

**“We shall remember them”**

**Brislington and St Anne’s in the Great War  
1914-1919**

**D.P. Lindegaard**

*“And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat upon him was  
Death, and Hell followed with him.” Revelation 6-8 KJV.*



***A survivor: Private Henry George Panes, No. 20080, 1/4th SLI, one of “the Brislington Boys” who was with the Somersets at Colaba in India and later at Mesopotamia. Henry’s brother Fred was killed in action in 1916.***

## FOREWORD

On 28 June 1914 at Sarajevo, a self-proclaimed “Yugoslav” patriot, Gavrilo Princip shot dead the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, and his Duchess. In retaliation, Austro-Hungary invaded Serbia and Russia began to mobilise troops near the German border. Germany had long believed that war was inevitable and that she would have to fight on two fronts, France and Russia, and so attacked France under the belief that she was the weaker of the two. Belgium, whose neutrality was guaranteed by Britain stood in the way. Britain delivered an ultimatum to Germany to get out of Belgium by midnight on the 3<sup>rd</sup> August but as the last strokes of Big Ben sounded there had been no withdrawal and Britain declared war on Germany. Before an Armistice was signed on 11 November 1918 almost every country in the world was engaged and the War had claimed eighteen million dead.

This project, which expanded to include the aftermath of the war, began as an attempt to identify the men and boys of Brislington and St Anne’s, who died in that conflict, 1914-1918, which became known as the Great War, and more optimistically “the War to end Wars.”

If only that were the case.

The men named on the memorial plaques in our various churches, chapels and school are listed in alphabetical order by surname and initial which gives no indication of their personalities or their part in the progress of the war. “*We shall remember them*”, we intone dutifully on Remembrance Sunday, but few of us know who they were, especially now that more than a century has elapsed since the first shot was fired. My intention is simply that, to remember them, as more than just names on a shield or plaque.

Local men fought in all the “theatres” of the war, on land, sea and air. They are as different as the men who live in our streets today: young, middle-aged, married, single, tall, short, husband, son, brother, volunteer, conscript, conscientious objector. A few were the “young village farm boys” of my original imagination, but many more were the artisans, especially those newcomers, of “New Brislington”, who lived in the long terraces of the roads off Sandy Park which all begin with “Sand”. Some names are engraved on all the memorials, as if they attended each church or chapel in turn; occasionally they also turn up on other memorials elsewhere. Some men who should appear do not, omitted perhaps through oversight, because their families had moved away or who felt their loss too deeply to take part in the charade that they had “given their lives”. A few I have been unable to identify with certainty or even not at all. The casualties did not end with the Armistice of 11 November 1918 and many carried their wounds, physical or mental, to the grave. Other survivors found their experiences too painful to talk about. The war affected everyone

therefore I have included survivors as well as those who waited anxiously on the home front.

The church and school plaques are not to be confused with Brislington's official War Memorial, a modest affair tucked away in a niche at Kensington Hill. I imagine many residents are unaware it is there at all. It contains no names, the reason for which, I have been led to believe was because small-minded committee types were unable to agree who should be included and who should be left out. In my account I have included all those with a Brislington connection however remote and whether they are on the local plaques or not.

Finally, I am not a military historian and if, as I suspect, those more qualified than myself will find errors and omissions, then the fault is entirely my own.

D.P. Lindegaard, BA, Brislington, 2020



Brislington, Bristol.

*The Life they left behind*

## 1914: Enthusiasm: “Your Country Needs You!”

In 1914, the British Army was composed entirely of volunteers. Following the declaration of war on 4<sup>th</sup> August, Reservists were immediately recalled and the Territorials sent for full time training. Lord Kitchener issued his iconic command which beckoned 100,000 new men to enlist. In Bristol eager novices were sworn in at the Colston Hall at a steady rate and by the middle of the month overall recruiting was said to be “satisfactory”. Local premises were offered for the purpose of signing up and drilling bands of militia admirably dubbed by the media “Our Citizen Army”. In Brislington, Donald Burt, aged fourteen, of 65 Kensington Park Road, son of Frank Burt, the schoolmaster, and his wife Alice, was “a pioneer of local sharp-shooting”. Cyril Nasmyth, the brother of Rebecca, headmistress of Wick Road Council School, was “an able instructor”, available to drill more youths. Training was offered on Saturday afternoons at the Tramway Centre range at the bottom of Sandy Park Road. The Drill Hall, Tuesdays 7.30 -10 pm and Saturdays, 2 pm until dusk, and Brislington Unionist Club, Wick Road also opened their rifle ranges to novice marksmen.<sup>1</sup> A mantra, “*Today’s boys are tomorrow’s men*”<sup>2</sup> encouraged young enthusiasts to join the Church Lads’ Brigade at St Luke’s church.

The CLB had been formed in 1891 by a man called Walter Gee, who, impressed by the non-denominational work of the Boys’ Brigade suggested the creation of a Church of England section within it. When his local vicar refused, Gee successfully set up his own organisation.



***Brislington boys playing soldiers: not quite the CLB but with aspirations!***

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<sup>1</sup> WDP 24.9.1914, 23.11.1914

<sup>2</sup> Ibid 9.11.1914

From mid-September 1914 and in the following few weeks, the Western Daily Press published lists of volunteers from all over Bristol and some from beyond, with the dwelling place of their kin shown. Thus we can recognise those whose families lived in Brislington or St Anne's.<sup>3</sup> Many of the "early birds" who joined the 12<sup>th</sup> Gloucestershire Regiment, dubbed "Bristol's Own" were "white-collar" workers, with the artisans diverted to Taunton and the Somerset Light Infantry.

These new recruits, shown with surname and initials, are easiest to identify when they had a distinctive name. One such was Brislington-born **Edward Homfray Addenbrooke**, the only child of Edward and Mary, of Rose Cottage, a pretty house on the Bath Road.<sup>4</sup> Edward senior, an insurance broker, was a relative of the Addenbrookes of Worcestershire, one of whom founded the world-famous Cambridge Hospital which bears the family name. Young Edward, an alumnus of Clifton College, had played rugby for the school XV at three-quarter and later turned out for the Harlequins RFC. In 1911 he was a nineteen year old pupil stockbroker living in London;<sup>5</sup> by September 1915, he was a lieutenant in the 9<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters on active service in France. Despite being wounded in May 1917,<sup>6</sup> Edward survived the war, unlike his cousin, and fellow Old Cliftonian, Guy Addenbrooke, who was killed in 1915. By 1939, when living in Swansea, he was ready for more action, being a Major in the Training Reserve, with his wife Margaret ("Madge") an ARP Ambulance Driver.

A law clerk, **Herbert Samuel Dancey**, born in 1890, was a son of James and Sarah Ann of 42 Newbridge Road, St Anne's Park. Prior to being sent into action (by then promoted to Lance-Sergeant) he married Barbara Webb on 2 November 1915 at St George.<sup>7</sup>

**Alfred Thomas Hodges**, an invoice clerk, born at Saltford in 1895, was the son of Thomas and Harriet of 36 Montrose Avenue. He served firstly as Private 14317 in the Gloucestershire Regiment and ended the war as Private 34291 in the Devons. He married Gwendoline Joyce after the war.

**Edward Leonard Thomas**, born in 1888, who enlisted in the 12<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters, was a clerk with Bristol Municipal Docks. In 1911 he lived at Arno's Vale Cemetery, Bath Road where his grandfather, the Rev. E. Thomas was the officiating clergyman.

**James Temple Owens**, named after Bristol's Temple Church, was born on 26 June 1891, the son of James and Mary Ann, of "Lynwood", Brislington. An ironmonger by trade, he enlisted for the duration of the war on 19<sup>th</sup> September. First as a Private in the 12<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters, he afterwards transferred to the Tank Corps and allegedly "drove one of the first tanks in France in 1916". He was finally in the Machine Gun Corps.

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<sup>3</sup> WDP 14/15/16/19/22/23/28.9.1914

<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately demolished in the 1930s.

<sup>5</sup> The information is taken from the 1911 census, here and thereafter.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid 9.5.1917

<sup>7</sup> Ibid 3.11.1915

**Albert George Langley**, a commercial clerk, the son Zebedee and Ada Florence, was born in 1892 at Midsomer Norton, but in 1911 lived at 2 Winchester Road, Brislington.

**Edward William Toon**, a solicitor's clerk, born in 1893, in 1911, lived with his parents Edward and Annie at 52 Winchester Road. He enlisted at the Colston Hall on 15<sup>th</sup> September "aged 21 years, 7 months, height: 5 feet 10¼ inches, chest 34½ inches plus 2 inches expanded. Physical development: good."

**Frederick Charles Hemmens** lived with his cousin at Bedminster in 1911 though stated that his next of kin lived at Brislington. In 1916 he was "Private 14059, 15<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters, (a Training Regiment), 32 years 5 months old, 5 feet 9½ inches tall, chest 37½ inches plus another 2 inches when expanded; fresh complexion, brown hair and eyes; occupation: commercial traveller."

**Ralph Bateman Walker**, a scale maker, born at Easton, was twenty two when he enlisted for short service (day and month lost). In 1911 he was living at 283 Wells Road with his parents Henry and Elizabeth who were presumably in Brislington by 1914.

**William Montague W. Northam** was born in 1894 at Tiverton, Devon. In 1911, an engineering apprentice, he was living with his parents, Thomas and Emily at 59 Sandy Park Road. He became Private 02966, of the Army Ordnance Corps. He survived the war and in 1923 married Ada Brittan in Bristol. In 1939 he was an aero engines inspector, living with Ada and four children at 32 Grosvenor Road. He died in the Kingswood area in 1971.

"W. Smith" is perhaps **Wilfred Percy Smith**, born in 1894, an acetylene worker, the son of William and Ellen, who in 1911 lived at 92 Langton Road, St Anne's Park.

**Ernest Cross** was born at Uffcolme, Devon. In 1911, he was a tramway conductor, living at 2 Harrow Road with his uncle and aunt, Ernest and Lizzie Cross.

**John William Richard Lambert**, born at Redcliff in 1879, the son of John and Catherine, in 1911 was living with his widowed father and younger brother William at 31 Repton Road, but was of 8 Belmont Road when he enlisted in the SLI on 25<sup>th</sup> August. He was so keen to join up (worried in case he was "too old"?) he reduced his age by four years alleging he was 31 rather than thirty five.

John Lambert worked at the galvanised iron works, John Lysaght & Company who normally received their supply of zinc from the Belgian city of Liege, and thus production was immediately affected when war was declared. A mass meeting was called on the morning of 7<sup>th</sup> August at the Netham Works when the management told the workforce (about a thousand strong) that they were being put on short time. The reaction of the men was startling. There were no grumbles, no rancour; instead they broke into cheers crying "Hurrah for King George and the Allies!"

Many who attended the meeting were so overcome with patriotic zeal that they immediately joined Kitchener's New Army so that the company was left very short staffed. Those who remained were kept at full stretch until the end of the war.<sup>8</sup> The Lysaght's factory workers joined up together so as not to be left behind by the group. This phenomenon was echoed all over the country resulting in the tragic "Pals' Battalions" where whole streets lost all their menfolk.

John Lambert, unlike many of his former workmates, survived the war.

**"God be with you till we meet again!"**

.....was the prayer of Brislington's Congregational Church for "Our Young Men at the War", who were members of the Sunday school or congregation.<sup>9</sup>

**Sidney Abbott**, 4<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters. (*qv.* 13.6.1915)

**(Christopher) Reginald Arnott**, 1<sup>st</sup> SLI. (born 1891, son of Charles, tram driver, and Elizabeth, 25 Manworthy Road; a serving soldier, his absence from home in 1911 suggests he was somewhere "abroad" with army. He re-enlisted 1915, a Private, RAMC; he married Dorothy Hawkins, 1916; discharged due to "sickness", 22 Nov. 1918. He returned to live at 89 Manworthy Road.)

**Clifford Bowden**, RAMC. (born 1896, Kewstoke, clerk, son of Archelaus and Kate, of 19 Bellevue Road, 1911.)

**Sidney Bowden**, South Midland R.E. (brother of the above, born 1896, Brislington.)

**Thomas Brodrick**, RFA. (son of Thomas Brodrick of Limerick, a dairyman and Elizabeth, of 1 Manworthy Road; enlisted 22 Dec 1912 aged 18; served: Mediterranean, 1914-15, France 1915-16, 17-19, Salonika, 1916. Lance/Sgt; conduct exemplary, 1914 Star. Married Minnie Cousins, 1923, daughter, Peggy. In 1939 he and his family had moved next door to 3 Manworthy Road, by which time he was a watchman at a tobacco factory, probably W.D. & H.O. Wills. He died in 1955.)

**Wilfred Cook**, 6<sup>th</sup> Glos. Battalion. (*qv.* 21.5.1915)

**(Felix Ivor) Cecil Davies**, RAMC. (born 1890, son of Blanche, widow, lodging house keeper, 151 Bath Road in 1911; butcher at Thornbury, 1939.)

**Alec Dite**, Grenadier Guards. (perhaps Joseph Alexander Dite, born Bedminster, 1897, son of Walter and Harriett, living at Baptist Street, 1901.)

**James Ferguson**, 4<sup>th</sup> Somersets. (?born Edinburgh, 1892, a potter, son of John and Mary, of 19 Grove Park Road in 1911.)

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<sup>8</sup> Barton Hill History Group, History of John Lysaght Ltd.

<sup>9</sup> Congregational Magazine, Oct/Dec 1914. Author's additional notes in parentheses.



**Henry Goddard**, South Midland R.E. (*qv.12.2.1915*)

**Ernest Gunton**, 4<sup>th</sup> Glos. (born 1895, married Emma Winchester 1914; son Ernest, born 1915, and three daughters Ivy, Emma and Joyce born after the war. Served 4 years, 178 days. Re-joined [Tank Corps] 1922. Address: 2 Langton Road, St Anne's Park.)

**Thomas Hadley**, RNR. (Ordinary Seaman, RNVR Medal Roll, 1919.)

**Joseph Hawkins**, HMS "Argonaut".

**John Hayes**, RAMC. (?John Lewis Hayes, clerk, cotton warehouse, born c1892, son of John Francis and Elizabeth, 46 Winchester Road in 1911.)

**Albert Janes**, Royal Marines Light Infantry. (born 19 Nov. 1895; enlisted January 1913, case maker, son of Ernest and Elizabeth, 9 Repton Road; at the Battle of Jutland, HMS "Bellerephon"; in RMLI until discharged after 40 years in 1934; married Clara Mills in 1922 and they had a daughter, Kathleen. He died a hero in WW2. He was a Fire Constable with the City Fire Brigade when he was killed on 3 January 1941 during the Bristol Blitz. He was buried at Whitchurch.

**Herbert Jones**, Northumberland Fusiliers. (Corporal, 1914 Star)

**Gilbert Kirby**, 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion Gloucesters. (chocolate factory worker, born 1894, son of Albert, 73 Upper Sandhurst Road, 1911. He died 9 August 1917 of meningitis and is probably mis-named as "G. Kibby" on the St Luke's plaque.)

**Herbert Langley**, 12<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters, "Bristol's Own".

**Edwin Lambourne**, RAMC. (otherwise William Edward (Ted) Lambourn, see 1916 etc.)

**John Llewelin**, RFA. (brother of William, below)

**William Llewelin**, RFA. (*qv. 24.3.1918*)

**James MacNab**, 19<sup>th</sup> Hussars. (born 1892, son of John & Maggie MacNab, of Rose Bower Cottage, Brislington Hill. Awarded Military Cross, see 1918.)

**Thomas MacNab**, 19<sup>th</sup> Hussars. (brother of the above)

**George MacNab**, 19<sup>th</sup> Hussars. (brother of the above)

**Frank Rogers**, HMS "Argyle". (born 16 Oct. 1890, a labourer, son of William Rogers of 67 Sandholme Road; 5 feet 6½ inches tall, 34½ inch chest, religion C. of E.; could swim. Experienced sailor with pre-war sea service. Able Seaman, 15 September 1914; of 2 Sandringham Road when he married Emma Norman, 23, of 4 Sandgate Road, a filler at Robertson's Jam factory.)

**Fred Panes**, 4<sup>th</sup> Glos. Battalion. (*qv. 17.4.1916*)

**(Henry) George Panes**, 4<sup>th</sup> Glos; brother of the above, born 1892, son of William and Ellen, 73 Wick Road.

**Arthur (Abram) Perrett**, RAMC. (born 1884, boot factory warehouseman, at 51 Pendennis Road, 1911, with his wife Hannah, nee Harvey, and children, Arthur John and Grace; enlisted 1 Nov.1914, discharged 17 Apr.1919; died, aged 49, 1933.)

**Albert Shortman**, "Bristol's Own". (? "A. Shortman, Thomas Street" is listed among volunteers, WDP, 15 Sept.1914; Lance Corporal/2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant.)

**Ernest Simmons**, HMS "Britannia". (born 20 Feb. 1894, son of John and Emma, 13 Hampstead Road, 1911; enlisted Royal Marines Apr. 1912; married Daisy Kingdom, March 1918; 31 Wick Road, discharged to Reserve, 1922.)

**Stephen (Ormonde) Sims**, "Bristol's Own". (Motor mechanic, son of Alfred and Sarah, 20 Kensington Villas, 1911; a Baptist; enlisted 18 Sept. 1914 aged 24 years and 2 months; in France, with RASC, from November 1915.)

**Edward Veal**, RFA. (? born 27 Mar.1892, enlisted RN Sept.1910, served with RN Division, son of Edward, 48 Pendennis Road.)

**George Warren**, 4<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters.

**Frederick Western**, RMA. (? Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst.)

**Bert Brewer**, RAMC.



**William Gordon Chown**, RAMC. (son of Joseph Henry Chown of Churchill Cottages; aged 29, 5 feet 7 inches tall, weight 9 stone; working at a tobacco warehouse when he joined the RGA, 9 Nov. 1914. Promoted to Lance Corporal at the time of his marriage to Janet Gerrish, at the Congregational Church, 31 October 1915, when his address was "the 2<sup>nd</sup> Southern Hospital, Southmead". His record suggests a chequered army career, for he had reverted to Private by 1917. He was discharged 20 May 1919 and in 1939 was a foreman at "a tobacco factory", probably Wills, living with Janet at Bromley Road, Bristol.

**William Chown, 1885-1973**

**William Handcock**, 6<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters. (?perhaps William G.V. Hancock, born 1897, son of Charles and Ellen, of Homelea, Kensington Hill, 1911. A "W. Handcock" is listed among "Athletes' Volunteer Force" when the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Paraded at Broad Quay.<sup>10</sup> )

**Arthur Bertram New**, RNVR. HMS "Colossus". (son of Charles, 19 Churchill Road, born 6 Feb. 1894, a fitter/turner, joined Royal Navy 7 July 1913; 5 feet 3½ inches tall, fair complexion, brown hair and grey eyes. Member of the Congregational Church; could swim. In 1939 he was a maintenance mechanic, a widower, living with his son Fred aged 13 at Argyle Street, St Paul's.)

**Sidney Charles New**, 6<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters. (brother of above; see 1915)

**Bertram Norman**, Bristol's Own. (Bertram Albert Kingston Norman, engineering clerk, born Pontypridd, 1890, son of Arthur, a steam crane driver, and Edith of 19 Repton Road. Captain, Royal Engineers. Played Cricket for Brislington CC. He died of small pox in India in 1923 aged 32: "*NORMAN. Jan. 20, at Bangalore, Captain Bertram Albert Kingston, late RE, dearly loved son of Arthur and Edith of 13 Jubilee Road, Knowle. Deeply mourned by father, mother, sisters and brothers.*"<sup>11</sup>

**H (arry?) Solway**, 6<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters.



***The Grove Institute FC 1912-13 with Rev Ignatius Jones, Pastor of the Congregational Church and Mrs Jones. Were some of these among "our young men at the war"?***

Other Brislington men who enlisted in 1914:

**28<sup>th</sup> August, George Holmes**, a clerk, born Brislington, son of George, a railway man, and Frances, of 120 Winchester Road (1911); enlisted Yeovil aged 19 years and 33 days, Transferred to the Royal Flying Corps, 1917; subsequently a Corporal in the RAF.

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<sup>10</sup> WDP 26.1.1915

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. 31.1.1923

**31<sup>st</sup> August, Frederick Bishop**, a clerk, son of Alfred and Hester, joined the SLI at Taunton, aged 23 years and 11 months; 5 feet 9 inches tall, weight 131 lbs. Served throughout the war; a Sergeant in the Royal Irish Regiment when transferred to the Reserve at Cork, 30 March 1919. He returned home to Gordon Villa, Bellevue, Brislington.

**1<sup>st</sup> September, Leonard George Gladstone Haskett**, aged 21, enlisted in the RASC; of 30 Winchester Road, a Sapper, Royal Engineers when he married Winifred Mabel Stone, 23, of "Trevor-dene", 10 Grove Park, 17 February 1917. He served throughout the war; "Acting Sergeant" when discharged due to "sickness", 18 February 1919.

**4<sup>th</sup> September, John Heamon**, born Brislington, 1889, a police constable, at City Road, Bristol when he enlisted in the Grenadier Guards aged 25 years, 182 days; 6 feet tall, 140 lbs, C. of E. Was "at the front", 21 April 1917. Promoted Sergeant 19 May 1918. Granted 2 weeks leave, 28 Jan. 1919; in the field hospital with "sickness", possibly 'flu, 18 Feb. 1919; demobbed in 1919. In 1939 he was the Superintendent at Redland Police Station.

**26<sup>th</sup> October, Thomas Carpenter**, born Brislington 17 April 1880, a carpenter by trade as well as by name. He migrated to Port Elizabeth, South Africa, where he married Agnes in 1905, and their son Henry was born, 1907. The couple had returned home by 1914 and Thomas enlisted in Royal Flying Corps. Agnes gave birth to their second son, Maurice Wilfred David Thomas Carpenter, baptised at St Luke's 14 March 1915. Thomas was promoted Flight Sergeant by 1 March 1916 and was Chief Technician, RAF, in April 1918. He was discharged 9 April 1920 to his home address, 23 Bellevue Road, Brislington. Agnes died in Bristol in 1926 aged 48. Thomas re-enlisted in the RAF on 23 October 1938, after Munich.

**8<sup>th</sup> December, Ernest Montague Treharne**, born 1892, a labourer, 5 feet 9 inches tall, son of Edward of Bridport, Dorset. He was of 7 Edward Road, Brislington when he joined the 6<sup>th</sup> Cyclists Corps (Royal Sussex). He injured his right foot in a cycling accident (contusion, metatarsus phalangeal joint) and was discharged, medically unfit, 21 March 1915, with a "good character".

Brislington was home to a number of other regulars and reservists who found themselves in the firing line in 1914.

**Garnet Henry Jefferis**, a quarryman, born Brislington, 20 September, 1881, son of Henry, enlisted in the Royal Navy in 1900; he left by purchase, but re-joined on 24 February 1910. His R.N. record shows that from 17 September 1914 he was with the Collingwood Brigade of the Royal Naval Division, an infantry unit made up from surplus RN and Royal Marines Reserves and volunteers not needed for sea service. He took part in the Siege of Antwerp, which had been identified as a likely port for a German invasion of the south of England, an action which enabled the main British and French forces to move closer to the coast in the last days of "the Race to the Sea". Jefferis was interned in Holland (then neutral) from that

time until December 1917. He received the 1914 Star, and was discharged from the Navy 25 February. 1919. After the war he lived at Thornbury.

Others in the RN Division who may also have taken part in the above engagement were **James Pantlin**, a taxi driver, of 59 Churchill Road, born 9 Feb. 1883, who had been in the Royal Navy since 28 April 1913. He was 5 feet 7 inches tall, C of E, could swim and was a bandsman. He married Ethel Pegler in 1909. He died in Bristol in 1921.

**William Samuel Edmondson**, a tram conductor, born 24 Sept. 1889, next of kin, his mother Mary, of "Budleigh", 151 Bloomfield Road; joined the Royal Navy, 6 September 1909, 5 feet 5 inches tall, brown hair, blue eyes. In 1939 he was a bus driver, living with his wife Edith at 167 Winchester Road.

A former Merchant Navy officer, **Charles Edwin Palmer**, born 17 July 1877, served for 1 year 79 days as a soldier in the London Regiment as a young man and afterwards in the RN Division. (see 1919.)

**Samuel Mark Pearce**, born 26 April 1888, an oil cake labourer, joined the Royal Navy on 28 August 1911. He was 5 feet 5½ inches tall, with brown hair and blue eyes. His next of kin was his mother, Mrs Elizabeth Pearce, a widow, of 8 Churchill Road.<sup>12</sup>

**Thomas Frederick Seward**, born 1880, joined the Royal Navy in 1906 and served with the "Drake" Battalion, having previously been a soldier with the Gloucesters. In 1911, he lived at Totterdown with his sister Alice; he married Ada Mitchell, 1912. They were of 44 Manworthy Road, Brislington when their daughter Ada Isabella was born: christened at St Luke's, 1915. Promoted Chief Petty Officer in October 1915, he served at Madras, India, and in France. In 1939 he lived with his wife and Mitchell in-laws at Long Ashton. A soldier, Frederick J. Tubb of the ASC and his wife Ada, nee Parsons, were also resident at 44 Manworthy Road when their daughter Ida was christened at St Luke's in 1916.

**Henry Davis** born 14 September 1882, having previously served in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Gloucesters, joined the Royal Navy on 25 March 1912. He was 5 feet 4½ inches tall, with a fair complexion, light brown hair and blue eyes. He could swim and was a member of the C of E. His wife Rosina lived at 23 Churchill Road.

**David Stephen Morris** was another ex-Navy man who re-enrolled in August 1914. He lived at 22 Harrow Road; an un-named aunt of Mina Road, Bristol was his next of kin.

Possibly the most remarkable of the RN Division's Brislington contingent was an old salt, **Edmund Martin Joseph Duggan**, an Irishman, born at County Cork, who lived at 101 Sandholme Road. For his story, and that of an old soldier, **Joseph Benedict Cox**, who also re-enlisted in 1914, see "Survivors".

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<sup>12</sup> Not to be confused with Elizabeth Pearce the fundraiser.

**Anthony Payne**, RN, of 11 Bellevue Terrace was recalled to sea service and joined HMS “Hightower” on the outbreak of war.<sup>13</sup> Born in 1890, he was a coalminer when he enlisted at Devonport in April 1909, for five years with seven in the Reserve. He was 5 feet 3¼ inches tall, with a 35 inch chest, brown hair and eyes, a dark complexion and a scar on his forehead. He was tattooed with “Hands across the sea” on his left forearm and “a woman’s head” on his right. He married Elizabeth Bowen at St George, 1917. He was demobbed on 31 December 1918 with a gratuity of £5.

**Thomas Frederick Friend**, a groom/gardener, born in Brislington, 1893, enlisted in the army in 1912. He served with the BEF in France and was awarded the 1914 Star, War Medal and Victory Medal. He married Esther Florence Barrington at Lyncomb, Bath in 1920; he was demobbed 3 June 1921 to 4 Railway Place, Bath.

**Frederick Andrews** enlisted in 1910. He served in France with the Royal Field Artillery throughout the war and was awarded the 1914 Star, War Medal and Victory Medal, with conduct “exemplary”. He was of 27 Langton Park in October 1918 when he married Annie Elizabeth Brewer, 27, of 3 Grove Road. He was discharged in 1922 with the rank of Corporal. In 1939 he and Annie lived at St George with their three children.

Despite the initial enthusiasm, many people were rightly concerned that the fervour would not last and voiced their fears in the press. One man urged that recruits should be taken from prisons and reformatories and another said (ominously) that married men currently not being accepted as recruits should roll up their sleeves and start practising trench digging for which they would be needed in future. An “H.C.B” of Brislington wrote on 8 September 1914:

*“We hear from all sides that our country is in danger; why then do not the Government call up the ex-Territorials and Naval Volunteers who have served their time? Surely those with three or four years’ experience would not require half as much training and would be better than raw volunteers. There are in this City thousands of such men who have not offered their services and I feel sure that if called upon would reply “Aye”. I believe 9 out of 10 would answer the call.”*

Even before the fateful declaration of war, Mr Joseph Cooke-Hurle of Brislington Hill, anticipating general alarm, had written to the Western Daily Press, 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1914, appealing against the hoarding of provisions:

*“Let us all in the time of stress think not only of ourselves but of our neighbours too. As Sheriff of Somerset, I appeal to Somerset householders not to give larger orders of flour and groceries than they usually do.”*

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<sup>13</sup> WDP 14.9.1914

*“If many persons in a foolish panic were to create an artificial demand by storing unusual amounts of provisions they would cause prices to rise to such an extent that would bear very hardly on their poorer neighbours.”*

This same Captain Cooke-Hurle of the West Somerset Yeomanry was put in charge of Territorial Recruiting for the South West districts. He stated that more than a thousand recruits were needed for the Somerset Light Infantry and he invited those wishing to travel to enlist at Taunton to apply to him personally for a travel voucher.<sup>14</sup> He expressed satisfaction at a “capital response” but “all places are not doing so well”. On 2 September 1914 in another letter to the newspaper he told of

*“My married daughter who travelled five days ago from Switzerland through France ....”*

.....(it must have been an alarming journey..... )

*“..... writes to me that ‘when we got to England we were horrified at the number of men we saw everywhere. In France you only see old men and boys: the women are doing men’s work everywhere.’”<sup>15</sup>*

Captain Cooke-Hurle, and his daughter, Mary Kitson, were apparently unaware that the French army was made up of conscripted men, unlike Britain’s small regular force, which required augmentation from volunteers, who, however willing, would need training before going into combat. Other “horrified” women elsewhere were busy handing out white feathers to men not in uniform, one of the more repulsive images of the war. The Worcester News, 23<sup>rd</sup> September commented:

*“Not all young men to be seen in the streets merit the stigma of the white feather, about which we have heard so much.....in future those who have volunteered, but have been refused, will be able to wear a gilt ‘V’, the emblem which shows that they did answer the call, but had not the satisfaction of giving the service they had hoped.”*

..... which rather spoiled the “fun” for the ghastly harridans.

John Lysaghts’ were not the only local firm to lose their workforce owing to the call to arms. About 200 employees of Bristol Tramways were Reserves or Territorials. With optimistic wishful thinking the Company was “holding open the positions of these men until their return.”<sup>16</sup>

Within days of the outbreak of war, appeals were made from the pulpits of all the churches and chapels for funds and work in kind to provide shirts, socks and nightshirts for wounded soldiers. In Brislington, “local ladies” were mobilised and a first meeting was held on 11<sup>th</sup> August. Those present were Mrs Harman, the vicar’s wife, Mrs I. Jones, the Minister’s wife,

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<sup>14</sup> WDP 18.9.1914

<sup>15</sup> ibid 2.9.1914

<sup>16</sup> Bath Chron, 17.8.1914

Mrs Sherwell, Mrs Holland, Mrs Poole, Mrs Bonville Fox, (nee Annie Danger, once of Gotley Lodge, widow of Dr Bonville Fox of Brislington's famous lunatic asylum), Miss Wise and Mrs Norris. They volunteered to "cut out" materials which were then passed to other women and girls further down the chain to make up into garments. Between 16<sup>th</sup> August and 31<sup>st</sup> October 266 shirts and 70 night shirts had been sewn, 335 pairs of socks knitted as well as scarves, balaclava helmets and bed socks. The Derry Laundry and the nuns of Arno's Vale Convent assisted this gargantuan effort with washing and ironing. The items were distributed among various regiments including the Somerset Light Infantry in which eighteen men from the village were serving. Mrs Martin Gibbs wrote to Mrs Fox on behalf of the Hussars serving at the front thanking all concerned for their valuable time, not to say considerable cost involved in this labour of love. Brislington people had contributed £118.10s.2½d of which £86. 5s.9½d had been expended leaving a balance of £32.4s.5d.<sup>17</sup> The knitting and sewing continued throughout the war and thanks for these marvellous efforts appear regularly in the Parish Magazines of the period.

Others were keen to do their bit in a variety of other ways. In October, Mrs. Ellen Baker of Durdham Down suggested that every housewife when making up a batch of Christmas puddings should make one extra to be boiled in a cloth and forwarded to the troops abroad.<sup>18</sup> In November, Fred Sanders of Woodstock, Kensington Hill collected £5.15s 0d "mostly in coppers" in aid of the Dogs' Corps and Elizabeth Pearce raised £105 for the Belgian Relief Fund through the sale of flowers at various markets.

This was only the start: Mrs. Elizabeth Pearce, nee Atkinson of 1 King's Road, Brislington who ran the family fish stall in Bristol market jointly with her husband William would become Brislington's (and perhaps the whole of Bristol's) most prolific single fund-raiser, whether for comforts for the troops, wounded soldiers, hospitals or displaced Belgians.

A local businessman, Mr Friedrich Bartelt, *"offered his large warehouses at Brislington to the Government for use either as a hospital or barracks and to provide at his own cost 500-600 beds in case of need."* He also offered a house to accommodate Belgian refugees. Mr Bartelt's position could have been very awkward indeed for he was *"German by birth but became naturalised many years ago and has resided in Somerset for many years. He has held the position of a County Magistrate and sympathises very deeply with the country of his adoption."*<sup>19</sup>

Prussian-born Friedrich Bartelt migrated to the north east of England as a young man in the 1870s. In 1878 he married Roseanna Hodgeson at Durham and they had a daughter Amy Isabel Lannia the following year. In 1881 he became a naturalised British Subject. In 1887, their son, Fritz, was born, by which time the Bartelts had moved to Corston Lodge near Bath. Mr Bartelt, an industrial chemist and engineer, set up the Polysulphin Company, known

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<sup>17</sup> Brislington Congregational Mag, Dec 1914.

<sup>18</sup> WDP 9.10.1914

<sup>19</sup> ibid 13.8.1914



locally as “the Old Soap Works”, on the Avon Weir at Keynsham, which manufactured chemicals as well as soap but also held patents for vacuum cleaners, washing, drying and ironing machines.



Mr Bartelt was also an inventor. His pram-like contraption, “The Bartelt Ornithopter”, which had beating wings, was exhibited at the Olympic Aero Show in 1911. It seems unlikely it ever got off the ground is unknown.



On census night 1901 Friedrich entertained three international visitors, born variously in Ceylon, Canada, and Germany! The young German of the trio was twenty three year old Ivo Adolf Peters who was soon to become daughter Amy’s fiancé: they were married at Corston in 1902 amid great rejoicing in the village. The Bartelts were very popular locally, and newspapers report many “open days” and “garden fetes” to which the whole of Corston seems to have been invited. The coronations of Edward VII and George V were likewise celebrated in lavish, patriotic style.

***Mr & Mrs Bartelt, 1894***

Corston Lodge, with its 22 rooms and generous grounds was a considerable property where a large staff kept things ticking over: a gardener, cook/housekeeper, kitchen maid, lady’s maid, parlour maid, house maid, handyman, and even a nurse, present a glimpse of life within a well-to-do household in the balmy days of the extended “Edwardian summer” which ended abruptly in August 1914.

Young Fritz Bartelt, an all-round sportsman, represented Bath College at rugby, cricket and the rowing fours. After Bristol University, he was commissioned in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the SLI but by 1911 was in Reserve. Newly married to Gertrude Isgar, he and his bride set up home at Hill House, Corston, near to his sister Amy and brother-in-law Ivo Peters who lived at Corston Cottage with their young daughters Amy junior, Rosalie, Betty, Louise and Pansy.

(Amy and Ivo's only son Ivo, junior, who was born in 1915, would become well known as a competitive rally driver but even more so for his photographs of the Somerset & Dorset Railway. He served in the Royal Observer Corps in the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War.) At the census of 1911 Ivo Peters had recorded his wife and their daughters (plus their nursery nurse, Ottolie Selchon) as "German subjects" which may have caused more than raised eyebrows had not Ivo (rather fortuitously) become naturalised British in 1913. Nevertheless the outbreak of war must have been devastating for the Bartelts and the Peters families and not least because Fritz was immediately recalled to his regiment.

Belgian refugees began arriving in Bristol at the end of 1914. The local papers hoped that every effort would be made to welcome them and to show appreciation for their bravery.<sup>20</sup> Brislington rose to the occasion. A committee was formed with the Rev A.C. Harman of St Luke's in the chair, the Rev Ignatius Jones, pastor of the Congregational Church as his deputy and Mr J.K. Hemmens as Hon. Secretary. Mr George Lewis Poole, of Kensington House, the Hon. Treasurer, reported that funds were coming in well.<sup>21</sup> By 18<sup>th</sup> November Mr Bartelt's offer of 2 Kensington Place had been accepted, adapted and furnished to accommodate fourteen Belgians, Monsieur and Madame Le Jeune and family and Monsieur and Mme. Boone. Through generous public support another property, "Glendale" at Kensington Hill was rented and a Mme. Kockerel and her large family of ten persons arrived from Antwerp on 12<sup>th</sup> December.<sup>22</sup> They were welcomed by the committee and a parade of Boy Scouts. Ivor Poole, the scoutmaster, son of George, rallied the crowd of interested well-wishers with the cry "*Vivent les Belges!*" which was well meant but must have caused considerable bemusement among the visitors. The arrivals were stated to be delighted with their rooms and thoroughly appreciated all that was being done on their behalf.<sup>23</sup>

### Those we lost, 1914

**26<sup>th</sup> August, France.** Though **Lance Corporal Hubert Charles BISHOP, 1888-1914**, a regular soldier, was our first fatality it is unlikely he ever set foot in Brislington. Born near Wincanton, he grew up in Shepton Mallet with his parents Alfred and Ellen and several siblings. On 5 September 1904, at least a year younger than his professed age, "17 years 5 months", he took the King's shilling and enlisted in the SLI at Taunton. At the end of his six year term he signed on for further service and by 1911, then Lance Corporal, was in India with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion preparing to leave for "peacekeeping activities" at Tienstin, China during the Nationalist uprising which led to the overthrow of the Qing dynasty.

Back in Britain by 1914, he married Beatrice May Lansdown shortly before departing for France with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion as part of the British Expeditionary Force. He was killed in action on 26<sup>th</sup> August at the Battle of Mons. He has no known grave and is commemorated

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<sup>20</sup> Bristol Times & Mirror, 14.11.1914

<sup>21</sup> WDP 20.11.1914

<sup>22</sup> Brislington Congregational Church Magazine, Feb. 1916

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, Dec. 1914.

on the Memorial at La-Ferte-sous-Jourarre, Seine et Marne, one of 3,740 officers and men who died at Mons, Le Cateau, the Marne and the Aisne. He is remembered on the War Memorial at Wells. He was survived by his widow of Haybridge, Wells and his parents Alfred and Helen (*sic*) Bishop of 14 Trelawney Road, Brislington.



**18<sup>th</sup> September, France. Private Frederick ROGERS, c1886-1914**, a son of William and Fanny, of 67 Sandholme Road was an eighteen year old labourer at Terrell’s Rope Works, when he signed on for short service in the SLI. In 1910, his adventure done, he came back to work at Terrell’s. He married Alice Maud Wagland and the couple settled at 6 Harrow Road with their two daughters, Lilian and Hilda. At the outbreak of war Fred was recalled to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, South Wales Borderers and embarked to France as part of the British Expeditionary Force. The action at the Battle of the Marne on the day of his death is described in the Regimental Diary:



*“Friday, 18 September. At dawn the firing starts again and this time we have to stay in our trenches the whole day long. I wonder how many thousands of shrapnel bullets must have been fired at us during the last 24 hours. It is a wearing, trying job and gets on one’s nerves fearfully. We manage at daybreak to send out a search party to bring in any wounded that may be out in front and we find some will have been three days wounded, with no water, no food and no shelter. When*

*found, a large number say they are not half as bad as someone else close to them and will we look at the others first. Magnificent spirit and people who say England is going to the dogs and the men of England at the present day are inferior to those of the past do not know what they are talking about.*

*“The rain comes down at about 9 a.m. and falls all day long in sheets. All the trenches are full of water. No draining any good. A cold wind on top of the hill does not improve matters. But again everyone tries to be as cheery as possible and so night comes on. The battle stops for a bit and again we have some rest. But little sleep, it is too cold really for that. At dawn firing starts again. How long can it go on, I wonder, and how long can one’s nerves stand it? Of course one is safe enough as far as things go in trenches with cover etc., but it is the noise and the shock that tires one. A whistle and a bang, and the noise that sounds like a shower of hail as the shrapnel comes through the branches of the trees and all is over for a minute and then it starts again.*”

*“Saturday September 19. We still sit in our trenches being heavily shelled by enfilade fire from enemy’s guns. Every now and then a man is knocked out and nothing to shoot at. One does not mind losing men when one is doing something but to sit still and be knocked over by one without seeing a soul is trying. At last the CO went to see the General. We were allowed to withdraw to the ridge on the left of the Gloucesters. Thank God. Total casualties: killed 35, wounded 131. One blessing is that the 68 missing have come back. They were lost and became attached to the Connaughts.”*

Fred Rogers is one of the 35 unnamed who were killed in action. He has no known grave and like Hubert Bishop is commemorated at La Ferte-sous-Jouarre. He is not remembered on any of the Brislington memorial plaques and he is known only from the WDP, 20 September 1916, when the death of his elder brother Albert (qv 9.8.1916) was reported.

**23<sup>rd</sup> September, France.** In 1901, **Private Frank LUCAS, 1894-1914**, was a seven-year-old scholar at St Anne’s Park School who lived at 1 Edward Road with his parents, Thomas, a weighing machine maker, mother Rosa, and brothers Walter, 23, and Albert, 14, and a lodger, Frances Wookey, who was still with them ten years later. When war broke out, Frank, by trade a plumber, was already serving in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the Worcestershire Regiment, part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division. The battalion crossed the Channel with the BEF and men and equipment were swiftly in position as planned when they encountered the enemy at Mons. The Worcester News, 21<sup>st</sup> September, reported in rat-a-tat fashion as if received down the telegraph wire:

*“The Second Battalion: usual bombardment continued. C. Company, more casualties from shell fire. Reinforcements arrive, 93 men from Third Battalion, Captain R H Pepys died of wounds. Battalion relieved by Coldstream Guards and marched back to Dhuize to refit; out of range of enemy guns for the first time since August 22.”*

Frank was wounded in this action and conveyed to Bois-Guillaume, a private house, converted into a make-shift hospital, where he died on 23<sup>rd</sup> September. He is buried in Grave I.A.17 at the Guillaume Communal Cemetery, Rouen, and named in De Ruvigny’s “Roll of Honour”. He is remembered at St Anne’s Church and at St Anne’s School. (F. Lucas)

**5<sup>th</sup> December, at Home. Rifleman Archibald (Archie) Bishop ANNABLE, 1885-1914**, another “regular”, was born at Aston, Birmingham, one of three children, of Thomas Henry and Emma Annable, who were in the licensing trade. Archie enlisted in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, the Rifle Brigade in 1908 and served at Rawalpindi. He went with the Brigade to France and is likely to have been on active service with the BEF at Mons. His death, 5<sup>th</sup> December, aged 29, was from “illness”, possibly contracted during his previous service in India or from wounds. He was buried “at home” at the Portsdown Military Cemetery, Christchurch, Hampshire. Thomas and Emma lived at 69 Churchill Road following their retirement. Archie is remembered on the War Memorial at St Anne’s, (A.B. Annable).

**18<sup>th</sup> December, at Home. Driver DAVID HAMER, 1884-1914**, was born at Four Crosses, Shropshire as David Perkins, but was known by his stepfather’s name, Hamer. He had enlisted in the Royal Field Artillery by December 1904, when he married Fanny Roper, the daughter of a railway signalman, at Emmanuel Church, St Philip’s, Bristol. Fanny, who was born in Rutland, had previously worked as a kitchen maid at the famous Uppingham School. Their three children were born during a period when David was in Reserve, and they journeyed back and forth between St Philip’s and Ferndale, Glamorgan, where latterly, David worked at a colliery. He was recalled to the Colours at the outbreak of war, and was presumably involved in the retreat from Mons. He died of injury or illness and was brought back to Ferndale where he was buried in the local cemetery, in Grave C.A1. According to the CWGC record, Fanny lived at “13 Leicester Walk, St Anne’s” but by 1939 she had moved to Hengrove with her youngest daughter, Ethel Taylor. She died in Bristol in 1957 aged 73.

The reality of the continental war had arrived on Brislington’s doorstep by 30<sup>th</sup> August when Private H. Hunter of the Army Service Corps was interred at Arno’s Vale; between then and the end of 1914 twelve service personnel from all parts of the British Isles had been buried at the Cemetery. Three were local men, Royal Navy Bandsman William Nevin (HMS “Vivid”) of Eastville, and two soldiers from the Gloucestershire Regiment, Corporal Albert Bowden of Southville and Private Edward Dudley, born in Bristol, though of Jersey. Far from home was RAMC Driver, Sydney Jacka from New South Wales, who died on 6<sup>th</sup> November.

Wounded Belgian soldiers who died in Bristol hospitals were buried with military honours at the adjacent Roman Catholic cemetery, Holy Souls, where they are commemorated on a frieze.

“Volunteer” Maurice Willems, aged sixteen, died 2<sup>nd</sup> November, was “extremely fine and brave”. The coffin of Soldaat Desire Jaumotte, who died 3<sup>rd</sup> November at Southmead was “draped in the Union Jack and Belgian Flags and the Last Post was sounded”. Soldaat Desire Alphonse Leimbach and Majoor Adolphe Leo Saltpetier both died 7<sup>th</sup> November. The latter’s funeral was attended by many dignitaries and he lies beneath the Chapel. Soldaat Jean Joseph Berthels, 24, a cyclist of the Belgian army died on 18<sup>th</sup> November.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Funerals reported WDP, 7./10./12./16./23.11.1914. Leimbach misspelled Linbach.

During the next four years military funerals would become a routine sight. Servicemen from all parts of the British Isles and the Empire who succumbed from their wounds in Bristol and were buried at either of the two cemeteries can be found listed on the website of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Among other War graves at Holy Souls, is that of Sister E.M. O’Gorman, of the Territorial Nursing Service who died on 20<sup>th</sup> November. Eileen Mary O’Gorman, of Carrickbeg, County Waterford, a former matron of Ilkeston Hospital, Derbyshire joined up at the outbreak of war, prepared to do her bit in any capacity, perhaps with visions of “adventure”, going abroad to “the front”. Sadly she died suddenly in Bristol, where there was “great shock and distress at her unexpected death”, though one cannot dismiss the thought that the event presented a recruiting opportunity. After Requiem Mass at the Pro-Cathedral in Clifton, the coffin with eighteen pallbearers was conveyed on a gun carriage to Holy Souls in a procession headed by the band of the 6<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters, followed by the priest, Father Thomas, Mr Edward O’Gorman, the nurse’s father, who had come over from Ireland and Miss Baily, the matron of Southmead Hospital. Col. Paul Bush, Commanding Officer of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Southern Division General Hospitals was accompanied by fifty nurses as well as public figures, medical, military and civilian. The Last Post was sounded at the graveside.<sup>25</sup> . Her gravestone bears the legend “May God Have Mercy on her Soul”.

From early December, in line with Bristol, Brislington’s pubs were to be closed at 9 p.m. every evening,<sup>26</sup> and at 12 noon each day, throughout the war, the church bell at St Luke’s was rung for five minutes for those at home to remember and pray and for the men away at the war.<sup>27</sup>

### **1915. Reinforcements: “What did you do in the War, Daddy?”**

By the spring of 1915, 100,000 men from all over the British Isles had volunteered, though these were not nearly enough to fight the war and fill the gaps caused by casualties. Bristol was one of the cities designated to treat the wounded brought home from the battlefields. In April, the Chairman of the Bristol Branch of the Red Cross reported that to date 6,247 sick and wounded had been received in the city and including those transferred to subsidiary hospitals, no fewer than 11,046 injured soldiers had been treated.<sup>28</sup> Originally the men were shared around city hospitals but as the casualties mounted, first from the Western Front and then the Dardanelles, general hospitals were unable to cope and a specialised hospital became a necessity. In a few hectic months Bristol’s Lunatic Asylum (now Glenside Hospital) at Stapleton was converted to the Beaufort War Hospital to cater for about 1,500 military patients.

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<sup>25</sup> The Territorial Force Nursing Service was established in 1909 as a sister organisation to supplement Queen Alexandra’s Imperial Nursing Service.

<sup>26</sup> HBM 5.12.1914

<sup>27</sup> Brislington Bugle, no. 12. Summer 1989

<sup>28</sup> WDP 30.4.1915

Day rooms, night wards, even the “maximum restraint” cells were transformed into medical and surgical units. Other sites were converted into operating theatres, radiography units and dispensaries. Despite efforts to make the wards less forbidding, regimented lines of metal beds were the norm and the cast iron bars on the windows (to prevent the former inmates escaping) remained. The staff were awarded military rank - the Superintendent, Dr R.J. Blachford became Lieutenant-Colonel, RAMC. *The female staff, in order of seniority, comprised the* matron, ward sisters (army nurses of Queen Alexandra’s Imperial Nursing Service Reserve), Red Cross nurses, and finally the nursing assistants, who were formerly asylum wardresses. *Stanley Spencer*, the artist, who spent 16 months at Beaufort from 1915 as an RAMC orderly found the women intimidating.<sup>29</sup>

The wounded were initially treated on the battlefield by regimental doctors and then brought “home” – by ship to Avonmouth – thence to Temple Meads by train, usually under cover of darkness, allegedly to maintain morale amongst the general population: some who came to welcome the ‘returning heroes’ were repulsed by the reality of mangled shadows.

One of the arrivals, surprisingly upbeat, said

*“We didn’t expect any fuss to be made of us at that hour of the morning, so you can imagine our glad surprise to see a bright array of Red Cross sisters and smart looking Ambulance Corps.....While some served the good things, others gave us postcards — wrote them and arranged to post them for us — and one dear, thoughtful, motherly lady gave us, luxury of luxuries! — a nice pocket handkerchief each. And then there were the cigarettes..... The splendid handling of the large number of stretcher cases was a sight good to see.”*

Red Cross volunteers who assisted with these vital operations include the following Brislington people:

**Delivering wounded, embarking and disembarking hospital ships:** Alfred Sheppard, 135 Winchester Road, Section Leader, (from 8 Dec. 1914).

**Assisting transport of the wounded:** Alfred Anderson, 50 Manworthy Road, a married man with a family, a fitter at the tramway, (1912-1919)

Henry Edwards, 82 Winchester Road, later a soldier, (1916-1919)

William Clarke, 19 Conway Road; orderly, (1912-1919)

Charles Coles, 63 Wick Road; orderly, (1912-1919)

William Graham, 69 Wick Road, a married man with a family, a tramway Inspector; orderly, (1912-1919)

Sidney Harker, 41 Sandgate Road; orderly, (1918-1919)

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<sup>29</sup> Spencer’s paintings depicting wounded arriving at Beaufort can be seen at the Sandham Memorial Chapel (NT).

Charles Nash, 20 Sandholme Road; orderly, (1914-1919)

John Simmons, 13 Hampstead Road; orderly, (1912-1919)

Henry Williams, 14 Salisbury Road, St Anne's; orderly, (1914-1919)

**Detraining at Temple Meads and disembarkation of the wounded:** Samuel Burns, 29 Grove Park Road, married with family, wholesale druggist; Private, Served from 2.9.1915;

William John Cox, 18 Sandgate Road, married, gasworks fireman, (1915-1919)

William George Hallett, 24 Grove Park Road, married, County Court Bailiff; Private, (1915-1919)

Henry Poole, 8 Chatsworth Road; Private, served to August 1915. (Joined army?)

Thomas Henry Sevier, 40 Grove Park Avenue; Private, August 1915 - ?

Henry William Foan, "Doubleton", Wick Road, St Anne's Park, engineer's fitter; from November 1914.

**Assisting sick and wounded at Bristol:** Herbert John Lewis, "Ivydene", 10 Kensington Park Road, married, with one son, railway clerk; Private, November, 1915-1919. No. 1 detachment, Red Cross Society.

**Motor Launch Engineer, Commission, Mesopotamia:** Henry Horam Russett, born c1888, of 95 Hampstead Road. At Basra, 11.6.1917 – 13.6.1918 as a Red Cross Volunteer and also served with New Zealand Forces. (He was a son of Henry & Emily of 116 Bath Road.)

**Enlisted:** John Philip Lenton, 598 Kensington Hill; Private 29.9.1914; Corporal 1.4.1915. (Joined RAMC 1 December 1915)

**Nurses/Voluntary Aid Detachment:** Emily Matilda Bishop, 14 Trelawney Road. Enlisted aged 32, served 25.9.1916-24.4.1919, South General Hospital, Bristol, and War Hospital, Bath.

Florence E. Carter, "Rosemont", 3 Harrow Road; trainee nurse: 28.8.1914-15.7.1915.

Mabel Carwardine, of "The Hollies", aged 34. Nursing member, June 1915-January 1917. Chauffeuse, 29.6.1916 - 1.1.1917.

Mildred Mary Carwardine, born c1885, sister of the above, daughters of Joseph, a candle manufacturer and his wife Mary. Nurse, November 1914-November 1917, served Military Hospital, Brunswick Square and Red Cross Hospital, Almondsbury.

Violet Cooke-Hurle, aged 23, Brislington Hill House, daughter of Joseph; Nurse/VAD, 15.7.1915-22.3.1919. Red Cross Hospital, Leigh Woods; Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley; General Hospital, Oxford.



Annie M. Green, Grove Park Avenue, 15.2.1916-1.9.1917.

Mrs Emily Hall, 23 Edward Road, served 1.4.1912-1919, Housing Sister: Rest Station; Bristol General; Beaufort Hospital; Queen Victoria Hospital; Orderly at WAAC Medical Board; Bruce Cole Hospital; Detachment, Rest Station, Worle.

Ellen Mary Harris, (later Mrs Evans), 19 Whitby Road, New Brislington. Nurse, 3.8.1917-8.4.1919: Weston General Hospital; Napsbury, St Albans; HM Coastguard Station Mothercombe, Plymouth. Rank JW VAD. Pay £20 p.a. Retired 12.12.1921.

### ***“The Rape of Belgium”***

In February 1915, another Belgian family was accommodated at “Glendale”, 3 Kensington Hill. They came from Dinant where the events of the previous year, 21<sup>st</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> August, contributed to the infamous “Rape of Belgium”. The father of the family, Monsieur Victor Thonon told the Western Daily Press that though they had been warned the Germans were coming they were told that if they kept quiet all would be well, as the invaders were expected to pass by south of the town. However *“the Germans came. And it seemed they went mad,”* he said, *“thrusting their rifles through the windows, firing blindly, so that many people were killed.”*

The first invaders encountered small arms fire which they believed came from Belgian civilians, though such was the chaos that it may have been an example of what is now known by the oxymoron “friendly fire”, that is, the Germans firing on themselves. Whatever the truth of the matter, the enemy sustained nineteen dead and 117 wounded. In retaliation they killed seventeen Belgians and burnt down fifteen or more houses. They returned the following day, believing the town to be full of *francs-tireurs*, French irregulars, and massacred more than 600 unarmed citizens.

M. Thonon was arrested along with other men and taken away, but his wife and children, five girls and a boy, were left behind. Men, women and children were herded into the town square where machine guns opened fire on them. *“Many women became raging maniacs, racing through the town oblivious of their wounds. One still carried her dead baby which had been shot dead in her arms.”* Madame Thonon was among those badly wounded. Her children managed to drag her away and even found a doctor to treat her injuries but he *“had lost his reason and in a fit of madness....opened up her veins and bathed her face in her own blood, saying ‘She will be alright now.’”* Mme. Thonon died shortly afterwards. M. Thonon, who was released by the Germans because he looked so much older than his years, was told of his wife’s terrible end. He managed to get his family together and they came to Flushing, in Holland, and thence to England. He asked to come to Bristol because he knew other Belgian families already in the city. Unfortunately the Thonons left the train at Clifton Down by mistake instead of at Temple Meads where the Brislington welcoming committee waited. Eventually they got to Kensington Hill without further mishap.

Before the war Victor Thonon, a man of middle age, had been a prosperous builder; now he was *“a lonely pathetic figure, a broken man, who looks at least 70 years old. The family cannot speak of their experiences without sobbing hysterically though the signs are they appreciate the comforts offered and are daily less prostrated by grief.”*

Two days after the Dinant massacre, two hundred and forty eight civilians were shot at Louvain, and 10,000 people, the entire population, were expelled from the town. In addition the Germans deliberately fired the University Library, destroying 300,000 medieval books and manuscripts. These events were exploited in full by the Allied propaganda machine and added considerably to the popularity of the war.<sup>30</sup>

Altogether about 600 Belgians came to Bristol to escape the fighting. About 100 refugee babies were born in the city during the war years.

### ***The Evils of Drink***

*“We Congregationalists are strange folk,”* opined Brislington’s pastor, in another context, but may equally apply to his alarm regarding *“the natural foe - greater even than the Germans”*, - alcohol - long perceived as *“the enemy within”* among the working classes. Back in October 1914 Ignatius had called upon mothers in particular to be total abstainers: *“There would be no peace,”* he said *“until the scourge of alcohol was trampled underfoot.”* Ignatius was not alone. Military leaders needed steady hands to fire the guns and likewise sobriety was essential among the munitions workers as they went about their dangerous tasks. In February 1915, Lloyd George, the Prime Minister, though not a teetotaler himself, agreed with Ignatius *“that drink is doing us more damage than all the German submarines put together.”* He underlined that *“We are fighting Germany, Austria and Drink, and as far as I can see the greatest of these three deadly foes is Drink.”* Lloyd George persuaded King George V to support the cause and Buckingham Palace was swift to issue a proclamation that *“no wines, spirits or beer will be consumed in any of His Majesty’s houses after today, Tuesday April 6<sup>th</sup>, 1915.”* Delighted temperance campaigners trumpeted *“follow the King’s lead!”* and Ignatius, pleased to comply *“preached a powerful sermon to a large congregation and asked [them] to follow the example of their King and abstain from intoxicants for the duration of the war. He invited those present to stand if agreeable. The congregation rose as one man.”*<sup>31</sup>

Rev Ignatius Jones was born in October 1870 in Denbighshire, the son of John Jones, a small farmer with two acres of land, and his second wife Diana. In 1871 he is found at Tanybryn with his parents, twin brother and sister, aged two, and Hugh, his half-brother, 13, a farm servant. His father and both twins died before Ignatius was ten years old. Despite considerable financial strain on his remaining family, Ignatius studied for the ministry at the Memorial College, Brecon and after ordination was sent to Drybrook in the Forest of Dean.

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<sup>30</sup> WDP 20.2.1915

<sup>31</sup> WDP 27.4.1915

He married Mary Christina Francis at Cardiff in 1898. The couple spent several years at Hope Mansell on the northern edge of the Dean where their two sons, Idris and Gareth, were born. Ignatius, formally welcomed as Brislington's pastor in 1902, remained in the village with his family until 1918. A daughter, Gwenyth Aylwin, was born in 1908. Rev Jones was very much involved with the war effort, with local charitable events and Belgian refugees. In 1916 he would become a volunteer chaplain at the front.

### ***Home from the War***

A Brislington tram conductor, Sergeant Percy Alfred Davies, a former Hussar, re-enlisted on the outbreak of war and transferred to the Royal Flying Corps. He took to the air for the first time on 7 August 1914, qualifying for a certificate eight days later! He flew from Scotland to the Marne, as an observer, reconnoitring German trenches and went thence to Aisnes, where his officer was badly wounded by shell fire. The pilot managed to bring the plane down safely behind British lines, though his injuries were so severe he died soon afterwards. Davies then took part in a raid on Dusseldorf in which ten aircraft were involved, one being downed by the Germans and the crew taken prisoner. Davies was slightly wounded by shellfire. In April 1915 he had flown over from France for the funeral of his father in Brislington, and was *"having a few days rest in Bristol before returning to his hazardous work."* After this he *"left by aeroplane to return to the Front."*<sup>32</sup>

Percy, born in 1889, was the eldest son of Alfred, 1865-1915, and Eliza Davies of 48 Pendennis Road, the brother of Jabez, (*qv.* 31.12.1916) and Arthur, (*qv.* 14.8.1917). He made the RAF his career. (see Survivors)

### ***Jolly good luck to the girl who loves a soldier!***

Prior to the war most of our girls found husbands in the village or nearby, marrying either a "childhood sweetheart" or "the boy next door" with the more daring finding partners in Bristol or Bath, but from this time on there were opportunities to get to know men from all over Britain and the Empire; without the war many couples would not have met. Weddings took place in church and chapel, and though in some cases both parties were "local" in others the bridegroom was a visitor; in these instances he often gave the same address as the bride. This is not evidence of what used to be known as "living in sin" but was simply a matter of convenience to establish residence for the "calling of the banns" in case of "just impediments" to the match. A few obviated this requirement by obtaining a licence. After the war some of the couples came back to Brislington, or other parts of Bristol, to live, though others departed for the husband's home town or village. A few brave souls were "Empire Brides" who began new lives in Canada or Australia with their husbands.

The first of the "war" marriages took place on 26<sup>th</sup> February 1915 by licence at St Luke's between Elsie Weare, known as "Biddy", a teaching assistant of Springdale, Bristol Hill and

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<sup>32</sup> WDP 28.4.1915; Clifton & Redland Free Press, 30.4.1915

Colour Sergeant Sidney Charles New, of 19 Churchill Road, a regular soldier of the 6<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters. Both parties were 23 years old. The groom, one of "Our young men at the War" named in the Congregational Magazine, 1914, would be "mentioned in despatches". He finally left the army with Meritorious Service and Territorial Force Efficiency gongs to go with the regular medals. In 1939 he was a schoolmaster and lived with Bidy in Knowle.

Margaret Stadward of 9 Edward Road and Private Harold Charles Tyrrell of Knowle, a soldier in the North Somerset Yeomanry, were married by licence on 8<sup>th</sup> May. The bride was a daughter of Sergeant-Major Edward Stadward, formerly of the Queen's Own 4<sup>th</sup> Hussars. (Men with previous military service proudly dusted off their old army ranks!)

On 23<sup>rd</sup> May, Lilian Grace Rogers, a domestic servant, of 38 Sandgate Road and Sergeant Francis Samuel Lloyd, 46, of the 12<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters, a widower, were married. From his address "Long Ashton" it seems likely that the groom was a patient at Ashton Court which had been requisitioned as a war hospital. Francis, who was born in barracks at Thornecliffe, Kent, was the son of a sergeant in the 7<sup>th</sup> Royal Fusiliers; he joined the Seaforth Highlanders aged eighteen and had served in India and South Africa before re-enlisting in the Gloucesters on 17 September 1914. He was discharged 19 December 1918 "*having suffered impairment since entry into service*". Lilian and Francis were living at Briar Way, Fishponds when he died in 1944.

A Londoner, Gunner Isaac Clarence Bull, 25, of the Royal Field Artillery, a former reservist, had been recalled three weeks before his wedding on 23<sup>rd</sup> June to a domestic servant, Martha Letitia Knight, of 9 Montrose Avenue. Their daughter, Clarice Letitia May was christened at St Luke's on 9 May 1916. Isaac, by then promoted Sergeant, was discharged by the army on 7 February 1919, due to unspecified "wounds". He never recovered his health and died at Whitechapel, London, in September 1921 aged only thirty one. Clarice was married in Bristol in 1936 but Martha who remained a widow, was working as a cook in a café at Harrow in 1939. She died in 1972.

Amy Frances Thomas, a school mistress, aged 27, of 8 Bristol Hill, became the bride of 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. Vivian Reginald Biddulph of the 5<sup>th</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers, from Sittingbourne, Kent, on 17<sup>th</sup> July.<sup>33</sup> Vivian was discharged from the army in 1919 and in 1939 was a Canadian Government Official living at Westminster with Amy and their daughter Suzette, a student at the Royal Academy.

Ida Skilling, 24, a typist, of Homemead, married Sergeant John Thomas Clarke, of the 1/4<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters on 3<sup>rd</sup> November. The Dublin-born bridegroom was the third generation of his family to have served in the British Army. Clarke, whose rank suggests he had enlisted well before the war, was the son of a retired soldier of the Raj (born in Bombay), currently being kept busy as a recruiting sergeant. John's service records are lost, but he died before 1939

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<sup>33</sup> *ibid* 19.7.1915

when his widow Ida was back where she began, in Brislington, at 49 Bristol Hill, with her widowed father Alfred George Skilling.

On 10<sup>th</sup> November, Letitia, a daughter of Joseph Cooke-Hurle by his first wife Florence was married at St Luke's to Captain Hamilton Kerby Shore, of the South Staffordshire Regiment. Captain Shore who had been in the army since 1907, had been wounded in action in November 1914 and again in July 1915. Owing to war-time austerity, Letitia's wedding, (in contrast to that of her sister Mary to Rev Arthur Kitson in April 1909) was a simple affair, though many parishioners attended the ceremony in respect to the bride's family. Letitia, who carried a bouquet of roses, was sombrely dressed in a navy-blue coat and skirt with a black hat, which also served as her going away outfit. There were no bridesmaids but a brother officer of the groom, Captain H.S. Blockley was best man.

Hamilton Shore, retired from the army in 1932 with the rank of Major. The following year he gave a speech at a dinner at Nunney, in which he urged young men to enlist: they would be fed and clothed and their wages would be almost all pocket money, he said. As to himself, he was well pleased, having seen the world, South Africa, Gibraltar, Singapore, Burma and India. In 1939 the Shores lived at the Manor House, Shepton Mallet; Hamilton was Divisional Warden of the ARP and Letitia organised the local WVS and Civil Defence.

The marriage of Edith Annie Sawyer, 21 of Brigmerston, near Salisbury and Battery Sergeant-Major William Read Burchell, RFA, 26, took place on 12<sup>th</sup> November at St Anne's.<sup>34</sup> William, the eldest son of Mr and Mrs Charles Burchell of 32 Arlington Road, had joined the army aged eighteen and had formerly served in South Africa. He left the service at the end of the war with the rank of 2nd Lieutenant and in 1939 the couple lived at Pewsey, Wiltshire, where he worked for a small arms firm and was joint senior ARP Warden in the town.

### ***The Church Militant (1)***

On 27<sup>th</sup> May, Rev John Escu Pugh, a popular curate at St Luke's, enlisted in the RAMC, the first Bristol clergyman to join up as a private soldier. Baptised in the Church of England at Llangeinor, Glamorgan, 8 February 1885, he was the son of Robert Gibbon Pugh, a draper, and his wife Sarah Leah. After school at Ystrad Meurig, he studied at St David's College, Lampeter, which he represented at cricket and football, (with both round and oval ball), and played rugby alongside a famous Welsh international full back David Bailey (Beili) Davies. He preferred soccer however and in his spare time kept goal for the "Ivy's" of the Cardiff & District League. He graduated MA in 1908 and came to St Luke's in December 1911 shortly after his ordination. He was soon in the thick of religious and rustic sporting life, standing in goal for Brislington FC, "strengthening" the Brislington Cricket Club, and playing off a handicap of eight at two golf clubs, Saltford and Knowle. Not surprisingly, he was described as "*a fine type of muscular Christian.*"

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<sup>34</sup> *ibid* 19.12.1915



***L to R: The St Luke's triumvirate: Revs. Harman, Pugh and Ludlow. The "old-fashioned" Harman did not wear the now familiar clerical "dog collar".***

His boss, the vicar, the Rev Alfred Cecil Harman, a Cambridge boating Blue, tall and well-built, apparently favoured the sporty Welshman over the other curate, the Rev. Walter Ludlow. The story goes that Harman was rather contemptuous of Ludlow, suggesting he was a bit "weedy", who when sick had been espied sitting up in bed with a shawl around him. You have to feel for poor Ludlow, surrounded by all that public school heartiness, twenty mile cross-country runs with, I suspect, a "refreshing" cold bath to finish.....

Rev Harman, who was aged 43 when the war started, lived at Brislington Vicarage with his wife Enid. They were the parents of five children, though only Margaret Helen, born in London in 1906 and Cecil Lancelot born in Brislington in 1910 survived infancy. They kept six servants: a cook and a nurse, and assorted maids.

Walter Ludlow, the curate in charge of the infant St Cuthbert's Mission, in "New Brislington", lived at "Woodruffe", on Bristol Hill, with his wife Betsey and their daughter Kathleen, who was born in Brislington in 1911. She never married and served as a nurse 1939-45.

From August 1914, Rev Pugh had been active in the many concert parties, which provided entertainment for wounded soldiers where his speciality was the "cheery singing" of sea shanties. It could hardly have come as a surprise when he presented himself at the Guildhall, clad in his clerical broadcloth and walked out wearing the enlistment badge. His

friend, the church organist, Mr C.A. Inman, praised his *“genial and hearty nature”* adding that *“such a man will appeal greatly to the Tommies and will be a great power for good amongst the men.”* A large gallery of friends from his various activities gathered at Temple Meads Station to see him off when he left for training at Aldershot.

In August Rev Pugh treated the citizens of Bristol to his impressions of army life<sup>35</sup>: *“The Aldershot Tommy carries himself with an increased though unconscious pride, his cap at a more aristocratic angle, his step more buoyant, his swagger a thing that can only come from Aldershot. On arrival I was taken to a miniature flat with nine others, a most interesting study of all sorts in the ranks; a surveyor, policeman, clerk, miner, tinplater, actor, labourer and tailor, plus a parson. One meets all ages too, lads of 17 who had to imagine a couple of years to satisfy the recruiting officer; men of over fifty who have forgotten many years to satisfy the same authority. Men between forty five and fifty are met frequently. The life of a Tommy is not easy; scrubbing floors down on one’s knees or with a shovel clearing a rubbish heap. Our beds are of straw and thinly covered, but we are too exhausted to worry over such trifles. Before we know it Reveille for the six o’clock parade is sounded and the Sergeant with laconic briefness gives the Command: Company - numbers – form fours – by the left – quick march and another day has begun.*

*“There was a funny incident a few weeks ago. Our company was asked if there were any artists among us. Two meekly stepped forward and were marched off by a Corporal. They were given a brush each and told to start white-washing the cook-house! There has been grave danger of riot in our Mess recently. One of our fellows has bought a flute but the music does not appear to have the charms talked about. Instead of soothing the savage beast it brings about the most savage passions in those of a hitherto peaceable nature. The repertoire is limited, a few hymns, ‘Home Sweet Home’ and the ‘Hitchy Koo’ but if ever he tries to play ‘When Irish Eyes are Smiling’ there’ll be murder.”*

(Rev Pugh’s puzzling last line is perhaps a reminder that the Easter Rising was only nine months in the future. There were many Irish volunteers in the British Army; nearly 50,000 died.)

The 21<sup>st</sup> century does not have the monopoly of absurd lyrics. The “Hitchy Koo” is featured in the satirical musical “Oh What a Lovely War”:

*Oh! Every evening hear him sing,  
It's the cutest little thing,  
With the cutest little swing,  
Hitchy-koo, Hitchy-koo.*

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<sup>35</sup> WDP 2.8.1915

The letter concludes: *“Everyone is anxious to finish training so that they can take up their places in the Line. It is inspiring to watch these men set off to battle in their Country’s cause in this greatest of all fights for right against might.....”*

Two months later, Rev Pugh was in France where he took part *“in the thickest of the fighting”* at least until April 1916.

### ***A Survivor***

**18<sup>th</sup> August:** *“Mr Charles Bowden, of Newlyn, Repton Road, Brislington is one of the survivors of the E.13 lost off the Danish island of Salthome.”*<sup>36</sup>

The British submarine HMS E13 was awaiting a tow following an accident when she was fired on by two German torpedo boats, and shooting only ceased when subs of the (neutral) Danish Navy put themselves between the parties. Nevertheless fifteen crew members of E13 were killed in the action. The fifteen survivors were imprisoned in Denmark, though Lt. Cdr Layton and his first officer managed to escape and subsequently returned to the war.

Charles Bowden was born in Bedminster in 1884, the son of William, a Merchant Navy stoker. He joined the Royal Navy from school (Queen Elizabeth’s Hospital) in 1901/1902 for twelve years. He was then 5 feet 5 inches tall, but his records show he grew four inches during his service. He had brown eyes, with dark hair and complexion and at some stage had lost the index finger on his right hand. He was promoted Petty Officer in 1908 and his service was extended on the outbreak of war. His mother Charlotte had been widowed by 1911 and had gone to live at 86 Repton Road with her daughter and son-in-law Charles and Charlotte Saunders. Charles was interned in Denmark until repatriated in March 1918. He was pensioned in 1924.

### ***“A Brislington Lady’s Six Soldier Sons”.***

**11<sup>th</sup> September:** *“For several months past, red discs have been supplied by the Recruiting Office to be hung in the window as an indication that a man from the house is serving King and Country. Thousands have already been distributed and in several districts streets compete for the honour of being the most patriotic. Wick Road, Bristol had a notable addition to these emblems and found no fewer than six displayed in one window the home of Mrs Leonard whose six sons had joined the Colours, two of them alas! laid down their lives for their Country, one in Africa, one in Flanders. Mrs Leonard is proud of her boys and although 75 years of age would, she said, be willing to go to Flanders to wash the soldiers’ clothes if they would let her.”*

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<sup>36</sup> HBM 28.8.1915;WDP 21.8.1915





The lady in question was Elizabeth, 1841-1927, the wife of Wellington Leonard of Broomwell House Lodge, Wick Road. Their nine children, born between 1867 and 1881 consisted of two daughters, Rose and Hester, and seven sons, Albert, George, William, Isaac, James, Joseph and Walter Ernest. All the boys except Albert had indeed been in the army, though only two were active during the Great War. Joseph served in France and at the age of 42 was part of the expeditionary force sent to Russia in 1919, and Walter, the youngest, who re-enlisted in December 1914, aged 33, served in the eastern theatre of the war.

During the latter years of Queen Victoria's reign, Wellington and Elizabeth had been the proud recipients of £3, awarded for having five sons who had joined the army before they were nineteen years old *"as a mark of the Queen's appreciation of this interesting record."* William, who died of pneumonia in Johannesburg in 1900, and his brothers George and Joseph, served in the Boer War; James in India and Isaac, in the South Wales Borderers. It was a proud patriotic record.



In October 1915 the Sutton Trustees purchased Broomwell House and proposed to build 240 workman's dwellings on the site after the war.<sup>37</sup>

Throughout the year Mrs Elizabeth Pearce continued with her invaluable charity work. In March a Private G.H. Gilvear of Bristol, who was serving with the Canadians wrote to thank her for the gift of socks:

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<sup>37</sup> HBM 16.10.1915

*"I received the parcel just as we were going into the trenches.....they came at an opportune moment and my mates and myself found them a blessing. When our feet got wet and cold we had clean dry socks to change into.*

*"If those folks in England who send a little parcel of comfort could see how the boys gather round the mail bag.....even how those unfortunates who do not receive anything wait for the lucky ones to open their parcels in the hope of getting a bit of cake or a morsel of jam tart it would do the senders hearts good."*<sup>38</sup>

In September, Gunner J. King of "C" Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Gloucesters, thanked Mrs Pearce for the boxing gloves she had sent, which

*"caused no end of amusement among our men. What with a crop in the face and a Krupp in the ground, the gloves were in good use in a very short time, in spite of the boom of German guns,"* he said.<sup>39</sup>

The WDP used its platform to publicly thank *"the indefatigable Mrs Pearce.....whose goodness will be remembered by the many men who have benefited from her kindness."* Elizabeth had collected objects as diverse as a gramophone, books, cakes, jam, sporting goods, as well the dozens of socks made by the non-stop Bristol knitters which the newspaper forwarded to the men in the trenches. Among these was my ten-year-old mother, Florrie Honour of Morley Street, Barton Hill who was presented with this certificate for "Knitting Socks for Soldiers!"<sup>40</sup>



<sup>38</sup> WDP 11.3.1915

<sup>39</sup> ibid 8.9.1915

<sup>40</sup> Her younger brother Harry endorsed it with his name too, though there is no evidence he did any knitting!

A Private S. Price was especially grateful: *“Our feet were drenched to the skin and before many minutes eleven feet<sup>41</sup> went into the pairs of socks, even the sergeant joined in. One of the lads gave a cheer, ‘Sam, tell that lady she’s the best in England’”*.

Another soldier, Gunner Charles Herridge wrote to thank Mr William Tiley of 24 Grove Park Road for the flute he had sent in response to his request for instruments *“to give the lads a little music”*.<sup>42</sup>

Glees at the Grove Hall became an institution; a Mr H.E. Moon set the ball rolling, bearing the expense from his own pocket, but from then on donations came in throughout the war. The entertainments were mostly for wounded soldiers, with teas served by voluntary helpers and transport provided by those, who (like Mrs Bonville Fox), owned motor cars, but on one memorable occasion, 235 children were entertained with songs and recitations, as well as getting an unexpected address from the Belgian Minister of Agriculture, who apparently arrived expecting them to be *Belgian* children. The Grove Hall rose to the occasion and gave him three hearty cheers and some of the children even managed to join in the Belgian National Anthem!<sup>43</sup> (Bravo to one of the lady pianists who must have pulled the appropriate sheet music out of the hat!) The Sandringham Pub, from which several of the landlord’s sons had joined the Colours was also a favourite venue for charity concerts, as when *“Miss E. Clarke of the Picture House - Brislington’s answer to Hetty King? - sang a recruiting song in aid in of the Red Cross in very pleasant manner”*.<sup>44</sup> In a diversion of a quite different kind, a contingent from St Luke’s was among the three hundred boys of the Church Lads Brigade who took part in a simulated military exercise in which *“a foreign army”* had landed at Newport and occupied South Wales; the *“invaders”* pushed forward with an artillery battery in an attempt to seize the Severn tunnel. The *“British”* battalion at Filton junction was tasked with driving back the enemy with heavy artillery.<sup>45</sup> No doubt a fine old time was had by all; sadly many of them would soon know the reality and some would not return.

A sailor, Stoker Bertie Joseph Bell, 25, of HMS *“Indefatigable”*, otherwise *“Bluejacket Bell”* who died 8<sup>th</sup> March was buried at Holy Souls, the first Royal Navy funeral of the war to be held at the cemetery.<sup>46</sup> Before the end of the year another RN man and 58 soldiers, who included two Canadians and two Belgians would be interred at either Arno’s Vale or Holy Souls.

Private Allan Gifford, wounded at St Julienne, near Ypres, who died at Southmead Hospital on 30<sup>th</sup> April, was the first Canadian soldier to be buried in Bristol and many sympathetic citizens turned out for his funeral. The coffin was conveyed on a gun carriage to Arno’s Vale where a firing party from *“Bristol’s Own”* completed the ceremony. Mourners included

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<sup>41</sup> Was there a one-legged soldier among them?

