Aurora Della Torca 4ALS

Key figures in The History and Ritual of the British Unknown Soldier

David Railton was born on the 13th November 1884 in London; he was son of the Scottish George Scott Railton, the first commissioner of The Salvation Army, and his wife Marianne Deborah Lydia Ellen Parkyn. The second of two brothers, David Railton was educated by private tutors before studying at Oxford, where he was led to ordination in the Church of England. In 1908 he was ordained deacon by the Bishop of Liverpool, and in 1909 he became priest; after that, he took up the curacy of Edge Hill in the city. In 1910 he moved to Kent, where he volunteered to serve there as an army chaplain like other many local clergies. Before becoming a chaplain to the second Battalion on to the Western Front, he was awarded the [Military Cross](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_Cross) for saving injured servicemen under fire. The idea of a ritual to preserve the memory of those who lost their life fighting in the World War I borne there, in northern France, when David Railton saw a grave in a back garden at Erkingham with a rough cross on which was the inscription “An Unknown British soldier”. He was really impressed by those few words, and this is why in August 1920 he decided to wrote a letter addressed to Dean Ryle of Wstminster Abbey in which he suggested a memorial to commemorate the fallen of the Grear War. King George V and the prime minister David Lloyd George were enthusiastic and they decided to support Railton’s idea: thanks to their efforts the memorial was carried into effect. As regards the message the documents convey, what emerges is a willingness to encourage the maintaining of the commemoration starting from its origin: if you better understand how the rite was born and its “background”, you better reflect on the meaning of this celebration and its importance. So the objective of the informative documents is explaining what’s behind the ritual of the Unknown Soldier; for this reason, the language used is simple, direct and easier to understand, in order to make the reader better aware of the texts’ contents. The prevalence of paratactic structure makes the reading as easy as possible, and in this way a wider audience can have access to the documents.