

Unveiling of stained-glass windows at the Church of St James, Twickenham, in memory of the Portuguese soldiers who fell during the 1st World War

56,000 soldiers of the Portuguese Expeditionary Force were sent to France in 1917. About 2,100 died on the Western Front, 5,200 were wounded, and 7,000 were taken prisoner. Half the total losses were incurred at the battle of La Lys.

By Malcolm Howe, GCMW

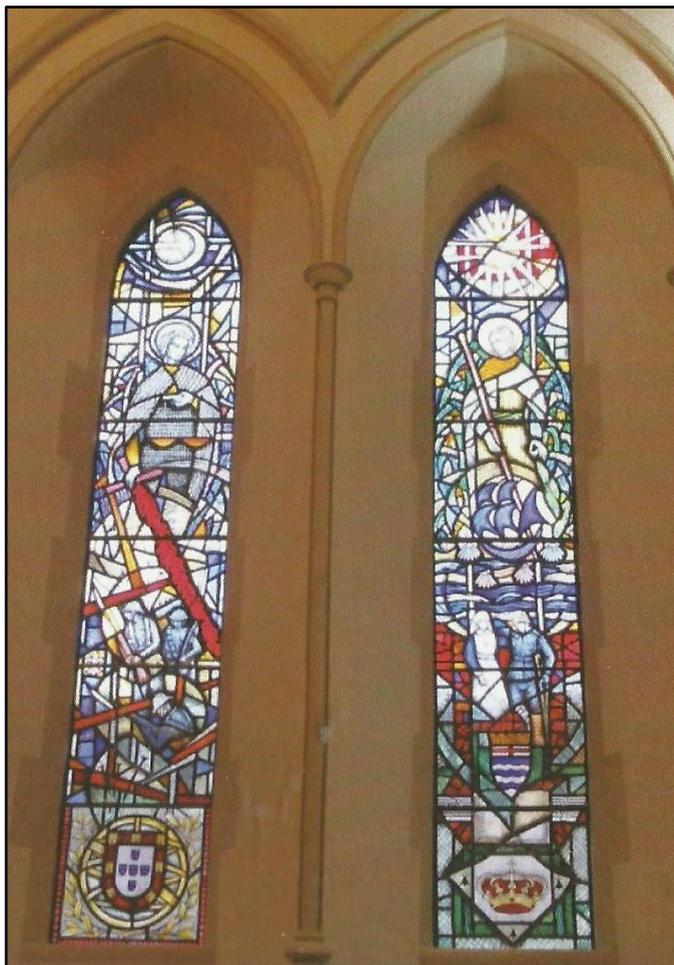
“Miseremini mei saltem vos amici mei quia Manus Domini tetigit me”.

This lament from the Book of Job: "Pity me, you at least my friends, for the Hand of the Lord has touched me" encapsulates the plight of the valiant Portuguese who gave their lives in the 1st World War, as well as our heartfelt sympathy for their sacrifice manifested at a Requiem Mass in the Church of St James, Twickenham, on 9th April 2018, the date of the centenary of the Battle of La Lys.



Rev Nick Reynolds, The Bishop of Lindisfarne, Rev Fr Ulick Loring

Two stained glass memorial windows, which were the inspiration of the Parish Priest, Fr. Ulick Loring and designed by Caroline Benyon, were dedicated by the Right Reverend John Wilson, Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Westminster and Titular Bishop of Lindisfarne.



Memorial windows to the Portuguese soldiers who died in WWI

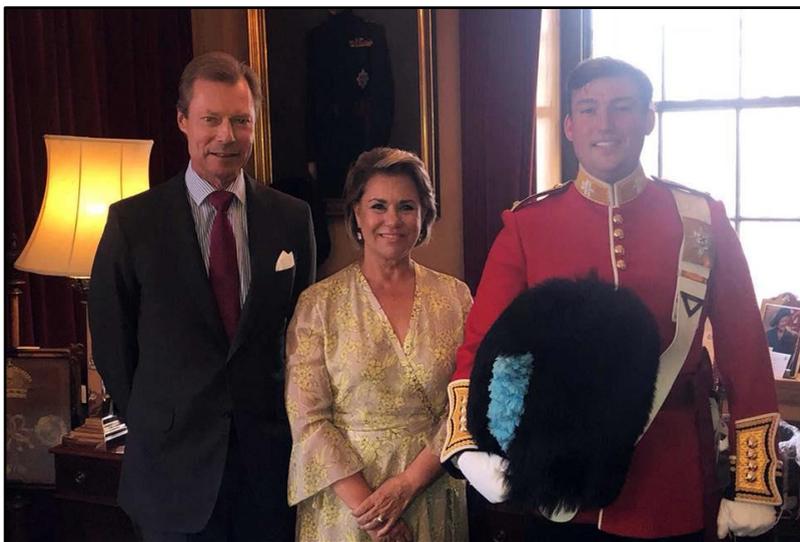
Portugal was represented by His Excellency the Portuguese Ambassador, Senhor Manuel Lobo Antunes, L.V.O., who laid a wreath and gave the address. The British Army was represented by Field Marshal the Lord Guthrie of Craigebank, G.C.B., Colonel of the Life Guards and Gold Stick to Her Majesty The Queen. The Royal British Legion and local veterans mounted a Guard of Honour. An adjacent explanatory temporary plaque was also unveiled.



