



**Winning President's Cup Exhibit Alice & The King
Dahlia Harrison
(see page 10 for full story)**



**Winning Exhibitor Dahlia Harrison being presented with the
President's Cup by Society President Martin Harrison**



Second place exhibit Motor Ambulance Convoys of the British Red Cross and Saint John Ambulance on the Western Front 1914-18
Paul Handford



Paul being presented with his rosette



Third place exhibit HMHS Ebani
Mick Atkinson



Mick being presented with his rosette

Other Exhibits



Special Men
Dave Seeney



The Spirit of Remembrance
Philip Wilson



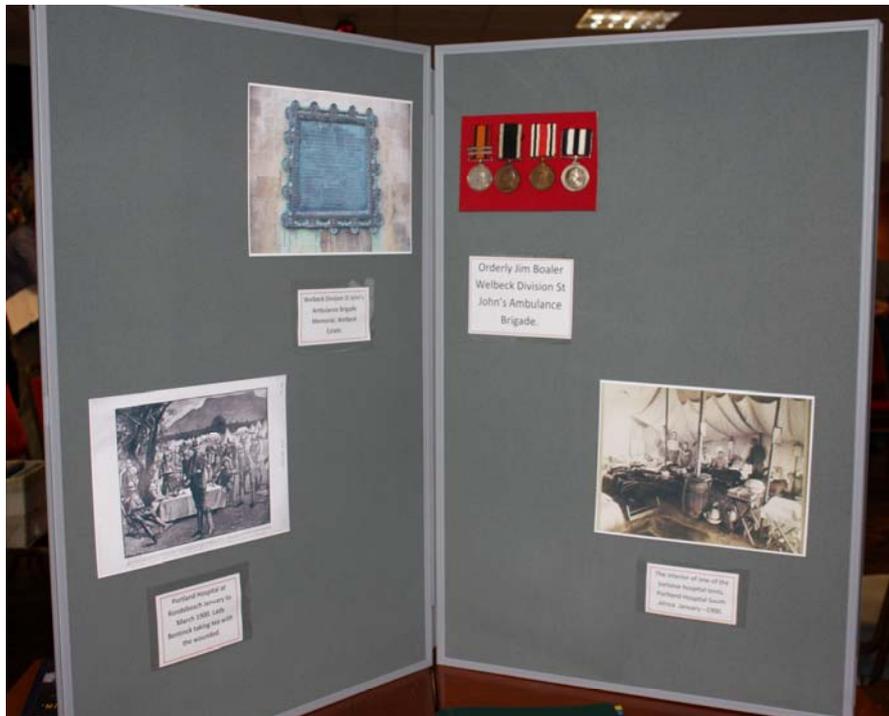
For Loyal Service
Martin Harrison



Waima
Christopher Hill



Like Uncle Like Nephew
Roger Bragger



The Portland Hospital in the Boer War
Paul Murray



A separate display not in the competition
Chris Newton

Ten Minute presentations:

Reg Cook – *A B James Hunt RN HMS Penel*

Dave Seeney - *An Odd Man*

Philip Wilson – *Reflections*

Geoff Taylor – *A Chief Commoner*

Roger Bragger – *Like Uncle like Nephew*

Christopher Hill - *Tanga 1914 – Another classic British disaster*

Paul Handford - *Two extremely rare 1914 Star trios*

Martin Harrison – *Brother Eric*

Paul Murray – *Portland Hospital in the Boer War*



Guests view the displays



With thanks to Sue Handford for taking and kindly allowing publication of the photographs.

Birmingham Medal Society Convention
Knowle Royal British Legion
Saturday 9th June 2012
Programme

- 1000h - Doors open
- 1015h - Coffee & biscuits - view displays & President's Cup judging
- 1045h - Official Opening & introductions by President
- 1100h - Talk - Elizabethan Medals *Mick Atkinson*
- 1200h - Buffet lunch & raffle
- 1300h - Raffle draw and President's Cup presentation
- 1330h - Members presentations
 - 1330h - **Reg Cook** - *A B James Hunt RN HMS Penelope*
 - 1345h - **Dave Seeney** - *A Odd Man*
 - 1400h - **Philip Wilson** - *Reflections*
 - 1415h - **Geoff Taylor** - *A Chief Commoner*
 - 1430h - **Roger Bragger** - *Like Uncle like Nephew*
 - 1445h - **Christopher Hill** - *Tanga 1914 - Another classic British disaster*
- 1500h - Tea and biscuits
 - 1530h - **Paul Handford** - *Two extremely rare 1914 Star trios*
 - 1545h - **Martin Harrison** - *Brother Eric*
 - 1600h - **Paul Murray** - *Portland Hospital in the Boer War*
- 1615h - Closing address & disperse

