

Commentary on documents collected by Kate Maxey MM, RRC, FNM

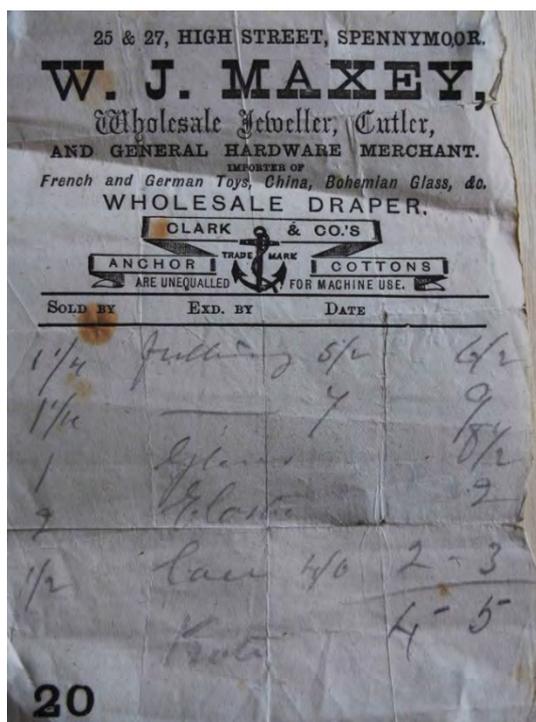
Prepared by John Banham to complement the *Kate Maxey Story* produced for the *Spennymoor's Great War* Exhibition.

In 2014, with the permission of Maureen Defty, I photographed a large number her Great Aunt Kate Maxey's documents and photographs in researching for the *Spennymoor's Great War* Exhibition. This included re-photographing the Album compiled during the Great War when Sister Maxey served in France. Material from this album was then used in the Somme 1916 Exhibition – *From Durham to the Western Front* on which I advised and which was held at Palace Green Library in Durham from March to October 2016.

There is little written information with the collection but I thought it useful to comment on as many of the photographs as possible in order to help further research. There are still photos which I have not included in this commentary.

Group 1. Spennymoor and Leeds pre 1900.

These seven images are not from the Album.



Above. Receipt from Walter Maxey's shop. The shop still exists as Defty & Son and is run by Walter's Great Grandson, Richard Defty.

Top right. The Maxey family in the 1890s. Kate is sitting on the right. Walter Maxey is standing on the right.



Below : Kate in the early 1890s.





Above - Kate as a nurse at Leeds General Infirmary c 1900.



LGI Nurse's Badge



Above – Kate’s ID tag for the Territorial Force Nursing Service (presumably worn throughout the war).

More research into Kate Maxey’s life in pre-war Leeds would be beneficial. She is described as a *scholar* in the 1891 Census living with Dr & Mrs McKane, her uncle and aunt, at 55a North Street but we don’t know how she was educated (the McKane and Maxey children may even have had a governess). Oral evidence passed down through Kate’s family suggests that at some stage she worked with or for the eminent surgeon Berkeley Moynihan (1865-1936). He was prominent in setting up the Army’s Northern General Hospital at Beckett Park, Leeds, and was a Territorial Major in the RAMC. It seems probable that this connection motivated Kate Maxey to join the TFNS in 1912.

For detail on Moynihan see :

