

# THE ONE-HUMPED CAMEL IN THE UNITED KINGDOM: MONUMENTS, MEMORIALS AND MUNICIPALITIES

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## ABSTRACT

The one humped camel (*Camelus dromedarius*) has never been numerous in the United Kingdom and in British law is classed as a dangerous wild animal for which a licence is needed by the keeper. It is now illegal to use camels for entertainment, for example in circuses. There have been, nonetheless, both one humped and two humped (*Camelus bactrianus*) camels in Britain since the early 12<sup>th</sup> century, 900 years ago. Camels have seen service in the British military and in transport of trade goods for British trading companies from their areas of origin and have been recognised as making considerable economic contributions to Britain in these roles. In recognition of this there are several monuments and memorials to the animal around the country. Camel is also a word used in British geography for some British towns and villages and as names for geographic features such as rivers and hills. This paper provides a repertoire of such monuments, memorials and place names.

**Key words:** Albert Memorial, Bactrian camel, Cleopatra's Needle, General Charles Gordon, Imperial Camel Corps, Kitchener of Khartoum

Most of the world's countries class the camel as a domesticated animal but the UK is among a small minority that considers camels as wild. Camels – unspecified as to being Old World or New World – are classified in British Law as 'Dangerous Wild Animals' for which a licence is required in order for the general public to keep them (LGU, 1976). There are separate regulations for zoos, circuses and some other bodies but live performances in circuses have been banned since January 2020 (LGU, 2019). Up until 2019 two circuses in the UK held wild animal licences but the Wild Animals in Circuses Act 2019 banned their use in the entertainment industry from January 20, 2020. Several British zoos and wildlife parks continue to exhibit Bactrian camels but only two 'safari' parks keep the one humped camel. It seems there is only one commercial herd of one humped camels in the UK. The herd, with animals obtained from Europe and maintained under a Dangerous wild animal licence, comprised 17 animals aged from 2 to 25 years old in May 2024. The unit was founded as a pseudo-safari business in the 2<sup>nd</sup> decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century but converted to a dairy herd, milked by a mobile machine, as a result of the Covid pandemic in 2020 when movements were not allowed. Milk was not being produced in May 2024 because

imports of pregnant females were stopped, as with all ruminants, due to the risk of contracting BTV-3 (bluetongue disease) (Joseph and Rebecca Fossett, personal communication 13 May, 2024).

There has never been more than a very small number of camels in the United Kingdom. There is, however, solid evidence for the presence of both one- and two-humped camels in England, Scotland and Ireland at least as far back as the early 12<sup>th</sup> century (900 years ago). Henry I of England (king from 1100 to 1135 AD) is known to have had camels in his menagerie at Woodstock near Oxford (Mynors *et al*, 1998) with potential hints of an even earlier presence. Later, in 1466 in the mid 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Patriarch of Antioch (a city in Greece) presented four "dromedaries" and two "camels" (i.e. Bactrians) to the English King Edward IV (Searle, 1902). The tomb of a John Camel in the Church of St John the Baptist in Glastonbury in Somerset, southwest England dated 1487 has a carving of a Bactrian camel: the history of this camel does not appear to be known but it may be a pun on the occupier's name.

Several geographical place names contain the word camel in addition to Camelford in Cornwall (see below). There is a West Camel village on the River Cam in Somerset and another nearby village

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known as Queen Camel: none of these places has any connection with the camel as an animal but have been derived from earlier indigenous place names. The Sopwith Camel was a single engine biplane fighter aircraft of the First World War whose name was said to derive from the hump at the front of the aircraft that housed the machine guns.

In spite of there only ever having been very few camels in the United Kingdom their various contributions to military operations and to international trade the country has several “hard” memorials to their role in these contexts. This paper provided a partial repertoire of such mementos.

## Methodology

This paper is based on the author’s own knowledge and experience and on a thorough review of the literature. In view of the rather unusual subject formal sources are relatively few. Much of the text is thus based on grey literature and the ever-growing number of internet sources usually under the epithet of “blog”

## Monuments, Memorials and Municipalities

### *Prince Consort National Memorial (The Albert Memorial)*

The Albert Memorial, north of the Royal Albert Hall in Kensington Gardens, London, was commissioned by Queen Victoria in memory of her husband Prince Albert, who died in 1861. Designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott in the Gothic Revival style it is an ornate canopy or pavilion 176 feet (54 m) tall, like a ciborium over a church high altar with a statue of the prince facing south below (Risebero, 1985) (Fig 1). It took more than ten years to complete, the £120,000 cost (the equivalent of about £19,000,000 in 2024) met by public subscription. The memorial was opened in July 1872 by Queen Victoria although Albert’s statue was not ceremonially “seated” until 1876. It has been Grade I listed since 1970 (Appendix A).<sup>1</sup>

Each of the four corners of the central area has an allegorical sculpture depicting Victorian industrial arts and sciences, these being agriculture, commerce, engineering and manufacturing. At the outer corners are four more groups representing the traditional four

continents: Africa, the Americas, Asia and Europe. Each of these groups comprises several ethnographic figures and a large animal: a bison is represented for the Americas, an elephant for Asia, a bull for Europe and a one-humped camel for Africa (Fig 2).

