



Neville Lytton: First World War Artist

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Those of you who happened to see BBC Bargain Hunt at lunch time on January 10th may have seen **Eric Knowles** visit the Victory Hall in the village of Balcombe, West Sussex. After WW1 the village wanted a memorial to all those who never returned and, partially on the recommendation of **Lady Denman**, of nearby Balcombe Place decided that a village hall would be both appropriate and functional.

Lady Denman, a self-declared feminist and founding president of the WI, on seeing the plans for the hall noticed there were to be large areas of blank wall around the windows. It was arranged that **Neville Stephen Lytton (1879-1951)** #3710 on the web family tree, who had a reputation as a war artist, should paint murals in those spaces reflecting the commemorative purpose of the hall.

Accordingly, inter alia, the murals portray a wounded soldier on a stretcher, shattered trees, mine shafts, wounded German prisoners and replacement British soldiers all illustrating the pain and misery of war.

Neville Lytton was the grandson of writer and politician **Edward Bulwer-Lytton (1803-1873)** #3678. His elder brother was **Viceroy of India**; and he had three famous sisters; one was the suffragette, **Constance Lytton (1869-1923)** #3712, another married the architect **Sir Edwin Lutyens (1869-1944)** #3716 and the third married Prime Minister Balfour's younger brother.

Neville played cricket for Hertfordshire making five appearances between 1896 and 1898 and went on to win Bronze for Real Tennis in the 1908 Summer Olympics. He served on the Western Front in the 1st World War and saw duty on the Somme and at Amiens. His art was a constant interest during the war and when it was over examples were acquired by the Imperial War Museum and by the Musee de Guerre in France. Towards the end of his life, he succeeded his elder brother to become the **3rd Earl of Lytton**. A man of many talents.

Anthony Cobbold