<sup>42</sup> WDP 27.7.1915

<sup>43</sup> WDP 8.1./14.5./8.12.1915

<sup>44</sup> Ibid 7.7.1915.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid 6.4.1915

<sup>46</sup> HBM 20.3.1915

some of his countrymen wearing their hospital blue serge. Two bands played the “Dead March” from “Saul” and “O Come All Ye Faithful”. On 10<sup>th</sup> May, Private Ian D.W Sarel, of the 39<sup>th</sup> Battalion Canadian Infantry died from shrapnel wounds; “A brave young Colonial who gave his life for the Empire,” he was likewise brought to Arno’s Vale where he was buried with military honours.<sup>47</sup>

Sergeant Victor Bascour of the Belgian Army’s 1<sup>st</sup> Chasseurs, who had been in hospital since October 1914, succumbed to his wounds after 80 days suffering. A large number of Belgian refugees attended the Requiem Mass on 19<sup>th</sup> June, at which Father Bernadine officiated. Private Edouard Goffiat, aged 21, of Vlessart, another who had lingered for 8 months, died on 1<sup>st</sup> August. The Requiem Mass at St Mary’s on the Quay was reported in both French and English. Both were buried with full military honours at Holy Souls.

### ***In the Field***

Tommy’s Kit: Clothing and incidental equipment:

#### **Wearing apparel:**

Boots, ankle, pairs, 1	Body band , 2
Caps, service dress, 1	Flannel vest, 1
Drawers, pairs, 2	Cap cover, 1
Greatcoat, 1	Comforter, 1
Jackets, service dress, 1	Badge, Cap, 1
Puttees, pairs, 1	Braces, pairs, 1
Trouser, service dress, 1	Helmet, 1
Waistcoat/cardigan, 1	Goggles, 1
Glove, pairs, 1	Laces, leather, spare pairs, 1
Shirts, flannel, 2	Disc, identity, with cord, 2
Socks, worsted, pairs, 3	Wallet, 1

#### **Other:**

Spoon 1	Towels, hand
Wax polish, tin, 1	Razor, 1
Brush, shaving, 1	Brush, tooth, 1
Comb, hair, 1	Field dressing, 1
Satchel, 1	Boot repair kit, 1
Boot rasper, 1	Ration Bag, 1
Holdall, 1	Housewife, 1
Knife, table	Fork, 1
Knife, clasp & lanyard 1	

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<sup>47</sup> WDP 3.5./13.5.15

Such were the items (ideally) issued to William John Stevens, a motor driver, who enlisted 2<sup>nd</sup> February at Grove Park. He was 19 years and 4 months old and gave his father, Walter John, of 588 Bath Road as his next of kin. He served with the BEF in France from 31 May 1915 and was awarded the 1914/15 Star. He survived the war and following the Armistice worked with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission until July 1919. In 1939 he was “a disabled ex-serviceman, army pensioner”, living at 218 Whiteway Road, Bristol with his wife Ida and two teenage children.

Joseph Law, a baker, aged 34, of 35 Arlington Road, St Anne’s (formerly of the 1<sup>st</sup> Worcesters) was recalled to the 6<sup>th</sup> SLI in Bath on the 3<sup>rd</sup> February for Short Service “during the hostilities”. He was a married man, the father of six children, all born in Brislington, the eldest aged twelve, the youngest, 11 months old. (Another child, Joseph junior, was born in 1915.) During the course of his army career he was wounded several times (right thigh and buttock, treated in a field hospital at Rouen) and suffered bouts of illness, (influenza, pleurisy, myalgia). His wife Rosina had difficulty keeping track of his movements and wrote:

*“Dear Sir*

*“I am sorry to trouble you but could you let me know if my husband is still at Boulogne or did he sail in the Angelia (sic) on Wednesday, perhaps you could find out quicker than I. Awaiting your reply, I remain, yours faithfully, Mrs R.B. Law.”*

Joe Law, the reluctant correspondent, remained a Private until discharged in 1919. In 1939 he was working as a steel worker; he and Rosina then lived at 272 Wick Road,

Albert Henry Panes, son of Henry and Jessie, of 9 Bellevue Road, born on Christmas Day 1882, a Royal Navy Reservist with 12 years previous service, was a coalminer in South Wales when he was recalled for war service on 24<sup>th</sup> March. He was 5 feet 5 inches tall, could swim, religion C of E, and was tattooed on his back, on his right wrist and left arm, with clasped hands, an eagle and snake intertwined and an Indian’s head. He survived the war and received his gratuity in May 1919 but had left Brislington by 1939, for Worcestershire.

A railwayman, George Samuel Steer, born 1883, of 34 Sandholme Road, enlisted on 21<sup>st</sup> April. He was 5 feet 8½ inches tall and became a Sapper in the Royal Engineers. He survived the war and in 1939 was a railway clerk, back at Sandholme Road with his wife and two children.

***May: The upper age limit for volunteers enlisting in the forces is raised from 38 to 40.***

Herbert Thomas Willie, aged 19, 42 Addison Road, a grocer’s porter, enlisted in the 12<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters on 24<sup>th</sup> May and served with the BEF in France from 21 November 1915. He suffered a compound fracture of the right leg, 5 January 1916, and was treated “at home” from 14<sup>th</sup> January. He evidently recovered, as he served in the army of occupation from 10 March 1919; he was promoted Sergeant, 26 January 1922.

William Henry Moore, a son of Tom and Eva, enlisted on 29<sup>th</sup> May. He was 5 feet 8½ inches tall, with brown hair and eyes and a fresh complexion. He had arrived in France by the end of 1915 and was “slightly wounded” on 1 May 1916 but remained on duty until a spell of home leave 11-21 January 1917. He was awarded the Military Medal for bravery in the field on 20 December 1917, to which a bar was added in June 1919. He had been promoted Lance Corporal at the time of his marriage, 9 November 1918, to Gertrude Maud Smaldon, a tobacco stripper, of 39 Chatsworth Road. He was then 26, home address, 69 Repton Road. He was a “skilled telegraphist” when demobbed at Reading on 4 June 1919. His younger brother Francis also served throughout the war.

Richard Hugh “Dick” Knight joined the 2/6<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters on 15<sup>th</sup> June. He was born in “The Pound” at Brislington Village on 24 October 1897, the second eldest of the large family of a horse driver, Richard Daniel Knight and his wife Jane of 29 Pendennis Road. (Their ninth child, would be named “Robert Kitchener”, in honour of Lord Kitchener, who was lost at sea in 1916.) This is Dick’s account of his war<sup>48</sup>:

*“I went to Bath with two other Brislington boys to join the Somersets. They used to be in the old Rifle Range down Jean Road. They took the other two but they didn’t take me. They said ‘Come back on Monday and say you’re eighteen.’ I was too young, see. I was working for the Tramways then. Then we got talking at work and me and two other chaps decided to join the Gloucesters. So we went up St Michael’s Hill and joined up in the 2<sup>nd</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Battalion – the 1<sup>st</sup> had already gone to France. We went to Northampton for a week. Our Colonel was Colonel Smith who had been the manager at the Tramways. Then they moved us to Essex where they picked out 100 men and said ‘You’re going to France next Friday’.<sup>49</sup> This was on the Wednesday. We went over to Belgium from Le Havre. We stayed at Eberterne<sup>50</sup> for four weeks, then we went up to the Front. I went up in this attack. We saw our Lance-Corporal got hit by a shell, nearly all his arm was blown off. We jumped down into a trench and found there were a couple of Jerries either side of us, so they took the two of us and marched us along. The other chap worked at the Motor Construction Works. The Germans took us to Cambria<sup>51</sup> and we stayed there for 3 weeks. About 500-600 of us got taken prisoner and we got sent on to little farms and mines to work. I went to work in a mine. There were 38 of us from all over, even a couple of chaps from Australia. We had a French woman looking after us with her daughter. We used to chop chumps for her fire. We was there two years. We didn’t do too bad considering. I had an accident and fell into a tank of oil and took all the skin off my right leg so I was sent to a hospital in Cologne; then I got operated on for appendicitis. Then I went to a hospital in Boulogne. It was English Doctors.”*

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<sup>48</sup> As told to Jonathan Rowe in 1987 when Dick was living at Merryweathers

<sup>49</sup> 24.5.1916

<sup>50</sup> Hebuterne near Auchonvillers on the Somme

<sup>51</sup> Cambrai

**July.** The National Registration Act revealed that there were almost 5 million males of military age who were not in the forces, though of these, about 1.6 million were in protected highly skilled jobs.

Eli Cousins, born at East Coker in 1900, was so eager to join up he gave his date of birth as 30 March 1897 when he enlisted on 26<sup>th</sup> July in the 5<sup>th</sup> battalion of the RN Division. He gave "Oakenhills" (where his grandparents lived, as his address: his father, a police constable, also called Eli, had been born in Brislington in 1869.) Junior was 5 feet 6½ inches tall, could swim and was C. of E. He was not rumbled until the following 25<sup>th</sup> February when he was removed from the front line as being "under age",<sup>52</sup> though he remained in the Navy until 1919. In 1939 he was a lorry driver living at 39 Sherwell Road with his wife Beatrice.

**October.** *The numbers of volunteers, now down to a trickle, are insufficient to fill the gaps caused by the heavy losses on the battlefield. Lord Derby, the Director General of Recruiting inaugurates a plan to raise the numbers. Known inevitably as "the Derby Scheme", it enables men between 18 and 40 to enlist immediately or "attest", allowing them time to put their affairs in order before being called upon to serve. To counteract the White Feather toting harpies, those who attested were able to obtain armbands marked with the letter "D" to show their status.*

Charles Khartoum Culverwell, christened at St Luke's 13 October 1897, was a tram conductor, aged 19 years, 1 month when he enlisted at Gosport in the 3/15<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters, on 1<sup>st</sup> November. His father, a Bridgwater man, was an "old soldier" of the SLI, who had served for "20 years, 92 days", in the Mediterranean, Canada and the East Indies (though not, apparently, at Khartoum!) In 1911, Charles, lived at Nelson's Glory with his father, William, aged 70, mother Rosina, 45 and brother and sister Sidney and Edith. Charles left with the battalion on 8 August 1916 as part of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force. He was discharged in March 1919 and was back at Nelson's Glory when he acknowledged receipt of the British War Medal and Victory Medal. He died in 1926 aged only 28.

Ralph Veal, baptised at St Luke's, 1 October 1897, son of Francis and Emily of 16 Manworthy Road, attested 1<sup>st</sup> November aged 19 years, 1 month. He was kicked on the ankle playing football on 2 April 1916 and was in a military hospital for two months with a fracture of the right tibia. He recovered, "*walks without difficulty*", and was given a sitting down job, driving a lorry for the "5<sup>th</sup> Australian Sub. Park, RASC". He embarked from Avonmouth, 15 July 1916 and arrived at Rouen five days later. He was transferred to the Reserve 14 August 1919.

Edward Kibbey, born in Brislington 1880, first joined the army in February 1896 "aged 18 and 2 months", 5 feet 7 inches tall with a 38 inch chest, brown hair, grey eyes, and was tattooed on his right arm with crossed flags and "England, Love and Beauty". He was "*claimed out by parents, under-age*" and discharged in May that year. He tried again in January 1900 this time aged "21 years, 1 month", and served in the Boer War. He returned

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<sup>52</sup> Other officers were not so concerned with welfare of youngsters, see Harold Knight, 1916

from Africa and was released on 7 December 1900. He married Annie Kathleen Mayo in 1902 and they had two daughters, Clarice and Irene. Edward was recalled 20<sup>th</sup> November 1915 aged 35 and was on active service with the RASC throughout the rest of the war. He was diagnosed with loose cartilages in both knees and on 12 December 1917 the little finger of his left hand was amputated. In 1920 he was allowed a war pension of 8s 7d per week.

On 11<sup>th</sup> December, Edwin William Richards, aged 32 years 11 months, of 2 Kensington Park Road, the manager of a clothier's shop, attested for the duration of the war. He was married to Bessie Whitford Morgan (at the Baptist Church, Saltash, Cornwall in 1908) and they had a daughter, Violet, in 1911. He became a gunner in the RGA and received his war medals in January 1922.

Edward Henry Webley, born in Brislington, 12 November 1875, of 23 Montrose Avenue was aged 42, a groom, 5 feet 2 inches tall when called by the Army on 12<sup>th</sup> December. In 1891 he was living at Brislington Square, and by 1911, was a domestic coachman at Clifton. His absence from the 1901 census and his age, suggests previous army service during the Boer War. He served twice in France from 21 March 1916 ("very good conduct") but contracted myocarditis (heart disease) as a result of "exposure under active service conditions" and nephritis (kidney disease). He was in hospital variously at Poole, Manchester, Swanage and Bournemouth before his discharge from the army on medical grounds, 10 November 1917. He died in 1933.

James Edward Taylor, born 1879, of 8 Sandgate Road attested under the Derby Scheme for the duration of the war on 15<sup>th</sup> December. He and his wife Blanche had a daughter, Marion on 25 January 1916, who was christened at St Luke's in February. James transferred from the 4<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters to the Devonshire Regiment in January 1917 as a Lance Corporal. His war service lasted 2 years 187 days until he was discharged with a good character, suffering from "Myalgia, aggravated by military service".

***Despite the moderate success of the Derby Scheme, it could not keep up with the losses on the battlefield. Jim Taylor's attestation is among the last, for on that day, 15<sup>th</sup> December, all voluntary enlistment was to cease.***

Since the beginning of the war, Captain Fritz Bartelt had been in India with the 2/4<sup>th</sup> Somerset Light Infantry. There is speculation that the authorities acted with sensitivity in his case, keeping him out of the main theatre of action owing to his Prussian ancestry. To some of his brother officers in the battalion, this posting was "a bitter blow" for they found themselves with little to do whilst their comrades in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion were in the thick of it in Europe.





*Fritz Bartelt in India with fellow officers*

This sentiment, I assume, was not shared by the rank and file. Some of the local lads had their photograph taken in tropical kit, including pith helmets, to send home.



*“With Every Good Wish from the Brislington Boys”*

Back row, far right, is Bill Norley, who was born in 1894, one of seven children of William and Ada. In 1911 he worked at a cycle factory and lived at 18 Trelawney Road. He came home to Brislington and married Beatrice Truth Sullivan in 1920. In 1939 they lived at 23 Harrow Road. Bill was a train driver with the GWR until he retired in the 1950s. He died in 1966 aged 72 and was cremated at Arno's Vale. The soldier seated second from left is Fred Panes, (*qv. 17.4.1916*). His brother Henry is *also* thought be in the picture. Others known to have been with the SLI and are possibly pictured here are William Townsend, his brother Evan, (*qv. 25.6.1916*) and Edward Brewer, (*qv.17.7.1916*.)

Another "possible" is Sydney Albert Evans, (a brother of William, *qv. 26.4.1918*.) Sydney, born 1 November 1897 joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> SLI, under age, in November 1914 and served in India until the battalion was sent to Mesopotamia, 6 May 1915. A (fortuitous?) bout of Beri Beri (caused by Vitamin B1 deficiency) led to his removal from the fighting in Basra, back to India, on Christmas Day 1916, where he remained until discharged by the army on 11 April 1919. He returned home to 3 Bellevue Buildings. As well as Beri Beri he also suffered, at various times, from "a crushed foot", and "contusions". After the war, complaining of chest pains, shortness of breath and swelling of the feet, his application for a pension was rejected. In 1939 he was a plumber living at 17 Savoy Road with his wife Hilda and their two sons, Robert and John. Fred and Rose, his parents then lived at 44 Manworthy Road, with their daughters Dorothy Evans, Patricia Collins, Phyllis Jones, and a grandson, Beresford Jones aged two.

Can anybody identify any more of "the boys"?

### Those we lost, 1915

***Late 1914 & 1915. Ploegstreet Wood in Flanders, 2 kilometres north of the French border is the scene of fierce fighting.***

**25<sup>th</sup> January, Ploegsteert. Private Frederick William Pearce JAGO, 1888-1915** was the son of a railway policeman, William Thomas Jago and his wife Sarah, formerly Andrews. He was a galvaniser at John Lysaght & Co. and may have attended the firm's emergency meeting on 7 August 1914. However, the speed at which he was sent to the front with the "B" Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion SLI, suggests he was already a Reservist. The battalion took up a position at Ploegsteert Wood (known, of course, as "Plug Street" by the British) and remained there for the winter months. Fred, aged 26, died on 25<sup>th</sup> January, and is buried in Plot II at Ploegsteert Wood Military Cemetery, Comines-Warneton, near Hainaut, among 32 comrades from the 1<sup>st</sup> Somersets. An obituary (WDP) 11<sup>th</sup> February reads: "*JAGO. Killed in Action: on January 25, Frederick W. Jago, son of the late W.T. Jago, 4 Sandgate Road, Brislington, late of Harford Street, Redcliff. Missed by all.*"

In 1916 on the anniversary of his death an "In Memoriam" notice includes a grieving sweetheart: "*JAGO. In affectionate remembrance of Private Frederick W. Jago, 1<sup>st</sup> Somerset*

*L.I., killed in action, Flanders, January 25, 1915. Ever remembered by his loving mother, sister, sweetheart and brother Edward."*

Fred is remembered on the War Memorial at St Luke's (F.W. Jago) and on the Lysaght's Memorial to the "Employees of the St Vincent's Works who died for their country, 1914-1919". On 11 August 1915, his sister, Mary Ida Jago, aged 25, a box maker, was married at St Luke's to Edward Arthur Pilkington, 27, an RASC driver, the son of the late Charles James Pilkington, a sergeant major in the RFA. Both parties gave their address as 4 Sandgate Road. Edward Pilkington survived the war.

**22<sup>nd</sup> April, Ploegsteert. Private George Herbert CRABB, 1886-1915** may be the twenty six year old railway stableman of this name who in 1911 lived at 3 Eugene Street, St Jude's with his wife Emily and three young daughters, Emily, Laura and Florry.<sup>53</sup> His service number, 3117, 1/6<sup>th</sup> Gloucestershire Regiment suggests that he enlisted early in the war: a stableman with knowledge of horses would have been much in demand. He was killed in action near Ploegsteert and is buried at the Lancashire Cottage Cemetery in Grave 11A.4. He is remembered on the Memorial Plaque at St Anne's (G.H. Crabb) though his connection with the parish is not known.

**13<sup>th</sup> May, Ploegsteert. Private Frederick Denby POOLE, 1891-1915**, born at Flax Bourton, was a son of Henry D. Poole a railway signaller and his wife Mary. By 1901, the family lived at Morton House, 41 Arlington Road, St Anne's Park and Fred attended the local school. He had left home by 1911, when he was a postman, in lodgings at Prestwich, Manchester. By 1913 he had enlisted and was stationed at Elham in Kent when he married Annie Knell, a housemaid. At the outbreak of war he went to Flanders with the 82<sup>nd</sup> Field Ambulance Corps, RAMC, where he was killed in action. He has no known grave and is remembered on Panel 56 of the Menin Gate and on De Ruvigny's Roll. He was survived by his wife Annie, (subsequently of 515 Niagara Street, Ontario, Canada), and is remembered at St Anne's Church (F.D. Poole) and School (F. Poole). Fred's mother died in 1913 and in 1939, his father Henry was living at 8 Chatsworth Road with his second wife Elizabeth.

**21<sup>st</sup> May, Ploegsteert. Private Wilfred George Beazer COOK, c1896-1915**, born at Oldfield, Somerset, was the son of George, a railwayman, and Annie, formerly Beazer. The couple arrived at 9 Sandbach Road by 1911 with their five children, three boys and two girls who attended St Anne's School.

Wilfred joined the Territorial Army aged seventeen and was called up on the outbreak of war. After training he went to the front with the 1/6<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters and was on duty near Ploegsteert when he became the second local man to be fatally wounded by a sniper. (see *H.A. Goddard, qv, 12.2.1915, Ypres, below*) On 4<sup>th</sup> June the WDP printed the letter sent to his father by Captain E.W. Tame:

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<sup>53</sup> It is impossible to identify him with certainty. At his marriage to Emily Harvey, 1905, he is shown as "George James Crabb" whereas the man recorded by CWGC is "George Herbert Crabb".)

*“It is with deep regret that I have to inform you of the death of your son Wilfred Cook whilst performing his duty in the trenches. He was on the look-out as a sentry and had been taking the occasional shot at the enemy whilst moving along his side of the trench but he must have been watched, as on taking his last aim, he was shot through the head and instantly killed.*

*“On behalf of myself and the other members of the Company, I tender to you our sincere sympathy on the sad loss which you have sustained.*

*“I have felt an interest in your son ever since he first joined the Territorial Forces in September 1913 and no-one could wish to serve with a better soldier. He was a man who was always prepared to do more than was required. I can never remember having occasion to find the slightest fault with him. He was very popular with his comrades and his death has had considerable effect on many of them.*

*“I trust the knowledge that although young, he has lived a useful and profitable life and the fact that he has died in the service of his country will to some extent console you and the other members of his family in their sad bereavement. His end was without pain and he will be buried this evening in a piece of Belgian soil which was recently consecrated by the Bishop of Pretoria as a burial place for the 6<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters and I can promise you that the grave will be suitably marked with an inscription.”*

Wilfred is buried at the Lancashire Cottage Cemetery, at Hainaut, Grave II B 8, and is remembered on four plaques: St Luke's, (W.G. Cook), St Anne's, Church and School, (W. Cook) and the Congregational, (Wilfred Cook), where he had belonged to the Sunday School.

**3<sup>rd</sup> February, France. Sub-Conductor William Henry Taylor, c1883-1915**, Service No: HA/21674, was a son of James and Caroline of 13 Bellevue Road. He served with the Supply/Transport Corps of the Indian Forces which was responsible for the logistical distribution of provisions, health and catering as well as fuel and ammunition. He died aged 32 and is buried in Grave A.3.13 at St Sever, Rouen. He is remembered on the Memorials at St Luke's (W.H. Taylor) and at the Congregational.

In 1891 James and Caroline Taylor lived near the Engine House, Brislington with a son William, born 1879, the 3<sup>rd</sup> of their 8 children; if this is the same family, then W.H.T. was four years older than the age stated by the CWGC.

**12<sup>th</sup> February, Ypres. Sergeant Henry Albert GODDARD, 1868-1915**, son of Francis and Eliza, who was born at Shortwood, married Sarah Pocock in 1888. After an itinerant few years in which they passed through Norton Malreward, Knowle, Bedminster, and St George, the couple arrived in Brislington and by 1911 were installed at 15 Pendennis Road with the surviving ten of their eleven children: Herbert, Louisa, George, William, Alice Rose, Lilian, Frank, Gladys, Charlie, and Ernest. In between his work as a horse carter and leather tanner and bringing up his large family, Henry evidently looked for some adult male camaraderie, so joined the Territorial Army, moving up the ladder of promotion to the rank of Sergeant.

He looked forward to going “on holiday” at least once a year with the army to Somerset. He was among the Terriers recalled to Bristol in August 1914 and left a few days later for full time training. By the autumn he was in Flanders. The news of his death appeared in the WDP under the headline:

*“Bristol Engineers at the Front.”*

*“Lieut. Col. Seymour Williams writes: ‘No. 86 Sergeant H.A. Goddard of 19 Guinea Street, 1<sup>st</sup> Field Company, South Midlands Royal Engineers was killed on the 12<sup>th</sup> inst. He was engaged in laying a wire entanglement in front of the trenches at night and was shot through the chest just before daylight. Major Gardiner in writing to me says ‘He was a whole-hearted worker and I could do with more like him.’” [Said] Lieut-Col Williams: ‘I cordially agree. This is the first casualty the SRE has had in the months they have been at the front. It is the only Bristol Territorial Unit (other than the North Somerset Yeomanry) at the front.’”<sup>54</sup>*

“The Sniper” was a German innovation. Early in the War, Prussian aristocrats recruited gamekeepers and stalkers from their country estates who were handy with a rifle. German technology added a deadly extra, the telescopic sight. These country riflemen began picking off British soldiers, none of whom wore body armour, at an alarming rate. This activity was seen to be “not quite cricket” but in due course the British caught up and retaliated in kind.

Henry, who was 47, has no known grave and is commemorated on Panel 9 of the Menin Gate at Ypres. He is remembered at St Luke’s, (H. Goddard).

On the third anniversary of his death, his widow, Sarah, having again moved house, placed an “In Memoriam” notice in the WDP. *“GODDARD. In loving memory of Sgt H.A. Goddard, killed in action, 12 Feb.1915, ever remembered by his wife and children of 34 Bishop Street, St Paul’s, also sons on active service and son and daughter of Lawrence Hill, Bristol.”*

Sarah’s sons “on active service” were almost certainly Herbert, George and William. Though it seems likely that one of these is the **“G.F. Goddard”** who is among those listed on the St Luke’s Memorial, I have been unable to identify him in any combination of first names/initials, either in the catalogue of “Soldiers Died in the Great War”, the CWGC list or in the General Register Office death indexes. It is possible that he survived the war and died later from the consequences, perhaps in one of the countries of the British Empire. Whatever the truth, it seems someone in Brislington knew enough to put his name forward for inclusion alongside his father (?) on the Memorial.

**11<sup>th</sup> March, at Sea. Midshipman Harold Brentnall “Brennie” GOUGH, RNR, 1898-1915** was born in Northamptonshire to Harold Gough, a schoolmaster, and his wife Alice. He had two brothers: Donald<sup>55</sup> and Edwin and a sister, Alice Marjorie. The Gough family came to Bristol when Harold took up a post at Bristol Grammar School; they arrived at Hicks Gate House

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<sup>54</sup> WDP 19.2.1915

<sup>55</sup> See “Survivors” for Donald’s letters home.

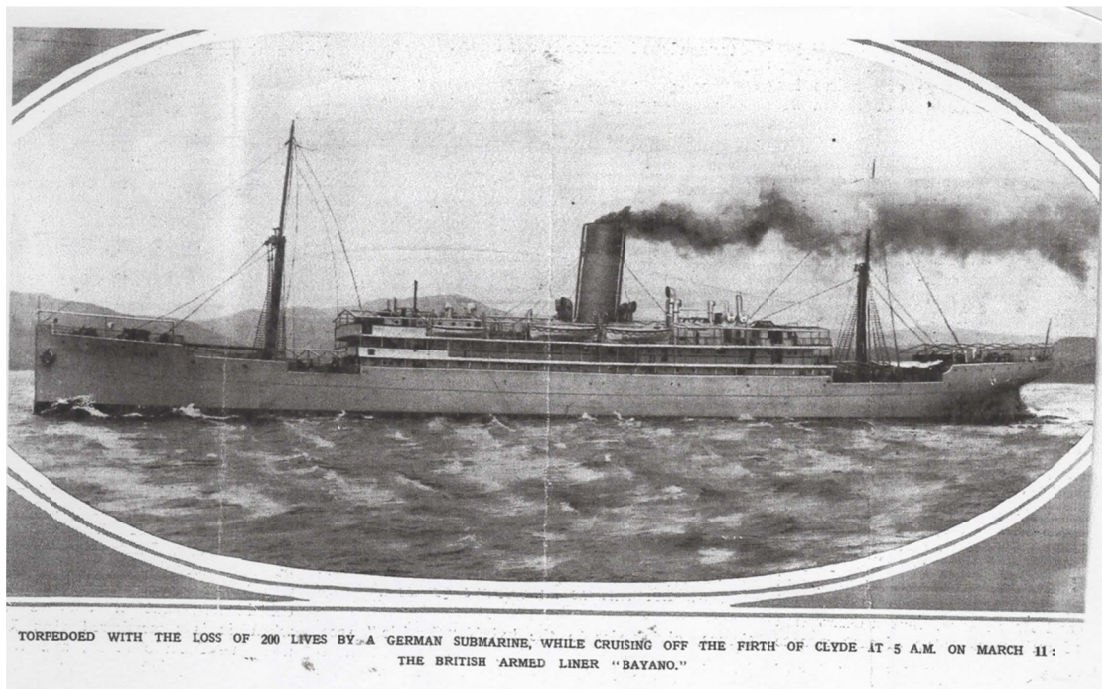
between Brislington and Keynsham shortly before the outbreak of war. Brennie joined the Royal Navy on 30 November 1914 as a midshipman aboard HMS "Bayano", an Elders & Fyffes banana boat which had been drafted into war service as an armed merchant auxiliary cruiser.

These are the young sailor's (slightly abridged) last two letters home:

*"Feb 24<sup>th</sup>*

*"Dearest Mother: I am writing this letter on a Swedish steamer, the 2<sup>nd</sup> boat I have had this trip but when I took the last one in I was sent straight back by another vessel. However, I had a day's leave. I can't tell what they will do with me this time but don't expect I shall get down to see you. We are due in port again for coal next week but nobody has any idea where we are going. If we go to Liverpool I shall most likely come for a couple of days but if we are any further away from Bristol I shan't be able to afford it.*

*Some of the boats have been going to the most unheard of places where they can't even get ashore. As we are the senior boat in the patrol today I fancy we may get better luck. We have been having simply frightful weather during the last week but today is more like spring except it is freezing. We have had snow, sleet, hail and rain but I think the snow is best; it isn't so wet at any rate. For two days our cabin was more or less under water.*



*It is almost impossible to keep dry on the bridge when the ship goes through a wave instead of over it. It is nerve racking work because you're fighting something you can't see. You never know when you'll run into a wave to be torpedoed. I did not tell you in my last letter that when we were leaving port to go on patrol, I doubt if any ship went as near to sinking as ours, without getting damaged. It was about 3 o'clock one afternoon and we had got a rifle*

party on the fo'c'sle head because we were going through a mine area. Somebody suddenly saw a mine on the starboard bow. We changed course to get clear of it and opened fire. It was a frightful looking object and I didn't feel very comfortable. But it must have been nearer than we thought for as we were slewing round, our stern passed within six feet of the mine. I ran to the other side of the bridge when I saw it close to us. There was another one on the port side but not nearly as dangerously close. I don't know whether we sank them but they certainly did not explode. I think though that even a rifle bullet passing through the thin iron shell would be enough to sink it. I shall never forget the face of the captain, although others were much the same. Everybody was staring at it absolutely fascinated and you could hear sighs of relief when it missed us. I don't know what I looked like but my heart seemed to have jumped right out of my throat. However nothing happened so we continued our journey. That is all I've got to say for the present so I will close with best love and wishes to all and everyone. Hoping to see you again soon. Your loving son Brennie.

You must write to Hutchings and ask them to have my uniform ready in case I come down. I want the button a little lower down the collar and the blue cord doubled back. You see that makes it the correct style with the same amount of cord but only half as long. (Rather ambiguous?) Brennie."



**Brennie Gough, 1898-1915**

The Second letter, 5<sup>th</sup> March, is to "Dear little Marj" (his sister):

*Thanks very much for your letter. I could not think what had happened as I had not heard since Sunday, however all's well that ends well.*

*It is awfully good of you and Audrey to remember poor little me so kindly and I must look around for something to bring home with me when I come. You will see from my last letter written yesterday that I am uncertain about coming home. As I started by talking of your kindness to me I will continue. It would be as well to get the pictures framed before sending them here because unframed they are bound to*

*get dirty. It is not like being home where everything is kept clean. Mother has plenty of money belonging to me so if you can obtain it from her I shall be your life-long debtor.*

*I ended my last letter when we got into the Channel but nothing of interest happened afterwards. Directly we left the North Sea we ran into the fog again - thicker than ever this*

*time and we were driving through with engines slow all night. At about 9 o'clock but for a piece of luck we should have run clean through a small tramp. She was running full speed right across our bows but happily for her the fog lifted for about a minute so we had time to alter course. It was a mad thing for her to do. She was going about 7 knots and blowing no whistle or other signal. However we cleared her all right. At 6 a. m. next morning I woke to find us anchored at the mouth of the river having been there since 2 a.m. We stayed till nearly 8 o'clock when the fog lifted a wee bit and we were able to make the river. At the Hook the weather signals showed us we were in for fog up the river and it was only too true. It took us 4 hours to do 12 miles. We were going dead slow one minute then stop as it got thicker again. Directly it cleared it was half speed right up to the river with the whistle blowing every half minute or so. During that 4 hours I was stuck up on the bridge feeling like a frozen doll. In the end we managed to get docked about dinner time and I found 4 letters and a parcel waiting for me. Three of the letters were old ones from last trip and one for this trip dated Feb 9th. The parcel was from Auntie Fanny (whom I have written to thank) containing one or two books & some chocolate. Please remember me to Uncle Stanley, and many enjoyable rides may you have in his motor car. You might get him to drive you over here for a day. You do not mention what exam you have entered for. I suppose it is LRAM isn't it? You say the poultry yard will have grown when I come back. Are you watering it well or have you added a new one to it? When I came to the paragraph about the late Mr Baber's dance I expected you to say that Miss Forster had her skirt ripped. All the same it is very sad for the kids. I was given to understand that they were not very well provided for. Is that so? I hope you enjoy yourself at the Cauldwell's and at Uncle Stanley's. Now I think I will go and get some dinner so answer my dear sister, with much love and the best of wishes and heaps of kisses. Brennie."*

HMS "Bayano" on course between Glasgow and Liverpool was torpedoed 10 miles west of Corsewall Point, Galloway by SM U-Boat 27 and sank within minutes with the loss of 200 crew members with 26 saved. Her captain, Lieut. Cdr Guy was last seen standing on the bridge shouting "Good luck to you boys" as the ship disappeared beneath the waves.

THE NORTHAMPTON INDEPENDENT.

MIDSHIPMAN H. B. GOUGH.



Many old boys of the Northampton & County School, as well as a host of other local friends, will learn with sincere regret of the death of Midshipman H. B. Gough, who lost his life in the disaster to H.M.S. Bayano recently. The deceased who was only 17 years of age, was the son of Mr. E. Gough, of Hinks' Gate House, Keynsham, Somerset, formerly a master at the Northampton and County School, and who for some years conducted a private school on the Billing Road. Midshipman Gough, who was born at Northampton, was educated first at his father's school, and afterwards at Bristol Grammar School. He was appointed a midshipman in the Royal Naval Reserve, on the Bayano in November, and was the youngest officer on board. His eldest brother has a commission in the Somerset Light Infantry.

The inhabitants of the Isle of Man were deeply affected by the tragedy as many bodies were washed ashore there, though Brennie, aged seventeen, was not among them. He is commemorated on Portsmouth Naval Memorial, Panel 9, and remembered on the Memorial Gates at Keynsham.



## **Gallipoli**

***The Gallipoli campaign which commenced at the end of April was destined to last eight months until withdrawal in December/January 1916. The objective was to force the Turks out of the war and to open a supply route to Russia through the Black Sea. The Allies landed on the peninsula 25-26<sup>th</sup> April, the 29<sup>th</sup> Division, British, Indian and French forces at Cape Helles in the south and the Australian and New Zealand forces to the west in the area now known as ANZAC. There were further landings on 6<sup>th</sup> August with fighting on all three fronts, though the difficult terrain and stiff Turkish resistance led to the stalemate of trench warfare. The hottest known summer gave way to freezing winter followed by torrential rains with attendant mud and sickness. The troops were eventually evacuated in what was, ironically, the most successful part of the entire debacle.***

**3<sup>rd</sup> May, Gallipoli. Sergeant John James Henry SNELL, 1880-1915** was born at St Pancras, the son of John, “a packer of fine arts”, of Widcombe, Bath, and his wife, the former Charlotte Harris, of Queen Charlton. They had two other sons, Fritz and Arthur. In 1898, John J.H. enlisted in the Royal Marines at Devonport, and went to sea a year later aboard HMS “Vivid”. In 1901, with his next ship, HMS “Phoebe, he went to Australia. He was on leave in Bristol in 1905 when he married Alice Lilian Harris. Then, promoted Sergeant, he served aboard HM Ships “Crescent”, “Tamar” and “Royal Arthur”. He was ashore at East Stonehouse on census night 1911 with Alice and their son, Arthur, aged two. After further sea duty aboard HMS “Neptune” he returned to Plymouth in January 1913 where he remained until the outbreak of war. He left with the RM Brigade aboard HMS “Victory” for Malta in February 1915 and proceeded thence to the Dardanelles, Kum Kale and Sedd-el-Bahr, where the Brigade was to provide raiding parties in an attempt to demolish the Turkish guns. They subsequently landed at ANZAC Cove on the 25<sup>th</sup> April. The Turks counter attacked 2<sup>nd</sup> May following the Battle at Krithia; John Snell died the next day. He was buried at Twelve Tree Copse Cemetery in Grave Sp. Mem C. 364 and is remembered at St Anne’s (J.J.H Snell). His connection with the parish is not known, but may have been through his Queen Charlton kinfolk. Alice, his widow, is named by the CWGC though by 1921 she was living at The Plough Inn, Wolvercote, Oxford, with her second husband, Herbert Stockford. John Snell’s brothers, Fritz, of the Royal Navy, and Arthur, a machine gunner, both survived the War.

**4<sup>th</sup> June, Gallipoli. Private Herbert “Norman” LAIMBEER, 1894-1915,** was the elder of two children of George, born at Chepstow, and Ada, who were grocers in the Manchester area. Norman, a Territorial, was called up at the outbreak of war and landed at Gallipoli with the 6<sup>th</sup> Manchesters on 6 May 1915. He was killed less than a month later.

His death was reported on 5<sup>th</sup> July: *LAIMBEER, killed in action at the Dardanelles, Herbert Norman, only son of George Herbert and Ada Laimbeer of 47 Milner Street, Brooks Bar (late of Hale).*<sup>56</sup>

Norman has no known grave and is commemorated on Panel 158-170 of the Helles Memorial which is dedicated to the UK and Indian Forces who died in operations throughout the Gallipoli Peninsula, and to the Australians who died at Helles itself. The monolith is 30 metres high and can be seen by ships passing through the Dardanelles. Norman Laimbeer is remembered on the tablet at his local church, St Peter's, Hale.

Norman's parents and sister Florence came to live at 128 Winchester Road, Brislington where Mrs Laimbeer died in 1923 aged 55. Florence was married at St Luke's on 4 December 1924 to John Upton, a civil servant of 15 Hampstead Road. Her father was then a District Manager of Shell Mex at Stourbridge where the Uptons had joined him by 1937.



**7<sup>th</sup> July, Gallipoli. Private Howard SWIFT, c1894-1915** son of Albert, a carpenter, and Charlotte, nee Jones lived at Knowle in 1901 with his parents, brother Leslie and sister Hilda. After a brief sojourn in Brislington, the family migrated to New Zealand.

They were of Managtehi, Cambridge, NZ, when Howard enlisted as Private 6/1733 in the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion Canterbury Regiment. He embarked 17 April 1915, on one of three New Zealand transport ships, "Willochra", "Knight Templar" or "Waitomo" for Suez.

The Swift family remained in touch with local friends, one of whom placed this sad news item, WDP, 30<sup>th</sup> August: *"Ex Brislington Family's Bereavement. News has reached Mr Albert Swift of 17 West Street, Auckland, New Zealand that his son Howard, aged 21, was wounded on June 17 at the Dardanelles and died at Alexandria on July 7. Mr Swift and family formerly resided at Brislington."*

Howard Swift, who was buried at the Chatby Military & War Cemetery is commemorated on the Auckland Cenotaph.

**12<sup>th</sup> August, Gallipoli. Private Oliver Henry HARSE, 1891-1915**, was born at Bedminster, a son of Edward, a postman, and Mary, nee Branch. By 1901, Mr & Mrs Harse had moved to No. 45 (and later to 52) Churchill Road, Brislington, with four of their children, Percy, 12, Oliver, 10, Ellen, 7 and Ivor, 5, and three lodgers. All the children attended St Anne's School,

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<sup>56</sup> Manchester Evening News

but by 1911 the two older boys were at work, Percy as a hydraulic assistant and Oliver at a saw mill.

Oliver, who enlisted in the 7<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters in 1914, landed at Gallipoli, 11 July 1915. The earlier invasions in April had allowed the Allies a precarious foothold on the peninsula and the major commitment of the 7<sup>th</sup> was to attempt to take Chunuk Bair, a hill inland from Anzac Cove. They went into action, a thousand strong, on 7<sup>th</sup> August, but only 181 men emerged unscathed, the rest being killed or wounded. Chunuk Bair remained in Turkish hands.

Oliver Harse was killed on the 12<sup>th</sup> August, among 56 "other ranks" from the 7<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters and is among those named in the WDP's "Roll of Honour", 17<sup>th</sup> September. He has no known grave and is commemorated on Panel 101 - 104 of the Helles Memorial. He is remembered at St Anne's church (O.H. Harse) and at St Anne's School (O. Harse).

His brothers, Percy and Ivor both survived army service, though in May 1919, Ivor was discharged through "sickness". After the war he worked at Bristol docks and in 1939 lived at 81 Bloomfield Road with his wife Laura; Percy lived at Cathay, Bristol with his wife and family.

***October. The Bulgarians entered the war on the German side and an additional front opened up in Salonika.***

**29<sup>th</sup> October, at Sea. Private William TILLEY, c1875-1915,** was *en route* for Salonika when he died from an unspecified cause and was buried at sea. He was born in Brislington, the fourth child of George, a farm labourer, and Mary Tilley. In 1881 they lived at Fry's Hill with their six children, aged between 18 and one year: George, James, Mary, William, Thomas, and Alfred. Mary Tilley, their mother, died sometime during the next decade and by 1891, George senior was a colliery labourer at Aberystroth, South Wales, while George, junior, a 13 year old stable boy was a patient at Bristol Royal Infirmary. These are the only members of the family who can be located at this time.

William Tilley, who served in the SLI as a young man, married Ellen Louisa Perkins in 1897. By 1901 they lived at Woodland Cottages with a baby son and daughter, both of whom died in infancy. By 1911 they were at King's Arms Cottage, with five surviving children, Alfred, Ellen, Herbert, Dorothy and Ayliffe Edna, aged two. William, probably still in the Reserve, was recalled to the Colours, though it is a mystery why he was placed in the 6<sup>th</sup> Prince of Wales's Leinster Regiment. It is possible the army confused him with an Irishman of the same name and age who previously served in that Regiment. "Our" William was "a Private in the Leinsters" when the latest arrival, Clarice Joyce, who was born in May 1915 was christened at St Luke's on 11<sup>th</sup> August.

William, whose age is stated by the CWGC as “37” (though he was probably nearer forty) is remembered at St Luke’s, (W. Tilley). Tragedy came again to the Tilley family in 1929 when twenty year old Ayliffe was killed during a collision of two motor cycles.<sup>57</sup>

In 1911, William’s younger brother Alfred John, a tiler and plasterer, of 22 Pendennis Park (later 5 Montrose Avenue), aged 35 years, 8 months enlisted in the 41<sup>st</sup> Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery in December 1915. He and his wife Christianna, had four children, soon to be five, when the latest infant, Charles Edwin, was born in February 1917; he was christened at St Luke’s on 21<sup>st</sup> March. Alfred was wounded in action in 1918 which left him with a disabled right leg. In 1939 he was living at 2 Montrose Park with his wife and two of their children.

**Back to Flanders, 13<sup>th</sup> June. Corporal Sidney Adolphus ABBOTT, 1896-1915** lived in Brislington with his parents and younger brother, Leslie. The biography of his short life appears in De Ruvigny’s “Roll of Honour”:

*“Abbott, Sidney Adolphus, Corporal, 1722, Gloucestershire Regiment, (City of Bristol), son of Frederick Goodlett Abbott by his wife Alice, of 162 Wick Road, Brislington, the daughter of F. Trout, and grandson of Staff Quarter-Master Sergeant Adolphus Frederick Abbott, R.E. (who served in the Indian Mutiny), born Derby 30 July 1896, educated at Leeds and Brislington; was a car conductor; joined 4<sup>th</sup> Gloucestershire Territorials in 1912, volunteered for foreign service on the outbreak of war. Went to France 30 March 1915; was promoted Corporal for an act of gallantry on 9<sup>th</sup> May when he went with a small party to lay planks on to the barbed wire in front of the German trenches. Killed in action 13<sup>th</sup> June being shot by a German sniper at 5 a.m. as he was about to leave the dug-out. His Major wrote, [to his family] speaking of him as one of their best NCOs.”*

Sidney is named among others in the WDP’s “Roll of Honour”, 8 July 1915: “Gloucestershire Regt, 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion T.F., ABBOTT, 1722, Corpl, S.A. British Expeditionary Force.” He lies buried in Grave I.F.I. at the Lancashire Cottage Cemetery, Comines-Warneton, Hainaut, one of 256 graves of British and Empire servicemen and twelve German soldiers who died in the Great War. He is remembered at St Luke’s (S.A. Abbott) and the Congregational (Sydney Abbott). Alice Abbott died in the winter of 1916 aged 46, her death possibly hastened by grief. Frederick Abbott married secondly, Emma Bolley in 1920.

**13<sup>th</sup> June, Flanders, Private Alfred William RAWLE, 1895-1915** was one of a family of eleven children born to William Rawle, a stone mason, and his wife Emma Lavinia, nee Mulcahy. In 1911 they lived at 11 Pendennis Road with seven of the children, Alfred, 16, a butcher’s boy, Emmeline, 14, Reginald, 12, Mary, 10, Alma, 8, Marion, 7, and “Idol”, (Ida) aged four, all born in Brislington. (Although a Brummie, William Rawle, who filled out the form, had apparently embraced the notorious “Bristol L”!)

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<sup>57</sup> WDP 26.6.1929

Alfred was a regular soldier of the 1<sup>st</sup> Bedfordshires. The action which began 1 June 1915, up to his death on the 13<sup>th</sup> is vividly portrayed in the immediacy of the Regiment's War diary:

*"1 Jun 1915 - Hill 60 Battn. moved into trenches at Hill 60 relieving 1st Dorset Regt. Casualties 3 wounded.*

*2 Jun 1915 - Things have been very quiet in these trenches recently, but enemy shelled Head Quarters & railway cutting at intervals during day & night, with 4.9 howitzers. Casualties slight, 2 killed, 3 wounded.*

*3 Jun 1915 - Quiet day. Casualties - 7 wounded.*

*4-5 Jun 1915 - Situation normal 1 killed, 7 wounded.*

*6 Jun 1915 - Some of our trenches shelled accurately by 15 prs. Parapets brought down on self & other officers on two occasions.*

*7 Jun 1915 - Two trench howitzers under R.A. supervision brought up to trenches & opened fire on German machine gun positions. Casualties - 11 men wounded.*

*8 Jun 1915 - Hd.Quarters & railway cutting shelled with howitzers. Casualties - 2 killed, 21 wounded.*

*9 Jun 1915 - Enemy used rifle grenades effectively against 39 trench. Hd.Qrs. & railway cutting shelled by howitzers at 7 pm. Heavy rain & thunderstorm: trenches became flooded. Casualties - 6 wounded.*

*10 Jun 1915 - Trenches very wet. Hd.Qrs & cutting shelled by howitzers. Casualties - 1 killed, 2 wounded, 1 missing*

*11 Jun 1915 - Almost 20 yards of 38 trench blown in by shell fire. 4 wounded, 1 missing.*

*12 Jun 1915 - Hd.Qrs & railway cutting shelled by howitzers about 4.30 pm. 1 killed, 12 wounded.*

*13 Jun 1915 - Railway embankment in support of Hill 60 38 trench blown in by shell fire in places. Hd.Qrs & railway cutting shelled by howitzers. Battn. relieved at 9.30 pm by 1 Dorset Regt. & returned into support on railway embankment. Casualties – 2 killed, 12 wounded."*

Alfred Rawle, aged 20, is one of the "2 killed", on 13<sup>th</sup> June. He is named in the Bedfordshire Times & Independent: "W. Cade, 8116; P. Impey, 9485; H. Pritchard, 13624; A.W. Rawle, 13510 and (died of wounds) F. Monk, 8759."<sup>58</sup>

Alfred is buried in Grave I.D.15 at Larch Wood Railway Cuttings; he is remembered at St Luke's (A.W. Rawle) and the Congregational, (A. Rawle).

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<sup>58</sup> 16.7.1915

**16<sup>th</sup> June, France, Private Thomas William WILLIAMS, 1896-1915** was the second of eight children of William Williams, a railway shunter and Thirza, nee Pruett. In 1911 they lived at 24 Trelawney Road, with their children Tom, Percy, William, Doris, Reginald, Charles and Lillian.

It seems entirely likely that the Bedfordshire Regiment had been recruiting in Bristol just prior to the war and that Tom Williams and Alf Rawle were friends who signed on together. Unfortunately, they were placed in different battalions, Alf in the 1<sup>st</sup> and Tom, an errand boy in the Second.

The War Diary of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bedfords describes the terrible action in which Tom Williams died:

*"Orders received that an attack was to take place at 4.45 p.m. Battalion ordered to "attack I.4 from the North and assist the R.S.F. as opportunity offers". R.S.F. first objective was German 1st Line trench from H 3 to I.4 (inclusive) 4.45 p.m. the company advanced in successive platoons from the right, No 8 platoon under 2/Lt C.W. McFie, 3rd S. Staffs. R. leading. All the platoons entered the CRATER at the junction of SUNKEN Road trench & the Trench, once German at this time unoccupied & in a bad state of repair. The Company came under a considerable volume of rifle & Machine Gun fire as it topped the lip of the CRATER. A spirited fight at close range took place in the CRATER. The company formed a line in the crater as they were not able to push forward on account of the hostile bombs. 4/7296 Corporal Milne [Robert M. Milne, DCM] distinguished himself by throwing back all those that landed near him into the German trenches until he was wounded. 2/Lt Frank Powell seeing that his company was suffering heavy losses (2 officers killed, C.M.S. wounded & nearly 50% of other ranks.) 2/Lt Powell was twice wounded himself & some German reinforcements coming up - and also on account of there being no sign of Regiment which was attacking on the right or of our bomb throwers - gave the order for the Company to withdraw to their former trenches. This was carried out in good order under the direction of 2/Lt R.B. Gibson, 3rd S. Staffs.R. attached 2 Bedf. R. the only officer of the company left. 9638 Cpl T. Green [Thomas Green DCM] with about 9 men was on the left of & slightly separated from the rest on the Company. He saw the Company go back & remained a while longer but seeing he was in danger of being surrounded & that the Germans appeared to be getting ready for a counter attack, he withdrew his men safely, bringing in a wounded man himself, he went out later in the evening & brought some more wounded in."*

Thomas Williams, was one of the anonymous "heavy losses.....nearly 50% other ranks", on 16<sup>th</sup> June, just another bloody day in the war, notable for chaos and individual acts of courage. He could not have known that his friend Alf Rawle had died three days before at another part of the front. He is buried in Grave I.D.S at the Guards' Cemetery, Windy Corner, Cuinchy, Pas de Calais and is remembered at St Luke's, (T. Williams). He was eighteen.

In 1916, on the anniversary of his death his family placed an "In Memoriam" notice: WILLIAMS. *"In loving Memory of our dear son, Thomas William, son of Mr & Mrs Williams,*

*24 Trelawney Road, Brislington, Killed in Action 16 June 1915. Ever remembered by father, mother, sisters and brothers."*

**23<sup>rd</sup> May, France. Sapper Harry (Herbert) Tittley, 1893-1915**, born at Tipton, Staffordshire, son of John Henry and Mary Jane, may have run away from home to join the war. He turned up at Park Row in Bristol on 8 September 1914, and enlisted as a Sapper in the Royal Engineers, as *Herbert Tittley*, born at "Brislington, Gloucestershire" [sic] giving his age as 21 years, 8 months. He was 5'8" tall with a 35 inch chest, passed fit, received inoculations and was in France by 22 February 1915. Apart from a minor misdemeanour, "absent from his billet; apprehended by Military Police" there is nothing of note on his record until 23<sup>rd</sup> May when a tragedy occurred. He was severely wounded in an accidental explosion at "No. 8 Gas Charging Station", and died from multiple injuries and burns. He is buried at Bailleul, (a small French town near the Belgian border) as *Harry Tittley*, the same cemetery as the next named, Hubert Cornock.

**26<sup>th</sup> June, France, Messines, Corporal Hubert William CORNOCK, 1888-1915** was the eldest son of William, a Great Western Railway inspector and Mary Cornock, from Newland, Gloucestershire. He had a brother, Vivian, who died aged four in 1895 and a sister, Marjorie May, born in 1896. In 1901 the Cornock family plus Henry Dayer, Mary's brother, lived at 6 Kensington Hill. Little Marjorie died in 1903, aged five, but the full extent of the family loss is only revealed by the 1911 census: of William and Mary's *five* children only one, Hubert, then 22, (working for the GWR like his father) was still alive. Despite appearances, he had not gone straight from school into "a good job" on the railway, for in or about 1904, he had joined the army for short service. At the end of his time he was released into the Reserves, and 1908-1913 went for annual training each August. In 1914 he was another of the Bristol contingent who had left for camp in Somerset when war was declared. He was "re-embodied" as a temporary Lance Corporal on the 5<sup>th</sup> August.

Meanwhile, across the road from the Cornocks at no. 5 Kensington Hill, lived the Coleman family, Walter, an accounts clerk, his wife Ada and their daughter, Dorothy Mary. Hubert



must have known Dorothy all his life, perhaps a nuisance who had tagged along to boys' games, a schoolgirl whose pigtails he had pulled, right up to the present when he came marching home and found a fashionable young woman in a pretty hat. (Dorothy was a milliner.) Slow and steady, they began to walk out together and became engaged. He was on embarkation leave when they were married at St Luke's, on 22 March 1915 by the Rev Pugh, who would soon be in uniform himself.

***Hubert Cornock, 1888-1915***

After a few days honeymoon, Hubert returned to the war and was officially confirmed Corporal on 24<sup>th</sup> April 1915. Two months later, 26<sup>th</sup> June, he was killed in action at Messines, as noted in the obituary column of the WDP:

*“CORNOCK. In loving memory of Hubert William Cornock, 6<sup>th</sup> Gloucestershire Regiment, the dearly beloved husband of Dorothy Mary Cornock of the Newlands, Brislington, died of wounds received in France, June 26, aged 26 years. Interred at Bailleul Cemetery, France.*

*“In loving memory of Hubert William Cornock, much loved son of William & Mary Cornock of Kensington Hill, Brislington, aged 26 years.*

On 6<sup>th</sup> July, the family acknowledged the kind sympathy received from many friends. Belatedly, Herbert was listed in the WDP’s “Roll of Honour”: *“Cornock, Corpl H., Service No. 106. 6<sup>th</sup> Bn, Glos. Regt; previously reported wounded, died of wounds.”*

On the 9<sup>th</sup> July a letter from Lance-Corporal Charles Higby of Totterdown mentions Hubert Cornock. Higby was a former clerk in the Goods Section of the GWR, who was with the BEF, in the machine gun section of the 6<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters. It is a grisly tale, all gung-ho.

#### *“SIXTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE MAN’S THRILLING EXPERIENCE*

*“We are a good way behind the firing line now, and were marching four days. There are going to some sports tomorrow for the battalion including obstacle races, &c. The first of the office staff, GWR, has been killed, Corpl. Cornock, who was at the same desk as me at Temple Meads. Cornock was shot through the thigh. He was only married a few days before he came to France and his father is a travelling inspector on the GWR.*

*“The trenches we have just come out of were not so comfortable as the first lot we occupied. At midnight, three of us were asleep in the dug-out when there were three terrific explosions. Just then the sentry came along to give the alarm and we all three made a jump for the door and got jammed. However, we soon got out and got the iron-plates and sand bags away, also getting the machine-gun ready. There was one continual rifle fire and big explosions.*

#### *“A NARROW ESCAPE”*

*“No. 2 gunner and myself were looking over the gun-sights when one of those explosive bullets exploded right between us, and made us deaf for five minutes. It was the narrowest squeak I have had up to the time of writing. The Germans kept this up for an hour. It turned out afterwards that a wire-cutting party of the Worcester Regiment who were in the next trench met a bomb-throwing party of the Germans, and then the fun began. The Germans threw their bombs and killed the officer of the Worcesters, also wounding four men. A sergeant of the German detachment got lost and came into the Worcester’s trench by mistake. However, he did not escape, for a member of the Worcesters, who had fought in*



*the South African campaign, caught him in the neck with his bayonet, and hooked him over the parapet and three others pounced on the German and finished him."*

In the early months of the war many letters from the front were re-published in the local paper, though more usually they were from officers and padres with words of comfort to bereaved families. The telegram boy on his bicycle bringing the bad news of a loved one killed, wounded or missing in action, is a potent image, though generally only the relatives of officers were contacted in this way. The families of the rank and file were notified by letter. The letters came first in a trickle, but as casualties became a flood the public reports were less frequent. By the last year of the war they had all but ceased.

To young Higby it was still a game. For the Cornock family the grief remained raw. "In Memoriam" notices were posted for several years on the anniversary of Hubert's death: *"awaiting a joyful resurrection" ..... "today recalls sad memories"*.

Hubert is buried in Grave: I.D.50 at the Communal Cemetery Extension at Bailleul, five kilometres south west of Ieper (Ypres). He is remembered at St Luke's (H.W. Cornock).

As to his parents, their obituaries hint at lives passed in shadow. William died in 1934: *"CORNOCK. Nov 1, at 513 Bath Road, William, the beloved husband of Mary Cornock, suddenly aged 83 years. No flowers by request."* And 8 December 1941: *"CORNOCK, Mary, 94 Howard Road, widow of William, (late of Brislington) passed away December 6, at a nursing home, aged 83. Rest in Peace. No mourning, no flowers."* In 1972, Dorothy Mary Cornock who had remained a widow, died at Weston-super-Mare aged 79.

The hitherto enthusiastic Lance-Corporal Charlie Higby, aged 23, formerly of the GWR, son of Mr & Mrs J. Higby of 17 Upper Street, Knowle, died of wounds on 21 September 1917. He is buried at the Loker Hospice Cemetery, Flanders.

**6<sup>th</sup> July, Flanders, Private Charles Henry BAKER, 1894-1915**, the third child of John and Caroline, nee Hewitson, was baptised at St Luke's on 5 August 1894. John Baker was a stockman at Hicks Gate Farm in 1901, but a few years later the family moved to Little Hams, Keynsham. Charles, a farm labourer, was one of many local boys who went to Bath to join the SLI at the outbreak of war. He was in Flanders by 1915, and was killed in action at Ypres, aged 20. He is buried at the Talana Farm Cemetery among seven named members of the SLI and one unknown man, who died the same day. He is named among the dead of the Regiment in the WDP's *"Roll of Honour"*, 31 July, 1915. Charles' younger brother **Ernest Stanley BAKER** of the 6<sup>th</sup> SLI, also formerly of Brislington, was killed in action, 16 September, 1916, aged 19. The brothers are remembered on the Memorial Gates at Keynsham.

**9<sup>th</sup> August, Flanders, Sergeant Major William Henry GAMLIN, c1870-1915** was born at Wellington, Somerset to William, a carpenter, and Elizabeth Gamlin. He may have been encouraged to enlist by John Webber, a private in the 14<sup>th</sup> Regiment, who in 1881 was staying with his next door neighbour. Perhaps dazzled by John's red coat and tales of

derring-do, William joined up the 3<sup>rd</sup> SLI at Taunton on 16 December 1886, insisting he was eighteen. After service in Gibraltar, he returned home and married Ellen Lane in 1894. His wife “followed the Regiment”, giving birth to Nellie, Willie and Jessie, variously at Devonport, Guernsey and Aldershot. In 1901 with William in South Africa during the Boer War and with children aged 5, 3, and 2 years old, Ellen lived in lodgings at Taunton, obliged to work in a silk factory. By 1911, the couple had five children, and William was “in Reserve”, eking out a living selling insurance. He was recalled in August 1914 to the 6<sup>th</sup> SLI and landed in France, 21 May 1915. The 6<sup>th</sup> was engaged at Hooze in Flanders when the Germans used flame throwers for the first time and again at a second attack on Bellewaarde. William was wounded, possibly in one of these actions and was taken to hospital where he died on 9 August 1915. His death was reported on 18<sup>th</sup> August by the Western Daily Press:

*“Mrs Gamlin of Ashleigh Avenue, Bridgwater has been notified by the War Office of the death of her husband Company Sergt-Major H. Gamlin which took place in Boulogne General Hospital as the result of wounds received in action. He leaves a widow and five children, the eldest being a sergeant in the 5<sup>th</sup> Somersets. Much sympathy is felt for them all in their bereavement.”*

William’s South African Service, Good Conduct and Long Service medals are listed by the CWGC which names his parents William and Elizabeth Gamlin of Golden Hill, Wiveliscombe and his wife, Ellen of 55 Churchill Road, Brislington. He is buried in Grave VIII.B.70 at Boulogne Eastern Cemetery, and is remembered at St Anne’s (W.H. Gamlin) and St Andrew’s church Wiveliscombe. His son, William Charles Gamlin who enlisted 5 September 1914 served in the SLI and the Royal Engineers and rose to the rank of Colour-Sergeant. He survived the war and was demobbed in 1920. It is not known how long Ellen Gamlin lived in Brislington; by 1939 she had returned to Taunton.

**13<sup>th</sup> August, at Sea. Scullion Percival Harold STEDEFORD, 1887-1915** was the second of five sons of William Stedeford, a bootmaker, and his wife Clara who in 1901 lived at 21 Bush Street, Barton Hill. Herbert, the eldest, worked at the Western Cotton Mill and Percival, then aged 13, had the unusual job of “a blind man’s guide”. The younger boys, Francis, 12, and Louis, 8, were both at school. Clara Stedeford died aged 43 in 1906 and five years later the widowed William had moved to 141 Bloomfield Road, with his youngest son, Leslie, aged nine. On census night in 1911, Percy, 24, was a steward, aboard a Bristol steamer, the



“Hasso” which was tied up in harbour at Fowey, Cornwall.

A few years later Percy joined the crew of the “Royal Edward” a passenger ship belonging to the Canadian Northern Steamship Company. Despite his lowly rank, “Scullion”, he must have believed this was a

step up from the little cargo ships of the Channel ports.

At the outbreak of war the "Royal Edward" was commandeered to transport British and Empire troops as required. On 28 July 1915, 1,367 officers and men, reinforcements for infantry regiments and medics of the RAMC, embarked at Avonmouth for Gallipoli. After a short stop at Alexandria on 10<sup>th</sup> August, the "Royal Edward" sailed for Lemnos, a staging point of the Dardanelles. On the 13<sup>th</sup> she passed the British Hospital Ship "Soudan" going in the opposite direction. From over a mile away the Captain of U-Boat 14, Heinz von Heimburg saw both ships and following the rules of war allowed the "Soudan" to pass unmolested but then launched a torpedo at the "Royal Edward" which took a direct hit in the stern and sank within six minutes with a huge loss of life. Percy was among those drowned. He is commemorated on the Merchant Navy Memorial at Tower Hill, London, one of over 12,000 merchant seamen lost at sea in WW1. His parents are named by the CWGC as William and the late Clara Annie Stedeford of 141 Bloomfield Road. He is recorded among other Bristol seamen in the "Shirehampton Book of Remembrance".

William Stedeford died at home on 13 October 1919 aged 62. In World War Two, Leslie Stedeford, his youngest son was an able seaman aboard the ss."Montreal City", belonging to the Bristol City Line, part of Atlantic Convoy ON152 when she straggled behind the rest. She was torpedoed on 21 December 1942 with the loss of all 40 crew. Percy and Leslie Stedeford are commemorated on the Merchant Navy Memorial at Tower Hill. Neither is remembered on our War Memorials.

**1<sup>st</sup> September, at Sea. Ordinary Seaman (Painter) GEORGE JOSEPH SOBEY, 1883-1915** was born at King's Town, (now Dun Laoghaire), Ireland, the son of a British soldier, John Sobey, formerly of the Artillery, who had been at Gibraltar in 1861<sup>59</sup> and Mary his wife. Four of their children were born in Ireland, the next five in Plymouth and the youngest two in Brislington. In 1891, John, by then a labourer, and Mary, 49, were living at Fry's Hill, with the younger members of the family, aged between 19 and six years old: John, Elizabeth, Caroline, Sarah, Harriet, George and James. Within the next ten years they moved to 4 Pendennis Road where John senior died in 1901.

In 1903, James, 18, the youngest member of the family, signed on for 12 years in the Royal Navy. He served with "indifferent" conduct, being confined to cells on occasions mostly for unspecified misdemeanours, but once for "smuggling". Nevertheless he went safely through the war and survived to receive his gratuity and the appropriate medals when it was all over.

On the 13 January 1910, George followed his brother, and signed on at Portsmouth giving his date of birth as 1 May 1888, 5 years less than his correct age: perhaps the Navy preferred younger men? A painter by trade, he was 5 feet 4 inches tall, with a 36 inch chest, dark hair and grey eyes. He might just as well have stayed in Brislington, for rather than

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<sup>59</sup> World Wide Army Index

seeing the world he spent the first three years of his service in Liverpool – painting ships! He served on HMS “Victory II” from January to September 1910 and was in port until 13 March 1913. Then at last, he went to sea with HMS “Victory II”, then with “Thetis” and “Fearless”. He seems a steady type, and unlike his flighty brother, his conduct throughout was “very good”.



HMS “Fearless”, his last ship, was an Active Scout Cruiser which led the flotilla at Heligoland Bight on 28 August 1914, in the first Naval engagement of the War; George Sobey participated. A year later, on 1 September 1915, he was drowned in a tragic accident, falling overboard when “Fearless” collided with another ship, the “Hydra”.

This incident may have been down to the fog of war, but it was not the only accident in which “Fearless” was involved. On 31 January 1918 due to “adverse weather and incompetence”, she rammed a submarine, “K17” which sank in a few minutes though most of the crew managed to jump overboard. This relatively happy outcome turned to tragedy, for at this point the 5<sup>th</sup> Battle Squadron passed through and unaware of what had occurred cut down the men who were struggling in the water. In the ensuing melee, another sub, “K7” sank with all her crew. In all 106 men died. The subsequent courts martial were kept quiet to avoid giving the Germans a propaganda coup. The affair, near Anstruther harbour in Fife, became known in the Navy (with black humour) as the Battle of May.<sup>60</sup>

George Sobey, “killed or died by means other than disease, accident or enemy action” was buried at Dalmeny Parish Cemetery, South Queensferry, West Lothian. Mary Sobey, then of Grove Lodge, was officially told of the death of her son. She survived him by just over a year and was buried at St Luke’s on 22 December 1916 aged 69. George Sobey is remembered at St Luke’s and the Congregational Church, (G.J. Sobey) and St Anne’s, (G. Sobey).

**15<sup>th</sup> October, France, Vermelles, Sergeant Bertram Howard Anthony APSEY, 1895-1915** and his sister Dorothy, three years older, were the children of Joseph, a gas fitter, and Kate Maria, nee Townsend. By 1911, 15 year old Bertram was a waiter at the University & Literary Club, 20 Berkeley Square, Clifton, where he “lived in” under the tutelage of Head Steward Albert Green, a Royal Navy Pensioner.

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<sup>60</sup> The Island of May is a now nature reserve. I visited with my family in 2014, but at that time I was unaware of the horror that took place in the vicinity. It is not mentioned in the publicity literature.

Bertram, possibly a Territorial, joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Oxford and Buckinghamshire Light up early in the war and was soon promoted, Lance Corporal, then Sergeant. He served with distinction: "mentioned in despatches". Following the decisive action at the first Battle of Ypres in 1914, his battalion, *"the 2<sup>nd</sup> Oxforas participated in many of the bloody campaigns which typically resulted in extreme casualties for little strategic gain."* Bertram, aged 20 was killed in action and is buried in Grave C. 9 at the Quarry Cemetery, Vermelles beside seven others from the battalion and one man from the West Surreys who died with him.

His death was announced on 23<sup>rd</sup> October: *"APSEY. Killed in the trenches in France, Oct. 15, Bertram H. Apsey, only son of Joseph Apsey and beloved nephew of Thomas F. Apsey. He was in active service from the beginning of the War and mentioned by Sir John French in Nov. last."*

The CWGC names Bertram's parents, Joseph and Kate of "Hill Tops", Birchwood Road, St Anne's Park, where they were still living in 1939. Bertram's bereaved uncle, Thomas Farnham Apsey, born c1859, an accountant, lived at Greenbank.

## **1916: Attrition.**

### ***The (still) indefatigable Mrs Pearce***

In January, starting off as she meant to go on, Elizabeth Pearce donated *"another new gramophone"* for the men at the front, in response to a plea in the Daily News from Corporal A. Dalton of the Royal Engineers. The WDP arranged transport, confirming the machine was on its way to the trenches. In March, she provided a melodeon for a soldier at Salonika and also supplied 250 packets of cigarettes for *"our wounded Bristol boys."* A month later she donated £10 towards entertaining sick and wounded soldiers, *"a remarkable example of individual effort"*. In May, she thanked all the kind friends who had patronised her sale of "patriotic handkerchiefs" in aid of "Comforts for Soldiers":

*"I am pleased to say that with the profits obtained I have sent to France 304 mufflers, 1,050 pairs of socks, 398 pairs of mittens, 1,576 packets of cigarettes, one gramophone, 56 records and two rugs, the whole at a cost of £104 14s 5d."*

A month later she supplied 600 eggs to Bristol Royal Infirmary, and 130 to Southmead Hospital, plus 240 pairs of socks. In November foul weather did not dampen her enthusiasm when on "Empire Day" she stood on Bristol Bridge with her collecting box and donated the proceeds, £40, between the Red Cross and the Hospital Sunday Society.

In January Brislington contributed £20, as "Help for the starving Belgians"; St Anne's Church donated their offertory to the Naval POW fund, one of a number of such donations; in March the Women's Social Hour sent four shillings each to twenty two Brislington men who were serving their country,<sup>61</sup> and in June, a Mr Walker of Brislington was among those who

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid 13.3.1916

collected money towards the purchase of “*cricket gear (bats, balls and wickets) for our Bristol men in France.*”<sup>62</sup> The terrible suffering of the horses at the Front was remembered with a flag day on 22<sup>nd</sup> July.

Horses and dogs were not the only animals that went to war. Pigeons were used extensively for carrying messages; under the Defence of the Realm Act they had to be licensed and placed at the disposal of the Government. Any others were likely to cause confusion and had to be destroyed. In January, Thomas Arthur Pitt Bickley, a pigeon fancier, of 119 Winchester Road, inadvertently became a bit player during a court case, the Crown versus Walter Holder. Bickley had sold some of his pigeons to Holder who was summonsed for keeping the birds without a permit. Holder told the court he had killed the two adult birds and set the three youngsters free. He was found guilty but was treated leniently as he had already attested and was awaiting the call to arms.<sup>63</sup> Mr Bickley’s greatest sporting success had taken place in 1911 when one of his birds crossed the Channel from Rennes, finishing third, one of only seven to make it home out of a flight of fifty two. It is not stated whether any of his champion pigeons ever went to war, though Bickley himself did so and was called into the Royal Engineers that year. He survived and we shall meet him again in 1919.

Special Constables such as John Scammell of 29 Sandholme Road, who had been recently sworn in, were needed to fill the gaps left by the regular policemen who had gone to war. They investigated petty offenders, like Percy Stadward, of 9 Edward Road, (later a Sapper in the Royal Engineers), the brother of Margaret Tyrrell, who was summonsed for showing “*a naked incandescent light*” from his house during the blackout. He was fined £1.<sup>64</sup>

Mary Elizabeth Norris (Mrs Batty), of Woodland House, born in 1910, watched “*Hundreds of soldiers, horses and lorries passing through the village. My home and many others were opened to the soldiers who were supplied with tea, coffee, cigarettes and sweets. Quite a few came to the house and enjoyed a bath – they often said they had not taken their clothes off for days! I think they had come from Avonmouth and were on their way to Salisbury. Some would stay all day, awaiting movement orders.*”<sup>65</sup>

***March: A Military Service Act was passed which imposed conscription on all single men aged between 18 and 41, but exempted the medically unfit, clergymen, teachers and certain classes of industrial worker.***<sup>66</sup>

A ribald song signifies the dismay at this announcement:

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<sup>62</sup> WDP 7.6.1916

<sup>63</sup> WDP, 7.1.1916

<sup>64</sup> 15.1./26.1.1916

<sup>65</sup> Brislington Bugle, no. 12. Summer 1989

<sup>66</sup> Conscription was not applied in Ireland because of the 1916 Easter Rising, although many Irishmen had already volunteered and were fighting on the Western Front.

*I don't want to join the army; I don't want to go to war.  
I'd rather hang around Piccadilly underground  
Living off the earnings of a high born lady.  
I don't want a bayonet in my belly,  
I don't want my bollocks shot away.  
I'd rather stay in England, in merry merry England,  
And fornicate my bleeding life away.*

**May: A second Military Service Act extended conscription to married men.....**

..... although workers, or their employers, were able to appeal to a tribunal if their loss would cause undue hardship to the firm. Robertson's Jam Factory at Water Lane, was in dire straits of becoming "An Adamless Eden":

*"Fifty three of their men had joined the colours and all their employees of military age had attested. The employee for whom the company appealed was a most valuable man who could not be done without. The Government was urging them to make as much jam as possible."*

The indispensable man, unfortunately not named, was granted a Conditional Exemption.<sup>67</sup>

Some men refused to fight on moral, religious or political grounds; they were "Conscientious Objectors", otherwise "Conchies" and widely reviled for their beliefs which took a different kind of courage. Harry S. Webb, 26, a married man, is probably the unnamed "*printers' labourer of Brislington*" who was obliged to face a tribunal composed of magistrates, retired army officers and other "worthies" so that their objections could be assessed. The Tribunal decided that Harry had no grounds for objection and gave him 21 days in which to find work of national importance. This proved to be at British Dyes of Huddersfield, which had been turned over to military purposes, the manufacture of trinitrotoluene (TNT) and other dangerous substances used in munitions. Harry Webb worked there from 4 August 1916 until 18 October 1918, when his discharge, recorded with undisguised contempt, was "*a part of a general clear out of conscientious objectors who want to come home.*"<sup>68</sup>

Harry returned to his wife Elsie and to his job as a lithographic printer. In 1939, they were living at 61 Sandringham Road.

In April 1917, Brislington's second conscientious objector was summonsed. Thomas Richard Rawlings, a single man aged 29, of 40 Kensington Park Road was a member of the Plymouth Brethren who worked as a cashier for Post Office Telephones. His case was stated by the Appeals Tribunal, to be.....

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<sup>67</sup> WDP 13.5.1916

<sup>68</sup> WDP 27.6.1916 & database by Cyril Pearce, Imperial War Museum

*“..... very weak. He appealed for exemption on Christian lines that he had objected to war since he was a lad. Asked if he would do work for the Red Cross he said he would not mind if it was at the Railway Station. He was given 14 days to find work of national importance.”*

A month later, Thomas registered as a non-combatant in a non-fighting role. After the Armistice, he served with the 5<sup>th</sup> Northern Ambulances from March 1919 until January 1920,<sup>69</sup> most likely on burial duties, when the corpses of the slain were disinterred from different battlefield graveyards and reburied in the now familiar war cemeteries.

Francis John Oliver Clutterbuck, born at Thornbury in 1897, motor fitter, of 94 Repton Road, was the first Brislington man to object in a different way. He was *“An Absentee under the Military Service Act, last seen in Bristol, 12 October 1916.”*<sup>70</sup>

### ***The Church Lads' Brigade***

As in the previous year, the boys of the Brislington CLB were inspected in May by Major General Bradshaw<sup>71</sup>, with their new Lieutenant, E.C.J. Harris,<sup>72</sup> in command, though *“numbers were depleted because most of the officers and senior boys were away serving their country.”* The lads marched to a drum and fife band and demonstrated movements and positions for *“the attack”* in the presence of their Chaplain, Rev A.C. Harman, the vicar of Brislington.<sup>73</sup>

### ***An Accidental death***

Private Fred Butterfield was one of the 1914 recruits who had kinfolk in Brislington. (His relative was possibly Martha Lucy Butterfield, aged 66, of “independent means”, who lived at 11 Grove Park Road.) Fred, by occupation a “brass turner”, may have come to Bristol from his home in Manchester to work in our local brass industry. He enlisted in a reserve battalion, the 15<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters, and was in lodgings at 1 Providence Place, Redfield whilst awaiting the call. On 22nd May, he and a friend hired a boat which they took on the water at the Feeder Canal, but in trying to turn, both fell out. The friend, a civilian, managed to get to the bank, but Fred who could not swim, drowned despite attempts to rescue him.<sup>74</sup> He is buried in a war grave at Stretford, and is remembered on his local War Memorial.

### ***A Call to the Women***

At a meeting at the Grove Hall in June, a Mrs Boys made an eloquent appeal for women to do their bit by *“economising and cultivating every available space for vegetables, herbs and fruit, rearing poultry, pigs etc. and hoped that many would offer their services at the*

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<sup>69</sup> WDP 14.4./5.5.1917; database Cyril Pearce, Imperial War Museum.

<sup>70</sup> Police Gazette, 19.10.1916

<sup>71</sup> Ibid 26.2.1915

<sup>72</sup> Ibid 8.5.1916

<sup>73</sup> WDP 24.7.1916

<sup>74</sup> Shepton Mallet Journal, 26.5.1916



*neighbouring farms.*"<sup>75</sup> Mrs Alice Burt, the mother of Donald, the young sharp shooter, offered to keep a register of the volunteers. Mrs Bonville Fox, a diligent fund raiser for such organisations as the Star and Garter Homes was among those always "at the ready". She provided transport to collect the wounded to and from the entertainments at the Hall, as well as organising cars to ferry "the artistes" who performed there, but now she found her true vocation: the Women's Land Army. Following Mrs Boys' appeal, Mrs Bonville Fox was deputised by the Patriotic League to promote the idea of women working on the land and to combat prejudice against female labour. She established a training centre at Brislington House, ("one of the best training centres in the West"<sup>76</sup>), attended numerous meetings, drummed up recruits, requisitioned land for the plough, and sent the produce, crates of vegetables from the allotments to the hospitals.

Among the well-to-do women who worked on strips of land at Hampstead Road, were Mary Norris's mother Emma, and aunt, Miss Vowles, "*digging in their long skirts which some of them pinned up just above their ankles. I collected eggs in my pushchair from local farms and these were left at the Post Office for the Red Cross.*"<sup>77</sup>



**Mrs Bonville Fox, (nee Annie Danger)**

An anonymous correspondent calling himself "North Somerset" wrote to the Western Daily Press saying "We want a few more like Mrs Bonville Fox to put the truth to the six bob a week girls of the towns and convert them to 16 shillings-a-week red-cheeked country girls." A sceptical farmer wanting to know how women would handle heavy horses was rebuked by a young lady who said "I can drive a carriage, hunt with a blood horse. Surely I can drive a pair of cart horses? In a fortnight I will do it!"