<http://www.firstworldwarhospital.co.uk/sir-berkeley-moynihan>

<http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/c/F40453>

<http://livesonline.rcseng.ac.uk/biogs/E000226b.htm>

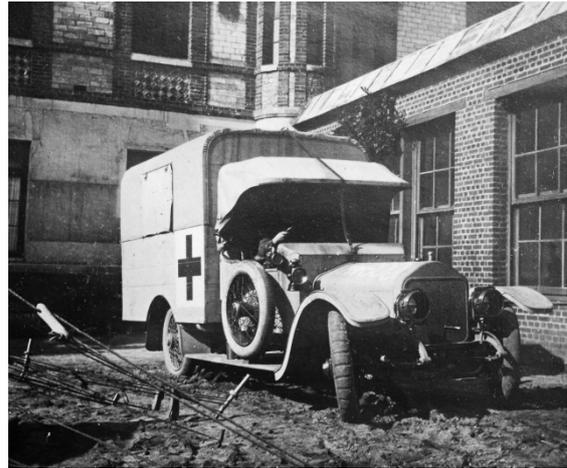
Group 2 : Kate Maxey's Great War Album



Above and below : Assumed to show staff and patients in a Ward at No 1 General Hospital Etretat with displays of flowers. This was possibly on 30th July 1916 – see extract from Edith Appleton's Diary below :

Off in afternoon went with Maxey to a glorious garden - where we cut flowers to our hearts' content & when we both had a double arms full - asked the old man how much - He - with an apologetic look of "hope it is not too much" - said - 2 francs les deux!! then we did the flowers in both churches - took bundles to the ward - gave some away - & still had some left for our own rooms.

There is a suggestion, which needs confirmation, that the Ward was in the Etretat Casino. The Nurses rooms were in the Hotel Blanquet; it is suggested that Claude Monet stayed there in 1883 and in November 1885 and occupied the same room as Edith Appleton did in 1916.



Above : Ambulance, possibly at No 1 General Hospital Etretat. Alain Millet, a local historian of Etretat, writes on the Appleton website :

When a convoy arrived in Etretat Railway Station, the light wounded walked to the centre of Etretat. Buses drove those who couldn't walk and the ambulances drove the heavy wounded. ... Cecil Smith [was] the chief of the "girl drivers". I met him when I was young. He spoke very [good] French but in a strange manner. He had learned French through the [works] of Victor Hugo and a French Bible.*

*"chaufferettes"

For the above information see the Website :

<http://anurseatthefront.org.uk/information-about-etretat-and-no-1-general-hospital/>

Below : An undated photograph of Kate Maxey with the flower arrangements referred to above.





Above : I believe that this is a photograph of one of the buildings in Etretat housing No 1 General Hospital . The colonnades appear on a large number of photos in the album and may be at the rear of the Hotel des Roches. More details of No 1 General Hospital can be found on :

<http://familyatwar.co.uk/index.php/home/etretat/>

Alain Millet lists the following locations as having hospital functions :

L'Hôtel des Roches, La Villa Orphée, La Villa des Roses, Hôtel Blanquet, Villa des Fleurs, The Casino



Above and top across : I assume that these are group photos of staff of the No 1 General Hospital Etretat from the colonnades.



Below : There are a few photos in the album of officers reading newspapers at Etretat. Perhaps high resolution analysis would allow these to be dated and individuals to be identified.





Above : Group photo of medical officers at the Villa des Roses in Etretat (probably taken in 1916). This identifies the names of the officers and further analysis of who they are is being undertaken.

For example, I believe that the officer seated second from the left on the front row is Major Samuel Martyn of Airdrie in Scotland, a Territorial Force officer who received the OBE for his services (London Gazette 3 June 1919).

Conclusive evidence is provided by a story from the *Sunday Post* of 22 October 1916 headlined *Airdrie Raises £3000 for Red Cross*. This states that the Chairman of the Bazaar to raise funds for the Red Cross Society was *Major Samuel Martyn, the Second in Command of the First General Hospital in France ...* (Source British Newspaper Archive).

Major Martyn is mentioned many times in Edith Appleton's Diary see :

<http://anurseatthefront.org.uk/names-mentioned-in-the-diaries/other-people/medical-colleagues/major-martyn/>

Martyn's CO, seated in the centre front row, is Colonel George Abraham Moore CMG DSO, then a newly promoted Lieutenant Colonel. In August 1914, as a Major, Moore organised the first ambulance train in France while working on Sir John French's staff.



Moore was from a prominent Ulster family and a veteran of the Zulu and Boer Wars.