President's Cup entries

Motor Ambulance Convoys of the BRC & OSTJ on the Western Front 14-18
For Loyal Service

Special Men

Wiama 1893

The Portland Hospital in the Boer War

Alice and the King

The Spirit of Remembrance

Like Uncle like Nephew

HMHS Ebani

Judges

Ian Laidler

Chris Newton

Bill Walton

Web Site: www.birminghammedalsociety.com

With thanks to Knowle Royal British Legion Club and Sue Joss for the use of their excellent facilities

Alice and the King



Alice was born in Trevor, near Llangollen, Wales on 2 May 1880. Trevor is situated on the opposite side of the Dee Valley from Froncysyllte. She was educated at a private school in Rake Lane, New Brighton, Cheshire, and notes that her father was a Troop Sergeant Major in the 16th Lancers.

In January 1905, when she was approaching 25 years of age, she commenced her three year's training to become a Nurse at the Infirmary and Dispensary in Bolton, Lancashire. On completion of her training, she spent several years in District Nursing before making the decision to train as a Maternity Nurse at Middleton Square, London. On 24 November, 1914, Alice signed the declaration to become a nursing sister with Queen Alexandra's Imperial Nursing Service Reserve.

Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service Reserve.

acted
notations ref
applied for
Nov. 26.

FORM OF APPLICATION.

1. Name in full *Alice Meldrum.*
2. Date of birth *2nd of May 1880.*
3. Place of birth *Irew. N. Llangollen. N. Wales.*
4. Profession or occupation of father *Secretary.*
5. Whether parents are living, and address. *Mother 126. Cromhall St. Walsley
Sheffield
Father dead.*
6. Whether single or widow (if a widow profession or occupation of late husband) *Single.*
7. Where educated ... *"Rake Lane" School Ken-Brighton
Cheshire*
8. State of health (attach Medical Certificate) ...
9. In what hospital trained, and for what period—giving dates *Infirmaries Dispensary, Bolton
Janst 1905 - Febst 1908. Lancs*
When did you leave? ... *Feb. 1908.*
What position did you hold? ... *Staff Nurse.*
10. If you have had further nursing experience, state its nature, giving dates *"District Nursing" under "Queen Vic"
april 25th 1908 to July 15th 1914
"Midwifery" Aug 5th 1914*
11. State name and address of one lady, not a member of your own family, to whom reference can be made *Miss J. ...
114 ...
1914*
12. Names and addresses of the Matron under whom you were trained, and of other Matrons under whom you have served *Miss Patterson. Great Lever.
"The Rectory" Bolton Lancs
Miss. ...
Miss. ...
1914*
13. What experience have you had in the nursing of Enteric Fever? ... *Nursing
Cases in their
own homes in the
District
The Linden
Victoria Park
Manchester.*
14. Are you a Candidate for any other Nursing Service? *Do.*

1885-1960 H.W.

[OVER

She was formally accepted and on 23 December 1914 was posted to Tring Military Hospital. On 7 May 1915, Alice was posted to serve on His Majesty's Hospital Ship "Anglia" as a Staff Nurse. The SS Anglia belonged to the London and North West Railway Company, operating a

service between Holyhead and Dublin. In 1915 the Government requisitioned the *Anglia* and converted her into a hospital ship.



The Hague Convention of 1864 adopted Convention (III) by which hospital ships were to be respected even during actual engagements at sea, as far as this was possible. It was further laid down that they could not be captured, nor could their nursing and medical staff be made prisoners of war. To ensure this immunity, it was declared that hospital ships should be distinctly decorated, being painted white with a horizontal band about a metre and a half broad, either of red or green, such decoration to be so lit up at night as to be easily distinguishable. All hospital ships were to fly, in addition to their national flag, a white flag with a Red Cross upon it.

An extract from the War diary notes that it was HMHS *Anglia* that had brought King George V back to England on 1 November, after he suffered an accident whilst visiting troops in France.

WAR DIARY
or
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY *HS Anglia*

Army Form S. 2118

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F. S. Regs. Part II and the Staff Manual respectively. Title Pages will be prepared in manuscript.

(Erase heading not required.)

