civilian suits but is sure that there were no shiny buttons on any of them. Grigson has not worn any of these suits, and he was not present when the suits were issued". All of the internees interviewed commented on their own movements in and out of the camp and the visits that they made to a local café, the soldiers home and walks that they took around the local area. It would appear that Jack also visited those places when he was not working or in the camp.

I suppose the one thing that has always interested me about Jack and Charles Clinton's escape was that they were not found in the UK and returned to the camp. Both men could easily have been found as both signed up for active service again. Jack Grigson's service record, right underneath where it says, 'Interned in Norway', states that a new service certificate was written for him on the 21.7.16 and then by the 20th August he is entered as a Probationary Sub-Lieutenant with the Royal Navy Air Service. Jørstadmoen camp documents give the impression that the blame for the escape is laid solely at the feet of Charles Clinton -

“Since Commander Kennedy has guaranteed that his secretary Grigson had no intention to escape and since Petty Officer Clinton is suspected of having stolen the bicycle during a break-in, it would seem reasonable that the British government, on demand, returns both fugitives.” And then “As it can be proved that Clinton has stolen a bicycle and as Commander Kennedy has vouched for Grigson, the camp commander suggests that there will be made an official request for extradition.” I have not sighted any evidence to prove that Clinton stole the bicycles independently of Grigson and with Grigson being the one in ownership of the armband then he most certainly had his part to play. I really do not think that either is blame free and it seems like a carefully constructed plan that was pulled off. It was a gutsy move to decide to cycle into Sweden. The Swedish border is at least around 200km from the camp as you need to cycle around the mountain ranges behind Lillehammer or, which seems even harder, go over them! Once inside the Swedish border it is then over 400km to Stockholm. Surely this is not a journey that one would take on bicycle unless they were committed to it. I think that both men had worked together to plan the escape and both men carried it out with probably equal amounts of determination. Jack Grigson was robbed of his promotion into the RNAS when he was made an internee and I suspect that he was determined to go back and fulfil this destiny. I do not know Charles Clinton’s motivation but I suspect that he too wished to rejoin the war effort.

My meeting with Simon, Jack’s son, opened some areas of new research for me. The primary document Simon wished to share with me was an “Emergency Certificate of British Nationality” made up for a ‘John Green’. John Green shares the same likeness as Jack Grigson, as seen in the photograph on the document, and shares the same birthday and birthplace as Jack and the fact that the document is framed and hanging on the wall of Simon’s house, it is obvious that Jack had provided a false name for the purposes of remaining unknown – he was a hunted man at this stage. The document was completed in Gothenburg for passage on a ship, ss *Thelma*, on the 30th May, sailing from Gothenburg to Belfast. News reports had the escapees sailing from Stockholm but it appears that they might have been wrong about this. Reports also have the men sailing to Glasgow – this might be correct as using the information supplied to the Liverpool Journal of Commerce, I can see ss *Thelma* sailing into Belfast on the 30th May and I do not think that the journey could be completed in that short a time. She arrives in Glasgow on 8th June and I think that this would fit the dates on Jack’s document. There is every chance that the ship stopped at Belfast and then went to Glasgow (the dates might be a little muddled) and that is how Jack and Charles Clinton ended up in Scotland. This seemed like the most likely thing to me. To confirm this, I searched for information on ss *Thelma* and was fortunate to find her logbooks for 1916 being held at the National Archives in Kew, only 10 minutes from my front door. I put in a request to see them and all of the *HMS India* files again to see if they could shed any more light on this mystery. The ss *Thelma* files were quite enlightening. The logbook covers journeys taken between 14th February 1916 and 9th July 1916 under Master Robert Tait. The journey concerning Jack Grigson and Charles Clinton did leave Gothenburg on the 30th May, as research had suggested, and in the crew lists I found the names John Green and Charles Cott – both men listed as being Ordinary Seaman. I had expected to find the men as passengers but no, they are listed as working onboard the vessel. Their character reports have both men listed as very good for both their ability and for their general conduct. On the 5th June, their names pop up again in comment stating, “Charles Cott and John Green O.S were this day discharged before the superintendent of the Mercantile Marine Office, Belfast.” This is where the trail goes cold again. The letter sent to Mr Helleberg, the sport store owner in Lillehammer, was sent from Glasgow and so it appears that is where the men went after Glasgow, and the letter is dated 6th July meaning that they must not have stayed in Belfast long. Charles Clinton’s parents lived in Glasgow and so that might have been where the men were heading.

Jack’s temporary passport and the ss *Thelma* record also confirm that the Norwegian newspapers seem to have got a few other things wrong. There was an assumption that the men had ridden the bikes into Sweden and then across to Stockholm but it appears that they may have stayed in Norway a bit longer, riding down

the country towards Kongsvinger and then, at some stage, in or along the Swedish border before heading down to Gothenburg, almost 500km from Jørstadmoen!

What happened between Jack arriving in Glasgow and the 20th August when Jack's navy record notes that he is with the RNAS might never be known. The Admiralty must have been aware of his situation and the fact that he had escaped from an internment camp but nothing is written in his records or any of the records I have seen from the admiralty or from the Norwegian authorities. In the long run, what it meant for Jack was that he was able to fulfil his wish to fly planes and he flew them very well. His progression through the RNAS and later through the Royal Airforce was swift and impressive with him being posted to *HMS Ark Royal*, Britain's first aircraft carrier, in August 1917 and within two years being offered a permanent commission, with the rank of Captain.

Jack Grigson was a highly decorated officer. Towards the end of WW1, along with his flying partner, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. The Edinburgh Gazette reported on their achievements just after they received their awards -

“Captain J.W.B Grigson and Lieut Oswald Robert Gayford. These two officers have flown together for a period of twelve months, during which time they participated in a number of bombing raids, carried out a large number of valuable reconnaissance patrols and escort flights in all weathers, by day and night, during the performance of which duties they have brought down hostile aircraft on several occasions. No task is too difficult for these officers.”

The awards kept coming with a first bar being added to his Distinguished Flying Cross in December 1919 and a second bar on 28 October 1921 and then 1920 he was also awarded the Distinguished Service Order.

Jack Grigson became the commanding officer for No. 55 Squadron RAF in 1929, No 2 (Indian Wing) Station, Risalpur in 1935, RAF forces in Palestine and Trans-Jordan in 1940 and RAF forces in Greece on 23 April 1941. He served as Officer Commanding for the Rhodesian Air Training Group in 1943.

His brother, Geoffrey, writes of meeting up with Jack prior to WW2

“In London I saw my eldest brother from time to time in the Air Ministry, half elated, half worried at the prospect of war.

After he was killed later in the war, I learnt second-hand from the officers in a West Country aerodrome how his officers respected him for a cold and unhesitating courage and hated him for a parade-ground discipline, meticulous in all the small points.⁴”

He goes on to recall –

“We walked along the Fowey River. He was still as alert and brisk, but a good deal quieter and more in earnest. He had lost weight and looked well, and his uniform was new, and I admired the gold braid on his hat. But he surprised me by saying “Keep out of it. Go on quill driving. (which was his favourite, half-ironical term for writing). Anyway, keep out of it.” His wife told me afterwards that cold courage or no, the rights and wrongs of air warfare and bombs and civilians had worried him a long time.”

Jack's younger son, Simon, was only five when his father was killed and recalls truly little of the man himself but remembers clearly being told of his father's death by his nanny as he was sitting in the bath. John William Boldero Grigson died in Rhodesia where he was the Air Officer Commanding for the Rhodesian Air Training Group. The plane he was flying crashed at Antelope Mine near Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia. He was buried

⁴ Grigson, Geoffrey (1950) *ibid.*

in Harare Cemetery in Zimbabwe and is remembered on the war memorial in Wherwell, Hampshire and at St John's School, Leatherhead. He was survived by his wife, Mary, and his two young sons.

I have not been able to find a concrete reason as to why Jack and Charles were not forced to return to Norway after their escape. Why they were allowed to rejoin the war effort. The official files from both Norway and Britain speak of making the men return with a document written by the Norwegian Legation on July 25th, 1916, stating –

“As will be seen from the facts, set forth above, Grigson abused the guarantee which had been given for him by the Officer late in command of “India”, and the Royal Norwegian War Office consider it likely that this guarantee has also been abused in order to make Clinton's escape possible.

The Minister has been instructed by his government to submit whether His Britannic Majesty's Government, in view of the circumstances of the case, may not consider it reasonable to send the two escaped sailors back to the internment camp at Lillehammer.

M. Vogt may add that the German Government some time ago decided to send back to Norway an escaped German sailor ex the German auxiliary cruiser ‘Berlin,’ interned at Trondhjem. The man had escaped while out taking walking exercise onshore, which had only been allowed after the German officer in command of the named auxiliary cruiser had given his guarantee in regard to the same.”

There is nothing after this letter. Nothing to explain why the pair of British sailors were not forced to return and I cannot even imagine a reason other than wonder if it was because the men themselves had not signed a document swearing to stay at the camp and not be involved in the war, the same way the men who went on leave did. But even this does not seem to cover it, and I suppose I might never know.



The fake papers Jack Grigson had made up so that he could escape Norway. This now hangs in his son, Simon's, house.

The not so successful escapee

William Oakley, trimmer, was one of the interned sailors on whom I found it very difficult to find any information on during my initial research period. I could not find any official documents on him as he was not Royal Navy, Royal Navy Reserve or Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve and nothing relevant was coming up on

any of the genealogical websites. It was not until early 2024 that William's story began to unfurl and begin a snowball of stories and connections that brought him to life for me.

The highlight and purpose of my trip to Oslo was spending time in the National Archives – a relatively quick train ride and short trudge through the softening snow from my hotel in central Oslo. I had reserved a couple of files that concerned *HMS India* and her men and their being interned in Jørstadmoen. The first file dealt primarily with 1918 and whilst it extended upon some of the research I had already done, there was not anything particularly juicy or surprising until I came across, tucked into the back of the file, two letters handwritten in English. The first in an envelope addressed to Mr Frederick Haddow, Stoker, British Prisoner of War, Kongsvinger Fæstning, Kongsvinger, Norway and the second to John Attwood, The British Internment Camp, Jørstadmoen, Faaberg Station, Norway, both dated for June 1918. Finding more letters has always been a priority of mine and so I read on, eagerly.

The first letter dated 26th June 1918 read –

12 Stratford Place, Camden Square, Camden Town, London

Dear Fred,

No doubt you will be surprised to hear from me, well old pal, as I have just got a month's leave, and I have met McKeever here in London, he brought me with him to your place, and now as I am here, I thought I might drop you a line, I have met all your sisters and brothers and Mother and Father and believe me they are very nice people and your Mother has made me very welcome indeed.

I joined up to fight "not to be interned" so I met a pal and him and I suggested to change places. He belongs to the Australian Forces so I am to get his uniform and he has got mine and he shall go back to Norway soon and I shall go to France next week. I mean to have a go at the big stuff yet! Of course, the boys in Jørstadmoen will laugh when they see the fellow walk into the camp. I shall write to you from France and tell you how I am doing. I hope you have got good ever there old pal. I'll bet you all "some Norwegian now". McKeever is here at present but gee he is a fool, he don't seem to know his own mind 5 minutes. I believe you are coming home soon, gee, this is some town. Plenty of beer and the other thing, I suppose you heard how I was always getting into trouble in Jørstadmoen. Well, I hope I can get a chance to a go at Fritz before they get me and send me back to Norway but they can't do anything because I've sent a fellow in my place. The camp was alright but I really wanted to get to the front and now is my chance. Of course a mans only got to die once. Well, old pal, I won't bore you with all this talk. So cheer up, keep good health, best wishes to the Mrs and the kiddie.

Wishing you the best of luck,

I am your pal,

William H Oakley

The second, written on Australian Red Cross writing paper, told a bit more of the story –

Sutton Very, Wiltshire

No 1 Command

Dear Lofti, (John Attwood)

Just a line hoping to find you and all the boys in the pink. You will see by the above address that I am in camp and I leave here any day for the other side, anyhow by the time you get this I shall be in France. I hope the other fellow arrived safely in Jørstadmoen. I'll explain all about it. I was very keen on have a go at the squarehead and this is my chance. I never joined up to be interned for duration of war.

I met a pal in London and he said he had had enough of it, so I said you take my place and I'll take yours. We changed everything and here I am fighting under his name while he is out there under mine.

Now what I want you to do old pal is to look after all my letters and collect every letter that arrives for me until I send you my permanent address. And also look after all my old letters, and I'll drop you a line very soon.

Excuse this awful scribble as I have got a bonza arm, just been inoculated.

This is a different life to out there. Plenty of work but still I am right out to have a go. I am happy and I'll be more happy when I've got my first fritz.

I also want you to know the name I am fighting under, in case I should get knocked then you can inform my people.

I have taken the fellows name who has taken my place in Jørstadmoen.

Private A.W.V Ronke (3500)

C. Company 37th Battalion

No 1 Command

Sutton Veny, Wilts, England

Regards to all the pige's

Now, like all the internees at this point, William Oakley had signed a declaration swearing that he would not "attempt to escape, neither will I make any arrangements for escaping nor assist anyone else to do so in any way whatsoever" and so these actions would have been taken very seriously by both the Norwegian and British authorities. My first thought, however, was one of amusement, as it appeared to be quite a foolish thing to write of these plans to men who were still incarcerated. Especially to write to Frederick Haddow whom I believed to be in Kongsvinger Fortress, a prison, due to his inability to keep out of trouble. Not only would this mail have had to be passed by the censors, but it may also have been checked coming into the camp and the fortress. I wonder that the mail never reached its intended recipients as it was contained within the Norwegian army files. If the mail reached the prison or the camp before the interloper did then he would be caught immediately.

I was unable to spend much time researching this event whilst I was in Norway but upon my return to London it was the top of my list of things to research. I first started with the newspapers. There was nothing in the British papers, but the Norwegian papers featured several articles on William Oakley, the first appearing in the Lillehammer Tilskuer in October 1917. This initial article gave an indication of how Oakley was handling his time in the internment camp. It speaks of a trial being held in Lillehammer involving two internees, Private John Philip, and Stoker William Oakley. According to the newspaper, the men had behaved violently towards a guard in March of 1917, hitting the guard in the face. Philip was further charged for encouraging other internees to break out. There was also a charge for having insulted the station master at Faaberg. "Phillip was sentenced to 60 days in prison and Oakley to 21 days in prison. Furthermore, both

were fined NOK 15 in street fines. In Oakley's case, the court found that there were extenuating circumstances.”⁵ From what I can tell, Oakley did not serve any time in prison, but Philip did.

The other event that popped up in the Norwegian newspapers in 1917 was the engagement of William H Oakley to “Miss Mary Bloch, Kjobenhavn.” Kjobenhavn is a town in Denmark however further research uncovered that Mary Bloch was working as a dental assistant in the Lillehammer area which would have been how the couple met. It interested me that Oakley would be engaged, potentially married, by 1918, but would still attempt to escape camp and therefore leave his fiancé/wife. I was coming up with more questions than answers when it came to William H Oakley.

The Norwegian newspapers had a gala reporting on the plan between Oakley and Ronke, initially reporting that Oakley had swapped places with his own brother. The Trondhjems Folkesblad newspaper reported on “A funny story from Jørstadmoen – A Furloughed Englishman does not attend, but sends deputy” on the 18th July 1918 -

The interned Britons at Jørstadmoen have annually received permission for a week's stay in England. The leave has been arranged so that the British in turn traveled in smaller parties, and the conditions for the whole arrangement have been that no man evaded the duty to return. So far, the regulations have also been strictly followed. Even if one or the other could have most wanted to become England, the thought of his comrades who would thereby be refused leave, has helped him overcome the temptations. And in this way, the aforementioned permits have been a completely routine affair, to the delight of both the British and their guardians here.

The other day, the most recently laid-off team returned from England, reports "Lillehammer Tilskuer". However, when it was called for muster after arrival, it turned out that a familiar face was missing - Willy Oakley's. It caused some astonishment, but the astonishment was greater, when a completely new man stepped out of the gang and presented himself as the owner of the name.

When the warden, not without reason, had difficulty in being able to identify the new man as the missing Willy Oakley, the newcomer was put behind lock and key for the time being, and in his new quarters he is said to have lifted a little of the mysterious veil that still rested over both him and the missing person. His real name was Albert Oakley, he said, and the brother of the missing man. Three weeks ago, he is said to have met his 'brother' in England, and he was to take over the job at Jørstadmoen, so that Willy could once again enjoy the long-missed freedom, a proposal which presumably out of brotherly love drove Albert to accept. He got Willy's uniform cap and badge as well as papers, and thus the matter should be settled and ready.

The Norwegian authorities are presumably not of that opinion. Albert Oakley? is still in custody at Jørstadmoen and will probably be returned to England in any case. And that Willy will be returned to Jørstadmoen, as he is still before the wrath of the United Kingdoms, is beyond doubt. The British Government, which has once and for all guaranteed the return of its boys, will probably see to it. But there is also the possibility that Willy, who has now had a 3-week head start, has drifted off to more distant places.”

The files kept at the Norwegian National Archives in Oslo reveal the facts of the incident in a few memos sent between the camp, the Norwegian Officials, and the British embassy. The first mention is on the 7th July

⁵ Lillehammer Tilskuer 19th October 1918 - *Two Britons detained for co-judgement -sentenced to 60 and 21 days.*

where it is noted that “reporting from here regarding W. Oakley, who did not return from England with the last group of layoffs, it is reported that the English officer on duty today has produced a verbal notification from Commander Kennedy that the last Englishman to arrive is not, as he himself stated, named Albert Oakley and that he is not the missing Oakley's brother. The person's name shall be: Rook (sic), private belonging to the Australian Forces.” Things go even more awry for Oakley when Ronke proves to be a less than cooperative internee which makes the Norwegian authorities even more intent on returning Oakley to the camp. On the 23 July 1918, a memo from the District Commander is sent to the General Staff of the internment camp and reads -

“The internment Jørstadmoen In connection with previous expeditions no later than 22/7 1918 regarding Oakley internees who have not returned, it is announced that Rouke (sic) of the Australian forces, who has falsely impersonated Oakley after a telephone report from the camp commandant at Jørstadmoen due to internal disciplines and violent behavior, has had to be arrested with arrest and that it is therefore extremely unfortunate for the sake of the other detainees to be kept in the detention camp.

As this person does not belong at all among the detainees, while on the other hand it is probably doubtful whether his behavior is punishable under Norwegian law, so that he can be sent to a civilian prison, the District Commander has temporarily ordered him transferred to Akershus fortress, as the question of his further treatment is submitted to the General Staff for consideration.

In the District Command's opinion, it could almost be that the person in question was handed over to the British authorities after a conference with the English legation or that he was expelled from the country.

The decision is requested to be notified directly to Akershus Fortress' command.”

Further memos speak of the desire to locate Oakley and bring him back to Norway and to return Ronke to the Australian Forces. Researching Ronke resulted in some interesting discoveries and his distant relatives were very helpful in providing me with his photograph and leading me to a confession that I believe was written by Oakley in London and is dated 10th September 1918 but is kept in Ronke's military file.

“Soldier reported to be in Norway as Stoker W.H Oakley

W.H Oakley in his Majesty's Navy who was born S. Melbourne Victoria. Parent's present address 173 Pichee St, Port Melbourne. Was a stoker on one of his Majesty's ships and was torpedoed at 5:50pm on 8th August 1915 and picked up at 9:10pm on the 8th August 1915 by one of his Majesty's trawlers and taken to Narvik in Norway.

“I was interned by the N. Authorities who sent me to the internment camp at Jørstadmoen - Faaberg Station, Norway. I was granted on parole one month's leave, commencing from the 24th May 1918, for the purposes of visiting England. Whilst on leave in England I met a soldier of the A.I.F who was of the 37th Battalion. Pte Ronke informed me that he was being sent to Australia as he was unfit for further general service. We then arranged that we should impersonate each other in such a way that I should assume his identity and he mine. My idea was to go to Australia as Pte Ronke. His, to go to Norway, as Stoker Oakley, as he was tired of soldiering in the A.I.F. Thus, I reported to Hc I Command Depot as 3500 Pte AWV Ronke.

He has returned to the Internment Camp, in Norway, as Stoker Wm Hy Oakley. I have given his pay back to Lieut Fleming of the A.I.F and I have been in No 1 command depot masquerading as Pte Ronke since the 26th June 1918.

Signed before

A.H Aitken, Major

C.O Rt Wing No 1 Command Depot”

I think that I would have been satisfied to leave William Oakley's story there. I could not find any information on the punishment that he received or on his life after the war but was thrilled with being able to uncover the story of his attempted escape and subterfuge. But then I got a message on my website from Anni. I had put out a call for volunteers to assist me in translating the Norwegian files I had been looking through in Oslo and Hamar and Anni messaged me saying that she would be happy to try and assist with the translations and then she dropped the bombshell that she was the great niece of William Oakley, saying that he was Australian and that she had his medals and some photographs. I replied to her email eagerly and we began several weeks of emails with her revealing what she knew about her great uncle. She had never met him but had known his son, Christian William Oakley Bloch or Bloch Oakley – “We always called him Uncle William, and he used Oakley as his last name.” She told me that Mary had gone to Melbourne, Australia in 1919 where she married William and that Mary gave birth to Christian William in March 1922. She sent me a small collection of photographs including a couple of William Oakley during the WW1 years and then some clippings from newspapers outlining his career in vaudeville theatre in the 1920's as a Singing Cartoonist and Lightning Sketcher (crudely defined as an artist who draws, usually caricatures, in lightning speed.) Most interesting to me, though, was the revelation that Anni had a collection of letters that William had written to his son. She kindly offered to send me the box of letters to read and I excitedly accepted her offer. The letters cover a period of about twenty years that begin after WW2 and continue until near Oakley's death around 1970. It would appear that William and Chris (as his father calls him) were estranged for many years and the letters serve to reunite father and son and William seems thrilled to be in touch with his son once more and spends time not only getting to know him and his wife but also filling him in on his father's early life, including his time spent in Norway.

