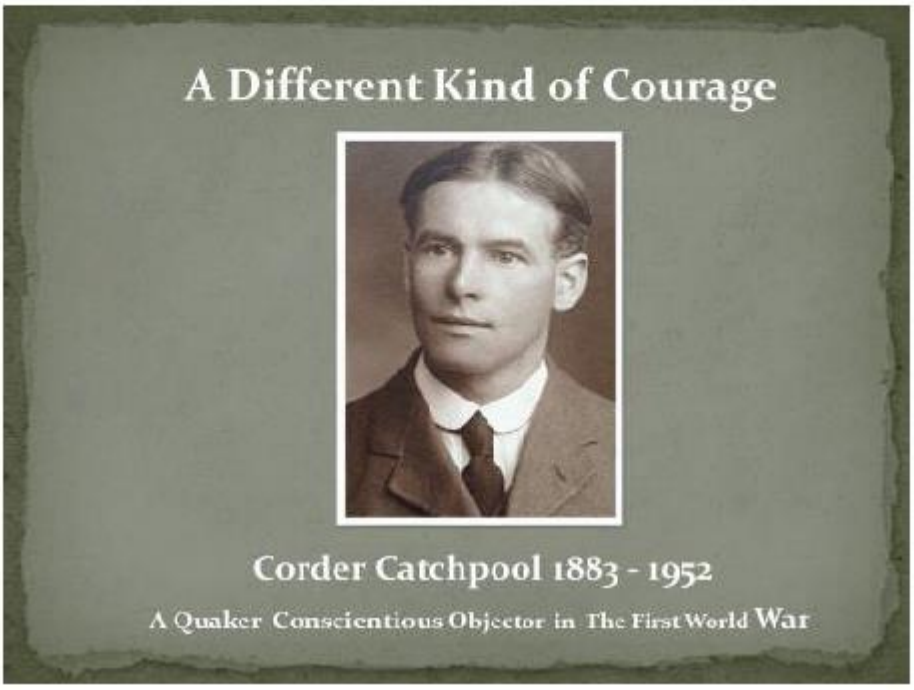


A talk given in Hexham Abbey on Thursday 8th November 2018

by

Andrew Greaves

of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

in Northumbria

Dedicated to my grandfather Thomas Corder Catchpool, and all other prisoners of conscience of every nation, from the First World War to the present day.

As we prepare to commemorate next Sunday the centenary of the ending of the First World War, thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak to you about my maternal grandfather Corder Catchpool, who spent the first two years of the war as a paramedic on the Western Front in France serving with the Friends Ambulance Unit, and following the introduction of Conscription in January 1917, a further two and a quarter years in prison as an Absolutist Conscientious Objector.

St Peter's Chapel, Bradwell, Essex (AD 654)

Though an incomer to Tynedale (since moving here in 2004), I share the deep love felt by native Northumbrians for Hexham Abbey – not least because of the unbroken link it provides back to the first Christian missionaries from Iona and Lindisfarne – so I feel somewhat overawed to be speaking to you in such a historic setting today.

Growing up in rural Essex, one of my favourite places to visit was St Peter's Chapel in Bradwell, built in AD 654 on the remains of a Roman fort where the river Blackwater flows out into the North Sea by St Cedd, who had sailed down the East Coast from Lindisfarne to do so.

As I sat listening to last Saturday's re-dedication of Hexham Abbey's 1918 West Window, I was conscious of the immense legacy bequeathed to future generations by the men and women who founded the Church in Northumbria so long ago, in terms of both this wonderful building itself, and the living Christian witness that continues within it today.

Quakers have a saying we've inherited from the best-known of *our* founding fathers, George Fox: '*Let your life speak'*. The lives of the Northumbrian saints and all those who have walked in their footsteps since continue to speak powerfully to us today.

This weekend, our nation and our local communities throughout Northumberland will be gathering to honour the memory of all the Armed Forces personnel who gave their lives in the service of their country in two World Wars, and many other conflicts past and present. We will be giving thanks for their selflessness, dedication and bravery, and for their willingness to make the ultimate sacrifice if need be, when the call to take up arms came.

The *WW1 Voices and Choices* exhibition currently on show in the North Transept seeks to bring to life the stories of some of the local people who made the decision to join up when war broke out, and to show what life was like for the families they left behind them, not just in Tynedale, but also in Hexham's twin towns, Noyon and Metzingen.

Many young men will undoubtedly have felt they had no choice but to enlist, even before the introduction of mass conscription with the passing of the Military Services Act in 1916. There were however a relatively small number of individuals who felt themselves to be prevented from fighting for King and Country on grounds of conscience, whether of a religious, political or philosophical nature. Several local Conscientious Objectors are featured in '*Voices and Choices'*.

Corder Catchpool was born in Leicester in 1883, the second of seven children, into a family that had been Quakers for a long time on his father's side, Anglican on his mother's. At the two Quaker boarding schools he attended, Corder excelled academically and in sports teams, showing obvious leadership qualities from an early age. Corder was already a convinced pacifist by the time he left school, and anxious to devote his whole life to the service of humanity.

He wanted to become a doctor, but the family could not afford the long and expensive training involved, so instead Corder trained was apprenticed to a Quaker engineer who was the Locomotive Superintendent of the Great Eastern Railway Works at Stratford in the East End of London.

Like many idealistic young Christian Socialists of his generation, Corder was passionate about sharing the benefits of his privileged start in life with others, particularly those from a less well-off background. He became active as a teacher and mentor in the Adult School Movement in the East End of London, pushing himself to the limit to fit this work in amidst his duties on the railway and his own engineering studies, often going without food and sleep in the process.

After deciding to the concern of his family and friends to attempt a career-change to studying medicine, which meant giving up a promising career on the railway, Corder became even more stretched and depleted physically, mentally and financially, till the inevitable occurred: a complete breakdown in his health that forced him to re-consider his hopes to become a doctor and undertake a prolonged period of convalescence - during which he was enabled to visit the Swiss Alps for the first time with some old school-friends, the start of a love-affair with high mountains that lasted for the rest of his life.

Returning revitalised and ready for a fresh start after six weeks re-building his strength in Switzerland, in the spring of 1912 Corder was offered a post as resident engineer at a cotton mill at Darwen in Lancashire, owned by a Quaker industrialist whose son Corder had been close friends with at Bootham School. Corder was also asked to design a model village for the millworkers, based on Bourneville, the garden village estate provided by the Cadburys in Birmingham for their employees.