The memorial plaque that was unveiled by the Portuguese Ambassador¹

¹ This marble plaque replaced the temporary one and was also unveiled by the Portuguese Ambassador. £24,000 was raised, including contributions from parishioners.

His Royal Highness Prince Sébastien of Luxembourg represented the Braganzas, the Portuguese Royal Family, who is currently serving in the Irish Guards, after passing out from Sandhurst in 2017. Born in 1992, the fifth and youngest child of Grand Duke Henri and Grand Duchess Maria Teresa of Luxembourg, he was educated at Summerfields and Ampleforth in the UK. Three of his forebears were Infantas of Portugal, daughters of the exiled King Dom Miguel. The Infanta Maria Ana married William IV, Grand Duke Luxembourg; the Infanta Maria Antonia married Robert I, Duke of Parma, whose son Prince Felix of Bourbon Parma married Grand Duchess Charlotte of Luxembourg, and; his great-great grandmother, Queen Elizabeth of the Belgians, who spoke Portuguese, was the daughter of the Infanta Maria Josefa who married Karl-Theodor Duke in Bavaria. His grandfather, the Grand Duke Jean, also served in the Irish Guards and was on the first tank to enter the capital when Luxembourg was liberated in 1944. Lieutenant Luxembourg was given leave of duty at the Tower of London, guarding the Crown Jewels, to attend the memorial service.



**Their Royal Highnesses The Grand Duke, The Grand Duchess,
and Prince Sébastien of Luxembourg**

The Portuguese Choir of Camden Town sang most melodiously, the readings were read in English by Bernard Hornung, former Chairman of the Anglo-Portuguese Society, and in Portuguese by Dr Joana Gaspar, Consul General for Portugal. The Gospel was proclaimed in English and Portuguese by the Deacon, the Rev Nick Reynolds. The Deputy Mayor of Richmond, Councillor Benedict Dias and Sir Vincent Cable, MP for Twickenham were in the congregation. After the service there was a reception with Portuguese “*petiscos*” and wine served in the Parish Hall, which was opened by King Manuel II in 1927.



The Portuguese Ambassador, Senhor Manuel Lobo Antunes (2nd right)

One window commemorates the humanitarian efforts in England of the exiled King during the 1st World War. The healing Archangel Raphael, surmounts symbols of the charitable work of Dom Manuel who served in the Red Cross. The caravels reflect the support given by members of the Anglo-Portuguese Society, including a generous donation from the Symington family, towards the £18,000 cost.



The other window features the warrior Archangel Michael surmounting symbols of war. The Foundation in the United Kingdom of the Portuguese Royal Order of St. Michael of the Wing gave a significant contribution. Fleur de Lys represents the battle of that name, when the depleted 20,000 Portuguese troops with 88 guns faced a bombardment at 4.15am from 1,700 guns supported by 100,000 German soldiers.

Chelsea Pensioner Roy Palmer, IP 360, was in the congregation and was inspired to compose this evocative eulogy:

On Monday, the Ninth of April, Two Thousand and Eighteen,
Two commemorative windows for the Portuguese dead, **were** first seen.
Visit St James Church in Twickenham Parish and step inside.
Study our windows for the men who fought and died.
Britain and her Allies needed help to defeat the Hun
During the darkest hours of World War One.
From many countries Britain asked, for “help and men”.
Portugal answered the question saying, “where and when”?
They declared war on the Ninth of March,
Nineteen Hundred and Sixteen.
It was the bloodiest war the World had ever seen.
Portugal fought in Mozambique, Angola, Belgium and France.
Her troops fought hard and did her name enhance.
Anibal Milhais, the highest decorated soldier Portugal has seen,
Fought alone, stopped two attacks, after having a dream.
Twelve Thousand Portuguese troops died in World War One.
Six Thousand more went missing before it all was done.
At least Seven Thousand men were taken prisoners of war.
One Hundred Portuguese ships were sunk, maybe even more!
Two Hundred and Twenty Thousand civilians also died.
Try explaining the cost to the families that cried.
Portugal honoured the oldest unbroken alliance in the World
By coming to our aid with their colours unfurled.
These heroes were remembered by King Manuel II and Twickenham Town.
Who raised the money, to remember the dead and the Crown?
In Twickenham Anglo-Portuguese Communities are living side by side.
So we shouldn’t forget those soldiers **who for us** have died.
A further plaque was dedicated, on Tuesday, Ninth of April
Two Thousand and Nineteen, to let the whole world know what Portugal,
had done and seen.



Peace Day, 19/07/1919. Left to right: King Manuel II of Portugal and Queen Augusta Victoria, The Prince of Wales, King George V and Queen Mary, and the Princess Royal, George V's sister

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*Malcolm Howe, GCMW, is a knight of the Order of St. Michael of the Wing, which is believed to have been founded in 1171 by the First King of Portugal, D. Afonso Henriques. It was revived in its current form in 1981 and recognised by the Royal House of Braganza in 1986. Malcolm is the author of the following books relating to the history of Portugal: *The Braganza Story: a visit to the Royal Pantheon of Portugal* published in 1999 by the Society, with the preface by the late Paulo Lowndes Marques, O.B.E., Chairman; *Portugal's Perplexing Panels: the meaning of a medieval masterpiece*, published in 2001, with copies donated to the Society for each member, and; *Dom Manuel II The last King of Portugal: His Life and Reign* published in 2009. Malcolm has also contributed 14 articles which have been published in successive Annual Reports from 1986 to 2017 and has given several talks to Society Members.*