In June 1952, William writes to Chris about an upcoming holiday his son is going on “*So you are going to Norway for your holidays. Have you been to Norway before? If not, I can tell you it is a very pretty place. The scenery is really wonderful. I am sure that you will enjoy it very much. I know Norway very well as I spent about 3 years there as a prisoner of war and I do not regret it because it was there that I met your Ma and if I had not been in Norway I would not have met your Ma and I would not have a wonderful son. A Danish mother and an Australian father is a very fine combination.*

It was on August 8, 1915, that my ship HMS India was torpedoed off the coast of Norway, inside the Arctic circle. After being in the water for 3 hours I and many others were picked up and taken to Narvik. I think about 30 or 40 of our drowned men are buried in one big grave at Narvik. We were there for about a week and then went by a small steamboat down along the coast (through dozens of small islands, it was a lovely trip) to Trondhjem, then by train to Kristiania and then train again to Lillehammer. We disembarked from the train and marched to a camp that was prepared for us at a place called Jørstadmoen and immediately the war was finished we were all sent back to England.

While I was in the POW camp we had a very good soccer team, and I was the only Australian in the team, all the others were English, Irish, Scotch, we had some good trips to different parts of Norway to play against the leading Norwegian teams so that gave me a good opportunity to see many inland towns. It was whilst spending about 3 years in Norway that I learnt to speak a little Norske. I was the goalkeeper in the team. There were about 130 men from the India and later some more men were picked up from an English trawler and came to our camp then we were about 150 and I believe I was the best all round athlete in the camp

especially at boxing, running, shot putt, cricket, and of course the goalie in soccer as I was the only Australian I had to stick up for myself and after I had a few fights with some of the other fellows in the camp they soon found out that I was to be respected and I many myself popular with everyone, especially some of the English officers and Norwegian officers whom I used to teach boxing lessons."

He follows this up a month later with another letter where he asks *"By the way did you go to Lillehammer? I was a prisoner of war in a camp "Faaberg" quite near Lillehammer. I have very fond memories of that quaint little town. It was in Lillehammer that I fell in love for the first time in my life."* And then a week later, in another letter he explains *"I was in Bergen just a few years after (it burnt down) and I went there by train over a very high mountain (Finse) I think it was named. I remember that it had perpetual snow on top and we passed through very many snow tunnels. I have fond memories of the Sandvig museum at Lillehammer. You see we prisoners were at Jørstadmoen for 3 years but one summer the Norwegian government asked for volunteers to work on the new railway line that was proposed to run from Dombås to Trondhjem. About 50 of us went to a place named Hjerkin about 10 miles past Dombås. In those days the train ran from Kristiania to Dombås only. We worked hard with pick and shovel and received good pay. We did it so that it would be a change of environment and freedom.*

But one of the finest trips of my life, was when I sailed in a steamboat from Narvik to Trondhjem along the coast through dozens of islands. It was a great sight and the midnight sun and the Northern Lights is most beautiful and wonderful. Yes, it seems strange that I should help to build that portion of railway when I was a single man and then 30 years later my son should travel over the same line. It is a true saying; wonders will never cease."

In early 1953 he tries to explain to his son what had happened to his marriage to Mary, Chris' mother. *"I have only ever loved one woman in my life and that was your ma, although I did not show it in deeds, as I was young and foolish. I was just a 'big boy' and it was not until your Ma sailed away and took my little baby from me, never to see him again, that is when I realized I had grown up. When your Ma and I parted it was a friendly and mutual parting, your Ma said it would only be for about 6 months. But she knew in her own mind that she never intended to return to me. At first, we wrote regularly and about 12 months later I realized that I had been tricked. Then my letters became fewer and later our correspondence ceased altogether. Then one day I received a letter from your Ma asking for a divorce. I said yes, of course, if it will make you happy. I would not stand in the way of happiness because I was still in love with your Ma and I have never loved another woman since."*

It is years later that William shares with Chris that he had attempted to visit his son but his efforts were thwarted by the threats of his ex-wife – *"But when your Ma heard about me coming to Denmark, she wrote to me and threatened that she would get the police to throw me out of the country. She said she did not wish to see me. That I can assure you it was not her that I wanted to see. OH no, it was my own son that I longed to see once again. I am sure I really do not understand why she will not allow me to see my own son. I can assure you that I did not deserve such a nasty and abusive letter, anyhow, I took it on the chin and did not squeal."* Mary had remarried by this point and was well-known in her part of Denmark as a brave and formidable woman but she obviously felt threatened or unsure about William seeing his son. Luckily for Chris and William, Chris and his wife, Greta, managed to get to Australia on a couple of occasions and so father and son were reunited and forged a caring relationship through their letters and occasional visits. Chris was obviously concerned about his father's financial situation as many letters have William reassuring his son that his war pensions provide enough for him to survive comfortably on. William participated in WW2 but I cannot find him as a registered soldier and suspect he accompanied the troops to supply entertainment. He was still proud of the time he spent serving in WW1 writing – *"Needless to say I do not know the men of the 1st world war because I was in the Royal Navy and I was the only Australian on the warship "India" the remainder of the crew were from the British Isles. So, you know that I am the first*

Australian in history to be made a Prisoner of War by Norway (I do not know if there has been any other Aussie since). When our ship was torpedoed and all the survivors were taken to Norway we were interned, but, as we were a fighting unit of a belligerent country Norway therefore claimed us her Prisoners of War."

William was also acutely aware of his good fortune in surviving a torpedo attack and tells his son in 1965, on August 8th, 50 years after the day *HMS India* sank -

"I am writing a few lines to tell you that today is my "Thanksgiving Day". I have spent most of the day reminiscing. It was on the Sunday Aug 8th, 1915, 50 years ago, that my ship H.M.S India was torpedoed in the North Sea off the coast of Norway, inside the Arctic Circle, and as I was one of the fortunates to be saved, I guess I am truly grateful and I always remember the date. Today many things have been running through my mind that happened that day and of course as you know that I spent 3 years in Norway and learnt much about the country and its people.

When we were rescued and taken into Narvik we were given 24 hours to get out but that was impossible and therefore the Norwegian Government held us as prisoners of war. Do you know that I am the first, one and only Australian to ever been made a prisoner of war by Norway. That is why my detention in Norway was rather unique and made history, therefore Norway was highly honoured to have that distinction. It was while I was in Norway that I met "natures little lady" Mary. I hope that you will not think that I am too sentimental. I thought I would tell you what the 8th August means to me."

In 1966 he alludes to the relationship he formed with Mary in Norway writing *"It gives me the greatest joy to send your Ma, a small gift because I could never repay her for the kind actions and sacrifices, she did for me in Norway, Denmark and Australia. I remember once when I was in the camp at Jørstadmoen Norway. Your Ma procured some maps so that I might escape and in Denmark your Ma was so very kind to me. I cannot forget the hundreds of kind things for which I can never repay."* I wish I knew more about Mary's thoughts on William's escape attempt and whether he wrote to her the way he wrote to his campmates about his brilliant but truly flawed plan. If she had tried to help him escape at another stage then I can only assume that she would have been in support of him trying another method.

William provides his son, and me, a lovely summation of his character in a letter he writes in 1967 – *"Yes! I have worked in the movies and did quite a bit of stage work but I was never a star. I was good at athletics and boxing but was never a champion. I also took part as a front-line service man in two wars but I was never a hero. I also painted many nice pictures in my younger days but I was never a 'Rembrandt' or a 'Reubens'. I have always been just a happy-go-lucky fellow and laughed in the face of adversity."*

I will admit to having developed a real affection for William Harold Oakley! I still have so many questions, I would love to know why he ended up serving on a British Navy ship and not an Australian one. I think he travelled to London in 1910 but I am not sure on this and so would like to uncover this mystery. He also never really writes of his bad boy behaviour in the camp or his identity swap with Ronke but the full details of this might have to remain unknown. I have also not been able to find a marriage date for William and Mary or a birthdate for Chris however having the good fortune to have Anni contact me, I feel I now have a good idea of William and I am so glad that I got to posthumously meet him.

I cannot leave this, though, without revealing a bit about Albert William Victor Ronke. As I mentioned earlier, it was quite easy locating Ronke on the genealogy websites. He has a distinctive name and descendants who have also put in the hard yards researching him and have helpfully put much of that research onto the relevant sites. I believe that Oakley and Ronke knew each other or know of each other prior to WW1. Oakley writes in his letters to Lofti and Haddow that he has met a "pal" who is prepared to make the swap with him. I do not think he would use a familiar term like this if he was talking about a stranger. It would appear that both men grew up in the southern suburbs of Melbourne so it does not seem a stretch that they

were 'pals. The records show Ronke seems to have been a bit of a troublemaker whilst serving in WW1. He was very young when he enlisted, maybe as young as 16, and so this may be attributed to immaturity but he was court martialled in early 1918 for insubordination and not attending marshalling. He suffered a period of illness prior to his swap with Oakley spending time in hospital in both France and England being treated for "Trench Fever". His records reveal a letter written by a relative asking information from the armed forces as to the location of Ronke as they understood that he was in Guildford hospital but had received a letter "saying Ronke was a Prisoner of War in Norway" and that they "cannot understand why he should be in Norway unless he is an absentee." The letter written in reply states that they "beg to inform you that Private Ronke is indeed interned in Norway. After his illness, he was sent to No 1 Command Depot, Sutton Verny, and whilst there met a stoker, an Australian, who was on parole from an internment camp in Norway. Your brother-in-law not wishing to be sent back to Australia, as he understood was to be the case, exchanged identities with this stoker and returned to the internment camp in Norway in his place. The exchange was found out and the stoker has confessed.

Further information we have been unable to get but I expect your brother-in-law will be brought back to England."

From what I can tell, Ronke was returned to Britain and then went back to Australia and Oakley was returned to Norway before he too went back to Australia. I have no idea as to whether the two of them were ever in contact again. Ronke did not seem to settle easily back into civilian life. He married Ellen Morgan in 1921 and in September 1923 Ellen gave birth to a son. By late December 1923, Ronke was in the local Melbourne news as Ellen had taken him to court seeking maintenance for her and their son. The papers report that he was a tramways employee and whilst he was a "young, well-dressed man" he was frequently late for work as he was prone to "lose a bit of time by sleeping in⁶." The next we see of Ronke he is in Sydney where he has married Kathleen after the birth of another son in 1925. Several years later his name appears in the New South Wales Police Gazette where it is announced that a warrant has been issued "by the Children's Court Bench for the arrest of Albert William Victor Ronke, charged with wife desertion. He is 27 years of age, 6 feet high, slim build, bronze complexion, dark brown hair, blue eyes, clean shaved; a motor driver. "⁷ This warrant is cancelled in August 1928 and replaced with an order for him to pay support to both his wife and his child.

Things then seem to settle down for Ronke with no more newspaper or gazette reports and then next we see of him he has moved to Queensland and appears to have married again. He served in WW2 and died in 1988, his life seeming to become less troubled as he got older.

The William Oakley/Albert Ronke story is the kind of story a researcher and writer like me hopes for. It is quirky with interesting characters and made even more enjoyable as I was able to contact relatives of both of the men and get an idea of what they were like as living humans not as just dates and names on a page. Unfortunately, it is not always this easy!

⁶ Found on <https://www.trove.nla.gov.au>. - Truth, 13 January 1924

⁷ Found on <https://www.trove.nla.gov.au>. - Police Gazette 8 February 1928



A photograph of Ronke, I suspect from WW1.



From his family archives, Willy Oakley with *HMS India* life preserver ring (above) and a collection of medals and photos (left). Below advertisement for Willy's services after WW1.



"With or without offence to friends or foes,
We sketch the world exactly as it goes."

Hopping & Oakley

Australia's Singing Cartoonists
AND
Lightning Sketch Artists.

An Original Act.

OPEN FOR ENGAGEMENT,
All coms. Hawket.



BERT HOPPING



WILL OAKLEY

The saddest story

John Thomas Wells

Able Seaman John Thomas Wells appears to have been a career sailor. Born in Islington in 1879 to labourer George and his wife Sarah, John spent his early years in Islington before the young family moved to Kent to take a residence in Margate. John joined the Navy in February 1896 at the age of seventeen. His records describe him as 5ft 6 ½ with light brown hair, grey eyes and a fair complexion. He served for around 12 years with the 1901 census recording him as being onboard in Malta at the age of 21. He left service in 1909 but whilst serving in the navy had found the time to marry Fanny and father a little girl, Rose. John Thomas Wells rejoined the Royal Navy in 1914 after the beginning of the war and joined the crew of *HMS India* in April of 1915. I know nothing of John's first couple of years in the internment camp. He is occasionally mentioned in the Norwegian records for going on *landlege* which may mean going to the dentist or mean partaking in outdoors work but he seems to have spent his time in camp quietly and not making trouble.

It is hard to know how long this quiet behaviour was hiding deeper problems for John Thomas Wells. Both British and Norwegian records noted that in July 1917 he was taken to Prestestæter Asylum in Gjøvik. In his letter of July 19, 1917, Arnold writes that "Last Sunday one man started to go mad. A day later he turned into a raving homicidal maniac and was taken to Gjøvik Asylum in a motor car. It shows what can be done." Records from the Asylum show that John was admitted on July 17th accompanied by a Norwegian guard and Able Seaman Samuel Summerfield who was close in age to John and may have been one of his closest acquaintances in the internment camp. I was always aware that John had died whilst in the asylum and had assumed (and wrote this in my first book) that I thought he had taken his own life. It has only been since publishing and undertaking more research, that I have come up with the still tragic truth but a correction that he did not take his own life. His Navy file has him dying of pneumonia and his WW1 Casualties record has him listed as dying from disease. It took me four years but I finally was able to work out how to access the records from the Asylum. After my visit to Norway in March 2024 I began to better understand how to access the records in Norway and if I could not find them myself then I was better able to work out who to ask to help me. I decided to search for the local library in Gjøvik and I after finding an email address, I sent an email asking if anyone could help me find the archives for Prestestæter Asylum. Within a day I had a reply supplying me with an email address for a local archive as well as a PDF of a file concerning the records of the asylum. They were quick to point out that they could not guarantee the information I wanted would be either still there or accessible as most of the records were listed as restricted. Not wishing to give up at this point, I emailed the archives with a list of the files that I thought might be relevant. I did not have to wait long for a reply email with an exciting attachment. The lovely people at the archives had not only found files that were relevant but they had gone ahead and translated them before they sent them over. I am continually impressed and so grateful for the kindness and helpfulness of the Norwegian archivists and librarians I have come in contact with.

I have decided to include the full record as it was sent to me as I think it most accurately describes the torment suffered by poor John Thomas Wells.

July 18.

Arrived yesterday, accompanied by medical corporal Gustavsen and his comrade Sumerfuld (sic) by car from Jørstadmoen. Pacing up and down the office completely confused. Talking incessantly, gesticulating, but without it being possible to understand his statements, even his companion does not understand anything. Did not say goodbye to those who followed him.

Was put on Y.S.2, but stood up all the time, and had to be put to bed all at once. Gradually he calmed down and fell asleep for a couple of hours. Have eaten very little.

July 27

Still been confused. Unable to lie in bed and has been given daily medicine (unknown name of the medicine). Have occasionally been able to sleep up to 10 hours at a time. Due to unrest, he had to be moved to another ward. Constantly confused, but there is no sense in what he says. Can not gather his attention enough to answer questions. Keeps clean and tidy. Accidentally broke a window in the door, but that was because he knocked a mug into the window.

Strong body, light yellow hair, blue eyes, pretty good teeth. Over lung heart abdomen normal conditions. Vibrant patellar reflexes, normal urine. So far not possible to do medical examinations.

His friend says that he has been ill for a month, and during that time has had poor sleep. For the last three days, he has not slept, and talked violently about his participation in the war.

July 31.

Still totally confused. Walks around most of the day talking to himself and with facts that suggest he is in war battles. Clenching his fists and looking menacing while constantly talking to himself. Gathers the bedclothes and carries them from one corner of the room to the other. Is otherwise kind and pleasant and never aggressive towards the staff. Normal sleep after medication but can occasionally go Clean.

August 24.

There is no change in his condition. Walks around the room all day and is constantly moving the bedclothes while constantly talking to himself. Is sometimes..... And again busy with facts that indicate that he is in war battles, in a defensive position with clenched fists. After several days of insomnia despite the use of sleeping pills, he can have periods of sleep of up to 10 - 12 hours. A week ago it was The last few days he is feeling better and doesn't look too bad. Always clean. In his state of confusion he can never answer any questions.

September 10

Lately he has become more calm. He doesn't talk to himself all the time and doesn't mess with the bedclothes as much. But is just as confused and disoriented. Has been moved to another bed post in the last few days, but has also been moved back. Now eating better and also looking much better. Mostly clean. Has always been kind. Sleep very uneven.

October 5

Remains in the ward where he is still completely confused and disoriented. Since his admission, he has not been able to give a single proper answer. Always do the same with the bedclothes. Constantly continues to talk to himself. Sometimes falls to rest and can lie still for up to a day with many hours of natural sleep. Usually eats his food but has to be helped as he doesn't give himself enough time to eat properly. Always clean.

October 12.

Has been lying quite quietly in bed for the last two days but looks very composed. Is clearly collapsing. Must have help to eat and drink. Currently wetting the bed.

October 15

His condition is much worse. More and more powerless. Don't eat and drink too much, mainly milk and cocoa. Have been given medicine (not sure of name) every two hours for the last few days. Otherwise completely confused and without any understanding of what is going on.

Yesterday, a meeting was held with divisional doctor Stenberg from Kristiania, doctor Konhow at the internment camp at Jørstadmoen and the director at Presteæter, P. Hanstuen, on behalf of the sanitary unit, to decide whether the patient could be sent home. It was decided that it was not impossible. But as the situation is at the moment, it seems that it was not possible.

On physical examination, sounds are heard from the back of the lungs. pulse about 80.

October 20

Hasn't been worse in the last few days, not quite as weak and has also managed to eat and drink more. Above both tubera ischi the skin is red and inflamed. Sounds are heard at the back of both lungs.

October 22

Condition no worse. Temperature 38. Has a lot of coughing and some shortness of breath. Over the course of the evening, the condition worsened, and at 4 o'clock on the night of the 22nd, death occurred.

Died 21 October

At the autopsy on 23 October, nothing abnormal could be detected in the macroscopic examination of the brain, the cerebral arteries possibly somewhat stiffer and somewhat... In the lower lobe of the left lung, the lung tissue calcified, it sinks in water. A kind of foam can be squeezed out. In the right lower lobe, the same can be detected, but to a lesser extent. Abdominal organs nothing abnormal. Cause mortis: Pneumonia hyposttica.⁸

My take on John's death was that his mental health issues had already started to impact upon his physical health – he had not been sleeping or eating well – and I don't think he was able to fight the pneumonia when it struck. Perhaps, also, his poor communication meant that he had not reported any of the early symptoms to doctors and so the treatment that was started did not begin early enough. I was wrong in thinking that John Thomas Wells had taken his own life, but I do think that the mental illness he was suffering from was, if not caused, then totally exacerbated by his internment. And I believe it contributed to his death. He left behind a wife and a daughter and his death from natural causes is no less the tragic or sad.

The story of the boys from room 10 and their mates

The first six months in camp proved to be quite challenging for a small but tempestuous group of the *HMS India* crew – primarily they were men who had worked below decks as fireman, stokers and trimmers and who were all roomed together at Jørstadmoen in room 10 (as well as a few others from other rooms). It did not take long for this small group of men to tire of their enforced internment and to start to attempt escapes and to push the boundaries of acceptable behaviour.

The troublesome occupants of room 10 were firemen Arthur Glibbery, Sidney Hawes, Edward McKeever, John McKinnon and trimmers William Oakley, Frederick Haddow, James Connor and George Barber. Those eight men along with trimmer William Cosgrove and fireman Edwin Miller from room 8 and plumber Charles

⁸ Files ARK/00100 from Presteseter Sykehus can be found at the Innlandet fylkesarkiv/AKA Opplandene (Inlandet County Archive)

Anderson and Private John Philip from room 6 and head fireman William Price from room 7 were the men who refused to settle nicely into interned life.

Little is documented in the files found in the UK archives however the Norwegian archives and newspapers document the actions and activities of the internees in more detail. The first sign of trouble occurs around two months after the men had arrived in Jørstadmoen. The official files reveal that “W. Cosgrove, Edw. McKeever and James Connor were “confined to barracks” as they had tried to escape.” This was reported on the 27th October 1915. The report goes on to mention that “Their behaviour has subsequently been good, so it is now proposed that the ban be lifted.” Edward McKeever was a career sailor who had served in the navy from 1904-1910 and joined the merchant navy after WW1 was ended. It would appear that McKeever’s behaviour during his initial period as a naval man left some to be desired as his record states that he was discharged “as he is an habitual offender owing to the effects of drink.” The other two men are more elusive and I have not been able to find out much about them. The Norwegian newspapers reported on the 26th October in an article titled ‘Three English sailors - Escape from Jørstadmoen’ that an inspector at Lillehammer railway station was inspecting the wagons of a stationary train at 1:30am and found three escaped internees – “They were all in civilian clothes, and it was clearly their intention to try and escape.” The station staff promptly attempted to contact the police but having no response, the three escapees took the opportunity to leave the station and were followed by the station attendant until they managed to shake him. The paper goes on to surmise how the escape took place – “It is also not known how the escape was done. As previously mentioned in 'Aftenposten', a three-metre-high barbed wire fence has been erected around the internment site. It is considered impossible that the sailors could have come over this fence, but on the other hand, the watch commander believes that they could possibly have crawled under the fence. There are seven guard posts at night, and the entire square is illuminated with lux lamps. Presumably, the vagrants must have looked out at an opportune moment anyway and snuck under the fence.” The article reports that many internees had been in Lillehammer on the day of the escape, but all had been accounted for in the evenings marshalling so it assumed that the men escaped under a fence. Two days later the same paper reports on the capture of the men – “The fugitives from Jørstadmoen caught up in Lillehammer this afternoon. It was a police constable who took them near the railway station, and from there they were taken to the detention centre. The guard duty at Jørstadmoen was notified and after a couple of hours the lieutenant on duty came with three privates to collect them. They had to march the way from Lillehammer to Jørstadmoen.” It is unclear how quickly the capture took place but once back in the camp, they were confined to barracks until further notice.