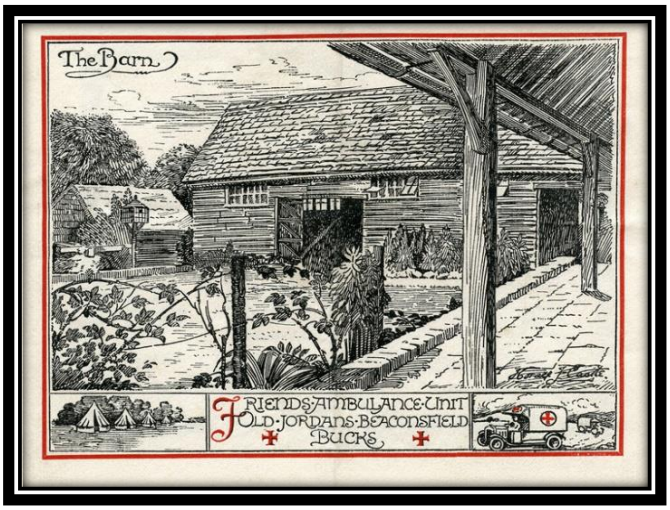
Corder threw himself into this unfamiliar new line of work with characteristic energy and enthusiasm. By the summer of 1914 he had the satisfaction of seeing the first thirty houses completed. He and his youngest brother Guy were on a walking tour of Switzerland when war was declared all across Europe.

It took the brothers two weeks to struggle home to England, during which time they witnessed war fever raging in the towns and cities they passed through en route, and met the first British units of the Expeditionary Force singing on their way to the front line, with no idea of the horrors that lay ahead.

Corder had had plenty of time to think during the tortuous journey home, and knew what he wanted to do. His conviction that to take part in war was contrary to the will of God as revealed in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ was as unshakeable now as it remained for the rest of his life.

Resigning his post at Darwen, he immediately signed up for training as a voluntary ambulance driver at the Front Line, for which there was then a call.

Corder reported for duty in September 1914 at Jordans in Buckinghamshire, joining a large number of other Quakers and Christian pacifists who were to form the First Anglo-Belgian Field Ambulance, afterwards known as the Friends Ambulance Unit, or FAU for short.



The Barn, Jordans, FAU card illustration by Horace Castle, 1915

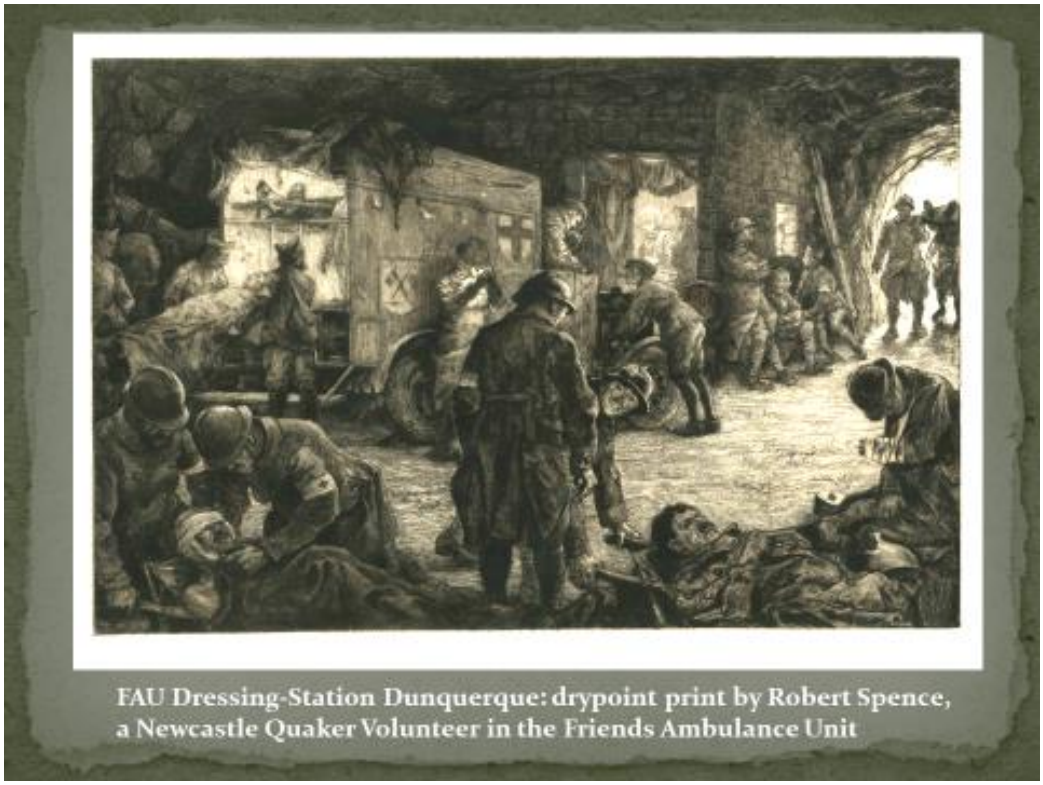
FAU training at Jordans, volunteers pose after a game of football, 1914

After nearly losing an arm through blood-poisoning during the training, Corder finished up with a fortnight's practice dressing outpatients at the London Hospital before putting on the khaki FAU uniform and at the end of October 1914 marching with his comrades to Charing Cross Station, bound for France.

From now on, I will be quoting as much as possible Corder's own words about his wartime experiences and his time in prison, drawing upon two companion journals first published in '*On Two Fronts*' (1917), and '*Letters of a Prisoner for Conscience Sake'* (1941).

Within an hour or two of setting sail from Dover, the FAU team were plunged straight into life-saving action when the troop carrier they were on went to the rescue of a sinking warship, HMS Hermes, torpedoed in mid-channel. The survivors were helped aboard and ferried back to Dover, whereupon the transport turned straight round and set off again for Dunkirk.

'As soon as we got alongside they asked for immediate volunteer dressers – hundreds of wounded at the station, and no-one to attend to them. I am not rated as a dresser, but was mad to go – and <u>went</u> – got round a doctor somehow – I believe I was almost irresistible just then. I shall never in my life forget the sight and sounds that met us. Figure two huge good sheds, semi-dark, every inch of floor-space – platforms, rails, everywhere – covered with the flimsy French stretchers, and on each stretcher a wounded man, desperately wounded nearly every one. The air heavy with the stench of putrid flesh, and thick with groans and cries. Four hundred wounded, and one French medical student to attend to them, two English officers helping voluntarily.



FAU Dressing-Station Dunquerque: drypoint print by Robert Spence, a Newcastle Quaker Volunteer in the Friends Ambulance Unit

Half dead as we were with fatigue, we flung ourselves into this work throughout the night, the need was so great. …We are only able to touch a fringe. The priests touch more than we, hurrying through the solemn rite – men are dying on all sides.

At dawn we began loading the hospital ships. We worked most of the day loading, for when the sheds had emptied, trains began to run through to the Quay, cattle wagons and box vans, filthy dirty, twelve stretchers apiece, packed like tinned fish. At 7pm we paraded on the quay and marched to Malo, where quarters had been got for us.

All dog-tired, you may guess, but after a meal I implored the O.C. to let some of us go down to the sheds again for the night. The thought of that groaning sea of tortured men was almost more than I could stand. The O.C. was adamant – we must take rest. Perhaps he was right; he had responsibility. I thought him heartless.'

For the FAU's first week in France, their work was mainly as dressers in 'The Shambles', as they named the huge goods-sheds that filled anew with suffering men every twenty-four hours, then emptied again ready for the next convoy.

The unit established a base hospital at Dunkirk, and began to string out dressing stations at Ypres and along the front where the 'Battle of the Dunes' was being waged.