The memorial was planned by a committee of well-known architects that was led by Sir George Gilbert Scott. The sculptural work was coordinated by Henry Hugh Armstead who recruited many of the artists from the Royal Academy. William Theed, who was a favourite of Prince Albert, was chosen to carve the “Africa” group.

### *Imperial Camel Corps Memorial, Victoria Embankment Gardens, London WC2*

The beginning of what eventually became the Imperial Camel Corps was four Company-strength units raised in Egypt in January 1916. The companies comprised, respectively, Australian troops that had returned from the disastrous Gallipoli Campaign, New Zealand, British and Indian troops. A Company of 130 men comprised a small Headquarters and four Sections, each of 7 groups of 4 men armed with Lee-Enfields, the then standard British Army bolt action rifle. The first camels were heavy baggagers from the Bikaner Camel Corps but these were later replaced by lighter Egyptian camels for riding mounts (Falls and MacMunn, 1930; Clayton and Killingray, 1989). Six new companies were raised from British yeomanry regiments in March 1916, four additional Australian companies were raised in June from reinforcements intended for the Australian Light Horse regiments and reinforcements intended for the New Zealand Mounted Rifles Brigade formed two companies, one in August and the other in November (NZMCH, n.d.).

Initial activities were confined to long range patrols around the Suez Canal and the Sinai Desert. In August 1916, a transition to a more active combat role took place when each Company added a machine gun Section of 15 men with three Lewis guns. Additional staff on the Headquarters section brought each Company’s strength to 184 men. Companies operated independently as cavalry whilst on the march but dismounted to fight as infantry in actual battle and thereafter, the Corps (as it eventually became) continued to fight as mounted infantry.

The unit eventually expanded to Battalion size. Four such entities were eventually formed, one each from Great Britain (also known as the Imperial) and New Zealand (ANZAC) and two from Australia, each of 770 men and 922 camels. When Brigade status was achieved on 19 December 1916 support troops

1. Buildings, scheduled monuments, parks and gardens, battlefields and shipwrecks judged of national importance in the United Kingdom in terms of architectural or historic interest are “listed” in one of three grades. These are: Grade I (buildings of exceptional interest); Grade II\* (particularly important buildings of more than special interest); and, Grade II (buildings of special interest).

included a mountain artillery battery (Hong Kong and Singapore (Mountain) Battery), machine gun squadron (265<sup>th</sup> (Camel) Machine Gun Squadron), Royal Engineers (10<sup>th</sup> (Camel) Field Troop), field ambulance (Australian (Camel) Field Ambulance) and 97<sup>th</sup> Australian Dental Unit, this last comprising only four men!, the Mobile Veterinary Section and – inevitably – an administrative train including a Brigade Ammunition Column and the Brigade Train which carried five days of supplies (Underwood, 2003). Brigade strength at this stage was about 4150 men and 4800 camels (NZMCH, n.d.).

The Imperial Camel Corps (ICC) eventually became part of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force (EEF).<sup>2</sup> It fought in many battles in the Senussi Campaign (November 1915-February 1917), the Sinai and Palestine Campaign (January 1915-October 1918) (Reid, 1934; Robertson, 1938) and in the Arab Revolt (June 1916-October 1918). The ICC was disbanded in May 1919 after the end of the war having had more than 240 men killed over the period of its existence.

A memorial to the Imperial Camel Corps was unveiled in the Victoria Gardens on the Thames Embankment in London on 22 July 1921 (Ward-Jackson, 2012) and listed as Grade II in 1958 (Appendix B). The bronze effigy of a rider carrying a rifle was sculpted by Major Cecil Brown (who had himself served in the Corps) in 1919-1920 and unveiled in July 1921 (Fig 3). The monument is mounted on a two-stage pedestal of Portland stone with the upper part bearing bronze bas-relief images of various actions. The lower part has bronze plaques, the one with a sentiment commemorating those men who made the supreme sacrifice:

To the Glorious and Immortal Memory of the Officers, N.C.O.s and Men of the Imperial Camel Corps -- British, Australian, New Zealand, Indian -- who fell in action or died of wounds and disease in Egypt, Sinai, and Palestine, 1916, 1917, 1918. (Fig 4).

The other sides carry the names of all the members of the Corps who were killed or died of their wounds during the war and all the battles and engagements fought by the Corps;

1916: Romani, Baharia, Mazar, Dakhla, Maghara, El Arish, Maghdaba.