By the end of the war when such work was no longer quite so novel, Mrs Fox arranged for fifty girls to come to Heath Farm and Brislington House "to familiarise themselves with practical operations."<sup>78</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Ibid 4.2./26.6. 916

<sup>76</sup> "Bristol and the War" p316

<sup>77</sup> Brislington Bugle, no. 12. Summer 1989

In July, the Rev Pugh, now a Chaplain with the honorary rank of Captain, who had been “much missed” by the vicar, came home on a brief leave and preached the Sunday sermon at St Luke’s.

***Rev Pugh, right, in his military gear***



On 25<sup>th</sup> October, Mary Louise Betty Fox, aged 21, the only daughter of the late Bonville and Mrs Fox was married at the St Luke’s to Richard Hattersley Smith of Keighley, Yorkshire, of the family firm, George Hattersley & Sons Ltd, makers of power looms. Presumably Hattersley’s had been requisitioned by the MOD and Richard was in a reserved occupation; his brother, the best man, Captain T.L. Smith, was a holder of the Military Cross. Despite war austerity the wedding (in contrast to the Cooke-Hurle wedding of 1915) was a surprisingly lavish affair attended by many of Brislington’s elite. The bride wore a gown of ivory silk tulle embroidered with pearls and crystal beads over an underskirt of ivory charmeuse (a satin fabric) with a full court train and a veil of antique lace crowned with a wreath of myrtle. Round her neck was a diamond pendant, a gift from the bridegroom, and she carried a bouquet of lily of the valley and white heather. The honeymoon was spent in Cornwall.

In 1939, Betty and Richard Smith lived at Shoebridge House, Eastburn, Skipton, Yorkshire where the household was again geared up for war: Richard, MD of the family firm, was a Special Constable, Mary Louise, an auxiliary nurse and their daughter Susan, (Mrs Nickell-Lean) a member of the Auxiliary Territorial Service which later became the WRAC.

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<sup>78</sup> WDP 26.6.1915, 6.1.1917, 21.5.1917, 27.10.1917, 9.2.1918



***The Fox Family at Brislington House in July 1919: Edith & Tom Fox are standing at the back; Betty Hattersley Smith with Duncan, Francis Elliot Fox, Mrs Bonville Fox, Richard Hattersley Smith with Susan.***

### ***Some Corner of a Foreign Field***

Sixty six servicemen from Britain and the Empire were buried at Arno's Vale in 1916 and ten at Holy Souls next door. The funerals of some of the Empire soldiers were reported in the press. Private Peter Dupras, 44, of Ontario, of the 41<sup>st</sup> French Canadian Regiment died from his wounds on 12<sup>th</sup> May. After a Requiem Mass at St Mary's on the Quay his coffin was carried to the cemetery on a Royal Naval gun carriage drawn by men of the 9th Siege Battery to Holy Souls where the Last Post was sounded.<sup>79</sup> On 1<sup>st</sup> August, Private John James Simpson, 33, of the Australian Imperial Force, from Victoria, died "*from grievous wounds*" at Bishop's Knoll Hospital, having "*given his life for the Empire*". The coffin draped in the Australian flag moved through the City watched by respectful crowds. The interment was attended by nursing staff and over 80 wounded soldiers who were conveyed to Arno's Vale by charabanc.<sup>80</sup> On 14<sup>th</sup> August, the gravely injured Private John Roach of the AIF, died at Bishop's Knoll Hospital. After Requiem Mass at the Pro-Cathedral the cortege moved with due respect through the City to Holy Souls accompanied by a contingent of wounded soldiers in Red Cross cars. One of the wreaths read "*with sympathy and respect for a gallant soldier*".<sup>81</sup> On 20<sup>th</sup> August, Lance/Sergeant George Newman of the 18<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry died at Beaufort War Hospital. His funeral service at Temple Church was followed by

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<sup>79</sup> *ibid* 16.5.1916

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid*, 4.8.1916

<sup>81</sup> WDP 18.8.1916

interment at Arno's Vale. On 4<sup>th</sup> September, Private Royal Edward Penna, 22, of the 27<sup>th</sup> AIF, from South Australia, also died at the Beaufort, *"Far, Far from Home"*. His funeral at the Old King Street Chapel was attended by wounded comrades, sympathetic citizens and nursing sisters, after which the coffin was taken to Soldiers' Corner at Arno's Vale on a gun carriage drawn by cadets of the 6<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters under Captain Edward Watts. On 19<sup>th</sup> October, Private Joseph Straker, 29, of the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Mounted Rifles, (son of Joseph and Hannah, of Saskatchewan) died of his wounds at the Beaufort. His funeral (again at King Street) was attended by 30 wounded soldiers from the hospital. The "Dead March" was played and the coffin conveyed to Arno's Vale by gun carriage where the Last Post was sounded.<sup>82</sup> On 23<sup>rd</sup> November, Private William Ham, 43, of Victoria, of the AIF who had been wounded in France had *"seemed to be making good progress but heart trouble which suddenly came on proved fatal. There was a short service at the chapel of the Royal Infirmary then the coffin covered with the flag of the Commonwealth was conveyed to Soldiers' Corner on a gun carriage preceded by a firing party. The graveside was attended by wounded comrades and nursing sisters."*<sup>83</sup>

Between 25<sup>th</sup> February and 31<sup>st</sup> December another five Australians and six Canadians were buried at Arno's Vale, and three Canadians at Holy Souls. These funerals do not appear to have been reported in the press.

### ***Some of our Tommies***

Frederick Charles Hemmens of the 15<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters, who had joined up in 1914 was by now less keen, in fact it had been downhill all the way: *"Military character: Indifferent"*, his officer recorded, *"addicted to absences; several times absent"*. In view of the terrible fate of some poor souls who went AWOL he was one of the lucky ones. He was discharged 18<sup>th</sup> February, *"no longer fit for war service"*.

A marriage was announced in February between *"Driver Victor John Murrow, ASC (MT) eldest son of Mr A. Murrow, stationmaster of St Anne's Park, and Laura Frances Smith, youngest daughter of the late George Smith of Box. The bridegroom had a short leave after 14 months active service in France with the Mechanical Transport. Prior to joining he was a taxi driver with Bath Garage Co. He returned to the front on Thursday last."*<sup>84</sup>

Victor, born 1887, son of the splendidly named Aristarchus, and Sarah Murrow attested at Grove Park, 18 December 1914 and served in France from 1915 until 28 July 1916. He was discharged to 38 Langton Road in June 1919 *"sober, reliable and a good driver"* but with 40% disability. In 1939, he was a taxi driver, still at the same address with Laura who was a partner in a grocery store, and their granddaughter, Margaret. He died in 1974.

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid 25.10.1916

<sup>83</sup> Ibid 28.11.1916

<sup>84</sup> Bath Chron 22.2.1916

Joseph Verchild, an insurance agent, aged 30 years and 7 months, then living at Shepton Mallet, enlisted on 10<sup>th</sup> May at Taunton in the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion SLI for the duration of the war. He was 5 feet 4¾ inches tall and weighed 116 lbs. His wife, formerly Elsie Mabel Freestone, of Brislington, returned “home” to 15 Bellevue Road with their daughter Christine, aged eight. A son, Bertram, was born on 4 August 1916 and the children were christened together at St Luke’s shortly afterwards. Joseph went to France with the BEF on 30<sup>th</sup> November where he remained until severely wounded at Arras by a gunshot to his left arm on 23 April 1917. Promoted Corporal, he resumed service in France from 19 April 1918. Following the Armistice he was gazetted 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant and remained in the army until demobbed on 18 July 1919, when he was awarded the silver badge. He returned to the insurance industry and in 1921 was appointed Superintendent for the Bridgwater District of “the Pru”.<sup>85</sup> In 1939 he and Elsie were living at Weston-super-Mare with their younger son Donald, born 1924. Elsie died in 1961 at Weston and Joseph in 1963 at Trowbridge.

On 7<sup>th</sup> June, Gunner Thomas Henry Quantock of Brislington, no. 6382, of the Royal Garrison Artillery was listed as “wounded: Shock-Shell [sic] at Kut-el-Amara,” in the WDP’s casualty list. Tom was a Londoner, born at Kentish Town, 19 February 1873, who first joined up in 1891 aged 18 years, 8 months for 12 years “short service”, seven as a Regular with five in Reserve. Demobbed by 1901, he was a railway labourer, lodging with his brother William and family at 18 Sandgate Road. Married by 1911, he was a coal trammer, resident at 58 Repton Road with his wife Ada and their four children. He was recalled to the RGA on 8 May 1915, aged 42 years and 2 months old.

On 2 January 1918, presumably to save him from abuse, he was issued with a badge “to be worn on the right breast” and a certificate confirming he was on the casualty list of the RGA, shell-shock not having an outward manifestation. He remained in the army until officially discharged, 15 January 1919. He was still at Repton Road, (GWR, retired), in 1939 with Ada and their son, also called Thomas Henry, a clerk. Thomas Quantock died in 1957 aged 84.

On 21<sup>st</sup> June, Frederick Clarke, 24 years, 6 months old, 5 feet 2 inches tall, a foreman at St Anne’s Farm, was conscripted into the 16<sup>th</sup> Training Reserve, and subsequently transferred to the King’s Royal Rifles. His wife, the former Elizabeth Thatcher, was then about six months pregnant. Fred’s first army record shows that he went sick on 22<sup>nd</sup> August and was in hospital for nine days with “gastric irritation”. Three weeks later, 21<sup>st</sup> September, his son Frederick Francis Beaumont was born, and Elizabeth wrote to the Army requesting the five shillings per week that she was now due. Fred was a reluctant soldier, troubled and troublesome from the beginning and we shall hear of him again.

By July this year, Herbert Dancey, an “early bird” of 1914, was now a Company Quarter Master Sergeant in the 12<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters. He sent home a group photograph of the 7<sup>th</sup> Platoon, B. Company, “Bristol’s Own in Fighting Kit” which was

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<sup>85</sup> WDP 29.5.1917, 24.12.1921

*“taken within the sound of the guns and shows what pretty objects we make in the new steel helmets. Although [they] are heavy and uncomfortable the advantages are very great as in this Company there have been at least two instances in which the men owed their lives to them, in one case having several holes in the helmet and the other only slightly injured. This escape was very remarkable as a grenade burst on the parapet of a trench only a few feet away. At these critical times the censorship is very strict which prevents us giving the people at home an interesting account of our doings.”*<sup>86</sup>

Incredible as it sounds, in the first years of the war men went into battle wearing only leather or woollen caps. Steel cap liners had been introduced by the French in 1915 when a General Adrian noted that a soldier under his command (a resourceful Gallic Baldrick?) survived a shot to the head because he wore his metal food bowl underneath his cloth cap. (If this story is not true then it should be.) It was rumoured that some British commanders thought that such helmets *“would make the men go soft”*, but reason prevailed and by early 1916, 250,000 had been issued to the British army. Herbert was right about the discomfort: the helmets weighed about one and a quarter pounds (59kgs), were too shallow, the rims too sharp and the lining slippery, but they saved lives and modifications soon followed.

It is generally believed that minor “Blighty wounds”, were welcomed. On 29<sup>th</sup> July, Stephen Ormonde Sims, (another of the 1914-ers), serving at the front was treated for a gunshot wound through the shoulder. He was sent home to recuperate and re-embarked for France in April 1917 as part of the “New Army” and served until discharged to the Reserve on 22 March 1919. He returned to “Brookside” Brislington after the war, but later moved to Essex following his marriage.

On 19<sup>th</sup> August, F.G. Harris, no. 3235 of the Gloucestershire Regiment, stated to be “of Brislington” is named by the WDP among those *“wounded with local regiments”*.

Meanwhile, Fritz Bartelt, who had been in India with the SLI since 1914, fell seriously ill with food poisoning. Sadly, he died in hospital in Calcutta, aged 29, on 12<sup>th</sup> September. He left a widow and two sons, Richard and Peter.

His body was repatriated to Corston where he was buried at All Saints Church on 14 January 1917. His father Mr Friedrich Bartelt presented a peal of eight bells to the church in his memory and he is remembered on an individual plaque dedicated to *“a devoted and loving son, husband and father”*, with a text from I Corinthians XV 54: *“Death is swallowed up in Victory”*. He is also commemorated on the Corston village War Memorial.

On 1<sup>st</sup> November, Edward Toon, another of those who had enlisted in 1914, was discharged with neurasthenia, *“very shaky and erratic in his walking and other movements. No longer physically fit for War Service.”* He wrote to his C.O., of the Lancashire Fusiliers, with the following plea:

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<sup>86</sup> WDP 20.7.1917

*"I understand there is a badge issued to discharged soldiers. I would be grateful if you would send me one."*<sup>87</sup>

..... from which it is evident that the despicable harpies were still out and about with their abominable white feathers.

Edward survived to become Chief Cashier at a Bristol Shipping Company; in 1939 he lived at 133 Repton Road with his wife Gertrude and family. He died in Bristol in 1977 aged 84.



During this year, a boy of sixteen, George Baden Powell, who was born in 1900, ran away from home in Brislington and joined the Warwickshire Regiment. He served in France and after the Armistice was in Cologne with the Army of Occupation. He returned home with a souvenir, one of the notorious spiked German helmets! Unfortunately the family do not know what became of it. George became a master butcher and inherited the family business from his parents George and Emily at 65 Sandy Park

Road, which is still a butcher's shop to this day. He died at the early age of forty eight. .

### ***Missing***

An occasional plea conveys the anxiety of those who waited at home for news:

*"Mr Mullis of 46 Montrose Avenue has received information that his only son Walter has been missing since October 9<sup>th</sup>."*<sup>88</sup>

Walter, a school teacher was born in 1881 and in 1901 lived at Hemplow Cottage with his father Benjamin, a gardener, mother Emma, and sister Rhoda. He made the adventurous decision to emigrate and left Brislington for Quebec in 1910. When war broke out he joined the 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Infantry and went with them to France. At the time of his father's plea of 8<sup>th</sup> December, he was alive, but was a POW in Germany; he had suffered an appalling injury: a gunshot wound to the left side of his lower jaw. In 1917 a few short words record his progress: *"convalescence slow; no packages; letters received."* Nevertheless he survived. In 1939, described "army pensioner, married", he was recorded at the Littlemore Hospital, Bullingdon, Oxford. He died in 1945.

Benjamin Mullis died aged 75 on 16 December 1926, "beloved husband of Emma", and "beloved friend of Joseph Henry Chown".<sup>89</sup>

<sup>87</sup> Surely the same badge as that issued to Quantock? Both lived in Repton Rd, and perhaps one advised the other.

<sup>88</sup> HBM 8.12.1916

A letter to the Hull Daily Mail, 5<sup>th</sup> December, requested: *“Any information concerning 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. F.W. Drew of the East Yorkshire Regiment first reported missing, then later killed, Sunday, November 5<sup>th</sup> 1916, when in charge of his Company will be gratefully received by Alfred J. Pugsley, 12 Hampstead Road, Brislington.”*<sup>90</sup>

Freddie Drew, an old boy of Colston’s School, was killed on the Somme aged 33, and is remembered on the Thiepval Memorial. It is not known whether his friend and contemporary, Alfred Pugsley received a reply. Mr Pugsley was a Physics Master and the author of an obscure tome, *“Dewponds in Fable and Fact”*. In 1939 he was still living at 12 Hampstead Road; he died aged 80, in 1963.

### ***The Church Militant, 2.***



During July - August 1916, Rev Ignatius Jones of Brislington’s Congregational Church served as an honorary chaplain at a YMCA convalescent camp in France and sent regular letters home which were reproduced in the church magazine.

Magazine, No.8: *“Away to France after three weeks waiting.....military authorities deign no explanation for delay .....I am writing on board a ship full of officers and Tommies crossing the Channel, which is a silver streak on this glorious summer after noon.....though we all have our life jackets on...”*

No. 9: (August 5<sup>th</sup>) *“I am at last in blood stained France and on calm evenings we can hear the distant rumbling of the guns where so many of our brave boys are receiving their baptism of fire.....the King came within a hundred yards of our hut last week, and yesterday a German airship flew over us at a great height but did no damage”.*

To coincide with the second anniversary of the outbreak of war, Ignatius sent his observations to the Western Daily Press:

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<sup>89</sup> WDP 18.12.1926. J.H. was the father of W.G. Chown.

<sup>90</sup> Repeated on 11.12.16



*“Summer sun was glowing as we wended our way along the dusty road thronged with motor cars, lorries, pedestrians, military and civilian, nursing sisters with their red facings and long flowing white caps. Our destination was the English cemetery, God’s Holy Acre, a wood on one side, the silver sea on the other. The cemetery contains hundreds of our brave lads who have made the supreme sacrifice for King and Country. We had to resist the rising emotion at seeing the crowd of little mounds with two wooden crosses at the head, for each contained the bodies of two soldiers. I have never been enamoured of crosses as such but no symbol could be more fitting. Each grave was covered with flowers of many hues in soft muted colours and beyond us the sea glinted in the golden sunshine. At six o’clock the English General gave a brief speech referring to the 2nd anniversary of the war and paid a moving tribute to the boys who slept their long sleep. Never would they be forgotten and loving friends would tend their graves forever. The French Commandant placed a huge wreath, France’s tribute, to those who stepped forward to save the great republic in her hour of need, on the grave of a private soldier. Then a lone piper struck up “Flowers of the Forest” leaving many a strong man with a lump in his throat and tears in his eyes.*

*Five padres represented the different denominations including a Roman Catholic Priest and a Jewish Rabbi. The Rabbi gave a beautiful reading of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm. Around the cemetery a cordon of soldiers stood guard with a soldier at each grave holding a wreath of roses or carnations which on the signal was placed on top of the crosses.*



*Then I noticed the graves were facing west towards dear old Blighty. Are not all the boys’ thoughts at the last of home and heaven? A dear Brislington lad, a nurse told me, spoke in his last breath of his mother. As the haunting notes of the Last Post broke the stillness, the gathering filed away led by an Australian band in a quick march reminding us that though others fell in the bitter struggle we had to brace ourselves to fill the gaps and carry on to the victorious end.*

*One other striking incident: In the cemetery are Germans who died as well as our own. They had wreathes gently placed as well. I was proud of this sign of British chivalry. May it be a sign of a coming better day, a holy day of peace and international brotherhood.*<sup>91</sup>

### **Decorated**



**1<sup>st</sup> February**, France/Flanders: Company Sergeant-Major W.J. Smith, South Midland Royal Engineers, of 31 Sandhurst Road, was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal for his exploits in the field.

#### **CSM W.J. Smith**

**11<sup>th</sup> March**, France/Flanders, the DCM was awarded to A/Bombardier W.H. Ridler, no. 22425, 91<sup>st</sup> Trench Howitzer Battery, RGA for Conspicuous Gallantry.

*“He volunteered to bring ammunition across a bridge whilst under very heavy fire. He made several journeys across the bridge at a very critical time when the enemy were developing a counter-attack from the trenches.”*<sup>92</sup>

The Presentation was made in December 1917 at Reading, by Brigadier General E. A. W. Grove, CB, before a full military parade with a large assembly of officers and men of various regiments in attendance.<sup>93</sup>

William Henry Ridler was born in Bristol c1886 and was serving overseas when the census of 1911 was taken. He died, either killed in action or from disease, prior to the January 1918 edition of the St Luke’s church magazine which refers to him as *“the late Sergeant Ridler of 2 Sandringham Road.”*

**22<sup>nd</sup>/23<sup>rd</sup> July:** *“News has lately been received by Mr and Mrs Lambourn of 10 Grove Park Road that their son Lance-Sergt. Lambourn has been awarded the Military Medal for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty in the field on the night of 22<sup>nd</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1916. The 24<sup>th</sup> July was his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. At the outbreak of war he was at camp at Minehead being a corporal with the South Midland Field Ambulance RAMC (T).*

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<sup>91</sup> WDP 22.8.1916

<sup>92</sup> Citation, London Gazette C

<sup>93</sup> Reading Mercury 1.12.1917



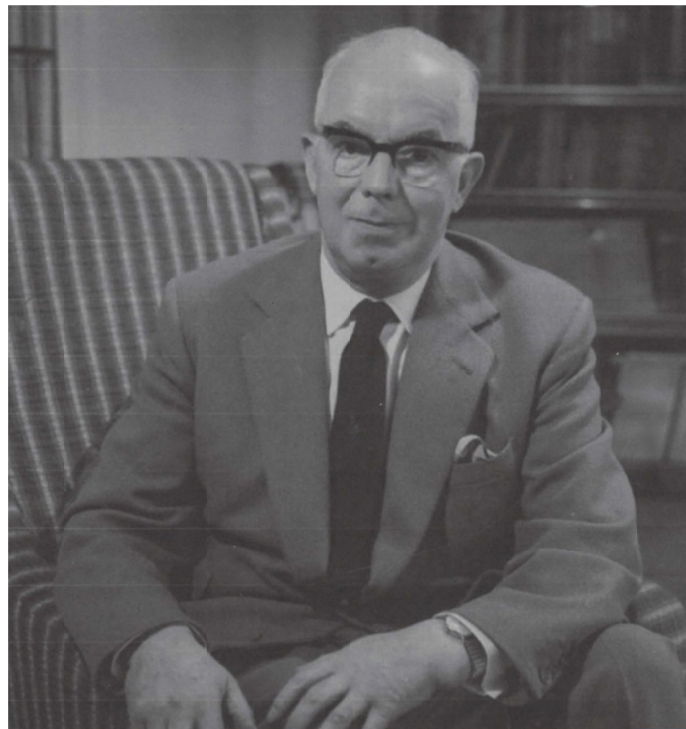
**Ted Lambourn 1895-1965**

*“He left Chelmsford for France in March 1915 where needless to say he has had a busy time. Writing to his father who had asked for details of how he had won his honour he says ‘I would rather tell you when the war is ended but on the night in question I was in charge of 30 of our men attending to the wounded (British and German) in the trenches who had done their best and deserved all we could do for them. Things were not comfortable but we were*

*pleased to take some part in the battle of the Somme.”<sup>94</sup>*

Sergeant Ted Lambourn, MM, 1895-1965, originally enlisted in 1912. He left the RAMC on 28 January 1918 aged 23, and was awarded the silver badge denoting that he had been honourably discharged due to injury. His 1939 registration, when he lived in Oxford, shows he was “an army pensioner, disability; superintendent of First Aid Post “A”. He married Ivy M. Cole in Bristol in 1920 and they had two children.

***Ted Lambourn in later life.***



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<sup>94</sup> WDP 6.10.196

**3<sup>rd</sup> August**, Gunner Lionel Chapman, RFA, was awarded the Military Medal for an “act of gallantry and devotion to duty.” 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. E.H.W. Maddock wrote to his mother, Mrs Chapman of 30 Langton Road to congratulate her on the honour conferred on her son:

*“The enemy had commenced a furious bombardment of the front line trench badly damaging the telephone wires. Gunner Chapman, a telephonist, went out at great risk and repaired the wire thus keeping communications open for an hour. When further repairs became impossible he volunteered to act as a stretcher bearer even though the order had gone out that all men were to be kept under the parapet and continued in this capacity until 2 a.m. The next morning he rendered valuable assistance to the infantry. Major Harris has requested me to tell you how proud he is of your son’s achievement and of the honour he has conferred on the battery. He and his comrade Gunner Williams are the first two men in the Divisional Artillery to have earned this reward. As Chapman’s section commander I am especially proud of him.”*<sup>95</sup>

By 1939, Lionel’s parents, Philip, a GWR shunter, and Elizabeth Chapman had moved to 102 Newbridge Road. Lionel, who married Lilian Amesbury in 1922, was a Post Office Inspector; he lived with his wife and son John at Mivart Road, Greenbank.



**22<sup>nd</sup> September**, France/Flanders, a Military Medal was awarded to Sapper Arthur E. Strange, S.M.R.E, of 80 Winchester Road, “for work in the trenches. He was formerly employed by Bristol Tramways Company as a clerk and went to the front in February this year. He is 21 years old.”<sup>96</sup>

**Sapper Arthur Strange**

Arthur, born in 1895, one of five children of Albert and Rosetta Strange, had been a clerk at a “motor garage” before the war.

**5 October**, WDP: “Mr & Mrs Lewis of 8 Upper Sandhurst Road, Brislington have received news that their son, Private H. Lewis of the Gloucesters has been awarded the Military Medal for Bravery in the Field. Pte Lewis returned home from Gallipoli twelve months ago with four shrapnel wounds received in August 1915. He was drafted to France 8 months ago and expects to be home on leave shortly. His two brothers are also in the army, one in Mesopotamia<sup>97</sup> and the other just returned from France with shell shock.

**7<sup>th</sup> December**. Corporal Ralph George Murrow of the Liverpool Regiment, born 1891, the younger son of Aristarchus of St Anne’s Park Station and Sarah, and brother of Victor, was awarded the Military Medal.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> WDP 3.8.1916

<sup>96</sup> Ibid 22.9.1916. He is shown erroneously as “E.E. Strange”

<sup>97</sup> His brother Edward died in 1917.

<sup>98</sup> Clifton & Redland Free Press

## Those we lost, 1916

**8<sup>th</sup> January, Somme. Private Harold Arthur RICH, 1888-1916**, was the eighth child of John, a clay pot maker, who died in Brislington in 1906, and Ann Rich, nee Holbrook. Harold, a commercial clerk, joined the army early in the war and was in France by December 1915. He



was killed in action in the Somme area, aged 28.<sup>99</sup>

*"HIS LIFE FOR HIS COUNTRY"*

*"AN OFFICER'S TRIBUTE"*

*"Private Harold A. Rich of the 12<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters, (Bristol's Own) who fell in action in France on January 8, was the youngest son of the late Mr J. Rich, of 4, Belmont Road, Brislington. Prior to enlisting he had from boyhood been in the employ of Messrs Stotesbury, engineers' outfitters, Victoria Street and he was highly respected by every member of the firm's staff.*

**Harold Arthur Rich**

*"In acquainting his mother of the sad event, his officer wrote: 'He died almost instantaneously as a result of a bursting of a bomb probably thrown from a German catapult. Of his value as a soldier I cannot write too highly. He was always cheerful and willing to do a double share of the hard work which has fallen to our lot since we have been in France. He died the noblest of all deaths, and leaves behind an example we should all try to follow.'*

*"Such a tribute to a brave man and good soldier will do much to lessen the sorrow which has come upon the home at Brislington. Mrs Rich also had a most sympathetic letter from the Rev. J.F.J. Southam, of St Mary Redcliff, chaplain to the 12<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters."*

Harold is buried in Grave II.E.3 at Cerisy-Gailly Military Cemetery at Albert (Somme) and is remembered at St Luke's, the Congregational, (H. Rich) and on the "Georgian Boys Plaque" at St George's School, (H.A. Rich).

**14<sup>th</sup> March, Somme. Sergeant Alfred Vaughan TOTTLE, 1889-1916** was known by his second name, Vaughan, to distinguish him from his father, Alfred, a coachman, and Emma, nee Gabb. They lived first at Stoke Bishop and then Flax Bourton (where Vaughan's younger

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<sup>99</sup> WDP 24.1.1916

brother Roland was born) and arrived at St Anne's Park sometime before 1911. Vaughan was then twenty one, an assistant librarian and Roland, 15, a clerk at John Lysaght & Co.'s ironworks.

Vaughan, as "W. Tottle, Clifton" is named by the WDP, 15 September 1914, in "another list of recruits". He served in the 48<sup>th</sup> Signal Company R.E., rising quickly to the rank of sergeant. His death was announced on 20 March 1916: "*TOTTLE, Vaughan, S.M.R.E, killed March 14, in France, aged 26, eldest son of Mr and Mrs A. Tottle, Birchwood Road, St Anne's, deeply mourned.*"

#### *"THE TOLL OF THE BRAVE"*

*"The sad news has arrived that another brave soldier has given his life for his country. Sergeant Vaughan Tottle was the eldest son of Mr and Mrs A. Tottle. When the call for soldiers came he left his position as library clerk for Bristol University and joined the S.M.R.E. He was serving with that unit when he received the wounds from an aeroplane bomb which resulted in his death in hospital in France. His memory will be treasured by many friends in Bristol and sympathy will be extended to his parents. His Company Commander, Captain J. Arrowsmith-Brown writes: 'I personally regret his loss more than I can express. He had been with me ever since I took over this Company (he joined about a year before I took over command) and has risen from the position of driver to sergeant. Both as a driver and as sergeant he has always been the same, thoroughly reliable and always doing his job to the utmost of his ability. In the last twelve months particularly I have come to have a very high opinion of him. He always lent himself to any work which fell to his lot without question and his work was always good. He was a very modest fellow and never obtruded himself or sought his own advancement and yet he had won for himself a very definite place of his own in the Company. One was always glad to feel he was there. He was a thoroughly sound, wholesome, clean living fellow, an influence for good in the Company, liked and respected by all. I have always liked him from the earliest days and can quite unaffectedly say that his death as come as a great blow to me as it has, I know, to many other friends of his out here.'"*<sup>100</sup>

Vaughan is buried at Louvencourt Military Cemetery, Somme, and is commemorated at St Anne's, (V. Tottle).

**19<sup>th</sup> March, Somme. Private Percy Charles HILL, 1879-1916** was allegedly "born in Brislington", according to his military card, though his connection with the village is unexplained. He was the third child of Henry and Emma Hill, of Deal, Kent, who were elementary schoolteachers, living and working in Bristol. Emma Hill, who was widowed by 1901, then lived at St Andrew's with her younger daughter Kate. Percy, a student architect, was at this time visiting his married sister, Lizzie, the wife of George Stephens, a schoolmaster at Llanfrechva, Pontypool. In 1911, Emma and Kate were staying with George

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<sup>100</sup> WDP 23.3.1916

and Lizzie at Llanfrechva though there is no trace of Percy until he joined the 1/5<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters early in the war. He was killed in action alongside Stephen Dolman, 1897-1916, of St Paul's who formerly worked for the printing department at St Anne's Board Mills.<sup>101</sup>

Percy's death is briefly noted on 12<sup>th</sup> April in the WDP, "Roll of Honour – the Local Lists": "*Gloucestershire Regiment: Hill, 3684, Private P.C.*" He is buried in Grave I.C. 15, at Sucrierie Military Cemetery. CWGC names Percy "a native of Bristol" and his parents, Henry George and Emma Collyer Hill, of "Pen-y-Bryn" Clifton Road, Abergavenny where he is commemorated on the War Memorial. Emma Hill died aged 95 in 1939, at Pen-y-Bryn, living with her daughter Kate, by then Mrs Evans, the wife of a railwayman.

**19<sup>th</sup> March, Somme. Sergeant Arthur Robert PARKER, 1891-1916,** lived at Dodington Lane, Old Sodbury where his father, Rev Arthur James Parker, was pastor of a group of Baptist Churches. Following his father's premature death in 1906, he came to Bristol with his mother Mary Anne and sister Dorothy. He enlisted in the 1/6<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters early in the war, and was soon promoted sergeant. He was killed in action and is buried at Sucrierie Military Cemetery beside eight comrades who lie in adjacent graves and include the last named Percy Hill. One of the group was 21 year old Private Alf Birger Fristad, a Norwegian, born at Winnipeg, Canada, who enlisted in Bristol. His father Johannes lived in Bergen.



Arthur's obituary, WDP, 27<sup>th</sup> March 1916, shows that his mother was then living at 3 Hengrove Road, Knowle, though she is later recorded by the CWGC at 1 Salisbury Street, St Anne's Park. Arthur is remembered on the War Memorial at Wotton-under-Edge under the inscription: "*Greater love hath no man than this; that a man lay down his life for his friends.*"

**17<sup>th</sup> April, Mesopotamia. Lance Corporal Frederick (Fred) Arthur PANES, 1888-1916.**

**Fred Panes** appears in the brave photograph of "The Brislington Boys" which was taken in India in 1915. His biography, written by his granddaughter, Jenifer Prosser, is reproduced

here with her permission:

*"Charles Panes and Caroline Hasell were married at St Luke's, Brislington on 23 April, 1853 and lived at Church Hill Cottage, Brislington all their married life. They had eight children, three of whom died young. Their third child, William born 1860, went on to marry Ellen Greedy in 1885 at St Paul's Church, Bristol. William, a carpenter and joiner, and Ellen had nine children in total, and lived at various addresses in Brislington.*

<sup>101</sup> "Those who Served; Wartime Memories Project"; on-line.

*On the 11 November, 1888 at 2, Bellevue Road, Ellen Panes gave birth to their third son, who they named Frederick Arthur. Later, the family moved to 73 Wick Road. This same house remained tenanted by members of the family until 1968. Very little is known of Fred's childhood. In 1906, he enlisted at Bath for short service, in the Somerset Light Infantry, 1<sup>st</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, and won the Lady Grosvenor watch for being the best shot amongst the recruits for that year. The same year he won the National Rifle Association badge for his efficient shooting.*



***Church Hill Cottages, Brislington, home of Charles & Caroline Panes***

*By 1911 Fred was in Brislington again and working as an engineer at the Motor Works. Later that year, he went to Toronto, Canada, but apparently the climate did not agree with him, and after a couple of years he returned home.*

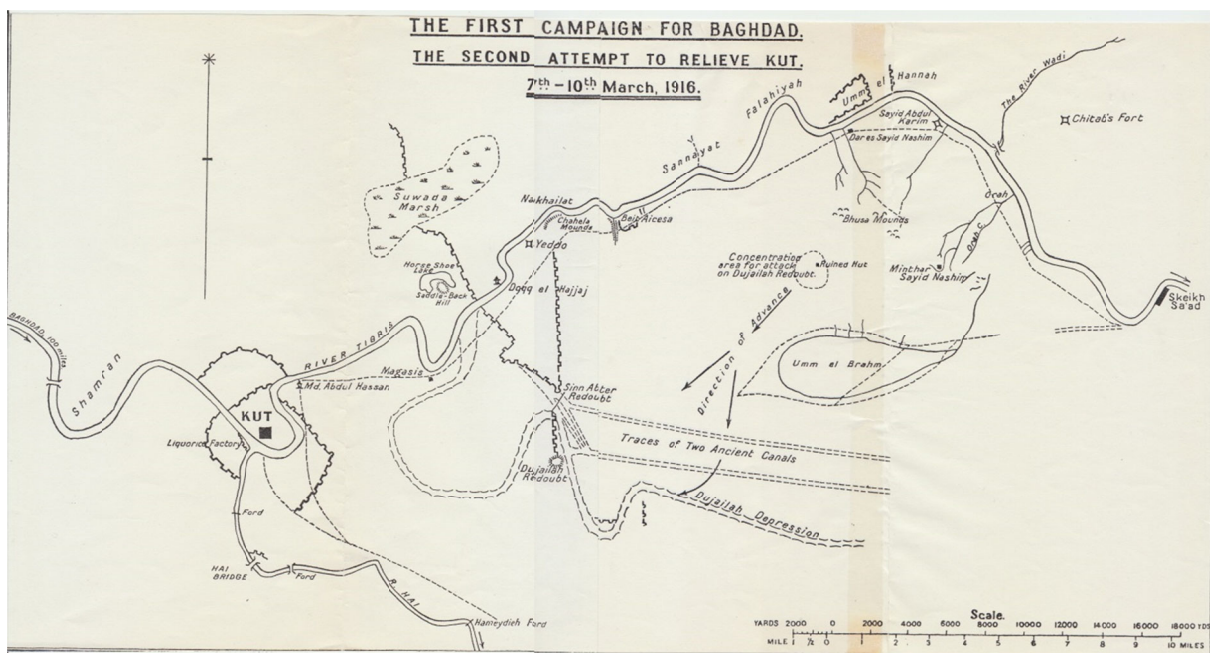
*Upon his return, Fred was employed by British American Tobacco (BAT) where he was “very much liked”. He remained with BAT until the outbreak of World War I, when he re-joined his old battalion. Rumour has it that he encouraged his brothers and all friends who were old enough, to rally round for their country and also enlist. His eldest brother, Alfred Edward, born 1886, was turned down as he had problems with his leg; the next brother, William Charles Allen, born 1887 (who later played football for Bristol Rovers) also signed up, regiment unknown; Henry George, born 1892, joined Fred at the 4<sup>th</sup> SLI, ‘C’ Company; Sidney Thomas, born 1897, enlisted with the Royal Engineers and finally, the youngest of the family, Frank Hasell Panes, born 1898, joined the Navy.*

*In the October, Fred was sent to India with the battalion, where they occupied several of the stations on the Northern Frontier. Whilst in India, he worked for his engineering certificate,*



which he gained with first class honours. After this, he was put in charge of the battalion's arms, and in the last Nomad rising, he was in the Khyber Pass with the armoured cars.

In February 1916, the 1<sup>st</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Battalion was sent to Mesopotamia in the attempt to relieve Kut, where General Townshend's force had been made to retire on 3 December, 1915. Heavy fighting took place on the following 21<sup>st</sup> January, and GHQ received a report dated 25<sup>th</sup> January from Townshend that he could hold out for another 84 days. It was then decided to attack the right flank of the Turkish position at the Dujailah Redoubt, as the first step towards the Relief. The flood season would arrive about the middle of March, and if the Turks broke the banks so that the Tigris flooded the surrounding country, offensive operations would be impracticable.



Towards the end of February, the 1<sup>st</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Somersets landed in Mesopotamia. For several days after their arrival, Fred, who had been promoted to Lance Corporal before leaving, and the rest of the battalion, were camped at Basra amidst pleasant surroundings. At midnight on 24/25<sup>th</sup> February they were ordered to proceed up country by river. At 6.15pm on 4<sup>th</sup> March, they arrived at Orah, disembarked, and marched to their camp which had been prepared by 'B' and 'D' Companies, who had arrived the previous day. Unfortunately, the 2<sup>nd</sup> attempt to relieve Kut failed, and the 1<sup>st</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> were moved to Thorny Nala on 29<sup>th</sup> March. Heavy rain fell on 1<sup>st</sup> April, and for several days the trenches were in a very bad state.

On 5<sup>th</sup> April the third attempt to relieve Kut began, though Fred's battalion was not actively engaged in this until the afternoon of the 12<sup>th</sup>. The going was very difficult, as torrential rain had fallen and in places the soldiers had to wade through water waist-deep, whilst under artillery and long range rifle fire.

On 17<sup>th</sup> April, the Action of Beit Aieesa took place; the 37<sup>th</sup> Brigade, of which the 1<sup>st</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> SLI were part, acted in Divisional Reserve, moving forward in support of the operations of the attacking Brigades. The 37<sup>th</sup> Brigade was formed up: 1<sup>st</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Somersets on the right, 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> Gurkhas on the left as the front line, 36<sup>th</sup> Sikhs on the second line, all facing North West. The 1<sup>st</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> had moved off at 6.10am, and by about 7.10am had got into position. For the next

half hour the battalion came under very heavy artillery fire, and then received orders to push forward for another mile. This advance was also made under shell fire. The going was difficult across flooded areas and nullahs.

By mid-day the 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Brigades had successfully carried the first line of the Beit Aieesa position, and bombing parties were busy driving the Turks still farther back. At 4pm, the 37<sup>th</sup> Brigade was ordered to move for the night towards the left flank beyond the Twin Pimples in order to hold it against counter-attacks.

The 1<sup>st</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Somersets occupied some trenches behind two companies of the Manchester Regiment, but were not long in position before fresh orders came to move off a little farther to the left. About 10pm this order was changed, and eventually the 1<sup>st</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> occupied trenches recently held by the 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> Gurkhas, who had been moved off to the right.



These trenches formed a triangular strong point on the extreme left flank. A heavy counter-attack was expected at this point, and close behind, the British guns would have been in danger if any withdrawal had been forced, as they could only be moved with great difficulty, being surrounded by flooded grounds. The battalion was ordered to hold on at all costs, as they were entirely unsupported. The counter-attack by a fresh Turkish division was however directed against the strongest point of the line, well to the battalion's right, and after all-night fighting, was repulsed with very heavy Turkish losses. Had it proved successful, the battalion would have become completely isolated.

During these activities of the 17<sup>th</sup>, 2324 Lance Corporal Frederick Panes (left) was hit in the head with a piece of shrapnel fired by a sniper. His brother, Henry was hurriedly called for from his position in the trenches, and he remained with Fred until he died, within an hour of his injury. Although Fred was armourer of his battalion, it is understood that he was killed while doing his bit in

the firing line.

The fighting that day, took the lives of two other men, and wounded 22 others, including Lieutenant Colonel W. C. Cox (who was commanding the 1<sup>st</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Somersets) and Lieutenant W. E. Phillips.

The Third Attempt to relieve Kut-el-Amarah was, in the end, unsuccessful, and General Townshend was compelled to surrender on the 29<sup>th</sup> April, owing to the total exhaustion of

*their food supplies. He had in fact held out for 94 days from the date he sent his report. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> May, the 37<sup>th</sup> Brigade was relieved, and returned to Basra.*

*Fred's personal military records are lost with the rest of the "burnt papers" destroyed by enemy action in WW2. He has no known grave. He is commemorated on the Basra Memorial in Iraq and on the War Memorials at St Luke's and the Congregational (F.A. Panes). He is also remembered on his parents' grave in Brislington Cemetery and his name is recorded (page 39) in the Book of Remembrance in St Martin's Chapel in Wells Cathedral. His former employers, BAT, printed an appreciation in their bulletin of 10 June, 1916, "With deep regret we announce the death of Lance-Corporal F. Panes, late of our fitting shop, who was killed in Mesopotamia on April 17<sup>th</sup> by shrapnel," .....continuing with a shortened version of the events described above and concludes:*

*"At the time of his death he was only 27 years of age and a fine fellow, a good all-round athlete, a capital shot and it seems hard that such a promising life should have been laid down."*

Jenifer Prosser ends her tribute with the words: *"From all I've heard and read about him, Fred strikes me as a fun-loving man, keen for adventure and excitement, and full of life. It is sad that, with so much potential, he was struck down at only twenty-seven years of age."*



***Fred Panes' name on the family grave at Brislington Cemetery.***

Obituary notices appeared on the anniversary of his death: *"PANES. In loving memory of Fred, killed in action, April 17, 1916. Deeply mourned by his brother and sister-in-law Will & Mabel."* & *"PANES. In memory of dear Fred killed in action in Mesopotamia, April 17, 1916, ever remembered by Mabel and Billie."*

Fred Panes' brothers William, Frank and Henry survived the war.

**19<sup>th</sup> April, Mesopotamia. Private John William (or William John) CREECH, c1893-1916**, was the eldest of eight children of John, a farm labourer, and Mary Creech. By 1911, the Creech family were living at 3 Elm Tree Cottages, Brislington, with John working as a “car washer”, suggesting he was employed at Brislington Depot. Mary was a cleaner at the school, where her five youngest children, Dennis, Nellie, George, Nancy and Ena were scholars. The three elder boys, W.J., Ernest, and Reggie, were respectively a painter (at an estate agency), an office boy and a chocolate maker.

William enlisted early in the war in the 6<sup>th</sup> (Service) Battalion of the Gloucesters, but was with the 7<sup>th</sup> in Mesopotamia when he was killed in action during the Turkish counter-attack to retake the Bait-Isa Line. He has no known grave and is commemorated at Panel 17 of the Basra Memorial. He is remembered on the War Memorial at St Luke’s (J.W. Creech). His brother Reggie would also die in Mesopotamia the next year.

**25<sup>th</sup> June, Mesopotamia. Private Evan John TOWNSEND, 1884-1916** was the eldest son of George, an agricultural labourer, and Louisa Townsend, nee Payne who were married in Wales. Their other children were Alice, a kitchen maid at Dr Fox’s Asylum, William, Emily, Ellen, Edith, and Rosa.

On 6 December 1906, William, *“aged 19 years, one month, born at Wrington, but resident at School Place, Old Brislington, a labourer, working for Mr Nash”* volunteered for the Somerset Light Infantry. England was at peace, and he served less than two years, *“discharged on disbandment”* in January 1908. His enforced return home may have been fortuitous, for his father George died that summer aged 63, and his mother Louisa in 1909.

When the 1911 census form came through the door at 2 Mount Pleasant it caused some consternation. It was the first time householders were required to fill out the details themselves and William, the “old soldier” was delegated to do the necessary. After discussion, he put his father George as Head of the House, then crossed it out and inserted “dead” instead. His mother Louisa, occupation, charwoman, followed but was again deleted. Alice, aged 28, who ten years before had worked at Dr Fox’s is described “20, Blind” (which may mean that she had lost her sight from about the age of twenty, rather than being blind all her life.) Next up came Evan John, 26, farm labourer, “born Chew Stoak” [sic], William, 24, farm labourer, (no confusion there) is followed by “ Emily Townsend, 22, sister, “married”, which is correct, except that she was in fact Emily Fisher having been married to Henry George Fisher since 1910. (In any case, it appears she was not under the family roof on census night, as required, for she is recorded again at Keynsham, in her married name with her husband and their baby daughter!) The final members of the family, Ellen, 19, Edith, 15, “general servants”, and Rosa, 11, scholar, caused no problems. (With which, it may be imagined, William folded up the form with a great sigh of relief and handed it over to the enumerator with satisfaction at a job well done!)

At the outbreak of war, William's recall to the colours was inevitable, and his brother "John Evan Townsend, born at Kewstoke" went with him when he enlisted at Bath in the 1/4<sup>th</sup> (Territorial) SLI.

The battalion landed at Basra on 23 February 1916 as part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Indian Division. Evan John, aged 32, died on the 25<sup>th</sup> June of "sickness", probably dysentery or fever. He is buried at the Basra War Cemetery in Grave VI.O.17 and named by the WDP in the casualty list, 31<sup>st</sup> July as: "2329, Townsend, J, SLI, died". He is remembered at St Luke's (J. Townsend) and the Congregational. William Townsend survived the war and in 1939 was a motor tyre vulcaniser, living at 64 Manworthy Road with his wife Olive, son Fred and another child.

**17<sup>th</sup> July, Mesopotamia. Private Edward BREWER, 1885-1916** was the third child of an elderly father, John Brewer, a shoemaker (born in 1831) and Elizabeth his wife. In 1911, Edward and his younger sister, Elizabeth were living at Mount Pleasant with their married brother, John Henry, his wife Alice and their six year old daughter.

Edward, a gardener, may have gone to enlist in the 1/4<sup>th</sup> SLI at Bath with his neighbours, the Townsend brothers and landed with them at Basra in February 1916. He died of "sickness" on 17<sup>th</sup> July "cause unknown" but probably of fever, dysentery or the heat. Edward was buried at Basra War Cemetery in Grave V.V.16. Edward is remembered at St Luke's, (E. Brewer).

The battalion remained in the Middle East for the rest of the war.

**8<sup>th</sup> October, Mesopotamia. Private Herbert John LEAT, 1896-1916**, lived at 7 Chatsworth Road in 1901 with his parents Herbert, a plumber, and Ethel, plus his brother Percival aged two, and maternal grandfather Abraham Stevens, who worked at the tram depot. Ethel died in 1908 aged thirty three, and a year later, his grandfather, aged sixty five also died. By 1911, Herbert senior with his two boys had moved to 138 Manworthy Road and in 1912 he married his second wife, Edith Phillips. Herbert junior, a student at the Merchant Venturers' Technical College passed the University of Bristol's Matriculation examination in 1913 and became a student teacher at Wells Road School. He then joined the Homelight Oil Company, Baldwin Street, whilst simultaneously studying for the Civil Service entrance exams. At the outbreak of war he enlisted in the 7<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters and after training at Tidworth, Basingstoke and Aldershot, sailed from Avonmouth with the battalion, 19 June 1915, and landed at Gallipoli the following month. In January 1916 the battalion moved to Egypt for a brief refit and thence to Mesopotamia as reinforcements for the Anglo-Indian Forces who were attempting to relieve the siege of Kut. (*see Fred Panes, qv, 7.4.1916*). Herbert's life is chronicled in the January 1917 edition of "Bristol and the War" though news of his death in the "Roll of Honour", WDP, 13 November 1916, is reported in the usual curt fashion: "LEAT. Private Herbert J. Leat, Gloucestershire Regiment (4 Stirling Road, Brislington), died of a fever on active service, Oct. 8, 1916, aged 20 years."



**Herbert Leat, 1896-1916**

Herbert is buried in Grave V.A. 15 at the Basra War Cemetery. A Memorial Service *“filled with love and esteem”* was held for him at the Wesleyan Church in Upper Knowle, where he had been a Sunday school teacher and he is also remembered at St Luke’s, (H. Leat).

(Herbert Leat senior who was engaged in “government work” at Salisbury Plain, 1914-18, was still in army service in 1939 at Bulford Barracks, Amesbury, where he lived with his wife Edith, their daughter Alice and son in law Leslie Lettice. Percival Leat, his son, a motor mechanic in the RNR, lived at Runswick Road in 1939 with his wife Laura and their two children.

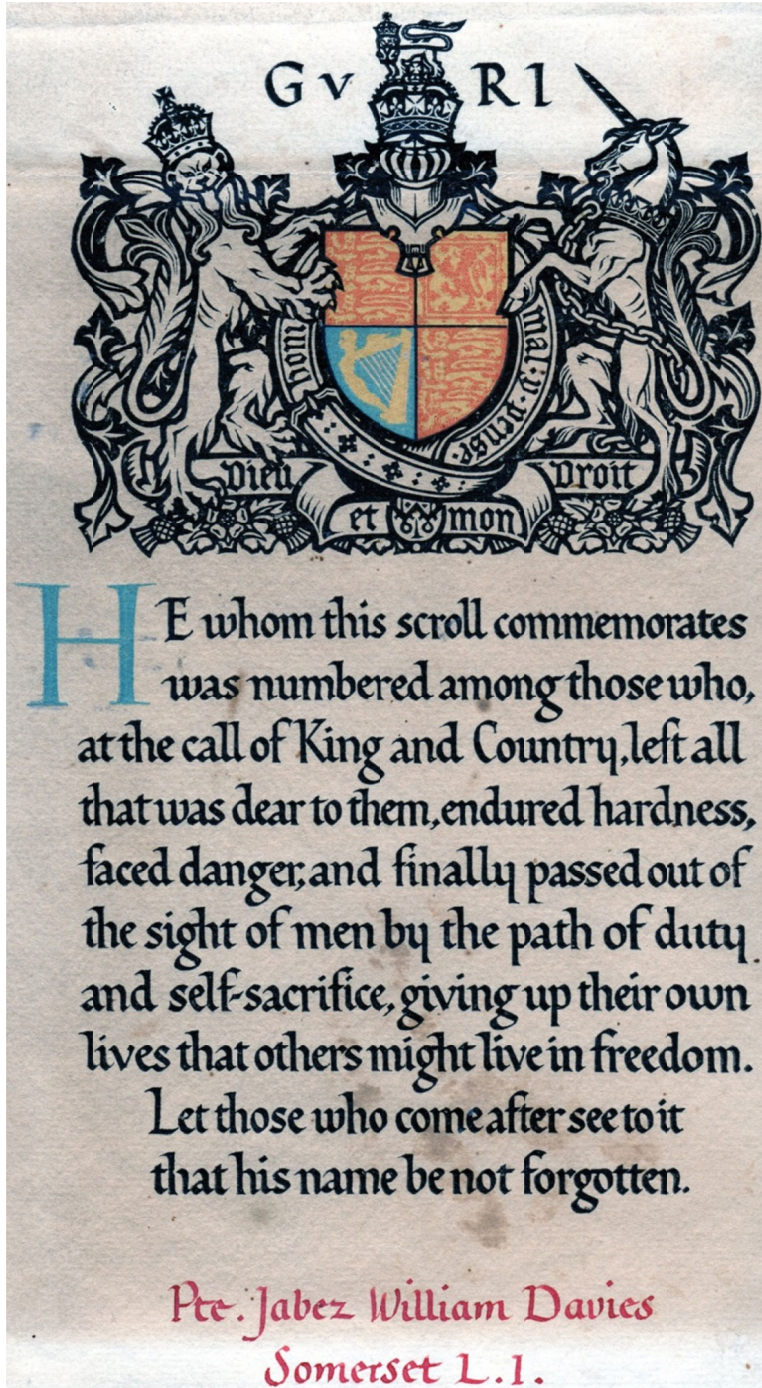
The Basra War Cemetery where Townsend, Brewer and Leat are buried suffered years of neglect and deliberate desecration under Saddam Hussein. In 2003 British troops began salvaging headstones for safe storage until the Commonwealth War Graves Commission could undertake reconstruction, though in the light of current events this work must be far off. Robert Fisk in the “Independent” newspaper, 24 August 2003, called the Basra Cemetery *“the broken remnants of Britain’s Imperial past”* where *“the soldiers of Britain’s forgotten armies of Iraq lie beneath the dirt and garbage, almost 3,000 of them, their gravestones smashed, the memorial book long looted from the entrance, even the names of the dead stripped from the screen wall.”*

**31<sup>st</sup> December, Mesopotamia. Private Jabez William DAVIES, 1892-1916** was one of eight surviving children of Shropshire-born Alfred Davies and his wife, the former Eliza Hannah Masters. For much of their married life the couple ran various pubs in Bristol and parts of Somerset, finally arriving at 40 Pendennis Road, Brislington sometime before 1904 when their youngest son Bert was born. Alfred changed his occupation and became a miller, assisted by his son, Harry. The others still at home were Jabez William, a chocolate maker, Agnes, Frederick, Arthur, Oswald and the aforesaid Bert. (Percy, born in 1889, was absent, as he was already serving in the 11<sup>th</sup> Hussars.)<sup>102</sup> In between 1911 and 1914 one by one four more sons joined up. Alfred Davies died in 1915, leaving the widowed Eliza and only young Bert at home.

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<sup>102</sup> see 1915 and “Survivors”

Jabez had two army numbers, the first, "1753", suggests that he had enlisted in the SLI between January 1912 and January 1913, and was already serving at the outbreak of war. He was with the 1/4<sup>th</sup> Somersets (no.200226) in Mesopotamia and was probably part of General Maude's offensive, launched on 13 December 1916, during which the British



advanced on both sides of the Tigris River forcing the Ottoman army out of a number of fortified positions along the way. The offensive is said to have been methodical and organized allowing the British forces to occupy Kut. Jabez died on 31<sup>st</sup> December, "either from wounds or disease" though it appears from a statement made by his mother in September 1917 (see Arthur Davies, *qv* 14.8.1917) that she was then unaware of her older son's death. Jabez, who was twenty four, has no known grave and is commemorated on Panel 12 of the Basra Memorial. He is remembered at St Luke's (J.W. Davies).

***A scroll such as this one was sent to every bereaved family after the war.***



*Jabez William Davies, 1892-1916*



***Here we return to battlefields of France and Flanders.....***

**23<sup>rd</sup> April, Ypres. Lance Corporal Frank FUSSELL, 1883-1916**, was the fourth of nine children of John Fussell, a coal haulier of Cloud's Hill, St George and his wife Rebecca, nee Ford. When John died in 1896 aged 45, Rebecca moved to Pennywell Road and then to 3 Herbert Street, Whitehall, where she was living in 1911 with Frank, an insurance agent, and his sisters Annie, Elizabeth, Blanche and Rose, who worked variously at cigarette or corset factories. On 24 May 1915, he was "Sapper" Frank Fussell, of the Royal Engineers, when he married Elizabeth Ann Milsom, 25, of Clouds Hill, at St George parish church.

Frank who was wounded in action on the Berthune Front, was taken to the No.1. Casualty Clearing Station where he died. He is buried in Grave I.H. 137 at Chocques, Pas de Calais. He is named in the WDP, 12<sup>th</sup> May, "Roll of Honour – Local Lists": *"Royal Engineers. Died of wounds: 48364, L-Cpl Fussell, F. (Bristol)"*.

CWGC records his mother, Rebecca Fussell still living at Whitehall and his widow, Elizabeth Ann, of 25 Sandholme Road, Brislington. No Memorial has been found.

**29<sup>th</sup> May, Ypres. Gunner Thomas Newman DARVILLE, MM, 1895-1916** was one of four children of William, a brewery labourer, and Elizabeth his wife. In 1901 -1911, the Darvilles lived at various addresses, Cowl Street and Paul Street, Shepton Mallet, with their children Hugh, Evelyn, Thomas, and William Ewart. In the spring of 1914, Mr Darville died aged 51 in the spring of 1914 and about this time Mrs Darville moved to 11 Pendennis Road, Brislington with her daughter and son, Evelyn and William. Her elder son Hugh, having previously served four years in the Gloucesters had re-joined the army. Before he went into action he married Ethel May Gregory at Shepton Mallet. Her next son, Tom joined the Royal Horse Artillery on the outbreak of war; he landed in France on 24 July 1915. In June, the local Journal reported that he had been killed:

*"News has been received of the death in action of Tom Darville of Shepton Mallet. On leaving school he worked as a porter for the GWR at Shepton Mallet and then Draycott. He was one of those who joined up in the first month of the war and had been serving ever since. He had recently been awarded the Military Medal for bravery in the field but he has not lived to wear it. His captain in a letter to his friends stated that when one of the officers was engaged in a dangerous reconnaissance mission Tom Darville went out under very heavy shell fire to assist him because he thought the officer had been hit. He met his death while walking with his Captain down a front line trench when he was hit in the head by a bullet. He lived for about two hours and died in his Captain's arms. He suffered no pain being unconscious all the time. A comrade in the Howitzer Battery wrote: 'It is no exaggeration to say he was one of the best liked young men in the Battery as he was always the same to everyone, good natured and happy. All of us were grieved especially myself who had been in his company only a few minutes before. Three gunners and myself went to the trenches for his body Monday night so that we could ensure a good burial and to have the chance of*

*paying our last respects to a noble and good comrade. Unfortunately he will not be able to wear the Military Medal he earned a few weeks ago.”*<sup>103</sup>

Tom Darville is buried at the Ypres Reservoir Cemetery, in Grave IA 75. Mrs Darville wrote “from Bristol” to the Shepton Mallet Journal to express her “hearty thanks” for messages of sympathy she had received. Soon, third Darville brother would be conscripted.

***The Battle of Jutland, the largest sea battle of the war took place on 31 May 1916. Two Brislington sailors died aboard HMS “Indefatigable” and another aboard HMS “Invincible. Two others, members of the Royal Marines, survived the battle but were killed days later when their ship HMS “Hampshire” struck a mine when attempting to take Lord Kitchener to Russia for crucial talks with the Tsar.***

**31<sup>st</sup> May, at Sea. Able Seaman Charles Frederick Jacob BRIMBLE, 1894-1916; Leading Signalman Edwin Charles MEREDITH, 1895-1916; Officer’s Cook Herbert Francis GOSS, 1897-1916.**

At the outbreak of war, HMS “Indefatigable” with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle Cruiser Squadron was in the Mediterranean, in pursuit of the Imperial German Navy ships “Goeben” and “Breslau” as they fled towards the safety of the Ottoman Empire. Subsequently on 3 November 1914, “Indefatigable” bombarded the Ottoman fortifications defending the Dardanelles. After a welcome refit in Malta, she returned to her place in the Squadron in the North Sea. Her demise at Jutland is described:

*“.....At the other end of the line the duel between the Indefatigable and the Von der Tann had been growing in intensity till a few minutes after 4.0 the British ship was suddenly hidden in a burst of fire and smoke. A salvo of 3 shots had fallen on her upper deck and must have penetrated a magazine. She staggered out of the line, sinking by the stern when another salvo struck her; a second terrible explosion rent her, she turned over, and in a moment all trace of her was gone.....”*



Charles Brimble and Edwin Meredith of HMS “Indefatigable” were lost. Out of a ship’s company of 1,017 there were only two survivors.

Charles Brimble, was born on 17 December 1894 and in 1901 lived in Swindon with his parents, Walter, a labourer, Ann Maria (Annie), nee Mills, and three siblings. Annie

Brimble died in Bristol in 1908 and in 1909 Walter married his second wife Maud Haynes

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<sup>103</sup> Shepton Mallet Journal, 16.6.1916

(who brought two daughters to the marriage); the couple took a grocery shop at Barton Hill. At about the same time Charles joined the Royal Navy as a Boy Seaman. He had brown hair and eyes, with a fresh complexion, marred by a growth or wen on the side of his neck. He grew two inches (to 5 feet 6½ inches tall) between his enlistment aged sixteen and his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. He served aboard HM Ships “Impregnable” (twice), “Donegal”, “Vivid II”, “King Alfred” and finally “Indefatigable”.

Edwin Meredith, the son of John and Kate, nee Milsom, who was born in Bedminster on 23 August 1895, was eight months younger than Charles Brimble. In 1901, his father was absent when the census was taken; Kate Meredith, 34, from Oxford, was living at 1 Bellevue Terrace, with Edwin Charles, aged five and her 6 months old twin girls, Edith and Lilian. An elder child, Marian Kate aged 4, was staying in Taunton with Thomas and Caroline Cook.

Ten years later, April 1911, with her husband still absent, Kate (“married 16 years”) and her children were at 5 Whitby Road. Edwin, a junior office clerk, was by then fifteen, Marian worked for (Fry’s) “a cocoa manufacturer” and the twins were at school.

Five weeks after the census, on 9<sup>th</sup> May, Edwin went to Devonport where he enlisted in the Royal Navy for twelve years. He was 5 feet 7 inches tall with a 36 inch chest, and had a freckled face with brown hair and blue eyes, and a scar on one of his shins. He served in various HM Ships, “Impregnable”, “Ganges”, “Vivid II” “Leviathan”, “Vivid I” and finally “Indefatigable”, rising from the rank of “Boy, 2<sup>nd</sup> Class” to “Leading Signaller”, his conduct throughout was judged “Very Good”.

The deaths of the two young men, aged 21 and 20, were certified as “*by enemy action, body not recovered*”. They are commemorated on the Plymouth Naval Memorial, Charles at Panel 11, Edwin at 13.

The CWGC names Charles’ father, Walter Brimble of 72 Sandholme Road and Edwin’s father, John Meredith, 5 Whitby Road as next of kin. (John Meredith may have been a mariner, which would explain his absence from the censuses). A War gratuity was paid to both sets of parents.

Edwin Meredith is commemorated on all three Brislington Memorials: St Luke’s, St Anne’s and the Congregational, (E.C. Meredith); Charles Brimble is remembered at St Anne’s (C.F.J. Brimble).

HMS “Indefatigable”, like other Jutland wrecks was much subjected to plunder by looters. In 2006 she was belatedly protected as a War Grave to save her from further depredation.

Herbert Goss and his brother Reginald, identical twins, were born in Bedminster on 22 August 1897. By 1911 they were living at 41 Churchill Road with their father Francis James Goss, a timekeeper at Bristol Docks, mother Alice and sisters Dorothy, 12, Phyllis, 8 and

Marion, aged four, as well as their aunt Martha Goss, a dressmaker. The boys and the two older girls all went to St Anne's School.

Herbert joined the Royal Navy on 26 February 1916 "for the duration of the hostilities". He most likely went home and boasted to his brother, who followed suit and joined up the next day. They may have hoped to serve together, but this was thwarted when Reggie went to HMS "President" and Herbert went to HMS "Invincible" as a cook.

HMS "Invincible", the flagship of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battlecruiser Squadron, was acting as the Grand Fleet's scouting force at Jutland when she sustained a magazine explosion which penetrated "Q" Turret. Out of a crew of more than a thousand there were only six survivors.

Francis Goss died shortly after his sons signed on, and an obituary of 17<sup>th</sup> June (WDP) shows that their mother had moved from Brislington.

*"GOSS. Herbert Francis, dearly loved son of Alice Goss and the late Francis James Goss of 78 Park Street, believed to have lost his life when serving as officer's mate's cook on HMS "Invincible", March 31<sup>st</sup> in the Jutland battle."*

Herbert Goss is named on the War Memorial at St Anne's School. His twin Reginald transferred from the Royal Navy to the RAF on 31 May 1918 and in 1939 he was a clerk at the Ministry of Labour, living 3 Uplands Road, Hillfields with his wife Elsie and children. Their sister Marion died aged 18 in 1925 and Alice their mother in 1939 aged 73.

**5<sup>th</sup> June, Private Edmund Clayworth FEAR, 1897-1916; Private William Frank INNOLES, 1894-1916.**

On 1 June 1915, HMS "Hampshire" was ordered to Scapa Flow where she joined the Grand Fleet on patrol duties. A year later she was in action at Jutland, returning safely to Scapa Flow on 3<sup>rd</sup> June, no doubt to general relief, especially in view of the recent fate of the battleships "Indefatigable" and "Invincible".

Within two days, 5<sup>th</sup> June, at 16.45 hours, "Hampshire" with a crew of 650, under the command of Captain H. Savill, was ordered to sea again. Despite atrocious weather, the mission to Archangel was considered too vital to be postponed. Field Marshal Lord Kitchener, the Secretary of State for War, had come aboard with a brief to confer with the Tsar about a proposed purchase of munitions for the Russian war effort. Putting to sea at all must have been against Captain Savill's better judgement but he battled the elements for an hour, then with the weather deteriorating by the minute he took the decision to turn back. At 19.40 hours between the Brough of Birsay and Marwick Head, within a mile and a half of land, "Hampshire" struck a mine. The explosion ripped out the heart of the ship and took the lives of all but fourteen of those on board, including Lord Kitchener himself and his staff, as well as Edmund Fear, 19, and William Innoles aged twenty three.



Edmund Clayworth Fear was born on 14 July 1897 at Totterdown, the son of George and Jane, nee Clayworth, who were married at Bolton in 1894. By 1901 now with the addition of a little daughter, Doris, the Fears lived at 7 Sandgate Road. Jane Fear died in 1909 aged 42 and by 1911 George Fear and his two sons, Edmund, 13, and Egbert, 8, had moved to Nelson's Glory in School Road, where his father

William lived. (Doris seems to have disappeared; she may have been fostered or adopted.) William and George worked for local farmers: Mr Sinnott, "a gentleman", and Mr Brean.

"Nelson's Glory" is one of Brislington's most notable houses. Set into its wall is a misquoted version of Nelson's famous signal at Trafalgar, "*Let ev'ry man do his duty*". Perhaps this legend inspired Edmund to choose the sea as a career, though he enlisted, not as a sailor, but in the Royal Marines on 5 October 1914, aged 17 years, 2 months and 21 days, address (by then) 62 Sandy Park Road. He was 5 foot 6 inches tall, with a fresh complexion, blue eyes, and light hair, religion Church of England. He served as a boy sailor for 282 days, 5 October 1914 – 13 July 1915. On 3 March 1915 he was transferred from the Depot at Deal, Kent, to HMS "Hampshire".

William Frank Innoles was born on 18 February 1894 at Eastney, near Portsmouth, the son of James, a Colour Sergeant in the Royal Marines Artillery and his wife Alice, nee Weeks. Sometime before 1901, James (by then a Navy Pensioner) and Alice arrived at 11 Chatsworth Road, Brislington with their seven surviving children, Lilian, Emmeline, Marion, James Henry, William Frank, Henry Leonard and Dorothy Esther. On 24 April 1907, the eldest son, James aged 17 years, 11 months and 12 days joined the Royal Marines, remaining a Private soldier from then until March 1914 when he was invalided out of the service. His brother William, a railway van boy, enlisted on 19 February 1912, the day after his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, address 2 Chatsworth Road. His first choice was the Gloucestershire Regiment, but he transferred to the Royal Marines, recorded as 5 feet 9½ inches tall, fresh faced with grey eyes, C of E, and could swim. Based in Portsmouth, he served in HMS ships "Glory", "Iron Duke" and finally HMS "Hampshire".

Edmund's body, cause of death "enemy action", like the majority of the casualties, was not recovered for burial and he is commemorated on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial. Notification of his death was given to his "Mother" (actually his stepmother) Beatrice Fear<sup>104</sup>, of 62 Sandy Park Road. His name appears on the Royal Marines Medal Roll.

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<sup>104</sup> Nee Beatrice Williams, who married George Fear in 1911

The body of William Innoles was among those washed ashore and he was buried at the Royal Navy Cemetery, Lyness, Hoy, Orkney; his next of kin were his parents, James and Alice Innoles of 2 Chatsworth Road, Brislington.

Edmund Fear is remembered at St Luke's and the Congregational, (E.C. Fear) and William Innoles at St Anne's (W.F. Innoles) and St Anne's School (W. Innoles).

**The Somme. Brislington men had already died in the vicinity of the Somme, but the great battle of attrition officially started on 1<sup>st</sup> July and continued until 18<sup>th</sup> November 1916. The 1<sup>st</sup> July is notorious as the greatest number of British soldiers, 19,240, who died in one day on the battlefield. This number includes two of our soldiers, Private Thomas DREDGE, 1890-1916 and Private Edwin Arthur WILLIAMS, c1893-1916. The army gained just three square miles of territory.**



***“Shrouds of the Somme” (author’s photograph, courtesy of the artist, Rob Heard)***

**Thomas Dredge**, the eldest son of William, a labourer, and his wife Mary Ann, formerly Collins, who was christened at Buckland Dinham on 2 November 1890 arrived in Brislington with his parents, sister Ivy, and brother George, sometime before 1897 when his brother Harold was born in the village. Frank followed in 1900. The Dredge family lived first at 6 Churchill Road, later moving to 1 Pendennis Road. In 1911 Tom Dredge, aged 20, was a coachman, his sister Ivy in “service”, Harold, a telegraph messenger and Frank at school.

George is missing from the line-up, perhaps gone to the army or navy? Who knows? No trace of him survives anywhere else. The family had a lodger, a widower, William Coggins. Thomas Dredge joined the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion SLI in Bath and after training went to France. The 8<sup>th</sup> was involved in the attack on Ovillers and La Boisselle; neither village was taken though some ground to the south of the latter was won, but hardly sufficient to merit the lives of the 311 men who perished there, including Tom Dredge. He is buried at the Gordon Dump Cemetery, Villars-La-Boisselle in Grave V.P4, and is listed among the many named in the "Roll of Honour", WDP, 8 September, 1916 as "*Killed, Dredge, 21429, T. Bristol, SLI*". He is remembered on the War Memorials at St Luke's and the Congregational, (T. Dredge).

Tom's mother Mary Ann Dredge died in 1933. In 1939, His father William, aged 78, and sister Ivy both lived in lodgings, William at 263 Wick Road and Ivy at 12 Grove Park Road. Ivy, who was single, was a packer at the Smith's Crisp Factory. Tom's brother Harold who had joined up in September 1914 was discharged with war wounds in January 1916. He married Harriet Bailey in 1919 and they had three children, Thomas C(harles?), Doreen, and Peter. Thomas C. Dredge was killed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War and as "T.C. Dredge" appears, like his uncle, on the War Memorial at St Luke's.

**Edwin Arthur Williams**, address Thornton Heath, enlisted in the 14<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the London Scottish early in the war and was killed, aged 23, on 1<sup>st</sup> July. He is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial dedicated to those who died at the Somme whose graves are unknown. His connection with Brislington is through his brother, William Hector Williams, "a printer of cigarette papers", born at Didcot, ca1886, who in 1911 lived at "Rockleaze", 58 Langton Court Road with his wife Edith Maud and baby daughter Betty. Captain W.H. Williams was living at 100 Hampstead Road when named by the CWGC as Edwin's next of kin.

**10<sup>th</sup> July, Somme. Sergeant Edward George Randall, c1888-1916** was born at Nettlebury, Dorset, the 7<sup>th</sup> of eight children of James Randall, a blacksmith, and his wife Martha who died before 1901. James was a butcher when he enlisted in 1906, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Dorset Regiment. In 1914, he was in the Reserve and in lodgings at 32 Sandy Park Road with Samuel Eddolls and his family. (*See Ernest Eddolls, 10.11.1918*) Edward Randall was recalled to the 1<sup>st</sup> Dorsets and landed at Le Havre on 16 August 1914. The battalion was engaged in the retreat from Mons and in 1915 at Ypres. Edward, by then promoted Sergeant was killed in 1916 on 10<sup>th</sup> July. He has no known grave and is commemorated at Pier & Face 7B of the Thiepval Memorial. He is remembered on the War Memorial at St Anne's, (E.G. Randall).

**17<sup>th</sup> July, Somme. Lance Corporal Henry Gunning WEBB, c1874-1916**, aged 17 in 1891, was one of several lodgers in the household of Joseph Collins at 15 Trinity Street, St Philips. He applied to join the SLI on 5 July 1895, stating he was "*aged 20 years and six months, born in Stowey, now of 16 John Street, Totterdown, working as a clerk for Mr Crocker.*" Apparently the SLI did not live up to his expectations and 15 months later, he applied for a transfer to the Corps of Dragoons, this time having mysteriously lost a few years off his age, which he now gave as 19 years and six months. In 1898, he married Annie, the daughter of Richard

Carter, a barge builder at Kingston-upon-Thames. He fought in the Boer War and was away in 1901 when his wife, aged 34, was living in her father's house at Kingston. Henry, who was demobbed by 1906, brought Annie to Bristol where their children, Richard and Barbara were born. In 1911, they were resident at 19 Chatsworth Road, St Anne's where Henry was an "assistant manager in the wine and spirits (retail) trade", which sounds rather more grand than "second-in-command at an off-licence". Nevertheless the family of four were ticking over quite nicely until the outbreak of war, when Henry, a Reservist, was recalled to the 1/4<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters. He was killed in action this day, probably at Delleville Wood. He has no known grave and is commemorated at Pier & Face 5A & 5B of the Thiepval Memorial. He is remembered on the War Memorial at St Anne's, (H.G. Webb).

**18<sup>th</sup> July, Somme. Private William Ernest DREW, 1875-1916** was the son of Charles, a shepherd, and Elizabeth Drew, who enlisted at Stroud on 21 August 1893 in the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the SLI. He stated he was "a labourer, aged 18 years 4 months, born at Brislington but now of Nettleton". He fought in the Boer War but had been demobbed by 1903 when he married Laura Walker at Chipping Sodbury. He returned to work on the land and after an itinerant few years, (as indicated by the birthplaces of their children in various Gloucestershire parishes, Freda, at Alderley, Herbert and Jack, at Wortley and Millie Laura at Hillsby), they were at Price's Court, Slimbridge in 1911. Another son, Arthur, was born in 1913.

William was recalled "for the duration of the War" in August 1914 to the 10<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters. He died of wounds, probably at Delleville Wood, and is buried in Grave E.10 at Puchevillers British Cemetery. He is remembered on the War Memorial at Cheltenham.

In 1939 Alice was living with her son Arthur in Cheltenham; she died aged 73 in 1951.

**18<sup>th</sup> July, Somme. Private Dennis James HOLMAN, 1895-1916** was the son of James Wake Holman, who worked for "the Municipal Electric Light Station" and his wife Avis. Sometime after 1901, James and Avis with their children Dennis and Fanny, moved from Easton to 18 Arlington Road, St Anne's Park where both children attended St Anne's School. By 1911, Dennis was working in an iron foundry, perhaps Lysaght's, though his name does not appear on any of the firm's memorials. His early service number, 1728 suggests he was already a part-time soldier when he enlisted in the 1/6<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters and he presumably landed at Boulogne with the battalion on 30 March 1915. He died on 18 July 1916 aged 21, of wounds probably at Delleville Wood, and is named in the "*Roll of Honour*" (WDP) 19<sup>th</sup> August. He is buried at the Gezaincourt Communal Cemetery Extension, Grave I.C.10 and is remembered at St Anne's and St Anne's School, (D. Holman).

**18<sup>th</sup> July, Delleville Wood, Somme, Major Edward Travers BURGESS, DCM, 1877-1916** was baptised at St Paul's church, Clifton on 19 September 1877, the second son of Daniel Travers Burgess, a solicitor and his wife, South-African born Alice Sarah. Daniel Travers Burgess was Town Clerk of Bristol, 1880-1900, a post held by his father and grandfather before him. The



family's association with Brislington goes back to the 1830s when the first Daniel Burges came to live at Gotley Lodge. Daniel and Alice Burges were living in the village by 6 March 1887 when their youngest son Roger was baptised at St Luke's. In 1891, Edward was away from home, a boarder at Winchester School; his parents were then resident at Winash House, with their three younger children and several servants.

Perhaps inspired by his mother's tales of the Cape, Edward Burges went to South Africa on leaving school, and joined the Border Horse, otherwise the South African Field Force. He served with distinction in the Boer War, being awarded the DCM for gallantry and was also the recipient of the Queen's South Africa and the King's South Africa Medals, 1901 & 1902.

In 1907, ironically in view of later events, Burges was part of a combined British-German

force which defeated an insurrection against the German occupation of South West Africa, now Namibia. Jacob Marengo, the leader of the rebellion was shot and killed on 20 September 1907 at Eenzaamheid.



**Edward Travers Burges,  
1877-1916**

In 1914 Burges found himself fighting *against* the Germans, his erstwhile allies, alongside General Louis Botha whose unpopular campaign in SW Africa provoked a Boer revolt.

Perhaps Edward had become tired of the convoluted local politics and volunteered for service in North Africa to fight against the Sennussi, a religious sect, (engaged in *Jihad* against the British Empire) which was being courted by the Germans. He was promoted Major and subsequently went

with the South African Infantry to the Somme where he died on 18 July 1916 following an early morning onset to capture a part of Delville Wood.



***Edward Burges – remembered at St Luke’s Churchyard***

The attack was successful but as Major Burges was passing up and down the lines urging the men to dig themselves in he was struck by a shell and killed instantly. He was “Mentioned in Despatches” in all three theatres of war in which he served. He has no known grave and is remembered on the Thiepval Memorial, Pier & Face, 4C. His name is inscribed on his parents’ tombstone in St Luke’s Churchyard, “*Edward, second son of Daniel Travers and Alice Sarah Burges, Major, South African Infantry, born 13 August 1877, killed in action at Delville*

*Wood, France, Friday July 18<sup>th</sup>, 1916.”*

Edward Burges married Charlotte Harrington at Croydon in 1911. She is named, along with his late parents, by the CWGC, though not mentioned in his obituary notice in the WDP of 28 July 1916. Edward is remembered on the War Memorial at East Clevedon. Charlotte seems to have lived a fairly quiet life there at Highland Cottage and came to the notice of the media only once, when she was fined five shillings for having a firearm without a licence. She appears not to have remarried and is perhaps the Charlotte Burges, who was living alone in Weybridge, Surrey in 1939. Edward’s elder brother Daniel (*qv*) who survived the war was awarded the Victoria Cross on 18 September 1918.

**19<sup>th</sup> July, Fromelles. Private William DUGGAN, 1887-1916, Lance Corporal Henry Charles SAMPSON, 1896-1916 and Private Edward Colston HOWELL, 1896-1916** are buried next to each other at Fleurbaix in Graves III.B.17, III.B.18, III.B.19. Brislington also lost **Lance Corporal Harold W. MILLER/MILLAR, c1890-1916 and Private James Abel REED, 1891-1916** in the same action.