Friends Ambulance Unit Volunteers

Corder found a tremendous satisfaction in being able to give himself so completely to this work. Periods of service at the front, collecting French wounded amidst the mud and falling shells alternated with weeks spent as a nursing orderly in the Dunkirk hospital.

FAU Volunteers with the daily bread

Gradually the first wild disorder and improvisation gave place to regulated hours of duties. At Christmas 1914 he wrote:

'I wish you could see our contingent of nineteen men and ten cars here tonight. All the glamour, if ever there was any; all the romance, if war <u>has</u> romance; almost all the interest – has worn off long ago. We are just grimly working out a purpose. Wading about in thick mud, and through incessant rain, from 6am until late at night. Sometimes the uncertainty of war keeps us out all night. It is mercilessly cold. I have not had my clothes off for a fortnight…'

With his gift for simple friendliness, Corder was always striking up close personal acquaintance with the local inhabitants who still hid in the shelled villages, with doctors, nurses, nuns, priests and pastors, as well as with the Tommies and the French *poilus* and their officers.

'*It is grand the way men give all – their comfort, their lives, gladly to serve their country, in a cause they believe to be right. But when I look out of my window at night, as I do now and see the starlit sky prostituted by those blood-red patches of flame, I turn away sick at heart and go to bed and think that they with all the sublimity of their sacrifice are dupes; we dupes; all the world, dupes of the handfuls of charlatans who make wars, exploiting, trading upon, those nobler traits of human nature.*

"Your country needs you" cry armament manufacturers, well knowing that at that cry millions of hearts that beat true and honest will begin to beat proudly and courageously, and millions of men will march out to slay their brothers…'

FAU Hospital Train and Volunteer Staff

In April 1915 the Western Front flared up again in the Second Battle of Ypres, with the shock of the first German use of gas; the FAU cars, now forty strong, dashed together to the scene of the emergency, and for nine days and nights the men had hardly an hour's sleep at a time.
They had witnessed the barrage of gunfire, the dense clouds of gas rolling over the trenches, and spreading across the countryside, and as they came to the front lines they were caught up in a running crowd, with hoarse voices shouting: '*The Germans have broken through; every man that can carry a rifle come along!*' Then came the casualties:

'…the poor, choking, gasping, dying asphyxiated beggars were already beginning to pour in. We could do nothing but transport them with the utmost speed to safety and proper attention. All through the night our buses beat it back and forth to the railhead.

The wounded followed the asphyxiated. Blood covered the stretchers, dripped from bandages, lay in little pools about the drive and steps and flower-beds. Still we worked and flung ourselves down now and then for a brief sleep. A breathless messenger comes for cars, and we go out with two, to behold one of the most pitiable spectacles the war will disclose – a whole ward of the civil hospital wiped out. Eleven corpses, mostly nuns, strew the floor, the dust of plaster whitening them, choking up the streams of blood. An old Trappist monk, with wounded head, totters about, helping everyone, playing the hero amongst it all.

Out again to the front, where men filing up from the reserves, passed our gate gay and singing, to be carried back to us, maimed, upon stretchers, within an hour. The roar of hundreds of guns, before, behind, on both sides of us, was continuous and appalling….They started shelling the ambulance post itself. The garden was pocked with holes, the room we lived in strewn with debris, the kitchen car riddled. We moved a few hundred yards back into some sheds. Still they shelled us…'

Working at this extreme pressure continued for a month, and was renewed at Whitsuntide for a time, when another attack was made on Ypres. But by midsummer 1915 the work of the unit settled into more of a routine. Corder was made Adjutant and was largely tied down to office work in Poperinghe, though he had his own car and visited the various stations in villages just behind the lines. He wrote in August that the days of roughing it were over. He even bought himself a hairbrush and a pair of pyjamas!

In October 1915 Corder wrote home,

'I feel more and more that we who have been spared are only justified in going on living if our future lives manifest, at every point and at all times, a heroism at least equal to that of the soldier who is killed in battle. One hates to have such a comparatively comfortable time as we are having now, whilst friends are in the trenches.'

And in November 1915:

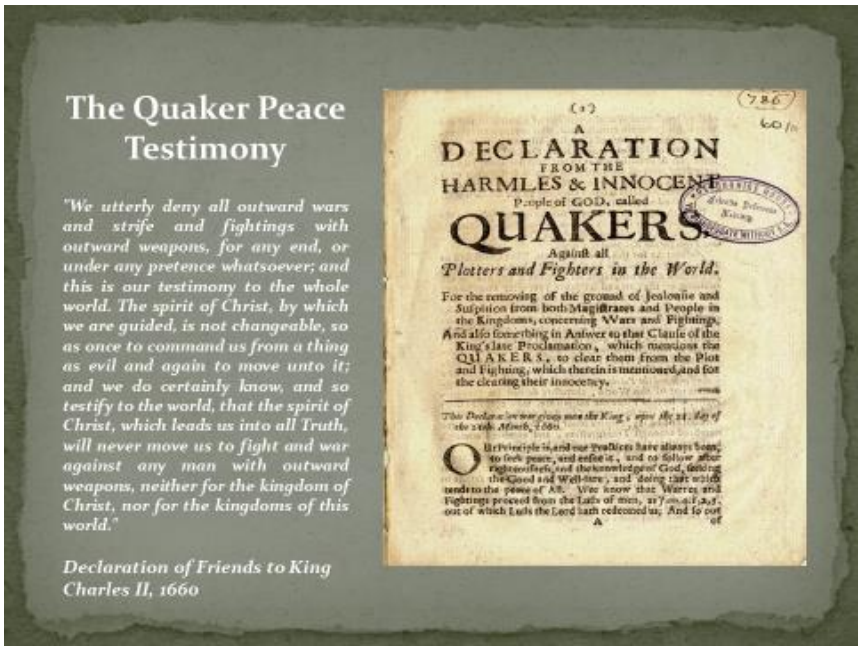
'I am getting soul-sick of the work out here the last four months, mending motor-cars instead of men. It is all so astonishingly different from last winter. I wonder how long it would take the world to settle down to war as the normal state of things? It would be like adjusting one's self to slide as comfortably as possible down a slope into hell.'

Corder's inner conflict intensified with the introduction of conscription. He began to wonder whether he should not return to England, and take his stand with those who were resisting pressure for military service.

The question became still more insistent after Corder attended a landmark Yearly Meeting of British Quakers in London in January 1916 while home on leave, which had been called in response to the passing of the Compulsory Service Act.

The decision regarding the position the Society of Friends should formally adopt was largely left to the men of military age. Among the 450 of these present there was near-complete unanimity in recommending that no form of service that would help in prosecuting the war should be undertaken by Friends.

Many were prepared to change their employment if required for constructive alternative civilian work; but a significant number, who came to be known as 'absolutists' regarded this as unduly compromising and would accept only unconditional exemption under the Act.



The Yearly Meeting upheld the young men's decision, stating that ' *our testimony as a Society is against all war, and on behalf of the liberty and supremacy of conscience*', expressed the intention to support all those who might suffer as conscientious objectors - whether Quakers or not.