1917: Rafa, Hassana, Gaza 1, Gaza 2, Sana Redoubt, Beersheba, Bir Khu Weilfe, Hill 265.

1918: Amman, Jordan Valley, Mudawar (Hedjaz).

2. It is not clear how the camel fighting force became a Corps. In the British Army a Corps (commanded by a Lieutenant General) comprises at least two Divisions (each commanded by a Major General) made up of several Brigades (each commanded by a Brigadier)

## *Statue of General Gordon at the Royal School of Military Engineering, Brompton Barracks*

Charles George Gordon was born into a military family in Woolwich on 28 January 1833. He obtained a commission as Second Lieutenant in the Royal Engineers in 1852. After fighting in the Crimean War in 1853-1856 he was then in China in 1860 with the Anglo-French forces. At 30 years of age in 1863 Gordon commanded a force established in Shanghai to protect Europeans from Chinese rebels and within two years the revolt known as the Taiping Rebellion was put down. As a result, the Chinese Emperor honoured him with the yellow jacket and peacock feather of a mandarin after which he became known by the soubriquet of “Chinese” Gordon although, he was promoted only to Captain in the British Army (Barnes, 1885; Trench, 1979).

Promoted Colonel in 1872 Gordon accepted an offer from the Egyptian Khedive in 1874 – with British Government consent – to join the Egyptian army. He was shortly appointed Governor of Equatoria Province (now mainly South Sudan and northern Uganda), where he attempted to suppress the slave trade and where he stayed until 1876. Gordon then returned to England but was eventually persuaded by the Khedive to accept the Governor-Generalship of the entire Sudan which also carried the Ottoman title of Pasha (Sparrow, 1962).

Gordon tried hard to suppress the slave trade but was hindered in this by not only the corruption of his Egyptian official but also of his British colleagues (Moore-Harell, 1998). He resigned as Governor General in 1879. Offered positions in the Belgian Congo and in the Cape Colony, Gordon refused but then accepted a post as Private Secretary to the Governor-General of India before returning to China (Galbraith, 1971; Hsu, 1964). He spent much of 1881 in Mauritius and the Seychelles before moving to Palestine. Gordon was promoted to Major General in the British Army in March 1882 (Boulger, 1897).

In January 1884, Gordon was again sent to the Sudan by the British Government. At this time, the country was in turmoil as a result of the carnage being created by a religious fanatic known as the Mahdi and his followers who were winning battles against the Egyptian army over most of the country.<sup>3</sup>

3. Mahdi is an Arabic word that means “guided to the right path” or “rightly guided”. In Islam, Mahdi is the prophesied messianic figure who will appear at the end of the world to rid humanity of evil and injustice. Mahdi is also a popular and deeply spiritual choice given by Muslim parents to their children (<https://www.thebump.com/b/mahdi-baby-name>).

Gordon's brief was to evacuate the Egyptian garrisons endangered by the revolt of the Sudanese rebels and then to leave the country himself. He successfully evacuated several expatriate families but refused to leave himself and sought to hold the central areas but was besieged in Khartoum. The city held out for 10 months before it fell on 26<sup>th</sup> January 1885 as the rebels stormed the Governor's Palace. The whole garrison was slaughtered, Gordon being killed, supposedly through a spear thrust from one of the attackers. A relief expedition sailing up the Nile, for which the British public had been demanding for a considerable time but over which the Government had prevaricated, reached Khartoum two days later. It was at this point that Gordon was hailed as a martyr and a national hero. There were calls for revenge but this did not come until 13 years later when another British General, Herbert Kitchener, recaptured Khartoum and reinstalled a kind of peace (Ziegler, 1973).

There was a general feeling that a permanent memorial to Gordon in the form of a statue should be created but it was Gordon's own Corps, the Corps of Royal Engineers that took the initiative. Officers and other ranks contributed money to a fund to commission a statue of Gordon. The original specification was for a statue on foot in the uniform of an Egyptian General. The selected sculptor, Edward Onslow Ford, considered it more appropriate for Gordon to be seated on a camel.<sup>4</sup> Ford studied the camels at London Zoo and made casts of a dead camel (said to be a one humped beast). The resulting monument, of bronze and stone is of a one humped camel that is correct in most details. The exception is that the beast has a horse's tail rather than that of a camel intended as a sop to late Victorian (and perhaps especially Queen Victoria's) morality (Droth *et al*, 2014; Darke, 1991). The statue was first exhibited and unveiled by the Prince of Wales at the Royal Academy in 1890. It was later moved to Brompton Barracks, the home of the Royal School of Military Engineering in Chatham, where it still stands (Fig 5). It became Grade II\* listed in 1998 (Appendix C).