I am also researching the officer seated on the extreme left of the picture, who I believe to be Captain Alfred John Hutchinson Iles, a Taunton doctor. Iles served in the Boer War as a Sergeant in the RAMC.





Above : A group of officers at Etretat. I believe the officer seated on the right to be Captain Iles, who appears in a number of photos in the Album (see below and across).



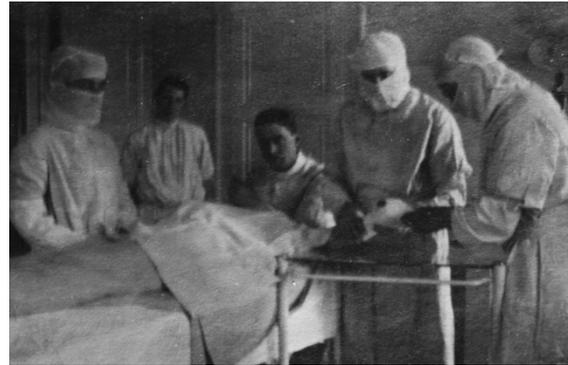
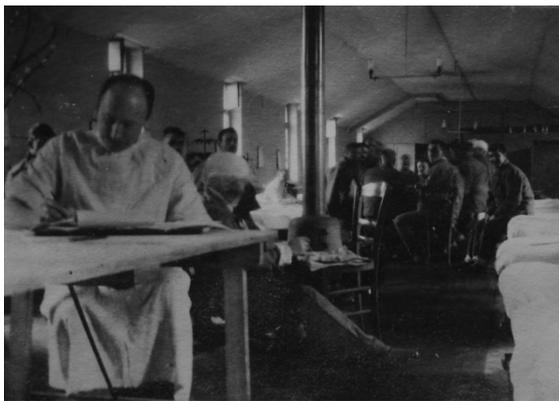
Above and below : Viewing X rays, probably taken at No 1 General Hospital, Etretat (no date)





Above : Sketch of a Ward interior, possibly at No 1 General Hospital Etretat. The caption reads : "Sorry could not finish it" but the signature is not readable although I think the rank is "Sergeant".

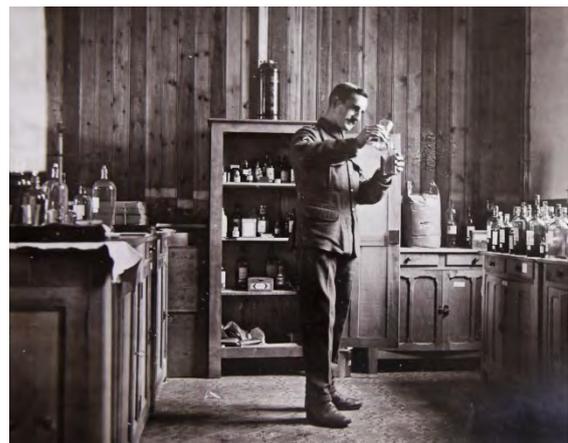
Below : A photos of ward interiors that look very like the sketch



Above : An operating theatre scene from the album, which contains a number of poor quality photos of interiors of hospitals.



Above : An interior of an operating theatre with Kate Maxey on the right of the picture.



Above : An interior of a dispensary



Above and below : Photos of Hospital tents, which may not be at Etretat or at the same location. Maureen Defty has identified the photo above as taken in Rouen in the winter of 1914/15. ¹ However, the Appleton website refers to the tents erected at Etretat which accommodated those wounded in the Somme battles. Alain Millet commented :

... during the battle of the Somme, they [were] used to shelter the most [heavily] wounded who [could not] find places in the hospital annexes. Hundreds of wounded soldiers were lying on stretchers on both sides of all the streets of Etretat. The number of the dead was so high (60 on certain days) the British Army asked ambulance, lorries and farmer's horse powered wagons to drive the coffins to the church yard. Many gassed soldiers were buried in sheets for the coffins were too small for them.