The next reports of trouble involved a larger group of men and drunkenness and smuggled alcohol. The official log shows on the 29th December 1915 that McKeever, Connor and Cosgrove are once again involved but this time are joined by Sidney Hawes, John McKinnon, George Barber, Arthur Glibbery and Frederick Haddow. Once again, most of these men are difficult to research. Little or no records were kept on the men who worked in the bowels of the ship and many of them were born, grew up and worked in poorer areas where records were not adhered to or kept as well as those of the wealthier, more educated men who were onboard *HMS India*. The Norwegian records note how old each man was when he was interned and, in many cases, what his occupation was prior to the war. In the British records it is sometimes possible to find the medal records of the men who were trimmers or firemen and if you visit the National Archives and look at the original records you will find lists of those on board but in most cases, and certainly digitally, there is little evidence they were on the ships at all. In any case, these eight men and their drunken exploits are mentioned in several reports. Unlike later events, this first instance of drunkenness occurred in the internment camp meaning that there was also then the challenge of working out who had smuggled illicit alcohol in. It would appear that McKinnon, Glibbery and Barber were also fighting and this eventuated in McKinnon being arrested. On the 4th January it is reported that plumber Charles Anderson is arrested for

supplying the alcohol on the 29th December but why McKinnon was arrested is not clear however his name appears regularly in camp reports and in most cases, it is related to drunkenness or poor behaviour.

Mid-March 1916 marks the beginning of a spate of bad behaviour from a small group of men. I wonder if the first long, Norwegian winter was getting to them and they were simply bored and on their weekly visits to Lillehammer they just could not resist the temptation of having a bit of a drink. On the 15th March, Edwin Miller and George Barber were punished for drunkenness during a visit to Lillehammer. And then the following week, McKinnon, McKeever and Steward Samuel Perry were pulled up for their public drunken behaviour. They were punished with being confined to barracks and not be allowed to visit Lillehammer again until further notice.

Perhaps the most notoriously badly behaved crewman was trimmer Frederick Arthur Haddow. Unlike many of the other trimmers, Haddow's unusual name has made him easier to research. Born in 1894 in Islington to engineer John and his wife Alexandra, Frederick was the third of ten children. In the 1911 census he is listed as working in printing but there are no records of him signing up for service for WW1 and I can only assume that this is because he was a 'lowly' trimmer. Fred (as he is later referred to by other crew) is first mentioned for his drunken behaviour in late 1915 but it is an event in early 1916 that propels him into the position of potential top bad boy of the Jørstadmoen camp. The Norwegian records note that "The oldest serving petty officer of the detainees, A. Tanner, reported on the morning of 28/1 that he had been threatened and insulted by sailor No. 91 F. D. Haddow. Haddow was then arrested. During the arrest he behaved violently and had to be threatened with the revolver. He is being held in custody until further orders." It goes on to "suggest that he should be severely punished and to be placed outside the internment camp in the future" and that Fred had "also previously behaved cheatingly, and this report strongly emphasizes the necessity of a severe punishment or that the person in question be removed from the camp." I have no idea as to what the reported cheating was but that could be a term that has been lost in translation. There seemed to be a united opinion that Haddow was a bad influence on other internees and that it would be best to move him out of the camp to a jail closer to Kristiania. A further report explains the incident in more detail –

Senior Petty Officer A. Tanner (from *HMS India*) reported this morning that he had been reviled and seriously threatened by No. 91 F. A. Haddow. The reason was that Tanner had confiscated a saw from Haddow. Haddow had broken into the camp's woodshed and stolen the saw. Tanner explained that Haddow had behaved in such manner that his life could be in danger.

It was then decided to arrest Haddow. The undersigned accompanied by lieutenant Bjørstad, sergeant Wettnen and a couple of men went in. During the arrest, Haddow became violent and had to be threatened with the revolver to get him to move. According to today's telephone conversation, he will be held in custody until further notice.

The consequence of Haddow's outburst was not only arrest but charges being laid and a court case to decide upon his fate. His previous poor behaviour contributed to the feeling that he should be removed from the camp and interned at Kongsvinger fortress. The case was held in court in Lillehammer in early March 1916 and whilst it was decided that no criminal charges would be held against Frederick Haddow, he would be removed from camp and the local area immediately and was transported to Kongsvinger fortress on the 9th under guard of police officer Larsen. A part of the internment at Kongsvinger was that Haddow would not be "allowed to correspond with his comrades

at Jørstadmoen” and that any letters sent by him would be held by Commander Kennedy or any other English officer on duty.⁹

The Norwegian newspapers were quick to report on the disturbance at the internee camp and *Aftenposten* picked up the story for the second time on the 14 March 1916. They write that Haddow “has been very difficult to deal with, a disturbing element, so several times he has been hostile to his superiors and sought to instigate a spectacle.” They go on to describe the incident thus –

One day in January, a couple of the interned Englishmen had gotten hold of some tool, which they were not allowed to have. One of the English non-commissioned officers then came and took the tools from them; including the defendant scolded the non-commissioned officer. The non-commissioned officer then turned to the head of detention, Captain Ellingsen, with a request that the fireman had to block the arrestee, as he was dangerous to the general safety of the camp. The request was complied with and Sergeant Vetlesen with three men was sent up to the barracks to arrest the man.

Haddow then stood outside on the front porch, engaged in shoveling snow. When he caught sight of the sergeant and his men, he threw down the snow shovel and ran into the barracks, where he wriggled his sweater off. The sergeant, who got the impression that the man wanted to defend himself, ran after him with a loaded revolver in his hand. Inside the barracks, the defendant came towards the sergeant with a very telling expression and with his hands in front of him, but when he saw the revolver, he calmed down, stopped and looked around, as if he wanted to seek help from the other soldiers. But these called him a fool and asked him to surrender, which he did.

In the co-jury, the defendant admitted his behaviour but did not believe that he had done anything illegal, although he admitted that he would probably have been punished if he had behaved in the same way on board "*India*".

So, Frederick Haddow spent the rest of his internment in Kongsvinger but there is some interesting information about his time there. In the early days he was guarded closely by three soldiers but as time went on, he was granted small amounts of freedom until he was eventually allowed a few hours each week to go for a walk without a guard. On the 6th February 1916, the *Hedemarkens Amstidende* newspaper announced the engagement between ‘Frederick Haddow the Englishman interned at the fort and Marie Rilson, Kongsvinger.’ Less than a year later prison records note that Haddow requested leave so that he could go to Kristiania to marry Marie and then after this he settled back in Kongsvinger and worked at the fortress. It is unclear in the records as to whether he was still living as a prisoner/internee, but the letter William Oakley wrote to him to tell of his escape was addressed to ‘Mr. Fred Haddow, Stoker, British Prisoner of War, Kongsvinger Fæstning’ so my thinking is that he was.

After the war, Fred took his Norwegian bride and young son, Frederick, born sometime in 1918 in Kongsvinger, back to London where they set up home in the inner northern suburbs of London. They had two more children – Ivy born in 1922 and then Marie born in 1936. The 1921 census has Frederick working as a handyman and the 1939 register has him living in the same area, working as a printer’s warehouseman and Marie at home. All three children are still at home with their parents, with 21-year-old Frederick working as a railway porter and 18-year-old Ivy working as a lady’s tailor assistant.

⁹ These reports are found in the logbooks and files kept at the Hamar Archives

Frederick Haddow lived a long life based in Islington until dying at the age of 73 in 1967. Marie outlived him by eight years.

Unfortunately removing Frederick Haddow from the camp did not provide the warning to the other prisoners that the Norwegian authorities were hoping for. Fireman Felice Spiteri was jailed for fourteen days for disobeying a guard during a ski trip. James Connor, Private Norman Bolton, and fireman Edwin Miller were punished with no more visits to Lillehammer after drunken behaviour in the town. These instances were all reported in the official logbook, but the papers also reported on other instances. The Aftenposten reported, in a lengthy article written in July 1916 that both the guards and the internees were drunk –

Embarrassing scenes are not infrequently witnessed when the detained English sailors on Jørstadmoen are on a visit to Lillehammer with their Norwegian guard. Often there is drinking, - and you have sometimes witnessed the not only embarrassing, but downright scandalous situation, that the guard has been as drunk as those who were supposed to be guarding! It is not exactly to the credit of the uniform.

We do not know how far the guard's authority goes towards the detainees it is supposed to look after; but the guard has often given the impression of being impermissibly lax. As a rule, the ever-changing guards do not understand the English's language either, and that must naturally make it difficult for the Norwegian guards to behave. And that speaks volumes for the guard's apology.

We have been told that the English sailors on Jørstadmoen are for the most part sailors from the London docks, who are probably used to a little of everything, and when they are affected by alcohol, they do not put up with any arguments.

Then there will be, as on Thursday - and as so often before - 'nausea in the streets', and there will always be some Norwegian civilian who is all too willing to breathe fire.

Three of the Englishmen, who were in town on Monday, accompanied by a Norwegian sergeant and a soldier, were particularly difficult to deal with and caused the guard much trouble. Perhaps they were not really that drunk; but they were violent in their speech and swore a good desire to 'box'."

"At the railway station, the sailors narrowed down quite a few people outside the compartment, they had taken their seats together with several of their comrades. For the spectators, the situation had a certain tension, as a Norwegian civilian of some appearance placed himself just outside the passenger compartment window and 'challenged' the Englishman, a challenge the Englishman was obviously keen to follow, with which he however limited himself to answer with that – a spit in the civilian's face.

When the English sailors have not been drinking, there is nothing to say about their behavior in the city. But even if those who appear to be drunk are few in number, they are always the most noticed.

The police chief, with whom we had a conversation, stated that they cannot be allowed to have these scenes in the city's streets. He thought that it was necessary to ensure that spirits were not served to English sailors when they were in town.

It seems that it is required that something be done in that direction - or even deny those who cannot fit in, permission to the city.

And we believe that the English uniform just as much as the Norwegian one deserves the respect when it is worn."

It was not just outside of the camp that trouble was seen as escape attempts were also made on a semi-regular basis. The Express reported in July 1916 that a couple of men had plans to dig their way out of the camp but were disturbed by a guard and fled back to their barracks. Over a year later, in September 1917, the newspaper Dagbladet reported another attempted escape by two unnamed internees –

“On 30 June this year, two of the prisoners of war interned at Jørstadmoen tried to escape, while they were furloughed to a Lillehammer. They returned you voluntarily, when they found the mountains so steep that they could not get over them.

For their attempted escape, they were both ordered to 30 days' custody, but refused to accept it, without giving any explanation or justification for this. They were therefore prosecuted by court-martial, which is being held here in the city today. The two defendants were produced under guard from Jørstadmoen and pleaded guilty. It was their intention to see if they could get over to Sweden or from there continue home, but they immediately faced so many difficulties that they gave up the attempt and decided to return.”

The two men were sentenced to time in prison and on return to the camp had their privileges removed and were not allowed to visit Lillehammer or leave the camp. Their failed attempt did not dissuade two more internees who attempted escape again at the end of September 1917 and got as far as Gjøvik before being tracked down by the police and returned to Jørstadmoen camp.

A few weeks later more poor behaviour was being reported in the press but this time the accused men were named as their actions had led to them being arrested and taken to court. They were charged with violence towards a guard and one of them also was charged with attempting to incite other internees to violence. Fireman William Oakley had already become known for drunkenness and less than a year later attempted the swap with another Australian soldier but Private John Philip, who may have indulged in some bad behaviour, had until this report gone unnoticed. This conduct, however, was taken very seriously and seemed to result in him being sent to Kongsvinger to be imprisoned there for a period.

Of all the men whose exploits resulted in admonition of one form or another, quite a few of them became involved with local women. As mentioned earlier, Frederick Haddow married Marie Nilson and William Oakley married Mary Bloch. Norman Bolton married Nora Iverson and had a son, Sven. Edwin Miller was reported to have become engaged to Anna Roed and John Philip was supposedly engaged to Asta Nyhus. My thorough research is yet to confirm the last two relationships and I certainly have not found any marriage records.

The unfortunate lack of records for 1917 means that I do not have a clear idea of how the men of room 10 (and some from the few other rooms mentioned) behaved over time, whether they settled or not but there are reports of both William Price (head fireman) and Charles Temple (fireman) both being imprisoned for short periods for drunkenness. Due to the difficulty in researching all these men, I also do not have a clear idea of what happened to most of them but there are a few that I have been able to trace.

James Connor was perhaps saved from further bad behaviour by being invalided home in mid-August 1916 and John McKinnon was invalided home less than a month after that. I have traced Arthur Glibbery to the Dreadnought Seaman's Hospital in 1920 but have lost track of him from that point. I would love to know more about the experiences of the men who made up the 'black gang' (named due to the soot that was constantly coating them) as fireman, stokers and trimmers were known. Their life on the ship would have been rough, hot and dirty and their time in internment was challenging and I wonder if they were at a loss as

to how to fill their time. I hope that at some stage I will be able to contact a descendant of one of these men and that they may have shared a bit about their experience. ¹⁰



Some of the room 10 boys and their friends – above from left to right Arthur Glibbery, Sidney Hawes, Edward McKeever, James Connor and George Barber. And below Charles Anderson and William Cosgrove/Cosgree



¹⁰ All photographs of with numbers on them are from Merchant Navy registration cards made post-WW1. These can all be found through the National Archives website.

The story of internment- A timeline through the eyes and pens of the Norwegian Newspapers¹¹

- 13 August 1915 Stholms Dagblad – most papers reported the facts about the sinking of *HMS India* as they came in, but this Swedish article went a bit further. It firstly questions the neutrality of Norway inferring that if war events are occurring this close to a neutral country, then “that neutrality is sick.” The article reports that the “Gotaland” rescued 88 crew and that 3 died on the passage from the wreck site to Narvik. The primary difference between this article and most of the others is that the writer got to speak to eyewitness from the Gotaland and he relays what the second mate saw when coming upon the scene of the sinking ‘*India*’

"It was an indescribable and horrible sight," recounted Mr. Goransson, "to see these poor people fighting for their lives out there in the cold blizzards. Their wails and wails were terrifying". He goes on to report that everything was in “bad shape’ and that some of the men were trying to prevent the rescue of others and I think this is because they had not yet determined the that their rescuers were to be trusted. Goransson relates to the journalist that “Twenty men stood on a raft - it was not the least danger to them, but they were as if mad with fright. Only a small group of five men, who also managed to get on board a raft, kept their humor and sang "It's a long way to Tipperary."". He then relates that many of ‘*India's*’ men were so exhausted or badly injured that they had to be hoisted aboard and the many were down to their ‘intimate clothes. The cold water and/pr the trauma had affected some who acted “as if they were insane, staring ahead with rigid eyes and mumbling incoherent words.” After a drop of Swedish whiskey and hospitality, some men found themselves recovering enough to curse “the damned Germans.” The Gotaland was faced with the challenge of clothing some of the men had little clothing on when they ‘fished them out.”

The journalist then reports on an interview with one of the rescued men, Fireman William Daly.

“In one of the crew's cabins I meet one of the wounded, William Daly, whose arm had just been plastered.

"It's bad," He answers when I ask how he is. “The torpedoing came like a bolt from the blue," he explains. "No one had any idea that a German U-Bat was in the vicinity. '*India*' was traveling at 16 knots when torpedoed and the torpedoes hit the engines exploded, making all scuttling impossible. Several people were thrown overboard by the explosion - including I. The cruiser's lifeboats were immediately deployed but owing to the strong speed with which the '*India*' shot forward, the lifeboats filled with water and sank almost instantly.”

The article moves on to point out that the Gotaland had been the victim of *HMS India's* searches more than once, in fact, at least five times and had been driven to Kirkwall twice. It is noted that when tragedy struck, all grievances were set aside and the crew of the Gotaland worked hard to save as many men as they could.

-16 August 1915 Trondhjems

The rescued crews from '*India*' arrived here in the city at 7 o'clock this afternoon with the fast-route ship 'Polarlys'. There was a total of 12 officers, 23 non-commissioned officers and about 70 privates. They were received on the quay by a cavalry unit from Rindleiret, which was supposed to act as a guard. After the English had eaten until evening in the steam kitchen, the journey continued at 9 am with an extra train to Hamar. From there, the trip continues to Jørstadmoen, where they will be interned.

¹¹ All newspaper references, research and quotes in this chapter are taken from the Nasjonalbiblioteket website <https://www.nb.no>

The Englishmen were in good spirits and sang 'Tipperary' during the march through the town. A lot of people gathered on the quay when the ship arrived.

-21st September 1915 Aftenposten: Ukens Nytt

The officers move to Lillehammer

The British officers at Jørstadmoen are moving today to the Lillehammer tourist hotel, where they will all stay over the winter.

-25th September 1915 Aftenposten: Ukens Nytt

The local people are reported to be "very much concerned with providing comfort for the English, who are interned at Jørstadmoen. The officers are gone; they are installed at the Tourist Hotel. But the crew members are and will still be in the barracks". The article explains that a stall has been set up selling necessities and a concert has already been held as has a lecture on Paris. The article reflects that "with the rich and capable forces our city commands, and the goodwill and sympathy that one always finds among them, it is not so difficult to obtain musical entertainment. Worse is that there are few speakers up there. On that occasion, the president of the soldiers' home has been on a trip to the capital and has, through the Norwegian Students' Christian Association, managed to get young students to give religious and edifying lectures for the English every second Sunday. On Sunday the 19th, pastor Kristen Løken spoke for the interned. Through the student association, speakers can also be hired, who can give public and humane lectures in English.

-26 October 1915 Aftenposten

It didn't take long for the English internees to tire of their life behind barbed wire and attempt an escape, as reported on 26th October,

"When the wagon inspector at Lillehammer railway station was to inspect the wagons at 1:27 a.m., he found three of the British soldiers from Jørstadmoen. They were all in civilian clothes, and it was clearly their intention to try to escape.

The station staff approached the police, but when there was no response from them, a station officer followed the three Englishmen up the street and north of the city. Soon, however, the English sailors evaded the station attendant and made another escape."

-28th October 1915 Aftenposten: Ukens Nytt

The same newspaper provided a follow up story two days later revealing that the escapees had not got far and were caught in Lillehammer by a police constable "and from there they were taken to the detention centre. The guard duty at Jørstadmoen was notified and after a couple of hours the lieutenant on duty came with 3 privates to collect them. They had to march the way from Lillehammer to Jørstadmoen."

-12 November 1915 Lillehammer Tilskuer

News of a concert at the camp where Klara Thygesen performed. Klara was, at the time, the wife of a renowned artist, Rudolph Thygesen but before the war had ended, she had divorced Thygesen and married Ronald Clunies-Ross, an officer from *HMS India*. The ships doctor, Dr Lawson, also performed at the concert.

-9th December 1915 Gudbrandsdølen

A sad report of the first death in the camp. Sub-Lieutenant Claude Bale died suddenly, and it made the news in several newspaper. The Gudbrandsdølen gave a touching account- "It was in the evening at 9 o'clock Mr. Bale was sitting with one of his comrades, Lieutenant Jenkins, when he suddenly collapsed. Dr Ustrup, who

happened to be at Jørstadmoen to see a non-Norwegian soldier who apparently fell, came immediately but was unable to prevent death.

The sudden death naturally had a severe impact on the other officers, for whom the young lieutenant had been a good companion both on board "*India*" and during the internment.

Mr. Bale is a young man, 25 years old. Some time ago, he suddenly passed out at the Brunlaug Bridge and was then admitted to the infirmary here, where he stayed for ten days. But when we saw him the other day, he gave the impression of being completely happy. He was a cheerful and happy young man, and had already won many friends here in town, not least among the young ladies, who greatly appreciated the young "gentleman of the British Navy."

-15th December 1915 Lillehammer Tilskuer

Six days later came the reports of Lieutenant Bale's beautiful and poignant funeral.

"A Sub-Lieutenant was buried yesterday from the British Marine, Mr. Claude Bale. The funeral was held in Fåberg Church and was attended by all internees, both officers and privates. In addition, some of the deceased's acquaintances had turned up in Lillehammer. Also present were Colonel Holtan, Major Haave and Koptein Ellinasen, as well as the parish priest in Faaberg, Hartmann. The English Priest in Kristiania, Mr. Moonen, performed both the church and at the graveside ceremonies.

The hearse left from Jørstadmoen at 1 o'clock. The Guard Division marched under the Command of First Lieutenant Erling Bjørstad and followed the hearse and joined by the English dignitaries and privates. When the procession reached the church, the interned privates remained outside on the road until the coffin was carried into the church. The coffin, which was carried by six sailors, was covered by the English flag. The officers came each carrying a wreath, there was a length of beautiful Wreaths. Wreaths were also sent forward from the District Command, from the English Officers and Privates and from the Norwegian Officers and Privates at the Guard. The church bells had rung when the coffin was carried into the church, but now it was deathly quiet. The British officers and the two or three Norwegian officers had sat at the top of church, and the Privates further down. All was silent, then Pastor Maroni stepped forward, an older, quiet man with a beautiful and sympathetic voice. After a short prayer, he invited the congregation to sing the hymn "Rock of ages cleft for me". The tones of the organ burst out over the church and the internees sang. It sounded so wonderful. For all these men sang with a warmth and a sincerity that is rarely heard. The priest then read the Ritual and again there was singing. Then they sang "Abide with me, fast falls the eventide". Finally, "Forever with the Lord" was sung and then the Lord's Prayer was recited. Solemnity in the Church ended – a solemnity which had been both beautiful and poignant. The coffin was carried out and to the grave. Here both the Norwegian soldiers and British marines were ready. Together they formed a square around the grave. The coffin was lowered, the bells rang, and the priest said the prayer necessary for the occasion. All civilians bared their heads, the military saluted. Then the priest took soil in his fist and threw it down on the coffin. Thus, the ecclesiastical action was over."