**William Duggan** was the son of an Irishman, Edmund Joseph Martin Duggan and his wife Amelia Watkins, who were married at Bedminster on 3 October 1881. The history of his father, Edmund J.M. Duggan, RN, is told elsewhere in this volume. William Duggan who was in the Territorial Army was called to serve by the 2/4<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters in September 1914. After initial training at Northampton and Chelmsford the battalion was mobilised for war and landed in France on 24 May 1916. William was killed during the disastrous battle at Fromelles, a subsidiary action to the Somme. He is buried at Rue-du-Bois Military Cemetery, Fleurbaix, in Grave III.B.17 and is among the fallen listed in the *“Roll of Honour”*, (WDP), 31<sup>st</sup> August 1916, simply as: *“Killed. Duggan, 3339, W., Bristol, Gloucestershire Regt.”* He is remembered at St Luke’s. (W.M. Duggan)

**Henry Charles Sampson** was born at Bedminster in 1896, the second of five children of Joseph, a wood sawyer, and Beatrice Elizabeth Jane Sampson, nee Downer. By 1911 they were living at 38 Sandy Park Road, with their children William, Henry, Leonard, Beatrice and George Edward. The two older boys were working as clerks with the rest of the children at school, most likely at Wick Road. In an extraordinary change of occupation, their father Joseph is described as an “unregistered dentist”, which must have been a horror reserved for the truly desperate.

Henry was working in the offices of the Midland Railway when he joined the 2/5<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Gloucesters in 1915. After training he went to France where he was killed in action at Fromelles. His body was not immediately identified and he was originally listed as *“Unknown British Soldier”* but the typed entry is crossed through and altered in handwriting, *“proved to be H.C. Sampson.”* Henry is commemorated at St Luke’s and the Congregational, his initials transposed as C.H. Sampson.

**Edward (Teddie) Colston Howell** was born at St Giles, Bristol, one of five surviving children of Alfred, a railway labourer, and Mary Jane, nee Smart, a tailoress. By 1911 the family were at 99 Day’s Road, Barton Hill, by which time Ted was fifteen, working as a newspaper delivery boy. He later worked for the GWR and was living at Repton Road, Brislington when he enlisted shortly after the outbreak of the war and joined the 2/6<sup>th</sup> Gloucestershire Regiment. Following training the battalion left for France on 24 May 1916 with Ted apparently arriving a week or so later.



The tragic news of his death by sniper fire was published in the WDP on 18<sup>th</sup> August:

*“Killed in Action. Mr & Mrs Howell of 73 Repton Road, Brislington have received official news of the death of their only son, E.C. Howell (Teddie) with the Gloucesters in France. Prior to the War he was in the employ of the Great Western Railway at their locomotive sheds.*

*Shortly after the start of the War he answered his country's call and arrived in France in June of this year. His comrades who were with him spoke of him as a most cheerful lad and how he will be greatly missed by them. He was with the machine gun section and met his death instantaneously by being shot through the head by an enemy bullet whilst going into action. They say he died peacefully with a smile on his face as a true British lad, fighting for the common cause, his King and his Country. He was buried with military honours in the British cemetery behind the lines. There have been many expressions of sympathy to the bereaved parents and sisters. The deceased was only 20 years old."*

Ted Howell is remembered at St Luke's, (E.C. Howell). An "In Memoriam" notice, 19 July 1919 reads: *"HOWELL. In loving memory of our dear son Edward Colston Howell (Ted) who was killed in action in France July 19, 1916. Ever lovingly remembered by his mother, father, & sisters. When alone in my sorrow bitter years flow, there stealeth a dream of a dead long ago, but unknown to the world he stands by my side and whispers the words death cannot divide."*

In 1901, **Harold William (or William Harold) Miller**, aged 11, lived with his widowed mother Harriet, nee Penny, a school teacher, and elder sister and brother, Ethel and Alexander at 5 Denbigh Street, City Road, Bristol. He was at the same address, "a litho printer, son of Charles Alexander Miller, deceased" on 30 August 1912 when he married a book keeper, Ada Marion Good, aged 24, daughter of Arthur, a greengrocer, at St Barnabas. He is recorded as No. 3547 Harold W. Millar, born Brislington, 2/4<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters when as a Territorial he was called up in 1914, and promoted to Lance Corporal. The WDP, "Roll of Honour", column, 2<sup>nd</sup> August reads: *"MILLER. L/Cpl Harold W. Miller, Gloucestershire Regiment, Killed in Action, in France, July 19<sup>th</sup>, dearly loved husband of Ada Miller."*

Harold is buried in Grave IIG.28 at Laventie Military Cemetery, La Gorgue. CWGC records his widow Ada, at 41 Grove Park Road, Brislington. He does not appear to be connected to the Miller family of "Football Match" fame who lived at Grove Road and he is not on any of the Brislington War Memorials.

**James Abel Reed**, the third of four children of James Abel, senior, and Florence, nee Green was recorded in 1891 aged three months at 1 Butler's Lane, Temple. Subsequently he was with the family at Redcliff and following his father's death, (1905) lived at 3 Orchard Square, Bedminster. In 1911, aged 20, he was "a labourer at a rails & bridge girder works", possibly Lysaght's, though his name is not on their War Memorials. He joined the 14<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters for short service and was killed in action aged 25, at Fromelles. He has no known grave and is commemorated at Pier & Face 5A & 5B of the Thiepval Memorial. Though his connections with Brislington are unknown, he is remembered on the War Memorial at St Luke's (J.A. Reed). CWGC names his mother, Mrs Florence Reed, of 32 Fraser Street, Bedminster.



**23<sup>rd</sup> July, Somme: Corporal Arthur John HART, 1895-1916** was the eldest of four children who were born in Pontypridd, Glamorgan to Alice Hart, a Londoner from Bermondsey.

***Arthur John Hart, 1895-1916***

The family had moved to 15 Sandgate Road, Brislington by the time Arthur was six and he attended school at Wick Road. In 1905 Alice gave birth to a fifth child, Ernest Edward. Mr Hart, so far conspicuously absent was perhaps (a long shot) the “Gunner Hart” (a former soldier?), a boxer, who in 1907 fought Freddie “the Wizard” Welsh, at Pontypridd.

In 1911, the widowed Alice was 43, living with her children at 99 Sandholme Road. Arthur, 16, formerly a telegraph messenger, was between jobs, Elsie Rose, 14, had left school; the rest were all scholars at Wick Road: Leonard Robert, 12, (also working part time as a newsboy), Doris Elizabeth, 10 and Ernest aged six.

Arthur (a Territorial) was working at Brislington Tramways Works when he joined the 1/4<sup>th</sup> (City of Bristol) Gloucesters in August 1914. He landed with the battalion at Boulogne on 30 March 1915 and proceeded to the Somme. He was originally “missing”, 23<sup>rd</sup> July, and his death was not confirmed for six weeks. The WDP, 8<sup>th</sup> September, records: *“Lance/Cpl A.J. Hart has been killed in action aged 23. He was the eldest son of Mrs Hart of 99 Sandholme Road, Brislington. He was educated at Wick Road Council School and was employed by Bristol Tramways at their Construction Works in Brislington.”*

Arthur has no known grave and is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, Pier & Face, 5A & 5C. He is remembered at St Anne’s church (J.A. Hart) and as “A.J. Hart” on the St Anne’s School Memorial (which apparently includes Wick Road scholars). His brother Leonard Hart who also served in the Gloucesters survived the war and in 1939 was a bus conductor living at 14 Cuffington Road with his wife Irene.

**23<sup>rd</sup> July, Somme, Private William Albert WILSON, 1895-1916**, was also “missing in action” and was later recorded as being killed, probably in the same action as Arthur Hart. William was born at Totterdown in 1895, the only son of Albert, an upholsterer (born Lewes, Sussex) and Bessie, nee Rowe. By 1901 they were living in Brislington at the first of three recorded addresses, 55 and 21 Churchill Road and 15 Conway Road. William and his sister Mary, who was three years younger, went to St Anne’s School. In 1911, William was in London, at 3 Chambers Lane, Willesden, staying with his maternal uncle, Thomas Ezekiel Rowe from

whom he was learning trunk and portmanteau making but it seems he did not settle to this occupation, and returned to Brislington and a job "on the trams".

He enlisted early in the war in the 1/6<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters and was in action at the Somme. He was reported "Missing" and for **ten months** the family clung to the hope that he was still alive until his death was confirmed and reported (WDP) on 24 May 1917:



*"Mr & Mrs Wilson of 15 Conway Road, Brislington, have received official information that their son Private W.A. Wilson of the Gloucesters is dead. He was reported missing on July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1916. Much sympathy is shown to the parents in their bereavement after many months of suspense. He was 21 years and 6 months and before joining was in the employ of the Bristol Tramways & Carriage Co as a conductor. He was highly respected."*

***Pte. William Albert Wilson, 1895-1916***

William's grave is unknown and he is commemorated at Pier & Face 5A & 5B on the Thiepval Memorial. He is remembered

at St Anne's Church (W.A. Wilson) and at St Anne's school (W. Wilson).

**29<sup>th</sup> July, Somme. Private Arthur Henry WILLIAMS, 1887-1916**, was a son of John Royle Williams, Brislington's station master, and his wife Maria Jane, nee Barnard. In 1901 John and Maria were living at 1 Lower Kensington Park Road with their family of ten children aged between 25 years and 8 months old. Arthur Henry, the third youngest, then aged 14, was apprenticed to his uncle, Edward George Barnard, a wholesale tobacconist at St Mary le Port Street, Bristol.

***Private Arthur Williams, 1887-1916***

A letter, sent to his father was published in the Western Daily Press on 21<sup>st</sup> August:

*It is with very great regret that I have to inform you of the death of your son Private Arthur Williams. He was killed in the early morning of 29 July by a German shell which fell on the trench he was occupying and due to the devotion of two colleagues he was buried near where he fell. Since your son joined*



*my platoon he has always proved himself a willing, capable and courageous soldier and his lamentable death is a great loss to his company and battalion."*

Despite the specific details of his date of death and the devotion of his comrades, his grave went unmarked during the chaos and not found again, yet another fatality of the Somme whose resting place is unknown. He is commemorated at Pier & Face 5A & 5B of the Thiepval Memorial and is remembered on the family grave in St Luke's churchyard: *"In Loving Memory of Arthur Henry Williams killed in action 29 July 1916 near Longueval, France, age 29."* An inscription from John 15:13 follows: *"Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends."*



***John Royle Williams, the Stationmaster, at Brislington Station, c1917, with Harold Hole, right and Mrs Swaine ("who did the heavy work!") The prosperous looking countryman on the left is unknown.***

Arthur is commemorated at St Luke's and the Congregational, (A.H. Williams). His mother, Maria Jane died on 13 March 1930 aged 77 and his father, John Royle, a few months later on 8<sup>th</sup> December aged 79. Arthur's sister, Florence who died in 1932 aged 51 and his baby brother Frank who died at six months old in 1892 are interred with their parents. Another brother, Leonard Royle Williams died in Brislington in 1972.



***Arthur Williams' Memorial on the Family Grave, St Luke's churchyard***

**31<sup>st</sup> July, Somme. Sergeant Major Alfred Arthur FOWLER, c1872-1916** was born in Glasgow. On 27 August 1886 aged only fourteen, he signed the Oath of Allegiance in Ireland and enlisted at Cork in the 1<sup>st</sup> Devonshire Regiment for a term of 12 years, plus an additional year in the Reserves *"in the case of imminent National danger."* His time was served by 1898, but he remained a Reservist, and was recalled to the Colours for the Anglo-Boer War, serving in South Africa as "2<sup>nd</sup> Corporal", No. 9816, in the Army Service Corps.

In 1900 he married Edith Eleanor Cook at Islington, London, but by 1901 the couple had arrived at 8 Kitchener Terrace, Knowle. Alfred, once again demobbed, was "a fitter of stoves and ranges". Sadly Edith died in 1909 aged only thirty four and by 1911 Alfred, then an iron foundry worker, was in lodgings at 4 Sandwich Road, Brislington, with his sister-in-law Ann (Edith's sister), her husband Edwin Leopold Webb and their three children. Eleanor Cook, a widow, (Edith and Ann's mother) also lived with them. On 7 June 1911, he married his second wife at St Luke's, Minnie Maria Moore, 27, a cook.

On the outbreak of war Alfred was recalled yet again, this time to the 14<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters and was serving with the battalion on the Somme when he was wounded in action. He was brought home to a Bristol hospital where he died on 31<sup>st</sup> July. His death was announced in the WDP, *"Roll of Honour"*, 7<sup>th</sup> September: *"Gloucestershire Regiment; Died of Wounds: Fowler, 21666, Company Sergeant-Major Fowler, A.A. (Bristol)."* On the Medal Roll of the Great War he is shown as *"Acting Warrant Officer A.A. Fowler."*



Alfred, aged 44, is buried at "Soldiers' Corner", Arno's Vale, and commemorated there on the Screen Wall. He is remembered at St Luke's, (A.A. Fowler). Minnie, his widow, moved away from Brislington and is recorded by the CWGC at Cardiff. Edwin and Ann Webb also moved, to 178 York Road where they were living in 1939; (Granny) Eleanor Cook, mother-in-law, "a permanent invalid", aged 81 was still with them.

**31<sup>st</sup> July, Somme. Private Charles Frank PETTY, 1897-1916** the son and namesake of Charles Petty, from Tooting, London and his wife Alice, nee Miller lived at 6 Pendennis Road, Brislington. Charles senior died in 1906 aged 35 and in 1910, Alice married her second husband, William Lippitt, a widower with a young son.

By 1911, the combined Petty and Lippitt families lived at 17 Grove Park Road: William Lippitt, aged 58, a carter/haulage contractor, born at Upton on Severn, Alice, 42, from Cirencester, with her six children, aged between eighteen and five years old, Henry, Margaret, Charles, William, Wyndham and Kathleen, plus William's only son Victor Edward Lippitt, aged seven. All the children were born in Brislington.

Charles Petty, a tram conductor volunteered two months after the outbreak of war and went to France in March 1915 with the 1/6<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters. He was wounded in action and taken to a field hospital behind the lines where hopes were entertained for his recovery. Sadly gangrene set in and on his 19<sup>th</sup> birthday, 28<sup>th</sup> July, it was found necessary to amputate his leg. He died the next day from the shock of the operation.

The Battalion's Chaplain wrote to Alice Lippitt (WDP 12<sup>th</sup> August) that "*he lies in the Military Cemetery at Etaples near the sea in a spot facing England.*" His death likewise touched the heart of the matron at the hospital as she also wrote in sympathy to Mrs Lippitt telling her that that "*fortunately the boy was not aware how ill he was.*"

This sad news did not reach the family until the second week of August and they were unaware of Charles' death on 30<sup>th</sup> July when his sister Margaret, 20, a domestic servant was married at St Luke's to an Irishman from Newbridge, Private William Albert Harvey, 32, of the 9<sup>th</sup> Reserve Cavalry.

Charles is buried at Etaples, in Grave, VI. B.7. He is remembered at St Luke's (C. Petty) and on the Bristol Tramways War Memorial (C.F. Petty). His elder brother, Henry served with the Gloucestershire Hussars in Egypt and survived the war. William Harvey, his brother in law also survived and stayed in Brislington after he was demobbed and worked as baker's roundsman. He and Margaret brought up five children and in 1939 were living at 71 Sandholme Road. William died in 1949 and Margaret in 1975.



***Charles Petty 1897-1916 (right) with his younger brother, Henry Northcott Petty.***

**8<sup>th</sup> August. Private William John MILLER, 1879-1916** was about two years old when he was baptised at Chew Magna in a double christening with his infant sister Sarah Ann on 6 August 1882, children of William Miller, a coachman and his wife Elizabeth Ann. By 1901 the Miller family had arrived at 9 Grove Road, Brislington and in due course were blessed with enough offspring to form a family football team (with the father in goal). At Easter 1914 the team played a famous match against the Hunt family of 11 brothers, of Pucklechurch.

*“W. Miller scored a goal and immediately afterwards the Hunts were awarded a penalty - but failed to score. The Millers had the advantage in years and physique, the Hunts somewhat superior in skill.”<sup>105</sup>*

The Millers won by this single goal. In June both teams were presented with “Family Medals” by the Bristol and Suburban League.



***The Miller Family Football Team, 1914***

On 20 March 1915, Mr & Mrs Miller senior reported proudly that six of their sons were on active service.<sup>106</sup>

William originally enlisted aged 18 years and six months, on 2 October 1897 for twelve years in the 1<sup>st</sup> SLI, five in the Regular Army, seven in Reserve. In the early summer of 1902, a veteran of the Boer War, he married Alice Edith Clarke; by 1911 they lived at Fry’s Hill with their three children Beatrice, Clara and William James. William worked at Mr Ricketts’ glass house. By 1915 he had been recalled to the regiment and was probably in France when Alice gave birth to their second son, Ernest John, on 14 May 1916. William’s name is among the wounded in the long list of casualties published on 5<sup>th</sup> August. Alice took the new baby to be christened at St Luke’s on 8<sup>th</sup> September: “the son of William John and Alice Miller, 57 Sandown Road, Pte 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion, SLI”; it is probable that she had not been told the news that her husband had died of his wounds on 8<sup>th</sup> August.

William is buried at the Essex Farm, (a hospital cemetery) at West Vlaanderen in Grave III. B. 34 alongside 26 soldiers of the SLI, who included the next named Albert Rogers and their

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<sup>105</sup> WDP 14.4.1914

<sup>106</sup> HBM Free Press, 20.3.1915

young officer, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. Ronald Chard Roseveare, aged nineteen. William Miller, 37, the goal scorer of 1914 is remembered at St Luke's, (W.J. Miller).

(Another William John Miller, born c1876, was living at Water Lane in 1911. He and Florence Ada Williams were married at St Luke's in 1902 and had sons William Hubert James and John Leslie. This W.J. Miller of the 648<sup>th</sup> Agricultural Company, was transferred to the Royal Berkshires, was promoted Corporal and served in France 20 August 1916 to 11 February 1917. He survived the war and received his Victory Medal in 1920.)

**8<sup>th</sup> August. Private Albert ROGERS, 1883-1916**, born at Hotwells, was one of nine surviving children (of eleven) of William Rogers, a carter at a ropeworks, (probably Terrell's of Arno's Vale), and his wife Fanny who had moved to Brislington by 1911. Like his younger brother Fred (*qv.* 18.9.1914) Albert was already in the 1<sup>st</sup> SLI when war was declared. His death was announced in the WDP, 10 September 1916:

*"Mrs Rogers of 67 Sandholme Road, Brislington has been informed that her son Private Albert Rogers of the Somerset Light Infantry has died of wounds received in action on August 8<sup>th</sup>. This is the second son she has lost; Private Frederick Rogers, of the 1<sup>st</sup> South Wales Borderers, being killed in action in September 1914."*<sup>107</sup>



Albert is buried at the Essex Farm Cemetery, Grave: III D.24 close to the last named William John Miller. He is commemorated at St Anne's, (A. Rogers.)

***Albert Rogers, 1883-1916***

Essex Farm is famous for the poem "In Flanders Fields" written in 1915, by Lieut.-Col John McCrae of the Canadian Army Medical Corps.

**9<sup>th</sup> August. Private Robert RICHMOND, 1894-1916** was the second of eight children of James, a labourer, and his wife Annie, nee Richards. In 1911 they were living at 2 Sandholme Road; their eldest son, "James B. Richmond, aged 21, a soldier, in the SLI" is recorded on the census form but his name deleted. No military record survives for him and his whereabouts are unknown.

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<sup>107</sup> See 1914



The WDP, 7 September 1916, reports: "Mr & Mrs Richmond of 67 Bath Road, have just received official news of the death of their son Robert, aged twenty two. He joined the SLI 25 August 1914 and went to the front in April last year. He was formerly in the employ of J.S. Fry & Sons. Robert was wounded in action and died on 9<sup>th</sup> August, at the casualty clearing station at Lijssenthoek."

**Robert Richmond, 1894-1916**

Robert was buried in Grave VIII D.25A at the Essex Farm Military Cemetery, (next to Albert Rogers, above) but is not remembered on any of the Brislington Memorials; the CWGC states

simply that his parents were "of Brislington". James Richmond, who was widowed in 1937, was living with his married daughter Annie Dodge (Robert's sister) at 22 Watson Avenue, Brislington in 1939.

**16<sup>th</sup> August, Somme. Private Arthur Edwin WARREN, ?1894-1916**, "born in Brislington" according to his brief military record, may be the child of this name registered at Keynsham in 1894. He served in the 1/4<sup>th</sup> (City of Bristol) Gloucesters, Service No. 5254 and was killed in action at the Somme on 16 August 1916. He has no known grave and is commemorated on Pier & Face 5A & 5B of the Thiepval Memorial, but is otherwise unidentified.

**16<sup>th</sup> August, Somme. Corporal Samuel George WARREN, 1895-1916** was one of four children of Albert and Alice, nee Bullock, the others being Lily, Bertha and William. In 1901, Albert, (aged 31, a shopkeeper and meat purveyor) was absent from the family home, 65 Richmond Street, Knowle, as he was currently a guest of Queen Victoria at Bristol gaol. Alice Warren died in 1910 and on 29<sup>th</sup> August that year her son William, a GWR porter, born 1892, joined the Royal Navy. He was "5 feet 7½ inches tall, 39 inch chest, light hair, hazel eyes, a fresh complexion, and tattooed on both forearms, one depicting a bird." He would serve for 23 years. With their father still missing in 1911, whereabouts unknown, Samuel George, a printer's apprentice, moved in with his elder sister Bertha and her husband Thomas Hale at 23 Sandown Road, Brislington. He was a Territorial and in August 1914, joined the 4<sup>th</sup> (Bristol) Gloucesters, landing with the battalion at Boulogne on 30 March 1915. He died of wounds received during the Somme fighting. A death notice, 15 September 1916, was posted by his loving family:

*"WARREN. Died of wounds received in action, August 16<sup>th</sup>, Corporal S.G. Warren of Brislington. Deeply mourned by his loving sisters and brother also his brothers in law and loving sweetheart, Rose. Though death divides us, sweet memories cling."*

If only we knew the last name of his “sweetheart Rose”. Did she find love again or was she one of the many women, forever spinsters, “left over” after the war?

Samuel, aged 20, is buried at Puchvillers in Grave II.E 44 and is remembered at St Luke’s, (G. Warren), St Anne’s and the Congregational, (S.G. Warren). The CWGC records his brother, Petty Officer William Edward Warren, R.N. as his next of kin.

**17<sup>th</sup> August, Somme. Private Ernest John HABERFIELD, 1891-1916**, a son of Nicholas Blight Haberfield and his wife Eliza Ann, nee Vowles was born at Barton Hill. Following Eliza’s death aged 46 in 1899 Nicholas took a new partner, Maria Whitnell, though they did not marry until 1906. In 1901, their household at 83 Richmond Street, St Philip’s was full to bursting: besides the parents, there were eleven resident Haberfield offspring, aged between twenty eight and five years old: William, George, Arthur, Eliza, Frank, Herbert, Ernest, Wallace, Rose, Mary and Edward plus two Whitnells, Maria’s sons John and Edwin, 18 and 16 respectively. During the next decade the Haberfield family moved to 16 Addison Road, Brislington with the younger children who attended St Anne’s School. Maria Haberfield died aged 50 in 1910. By 1911, Ernest was a Private in the 1<sup>st</sup> Gloucestershire Regiment in barracks at Portsmouth. He was in the Reserve in 1914 and was recalled to the 10<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters for the duration of the war. He died at the Somme, 17<sup>th</sup> August, aged 25. He has no known grave and is commemorated on Pier & Face 5A & 5B of the Thiepval Memorial; he is remembered on the Memorials at St Anne’s Church and School (E.J. Haberfield).

(It seems likely that he was a relation of Edwin George Haberfield, a tramway worker, of 18 Chatsworth Road who enlisted in the army in 1904. Edwin served throughout the Great War and signed on for another tour of duty afterwards. Another relative must be Private Nicholas J. Haberfield, 92<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, TR7/4835, who died aged 30 on 1 March 1919 and is buried in a War Grave at Avon View Cemetery, St George. He was the son of Alfred Colston and Mary Ann Haberfield, and married to Beatrice.)

**18<sup>th</sup> August, Somme. Private Jabez (Frank) ACKERMAN, 1887-1916**, was the son of Asher and Alicia Joyce Ackerman who were married at Frome in 1867. Alicia died aged 50 in 1890, and Asher married her younger sister Clara, (still technically at this time). By 1901 was an iron moulder, living at 12 Cotswold Road, Bedminster with Asher and Clara, and two spinster aunts. When Asher died in 1904 Frank continued to live with his stepmother though he appears to have been a member of Brislington’s Congregational Church. He enlisted in the 2/4<sup>th</sup> Royal Berkshire Regiment, probably by choice – Berkshire was his father’s county of birth. He was wounded in action at the Somme and died of his injuries on 18<sup>th</sup> August. He is buried in Grave VI. C. at Warloy-Baillon and is remembered at St Luke’s (F. Ackerman) and at the Congregational, (Frank Ackerman). His stepmother Clara died in 1918 aged 74.

**18<sup>th</sup> August, Somme. Private Harold Louis KNIGHT, 1900-1916** was born in the autumn of 1900, the sixth child (of ten) of William Knight, a commercial clerk and his wife Annie, nee

Griffiths. The Knight family lived at various addresses in Bedminster throughout Harold's



childhood and were probably still in that area when enlisted several years under age in the 1<sup>st</sup> Cyclists' Battalion, (the 1/6<sup>th</sup> Royal Warwickshire Regiment). He was "missing" for three months until his death was officially announced briefly by the WDP, in the "Roll of Honour", of 17 November 1916: "*killed in action, 18 August 1916, Knight, 20822, Pte H, Keynsham.*"

Harold has no known grave. He is commemorated on the Thiepval Memoria, Pier & Face, 9A & 9B, 10B, and on the Memorial Gates at Keynsham.

The CWGC was aware of Harold's age and it is recorded, "16" without comment, alongside the names of his parents, then of 15 Grove Park Avenue, Brislington. William and Annie were still at this address in 1939 with their youngest son, Philip Robert, born 1911.

***Harold Knight, 1900-1916. A child at the front.***

Harold's brothers Edwin, 20, and Thomas, 17, joined up with him in August 1914. Edwin was with the RFA in Alexandria and served until 1919. Thomas was discharged in November 1914, medically unfit, due to heart trouble. William, the eldest brother attested in 1916. Despite "defective sight" he served at Salonika from November that year to September 1919, which included a spell in Mesopotamia.

**21<sup>st</sup> August, Somme. Sergeant Thomas William BULL, 1878-1916**, aged 3 in 1881, lived at 4 Francis Place, Bristol, with his parents Thomas and Sarah and younger sister, Sarah Annie. Following his marriage to Grace Darling, by 1901, he was a solicitor's clerk, living at 3A Sandy Park Road with his wife and son, Norman, aged 5 weeks. Sadly baby Norman died before his first birthday. By 1911, with four children, Doris, Leslie, Douglas and Olive May,

they had moved to 6 Sandringham Road where Thomas's aunt, Emily, a 67 year old widow lived with them as "an assistant in the home". During the next few years two more children were born.

Thomas Bull, a Territorial, was called into the 1/6<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters in October 1914. After training for war at Swindon and Maldon, Essex, he landed with the battalion at Boulogne, 3 March 1915.



**Sergeant T.W. Bull, 1878-1916**

**26<sup>th</sup> August, Somme. Private Albert William PERRY, 1899-1916**, aged seventeen, was the only son of William Henry and Sarah Perry who was listed among the wounded", of 7 August 1916 but later died, 26<sup>th</sup> August.<sup>108</sup>

"He died on 21 August 1916, though his death was not reported for five weeks, 27<sup>th</sup> September: "T.W. Bull of the Gloucesters has been killed in action. His parents reside at Sandringham Road, Brislington. He was an old Redcliff schoolboy and before joining up in October 1914 was employed at John Lysaght's Ltd. He leaves a widow and six

*children. Sgt-Major Handford has written a most sympathetic letter to his widow."*

Thomas who was thirty eight, has no known grave and is commemorated at Pier & Face, 5 & 5B, of the Thiepval Memorial. He is remembered on the John Lysaght's Memorial plaque for "The Employees of the Constructional Works who died for their Country, 1914-19" (T.W. Bull) and at St Luke's (with his initials transposed) as "W.T. Bull".



*"PRIVATE A.W. PERRY. The sad news has been received that Private A.W. Perry the only son of Mr and Mrs Perry of 114 Bloomfield Road, Brislington has died of wounds received in action. He started his military career as long ago as November 1912 when he joined the 6th Gloucestershire Cadets, transferring into the ranks of the Gloucestershire Regiment in July 1914 when he proceeded to Minehead camp. On war being declared he failed to pass the military test, but going into hospital he underwent an operation which was successful. Then still feeling determined to do his bit he joined the Gloucesters in May 1915 when he*



*was sent to the East Coast going to France this year as a bomber. He was wounded on 6 June 1916 and was sent to Boulogne Hospital after which he was sent back to the regiment with which he served up to the time of his death. He was educated at St Nicholas and St Leonard's, (City) under the headmastership of Mr T. Barrow. He always took an active part in all games attached to the school. He played in the school's rugby team the year the school won the cup for which he received the medal. He was liked by a large circle of friends who will mourn the passing of such a fine and promising young soldier. He was 6 ft. 2in."*

Albert, just a year older than Harold Knight, is buried at Warloy-Baillon in Grave V.R.9 and is remembered on the War Memorial at St Anne's, (A.W. Perry).

**26<sup>th</sup> August, Somme. Private Tom Cecil NEWPORT, 1897-1916** lived with his parents Joseph and Ellen at their outfitters shop in Keynsham High Street, 1901-1911. Tom was between two older brothers Gerald and Dick and had two younger sisters, Jessie and Josephine. He enlisted in the 2/4<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters probably under the Derby Scheme sometime in 1915 and was killed in action, aged 19, at the Somme. He is buried in Grave II. A. Pont-du-Hem, La Gorgue and is commemorated on the Memorial Gates at Keynsham, (T. Newport). He evidently attended St Anne's School for a brief period, and he is remembered among those on the Memorial Shield (T.C. Newport)

**29<sup>th</sup> August, Somme. Private Thomas Frederick THATCHER, 1897-1916**, one of six surviving children of Robert James and Jessie Thatcher of 60 Newbridge Road also went to St Anne's School. His father, Robert, senior, his sons Robert junior, John and Thomas all worked at John Lysaght's Ironworks and must have attended the factory's mass meeting in August 1914 after which Tom, along with many of their workmates enlisted "for King and Country".

Tom Thatcher served in France with the SLI and was killed in action aged nineteen. He has no known grave and is commemorated on Pier & Face, 5A, of the Thiepval Memorial. He is remembered at St Anne's Church, (T.F. Thatcher), St Anne's School, (T. Thatcher) and on the Lysaght's Memorial to the "Employees of the Constructional Works who died for their country in the Great War, 1914-1919", (T. Thatcher).

His widowed Robert, "machine driller, retired", still lived at 60 Newbridge Road, in 1939.

**3<sup>rd</sup> September, Somme. Corporal Leslie Norman ELSON, 1895-1916; Sergeant Sidney George FOSS, 1886-1916; Private William Mark KING (formerly REX), 1895-1916; Private Arthur SAMPSON, 1893-1916.**

These four men, all with Brislington connections, who enlisted in 1914 in the 12<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters (Bristol's Own) were lost during an attack on the German position near Guillemont. Following an approach of one and a half miles in daylight over open ground, the Gloucesters took Wedge Wood, but at a terrible cost. Over 300 of the battalion were killed, wounded or missing.

**Leslie Elson**, born in 1895, was the son of Walter Senyour [sic] Elson, a french polisher, and his wife Lucy, nee Shepherd. By 1901, at 25 Wells Road, Knowle, Walter was a self-employed “fancy toy dealer”, a business that had become defunct by 1911, when as “Walter Senior Elson, 45, a laundry manager, born Stalbridge, Dorset” was in lodgings at Kingsbridge, Devon. When completing the census form he was evidently in a nostalgic frame of mind for he stated he had been “married 20 years with four children”. A cross official ran his pen through the information. One of Walter’s daughters, Mabel, 19, a laundress, was also at Kingsbridge on census night, though at a different address. His wife Lucy meanwhile was at 6 Grove Park Avenue, Brislington, with the rest of the family, Leslie, a junior clerk, Doris, a schoolgirl and a toddler, Donald.

Leslie was among the eager recruits who enlisted as soon as war was declared, his name misprinted in the WDP, 15 September 1914, as “*ELSOM, L.N.*”



***Leslie Elson, 1895-1916***

After initial training in Bristol, the battalion, 990 officers and men, moved first to Salisbury Plain and thence to France in November 1915. Leslie, evidently a useful soldier was promoted corporal. His death was reported by the WDP, 27 September 1916:

*“Corporal Leslie Elson of the Gloucestershire Regiment who was killed in action on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September was the son of Mr & Mrs W. (Fred) Elson. He was 21 this September. He was educated the Wells Road School and at the Merchant Venturers' College. He entered the firm of Messrs Jones & Wainwright, timber merchants and on leaving there joined Messrs McArthur Nash & Co, Marsh Street. He joined a local battalion soon after war broke out. The Commander of his Company has sent a deeply sympathetic letter to Mr Elson in which he stated that Cpl Elson was killed when leading his section on an advance and that he lived to see the advance carried to its final part and our efforts crowned with success. He was a good NCO and I want you to know how much he will be missed by his platoon and company.”*

Leslie is remembered at St Luke’s, (L.H. Elson). In 1939, his father, for whom variety was the spice of life, was an antique dealer, living at 3 Montrose Park with Lucy and their son Donald, a senior clerk, who had applied to become a Special Constable. Lucy’s sister, Annie Shepherd, “of private means” lived with them.

Sidney George Foss, one of eight children of George and Mary was born in Bitton. After his marriage to Rosina Harriett Hill in 1909, he lived at 225 Pennywell Road, Bristol, where he kept busy as a “bootmaker, dealer, greengrocer, and employer”. Around 1912, Sidney and Rosina moved to St Anne’s with their two children, Evelyn and Sidney junior.

Sidney Foss, who volunteered in 1914, proved such an able soldier that he was swiftly promoted to sergeant.

His death was announced, WDP, 29<sup>th</sup> September:

*“SERGT. S.G. FOSS.*



*“Mrs S.G. Foss of 18 Addison Road, St Anne’s, has just received the sad news of the death of her husband, Sidney George Foss who was killed on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, aged 30 years. He joined the Gloucesters just after the outbreak of war and rose to the rank of sergeant. He only proceeded to France in August last and during his short time there proved to be a trustworthy and honourable soldier.”*

**Sergeant S.G. Foss, 1886-1916**

Sidney left a soldier’s will. He is not named on any of the local War Memorials.

Rosina, his widow, who married her second husband Richard Walmsley in 1927, was widowed again in 1932. In 1939 she was living in Bedminster.

William “Willie” Mark King, (formerly Rex) was the third son of Harry and Alice Mary Rex, nee Coombs. He was born after his father died in 1895: *“REX. June, 25<sup>th</sup> at the Lord Clyde, Castle Street, after a long illness, Harry, the dearly beloved husband of Alice Mary, late of Richmond Street, Barton Hill, aged 27. U A.O.D.”*<sup>109</sup>

In 1896 Alice married her second husband, Philip Henry King at St James Church, Bath and by 1901, they were the licensees of the Sandringham Hotel, Brislington and lived on the



premises with Alice’s sons, Harry, Frederick and Willie Rex, and their baby, Ernest King.

***The Sandringham Hotel has hardly changed.***

By 1911, (“Hotel Proprietor”, Philip, patriotically styled himself

<sup>109</sup> WDP 28.6.1895. UAOD = United Ancient Order of Druids.

“Englishman!”) the family had grown considerably with almost enough sons to rival the Miller family’s football team. Harry Rex, was married and running his own pub, the famous “Seven Stars” in St Thomas Street, Fred Rex aged 19 assisted his stepfather in the bar, and Willie, 16, was a draper’s apprentice, then came the King children, Ernest, Alfred, Ivor, Victor and two year old twins, Percy and Gladys.

At the outbreak of war, “William Mark King” enlisted under his stepfather’s surname, (recorded erroneously, 14 September 1914 by the WDP, as “W.N. King”.) He landed in France on Boxing Day, 1915. His family’s obituary appeared 21 September 1916: *“KING: Roll of Honour. Killed in Action, Sept. 3<sup>rd</sup>, Pte W. King, 3<sup>rd</sup> son of Mrs King of the Sandringham Hotel, Brislington. Sadly missed by his sorrowing parents and brothers. He gave his life for his country.”* Followed on 25<sup>th</sup> September:

*“Mr & Mrs King ..... have received official confirmation of the death of their son Pte W. King of the Gloucestershire Regiment. He was only 21 years of age. He was educated at Redcliff School and was afterwards on the staff of Messrs Bolt Bros. Ltd of Victoria Street. He will be sadly missed by a large circle of friends both in business and private life. He also has two brothers with the Colours. He was a member of the cricket and football club and of St Cuthbert’s Church, Brislington. Writing to his parents, his officer says ‘It may be consolation to you to know he died without pain and not before he saw victory crowning our efforts.’”*



**Willie King, 1895-1916**

Willie is remembered at St Luke’s and St Anne’s, (W.M. King). His brothers survived the war.

Arthur Sampson, one of eight surviving children of William, a blacksmith, from Devon, and Emily Sampson lived variously at Barton Hill, Horfield before coming to St Anne’s. His death is reported, 23 October 1916:

*“Private Arthur Sampson, late of Horfield and St Anne’s Brislington, was killed in action in France on September 3<sup>rd</sup>. Prior to the war he was in the employ of the Midland Railway Company. He enlisted in the Gloucesters early in the war and went to the front with the regiment. The family has received a very sympathetic letter from Lieut. Kirby, as follows:*



**Arthur Sampson, 1893-1916**

*'Dear Madam; I regret to inform you that Private Sampson was killed while gallantly attacking the German trenches. He had always proved to be a most willing capable and courageous soldier and his loss will be greatly felt in this company'. He was 23 years of age and was respected and loved by all who knew him."*

The four Brislington men named above have no known graves and are remembered at Pier & Face, 5A & 5B of the Thiepval Memorial.



The Memorial to the 12<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters – the Bristol Cross – is located just outside Longueval, south-east of High Wood at a spot where the battalion was involved in an attack on the 29th of July. The original cross, erected in the 1920s, disappeared during the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War. The replacement, made in Bristol, was put in place in 1986.

**4<sup>th</sup> September, Somme. Private Richard (Dick) Farley CHOWN, 1887-1916** was baptised at St Luke's on 5 August 1887, (with his twin brother John who died soon after). They were the sons of John Farley Chown and his wife, Mary Elizabeth, nee Weeks.



Two more of John and Mary's offspring were born in Brislington, before 1911 by which time the Chown family had moved to 13 Hughenden Road, Horfield. The children then aged between 23 and 8 years old were Dick, the manager of boot shop, Elsie, Ernest, Ada, Leslie, Edgar, Cyril, Maude, Marguerite, and Herbert Valentine. Dick Chown married Mary Elizabeth (Lizzie) Carter who sadly died aged 24 in June 1913, leaving Dick with their baby son John.

**Dick Chown, 1887-1916**

Dick enlisted in the SLI in August 1914. His death in action at the Somme was announced 14<sup>th</sup> September, 1916:

*"Mr Chown of 13 Hughenden Road has received intimation from the War Office that his son, Richard (Dick) was killed on September 4<sup>th</sup>. The deceased was employed by Mr H. Gunn of Elnfield, Westbury on Trym before the outbreak of war. He joined the Colours at the end of August 1914. His Regiment was the Somerset Light Infantry but latterly he was attached to the Devons. He played football for Belgrave, left half, the season they won the Wednesday League. Three more of his brothers are with the Colours, George (the old Belgrave full back) is in Mesopotamia, but the other two are unfortunately lying seriously wounded. The deceased left one child. His wife died sometime before the outbreak of war."*

Dick, who has no known grave is commemorated at Pier & Face 2A of the Thiepval Memorial and remembered on a shield dedicated to former scholars of Stoke Bishop School who fell in the Great War.

**9<sup>th</sup> September, Somme. Lance Corporal Frank FERRAR, 1883-1916** was the fifth child of George, a baker, and Sarah Ferrar who came to Bristol from Peterborough, Northamptonshire. In 1881 they lived at St Paul's with their first four children, George, John, Sarah and Susan, plus Sarah senior's spinster sister Susan Parsons. The baby Susan, died aged two in 1882. In 1891, only two children were with them, John, by then 15, and Frank aged eight. In 1907, George junior, otherwise "George William Parsons Ferrar", an army private, reappeared and encouraged Frank to join him. Frank duly enlisted in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Gloucesters, "a labourer, aged 24 years, six months, of 15 Laxey Road, Horfield" and in April 1911 was living at barracks in Portsmouth. Meanwhile, back in Bristol, matters had taken a turn for the worse; his father and mother, George, 77 and Sarah, 67 had been admitted to Eastville Workhouse and, as was the cruel custom, had been separated. Sarah's entry tells its own tragic story. She told the census-taker that she had been married forty four years, borne seven children though only three were still living. This "irrelevant" information was

crossed out on the form though remained legible. Sarah died in 1914 aged 70 and George aged 80 in 1915.

As a serving soldier Frank was already in the thick of it when war broke out, though he found time to go courting and on 19 February 1916 at St Anne's he married Ethel Mary Crocker, the sister of Albert Edward Crocker (*qv.* 19.11.1917). Frank was then 32, a Lance Corporal in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Gloucesters, who gave his address (mysteriously) as "Curtis & Harvey, Cliftgate Hoo, Kent".

The couple's married life lasted less than six months. Frank was one of the "missing" named in the "Roll of Honour", 30 October 1916, but it was later confirmed among the dead. He was buried in Grave XII D 31, at Caterpillar Valley, Longueval and is remembered on the War Memorial at St Anne's, (F. Ferrar).

Frank and Ethel's daughter, also called Ethel, was born posthumously in 1917. Mother and daughter remained in the Crocker family household at 20 Addison Avenue until Ethel senior died in 1930. Frank Ferrar's brother George, a Private in the 17<sup>th</sup> Battalion, the Essex Regiment, husband of Maria Susannah Ferrar of 15 Rozel Road, Horfield, died on 31 October 1918 aged 49. He lies in a war grave at Holy Trinity Churchyard, Horfield.

**16<sup>th</sup> September, Somme. Private Leslie CHOWN, 1897-1916.** The recent report of Dick Chown's death, (above) states that three of his brothers were with the Colours, and that two of them were currently "*lying seriously wounded*". Shortly afterwards, it was confirmed that one of the brothers, Leslie, aged 19, a Private in the 6<sup>th</sup> SLI had died on the 16<sup>th</sup> September, twelve days after Dick. Leslie, who has no known grave is commemorated beside his brother at Pier & Face 2A of the Thiepval Memorial and likewise named on the Stoke Bishop school shield.

Leslie has no newspaper obituary, from which it may be imagined that his parents were too grief stricken to file a report. All four brothers were in the 6<sup>th</sup> Somersets. Edgar, who had been lying wounded, and Ernest George, a Corporal who served in Mesopotamia, both survived. Their mother, Mary Elizabeth "beloved wife of John Farley Chown" died aged 54 in February 1924 and was buried at Horfield Church.

**16<sup>th</sup> September, Somme. Private George Henry GARLAND, 1892-1916,** the only son of Edwin at Bristol Waterworks, and Jane Garland, nee Pouter, lived at 30 Sandgate Road, Brislington, 1901/1911, with his parents and younger sister Eva. In common with many other families they took in a lodger to make ends meet. In February 1915, George, a "machine feeder", joined the 7<sup>th</sup> (Service) Battalion of the SLI for the duration of the War. His death, aged 24, was reported 20<sup>th</sup> October 1916: "*Information has been received that Pte George Garland of the Somersets has been killed. Before he joined up he was with Messrs Allen, Davies & Co, Rupert Street, Much sympathy has been expressed to his parents who live at 30 Sandgate Road, Brislington.*"



***George Henry Garland, 1892-1916***

George has no known grave and is commemorated at Pier & Face 2A of the Thiepval Memorial. He is remembered at St Luke's. (G.H. Garland).

The staff at Allen Davies & Co, (paper merchants and stationers), where George formerly worked were enthusiastic contributors to the Prince of Wales' War Relief Fund and details of the amounts collected appear regularly in the local press from October 1914.

**16<sup>th</sup> September, Somme. L/Cpl Arthur Colston Lloyd, 1894-1916**, son of George and Eleanor

lived at 40 Willway Street, Bedminster in 1911. He enlisted in the SLI, no. 13367, at Tonyrefail, Glamorgan and was killed in action at the Somme. He has no known grave and is remembered on Pier & Face 2A of the Thiepval Memorial. At some time he was a pupil at St Anne's School where he is remembered on the Memorial Plaque, (A.C. Lloyd).

**5<sup>th</sup> September, Somme. Private William Cornelius KEATES, 1894-1916** was baptised on 23



December 1894 at St Philip & St Jacob, Bristol, the only son of William James and Hester Keates, nee Ridley. His mother died aged 35 in 1898. In 1911 Mr Keates with his two of his daughters and William Cornelius, an insurance clerk, was resident at 17 Repton Road. The younger man, aged 19, joined "Bristol's Own" and is named in the lists of 17 September 1914.

***William Keates, 1894-1916***

By the time of his death, 25<sup>th</sup> September at the Somme, the family had moved from Brislington:



*“PRIVATE W. KEATES. News has reached Mr Keates of 58 Seymour Avenue, Bishopston that his son Private W. Keates has been killed in action. In a letter the Rev J.F.S. Jones (Chaplain) expresses sympathy for the bereaved family and reminds the father that his son gave freely all he could for his country and his home. He died while contributing to the victory of a great cause. Private Keates joined Bristol’s Own at its formation. He was an Old Redcliff schoolboy and was with Mr H.F. Waite of John Street at the time he joined up.”<sup>110</sup>*

Obituaries, 11<sup>th</sup> October, from his father and sisters read: *“KEATES. Killed in action, Sep. 25, Private William Cornelius Keates, Gloucestershire Regiment, aged 21, dearly loved and only son of W.J. Keates of 58 Seymour Avenue, Bishopston. He gave his life: what more could he give?”*

*“KEATES. Killed in action Sept 25, Pte W.C. Keates, Glos. Regt, late of 58 Seymour Avenue, Bishopston, deeply mourned by his loving sisters Edith, Cis & May. It would not have been so hard to part could we have said good-bye.”*

He has no known grave and is commemorated at Pier & Face 5A & 5B, of the Thiepval Memorial.

**26<sup>th</sup> September, Somme. Private Albert James WEEKS/WEEKES, 1891-1916**, was the namesake of his father, Albert James Weeks, “an oil and colour refiner”, probably another of Mr Bartelt’s staff, and London-born Zillah Elizabeth, nee Hartland, of Gordon House, Repton Road. On 2 April 1911, Albert, Zillah and two of their sons, James, a trainee architect, and William, were at home, but as occasionally elsewhere in this history, the census form again yields serendipitous information due to error that would otherwise be lost. Albert James, a clerk, aged nineteen, was included with the rest, though he was not at home in Brislington on census night. In fact he was about as far away as he could get without leaving the planet. Albert, said a little note beside his name, (which escaped the eagle eye of the invigilator), was “travelling in New Zealand”.

Such a trip, taking months would not have been undertaken lightly and was almost certainly a reconnaissance mission. Sometime within the next couple of years, the Weeks family migrated to New Zealand, though such is chance, they went without Albert for love had intervened and Albert had met the young woman who would become his wife. He was yet another of the early recruits, (listed 14 September 1914), who volunteered eagerly for “Bristol’s Own” but he came home on leave, 3 August 1915, “of Wensley Camp, Leyburn, Yorkshire” to marry at St Luke’s, Gertrude Dimpleby, a milliner. Perhaps he intended to take his bride to New Zealand after the war, but for now, after a few short days he returned to camp and Gertie to her widowed mother Louisa, at 9 Grove Park.

After just over a year of married life, most of which the couple spent apart, Albert, died of wounds at the Somme on 26 September 1916, being “..... one of the first to join the Colours

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<sup>110</sup> WDP 13.10.1916

*and on landing in France transferred to the Stretcher Bearer Section. Many letters have been received testifying to the splendid way he carried out his duties. His Medical Officer, Capt. J. Lang wrote to his widow: 'Before I knew he had died I sent in his name for a Military Medal in view of his wonderful work during heavy shell fire. I hope he is granted it posthumously, but if not, I want you to know that his work merited the award. He was a man I could always rely on, always cool amid the greatest danger and never thought of his own safety except in so far of his wish to return to you.'*

*"Two of his brothers are currently serving with New Zealand Forces, one of whom is now in England recovering from wounds received in France. Sadly, news has recently been received from their parents in New Zealand that the remaining brother, aged 13, had been accidentally shot."<sup>111</sup>*

Albert, who was twenty five, formerly worked for General & Accident Assurance and was a Sunday-School teacher at St Cuthbert's, then known as "the tin church"; he was "greatly missed" by both organisations. He was buried in Grave I.E. 18 at the Grove Town Cemetery, Meaulte and is remembered at St Luke's, (A.J. Weekes).

The brother who died accidentally in New Zealand must have been William, though he would have been nearer fifteen. Albert's widow Gertie never remarried and in 1939, aged 50, was working as a telegraphist, living at 63 Wick Road, with her sister Norah and brother-in-law Frederick Hall.

**30<sup>th</sup> September, Somme. Lance Corporal Ernest Valentine SHELL, 1889-1916** was born in Exeter to Thomas Shell, a journeyman bricklayer and his wife Ann who had moved to Bristol by 1901. Ernest had twin brothers George and William and sisters Florence and Ann. In 1911



he lived with William and sister-in-law Ellen at 16 Churchill Road, Brislington. Nearby at 17 Sandwich Road, brother George lived with his wife Elizabeth and their three year old daughter Gladys. Ernest was then "a corset presser" at "the Stay Factory", the local name for Chappell Allen & Company, at their red brick premises factory at the junction of Avonvale Road and Victoria Avenue, Barton Hill. Ernest thought (no doubt) that Army life offered more excitement than pressing whalebone undergarments and enthusiastically volunteered in September 1914.

***Ernest Shell, 1889-1916***

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<sup>111</sup> WDP 12.10.1916

Like the majority of the artisans, the Somerset Light Infantry was his destination. Perhaps he was one of a number of "Pals" who joined up together as was the fashion at the time. He was killed in action at the Somme on 30<sup>th</sup> September, was not confirmed until 20<sup>th</sup> November: *"Mr and Mrs T. Shell and family of 17 Sandwich Road, Brislington, have heard news of the death in action of their son, Lance Corporal E.V. Shell of the Somerset Light Infantry. He was 27 years of age and before joining the army in September 1914, was in the employ of Chappell, Allen & Co. Ltd. by whom he was highly esteemed owing to his genial disposition. He will be sadly missed by his fellow employees."*

Ernest has no known grave and is commemorated at Pier & Face 2A at the Thiepval Memorial. He is remembered at St Anne's, (E.V. Shell).

**7<sup>th</sup> October, Somme, Rifleman Albert James CROSS, 1894-1916**, the youngest son of Wallace Harry and Dinah Cross, nee Shaul was a pupil at St Anne's school. His mother Dinah died in 1909. In 1911, Albert, apprenticed as a bootmaker to his father lived at 15 Whitby Road, with Wallace, his brother John, a stoker, and sisters Edith and Constance; they also looked after a foster child, Beatrice Jones, aged five. Albert enlisted in the SLI for short service early in the war and apparently showing promise as a shooter he was transferred to the 1<sup>st</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> (London) Rangers and was at the Somme from 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916. A brief obituary notice, 19<sup>th</sup> November, records his death: *"CROSS. Rifleman Albert James Cross, youngest son of W.H. Cross of 15 Whitby Road, Brislington, killed in action October 7, 1916."*

Albert who was 22, who has no known grave is commemorated on Panel 9C of the Thiepval Memorial. He is remembered at St Anne's church, and school, (A.J. Cross).

**13<sup>th</sup> November, Somme. Private Gilbert Sidney BRIMBLE, 1885-1916**, the second son of Sidney James Brimble, a corn merchant, and his wife Julia lived at Langham Road, Knowle before his marriage to Gladys Lilian Osmund in 1907. By 1911, the couple lived at 14 Langton Road, St Anne's with their two children, Ivy Gladys, aged 3 and Gilbert Percy, aged 5 months. Gilbert, a corset cutter, was probably a colleague of Ernest Shell (*qv.* 30.9.1916) at Chappell & Allen). Gilbert, a Reservist, with previous service in the Royal Berkshire Regiment, which he had joined at eighteen, was recalled to the Colours soon after the outbreak of war. He was with the "Ox. & Bucks." Light Infantry when he was killed in action during the last days of the Somme and is buried in Grave B.30 at Munich Trench Cemetery, Beaumont-Hamel with twelve other members of the regiment, including their officer, a Canadian, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. John Dixon Cuyler Holland. He is remembered at St Anne's (G.S. Brimble).

**22<sup>nd</sup> November, at Sea. Able Seaman Charles Henry REEVES, 1891-1916** was a crewman of HM Submarine E30 which was struck within a previously undetected minefield and lost with all hands. Charles was born 20 September 1891, the son of George, a "watcher" for HM Customs and Susan Reeves. In 1901 he lived at 74 Colston Road, Easton, with his parents, sister Kate and brother Bertram. Life for the family had long been unsettled, owing to the

demand of the Customs Service: Charles was born at Devonport and his siblings at Portsmouth and Salisbury. An elder brother, Thomas, was already in the Royal Navy when war was declared. Following the death of his mother in 1907, Charles, perhaps encouraged by his brother, (and not too excited by his work as a butcher's boy) joined the RN as a Boy Sailor for 12 years, on 10 August 1908. He was then 5 feet 2¾ inches tall but like other recruits by the time of his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, he had grown, in his case, by an inch and a half. He had dark brown hair, hazel eyes and a fresh complexion.

In 1911, he was a "seaman, RN", ashore overnight with his brother Tom, 27, an RN signalman and sister-in-law Beatrice Mary, at 15 Colderick Street, St Budeaux. By this time their younger brother, Bertie, had also joined the Navy and in 1911 was recorded "at sea or in ports abroad". Meanwhile, the boys' father, George, retired with a pension, had moved to 19 Langton Road, St Anne's with his 2<sup>nd</sup> wife, Alice, and his daughter Kate, 22, who worked for Bristol City Council.

Throughout the eight years of his service Charles Reeves's conduct was "very good" though he was aboard so many different ships that it would seem that he hardly got his bearings on one before he was transferred to another: "Ganges", "Warrior", "Isis", "Vivid", "Sutley", "Hannibal", "Colossus", "Defiance", "Blake", "Diligence", "Dolphin", "Titania" and "Maidstone" until November 1916 when he became a submariner.

HM Sub. E30 left Harwich for sea service on 15<sup>th</sup> November, and seven days later she strayed into the minefield. Charles, aged twenty five, died "*as a result of enemy action, body not recovered for burial*" and is commemorated on Panel 12, of the Plymouth Naval Memorial. He is remembered at St Anne's, (C. Reeves).

George Reeves was paid the "War Gratuity" in respect of his son's service. Bertie served throughout the war and stayed in the Navy until he was pensioned off in 1929. Tom served until 4 July 1917 when he was invalidated out with "disseminated sclerosis" otherwise MS.

### **1917: No end in sight.**

Of all the roles women took on during the war, their work in munitions factories was probably the most vital. Without the bullets and shells they produced the British Army could not have carried on fighting. Locally, St Anne's Board Mills was turned over to war production, making wrappings for shells as well as thousands of tons of specially coated board to protect the stores of the Armed Forces in tropical climates.<sup>112</sup> Strachan & Henshaw of Whitehall also changed their product from paper bags to munitions during the war and engaged their first ever female workers, though took great care to stagger shifts so that they never overlapped with the men!

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<sup>112</sup> St Anne's Bristol: A History. Evelyn Winchester

Madge Addenbrooke, the wife of Lieut. Edward Addenbrooke of Brislington, was a pioneer, a “new woman” of the type liable to cause much harrumphing by apoplectic colonels, for in 1915, during her husband’s absence she had successfully completed a course at the Merchant Venturers’ College to become a fully trained “Gauger”, competent to work at a munitions factory. Because of her class, this was unusual enough to warrant a newspaper item.<sup>113</sup>

Where Madge led others surely followed, but it was not until 17<sup>th</sup> February this year that a Brislington munitions worker emerged: Winifred Mabel Stone, aged 23, of 10 Grove Park, married Sapper Leonard Haskett at St Luke’s. Winnie was followed by a small band of other “munitionettes” who were married at the two parish churches. In March, Beatrice Dixon, 22, of 30 Trelawney Road, to Edwin Delve of Easton in Gordano; in May, Dora Brunt, 19, of 72 Repton Road to George Strong, a fellow munitions worker; in August, Edith Maud Singleton, 19, of 74 Repton Road, to Frederick Wathen and in November, Annie Grace Webb, 18, of 153 Bloomfield Road to Gunner Clement Cartledge, of the RGA. In March 1918, Edith Eldridge, 24, of 6 Bellevue Road and Frederick Pearce, of the 5<sup>th</sup> Dorsets, whose father Simeon also worked at the factory; in April, Annie Caroline Bradford, of St Anne’s Terrace and Albert Tunaley, were followed in May by Gertrude Filer, 21, of 55 Sandringham Road who married John W.T. Jones, an RASC driver. During the same period, two brides were engaged in unspecified “War Work”, Hilda Hallick, 28, of 489 Kensington Hill, who married Robert Ruddle in July 1917 and Esther Sobey, 26, of 4 Church Hill who became the wife of William Dredge (the brother of Thomas Dredge, *qv.* 1.7.1916) in June 1918. Eva May Terry, a munitionette, was doubly notable: in December 1917 she married a Canadian soldier!

The work was unpleasant, uncomfortable and dangerous. Munitions workers had limited protection against the toxic chemicals they had to use, such as TNT<sup>114</sup> and prolonged exposure to nitric acid turned their skin yellow which led to another of their nicknames, “canary girls”. Throughout the country over 200 “munitionettes” lost their lives through accidents, explosions, or poisoning from handling toxic chemicals though many such events were hushed up for the purposes of morale.

By June 1917 with most of the men away at the war, it is estimated that about 80% of the weapons and ammunition was being produced by women workers though on average their wages were less than half of the amount paid to the men. They were employed for the duration of the war only and were obliged to leave when the war ended and the factory premises returned to peacetime production.

Women working in factories suffered general hazards whether there was a war on or not. On 24th July, Violet Hughes of Knowle was taken to hospital with severe scalds sustained while at work at Robertson’s Jam Factory (which does not bear thinking about.)

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<sup>113</sup> WDP 17.11.1915

<sup>114</sup> The exposure to danger can be ascertained by comparison with Harry Webb, *qv.* 1916, a C.O. who was sent to work with TNT at a munitions factory.

### ***Food shortages***

As the war dragged on the supply of basic foodstuffs, such as flour and sugar was in jeopardy but even more pressing was the scarcity of fresh fruit and vegetables due to the absence of so many farm labourers at the front. More allotments were required to alleviate the situation, small plots to be tended by elderly men or even “ladies”. In Brislington arrangements were made for the Broomwell House Estate to be cultivated with 250 strips made available. Mrs Bonville Fox also offered to organise the break up and cultivation of a site belonging to the Tramways Company. All this however would take time to come to fruition, (literally!) and meanwhile, stocks of the most staple vegetable, the potato, were running low and had to be rationed. A supplier, Rowland Adams, was brought to court for selling more than the regulation amount to several retailers, among them Ethel Hart (the mother of Arthur Hart, *qv.* 23.7. 1916) of 39 Sandholme Road. Mrs Hart who had paid 14 shillings per hundredweight<sup>115</sup> for “2 cwt excess of potatoes” had immediately ordered another hundredweight. In mitigation, Mr Adams said he used to sell between 400 and 500 tons per week, and last week he was only able to get 10 tons, and out of them he was obliged to sell to military hospitals and other institutions. He was fined 10 shillings plus costs on each of three counts. Mrs Hart who sold the potatoes for twopence (2d) a pound was fined four shillings. There were disorderly scenes outside greengrocers’ shops with women refusing to disperse without potatoes. A shop in St George was “invaded from Ashley Down and Brislington” and when the place “was cleared with difficulty, the floor was littered with torn shawls, hats and other wearing apparel.” An angry crowd remained outside and when a farmer pulled up with a small load, the women threatened to drag the goods off his cart unless he sold to them on the spot. He concurred and sold the potatoes in small lots.<sup>116</sup> Elsewhere, “Rough parsnips and beetroots which at normal times wouldn’t be looked at” were being sold as potato substitutes.

### ***Welcome News***

***6<sup>th</sup> April 1917, the United States of America entered the war alongside Britain and the Empire, France and Russia. Over two million US soldiers would fight on the battlefields of Europe.***

### ***Arno’s Vale & Holy Souls***

During the year the dismal parade of soldiers from Britain buried at Arnos’ Vale and Holy Souls continued. These funerals included those of five men from Canada and five from Australia, none of whom were noted by the newspapers. Gunner Hamilton Gouldsworthy Jones, aged 27, of Stellenbosch, South Africa who belonged to his country’s Heavy Artillery Brigade did not merit a newspaper obituary either, but on the 18<sup>th</sup> August, anyone in the vicinity of Brislington might have witnessed the latest military funeral:

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<sup>115</sup> 1 cwt = 50.8 kilos

<sup>116</sup> WDP 13.1/12.3.1917

### **“ZULU CHIEF DIES A SOLDIER’S DEATH”**

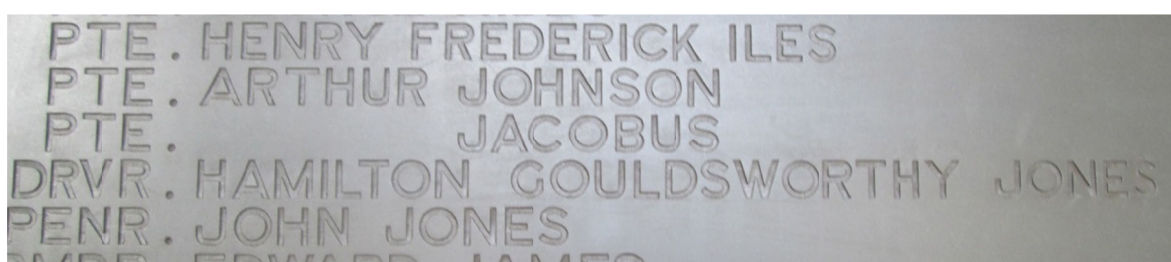
*“With military honours, a Zulu Chief who served with the South African Labour Battalion was buried at Arno’s Vale on Saturday. His name was Private Mrogoy Modlala [sic] who died at Southmead War Hospital of honourable wounds sustained while serving his Great White Chief. The body was carried in a gun carriage and a bearer party was supplied by the Royal Engineers. The deceased chief who leaves three wives and eighteen children was buried in Soldiers’ Corner. Wreaths were sent by the Red Cross and Colonel J. Goss.”<sup>117</sup>*

The soldier is identified by the CWGC as Madhlala Mrogoyi Tshikwase, aged 55, of Natal, the son of Gatshu. He had died two days earlier.

In that class-ridden society, his send-off was seemingly deemed appropriate to his station in life rather than the colour of his skin, and though his service to *“his Great White Chief”* sets contemporary teeth on edge, it is of its time.



In contrast, another SANLF man Private Jacobus Mozupe, who died in Bristol on the 28<sup>th</sup> August, was apparently perceived as a far lowlier individual, for his funeral went unreported. Recorded on the frieze simply as “Jacobus”, he was 48, survived by his wife, Sanna and his father Mr. R. Mozupe of the Transvaal. Both men were buried at “Soldiers’ Corner”, numbered 674 and 675. Hamilton Gouldsworthy Jones is next to him in the list:



The South African Native Labour Force to which the men belonged was used to dig trenches and to act as porters in France and Flanders so that white labourers could be freed up to fight. The men of the SANLF lived in separate compounds and could not go out unless accompanied by a white officer. They were not allowed to have guns though they frequently came under fire. If they were killed they were buried in local graveyards, unlike white South Africans who were buried in special military cemeteries. In 2014 to right this old wrong, a symbolic reburial of one member of the force, Private Myengwa Beleza, took place at

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<sup>117</sup> WDP 20.4.1917

Delleville Wood, to represent the 90,000 men of the SANLF who served but did not even get a war medal.

At the inaugural meeting of the Imperial War Graves Commission, 24<sup>th</sup> November, it was unanimously agreed that no distinction should be made between the graves of officers and men. The listing of Brislington's war dead, officer and private soldier, black and white, is in accord.

### ***Off to the war this year.....***

.....went Herbert Wiltshire who enlisted 18<sup>th</sup> January 1917. He was born in Brislington, aged 17 years, 7 months, 5 feet, one inch tall, a Wesleyan, who lived at 30 Grove Park Avenue, with his mother, Emma Elizabeth and step-father, Alfred Faraday. Herbert's approval of this match (which took place in 1913) between Emma and Alfred, formerly the family lodger, is suggested by the fact that he named the latter as his father in the list of his next of kin along with his mother, elder brother Harold Wiltshire, and half-brother Richard Faraday. After six months training, Herbert embarked for France on 9<sup>th</sup> July where he served until January 1919, having suffered trench fever and dysentery at various times. During this period, (date unspecified) he was awarded the Military Medal for courage in the field. A few months "at home" kicking his heels at barracks in Eastern Command followed, a time when he was so fed up he went AWOL on a couple of occasions. He transferred to the RAMC in 1919 and returned to France among the contingents engaged with the re-burials of the dead. Finally demobbed in 1920, it is interesting that like others noted elsewhere he had grown four inches to 5 feet 5 inches during his service, which suggests that army food was better than its reputation. He claimed a pension citing the effects of his war service, with symptoms of "poor teeth, puffy face, giddy after running, no albumen", but his disability was judged "less than 20%".

Herbert's bad teeth reflects a report of 1916 which refers to the outbreak of "trench gums" at the front and states the "well-known fact" that many officers were invalided home for dental treatment but laments that "Tommy" was not afforded the same privilege as his officer: *"his wants are not attended to as they are in every other combatant army. During the last year out of 3 million recruits no fewer than one million were rejected on account of their teeth."* A private benefactor, a Mr H. Sykes-Brown had paid for the first dental car to be sent to the front. The British Dental Association had offered two cars but a wrangle had ensued between the BDA and the War Office: the dentists had expected to be granted honorary military rank (as they were by every other allied government) but this had been refused. With Mr Sykes-Brown's munificence but a drop in the ocean, "Tommy" as personified by Herbert Wiltshire continued to suffer.<sup>118</sup> The scandalous state of the nation's teeth is one reason that no "historical" film or TV play can ever be entirely accurate.

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<sup>118</sup> Daily Telegraph 20.9.1916



After he was demobbed, Herbert returned to 30 Grove Park Avenue where he still lived in 1939, "a painter on canvas", with his wife Nora, his mother Emma and half-brother Richard. Alfred Faraday died in 1922 aged 34. A man of this name served as a Gunner in the RM Artillery, but it is not known if he is the same and whether he died from consequences of the war.

On 17<sup>th</sup> March, seventeen year old Henry William Smart, 5 feet 7 inches tall, a baker's deliveryman of 19 Pendennis Road enlisted in the Royal Berkshire Regiment. He spent 26 days in France from 25 April 1918, during which he suffered a gunshot wound to his right shoulder. He was discharged in October 1919, with "very little disability".

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of the month, Abraham Shortman of 14 Stirling Road joined the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry. He was discharged on 1<sup>st</sup> September, "no longer fit for war service", being handicapped by an old fracture of his left leg sustained in 1913. His character was "good, honest and sober".

"Charlie" Garland, who was born at "New Brislington" 23 October 1897, a member of the Church of England, one of the eight children of William and Selina Garland, of The Rock, was called up for the "Hood" Battalion of the RN Division on 16<sup>th</sup> June. He left the service as an Able Seaman and in 1939 lived at Broad Walk, Knowle with his wife Hester and two children.

On 12<sup>th</sup> October, Herbert John Allen, aged 40, of 74 Winchester Road, married to Kate, also joined the Royal Navy "for the period of hostilities". He was a grocer's manager, 5 feet 3½ inches tall, with brown eyes and a fresh complexion. He transferred to the RAF Reserve in February 1919 and was discharged on 30 April 1920.

On 1<sup>st</sup> November, Albert Hale, born 29 August 1901, a tram conductor, son of Thomas, of 40 Repton Road, enlisted in the Royal Flying Corps as a "Boy". He was retained when the RFC and the RNAS were amalgamated into the RAF on 1 April 1918, and served with the "Grand Fleet" during the occupation of Germany after the war. He married Dagny Olina Johansen at Long Ashton in 1930. He re-enlisted in 1938, by which time Dagny and their children lived at Clutton.

On 31<sup>st</sup> December, Ernest Albert Newman, born in Brislington, a chauffeur, joined the Royal Marines Artillery aged "17 years, 5 months and 8 days". He continued to serve until 1924.

### ***The Police Gazette***

It comes as no surprise that the gung-ho attitude displayed by Lance Corporal Higby in 1915 had for the most part given way to apprehension in the hearts of most young men, and even more often, dread. The extension of conscription coupled with the numbers of war dead led to some men going on the run, (who can blame them?) and consequently they made an unwelcome appearance in the Police Gazette as "Absentees under the Military Service Act". First up on 24<sup>th</sup> April was "Thomas Manley, aged 18, turner, 6 Sandholme Road, last seen

Bristol, 16<sup>th</sup> March,” followed on 8<sup>th</sup> May by “Reginald Veal, 31, last seen, Weston-super-Mare, 28<sup>th</sup> March” (of whom more anon). On 15<sup>th</sup> May, “John Robert Day, 18, tram conductor, 6 Sandbach Road, last seen Bristol, 10<sup>th</sup> March”; 19<sup>th</sup> June, “Edgar Stokes, alias Stoker, 489 Kensington Hill, last seen Bristol, 25<sup>th</sup> May,” and the last in a dismal list, 3<sup>rd</sup> July, “Herbert William Babb, 20, 5 feet 7¾ inches, clerk, 7 Pendennis Road, last seen 17<sup>th</sup> April, Weston-super-Mare.”

### ***News from the Front***

On 19<sup>th</sup> July, Alec Dite, (one of the Congregational’s 1914 volunteers) was a Lance-Sergeant in France when he was required to report a mundane accident to a fellow soldier:

*“Sir, I was on fatigue about 10.45 p.m. on 19.7.1917 carrying R.E. material from the Guards Divn. R.E. Dump to Folly Dump in Hunter St. The first journey I was carrying a sheet of corrugated iron with 26165 Pte Thompson, W. He stumbled in a shell hole and complained he had hurt his ankle but was able to carry on with the fatigue. The next journey I was again with Pte. Thompson, this time carrying a bale of sandbags. He again stumbled. I assisted him to the main track and he managed to march home with the rest of the party but was limping bad and appeared to be in great pain. He reported sick the next day. Your obedient servant, (signed) L/Sgt. Dite, A. 16991, No 4 Coy, 1st Bn, Grenadier Guards. In the field, 4.8.17.”*

“Fatigues”, “corrugated iron”, “sandbags”.....who said war was 90% boredom, 10% terror? This in the only surviving record of Alec Dite.

### ***Wounded***

Lieut. E.H. Addenbrooke of Brislington had been wounded in action and was suffering from shell shock, though the WDP was able to report “more cheerful news” on 14 May 1917; his parents had been informed that he was making “satisfactory progress”.

“Veal, E, 7984, Brislington, of the Somerset Light Infantry” was “wounded in action” (WDP, 29<sup>th</sup> May.) This may have been Edward Veal, born 1893, who lived at the Pound in 1911. A Francis William Veal, in civilian life a corset cutter, was discharged from the RAMC on 30<sup>th</sup> August, aged 38 years 9 months, “no longer fit for military service”. He lived at 11 Grove Park Road, and then at 21 Belle Vue. He was married to Lily and had a daughter Lilian Margaret, born in 1911.

Ernest Henry Webley of 23 Montrose Avenue, a groom, who had served in France from June 1915, with three months respite, was wounded in action on 18<sup>th</sup> July. He was in hospital variously at Poole, Manchester, Swanage and Bournemouth before his discharge, conduct “V.G.”, on 10<sup>th</sup> November suffering from myocarditis (heart disease). His service documents are stamped “deceased” though undated and his death possibly occurred in 1933.

Trooper Bertram Baker Bowering, 31, of the 2nd Life Guards and Rose Anne Bishop, of Gordon Villa, bravely went ahead with their wedding at St Luke’s on 6<sup>th</sup> October despite

Bert's having sustained severe injuries to his face and right hand in action two months before. The bridegroom, a farm bailiff at Banwell when he volunteered in November 1914, was a strapping chap, over 6 feet tall. Some measure of his disability can be imagined as on 18<sup>th</sup> October, less than two weeks after his wedding, he was deemed "*no longer physically fit for war service*". His official discharge document, dated 18 June 1918, was signed for by Rose, "Mrs B.B. Bowering of Gordon Villa", as was his silver war badge received at a later date, which indicates he could still not use his hand. Bertram died aged 53, at Weston-super-Mare, shortly before the mass registration of 1939, when Rose, a widow, is recorded with their son Jack, born in 1919. Jack, a cabinetmaker had already joined the ARP and the St John's Ambulance Brigade in anticipation of the war to come. Rose died at Weston in 1963 aged seventy five.

On 8<sup>th</sup> November, Private George Garraway, 10 Harrow Road, a regular soldier of the Devon Regiment who had enlisted on 4 December 1913 was discharged from the army owing to "sickness". He died in 1933 aged 39.

Life had not improved for the reluctant soldier Fred Clarke. On 5<sup>th</sup> May he went AWOL for 5 days and had been docked 10 days' pay. On 20<sup>th</sup> November he was reported for "*not complying with battalion orders, i.e., washing, and emptying the dirty water in the lines. sentenced to two days CB.*" On 4<sup>th</sup> December, by then at Ypres, he was "*sick with stomach pains, suffered 10 days before reporting; pain ½ hour after eating; similar attacks twice before. Slightly distended abdomen.*"

### ***Dorothea Naysmith, a Doctor at the front***

The marriage, at Salonika, was announced between "*Lieut. Hugh Nasmyth, A.S.C., son of the late John Nasmyth of Coalpit Heath and Mrs Naysmith of Brislington to Dorothea C. Maude, MD, 3<sup>rd</sup> daughter of Ashley H. Maude of Bussock Hill, Newbury*"<sup>119</sup>

In 1911, Hugh, an assistant manager at Bedminster Colliery Company, lived at 44 Kensington Park Road, Brislington, with his widowed mother Phoebe, (who died 7 May 1918 aged 70), younger brother Cyril, the "sharp shooter" of 1914, and sister, Rebecca, the Headmistress of Wick Road School.

Dorothea Maude went up to Somerville College, Oxford in 1898 and four years later took a First in Natural Sciences, before going on to train at the London Royal Free Hospital School of Medicine for Women. On the outbreak of war she joined a British Field Hospital in Antwerp whence she was evacuated during the German advance and accompanied the wounded back to England. Shortly afterwards she left for France, joining the RAMC Hospital at Calais. She served there until 1915; with her uncle Alwyn Maude she set up the first Maude Hospital at Dunkirk. Her next posting was for the Serbian Relief Fund at Corfu as an anaesthetist and surgeon, where she assisted setting up the second Maude Hospital. Her

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<sup>119</sup> Reading Mercury, 19.4.1917

last posting of the war was to Salonika in 1916 for the "Wounded Allies Relief Fund". She caught malaria during her first weeks there though recovered with the help of quinine. She developed a deep and abiding affection for the Serbs who she left "with many regrets" on 30 April 1917. Her uncle Alwyn described her as "*a small lady with a girlish silhouette. When I presented her to medical potentates as my principal doctor I often caught a smile of incredulity on their faces, but later they were full of respect and admiration. For me and for the patients, she was an unmixed blessing.*"

Dorothea was granted Royal Naval Rank as a Civilian Surgeon for her work in opening the First Field Hospital in Belgium and was awarded the 1914 Star among other honours.

She and Hugh had two children, James and Rosemary. Hugh died in 1942 and Dorothea in 1959 aged 80.

### ***Decorated***

*"For Gallantry in the Field"*: Private P.C. Organ of the 8<sup>th</sup> Hussars, "of Brislington", and Lance/Cpl R. Gunton of the 1<sup>st</sup> South Staffordshires, 3<sup>rd</sup> son of Mr H. Gunton of 11 Manworthy Road were awarded Military Medals on 11<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> May respectively.<sup>120</sup>

In civilian life both men had been associated with coalmining, and it is possible their medals may have been for the desperate work of undermining the tunnels at the front. In 1911, Percy Organ, born in 1887, is described as a "mining engineer". He survived the war, married his wife Dorothy in 1924 and was still living in Bristol in 1939. Richard Gunton, born in 1881 in Bristol, had been a caretaker at a colliery in Wolverhampton in 1911 and presumably had experience underground. He had joined up on 18 November 1914 and was invalided through wounds on 28 December 1918.

On 21<sup>st</sup> November the WDP announced: "The staff and pupils of the Merchant Venturers' School have heard with great pleasure that Private F.G. Hockin, a former pupil has been awarded the Military Medal." Fred Hockin, born in 1894, of 60 Arlington Road, son and namesake of Frederick, a commercial traveller, and his wife Julia, was an architect's clerk before joining the RAMC. In 1939, he was an "architect and surveyor", living at 31 First Avenue with his wife Elsie and their two children.

### ***The "Empire" Brides***

The "GI Brides" aroused a great deal of interest after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, but little appears to have been written about their daring sisters from this previous era.

In June, Agnes Lydia Cook, 19, of 36 Pendennis Park married Private James Dyke Miller, 27, of the Australian Imperial Force (who gave his address as 9 Grove Road) and in December, four more young women found husbands who were serving in the Empire forces: Constance Violet Harley, 24, of Beechen Cliff, Bristol Hill married Private George Wood

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<sup>120</sup> HMB 4.5./8.6.1917

Williams, 28, a signaller in the Canadian Corps, (though his address is given as “Forres-Elgin”, The Range, Rockhampton, Queensland) and Minnie Mary Tristram, 33, of 19 Hampstead Road, and Private Horace James Wilson, 29, the 29<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force, of Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan; the “munitionette”, Eva Marion Terry, 29, of 3 Winchester Road, married William Lovell, another Canadian soldier. In March 1918, Beatrice May Young, of Sandgate Road married Henry John Smith, aged 24, of the Canadian Forces at the Congregational Church. Henry who must have emigrated prior to the war was the eldest son of Mr and Mrs Samuel Smith of Victoria Park, Bedminster.