Corder was keenly aware of the responsibility he bore as adjutant of the Unit, and to his FAU comrades, some of whom expressed outright hostility towards those thinking of taking such action - seeking to stigmatise them as rebels. But in May 1916, Corder decided that he had no alternative but to resign from the FAU.

In a personal statement he read out at his second court-martial a year later, Corder said,

'I was baffled more and more by the consciousness that, under military control, the primary objective of our work was the refitting of men to take their places again in the trenches…it seemed to me that, for one called to serve in the cause of peace, the position was becoming impossible.

At home, men who stood for the same ideals as myself were being reviled as cowards and shirkers, and forced into the army against their principles. When some of them were sent to France and became liable to the death penalty, I hesitated no longer. It seemed to me more honest and more manly to take my stand with them, make public profession of my faith, and accept the consequences'.

Corder could have obtained exemption by continuing ambulance work, had he felt it right. His family and friends begged him in vain to do so.

' …But I am enlisted in the highest service I know, the formation of a world fellowship of men prepared to die rather than take part in war; and the foundations of such a fellowship, which is already spreading from country to country, cannot rest upon compromise...'

Once Corder had resigned from the Friends Ambulance Unit, the certificate of absolute exemption from military service granted by the War Office was withdrawn. Corder was arrested at Woodbrooke, a Quaker college in Bournville, Birmingham on January 11th, 1917 along with seven other COs.

Brought before a police court, they were then handed over to the military. While awaiting an escort they cheerfully spent their first weekend in prison, after which they were moved about in an apparently aimless manner: no-one seemed to know what to do with a little gang of COs.

Corder was drafted to an infantry regiment, the 6th Worcesters, and transferred to the guard-room of Worcester Barracks.

'The old machine works along and COs drift through its mill without any serious friction', Corder noted in his diary. *'The soldiers are all sympathetic, the NCOs harsh, the officers frigid but courteous.'*

The discomforts and privations of the guard-room were familiar enough to Corder after his time at the front in France. He felt very much at home among the soldiers:

'Here we have had a time full of interest – my only trouble is lack of sleep. I can't do it packed like herrings in a tub; the hard floor gives me little trouble, as I am used to that in the Unit. The whole life reminds me constantly of early Unit billets – it is not at all unlike, except no freedom here, and only one half hour in the open air since arrival.'

Several weeks followed under guard in a succession of barracks. At Reading, Corder commented in his diary, that, *'as we were getting up a newspaper boy came in, so we shared a Daily News whilst sitting around the fire waiting for breakfast, and read the leading article:*

'Ah me! Newspapers in wartime! As I read that article of blood and iron, I was not dissatisfied to be a prisoner for my faith, though for it, I have as yet, suffered hardly any discomfort.

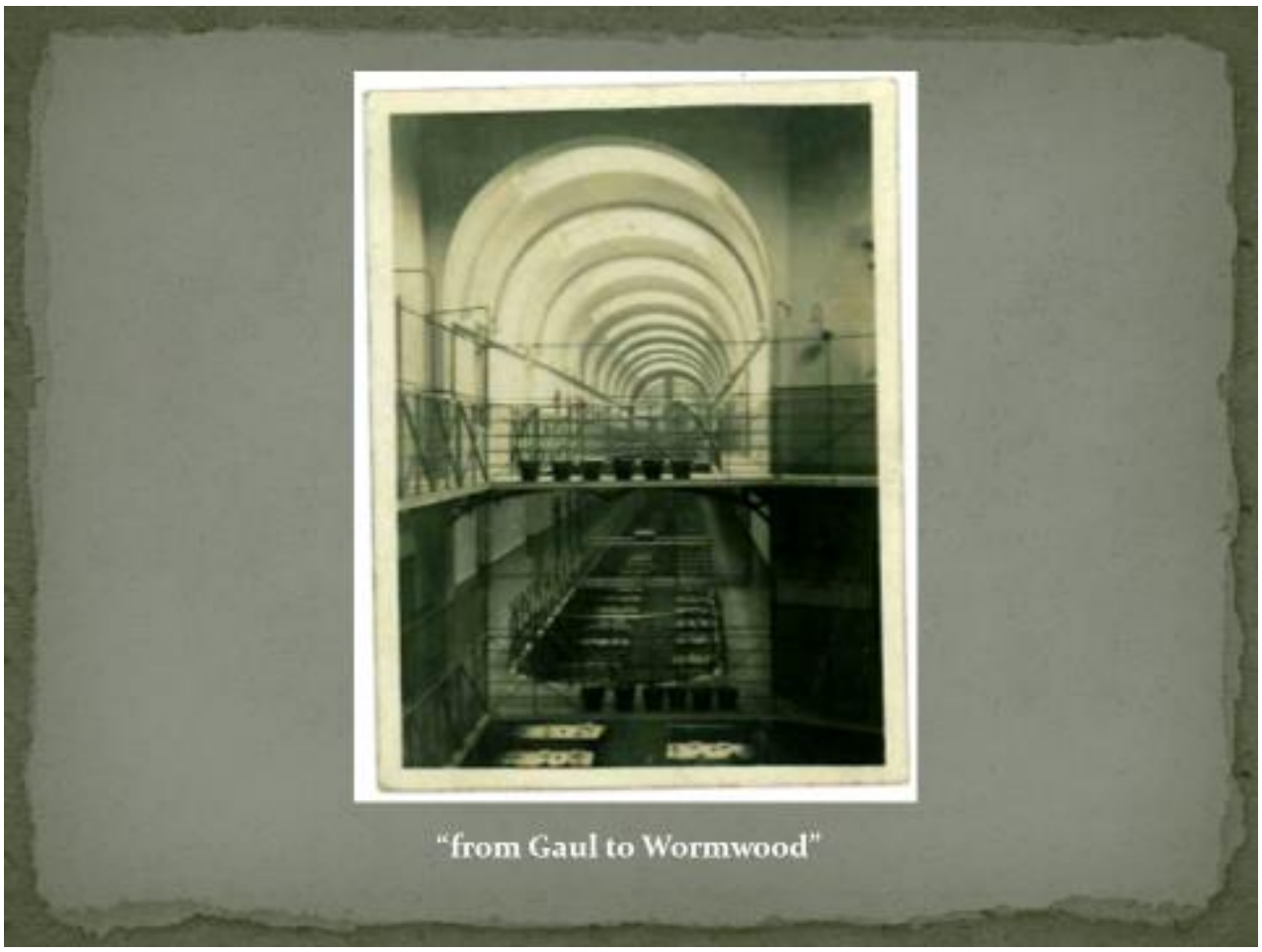
Women rail a little sometimes as we go through the streets, and if there be any ordeal in our position, it is outside the army, not inside.

'There's not one in a thousand has the courage to stand by his conscience," said a soldier to me yesterday.

I have food for thought when I contrast this attitude of the men themselves with civilians I have met; men and women who have thrown themselves into a passion of rage when I have handed them a picture of Christ on the Cross with the words, "In Christ's Name, Peace," – and have torn it up under my eyes.'