Claude Bale was buried in Faaberg churchyard where his grave is now marked by a Commonwealth War Graves stone.

-31 Jan 1916 Nidaros

An interesting little tale of some of the internees returning to Jørstadmoen after a permitted guard-accompanied trip to Lillehammer. The article explains that they were sitting on the train with a local man who loudly proclaimed in his native Norwegian language how convinced he was that Germany would win the war and began to heartedly praise the Germans. He did not realize that one of the British internees spoke

Norwegian and understood what he said until the interned man got up to face the man and give him a threatening wink. The Norwegian gentleman promptly moved carriages!

-13 January 1916 Gudbrandsdølen

The sub-heading of the article reads "A descendant of the royal house among the interned English officers at Jørstadmoen." The article is an in depth expose into the Cocos Islands and the Clunies-Ross family and is quick to point out that "among the interned English officers at Jørstadmoen there is a young lieutenant Ross, who is a direct descendant of the old King Clunies Ross of the Cocos Islands." Further down the article they give more information about Ronald Clunies-Ross stating that

"The Ross family has probably kept up the regiment's old seafaring traditions, and it is therefore hardly unusual that the young Mr. Ross, in the internment camp at Jørstadmoen, has become a naval officer. When the war broke out, he was ordered as a "sub-lieutenant" in the British navy on board the "*India*" and shortly after, by the whims of the ship, he ended up in a Norwegian village, infinitely far from his royal residence on the Cocos Islands. We do not know if the young lieutenant is the hereditary prince to the vacant throne in the palm grove down there in the Indian sea; but should he be, the idea of becoming queen over 700 Malays and ascending the vacant throne at the time of the "coconut prince" that he popularly sold at Lillehammer begins to creep into the minds of some young girls. That eventuality would not weaken the romantic spectacle of the ruler's hut on the Cocos Islands."

As mentioned earlier, Ronald Clunies-Ross charmed at least one local woman as he was married before the war ended. Another article says that the local women called him the 'Little Prince'

-14 February 1916 Trondhjems Adresseavis

An Engagement is entered into between Miss Feodora Lundh, daughter of commander Harold Lundh and commander W.G.A Kennedy, commander-in-chief of the British interned at Jørstadmoen.

-23 February 1916 Morgenbladet

There seems to have been considerable local interest in the interned Soldiers at Jørstadmoen, and this February 1916 article seems to try and explain what life is like for the internees and how the Norwegian authorities are trying to find things for the men to do – "efforts have been made to provide them with carpentry work; teachers have been sent; but the courses have gained almost no support. Likewise, daily outings have been arranged, with only a limited number of the 25 who were allowed to join each excursion participating; but the participants have been both eager and interested.

The fact is that most of the internees are sailors, 20 are stokers from the London docks, and these have neither a particular interest in earthwork nor sports. If suitable employment were to be found for them, it would have to be something in connection with steam shipping on Mjøsa or the like.

On the other hand, the interest in sports is probably not very great in the districts around Jørstadmoen, so who would, in the event, investigate the expenses for the construction of a sports field is an open question. The conditions that had to be met for the construction of a sports field are thus not present, and this alone and not the military authorities' lack of initiative is the reason why nothing of the sort is undertaken."

-5 March 1916 Trondhjems Adresseavis

This article titled "*Winter in the internment camp*" is another one that attempts to explain to the locals what life is like for the interned men. It is a lengthy article but gives a fantastic insight into day-to-day life within the internment camp.

"It has become strangely so quiet about the interned Englishmen. Their fame is obviously on the wane. The newspapers no longer concern themselves with their daily business, and the curious have quietly retreated.

But that's how people are. Last autumn they came from far and wide to entertain the British visitors. They drove, they rode, they walked. The whole of Jørstadmoen swarmed like ants at an anthill. And the guests gasped. Cigars or cigarettes rained down on them, and the young ladies of the town and country tailed around and were a sight to behold.

Those times are over. Now the moen resembles a snowy desert, and the detainees are left to winter, loneliness and memories. A high steel net forms the boundaries of the world in which they can move freely, and outside the steel nets, the Norwegian guards walk like cherubs with flashing swords.

From time to time a shapeless figure glide across the square. A door slams again, and then it becomes desolate and unspeakably sad again. An occasional exclamation is heard, otherwise there is only the eternal creak of the sentries' boots against the frozen snow.

But up from the barracks the smoke rises in cheerful swirls. The British understand how to build a fire, and there is no shortage of firewood. The state pays, so there was no need to shiver and freeze here. The Norwegian inland winter is hard enough for the English sailor anyway. Some of them do not suit the climate here. The air may not be humid enough. The sea has been their place of worship, and it is the sea they are also now missing - the sea and freedom.

It is beautiful here - someone said - but I would gladly have exchanged both the forest and the meadows for a strip of the harbour.

Then came a long autumn and an even longer winter. The internees faced the winter with great trepidation. Many of them believed that the snow would settle at the height of the roofs and the cold would make any life under the open sky impossible. It didn't get that bad, although the snow was meters deep and the temperatures often exceeded the thirties.

No, winter offered surprises for the internees. One day there came a powerful snowball sailing, and it was the beginning of a snowball war of large dimensions. The gloomy barracks were emptied, and all the hundreds of internees ran about in the square and fought and howled and laughed. It was as if they had all taken a breath of liberation.

It started to freeze. Ice settled over the water in the washing tubs, and immediately someone found out that they had to have an ice rink. They borrowed a sled from a neighboring farm and dragged the snow away. Then they sprayed water on, and in a night or two they had the most wonderful course. It has been a playground for them for many lonely hours - although none of them show any great skill in skating.

As skiers, they are no masters either; but they also dabble in skiing. They stand on a ski or two because it is falling, and they roll around in the snow and amuse themselves like children. They have also prepared sledges, which do not go slowly down the hill as they do uphill. All in all, there seem to be no limits to their ingenuity when it comes to commerce and fun. They then let go of all worries and surrender completely to the joys of the present.

Meanwhile, time passes. The days are getting bright and long, and spring is approaching. But peace and freedom still seem to be far, far away. If you track down one of the internees, if he thinks it's the last winter he's spending up here, he shakes his head smiling: No, no. He believes that the war will last at least another four years. The Germans are tough, but they must be broken, because the Germans belong to the devil. He grabs an old English newspaper and points to some heavy headlines. It is about a German Zeppelin attack on England.

- Damned - he exclaims. And his voice trembles with resentment.

But then a message of joy is preached to him and all the other internees. It will be a cabaret evening in the large dining barrack.

The barracks, which are intended for the entire Gudbrandsdalen battalion, are now divided into two rooms, one is used as a celebration room and reading room and the other as a workroom. In the celebration room, the detainees themselves have created a stage, and they have draped the background of the stage with the Norwegian flag.

In the party room, they also put out the newspapers and magazines they receive, and here they spend a good part of the day. Here the course of events is discussed, and here they sometimes come together in lively exchanges of opinion.

The officers, who now live in a boarding house near Lillehammer, come to the cabaret evenings. And one or more of the officers are often among the actors. As the circus is also organized there in connection with the cabaret, it goes without saying that one of the officers is the circus director. In the absence of horses, he trains some of his subordinates, and clowns are always in plentiful supply.

But despite all the distractions, the days eventually become somewhat monotonous. And it cannot be denied that many of the detainees begin to suffer from homesickness and melancholy. Of course, this particularly applies to all those who are breadwinners and who know that someone is waiting for them at home.

To pass the time, they also tinker with different kinds of work. Some of them are good both as carpenters and carpenters, and when the barracks were to be fitted out for winter use, they took part in this work. Now they are engaged in woodworking. They make photo frames, tobacco boxes and many oddities. Three non-commissioned officers have even made a model aeroplane.

Every day, some of the detainees, accompanied by some of the guards, make a leisurely excursion, either on skis or on foot, and quite often a group of them turn up in Lillehammer. Then, too, they are followed at their heels by a sentry, who patiently goes outside and waits when they are inside the shops to make purchases. Some escape attempts are, however, hardly to be feared. And in the understanding of this, it is probably also the case that the sentries themselves sometimes make a detour. It is said to have happened in this way, that the detainees have wandered the streets and searched for their own guard. Otherwise, the detainees will walk and stroll as they please. They also occasionally go to the town's beer club.

-Beer- then shout - beer and glass. And then they drink to death and defeat for the Bosch.

Meanwhile, the guard stands outside and waits. And sometimes the waiting time is quite long. But the guard is understanding, and the relationship between them and the detainees has always been the best.

Henrik Lysøe «

-14 March 1916 Aftenposten

A detailed article about the trial of Frederick Haddow,

-12 April 1916 Honefoss og Oplands Socialdemoki

It would appear that the advent of Spring has brought the girls back to the fence to see the British internees – a predicament known as the “English Sick”. “The biggest challenge is to remove the girls from the fence, who are very much afflicted by the English Sick.”

-23 April 1916 Dagbladet

Another article about the day to day lives of the British internees. "There are some other strangers here, by the way, namely the famous 98 English prisoners of war at Jørstadmoen." The article speaks of the good nature of the prisoners and the good relationship between the English and the 70 Norwegian soldiers who guard them.

-4th May 1916 Vestoplændin

There is still the issue of the girls at the fence where the guards "biggest task is to remove the girls from the farm where they are very much troubled by the English disease."

-21st May 1916 Aftenposten

An article about a fallen bridge which has stopped the internees visiting Lillehammer, the words are accompanied by a drawing from Lieutenant Alltree. After expressing the "great sorrow of the many young ladies, who were cut off from bringing the interned British their tribute", the article goes on to outline Lieut Alltree's suggestions for a temporary solution to the problem -

"You don't need to build a new bridge or experiment with 'flying ferries', says Mr Alltree, from afar. It gets way too expensive these days. No, stretch a steel surface cableway over the river and for the time being follow the above drawing in the facility, then you will probably be satisfied, he believes."

The article regrets that this idea is not possible but no one should be too alarmed as a ferry has been put in place "and it is now carrying across the river both Lillehammer ladies and Englishmen and large and small cattle, if not exactly in such an original and interesting way as the English officer had intended."

-June 1916

All the news is about the Clinton and Grigson and their escape from the camp.

-8th July 1916 Aftenposten: Ukens Nytt

"Commander Kennedy - commander-in-chief of the English interned at Jørstadmoen, is granted 14 days' leave to look around the country. According to 'Lillehammer Tilskuer', Mr Kennedy will visit Sogndal in Sogn, where a brother of his lived for several years, and where he died and is buried.

Mr. Kennedy was known as one of the country's most skilled salmon fishermen. For several years, he leased the famous salmon river Aarøelven, and here he succeeded with rod and fly in catching the largest salmon ever fished in Norway. It weighed 35kg. The salmon was donated to Bergen's museum, where it was stuffed, and where it is displayed as a sight to see.

-14 July 1916 Aftenposten

The internees seem to be in trouble again!

"Embarrassing scenes are not infrequently witnessed when the detained English sailors on Jørstadmoen are on a visit to Lillehammer with their Norwegian guard. Often there is drinking, - and you have sometimes witnessed the not only embarrassing, but downright scandalous situation, that the guard has been as drunk as those who were supposed to be guarding! It's not exactly to the credit of the uniform."

The articles continues with some musings as to why the English are behaving badly when visiting Lillehammer - "We have been told that the English sailors on Jørstadmoen are for the most part sailors from the London docks, who are probably used to a little of everything, and when they are affected by alcohol, they do not put up with any arguments.

Three of the Englishmen, who were in town on Monday, accompanied by a Norwegian sergeant and a soldier, were particularly difficult to deal with and caused the guard much trouble. Perhaps they weren't really that drunk; but they were using inappropriate and had sworn a good desire to fight." This 'desire' resulted in an exchanging of words with a local at the train station and an Englishman, reportedly, spitting in the face of a local.

The article is quick to point out that not all behaviour is undesirable "when the English sailors have not been drinking, there is nothing to say about their behavior in the city. But even if those who appear to be drunk are few in number, they are always the most noticed." And the writer then suggests that the visiting sailors are not allowed access to alcohol when they visit Lillehammer.

-27th July 1916 Arbeidet

A report from the British House of Commons – "Sir Robert Cecil answered a question about whether the crews of the English fleet interned at Jørstadmoen near Lillehammer were subjected to harsh treatment with bad food and undue restraint. He declared that the Admiralty has received an official report of 14 July concerning the treatment of the British crews at Jørstadmoen. It appeared that they were treated well, fed well and enjoyed reasonable freedom."

-15th Aug 1916 Aftenposten Ukens Nytt

The title reads *Pig breeding and chicken breeding at Jørstadmoen* and the article is another which tells of everyday life within the barbed wire fence.

"The internees at Jørstadmoen, which include people from many professions and with the most varied interests, are trying to make the time go by in the best way and to get some 'profit' from the involuntary stay at Jørstadmoen.

A London police constable among the detainees was thus bought a pig farm some time ago.

A couple of other internees were out one day and got hold of some chickens and are going to start chicken breeding.

Some have recently been busy driving and piling up firewood on the mountain for the coming winter. They get extra payment for that work.

Many of the internees are very handy and inventive and have created beautiful and original leaf sawing and wood carving works and a large group of them are now picking blueberries in the fields around Moen under the direction of their Norwegian guard. The berries they find are allowed to be used in their own household - for juice and jam, which they make themselves."

-13 August 1916 Aftenposten

The repatriation begins as the report tells of seven crew members and one officer who have been sent home due to poor health.

-25 August 1916 Nordland

A trial is being held concerning a Norwegian cruiser that could have come to the aid of the stricken *HMS India* when she was torpedoed in August 1915. The ship's helmsman and pilot are being prosecuted for failing to stop and help the drowning men when they had the option. Both men claimed they were unaware of the presence of *India* and that they did not know that submarines were operating in the Norwegian Sea. The men were acquitted.

-7th Sept 1916 Express

Another unsuccessful escape attempt. The two men “had apparently finished their plan and the intention was that they would dig their way out from under the fence surrounding the camp. They began their mole work in the darkness of the night but were surprised by the guard and fled back to the camp. The guard has been reinforced and additional precautions have been taken against new escape attempts.”

-9th October 1916 Tidens Tegn

“Some of the British marines, who are interned at Jørstadmoen, have in the autumn, as is well known, taken part in the railway works at Dombås. About fifty of them have worked there since mid-August for the same pay as the other construction workers. Now, however, the snow on the mountains makes their work impossible, and these days the British have returned to the camp at Jørstadmoen.

The stay on the mountains has been, they say - a welcome diversion for them. The interned English lieutenant Alltree has sent us a caricature of the British return journey from the snow, which seems to have been difficult to avoid. The commander in the foreground of the drawing is Artillery Assistant Byrne, who has supervised the sailors during their stay on the mountains. (accompanying an illustration)”

-27 October 1916 Aftenposten

Lieutenant Patmore’s trip to Britain to see his sick wife make the news but also “the other interned officers have been granted permission to take up residence anywhere in southern Norway.” I have not seen this in any other document. To my knowledge they stayed in the hotel in Lillehammer for the whole war but maybe not?

-29th Oct 1916 Tidens Tegn

Another contribution from Lieut Alltree and this time it’s all about the internee’s ice skating. “Judging by the drawings Lieutenant Alltree has sent us of his troops, the ice must also have a certain solidity to be able to withstand the various attacks on it by the English. Keen sportsmen, as the English are, the detainees did not want to wait any longer to resume skating. They started the other day to refresh their skills on some frozen marshes near Mjøsen”.

-24 November 1916 Apruposten

“The notice in a Kristiania newspaper announcing that those interned in this country - Englishmen as well as Germans - are only granted leave to return home or only because of illness in the person's family or the like.”

-29 December 1916 Tidens Tegn

Christmas tidings from Lieut. Alltree - “In the internment camp, as in all other places, Christmas was a strenuous time for the cooks - they worked day and night without respite preparing plum puddings and other English delicacies that could make the foreigners less hurt by being involuntary guests. No wonder everyone’s wishes for a happy and peaceful and pleasant Christmas had to be waved both disturbingly and ironically to the hard-working cooks. The well-meaning souls who turned up in turn for 'merry Christmas' visits to the kitchen, as you can see, also received an increasingly cold reception. The last ones were roughly ribbed and in true kitchen fashion made completely ready to put in one of the big pots.”

-11 January 1917 Tidens Tegn

“The internees' Englishmen at Jørstadmoen would like to thank Commander Kennedy for all the gifts they received for Christmas.”

-7 March 1917 Trondhjems Adresseavis

A fire in the internment camp. "The fire is due to a chimney that fell down" and "the old and crisp -dry materials" fueled a strong fire that "sent a sea of sparks around". There were fears for the local guard's barracks and a fuel store but the only building to burn to the ground was the single barracks housing some of the British internees.

The article also reports an incident between an internee and a journalist. Apparently, there were bad feelings towards this journalist as he had written an article criticizing the behaviour of internees in Lillehammer. One of the internees took advantage of the chaos of the fire to assault the journalist.

-29th March 1917 Tidens Tegn

Lieut. Alltree's views on the fire

"Today we reproduce a drawing, which shows the sad remains of the building. The planks in the barracks were completely dry, a pure storm was blowing and within a short time there was nothing left. The barracks were inhabited by about twenty English marines. In a dungeon, where one day is like the next, a fire is of course an event that, in holy grace, sets minds in motion. Our excellent friend Lieutenant Alltree sent the following sketch which clearly reveals the ideas the English had about their future housing conditions. However, we don't think they will be quite as miserable. And anyway, luckily, summer is approaching."

-31st May 1917 Valdres

Reporter Eivind Revang writes a considered and compassionate review of the British internees and their life in Jørstadmoen.

"After more than a month of being together, I have got the best impressions of our 'prisoners', as long as they are treated with tolerance and courtesy.

Twenty months - away in a foreign country - away from home and loved ones - bound by guard and internment rules, censorship in correspondence, and in all movements, so to speak, can put the best person in a bad mood. Homesickness and the restricted freedom, the difficulty of language use and the conditions of internment can sometimes wear out patience, but they are young people of a free and powerful nation, and the loss of freedom is sensitive to every young person. Of the 70-80 internees, there are many classes who have been voluntarily recruited - from the Prince of the Cocos Islands to the dock worker. Irish and Australian, Indian and Maltese are mixed together. And one cannot expect that all of this should only offer a high level of intelligence. 'Bratty men in all countries', one must consider. That the same number of Norwegian soldiers from Norway's different regions would hardly inspire a greater appreciation of (our) soldiers' intelligence, if we came to foreign countries under conditions like these. The time is naturally long and dreary, and in the winter, there is less opportunity for exercise, games or other sports, when the high internment fence stands there blocking the 'exercise line'."

He lists a variety of activities the internees are involved in from football games "most of them are excellent footballers," hiking and boxing. He also mentions that they were allowed to "hold a festive event with some dancing. The English sailors and sailors were happy, but the invited ladies seemed even happier."

Revang finishes with – "Of the English gentlemen, a majority are really handsome and good-looking boys, which has given rise to several cases of the English disease among the fairer sex - despite language difficulties. The disease is not harmless, although it can be denied that it is fatal."

-16 July 1917 Varden

Apparently only 26 Englishmen are in the camp when this article is written with the rest of them working outside of their camp, most of them on the Dovre railway. "As far as could be seen, there were more Norwegian soldiers on guard duty than there were detainees."

-2 August 1917 Nordre Trondhjems Amtstidende

A report on "The Englishmen on the Dovrebanen." Apparently all 24 men "work with life and desire and do not wish to return to Jørstadmoen. They will now stay on until the end of November. The guys work in shifting places in a struggle of 6/7 kilometers of the track. The railway has supplied very good barracks for them, and they have their own English chefs."

-7 August 1917 Gudbrandsdølen

An article recognizing the two-year anniversary of the sinking of *HMS India*

-26 September 1917 Gjoviks Blad

Another attempted escape from Jørstadmoen is chronicled with two men making it as far as Gjovik, 49km away. They were arrested on their way back, having seemingly decided not to go any further.

-27th September 1917 Dagbladet

Two internees are in court after being arrested for an attempted escape in June. They had apparently returned to the camp voluntarily when they found the mountains surrounding Lillehammer so steep that they could not traverse them.

"For their attempted escape, they were both ordered to 30 days' custody, but refused to accept it, without giving any explanation or justification for this. They were therefore prosecuted by court-martial, which is being held here in the city today. The two defendants were produced under guard from Jørstadmoen and pleaded guilty. It was their intention to see if they could get over to Sweden or from there continue home, but they immediately faced so many difficulties that they gave up the attempt and decided to return. They then received the crew that had been sent out after them, they were on their way to Moen.

When they had not adopted the proposal, it was because they felt that they had thus spent 88 hours in custody in connection with this affair, they were not allowed to go outside the camp for a whole month without guarding. The prosecutor demanded that both be sentenced to 40 days in custody. The court set the sentence for one, who last year was sentenced to 20 days in custody for attempted escape, to 45 days in custody and for the other, who was sentenced to 20 days in prison for disregarding instructions, to 35 days in custody."

-16 October 1917 Aftenposten & Lillehammer Tilskuer

More reports of men behaving badly when two internees "have been indicted by the state attorney" for violently attacking a public official during the arrest of other internees and for then also hitting a Norwegian guard in the face. They may have also attempted to help other internees escape. The two men were named as John Philip and William Oakley, and both were sentenced to time in prison.

-12 November 1917 Morgenbladet

"64 artillerymen under the command of Captain Wetlingstad will take over guard duty at Jørstadmoen on Wednesday. This is the first time the special forces have been deployed to guard the internment site." I wonder if the interned men were getting restless.

-17 December 1917 Dagsposten

"The Englishmen from Jørstadmoen seem to be enjoying their railway work. They have their own barracks, where the English flag flies and have their own cooks. They also seem to be living well, for first of all, what met the travelling employee of 'Morgenposten' outside an English barracks was a herd of well-bred pigs."