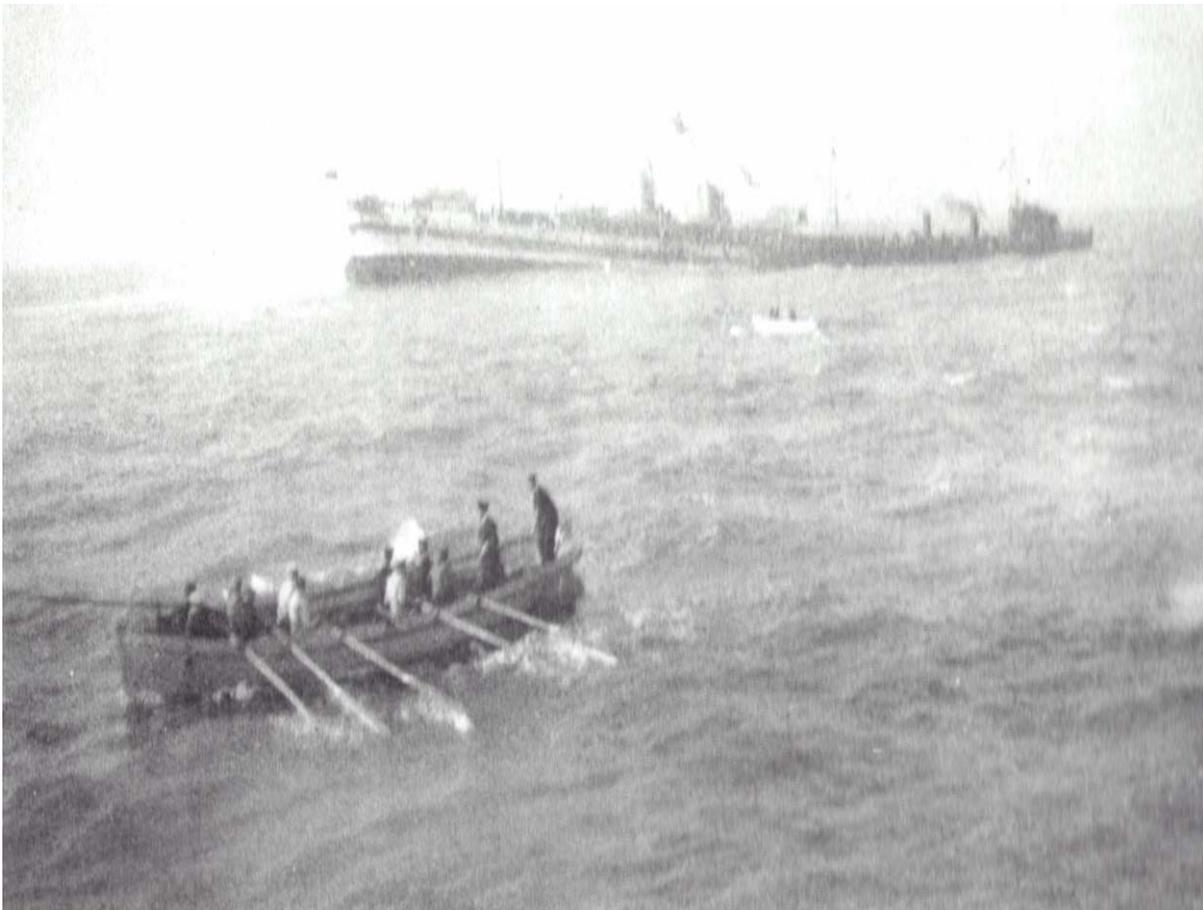
Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
Boulogne	26		At Boulogne. Patients still on board	
"	27		Left for Dover at 11.15 am. 147 cots & 163 walking cases Good passage	
DOVER	28		Coaled & left for Boulogne at 8.15 am. SW gale Rough passage	
Boulogne	29		At Boulogne	
"	30		Received order to prepare the Officers Ward for the use of H.M. The King & make such other preparations as might be necessary for his comfort. This was done	
"	31		At Boulogne	

*William Gow
Capt R.A.M.C.
OC Troop, HS Anglia*

Alice describes his arrival on board: "With great difficulty he was carried down the companion-way and into a small ward which had been previously prepared and very beautifully arranged with lovely flowers. The King, as was the case with most patients, was very sick, as it turned out to be one of the roughest crossings we had ever experienced. We felt very important leaving Boulogne harbour with destroyers on either side, and encircling us, and bluejackets on deck, on duty, keeping a sharp look out for any sign of mines or submarines, however, we fortunately reached port safely."