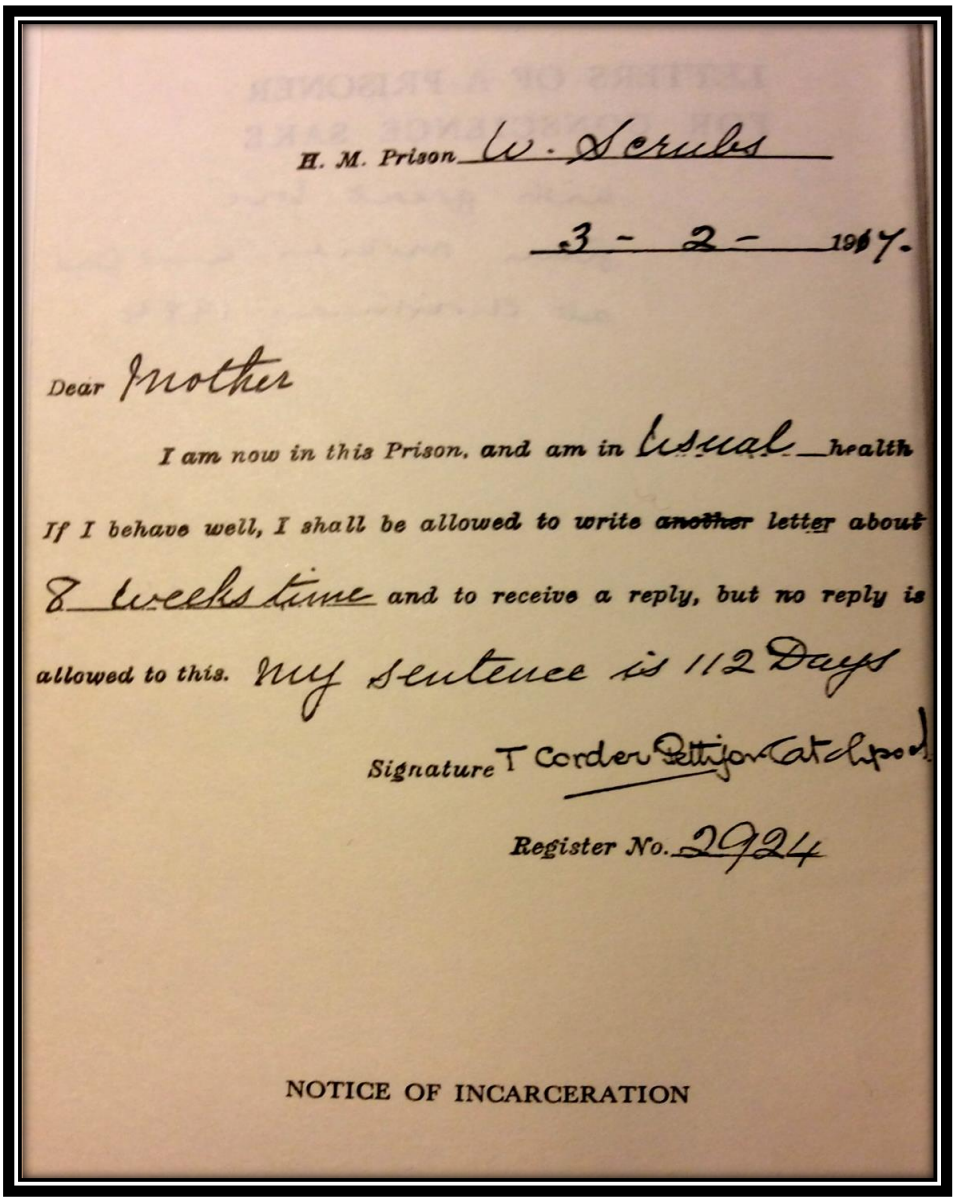
On January 22nd 1917, Corder and his friends faced their first court-martial, charged with disobeying a legal order to put on uniform. A few days later the sentences were read out before the paraded troops: 112 days' hard labour each. Within an hour or two, the little band of COs and their escort were aboard a train en route for the final stage of their journey: '*from Gaul to Wormwood*', as Corder later described it.

At Paddington they were met by a group of relatives and friends, and the whole company had a restaurant supper together. Shortly after this, Corder passed through the forbidding gates of Wormwood Scrubs.



"I shall long remember the genuine handgrip, the few kind words of cheer, supplemented in one case by a whisper – the very last words I heard before going in – 'There's hardly a man in barracks but honours you in his heart.' "

A Quaker prison chaplain had told Corder that he only knew of one case in which a man had emerged from a hard labour sentence spiritually strengthened by the experience. And it was commonly said that two years of such confinement was the utmost that a man could stand without some permanent injury to soul and body.



H. M. Prison W. Scrubs

3 - 2 - 1917.

Dear Mother

I am now in this Prison, and am in Usual health

If I behave well, I shall be allowed to write ~~another~~ letter about

8 weeks time and to receive a reply, but no reply is

allowed to this. My sentence is 112 Days

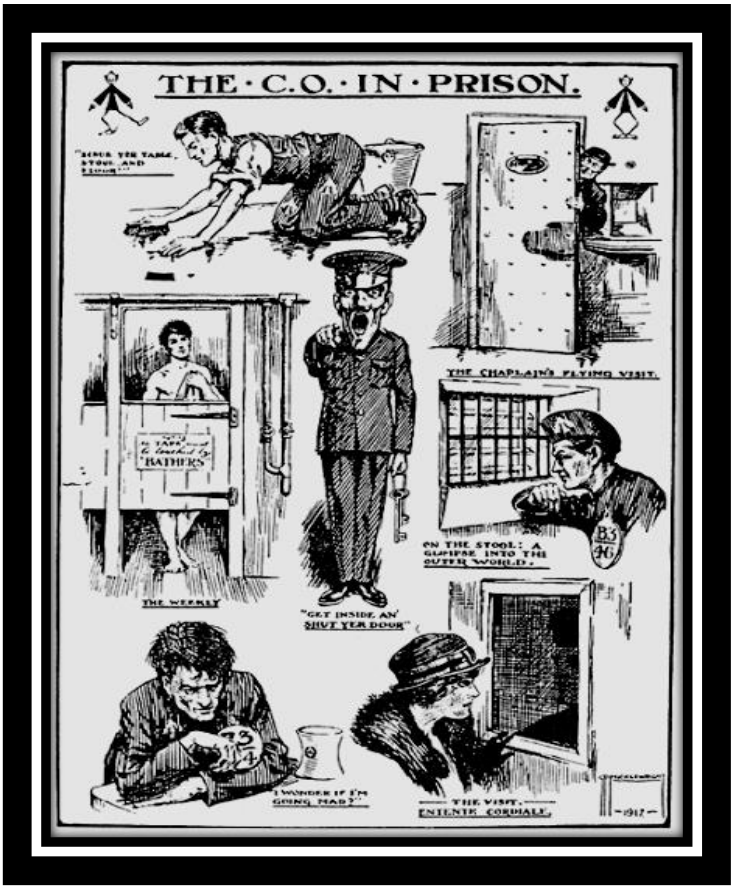
Signature T Corder Petty Officer Catchpool