### ***Mother and Daughter***

Private Albert Charles Veale, 35, of the 7<sup>th</sup> Dragoon Guards, Mooltan Barracks, Tidworth and Josephine Langridge, of Brislington Square, the widow of George Langridge, (manager of a chemist’s shop on the Bath Road) were married on 5<sup>th</sup> November. Albert, a reservist, survived the war but died in 1927 aged only forty four. Josephine’s daughter, Muriel Langridge, 22, a jeweller’s assistant, was married on 25 March 1918, to a “regular”, Corporal Nicholas Gilbert Cooke, 26, civilian address Pendennis Park, of the 4<sup>th</sup> SLI. Nicholas served in India between April 1914 and February 1916.<sup>121</sup> He was at the Persian Gulf 18 February to 29 April 1916, in India again 30 April to 22 June 1916 and in Egypt, 24 June to 25 July 1916. He was dogged by illness and accidents throughout his army career: sunstroke and malaria in 1914; a contusion over his right eye from playing football at Amritsar in 1915; a gunshot wound to his left forearm sustained in action on 12 May 1916 to which is added: “*heart trouble since wounded, caused by active service*”. As Acting Sergeant, he was discharged on 7 June 1919 and appears to have applied for invalidity benefit, but it is not clear whether it was granted. His papers are over-stamped, undated, with the word “deceased”. He died in 1932, aged 36 at Axbridge, where, in 1939, the widowed mother and daughter, Josephine and Muriel were living along with Muriel’s son Kenneth Cooke and Josephine’s elderly sister, Fanny Thorne, “an invalid”.

### ***More Wedding bells***

On 5<sup>th</sup> December, Royal Marine Sergeant Frederick Austin John Thorne, 24, of HMS “Lion” married Louisa Tucker, 28, of 44 Repton Road, daughter of Edwin Tucker, a bookbinder, (who died in 1900) and his wife Elizabeth Anne. The couple were unusual, having grown up in the same household: in 1901 the widowed Elizabeth Tucker married Henry James Thorne, a compositor, the father of Fred Thorne. Louisa, then aged 12, came as part of the package, thus becoming the step-sister of her eventual bridegroom. Fred Thorne who had enlisted aged seventeen, must have gone away a boy and come back a man: perhaps Louisa had never looked at anyone else. He served throughout the war in various ships until placed on the Reserve list in 1923. In 1939 he was recalled and became a “Red Cap” at Portsmouth

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<sup>121</sup> Another of the “Brislington Boys” of 1915?

where he and Louisa lived with their children, Geoffrey, Mary and Raymond and Fred's invalid sister Ellen. He served in the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War until May 1944.

### ***Miscellaneous Events***

Throughout the year wounded soldiers in their blue uniforms, were brought from hospital by car and ambulance to the Grove Hall where entertainments continued as they had done throughout the war. Little Diddie Williams "helped with the tea" which was dispensed by the ladies, "probably more of a hindrance" she said, many years later of her child-self. Her mother Emma played the piano and her aunt Isabelle Allen sang. Afterwards the men would sit on the lawn at Eagle House when weather permitted. The entertainment of 28<sup>th</sup> April was typical of these gatherings, when a hundred and thirty soldiers enjoyed recitations and songs, as well as "a little play of patriotic nursery rhymes performed by the children" which was especially well received. Sadly, industrial action that October meant that "a treat at Bristol Art Gallery" for 400 of the wounded had to be cancelled because of a tramway strike, though there were sufficient drivers and conductors to keep the Brislington route open.<sup>122</sup> On 17<sup>th</sup> December, a strike at the Aircraft works was settled. The night shift at Brislington had resumed work the previous evening.

It was a relief when old friends returned. News from St Luke's church: "*We were very glad to see Rev J. E. Pugh once again on Sunday February 11th and to see him looking as well as he did. He is now stationed at Halton Camp, near Wendover, Berkshire.*"<sup>123</sup>

During the year Brislington mourned several notable residents; in March, Tom Weymouth, 81, who had been the village bandmaster for forty five years, died at the Pilgrim, the local pub where he and his wife Caroline, nee Bishop, had formerly been licensees. Edward L. S. Colston of Daisy Bank, a retired undertaker, who had been in business for half a century died in April and in September, Mr H. J. White, eleven years headmaster of Wick Road School. A full complement of Council officials turned out for his funeral at the Congregational Church, as well as his fellow teachers, Mr W. Gibbs, Mr W.H. Sims, Mr W.E. Braund, Mr J. Whippley, Miss McGuire and Miss Naysmith.

Also in September, Temple Owens, "in action in France was unable to attend" the funeral of his father James, a retired grocer, at Temple Church.<sup>124</sup> Mary Ann, James' widow, a great committee woman, fund raiser and the manager of the Brislington Church School, held Wednesday afternoon sewing meetings at their residence, Lynwood on Kensington Hill, making shirts and knitting socks and balaclavas for the troops. Mary Norris recalled that her mother "read to the ladies as they worked, and said prayers while I played in the lovely garden".<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> WDP 24.10.1917

<sup>123</sup> St Luke's Parish Magazine, March 1917

<sup>124</sup> Ibid. 5.3./23.4./6.9./10.9.1917

<sup>125</sup> Brislington Bulletins, no. 12. Summer 1989

In February an appalling tragedy at 1 Repton Road, took the lives of Evangeline and Ruth, two young daughters (and only children) of Mr and Mrs Richard Pearce, who died in their bedroom from a gas leak. An inquest heard that the room was heated by a Bunsen burner with the flame enclosed in a porcelain cup.

### **Those we lost, 1917.**

**Jabez Davies** of Brislington had died in **Mesopotamia** on the last day of 1916. On 25<sup>th</sup> January 1917, **Private Nicholas Angell**, of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment was killed in action in the same theatre of the war.

*“For many years [Nicholas] was the leading member of Mr Walter Warren’s choir, at St Peter’s Church, Dormer Place, Leamington Spa. He had a fine bass voice and was greatly missed when he joined up..... he had gained many friends by his good nature and kindly disposition. His parents formerly resided in Leamington but moved to Bristol a few years ago. Only five days before the young soldier was killed his mother died. Previous to enlisting he was employed at Messrs Macdonald & Sons, 13 Waterloo Place.”<sup>126</sup>*

Nicholas, 1891-1917, the eldest of five children of Bath-born Thomas, a coach trimmer, and Eliza Angell had lived in Leamington most of his life. In 1911, on census night, Thomas Angell was staying at his father’s house in Bath perhaps discussing the family’s proposed move back to the West Country: the Angells had moved to Brislington by the time Nicholas enlisted in the local regiment of his former home town. His death was followed within three weeks by that of his mother, Eliza, aged fifty six, her end perhaps accelerated by shock and grief. Nicholas, aged twenty five, is buried in Grave X.H13 at the Amara War Cemetery, along with 263 others who died the same day.

**Private Edward Charles LEWIS**, b? – died 11<sup>th</sup> February. *Mr E. Lewis of 8 Upper Sandhurst Road, Brislington has been notified that his second son Edward Charles Lewis has died of wounds in Mesopotamia.”<sup>127</sup>*

Edward, of the 7<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters, is buried in Grave XX.11 at the Amara War Cemetery. He is remembered at St Luke’s (E.C. Lewis) and at St Anne’s School (E. Lewis).

On 13 November 1919, the WDP refers to Edward’s death (though does not name him) when reporting the receipt of the Military Medal (awarded in 1916) by his brother, Corporal H. Lewis:

*“Corporal H. LEWIS of the 7<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters who was decorated with the Military Medal at Worcester is the son of Mr and Mrs Lewis who for some years have resided at 8 Upper Sandhurst Road, Brislington. Corpl Lewis joined up in Hereford at the outbreak of war and with his brother, who was also in the 7<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters, went to the Dardanelles in 1915. He*

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<sup>126</sup> Leamington Spa Courier, 16.2.1917

<sup>127</sup> HBM/WDP 2.3.1917

returned suffering from shrapnel wounds and on discharge from hospital went to France with the 1<sup>st</sup> Gloucesters and there saw much service with them at the Somme. He was from there recommended for the MM. He transferred to the Lancashire Fusiliers, (and) was for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time recommended for the medal which he has now received. His brother who was with



him at the landing at Suvla Bay returned home with frostbite but later went to Mesopotamia where he died of his wounds. A 3<sup>rd</sup> brother who has just been demobilised was three times wounded and gassed.”

<sup>128</sup>

### **Reggie Creech, 1896-1917**

No other Brislington man died in Mesopotamia until 20<sup>th</sup> July when **Private Reginald Frank CREECH, 1896-1917**, of the RAMC succumbed in the extreme heat, average temperature 45 degrees Celsius, (113 degrees Fahrenheit.) The news was relayed in the WDP, 29<sup>th</sup> August: “Mr and Mrs J. Creech of Old Victoria Cottage, Brislington have received information that their son, Private R.F. Creech, RAMC, died on July 20<sup>th</sup> from sunstroke at

Stationary Hospital, Mesopotamia. He was 21 years of age and before joining HM Forces was employed at Brislington Motor Constructional Works. Sad to say, this is the second son Mr & Mrs Creech have lost in the war, both in Mesopotamia.”

Reggie, brother of John Creech, (*qv*, 19.4.1916) was buried at the North Gate Cemetery, Baghdad, Grave, XV.B.5.<sup>129</sup> He is remembered at St Luke’s (R. Creech). John and Mary Creech both died in 1935.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> March, **Reservist Leonard SAMPSON, 1898-1917**, of the 93<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, Training Reserve, Service No. TR/7/6868, died “at home” from meningitis, aged nineteen. He was the younger son of Joseph and Beatrice Sampson of 38 Sandy Park Road, who had lost their elder son Henry (*qv*, 9.7.1916) at Fremelles. Leonard is buried in War Grave Q 338 at Arno’s Vale and is remembered at St Luke’s, (L. Sampson).

**3<sup>rd</sup> April, at Home. Gunner Fred NORTHOVER, 1878-1917**, died “from wounds or illness” also “at home”. Fred was born at Beaminster, Dorset, one of nine children of John Northover, a carpenter and coachbuilder, and his wife Isabel. He enlisted c1899 as Private 4323 in the Queen’s Own Hussars, served in the Boer War, Cape Colony, Orange Free State and Transvaal, and was awarded the Queen’s South Africa medal, 1901 & 1902, with clasps. Demobbed by 1903, he married Winifred Emily Gentel in Bristol and joined the Tramway

<sup>128</sup> See also WDP 28.2.1917

<sup>129</sup> Roll of Honour at Maidenhead, as above.



Company at Brislington depot as a “motor man”. In 1911, he and Winifred lived at 28 Harrow Road with their children, Olive, Wilfred, and Arthur, (followed by Edith in 1913), plus, a lodger, William Blackwell, of Cirencester, another tramway man. Fred was recalled to the Colours shortly after the outbreak of war and joined the RGA at no. 1 Reinforcing Depot. He is buried at Arno’s Vale in War Grave HHA.972 and is remembered at St Luke’s, (F. Northover). He was thirty nine.



In January 1928<sup>130</sup> an Old Boys Society was set up to provide a Memorial to the boys of Wick Road School who had lost their lives in the war; among the members was a Mr Northover, no first name supplied, but obviously one of Fred’s sons.

The idea was taken up and a small brass plaque was in place by the following 2<sup>nd</sup> July. As interest waned, the plaque was mislaid but it was found again, restored and re-dedicated on Remembrance Day, 2009. Two current scholars read poems they had written and two young trumpeters, a boy and a girl, played a moving Last Post at the ceremony. The plaque reads: “In proud and grateful Memory of the Old Scholars who laid down their lives for their King and Country, during the Great War, 1914-1918.” Unfortunately there are no individual names carved on it.

In 1939, Fred’s widow, Winifred, described as “incapacitated” lived at Long Ashton with her daughter and son-in-law, Olive and William Newth. Winifred died in 1940 aged 57.

***From February 1917, and for the next two months Brislington soldiers would be fighting and dying in action in France and Flanders.***

**4<sup>th</sup> February. Private Harold Leslie JONES, 1895-1917,** of the 1/6<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters whose service no. 3544, suggests he enlisted between December 1914 and January 1915, was killed in action. He was one of ten members of the battalion who died the same day, attempting to dislodge the Germans from a prominent position at Peronne. His remains, after the war, were brought from makeshift graves to Heath Cemetery Harbonnieres for permanent burial. Harold was interred in Grave VIII. H. 10.

He was formerly a tobacco worker, who lived at 15 Grove Park Road with his father Francis Henry, a galvaniser at Lysaght’s, his mother Susan, nee James, and sister and brother, Winifred and Frederick. He is remembered at St Luke’s and the Congregational Church, (H.L. Jones).

**4<sup>th</sup> February. Private Frederick Eli Arthur Masters, 1882-1917,** also of the 1/6<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters, service no. 5212 was killed in the same action as Leslie Jones, and was also buried at Heath

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<sup>130</sup> WDP 27.1.1928

Cemetery Harbonnieres, in his case in Grave VIII I. 5. It is ironic that the enemy planned no retreat to take up a more easily defended location and did within the next few days.

Fred was linked to Brislington through his grandparents, Alfred and Ann Masters who were licensees at the Hollybush Inn. Their son Arthur married Mary Ann Coggins and Fred was their only child. After Arthur's death, Mary Ann married a second husband William Bailey in 1889. Their daughter, Fred's half-sister Lilian married Edgar Harris in 1914: they were one of the first families to live on Brislington's newly built Sutton Estate. Fred Masters was a cousin of the Davies brothers, Jabez, died 1916, Arthur, died 1917) and Percy, who survived the war.

**19<sup>th</sup> February. Lance Corporal Walter William JANES, 1896-1917**, whose obituary notice, 7<sup>th</sup> March, read: *"Mr & Mrs Walter Janes of 2 Sandhurst Road, Brislington have received the very sad news of the death of their second son Lance Corporal Walter William Janes who died of wounds on 19<sup>th</sup> February 1917 aged 21.*

*"He joined the Gloucestershire Regiment on the outbreak of war in August, 1914. He went to France on March 30, 1915 and returned suffering with enteric gastritis and other complaints. He returned to France again on December 19, 1916 with the Gloucesters, was wounded in both legs on February 13 and passed away on the 19<sup>th</sup>.*

Walter was born to Walter, a house decorator, and Florence Colston Janes, nee Bartlett. In



1911, aged fifteen, he was an assistant at the Conservative Club in Wick Road, one of nine children still living at home, the youngest, Edward Colston, a baby of six months,

**Walter Janes, 1896-1917**

During the War, Allied camps and hospitals were stationed on the southern outskirts of Rouen and the wounded were brought there from various battlefields. Walter, aged 21, is buried there in Grave O.VI.F.7, at the St Sever Cemetery Extension.

On 17<sup>th</sup> March, the family thanked *"all kind friends for their sympathy in their recent sad bereavement."* Walter senior is named by the CWGC though his son is not remembered on the

local War Memorials: perhaps the family found the pomp and ceremony an unbearable intrusion. Mr and Mrs Janes were still living at 2 Sandhurst Road in 1939. Walter's younger brother, Arthur Edward served in the RGA in both World Wars.

**10<sup>th</sup> March. Private Arthur John HENGE, 1881-1917**, first enlisted in the SLI on 29 November 1897, stating he was eighteen (having added a year to his age) for *“Short Service, 7 years with the Colours plus five in Reserve; or if the man completes his 7 years whilst serving beyond the seas, then for a further period not exceeding 1 year, with the remainder of the 12 years in Reserve.”*

After service in South Africa during the Boer War, Arthur was released in 1909 and moved back home to the Rock, Brislington to live with his mother, Charlotte Henge. In 1911, Charlotte stated she was sixty five, had “13 children born, 8 still living”, but apart from Arthur, then working as a mason’s labourer, the whole family seems to have dispersed elsewhere. (A woman with a similar name, Charlotte Hinge, lived in Brislington at the same time, but she was ten years younger than Mrs Henge and whether there is a connection it has not been possible to say.)

At the outbreak of war Arthur was recalled for the duration and landed with the 7<sup>th</sup> SLI at Boulogne on 24 July 1915. He was reported missing” (10<sup>th</sup> April 1917, “Roll of Honour”, WDP) but it was later confirmed that he had died a month earlier, either in action or from wounds. He has no known grave and is commemorated at Pier & Face 2A of the Thiepval Memorial. He is remembered at St Luke’s, (A. Henge).

“Catherine Charlotte” Henge was buried at St Luke’s on 27 June 1932, aged 88. A John Henge, born in 1883, who may have been a relative, was in Stapleton Workhouse in 1939.

**21<sup>st</sup> March. Corporal William James Kenningdale ROBBINS, 1886-1917**, whose birth was registered at Lymington, Hampshire led an itinerant childhood with his parents, Alfred and Edith (via Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Cheshire, and Wales) until they arrived in Brislington sometime around 1911 as licensees of the White Hart with their twin daughters Mabel and Consie who worked in the bar. William’s whereabouts at this time are unknown, and he is not heard of again until he enlisted in the 19<sup>th</sup> King’s Liverpool Regiment, (one of the famous “Pals” Battalions). His brief entry in the register of “Liverpool Pals, 1914-18” states that he arrived “overseas” on 7 November 1915 and was killed near Ficheux. He is buried at the Bucquoy Road Cemetery, in Grave VI.H. 20 and is remembered at St Luke’s, (W.J.K. Robbins). The CWGC lists his parents address as I Winchester Road, Brislington.



**29<sup>th</sup> March, Private Louis (Lewis) Tomkins BIGGS, 1894-1917:** *“Mrs Biggs of 30 Pendennis Road, Brislington has received news that her beloved and only son, Private Lewis [sic] Biggs of the Gloucestershire Regiment was killed in action on 29<sup>th</sup> March while serving at the front.*



*He had been in the Army exactly two years at the time of his death and prior to enlisting had been employed by Bristol Tramways and Carriage Co. as a conductor on the Brislington line.<sup>131</sup>*

**Emery Farm**

Louis was the only child of Elizabeth Fry Tomkins, of Emery Farm, and Alfred Edward Biggs of The Shrubbery who were married in 1891.

Alfred Biggs died in 1900 aged only thirty three, and Elizabeth and her son went to live with her brother, John Tomkins and his wife Caroline at Oakenhills Farm. John and Caroline’s only child had died an infant and it may be that young Louis became a surrogate son to them. He enlisted in 1915 and after training went to France with the 1/6<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters.

Louis has no known grave and is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, Pier & Face 5A & 5B. He is remembered at St Luke’s (L.T. Biggs) and on the Bristol Tramways Memorial (L. Biggs). His name is also inscribed on the gravestone in St Luke’s churchyard of his grandparents, Alfred Henry and Sarah Ann Tomkins of Emery’s Farm, *“Louis Tomkins Biggs fell in action in France, 29 March 1917, aged 22.”<sup>132</sup>*

John and Caroline Tomkins and Elizabeth Fry Biggs stayed together for the rest of their lives and in 1939 lived at 30 Pendennis Park. John died in 1946 aged 80, Elizabeth aged 79 in 1948 and Caroline in 1966, aged 94.

**6<sup>th</sup> April, Private Albert George PRICE, 1879-1917, and Private Philip Alfred WHATLEY, 1896-1917** both of the 2/5<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters had the dispiriting task of going out to the killing fields every day and bringing back the dead.

**Albert Price** was the son of Stephen, an “old soldier”, a former infantryman, who had been pensioned off after at least twenty years in India and Burma. He married Elizabeth Charnley of Liverpool at Bengal in 1869. Elizabeth followed the Regiment, bearing her children *en route*: Hannah in Burma, Alice at Trichinopoli and Frederick at Dindpore (*sic*). The birth of

<sup>131</sup> 27.4.1917

<sup>132</sup> Listed in transcription of MIs at St Luke’s by A.A. & B.M. Austin, 1983; I failed to find it in 2016.

Albert, (at St George in 1879) was less exotic. Elizabeth Price died aged 52 in 1885, probably worn out, and Stephen married his second wife, Rosina Collins, (died 1907). Stephen and Albert drifted about to various addresses working as carters or labourers. In 1908, Albert, then working at a chemical factory, married his wife Alice, and Stephen lived with the young couple at 104 Bloomfield Road until his death a few months later aged 69. Albert was conscripted in 1916. Alice Price received a letter of condolence from one of Albert's fellow soldiers telling her that he was *"beloved by all as a brave and courageous man. He was always the first to volunteer for any dangerous work and always willing to give a helping hand to any of his comrades not as strong as he."*<sup>133</sup>

**Philip Arthur Whatley** was born in Brislington in 1896, the son of Frank, a gardener from Shepton Mallet and Elizabeth, nee Pyne, of Blandford, Dorset. In 1901, aged five, he was the youngest of five children, living at Gotley Cottage with his parents, brothers and sister, Frederick, Henry, Dora, and Francis. By 1911, the family had moved to Horton, where Philip worked with his father as an under-gardener, and later to Rangeworthy, Gloucestershire. Albert and Philip were killed during an attack which took at least fourteen other members of their group. They are buried at the Vadencourt British Cemetery, Maissemy, Albert in Grave I.C.35, and Philip in Grave I.C. 43.

Though Philip, 21, had moved away, he was still remembered at Brislington; both he and Albert, who was 38, are named on the Congregational Memorial, as "Philip Whatley" and "Albert Price" which indicates they had been members. Arthur is also remembered at St Luke's, (A. Price) and at St Anne's (A. J. Price). They are named on the Cenotaph to the Fallen of the 1/5<sup>th</sup> & 2/5<sup>th</sup> Battalions of the Gloucestershire Regiment at Gloucester Park.

Philip's brother Francis, a Corporal in the Royal Engineers, of Chatterton Barracks, Rochester, Kent, aged 25, married Ellen Hopkins of 44 Harrow Road at the Congregational on 27 October 1917. He survived the war.

**Arras: From 9<sup>th</sup> April to 16<sup>th</sup> May British troops (from all parts of the Empire) attacked German trenches near the French city of Arras. Field Marshal Haig would have preferred the main effort directed to the north around the Ypres Salient but he was over-ruled by the Prime Minister, Lloyd George; consequently the ground and date for the battle was chosen to co-ordinate with the French. In the first days of the offensive the British achieved the longest advance since the beginning of trench warfare in September 1914, but progress subsequently slowed and the opposing forces became locked in a deadly stalemate. The Germans suffered 125,000 casualties and the British 160,000. Among these at least twelve soldiers from Brislington were lost at Arras and its off-shoot battles at Vimy Ridge, and The Scarpe, between 9<sup>th</sup> April and 3<sup>rd</sup> May. The Arras project concluded with the Battle of Bullecourt, which the Australians called "The Blood Tub". It accounted for the death of Bristol-born Archie Taplin of the Australian army.**

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<sup>133</sup> Brislington Congregational Magazine, no 5, 1917

On 9<sup>th</sup> April, the first day of the Arras attack, two St Anne's soldiers died. **Private Arthur Sydney LEWIS, 1881-1917**, who in 1901 had run away from home to Portsmouth where he joined the 3<sup>rd</sup> Hampshire Regiment, Service No. 9516, "aged eighteen years and eleven months, born Bemister (*sic*), Bristol." Demobbed by 1909, he returned home, got married and settled down to family life with his wife, Beatrice and young son Horace Godfrey. In 1911 he was a gas meter inspector and living with his family at 6 Higham Street, Totterdown. As with so many others, youthful military service meant an early call to arms when the war came, and Arthur soon found himself in the 9<sup>th</sup> King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, and so to France. He was among 349 fatalities, mainly from the Yorkshire and Durham Regiments who died during an action (subsequently deemed "successful") to take the village of St Martin-sur-Cojeul. He is buried there in Grave D.50. The CWGC records his wife Beatrice simply as "of Bristol". In the absence of any other likely candidate, I have assumed he is the "A.S. Lewis" who is remembered at St Anne's.

**Driver Archibald Henry George PARSONS, 1884-1917** was born at Twerton in 1884 and spent his early life in the Bath area, one of four children of William Parsons, a railway guard, and his wife Sarah Elizabeth, nee Cottell. By 1911, he was working as a bookbinder.

He attested under the Derby Scheme in 1915 and joined the Royal Horse Artillery, though at the time of his death he was with D. Battery, 71<sup>st</sup> Brigade, Royal Field Artillery. He is buried in Grave VIII A.8 at the Faubourg D'Amiens Cemetery, Arras. His connection with Brislington is unknown: perhaps he was someone's boyfriend or someone's lodger? He is remembered at St Anne's, (A.H.G. Parsons), which suggests familiarity with his full name, and at St Luke's as "G. Parsons" where he seems to have been known as "George".

**11<sup>th</sup> April, Private Reginald (Reg) Harry LOVELL, 1895-1917**, a draper's assistant, was only three when his mother Emma died. His father Herbert, a printer, married secondly Mary Ann White, and they had a daughter, Kathleen Florence. In 1911 the family lived at 4 Montrose Avenue, Brislington. Reg was a keen soldier, a member of the Army Cadet Force, before he enlisted in the 10<sup>th</sup> Loyal North Lancashire Regiment, not his natural destination one would have supposed, but probably due to "vacancies". He died during the slough which followed the "encouraging gains" of the first few days at Arras. He has no known grave and is commemorated at Bay 7 of the Arras Memorial. He is remembered at St Luke's (R.H. Lovell) and at the Congregational, (Reg Lovell).

***In October/November 1916 the Canadians took up positions at the base of Vimy Ridge, eight kilometres long, 110 metres high, which dominates the region. It was honeycombed with trenches and reinforced with barbed wire, nests of machine guns and artillery. Throughout the winter the troops prepared for a major engagement there. The Canadians, at the northern end of the line, were tasked with capturing the Ridge to protect another flank where the British were to attack. At dawn on 9 April 1917, 35,000 Canadians went***



**Badge of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion Canadian Infantry (CEF)**

***into action; after three days of heavy fighting 10,000 had been killed or wounded, but they emerged victorious.***

**Vimy Ridge has entered Canada's folklore as the patriotic birth of the nation.**

**14<sup>th</sup> April, Private Henry Joseph RICKETTS, 1892-1917** of 8 Addison Road, was the third of nine children, of John, who worked at various local mills, and Laura Ricketts. He was a labourer at an iron foundry, probably Lysaght's, before he emigrated to Canada sometime between April 1911 and the outbreak of war when he enlisted in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the Canadian Infantry. He was wounded in action at Farbus Wood<sup>134</sup>, was taken to the clearing station at Barlin where he died of his wounds. He was buried at Barlin Communal Cemetery in Grave I.A.5, among his fellow Canadians. Henry is remembered at St Anne's (H. Ricketts).

**23<sup>rd</sup> April, Private Frederick John "Jack" WILLIAMS, ca1889-1917**, of Eagle House, Brislington, was reported missing after the unsuccessful British attack to the south of Vimy Ridge.

Jack is buried in Grave I.A.2. at the Windmill British Cemetery, Monchy-le-Preux and is remembered at St Luke's (F.J. Williams). His name is also inscribed on his parents' grave at Brislington Cemetery, *"Killed in action in France at the battle of Vimy Ridge on April 23<sup>rd</sup> 1917. Aged 28 years. Gone but not forgotten."*

Jack was an uncle of Edith Frances "Diddie" Williams, 1911-2001, of the Chestnuts. She said Jack was sure he would be killed. He told his family *"The others will come back, but I shall not return."*

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<sup>134</sup> For a full and remarkable account of this action see "War Diaries, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battn"; on-line, Queens Own Rifles of Canada, Museum & Archives.

“Jack”, an insurance clerk, either attested or was conscripted in 1915 and joined the 4<sup>th</sup>



Battalion of the Worcestershire Regiment. His parents, Henry, an architect and surveyor, and Ellen Sarah Williams, had moved to Brislington from Cotham with six of their children, Amy, Beatrice, Ernest, Arthur William, “Jack”, and Cecil plus a servant, Florence Annie Angell, who had been with the family for at least ten years. Henry Williams died in the early summer of 1913, though the only media reference appears to be on 22 May 1914 when his “valuable collection of glass, silver and pictures” was advertised for auction.

***Jack Williams, 1889-1917***

The Williams family heard nothing of Jack’s fate for three months until finally his death was confirmed, (the WDP, 14<sup>th</sup> July): *“WILLIAMS. Killed in Action, April 23<sup>rd</sup> 1917, previously reported missing, Frederick John Williams, Worcester Regt, 4<sup>th</sup> son of the late Henry Williams & Mrs Williams of Eagle House, Brislington.”*





*Jack Williams named on the family grave at Brislington Cemetery.*

*Meanwhile the fighting in the main theatre at Arras continued...*

**16<sup>th</sup> April, Gunner Frederick George REYNOLDS, 1884-1917**, wounded in action, was brought 85 kilometres by ambulance train to a field hospital at Etaples. Eleven general hospitals in the area and four Red Cross units dealt with 22,000 wounded or sick men, from an immense concentration of troops, encamped along the sand dunes. Sadly, Frederick could not be saved and he died of his injuries.

He was born at Almondsbury, the third child of William, a brickyard labourer, and Mary Jane Reynolds, nee Oakhill. He married Ellen Nash in 1909 and they had a daughter, Irene, born in Bristol, 1912, and a son, Cyril, born in Brislington in 1913. Fred enlisted in the Royal Horse Artillery, and subsequently transferred to the 80<sup>th</sup> Battery, 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade RFA. He was buried in Grave XIX A.13A at Etaples Military Cemetery and is remembered at St Luke's, (F.G. Reynolds) and at St Mary's, Almondsbury, (Frederick G. Reynolds). Ellen his widow lived at School Road; in 1939, Cyril, their son lived at 91 Manworthy Road.

**23<sup>rd</sup> April, Second Lieutenant Leslie Howell VAUGHAN, 1894-1917** came from Knowle to "Oaklands", Kensington Hill, sometime after 1901, one of five children of Joseph, the proprietor of a wire-working factory and Lilian Vaughan, nee Howell. In 1911 Joseph's widowed mother, Ann, aged 82, from Tenby, Pembrokeshire, who had been "blind for 45 years" lived with them. Leslie, then 17, assisted his father in the factory. He enlisted in the Hussars as a Private soldier on 7 February 1916 and was Gazetted 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in the SLI on 19<sup>th</sup> December the same year, going to France with the Regiment the following spring.

He was killed in action on St George's Day at Arras and is buried in Grave VI. D. 21 at Brown's Copse Cemetery, Roeux.



***Leslie Howell Vaughan, Officer and Gentleman,  
1894-1917.***

He is remembered at St Luke's (L.H. Vaughan) and in the Memorial Books of the Honourable Artillery Company. His name was also added to the Vaughan family grave in St Luke's churchyard, "*2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. Somerset L.I. fell at battle of Arras, France 23 April 1917 aged 23*". (The grave also contains the remains of "John Vaughan esquire, died July 1834 aged 54 and Anna Maria, relict of the above died 19 January 1847 aged 65.")<sup>135</sup>

**28<sup>th</sup> April, Private Alfred James FRICKER, 1899-1917**, was, according to Royal Marine records, born on 4 August 1897 at Brislington but by 1901, he was living at 33 Doveton Street, Bedminster with his parents, Alfred, a stationery packer and Bessie. Later the Frickers lived at Stapleton. Alfred was a railway porter, when he enlisted in the RM on 19 January 1915: "5 feet 3½ inches tall, (with) a fair complexion, blue eyes and light hair." His next of kin was his mother, Betty [*sic*] Fricker of Thomas Street, Ratcliffe [*sic*].

He was based first at Deal, then at Plymouth, where his conduct was described "very good" and his ability, "satisfactory". He embarked for France on 8 February 1916, with the "Victory", RM squadron, as part of the RN Brigade. It appears the last time he was seen or heard of was on 28<sup>th</sup> April and he was therefore "assumed dead" on this date. He has no known grave and is commemorated at Bay 1 of the Arras Memorial. He was eighteen.

**29<sup>th</sup> April, Rifleman (Acting Corporal) Ernest Harold BLACKWELL, 1890-1917**, was the fourth child of an itinerant farm labourer, William Blackwell and his wife Elizabeth. Ernest enlisted in the South Wales Borderers in August 1907 stating he was "born at Ross on Wye, aged 18 years, 10 months, a labourer with the Wales Iron & Coal Company at Ebbw Vale". He was stood down by the army after three years, though remained "in Reserve". In 1911 he was back at Ebbw Vale, working in the coalmines, and in lodgings with a William Morgan and family. He was in Nottingham, perhaps looking for coalmining work, or lying low, when the army caught up with him and he re-enlisted for the duration of the war. He was killed in

<sup>135</sup> As recorded by A.A & B.M. Austin, August, 1983. I was unable to find it in 2016.

action, one of nine men called Blackwell who have no known graves and are commemorated on the Arras Memorial.

The Memorial Book of Remembrance for Somerset at Wells Cathedral states that he was “of Brislington”; he is named in the Roll of Honour in St Luke’s parish magazine and remembered on the memorial plaque at the church, (E.H. Blackwell). He may be connected to others of this surname who lived in Brislington: Francis Blackwell, a stonemason of 44 Sandgate Road (1901) and William Willavoise Blackwell, a car driver, aged 38, of 40 Montrose Avenue, who married Edith May Withers at St Luke’s on 11 October 1915. William Willavoise, who in 1911, was in lodgings with Fred Northover, (*qv* 3.4.1917) states he was born at Cirencester, which is given as an occasional alternative birthplace for E.H. Blackwell.

**3<sup>rd</sup> May, Private Douglas Charles LIVINGSTON[E], 1895-1917, Private Gilbert Edward POOLE, 1882-1917 and Corporal Frank Gilbert SMITH, 1887-1917** were all killed during the Battle of the Scarpe, an unmitigated British disaster in which 6,000 men died for little material gain.

*“The confusion caused by the darkness; the speed with which the German artillery opened fire; the manner in which it concentrated upon the British infantry, almost neglecting the artillery; the intensity of its fire, the heaviest that many an experienced soldier had ever witnessed, seemingly unchecked by British counter-battery fire and lasting almost without slackening for fifteen hours; the readiness with which the German infantry yielded to the first assault and the energy of its counter-attack; and, it must be added, the bewilderment of the British infantry on finding itself in the open and its inability to withstand any resolute counter-attack.”*<sup>136</sup>

The three men are commemorated on the Arras Memorial, among almost 35,000 servicemen from the United Kingdom, South Africa and New Zealand who died in this sector 1916-1918 whose graves are unknown.

When **Douglas Charles Livingstone** enlisted he gave his birthplace as Brislington, but this may be his only connection with the parish. In 1901 he was living at 67 Clarence Road, Redcliffe with his father James, a tailor, who had come to Bristol from Brighton, his brothers William and John and his maternal grandmother, Elizabeth Simmonds. On the night of the census their mother Florence was at Bedminster assisting a friend, Susie Emma Honeywill who had just given birth. An older brother, Alec, aged nine, was also away from the family home, at Ham Green Isolation Hospital, suffering from TB. In 1911, the family were reunited at 40 Islington Road, Southville, having in the interim been blessed with two more boys and a baby girl. Alec had apparently recovered from his childhood illness, and presumably hoping to benefit from sea air, had joined the Merchant Navy as a ship’s steward, though was ashore on census night. Charles Douglas, [*sic*], was working for the

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<sup>136</sup> Frith, Cyril, “Military Operations, France and Belgium, 1917”.

Imperial Tobacco Company as a wooden box maker. In 1915 he joined the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Queen's Own Royal West Kents. He is commemorated at Bay 6 of the Arras Memorial.

**Gilbert Edward Poole** was the eldest son of Edwin Henry (a foreman at a corn warehouse) and Annie (Mary Ann), nee Rendell. In 1891 the Pooles and their five children, Agnes, Gilbert, Henry, Herbert (baptised St Luke's, 1885) and Clifford, lived at Temple, Bristol. A second daughter, Olive, was born in 1895. By 1901, they had moved to at Pendomer House, 1 Grove Park, Brislington, with Edwin newly promoted superintendent and all the boys had been found respectable apprenticeships, to a carpenter, a bricklayer, a compositor and a brass engraver. On census night 1911, only the parents, Henry and Olive were at home with the rest untraced. A terse notice, 6<sup>th</sup> September, 1914 announced Edwin's death and funeral arrangements: *"POOLE. Sept 4<sup>th</sup> at Pendomer, Grove Park, Brislington, Edwin Henry Poole. Funeral Brislington Church, Monday 7<sup>th</sup> Sept, 3 pm."*<sup>137</sup>

Gilbert Poole joined the 18<sup>th</sup> West Yorkshire Regiment in 1916. He is commemorated at Bay 8 of the Arras Memorial and remembered at St Luke's (G.E. Poole).

Herbert Poole, Gilbert's brother, a printer, volunteered in September 1914. Between May and July 1917, he suffered trench fever, a disease caused by body lice, easily passed between soldiers, which manifested itself in high fever, headaches, aching muscles and sores on the skin. He suffered shell shock on at least two occasions and was still in hospital on 10 September 1918. Another brother, Clifford, lived at 171 Wick Road with his wife Lilian (nee Clarke) in 1939. Their sister Olive Mildred, aged 21, of 12 Grove Park, married at St Luke's, 18 August 1917, Bombardier Harold Ernest Tupman of the RGA, 36 Chatsworth Road; they had two sons, Gilbert and Cyril, and were living at Weston-super-Mare in 1939.

**Frank Gilbert Smith** of the 5<sup>th</sup> Oxford & Bucks Light Infantry, was the son of John Samuel James Smith, "a plater in a bridge girder yard", born in Birmingham, and Clara Sophia of Cheltenham. By 1901 they had settled at Salisbury Road, St Anne's Park, first at no. 3 and later at no. 6. In 1911, they were at home with their children, Violet, Samuel, Frank, Daisy, Alfred, Walter and Pansy, except for Frank Gilbert, 24, who "lived in" as an attendant at Dr Fox's Asylum where he must have known another orderly, his fellow Brislington resident, Hugh Byrne (*qv.* 15.4.1918). It is striking to see that the stigma of mental illness was so great that the inmates are listed only by their initials.

Frank is commemorated at Bay 6 & 7 of the Arras Memorial and is remembered at St Anne's (F.G. Smith).

**2<sup>nd</sup> May, at Home. Leslie WOOD**, Cadet 10659, RHA & RFA, born at Nottingham, died at Hampstead Military Hospital of an unknown cause. His name is engraved on a tombstone at Castle Cary, alongside "Samuel Wood, died 21 September 1914, aged 55; also Frank, fell at Ypres, 31 July 1917 aged 28." Leslie, as "L. Wood" was added to the other names at the foot

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<sup>137</sup> Pendomer, otherwise 12 Grove Park, was also the address of the parents of L.W. Savage, *qv.*

of the St Anne's School Memorial Plaque alongside "G. Kirby", which suggests an afterthought that someone among their fellow pupils remembered them. No other information has been found.

**3<sup>rd</sup> May, Bullecourt. Lieutenant Archibald "Archie" Stevens TAPLIN, 1880-1917** was born in Bristol to Thomas Poynder Taplin, a hosier, and his wife Clara who were married in London. After a sojourn in Devon, they returned to Bristol with their children in 1901 when Thomas Taplin was seriously ill; he died in 1904 aged 48. A year later, Archie, aged 25, married Bessie Louisa Parry and went to live – and assist in the business - at Bessie's mother's tobacconist's shop in Downend. Archie and Bessie had two children, Margaret and Edward.

***Archie Taplin (Photo – courtesy Australian War Memorial)***

With his marriage apparently in difficulties, Archie travelled alone to Australia arriving in August 1914. He told immigration officials that he was a single man, had been educated in Bristol at Merrywood School, was a commercial traveller and by religion Church of England. He named his mother Clara Taplin of 34 Chessell Street, Bedminster as his next of kin.



Alas, his Australian escape, if such it was, did not last long. On 14 December 1914, he enlisted in the Australian Imperial Infantry and despite having no known previous military experience, embarked from Sydney on 12 May 1915 with the rank of Company Quartermaster Sergeant on HMAT "Themistocles". He was promoted Lieutenant on 31 November 1915. In April 1917, he was declared "missing in action" at Bullecourt, subsequently amended to "wounded". He died of his injuries on 3<sup>rd</sup> May, was buried at Queant Road Cemetery, Buissy in Grave: II.G.17 and is commemorated at Panel 84 of the Australian War Memorial.

Archie's sole connection with Brislington is through his widow, Bessie who the CWGC records living at 538 Kensington Hill. She surfaced again, briefly, in 1924 when it was reported in the local press that she and her mother, Mrs Parry, had sent a wreath to the funeral of Ernest Warland, a Downend businessman. She may be the Bessie Taplin who died

in Bristol in 1946. A Margaret Taplin married Charles H. Banks in 1928 (registered at Keynsham), who was living at 19 Canowie Road, Redland in 1939. Clara, Archie's mother, died in 1932.

**3<sup>rd</sup> June, Private Leslie William FISHER, 1898-1917**, died of wounds in the defence of Tilloy-Les Mofflaines, a village which had been taken by British forces on 9<sup>th</sup> April, the first day of the Arras attack. William, the eldest of three sons of George Fisher, a builder and Louisa, formerly Baker, was allegedly born in Brislington; however, he appears to have spent the rest of his short life at Congresbury where he was a chorister and bell ringer until he was conscripted aged 18 into the 2/5<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters. He is buried in Grave I.G.8 at Tilloy-Les Mofflaines and is commemorated on The Cenotaph to the Fallen of the 1/5<sup>th</sup> & 2/5<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters at Gloucester Park. He is remembered on the War Memorial at St Andrew's Church and at the Community Hall, Congresbury. Tilloy-Les-Mofflaines remained in British hands until it was retaken by the enemy in March 1918.

***This ends the period of the various Arras battlefields in which men from Brislington either by birth or association died.***

In order to keep the men of Arras together, it will be necessary to go back a few months to **11<sup>th</sup> April**, when **Captain William IRVINE, MN, 1867-1917**, died at sea. William was the Master of the "Duchess of Cornwall", a cargo ship of 1706 tons, owned by R.B. Chellew of Truro which was defensively armed, having been requisitioned for war service. The "Duchess" was between the Port of London and Le Havre, when she was torpedoed five miles North of Cape Barfleur with the loss of all hands.



***Captain William Irvine, 1867-1917***

Sometime about 1909, William and Catherine Irvine, and their son William who were all born in Shetland, arrived at 49 Upper Sandhurst Road, Brislington where their daughter Agnes was born. At the census of 1911, Catherine recorded all the family including her master mariner husband, aged 40, helpfully adding "at sea".

As noted elsewhere householders were only required to name those who were actually under the same roof that night. The erroneous entry was crossed through by the enumerator though fortunately not obliterated. Without this mistake it is unlikely that the "W. Irvine" remembered on the plaque at St Anne's could have been identified.

William and the 22 members of his crew are commemorated on the Merchant Marine Memorial at Tower Hill in London. In 1939 Catherine Irvine was still at 49 Upper Sandhurst Road with her daughter Agnes, a clerk. She died in Bristol in 1960 at the grand old age of 94.



*The “Duchess of Cornwall” was launched on May 1st, 1889, by HRH Prince Albert Victor, for the Duchess of Cornwall Steam Ship Co. (R. Chellew, of Truro).<sup>138</sup>*



*The “Duchess of Cornwall” with the Clifton Suspension Bridge in the background.<sup>139</sup>*

To return to the Somme, where on **24<sup>th</sup> April, Lance Corporal Albert GREEN, 1883-1917** was killed in action. He enlisted in the 1/6<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters, “birthplace Brislington”, though in 1911, he was living at 9 York Street, Barton Hill with his parents John and Mary Ann, his

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<sup>138</sup> (Picture [1903] Courtesy of Maureen Anderson; to “Hartlepool History, then and now”)

<sup>139</sup> (Picture [1889] Courtesy of Mr H. Appleyard ; “Hartlepool History, then and now”)

aged maternal grandmother Martha Waite, and two siblings. He was married in April 1914 at St Matthew Moorfields to 28 year old Clara Fry.

He was “a potman at a galvanised iron works”, (Lysaght’s) so he may have been among those inspired to join up following the tumultuous meeting at the works in 1914; both his father and brother Bert worked for the Company.

Albert has no known grave and is commemorated at Pier & Face 5A & 5B of the Thiepval Memorial. He is remembered on John Lysaght & Co.’s Memorial to “The Employees at the St Vincent’s Works who died for their country in the Great War, 1914-1919”. CWGC records the names of his mother, Mary Ann, by then a widow, and Clara, his wife.

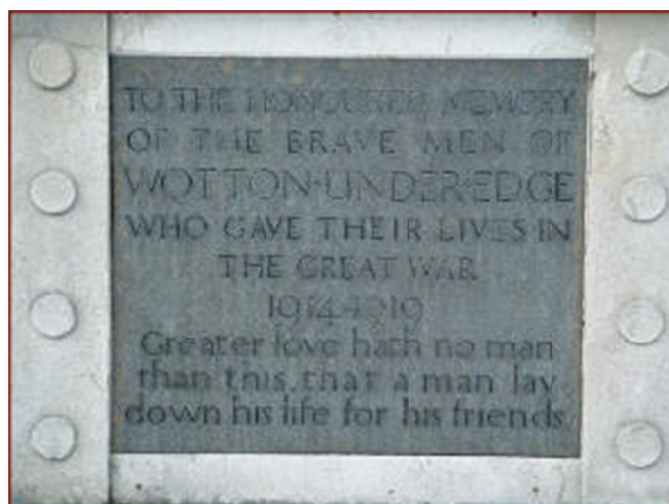
***July 1917. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Battle of Ypres, otherwise “Passchendaele” began and became a dogged struggle against determined resistance. Owing to heavy rain during August and September the land became bogged down in a morass of mud, sewage and the corpses of men and animals. Writing home, Donald Gough, of Hicks Gate House, described all the low lying ground “as a dank and deadly swamp filled with the overpowering stench of the dead, powder and gas shells for a stretch of six miles; the whole ground nothing but a pocked marked mass of dirty brown with the shell holes full of water and only a very precarious footing to be had between them.” The campaign came to a close in November when the village of Passchendaele was captured.***

**27<sup>th</sup> July. Private William Thomas LEONARD, 1882-1917**, of the 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion, the Welsh Regiment was killed, most likely during the opening salvo at Pilckem Ridge. He was born in Kingswood, the eldest son of William Alfred and Louisa Leonard, nee Sellick, who lived with their seven children at 13 Royate Hill. In 1911 his father, apparently exasperated (at this violation of privacy?) filled out the census paper, identifying himself and his family only by their initials or abbreviations: “W.T. 40, bootmaker, home, A.L. 40, W.T. 19, painter, D.G., 17, pottery, Alf R., 15, painter’s boy, Ed L., 12, G.M., 9, A.R., 7, E.D., 4.”

William was buried at the New Irish Farm Cemetery, West Vlaaderen in Grave XXVI. A.9. and is remembered on the War Memorial at St Anne’s, (W.T. Leonard). CWGC records his parents, William and Louisa at 40 Edward Road, Brislington.

**28<sup>th</sup> July. Sergeant Daniel E. WALKER, 1893-1917**, of the 8<sup>th</sup> (Service) Battalion of the Gloucesters was the third of six children of Thomas, a cowman, and Elizabeth Walker of Wortley, Wotton-under-Edge. His connection with Brislington is through his aunt and uncle, John Edward and Edith Seaton who placed this obituary in the WDP, 15 August 1917: “WALKER. Killed in Action, July 28, late of Bristol’s Own, attached to Gloucestershire’s, Sgt Daniel E., son of Mr and Mrs W. Walker of Wotton-under-edge and nephew of Mr and Mrs J.E. Seaton of St Anne’s Park, Brislington.”





Daniel who has no known grave is commemorated at Panel 22 & 24 of the Menin Gate and is remembered on the War Memorial at Wotton-under-Edge.

**31<sup>st</sup> July. Private George Henry BOWN, 1880-1917**, a son of George and Eliza, lived at 2 Boulton's Lane, Kingswood in 1901 with his parents, three younger siblings and their niece. A bootmaker and part-time insurance agent, he married Ella Annie Lacey in 1905 and they moved in with her mother at Crew's Hole, St George. In 1915 he joined the 20<sup>th</sup> Durham Light Infantry.

A memorial stone in the overgrown graveyard of the derelict Wesleyan Chapel in Kingswood<sup>140</sup> is inscribed as follows: *"Eliza Jane Bown died 2 September 1918 aged 68; her husband George Bown, died 1 April 1937, aged 88; Private George Henry Bown, Durham Light Infantry, son of the above, killed in action at Hollibeke, Belgium, 31 July 1917, aged 37. Also of his nephew Corporal Wilfred Bown, 14<sup>th</sup> Glosters, [sic] son of H.A. & W.J. Bown, grandson of George and Eliza Bown, who died of wounds at Marcel Cave, Flanders, 2 April 1918, aged 22."*

The CWGC names George's father, of Soundwell Road, Kingswood and his widow, Ella of 34 Sandhurst Road, Brislington. George is remembered at St Anne's, (though mis-spelled as "G.H. Bound").

**31<sup>st</sup> July. Private Albert Edward RICKETTS, 1897-1917**, was the brother of Henry Ricketts, (qv. 14.4.1917), and the second son of John and Laura Ricketts of 8 Arlington Road, St Anne's Park to die in action. He was conscripted in Bristol, Service No. 37500 of the 13<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters, aka the "Forest of Dean Pioneers" which was formed at Malvern in 1914. He has no known grave and is commemorated at Ypres on the Menin Gate. He is remembered at St Anne's church (A. Ricketts) and School (A.E. Ricketts).

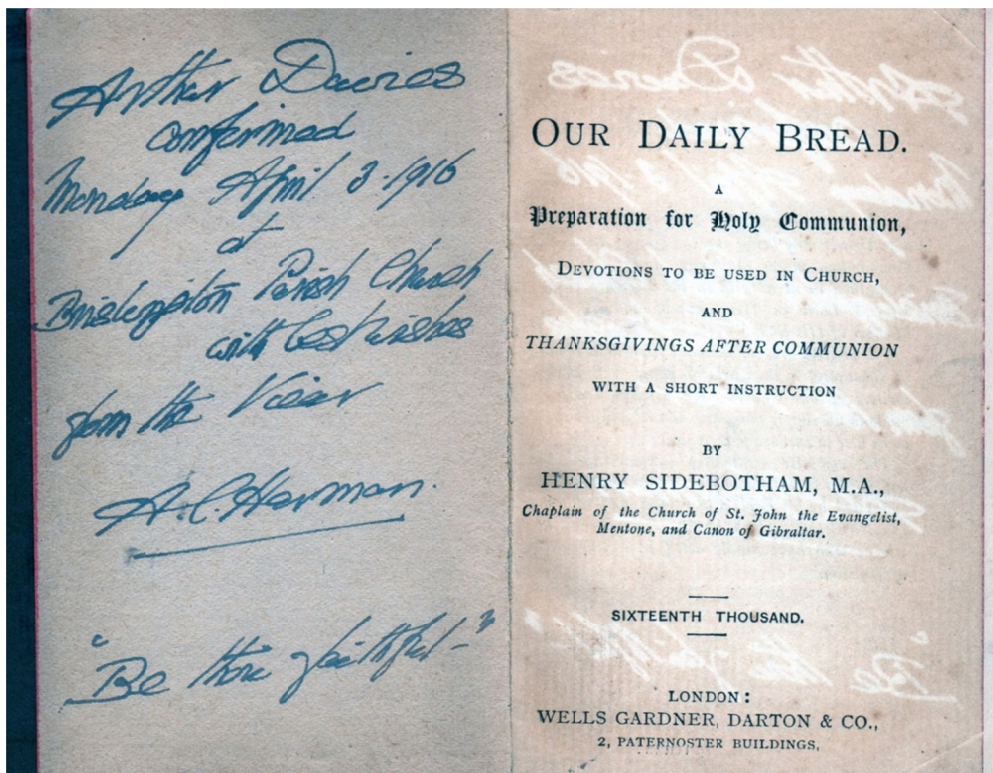
**9<sup>th</sup> August, at Home. Gilbert Henry KIRBY**, born in 1894, son of Andrew, a railway inspector, and Ethel, who lived at 73 Upper Sandhurst Road was one of "our young men at the War"

<sup>140</sup> Currently, 2018, with no access.

named by the Congregational Magazine in 1914. He died in 1<sup>st</sup> Eastern General Hospital, of Meningitis on 9 August 1917 when his address was given as 2 Sandringham Road. It appears that someone recalled that he was once a schoolboy at St Anne's and his name (G.H. Kirby) is at the foot of the school's memorial plaque along with L. Wood, (qv) another late addition. Gilbert who may be incorrectly named, "G. Kibby" on the plaque at St Luke's is otherwise unknown.

**14<sup>th</sup> August. Lance Corporal Arthur Reginald DAVIES, 1897-1917**, of the 7<sup>th</sup> Somerset Light Infantry was the brother of Jabez Davies (qv. 31.12.1916) and the second son of Alfred and Eliza to be killed in action. His death was announced in the WDP, 6 September 1917:

*"L/Cpl A.R. Davies. The sad news has recently been received by his mother, Mrs Davies, 48 Pendennis Road, Brislington that Arthur Davies was killed by a shell while going into action. Arthur was the youngest son of five serving in the army. His platoon sergeant said he was a good lad. He was only 19 years of age and had only been in France two months before he met with his death. Before joining up, he was with Mr Foot, butcher, of Brislington for 8 years. Mr Foot has sent his deepest regret."*



Arthur, a member of the Brislington Church Lads' Brigade was confirmed by the Rev Harman at St Luke's on 3 April 1916, just before he went to war. The vicar wrote "Be thou faithful" in the Communion Book of Preparation.



***Arthur Davies, 1897-1917***

At the time of the newspaper paper report, his widowed mother was apparently unaware that another of her sons, Jabez was also dead.

Despite the mention of France, (the “theatre of war” was officially France/Flanders), Arthur was buried at the Duhallow Cemetery, Belgium in Grave VII.C7. He is remembered at St Luke’s and on the separate CLB plaque in the church. (Arthur Davies).



**H**E whom this scroll commemorates was numbered among those who, at the call of King and Country, left all that was dear to them, endured hardness, faced danger, and finally passed out of the sight of men by the path of duty and self-sacrifice, giving up their own lives that others might live in freedom. Let those who come after see to it that his name be not forgotten.

*L. Cpl. Arthur Reginald Davies  
1 Somerset Light Infantry*

**16<sup>th</sup> August. Private Leonard William CREASE, 1889-1917**, was the son of Richard, a postman, and his wife Mary, the daughter of Thomas Hickery, a red ware potter. In 1891 Mr and Mrs Crease lived with Mr Hickey at Pottery Cottage, Avon Bank, (where their daughter Ruby was born in 1895) before moving first to Sandy Park (1901) then to 20 Sandgate Road. Len had left home by 1911 when he was in lodgings at Walcot, Bath, with Mrs Frances China, a widow with two daughters. He was then courting Lavinia (Lena) Kathleen Griffin who became his wife in 1913.

Len Crease joined the SLI early in the war, and had been transferred to the 11<sup>th</sup> Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers when he was killed during the main assault at Passchendaele.<sup>141</sup>

*“CREASE. Killed in Action on August 16, Leonard William, dearly loved husband of Lena K.B. Crease, 14 Tynning Terrace, Bath.”*

*“A Former Bath Tram Driver”. Private Leonard Crease of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers who has been killed in action was formerly employed by the Bath Electric Tram Company as a driver of one of their cars. He lived at 16 Seymour Road, Walcot, was about 28 years of age and leaves a widow and a first baby he never saw, who is two months old. The widow received the following letter from ‘The Chaplain, R.I. Fusiliers, BEF, Aug. 19.*



*‘Dear Mrs Crease. I am sure by now you will have heard the sad news about your husband Pte Leonard Crease. I wish to send you my deepest sympathy in your sorrow. He took part in the attack we made on the German line on the morning of the 16<sup>th</sup> August. He was close by his leader, Lieut. Murdoch, and advanced with the utmost coolness in the face of very intense shell and machine gun fire. I regret very much to tell you he was struck on the top of the head by a piece of shrapnel and instantly killed. He was always so cheerful and so light-hearted in the midst of hardships. He came to communion just before the battle. In losing your husband I feel I have lost a personal friend. Yours very sincerely, Alexander Spence, C of E. Chaplain.’”*

The Lieutenant in command of Crease’s platoon also wrote to Lena:

*“During my time with the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, your husband acted as my servant and I never at any occasion had to find fault with him. He was always very willing to oblige and carried out his duties to the best of his ability. I cannot speak too highly of him. I have lost not only an excellent servant but a comrade as well. Offering you the most sincere sympathy of the NCOs and men of my platoon, in all sincerity, Hugh H. Murdoch, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut.”*

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<sup>141</sup> Bath Chron, 15.9.1917

Leonard, who has no known grave is commemorated on Panel 70-72 of the Tyne Cot Memorial and is remembered at St Luke's, (L.W. Crease). The baby daughter he did not live to see was named Stella, (little star). His widow, Lena who was living at Oldfield Park in Bath in 1939 later went to Brighton where Stella was married in 1979.

Lieut. Hugh Murdoch, who thought so highly of his batman was reported "missing in action" sometime between 23 and 29 March 1918, though he had been taken prisoner and spent the rest of the war as a POW. He was repatriated on 1 December 1918 and returned home to Balmoral Cottage, Belfast.

The kindly Chaplain, Rev Alexander Spence was a hero. He was awarded the Military Cross, 18 February 1918, for *"conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty having worked for 20 hours attending to the wounded in an aid post during an attack. On the following day, hearing that some wounded were lying out in shell holes, he went out in daylight under machine gun fire and brought back several wounded men to the aid post. He rendered splendid service and showed great gallantry and contempt of danger."*

Just over a month following his investiture, Rev Spence was taken prisoner along with Hugh Murdoch, but was so severely injured that he died of his wounds at a POW camp on 31 March 1918. He is buried at the Roye New British Cemetery, on the Somme, in Grave IV.C.17. His army record and WW1 plaque (the Dead Man's Penny) was sold on EBay, 26 September 2013, for £450.

**16<sup>th</sup> August. Sapper Henry PREEN, 1891-1917**, a son of John, a builder's foreman and Jane Preen, had siblings Alfred, Cissie, Frank, Florence, Lillian, Elsie and Nelson; another brother, Walter, died in childhood. Henry spent his youth between Horfield, Chepstow and Bishopston where he attended Bishop Road School. He was a member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> South Midland Field Company of the Royal Engineers, a pre-war Territorial unit, renamed the 475<sup>th</sup> Field Company in 1917. In August 1914 the units of the Division had departed for their annual summer camp when emergency orders recalled them to home base. All units were mobilised for war service on the 5<sup>th</sup> August and moved to Chelmsford by mid-August 1914. On 13 March 1915 the Division was warned for overseas service. Henry's brother Frank went with them to Cassel in France on 27<sup>th</sup> March though Henry himself was kept back with a detachment of reinforcements. He took the opportunity get married on 23<sup>rd</sup> August to 21 year old Florence Orchard at St Agnes. Their time together was brief for Henry left for France on the 12<sup>th</sup> September. He became a father when Florence gave birth to a baby boy they called John. Henry's brother Alfred joined him in France in 1916.

The RE played a vital role in the war, maintaining the lines of supply, managing the railways, roads, water supply, bridges and inland waterways. They also secured communications by telephones, wireless and other signaling equipment. It also fell to the technically skilled engineers to develop responses to chemical and underground warfare. Above all, however, they provided support for the infantry and artillery by designing and building the front-line

fortifications. Allocated as combat engineers to their respective Divisions, the Field Companies often saw action and took part in the fighting, although their primary role was to provide works units for bridging and lines of communication, and it was by this means that Henry helped to support his comrades in the front line. In 1914, each infantry Division included two Field Companies. A third was added during January 1915, as more units came up to strength and passed through training.

Henry's unit did not see any of the major battles of 1915, although it suffered the usual minor losses as it carried out its trench holding duties. The unit was at the Somme from July 1916, and took part in the drive from Ovillers along the Pozieres Ridge in August, and working with the Australians, systematically reduced the Thiepval Salient. They were relieved by the Canadians, 3<sup>rd</sup> September, and eventually took Mouquet Farm, 16<sup>th</sup> September. They then moved back to III Corps for a relatively quiet time during the rest of September and October before going back into action at the battle of the Ancre (13<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> November).

In 1917 the Division took part in III Corps' advance to the Hindenburg Line (14<sup>th</sup> March – 5<sup>th</sup> April) and the occupation of Peronne (18<sup>th</sup> March). In August they were moved to II Corps for the attack on Langemarck (16<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup> August) as part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ypres Offensive. On the morning of the 16<sup>th</sup> August the village of Langemarck was taken at heavy cost after 4 hours of fighting. Though a German counterattack recovered much of the ground, British forces retained the initiative in this area aided by the use of tanks and a diversionary attack by the French at Verdun. At this time Henry's unit was based at the Canal Bank but left on the 15<sup>th</sup> August to take up positions on the Bund where it was to remain until the infantry had taken its objective, at which point they would go forward to construct 5 strong defensive positions in the newly consolidated line. It was while moving up to their position on the Bund that Henry was wounded by shell fire.

The attack itself commenced at 04.45 hours but the infantry made little progress and most of the line remained in German hands, although the unit was able to make a start on one of the proposed strong points. Meanwhile, Henry was taken to the casualty clearing station at Dozinghem (one of several such stations given ironic names by the troops: "Dozinghem", "Bandaghem", "Mendinghem") where he died on 16<sup>th</sup> August. He is buried in Grave III. I.9 at Dozinghem Military Cemetery.

News of his death appeared 27<sup>th</sup> August in the WDP "*Roll of Honour*" column in a series of obituaries from sorrowing family members:

*"PREEN. Sacred to the Memory of my dear husband, Sapper Henry Preen aged 26 years who fell in action Aug. 16, 1917. Deeply mourned by his sorrowing wife and child; also Mr & Mrs Orchard and family of 20 Lawrence Street, St Pauls."*

*"In ever loving memory of our dear son Henry of the Royal Engineers who died Aug. 16, from severe wounds received in action. From his sorrowing mother and father, 1 North Road, St Andrew's. We could not bid him goodbye."*

*"Killed in action, Aug. 16, in Flanders, Sapper Henry Preen, dearly loved brother of Mrs Adams and Mrs Pugh, 53 Sandy Park Road, Brislington. His duty done. At rest."*

*"In loving memory of our dear brother Henry who fell in action Aug. 16, to be always remembered by his brothers Fred, Frank and Nelson, and also by his brothers-in-law Harry Adams and Will Pugh, all of whom are serving in France. A loving brother and comrade true."*

*"In loving memory of my dear brother Henry, killed in action Aug. 16, deeply regretted by his sister Lil and brother-in-law Walter Brightman of 44 Gloucester Road, Bishopston. At rest."*

*"In dearly loving memory of our dear brother Henry, killed in action whilst fighting for his country in Flanders, Aug. 16, sadly missed by his sorrowing sisters Elsie and Cissie, 1 North Rad, St Andrews. Not goodbye but farewell."*

Two weeks later there was another tragedy, almost too unbearable to record:

*"PREEN. On September 1, 1917 at 25 St Lawrence Street, Bristol, after a very short illness, Jack, the dearly loved darling boy aged one year 11 months, only child of Florence and the late Sapper Henry Preen, killed in action on Aug. 16, last. God takes our loved ones from our home but never from our hearts."*

In 1918 on the anniversary of Henry's death his parents, sisters and brother in law placed "In Memoriam" notices, among them:

*"PREEN. In sorrowful memory of our dear brother Henry, Royal Engineers, who fell in action August 16<sup>th</sup> 1917. Ever remembered by Mabel, Flo & Sergt J. Adams, DCM, 53 Sandy Park, Brislington."*

*"Tis when the war is over  
Tis when we shall realise  
That in a grave somewhere out yonder  
Our dear brave hero lies."*

Henry Preen is remembered on the "Roll of Honour" at Bishop Road Primary School, Horfield. All three of his brothers survived the war: Alfred, the eldest, who was in France in 1916; Nelson the youngest, called up in 1918, served in the Staffordshire Regiment. After the war, Henry's brother Frank, who had preceded him to France lived at 491 Bath Road, Brislington with his wife Ellen Maria and family.

Henry's brother in law, 494343 Sergeant John Henry Adams of 53 Sandy Park Road, (married to Henry's sister Beatrice) was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal on 17 April 1918 for "*Conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. As section Sergeant of his Field Company he*



*continually showed great gallantry whilst working in exposed positions and his courageous and successful work in the consolidation of captured positions is worthy of the highest praise."*

I have never seen any study of the deaths of "old soldiers" in the ensuing months and years after the war ended. It has seemed to me that a disproportionate number died young. Henry Preen's brother-in-law Sergeant John Henry Adams, DCM, late of the Royal Engineers, was one of these. He died aged 39 on 9 September 1923 and was buried at Arno's Vale. He was mourned by Beatrice who added the text: "Until the Day break".<sup>142</sup>

**22<sup>nd</sup> August. Private Francis Samuel STERRY, 1885-1917**, was a son of Charles, a ship's steward, and Ellen M. A. (Elizabeth) Sterry, nee Spurlock who in 1901 lived at Bedminster with his parents, sisters and brother, Nelly, Flo, Charles, Ethel and Gertrude. He was a "rotary transferer" at Mardon, Son & Hall, when he married Emily Britton Reaville in 1910; they set up home at 48 Winchester Road, Brislington.

Fewer than one third of WW1 soldiers' records have survived enemy action in WW2. Frank Sterry's is one of the few though is nevertheless brief:

*Oxford & Bucks Light Infantry, 2<sup>nd</sup>/1<sup>st</sup> Bucks Battalion; formerly 243181, Hampshire Regiment. Sterry, Francis Samuel, born Bristol, occupation: Litho printer, age on enlistment: 30, enlisted for Duration of War; joined: Bristol, 15 November 1915; General Services attested; training, 16 November 1915; mobilised: 15 March 1917, Hampshire Regiment, Service 243181, 1 year, 119 days; posted: Hants: 16 March 1917, transferred to O.B.L.I Service No: 285122, 14 July 1917. kia: 22 August 1917."*

Frank, who has no known grave, is commemorated on Panels 96 – 98 of the Tyne Cot Memorial. He is remembered at St Luke's (F.S. Sterry) and the Congregational Church.

Emily his widow remained at 48 Winchester Road, and is recorded there in 1939 with her elderly mother, Alice Reaville, her daughter Kathleen and son-in-law Jack Seal, an Auxiliary RAF man.

**24<sup>th</sup> August. Corporal Herbert Harold (Bert) GARTON, 1891-1917.** On 5 April 1891, Louisa Garton aged 20, worked in a pub at Winsley Road, Bradford on-Avon, where William Simister and his wife Sarah were the licensees. Also resident was their son George aged seventeen. The same year Louisa gave birth to a son, known as Bert, at nearby Turley. In 1893 she married Alfred Simister, a stonemason, though his relationship to the other Simisters is not known. In 1901 young Bert had remained at Bradford-on-Avon with his grandmother Ann Garton whilst Alfred and Louisa set up home at 34 Sandown Road, Brislington, with their children Percy aged six and Hilda, three (who died the next year). By 1911, Bert Garton, aged 19, a grocer's assistant, had re-joined the family, at The Rock.

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<sup>142</sup> Obit and "In Memoriam", WDP, 11.9.1923/9.9.1925.

It is possible that Bert's origins may have caused tension in the household and he seized the opportunity to leave as soon as war was declared, perhaps applying to Mr Cooke-Hurle for his voucher to travel to Taunton to enlist. The 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion SLI, raised in 1914 as part of Kitchener's Army, was attached to the 43<sup>rd</sup> Brigade. Bert presumably landed in France with the battalion in May 1915 and served on the Western Front throughout the war. The 6<sup>th</sup> SLI was in action at Hooge and Bellewaarde in 1915; at Delville Wood and Flers-Courcelette, Somme in 1916. In 1917 the battalion was involved following the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line, and during the Arras offensive. Bert, promoted Corporal was killed in the mud of Ypres and is buried in Grave XVIII D.17 at the Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery. He is remembered at St Luke's (H. H. Garton) and at the Congregational.

The CWGC records only his mother's name: "son of Mrs L. Simister, formerly Garton, of Mayfield Cottages, Brislington", which strengthens my view that because of his illegitimate birth he had never been quite accepted by his stepfather.<sup>143</sup>

In 1939, Alfred and Louisa Simister lived at 25 Hollywood Road; Percy their son, a Private in the South Staffordshires, "formerly a typewriting clerk" survived the war and in 1939 was a chauffeur.

**27<sup>th</sup> August. Private Sydney MILSOM, 1886-1917** was the eldest child of Robert, a labourer, and Hannah who in 1911, was a wire netting weaver, living with his parents and younger siblings, Hannah, Lily, Horace, and Robert, at 18 Newbridge Road. He may have been the Sidney Milsom who married Edith Biggs in 1914, shortly before he enlisted, first in the Norfolk Regiment, later transferred to 1/8<sup>th</sup> Worcester Regiment. He was killed at Passchendaele and is buried in Grave XXVI, D9, at the New Irish Farm Cemetery. He is remembered at St Anne's (S. Millsom) and on a separate plaque in the church dedicated to the employees of the St Anne's Board Mills who fell in the Great War.

(NB. Sydney has proved elusive owing to the variations of spelling of both his forename (Sidney/Sydney) and surname (Milsom/Millsom/Milson). No next of kin appears on his CWGC entry where his name is spelt Milson.)

**27<sup>th</sup> August. Private William Parris VANNER, 1889-1917** was born in Bampton, Devon, the youngest of ten surviving children of Henry, a retired army schoolmaster and his wife Sarah. In 1891 they lived at 11 Newton Square, Tiverton, a prosperous middle class area where servants abounded and a physician and a veterinary surgeon were immediate neighbours. Henry Venner who was born at St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol, enlisted in the army on 1 January 1856 at the age of 20 years and ten months (with a bounty of £8) to act as a schoolmaster with the rank of Warrant Officer. In 1861 he was with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, the Rifle Brigade at Bareilly, East Indies. During a return home in 1868 he married Sarah Toogood Parris. Their children were born in various places where the Regiment was stationed: Birr, Ireland; Devonport; Dover. Having served the mandatory thirty years Henry retired on 19 October

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<sup>143</sup> Compare with Willie Tanner, 1917, and Harry Skinner, 1918

1886, becoming a Chelsea [out] Pensioner. He may never have heard a shot fired in anger and his career in a peacetime army with travel thrown in must have been a desirable one. Sadly, he did not live long to enjoy his pension and he died aged 57, on 24 May 1892 at Tiverton.<sup>144</sup>

By 1901, fifty four year old Sarah, "living on her own means" (an Army Pension?) was in Exeter with four of her daughters and her son, William Parris aged eleven. By 1911, she had moved to 60 Winchester Road, Brislington with the eldest and youngest of her children, Adelaide Amelia, 38, and William, 21, a miller's clerk. In 1915 Willie married Minnie Warburton, from Bath and joined the 2/8<sup>th</sup> Worcestershires. He was killed at Tyne Cot aged 27, and is commemorated on Panel 75-77 of the Memorial. He is remembered at St Luke's (W.P. Venner) and his name is inscribed on his father's grave at Bampton.

In 1919, his widow Minnie married Samuel L. Garrod at Wandsworth. His mother and sister remained in Bristol where Sarah died aged 77 in 1924 and Adelaide ten years later aged 61.

**20<sup>th</sup> September. Private Francis Frederick BURDEN, 1877-1917**, the son of Stephen and Emma, spent his early life in the Bath area. He applied to join the Metropolitan Police in 1901 but unfortunately his ambitions were not realised. In 1903 he married Louisa Holvey at Twerton and by 1911 was a tailor/presser, living at 65 Upper Sandhurst Road, Brislington, with his wife and their three year old daughter, Irene. Frank, in his 39<sup>th</sup> year (approaching the upper age limit of forty one) was conscripted into the 10<sup>th</sup> King's Royal Rifles and was unlucky enough to find himself with the Brigade at Ypres. On 20 September 1917 the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> battalions took part in an attack on Eagle Trench, north east of Langemarck in the Ypres Salient.

The KRRB Regimental History relates: *"The first object was taken and held; fighting was severe and somewhat confused. Though some progress was made, at dusk most of the small parties withdrew. Casualties were heavy. The losses were Officers: 10 killed, 6 injured; other ranks 351 injured or killed."*

Francis Burden was one of the un-named fatalities. He has no known grave and is commemorated on Panels 115-119, & 162A & 163A of the Tyne Cot Memorial. He is remembered at St Anne's, (F.F. Burden).

His widow Louisa married Dennis Virgo in 1920. In 1939 they lived at 60 Upper Sandhurst Road with Irene.

**20<sup>th</sup> September. Corporal Edward Charles "Charlie" VESEY, 1888-1917** the only child of Edward, a boiler maker, and Agnes Vesey, nee Evans lived at St Andrews. By 1911, aged 23, he was a lithographer, living in lodgings at 14 Newland Terrace, Battersea. He was a Private in the RAMC when he married in Alice Young, the daughter of an iron moulder at

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<sup>144</sup> Western Times.

Christchurch, Barton Hill, on Christmas Day, 1915. He subsequently transferred to the 8<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters. On 14 November 1917 Alice inserted a desperate plea in the Western Daily Press:

*“LOCAL SOLDIER MISSING. An earnest request is made by Mrs Vesey of 46 Queen Square for news of her husband, Cpl C. Vesey of the Gloucesters. Mrs Vesey received a field post card two months ago and three weeks after came official intimation that her husband was wounded and missing. Any news would be gratefully received.”*

In due course it was confirmed that Charlie, aged 29, was forever missing, swallowed by the mud and it was assumed he had died on 20<sup>th</sup> September. He is commemorated on Panel 72-75, of the Tyne Cot Memorial and is remembered at St Luke’s, (C. Vesey). It may be that Alice subsequently moved to Brislington, otherwise there is no obvious connection.

**24<sup>th</sup> September. Private William REID, otherwise DOCKER, 1886-1917** was born in Glasgow c1886-7, a son of John and Elizabeth Reid. After John’s death, his mother married her second husband Thomas Alfred Docker in about 1894. In 1901, Elizabeth Docker was in hospital leaving her husband at home at James Street, Calton, Glasgow with their complicated, nomadic family. Thomas Docker, then 33, was a sausage maker, who was born at Wolverhampton. He described 14 year old William, 14, (a pawnbroker’s assistant) as his son, listing him as William Docker. The Dockers had travelled about the United Kingdom: Rosa, 6, was born in England, Thomas, aged 4, in Wales, and Annie, who was “0” (which may account for Elizabeth’s hospitalisation following childbirth) in Scotland. The household was completed by Robert McNeil, “nephew, a journeyman blacksmith”, and Ann McGhee, “sister-in-law, widow, wool winder”. By 1911, with Elizabeth restored to health, the family had moved to 4 Victoria Road, Islington, now with five more children, a group which included William, “stepson” by then 24, who had reverted to his birth name, Reid. Rosa Docker, born in Southport, Lancashire, aged 14, was, like her father and half-brother William Reid, a sausage maker. Thomas Alfred junior, 14, a clerk, was born at Swansea, with the rest, Annie McNeil, now 10, Elizabeth McNeil, 8 and Joseph Morris, 6, all born in Glasgow.

William Reid/Docker enlisted in the 14<sup>th</sup> Durham Light Infantry (as William Reid) at Holloway, by which time his mother and several more of the Docker clan were either *en route* to, or had arrived at, Brislington.

The 14<sup>th</sup> DLI was engaged at Loos 15<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> August when they fought the enemy over a feature called Hill 70 in the coalfields of Lens, adding it to the Regiment’s battle honours. This was a diversionary tactic designed to draw the Germans away from the Ypres battlefield. William was killed with several others of the battalion, 24<sup>th</sup> September, in a skirmish after the main fighting there had died down. He was buried at Loos British Cemetery, in Grave XX.F.16 where his gravestone bears the inscription *“His name is written in letters of love in the hearts left at home”*. (From Mrs E. Docker, 37 Chatsworth Road,

Brislington, Bristol.) The CWGC records him as “William Reid, son of E. Docker, and of the late John Reid; born at Glasgow.” He is remembered at St Anne’s (W.R. Docker).

On 2 September 1919 at St Luke’s, William’s half-brother Thomas Alfred Docker junior married Norah, daughter of Mr and Mrs Thomas Weymouth who kept the Pilgrim Inn. It was a “double wedding”, the happy occasion being shared by Norah’s sister Phyllis who married William David Gilbert of Pusey, Wiltshire.<sup>145</sup>

Elizabeth Docker died in 1925 aged 63 and Thomas Docker, senior, a pork butcher, in 1930 aged 62. Rosa and Elizabeth Docker, spinster sisters, were still resident at 37 Chatsworth Road in 1939 where Rosa remained until she died, 28 February, 1961. By then the remnants of the family had diverged so widely that her executors, Lloyds Bank of Baldwin Street, advertised in the press “for any person having an interest in her estate” to contact them.

**26<sup>th</sup> September, at Home. Sapper George Joseph CONNOR (otherwise “Joseph George”), 1866-1917** was born in Bristol, one of three children of Joseph, a master mariner, and Mary Ann, nee Vowles. After the death of Captain Connor in 1874, his widow married her second husband, Andrew Partridge. The couple lived in Bedminster in 1891, but her son J.G. makes no appearance until 1903 when he married Ellen Mary Spriggs. By 1911, he was a lithographic printer, living at “Kinsale” 115 Repton Road, Brislington with Ellen, their only child, Edward, 6, and his mother, Mary Ann Partridge, by then widowed for the second time.

Joseph George Connor was recruited by the 4<sup>th</sup> Gloucestershire Regiment on 22 March 1915 aged 47. He was “Grade 3 Super Attested” and within a month had been promoted Lance-Corporal and transferred to the Loyal Defence Corps. A further transfer to the Royal Engineers as “D. Lithographer, skilled” followed shortly afterwards. Perhaps due to an accident, he contracted septicaemia from which he died at the Military Hospital, Netley, near Southampton. He is buried at the Military Cemetery there in Grave (R.C.) 907 and is remembered at St Luke’s, (G.J. Connor).