-22 December 1917 Trondhjems Folkeblad

Some new internees arrive at Jørstadmoen. "12 men were rescued from one of the British trawlers when the convoy was sunk in the North Sea. These will be sent early tomorrow morning, followed by a guard force under the command of Lieutenant Dugstad, to Jørstadmoen where they will be detained together with compatriots there."

-16th Jan 1918 Morgenbladet

"Exaggerated reports of unrest at Jørstadmoen."

"The interned sailors from 'India' gathered at the Jørstadmoen residential area and behaved very threateningly. They would burn down their hut and several other huts if they did not have their diet changed. And when they were handed over, they refused to receive the regulated food. And the most startling thing about the whole affair is that the Norwegian military authorities have bowed down to the threats. The diet has now changed as the English want it."

"The head of internment at Jørstadmoen, Major Haave, says that he cannot say anything about the report that appeared in 'Gjoviks Blad' other than that it is significantly misleading and exaggerated."

This incident is reported on in the Admiralty files housed in the National Archives of Britain. Negotiations took place in order to create a new menu of food for the interned men.

-14 February 1918 Gudbrandsdølen

An Airedale terrier (female) ran away on Monday evening. It is short-haired, has fast hair or brown paws. The necklace is marked: "Trophy" British Internment Camp, Jørstadmoen. Refer Lt. Alltree

-25 March 1918 Lillehammer Spectator

A report on a sports day that takes place in the Jørstadmoen camp.

-2 April 1918 Buskeruds Amstidende

A story about an internee who went skiing but fell off a bridge and into the water with his skis still on. I imagine it would have been a cold dip in the river!

-1 June 1918 Aftenposten

The announcement of the marriage of Miss Therese Johansen, Kongsvinger, and Lieutenant Harold Rhys Jenkins, RNR British Internment camp, Jørstadmoen on the 3rd June. The wedding takes place in the Church of England at 1 after which lunch at the Grand hotel.

-7 June 1918 Aftenposten

Another opportunity for the *HMS India* internees to work on the railway but this time with some of the German internees from *SS Berlin*. The article is quick to point out that the Britons and Germans will be working in different directions to each other and will not have to work together.

-27th July 1918 Vestoplændin

The July articles are all about William Oakley's attempts at escape and the reaction of the camp to Ronke arriving in his place. "The person did not return but instead sent a deputy. The deputy has been quite violent. The other day he went berserk on Jørstadmoen. He was finally overpowered and put him in handcuffs. A non-commissioned officer and 3 privates took the prisoner to Lillehammer, where he was committed to prison."

-7 September 1918 Akershus

Reporting on an upcoming football match between the internees' team and a local team.

-31 October 1918 Tidens Tegn

The sad news of Lieut Alltree's death.

The English marine lieutenant Ernest Woodburne Alltree has passed away at the death in Lillehammer. For several years, he has been interned here in Norway as a rearguard. During his captivity he was married to a Norwegian lady, and the sympathetic English officer also made several Norwegian friends. But also, outside his circle of friends he will be known and treasured through his funny little drawings from the prison camp at Jørstadmoen, - carried as these drawings were by healthy and good English humour.

-9 November 1918 Aftenposten

A long and detailed article on all the prisoners of war in Norway. At this point there were approximately 450 Germans, 100 English, 16 Finns, and one Australian deserter! They do not mention the Russians.

There is obviously a sense that the war is coming to an end, and this article attempts to summarize the experiences of the men who have been interned. It mentions that the British internees have received their full salary from their home country and then goes on to say -

"A couple of the English have also tried to escape, but this has not been successful. Although the prisoners are very well off and are even allowed to move freely within a certain area, the long isolation in this relatively lonely place seems tiring and boring in the long run.

The article selects William Oakley's attempted escape as the feature story of the Jørstadmoen internees and concludes by saying that Albert Ronke "will presumably meet a very unpleasant fate. Presumably, as a deserter, he will be sentenced to death." He wasn't!

-14 November 1918 Tidens Tegn

"The first from "India" are returning home. After the armistice, the interned Englishmen from the auxiliary "India" will return home. With the Lillehammer train yesterday, the first four happily arrived here. The four were accompanied from Lillehammer by a Norwegian soldier, who helped them get ready. They started yesterday evening with the Bergen train."

-21 November 1918. Aftenposten Lukens Nytt

The release of the interned Englishmen.

"An announcement has now arrived from the authorities that the British interned at Jørstadmoen are to be released and repatriated.

The departure will take place during this week, presumably Thursday.

When the news of the release reached Jørstadmoen, it created indescribable joy. The internees shouted cheers and gave their feelings immediate expression. But the joy had a slight touch of sadness, that of leaving Norway. Both officers and crew have grown fond of our country and have often shown this affection.

It is therefore hardly modest when we express the conviction that the British will only remember their long and involuntary stay at Jørstadmoen with friendly feelings. The fact that, given the circumstances, they have had a good time up there is primarily due to Major Haave. He has led the internment with commendable humanity and conduct.

From their side, the British will also have a good word on their trip home. The great majority of them have always shown commendable conduct, which has won them many personal friends among the population. Three years of internment in a foreign country is a tough test for young people, but the British have passed it with flying colors and thereby also done their nation honour."

-3 December 1918 Aftenposten, Ukens Nytt

Thanks to Norway

"Officers and sailors on the British warship "India", who have been interned at Jørstadmoen since August 1915, when their ship was sunk by a German submarine in the Vestfjorden, Lofoten, and who are now returning to England, wish, before they land in the country, to express their most sincere thanks for the great hospitality and kindness shown to them during their long stay in beautiful Norway by its warm-hearted and hospitable people.

WGA Kennedy

From the records of the Norwegian Authorities

Instructions for treatment of the British force interned at Jørstadmoen

1. The interned force with the associated guard is under the command of I.R.5 Colonel Holtan.
2. The interned force must comply with the provisions of the guard personnel.
3. The interned officers are kept permanently separated from the interned troop and can be allowed against signing the obligation stated in the ministry's letter of 26 August that day to move freely within an area determined by the district command.
4. With the exception mentioned under point 3, the detainees are not allowed to go outside the enclosures. In the face of any attempt to do so, the post in question will unceasingly make full use of his weapon, which must always be with a full magazine.
5. The area within which the detainees are kept must be well lit at night.
6. The head of I.R.5 determines the number of sentries and their post area. At night, if deemed necessary, several pods can be used.
7. The detainees are not allowed to receive visitors. However, the officers can exceptionally receive a single person for a visit, but only under the supervision of one of the officers of the guard force, where someone wants to make sure that no letters, packages, etc. are smuggled in or out during the conversation.

8. The internees are permitted to write a number of letters and postcards per week specified by the head of I.R.5. The writing must be in English or Norwegian and in clear capitals. Secret writing is not permitted. The letters - unsealed - and the badges are handed in to the guard forces chief, who sends them to I.R.5, who wants to have them censored. Suspicious consignments are detained. The same provisions apply to sending and receiving telegrams as for sending and receiving by post.
9. Letters, packages etc. received by the internees must be sent to I.R.5, who will have to open and censor (examine) them. Suspicious consignments are retained (returned to the sender if this has been specified) as well as anything with ciphers.
10. The internees are permitted, according to the regimental commander's detailed instructions, to subscribe to certain Norwegian and English newspapers, which, however, like other delays, take place through I.R.5, where necessary control.
11. According to the regimental commander's further determination, a twice-daily lineup of the complete strength of non-commissioned officers and privates is held with accurate enumeration. At the same time, the premises are inspected. It is carefully ensured that there is nothing at the disposal of the detainees that could facilitate an escape attempt, such as work equipment, civilian clothes, rope work, etc.
12. I.R.5 has to make the necessary arrangements for the interned force's catering for the officers, with the help of the officers' mess cook personnel. The interned officers may be allowed to purchase necessary food and drink, as well as tobacco, through the mess. The regiment may let the internment trade with various of the more closely defined articles: Tobacco, soft drinks, chocolate, etc.
13. The detained force is permitted to carry out gymnastic or sports exercises at certain times of the day.
14. The regiment completes formations in time division for formations, meals, signal of rest, etc.
15. The resident civilian population is kept at a distance from the area of the detainees.
16. The regiment submits a weekly report to the district command. In the event of an event of importance, an immediate notification is sent (in this case by telephone or telegraph).
17. The regiment is authorized to make minor deviations and additions to these instructions that are considered appropriate. A notification about this effect is sent to the district command.

The story of the camp- a timeline of events as recorded in the Norwegian logbooks and files.¹²

-30 August 1915 Logbook

49 C. Clinton

50 A. Jones

51 J. W Perkins

These three internees have not been paid.

-15 October 1915 Logbook

Correspondence concerning Maltese steward Mariano Rodrigues and whether he should be interned or returned to Malta

-20 October 1915 Logbook

More correspondence concerning Rodrigues who is *India's* paymaster and used by Commander Kennedy as his 'special curry cook.'

- 20 October 1915 Logbook

Regarding Captain's valet Lawrence Chircop and his trustworthiness

-23 October 1915 Logbook

Claiming of expenses for Sergeant H.G Ripley, and Corporal F Pike, who had to remain in Bodo and have only just arrived in Jørstadmoen.

1) Expenses for tickets NOK. 48.50

2) Living allowance for Ripley and Pike NOK 20.00

3) Telegram inflow NOK 1.15

-28 October 1915 Logbook

Working in partnership with Commander Kennedy to punish attempted escapees and those who have been drinking too much and misbehaving in Lillehammer

-30 November 1915 Logbook

Permission granted that English petty officer, Ripley, can assist with the marshalling of the interned men. The Norwegian guard considers Sgt Ripley to be an outstanding peacekeeper

-1 December 1915 Logbook

¹² Logbooks and files found at the National Archives of Norway, Oslo and at the Hamar Archives – SAH-MILT-104, SAH-PREST-086, RA-S-7020, RA-S-2259, AVS-24-01-01340, SAK 00926/1918

Five internees (names not provided) have been reported as behaving inappropriately in Lillehammer and of bringing prohibited items into the camp. Stokers James Fisher and Henry Riley are named as being main agitators.

-10 December 1915 Logbook

Finalizing arrangements for Sub-Lieut Bale's funeral.

-13 December 1915 Logbook

Commander Kennedy is granted permission to spend a few days before Christmas in Kristiania and Sub-Lieut Alltree for 14 days in Hamar after Kristiania in February.

-28 December 1915 Logbook

Investigation of poor behaviour of some of the interned men.

-30 December 1915 Logbook

Correspondence regarding Steward Rodrigues

-31 December 1915 Logbook

Dr Lawson will be on leave for 3 months in Kristiania to visit hospitals and wonder about institutes.

-2 January 1916 Logbook

Explain the new criminal provisions applied to the previous 8 men who were drunk on the 29th in the evening:

F. A Haddow

C McKeever

J Connor

V Cosgrove

S Hawes

J McKinnon

G Barber

A Glibbery

J. McKinnon remains in custody; they were in a fight at 9 1/2.

-2 January 1916 Official correspondence

The following has been reported:

Senior Petty Officer A. Tanner reported this morning that he had been reviled and seriously threatened by No. 91 F. A. Haddow. The reason was that Tanner had confiscated a saw from Haddow. Haddow had broken into the camp's woodshed and stolen the saw. Tanner explained that Haddow had behaved in such manner that his life could be in danger.

It was then decided to arrest Haddow. The undersigned accompanied by Lieutenant Bjørstad, sergeant Wettnen and a couple of men went in. During the arrest, Haddow became violent and had to be threatened with the revolver to get him to move. According to today's telephone conversation, he will be held in custody until further notice.

It is in general opinion that it is dangerous to have Haddow in the camp. According to the attached report from Petty Officer Tanner, endorsed by Commander Kennedy, Haddow has also on previous occasions behaved threateningly towards British Officers.

-4 January 1916 Official report

The oldest serving petty officer of the detainees, A. Tanner, reported on the morning of 28/1 that he had been threatened and insulted by sailor No. 91 F. D. Haddow. Haddow was then arrested. During the arrest he behaved violently and had to be threatened with the revolver. He is being held in custody until further orders.

The guard commander suggests that he should be severely punished and to be placed outside the internment camp in the future.

According to the attached report from petty officer Tanner, signed by Commander Kennedy, the person in question has also previously behaved cheatingly, and this report strongly emphasizes the necessity of a severe punishment or that the person in question be removed from the camp.

-11 January 1916 Official letter

Returned submission on detained English internee no 91 F.R.A Haddow. Sahen submits a civil warrant for prosecution.

-12 January 1916 Logbook

Update on F.W. Lawson and "sick berth steward" George Wood and their tour of Kristiania

-14 January 1916 Official letter

Temp Surgeon Lawson's leave for 3 months for post-graduate studies in hospitals.

The Ministry has also granted permission to the Ministry of Social Affairs for Lawson to have access to hospitals in the capital.

-15 January 1916 Logbook

F.W. Lawson and Wood left yesterday from Faaberg where they will travel to Kristiania in a couple of days.

-15 January 1916 Logbook

- 1) From Commander Kennedy for permission to Kristiania for 14 days
- 2) For Sub-Lieut Harold Musselwhite to have leave when Sub-Lieut Alltree returns

-15 January 1916 Logbook

The British officers staying at Sola Pensionet, Lillehammer:

Commander Kennedy

Lieut Biggs

Sub-Lieut Musselwhite

" " Alltree

" " Patmore

" " Nelson

" " Timms

Midshipmen Ross and Jenkins

-31 January 1916 Logbook

27/10 15, it was found that W Cosgrove, Edw McKeever and James Connor were outside the enclosure, and it would appear that they had made an escape attempt.

-15 February 1916 Official report

A request for Ross to stay on Sole Pensionet because Commander Kennedy is unwell as is Lieut Biggs and Chircop.

-19 February 1916 Official request

Report on Haddow at Kongsvinger Fortress

-20 February 1916 Weekly report

Glibberly is admitted to Lillehammer hospital suffering from a lung disease, according to doctor's orders. Spiteri has been gated for 14 days for disobeying the guard during a ski trip.

-2 March 1916 Official report

Notice, as the prosecutor in the case against F A Haddow, of the case scheduled to be heard on March 8 at 10 pm, in the Lillehammer courtroom. There is a strong thought that he should not return to the Jørstadmoen camp but be jailed somewhere else.

-10 March 1916 Logbook

Attachment: Transcript of a verbal note from the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs dated 22/2/16, according to which, as a condition for the release of Mariano Rodrigues, it is written that he undertakes to accept that he shall not participate in the war or acts of war against Germany.

-13 March 1916 Logbook

F A Haddow will be sent to Kongsvinger Fortress

-15 March 1916 Logbook

Miller and Barber reported for bad behaviour

-23 March 1916 Logbook

The English team of McKinnon, Keever and Perry were behaving badly in Lillehammer as were some of the Norwegian guards.

-4 May 1916 Logbook

Mariano Rodrigues will be going home and be under the supervision of his wife.

-June 1916 Official Letter

From Ostoplanden's Regiment No 5

Interned, Jørstadmoen

The regiment has demanded an explanation from Major Haave on the occasion of the article recorded in the attached newspaper.

The major has also been asked for further information regarding the "spitting in the face".

The trips to Lillehammer are unlikely to last. On the other hand, you should let all trips go via Vignes, so you avoid the stay at the railway station and the railway journey.

An inquiry has previously been made to the bar not to sell alcohol to the detainees. There is hardly any other way than to refuse the detainees to enter the bar in advance.

Holtan

-26 June 1916 Official letter

In response to the District Manager's letter of 21 June that day with a report from Lillehammer station, in which it is reported that one of the detained Englishmen was refused entry to train due to intoxication, it is announced that the person in question was Petty Officer Price who for the aforementioned condition has served 3 days of detention, and provisionally, until further notice, access to the detention center is denied to leave the enclosure.

Holtan

-23 September 1916 Official letter

Letter discusses the expenses of feeding the men who are working on the railroad.

-28 December 1917 Official letter

We hereby allow ourselves to announce that the below-mentioned 8 British internees are granted leave to England as and when those now laid off return and thus that never more than 10 are absent - on the conditions mentioned in the General Staff's letter of 5 September:

Cox, Charles P

Allen, Henry J

Jones, Albert

Milligan, Matthew

Carnes, John B

Gillon, William

Ward, George

Magill, Joseph V.M

Permission is valid for 1 month, calculated from the day the departure takes place from Jørstadmoen.

The district command is required to instruct the head of the internment guard to order the furloughed to report to the current British legation for departure to England.

The necessary declarations from the British authorities have been obtained in advance. But one dares recommend to Mr. Generalen to see to it that the command of Bergenhus fortress can be notified in due time of the return of the laid-off people from England.

The Norwegian files for 1917 are missing from the National Archives in Oslo and from the local archives in Hamar

-24 January 1918 Official letter

Release of British detainees

John Thomas Wright and Albert North Hopkins.

When the said internees have been declared unfit for duty, they are released in accordance with the conditions adopted by belligerent countries for the release of internees seriously wounded by belligerent navies cf. letters from here of 12 September and 23 October.

-28th February 1918 Official letter

Treatment of the detained English

The case was submitted to the 2nd District Command. District Command thus decided that of the detainees, every day at 10-12 and 2 hours in the afternoon, a number of up to 20 people are allowed to walk in the area unattended.

On 4/1 18, the number of those walking was increased from 20 to 30 at a time, whereby the camp commandant was authorized on Sundays and public holidays to allow certain internees, who have earned themselves due to good behavior, some extension of their walking time.

Under 21/1 18, the change was made in the service order that the serving English officer has command authority over the detainees within the fenced camp, and the Norwegian guard is responsible for order, discipline and cleanliness. This arrangement has undivided satisfaction with both the internees and the camp commanding guard.

Rules for detainees' permission to their home country.

1. Every internee should normally have 4 weeks' leave once a year for his home country, especially if there are no special reasons on the other hand...
2. Additional permission can only be granted in the case of serious illness in the closest relatives, and the petition must then be accompanied by a medical certificate, witnessed by the mayor of the relevant city and the nearest Norwegian consul. The petition and certificates are submitted by senior foreign officers at the place of detention through the relevant district command to the General Staff. Extension of a leave granted in this way is only permitted when a similarly certified declaration that the condition is critical is available.

3. Those on leave undertake to return before the expiry of the leave period, and during the leave not to participate in any work with war formalities for them, or which is to the detriment of the Norwegian state. Declarations to this effect will be made once and for all by the respective countries' legation in Kristiania.

4. The right to the ordinary week's leave is conditional on consistently good behavior at the Norwegian authorities' discretion. Remarks in this regard will be made in the event that the head of duty and the district command match the name assignments set up for the leave.

5. The internees are divided by the senior interned officer into 12 equal-sized groups, which take turns getting permission. No group will be allowed to leave before the previous one has returned.

These rules come into force from 1 February 1918.

-25 July 1918 Official Letter

To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

British Detainee Release - a notice issued by a medical assessment commission to the county hospital in Lillehammer to examine the fitness of interned Fred Hines is sent herewith. In accordance with the medical commission's decision, he is released in accordance with the conditions adopted by the belligerent countries for the release of detainees seriously wounded by the belligerents' navies."

A copy of the medical assessment commission's order is attached.

Repartee

Doctor's appointment

On 8 July 1918, a medical commission was held at the county hospital in Lillehammer to examine interned British non-commissioned officer Fr Hines.

The commission consisted of the undersigned doctors.

Presented a certificate from the local authority Kolstad of 24 June 1918 as follows:

"On June 20, 1918, I examined sub-officer Fred Hines. The condition of his eyes appears on the whole to be approximately the same as at the previous examination on March 16, 1918.

Although no further worsening of his eye disease (bilateral optic nerve atrophy) with significant visual impairment and reduced color perception in both eyes, especially the right, the condition of his eyes is worrying.

In view of this, I would recommend his return to England, as his persistent sleeplessness and the conditions under which he has so long lived, if it is to continue in the same way, must be feared to have a depressing effect on his constitutional state of health, whereby the danger of his vision is ok.

Mr. Hines states that his eye disease began in November 1916, and since then has been steadily getting worse. He can't see or read without glasses and doesn't know the people he meets on the road. He suffers a lot from insomnia.

In accordance with this and the above certificate, we consider it necessary that non-commissioned officer Fred Hines be repatriated to England.

Lillehammer on 8/7 1918

-July and August Logbook and Official Letters

Documents regarding William Oakley and Albert Ronke and the attempted swap.

- 10 November 1918 Official Memo

Lieutenant Colonel Rubach, commanding admiral's office, tel 3174 - phones this morning that the British internees at Jørstadmoen, whom the Norwegian military authorities had thought would be sent home as soon as possible, will not be able to be forwarded immediately by the British consulate in Bergen. This has declared that only 40 Englishmen can be sent home next week and the rest later, without any specific time being specified. The consulate has mentioned directly to the authorities in Bergen that one should get in touch with the English legation if a quick return home is desired.

Sub-Lieutenant Rubach does not think the ministry can get in touch with the English legation and see to it that the legation meets the need for transportation for the repatriation of the British, at the end of the present or the beginning of the next week.

Other internees

The men from *HMS India* were not the only interned men in Norway during WW1. In fact, they were not even the first.

In mid-November 1914, German mine layer and commerce raider, *S/S Berlin* sailed into Trondhjem, undetected by the Norwegian authorities, with complaints of a lack of coal and a need to overhaul engines before moving on. The Norwegian Authorities were not prepared to allow the ship to stay longer than twenty-four hours but the German commander was adamant that the ship could not be moved within this time.

S/S Berlin, like *HMS India*, was a converted passenger liner and from October 1914 had been laying mines off Ireland. One of its mines was responsible for damaging and later sinking the new British dreadnought battleship [HMS Audacious](#). *S/S Berlin* was returning to Germany when she needed to seek harbour in Norway as it was too dangerous for her to continue her journey, she had sustained damage due to high seas and storms and the German Admiralty were fearful of the ship falling into British hands if she faltered at sea. Upon entering Trondhjem harbour, the commander stated that to leave the harbour they would have to overhaul the engines and would need 1500 tonnes of coal. These requests were unable to be met and so the ship and her crew of over 400 men were interned.