Register No. 2924

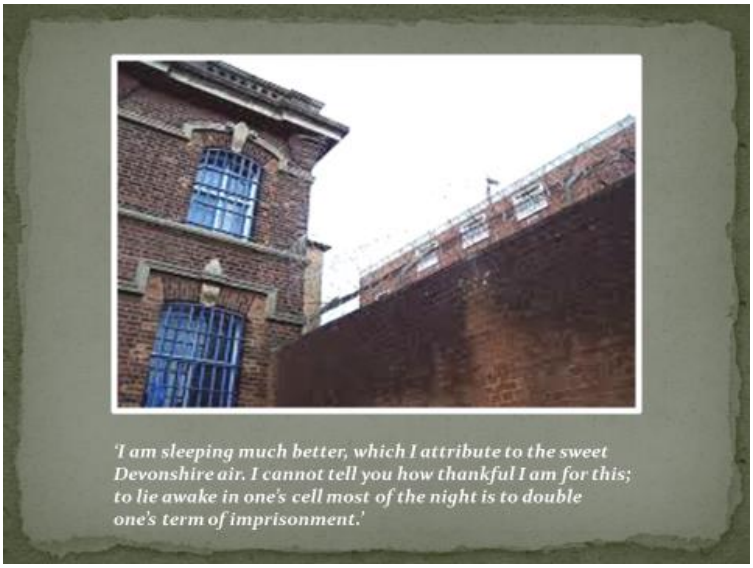
NOTICE OF INCARCERATION

Corder served two years and a quarter in all. Before beginning his first term, he had written: ***'I dread prison and its consequences for myself - and for my mother far more.'***

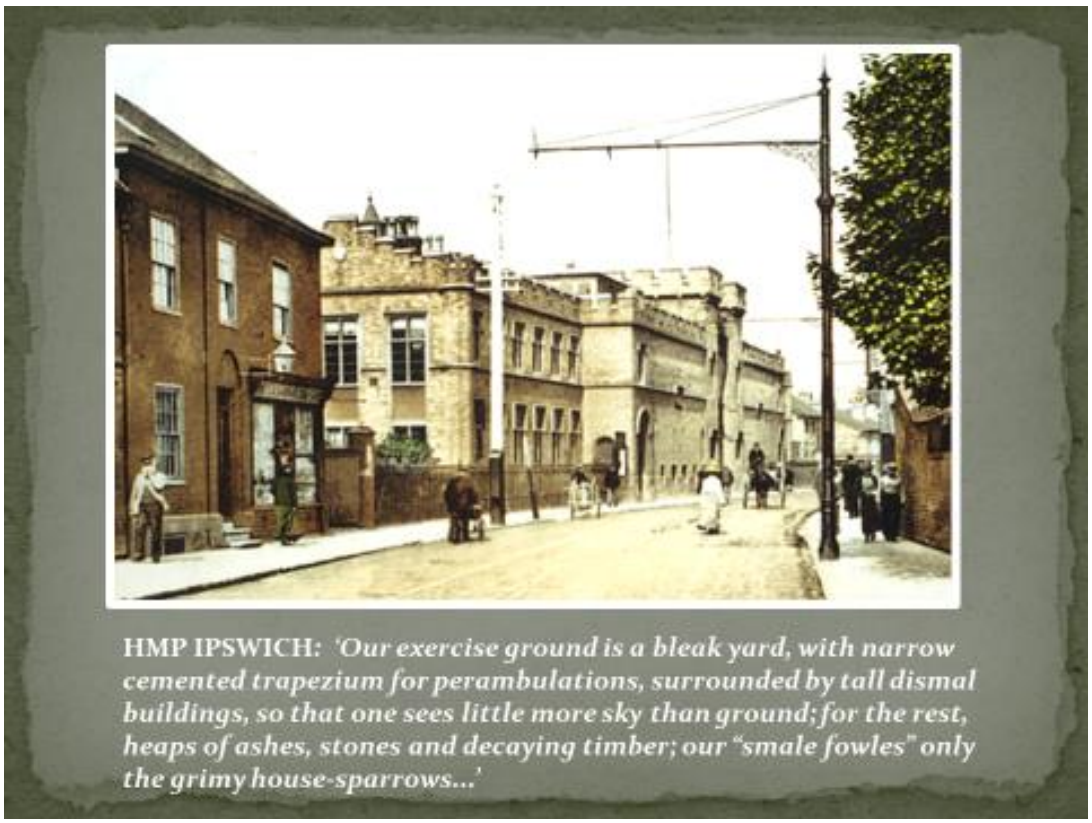
The discomforts of hard beds and physical austerity were nothing new to Corder, but the challenge of loneliness and silence were far harder to meet. In the Scrubs, he soon began to suffer from listlessness, lack of energy, and sleeplessness.



Corder found that the regime differed from prison to prison. Wormwood Scrubs was bad enough, and Ipswich even worse, but between these came six months in Exeter Prison, which were almost pleasant by comparison.



After three and a half months' hard labour in Wormwood Scrubs, Corder was taken under escort to Devonport, where he was straight away put before a second district court martial, on May 12 1917, and sentenced to a further two years' hard labour, commuted to one year 'in recognition of services to ambulance work'. This was subsequently reduced again to six months, which Corder served in Exeter Prison. Upon his release in October 1917, Corder was taken to Harwich, where a third court-martial sentenced him to another six months' hard labour, this time in Ipswich Prison.



Released just before Easter 1918, when the Battle of the Somme was at its height, Corder was returned to Harwich, where he was court-martialled for a fourth time.

Mindful of the extreme pressure the military authorities were under at this critical point in the war, he felt it right to trouble the court as little as possible and made only a brief statement in his defence, in which he expressed his longing to be at the Front giving what service he might to the relief of suffering, were it possible to do so without compromise to the Military Services Act. The impulse to return to this work of healing, he said, was at times almost irresistible, but, *'May God keep me steady and keep me faithful to a call I have heard above the roar of the guns.'*

Corder had recently been awarded the Mons Ribbon in recognition of his services there with the Friends Ambulance Unit. He chose not to wear this at his hearing, in case it might lead to an acquittal 'by reason of my military service', but at the 'reading out' of his sentence, to the astonishment of the officers present, Corder was wearing the ribbon. This time the President of the court-martial was a notoriously harsh Major, who sentenced Corder to a further two years: six months of which were later remitted by the reviewing General.

Corder spent the last eighteen months of his imprisonment fighting the psychological dangers of silence, monotony and brooding in the demoralising surroundings of Ipswich prison. He had two particular physical troubles to contend with. One was continual toothache. He could obtain neither prompt nor proper treatment, and had to have a number of teeth extracted both while in prison, and after being released. The other affliction was sleeplessness, which came on in bouts, often lasting for weeks at a time. For the rest of his life, Corder suffered severely from insomnia.

To add to the stress of endless wakeful nights, he developed a contrary weakness in the daytime, a drowsiness and listlessness, falling asleep even during mealtimes. This was probably due to Corder's attempt to use every spare moment for study, when after a year he was allowed to have books sent in. Corder was determined, from the outset, to try to use his time in prison to prepare himself for future service. When the chance came – with the permitted entry of books - he settled down to serious work.