Above : I believe the officer on the left of this photo to be Sir Berkeley Moynihan, who in 1914 was gazetted a temporary colonel in the Army Medical Service in France and was prominent in advising on the treatment of the wounded during the Battle of the Somme. As described above Moynihan was a surgeon at LGI and knew Kate Maxey.

Below : Another photo of Moynihan presumably taken during the same inspection.



¹ A similar postcard signed by J. H. Harris and dated 15 January 1915 was sold on e-Bay in 2013 as depicting a military hospital at Rouen. The seller believed J. H. Harris to have been a Private in the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) and to have been standing on the right of the photo with the large moustache and red cross arm band : The writing on the back of the e-Bay card read: *This is a P.C view. The photographer has sold more of this view than any - outside my tents. J.H Harris, Jan 15th 1915*



Above. This looks like a station yard with wounded soldiers being received. It may be Etretat or, perhaps less likely, it may be Lillers, near No 58 CCS, where Kate Maxey was severely wounded on 21 March 1918.

Below : An ambulance train with medical officers and wounded soldiers (no date, no location).



Below : Loading medical supplies



Above : Kate Maxey with her patients (no date, no location)

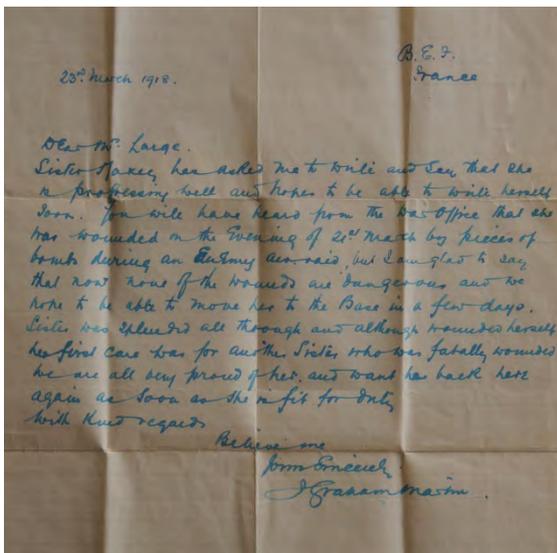


Above : Kate Maxey with an RAMC orderly (no date, no location)

Group 3 : Other material (not in Album)

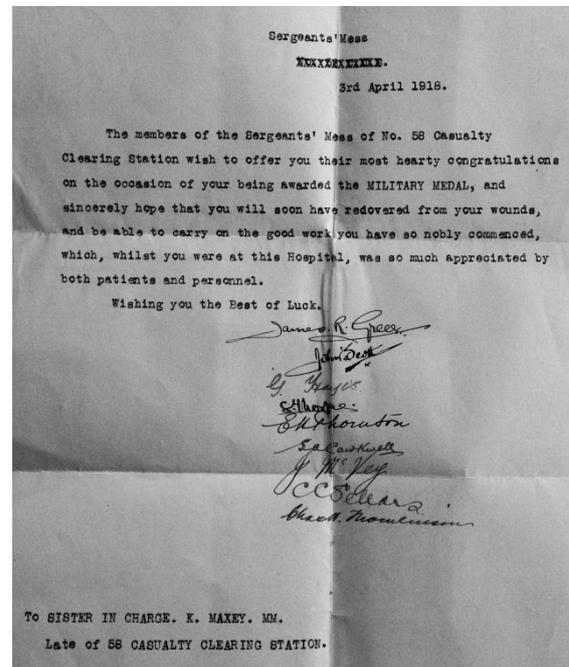


Above : Sister Kate Maxey (centre) with the McKane side of her family, with who she had lived in Leeds before becoming a nurse. Probably taken 1915/6, when Kate was on leave from France.



Above : Letter from Kate's CO to her sister Amelia in Spennymoor written two days after Kate was wounded.

Below : Letter from 58 CCS Sergeant's Mess congratulating Kate on being awarded the Military Medal two weeks after she was wounded.



Above : Citation for the Award of the Florence Nightingale Medal (one of the first awarded).