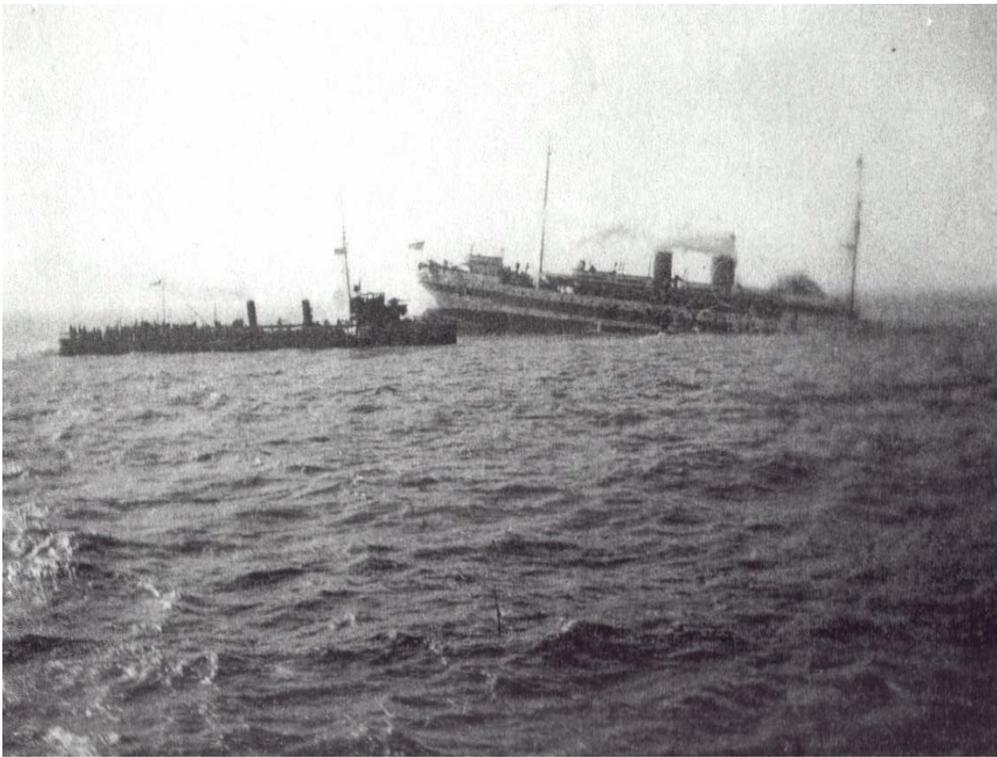
The King sent Matron M S Mitchell a brooch from London in appreciation for his treatment on the ship.

Regarded as one of the saddest incidents during 1915, the hospital ship Anglia struck a mine near number 8 buoy on the afternoon of 17 November on a routine journey from Boulogne to Folkestone to disembark wounded soldiers. She was carrying approximately 500 patients back to Blighty, many of them with fractured femurs, amputations and head wounds. This was the first hospital ship to be sunk during the war, while actually carrying wounded.

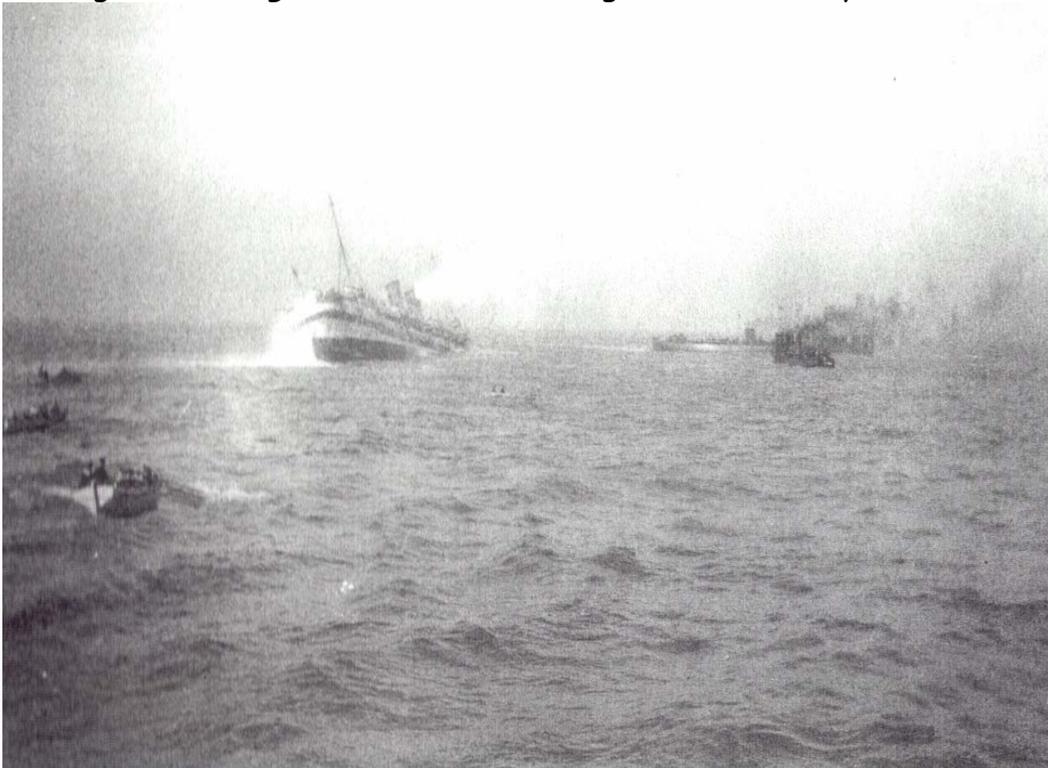


Hazard - see photograph below - was too large a vessel to get in close, so she stood off to receive the bulk of those saved.