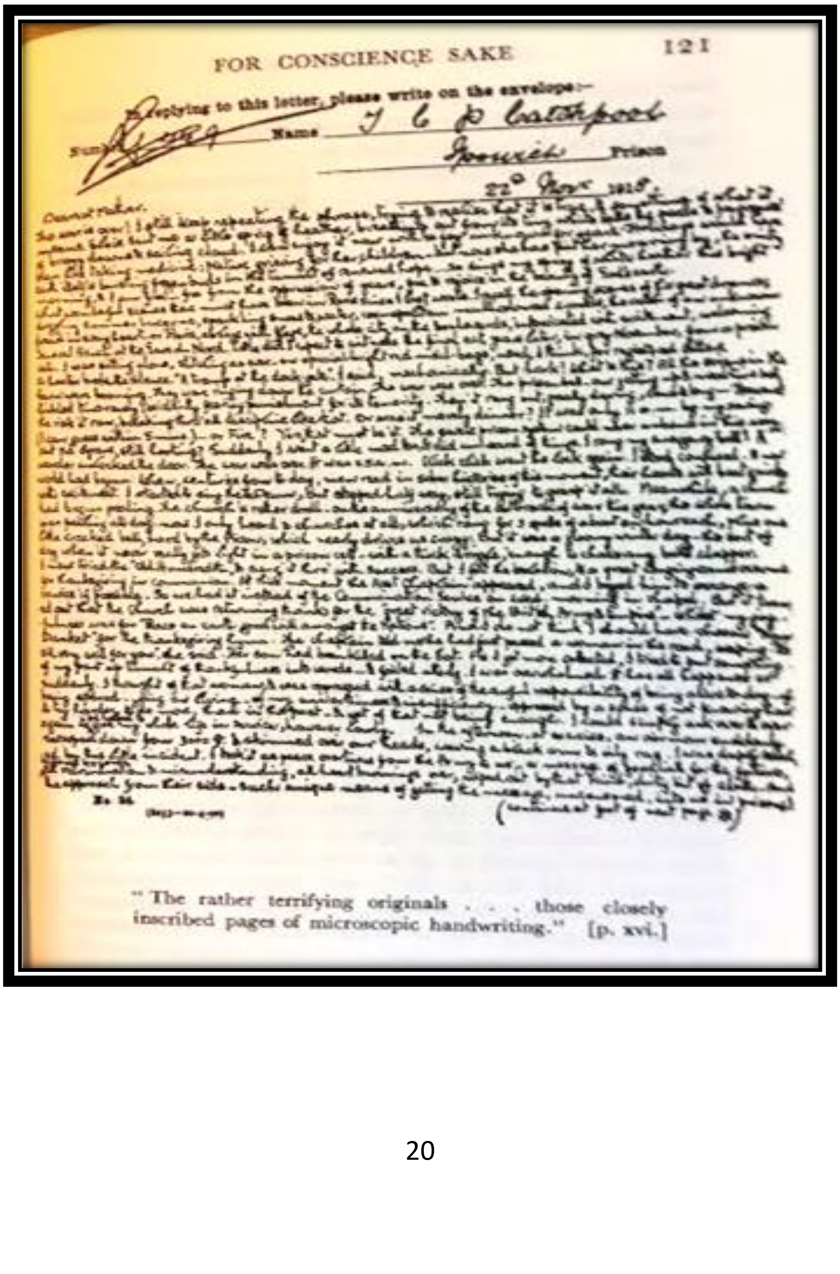
He noted with interest that when his weary brain could not entertain any other reading he was still able to study German, because of the direct connection with his desires for the future. Even at this time, Corder was already considering the possibilities for further international service after the war finally came to an end.

War news trickled slowly and scantily into prison. In a letter home dated 25th October 1918, Corder writes of his exultation upon being told that an Armistice had been signed on the Western Front, only for his euphoria to be succeeded by utter desolation and depression after discovering the news to be untrue. Contemplating the approaching end to hostilities, he went on to say,

'The present outlook makes me profoundly anxious….it seems all too clear that the Allied War-Lords have got the upper hand, just as those of Germany did in 1914, and are determined to force an unconditional surrender. Statesmanship is for the moment but a voice crying in the wilderness….

The present generation may through suffering learn the wrongfulness of armaments, but I am not sanguine that the world will be thus converted, or miss the too-obvious moral of such a colossal triumph of brute force. Unless a different spirit prevails, I fear we are but charging the future with the poison of bitterness, and the smart of a sense of injustice, that will inevitably break out again, sooner or later in open sores…'

In a letter dated 22nd November 1918, Corder describes now news of the signing of the Armistice had reached him in his prison-cell, eleven days earlier:


FOR CONSCIENCE SAKE 121

In replying to this letter, please write on the envelope:—

Name J. C. P. Catchpool

Ipswich Prison

22nd Nov 1918

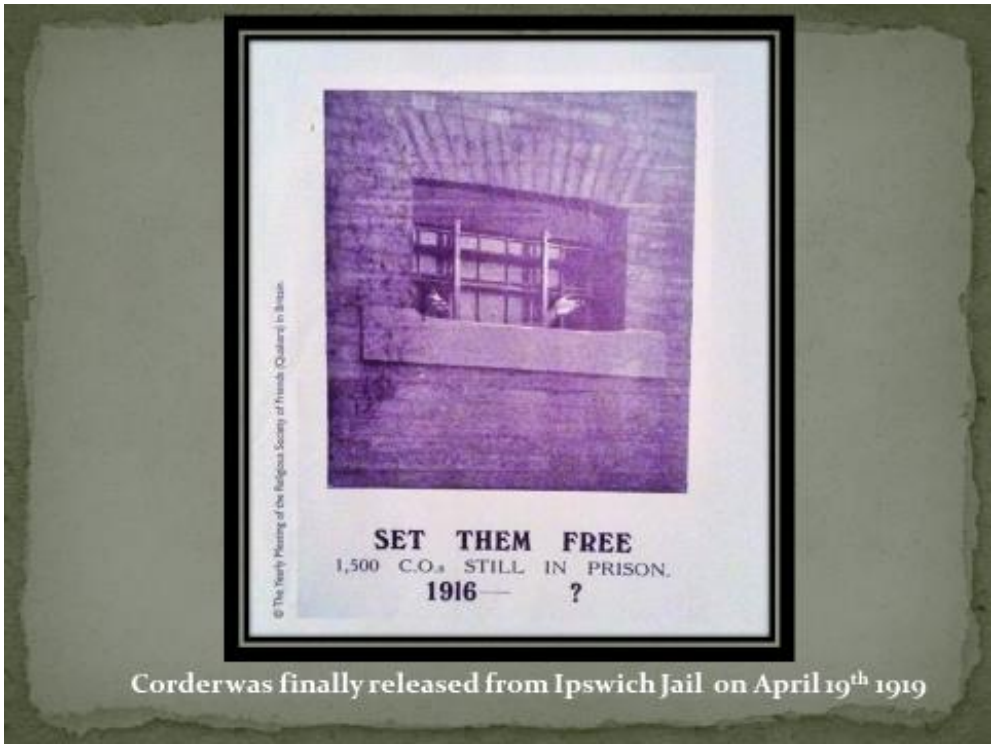
"The rather terrifying originals . . . those closely inscribed pages of microscopic handwriting." [p. xvi.]