An article in the Nidaros: Trondelagan newspaper, published on the 21 November 1914, explains

“The German auxiliary cruiser 'Berlin' could not leave the harbour at the end of the 24 hours yesterday morning due to boiler damage and therefore had to disarm in accordance with the international rules.

This was immediately begun and during the day the necessary cannon parts were removed, just as all the small arms were brought ashore and taken into custody.

It has not yet been decided whether the ship will be put up here in the city, or whether a place will be assigned elsewhere. There must be considerable probability that it can be brought to Hommelvik, and until that question is settled, it will keep its engine in fully usable condition. In that case, the large ship had to go there under its own power. At that point the engine will be put out of action.

The large crew, 17 officers and approx. 450 men, must stay here as long as the war lasts. The officers will be able to get permission to live ashore on a word of honour.

The article goes on to explain the particular details of the Hague convention and how it relates to *SS Berlin* stating

“When a belligerent ship is detained by a neutral power, the officers and crew must likewise be detained. Officers and crew thus detained may remain on the ship or ashore, and they may be subjected to such restrictive measures as may seem necessary for its maintenance. The officers can be set at liberty when they undertake on their word of honour not to leave the neutral area without permission.”

It was determined fairly quickly that the ship must be moved to a better location, one that was not as busy as Trondhjem, and so it was sailed about 25 kilometres to Hommelvik where it laid anchor and stayed for the next three years. Around 100 Norwegians were brought into Hommelvik to protect neutrality and to keep the interned crew under control and keep the peace between the locals and the interned Germans. With the large number of internees, even when they were confined to living on the ship, there was no way their presence was not going to have an impact on the community.

Life on board *S/S Berlin* was characterized primarily by its monotony! The *HMS India* crew complained of the monotony of the Jørstadmoen camp but the 100 of them had more room to stretch their wings than the Germans did. The men onboard *S/S Berlin* were considered to still be working and would be on roster but most had finished their day by around 16:00 and much time was spent after that playing cards. With considerable disposable income, apparently the stakes ran quite high! Groups of fifty men were permitted on outings “under the leadership of an officer who had given his word of honour¹³” and activities such as walks, sports, exercises on the nearby playing fields, swimming, skiing, rowing and football took place. Before too long, groups of fifty were also allowed to return to Germany on leave for four weeks but for many it was not the cheerful homecoming they had wished for as Germany was being ravaged by the war. Like the Jørstadmoen internees, some of the Germans got the opportunity to work outside of the camp in, mainly, manual labour jobs. Many of them spent time working on the construction of the Dovrebanen railway, however, the local media kept its eyes on the internees and it did not take long for the papers to start reporting on troubles and in April 1915, only 5 months after the beginning of the internment, the news broke that the captain of the ship had escaped.

There appear to have been many attempted escapes up to this point with rumours of Norwegian soldiers being assaulted by German sailors in attempt to escape as well as an incident in August 1915 when a large group of Germans attempted an escape, as many as 25 at the same time, and were fired at by the Norwegian guards.

A hearing had been held prior to this point to discuss the matter of the attempted and successful escapes. This hearing, held in April 1915, highlighted the embarrassment felt by the Norwegian authorities at these repeated escapes – “several representatives expressed surprise and disappointment at the many escapes and breaches of oath. Considering the comfortable conditions on board, and the situation in the rest of Europe during the war it seemed surprising the crew would risk escaping internment¹⁴.” The Norwegian Authorities seemed more upset at those who escaped whilst out on approved leave, where the interned individual would have taken an oath to return to the ship at the conclusion of the permitted time, than they were by those who escaped directly from the ship itself. By April 1915 twenty-nine had escaped from *S/S Berlin* – 7 officers, 17 non-commissioned officers, 4 privates and Captain Pfundheller. The media reported that “Naturally, the chief, Captain Pfundheller's escape has caused the most publicity. And it is strange that Norwegian magazines find that there is nothing to blame him, but the Norwegian authorities all the more. 'Morgenbladet' writes 'that there is hardly anything to blame the long-legged German.' and 'Adressebladet' naturally follows the lead of the main body. Yes, 'Adressebladet' even goes a step further, if possible, and writes that he has not given any 'word of honour' in the true sense of the word, nor is anything like that required of him.” This particular report goes on to say that “Mr. Pfundheller's Norwegian doctor saw Captain Bang inform the district command that his patient should be moved to Fjeldsæter. He then received the answer that then Mr. Pfundheller submits a written request to that effect and at the same time makes a declaration in compliance with the Hague Convention. The Hague Convention stipulates that officers may leave freely, when they undertake on honour not to leave the neutral area without permission.

After receiving this message, Captain Pfundheller sent his written request for permission to take up residence at Fjeldsæter, containing the declaration that was found in 'Nidaros' yesterday, and which states that it is obvious that he will not do anything that goes against the Hague Convention. According to this declaration, he was granted the desired permission”. The article continues concluding that Pfundheller used technical

¹³ Andersen, Jesper (2015) *Interneringen av hjelpekrysseren 'Berlin': Interneringspolitikk i Norge under første verdenskrig*. <https://ntnuopen.ntnu.no/ntnu-xmlui/handle/11250/2358645?locale-attribute=no>

¹⁴Op.cit

loopholes in the language and so did not 'escape' as such but has left with permission. The writer of the article concludes "The fact that his fatherland is at war does not entitle him to such a cunning in a friendly country, where he has been received by his compatriots as the knight one would like to see in any German officer." I have been unable to confirm whether Pfundheller returned to his duties upon *S/S Berlin* but I have a feeling that he did not.

Like the interned British sailors, the Germans went through periods of relative harmony with the locals and other times of friction. Like at Jørstadmoen, the German sailors on *S/S Berlin* seemed to create a certain level of interest from the local women as well as the rest of the community – "From the very beginning in Hommelvik, there were many visits on board from the local population. Initially, they came out of curiosity or to meet someone they had made acquaintance with on land. But eventually the visits became so numerous that the cargo boat had to make several trips in the evening to get all the visitors ashore. During holidays, the parties on board were something many in the local area looked forward to. The availability of cheap beer and strong drinks on board a ship of a size that few had been on board before must have been attractive." Gustav Neibuhr¹⁵ reiterates these statements saying "Many came, it must be said, because acquaintances had been made before, and these were then sent an invitation to that day and then were entered on the visitor list. It is probably not necessary to point out in more detail that the vast majority of the visitors consisted of the so-called weaker sex. There was everything on board one could wish for. Good food, beer and dram and wine."

Relations were not always as positive and in 1917 a Dagposten newspaper reports that the Germans have been through and plundered the blueberry fields leaving nothing for the locals and a sour taste in the mouths of those who were hoping for some fresh berries. The same article refers to a similar feeling of resentment towards the Germans overfishing and leaving little fish for the locals in the waterways. The article concludes "The internment in Hommelvik is considered a nuisance to the population; "If only it were over soon," said person interviewed."

The German internees appeared to confront similar issues to their British counterparts in regard to victualling the internees. As just mentioned, there were opportunities for the interned sailors to leave the boat and fish or hunt or forage but the bulk of their diet came from what was supplied by the Norwegian and German authorities. One internee wrote to the Dagsposten newspaper on the 13 September 1917– "The dinner meals mainly consisted of kohlrabi boiled in water. Had they been healthy, it might even have worked out somehow. But such large stocks had been procured there that they eventually lay and rotted, so they had to be 'scooped' out of the cellars with a shovel. But only when the majority of the internees who had been forced to eat the cabbage fell ill, was the remainder of the spoiled mass finally thrown away." Only identifying himself as 'S' he goes on to say – "The bread we got - from Easter 1917 about 150-200 grams in weight - was as heavy as stone, and heavily mixed with kohlrabi and carrots. After September 1915 it had to be eaten dry, before that time you got about 200 grams of fat every week." His parting comment refers to the sleeping conditions – "I guess I don't need to mention that the beds were full of bedbugs - they are 'pets' of which a great many are kept in Berlin." One way of improving the food provided to the Germans was by allowing the farming of livestock on board the boat" as a source of a little extra meat, some creative officers began to breed pigs on board." The German sailors also successfully petitioned for the wavering of prohibition and the allowance of the importation of brandy to the ship. There is every chance that like the British, the German officers were having an entirely (and more favourable) experience of internment than their crew.

Perhaps the most marked difference between the internment conditions of the Germans compared to the British (apart from the obvious one where the German's were being interned on their own boat) is that

¹⁵ Gustav Neibuhr wrote a memoir about his time on the *S/S Berlin* but I have been unable to access the whole document. I have seen excerpts on the following website <https://hvv.hommelviksvenner.no/hjelpkrysseren-berlin/>.

around 40 German families moved to Norway to live near their interned loved one. Xxx writes that after petitioning for families to be able to join the internees “The 5th District Command therefore sent a request to the General Staff, probably forwarded by the leadership in Berlin, whether it was possible for the families to temporarily settle in the areas around Hommelvik. The General Staff thought that there was nothing to prevent this, and not long afterwards a number of German families began to travel upland to spend the rest of the war in Norway. A small group of women and children first travelled upland in a group from the area around Wilhelmshaven where most of them were settled. The impression and experience of Norway must have been positive, for new groups soon followed. After a short time, there were so many families in the area around Hommelvik that it was difficult to find housing for everyone. After the move to Lofjorden (in 1917), it became considerably more difficult to find housing, and several of the families had to return home to great disappointment.” I imagine that the conditions in Norway would have been extremely favourable as compared to those in Germany and these families would have been grateful for the excuse to escape war torn Germany. Like a few of the British sailors, some of the German’s did not return to their homeland after the war, instead settling in Norway and setting up a new life. Those who did return found a very different place to the one they had left in 1914. One family wrote to their Norwegian hosts after their return to Germany “After a difficult journey, we have just arrived home. There was no joy in the large luggage. It is a sorrow here in Germany and we still do not know how we will manage with food. What do we not think of the beautiful home we had on your farm! Be sure, if only we could, we would return immediately, our cold home here in Bremen does not seem to us at all anymore, we miss the solemn silence there in the Lofjord so much. My wife in particular already has a terrible illness back.¹⁶”

As the years wore on, the position of the Berlin came into question with rumours and reports of espionage circling around the ship and her inhabitants. Different articles in newspapers reported on suspicions about messages being sent from the tops of hills with white sheets/flags (these were unfounded and probably innocent picnics) to espionage and spying on ships as they came in and out of the busy harbour and reporting traffic and movements back to Germany. Hommelvik was a very busy harbour with direct railway access and both German and British ships were using the harbour for timber and other materials. “The consequence is that there are Germans swarming around the ships and between the goods on the quay from early morning until late at night” wrote the Dagsposten on the 4 July 1917, concluding that “If the state authorities do not allow it to be moved, then a serious warning must be shouted to all shipowners that they must not send their ships to Hommelvik as long as ‘Berlin’ is there. There was also an apparent uneasiness in the town with the volume of Germans now living there and the impact that had on the neutral township.

On 30 October 1917, Berlin sailed out of Hommelvik and further down the Trondhjemsfjorden to a more remote place, Lofjord. Access was more challenging for all involved, the Norwegian Guards, the German’s who wished to access shore-based facilities, water, coal, food – all things now came with the added challenge of remoteness. Niebuhr commented that they were now “in the most godforsaken place, cut off from all communication.” With Berlin no longer in Hommelvik and with little to no accommodation available near to the new location, the German families were forced to make some difficult decisions. Dagsposten reported on 30 October that “of the 40 German families who have been living in Hommelvik, most have returned to Germany. Five or six families went to the Lofjord, only a couple will remain in Hommelvik.”

Berlin remained in Lofjord until mid-1919. At the end of the war the movement of sailors from Norway to Germany began. The German sailors onboard Berlin had experienced a challenging few months with the

¹⁶ Langas, Arne (2017). *Arbok (Nord-Trondelag historielag) Hjelpeskrysseren ‘Berlin’ i Lofjorden*. Volume 94. <https://www.nb.no/items/2f36592489285b92d1873eb67bc4bb43?page=119&searchText=%22gustav%20niebuhr%22>

arrival of the Spanish Flu virus. Around three quarters of the men became sick from the epidemic with a number of deaths. Living in such close quarters, it was unavoidable that the contagious virus would be difficult to avoid. It must have been a relief when the end of the war came and in late November the repatriation of sailors to Germany began. A skeleton crew of around sixty men remained on the boat until the official internment was ended on 14 June 1919 and Berlin made her way back to her homeland.

The British internees only seldom came in contact with their German counterparts. The most common place for this to happen was when men from both camps were sent to work on the Dovrebanen. A report was written in August 1917 explaining that "a plan is also mentioned to use the force for railway work on the Dovre Line, where some of the Englishmen interned at Jørstadmoen are already employed and are doing excellently. There is a shortage of workers at the Dovre Line and the plant is literally at a standstill due to insufficient manpower." I imagine that for the German sailors, like their British counterparts, the change of scenery would have been most welcome. Arnold refers to the Germans a couple of times in his letters from 1918 *"I have seen quite a lot of German sailors now. They pass pretty regularly on their way to the doctor's; plenty also come up this way for a stroll now. Of course, I am always grimy and in civvies but mutual recognition may come; meanwhile the time goes slipping by."* He also mentions that *"The foreman of this section was shifted yesterday to take charge of a gang of Germans (interned) at work. He didn't at all seem to relish the job. There have been one or two round this part of the valley, but I haven't met any yet."* One of my favourite quotes of Arnold's comes from a letter when he writes about the German internees working on the Dovrebanen – *"The crew of the 'Berlin' get their leave and spirits from Germany. If I could get some now, I would show a sponge a few things in the way of liquid absorption!"*

The story of the new letters

When I published *A Bare Chronicle of Existence*, I had no idea how the book would fare in the big wide world. I knew I had a small, predicted readership of those who I had been in contact with during my research (other descendants of men from the boat) and with friends and family but at that stage I had not thought about becoming a public speaker or getting myself on podcasts or in magazines. The past few years, however, have seen the story, website and book reach further than I could have anticipated and far further than my father-in-law and Arnold would have believed possible. One of the benefits of this wide reach is that I have been assisted in finding even more of Arnold's letters and, in some cases, I have been able to reunite some with the rest of the family collection. I was able to include excerpts from 66 letters in *A Bare Chronicle of Existence* but have since found at least 23 more letters, postcards or ephemera.

One of the letters that was hidden in the family archives was one Arnold wrote on the day he signed up to go to war -

"September 5th, 1914

25 Lime Street, Whiteinch, Glasgow

My dear Father,

It is one of the prerogatives of youth to act in haste and repent at leisure but moreover he who waits to see everything before he decides, usually never decides at all. After some good deliberation however, I have decided having passed the doctor this morning, I (needless to add with n others) am to be sworn in as a 'Seaman' in the Royal Naval Brigade. I might be able to get into the engine room later but doubt it; even so we were told that our service will probably be nearly all on land. We shall be living and drilling at the headquarters in Govan for a few days when we shall be drafted to Deal. That is about all I can sprout about for the present. I will write as soon as anything definite crops out and leaving any sentiment aside I had better strike out in the business line. Of course, I shall not need any more money and with the letter I am going to send my more treasured possessions and also my P.O book will arrive home early next week. It will be a nice feeling I am doing my little bit at last. I had a good job at Yarrow's and I hope to get back there after this is over. Things have happened at a very great rate. I told the Chief draughtsman on Thursday I had put my name down for service. The pc came last night. I left work early this morning, was medically examined by 12pm and we are sworn in at 6pm tonight - France in a fortnight and Berlin within 4 weeks, of course these latter two are both provisional only.

Ever your loving son,

Arnold

P.S The last black cat that ran across my path was this morning."

There were also a collection of postcards hiding in plain sight in Arnold's scrapbook. The scrapbook had somehow gone without my notice during my pre-Covid visit to Australia in 2020 and I didn't get to have an in person look at it until after the book was published. I have now included copies of the images in the scrapbook on my website and social media as well as providing some images below. Some of the postcards were masquerading as photographs and it was only when I carefully removed them from their slots, I found that there was writing on the back. There were only a few of them but they have now been added to the collection and to Arnold's story. There was one to father, a couple to Will and one to Winnie.

"August 19, 1915 to father

Good luck in haste. Can you send some bootlaces, light (weight), literature, some photos and some kreemy (toffee) as an experiment. Weather fine, hockey and golf! á la Harry Lauder sticks. Best love to all, Yrs.A"

"January 15, 1916 - 2nd Lieut W. R Clarke

Many thanks for your letter Dec 31 rec'd today. Address changes daily but hope this reaches you. You say 'again' in action so I take it you are getting a bit of the real things.

Nothing to report here except the snowfall which increases steadily. 4 feet now, still rising. Is this better than rain? The first case of frostbite occurred recently, but there's not much danger if you follow out the simple advice. Best wishes and good luck for the New Year."

And also

"January 29, 1916

Another pc to keep us in touch. Absolutely the finest views of the building is the time when we see it for positively the last time. Haven't heard from home for a month now but time is still passing quickly and it is still snowing. When will you be getting any leave? Good luck. Ever Yrs A"

"March 27th, 1916 – to Winnie

Judging from the date you went to Camb (Cambridge), you should be home by now; possibly even you would be at Internat v Reservers at Richmond. Here is the usual pc. We had a great disappointment today. One officer had arranged that the ski exercise party instead of dodging around like a jack in the box should go out for a long run 10am till 5pm over a near mountain. Today it dawns and it is thawing and sticky however we'll practice the jumps this afternoon in hopes. I have very nearly finished "The M's in a red box," also some engineering books I have borrowed. 'Romance' shews you what you are missing and 'shop' books shew you what you should be experiencing and are not. Best wishes."

By far the most useful people, as far as us locating more letters, have been the philatelic community. I had made some connections in the early days of my research with a few different people and the web has spread wider through word of mouth, my website and through the talks I have been giving to societies.

The following letters are those that have either been shared with me, as in I have been sent scans of, or occasionally I have been gifted, by collectors.

(Scan sent by a Norwegian collector)

April 23rd, 1916

St George's Day

My dear Queenie,

Many thanks indeed for your letter from N Milton of 6th and of 13th from Wimbledon with enclosures of booklets and letters, also the forwarding of the books. You certainly seem to lead a busy life. I am glad you managed to get to Surbiton.

I am writing to Aunt D today and shall enclose the letter.

As I write there are four panels in front of me – each of original design – with the varnish drying – there are now plenty of books to read; in daylight there is the certificate to be done so while these thaw floods rage, there is plenty to keep one busy.

Four of us obtained permission to go to Faaberg Church this morning for service but the incident closed with an eleventh hour cancellation. Not that I expected much more. So many Easters, Christmases and the like have found me separated from all companions, but books and lingering memories, that it doesn't worry me too much. After all, when the time comes, you go.

Much music is now in vogue. The bugles and drums are not our line. There are two banjos, 2 mandolins 'n' one stringed fiddles. Next door, in harmony, a mandolin and fiddle are getting through 'True, true till death'. Evidently sentiment is at high tide.

I have just finished reading Silas Mariner by G Eliot and the 'Moss Troopers' by Crockett. The latter is something of the whiff of the Scotch moors – yet there are other country's and peoples besides Scotland. We had hot scones for breakfast om Good Friday and shortbread for tea – baked by the ships baker in our room.

I do not think there is anymore to say so good night,

Yrs A

The letter below was scanned emailed to me by a British collector who has both this letter and one dated April 29th, 1917. This particular collector has been very generous and helpful with his time and expertise. He drove across the country to see me give a talk and gifted me a postcard sent from *HMS India* from prior to her time as a navy ship. He also assisted in researching how so many letters got on the open market and traced them to a Bournemouth philatelist and seller, Robson Lowe. My contact was able to search through some old auction catalogues he owned and found an entry in one from Christies {selling for Robson Lowe} dated 15 March 1988 with the following description – “1916-18 (35 covers) with enclosed letters from a British sailor interned at Jørstadmoen, Norway to Hampshire, two showing c.d.s (circular date stamp) the remainder censored and date stamp “PAID” in London: also 2 other letters without covers, all from the same correspondent. Apparently from a survivor from *HMS India*, sunk off Bodo, in August 1915. An interesting correspondence but mainly on personal affairs.” I am in the process of following a couple of leads relating to Robson Lowe to see if I can get any further information but nothing has come through yet.

September 4th, 1916

My dear Q,

In your last letter (Aug 4) you discoursed upon the joys of holidays, after the strenuous conclusion of the summer term. Yet this letter is to give you welcome back to Branksome and work again. I hope you have a successful winter term. It is no use lamenting the passage of time. That goes without saying.

It must be a curious, feeling to be able to go and speak to your friends and relations, and to journey about, when one feels so inclined.

Recently, I thought I would have a photo taken of the engine and wagons, I sent a message to the only photographer, who lives 14 km away. He agreed to, but it is superfluous to add shortly after he had an accident, was removed to hospital, and will not take photos for many a day. Hence, no photos. I would like to hear from that esteemed friend of mine, the inner sensations of a whale's belly.

I had a short PC from the camp recently. They had a big sports day down there, Grace, by many visitors and the local band. The prize giving and dance after we're apparently the best they have ever had. However, as someone inquired tenderly after me, I am prompted to think I am improving.

We are having terrible weather up here. Very little work today, owing to wind and rain. After the war, I am going to Egypt, where there are no hills, no snow, no frost and no rain.

It must be curious for D living again in the something after country life. I suppose she will drop in for flag days and other social bug bears. I suppose we are well off up here. Absolutely compelled to save money, because there is no way to spend it. What a paradox!

I do not know if the two letters a week camp rule applies up here. Perhaps additional ones are delayed to make the total square; any rate it would be hard to find material for many more letters. I am conscious that a bear circular letter is not satisfactory at times. All this, by the way of remarking that I haven't had a letter from WSC for nearly 3 1/2 months; I am much indebted to her for the “nation” magazines which she sent, and I take it. She is leaving very busy just at the present.