### ***Statue of General Gordon at Gordon's School***

A considerable grounds well persisted in favour of a statue to Gordon being put on public display at the site of his death in Khartoum. The hero of the

4. Edward Onslow Ford RA (27 July 1852 - 23 December 1901) was an English sculptor whose early success was with portrait heads or busts of prominent people. Several of Ford's monumental commissions celebrate the British Empire either by promoting imperial values or as memorials to military figures.

recapture of Khartoum, General Kitchener together with Algernon Borthwick, the owner of the Morning Post newspaper, persuaded the paper's readers to subscribe to a fund for this to happen. By 1902, there was sufficient money for a second statue to be cast. The new effigy was erected in St Martin's Place in London (Fig 6). In 1904, it was shipped for Khartoum although it survived two major mishaps, the first being that of the Cedarden which sank in the Thames and the second being the SS Lesbian which was submerged in the Nile! Finally it arrived in Khartoum where it was placed at the intersection of Gordon and Victoria Avenues, some 200 metres south of the new palace that had been built in 1899 after the former edifice had been destroyed (Fig 7).

The Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, a Condominium ruled jointly by the United Kingdom and Egypt, gained its independence on 1 January 1956 to become the Republic of Sudan. In 1958, the Sudanese government removed the Gordon statue and a second one of Kitchener which had been erected later. Both statues were offered to the UK, the offer being accepted and the statues were shipped back to England.

The UK government then offered the Gordon statue to Gordon's School, founded as the Gordon Boys' Home in 1885, in Woking in the county of Surrey. The statue was erected at the School in April 1959 and unveiled in May 1959 (Fig 8). Time has wreaked its worst on the statue and eventually the Portland stone plinth and the bronze statue were degraded and tassels and reins were missing. The statue was eventually given a make over and HRH The Earl of Wessex unveiled a plaque to mark the restoration of the statue on 10 October 2014. The front of the plinth now bears the inscription "Charles George Gordon". On the left side the inscription reads "Born Woolwich 28<sup>th</sup> January 1833, killed Khartoum 26<sup>th</sup> January, 1885"; the right side is inscribed with "This Statue was Erected at Khartoum in 1904. Removed and presented to the School in 1959" with the remaining side bearing the words "This plinth has been presented in memory of Major-General Sir Hubert J. Huddleston, G.G.M.C., G.G.B., C.B, D.S.O., M.C., who served the Sudan for 28 years and was Governor-General 1940-47." The statue was listed as Grade II on 29 April 2015 (Appendix D).

### ***Camel benches on Victoria Embankment of River Thames, London WC2***

Following British victories at the Battle of the Nile in 1798 and the Battle of Alexandria in 1801 the



**Fig 1.** Full view of the Albert Memorial in front of the Royal Albert Hall, London. Source: Photo by the Author.



**Fig 2.** The camel group representing Africa at the northeast corner of the Albert Memorial. Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert\\_Memorial#/media/File:Albert\\_Memorial\\_statue.JPG](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert_Memorial#/media/File:Albert_Memorial_statue.JPG).

Khedive of Egypt, Muhammad Ali, sought to reward the victors with some unwanted pieces of Egyptian antiquity. One was an obelisk which became known as Cleopatra's Needle presented to the United Kingdom in 1819. The British Government, however, were unable to justify the cost of its transport to England at that time. It therefore remained in



**Fig 3.** Memorial to Imperial Camel Corps in Victoria Gardens on Thames Embankment. Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Statues\\_in\\_Victoria\\_Embankment\\_Gardens\\_-\\_geograph.org.uk\\_-\\_1729996.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Statues_in_Victoria_Embankment_Gardens_-_geograph.org.uk_-_1729996.jpg).

Alexandria for more than 50 years until anatomist and dermatologist Sir William James Erasmus Wilson provided the money for the obelisk - of red Aswan granite, 68 feet (21 metres) tall and weighing more than 220 tons - to be dug out of the sand and transported to London. Encased in an iron cylinder and towed by a ship the obelisk left Alexandria on 21 September 1877 and after a perilous journey through stormy waters and via a harbour in northwest Spain it arrived at Gravesend in southeast England on 21 January 1878. Transported to London, Cleopatra's Needle was erected on the Victoria Embankment of the River Thames on 12 September 1878 (Wilson, 1877; Dickens, 1885).<sup>5</sup>

5. Two other "Cleopatra's Needles" are extant: one in New York which is the precise image of the London one in 1881 and one in Paris which is of a different provenance to the London and New York obelisks.



**Fig 4.** Detail of inscription on ICC statue. Source: enlarged from Fig 3.



**Fig 5.** Gordon's statue at the Brompton Barracks, School of Military Engineering in Chatham. Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Statue\\_of\\_General\\_Gordon#/media/File:Gordon\\_Memorial,\\_New\\_Brompton,\\_England-LCCN2002708002.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Statue_of_General_Gordon#/media/File:Gordon_Memorial,_New_Brompton,_England-LCCN2002708002.jpg).

