

## Did you know?

### The monument of the Crimean War Finnish soldiers in England

The monument, in Lewes, East Sussex, is dedicated to the 28 Finns who died in the local prison, after being captured when the British attacked the Åland Islands during the Crimean War 1854-1856.

The Åland Islands were controlled by Russia at the time and the British were worried about the threat posed by the country's Baltic fleet. The Royal Navy attacked the main fortress at Bomarsund in June 1854. The assault was repulsed, but a second attack by British and French forces proved successful and the fortress was destroyed.

Some two thousand soldiers were taken prisoner and transported to England and France, 340 of them to Lewes, where they were housed in an empty naval prison. Although the officers taken prisoner were Russian, the men were mostly Finns, conscripted into the Russian army. Both groups were well treated and became objects of great interest in Lewes. The officers were housed with local families and integrated themselves into local society.

In the prison, a workshop was set up for the men to make wooden toys, for sale, and the jail itself became a visitor attraction. When the inmates left for home after the war ended in 1856, the civic authorities and the townspeople came out with a military band to wave them goodbye.

Many prisoners had been ill when they arrived in the town and 28 of them died in Lewes, many from tuberculosis. They were buried in the churchyard of St John-sub-Castro. Their comrades erected a memorial stone for them, to be replaced in 1877 by a large obelisk commissioned by the Russian Tsar Alexander II. The new monument carried the names of the prisoners.

After a fundraising campaign in Finland and Russia the memorial was restored and unveiled in September 2013.



Read more:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian\\_Memorial,\\_Lewes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_Memorial,_Lewes)

<http://www.finemb.org.uk/Public/default.aspx?contentid=288292&nodeid=35864&culture=en-GB>

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