From the period articles, one gathers that the go-ahead girls at home are having their haircut short. Is this a fact? It can't look pretty.

I have heard that 'Skelton' the other ERA ex 'India' who returned home, has again gone to Chatham. I do not know if he will visit number nine. I'm afraid I have not written to him much, but as I only meet to part, it is no use trying to keep in touch all the time; if I were to fall desperately in love with a beautiful Norwegian girl, then by the first law of cussedness, I should probably leave Norway shortly after.

Another measuring up with work takes place next week. Only a few more days and we shall have completed a three-quarter mile stretch of railway ready for the permanent way in four months. So work! Give me ticket punching where the whole job is finished in one second.

Best wishes to all a Merry Christmas and a happy new year. Ever yours A.

I am fortunate that many letters and postcards that have been or are being sold online are accompanied by photographs or scans of the original so that I am able to read and transcribe them, even if I cannot have the

original to add to the collection, at least I am able to see the contents! The postcard below was being sold on a Norwegian site.

October 20th, 1916

Winnie,

Many thanks for your postcards and also the parcel of chocolate and toffee which arrived absolutely OK yesterday. I have also received today a parcel from Father of magazines etc. Both welcome.

This shows one of our routes when out marching. Have marked the position of the camp. 13 P.O's were allowed to go to Lillehammer yesterday. The other 13 today. We were taken over a collection of very old houses. I then had a ripping feed followed by an hours shopping, not the least interesting bit was a goods train shunting! More of this visit in a general letter. Hoping things progress favourably ever.

Yrs, A

As I mentioned earlier, the philatelic community have been generous with their time, their connections, and their knowledge. After speaking to a South London group, I was contacted by one of their members alerting me to two of Arnold's letters being sold by a reputable London auction firm. I contacted the firm asking if they would approach the sellers to see if I might get prior options on obtaining the letters. This was not possible but the firm scanned the letters in and emailed the scans to me and then when one of the letters did not sell (it was a part of a larger lot) the firm were happy to separate it from the larger lot and send it to me! It was lovely to reunite it with the rest of the collection and it, and the letter from 28th September 1917 are shown in entirety in this chapter.

Dec 4th, 1916

Dear Q,

Your letter of 24th to hand last night. I have before me also all your letters of recent date. (Yours are as regular as clockwork. Do I deserve it?). Nowadays I never expect any letter I write to arrive.

Your request re turtle (picture) stoves was fully answered by letter from here Nov 24th; in case it gets ditched I enclose a sketch; the only recommendations I can make are (1) to have the flue swept monthly, (2) to burn small sifted coal – not lump(s). Keep the lower flap full open when lighting up, but when under weight way, have open the barest possible slit to keep the coal burning. Norwegians keep theirs going for weeks by working out ashes at the bottom always keeping it full of fuel. Will is nearest to hand.

Will you be going to St. Brendan's at Xmas? I have not in toto joined the A.I.L (all is lost) brigade but I don't care much what happens now. I am a genius for letting things slide. Of the men on leave, 2 put in for extensions and I have no doubt the rest will get medical certificates – 'too weak to travel back'. As I'm in next to last batch (the permutations of 76 men taken 9 at a time!) I expect I shall come tottering home on a crutch, with a 2ft beard about the same time as the War Babies battalion leaves for France. Still it doesn't matter much. What you never have had, you never miss.

We have had a tremendous good laugh over Punch's almanac. Messrs Dugout and Co and the 'eviction of an enemy mindset' – not to mention the 'home-made munitions.'

The Norwegians are not logical. We have not been allowed to draw the money we earned on the railway because they are afraid of us nipping – yet men have had £5 and £10 sent out from home and these amounts (far exceeding our modest wage) they cheerfully let come into the camp. Humbug, pure and simple. What's the good of anything? Why, nothing! The censor reads all of this so I won't say any more. I am looking for to the time when all the censors are sacked, and we can pursue our conversations in peace. Such is not likely to happen again, so I remain,

Yrs A

April 29th, 1917

My dear Q,

Altho there were a few letters this week, the ones I had were from DC, WSC, WRC – but to get letters one must write them.

The time seems to fly past all right. This is a peculiar nation. One would think that after six months of idleness and snow they would buckle to. Last week there was an Independence Day & a 3-days Horse show, when altho' there are heavy drink restrictions, all hands seemed to be pretty far gone in liquor.

Next week there are more independence days – this time from Sweden, I think. Everyone dresses in the National costume and carries a small flag about with them. They don't seem to be in any hurry to avenge it on the high seas. I suppose the landed farmers are too busy going to church to care a jot about the seafarers of this nation (the only good ones in it) who bring them their sustenance.

The wife of Commander Kennedy gave birth to a son and heir yesterday.

Statistics state that lunacy is on the increase in this country. It is not to be wondered at when you see some of the existences led. A lonely log house that contains people whose outlook on life is bounded by one cow, one potato and hay crop; in the course of a walk one night recently we came to such a dwelling near a lonely wood, and the sole woman inhabitant might have been over 100 years old, by the way she hobbled about. When once you get off the beaten track here you could go for a long time without seeing much bare snow drifts and pines.

The bridge at Faaberg was washed away last year. One would logically have thought as the ice started this year they would have buckled to and had the new temporary bridge ready for the thaw. But no, - the ice, dangerous for some three weeks past, broke away last Monday. The bridge might be finished by July or August.

The Board of Education books arrived last night. There are some good ones amongst them.

I posted a copy of 'Bindle' (two arrived here by mistake) to you. I should like to hear your opinion of it.

In stories of men wrecked on desert islands they invariably make some strange oath such as selling their soul to the devil, -marrying the first woman they meet or some such horrible things. I have often contemplated an orgy of smashing mirrors, sitting 13 to a table, spilling salt, walking under ladders, stirring tea with a knife et sic as a means of provoking an all-seeing Deity into action. But no, while some clergyman at home is forbidding his flock to till the soil on Sunday, other people are getting shot so that he can stand in the pulpit without fear of a shell wiping him up – while we, well there's something uncanny in it.

Best wishes

Yrs A

The international philatelic community have been as generous as their British counterparts; the letter below is from a Norwegian collector.

June 5th, 1917

Dear Q,

Many thanks indeed for your letters of 3rd, 13th and 19th of May. Here is another to keep in touch. I am sorry I ever said anything about leave; I might have known I was unlucky enough for it to practically fall thro'. It used to be a saying that in a common danger, Englishman dropped all petty spite and bickering; that hardly seems true nowadays. With England becoming self-supporting, I suppose hostilities will continue indefinitely. Probably we shall still be sitting smoking here this time next year with our own Patron Saint Micawber, and Norway's St Alfred Jingle.

Yesterday, six of us climbed Balberg for a midday picnic. After a night's rain everything was very fresh and the view was clear; at the summit we lit a fire, boiled the coffee and regaled ourselves on sandwiches, eggs, cakes, bread and butter and cigars.

I don't think I won't say anymore now

Yours A

Sept 28th, 1917

(Svanaa Party)

My dear Q,

Many thanks for your letter of 14th Sept which arrived here yesterday. One can quite presume that the women of England are quite handy with tools and work now; in fact it's a marvel to me they put up with men at all.

Should things go as I wish ultimately, I can assure you, you will need to keep a ledger for my address, or more probably you won't write at all.

We have had nearly a month's work up here and I had only missed 6 hrs work for rain when the chief engineer of this section paid us a visit yesterday.

As he is a bird of ill-omen, there is not a man working today. The impasse will blow over, no doubt.

Indefiniteness affects men much, but an especial curse seems to have been over Norway and us but as one does not know how it will end, it is no use saying.

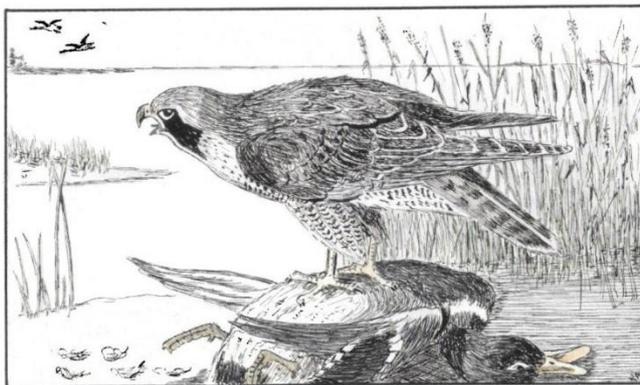
This letter must end now. It is no use forcing news, for that would make in uninteresting, so with best wishes, I remain Yrs,

A

One of the most interesting pieces I have added to the collection could have so easily slipped my notice as it did not have Arnold's name attached to it and it was only because I am so familiar with his writing and artwork that it stood out when I was doing an eBay search. It is a Christmas card he drew in 1916 and the only way of formally knowing it is his, is through the tiny RAC he writes in the corner of all his artwork. I was the only bidder on this item and got it for about £18. The seller had little knowledge of its provenance saying that he had purchased it in a bulk lot and was selling it separately. I am also aware of a notebook of Arnold's that is currently in the possession of a collector who told me that he would scan its pages for me. That was a few years ago now and despite my trying to get in contact with him, I have yet to hear from him again. I will admit that I find it frustrating when collectors fail to understand the importance of these items to the family. Most are very understanding but a few have been quite guarded and this means there are writings and drawings of Arnold's out there that we might never see. However, I continue to watch out for Arnold's letters and hope that through my website and my talks and my regular stalking of eBay and Google that we may be able to reunite more with the family collection.



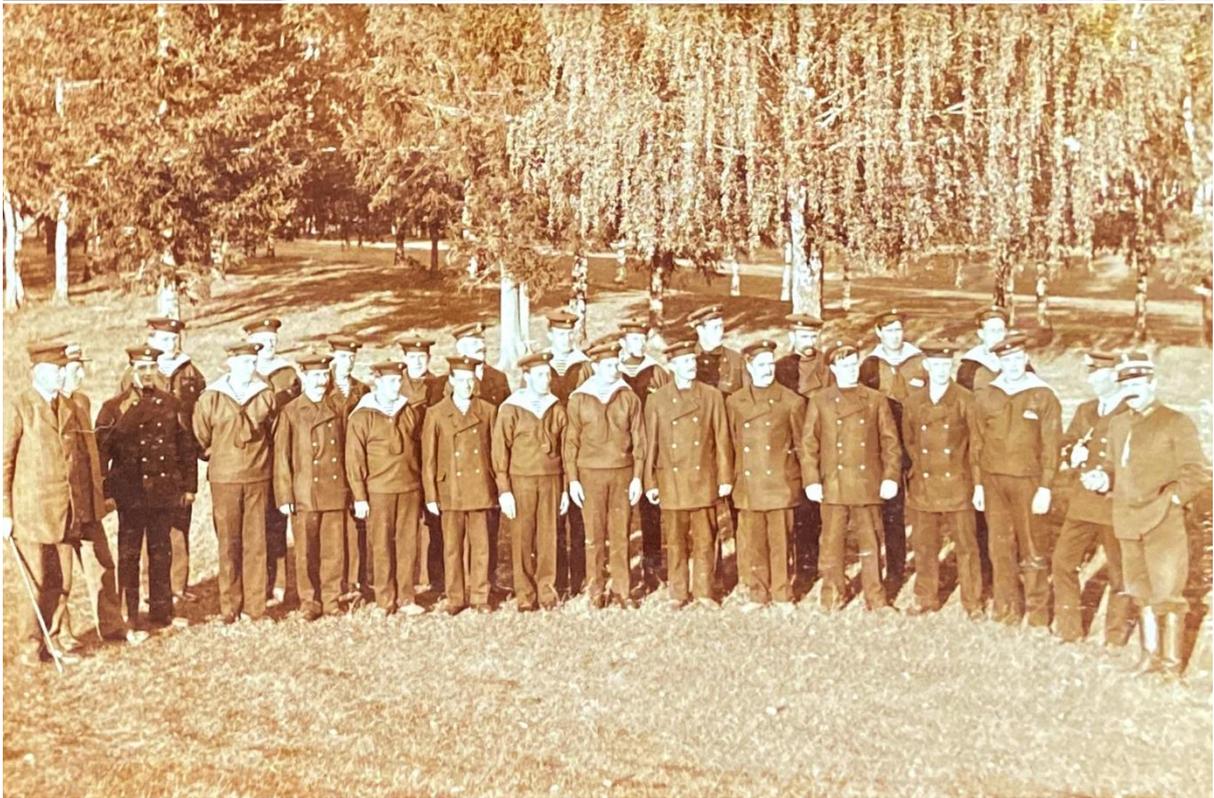
The 1916 Christmas card I stumbled across being sold on eBay. I was so happy to reunite it with the rest of the letters.

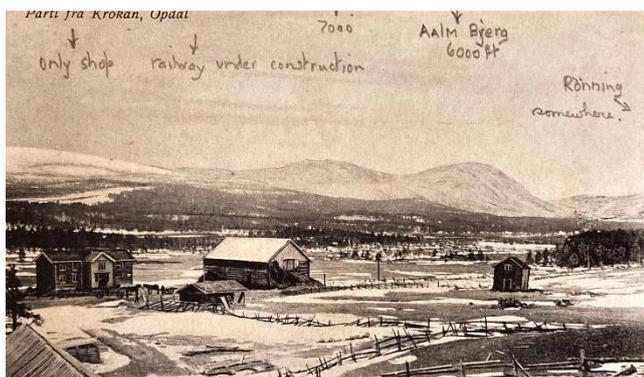
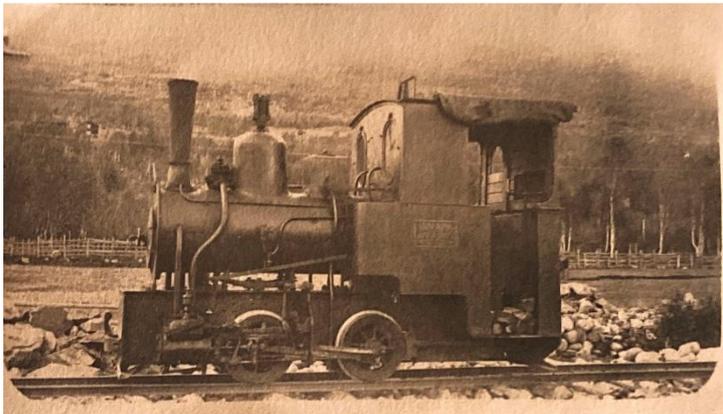
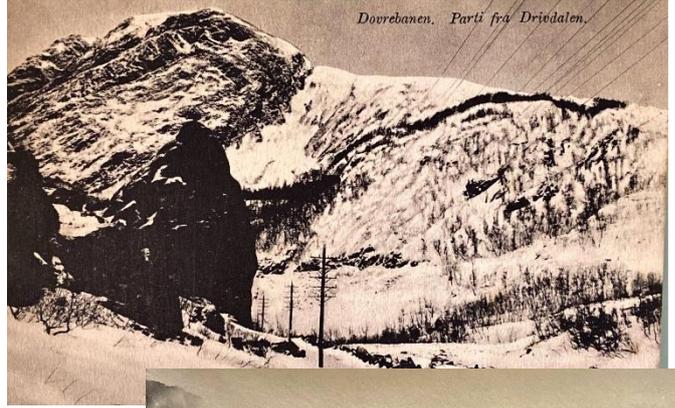


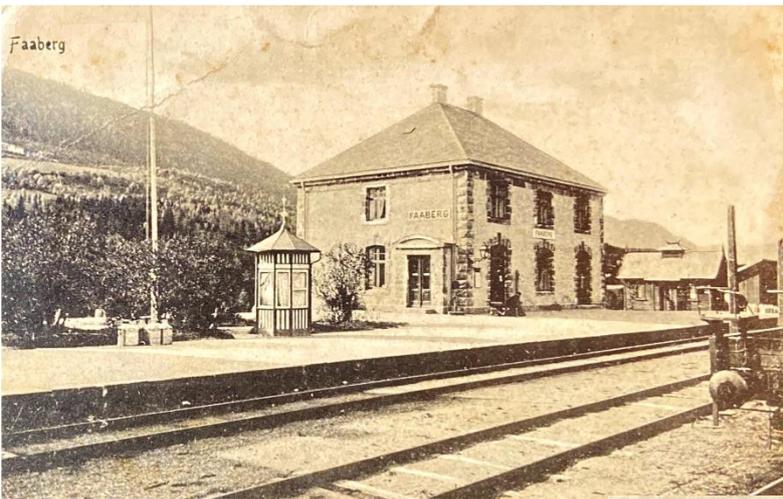
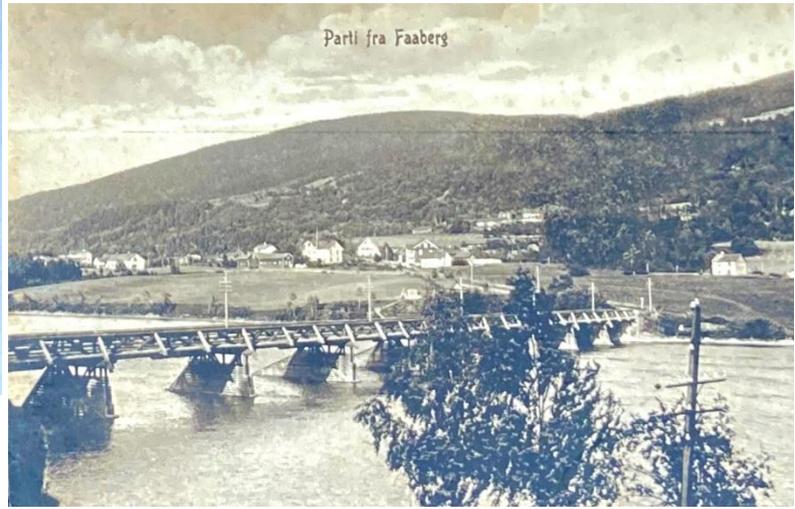
The Story of the Scrapbook

The writing and research of *A Bare Chronicle of Existence* was done during the Covid-19 pandemic and provided a welcome distraction from lockdowns, however, I was limited in the research that I was able to do as I couldn't go very far. I had been aware of a scrapbook of photographs and ephemera that Arnold had collected whilst in internment but the scrapbook was in Melbourne, Australia and I was in London. I was able to get my mum to scan most of it and send it over to me but the scans were not high definition and I put the scrapbook to the back of my mind and continued with my writing and research. It wasn't until after the book was published that I came across the scrapbook again at my father-in-law's house and spent some extended time having a really good look at it. I removed a couple of random photographs to find that they were actually postcards and they had writing on them. There were around 6 of these but a couple of other photographs were labelled or annotated with useful information. My father-in-law, Richard, has been kind enough to now allow me custodianship of the scrapbook and it sits proudly on my bookshelf and is taken to some of the talks I do. Below are a selection of photographs from the scrapbook which give a real sense of what life was like for the internees at Jorstadmoen. I have separated them into categories – Camp life, working on the railroad, Faaberg, ephemera and then a closer look at the photo with annotated nicknames on the back (with my workings on who is who).









BRITISH INTERNMENT CAMP

SPORTS DAY

SUNDAY 24th AUGUST 1918

The Band will play from 2 p. m. to 6 p. m.

Dancing from 7 p. m. to 12 p. m.

Distribution of prizes at 8 p. m.

JØRSTADMOEN, NORWAY

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS.

Committee: Mr. Jenkins, Lawrence, Anderson, Coomes, Oakley, McKeever, Ridley, Carnes.
Handicappers: Barn, Sampson, Lagon, Temple, Barber.

1. 80 YARDS HANDICAP (over 38 years old).
 Lawrence, R. C. scratch
 Cox, C. P. 2 yards
 Carnes, J. H. 5 yards

2. 100 YARDS HANDICAP.
1st Heat: Mr. H. Jenkins scratch
 Lawrence, R. C. 2 yards
 Johnston, A. scratch
2nd Heat: Philip, J. scratch
 Oakley, W. 2 yards
 Spiteri, F. scratch

3. 120 YARDS HANDICAP.
3rd Heat: McKeever, F. scratch
 Cogrove, W. 2 yards
 Jeffery, C. scratch
4th Heat: Cox, C. P. 2 yards
 Coomes, G. 2 yards
 Riley, H. scratch

4. 220 YARDS HANDICAP.
 Sub-Lieutenant H. R. Jenkins scratch
 Philip, J. 2 yards
 Oakley, W. 5 yards

5. SACK RACE (50 yards).
 Lawrence, R. 1st
 Burt, W. 2nd
 Philip, J. 3rd
 Maynard, R. 4th
 Harrison, H. 5th
 Atwood, J. S. 6th

6. THROWING THE CRICKET BALL.
 Lawrence, R. 1st
 Coomes, G. 2nd
 Johnston, A. 3rd
 Atwood, J. S. 4th

7. 440 YARDS HANDICAP.
 Mr. Jenkins scratch
 Philip, J. 5 yards
 Maynard, R. 10 yards
 Johnston, A. 15 yards

8. VISITORS RACE (LADIES) (80 yards).
 1st
 2nd

9. PUTTING THE WEIGHT.
 MacKay, G. 1st
 Cogrove, W. 2nd

10. 1/4 MILE (HANDICAP).
 Mr. Jenkins scratch
 Philip, J. 5 yards
 Johnston, A. 10 yards
 Riley, H. 15 yards
 Carnes, J. 20 yards

11. POTATO RACE.
 Lawrence, R. 1st
 Anderson, J. 2nd
 Mr. Jenkins 3rd
 Sumnerfield, S. E. 4th
 Burt, W. 5th

12. HOP, STEP AND JUMP RACE.
 Coomes, G. 1st
 Cogrove, W. 2nd

13. THREE LEGGED RACE.
 Lawrence, R. 1st
 McKeever, E. 2nd
 Coomes, G. 3rd
 Anderson, J. 4th
 Sumnerfield, S. E. 5th
 Perry, S. 6th

14. HIGH JUMP.
 Philip, J. 1st
 Oakley, W. 2nd
 Cogrove, W. 3rd

15. LONG JUMP.
 Philip, J. 1st
 Johnston, A. 2nd
 Oakley, W. 3rd
 Barber, G. 4th

16. 1 MILE HANDICAP.
 Mr. Jenkins scratch
 Johnston, A. 5 yards
 Oakley, W. 10 yards
 Maynard, R. 15 yards

17. WHEEL BARROW RACE (40 yards).
 Lawrence, R. 1st
 Harman, W. 2nd
 Jeffery, C. 3rd
 Cogrove, W. 4th
 Sumnerfield, S. E. 5th
 Carnes, J. 6th

18. OBSTACLE RACE.
 Philip, J. 1st
 Riley, H. 2nd
 Anderson, C. 3rd
 Carnes, J. 4th

19. CONSOLATION RACE (220 yards).
 1st
 2nd

6. THROWING THE CRICKET BALL.
 Lawrence, R. 1st
 Coomes, G. 2nd
 Johnston, A. 3rd
 Atwood, J. S. 4th

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19. CONSOLATION RACE (220 yards).
 1st
 2nd

Judges:
 Lieut. Alltree
 Mr. C. J. Byrne, Chief Gunner
 Lieut. Minken.

