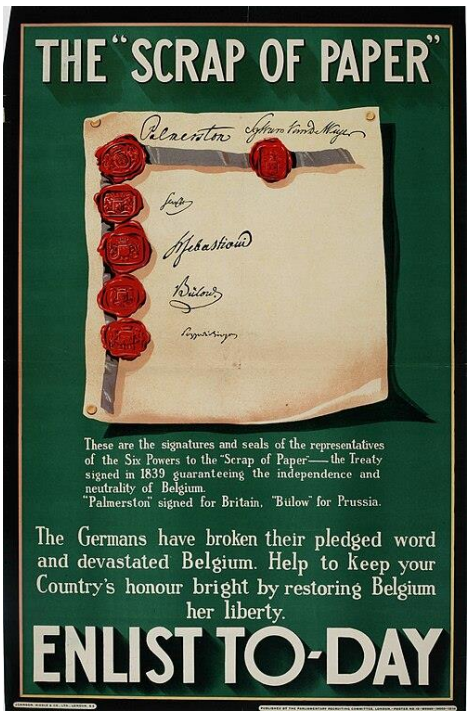
Walter W. Davison and the "Scrap of Paper"

Earlier this year, during a visit to the Bailiffgate Museum at Alnwick, the museum archivist Mick Grant showed Nick Hide a very unusual First World War Memorial. This item comprises a large illustrated document, mounted in a wooden frame. It lists those members of the St Paul's Church Choir of Alnwick who served during that war. At some stage, this item was probably on display inside St Paul's Church. What is particularly unusual is that under the heading the "Scrap of Paper", is included a facsimile and translation from part of the 1839 Treaty, which guaranteed the independence and neutrality of Belgium, the breaking of which, by Germany, was considered by Britain and its allies as one of the causes of the war.

When Germany invaded Belgium in 1914, the German Chancellor famously dismissed this functional treaty as a meaningless "Scrap of Paper", triggering Britain's entry into the First World War. The phrase "Scrap of Paper" subsequently became part of the propaganda campaigns used to by Britain and its allies to gather support for the War. The same image included in this memorial formed part of a war-time recruitment post.

Amongst the 14 names of the members of the choir, included in this memorial was **Walter William Davison**, indicating that he served in the Royal Garrison Artillery during the war. He survived the war. Walter was born in 1894 in Alnwick, the son of John Davison, a gardener, and Mary Wright. After the war he married and worked in a solicitor's office and lived until 1977.

The Choir of St Paul's Church, Alnwick, War Memorial

The "Scrap of Paper" Recruitment Post