Edward G. Connor, his son, married Josephine Kellaway in Bristol in 1930. Ellen Mary Connor died aged 79 in 1952.

**3<sup>rd</sup> October. Gunner Francis Walter SWAIN, 1891-1917.** Despite being remembered on all three local War Memorials, St Luke’s, St Anne’s and the Congregational, “F.W. Swain” has defied identification. The birth of a Francis Walter Swain was registered at Wandsworth, in March 1891 who may be the “Frank Swain” aged 10, an inmate of the “Stockwell Orphanage for Fatherless Children” in 1901. (Our man is **not** the “Frank W. Swain” who married “Ethel E. Howell” at Norwich in 1913: they were both alive in the city in 1939.) In the army list “Soldiers who died in the Great War”, Francis Walter Swain’s birthplace is stated to be Putney, Surrey and that he was of Kentish Town when he enlisted in the 353<sup>rd</sup> Siege Battery RGA, service no. 159641. He died of wounds received on the battlefield, having been

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<sup>145</sup> Son of the village bandsman, died 1917.

brought to Outtersteene, a casualty clearing station for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battle of Ypres and was buried there at the Communal Cemetery Extension in Grave I.C.61.

CWGC records his widow simply as “Mrs” Swain of 18 Sandholme Road, Brislington. I have been unable to find an appropriate marriage and efforts to trace her have been fruitless. In 1911, the house was occupied by people called Jordan, and in 1939, Bromege, neither of whom appear to be related.



**4<sup>th</sup> October. Corporal William PARSONS, 1882-1917** was born at Bampton, Devon, one of six children of John and Emma. He enlisted in 1899 in the 11<sup>th</sup> Foot, and was probably with the Regiment in South Africa during the Second Boer War. After his marriage to Mary Ann Stone in 1906 he was a railway platelayer and lived with his wife and children, William and Olive at Barnstaple. He was recalled early in the war and served in the 1<sup>st</sup> Devonshire Regiment with the rank of Corporal. He was killed during the taking of the ridge at Tyne

Cot and is buried at Tyne Cot Cemetery, which has the largest number of military burials in the world, in Grave LXIII. He is remembered on the War Memorial at Bampton and at St Anne’s, (W. Parsons).

Mary Ann Parsons married her second husband, Sydenham Brunt, a railway policeman, at St Luke’s on 18 October 1919, hence William is recorded by the CWGC as the husband Mary Ann Brunt, formerly Parsons, of 72 Repton Road. She died in 1920 aged 40; Sydenham Brunt died in 1929 aged 48.

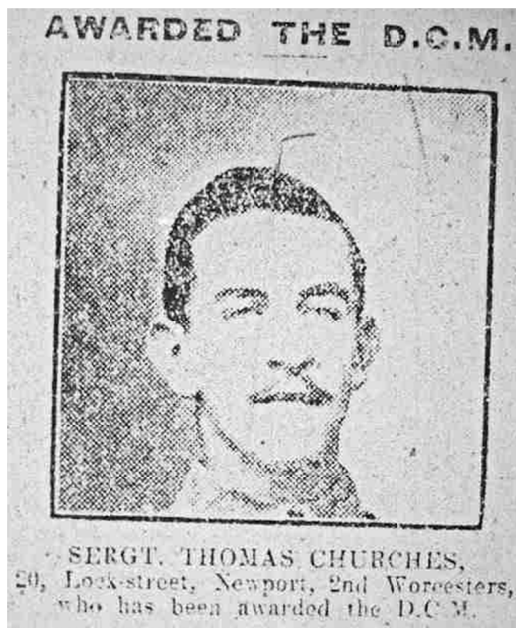
**9<sup>th</sup> October. Private William Henry (Harry) CHURCHES, 1883-1917**, asserted that he was born in Brislington which is probably not the case though he may have made a very brief visit to our village during his childhood and retained fond memories of the place. I have chosen to include him because the story of his family is that of the army itself, full of movement, colour, courage, and ultimately, tragedy.

The surname Churches, (fortunately less common in its plural version) is found chiefly around and about the Somerset Levels. Harry’s father, Thomas, who was unsure of his exact birthplace, (he variously gives Henton, Godney, Meare and Bristol), was rejected at his first attempt to enlist: he had too narrow a chest measurement! His next application, 4 April 1867, at Bristol was successful, “aged 18 years, eight months, born at Meare, Somerset, a labourer, height 5 feet 7½ inches tall, with a fair complexion, grey eyes and brown hair; much pitted with small pox.” The examining surgeon, Mr H.C. Neale, issued a favourable Medical Certificate: “I examined the above Recruit and find he has no Rupture or Mark of

*any old Wound or Ulcer adhering to the Bone; he is free from Varicose Veins of the Legs and has the Full Power of Motion of the Joints and Limbs. He is well formed and has no Scrofulous Affection of the Glands, Scald Head or other Cutaneous Eruptions; and he is free from any trace of Corporal Punishment and not marked as a Deserter with the letter 'D'. His Respiration is easy and his Lungs appear to be sound. He has the perfect use of his Eyes and Ears. His General Appearance is healthy and he possesses strength sufficient for him to undergo the fatigue to which soldiers are liable. I consider him fit for Her Majesty's Service."*

Thomas Churches signed the book with a legible signature, witnessed by another soldier, William Hillman, "Attestation under the Forty-Second Section of the Mutiny Act, 1865", and committed himself for 21 years with a proviso which allowed him to continue when his time was up. In 1871 he was a gunner at Woolwich Barracks, "aged 24, soldier, birthplace Bristol". He found himself a young wife, Lucy Ann, at Colchester, and flourished in the army: by 1881 he had been promoted to "Colour Sergeant" and he and Lucy were living at married quarters at Fulford Camp, York with their baby son, aged one month, who they called by the delightful first name of "Friendly" with "Ambrose" as a second name. Their second son, "Henry William", otherwise "Harry" was born at Overton, Yorkshire, in 1883.

Tom Churches was demobbed in the middle of this decade and it is perhaps during this time of upheaval that his son Harry lived for a while in Brislington which evoked his fond memory. Between 1881 and 1891, Valentine Churches, a farm labourer, born at Meare, lived at Pound Cottage with his wife Emily, their sons Jesse and John, and a baby daughter, Lucy, (who fancifully, during this tale of "ifs") may have been named after Harry's mother. The boys, born in 1876 and 1879 were few years Harry's senior, sufficiently older for him to hold them in awe. Let us suppose he arrived when he was about five or six, and stayed with them for a couple of years. By 1891 they had moved to Keynsham and Harry is recorded

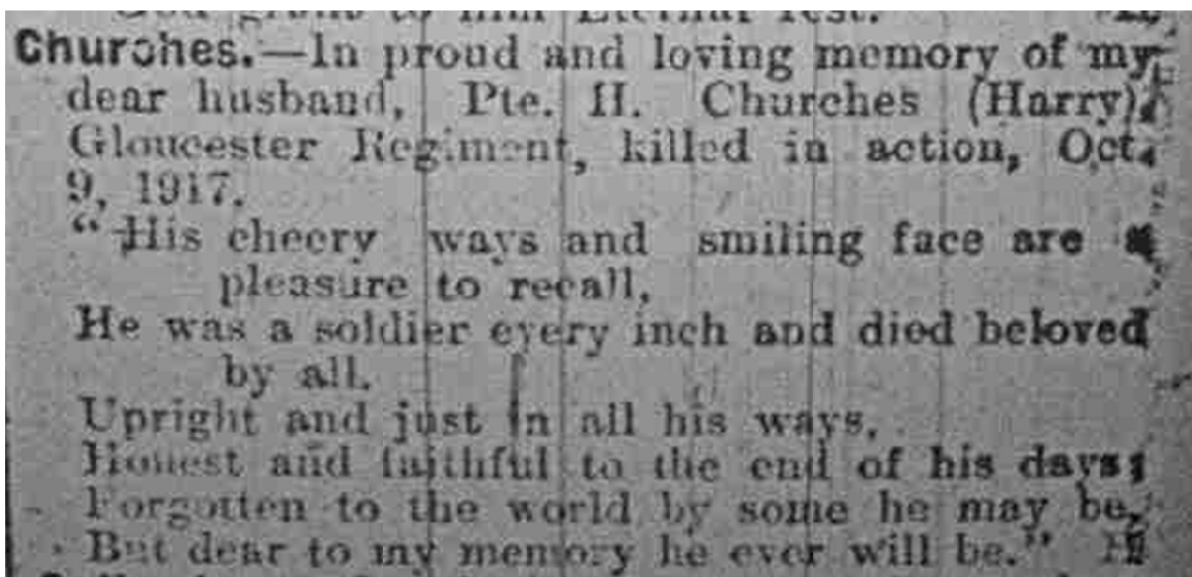


that year with his own family at 20 Locke Street, Newport, his parents, his brother Friendly and more junior arrivals, Thomas Victor, Violet, and finally Lilian. Having been a person of some standing in the Army, it must have been galling for Sergeant Tom, still only 43, to be back working, as he had started, as a farm labourer, with Lucy his wife taking in washing. Harry, a printer and typesetter, lived at Locke Street until his marriage to Alice Maud Gilbert in 1909, at which time he went to live with Alice's parents. The lot of Thomas Churches meanwhile had seemingly improved: in 1911, aged 63, he was "an army pensioner & caretaker of offices". He died not long afterwards, unaware that his three sons would shortly be in the

army, that one would become a war hero and another would be killed in action.

The younger son, Thomas Victor, a volunteer, was a Lance-Sergeant in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Worcesters when on the night of 15-16<sup>th</sup> May 1915, at Richebourg *“he made a very gallant and determined rush with his party in the face of devastating machine gun fire which killed and wounded the whole of his men, he himself being among the wounded.”* He was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal on 5<sup>th</sup> August.

His brother Harry's army records have not survived and nothing is known of him until Alice received the tragic news of his death: *“Killed in Action. Churches, on October 9, 1917, Pte Harry Churches, missing now officially reported killed. Dearly beloved husband of Alice Maud Churches, 48 Rugby Road, aged 35.”* Heartbroken, she placed a poignant obituary in the Newport press:



*“In proud and loving memory of my dear husband Pte H. Churches (Harry) Gloucester Regiment, KIA Oct. 9, 1917.*

*“His cheery ways and smiling face are pleasant to recall  
He was a soldier every inch and died beloved by all  
Upright and just in all his ways  
Honest and faithful to the end of his days  
Forgotten by the world to some he may be  
But dear to my memory he ever will be.”*

Harry is remembered at Panel 72-75 on the Tyne Cot Memorial, where, in 2013, my husband and I had the privilege of paying homage to Harry and his fallen comrades.

CWGC records him as the son of Lucy Churches and the late Thomas Churches of 20 Locke Street, and husband of Alice Maud Churches, 48 Rugby Road, Newport. In 1914, Alice gave birth to their baby daughter, Margery, who lived only a few days or weeks. Alice lived with her double bereavement until her death in 1935, aged 52.



Harry's brother Thomas Victor Churches DCM, married Elsie Compton at Newport in 1916 and left the army with the rank of Company Quarter Master Sergeant. In 1939, he and Elsie lived at Bexley in Kent where he worked for a shipping firm as "cargo supervisor" but he was also, proudly, "Pensioner, Worcestershire Regiment". They had a daughter, Margaret. Friendly Ambrose, a railway porter, whose records, like Harry's have not survived had been a Sapper in the Royal Engineers. In 1939, he was single, a GWR storekeeper in Newport.

**9<sup>th</sup> October. Private Keith Victor Gauntlett HIGGINS, 1891-1917**, at the age of 4 months, lived at 8 Clarence Place, Bedminster, a son of Henry, a factory time keeper, and his wife Emily, nee Gauntlett. Henry Higgins died a few months later, leaving his widow with six children aged between 23 and ten years; by 1911, only the romantically named Delphine, 25, and Keith, 20, "a shop assistant for a hosier and hatter" were still at home in Southville. In 1914, Keith married Welsh-born Lavinia Crabb, the manageress of a sweetshop, who was nine years his senior. After the wedding, the couple moved to Brislington with Mary Jane Crabb, Lavinia's mother, younger sister Margaret, brother George, who worked at the Tramway Depot, and a young niece, Doris Howells, aged eight.

Keith was conscripted in May 1916 and joined the 6<sup>th</sup> Worcestershire Regiment. A perceived skill at shooting led to his transfer to the Machine Gun Corps. He was wounded in action and died at one of the Clearing Stations at Etaples where he was buried at the Military Cemetery, in Grave XXX A.13.

Though he was aged about 26, the CWGC records him "aged 29, a native of Bedminster, son of George Henry and Emily E.R. Higgins; the husband of Lavinia Higgins of 11 Edward Road, Brislington." In 1920 Lavinia married Harry King, the brother of W.M. King, (*qv.* 3.9.1916).

**11<sup>th</sup> October. Corporal Matthew Charles McKEY, 1887-1917** of Small Heath, Birmingham of the 14<sup>th</sup> Royal Warwickshire Regiment was a son of John and Harriet of 1252 Coventry Road, South Yardley, one of two nephews of Mr and Mrs John Francis Hayes of Woodlawn, Winchester Road, Brislington who died in the Great War. (*see Arthur Lewtas qv* 22.9.1918). Matthew died of wounds, possibly at Passchendaele. He is buried in Grave 1.P.5 at the British Cemetery, Godewaersvelde, a French village close to the Belgian border and is remembered at the Hall of Memory in Birmingham.

**22<sup>nd</sup> October. Private William Henry TAYLOR, 1882-1917**, of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Gloucestershire Regiment was married, 27 April 1917 at St Luke's to Elsie Marshall, 28, a chemist's assistant. William, whose address was given as 89 Bowyer Road, Saltley, Birmingham, was previously a railway clerk, the eldest son of Henry and Maria Taylor who kept a grocery shop at Stourport, Worcestershire. As noted elsewhere, working for the railway network took many men away from their place of birth, hence William was in Bristol when he met Elsie who lived with her parents Walter, an Insurance Agent, his wife Ann, and sister and brother Ida and Walter Colston Marshall. (The latter, who in 1911 was a clerk at the Tramway Company, may be the man of this name who was a Lieutenant in the Wiltshire Regiment, 1915-19.)

William was killed on 22 October, less than six months after the wedding, one of 3,324 men who died in the battlefields of the Ypres Salient who had been laid in temporary graves, and whose bodies were exhumed after the Armistice. They were brought to Bedford House Cemetery, (between Ypres and Armentieres) for reburial. William lies at Enclosure No. 4, in Grave XV E.7 and is remembered at St Luke's and St Anne's, (W. Taylor).

The CWGC records his parents at Birmingham and his wife Elsie, simply "of Bristol". The Marshall family's home at 34 Grove Park Avenue was "to let" in April 1918 and in August 1920, a Mrs/Miss Rivers, of this address, advertised for a position as a companion help or nursery governess.<sup>146</sup>

**25<sup>th</sup> October. Private Reginald Cecil Claude LAW, 1898-1917** was born at Barton Regis to William James, of the Ordnance Survey, and Eva Law, nee Meadus, both of Poole, Dorset. They married at Christchurch in 1879, where their son Ronald was born in 1881. The OS kept them on the move: in 1887, another son, Noel Gwynne was born at Fishguard, though not christened until February 1889 at Winstead, Yorkshire. They had moved again before 1891 and managed to miss the census. Reggie was christened at St Andrew's, Clifton in 1898 and by 1901 they were at Rack Hill, Stroud, with Noel and Reggie while their elder son Ronald, a solicitor's clerk, was living at Christchurch with his aunts, Louisa and Eliza Meadus. In 1911 the Laws were in Ireland at 17 Bridge Street, Longford. William aged 58, married 32 years, Ordnance Surveyor, religion: Church of England; Eva, 56, mother of nine children, of whom only four were currently living. (From this sad record, I can only account for the three named.) Their son, Reginald, a scholar, lived with them whilst Noel, was in lodgings at a sub-post office in Cavan.

The Laws may have come to Brislington shortly after 9 November 1915 when 46 Sandringham Road was advertised to let. Reggie was conscripted aged 18, firstly into the Gloucesters then transferred to the 1<sup>st</sup> Oxford & Bucks LI. He was wounded in action in October 1917 and brought from the battlefield to the hub of Commonwealth camps and hospitals at Rouen where he died on 25<sup>th</sup> October. He is buried in Grave P.III.Q.11B at St Sever Cemetery Extension. He is remembered at St Luke's and the Congregational, (R.C.C. Law). Reggie's brother, known by his second name, Gwynne, had been called into the Royal Warwicks by 1918.<sup>147</sup> The CWGC records William and Eva at 46 Sandringham Road though by 1929 when their Golden Wedding Anniversary was announced they appear to have moved to no. 43.<sup>148</sup>

**26<sup>th</sup> October. Able Seaman Frederick York SPROD, 1895-1917** was born on 28 March 1895, the only child of Frederick, a pawnbroker, and Florence Ann, nee Jones. In 1901 they lived at 11 Mark's Grove, Easton with Fred senior's widowed mother, Elizabeth, and carried on business below the sign of the three brass balls. Mr Sprod died aged 40 in 1905, and

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<sup>146</sup> WDP 29.4.1918 & 5.8.1920

<sup>147</sup> St Luke's Parish Mag, Nov. 1918

<sup>148</sup> HBRM 22.11.1929

Florence moved the premises to 1 Narrow Plain with her son as her apprentice, and the household to 78 Winchester Road, Brislington. On 10 August 1916 at St Luke's, Frederick Sprod married Lily Golding of Southville. He was an Army Reservist from June 1916 but the following January joined the Royal Navy. He was 5 feet 3½ inches tall and weighed 9 stone (126 lbs.) He had a fresh complexion, brown hair and light blue eyes, with moles on his right cheek and left shoulder blade and a vaccination scar on his arm. The Navy evidently suited his talents and he was soon promoted from Ordinary to Able Seaman.

Then things took a turn for the worse. Fred, who had apparently avoided the Army, (perhaps noting that statistically he would be better off at sea) became, ironically, part of the "Royal Naval Division" and was sent into action on the Western Front with the "Hood" brigade. He was killed at Tyne Cot alongside 344 other Navy personnel who died the same day whose graves are unknown. He is commemorated on Panels 2 - 3 & 162 - 162A, of the Tyne Cot Memorial and is remembered at St Luke's and the Congregational, (F.Y. Sprod.)

He was much missed at home by his sorrowing relatives who issued three obituary notices, 7<sup>th</sup> November, "*Roll of Honour*": his mother Florence, his widow Lily and "Gran & Auntie, M. Dimmock" of 10 Gathorne Road, Ashton Gate. "In Memoriam" notices on the anniversary of his death continued each year until at least 1923, from relatives, including his parents-in-law, Mr & Mrs Golding, and most touchingly from Florence for whom he was her "dearly loved only child". She also lost her sister Mabel Dimmock, in 1918 and brother Henry Baker Jones in 1926. Florence, who still lived at 78 Winchester Road in 1939 died aged 82 in 1952. Lily, Fred's widow, married her second husband, Frank Jones in 1920.

**26<sup>th</sup> October. Private George Frederick Cleaver, 1894-1917** of the 4<sup>th</sup> (City of London) Royal Fusiliers died at Tyne Cot. He was born in Birmingham, the son of Henry and Frances, of 222 Hubert Road, Selly Oak. I believe he may have been one of the "lodgers" or "boyfriends" fondly remembered by someone in St Anne's after the war, hence his inclusion on the War Memorial there, (G.F. Cleaver). He has no known grave and is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial, (West Vlaanderen) Panel 148-150.

The life story of **Able Seaman William Seaward WRENCH, 1880-1917**, who died **31<sup>st</sup> October** is taken from "De Ruvigny's Roll of Honour, 1914-1918."

*"Able Seaman 1384, Hawke Battn, Royal Naval Division, born at Bridgwater on 16 March 1880, son of Henry Wrench of Spaxton, Somerset and his wife Emma, daughter of Henry Saunders of Taunton; educated at Bathforum School; formerly employed in the Ironmongery Dept. of James Colmer Ltd, Bath. Enlisted 21 November 1915. Served with the Expeditionary Force in France & Flanders from June, 1916. Wounded in action at Passchendaele on 28 Oct. 1917 and died at No. 18 General Hospital, Dannes on 31 Oct. 1917. Buried at British Military Cemetery, Etaples. Married at Bath Abbey on 4 November 1915 to Daisy Hale of the Guildhall, daughter of the late Charles Edward Hale. He had a daughter, Joan Seaward, born 26 Nov. 1917."*

William was 5 feet 10 inches tall, chest expanded, 35½ inches, with a fresh complexion, light brown hair and blue eyes; religion C. of E. and he could swim; of 9 Union Street, Bath, next of kin, his wife Daisy, (c/o Mrs Lydia Hale, hall keeper at the Guildhall.) He was recommended for "Signals" and promoted AB. 21 February 1916.

William Wrench is buried in Grave XXX H.19A at Etaples and is commemorated on the War Memorial at Bath. The birth of his daughter Joan, born posthumously, was announced in the Bath Chronicle on 1 December 1917: "*WRENCH. On November 26, at 37 Grove Park Road, Brislington to Daisy, wife of the late W.S. Wrench, R.N.D., a daughter.*" Daisy's connection with Brislington is otherwise unknown.

**19<sup>th</sup> November, Arras. Private Albert Edward CROCKER (Croker), 1898-1917**, born at "New Brislington", was the youngest son of William, a tanner's labourer, and Emma Crocker of 20 Addison Road. He was only two years old when his mother died in childbirth in 1900. The baby, called Dorothy, also died within a few weeks. In 1911, William was at the same address with three of his children, Ethel, 25, who had been running the household since she was fifteen, Alice, 21, a "brander" at Terrell's Rope Works, Albert Edward, aged twelve and a grandson three year old William Crocker junior. After he left St Anne's school, Albert went to work at St Anne's Board Mills. He was called up aged eighteen into the 2<sup>nd</sup> Manchester Regiment and was killed in action at Arras. After the Armistice his body was disinterred and brought to a permanent site at St Julien where he was buried in Grave II.K.33. He is remembered at St Anne's Church (A.E. Croker) St Anne's School, (A. Crocker) and on the Memorial to the employees of the Board Mills, (A. E. Crocker). Albert was the brother-in-law of Frank Ferrar, (*qv.* 9.9.1916), who was married to Ethel Crocker.

**20<sup>th</sup> November, Arras. Lance Corporal William Walter FRANKHAM, 1881-1917** was the fourth child of Frederick and Sarah Ann Frankham of Keynsham. His father was a "wire pickler" at the brass works, where Frankhams had been employed for at least two hundred years. In 1906, William married Ethel Jane Hayward and they branched out to London, where the streets were allegedly paved with gold. In 1911, with their three year old son, Leslie, they lived at 25 Brewster Gardens, North Kensington, in grim sounding accommodation "three rooms with use of kitchen" which they shared with a lodger, Isaac Sutton, a hook maker, who worked with William at a celluloid eyelet factory. Ernest Charles Frankham, William's brother, aged 33, his wife and six children, who lived in the same building, were likewise crammed into three rooms and shared a kitchen.

William, who was conscripted at Hammersmith, was transferred from the Rifle Brigade to the 7/8<sup>th</sup> Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers owing to "vacancies". He was killed in action at Croisilles, 13 kilometres from Arras and buried there at the British Cemetery, in Grave II.B.9. He is remembered on the Memorial Gates at Keynsham, (W. Frankham). The CWGC records his parents and his wife, Ethel Jane Frankham "of 27 Wick Road, Brislington", where she still lived in 1939. In 1941, she married her second husband, Charles Cattle, from another well-

known Keynsham family. Her son Leslie Frankham became a Local Government Officer and in 1939 was living with his wife Phyllis at 51 Wick Crescent.

**2<sup>nd</sup> November, (Israel & Palestine) Gaza. Rifleman Albert Philip Whitford BROWN, 1898-1917** was born at Odd Down, Bath, to Philip Brown, a solicitor's clerk, and his wife Ellen Sarah (Nellie) nee Hillman. Nellie died at Twerton on 11 September 1908, aged only 32 years old<sup>149</sup> leaving a young family of three sons, Maurice, Albert and Harold, and two daughters Margery and Dorothy.

In 1911, Philip, 39, a clerk in a brewery was at 6 Tracey Terrace, Bloomfield Road, Bath with four of his children while his elder son, Maurice, was staying with his mother, the boy's grandmother, Selina Brown, at Twerton. In December 1913, Philip married Rose Skeate<sup>150</sup> and the Brown family moved to Brislington.

Albert Brown, a member of the St Luke's CLB, joined up as soon as he was eighteen. Originally in the Rifle Brigade, he was subsequently transferred to the 1/10<sup>th</sup> London Regiment, and so to Palestine where he participated in the 1st and 2<sup>nd</sup> Battles of Gaza, 26/27 March and 17/19 April 1918. The Division held the left of the line in front of the City until the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battle, 27 October-7 November 1918 during which the ruined and deserted city was captured. Sadly, Albert, aged 19, was killed in action during this engagement on 2<sup>nd</sup> November. He is buried at the Gaza War Cemetery in Grave XIV and is remembered on the memorial plaque at St Luke's, (A.W. Brown) and on the separate CLB plaque, (Albert Brown).

**6<sup>th</sup> November, (Israel & Palestine) Gaza. Captain Alfred Terence Leatham RICHARDSON, 1892-1917**, was born at Brislington vicarage, son of the Rev Alfred and Emma Richardson and grandson of Joshua Pim Richardson of Brookfield, County Antrim. He was baptised by his father on 20 July 1892.



***Capt. Alfred T.L. Richardson, 1892-1917, son of the vicar of Brislington***

He was educated at Eton and Exeter College, Oxford, where he served in the Officers' Training Corps in both establishments as well as the choral and musical societies. He was active in the

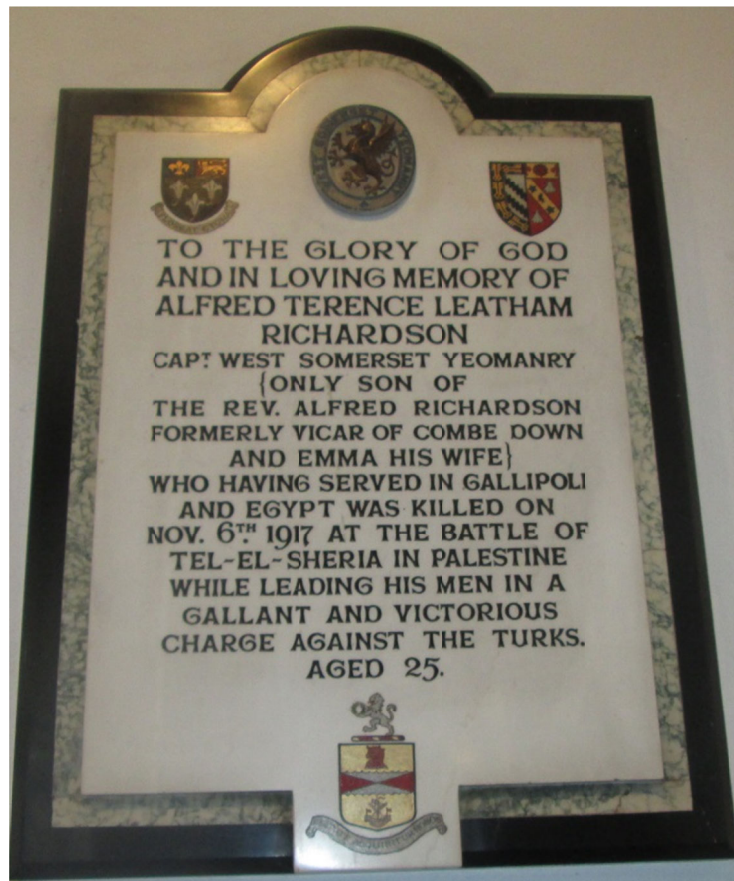
Oxford & Bermondsey Mission, a medical and reforming society, in one of London's most deprived areas. Many of the Mission's founders (including the famous Rev "Tubby" Clayton)

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<sup>149</sup> Obit., Bath Chronicle, 17.9.1908

<sup>150</sup> WDP 20.12.1913

were involved in Talbot House, more famous as “Toc H”, the unique place of rest and sanctuary for British troops in Flanders. Alfred, a keen sportsman, was “in the boats” at Eton, captained his college boat at Oxford and was “a whip” of the beagles. At the outbreak of war, he was commissioned in the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the SLI (the West Somerset Yeomanry) and served in Gallipoli and Egypt.<sup>151</sup>



*The Plaque to his memory in St Luke's Church, Brislington*

Alfred was made acting captain in 1916 and was a full captain by the time of his death in action in Palestine, 6<sup>th</sup> November 1917. He was buried in grave L.61 at the Beersheba War Cemetery. There is a plaque to his memory in St Luke's church and his name is also inscribed on his parents' grave in the churchyard.

**20<sup>th</sup> November. Israel & Palestine, Sergeant Harry Clifford MARSH, 1889-1917** was a son of William John, a railway inspector and his wife Emma, nee Pike. In 1901 he lived at 5 Langton Court Road with his parents, elder sister Lilian, brother Leslie, uncle Elihu Higgins, a railway fireman, and aunt Martha. Harry, who attended St Anne's School was a bright boy who became a solicitor's clerk. In 1911, he was in lodgings in the household of Reginald Luxon at Castle Cary, whence he enlisted in C. Company of the 2/4<sup>th</sup> Somerset Light Infantry early in the war. Quite possibly he was another of the “Brislington Boys” on the iconic 1915 photograph.

<sup>151</sup> WDP 15.11.1917; Bath Chr. 17.11.1917)

He landed at Suez, 25 September 1917 and probably met his death on the first day of the battle for Nabi Samwell, a village four kilometres from Jerusalem which was being cleared of occupying Turkish forces. His death was announced in the Roll of Honour of the WDP, 4<sup>th</sup> December, "Killed in Action in Egypt on November 20, Sergeant Harry C. Marsh of the Somerset Light Infantry, younger son of Mr. & Mrs W.J. Marsh of St Anne's Park, aged 28."

Harry is buried at the Ramleh (Ramla) War Cemetery, Palestine in Grave X.2 and is remembered on the Memorials at St Anne's church, (H.C. Marsh), St Anne's School, (H. Marsh), and at Castle Cary, below:



*The Battle of Cambrai, France, marked the first large scale use of tanks in a military offensive. The tank was designed to roll over the trenches and barbed wire, mowing down everything in its path. Five cavalry divisions and three tank brigades sprang a surprise attack to break the deadlock near Cambrai, 20 November 1917. On the first day, the British overwhelmed the German defences but crashed five miles behind enemy lines and became stranded, at the mercy of the German artillery. The Germans counter-attacked on 30<sup>th</sup> November and regained most of the ground that had been taken. The battle officially ended by 7<sup>th</sup> December. The attack was "considered a success as it demonstrated the power of the tank and altered the course of future warfare."*

**Cambrai, 27<sup>th</sup> November. Second Lieutenant Frederick George ECKLEY, ca1885-1917**, in civilian life a clerk at the Imperial Tobacco Company, was born in Pennsylvania, USA, the only child of George Eckley and Mary Jane Cleave who married at St Nicholas, Bristol, 14 February 1884 before emigrating to America. Following George's death in the United States Mary Jane and her young son returned to England where she joined her widowed father, Robert Cleave, a retired farm bailiff, at the Rookery, Brislington. After Robert Cleave died in 1907, Fred and his mother remained at the Rookery where they are recorded in 1911.

When war was declared, Frederick Eckley enlisted in the North Wiltshire Yeomanry. Subsequently transferred to the Machine Gun Corps, he rose through the non-commissioned ranks to Lance Sergeant, and on 23 November 1916 was gazetted 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant when he joined the 17<sup>th</sup> Company, "F" Battalion of the Tank Corps. Now of an age where he was likely to be known as "uncle" to the younger officers, he was second-in-

command of the “Fearnought” tank which went into action on 20<sup>th</sup> November. Inside the tank it was uncomfortably hot, and the occupants ran the risk of becoming overwhelmed by carbon monoxide gas. Speech was impossible due to the din and orders had to be communicated by hand signals. Mark 1 tanks were designated either “male” or “female”! “Fearnought” was a “male” tank, with a six-pounder gun mounted on each sponson [a projection] with 3 light machine guns; “female” tanks had two heavy Vickers machine guns in place of the six-pounders. “F” “C” and “I” Battalions formed part of the 3rd Tank Brigade and at Cambrai fought on the right flank of the British offensive, where “F” engaged in clearing the village of La Vacquerie, then moved north to the bridges on the St Quentin canal, which they held against German counter-attacks, capturing a machine gun and 80 enemy soldiers.



*This beast, “Hyacinth”, was surely “female”?*

On 27<sup>th</sup> November Eckley and his tank was in action again at Bourdon in support of 62<sup>nd</sup> Division when “Fearnought” was hit at point-blank range by a German anti-tank gun. Eckley and his C.O. were killed on the spot and all the crew injured.

Fred’s body was recovered and he was buried in Grave G.2 at Lowrie Cemetery near Havrincourt. He is remembered at St Luke’s, (F.G. Eckley). His mother, Mary Jane, of 32 Grove Park Avenue, died on 18 August 1939, aged 79, at 33 Conway Road, leaving estate £465.16s 7d, with probate to John Cleave, a relative. (A man of this name lived at the Shrubberies.) Mary Jane’s house was advertised for auction on 11<sup>th</sup> December.

**Private Ernest “Ern” Daniel TOMKINS, 1886-1918** also fought at Cambrai where he was wounded and taken prisoner during the battle. Between 1891 and 1901 (when he was “a farmer’s assistant) he lived at 45 Summers Hill, Knowle, with his father, Philip, a railway



engine driver, mother Sarah Jane, and five brothers and sisters. Philip died aged 56 in 1904.<sup>152</sup>

Ernest Tomkins and Emily Haycock were married in 1905, and by 1911 they had three children, Doris, 5, Jack, 2 and Hilda, 1, who were all born in Brislington. They then lived at 81 Repton Road. Ern, a dairyman, enlisted in the SLI before being transferred to the 6<sup>th</sup> Royal Warwickshires, which arrived at the Western Front in May 1916. His military record does not survive and the little which is known comes from the CWGC and from an "In Memoriam" notice of 29 January 1920: "*TOMKINS. In loving memory of Private Ernest Tomkins, our dear Ern, of the Royal Warwicks, who died a Prisoner of War at Cateau, January 29, 1918, of wounds received at Cambrai. Also of dear Dad, Philip James, father of the above, who died January 9, 1904. Only those that have lost loved ones understand. Two of the best. Mother, sisters and brothers.*"

Ern was buried in Grave V.B. 18 at Le Cateau, (a strategically important German Railhead) where the Military Cemetery contains Russian and German as well as British and Commonwealth graves. He is remembered at St Luke's, (E.D. Tomkins). In 1939, his widow Emily lived at 74 Pendennis Park with her son Arthur, born in 1913. Her mother-in-law Sarah died aged 90 in 1936.

**2<sup>nd</sup> December, Cambrai. Private William "Willie" E. P. TANNER (otherwise PEARCE), 1894 - 1917**, was born at Malmesbury, the son of Annie Elizabeth Pearce. His mother married Richard Tanner, a pennant stone quarryman in 1897, who adopted the little boy, and Willie took his stepfather's name. In 1901 they lived at Walter Cottages, Brislington, by which time Willie had gained two sisters, Lucy, 3 and Florence, aged one. By 1911, Richard and Annie were at 11 Grove Road, with five more children; Willie, aged fifteen, was then a milk carrier on a local farm. He enlisted in Bristol in the 2/6<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters, (as William Pearce), in late October 1915 under the Derby Scheme, which gave him a few months grace before his mobilisation just before Christmas. He was killed during the tank battle and is commemorated on Panel 6 of the Cambrai Memorial. He is remembered at St Luke's as W.E.P. Tanner; CWGC records him as "William Pearce, the son of Richard and Annie Elizabeth Tanner of Brislington".

**2<sup>nd</sup> December, Cambrai. Private John Sidney (Sidney John) William AITKEN, 1893-1917** was one of ten children of William, a labourer, born at Tidenham, Gloucestershire and Mary Elizabeth, nee Parker. In 1901, he lived at 5 Ashton Gate Road with his parents and five siblings, Nellie,<sup>153</sup> Agnes, Minnie, Samuel, and Harriett. They also had the almost obligatory lodger, a 70 year-old carter, Henry Maggs.

Another child, Alice, was born in 1902, by which time the Aitkens had moved to 60 Arlington Road, St Anne's where Sidney John attended the local school. He was a tailor's machinist,

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<sup>152</sup> WDP In Memoriam, 10.1.1916

<sup>153</sup> Nellie died aged 47 on 3.1.1933 and is buried at Arno's Vale

who had been a Territorial, and was called up in August 1914, aged 18, where he served in the 2/6<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters, alongside the previously named Willie Tanner. Like Willie, he has no known grave and is commemorated at Panel 6 of the Cambrai Memorial. He is remembered at St Anne's school and church, as well as on a personal tablet in the church which reads: "S.W.J. Aitken son of Mr. & Mrs W. Aitken & grandson of late Captain W. Aitken of New Passage."<sup>154</sup>

**6<sup>th</sup> December, Cambrai. Private William LEAR, 1881-1917** lived in Keynsham in 1891 with his widowed mother, Jane, a laundress, and elder brother John. Following a spell at the Brassworks, he went to work at the Soapworks (Polysulphine Co.) and by 1911, he was married to Winifred Warren. The couple lived in lodgings at 48 Sandgate Road, the home of Ivan and Susan Frost. William, who was probably conscripted in 1916, joined the 2/4<sup>th</sup> Royal Berkshire Regiment, (aka the Princess Charlotte of Wales). The Birmingham Post (18 April 1917) records him: "*Lear, 37227, W, Bristol, Royal Berkshire, listed as wounded,*" but he is not mentioned at all in the Bristol papers. He evidently recovered sufficiently to be sent back to the front where he was killed in action at Cambrai. He is recorded at Panel 8 of the Cambrai Memorial and is remembered at St Luke's (W. Lear). In 1939 his widow Winifred lived at 158 Wick Road.

Sergeant Frank Stowell of Brislington (*qv.* 22.3. 1918) also took part in "the great tank battle" at Cambrai, as did another Brislington man Temple Owens.

The battle would never be over for those whose relatives never returned. In 1929, Mrs W. George of "St Fagans", King's Road, Brislington still mourned her brother "William Saunders of the 6th Gloucesters, killed at Cambrai, 2 Dec 1917, aged 40", one of the 7,064 servicemen from the UK and South Africa who died during November and December 1917 who have no known graves.<sup>155</sup> As well as being adopted as a Christian name in a few cases for babies born that year, "Cambrai" enjoyed a brief vogue as a house name: Mr and Mrs L.C. Burt who announced the birth of a son (WDP 17 March 1926) lived at "Cambrai", Runswick Road, Brislington.

**1<sup>st</sup> December, France, Arras. Private Frederick Daniel John JORDAN, 1888-1917** was baptised at St Barnabas, 8 January 1889, the only son of John, a brewer's cooper, and Hannah Maria Jordan. John Jordan was born at St Augustine's, but Hannah Maria's origins were more exotic: she was born in 1857 in Jamaica to James Milliner, a sugar and coffee planter, and his wife Elizabeth Mary Rutter who died within three weeks of each other in 1858. The couple left behind the infant Hannah, her sister Mary, and two sons, John James and Thomas Isaac who were "rescued" by a Baptist missionary, Rev Thomas Gould who brought them to Bristol from the West Indies. He appears to have found suitable outlets for the boys, but the girls proved more of a problem and he handed them over to Muller's

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<sup>154</sup> W. Aitken was the well-known as the Captain of a Bristol channel paddle steamer. One of his sons, John, a merchant seaman, was stranded in Germany in 1914 and spent the war at Ruhleben POW camp. See DPL "Sappho & her Sisters".

<sup>155</sup> WDP 3.12.1929

Orphanage. It is not known what became of Mary, but Hannah *“could not be recommended for employment on account of her physical condition, a contracted chest and a curvature of the spine”*, and so she remained in the Institution until 1874 when she was sent to a Mrs Jemima Gadd, of 14 Elbroad Street described as a “cousin” though I have not been able to establish any kind of relationship between them. Hannah disappeared from view until 26 December 1887, when she and John Jordan were married at St John the Evangelist, Clifton. Their second child, Rose, was born in 1899. In 1911 they were living at Barnabas Street, St Paul’s and in 1912, their son Frederick, a grocery warehouseman married Charlotte Warford. By the time he was conscripted in April 1916, he was the father of two daughters, Edna and Barbara.

He was with the 3/10<sup>th</sup> Middlesex Regiment when he was killed near Arras and buried at the Windmill British Cemetery, Monch-le-Preux in Grave I. F. 26. The CWGC records his widow, Charlotte, of 10 America Place, Porth, Rhondda, and his parents, John and Hannah Maria Jordan, “of Brislington”. He is remembered on the Roll of Honour “Rhondda Remembers”.

Hannah Maria died on 8 February, 1922 *“after a few hours illness, aged 65, the wife of John Jordan, of 64 Sandy Park Road.”*<sup>156</sup> John Jordan died in 1928, aged seventy.

**2<sup>nd</sup> December, at Sea. Private Harold Edward HUNT, 1893-1917** was born in Brislington on 30 June 1893 and in 1901 lived at 10 Wick Road, where his parents, John, a gardener, and Mary, shared rooms with a doctor’s surgery. There were three older children, Albert, 19, Gertrude, 14, May, 10, and one younger child, Victor, aged 2. Harold, a “labourer in a saw mills” enlisted in the Royal Marines, Service No: PLY/15/87, on 17 August 1910, “aged 17 years, 1 month, 17 days”. He was 5’8¼” tall, with grey eyes, light hair and a fresh complexion; he could swim, having been tested at Deal, with a favourable pass. In 1911, his widowed mother lived at 38 Newbridge Road as housekeeper to John Millard, a Naval Pensioner, “a boatman to a rowing club”, with John’s son Alan and Mary’s children, Hilda and Victor.

Harold was serving aboard the “Benvenue”, a steam ship, which had been taken into war service as a troop carrier when he was *“accidentally drowned, 2 December 1917, body not recovered for burial.”* He is commemorated on Panel 23 of the Plymouth Naval Memorial and remembered at St Anne’s, (H.E. Hunt).

Victor, Harold’s brother, a wire netter, served with the BEF in France from July 1917 to September 1918, where he managed to avoid the attention of friend and foe alike apart from a minor skirmish in October 1917, when he was reported by two Frenchmen, called Carpentier and Galler and a certain S. Cookson, *“for failing to do an appointed task whilst on active service”*, for which he was “CB. 7 days”. He returned home safely to Newbridge Road and in 1939 lived at Whiteway Road with his elder brother Albert and family.

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<sup>156</sup> WDP 10.2.1922

**13<sup>th</sup> December, Flanders. Fitter Roger John RADFORD, 1894-1917**, the son of Harry and Elizabeth Ann, nee Crocker, was born in Devon, later moving to Minehead with his parents and elder brother Walter, a groom. Roger, a “cycle engineer” was a skilled mechanic by the time he was called up, in Bristol, for service with the Royal Field Artillery, B Battery, 48<sup>th</sup> Brigade. He was killed in action and buried at the Minty Farm Cemetery, West Vlaanderen, where one third of the graves belong to men of the Royal Artillery. At the time of his death his parents lived at 58 Sandgate Road, Brislington and he is remembered at St Luke’s (R.J. Radford).

**31<sup>st</sup> December, 1917, at Home. Private Harold WOOD, 1889-1917** was born at Brackley, Northamptonshire, the son of Joseph and Annie Wood, nee Hill. In 1911, Annie, 49, possibly widowed, lived at 8 Stirling Road, Brislington with her daughter Emily, 20, born in Galway, Ireland, and Harold, aged eleven. When she filled out the census form, she gave each of them a title, Mrs, Miss, Mr.

Harold, a member of the St Luke’s Church Lads’ Brigade, was a tramway conductor at the depot in Sandy Park Road when he enlisted in the 53<sup>rd</sup> Young Soldiers Battalion (Hampshire Regiment). Aged 18, he was with the 8<sup>th</sup> Reserve Brigade at Sutton Veny when he became ill during training and died from an unknown cause on New Year’s Eve, 1917. He was buried at Soldier’s Corner, Arno’s Vale in Grave Q.615. Though Annie moved from Brislington to Montpelier, Harold is remembered at St Luke’s (H. Wood) and on the separate CLB plaque, (Harold Wood). He is also named on the Bristol Tramways Staff Memorial.

### **1918: Sacrifice.**

***In January, a fourth Version of the Military Service Act quashed all exemptions at the Government’s discretion and the two month period of grace was abolished.<sup>157</sup> Despite this latest edict, recruitment and conscription still failed to keep up with the losses, besides which there was a currently secret plan, the “100 Days” policy, designed to end the war. A fifth version of the Act was passed, 9<sup>th</sup> April, which extended eligibility for conscription from the age of seventeen to fifty one years.***

This came as a shock to many and tragedy for Hartley John Batt, aged 49, a commercial traveller, who lived at 500 Bath Road. He was called up and passed Grade 2 for Army Service. Hartley was married with two sons, both of whom were in the forces: Hartley junior, 22, in the Navy for the “period of hostilities” had recently been transferred to the infant RAF; Lionel, aged 19, was in the army. One of them, presumably the younger son, had been wounded but had returned to the fray. The combined stress apparently caused Mr Batt to have a breakdown and an order was made committing him to Stapleton Workhouse. He was “a powerful man, a good athlete and a well-known cricketer. It had taken four men to hold him down and he was admitted covered in bruises.” He died shortly after admission.

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<sup>157</sup>WDP 28.1.1918

An inquest stated that death was from heart failure due to stomach dilation and retention of urine.<sup>158</sup>

### ***The Aircraft Workers***

Aeroplanes were manufactured at the Motor Constructional Works (later Bristol Commercial Vehicles) on Kensington Hill and at the Tramways Depot at Arno's Vale. From 1915 the Tramways Company, with a contract from Bristol Aeroplane Co. built over 200 planes including 6 Bristol Box Kites, 161 Bristol Scout Model C's and 24 Coanda TB8 Training Planes. On 18<sup>th</sup> February the Lord Mayor of Bristol addressed the workers at Bath Road. To loud cheers he congratulated them on their "*machines*" which had received "*a wonderful reception at the Front*". One of their aircraft held the record for two-seaters for the number of enemy planes destroyed.



***The Aircraft Workers, 1914-1918. Male and female worked alongside each other at the factory***

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<sup>158</sup> WDP 29.7.1918



Here, the women, are making aircraft wings. After sewing canvas on to the wing frames they were painted with “glue”, which when dry, tightened the canvas round the structure. The glue was highly toxic and caused giddiness and headaches. The women were advised to drink a pint of milk a day to counteract the effects of the fumes! The usefulness of this remedy is doubtful but presumably did no harm either.



***The plane makers with the finished product.***

Margaret Petty, (Mrs Harvey) (1896-1975), the sister of Charles Petty (*qv.* 31.7.1916) of 17 Grove Park Road, worked at the aircraft factory during the war.

***Margaret Petty***

Like the Munitionettes, a few of the “aircraft factory girls” can be identified from their weddings at the local churches. Alice Amelia Adams, 30, and her sister Edith, 24, both of 12 Sandholme Road, were “aeroplane trimmers” when they were married, Amelia to a farmer, Frederick Martin and Edith to Cyril Gascoigne of Banbury, Oxfordshire; Tryphena Augusta Whitburn, 24, an aircraft worker, of 39 Grove Park Avenue married Harold Morley, of Malpas, South Wales. These marriages took place at the end of 1918 and spring 1919, so the end of hostilities plus marriage (when women were expected to stay at home) would soon put a stop to their antics.



Men working at the aeroplane factory would have been in “reserved employment” and several can be identified: Thomas James Johnson aged 25, of 3 Elm Tree Cottages, an “aeroplane erector” married Violet Pike in May 1918; Albert Henry Strange of 80 Winchester Road, worked at the “Aeroplane Depot” when he married Mabel Ruth Jones at the

Congregational Church in June. Reginald Biffen, aged 21, “a fitter at Brislington Aerospace Works” was tragically drowned when wild swimming in the river at Saltford in August.<sup>159</sup>

### ***In the Field***

Albert Edward Sheppard, a labourer, aged 39, of Church Hill, (next of kin his mother, Sarah Ann) first attested in 1917. He was finally called up on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1918 by the Royal Engineers, and directed to the Inland Waterways at Sandwich in Kent. If he thought this would be a cushy number, the army had other ideas, and decided his skills were needed in Africa. Classified as a “Grade III engineer”, he embarked from Southampton on 19<sup>th</sup> July, calling at Alexandria and Aden, finally arriving at his destination, Dar-es-Salaam, on 23<sup>rd</sup> September. The long sea voyage was the best of it, for Africa did not agree with Albert: between 8<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> November he was in hospital with malaria, and again in December with rheumatism. In January 1919 the diagnosis was myalgia (muscle pains). He was laid low once more with another bout of malaria between 24<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> January. In between these maladies, he worked either as a “skilled pioneer” or stood in with the “wharf police”. I can only imagine he left the sunshine of East Africa with relief, aboard the SS.“Verona”, bound for drizzly Brislington. He was demobbed on 17 February 1919 and returned to Church Hill. He remained a bachelor and was still living there in 1939, with an Arthur Sheppard, also a single man, probably his nephew.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> January, the reluctant soldier, Fred Clarke, still suffering, spent 31 days in hospital with “Gastralgia”. On the 1<sup>st</sup> February, he had “no distension of abdomen. No vomiting,” and “cured” was presumably sent back to the front. On 18<sup>th</sup> May, back in Blighty, he was on a charge: “overstayed leave, 5 days CB.” Followed by 11<sup>th</sup> June: “7 days’ CB.” and on 24<sup>th</sup> June: “irregular conduct at Church Parade, 7 days CB”. Then he went AWOL altogether and having supplied an address “23, St John’s Lane, Bedminster”, the MPs who went to look for him found that no. 23 did not exist.

His charge sheet, 7<sup>th</sup> September, reads: *“A202213 Rfn Clarke, F. , 6<sup>th</sup> Bn KRRC illegally absented himself without leave from Holm Place, Sheerness, 13 August 1918 and is still so absent and that the Army is deprived of the following articles of clothing and necessaries.* Oh, the marvels of the bureaucratic mind! A list was appended:

2 pairs boots £2.7s 6d	1 cap badge 2d
1 cap S.D. 2s 2d	1 kit bag 2s.7d
2 pairs drawers 12s.0d	1 pair braces, 1s 1½d
1 Great Coat £1.16s.9d	1 cloth brush 11d
2 Jackets, S.D. £1.15s 10d	1 hair brush 1s 6d
2 pairs trousers £1.7s.4d	1 polishing brush 1s
1 cardigan 9s.0d	1 shaving brush 4d
1 toothbrush 3½d	1 comb 4d

<sup>159</sup> Bath Chron, 10.8.1818



1 fork 4¾d	1 holdall 6d
1 housewife 7d	1 table knife 4¾d
3 shirts £1.1s.0d	3 pairs socks 5s.0d
1 spoon 5d	1 pair titles(?) 4d
1 towel 1s 10d	1 razor 1s 0d

Presumably a soldier supplied his own knife? Whether the Army got any of their kit back is unknown, for regrettably, that is the last that is heard of Fred Clarke.

Reg Veal, a married father of three daughters, was another who caused the army more trouble than his service was worth. On 5<sup>th</sup> February he again appeared in the "Police Gazette" among the "Deserters and Absentees". He was by then aged "33¾ years old, 5 feet 7 inches tall, a painter, of Brislington". He had been "at large" from 28<sup>th</sup> March until 31<sup>st</sup> October, 1917 and was now reputedly absent again, "last seen 22<sup>nd</sup> January at Crownhill". However, all was not as it seemed. Police action may have been over zealous for there is nothing in his military records to suggest he was AWOL at this time. He was diagnosed with asthma and other bronchial complaints and was permanently discharged on 18<sup>th</sup> March, "medically unfit". Despite his first determined stance, and the rest of this song and dance, a small over-stamp indicates that he received a medal.

Other Brislington men known to have been serving at this time:

Walter William Smith, born 1884, married to Mabel; 26 Belmont Road; Pay Corps.

Lieut. W.R. Cann, RASC, of 37 Harrow Road, received the Silver War Badge, (22nd January)

Sergeant Harry Stevens, 28, married to Edith Maud Morris, 20 Montrose Avenue; served in the trenches with the Royal Field Artillery.

Sergeant Frederick Robert Bastin, 6<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters, married to Rosalie Wood, 1 Woodland Cottages.

Pte. Walter John Tout, born 1900, railway carter, 25 Sandgate Road; Devonshire Regiment.

Pte. Harold Francis Ede, married to Elsie Sophia Langdon, 9 Sandgate Road; Royal Marines.

Bombardier Ernest Edward Stanley, married to Emily Ada Wheeler, 2 Walker Cottages, Royal Garrison Artillery; previous service in South Africa, 1911-13, India, 1913-14, France, 1914-19; 1914 star, War and Victory Medals.

Pte. Walter Reginald Lansdown, 9<sup>th</sup> Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry: married Rose Martin of 10 Montrose Avenue, St Luke's 24 July 1916; discharged in September 1919; attended Medical Board, complaining of chest pains, palpitations and shortness of breath; July 1922, chest "clear" but with "tremors of hands, tongue and face", 30% disability. In 1939 he was a despatch clerk, living at 13 Churchill Road with Rose and their four children.

James Butler Comer, 1883 - 1965, was the son of Alfred, churchwarden at St Luke's from 1901. An ironmonger, he joined the Royal Naval Air Service, 12 December 1916; served on HMS "President" until 2 February 1917; in Dunkirk until 14 June 1917; Somme area, August 1917 where he remained on flying duties until January 1918; at Dunkirk attached to HMS "Daedalus" until March 1918, when he was transferred to the RAF, until 4 March 1919; discharged 30 April 1920. He returned to live at 639 Bath Road, where he was a sub-postmaster as well as running his ironmongery with his wife Dorothy, nee Thorne. He died in 1965 aged 82.

Walter Burnett West, born 13 August 1897, son of Frederick John and Sarah Ann, (nee Burnett) joined the Devon Regiment aged 16 as a bugler. He was invalided out from the trenches. He married Ada, the younger sister of Edward Howell (*qv* 19.7.1916). He lived at 73 Repton Road in 1939 and was then in charge of the ARP First Aid Post. He died 4 April 1966.<sup>160</sup>

So many men in the upper age bracket had been called up that with few men to work the land food shortages became dire. The population was encouraged to keep rabbits for food. An un-named Brislington butcher presumably of military age (now up to 51), was allowed exemption from service on condition he put in 14 hours a week on a soldier's allotment. Other volunteers were requested to contact the Secretary of the local Allotment Association, Mr T.H. Sevier of 40 Grove Park Avenue.

### ***The Church Lads' Brigade***

The CLB news from St Luke's Parish Magazine:

August: "Corporal Stanley Whittock is home on leave from Italy and quite fit; Private B. Powell is on draft leave – looks A1"

September: "Pte. Frank Scott is a POW in Germany. We trust he will have a little more comfortable a time than some have had. Congratulations to Lieut. W. Carryat, a former member who has received his commission. Lance Cpl. R. Davies is home on leave and hopes to remain in Blighty for some time to come. Other old boys we have seen: Seaman E. Brailey, Private Hawkins (on leave from Ireland) and Seaman Hawkins. In Memory of Harry N. Skinner, (*qv*. 3.6.1918), a corporal in our Company. Condolences have been sent to his family."

October: "Roll of Honour: Other Members of our Company who have made the Supreme Sacrifice: Charles Babb, Reg Creech, Albert Whitford Brown, Harold W. Brown, John Pike, Harold Wood, Ralph Slocombe. Will friends who know of other past members please forward their names?"

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<sup>160</sup> No surviving military records; family info.

“We have taken charge of a posh new drum and are about to secure the services of a real Sergeant-Bugler.”

November: “Harry Stowell and Dennis Creech, home on leave. Both quite well. Roll of Honour: we have extended sympathy to the family of Seaman S. Eyles; also in respect of Cadet Leslie J. Talbot who died Sunday October 20<sup>th</sup>.” Leslie, aged 16, whose first name was Joseph, was the younger brother of Sgt William Henry Talbot, (*qv.* 12.3.1918), sons of Lawrence and Julia, of 20 Trelawney Road.

Private Spencer Walden ASC, late Captain, Brislington Company (who had been called up in July 1917) wrote: *“I have heard through my wife that so many of my boys have given their lives for their Country and being in France myself I take this opportunity to tell you how I deplore the loss of so many good lads and express my sympathy to you all in your sorrow. Thank God they died fighting in a just and righteous cause and no doubt this will be some consolation to you.”*

(In Walden’s absence, Lieut. E. Harris was now in charge of the Company, supported by Lieut. Ridgman and Sgt-Maj Pebworth.)

### ***Arno’s Vale & Holy Souls.***

British soldiers from all over Britain continued to be buried at Brislington’s cemeteries. In 1918 these included nine Australians and four Canadians, one of whom, 18<sup>th</sup> September, was Frederick D’Ornellas, from British Guiana, who fought with the Canadians . A Belgian soldier, Felix A.L. Withof, was buried 9<sup>th</sup> October. None of these men merited a newspaper column, but more interest was shown in the only American soldier interred in Bristol. Private Stephen Veselka, aged 23, of Grainger, Texas, 107<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 27<sup>th</sup> Division, U.S. Army, died on 10<sup>th</sup> October, at the Beaufort War Hospital during an operation. A Requiem Mass at St Nicholas of Tolentine, Lawford’s Gate, was attended by the Lord Mayor of Bristol and many other dignitaries. The Bishop of Clifton, who officiated, said *“Now Bristol paid honour to the first fruits of America’s contribution to the war. Since America had joined, the tide had turned against the enemy and in paying tribute to one of America’s fallen sons (we) express our gratitude to that nation for throwing in their lot with us in the cause of humanity, freedom and democracy.”* The coffin covered by the Stars and Stripes was conveyed on a gun carriage to Holy Souls where the Last Post was sounded.<sup>161</sup>

### ***Decorated***

Lieut. Col. Daniel Burges VC, DSO, of the 7<sup>th</sup> South Wales Borderers, was awarded the Victoria Cross, “For Valour”, on 18<sup>th</sup> September. During the final push against the Bulgarian Army at the Dorian Line, Burges was in command of his battalion which came under heavy machine gun fire at an assembly point. Although wounded, he led his men forward until he

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid 19.10.1918



was hit a second time, when he collapsed and was taken prisoner. His captors, believing he was near death because of the severity of his injuries, abandoned him to die. He managed to crawl to a dug-out despite his shattered left leg, which was later amputated.”<sup>162</sup>

Daniel Burges, born in London in 1873, was a son of Daniel Travers Burges and Alice Sarah his wife, sometime of Winash, Brislington, and the elder brother of Edward Burges, (qv.18.7.1916). Daniel Burges went on to have a distinguished career in London and Bristol though it is disquieting that between the wars he joined the British Union of Fascists.<sup>163</sup> In 1939, described “army, recalled” he was living at Redland with his wife Florence. He died in Bristol on 24 October 1946 and is honoured by a marble plaque at Arno’s Vale, which was unveiled on the sixtieth anniversary of his death.

2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. James Thomas MacNab was awarded the Military Cross for gallantry during the advance of 9<sup>th</sup> September. *“Though his horse was killed under him, Lieut. MacNab escaped without injury. He formerly worked at Bristol Wagon Works, Victoria Street and joined up with his two brothers on the outbreak of war.”* James, born 1892, and his brothers, Thomas and George, the sons of John and Maggie MacNab, of Rose Bower Cottage, Brislington Hill had been in the 19<sup>th</sup> Hussars since 1914. All appear to have survived. James married Ellen Webley in 1921 and they had two daughters, Margaret and Jillian. In 1939 he was in the ARP, living with Ellen at 33 Eagle Road. He died in 1973.

Gunner J. Temple Owens of the Tank Corps was awarded the Military Medal for gallantry in action in August 1918. *“A son of the late Mr James Owens and Mrs Owens of Lynwood, Brislington, he was educated at the Bristol Cathedral School and prior to joining the 12<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters was in the employ of Bristol Wagon Works Company in Victoria Street.”*<sup>164</sup> Temple, who became sales manager of a motor company, married Kathleen Gibson in 1921 and in 1939 lived at Downs Cote Drive, Bristol. He died in 1961.

Sergeant Harry Charles Perkins, 300270, of the Royal Engineers, was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal for operations in Italy, 8<sup>th</sup> June. He was born in 1894 and in 1911 was a solicitor’s clerk, living at 21 Kensington Villas with his parents, Charles and Leoni, and a brother and sister.

Sergeant Lionel G Blampied, no. L/13223, of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, the Middlesex Regiment was awarded the DCM for an act of gallantry: *“During the advance on the enemy position at Englefontaine on 24 October 1918 the line was held up by heavy machine gun and rifle fire. Blampied collected a few men around him and charged the enemy position inspiring the*

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<sup>162</sup> London Gazette, 14.12.1918

<sup>163</sup> Thomas Linehan, “British Fascism 1918-39.”

<sup>164</sup> WDP 21.10.1918

*company to a further advance. Later when the Company Commander had been killed he assisted the second-in-command to rally the company under heavy fire and by his splendid example very greatly assisted in making the attack a complete success. Through the operation he showed very determined courage.*<sup>165</sup> Remarkably, this was Lionel's third "gong" for he had previously been awarded the Military Medal on 18 July 1917, with "a bar" added on 18 October 1918.

He was born in Bristol in 1890, the son of George Blampied<sup>166</sup> and his wife Agnes. George was a Channel Islander, a Captain in the Merchant Service, but Lionel did not follow his father to sea. Instead, he enlisted in the Middlesex Regiment, 15 November 1910. He served throughout the war until February 1919 but civilian life did not suit him and after a short break he joined the RAF. On 3 September 1919 he was posted to the North West Frontier where he added the Indian General Service Medal with Waziristan Bar, 1921-1924, to his growing collection. He left the RAF on 23 May 1935 but loved being in uniform so much that during World War Two he volunteered as a Warrant Officer for the Air Training Corps (179<sup>th</sup> Bristol Squadron) for which he received the Cadet Forces Medal in 1946. In civilian life he worked for the Imperial Tobacco Company. In retirement he was awarded the British Empire Medal. He married Gwendoline Mitchel in Chelsea "between wars" and they had a son, Gerald, born in 1935. The family lived in Brislington from about 1939 until (at least) 1956, though his younger brother Reginald, a tram conductor, had an earlier connection, as he lodged at 6 Harrow Road in 1911; during the Great War he was a private in the RAMC. Lionel Blampied died in 1962.

### ***Mrs Pearce***

Mrs Elizabeth Pearce continued with her *"untiring work for the welfare of soldiers"* throughout the war. One day she looked out from the glass-fronted office at the Fish Market where she had worked most of her life and espied a rather worried looking soldier. Mrs Pearce stepped outside. *"Who are you wanting, sir?"* she enquired.

*"Mrs Pearce,"* he replied.

*"Well you have no farther to go,"* she said, and with this, the friend of the Tommies shook the lad by the hand. There was an awkward pause. *"What is it son? Don't be afraid to ask,"* said Mrs Pearce, expecting that he wanted something in the way of 'comforts', but for once she was wrong.

*"Well, Missus, I've got to give you a message from my Captain,"* he replied, *"but I hardly know how to give it to you. He told me to call at the Market and give you a kiss for sending out that last box of kippers."* Then, in the presence of all, he delivered his message.

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<sup>165</sup> Citation 2.12.1919

<sup>166</sup> Obituary WDP 19.4.1920

(As he plonked an awkward kiss on a startled Mrs Pearce, I like to think there was a round of applause.)

Mrs Pearce thereafter quoted her own apocryphal account of how the *“the wind carried the news of the kippers being toasted on the battlefield and across No-Man’s-Land whereupon ‘Fritz’ put up a message begging for anything left over in the way of kipper fragments.”*<sup>167</sup>

Elizabeth died on 25 September 1925, aged only fifty four and was buried at Arno’s Vale Cemetery. It was said of her that *“No trouble was too great if a soldier or a soldier’s family needed help. Thousands of Bristol men have cause to praise her name. She commenced her work long before the majority took serious heed of the war’s demands. One thinks of her as she stood on Bristol Bridge handing out chocolates and cigarettes to the boys of Kitchener’s Army. She is remembered for her prompt response to every appeal. She took independent action. She raised her own funds and administered them. She was not only the Soldiers’ Friend because of what she did in the Great War but the friend of everybody who was down and out; the people who worked at the Market; the humble folk who hawked fish about the district. An elderly man who grew up in the market in Bristol found it hard to speak of her tenderness of heart without breaking down. Bristol has lost a daughter who deserves a permanent place among those whose life was devoted to the service of others.”*

#### **Miscellaneous Events**



In January this year, Major Harry Leworthy Baker gave evidence of identification at the inquest on his father, Herbert Baker, aged 74, who was knocked down and killed when crossing the road near the “Three Lamps” at Totterdown.

#### **Lt. Col. Harry Baker**

Prior to the war, Major (later Lt. Col.) had served in the 1<sup>st</sup> City of Gloucester Volunteers and in 1915 in France as a Staff Captain (1/4<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters) attached to HQ Units.<sup>168</sup> He was Honorary Colonel of the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion 1920-24. He married Caroline Helen Fuller, at St Mary’s, Leigh Woods in 1902 and they had three children, Gerald, Bernard and Betty. The family lived at “The Lindens” from 1907 until they left Brislington in 1928. Col Baker died in Devon in 1959.

Brislington said goodbye to Joseph Carwardine of the Hollies, aged 73, who was interred at Brislington Cemetery after a funeral service at the Wesleyan chapel. He was lucky to have lived so long. In 1865 he had embarked at Gravesend for Melbourne, Australia, aboard the ss. “London. The ship was overloaded with cargo and therefore unseaworthy. At the Bay of

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<sup>167</sup> WDP 30.9.1925

<sup>168</sup> WDP 13.11.1915

Biscay on 10 January 1866 she began taking in water, listed and sank the next day. Joseph was among only nineteen survivors out of 239 passengers and crew. He married Mary Wilmot in 1876 and they had two sons, Lewis and Sydney, (who served in the RNAS from 23 November 1917) and two daughters who were enthusiastic Red Cross volunteers, Mabel (who was awarded the VAD Medal) and Mildred.

Joseph Carter, of Brooklands, Kensington Hill died in November. He had been works manager of John Lysaght Ltd, for 33 years, and in his spare time, treasurer of the Brislington Rifle Club. At the outbreak of war, Brislington's Rifle Ranges had played a vital part encouraging our young men to become sharp-shooters in defence of "King and Country".

Others left Brislington for pastures new. In March, the Rev Ignatius Jones departed for a new ministry in Birmingham. He was presented with an illuminated book (signed by more than 800 members of the church) and a cheque for £90. Mrs Jones was given an inlaid mahogany writing desk. Among the well-wishers was the Rev A.C. Harman of St Luke's who himself said farewell to Brislington in June after "eleven happy years" for a parish near Minehead. A sum of £133 had been donated out of which a gold watch was purchased and engraved "Brislington Parish to A.C.H. in gratitude, 1907-1918." The vicar thanked everyone and said that with the remaining cash he intended to buy a (two seater) governess cart with a cob and harness, (an item which seems to confirm Mr Harman's "old-fashioned" reputation. Perhaps the motor car had not yet arrived in Minehead?) If there was any residue after that, he added, he would like bookshelves for his study.

St Luke's new incumbent, Rev C.R.G. Norris was inducted on 27<sup>th</sup> July and in September the Rev Walter Ludlow left after nine years. A large crowd gathered when he was presented with £110 "*as a token of the appreciation and esteem in which he was held.*"

The curate turned soldier, John Pugh, survived the war and on 21<sup>st</sup> November 1918 was married at St Mary's Kensington to Mary, the daughter of Mr G.A. Monk. In February 1919 he was installed as vicar of Aston Abbots & Cublington, Buckinghamshire where he remained until 1934. He died aged 67, on 2 February 1952 "*after a long illness patiently borne*".<sup>169</sup>

Life with all its minor grisly details continued regardless of the carnage of the battlefield. Any child who happens upon this account might like to spare a thought for the "*Boy Burglar who ate the Plunder*", an eye-catching headline in the Western Daily Press. An errand boy of Brislington, aged 13, pleaded guilty to breaking into a house at Bristol Hill on 24<sup>th</sup> January and stealing ¼lb tea, ½lb margarine, a jar of jam, 1lb raisins and a tin of condensed milk, the property of Mabel Bessant. He drank the milk, ate the jam at once and the raisins the next

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<sup>169</sup> Bucks Herald, 8.2.1952

morning. Punishment was harsh: *“The bench ordered him to receive six strokes of the birch and expressed the hope that the constable would lay them on well.”*<sup>170</sup>

### **Those we lost, 1918**

Note: The majority of Brislington’s fatalities in 1918 were in France or Flanders. I have attempted to place them in their correct theatres of war, but this has involved a certain amount of guesswork. I was once advised by a wise philosopher that *“the best is the enemy of the good”* therefore I have decided to leave the account as it is otherwise I shall never finish the project. I ask indulgence for any mistakes. Those who died at sea, in Italy, or in Salonika are interleaved in date order between the soldiers of the Western Front.

**7<sup>th</sup> January, France. Private Ernest James BAGGS, c1878-1918**, at the age of three lived at Walcot, Bath, with his father and mother, John Robert and Georgina, and older siblings, William, 19, Agnes, 17 and Kate, nine. Georgina Baggs died like so many other women in her mid-forties, and soon afterwards, John took a new partner, Bethian, a lodging house keeper. In 1888 they had a son, Lindon Sinclair, and in 1901, a daughter, Celia. Both Robert’s elder children, William and Agnes were married by 1891, though daughter Kate still lived at home, at the lodging house in Pulteney Street.

The orphaned Ernest appears to have been “cast adrift” and, aged 13, was a shoemaker, living in lodgings at Timsbury. By 1901, now “a pig-iron clicker”, he had moved in with his sister Kate, and her husband, Oliver Brooke, a tailor, at Willmead Road, Twerton. This was an almost silent household for Oliver was “deaf and dumb”, and Kate and their three year old son Percy, were also described “deaf”, though their elder boy, Ernest aged five, could hear and speak. Within the next few years Ernest Baggs married Susan Sarah (from Steeple Claydon, Buckinghamshire) and they had a son, Stanley Richard, born in Bristol in 1906. In 1911 the Baggs trio lived at 108 Newbridge Road, St Anne’s.

Ernest, probably conscripted in 1916, was with the ASC until transferred to the 8<sup>th</sup> South Staffordshires. He fought at Arras in 1917 and thence to Passchendaele. He was killed in action on 7<sup>th</sup> January and buried in Grave no I.F. 25 at the Hermies Hill British Cemetery. The battalion suffered such heavy losses that it was disbanded a month later with the survivors distributed among other regiments. Ernest is remembered at St Anne’s (E.J. Baggs).

CWGC records Susan, his widow, at 6 First Avenue, St Anne’s Park and his father, slightly mis-named, as “the late Robert James Baggs”. Stanley Baggs married Elsie Gamlin in 1928 and Susan went to live with them at 28 Barrett Street, Bristol where they still resided in 1939. She died aged 91 in 1955.

**14<sup>th</sup> January, at Home. Sapper Edward John HUDSON, ca1884-1918** of the Inland Water Transport, Royal Engineers is commemorated (no. 2.673) on the Screen Wall, at Arno’s Vale

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<sup>170</sup> WDP 2.2.1918



(E.J. Hudson). He married Amelia Speck at Clutton Register Office in 1903 and in 1911 they lived at 55 Pendennis Road, Brislington with their daughter Emma Louise, born at High Littleton in 1904. E.J. recorded his age as 27, and his birthplace as Thame, Oxfordshire, though as he successfully evaded the two previous censuses, 1891/1901 and his birth appears to have been unregistered it is difficult to resist the conclusion that "Edward Hudson" was an assumed name. He died "at home", i.e. in the UK, and is presumably the man of this name whose death was registered at Thanet, in the January Quarter of 1918. He is otherwise a mystery.

**19<sup>th</sup> January, France. Lance Corporal Fred WILLIAMS, c1889-1918**, was the baby of six children born to Robert Williams, a gardener, and his wife Agnes. The family moved from Elberton to Yew Tree Farm, Oldbury on Severn, and thence to Tytherington. By 1911 Fred was foreman at a timber yard, in lodgings at Clifton. He married Edith Amelia Newton, of 11 Sandown Road at St Anne's Church in 1917, and they had a daughter, Edith Agnes. Fred joined the 96<sup>th</sup> Training Reserve at Bath and having been promoted Lance Corporal, was transferred to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Worcestershire Regiment before deployment to France.

His death notice, 19<sup>th</sup> January, (not reported until 9<sup>th</sup> March) reads: *"Many friends in Bristol will be sad to learn of the death of L/Cpl Williams who died from wounds received in action. His C.O. writes 'he was a splendid fellow and one of the best NCOs in my platoon.' Prior to joining the Colours he was for many years in the office of Messrs Howe & Co, timber merchants, Hotwells Road. Sympathy has been shown to Mrs Williams of 113 Bloomfield Road, Brislington, (late of 31 Frederick Place, Clifton) in her great loss."*

Fred died at the No. 1 General Hospital (established in 1914 to cater for casualties brought from the surrounding battlefields). He was buried in Grave II.A.13 at Etretat Churchyard Extension, Seine-Maritime and is remembered at St Luke's (F.J. Williams) and St Anne's, (F. Williams).



**L/Cpl. Fred Williams, 1889-1918**

**27<sup>th</sup> January, France. Gunner William Charles HUMPHRIES, 1893-1918**, was one of four children of Harry Humphries, "a sanitary carter" for Bristol Corporation, and Emma Elizabeth, nee Snell. By 1911 they lived at 65 Churchill Road, "New" Brislington, with William then working as a grocer's assistant. He enlisted or was conscripted into the Royal Garrison Artillery. He died in France of pneumonia on 27<sup>th</sup> January and was buried in Grave IV.D.9 at Tincourt New British Cemetery. He is remembered at St Anne's, (W.C. Humphries).

His brother, Frederick who also served in the RGA, survived the War. In 1939 he was single, a Corporation dustman, living at 42 Edward Road with his widowed mother Emma, then “incapacitated”, and spinster sister Eva.

***Between 21 March and 5 April the German army sweeps back across the Somme battlefield, and inflicts heavy losses on the Allied forces whose objective is to hold the railway junction at Amiens.***

***In April 1917, the British Salonika Force (BSF) supported an offensive to capture Bulgarian forces, (allied to the Germans) around the strategic position of Doiran. When the offensive failed, static trench warfare continued there until the end of 1918. Conditions were harsh for both sides and disease (especially malaria) caused more casualties than the fighting.***

**15<sup>th</sup> February, Salonika. Private Stanley Ford DERMAN, 1890-1918**, of the Oxford & Bucks L.I. died “from wounds or disease”. His enlistment card states that he was born in Brislington, though his sojourn must have been short for by 1901 he lived at Twerton, one of four children of Tom, an insurance man, and Rhoda, nee Iles. He joined the Royal Navy on 25 January 1908, for 12 years, “5 feet 2 inches tall, with brown hair and eyes.” He served as an Engineer’s Boy, aboard HMS “Impregnable” but was invalided out after two years due to rheumatism. In 1911, at Oxford he married Isabel Wakefield who gave birth to Clarence, followed by twin boys Frederick and Tom, and a daughter Gladys. Stanley was called into the army in 1916, his previously disability apparently no longer a bar. He was buried at the Mikra British Cemetery, Kalamaria, Greece in Grave 225.

**22<sup>nd</sup> March, France. Sergeant Frank STOWELL, 1892-1918**, was one of ten children born to George, a farm labourer and Emma Ann, who in 1911 lived at 2 Oakenhills Cottages with five of their children, Albert, Frank, Charles, Mabel, and Henry.

Frank, a postman, enlisted in the Post Office Rifles on 8 February 1915 and went to France with the battalion, 18<sup>th</sup> August, which entitled him to the 1914-15 Star. He was “at home” when the PO Rifles were at the Somme (1916) but returned to the front on 17 March 1917. During June the battalion was holding the line in the Hill 60 sector and saw action at the White Chateau, Battle of Messines Ridge. He was on leave, 25 October 1917, “a Corporal in the 8th London Regiment” when he married Annie, 24, of Beeches Lodge, the daughter of Henry Riley Rogers. After a brief honeymoon, he returned to action at Arras and in November 1917 took part in the tank battle at Cambrai. In 1918, on 18<sup>th</sup> March, the battalion was overwhelmed when defending the crossings on the Crozat Canal.

It appears that Frank was among those holding the left of the sector when they were attacked on the flank and from the rear by Germans dressed in British uniforms. The Company Commanders, Lanes and Lamb were both killed and Frank, who was among the few survivors, was taken prisoner. He died on **7<sup>th</sup> July**, from TB (tuberculosis) in the German POW Camp at Stenay. He is buried in the ESE corner of a plot at Brioules-Meuse French

National (Mixed) Cemetery, the only British Commonwealth War Grave among a large number of French and Allied graves.

The CWGC records his parents George and Emma and his widow, Annie, a nurse, at the Sheffield Royal Hospital. On 9 January 1919, his mother issued a plea for information: *"Mrs Stowell of Oakenhills, Brislington would be very grateful to any Returned Prisoner who could give information regarding Sergt. Frank STOWELL, 371063, Post Office Rifles who died at Stenay War Hospital, Germany, July 7, 1918."*<sup>171</sup> Frank is remembered at St Luke's (F. Stowell). His brothers Albert, William and Harry survived the war.

**24<sup>th</sup> March, France, Pozieres. Gunner William H. LLEWELLIN, (Llewellyn), 1892-1918** was born at Reading, the son of John and Mary Llewelin (nee Parsons). John, a stoneware potter, brought his family to Bristol around 1895 and by 31 March 1901 they were living at 73 Sandholme Road, Brislington, with their children, Emily, Thomas, William, John, George, and Kate. In 1911, John was at Bridgend, Wales, presumably for work, whilst Mary and their (by then) adult children remained at 95 Repton Road. It is possible that all the family had reunited there by 1914, as his sons William and John joined up at Abertridwir, Glamorgan, though both are among *"our young men at the war"*, listed in the Congregational Magazine. William, aged 26, of "A" Battery, 251<sup>st</sup> Royal Field Artillery, was killed in action and is commemorated on of the Pozieres Memorial (Panel 7-10) one of 14,000 United Kingdom casualties and 300 South Africans who died between 21 March and 7 August 1918 who have no known graves. He is remembered at St Luke's (W.H. Llewelin) and the Congregational, (William Llewelin). His brother John who was also in the RFA survived; in 1939 he lived at 91 Harrow Road with his wife and family.