Ure, an E class destroyer captained by Lieutenant Commander H B L Scrivener RN, manoeuvred alongside *Anglia* while she was still moving ahead and all the while turning in circles owing to the list, as her engine room men had been driven out by the rush of the water. Scrivener steered *Ure* right over *Anglia's* bow and he managed to save many lives.



This is a broadside impression of the *Anglia* going to her doom. A destroyer is standing by to pick up some of the three hundred wounded and crew who were saved. The shock of the explosion had rendered the wireless apparatus and the telegraph system worthless, this meant that the Captain was unable to stop the engines.

There was no denying the fact that the Germans had deliberately laid mines in the path of the hospital ship, as they mined a route which had been purposely organised with specially lit buoys and on which no other ships were allowed to travel. It was at the last buoy round which *Anglia*

had to pass on her homeward journey that the trap was laid. The Anglia struck one of these well forward on the starboard side, soon after passing through "the Folkestone gate".

Alice describes the scene: "We carried as many as possible on deck, and those that could threw themselves into the sea; others were let down in the lifeboat, but unfortunately it was only possible to lower one boat, as the ship was sinking so rapidly. The patients kept their heads wonderfully, there was no panic whatever, and when one realises that in the vast majority of cases they were suffering from fractured limbs, severe wounds, and amputations, it speaks volumes for their spirit, their grit and real bravery for they must have suffered agonies of pain. After we had satisfied ourselves that there was no possible chance of getting any more patients out, for by that time our bows had quite gone under, and only the ship's stern was above water, with the propellers going at a terrific rate and blinding us with spray, we then got down onto the rudder and jumped into the sea....."

A member of the Heeley Church Lads Brigade described his miraculous escape to the Rev W Odom, Honorary Canon of Sheffield:

".....Up came a great big wave and polished her off - also me for the time being. What a sensation! All my breath was squeezed out of my body and I gave myself up. Down, down, down, - what a depth, and how I did struggle! It seemed years!.....Wave upon wave came, and absolutely drowned me.....I kept hold as best I could, but my strength was gradually giving way....when something banged my head, and I was grasped by the hair and lifted up.....I don't remember anything until we landed back at the gunboat."



The Anglia is already down by the head. The starboard propeller was still turning while clear of the water. Most of the survivors having been taken off, the destroyer is backing in order to avoid the coming vortex. None of the patients could be got out of the two front wards, and what added to the tragedy of the disaster was the fact that many of the wounded were entirely helpless. The Anglia's nurses are recorded as having behaved with magnificent heroism,

with several distinctions won by the Royal Army Medical Corps orderlies for their gallantry in entering the partially submerged wards.

Alice describes her arrival at Dover: "...imagine our delight on finding many of our patients lying on the Admiralty Pier, whom we had last seen floating in the water, who had been picked up by other destroyers, and whom we had hardly expected to see again. Many were the handshakes and kindly greetings, and expressions of real thankfulness at meeting again on terra firma.there was a humorous side to it, for we must have looked very weird in the different garments that had been so kindly supplied to us by the officers and men of the destroyers, who did everything in their power for our welfare.....I would remind you that 40 minutes in the water in November is not the kind of sea-bathing that many would indulge in from choiceAfter a good meal on the Ambulance Train, we were soon on our journey to London."

The Army Council place on record their appreciation of the presence of mind and devotion to duty of the Royal Army Medical Corps personnel.....Through the courage and presence of mind of the Matron, Mrs Mitchell and the devotion of the Nursing Sisters most of the cot cases were evacuated from the ship.....aided by Lt Bennet, Lt Hodgson, Pte Darwen and Pte McGuire....they succeeded in saving wounded from the Lower Wards when they were awash and almost submerged.

The Army Council also expressed their appreciation of the assistance in the work of the rescue rendered by HM Torpedo Boat No 4; HMS Hazard; HMS Ure; SS Lusitania and SS Channel Queen.

Draft Army Order.

Loss of Hospital Ship "Anglia".

The Army Council desire to place on record their appreciation of the presence of mind and devotion to duty shown by the Royal Army Medical Corps personnel on the occasion of the sinking of the Hospital Ship "Anglia" which struck a mine on the 17th November 1915.