During the 1860s, some 22 acres (8.9 ha) of marshland along the River Thames were drained and reclaimed, a retaining wall was built and a new sewage system and other infrastructural improvements were constructed. The new – now the Victoria Embankment – terrace thus created needed,



**Fig 6.** The second cast of Gordon on a camel in St Martin's Place, London before shipment to Khartoum in 1902. Source: <https://www.londonremembers.com/memorials/general-gordon-on-a-camel>.



**Fig 7.** General Gordon's statue *in situ* in Khartoum 1936. Source: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA. <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pp.print>.

to the minds of London's councillors, appropriate street furniture so that people could rest after their perambulations.

George John Vulliamy, architect to the Metropolitan Board of Works, designed an ornamental "dolphin" lamp (the ornament is actually a sturgeon), along with cast iron and slatted wood benches that featured sphinx and camel-shaped armrests that expanded on the perceived historic, patriotic and imperial concepts of the obelisk (Fig 9; Fig 10). The benches were cast and constructed by Z.D. Berry & Son of Regent Street (a well-known and respected manufacturer of cast-iron street furniture and heating and lighting equipment) and installed on the embankment partly in the City of Westminster and partly in the City of London in 1877, one year before the Needle was erected in 1878.



Fig 8. Statue of General Gordon at Gordon's School, Woking, Surrey. Source: [geograph.org.uk](http://geograph.org.uk) - 44414.jpg.



Fig 9. A camel bench on Victoria Embankment. Source: © Copyright N Chadwick and licensed for reuse under [creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/); <https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/2714246>.



Fig 10. Detail of bench end from Fig 9 (Note: stamp of manufacturer at base).



Fig 11. Location view of Peek House at 20 Eastcheap, London. Source: Copyright Mike Quinn and licensed for reuse under Creative Commons Licence.

The Westminster ones feature sphinxes whereas the London ones feature camels. Some 21 benches were listed Grade II in 1987 of which only one featured a camel (Appendix E). By the time, the benches were listed, many had been replaced due to wear and tear and replaced by reproductions in 1960-1985. The originals have become “collectors’ items”: one was sold at auction in 2015 by the renowned auctioneers Bonhams at an asking price of £8000-£10,000 (even one of the later reproductions sold in 2019 for £3750) with the description:

**Lot 284: A Victorian cast iron black painted ‘Camel’ bench by Z.D. Berry & Son, designed by George John Vulliamy, circa 1878**

The later slatted scrolling back and seat with ends cast as recumbent laden camels with pierced scrolling leaves



**Fig 12.** Detail of the camel train above the main entrance to Peek House showing latest office tenant. Source: Photograph courtesy of Andrew G Wilson, 7 December 2022.



**Fig 14.** Camels supporting the Coat of Arms of the Merchant Tailors on the wall of this Livery Company's home since 1347 almost opposite the previous Figure. Source: <https://lookup.london/eastcheap-camels-peek-house/>



**Fig 13.** A spandrel with two supporting camels on the former Oriental Bank Corporation building at London's EC2 area. Source: <https://lookup.london/eastcheap-camels-peek-house/>

and flowerheads, on plinth bases, 213 cm wide, 79 cm deep, 83 cm high (83 ½ in wide, 31 in deep, 32 ½ in high).

***Camel train relief sculpture in Eastcheap, London EC3 and other London wall sculptures***

A relief of a camel train is sculpted above the entrance to a building that was once a bank after it had been the offices of a tea and coffee importing business at the corner of Eastcheap with Lovat Lane, London EC3.



**Fig 15.** The camel sculpture on the front of the Liberty store in Regent Street, London. Source: <http://www.speel.me.uk/gp/camels.htm>.



**Fig 16.** The Asia Tympanum on the facade of the Manchester Free Trade Hall. Source: (<http://www.speel.me.uk/sculptplaces/manchfreetradehall.htm>).



Fig 17. The Obelisk memorial to Scottish Merchant seamen on the Shore, Leith, Scotland. Source: Photograph by the Author.



Fig 18. Detail of the bronze casting of camels on the Scottish Merchant seamen memorial. Source: Photograph by the Author.



Fig 19. Windvane in the shape of a one humped camel on the old Town Hall, Camelford. Source: Photograph by the Author.



Fig 20. The Coat of Arms of the Borough of Camelford showing a two humped camel crossing a stream. Source: Photograph by the Author.

Peek Bros, established in 1823 by three siblings, was a firm of Tea and Coffee Importers. It was a very successful business and imported 5 million pounds weight (2232 tonnes, 2,267,960 kg) of tea to England in 1865. Their office building, known as Peek House, together with much of the street of Eastcheap was demolished in 1882 so that the ground could be excavated to allow the Metropolitan Underground Line to be built. An impressive new 4-storey building was erected at No 20 Eastcheap during 1883-1885 and again named Peek House. The two fronts in Eastcheap and Lovat Lane are joined by a quadrant turning through 90 degrees and it is above the main entrance on this quadrant that the carving is sculpted. The building (Fig 11) is now home to a number of offices including a major branch of the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC).