**25<sup>th</sup> March, France. Private Thomas Sutton TAYLOR, 1888-1918** was born in Bolton, the 5<sup>th</sup> child of Henry Taylor, an iron foundry labourer and his wife Mary. He was working for "Mr Crompton", (a man with a famous surname in the textile trade), at the Prospect Cotton Mill, when he enlisted, aged 18, on 16 October 1906, in the 3rd Lancashire Regiment for 6 years. He had a varied army career in the Household Cavalry, the Cavalry of the Line, (including the Yeomanry), and not least, the Imperial Camel Corps. He had left the army by 1914, and was living in Bristol when he was recalled to the Colours.

On 28 May 1916 at St Anne's, Tom married Bertha Minnie Pitt, aged 24, of 12 Langton Road, the daughter of Joseph, a railwayman. He was then 28, a Private in the Royal Hussars (19<sup>th</sup> Queen Alexandra's Own) of Lympne Camp, Hampshire. He was killed during the defence of Montauban, a French village in the Somme area, about 10 km. from Albert which had been held by the Allies from 1 July 1916. He is buried in the Quarry Cemetery, Grave II.B.3 and is

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<sup>171</sup> "JezzaJacks", (on-line poster, 2010-11) whose sister lives near Stenay (Lorraine), took an interest in Frank's history having noticed that his was the only British grave in the cemetery. She/he was pleased to discover that "Frank's family had visited him several times.

remembered at St Anne's, (T.S. Taylor). Bertha, his widow, may have died in 1932; his parents-in-law, Joseph and Emily Pitt were still at 12 Langton Road in 1939.

**28<sup>th</sup> March, France, Arras. Private Percy Frederick GUY, 1896-1918** the son of a railwayman, Frederick William Guy of Chippenham and his wife Mary Jane, lived at Frome in 1901 with his parents and elder sister Ethel. Sometime within the next ten years the family arrived at 23 Langton Road, St Anne's Park, due to Fred's promotion to "goods train guard". On leaving St Anne's School, Percy became a clerk in a boot factory.

He was among the enthusiastic first recruits who joined the 12<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters, (WDP 16 September 1914) which makes it desperately tragic that he survived almost four years until he was killed in action at Arras aged twenty two. He has no known grave and is commemorated at Bay 6 of the Arras Memorial. He is remembered at St Anne's Church (P.F. Guy) and School (P. Guy). In 1939 his parents, Fred and Mary Jane were still living at 23 Langton Road.

**5<sup>th</sup> April, France, Pozieres. Private Bertie William RICKETTS, 1895-1918** joined the 14<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters in 1916 "for the duration of the war". He was killed in action when the Allied 5<sup>th</sup> Army was driven back across the former Somme battlefield by overwhelming numbers. He has no known grave and is commemorated on Panels 40 & 41 of the Pozieres Memorial. He is remembered at St Anne's, (B. Ricketts).

John and Laura Ricketts had already lost two sons in the war. Bertie was the third. Though the CWGC states the parents' names and address, 8 Arlington Road, St Anne's, there is no special mention of this tragic fact, nor is there any commemorative article in the press. Indeed from 1917 onwards there is a general dearth of personal news reports and one cannot avoid the conclusion that, (at least as far as the individuals who were sacrificed went) the war had become less than newsworthy, even boring.

The three names stand out on the St Anne's Memorial plaque for all to see: A. Ricketts, B. Ricketts, H. Ricketts. John and Laura continued to live in the area and in 1939 were at 9 Sutton Avenue with their surviving sons Fred and George and daughter-in-law Beatrice.

**7<sup>th</sup> April, at Sea. Private Albert Edward GODFREY, 1885-1918** was born on 16 September 1885, son of the uniquely named Appeles Kneller Godfrey, a sailmaker from Stonehouse, Devon, and his second wife Elizabeth Mary, who were married at St Werbergh's in 1885. In 1901, Appeles, 76, and Elizabeth, 48, lived at 12 Treefield Road, Bristol, with their extended family, Walter Terrell, Elizabeth's son from her first marriage, and three children from her marriage to Appeles, Albert, a cycle maker, Mabel, 13, (who worked at the cocoa department at Fry's) and William, nine. Albert, "*aged 18 years, eleven months and twenty four days*" enlisted in the Royal Marines on 31 December 1904. He was just over 5 feet 7½ inches tall, with a fresh complexion, blue eyes, brown hair and had "a dot" tattooed on his left forearm; religion: Church of England. In a varied career with conduct ranging between

“satisfactory” and “very good” Albert had “seen the world”, with the Marines, having been to New Zealand and to Wei-hei-wei, a British base in North East China. On 22 January 1918, home on leave, he married Charlotte Wring, 30, at St Anne’s.

On 7<sup>th</sup> April, he was aboard an armed collier, the SS. “Boscastle” when she was torpedoed by U-boat 111, 14 miles NNW of Strumble Head, Pembrokeshire. The vessel sank with a loss of eighteen lives, including the Master, Samuel Lewis, an apprentice, Stafford Wyatt of Brixham and the cook, Alexander Dryland of Liverpool. Albert’s death was officially noted as *“killed as a result of enemy action, body not recovered”*. His widow Charlotte continued to live with her parents at 25 Trelawney Road, but later moved to Cardiff, which possibly accounts for Albert’s absence on our War Memorials. He is commemorated on Panel 29 of the Plymouth Naval Memorial.

**9<sup>th</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup> April, Flanders, Battle of the Lys. The German objective was to cut off British supply lines at Ypres. The attack was once again repulsed.**

**9<sup>th</sup> April, Flanders, Tyne Cot. Sapper Frederick George WOOD, 1883-1918**, a son of Frederick, a wood carver, and Annie, was a cabinet maker who married Marion Winifred Challenger in 1903; they had three daughters, Winifred, Lilian and Hilda. Frederick joined the Royal Engineers in 1916, either through the Derby Scheme or was conscripted. He was killed in action, 9 April 1918. He has no known grave and is commemorated on Panels 8 & 12 of the Tyne Cot Memorial. The CWGC records his parents living at 136 Hampstead Road, Brislington but no local memorial is known.

**10<sup>th</sup> April, France. Private Albert Joseph BROMWICH, ca1881-1918**, a son of Oliver and Sarah, married Beatrice Bennett Robinson in Bristol in 1907. He was “a company secretary” in 1911, living with his wife and a young housemaid at 20 Kingsley Road, Norwich. He enlisted in the 1<sup>st</sup> Highland Light Infantry, Service no. 356170 and was wounded in action. He spent some time in a military hospital from which he wrote to his “Darling Bea”.<sup>172</sup> Albert died on 10 April 1918 aged 37, and is buried in Grave XXX III f8A at Etaples Military Cemetery, Pas de Calais. The CWGC records Beatrice at 533 Bath Road, Brislington.

**12<sup>th</sup> April, Flanders, Plogsteert. Private Alfred John Thomas KNOWLES, 1899-1918**, was the son of David, a railway platelayer, and Mary Louisa, nee Blake, who in 1911 lived at 30 Langton Court Road with his parents, paternal grandmother and sister Freda. He was in the Royal Warwickshire Regiment when he was killed in action aged eighteen. He is has no known grave and is named on Panels 2 & 3 of the Plogsteert Memorial. Most of those commemorated there did not die in major offensives like Ypres or Loos, but in the course of every-day trench warfare which characterised this part of the Line. He is remembered at St Anne’s Church and School (where he was formerly a pupil), (A. Knowles). In 1939, his father (widowed in 1934) lived at 6 Sandringham Road with his younger son Jack, (born 1915).

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<sup>172</sup> Albert’s original letter may be read on-line, copyright of the First World War Digital Poetry Archive.

**15<sup>th</sup> April, Flanders, Tyne Cot. Captain Hugh Vivian Edward “Harry” BYRNE, MC, 1884-1918**, whose epitaph is in De Ruvigny’s Roll of Honour:

*“BYRNE, Hugh Vyvyan Edward, MC, 9<sup>th</sup> Service Battalion, the Norfolk Regiment, 4<sup>th</sup> son of the late Patrick James Byrne, ARIBA, Architect & Surveyor, of Windsor and London by his wife Barbara, 2 Grove Road, Brislington, Bristol, daughter of the late Captain Samuel Scoltock of the 46<sup>th</sup> Foot, Military Knight of Windsor; born Windsor, Berkshire 16 September 1884, educated privately and at Clondalkin, Co. Dublin; joined the 10<sup>th</sup> Royal Fusiliers in August 1914, served with the Expeditionary Force in France and Flanders from 1915, recommended for a commission for service in the field, returned to England and after training at Chatham and Colchester, gazetted 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in the Norfolk Regiment; promoted to Lieutenant and Captain in August 1917. Returned to France, took an active part in all the Battles of Montauban, Delville Wood, Thiepval, Schwaber Redoubt, Irlles, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battle of Ypres, Battles of Poelcappelle and the Somme, and was killed in action near Mount Kemmel on 15 April 1918. A fellow officer wrote: ‘We were all fond of Harry. He was one of the best soldiers and comrades I ever knew. The country has lost a splendid man. I am sure his death was a glorious one.’ He was awarded the Military Cross<sup>173</sup> for gallant and distinguished service in the field.”*

Mount Kemmel south of Ieper (Ypres) was held in a thin defensive line by the British 19<sup>th</sup> Division. Hugh Byrne was apparently killed in the defence of the hill during the day before the main German onslaught (known as the 1<sup>st</sup> Battle of Kemmel) which commenced at 08.30 on 16<sup>th</sup> April. The Germans failed to break through but with the situation increasingly difficult, a strategic withdrawal was considered but vetoed by General Foch who bolstered the line with two French divisions.



Hugh Byrne came from a distinguished Irish family, being descended from Patrick James Byrne, 1783-1864, Vice-President of the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland, who was responsible for many Roman Catholic Churches in Dublin.

***P.J. Byrne, the architect, 1783-1864***

Hugh’s father, also called Patrick James, was likewise an architect, born in Dublin about 1842 but was of Windsor by 1875 when he met and married Barbara Catherine Scoltock. Her father Samuel, a military man all his adult life, had retired as one of the prestigious “Military Knights of Windsor”. This ancient order provides the Sovereign’s escort during the ceremonial Garter procession and is on parade at state visits and military funerals. The Knights live in a lower ward at Windsor Castle officially as long as they can carry out their

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<sup>173</sup> London Gazette 22.10.1917

duties, but generally until the end of their days. Far from implying wealth, the Knights during Samuel's time had an income of less than £20 per annum. It is likely that Barbara who was a pupil-teacher at a Catholic boarding school in Margate was visiting her father when she met Patrick, her future husband, who was about fifteen years her senior.

The couple had moved from Windsor by 1891 to Hanover Terrace, Cumberland Road, Bristol with their eight children, Henry, Ella (Helena), Patrick, Isabella, William, Hugh, Bertie and finally Vivian, a baby 12 months old. In September 1891 there was an odd situation when Ella and Patrick Byrne, *"two well dressed and well connected children"* appeared before magistrates accused of stealing a quantity of clothes from a Mr Hayes of Hanover Terrace. The case was deferred and the children were taken to the Union Workhouse, but when they were brought back to court a week later, Mr Hayes withdrew his complaint stating that their father was his friend and neighbour. Nevertheless, the girl (under 14) was sent to a convent in Belgium for a year and the boy (under 12) to a boarding school somewhere in England. Patrick Byrne senior died in 1896 aged 56, and by 1900 his widow was living at 3 Freeland Cottages, Brislington when her son Hugh, *"born in Windsor, a clerk, aged 18 years and 2 months"* enlisted in the SLI, and later transferred to the Grenadier Guards. His elder brother Henry, who had served six years in the Gloucesters was by then married and living at Westbury, Wiltshire. The absence of the other brother, William, from the census of 1901 suggests that he too had joined the army. Barbara's much reduced remaining family shows signs of being in straitened circumstances: Ella, aged 23, had returned from Belgium, *"a schoolmistress on her own account"*, and Bertie, 15, was *"a domestic servant"*. Vivian, 11 and John, aged eight were apparently being taught at home by their sister. By 2 April 1911, Barbara, the *"mother of nine children, all still living"*, had moved a few yards to 2 Grove Road with her sons, Albert, a house painter, Vivian, a clerk and eighteen year old John *"invalided"* [sic]. Meanwhile, Hugh, ex-army, was, rather surprisingly, an attendant at Dr Fox's famous lunatic asylum.<sup>174</sup> He was recalled to the Colours when war was declared.

On 27 April 1918, the WDP announced his death: *"BYRNE. April 15<sup>th</sup>, killed in action, Captain Hugh E.V. Byrne MC, Norfolks, 4<sup>th</sup> son of the late P.J. Byrne, A.R.I.B.A. of Bristol and Windsor."*

Barbara's obituary, 5 January 1934, is equally restrained, though harks back to better times: *"BYRNE. At Brislington, January 3<sup>rd</sup>, in her 76<sup>th</sup> year, Barbara, widow of the late Patrick James Byrne, A.R.I.B.A. of Bristol and Windsor and only daughter of the late Captain S. Scoltock, M.K. of Windsor."* She was buried at Holy Souls the following Saturday. Hugh, who has no known grave, is commemorated on the Addenda Panel of the Tyne Cot Memorial and remembered at St Luke's, (H. Byrne).<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> At this time, Frank Smith (qv. 3.5.1917) also worked there in the same capacity.

<sup>175</sup> NB. The St Luke's Church Books of the war have the wrong "H. Byrne".

**13<sup>th</sup> April, France. Major George Mountford ELLISON, 1892-1918**, whose connection with Brislington is through his widow Frances, nee Titt, (married West Bromwich, 1916) of 6 Hampstead Road, (CWGC).



***Major George Mountford Ellison, 1892-1918***

George who was born at West Bromwich, was the eldest of five children of Harry, a bulb and seed merchant, and Elsie Ellison. He rose from the ranks, in the South Staffordshires to Major in the 7<sup>th</sup> Lincolnshire Regiment. He was wounded in action in France and died of his injuries, 13 April 1918, aged 26. After the war his body was brought to Valenciennes (St Roch) Communal Cemetery, and re-interred in Grave V.A.8.

**14<sup>th</sup> April, France. Sapper Charles Ralph DANIEL, 1888-1918**, a wood turner, married Rosina Mildred Hillman in 1911 and they had a son, Frederick. He joined the RE, 479<sup>th</sup> Field Company, in May 1916. He was wounded in action and taken to a field hospital where he died, 14 April 1918. The "Roll of Honour", 22<sup>nd</sup> April reads: "*DANIEL, died of wounds, Charles Ralph, elder son of Mr & Mrs Charles Daniel of 20 Sandy Park Road, Brislington at St Louis Hospital, France, husband of R. Daniel of West Street, Bedminster.*" Charles is buried in Grave P. VII P 3A at the St Sever Cemetery Extension, Rouen.

**18<sup>th</sup> April, France, Loos. Private Edward George TUCKFIELD, 1883-1918**, followed his father, Edward into business as a monumental mason/sculptor. He married Edith Emma Browning in 1907 and the couple went to live at 10 Stirling Road, "New Brislington." Edith died in 1912, aged only 28 and three years later Edward married his second wife, Martha Reed Matthews. He enlisted in 1915 in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Gloucesters. He was killed in action in France and is commemorated, Panel 60-64, of the Loos Memorial, (one of 19 members of the Regiment who died the same day), named among 20,000 officers and men who fell in the area during the war and have no known graves. He is remembered at St Luke's, (E.G. Tuckfield). In 1939, his widow Martha lived at 11 Truro Road, Ashton.

**24<sup>th</sup> April, France. Lance-Corporal William Faraday CROCKER, 1898-1918**, son of William, a factory foreman and Agnes, lived with his parents and Ella, his sister, at 99 Hampstead Road. Formerly a Territorial in the Devon Regiment, he enlisted in 1915 in the 2/5<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters; he may be, mis-named, as "*W.E. Crockett* of Brislington, 3<sup>rd</sup> Royal Gloucester Hussars".<sup>176</sup> His promotion to Lance-Corporal must have been in part due to his super-fitness, for he was a Physical Training Instructor. His death was announced in the "Roll of Honour", 18 May 1918: "*CROCKER. Lance-Corpl W.F. Crocker killed in action, April 24, BEF, France, late instructor in PT and BF (?) to the Devon Regt, beloved and only son of Mr and Mrs W.C. Crocker, of "Compton", Hampstead Road, Brislington.*"

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<sup>176</sup> Gloucester Chron, 13.11.1915



After the Armistice, his body was brought from one of the surrounding small graveyards and re-interred in Grave V.A.1 at Vieille-Chapelle New Military Cemetery, Lacouture. He is remembered at St Luke's, (W.F. Crocker) and also "In Memoriam", (WDP 1922) below the death notice of his father, aged 51.<sup>177</sup> In 1939 the widowed Agnes Crocker lived at 99 Hampstead Road with her daughter Ella, and son-in-law Fred Whitehead.

**25<sup>th</sup> April, France. Private Sydney John MITCHELL, 1894-1918** lived at Elm Tree Cottage, Brislington with his parents, Arthur Joseph and Lucy, nee Baker, and brother and sisters Edith, George, Lucy and Dorothy. In 1911, his father was a market gardener, and Sydney a cigarette maker; the older girls were factory hands, at "a colour printers", perhaps the Polysulphin Company. Sydney like many other Brislington youths went to Bath early in the war expecting to join the SLI, but presumably being asked whether he could shoot, (a skill gained at one of the local Rifle Ranges?) found himself in the 58<sup>th</sup> Machine Gun Corps. He was killed in action in France. He has no known grave and is commemorated on the Pozieres Memorial, Panel 90-93, one of the 500 of the Machine Gun Corps thereon.<sup>178</sup> He is remembered at St Luke's, (S.J. Mitchell.)

**25<sup>th</sup> April, France, The Lys. Sapper William Charles GARDINER, 1878-1918** was taken prisoner at The Lys, otherwise the 4<sup>th</sup> Battle of Ypres). He first joined the army in January 1900, "*aged 21 years 2 months, occupation: plumber; he has not lived away from his father's house during the previous three years, not apprenticed or married and willing to be vaccinated.*" With paper formalities completed, he took an oath of loyalty and signed on for "*a term of one year unless the War in South Africa lasts longer*" in the Royal Engineers. At the end of hostilities he was demobbed and in 1905 married Mabel Beatrice Locke. In 1911

he was an inspector at Bristol Waterworks, living at 52 Sandringham Road, with Mabel and their son, William Henry, aged four. He was summoned back from camp with his fellow Reservists in August 1914 for service in the Royal Engineers. At the time of his death he was with the 447<sup>th</sup> Field Company which had been in action since early in the war, at Steenvoerde (Ypres), the Somme, Arras and at Passchendaele. William was taken prisoner on 25<sup>th</sup> April during the Battle of the Lys (7-26<sup>th</sup> April). He died in a German POW Camp on the **5<sup>th</sup> June**. He is buried in Grave I.AA. 6 at Vailly, Aisne where the majority of the graves are of men killed at Aisne in 1914, but includes the remains of 60 soldiers brought there from other burial grounds after the war. Of these, four were POWs: William Gardiner, Private A.H. Barnes, Private Frank Howarth and Private James Pollard. William is remembered at St Luke's, (W.C. Gardiner). In 1939, his son, William Henry, carrying on the family tradition, was a clerk at the Waterworks. He lived at 38 Imperial Road with his mother Mabel and sister Rowena.

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<sup>177</sup> WDP 13.4.1922

<sup>178</sup> See Harry Patch, "The Last Fighting Tommy" for life in the Machine Gun Corps.

**26<sup>th</sup> April, France, The Lys. Private William Henry EVANS, 1899-1918** lived in Brislington in 1901 at 3 Bellevue Buildings with his father Frederick, a plumber, his mother Rose Blanche, nee Taylor, and elder brother, Sidney, aged three. Fred's sister Ada, aged 23, a "paint bottler at a colour works" (the ubiquitous Polysulphin) lodged with them. By 1911, Fred, by then a "gas fitter" was a father of five, the two boys having been joined by three sisters, Dorothy, Phyllis and Margaret, (another child had died in infancy) and a new lodger, Fred's brother Alfred. William, a member of the St Luke's Church Lads' Brigade enlisted in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Northamptonshire Regiment aged eighteen, and was killed in action on the last day of the Battle of the Lys. With 54 others he was brought from the battlefield to the Casualty Clearing Station at Crouy-sur-Somme where he was buried in Grave I.E2. He is remembered at St Luke's (W.H. Evans) and on the CLB Plaque, (William Evans).

**2<sup>nd</sup> May, France. Lance Corporal Charles William (Billy) BABB, MM, 1897-1918** was the only son of Charles, a gardener, and Eliza, nee Rawlings. Between 1901 and 1911 the family moved from 1 Meridian Place, Clifton to 2 Pendennis Road, Brislington. Billy, then 14, a telegraph messenger boy, had three sisters Beatrice, Lilian and Doris. The family income was augmented by a lodger, 17 year old Sidney Rawlings, a tram conductor, possibly a relative of Eliza Babb. Charles Babb senior worked for the Collins family at Gotley Lodge, Water Lane, a property which still stands today along with the Babb family cottage.



***Billy Babb, astride a rather sad-looking horse.***

***Horses were commandeered for the battlefield and hundreds of thousands died in action or were slaughtered after the war.***

Billy enlisted in the 183<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, RE, Signal Section, where he served with distinction and was promoted

Lance-Corporal. His advancement was eclipsed by his bravery in the field when he carried a wounded comrade to safety under fire. During this courageous act he was shot in the head by a sniper and brought from the battlefield to the 54<sup>th</sup> Casualty Clearing Station. He never recovered and died in hospital. He was buried in Grave II.H.11 at the Aired Communal Cemetery, Pas de Calais and is remembered at St Luke's (C.W. Babb).

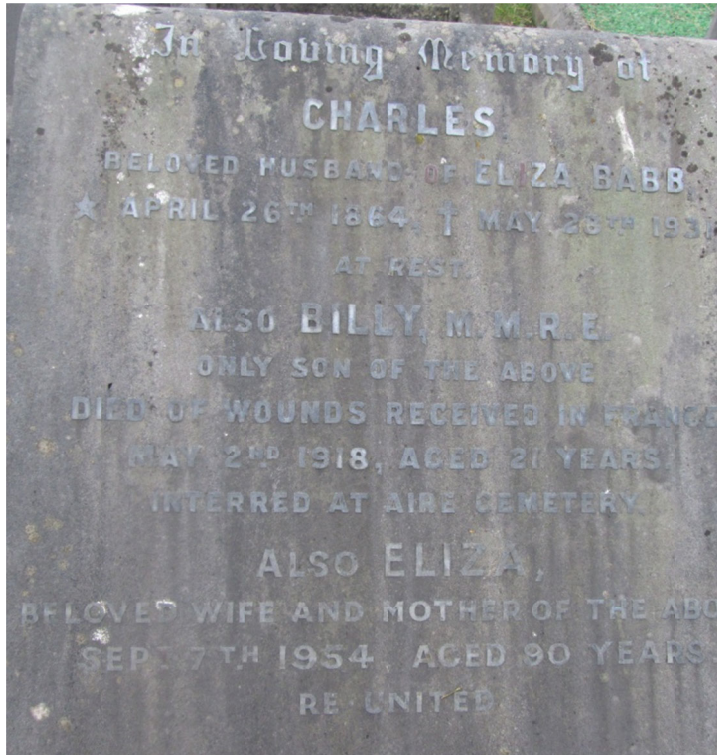
A Military Medal, awarded posthumously, was presented to his father at the Colston Hall, Bristol by General Sir Harry Slater in February 1919.<sup>179</sup> Charles died aged 67 in May 1931 and

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<sup>179</sup> WDP 25.2.1919

his mother Eliza in 1932. They are buried at Brislington's municipal cemetery where Billy is commemorated on their gravestone.

I placed a poppy there on 4 August 2014, the centenary of the outbreak of the Great War.



A brass memorial plaque which was awarded to Billy by admiring colleagues was located in 1987 after an appeal in the Bristol Evening Post by Jonathan Rowe of the Brislington Conservation & History Society who was trying to trace the histories of the men on the St Luke's War Memorial Plaque.

He was contacted by Billy's sister Mrs Doris Fishlock (1899-1991) of Portishead who gave him Billy's WW1 service medal, a photo of his grave in France, and the picture of Billy on horseback taken (at training camp?) in England. Mrs Fishlock was then 88 years old and although she had descendants she felt that none of them were sufficiently interested in these family relics and preferred to donate them rather than see them disappear. The plaque in the shape of a heart was raised by Billy's comrades in the R.E section and had originally been propped up by his grave in France. Mrs Fishlock inherited it from her parents who had visited the grave in the 1920s and brought it home with them. She gave it to Jonathan and it has hung over his bed ever since.



***“Erected to the Memory of our brave comrade  
“Billy” Babb  
by the officers, non-commissioned officers & men  
of his section”***

**3<sup>rd</sup> May, 1918, France, Amiens. Second Lieutenant Leslie James DERRICK, 1895-1918** was the son of Frederick, landlord of the Failand Inn, Wraxall and his second wife Annie, nee Collins. Fred Derrick died in 1896 and by 1901, Annie, 38, was “living on her own means” at Bedminster with Leslie, aged five and her two stepdaughters, Hester, 27, an assistant in a fancy leather goods shop and Amy, 21, a grocer’s clerk.

By 1911 they had moved to 23 Rugby Road, Brislington though Annie was absent from home on census night. She was at 34 Repton Road, in an official capacity as “a monthly nurse”, attending to Ethel, the wife of Edward Bosanquet, who was “lying in” after the birth of a baby daughter, Olive. (Seven years later, by an ironic twist of fate, Edward Bosanquet would die on the 4<sup>th</sup> May 1918, the day after Leslie Derrick.)

Leslie, a clerk, originally commissioned in the East Kents (The Buffs) was transferred to the 15<sup>th</sup> Squadron, RAF and killed in action “while flying”<sup>180</sup> during the defence of Amiens. He is buried in Grave B.18 at the Querrieu British Cemetery. He is commemorated on the Regimental Memorial to the Officers and Men of The Buffs who died in the Great War and is remembered at St Luke’s, (L.J. Derrick).

On the anniversary of his death an “In Memoriam” notice appeared in the WDP: *“DERRICK. Ever in affectionate memory of a very gallant airman, Lieut. L. J. Derrick, killed in action,*

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<sup>180</sup> HBM 17.5.1918

*May 3, 1918. I.A.*” Similar notices continued to be posted annually on the same date until at least 1948. The initials, “I.A.” over time become “I.A.H.” (Did the bereaved lady (?) eventually marry and find happiness with another?)

**4<sup>th</sup> May, at Home. Private Edward Luther Poulden BOSANQUET, 1878-1918**, was the second youngest of eight children of Thomas, born in Pimlico, a Royal Navy gunner, and his wife Lucy. Their first four children were born at Devonport, the rest in London. They eventually moved to 148 Bath Road, Brislington, with several of their children and a grandson. By 1901, Edward Bosanquet had left home for lodgings at Hinton, Gloucestershire, where he was “a checker of grain”. He married Ethel Clark in Bristol two years later.

Edward’s whereabouts on census night in April 1911 are unknown, though his wife Ethel, their son Theodore Edward Victor, aged 7, and a new baby, Olive, born a week before, were at 34 Repton Road with Ethel’s sister Jessie and the midwife, Annie Derrick, (mother of Leslie Derrick, *qv.3.5.1918*). It is tempting to imagine that Edward was simply making himself scarce, as men did in those days! More likely he was already in the army, or at least in the Reserve, as he enlisted, (or was recalled), in August 1914, a long way from Brislington, at Aberdeen. He served in the 2/4<sup>th</sup> Berkshires, a Territorial Regiment which was in action along the Western Front throughout the war and took part in major engagements at Fromelles, Ancre, the Somme, Langemarck etc. Edward was wounded at Bethune, and brought to hospital at Chorlton, Manchester on 4 May 1918 where he died. He was buried in Brislington at Arno’s Vale in Grave Q 833 following a military funeral, and is remembered at St Luke’s, (E. Bosanquet.)

Both Edward’s children married at St Luke’s in July 1931: Theodore to Elsie Vangorph and Olive to Cyril Pomeroy. In 1939, his widow, Ethel lived at Lilymead Avenue, Totterdown; she died in 1954 aged 75.

**9<sup>th</sup> May, France. Private Albert George MILLER, c1895-1918** who served in the 10<sup>th</sup> Duke of Cornwall’s Light Infantry was killed in action. He was buried in Grave I.A. 19 at Berles New Military Cemetery beside three other Infantrymen of the DCLI and a soldier from the King’s Royal Rifle Corps: Privates Jehu Baker, Sam Gregory, Charles Wenmouth and Rifleman Fred White. His sparse military record states he was born in Brislington and he may have been the child of this name registered at Keynsham (December quarter, 1895). The CWGC names his parents as Henry James and R. (*sic*) Miller of 13 Prewett’s Place, Cathay, Redcliff.

**12<sup>th</sup> May, France. Sergeant William Henry John TALBOT, 1895-1918** one of six children of Lawrence, a compositor and Julia (nee Cook, lived at 20 Trelawney Road. He worked as a confectioner before joining the 12<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters, among the enthusiastic first recruits (name published 25 September 1914). He arrived in France in December 1915. In March 1916 the battalion was in action at Vimy Ridge, and then at the Somme at High Wood. In 1917 they were engaged at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battle of Ypres, after which they deployed to Italy until recalled to

France in late March 1918 to assist against the German advance. Through evident qualities of leadership he had been promoted sergeant and it seems especially tragic that he went through nearly four years of the war only to lose his life, still aged only 22, so near the end. He is buried in France in Grave 1.11 at the Morbecque British Cemetery and is remembered at St Luke's, (W.H.J. Talbot).

Later that year, in October, William's parents would lose another son, Leslie, aged sixteen through illness. In 1939, they still lived at 20 Trelawney Park with their daughter Irene, son Jack, and an elderly widowed relative, Lucy Haynes, an "invalid".

**(Before) 15<sup>th</sup> May, France. Private William Ewart DARVILLE, 1898-1918**, the younger brother of Thomas Darville (*qv.* 29.5.1916), was taken prisoner prior to 15 May 1918 when he is among Somerset POWS named by the Taunton Courier of this date. Following his father's death, he had moved from Shepton Mallet with his mother Elizabeth and sister Evelyn to 11 Pendennis Road, Brislington. He was in the 7<sup>th</sup> SLI, though on leave on 6 January 1917, when he witnessed twenty two year old Evelyn's wedding to Grenadier Guardsman Bertram Chivers of Midsomer Norton at Brislington's Congregational Church.

His death, aged 20, officially took place on **28 August 1918** although his mother believed he died a few days later. The news, which took six weeks to reach the family, was reported 18th October:<sup>181</sup>

*"September 2<sup>nd</sup> at Giessen Camp, Germany, Pte W.E. Darville, youngest and dearly beloved son of the late William and Elizabeth Darville, formerly of Shepton Mallet."*

Niederzwehren Cemetery, Kassel where William is buried, Grave III D.6, was used by the Germans to bury soldiers who died in captivity. In 1922 most of the Empire servicemen who had died in Germany for any reason were re-interred together: Niederzwehren was one of the cemeteries chosen for this purpose. William is remembered, like his brother, on the War Memorial at Shepton Mallet.



Elizabeth's other son Hugh, a GWR porter, with 4 years previous service in the Gloucesters re-joined the army in 1916; he married Ethel May Gregory at Shepton Mallet before he went into action. He

survived the war and in 1939 lived with his wife in Swindon. After the war Elizabeth Darville went to live at Norton Radstock near her daughter Evelyn and son-in-law Bert Chivers who returned safely and resumed underground life as a miner. Their daughter Peggy, born in 1918, married a man from another Mendip coalmining family, Percy Ashman, in 1940.

**27 May – 6 June 1918, Battle of the Aisne.**

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<sup>181</sup> Shepton Mallet Journal

**27<sup>th</sup> May, 1918, France. Private John Henry HATHERELL, 1891-1918** the son of Henry, an “electric car driver” and his wife Frances lived at 12 Kensington Hill in 1901, in a crowded household consisting of the parents, children, Isabella, John, Eliza, Sidney, and Arthur aged between ten and two years old; plus Frances’s sister, Isabella Williamson, a niece, Isabella Duckworth, and three lodgers, two tramway workers and a railwayman. By 1911, John Henry had left home and was working as a groom at Ampney, near Cricklade, whence he was called up, probably in 1916, into the 2<sup>nd</sup> Northants Regiment. He was killed in action in France, aged 26, and buried in Grave III.A.37 at Vailly-sur-Aisne, one of more than sixty British & Empire soldiers killed during the battle for Aisne in the summer of 1918. (William Gardiner, above, is buried at the same cemetery.) John is remembered at St Anne’s School (J. Hatherell) where he and several of his siblings were pupils. His brother Sidney who joined the Gloucestershire Regiment was invalided out of the army in 1916 owing to a previous accident which rendered him unfit for war service.

**27<sup>th</sup> May, at Sea. Private Robert Leonard CLAPP, 1898-1918** lived first at 12 Kensington Villas, Brislington, with his father, Robert, the manager of an oil works, (Polysulphin, again?)



his mother Mildred Stanhope, nee Prestidge, his elder sister Eleanor, and a young servant. Neither parent was native to Bristol, Robert senior, from Tiverton and Mildred from Stourbridge. Another child, Frances was born in 1903. By 1911 the family were living at “Dartmouth”, 103 Hampstead Road, with a new live-in domestic help, Violet Claribel Watts.

***Pte Robert Clapp, 1898-1918***

Robert junior, a clerk joined the 271<sup>st</sup> Machine Gun Corps aged eighteen. He had the misfortune to be aboard the Transport ship “Leasowe Castle” which on 17 May 1918 was *en route* from Egypt to Marseilles when she was torpedoed off Alexandria by the U-boat “Ernst Krafft”. The ship went down with the loss of 101 lives comprising the master, Captain Holt and his crew, and 83 officers and men of the Empire forces. Although officially a hospital ship it appears that on this occasion, “Leasowe Castle” was (controversially) acting as a troop carrier and was therefore a “legitimate target”.

Robert’s death was announced by the WDP, 11<sup>th</sup> June: *“Mr and Mrs Clapp of 103 Hampstead Road, Brislington received official confirmation that their son Robert Leonard Clapp, Machine Gun Corps, is missing, believed drowned in a hospital transport on May 27. In civilian life, Clapp, who was 20 years of age, was employed at Bristol Tramways engineering dept, and before that at Brecknell, Munro & Rogers.”* Robert is commemorated on the Chatby Memorial at Alexandria and remembered at St Luke’s, (R.L. Clapp).

**Between the end of May and early July 1918, the British and Commonwealth Forces were pushed back across the Aisne to the Marne suffering 15,000 fatalities.**

**30<sup>th</sup> May, France, Aisne. Private William BLACKMORE, 1898-1918** the only child of William, a railway guard, and Lily Blackmore, nee Brice followed his father into the GWR prior to being conscripted into the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Worcestershire Regiment. The WDP announced his death, 2 July 1918, one of the few obituaries published in the press at this time.

*“GWR Employee killed”*

*“Great sympathy is felt at the Great Western Railway for Mr and Mrs William Blackmore of 48 Langton Road, St Anne’s Park, their only son being killed in France. His platoon officer expressed the highest admiration for the conduct and efficiency of the deceased who was in the Worcesters. Before joining up he was a telegraphist in the GWR service.”*

William has no known grave and is one of 4,000 officers and men commemorated on the Soissons Memorial. He is remembered at St Luke’s, (W. Blackmore).

**1<sup>st</sup> June, France. Private Walter Edward GIBBS, 1899-1918**, like his brothers William and Charles, was born at “New Brislington”, though by 1901 he was living at Petticoat Lane, Dilton Marsh. They were the sons of Louis Walker Gibbs a railway signalman, and his wife Elizabeth, nee Bryant. Another boy, Reginald was born soon after. Their mother Elizabeth died in 1907 at Devizes aged 34. In 1909 Louis married his second wife, Ann Bryant, (perhaps Elizabeth’s sister?) and by 1911 they had returned to 112 Bloomfield Road, St Anne’s Park.

Walter was conscripted into the 9<sup>th</sup> Cheshire Regiment aged eighteen and died of wounds in France a few months later. He is buried in Grave B.39 at Sezanne Communal Cemetery, 100 kilometres east of Paris. He is remembered at St Anne’s, (W.E. Gibbs).

**2<sup>nd</sup> June, France. Lieutenant Leonard Clement GARDNER, DCM, 1888-1918.** The history of this man, (whose nebulous connection with Brislington comes through his widow) is intriguing, not least because he changed his first name from “Lemuel” to “Leonard”. As Lemuel Clement, he was born on the 18 August 1888, at Dorking, Surrey, the sixth child of Thomas, a railway guard, and Elizabeth Gardner.



As a boy, he was a member of the Band of Hope, (a non-conformist Christian organisation designed to promote sobriety) and took part in their annual concert in April 1899. He left school at twelve and first worked as an errand boy, then at W.H. Smith the stationers, and from the age of 16, was a railway porter at Leatherhead until dismissed five years later for a petty theft. He enlisted in the Royal Garrison Artillery on 5 March 1908 as *Leonard* Clement Gardner, perhaps as a ruse to keep his “criminal past”



hidden. He was posted to no. 9 Battery, RGA and stationed at Gibraltar. He was promoted to Acting Bombardier in November 1913. In March 1914 he left for Londonderry with the 15<sup>th</sup> Company where his promotion to full Bombardier was confirmed on 26 August. By this time the country was at war and on 9 October 1914 he was transferred to 120 Heavy Battery, RGA. Whilst on leave, 12<sup>th</sup> October, he took the opportunity to get married to Lilian May Robinson at St. Alban's Church, Ilford, Essex. He arrived in France on 16 June 1915, and was posted to 38<sup>th</sup> Mortar Battery which operated within a forward trench area, an invaluable position for disrupting an enemy counter-attack.

Leonard courageously distinguished himself under fire, was recommended for a medal and promoted to Sergeant. On 11 January 1916 the award of a Distinguished Conduct Medal was confirmed in the London Gazette:

*"28548 Corporal L.C. Gardner, 38<sup>th</sup> Trench Mortar Battery, RGA: for excellent service and bravery under heavy shell and rifle fire. He continued to serve his gun for three hours after being wounded. His good work and gallantry were conspicuous throughout."*

In June, his application for a commission was ardently supported by his current officers:

*"This NCO has been 12 months on TM work and has always shown the greatest resource and courage. His knowledge of the work is complete and he always shows great acuteness in noticing any novel or improved features in blind shells or TM bombs of the enemy."*

*"(He) is quiet and reserved, exceedingly intelligent and quick and possesses the happy knack of extracting from the men under him the utmost labour possible. I consider this candidate eminently suitable."*

*"If Sgt Gardner can get a commission in the infantry for duty with RTM batteries I shall do my utmost to secure him for this Brigade."*

Leonard was duly commissioned 2nd Lieutenant on 18 July 1916 and two weeks later joined 118 Siege Battery. He had a week's home leave in November and the following February was posted to HQ 21st Heavy Artillery as Acting Adjutant; thence he was diverted to 40th Trench Mortars, Z Battery. His record suffered a blip on 5 September 1917 when on a night out with fellow officers, (high jinks were implied!) he tripped over a door sill and broke his arm. Fellow officers were required to confirm that this was a genuine accident, not self-inflicted and a subsequent inquiry found in his favour. His arm required an operation and after a spell in hospital he was sent home for three weeks leave and then confined to desk duties *pro tem*. His promotion to Lieutenant was confirmed in January 1918 and he returned to France on the 25th May, posted first to the 4th Army and thence to the 139th Heavy Battery, which he might have assumed was a safer option being a mile or so behind the front line. Sadly however, his luck ran out, and within a few hours of his arrival, he was wounded and taken to No. 4 Casualty Clearing Station where he died on 2 June 1918.

On 13<sup>th</sup> June the Newbury Weekly News belatedly reported the news of his DCM (and the monetary reward of £25!) and in stating that he was the son of Mr Thomas Gardner of Oriental Terrace, Andover Road added as an afterthought *“sad to relate Lieut. Gardner died of wounds on June 2<sup>nd</sup> .....”* (then, having evidently lost interest in Leonard, went off in a tangent) *“.....Mr Gardner has another son who is a sergeant in South Africa and a third who is engaged in torpedo warfare in the Mediterranean. He is an able-bodied seaman and was on board the Lightning when it went down having struck a mine and was one of the few who was rescued after being sometime in the water.”*

Leonard’s name is on the War Memorial at Newbury but there is an air of mystery even in death, for he appears incorrectly as “D. Gardner”. He is buried in Grave II.A.2 at the British Cemetery, Halloy-Les-Pernois, Somme. His widow Lilian May Gardner lived at 10 Wick Road, according to the CWGC, but her sojourn seems to have been temporary and she has left no further trace.

**3<sup>rd</sup> June, France. Private Harry Nicol SKINNER, 1898-1918** was “a nurse child” who in 1901 was fostered by Jane Atkins, a 54 year old widow, at 60 Richmond Street, Knowle. His



mother Ada, a domestic servant, worked for a potato merchant, Charles Cooper, at nearby 25 Brecknock Road. Most of Ada’s meagre wages would have gone towards the upkeep of her little boy but better times for both were round the corner: in 1903, Ada Nicol married Thomas Henry Skinner, a baker and confectioner. Tom Skinner’s legacy is one of kindness, for like the gentle sailor of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, he said *“and the little one too.”*

***Harry with his parents and sisters, Grace and three year old Beatrice, about 1914.***

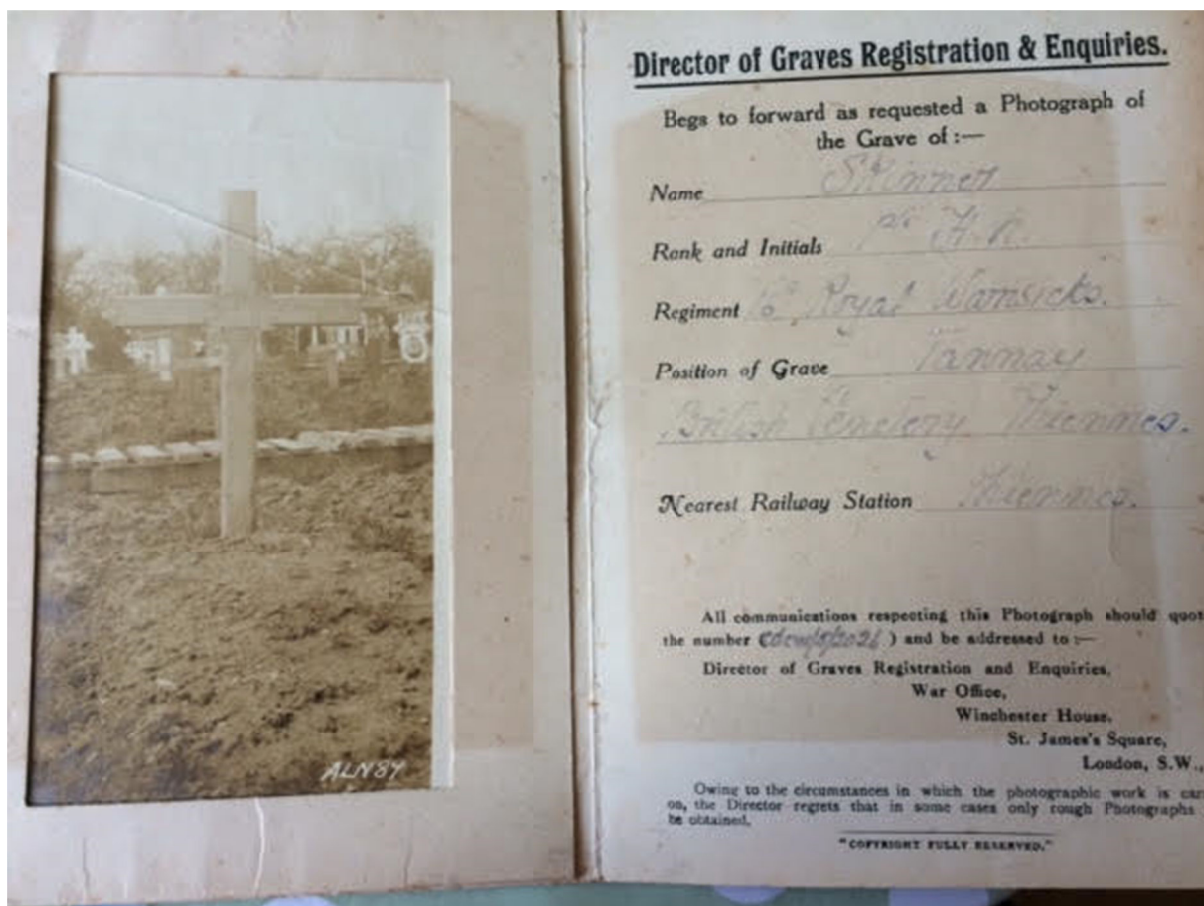
Young Harry took his stepfather’s name and in 1911 was living at 35 Trelawney Road, Brislington with his parents and two sisters, Grace, 6, and Beatrice Maud, aged eight months. Harry, a member of St Luke’s Church Lads Brigade was conscripted aged eighteen, first into the Royal Gloucester Hussars and subsequently filled a “vacancy” in the Royal Warwickshires. He died in France and is buried in Grave 3 A.2 at Tannay, a cemetery built by the 15<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance for those

killed fighting in the area. He is remembered at St Luke's (H.N. Skinner) and on the separate CLB plaque, (Harry Skinner). The CWGC records that he was the son of Thomas Henry and Ada Skinner of Totterdown, Bristol.



***Pte Harry Nicol Skinner, 1898-1918***

In 1939, Tom and Ada were living at 99 Talbot Road with their daughter Beatrice who married Richard Booth in 1941. Beatrice and Richard lived at Thiery Road, Brislington, and had two children, Harry, (named after Harry Nicol) and Lynda. Grace became the wife of Thomas Henry Leader Brown of the well-known Bristol shipping family whose ship the "Harry Brown" was often seen in Bristol docks. Thomas Skinner died in 1951 and Ada in 1962.



***This photograph of Harry Skinner's grave at Tannay was sent to the family. The graves were later provided with the now familiar uniform headstones.***

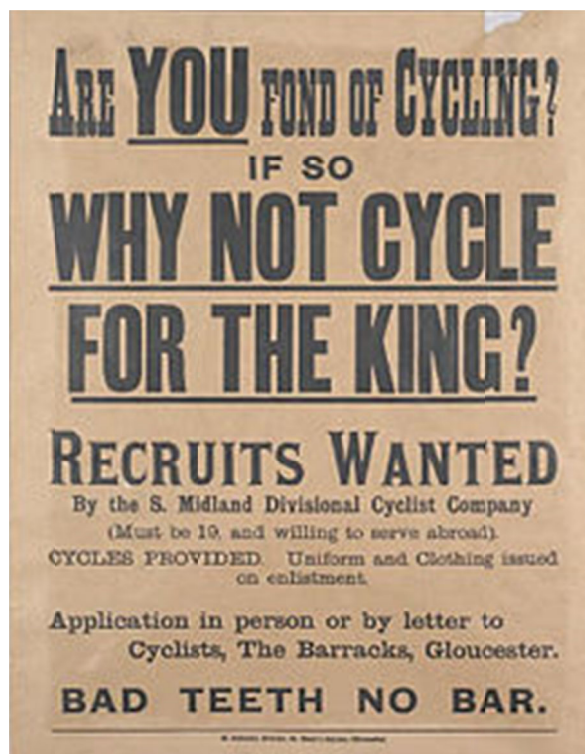
**6<sup>th</sup> June, France. Gunner Reginald MUNDY, 1893-1918**, was born at Ipswich, the home town of his mother, but had arrived in Brislington by 1898 when his sister Dorothy was born. In 1901, aged eight, he lived at 1 Hollywood Place, with his father, Oxfordshire-born Herbert, a house painter, mother Kate, and Dorothy. Herbert volunteered for the army aged eighteen and in 1911 was in barracks at Elham, Kent, whilst his family, by then with three more daughters, Millicent, Amy and Gertrude, remained in Brislington. Reg Mundy served throughout the war in the RFA, latterly in B. Battery, 186<sup>th</sup> Brigade until the summer of 1918 when he was brought to the hospital centre at Le Treport, near Dieppe suffering from the effects of a poison gas attack from which he died. He is buried in Grave VI.J.3A at the Huon Military Cemetery and is remembered at St Luke's, (R. Mundy).

Reg's father Herbert was buried at St Luke's on 28 July 1937 aged 72. In 1939 his mother Kate was living at 65 Gorse Hill, with her daughters Millicent Mundy and Dorothy Mann.

**8<sup>th</sup> June, France. Private Rupert Ernest Dauncey RUDGE, 1891-1918**, born in Cheltenham, was a son of Edward Rudge, a carpenter and his wife Harriett. In 1901 they lived at Horfield, with their children, George, a solicitor's clerk, William, a tramway conductor, Harold, a stationer's clerk, Mabel, and Rupert, aged nine. By 1911 Harriet was widowed and had become a newsagent at 37 Bath Road, Arno's Vale. George, Harold, Mabel and Rupert all worked for their mother at the shop.

Rupert enlisted in the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Army Cyclist Corps, possibly attracted by the advertisement, right. Note final sentence!<sup>182</sup>

The Army Cyclist Corps was founded in 1915. Small groups of men were formed in each Division on the Western Front and used mainly for reconnaissance and courier work, sometimes cycling down communications trenches. This was particularly important when the security of the trench telephone system was found to have been compromised by German receiving stations. Security patrols at canals and stations in both Britain and France were vulnerable to sabotage and they were patrolled by cyclists.



Unfortunately Rupert was also called upon to do more mundane tasks, and he died when on sentry duty: "*RUDGE. Killed by a shell while on guard duty in France, Rupert E.D. Rudge, (newsagent), Private, Cyclists' Battalion aged 25, youngest and dearly loved son of Harriet Ridge of Arno's Vale, Bristol.*"<sup>183</sup> He was buried in Grave XVI D.25 at Terlincthun, Pas de Calais, and is remembered at St Anne's, (R.E.D. Rudge).

**18<sup>th</sup> June, Italy. Lance Corporal Edwin Henry SMITH, 1894-1918** the only son of Edgar, a painter and decorator, and Ada, nee Tizzard, lived at with his parents and sister Lydia at 75 Richmond Terrace, Totterdown.

By the time he was conscripted in 1916, Edwin, had a promising career as a lithographic artist. He joined the 48<sup>th</sup> Division Company of the Royal Engineers, later attached to the 241<sup>st</sup> Brigade of the Royal Artillery where he served on the Italian Front. He was wounded in action and died, aged 24, from his injuries. He was buried in Grave 3.A.10 at the Montecchio Precalcino Cemetery in the Veneto Province of North East Italy. The CWGC records Edgar and Ada Smith's address as "Brislington" and Edwin is remembered at St Luke's, (E.H. Smith).

<sup>182</sup> See Herbert Wiltshire, 1917

<sup>183</sup> WDP 15.8.1918

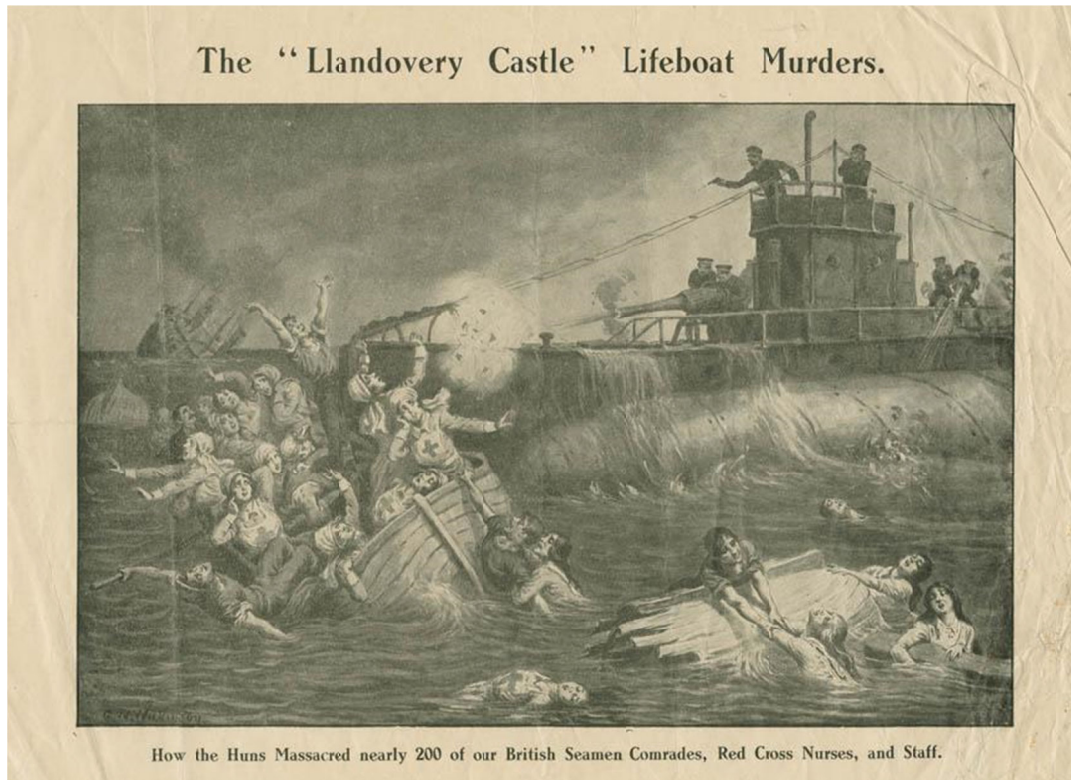
**21<sup>st</sup> June, Malta. Ord. Seaman William Henry Albert DYKE, 1898-1918**, was born on 28 November 1898, the son of Albert Joseph, a shoemaker, and his wife Maud Jane, nee Snelgrove. In 1901 he lived at 10 Ridgeway Road, Fishponds with his parents, sister and brother, Gladys and Bertie. In 1903, Albert Dyke died aged 30 and in 1909, little Bertie died aged nine. Maud's wretched circumstances led her to the door of the Workhouse when to the semi-rescue galloped Ephraim Bird, a GWR foreman. Ephraim had been left a widower with seven children between twelve years and twelve months old. Maud went to live with him as his housekeeper at 66 Addison Road, Brislington, bringing the teenaged Gladys, with her, though apparently there was no place for poor William, aged 12, who was designated an "orphan" and left at Muller's Orphanage, Ashley Road.

Like many boys who grew up in an institution, William was encouraged to enter one of the armed services and on 1 October 1915 he joined the Royal Navy as a Boy Seaman, aboard HMS "Impregnable". He subsequently served on "Prince of Wales" and "Victory I". Finally in 1918, as "Boy 1<sup>st</sup> Class", with conduct and ability rated "superior", he was in Malta with HMS "Harrier". Thus far he had survived all the difficulties life could devise from the Orphanage to the Kaiser's submarines and was now on the brink of promotion to Leading Seaman. He was ashore playing football with his shipmates when by appalling bad luck he fell into the dry dock fracturing his skull and breaking his back. A Naval Court enquired into the tragedy but held that his death was accidental and that "no blame attributed to anyone." William was buried in Grave F. 379 at Cappucini, an RN Cemetery generally used for the sick and injured evacuated from Salonika and Gallipoli who succumbed whilst in hospital on the island. William is remembered at St Anne's, (W.A. Dyke).

Maud Dyke and Ephraim Bird were married in 1911. Maud died aged 43 in 1919 and her daughter Gladys aged 24 in 1921. In 1939, Ephraim Bird, a retired railway inspector lived at Redfield with two of his children. He died aged 77 in 1949.

**27<sup>th</sup> June, at Sea. Steward James WYATT, 1893-1918** was a son of James Wyatt senior, a carpenter and joiner, and his wife, Ellen Jane, nee Mulcahy. Their children William, Frank, James, and Oriel, were born in Brislington whilst Mary Ann and the baby, Loriston, were born "at Ridgeway". In 1911, Frank Wyatt (*qv.*24.2.1919) was a carpenter but his younger brothers, James and Oriel, were "wrappers at a soap works". If this was the Polysulphene Company, then the boys' difficulty travelling to work may have hastened the family's return to 52 Sandy Park Road, though if seen as a ploy to keep them at home, it failed. "Soap wrapping" must have been particularly tedious, so James and Oriel joined the Merchant Navy. The RMS "Llandovery Castle" was built in Glasgow in 1913 for the Union Castle Line and was formerly in service between London and both East and West Africa. James Wyatt, an officers' steward, may have been on board during some of these peacetime voyages. In July 1916 the vessel was assigned to the Canadian Forces as a Hospital Ship and two years later on 27 June 1918, having taken war casualties home was returning to England from Halifax, Nova Scotia. The vessel, clearly identified as a Hospital Ship, was unarmed and

running with full lights and a brightly illuminated Red Cross, but despite these precautions, she was torpedoed off southern Ireland. On board were a crew of one hundred and sixty-four, plus eighty officers and men of the Canadian Medical Corps, and fourteen nurses, a total of two hundred and fifty-eight persons.



James' death was reported by the WDP, 6 July 1918: *"WYATT. June 27<sup>th</sup> torpedoed on HM Hospital ship Llandoverly Castle. James Wyatt, saloon steward and 4<sup>th</sup> son of James Taylor & Ellen Jane Wyatt of 52 Sandy Park Road, Brislington, aged 25. In the midst of life we are in death."*

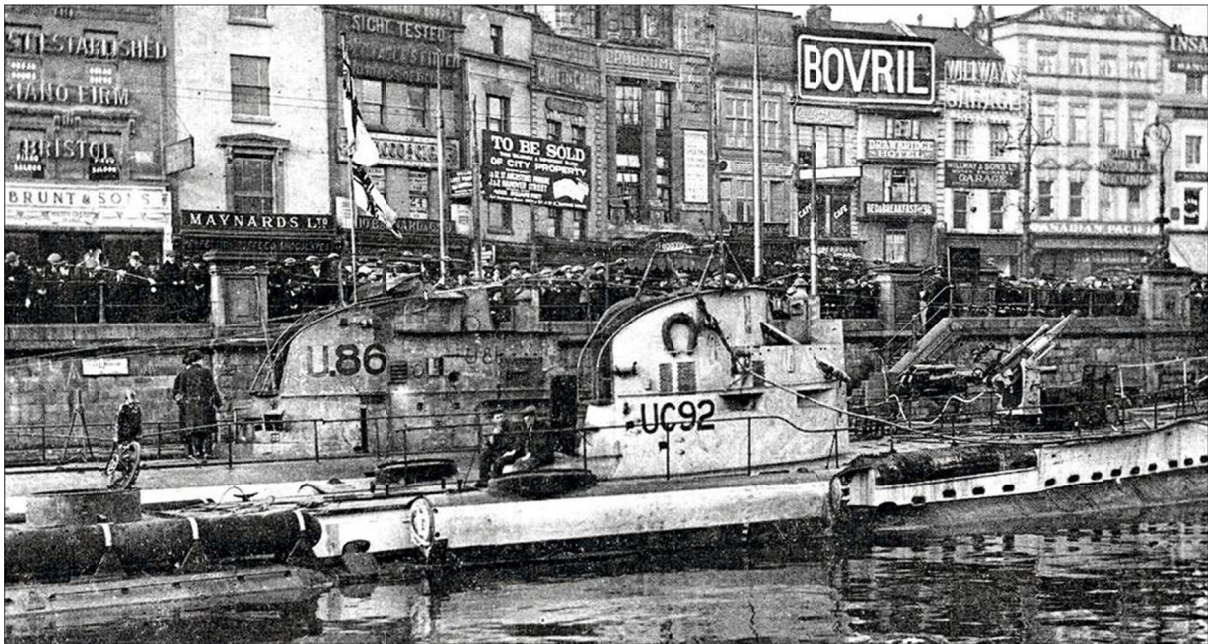
In December 1918 the German crew of U Boat U-86 surrendered and was taken in charge by the Royal Navy at Harwich. The vessel was brought to Bristol Docks where it was moored at the Floating Harbour, opposite the Co-operative Building. A few days later, the Lord Mayor of Bristol (Alderman Twiggs) visited the vessel with other civic dignitaries.

The Western Daily Press reported: "Very little is known of the part she played in the war. The German officers who handed over the vessels were not as a rule those who commanded them on their piratical expeditions and moreover were not generally in a communicative mood."<sup>184</sup>

The reticence of the Germans was understandable. The Captain of the U.86 had committed a war crime. The full story would later emerge.

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<sup>184</sup> WDP 11./14.12.1918



***Captured WW1 German submarines U86 and UC92 on view to the public in the centre of Bristol. (courtesy of Paul Townsend)***

According to the Hague Convention, an enemy vessel had the right to stop and search a Hospital Ship, but not to sink it. The German U-boat 86 which stopped the “Llandoverly Castle” made no attempt to search the ship and within ten minutes the “Llandoverly Castle” began to sink. Several boats were lowered successfully and the ship was abandoned in a calm and efficient manner; three of the boats escaped the crippled vessel undamaged and proceeded to rescue survivors from the water. The boats were intercepted by the U-Boat Captain Helmut Patzig who decided that the ship was being misused as an ammunition carrier. When no such proof could be established, he ordered his crew below decks to make clear for diving but stayed on the surface himself with two officers Ludwig Dithmar and John Boldt and the boatswain’s mate Meissner. The U-boat did not dive, but started firing at and sinking the life boats in an attempt to kill all the witnesses and cover up what had happened. Patzig extracted promises of secrecy from the crew, and faked the course of U-86 in the logbook so that nothing would connect it to the sinking.

Thirty six hours later, on the morning of the 29<sup>th</sup> June, a destroyer, HMS “Lysander” rescued 24 people from one of the life boats, but the rest, two hundred and thirty four people including the fourteen Nursing Sisters were lost.

After the war, the British sought to charge the officers of U.86 for this War Crime, but the proceedings were farcical. Patzig could not be found and was never brought to trial. Dithmar and Boldt were tried, convicted and sentenced to four years with hard labour, but escaped while being taken to prison. It is not known whether they were ever recaptured.



It is unknown whether James Wyatt was killed in the initial attack or survived to be murdered in the lifeboats. He is commemorated on the Merchant Navy Memorial at Tower Hill and remembered at St Luke's, (J. Wyatt). His brother Oriel, born 1895, who served in the Merchant Navy, 1914-1925, married Lucy Smith in 1921 and died at Thornbury in 1974.

**28<sup>th</sup> June, France, The Lys. Gunner William Ewart HAYNES, 1898-1918** spent his early life in the Swindon area with his parents, Edward, a coach builder, and Maud, nee Kirk, and three siblings. He enlisted in the 5<sup>th</sup> Trench Mortar Battery, RFA at Watford in 1916. He was killed, aged 20, at The Lys with three other members of his gun emplacement, John Wood, John Medley and Thomas Kidd who were buried in adjacent graves, at the Tannay Cemetery, Thiennes, Row D, 3, 4, 5 & 6 plus forty other men who died in the same action. The CWGC records William's mother Maud, and father the late Edward Haynes of 72 Sandholme Road, Brislington. He is remembered at St Anne's, (W. Haynes).

**30<sup>th</sup> June, France. Private Edwin John PADFIELD, 1899-1918 and Private John Harold PIKE, 1899-1918** were friends and fellow members of the St Luke's CLB. Edwin was born in Kingswood, the eldest child and namesake of Edwin Padfield and his wife Mary Ann. Edwin Padfield senior took over the Brislington Dairy around 1908 and the family came from Moorfields to Grove Road, with their children Edwin, Edith, George, Lillie Rose and a new baby, Evelyn Maude. Later they lived at 12 Montrose Avenue.

John was the youngest child of a coachman, Alfred Pike who died shortly after he was born. He also lived at Grove Road though later moved with his widowed mother Caroline and four siblings to 1 Hayfield Cottages.

The two boys joined the 8<sup>th</sup> SLI together, fought together and died together, both aged 18, two more young lives tragically taken in the latter stages of the war. They were buried in adjoining graves E. 3 & E. 4 at Couin New British Cemetery, alongside another young soldier, Ellis Knowles of Bolton, who was killed in the same action. They are remembered at St Luke's (E.J. Padfield; J.H. Pike) and on the separate CLB Plaque, (Edwin Padfield; John Pike).

**6<sup>th</sup> July, France. Lieutenant Mervyn Digby KNIGHT, MC, 1891-1918**, was a son of Henry Knight of Keeper's Cottage, coachman to Mr Joseph Cooke-Hurle (1891). By 1901 Henry was described "gardener, domestic" and if this was a demotion then it may have been the spur which led to his decision to emigrate. The Knight family – Henry, his Irish wife Sarah Jane, and their seven children, Edith, Henry, Mabel, Mervyn, Reginald, Winifred, and Isabel left for Australia. They were living at Mitford Street, St Kilda, Victoria in 1914 when Mervyn, a clerk, enlisted as a Private in the 4<sup>th</sup> Light Horse, Australian Imperial Force. He embarked for Europe in the Transport ship "Wiltshire" on the 19<sup>th</sup> October and was later commissioned Lieutenant in the 60<sup>th</sup> Battalion, AIF. On 30 September 1917 he was awarded the Military Cross: *"For Conspicuous Bravery and devotion to duty. He rendered valuable service to the work of consolidation and continued unflinchingly in his efforts to advance his line. He set a splendid example of fearlessness to his men."*

Mervyn, who was killed in action in France is buried at Mericourt-l'Abbe, Somme in Grave III.D.12.<sup>185</sup> The CWGC describes him "a native of Brislington". He is commemorated, no. 170 on the Australian War Memorial.



*Group portrait of officers of the 60th Battalion, AIF. Mervyn Knight is 2<sup>nd</sup> left, 2<sup>nd</sup> Row*

**9<sup>th</sup> July, France. Private George Frederick Albert BURNETT, 1899-1918** was one of two children of Arthur George and Catherine Eliza Burnett, nee Ford, of 11 Sandhurst Road. The census form, 1911, was completed with a touch of grandeur: "Mr A.G. Burnett, 37, working man, carpenter, railway; Mrs C. Burnett, 36; Miss B. Burnett, 6; and Mr G. Burnett, 12."

Young George was conscripted into the 2<sup>nd</sup> Oxford & Bucks Light Infantry aged eighteen. He was killed in action alongside an older soldier, Gunner George Parkin, aged forty one. They were buried next to each other at Bellacourt Military Cemetery in Graves IIIA.9 &10. George's death was announced in the Bath Chronicle, 3 August 1918:

*"BURNETT, Private George Frederick Albert, the dearly beloved and only son of George & Catherine Burnett of 11 Sandhurst Road, Brislington and grandson of Mr C. Ford & Mr J. Burnett of Bath, killed in action in France July 9<sup>th</sup>, 1918 aged 19 years. Sadly missed by all."* George is remembered at St Anne's, (G.F. Burnett).

**17<sup>th</sup> July, France. Private Harold George Whitford BROWN, 1899-1918** of 37 Grove Park Avenue, born at Bath, was the second son of Philip and Nellie Brown to die in the war. Like his brother Albert (*qv.* 2.11.1917) he was a member of the St Luke's CLB. He was

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<sup>185</sup> Mervyn's parents called their house "Mericourt" in his memory.

conscripted aged eighteen into the 15<sup>th</sup> Hampshire Yeomanry for the duration of the war. He is one of “the missing” of the Ypres Salient which stretched from Langemarck to Ploegsteert Wood and is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial, on Panels 88-90 & 162. Harold is remembered at St Luke’s (H.G.W. Brown) and on the CLB Plaque (Harold Brown). The boys’ elder brother Maurice appears to have survived the war.

**20<sup>th</sup> July to 2nd August: Battle of the Marne. A successful counter-offensive.**

**20<sup>th</sup> July 1918, France. Lance Corporal Alfred JURY, 1896-1918** was one of nine children of



James, a “Beach Man” at the Welsh seaside resort of Ogmore, and Catherine, nee Davies. Alfred, who was a schoolteacher, enlisted aged 19 years and eight months on 1 December 1914, in the Welsh Army Corps. He was transferred to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Welsh Guards when it was raised by order of King George V in February 1915 to complete the national complement of Foot Guards. Before he left for France, Alfred married Mary Thomas and they had a son, Isaac, in 1916. Alfred was at Loos, July 1917, when he was wounded, possibly at Pilckem Wood where Sergeant Robert Bye won the battalion’s first Victoria Cross.

***War Memorial at St Bride’s Major***

Alfred was back in France by the spring of 1918. He was killed in action, aged twenty two, and is buried Grave 11.D.3 at Berles, Pas de Calais. He is remembered on the War Memorial at St Bride’s Major, Ogmore-by-Sea. His widow Mary was recorded by the CWGC at 44 Wick Road, Brislington. In 1922 she married Charles H. Reed.

**2<sup>nd</sup> August, France. Private Reginald Randolph NOYES, 1897-1918** was the eldest son of Thomas and Emma, nee Old who 1901-1911 lived at 50 Addison Road, St Anne’s Park. Tom Noyes worked as a van driver for his father, a confectioner. Reg, who attended St Anne’s School with his brothers and sister, Victor, Leslie and Ivy, was conscripted into the Durham Light Infantry and subsequently transferred to the 1/6<sup>th</sup> North Staffords. He was wounded in action and was brought to the field hospital at Fouquieres where he died, aged twenty. He is buried there at the Churchyard Extension in Grave IV.G.4. He is remembered at St Anne’s Church (R.R. Noyes) and School (R. Noyes).

**The Hundred Days Offensive, which began at Amiens, (8<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> August) where the British and French scored a notable victory, was also known as the “Advance to Victory”, when the Allies launched a series of offensives against the enemy on the Western Front which essentially pushed the Germans out of France beyond the Hindenburg Line. It does not refer to a specific battle, but a rapid series of Allied victories. It was ultimately successful**

**and culminated in the Armistice of 11<sup>th</sup> November but at a terrible cost. The majority of Brislington's casualties during the period were young conscripts.**

**8<sup>th</sup> August, France. Thomas Hughes BRITTON, 1899-1918**, the second son of Alfred, an engine fitter and Adelaide Mary, nee Jones who in 1901, lived at 72 Victoria Road, Moorfields. Adelaide died in 1910 aged 38 leaving four sons between twelve and three years old. Thomas was called up, aged 18, into the 2/7<sup>th</sup> Royal Warwickshires. For four years since the outbreak of war the Allies had occupied the small French town of Merville, but in April 1918 it was taken by the Germans during their spring offensive. Thomas Hughes was killed during the counter-attack. (The struggle to retake Merville was finally successful on the 19<sup>th</sup> August.) Thomas is buried at Merville Communal Cemetery Extension in Grave E.54 with eight others who died the same day. CWGC gives his father's address as 106 Newbridge Road, though Thomas is not named on the St Anne's Memorial.

**9<sup>th</sup> August, Flanders. Private Ernest Edward STEPHENS, 1899-1918** was a son of Frederick, a prison warder and his wife Mary Ann, nee Thomas. In 1901 they lived in staff quarters at Exeter Gaol with four of their children, Frederick, junior, 16, a pawnbroker's assistant, John, 11, Winifred, 4 and Ernest, two. By 1911, Frederick had been pensioned from the prison service and lived at Tickenham before moving to 7 Eastwood Road, St Anne's Park with his wife and Ernest. (Winifred meanwhile was a boarder at a Methodist girls' school.) Ernest, aged 18, joined the 15<sup>th</sup> Hampshires for the duration of the war. He was one of nine members of the Regiment who were killed or later died of their wounds 8/9 August 1918, brought from the battlefield to La Clytte, West-Vlaanderen (which served as the Brigade HQ) and buried there in Grave IV.C.14. A brief announcement (16<sup>th</sup> August) reads:

*"STEPHENS. Killed in Action on the night of August 8-9, Ernest Edward, Hampshire Regt, dearly loved youngest son of F & M. Stephens of St Anne's Park aged 19 years."* CWGC records Ernest as "a native of Exeter". He is remembered on the War Memorial at St Quiricus & St Julietta, Tickenham.

**18 August - 2 September: advance in Flanders, Lys Valley to take back the territory lost in April.**

**21 August - 2 September. Second Battle of the Somme. British advanced over the Somme battlefields of 1916.**

**22<sup>nd</sup> August, France. Private Edward (Malcolm) ROBBINS, 1899-1918** was the eldest of three children of Edward, a carpenter and Flora, the others being daughters, Winifred and Hilda. In 1911 they lived at 43 Grove Park Avenue with Lydia Robbins, 70, Edward senior's aunt ("of private means").

Malcolm, first conscripted into the Middlesex Regiment, transferred to the 19<sup>th</sup> London Regiment and was killed in action, aged 18, during the "100 days offensive". He has no known grave and is commemorated on Panel 8-9 of the Vis-en-Artois Memorial among the

9,000 who fell at Picardy and Artois from 8<sup>th</sup> December until the Armistice. He is remembered at St Luke's, (M. Robbins). Edward and Flora were still at 43 Grove Park Avenue in 1939. Edward died aged 67 in 1942 and Flora, aged 80 in 1957.

**26 Aug – 3 September. 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of Arras. Successful break of the German line.**

**26<sup>th</sup> August, France. Private Vernon Olonza WRIGHT, 1897-1918**, was born at Swindon, one of three children of Arthur Wright of Birmingham and his wife Fanny, nee Welsby who were at 127 Repton Road, Brislington when Vernon enlisted in the Royal Marines, 10 December 1915, aged "18 years, 4 months and 18 days". Perhaps because of his height, 5 foot 1¼ inches, he was "attested to reserve". He was eventually mobilised in October 1917 and embarked for France on 11 February 1918. He was of 1<sup>st</sup> RM Battalion, "C" Company, 10<sup>th</sup> Platoon, (RN. Division) when he was posted as "Missing in action" on 26 August 1918, though not officially "presumed dead", until 19<sup>th</sup> November. He has no known grave and is commemorated on Panel 1 of the Vis-en-Artois Memorial and on the Royal Marine Medal Roll. He is remembered at St Luke's, (V. Wright). In 1939 Arthur and Fanny Wright were still at 127 Repton Road, with their son Leslie, born 1900 and daughter in law Fanny.

**30<sup>th</sup> August, France. Private William Thomas BAILEY, 1894-1918**, son of Walter and Sophia, nee Cox, was christened at Chew Magna, 3 June 1894, with his sister Annie Rosina, aged two. An older daughter, Alice Muriel was born in 1895. Sophia Bailey died aged 30, following the birth and death of a fourth baby. In 1901, Walter Bailey and his remaining children lived with his mother-in-law, Ann Marshman at 2 Gas Crescent; he married his second wife Emily Sarah Govern in 1903.

It is likely that William Bailey was serving in the Royal Gloucestershire Hussars when he began courting Daisy Penney, a maid servant in the household of a surgeon, Mr Richard Brew, at "The Hollies", Chew Magna. The couple married in 1914; a year later, Daisy was living in Brislington when their son Arthur was born. William, who had been transferred to the 6<sup>th</sup> Dorchester Regiment, was wounded in action and died of his wounds at a field hospital in France. He is buried in Grave R.II. G. 7 at the St Sever Cemetery Extension, Rouen, and is remembered at St Luke's, (W.T. Bailey).

Daisy, who is recorded by the CWGC as "late of Brislington" had probably left the village with her son Arthur at the time of her second marriage in 1921 to Arthur Hillier. In 1939 they were living at Clutton.

**1<sup>st</sup> September, France. Private Leonard William SAVAGE, 1899-1918**, baptised at St Mark's, Easton, 26 November 1899, was the only child of William George and Minnie Rose, nee Hill. He spent his early life at his parents' grocery shop in Stapleton Road before enlisting, probably under age in the 12<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters. He was wounded aged 19, during the "Advance to Victory" and died of his injuries at the Clearing Station at Gezancourt. He is buried in Grave VI.E.7 at the Bagneux British Cemetery. The CWGC records his parents at 12 Grove

Park, (otherwise "Pendomer"), Brislington which by coincidence (?) was also the address of Gilbert Poole, (qv 3.5.1917). Leonard is not named on the local War Memorials.

**2<sup>nd</sup> September, France. Gunner William PONTIN(G), 1880-1918**, married Florence Durston in 1904 and fathered two sons, Stanley and Douglas. In 1911 the family lived at 47 Repton Road. William, a house painter, was conscripted in 1916 and served in the 232<sup>nd</sup> Siege Battery of the Royal Garrison Artillery. He was one of seven men who were killed together in defence of the French village of Foucaucourt which had been taken from enemy hands on 27<sup>th</sup> August. Four of the men were, like William, in the RGA, presumably from the same gun placement. Only one document concerning his army service survives: it contains his "name, regiment and number" and has the word "Dead" scrawled across it in pencil. He lies buried in the South West Corner of Foucaucourt Cemetery and is remembered at St Luke's and St Anne's (W. Pontin). Florence remained a widow and in 1939 lived with her son Stanley at Talbot Road, Knowle.

**3<sup>rd</sup> September, France. Private Alfred PARKER, 1896-1918** and his twin brother Frank were born in 1896 to Jesse, a railwayman, and Annie Matilda, nee Dowling who also had an older son, Arthur and two younger daughters, Louisa and Eva. They arrived at "Bourneville", 109 Repton Road sometime about 1911. Alfred, a telegraph boy, enlisted in the 8<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters for the duration of the War, perhaps landing with the battalion in France in 1915. He was wounded in action during the "Advance to Victory", and died aged 22, at a casualty clearing station. He was buried at Lapugnoy Military Cemetery, Grave X.C and is remembered at St Luke's, (A. Parker).



***Brislington Station.***

In 1939, Jesse, a retired railwayman, and Annie were still living at 109 Repton Road, with Frank, who was then working at Terrell's Rope Works.

**3<sup>rd</sup> September, France. Private Ralph SLOCOMBE, 1899-1918**, a sometime pupil at St Matthew Moorfields School was a younger son of Thomas Slocombe, (formerly a private in the 11<sup>th</sup> Hussars, afterwards an iron and copper plate sawyer) and Louisa, nee Busted. By 1911 they lived at 72 Repton Road, with their children Thomas, Louisa, Ralph, and May. Ralph, a Sergeant in St Luke's CLB enlisted the 2<sup>nd</sup> Hampshires as soon as he was of age, and thus became another of Brislington's youthful soldiers engaged in the "100 days offensive". He was wounded in action and died at the hospital at St Omer. He is buried in Grave V.E. 8. at Longuenesse Souvenir Cemetery. He is remembered at St Luke's (R. Slocombe), on the CLB Plaque (Ralph Slocombe) and on the Memorial to the Old Boys of St Matthew Moorfield's School.