Through the courage and presence of mind of the Matron, Mrs. Mitchell, and the devotion of the Nursing Sisters most of the cot cases were evacuated from the ship. In this work Lieutenant P.L.T.Bennet aided by Lieutenant H.W.Hodgson were conspicuous, and, aided by Privates Darwen and McGuire of the Royal Army Medical Corps, they succeeded in saving wounded from the lower wards when they were awash and almost submerged.

The Army Council also desire to express their appreciation of the assistance in the work of rescue rendered by H. M. Torpedo Boat No. 4, Lieutenant-Commander H.P.Boxer, R.N., H.M.S. "Hazard", Lieutenant Commander L.A.D.Sturdee, R.N., H.M.S. "Ure", Lieutenant Commander Evelyn H.B.L.Scrivener, the s.s. "Lusitania" and the s.s. "Channel Queen".

2
✓ Assistance
to Hospital Ship
"Anglia"

The Terrible Tragedy of the Sea.

Channel Queen Saves Seven Lives.

Gallant Rescue Work.

Everyone was shocked this morning when the news was circulated that the hospital ship Anglia had struck a mine when near land, and had sunk with the loss of numbers of brave lives.

Realising that the incoming London trader Channel Queen whilst on her way to Jersey must have been close to the spot where the tragedy occurred, one of our representatives this morning interviewed Capt. Wetherall, the popular commander of the vessel, and the latter, though evidently reluctant to tell of some of the gruesome incidents he had seen, was pleased to be able to state that he and his crew had been instrumental in saving seven lives, though incidentally we were able to ascertain that the "Queen" herself had had a very narrow escape.

It appears that about midday yesterday the Channel Queen was near Dover on her way to this island, when some distance away a large steamer was noticed in a sinking condition, her bows being under water and her propellers, which were revolving at a terrible rate, were above the level of the sea. Men were also noticed diving off from the stern. A couple of patrol vessels could be seen taking off the passengers, and Capt. Wetherall at once gave "full speed ahead," and on getting nearer gave the order for a boat to be lowered.

The crew of the Channel Queen, who by now had seen that the vessel was a hospital ship, were naturally very anxious to render all assistance, and Capt. Wetherall pays a high tribute to his crew for the prompt manner in which they carried out the rescue work. Chief Mate Noel (of Guernsey), Bo'sun Geo. Brown, A.B.'s P. Arthur and Clem Hutton (Jerseymen), and Fireman A. Mahtman (of Guernsey) were the crew of the lifeboat, which once clear of the ship rowed with all haste on their errand of mercy.

Three wounded soldiers were seen floating in the water, and were promptly but gently taken into the lifeboat, only to collapse on being laid down. A lifebuoy raft was then discerned, and from this four wounded and thoroughly worn out warriors were taken off. No more could be noticed, and as the rescued men were in a pitiable condition owing to their exposure in the chilly water, the crew rowed with all haste to a patrol vessel, which took the grateful wounded aboard.

A search was then made, but as no more of the unfortunate wounded could be seen, the lifeboat returned to the Channel Queen, which meanwhile had not been idle, for Capt. Wetherall had noticed a few yards off a suspicious floating object which he discovered to be a loose mine, and he had had to manoeuvre his vessel to escape the danger. He also hoisted signals which brought up a patrol vessel to secure the mine, though the latter had a narrow escape. The captain evidently did not discern the mine, and only the warning hooter of the Queen prevented disaster.

Tragedy followed tragedy, for the collier Lusitania which came up on rescue work was also seen to sink by the stern, but her crew escaped safely in their boats.

Whilst congratulating Capt. Wetherall and his gallant crew on their smart rescue, which undoubtedly saved seven wounded heroes from a terrible death, may we express the hope that he will in the future, as in the past, successfully evade all the dangers which now beset mariners around our coasts.



Matron Mrs Mitchell had survived the sinking incident but lost all her possessions including the brooch presented to her by King George V. On hearing about this loss, the King lost no time in replacing it but he was also informed of her devotion to duty during the sinking. She had been found by Lieutenant Bennett, an RAMC officer, up to her waist in water and at a time when the ship was about to sink. She was struggling to rescue a patient from a cot. With his help they succeeded in saving the patient. Lieutenant Bennett, however, had to forcibly restrain the matron from re-entering B Ward to affect another rescue.

Survivors were taken by Ambulance Train to the County of London War Hospital.

On 29 November 1915 a Medical Board granted Alice leave due to 'Shock (following immersion)'. She was granted £31 7s 5d compensation for the loss of those articles necessary for the performance of military duties.



This is the submarine credited with having laid the mines in the channel - it is believed that she made 20 trips across the North Sea and laid c240 mines.

142 lives were lost. These included 22 men of the ship's company, all from Holyhead; 8 RAMC orderlies and Staff Nurse Mary Rodwell. They are all remembered on the Hollybrook Memorial in Southampton.