The carving in high relief (alto-relievo) on Portland stone was created by William Theed the Younger. Theed loved exotic subjects and had already carved the Africa section on the Albert Memorial (see above). The 3 camels and the Arab leading them – effectively the Peek logo – are estimated to be about one quarter of life size and are carrying, respectively, tea, coffee and spices which were the main commodities traded by Peek Bros (Fig 12).

A sprandrel on the wall of a building that was the office of the Oriental Bank Corporation between 1845 and 1892 situated where Adam's Court meets Threadneedle Street in London has two camels sculpted alongside two seated figures on each side of the central boss (Fig 13). Geographically, almost opposite the previous sculpture is one that is the Coat of Arms supported by 2 camels of the Merchant Tailors' Company (Fig 14). The Company is one of the twelve great Livery Companies established in Medieval times. It was originally the regulator and trade body of tailoring but over time it has become a philanthropic organisation (<https://www.merchant-tailors.co.uk/>). Liberty is a fashionable store in Regent Street, London W1 which describes itself as a "Designer Department Store Selling Luxury Brands". Liberty was established by the homonymous Arthur Lasenby Liberty in 1875 with the dream of setting up an emporium laden with luxuries and fabrics from distant lands (<https://www.libertylondon.com/uk/information/our-heritage.html>). In keeping with this dream is the camel sculpture on the long frontage of Liberty's in Regent Street, probably indicating trade and one of the exotic sources of Liberty's wares. The camel is seated with two Arabic traders and one naked worker who is pushing the camel possibly urging it to stand up (Fig 15).

### *Manchester Free Trade Hall Tympanum*

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the city of Manchester and its surrounds were a major industrial area on a world scale. The Manchester Free Trade Hall dates from the Victorian era (1853-1856) and is an important decorated building in a Renaissance style that is 9 bays wide and 2 storeys high. Its glory is the tympani (tympanum -- a half-round recessed space above a window with an arch on top) of decorative allegorical sculpture on the upper level. The sculptor was John Thomas, an esteemed architectural sculptor, whose work was always of consistently high quality, with the Free Trade Hall sculptures showing him at his best. These sculptural groups in the tympani comprise a central classically-draped seated female figure has around her accoutrements appropriate to the idea she represents.

The central group represents Free Trade with 3 others relating to commerce, industry and manufactures, and the arts (<http://www.speel.me.uk/sculptplaces/manchfreetradehall.htm>). The remaining 5 represent the continents with which Manchester trades. Asia is the one of interest to this paper. The female figure is modestly garbed and wears a turban. There is a small treasure chest in her lap, a large cornucopia is held in one arm and other sculptures include the prow of a bird-headed trade ship, a tea chest with exotic fruit on top, an ornamented pot and rolls of fabric. The lady is seated on a camel (Fig 16).

### *Memorial to Scottish Merchant Navy at Leith, Scotland*

On 16 November, 2010 a memorial was unveiled by Her Royal Highness Princess Anne, daughter of her Majesty the Queen Elizabeth II, to sailors of the Merchant Navy who had been killed in or died as result of conflict from the start of World War I in 1914 to the unveiling of the memorial in 2010 (<https://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/87515>).

The Memorial, located on The Shore in Leith near Edinburgh, is an 18 feet (5.5 m) tall sandstone obelisk featuring seafaring scenes (Fig 17). Each of the four sides has four tiers faced in light-coloured, grained Beryl sandstone and each panel contains a bronze relief. The architect and sculptor was the well-known Jill Watson: the nearby Powderhall Foundry cast the bronzes.

The upper panels represent the variety of merchant ships throughout history, the middle panels

have war scenes including destruction by torpedo, convoys with protection by Coastal Command and danger from rocks and storms at sea, the eye level panels are images of the world's trading routes, the ground level panels commemorating the educational role of Leith Nautical College and its training ship "Dolphin" and an empty lifebuoy evokes the loss of life at sea. One of the World Trade panels includes the Suez Canal and it is here that are shown two camels indicating that the Merchant Navy travelled world wide (Fig 18).

### ***The town and parish of Camelford, North Cornwall, West of England***

Camelford, a town in northeast Cornwall in southwest England, was first given a charter as a borough more than 800 years ago. The town has no real connection to a camel. The Cornish language name for the town, *reskammel*, derives from a combination of the Middle Cornish "rys" (ford) and the local river's Cornish name "kammel" (Ekwall, 1940; Mills, 2003). The English name, Camelford, was formed by Anglicisation of the river's name to Camel plus Ford, giving it an identical meaning to its Cornish counterpart. Due to the river's name sounding similar to the English word "camel" the animal is seen as a symbol of the town.

