

## Introduction

This memorial is situated in Cliftonville, near Margate. Unlike many other memorials that remember many people from a community, this one commemorates an individual, 2nd Lieutenant Roland 'Rowley' Moody Nicholson Bournier, who died during the First World War. The memorial was presented to the town by his father, Councillor Arthur Charles Bournier, in 1922. The memorial is of an unusual design, being a drinking fountain made from Forest of Dean stone.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Roland Moody Nicholson Bournier

2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Roland 'Rowley' Moody Nicholson Bournier fought in the Machine Gun Corps and died from wounds in 1918 at the age of 27.

2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Bournier was born in 1890 in Stoke on Trent, the son of Arthur Charles Bournier and Charlotte Louisa Bournier. After several attempts to join the Army he eventually received his commission in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Machine Gun Company in December 1917 and went to the front shortly afterwards. During his first experience of action at Passchendaele he was severely wounded, and he subsequently died from these injuries on 28<sup>th</sup> March 1918. He is buried in Wimereux Communal Cemetery, which is also where the grave of John McCrae (author of *In Flanders Fields*) is located.

When he was born Bournier's family lived in Stoke on Trent but later moved to Margate. The town therefore was seen as a fitting location for his memorial.

## Design and history of the war memorial

The memorial fountain was designed by Councillor Gunnis and built by the architect firm Farmer and Brindley of London. It consists of a circular fountain on a base which currently consists of four steps that are alternately circular and square, getting smaller towards the top of the base. This base has been altered at some point in the memorial's history resulting in the basin of the fountain now being higher from the ground than it was originally.

Around the fountain's basin is inscribed 'In memory of 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. Rowley Moody Nicholson Bournier who gave his life in the Great War, March 1918.' On the base a further inscription reads 'This fountain was presented to the Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses by Councillor Arthur Charles Bournier.' In a corner of one of the steps Councillor Gunnis's name is inscribed along with the word 'architect.' This seems to imply Gunnis's responsibility for the memorial's design and creation (although other records indicate Farmer and Brindley actually built the memorial). This is an interesting example of the information about a war memorial's history that can be obtained from an examination of the memorial itself.

Originally the memorial also incorporated an area from which dogs could drink – this is referred to in several reports detailing the memorial's unveiling. This facility was included in the design at the request of 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Bournier's family because of his love for animals. However, there is no longer any evidence of this at the memorial and it is not known when it was removed.



War memorial fountain dedicated to 2nd Lieutenant Roland Moody Nicholson Bournier, Cliftonville, Margate © WMT, 2014



Unveiling of the memorial by the local mayor in 1922.

The memorial was unveiled on 7<sup>th</sup> November 1922 by the Mayor of Margate, Councillor H B Smith. Councillor Bournier was prevented from attending by illness so was represented by his younger son, Nicholas, who spoke about his brother during the ceremony. The first cup of water from the fountain was drunk by the Mayoress. Finally, flowers were laid at the base of the fountain.

### **The memorial today**

Since its unveiling the memorial has undergone various changes, including the alterations to the base and the removal of the dogs' drinking area. The pedestal and uppermost part of the fountain have also been changed at some point in the past, and there is no longer evidence of a bronze plaque being incorporated into the memorial, which was mentioned in reports of the unveiling.

Furthermore, in recent years the memorial has become a target for vandalism, especially graffiti. Photographs taken in 2013 show that many pieces of graffiti had been drawn and written around the base of the memorial in what appears to be black marker pen. Photographs from 2014 indicate that this was removed only to be replaced by similar graffiti, again in black pen, covering areas of the memorial's base and the pedestal supporting the fountain's basin.

This makes this memorial an example of some of the difficulties facing many war memorials today and demonstrates why education is essential to their future protection. It is possible that whoever damaged the memorial did not fully appreciate what it was and what its significance to the community is. While this does not excuse the damaging of the fountain with graffiti, it does highlight a clear need to ensure people of every age are fully aware of the importance of memorials. Through education about the historical and current significance of war memorials we can hopefully encourage the next generation to care for them and so minimise similar acts of vandalism in the future.

### **Teaching suggestions**

Information about and photographs of this memorial can be used in sessions with young people about:

- War memorial designs: the Cliftonville fountain is a rather unusual war memorial design and the more personal aspects of it, such as the original area from which dogs could drink being incorporated at the family's request, highlight the fact that war memorial design has traditionally been entirely down to community choice.
- Vandalism to war memorials: the recent graffiti on the memorial is an example of the kind of vandalism that affects war memorials and can be used to explore attitudes towards this and the effects of it on the community. War Memorials Trust's lesson plan using this memorial as a way of exploring these issues can be used to teach this.

### **Useful links**

The following links may provide additional helpful information about this memorial:

- War Memorials Online record: [www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/node/95263](http://www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/node/95263)
- Information about how young people can get involved in the care and protection of war memorials: [www.learnaboutwarmemorials.org/youth-groups/projects](http://www.learnaboutwarmemorials.org/youth-groups/projects)

Further information can be found at [www.learnaboutwarmemorials.org/links](http://www.learnaboutwarmemorials.org/links) which may help with lessons on some of the wider issues suggested here.

For further information and resources please contact the Learning Officer at:  
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