Rifleman Leonard Ware was being sent home suffering from frozen feet. He gave a graphic account of his ordeal in a letter to his parents:

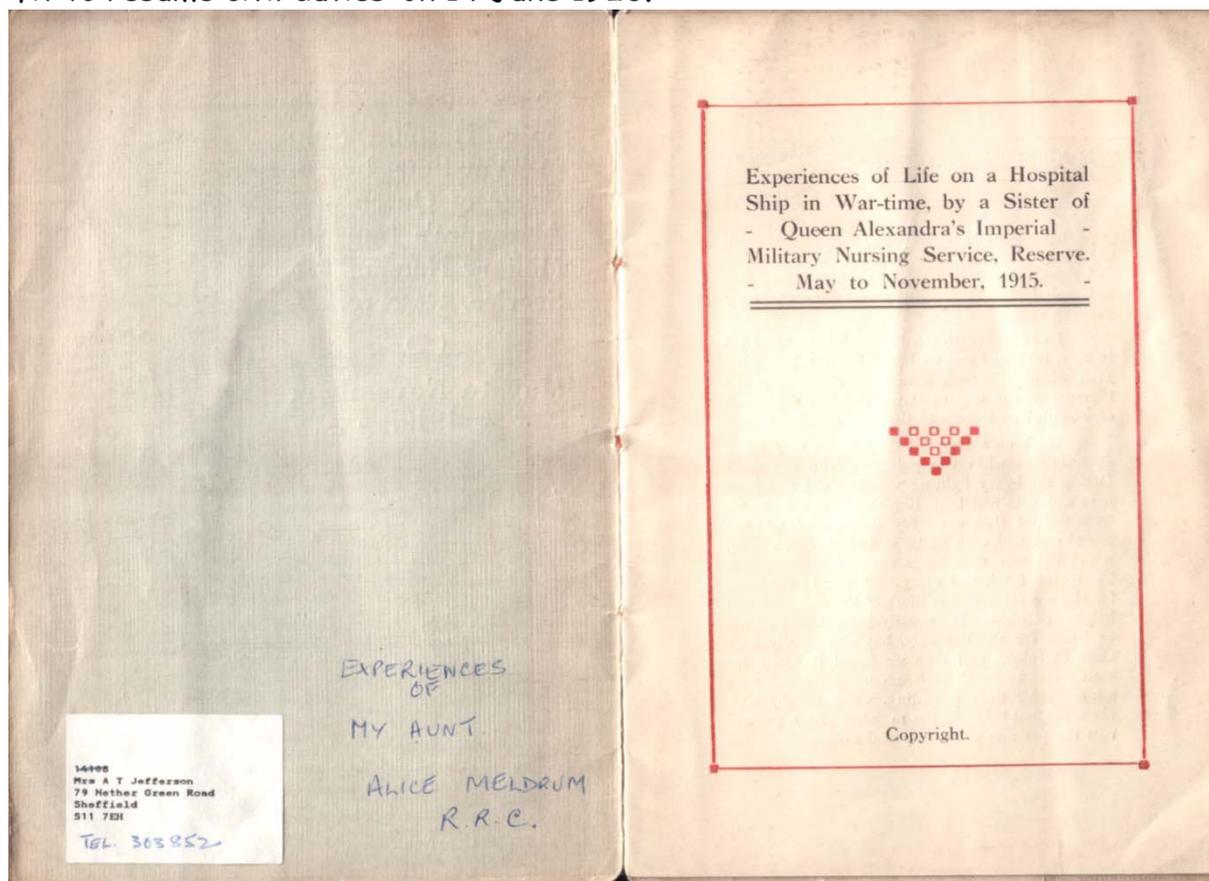
"I hope you will not get a shock when I tell you that I am in England. Thank God I am here to tell the tale. I was on the Anglia when she went down, But I will start from the beginning and tell you about it. We left Boulogne at 10 o'clock. They would not let us go before because it was so rough and they thought there might be a lot of mines break loose. We had just had lunch and some of the fellows who could walk were up on deck. I was a bed patient, so I was down below. We were about six miles from Dover, and the fellows upstairs were cheering - because they could see the Dover cliffs - when there was an awful explosion. I was thrown out of bed on to the floor and the water came rushing up to our knees. I do not know how I got upstairs. I think the water took me up, for I could not walk. The men on board were all weak from illness, and out of a crowd of fifty there was not one to tell us what to do. When the fellows got into the boats they did not know how to lower the boats themselves. They rushed to one of the boats, got into

it, but as soon as it touched the water it turned over and most of them were drowned, for they could not swim. All this time I was trying to walk along the deck, and as it was upright by this time, I had a bit of a job.