There are two obvious representations of a camel within the town limits. The most obvious is the model of a one humped camel acting as a weather vane atop the building in the town centre, erected in 1806, that was formerly the Town Hall and is now the Market Hall on the Ground Floor and the Public Library on the First Floor (Fig 19). The building was listed as Grade II in 1952 and then again listed Grade II in an amendment to the original heritage description in 1988 (Appendix F). As an integral part of the listed building the weather vane is protected under the Listing. The second representation comprises a stained glass window on the first floor of the building (and thus also protected) which shows a two humped camel crossing a body of water (Fig 20). The seal of the borough of Camelford is described as "Arg. a camel passing through a ford of water all proper" with the legend "Sigillum Vill de Camillford" (Pascoe, 1979). The logo of the town's Sir James Smith High School also is dominated by a silhouette of a one humped camel.

### **Discussion**

As a generally perceived and legally classed exotic or wild animal little is known by the British people of the contributions the one humped camel

has made to society over an extended time frame. Most of these contributions derive from outside the territorial UK where there has never been more than a few resident animals. This small number is likely to decrease in view of the legislation now in force. For more than two hundred years, however, camels have supported Britain and its economic success in a number of ways. Few memorials celebrate these contributions. In the area of military conflict it has supported conventional forces as a cavalry animal and kept troops in the field through its activities in transport. Its contribution to overseas trade is little understood other than by a minority of people. The few examples of such activities provided in this paper are, however, adequate testament to the position it has occupied and the esteem in which it is still held by a discerning establishment.

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### **Conflict of interest disclosure**

The Author declares no conflict of interest.

### **Ethics approval statement**

Not applicable.

### **Patient consent statement**

Not applicable.

### **Permission to reproduce material from other sources**

Not applicable.

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## Appendix A

### Prince Consort National Memorial (Albert Memorial), Westminster

Heritage Category: Listed Building // Grade: I // List Entry Number: 1217741 // Date first listed: 14-Jan-1970 // List Entry Name: PRINCE CONSORT NATIONAL MEMORIAL (ALBERT MEMORIAL) // Statutory Address: PRINCE CONSORT NATIONAL MEMORIAL (ALBERT MEMORIAL), KENSINGTON GORE SW7

TQ 2679 NE CITY OF WESTMINSTER KENSINGTON GORE, SW7. 85/2

14.1.70 Prince Consort National Memorial (Albert Memorial). GV I

Memorial. 1862 to 1875. George Gilbert Scott, with sculpture and other decorations by numerous Victorian artists and craftsmen. Granite, marble, limestone and metal. Square decoratively paved podium reached by steps to south; superimposed podia with steps to all sides, surmounted by ciborium-like canopy with clustered granite columns to four corners. Elaborate sculptured spire. Giant seated figure of Prince Albert within. Gables to all sides with pinnacles between. Richly sculptured band to base breaking outward at corners to support sculptured groups representing the industrial arts:- Agriculture, Manufacture, Commerce and Engineering. Further sculptured groups to four corners of stepped podium representing Europe, Asia, Africa and America, and linked by elaborate railings. Monument enriched with much figure and other sculpture and decorated also in numerous other techniques including mosaic, enamel, etc.

## Appendix B

### Imperial Camel Corps Memorial

Heritage Category: Listed Building // Grade: II // List Entry Number: 1238057 // Date first listed: 24-Feb-1958 // List Entry Name: IMPERIAL CAMEL CORPS MEMORIAL // Statutory Address: IMPERIAL CAMEL CORPS MEMORIAL, VICTORIA EMBANKMENT GARDENS WC2

TQ 3080 NW CITY OF WESTMINSTER VICTORIA EMBANKMENT 72/148 GARDENS, WC2 Imperial Camel Corps 24.2.58 Memorial G.V. II .

Memorial. 1920 by Cecil Brown. Bronze statuette of figure mounted on camel set on Portland stone pedestal with bronze bas-relief.

## Appendix C

### Memorial to General Gordon, Brompton Barracks

Heritage Category: Listed Building // Grade: II\* // List Entry Number: 1375610 // Date first listed: 07-Jul-1998 // List Entry Name: MEMORIAL TO GENERAL GORDON, BROMPTON BARRACKS // Statutory Address: MEMORIAL TO GENERAL GORDON, BROMPTON BARRACKS, PASLEY ROAD

TQ 7669 SW GILLINGHAM PASLEY ROAD (east side), Brompton 3/32 Memorial to General Gordon, Brompton Barracks GV II\*

Equestrian statue. 1890. Bronze statue and Portland stone plinth. Moulded plinth, with a bronze cartouche, with a full-sized figure of General Gordon, d.1885, seated on a camel with tasselled saddle. Attached a well-cast and expressive figure with free-hanging tassels; placed symmetrically on the axis with the Institute, memorial arches and barracks (qqv).