'The war is over! I still keep repeating the phrase, trying to realise that it is true, and what it means…. I was sitting alone, stitching as ever – on special bright red mail-bags, used I think for registered letters. A hooter broke the silence. "A tramp steamer at the dock-gate," I said mechanically. But hark! What is this? All the sirens in the town were booming. They were ringing down the curtain. The war was over.

The prison-bell tinkled timorously, evidently fearing punishment for its temerity. Then it rang out greatly daring, loud and long…. Heavens, the risk it ran, breaking all discipline like that! Or was it merely dinner? It was only 11am by my sewing (I can guess within five minutes)… or Fire? Yes, that must be it. But the sirens still hooting?

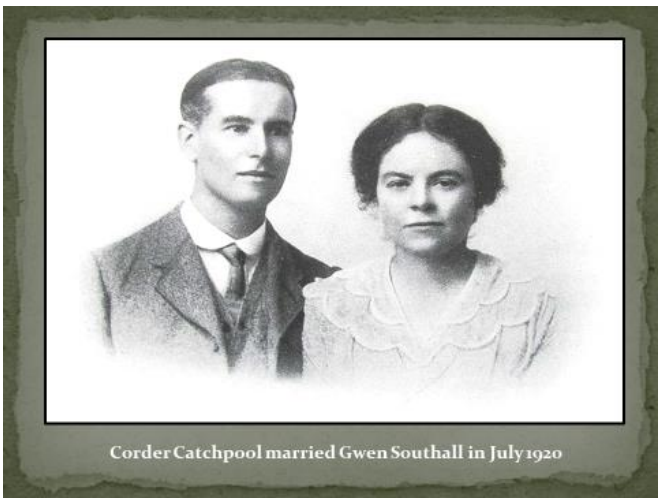
Suddenly I went a little mad too, and did unheard-of things. I rang my Emergency Bell! A warder unlocked the door. The war was over! It was 11.05 am. Click click went the lock again. I stood confused. A new world had begun….

….The knowledge that the hideous work is over is an unspeakable relief, tempered only by anxiety for the future. We must strike a hopeful note, but not be lulled by superficial optimism to ignore the causes of disquiet to which the nature of the termination of the war, and the present world situation give rise….A supreme effort of justice and generosity is called for now. Are we prepared to make it? Peace is an active spirit of goodwill. Dare we proclaim that we are at Peace today?'



Although the war was over, Corder had to remain a further five months in prison. He writes movingly in letters home of the mounting restlessness and frustration caused by his continuing incarceration with no mention of a release-date. Finally, on April 19th 1919, after two years and eighty-six days, Corder walked out of Ipswich Prison a free man.

Corder's determination to master the German language during his solitary confinement bore fruit in the immediate post-war period in the relief and reconstruction work he soon embarked upon in Germany – during which Corder also met his future wife and life-partner, Gwen Southall.

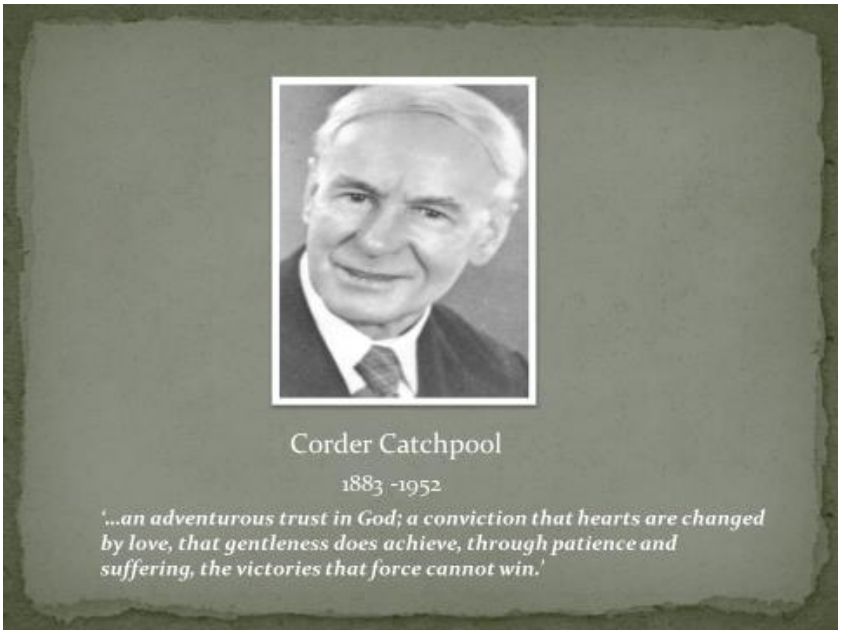


Corder Catchpool married Gwen Southall in July 1920

From 1930-36, as Hitler and the Nazis became ever more powerful, Corder and Gwen were engaged in helping to establish just the kind of international Quaker embassy that Corder had imagined while still a prisoner for conscience sake: the Friends International Centre in Berlin.

For the rest of his life, till his death at the age of 69 in September 1952 in a climbing accident on Monte Rosa in the Swiss Alps, Corder continued to dedicate himself to the cause of peace.

Corder Catchpool's grave in Zermatt



As he was being court-martialled for the third time in May 1917, Corder said this:

'I believe that England will be honoured in history for having had the courage to introduce exemptions on conscientious grounds – had she not done so, some thousands of us would have been shot, a fate which overtook many under the less liberal regimes of Germany, Russia and Austria. But I believe the order to shoot would have been repugnant to the British army, and to large sections of our people…'

In the end, no conscientious objectors were executed for refusing to fight in the First World War, although a total of 306 British and Commonwealth soldiers were executed after courts-martial for cowardice or desertion, many of whom would today have been recognised as suffering from post-traumatic stress.

It was not until 2007 that these men finally received a posthumous pardon. The 'Shot at Dawn' Monument at the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas in Staffordshire is modelled on the likeness of Private Herbert Burden of the First Battalion, Northumberland Fusiliers, who lied about his age to enlist in the armed forces and was executed for desertion at just 17 years of age. Herbert Burden and the Shot at Dawn memorial both feature in the *'WW1 and Choices'* Exhibition.

Seventy-three COs died in The First World War as a direct consequence of their witness for peace: ten in prison, twenty-four in Home Office remand centres, six in military custody and the rest shortly after release.

After the Second World War, freedom of conscience was enshrined in the United Nations Charter as a fundamental Human Right - though it continues to be violated by governments in a number of countries today, not least Saudi Arabia: most recently, in respect of the journalist Adnam Kharshoggi.

Since 2015 there has been a monument in Tavistock Square in London to the world's COs, and May 15th is officially designated International Conscientious Objectors' Day.