The sights were simply awful. There were fellows with broken legs trying to crawl along the decks, others with bullets through their chests, legs, arms etc. It was simply everyone for himself. I knew I could swim and I tried to get a raft overboard, but it was too much for me. And just then a nurse came floating by. I put my hand down to help her, as she could not swim, and she caught hold of it. But her weight was too much and she pulled me in as well and when I came to the surface I had lost hold of her. She must have gone right under the propeller, which was half out of the water. I had to swim for all I was worth, for I could feel the suction of the propeller as I passed."

He goes on to say that he was eventually picked up by a motor boat and passed out until he found himself on the train at Dover.

Alice was declared fit for duty on 11 January 1916 and posted to No 4 General Hospital, Camiers, France. On 20 June 1916 she was posted to No 35 Casualty Clearing Station, at Doullens, moving to No 2 CCS at Valenciennes in December 1918. In February 1919 she contracts cystitis and appears to have sick leave until posted to No 32 Stationery Hospital at Wimereaux on 12 July 1919. In April 1920 she has an operation for Papilloma of the Bladder and is passed 'fit to resume civil duties' on 14 June 1920.



Alice wrote and published a small booklet of her experience of life on a Hospital Ship. It also appears in "Reminiscent Sketches 1914-1919" by members of QAIMNS published in 1922. Alice's engagement with the Army was terminated wef 29 June 1920 being no longer required on reduction of establishment. In January 1921 she was appointed Assistant County Superintendent of the Derbyshire County Nursing Association, becoming County Superintendent in November of the same year.

Alice was given the option of receiving her award locally or by post but she was determined to receive her ARRC from the hands of the King himself. According to her personal file, she wrote on 14 January 1921, 11 February 1921, and 15 September 1921.

Derbyshire County Nursing Association.

In affiliation with Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses.

MISS C. A. LEE,
COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT.
MISS A. MELDRUM,
ASSISTANT COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT.

ROCK HOUSE,
CROMFORD,
DERBYSHIRE

GA
14-1-21

2/17/21/1574

To: The Matron in Chief,
G. A. J. M. H. S.

awarded ARRC
17-3-16
AM

V.I.
P.48

Madam,
I have the honour to bring the following facts to your notice.
For services rendered on board H.M.S. Anglia at the time she was sunk by enemy action in 1915, I was awarded the A.R.R.C.
My name has been repeatedly sent in since then as not having attended an investiture by H.M. the King.
As I had the honour of being on duty on board H.M.S. Anglia when we took His Majesty to England as a patient, I naturally should have been personally decorated by His Majesty.
I might mention that the only two women on board besides myself, namely the Matron Miss Walker, Miss Rodwell who was killed by the explosion

Derbyshire County Nursing Association.

(In affiliation with Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses).

A. LEE,
COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT.
MISS A. MELDRUM,
ASSISTANT COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT.

ROCK HOUSE,
CROMFORD,
DERBYSHIRE.

has both personally decorated by His Majesty,
and also incidentally received at his hands
tangible proof of his gratitude for the attention
he received.

I write this in no spirit of complaining, but because
my own people feel very naturally that I also
should have received my decoration at an
investiture by His Majesty, & thereby been enabled
to feel doubly proud of the honour that His
Majesty had seen fit to confer upon me.

Trusting you will give me your assistance in
obtaining for me the personal investiture

|| that has conferred upon my colleagues. ||

I have the honour to remain

Madam

your obedient servant.

Alice Meldrum.

In each case, she was informed that an intimation had been received from the Registrar and Secretary, Central Chancery of the Orders of Knighthood to the effect that her case would receive consideration for the next investiture to be held, which will probably take place early next year.

On 19 January 1921, Matron in Chief A B Smith wrote the following in support: "With reference to 9A would it be possible for an exception to be made under the special circumstances for this lady to receive her decoration of the ARRC personally from His Majesty the King, she was awarded the ARRC for special devotion to duty at the time of the sinking of the Hospital Ship Anglia. Miss Meldrum was one of the Nursing Staff on board this vessel when His Majesty was conveyed to England after his accident in France."

Ultimately, she was instructed by the Central Chancery to attend at Buckingham Palace on 10 February 1922, when she was decorated privately by the King. It is stated in her file that: In order to avoid any unpleasantness amongst the other Nurses who had been awarded this decoration, and had been refused permission to be decorated by the King, no publicity was given to Miss Meldrum's attendance.



Alice was recommended for enrolment on the Permanent Reserve of QAIMNS on 16 December 1920 and remained on the Reserve until her resignation on 17 April 1929.

In April 1931 The British Journal of Nursing records Alice as being one of a large number of nursing staff to receive a badge from Her Majesty the Queen. I'm assuming that the family have kept this particular item. Alice was 62 when she died in the first quarter of 1943.