## Appendix D

### Statue of General Gordon, Gordon's School

Heritage Category: Listed Building // Grade: II // List Entry Number: 1424607 // Date first listed: 29-Apr-2015 // List Entry Name: Statue of General Gordon, Gordon's School // Statutory Address: Gordons School, Bagshot Road, West End, Woking, GU24 9PT

Statue on plinth. A 1902 second casting of the sculptor Edward Onslow Ford's statue of General Gordon (first cast in 1890). The plinth is of circa 1959. Bronze statue on stone plinth. A thirteen feet high, bronze, full-sized statue of General Gordon in the uniform of an Egyptian general, seated on a tasselled saddle upon a standing camel. The base is inscribed 'GORDON' on the front and has a decoration of olive branches. The classical style rectangular stone plinth has recessed corner piers, a moulded cornice and base. An inscription on one side of the plinth reads 'THIS STATUE WAS ERECTED AT KHARTOUM/ IN 1904 AND PRESENTED TO/ THE SCHOOL IN 1959.' An inscription on the base of the plinth records that the plinth was presented in memory of Major General Sir Hubert J Huddleston who served the Sudan for 23 years. The statue of General Gordon at Gordon's School by the sculptor Edward Onslow Ford RA, cast in 1902 with a 1959 plinth, is listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons: Aesthetic quality: a fine bronze sculpture by a reputable sculptor with the subject unusually mounted on a camel; Historic interest: General Gordon is a figure of national importance and this statue is located at the school founded in his memory; Group value: with other listed buildings and structures at the school.

## Appendix E

### Bench seats on Victoria Embankment

Heritage Category: Listed Building // Grade: II // List Entry Number: 1357348 // Date first listed: 01-Dec-1987 // List Entry Name: 21 BENCH SEATS SET ON EMBANKMENT

PAVEMENT // Statutory Address: 21 BENCH SEATS SET ON EMBANKMENT PAVEMENT, VICTORIA EMBANKMENT SW1

TQ 3079 NW, 3080 SW and NE CITY OF WESTMINSTER VICTORIA EMBANKMENT, 3180 NW SW1 73/57;74/19;83/61;92/12 21 Bench Seats set on Embankment Pavement G.V. II Public seats. 1872-74 designed by Lewis and G F Vulliamy. Cast iron mounted and timber slatted. The seats take the form of long benches with curved backs supported on cast iron brackets, the terminal arm-brackets designed as winged sphinxes, with the exception of the bench opposite the junction with Horseguards Avenue which has the feature of seated camels instead of sphinxes. Included in their own right as original street furniture and as part of the Embankment design.

## Appendix F

### Library, Market Place, Camelford, Cornwall

Heritage Category: Listed Building // Grade: II // List Entry Number: 1138348 // Date first listed: 19-Jan-1952 // Date of most recent amendment 13-Jan-1988 // List Entry Name: LIBRARY // Statutory Address: LIBRARY, MARKET PLACE CAMELFORD MARKET PLACE, Camelford SX1083 - 1183 8/76 (1/3) Library (previously listed as Town Hall - 19.1.52) GV II. Townhall erected over market house, now library, exhibition hall and meeting room. 1806. Financed by John, 6<sup>th</sup> Duke of Bedford. Slate stone rubble with dressed quoins and dressed stone arches to window openings. Rag slate roof with hipped ends. Rectangular plan with internal partitions altered. Originally the market house on the ground floor with a central entrance on the front and the town hall above with a staircase to a doorway at the rear where the ground is at a higher level. Ground rises to left and to rear. 2 storeys. Symmetrical 3 window front faces onto Market Place; 5 semi-circular headed windows; the window frames replaced in circa mid C20, the central window in an earlier blocked door opening. First floor has 3 semi-circular windows with horned sashes with intersecting glazing bars. Lower side on right has a C20 glazed door with a Venetian window above, the central horned sash with intersecting glazing bars. The higher side on the left has a C20 door on the ground floor and a Venetian window above with stained glass window with Camelford arms. The wall above has been partly rebuilt. The rear elevation has 4 blocked round headed openings on the ground floor and a central double flight of steps which lead up to the first floor entrance with a C19 timber porch with flat roof and moulded cornice. 2 sash windows with round headed arches and intersecting glazing bars to right and left. Timber cupola on roof with clock and weather vane. This cupola originally had 2 bells dated 1807 and 1699. Interior : remodelled in circa mid C20. Bell from cupola in entrance inscribed 'W. Prideaux Mayor, 1699'. The Charter of Camelford was confirmed in 1259 and the rotten borough was created in 1552 to bolster the Earl of Northumberland's government. The rotten borough was abolished in 1831( Kelly's Directory, 1910. Polsue, J. Lake's Parochial History of the County of Cornwall 1872 Volume I).