Starter:
 Lieut. Hansteen.

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 1st
 2nd

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Judges:
 Lieut. Alltree
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Starter:
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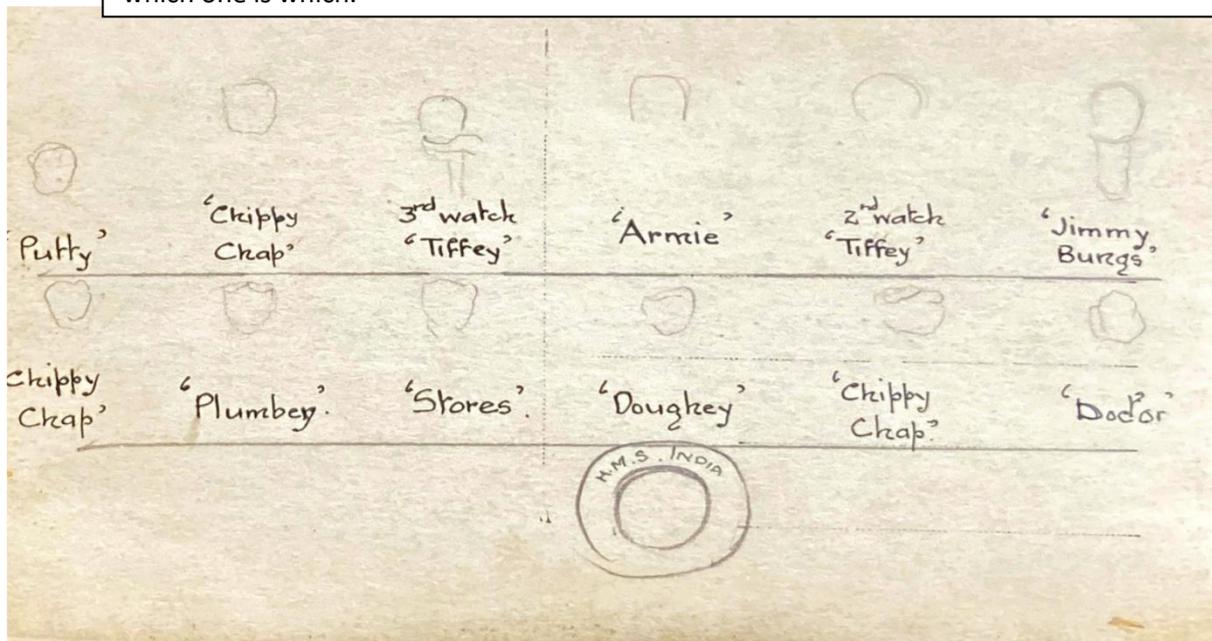


Using Arnold's nicknames, I have been able to work out the following men –

Back row, left to right – Painter (putty) Bernard C Baile, 3rd watch Tiffey (artificer) William Gillon, Armie (armourer) Thomas Joseph Sanders, 2nd watch Tiffey Arnold Clarke, Jimmy Bungs (cooper) Arthur William Green

Front row, left to right – Chippy Chap (carpenter) John Roland Anderson, Plumber Charles Thomas Anderson, Stores Richard Dunn, Doughey (baker) Robert Thomas Lawrence, Doctor Frank Lawson

The remaining chippy chaps are William James and Andrew Johnstone but I am unsure as to which one is which.



The story of the men

It has been an aim of mine to find photographs of as many of the interned *HMS India* men as I can. This has been made a lot easier by finding registration papers for those who joined the merchant navy after the war as the papers have photographs included with them. Below are all the men I have photos of – (please note that those men holding numbers are merchant navy crew not criminals! The numbers are their merchant navy identification numbers issued in 1919/20)¹⁷



Trimmer Albert Edward Jolley (1896 -)



Shipwright Albert Jones (1890-



Stoker Alexander McBain (1874-

¹⁷ Photographs of Merchant Navy crew taken from National Archives <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>



Leading Cook's Mate Henry John Allen (1891-

H J. ALLEN,
At first officially reported missing
from H.M.S. India and now
known to have been saved.



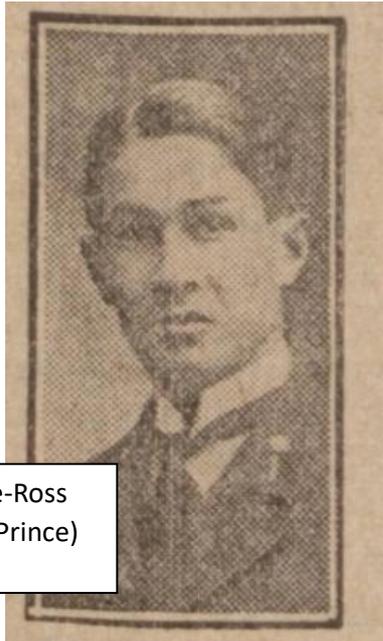
Tempy Sub-Lieutenant Claude John Bale (1890-1915)



Fireman Charles Albert Temple (1888-



Steward Charles Henry Ross (1894-



Proby Midshipman Ronald Clunie-Ross
(known to locals as the Coconut Prince)



Able Seaman Elvy Taylor ((1885-1973)



Assistant engineer Francis William Patmore
(1883-1960)



Engineer Frederick William Tims (1884-1934)



Able Seaman George Ward (1884-1943)



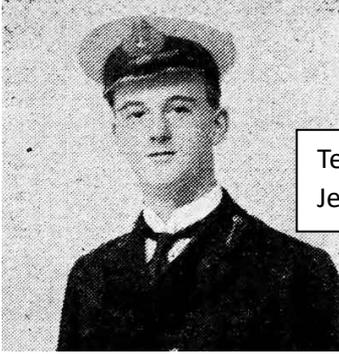
Blacksmith's Mate William Gardiner (1893-)



Fireman Henry Smith (1879-)



Able Seaman Hugh Davies (1887-)



Tempy Midshipman Harold Rhys Jenkins (1898-1948)

Captain's Valet Lawrence Chircop (1888-)



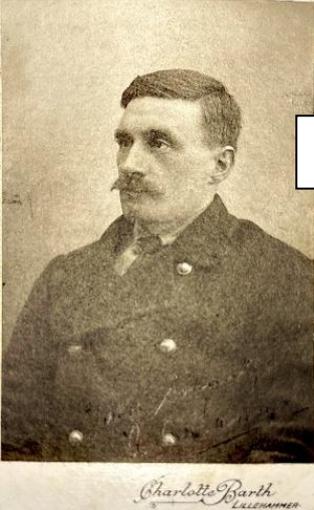
Ordinary Seaman Matthew Milligan (1895-)



Baker Robert T Lawrence (1880-)

Seaman Robert Charles Maynard (1892-)





Private 1st Class Arthur Charles Tanner (1885-1973)



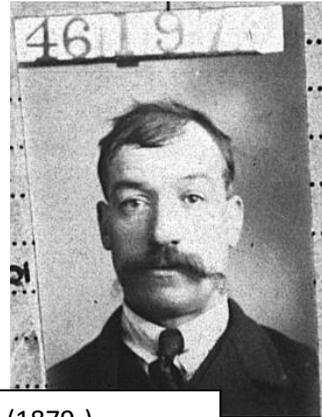
Chief Armourer Thomas Joseph Sanders (1865-1943)



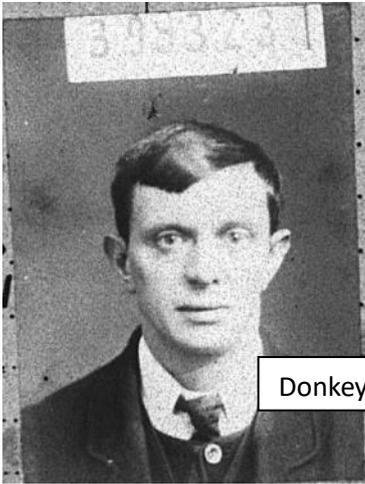
Trimmer Thomas William Cole (1894-)



Engine Room Artificer 2nd Class William Gillon (1892-)



Able Seaman William G.A Jones (1879-)



Donkeyman William Stephen Hammond (1885-)

The story of my trip to Norway

In March 2024, accompanied by my husband, I finally made it to Norway to personally visit Oslo and Lillehammer but, more importantly, Jørstadmoen.

The first part of my trip was spent in Oslo. I had previously contacted the National Archives in Oslo and had made an appointment to visit and look at the files they had available concerning *HMS India* and Jørstadmoen. A short train ride from the centre of Oslo, the National Archives of Norway is a striking building in its simplicity. It sits at the top of a small hill above the railway and on the day I visited, was perched among the trees upon the softening snow. I had previously filled out the registration form and was carrying my relevant I.D so the registration process was very straightforward and I was directed to the compact locker room where I divested of my coat, scarf and gloves and gathered my iPad and notebooks and pencils before making my way upstairs to the readers' rooms. Compared to the British National Archives, this building was significantly smaller but it well organized and the requested files were ready for me to look at. The first file was a book filled with newspaper clippings about the sinking of *HMS India* and the fate of its crew dated primarily from 1915 and 1916. From what I could tell, the clippings were from Norwegian newspapers. I was able to quickly Google translate a selection of them and there was no new information in them but it was interesting to see how the torpedo attack was reported in the Norwegian news. The second file contained the most interesting information in the forms of the letters written by William Oakley regarding his unsuccessful attempt to escape the camp. These were a priceless addition to my research and led me to getting in contact with his great-niece and learning all about the hapless Australian!

The final file contained paper after paper, letter after letter discussing the costs of keeping the British sailors at Jørstadmoen for 39 months and the amount the British government owed the Norwegians at the end of the war. I must admit to being quite bemused by this and will also admit to not spending a lot of time with the contents of this file. I had never considered that the belligerent country may be financially responsible for their interned crew in a neutral country when the neutral country had made the conscientious choice to inter the men in the first place but from my limited understanding of these papers, the British government expected the bill and plans were made to pay it. As I said, I did not spend a lot of time translating the Norwegian letters and only took a cursory glance at the English ones so my understanding is limited. Maybe I will have another look next time I visit.

Whilst in Oslo, I decided to take a visit to the Norwegian Armed Forces Museum expecting to see a small mention of Jørstadmoen. I was surprised to find no mention of the camp or the internees. The section on WW1 was very small as Norway was not involved in the war but I really thought that there would be a mention.

After a couple of nights in Oslo, I caught the train to Lillehammer. The scenery on the journey was stunning with the train winding around snow encased, icy lakes with individuals sitting in the middle on small stools, fishing through holes in the ice. Lillehammer was just as picturesque, with its multicoloured timber buildings and deep snow everywhere. I had come up earlier than my husband, who was working in Oslo, so that I could meet with a Norwegian film producer. I had been put in contact with him by a P&O enthusiast who knew the producer personally. The P&O enthusiast ran his own website on historical P&O ships and had done some research on *HMS India* and he and I had been in contact since the beginning of my research. He was sure, as I am, that the story of *HMS India* and her men would be great told on screen and he was confident his contact would agree. To cut straight to the chase, yes, the film producer agreed that it would make for an interesting project but he was of the opinion that it would need come from the British film or television makers, not the Norwegian. He encouraged me to hunt out producers and directors who have

worked on war films or history films and see if I could get any success that way. He did admit that it is incredibly hard to get projects like this off the ground when you have little support in the way of agents or publishers but I refuse to give up hope that one day I might see this story told on screen.

My husband arrived in Lillehammer that evening and we spent time in the hotel planning the next day. The day that we would visit Jørstadmoen and see the camp. After researching options, we realized that there was a bus that ran every 30 minutes or so from Lillehammer to Faaberg and Jørstadmoen. Too easy! We woke the next morning to a bright but chilly (-6 degrees) morning and after a quick breakfast walked down the hill into the centre of Lillehammer to catch the bus. I always feel quite chuffed when I am able to work out public transport in foreign countries and we were both feeling a bit smug when we successfully boarded the correct bus and headed out of Lillehammer. It is a relatively quick journey to Faaberg (around 15 minutes) and from there another 5 or so to Jørstadmoen. The bus runs in a loop around Jørstadmoen so we stayed on board as it wound its way up the hill above the village and the camp and then came back down again right alongside the camp where we disembarked onto the snowy footpaths, right outside the camp. I had decided to bring the folders of letters with me. The sentimental side of me wanted to bring them back to where they had been written – it felt like a full circle kind of moment. James and I stood outside the high fences of the now Norwegian Army base for Cyber Security and leafed through the letters and tried to work out why it was so important for us to be in this place. The first reason was because Richard, my father-in-law, had never made it to see where his father had been interned and we wanted to see it so that we could talk about it with him. The second, and it took us a while to find the right words for this, was to validate Arnold's and all the other *HMS India* sailor's experiences. They were men who went to war to serve their country. They were prepared to play their part. These men experienced the horror of a shipwreck in freezing waters and then, purely through the luck of the draw, ended up living behind barbed wire in a foreign country for over three years. James and I found ourselves getting a bit emotional (and cold) standing on the icy footpaths looking at the camp and the museum buildings opposite. We were so glad we had finally managed to visit.

After chatting for a while and having a look around (I have since been told that if I write to the army camp there is a chance that we could go in and have a tour around the current facilities and see the only remaining WW1 building – I would love to visit again), we decided to walk back to Faaberg. Well, I say walk, it was more of a slip and slide along. The pavements were so icy. We wanted to get a feel for the walks Arnold and the other men would have taken in the local area. It is a beautiful walk, especially in winter, alongside the river and walking around Faaberg. We did try to find the location of a house from one of the postcards that has the men marching in front of it (see photos below). We found loads of similar houses but not the right one so back on the bus and into Lillehammer for some open sandwiches (of course) and then to try and find Commander Kennedy's house (not successful this time) and the churchyard where Sub-Lieut Alltree is buried. The church and churchyard were easy to find and we knew we were in the right place as there is a Commonwealth War Graves sign at the entrance way. Knowing we were in the right place and finding the right grave were two different things! The churchyard was literally thigh deep in snow. Walkways had been thoughtfully carved in the snow creating deep rows however walking on them was extremely difficult as they were either wet slush or dangerously slippery ice! We split up, going in separate directions to try and cover as much ground as possible but when we met at the rear gate twenty minutes later, neither of us had located the grave. James refused to be put off and asked to look at the photos I had to see if he could narrow down the location. Looking carefully, he realised that the gravestone backed onto a wall and the only place that could happen was along the front wall of the churchyard. We hotfooted it back to the entrance gate and within a few minutes, James gave a triumphant shout. Sticking about 15 centimetres above the snow line was the top of a gravestone with an anchor carved into it. James began shifting the snow away to reveal Ernest Woodburne Alltree's grave. We had found him! We took photos and paid our respects and I was happy to send photos to Sub-Lieut Alltree's grandchildren to let them know that we had visited.

Before heading back to the hotel, I called into a couple of the local bookshops to see if they would consider stocking the book. I was successful at both places and left them a complimentary copy with instructions on how to order more copies for the shop. I also called into the Lillehammer library and offered them a copy of the book, which they happily accepted. I really hope that it is being read!

Feeling like we had completed a full day of exploration and adventure, we headed back to our hotel where we decided that it would be wise for me to see if I could change my flights and spend an extra day in the area so that I could visit the archives in Hamar where there were more files from the camp. I had emailed requesting permission to see the files but had not heard back from them. James and I decided it was worth the risk and so on the Sunday, we both got on the train in Lillehammer but at Hamar, I got off and James kept going back to London. I spent the afternoon exploring the very quiet town of Hamar and then working in my hotel room, all the while hoping that I would be able to access the files the next morning.

I was walking to the archives when the email came through that the files were ready for me to view and they were looking forward to welcoming me! Phew! Now to find the archives. I was following my directions on Google maps and found the building but finding the entrance was another matter. There was minimal signage and I felt that I was entering a block of flats but once in there, it was an easy ride in the elevator and I was in the right place. The files at the Hamar archives were primarily day to day logs books from the camp and they provided me with an insight into the daily happenings in the camp. Of course, they were all in Norwegian so I spent my time looking through the files and finding names of the interned men and then photographing those sections so that I could attempt to translate them later. I also had a good search through some local books that were being held in the archives and found a few relevant articles. Like the staff at the Oslo archives, those at Hamar were incredibly helpful and I was so glad I had taken the risk and stayed the extra two nights.

The real challenge came for me when I got home and tried to translate these records. Most were handwritten and the writing, in most cases, was spidery, to say the least! On top of this, the Norwegian language has changed since WW1 and this meant that Google translate was finding it tricky as well. I searched my contacts and emailed a number of Norwegian speakers who have helped me in the past in finding letters and asked for help. Luckily for me, pretty much everyone I appealed to was happy to help and the result was translations that made sense and were very useful. I have thanked these individuals on my thank you page but it is worth mentioning them again – Kjell-Arne, Linn, Rolf, Bjorn and Mette – thank you so very much!

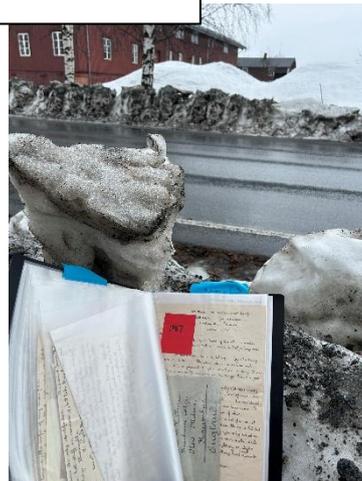
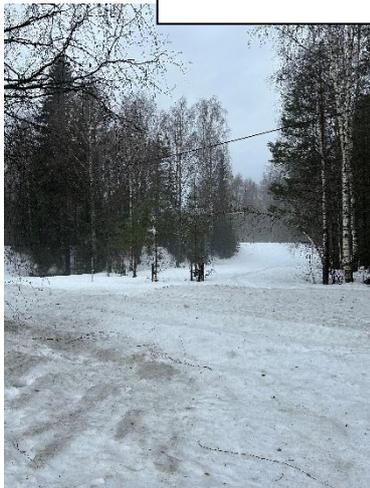
The most frustrating thing about visiting the archives in both Oslo and in Hamar was the information that was missing. Neither place had any records from 1917 and very little from 1916. 1917 is also the year we have the fewest letters from Arnold. I feel it is a bit of a hole in my research and would love to find out more about 1917. The archivists at both Oslo and Hamar were not surprised to find information missing. They commented to me that the Norwegian military are renowned for not being particularly good at keeping their records in order – especially back in the times of WW1. I am hoping that something will pop up over time and I can fill the gaps of 1917.

It was a brief visit to Norway but I was enchanted by the country and intend on returning. I would really like to visit Narvik, Bodo and the wreck site as well as the surrounding areas and would also like to see Bergen as so many of the men worked or travelled through there.

My research and writing on *HMS India* has taken me further than I ever thought it would in the beginning. I have met more descendants than I ever expected I would as well as so many other interested and interesting people. I now not only write about my research but have created a website which gets regular traffic and I speak on the subject to interested groups like philatelic societies, Probus groups, U3A groups and local history groups. I have been interviewed on podcasts and been interviewed for and I have written for magazines. I don't think I will ever be able to truly let this go but I am OK with that. I joke with my family that if I were to go on Mastermind, the ill-fated *HMS India* and the internment of her men would be by expert subject but my family are quick to point out that I wrote the chief source of information so that probably isn't accepted! So, for now, I watch out for Arnold's letters, but I move on to other work for a while. If you are still with me, thank you for your interest and support and let us never forget the men who sailed, who died and who survived *HMS India*.



Views of snowy Jorstadmoen – clockwise – the frozen Gudbrandsdalslagen, the view from the hill above the camp, Arnold's letters making their way back to where they were written over 100 years ago, looking back towards the camp after walking past.





Clockwise – the author on the bridge between Faaberg and Jorstadmoen, the authors husband outside the camp with museum buildings in the background. Sub-Lieut Alltree’s grave before and after being dugout.



References and thank you

Personal contributions to my research

Thanks to the following for sharing their families' stories, their collections or their knowledge of the Norwegian language – or in some cases all three!

Roland Adams

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Ellie Doak

Mette Fruergaard

Peter Grigson

Simon Grigson

Geoff Hanney

Janice James

Llanja Khon-Engheim

Anni Maluna

Graham Mark

Bjorn Muggerud

Tricia Ould

Rolf Scharning

Kjell-Arne Tilley

Archives and libraries

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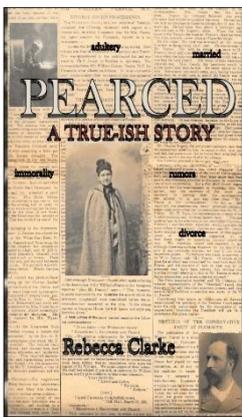
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Also, by Rebecca Clarke and available in most online bookstores



A Bare Chronicle of Existence – Stories and Letters from Internment in Norway during WW1



Pearced – A True-ish Story

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