Thomas, Ralph's elder brother, who was in the Army Ordnance Corps, survived the war and in 1939 lived at 18 Harrow Road with his wife Gertrude and daughter Betty. Ralph's uncle, William Busted, the Slocombe family's lodger also survived army service.



**War Memorial Plaque, St Matthew Moorfield's Old Boys.**

**12<sup>th</sup> September – 12<sup>th</sup> October, large scale Allied advances. Battle of Hindenburg Line. German ability to keep fighting in doubt.**

**18<sup>th</sup> September, France. Private Frederick Theodore VIRGIN, 1897-1918** was the eldest son



of Fred, an electric tramcar driver, and Sarah, nee Forsby, the other children being Sidney, Ada, Emily and Harold. In 1911 they lived at 27 Manworthy Road. Fred junior attested in 1916 under the Derby Scheme and served with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, East Kents ("The Buffs").

***Pte Fred Virgin, 1897-1918***

On 15 September 1918 he wrote home asking his mother to send him a new watch strap because his had worn out. He says he is writing on paper that he had found in *"one of the houses left standing"*. He had been to Church Parade but *"didn't think much of it; they never seem to speak of the things that matter. I always like the Non C. service best but it is very seldom they have them out here."*

*"Roll on the time I can get back home again for out here where we need more help to keep in the right way. There's one thing, everybody keeps cheerful no matter what the circumstances for after all it's just like a big family. We are especially cheerful now and that's only natural since the news has been so good lately.*

*"Yesterday we travelled miles in motor lorries over ground that a month ago was in enemy hands. Did you read about this advance? They mentioned how it started at the time of the last Intercession Day and that is a very good sign, don't you think? Let's hope we can keep it up for it's about time the whole business is finished as of course everybody is fed up with it but it's impossible to realise what the war means unless they've seen it. It opened my eyes when I first saw the destruction but I'm used to it now....."<sup>186</sup>*

Fred asks whether his brother Sid has come down from Scotland yet. *"I don't expect he likes it not being able to get leave but I suppose he'll have to put up with it for a bit, the same as I've got to, worse luck."* His brother, Sidney Rowland Virgin, born 3 April 1899, had joined the Royal Navy on 3 April 1917, for twelve years.

Three days later, Fred, aged 21, was killed in action during the "Hundred Days Offensive". It is chilling to imagine that this last letter probably arrived after the news of his death. His mother received condolences from Sgt R. Griffiths of the 57<sup>th</sup> Hampshire Regiment (with whom Fred had served before being transferred to the Buffs): Fred was *"One of the best. I never knew him anything but cheery, sunny, good tempered and willing and one of the 'cleanest' young fellows I have come across. Though so much younger than myself, I always*

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<sup>186</sup> Two pages of the letter survive: archives of St Luke's church



*had a very real respect for him and never heard him say anything which he would not have minded saying before you. I do not know of another young man in the army of whom I could say the same. We were all most sorry last spring to lose him and can hardly realise yet that he will not be coming back."*

Another comrade, "A.E. Marshall", also wrote of his sorrow: *"it was a great blow to me to have to part with him when his turn came to go out to the front as he had been with me so long. It is a real personal loss to me as I loved him very much."*<sup>187</sup>

Fred has no known grave and is commemorated on Panel 3 of the Vis-en-Artois Memorial and is remembered at St Luke's (F.T. Virgin).

On the first anniversary of his death an "In Memoriam" notice reads: *"VIRGIN. In affectionate and loving memory of Frederick T. Virgin, East Kents, eldest and dearly loved son of F & S.A. Virgin of 27 Manworthy Road, Brislington, who fell in action in France September 18, 1918. Until the day break and the shadows fall away."*

Fred's brother Sid served in various ships as a telegraphist (with an exemplary record) until 1924 when he "bought himself out" for £24. In 1939 he was a bus driver, living with his wife and children at 3 Bankside Road. Fred Virgin senior died in 1932 aged 61; in 1939 Fred's mother Sarah, and her daughter Amy, were still at 27 Manworthy Road. Her youngest son Harold lived nearby at no. 11 with his wife Kate.

**22<sup>nd</sup> September, France. Private Arthur Frank LEWTAS, 1894-1918**, was a nephew of John and Elizabeth Hayes of Woodlawn, Winchester Road, who placed this obituary, 12 December 1918: *"LEWTAS. McKEY: Arthur Frank LEWTAS, September 1918 & Matthew Charles McKEY<sup>188</sup>, October 1917, greatly loved nephews of Mr & Mrs J.F. Hayes of Brislington. Shall Britain lose her sons in vain?"*

Arthur, of Greenbank Road, St George was a son of Elizabeth Hayes' brother David Lewtas, a monumental sculptor who came to Bristol from Newcastle. Arthur and his brother Henry joined up on the outbreak of the war and are recorded, 31 October 1914, entertaining their fellow recruits at "glees", Arthur notably rendering a nautical ditty, *"Shipmates o' Mine"*. On 20 July 1916 he was among those in the group photograph of the men of "Bristol's Own" sent to the WDP by the St Anne's man, Herbert Dancey, (qv).

*"The news that Private A. Lewtas, son of Mr & Mrs Lewtas has been killed in action will be heard with regret. He was one of the earliest of the volunteers for "Bristol's Own" and had seen a lot of hard fighting. In the Somme battle of 1916 he was wounded and in August last "LEWTAS, Pte Arthur, of the Gloucesters (Bristol's Own) beloved younger son of David & Louisa Lewtas, killed in action, France, aged 24, Sept. 22, 1918." year he was again knocked out but made a quick recovery and resumed his place in the fighting line. He fell on 22<sup>nd</sup>*

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<sup>187</sup> Letters, permission of St Luke's church, Brislington

<sup>188</sup> Matthew McKey, qv 11.10.1917

*September. Two of his brothers are on active service.*<sup>189</sup> Arthur, who has no known grave, is commemorated on Panel 60-64, of the Loos Memorial.

John and Elizabeth Hayes had announced their Silver Wedding Anniversary on 10 July 1916, stating optimistically "*celebration after the war*". It is unlikely the party took place soon after the Armistice, particularly as Arthur has so recently died and sadly, Elizabeth herself died on 30 April 1919 aged 53. Their son John Lewtas Hayes, a Private in the RAMC, a dentist, married a telephonist, Minnie Rosina Illman, of 33 Grove Park Avenue, daughter of Thomas, an RN Petty Officer at St Luke's on 23 July 1917. In 1939, John and Minnie lived at 236 Wick Road with their daughter Audrey.

**24<sup>th</sup> September, France. Private Gilbert Edward PRIOR, 1883-1918** was the 3<sup>rd</sup> child of James, a carpenter, and Mary Ann Prior. In 1901, aged 17, he was a stable boy at Chipping Sodbury with his parents and siblings. He served in the Berkshire Regiment as a youth, but was a civilian again by 1911, in lodgings at Clevedon, working as a house painter. The same year he married Lily Violet Amos, a housemaid at Edgecombe House, Clifton, the home of an elderly widow, Catherine Smith. Gilbert was recalled soon after the outbreak of war and went to France with the BEF. In 1918 he was in action with the 1<sup>st</sup> Gloucesters at Estaires, Hazebrouck, Bethune, Drocourt-Queant and Epehy; he was probably killed during the latter engagement. His body was brought to a clearing station and thence to Bellicourt Cemetery where he was buried in Grave IV.Q.3. He is remembered on the War Memorial at Chipping Sodbury although the CWGC records his widow's address as 34 Churchill Road, Brislington.

***28<sup>th</sup> September - to 11<sup>th</sup> November. The Final advance in Flanders. British and Belgian armies broke out of Ypres Salient. More ground was taken in one day than in the entire Passchendaele Offensive of the previous year.***

**29<sup>th</sup> September, France. Rifleman Harry Ernest JONES, 1897-1918** was born at Wednesbury, Staffordshire, the son of Harry Spiers Jones, a railway clerk, and his wife Kate, nee Dwight, who also had two daughters. Though the family moved from Newport to Knowle before the outbreak of war, Harry enlisted in his local Regiment, the 1<sup>st</sup> Monmouthshires in 1914 and was in France by the following February, when the battalion suffered heavy losses at Ypres. He survived three years of fighting only to die aged 21, of wounds received during an action at the Somme to retake the town of Roisel. He is buried there at the Communal Cemetery Extension in Grave II.K.8, and is remembered on the War Memorial at St Woolos Cathedral, Newport. The CWGC records his father, Harry, of 6 Montrose Avenue, Brislington.

**30<sup>th</sup> September, France. Lance Corporal Albert William HAZELL, 1898-1918**, son of Albert, a tanner's labourer, and Elizabeth, nee Cook, the only boy among six sisters lived at St Luke's Road, Totterdown in 1911. He enlisted in the 2/5<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters aged 18, and was in France by 23 May 1916. He died of wounds sustained during fighting near Bethune and was buried at St Venant Communal Cemetery, Grave IV. B. 40. He is remembered on The Cenotaph to

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<sup>189</sup> WDP 12.10.1918

the Fallen of 1/5<sup>th</sup> & 2/5<sup>th</sup> Gloucestershire Regiments at Gloucester Park. The CWGC records his parents at 1 Sutton Avenue, Brislington, houses newly built (by the William Sutton Trust), on the site of the demolished Broomwell House, off Wick Road.

**30<sup>th</sup> September, France. Private Herbert Henry George (Bert) JOHNSON, 1898-1918** lived at Bedminster and Fishponds before 1911 when his father Edwin, evidently attracted by work at the Tramway Depot, moved the family to 133 Bloomfield Road. Their sojourn at Brislington did not last long and they were soon off to pastures new, this time across the sea to Canada.

Bert enlisted in the 87<sup>th</sup> Battalion (Canadian Grenadier Guards) and sailed back to England in April 1916 before embarking for France as part of the 11<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade. He was killed, aged 19, in a successful action during which the Canadians took Haynecourt and Sailly. He is buried in Grave B32 at the Cantimpre Cemetery among 225 Great War burials, only twenty one of whom are identified by name: four from UK forces and the other sixteen Canadians, largely from the 54<sup>th</sup>, 75<sup>th</sup> and 87<sup>th</sup> Battalions. A local friend who was still in touch with the Johnson family placed an obituary notice, 31 October 1918: *"JOHNSON, Sept. 30, Private Herbert Johnson (Bert), Canadian Grenadier Guards, son of Mr & Mrs. E.H. Johnson, Montreal, late of Brislington."* His parents' address, 1669 De la Roche, Montreal (CWGC).

**30<sup>th</sup> September/1<sup>st</sup> October, France. Private Thomas (Tom) Comer TUCKER, 1896-1918**, according to his enlistment card was "born Brislington". He was the youngest of five children, the others being Amy, Grace, Harold and Henry, belonging to Thomas Tucker, a stationary engine driver and his wife Kate, nee Brice, of 27 Morley Road. Harold died aged 14 in 1904, and their mother, Kate, in 1913, aged 52, mercifully unaware that her two remaining sons would soon be fighting in the "War to end Wars". Thomas who served in the 2/5<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters, was killed in the "Hundred Days Offensive" aged twenty two and is buried at the Laventie Military Cemetery, La Gorgue in Grave IV.D.2.

Roll of Honour, 16 October: *"TUCKER. Thomas Comer Tucker, Gloucester Regt, most loved and youngest son of Thomas Tucker, killed in action in France, October 1. Deeply mourned by his father, aunties and uncles."*

*"TUCKER. In loving memory of our dear brother Tom, killed in action October 1. Beloved by Amy & Eddie, Grace and brother Nen, serving in France."*

"Nen" must be Henry Tucker, Tom's brother who was two years his senior and who survived the war.

**2<sup>nd</sup> October – 11<sup>th</sup> November. Final advance in Artois. Liberation of French coalfields at Lens.**

**5<sup>th</sup> October, France. Corporal Herbert Samuel GOODLAND, c1877-1918** died in a tragic accident. He was born in Yeovil, a son of Edward, a railway signalman, and Elizabeth

Goodland, nee Bishop. Like other railway families, the Goodlands moved to various parts of Somerset and Devon, as directed by the GWR. As a young man Herbert served briefly in the Northamptonshire Regiment but by 1901, following in his father's footsteps, he had gone back to the GWR, as a railway guard. He was in lodgings in Cardiff in 1902 when he met and married a Welsh girl, Edna Reece. By 1911, with Herbert working as a warehouseman, they set up home at 38 Sandbach Road, Brislington with their three children, Edna May, 8, Lily, 7 and Herbert Edward aged one.

Herbert was recalled early in the war to the Royal Engineers. Unusually perhaps, he was placed in an area of expertise that he knew a little about, the 9<sup>th</sup> Light Railway Division, but sadly it would end tragically. On 5 October 1918 he was killed (with two others badly wounded, one of whom later died) in a serious accident, the circumstances of which, despite the battles raging around them required investigation by a Military Court:

*“Proceedings of a Court of Enquiry assembled at La Pierrette Light Railway Depot on 6<sup>th</sup> October 1918 by order of Captain G.H. Hall, O.C. no 9<sup>th</sup> LROC, R.E. for purpose of enquiring into and reporting on the circumstances by which W.R./269323 A/Cpl Goodland, H.S. was killed and W.R./26474 A/Cpl Shipp, & W.R./178778, Sapper Lawson, J.R. were injured on the night of October 5<sup>th</sup>, 1918.*

*Members: Captain L. Tibbitts, R.E. & Captain W. McJ. Robinson, S.A.E. “The Court assembled pursuant to order to proceed to take evidence of:-*

*1<sup>st</sup> Witness. W.R./262057 A/Cpl E.A. Knight, 9<sup>th</sup> L.R. Operating Company, who states that at 12.10. a.m. (Summer Time) ‘I was on duty in the Control Office when I heard excited voices giving an alarm of fire and going outside my office I noticed a hut on fire and it appeared to be gutted. I was unable to leave my post and I therefore telephoned to Lieut. Stewart. Just as I had finished telephoning, one of the injured men, A/Cpl Shipp came limping to my office and stated he had been burned. I made telephonic arrangements with the Field Ambulance at Hesinaul. About five minutes after the arrival of Shipp, Sapper Lawson was assisted to my office suffering from burns. Fearing delay of the arrival of the car I made arrangements for the men to be conveyed by ambulance train to the C.C.S. Ruitz. First Aid was rendered in the interim period to the two men by the ambulance man of the Depot. I knew the deceased A/Cpl Goodland. I last saw him alive about 18.30 on the day in question and he was apparently in good health. (Signed) E.A.Knight.’*

*2<sup>nd</sup> Witness. W.R./264738 Sapper G.B. Atkinson, 9<sup>th</sup> Operating Company states: ‘Shortly after midnight Driver Caplin reported that there was a fire in the petrol store. I went in the direction of the fire with a bucket of water. On arrival at the hut which was occupied by the deceased and the two injured men, I took steps to quench the fire. I forced open the door of the hut and saw Sapper Lawson who was leaning near the door. I brought him out, removed his burning tunic and extinguished his other burning garments. With the exception of his hat,*

*I am under the impression that he was fully dressed. I have known Sapper Lawson over 18 months. I did not see Goodland or Shipp in the hut as it was burning too fiercely.'*

[From here the majority of the papers concerning the incident have not survived, having been burnt in the conflagration of WW2. The document resumes mid-evidence of Witness no. 11, with gaps.]

*'.....turned out the men in the huts. There were on the [ ] extinguished the fire. I arranged for the guard [to stay] overnight and am satisfied that things remained [ ] until I went with the Sergeant Major [ ]. Suitable fire precautions have always been c[arried out and] these were in order on the 5<sup>th</sup> inst. I sa[ ] Pay Parade at 8 p.m. when they were sober. I have a high opinion of all three, especially the NCOs. (Signed J.E. Stewart, Lt.)*

*12<sup>th</sup> Witness, Captain G.W. Hall, O.C. 9<sup>th</sup> L.R. Operating Company, and states, ' I am O.C. of the 9<sup>th</sup> L.R.O. Company and this Depot is under my control. About midnight on the 5<sup>th</sup> October Cpl Knight who was on duty in the Control at La Pierrette called me by telephone and informed me that the hut occupied by Cpls Goodland, Shipp and Sapper Davis was on fire and that he feared Goodland and Davis were burned to death and that Shipp and Lawson were badly injured. The RAMC man attached to the Company was attending to the injured men. I instructed him to inform the C.C.S. that he was receiving at Ruitz that the two men would be there shortly. Sometime later Lt. Stewart telephoned giving further particulars that Davis for some reason slept in an adjoining dug-out. On the morning of the 6<sup>th</sup> October I instructed him to make enquires as to the reason for Davis' removal to another billet and to be careful to find out if any liquor had been taken in the hut. Lt. Stewart was quite sure of the sobriety of the men concerned and they have all been of very good character whilst with the Company. I then took steps to convene a Court of Enquiry and reported to A.D.L.R. 5. It is impossible to obtain statements from Shipp or Lawson as both are in a precarious condition.'* (Signed G.W. Hall, Captain, O.C. 9<sup>th</sup> LRO Coy, R.E.)

*The Court having considered the evidence report as under: a) that WR/269323 A/Cpl Goodland, H.S. met his death by accidental burning but how the fire originated it is impossible to say and can only be surmised that a candle was left burning.*

*b) that WR/178778 Sapper Lawson, J.R. & WR/264747 A/Cpl Shipp were accidentally injured by burning as a result of the fire.*

*c) that as far as the Court was able to ascertain every available means were used to extinguish the fire and to effect a rescue.*

*d) the evidence of WR/263171 Sapper Davis, T. that the deceased and the injured men were drunk is unsupported and the Court is not prepared to assume that they were.<sup>190</sup>*

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<sup>190</sup> The account of the enquiry appears "H.S. Goodland: British Army Service Records 1914-20", [www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk)

Herbert Goodland was buried at Houchin British Cemetery, Pas de Calais in Grave III C. 30. Sapper James Reid Lawson, 40, from Aberdeen, who succumbed to his injuries three days later, was buried in the same cemetery.

In 1932, Edna Goodland “a war widow, wearing her husband’s medals and carrying the standard of the British Legion’s women’s section” marched at the head of a 200 strong procession to St Luke’s where she handed over the flag to Rev Canon L.R. Worters for consecration.<sup>191</sup> Edna of 224 Wick Road died in 1947. She is buried at Arno’s Vale beside Herbert junior who died aged 17 in 1927. Herbert senior’s name is inscribed on their gravestone and he is remembered at St Anne’s (H.E.S. Goodland).

**17<sup>th</sup> October - 11<sup>th</sup> November. Final advance in Picardy to liberate Mons where it had all began four years before.**

**7<sup>th</sup> October, Home. Ordinary Seaman Herbert (Sidney) EYLES, 1900-1918,** was a son of Osborne, a tram driver, and Alice Ann, nee Coles who in 1911 lived with their five children at 25 Sandwich Road, Brislington. Young Sidney, a pupil at St Anne’s School, and a keen member of the St Luke’s CLB, couldn’t wait to join up. He enlisted in the Gloucesters on 26 September 1915, was given a service number, 24622, and his particulars taken: “5 feet 6¼”, chest, (expanded) 35½ inches; fair complexion, blue eyes, brown hair; trade: student.” He recorded his father as his next of kin along with three younger brothers, Ivor, Cyril and Roger. Alas, he was only 15 years and 298 days old and soon all was discovered: “*the above named man made a mis-statement as to his age*” wrote the officer, and under “Military Character” added, (surely with tongue in cheek), “*Good for his two days’ service.*”

I imagine Osborne was summoned to the recruiting office and told to keep his boy in order but Sidney, undeterred, joined the Navy five months later. For two years he was “in reserve” at the Crystal Palace Depot, HMS “Victory VI” and was still only seventeen when he fell ill and died “of disease”, perhaps in the ‘flu pandemic? He is commemorated on the Screen Wall, 5.683, at Arno's Vale and remembered on four Memorials: St Luke’s (S. Eyles), the CLB Plaque (Sidney Eyles); at St Anne’s, (S. Eyles) & St Anne’s School (S.Eyles). In 1939, Osborne, a Bristol bus inspector, and Alice lived at 83 Upper Sandhurst Road with three of their children, Leila, Ronald and Marion.

**19<sup>th</sup> October, Italy. Corporal (acting Sergeant) Albert William JONES, 1889-1918** was one of only two surviving children (out of eleven) born to Albert, and Minnie Jones, nee Hicks. Albert senior was a canal lighterman.<sup>192</sup> He was away from home on census night 1891 when Minnie lived near the river at Conham with three year old Albert, junior, his sister Minnie, 7, who were born at Treherbert, and her father-in-law, William Jones, 63, a blind man in receipt of parish relief. Albert’s job took him away frequently and he was still absent in 1901 by which time his family lived at Two Mile Hill. In 1911 he was (at last) at home, 49

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<sup>191</sup> WDP 19.9.1932

<sup>192</sup> A flat-bottomed boat

Netham Road, with his wife and children, Albert, who was a junior clerk, aerospace factory (at Brislington?) and Minnie, junior, now Mrs Bellamy, and her two boys, Wilfred, 5 and Percy, aged three.

Albert junior married Olive Coleman in 1913. He attested under the Derby Scheme or was conscripted in 1916 and joined the 48<sup>th</sup> Ammunition Column, Royal Field Artillery, which, as part of the Midland Division went into action at Passchendaele. On the 21 November 1917 the 48<sup>th</sup> entrained for Italy and in 1918 were involved in the fighting on the Asiago Plateau and in the Battle of the Vittoria Veneto in the Val d'Assa area. During this battle, Albert was mentioned in dispatches for gallantry in the field and recommended for promotion to Sergeant. This was still to be confirmed when he fell ill and was taken to hospital in Genoa. On 22<sup>nd</sup> September a person died of influenza there and the infection spread, taking at least 47 more lives between 7<sup>th</sup> October and 26<sup>th</sup> November. One of these was a staff nurse, Harriet Wright, and another, Albert Jones, who died on 19<sup>th</sup> October. (In all there were 157 military deaths logged at the hospital during this period; for a hundred and ten of these no cause of death is recorded; some would have occurred in battle and others in the pandemic.

Albert, aged 29, who is buried in Grave I.C. 16 at the small Staglieno Cemetery in Genoa is remembered at St Anne's, (A.W. Jones), though the CWGC records his home address as 11 Hedwick Street, St George.

**21<sup>st</sup> October. at Home. Private Samuel Reginald WINTERSON, 1899-1918**, son of Charles, a furnace stoker/house decorator and Emily, nee Pound lived at 32 Churchill Road in 1901 and at 34 Sandholme Road in 1911. He had a sister Maria and a brother Charlie. All three, who were first cousins of Ernest Eddolls, (*qv.* 10.11.1918), went to St Anne's School.

Sam originally enlisted in the Notts. & Derbyshire Regiment then transferred to the 12<sup>th</sup> Machine Gun Corps. He died, aged 19, in Bristol, of an unknown cause, possibly of flu, and is buried at Arno's Vale, in Grave Q79. He is remembered at St Luke's (S.R. Winterson) and at St Anne's School (S. Winterson). In 1939, his parents lived at 51 Sandy Park with a grandson, Reginald.

**28<sup>th</sup> October, France. Private Frederick George FLOOK, c1899-1918**, lived at 5 Whiteway Terrace, St George in 1901, with his father, George, a clicker in the boot trade, mother Elizabeth, and three year old brother John Henry. By 1911, he had two sisters, Grace and Mabel, though three other siblings had died in the interim.

Fred joined the 6<sup>th</sup> Dorsets, probably under-age in 1916 and died in action aged 20, another casualty of "the 100 Days" Offensive. He has no known grave and is commemorated on the Vis-en-Artois Memorial; he is remembered at St Anne's, (F.G. Flook) though the CWGC records the family at 1 Poplar Road, St George.



1<sup>st</sup> November, France. Private Leonard Reginald (Reggie) POOLE, 1900-1918.

*The Poole family. Reggie is second on the left.*

Reggie was yet another of the very young men who died during “the 100 Days” which was ultimately successful but at horrendous cost. For most of the others named above I have not found personal

documentation, but it seems to me that Reggie’s story, as told by his kinsman, Ray Poole represents them all and the cruel waste of their lives so near the day the guns fell silent.

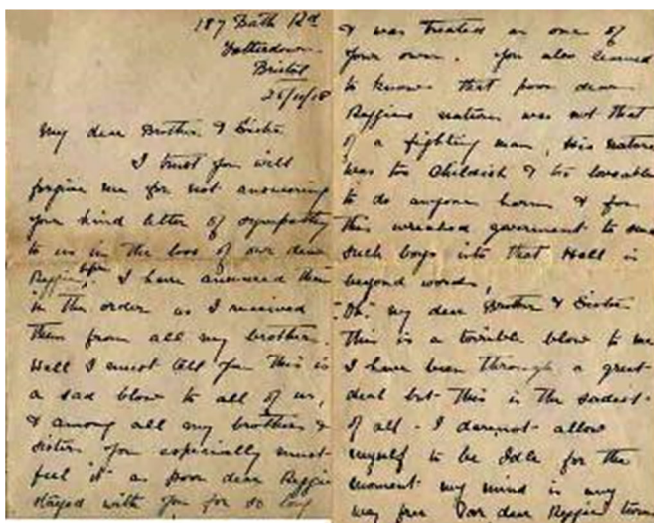
Reggie was born at Taunton, one of eight children of Ernest Alfred W. Poole, a stone mason, and his wife Amelia, nee Pike, who was the manager of a sweet shop. He spent much of his childhood living with his Uncle Sam, Aunt Emmie and cousin Bertie in Taunton. After Amelia’s death in 1916 at the early age of forty seven, his father moved to Totterdown, Bristol where in 1917 he married his second wife, Mary Miller.

*“Reggie joined the 2/4<sup>th</sup> Battalion Somerset Light Infantry in Bristol as soon as he was eighteen and was killed in action on 31 October 1918, just ten short days before the Armistice, meeting his death with many other young men among the tanks advancing towards enemy lines. The gentle immature Reggie would never be a grown man. His father, Ernest wrote to his brother and sister-in-law soon after receiving the tragic*



news.

His hurt and bitterness is raw.





“187 Bath Rd  
Totterdown  
Bristol.  
28/11/18

*“My dear Brother & Sister*

*“I trust you will forgive me for not answering your kind letter of sympathy to us in the loss of our own dear Reggie before. I have answered them in the order as I received them from all my brothers.*

*Well I cannot tell you this is a sad blow to all of us, and among all my brothers and sisters you especially must feel it as poor dear Reggie stayed with you for so long and was treated as one of your own. You also learned that poor dear Reggie’s nature was not that of a fighting man. His nature was too childish & too loveable to do anyone harm & for this wretched government to send such boys into the Hell is beyond words.*

*Oh, my dear Brother & Sister, this is a terrible blow to me. I have been through a great deal but this is the saddest of all. I dare not allow myself to be idle for the moment my mind is in any way free poor dear Reggie turns up and often my whole frame shakes with the shudder with passes through me. How well I shall remember the day the armistice was proclaimed. Never so long as I live shall I forget the dreadful agony I went through when Bristol was raging with mad joy, but all this emotion brought such a lump in my throat that was almost choking to think that my poor boy within a few days of the close of this war should be murdered.*

*Well dears, I will try to be brave. I have the comfort of knowing that he is in heaven with his dear mother and if the words of the old hymn are true that we “shall know as we are known” there cannot be any doubt that he is being clasped in the arms of his dear mother.*

*Well now, there is no doubt you have heard from father or Bill or Frank how poor Reggie died, as I have written to them, as I had time to spare, but I want to be able to tell you with my own lips and I know you will welcome it from me, that is only natural.*

*On the 31<sup>st</sup> Oct. poor Reggie with a few more men was told off to advance with the tanks to assist them in case they got into difficulties and whilst doing this he fell mortally wounded. This is the news from his Capt. But a day or two after this I had another letter from a man who picked his body up and he told me he should think poor Reggie died of shell shock. His left arm was broken from the elbow to the wrist. Outside of this there was no marks on his body but close beside where he laid was a great shell hole and he thinks it was this shell that killed him. I have heard from another man that the concussion of the shells knock the breath out of our poor men. Now I am prepared to believe this man’s story before that of his Capt. As to his death for it is not at all likely this officer saw him after he sent him off to certain death with the tanks. You know as well as I do that what chances a man’s got that goes with the tanks for these things goes right in amongst the enemy and not only that, they are being*

*shelled all the way in advances until they get right up to their goal. That is why I have said that he was murdered. The same young man told me that poor dear Reggie had quite a smile on his face when he picked him up. This is also a little comfort to me to know that his death was instantaneous.*

*I received the position of his grave from his commanding officer who I wrote to for this. His burial place is given as J29 B42 map reference on Belgium sheet 29, and if any of you in Taunton has got the map of Belgium you will be able to trace his grave within a few yards by the following. He is buried about 1000 yard west of Ansenhem which is about halfway between Courtrai and Audenarde.*

*His poor mother - (This was Reggie's stepmother Mary Miller) - has been quite ill since receiving the sad news as she was so fond of him. When he was at home about 3 months ago he was so nice with everyone and I am quite sure he felt his position very much and by his manner I believe instinct told him he should never see us again.*

*Now dear Sam & Emmie I must close or I shall upset myself. Again thanking you for your kind sympathy and God bless you from your loving bro & sis, E & M. Poole.*

*PS. The war office says he was killed Nov. 1<sup>st</sup> but this was the day his body was found."*

Though the whereabouts of Reggie's burial place is mentioned, officially, he "has no known grave" and is commemorated on Panels 41-42 & 163A of the Tyne Cot Memorial. He is remembered on the War Memorial at St James, Taunton, (R. Poole). The CWGC records his parents Ernest and Mary Poole at "Brookside", Grove Road, Brislington. Ernest Poole died on 3 February 1936 at 3 Hollywood Road, of heart failure and bronchitis. In 1939, Reggie's brother, Cecil Leslie, lived at 175 Wick Road with his wife Rosaleen and son Donald. Reggie's stepmother, Mary Poole, who lived at 8 Hollywood Road in 1939, had moved to 14 Bellevue Park by the time of her final illness. She died aged 93 in 1968.

**10<sup>th</sup> November, Prisoner of War, Germany. Private Ernest James EDDOLLS, 1899-1918** was a son of Thomas, a dock labourer, and Hester Amelia, nee Winterson. In 1901, aged two, he lived with his parents and maternal grandparents Samuel, a furnaceman, and Maria Winterson at 26 Churchill Road, Brislington. Ernest was a first cousin of Samuel Winterson (qv. 21.10.1918).

By 1911, the family had moved to 32 Sandy Park Road, where the household consisted of his widowed grandfather Samuel, 68, parents Thomas and Hester, Ernest, his two younger sisters, Ivy and Phyllis, Florence Winterson, Hester's sister, and Lily Hopkins, another of Samuel's grandchildren. They also had a lodger, Edward Randall, (qv. 10.7.1916). Ernest, his two sisters, and later their younger brother Harold, all attended St Anne's School. He was presumably called up as soon as he was eighteen and served first in the Berkshire Yeomanry before being transferred to the 1/4<sup>th</sup> East Yorkshire Regiment, which was under strength through losses. Ernest was taken prisoner in France and died in Germany, aged 19, at a POW

Camp one day before the Armistice. The majority of the POWs who died in enemy hands were buried in more than 120 German burial grounds; in 1923 they were re-interred in a permanent war cemetery in Hamburg where Ernest is buried in Grave I.D.5.

When the Armistice was signed the family were unaware of Ernest's death. The news, when it came was particularly hard to bear. His brother Harold said: *"His death broke mother's heart. He used to ride his bike up the lines taking messages. He was taken prisoner and died of starvation on Armistice Day 1918. What mother sent him – chocs and cake – all came back and was kept in the sideboard cupboard. Mother wouldn't let anyone touch it – all his letters and things.*

*"I was born in 1913 the year the Brislington cinema was opened. I went down there the day the war memorial was unveiled on Kensington Hill and Mr Tomkins the owner said 'Is there any little boy who has had someone killed in the Great War?' and I said, 'Yes, Mister.' He gave me a wreath I could hardly carry and we all went up to Kensington Hill. We put it on the War Memorial and it was all youngsters and young people, all in the middle of the road."*<sup>193</sup>

In 1939 Thomas (described *"incapacitated"*) and Hester were still at 32 Sandy Park Road, with their adult children Harold, Phyllis and Elizabeth. Ernest is remembered on the War Memorials at St Luke's, (E.J. Eddolls) and St Anne's School, (E. Eddolls).

**At 5 a.m. on 11<sup>th</sup> November, an Armistice was agreed between the warring factions, with a cease-fire to come into force the same morning at 11 a.m. (the wait, it appears, for no other reason, than someone liked the idea of the synchronicity of numbers). This was hard luck for the men on the ground. In the remaining few hours of the war, the American forces took particularly heavy losses, 1,100 in the Marines alone, due to their belligerent General Pershing who thought the terms were too soft on the Germans and wished to punish as many as possible. As the minutes ticked away towards 11 a.m. the Germans even tried to stop the US attack, but when they realised this was not going to happen, they opened fire and Private Henry Gunter was killed at 10.59 a.m.**

**His regimental record states *"Almost as he fell the gunfire died away and a terrible silence prevailed."***

**The last British fatality, Private George Edwin Ellison of the 5<sup>th</sup> Royal Irish Lancers fell at 9.30 a.m.**

**November - December. British forces advanced across Belgium, crossed into Germany and took up positions on the Rhine.**

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<sup>193</sup> As told to "Brislington Bugle" no.5, Spring 1987.

By the time the Armistice was announced, Brislington's Dick Knight of the 2/6<sup>th</sup> SLI had been taken from Boulogne to hospital at Eastbourne, and thence to Red Maids' School, Westbury on Trym, which was serving as a convalescent home.

*"I got word to Mrs Allen (Isabelle Allen nee Vowles, aunt of Diddie Williams and Mary Norris) at Southey House where my mother used to work and she got me stuff when I were in hospital. When the Armistice was declared we were in the camp. A fellow came in and said 'It's all over – it's finished.' We tried to have a bit of a sing song but that was all. You couldn't make anything much of it."*

Dick was discharged from the army in 1919 and married Edith Moore at Taunton the same year. They had three daughters, Irene, Dorothy and Margaret. In 1939, by then a bus driver, he lived with his wife and children at 9 Sherwell Road. The family remembered that his right leg *"was always a mess and he had to wear long johns because of it."* Dick, one of the last surviving village veterans, a much loved father, grandfather and great grandfather, died on 27 February 1988, aged 90.

Seven year old "Diddie" Williams recalled Armistice Day very clearly. *"My mother was teaching me at the time, then suddenly at 11 o'clock the bells began ringing and everyone went mad! Lessons finished at once and my aunt Frances and I ran out into the garden. I blew a little bugle. We were all crying. I don't think I really knew why. Someone rushed to put up every flag we had, never mind which kind. One large one was put along the garden path, but we had a horse with a rather long neck which leaned over from her field. Someone came in to say 'Goldy's eating the flag!'"<sup>194</sup>*

To celebrate the Armistice, Mr and Mrs Joseph Cooke-Hurle announced the gift of a piece of land as a recreation ground for the people of Brislington. Mr Cooke-Hurle suggested it should be named "Peace Park" but the press was in no mood for reconciliation and added a jingoistic rider: *"to commemorate our victory over German tyranny."*<sup>195</sup>

### ***The Influenza Pandemic, January 1918 –December 1920.***

Albert Jones died in Italy on 19<sup>th</sup> October from influenza and the deaths of others, like Samuel Winterson, two days later, "at home from illness" may also have been due to the virus. The Influenza pandemic was one of the deadliest natural disasters in human history. The "Black Death" of six decades before is known by every school child, yet remembrance of the so-called Spanish 'flu of just a century ago has almost passed from human consciousness. The pandemic resulted in the deaths of 50 – 100 million people worldwide (up to 5% of the world's population), more than the total killed in action in the war, and touched every part of the globe from the most remote Pacific Island to the Arctic. Influenza generally takes the infant, the old and the frail, but in contrast, the pandemic killed predominately previously healthy young adults. The source of this modern plague is still

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<sup>194</sup> Brislington Bugle, no. 12. Summer 1989

<sup>195</sup> WDP 30.11.1918

debated, but now general opinion is that it started at a chicken farm in Kansas, passed into humans and was carried via American camps in the USA and troopships to the vast military camp at Etaples in France. Certainly the spread of the virus was assisted by the wide movement of troops with malnourishment, poor hygiene, and overcrowded medical camps and hospitals, all playing their deadly part. The illness was mis-named “Spanish ‘flu” because news in neutral Spain was unrestricted whereas such reports among the warring factions were suppressed for purposes of morale.

The Registrar General recorded the number of deaths from influenza in England and Wales during the fourth quarter of the year 1918 as 98,998.<sup>196</sup> Bristol’s death toll was “12 in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter, 9 in the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 72 in the third and 957 in the last quarter.”<sup>197</sup>

Even in such dire times a little wry amusement can be had from the papers. Influenza had been “rampant” in Bristol from July with the purveyors of patent medicines speedily on their marks, one declaring that *“influenza is sweeping off those who are rendered low through worry, overwork, and indigestion”* (?) General advice suggested gargling with salty water though *“pure salt should be used, not the prepared table salt which could contain crushed bones”*(!) and I do wonder whether the “Press” reporter’s punning line that the illness was making its *“mischievous influence felt in Bristol”* was accidental.<sup>198</sup>

Both the Kaiser and King Alfonso XIII fell ill with the virus, but recovered. Sir Hubert Parry, the composer of “Jerusalem” did not; neither did “T. Ford” who played for Bristol Rovers at full back. The death toll among the general population continued, as well as among the troops, friend and foe alike and included some of our soldiers.

**13<sup>th</sup> November, Italy. Private Ernest Walter JONES, 1889-1918** was a son of Alfred Isaac Jones, a foreman at Bristol Tramways and his wife Hannah. In 1891 they lived at Clarence Road, St Philips with their three children, who included Ernest, then not quite two. By 1901, Alfred and his children, (two more having been born in the intervening decade) were living temporarily at Gladstone Street, where they had been taken in by Alfred’s brother-in-law Charles Porter during a family crisis. (Hannah Jones, “English, place of birth unknown” was a patient in Abergavenny Mental Hospital). Evidently recovered, she was restored to the family by 1911 by which time they were at 29 Raglan Road, Bishopston, though there was a gap in the family line up where Ernest should have been. He was walking out with Florence Eugenia, born in Dublin, the daughter of James Eastmond, formerly a Sergeant in the ASC, now retired, of 1 Addison Road, St Anne’s Park. James’ tales of the derring-do of military life apparently so impressed Flo’s young man that he decided to enlist. Ernest and Florence were married in 1913 and in due course, had a son, Ronald. No records of Ernest’s army service have survived, but by joining the ASC, he had managed to combine both his father’s

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<sup>196</sup> WDP 23.1.1919

<sup>197</sup> WDP 8.1.1919

<sup>198</sup> WDP 16./19./30.10.1918

and his father-in-law's professional expertise: driving lorries, buses and ambulances as the army required.

On 5<sup>th</sup> May 1918, Vera Eugenia, daughter of Florence and Private Ernest Jones, of the A.S.C. was christened at St Anne's. It is unlikely Ernest ever saw the baby, then a month old.

Commonwealth Forces had been at the Italian Front between November 1917 and November 1918. Ernest was with the ASC General HQ, helping to keep open vital supply lines when, like his near namesake Albert William Jones (*qv.19.10.1918*), he was taken ill and died on 13 November 1918, aged 29. Although the cause of his death is unspecified, it was almost certainly of 'flu. His grave, at Salvatronda, at Castelfranco Veneto, a few miles west of Treviso, no. I.4.2. is the only Commonwealth War Grave in the Cemetery. The CWGC records his parents, Mr and Mrs Alfred Jones of Bristol, and his widow, Florence Eugenia of 1 Addison Road, St Anne's Park. Ernest is remembered at St Anne's, (E.W. Jones).

**23<sup>rd</sup> November, at Home. Captain Arthur George POOLE, 1893-1918** was the eldest of three boys and a girl (Ivor, Rhoda and Leslie), children of George Lewis Poole, a master builder, and his wife Rhoda, nee Mullis.<sup>199</sup> They lived at 9 Lower Kensington Place, (later Clevedon) with two young servant girls to assist in the general running of the house. The Pooles represent the ideal of the Edwardian Age: father a self-made man, who could afford several servants, with a wife and a manageable brood of healthy children; a life style soon to be rudely shattered in 1914, never to return.

Arthur, who joined "Bristol's Own" at the outset of the war, died "at home" aged 25: *"The Late Captain A.G. Poole who died at Emmanuel College, Cambridge on November 23<sup>rd</sup> from pneumonia following influenza, was the eldest son of Mr. and Mrs G.L. Poole of Heatherdene, Clevedon. He joined Bristol's Own 12<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters in September 1914 and was musketry officer at Chiseldon for some months before going out to France where he was attached to the 8<sup>th</sup> Gloucester Regt. Soon after his arrival in France he had a severe attack of trench fever and was sent home for a few weeks. Returning to the Front, he was mentioned in despatches, but was severely injured in October 1917 and was sent home for good. He spent one year in hospital and though not discharged was allowed to resume his law studies at Emmanuel College. At the commencement of the war he was articled to a well-known firm of Bristol solicitors. He was reading for the Law Tripos at Cambridge when he fell ill."*<sup>200</sup>

Arthur, a talented cricketer, played for the First XI at Bristol Grammar School and is listed in *"Wisden & the Great War; Lives of Cricket's Fallen, 1914-18"*. He is buried in the churchyard at Clevedon where his name also appears on the Roll of Honour....

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<sup>199</sup> Sister of Benjamin Mullis  
<sup>200</sup> 30.11.1918



...as well as on the plaque at St Luke's (A.G. Poole) though he is not listed by the CWGC.

A more tangible reminder of the Great War was a German rifle cartridge case dating to 1916, found in the back garden of a house in Hampstead Road, a spot which once would have been in the grounds of the former Kensington House. It is tempting to suppose that Arthur Poole brought it home as a souvenir.



This sort of ammunition would have been used in the bolt-action Mauser rifle issued as standard to the German infantry, including those in the front line trenches. The weapon was loaded with a clip containing five rounds, each of which would be ejected manually after firing. Examination of the base of the cartridge shows that the circular primer is dented where it was struck by the firing pin - the primer ignites the main charge of gunpowder inside the cartridge - which means this round has been fired. The head stamp around the primer, DM / 4 / 16 / S67 indicates it was manufactured at Deutsche Munitionsfabriken (Karlsruhe, Germany) in April 1916, and once contained a spitzer (pointed) bullet and that the metal case is an alloy of 67% copper and 33 % zinc.<sup>201</sup>

**10<sup>th</sup> December, at Home. Private Charles Henry TERRY, 1893-1919**, a tram conductor, enlisted in the Royal Marines, 12 November 1911 aged 18 years and 23 days, 5 feet 5½ inches tall, with a fresh complexion, blue eyes, brown hair and had the letter "L" tattooed on his right forearm; he had moles on his upper arm, right cheek and left foot. His religion

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<sup>201</sup> Some remains of Kensington House can be seen on the A4 Bath Road (PDSA building). I am grateful to Ken & Kai Taylor (Brislington Virtual Museum) who found the artefact & for this technical information

was C of E and he could swim, having been tested as to his ability. His next of kin was his mother, Elizabeth, of 30 Harrow (recorded incorrectly as "Harrold") Road, Brislington.

Charles and his widowed mother had formerly lived at Torquay where Elizabeth was housekeeper at a public house, "the Fortunes of War". In 1903, she married a Merchant Navy Steward, Charles Budd, who brought them to Brislington. By 1911 Charles Terry was a conductor for "the Tramway" living at 30 Harrow Road with Charles and Elizabeth Budd who by then had three children, Ernest, Wilfred and Hilda, as well as the customary lodger, William Smart, 17, another tramway man. Charles Budd, usually on duty aboard the "Royal Edward" a ship of the Northern Canada Line, was between voyages, and at home on census night. Charles Terry joined the Royal Marines the same year and served at Deal, Kent, until transferred to Plymouth, August 1912, to HMS "Triumph", 28 August - 9 November, 1913. He embarked the following day for Australia aboard HMS "Torch". Up to then, his conduct, "very good", had even been endorsed by a First Class medal, but the bright lights of Sydney became too much for him, and on 21 March 1914, his record is blighted by one succinct word, "Run".

Charles (mysteriously) returned home, joined the army and served in the Royal Irish Regiment, though sadly died in Bristol, aged 26, He is buried in War grave Y.82 at Avon View, St George and is remembered at St Luke's, (C. Terry).

#### ***A land fit for heroes.....?***

Sergeant Cornelius Bolt, aged 22 and Alice Ada Reed, 23, a tobacco checker, both of 2 Sandgate Road were married at St Luke's on 16<sup>th</sup> November. Cornelius enlisted in 1911, giving 1893 as his year of birth to disguise the fact he was only sixteen, and served firstly in the Gloucesters, then the Machine Gun Corps. In 1916 his promotions came in quick succession: Lance Corporal: 24<sup>th</sup> January, Corporal: 12<sup>th</sup> February, Sergeant: 9<sup>th</sup> March. He had *"a good knowledge of horses and transport work; shows a good power of command control and handles himself well."* He was discharged in 1919, *"having suffered impairment since entry into the service"* and was awarded a small pension. In due course he received his 1914 Star and other medals, but one was missing. He believed he was entitled to the Territorial Efficiency Medal and wrote to the War Office several times to request it. One of the letters in his own hand, states: *"when my time expired in 1916 I was took in again before conscription came in and served in France."*

The reply, dated 7 August 1921, signed by an illegible Captain Blimp on behalf of an unnamed superior takes one's breath away:

*"It is regretted that your claim to the Territorial Efficiency Medal cannot be allowed. To qualify for this award you must have 12 years continuous service. In your case you enlisted 25.8.1911, were embodied 5.8.1914, and discharged 9.2.1919, total service counting embodied service as double, 11 years 354 days."*



## Survivors

**Harry Stowell** was the tenth and youngest of George and Emma Stowell's children: *"My brother Frank who was in the Territorials had to go straight away. Then all the lads I knew cleared out and the village was empty. I didn't care much for the job I was in (Robertson's Jam Factory) so I put my age on. I told them I was 19 - it was April 1915, two months before my 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. I was 5 foot ten inches tall, nobody queried it and they passed me A1. I joined up at Whiteladies Road in the Royal Field Artillery. I got my uniform and took it home and dressed up in it and went down the village. The following morning I had to catch the train to Temple Meads to go to Writtle in Essex. We were billeted in an old malthouse that was full of rats! We trained in Essex and on Salisbury Plain. I was a signaller.*



**Harry Stowell, 1899-  
1993**

*We landed at Le Havre, and I always remember how shocked I was at the French men's open urinals! We went into action at Festnberg. My mates and I volunteered to go with a battery in action just to get an idea what it was like before we went up ourselves. We had a pretty rough time up there. Then the battery went into action at Laventie and we stayed round there and Nieuw Chappelle until September 1916 when we went down to the Somme. That was a rough show. We had a winter down there then we went to Crecy for a rest. We were billeted in the attic of an old farmhouse. It was a terrible winter. When you opened a tin of jam it was solid ice. Then we were going south to*

*Peronne but I developed pneumonia and spent five weeks in Amiens Hospital. They sent me back to England to convalesce. I went back to a draft camp expecting to go back (to the Front) but my father had sent through my birth certificate. My Commanding Officer said 'Is this right Stowell?' I said 'Yes sir!' he said 'And you've been to France and all?' I said 'Yes, sir.' He said 'Well you can go over to Ireland now.'*

*So they sent me to Ireland and I was there for the rest of the war. I was in Kildare when the Armistice was declared. That was a night. Pouring with rain it was! My mate and I were the only two left sober in the camp. We spent the whole evening going out and dragging them out of the gutters and putting them to bed. They were just lying there, wet through. I remember one of them laying there crying out 'I want my mother'. It was a terrible night. I was demobbed in Shropshire in May 1919 just before my 20<sup>th</sup> birthday."*

All of Harry's brothers served in the Army.

Frank (qv. 1918) died a Prisoner of War. Albert, born in 1878, was a gardener at The Chestnuts when he was called up. He died 27 December 1929 aged 51.



**Albert Stowell, 1878-1929**

William, born in 1881, was also a gardener. He married Ellen Langmead in 1905, and they lived at Churchill Cottages with their two children. He was conscripted in August 1917 aged 36, and became a Bombardier in the RGA. He was demobbed in January 1920.

Harry, who married Amy Llewelin in 1926 died in 1993.

**Sergeant Walter Winchester, DCM, 1876-1975** of the Indian Volunteer Artillery was taken prisoner by the Turks following General Townshend's surrender at Kut. Along with two other Bristol men, Trumpeter H.F. Yearsley, RGA and Gunner F.H. Harper, he returned home at Christmas 1918 and called at the offices of the Western Daily Press.

### *BRISTOLIANS' WAR STORY*

#### *Turks brutal treatment*

##### *Men beaten to death and abandoned*

*"After the surrender at Kut we were taken to a camp seven miles away where we were fed with mouldy bread and hard biscuits which after eating expanded when we drank causing great agony, even deaths. Fresh food arrived by boat but the Turks refused to let us have it and it was left on the ground when we started out to march the 90 miles to Baghdad. After two days the men were in a bad condition and we halted for another two days. After this, owing to the intense heat of the sun we marched at night only. We were supposed to sleep by day but this was impossible because of the heat and the mosquitoes. Some of the numerous sick were put on camels but not secured so that they constantly fell off and were killed. Their bodies were robbed by the Arab escort. Rations were coarse meal, not even fit for poultry food and very small quantities. Half of it was lost because it had to be strained through gauze. We tried to gather wood to cook it, but we were not given time to light fires and we had to eat the stuff raw. In Baghdad we were marched round and round, the Arabs beating us with sticks to show they were the victors and knocked off our helmets. After this we were divided into parties 600 strong and sent in different directions. We were taken by rail to Samara 85 miles away. We had to barter our clothes and boots for food in order to stay alive. Then we were marched to Mosul. Men constantly fell out and we never heard whether they were dead or alive. The Turks left some of our sick behind. Some exhausted men were beaten to death, especially if they had anything worth taking. At Mosul we were herded into filthy conditions. Two English ladies who were interned there tried to help us but they were chased away. We were divided again and marched up country. If a man fell out the Arabs beat him and galloped over him. We were all washed out rags. As soon as we reached a small stream many of the men rushed to drink and a good many suffered the effects as well as apoplexy because of the heat. The place we were taken to was called by the Britishers "Cholera Camp"; we were herded within 20 yards of Turkish cholera patients. When we left many of our sick remained behind. We were marched to Mameria. General Melliush who was interned there gave us money and helped us all he could. In his journey he told us he had seen many dead by the roadside. We were put to railway work which was too heavy in our weakened state. In nine weeks we had 300 dead in our battery alone. Men who died were only partially buried. We were taken by open railway trucks to a place in the mountains but many died of exposure. Four hundred or so were taken to Tarcus where food and medicine was provided by kind Americans, but some had gone too far to be saved. We lost 300 at one place and 280 at another. When we had snow the Turks would not let us*

*have our bedding and men of all nations slept in a pen. Clothing and belongings of the English soldiers were sold by auction among the Turks. Men's feet were bleeding because they had no boots. We were put to making a roadway at the edge of a forest. Money had been sent for us through the Dutch Consul but we never got it. Eventually we were sent to a place near Constantinople where again we worked on the railway. The food was too coarse to eat but the Dutch Legation provided some which was better.*

*"We heard the news of the Armistice through newspapers published in French and Turkish. The Dutch gave us a Union Jack and put us up in a hotel until the British Commission arrived. We had the pleasure of hearing a Turkish band play "God Save the King". When I was a prisoner in Turkey my wife sent 40 parcels but I only received four. The Royal Artillery also sent food parcels but most had been looted or the foodstuffs had gone bad. Cigarettes and Cocoa were taken out and the empty tins replaced."*

The men, *"who looked remarkably fit considering the hardships they had encountered, issued a statement requesting the Government give an account of the number of men who died in captivity and the fate of those abandoned."*<sup>202</sup>

Walter Winchester of 9 Langton Court, enlisted in the Royal Field Artillery in January 1895, aged "18 years and two months". He was 5 feet 5 inches tall, with 34 inch chest and weighed 105 lbs. After service in South Africa, he returned home and married Rose Magdalene Mills at St Luke's on 5 November 1902. During the Great War he re-enlisted in the RFA and rose to Staff Sergeant. In 1924 he managed the farm for the Arno's Court Convent and later the Valley Poultry Farm, St Anne's. In 1939, he and his wife lived at 3 Nightingale Valley. He died in Bristol in 1945 aged 68.

It seems remarkable that the tale of survival told by CSM Winchester and his comrades is the only one I have been able to find in the local press.

### ***A sailor, a soldier and an airman***

**Edmund Duggan – an Old Sailor, c1858-1919**, enlisted in the Royal Navy in 1914, or I should say, re-enlisted. He was 5'5" tall, with a 37" chest, a dark complexion, greyish hair, grey eyes and was extensively tattooed on both arms. He was RC, could swim, and in civilian life was a rigger. His next of kin was his wife Amelia of 101 Sandholme Road. He gave his date of birth as 1 August 1879 and stated that he had ten years previous experience at sea.

I cannot vouch for his personal attributes, and the rest is probably correct too – except for his date of birth.

Edmund, an Irishman, was born in County Cork, a son of Martin Duggan. Aged 24, he married Amelia Watkins at Bedminster on 3 October 1881. Neither party appears on the census of that year though ten years previously in 1871, Amelia aged 12, lived at Pipe Lane

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<sup>202</sup> WDP 23.12.1918

with her parents and several siblings. In 1891, she was 31, living at Bedminster with her sons Richard, 5 and William, 4. Of her husband Edmund, there was no sign. He was home at last in 1901, aged 43, a labourer, at 101 Sandholme Road with Amelia and their three children Richard, William and Amelia, (two others having died in infancy). In 1911, Edmund, was 53, a dock labourer at the same address with Amelia; Richard was absent, though William and Matilda were still living at home.

So, according to available evidence when he joined the Navy in 1914, he would have been about fifty six, 20 years older than his RN records show. He must have been aboard ship somewhere in the world when the censuses of 1881 and 1891 were taken. To pass for thirty five in 1914 he must have been remarkable well preserved.

He is shown as serving with the RN Division until 18 December 1919 when his papers were sent to the Ministry of Pensions with the mysterious additional remark "Prize, Imperial Turkey" which may mean he had been at Gallipoli.

He had survived the war, but time had caught up with him at home, and he had already died, aged 61. Amelia died in 1922 aged 63. Their son William, who was killed in action in July 1916 at Fromelles, is named among the fallen at St Luke's.

**Joseph Benedict Cox – an Old Soldier, c1866-1948**, was a son of the gardener at Arno's Vale Convent. He was aged "22 years, 2 months" when he joined the Royal Field Artillery, 8 November 1888, for 7 years plus 5 in the Reserve. He was "a follower of the Church of Rome, physically fit, 5 feet 6¼ inches tall, chest expanded 34½ inches, with a dark complexion, brown eyes and dark brown hair." When his time expired he extended his service to complete 12 years with the Colours, the while being steadily promoted through the non-commissioned ranks from Gunner to Corporal to Sergeant. After twelve years he extended his service again. Between September 1890 and December 1896 he was with the regiment in India, though returned temporarily in 1893 to take the Army Veterinary School's examinations at Aldershot. He passed with credit becoming Sergeant Shoeing Smith. He was on leave in 1897 when he married Mary Caulfield, (an Irish girl from County Kilkenny) at All Souls RC Church, Bedminster. Their son Joseph was born in Bristol in 1898. With the Boer War looming he was sent to South Africa where he spent two tours of duty. At Potgieter's Drift, 6 February 1900, he sustained a gunshot wound to his left leg, but recovered. He was awarded the Queen's South Africa Medal with clasps for the Relief of Ladysmith, the Cape Colony Medal and the Good Conduct Medal. At home, 1901, by then Quartermaster Sergeant Farrier, his second son, Cuthbert was born at Portsmouth. Mary accompanied him on his last posting to India where in 1909, their third son Edward was born. It must have been a severe blow when on 15 December that year the Army decided that at 43, he was worn out, "medically unfit for further service." His discharge sheet adds optimistically (as if in hope that this would find him a job): "*Good veterinary knowledge as a farrier; he has passed the course and has had 19 years' experience in the force.*" (He had in fact served 21 years.)

The army's optimism was unfounded; though he proudly described himself "an army pensioner" in 1911 he was employed as "a shop doorman". One imagines him in comic-opera commissionaire's uniform which he must have loathed. The Kaiser's ambitions gave him some relief and a glutton for punishment, he joined up again, 7 October 1914, aged 49, as a farrier in the 57<sup>th</sup> Reserve with his old rank of QMSgt. He spent the majority of the war "at home" shoeing horses (for the front. where hundreds of thousands of the animals perished) but was posted on 4 March 1918, presumably to France. He was finally discharged seven months later, once again, "physically unfit," though evidently not that decrepit as he lived until 1948 and died in Southmead Hospital aged 81.

**Percy Alfred Davies, 1889-1953**, the intrepid flyer of 1915, whose brothers Jabez (1916) and Arthur (1917) were killed in action was the eldest son of Alfred and Eliza Davies, of 40 Pendennis Road. He first joined the Royal Gloucestershire Hussars in January 1906 for 21 years, described 5 feet 4¾ inches tall, with brown hair, blue eyes, a fresh complexion and a scar on his upper lip. He was promoted sergeant and transferred from the Army to the RFC on 11 August 1915. He became Flight Sergeant, 1 June 1916 and rose to Chief Master Mechanic, 18 April 1918. He was awarded the 1914 Star (3 May 1921) and Long Service and General Service Medals in 1925 when he extended his service for another twelve years in the RAF. He was recommended for a Commission and became Warrant Officer Davies on 24 January 1939. He continued to serve until discharged to pension on 16 May 1940. He married Violet Ruby Asher at Lincoln in 1917 and they had a daughter, June, in 1920. The family lived at Hucknall, Nottingham in 1939, by which time June was serving in the WAAF. She married Denis Harrop in 1943. Percy died on 11 February 1953.



*Violet, Percy, June, and two unknown friends at Morecambe, 1940.*



Army Dow (Dolly) 4TH FROM LEFT IN  
 FRONT ROW. PIMAFUNG DISTRICT. WORKED IN  
 Trolley Bus CARTON  
 SHOP.



WEARING  
 Percy's  
 Royal Flying Corp  
 OVEN COAT.

**Donald Lansdown Gough, MC, 1895-1969** was the eldest of the four children of a schoolmaster, Harold Walter Gough and his wife Alice Edith, nee Brentnall. The family moved from Derby to Cotham, in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when Mr Gough took up a post at Bristol Grammar School. The boys, Donald and his younger brothers Harold Brentnall, otherwise “Brennie” and Edwin attended the school. At home in 1911, their sister Marjorie was the only girl among nine boys, for six other pupils boarded with them! Between then and 1914 the Gough family moved to Hicks Gate House, between Brislington and Keynsham.

Donald joined the Somerset Light Infantry on the outbreak of war and his letters home usually addressed to Alice, his “Dearest Mater” are reproduced below. Many are undated and I have attempted to piece them together in the order in which I believe they were written, commencing sometime after his brother Brennie’s death at sea in March 1915 (*qv.*) of which Donald makes no mention. This first letter is surprisingly chipper:

*Sorry for having passed so much time since writing my last letter. But I have really had an unusual amount of work to do. We are not in the same place as we were before, having moved a little to the North. We are in a very (illegible) part of the line; in one part we are only five yards from the Boche while for a distance of 100 yards we are never more than 20 yards apart. I myself am in a furnished house about 300 yards behind the lines. We have beds and a piano, in fact everywhere you go you have a piano in all sorts of impossible places in cellars even in the firing line. Two of our aeroplanes came down near here yesterday, one behind the line and one in flames behind the Boche. Against this we brought down a Boche plane and one of their operation balloons. Talk about easy. I am very fit and life is not without its fun. Cheerio! Donald.*

By “Nov. 12<sup>th</sup> 1915” he is with the 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the SLI, apparently in France:

*Just a line to in due season. We have changed quarters again and have gone as a working battalion for about a week. It is quite good fun. Our camp is about two miles behind the firing line in the grounds of a beautiful chateau. The men are under canvas, the tents not being pitched in the orderly formation one is used in England but dotted about here and there under trees and painted all sorts of colours in order to render them invisible to aeroplanes. Our work consists of going up to the trenches at dusk and working there all night, either carting stores or draining or working at the trenches generally. We get back at about 2 am. I have got a billet in the chateau. The village has been shelled to smithereens but they don’t seem to have touched the chateau although it adjoins the village and its grounds are full of shell holes. The chateau is a fine high building destitute of furniture and everything has either been removed or looted. I wouldn’t be a bit surprised if a lot of “souvenirs” from it are in English lines.*





The next letter, undated but sometime in early December 1915, is from Belgium: Ypres.

**Donald Gough, MC, 1895-1969**

*Have just received yours and Dad's joint letter. Very pleased to have it too. Just at present we are wondering where we will spend Xmas as there seems to be fairly strong grounds for thinking we are moving; at all events, I think we shall be leaving Ypres district. It is too hot to stay there long - I am afraid we have had a good many casualties this last time as we had two days very heavy bombardment. How are James and Wadlow? Wadlow wasn't out very long was he? James has also been in a very quiet part of the line. I see the 6<sup>th</sup> Glosters have had several officer casualties. One was dear old Badgeley,*

*the corporal at Wellington House, the oldest fellow who joined the same day as I did and got his commission about a month ago. He is the one holding the kitten in the photograph I took. That finishes all the news, best love, Donald.*

On December 17<sup>th</sup> 1915 he wrote to *Dearest Family*: *I'm awfully grateful for the ripping parcel, which arrived here today safe and sound and for the cake from Barrett's. When I got back from the trenches last night I found some parcels waiting for me in varying dimensions; three from Grannie, two containing cakes and one with a mixture of chocolates. So I did very well. We are now back in a rest camp, preparatory I think, to a move to Egypt. All our trench coats, boots, maps, and everything in fact appertaining to the mud and rain of Flanders have been handed in and we are supposed to be moving soon after Xmas. Of course nobody knows if it is really Egypt but our C.O. told us it was and he has just come back from a visit with the War Office so he has some slight grounds for his information.*

*Nobody would really mind where it was as long as it was out of the Ypres Salient; it is the most Godforsaken part of the line. You see there is the one road into Ypres from outside and three the other side and you have to go through Ypres always on account of the canal which runs North and South and is only bridged at Ypres. Needless to say we shell every road night and day incessantly. Not content with that when you are in the firing line guns from the South can fire into your line if you are North of the Salient and vice versa. It is the most*

*uncomfortable part of the line. I hope we are saying goodbye to it, especially as everybody knows the Germans will make an attack there as soon as they get a favourable wind.*

*I am going to write to Mrs Willett and thank her for the biscuits. Is Keynsham the same as ever? I am afraid the move will do me out of my leave but that can't be helped. Lots of love to everybody, Donald.*

Alas, Egypt did not materialise and they were still at Ypres at Christmas. He wrote on Boxing Day, 1915: *Just a line to thank you for your Xmas good wishes. Our move was unfortunately cancelled last night and the next few days will see us once more in the trenches. Hasn't the weather been abominable lately? But we were at least lucky in being out of the trenches for Xmas day itself. We had quite an excellent day really. We had a service in an old barn with the band in full tune. It was really topping to hear the men singing the Xmas hymns. This is the second Xmas in succession I have missed. You may wonder at our having a band. We are the only regiment out here with one, quite unique, but it is wonderfully cheering. It was a great blow having our leave cancelled as everyone had built on it tremendously, nobody having much fancy for the Salient. On Xmas night we all had dinner together, everything was just as it should be (limited supply) plum puddings, mince pies, champagne; it was a very cheery evening. We only had two toasts, "the King" and "the Empire".*

*The shell shields<sup>203</sup> arrived a week ago I have not had a chance of wearing it yet though. I was awfully surprised to hear that Sol (illegible) was coming across, it seems a short time since he joined though I suppose it is four months now. It wouldn't be surprising if we met. Thank Dad ever so much for the cigarettes and tobacco. Best love, Donald.*

By 21 February 1916 he was in hospital:

*I am writing this letter under rather different conditions to the last. I am lying in bed propped up with pillows with just a small attack of flu. When we were relieved on the 12th I felt rather rotten but managed to stay on for a few days before I went sick and after many wanderings am now at Hazebrouck clearing station. I suppose I shall be back again in a week's time. The whole of our division is in rest so I am not missing any fighting. We have lost a lot of men up here during the last week over that 600 yards of trench and we haven't got it back yet. Hope Dad is all right again and now and then somebody in the name of a Lizzie may roll up. Best love, Donald. PS. Parcel arrived very many thanks for contents, books and chocolate, both excellent.*

By 4 March 1916 he was out of hospital and describes an exhausting journey trying to find the 6<sup>th</sup> SLI somewhere in France:

*Am out of hospital at last and have joined up with my unit again. It is good to be in France and not Belgium. It is so much nicer here. To begin with the inhabitants are not so doubtful;*

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<sup>203</sup> These were the tin helmets described by Herbert Dancy in 1915.

one always seems to imagine a Belgian pro-German and the women are really appalling, fat and ugly, also the country here boasts hills and scenery which is more than Ypres and the surrounding countryside.

*I had rather a bad journey down for a convalescent, boarding the train at 8 pm from the hospital and got to Calais or somewhere near at 11 pm and had to sleep in the train till the morning when we moved on and I didn't get to the railhead until 8 in the evening without having had anything to eat or drink en route. Truly a good start! And when I got to the railhead nobody knew where my regiment was as they hadn't been there long and they suggested my going to a village about 3 miles away. I had picked up a brother officer in the train in the same plight as myself and who had just returned from sick leave. Well, we set out and it started to sleet hard. The village turned out to be 8 miles instead of 3 and we were whacked and wet through. So we decided to call at a chateau and ask if we could get any help or information. We got all three at an officer's mess installed there and an ambulance came round to carry us to our destination. By this time it had turned to a blinding snow storm and when we got into the car it was almost impossible to see with the snow blowing into one's face. Well, we spent four hours in the car driving round the country just before the firing line in a white out and had to confess ourselves beaten in the end and had to return having failed to find our destination. We got back at 2 in the morning and spent the night in the car. I was fortunate and slept all the while but my companion didn't get any sleep at all and was almost frozen. At 8 in the morning we set out for the village where we knew we could gain a little information. It was only 2 miles away so we went with a light heart. There was already a couple of inches of snow on the ground and it continued to fall thick and fast. When we got to the village we were given a good breakfast but we learnt our village was about 6 miles away. We trudged off feeling awfully fed up. We were walking in the teeth of a not inconsiderable storm and a very uncomfortably wetting snowstorm. When we eventually got there we were soaked and tired out with no prospect of a change as we had left our valises at the station to follow later. We found that the battalion had been there three days already, so much for our month's rest. We have relieved the men of a section of their trenches as they need the men (?)<sup>204</sup>Our line is beginning to extend now. It is about 60 miles. We ourselves are quite close to Arras but it is very different indeed to Ypres. It is gentlemanly here, excellent trenches dug into about 30 feet below the ground and not too many shells. I am going up to the line tomorrow night. I haven't the faintest idea how they manage things down here but as it is fairly quiet I believe we do a month in at a time alternating of course between firing line and support. I don't often write as long a letter: my pen seems to have run away with me tonight. I am expecting quite a host of accumulated letters when I get into the trenches as of now none have been forwarded to me and I have had none for a fortnight. Very best love to all, Donald.*

A Telegraph postmarked "28 Aug 16" to his mother who was on holiday:

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<sup>204</sup> I think it should be "rest"

To: Gough, Croyde Bay, W, Devon, Beg to inform you that 2/Lt D.L. Gough 8<sup>th</sup> attached 6<sup>th</sup> SLI admitted 2nd Red Cross Hospital Rouen August 20<sup>th</sup> with slight gunshot wounds to groin. (Sgnd) Sec State War Office.

N.B.—This Form must accompany any inquiry respecting this Telegram.

**POST OFFICE TELEGRAPHS.**

Office Stamp.

If the Receiver of an Inland Telegram doubts its accuracy, he may have it repeated on payment of half the amount originally paid for its transmission, any fraction of 10s. less than 10s. being reckoned as 10s.; and if it be found that there was any inaccuracy, the amount paid for repetition will be refunded. Special conditions are applicable to the repetition of Foreign Telegrams.

Office of Origin and Service Instructions.

*Charges to pay* s. d.

*Received here at* 1045

*Office of Origin and Service Instructions*  
*London Regentham*

**TO** Gough into Croyde Bay  
 Beg to inform you that  
 2/Lt D.L. Gough 8<sup>th</sup> attached 6<sup>th</sup>  
 Somerset Infantry admitted 2<sup>nd</sup> Red  
 Cross Hospital Rouen August 20<sup>th</sup>  
 with slight gunshot wound to groin  
 Sec War Office

Donald was concerned not to worry her and wrote:

*If you see my name in the casualty list don't get worried and enjoy your holiday. It is a bullet through the groin but it has done no damage at all. I will let you know where they send me later. I am very fit. Best love, Donald. I am so far at Rouen.*

.....and he wrote again from hospital in Cardiff:

*Dumped in Wales. Now we must wait for sick leave which I hope won't be long. I am at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Western General Hospital, Cardiff.*

*I don't want you to come and see me before you get back from Croyde. When that time comes I will write and let you know what visiting times are. We had quite a nice trip. We got on the boat at Rouen and off again at Southampton and came here quite comfortably on the train. My kit will probably reach you in the near future. You might put what I shall need and send it on. I hope you are having a good time. Best love, Donald.*

Press Cutting, undated, concerning above:

*Lieut. Donald Gough has arrived from France wounded and is in hospital at Cardiff. Lieut. Gough, (whose brother H.B. Gough has been killed in action), after being severely wounded in the leg crawled three miles before assistance could be rendered.*

"August 1st 1917". (Back at Ypres)

*It's such an awful day today raining cats and dogs that I shan't be able to write anything interesting which is not to say that I am down in the dumps at all because I am not. I am feeling as top hole as the weather will allow. But this weather couldn't come at a worse time*

*as a big push started on our front yesterday and I am afraid the rain will considerably delay its after effects as you can't get any observation at all. It makes it awfully difficult to get guns forward.*

*I got up early to see the advance fire preceding the attack. I have seen some pretty intense fire on the Somme and at Arras but this eclipsed the whole lot, it was magnificent.*

*I am sending you a cheque for £1.1s. for Marjorie as it is impossible to get anything for her here and leave it to you. I want you also to get some khaki collars size 15 and I will pay you for them. The best of love, Donald.*

"19 October 1917", at Ypres:

*As I am cooped up in a dug out with wet and shells buzzing about outside I am going to take the chance of dealing with my correspondence.*

*Really in all my time about here I have never seen such a terrible battlefield as the Ypres battlefront. After this last rain all the low lying ground is a dank and deadly swamp filled with the overpowering stench of the dead, powder and gas shells for a stretch of six miles the whole ground is nothing but a pocked marked mass of (illegible) dirty brown with the shell holes full of water and only a very precarious footing to be had between them. I myself am suffering from a raging cold which has got a firm grip of me. I don't know when I got it but it's a confounded nuisance. Best of love, Donald.*

A Telegraph, undated apart from "October 25" but it was 1917. GOUGH HICKS GATE HOUSE KEYNSHAM SOMT

*REGRET TO INFORM YOU LIEUT D.L. GOUGH 8<sup>TH</sup> SOMT LIGHT INFANTRY ADMITTED TO THE GEN HOSP WIMEREUX OCT TWENTYFIVE WOUNDED GAS SHELL SEVERE ANY FURTHER NEWS RECEIVED WILL BE SENT SEC. WAR OFFICE.*

Undated letter, probably in 1917 from No 14 General Hospital, Boulogne

*That last little note was not written by me at the time. My eyes are practically alright again now but my throat is still a bit troublesome. There is just a chance I may get to England but it is just a chance. That is all anyhow I'll let you know differently in the next few days, as and when. Best of love, Donald. Excuse the writing!*

Donald's symptoms were of mustard gas poisoning - loss of sight, a bad throat etc.- this new outrage in addition to other forms of gas was used from July 1917.

Undated, but evidently early summer, 1918 "from 1<sup>st</sup> Somerset LI B.E.F. He was on 3 weeks rest at the seaside.

*My dear Granny.*

*You must please excuse my lateness in answering your letter but till two days ago I have been working very hard indeed. I have been sent for 3 weeks rest to the seaside, so I can write to you. Thank you ever so much for the chocolates and cake. The chocolates were divine, the first I have tasted for a long time and the cakes travelled extraordinarily well.*

*Aren't we having top hole weather now? I want to lie down all day long and would like to have my mouth under a barrel of iced lemon squash. I wish I could have a summer holiday in England but better here than nowhere at all. What do you think of the war? I really think we have got the old Hun this time, he doesn't know whether he is coming or going. Best of love, Donald.*

Undated, but sometime in March, 1918 again with the 1<sup>st</sup> Somersets. He had been "Acting Captain":

*Left A.P.O.S. as of yesterday and am going up to the front line in the morning so please in future address my letters Lt. not Capt. The three pips will take a little while getting here I am afraid. As they are already full of Captains; never mind, there is just a chance and I may get a decoration of some kind this time. I can't be beaten by Charlie Gibbons. The weather is absolutely top hole just now but the guns are gunning very loudly which just about spoils it all. Poor old Boucher<sup>205</sup> was killed here a month ago but Malet, is here, the man who wanted the puppy, and quite a lot of others I know very well. It isn't quite the same as the 8<sup>th</sup> but as there is a war on perhaps it doesn't make quite so much difference. I am just wondering whether Smith and I will be in the same company or not. Best of love, Donald.*

"Weekly Patrol Report": dated 30.7.18, from "4<sup>th</sup> Divn. No G.C. 7/26":

3.15. p.m. 1<sup>st</sup> Som. L.I. 1 Officer (Lt GOUGH) 1 Sgt (Sergeant WINTER) and 2 O.Rs.

*At 3 p.m. a German was seen at Q.33. a.7.5 in a trench usually occupied so patrol left our lines to capture him. Patrol worked along ditch to Q.33. a.4.9. then along German trench at Q.33.a.6.7. to where it ended. The patrol was then hampered by wire but got through by moving slightly to the North. The two O.R. were placed in covering positions while the Officer and Sergeant rushed the sentry, who surrendered. A few yards further along the trench was a shelter and as the Officer and Sergeant moved forward two Germans appeared from this. A rapid exchange of revolver shots took place without result. The sergeant then threw 2 bombs one of which exploded in the entrance to the shelter killing one of the Germans, (a Sergeant-Major). The other German after a short fight surrendered.*

(a 31 August 1918; Report, Fifth Army Infantry School on Lieut. D.E. Gough:

*An excellent young officer who has taken full advantage of the course. His practical knowledge is above average and his work throughout has been most satisfactory. (illegible signature)*

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<sup>205</sup> Captain Henry Mason Boucher, 3<sup>rd</sup> SLI, attd 1<sup>st</sup>. kia 23.4.1918 aged 27; of Clevedon. Bur. Chocques, France.

A very capable young officer who has worked well. With a little more experience he should be a good leader and do well. (signed) Lieut. Col. O.B. Graham, Chief Instructor.

Should make a good Company Commander. (signed) M. Hammond, Colonel Commandant

4th Division No. G.C. 7/26.

W E E K L Y   P A T R O L   R E P O R T

(Vide 4th Divn No. G.C. 7/26 d/- 21/7/18.)

Date	Time	Unit	Strength	Remarks
26/7/18	11 a.m.	2nd Lancers Fusrs.	1 Offr (2/Lt DUNLEVY) and 4 O.Rks.	After patrol had crawled through crops and had found several unoccupied shell holes, a sentry was observed in a shell hole at Q.27.c.75.66. Two O.R were told off to watch the flanks and the Officer and the other 2 O.R rushed the post, securing two prisoners. No shot was fired as the enemy was taken completely by surprise.
27/7/18	6.15 pm.	1st Som. L.I.	1 Offr (Lt. GOUGH) 1 Sgt and 1 O.R.	A hostile post was encountered at Q.27.c.75.50 where a sentry was on duty. The patrol worked round to rear of the post, capturing the sentry and another German who was in a shelter.
30/7/18	8.20 am.	1st Rifle Bde.	1 Offr (2/Lt ROUTH) & 8 O.Rks.	Left our lines at Q.34.c.7.3 and crawled in a Northerly direction, passed through enemy wire and worked behind enemy post at Q.34.c.8.6. The enemy post was then rushed and 5 prisoners captured. No shot was fired as the enemy was completely surprised.
30/7/18	3.15 pm.	1st Som. L.I.	1 Offr (Lt GOUGH) 1 Sgt (Sgt WINTER) & 2 O.Rks.	At 3 p.m a German was seen at Q.33.a.7.5 in a trench usually unoccupied so patrol left our lines to capture him. Patrol worked along ditch to Q.33.a.4.9, then German trench at Q.33.a.6.7 to where it ended. The patrol was then hampered by wire but got through by moving slightly to the North. The two O.R were placed in covering positions while the Officer and Sergeant rushed the sentry, who surrendered. A few yards further along the trench was a shelter and as the Officer and Sergeant moved forward, two Germans appeared from this. A rapid exchange of revolver shots took place without result. The Sergeant then threw 2 bombs, one of which exploded in the entrance to the shelter killing one of the Germans ( a Sergeant Major). The other German after a short fight surrendered.

Donald's award of the Military Cross was announced in the local press on 18 October 1918: This officer showed conspicuous enterprise and much gallantry in several successful patrol operations in which he inflicted severe casualties on the enemy, captured prisoners and

*secured valuable information. His energy and resource were a find example to all ranks of the battalion.*

Donald's letter of 23 November 1918 is muted. He was exhausted, disillusioned and bored. "It seems to be all over" he says, and asks whether England has "gone off her head".

*Sorry you had to wait 11 days but it couldn't be helped as I wrote to you to you on the first available opportunity which was the 11<sup>th</sup>. The Armistice must have upset the postal arrangements.*

*Well it seems to be all over now and although we haven't moved yet we expect to be in Germany shortly. It is practically peacetime warfare just now so there are one or two things I want you to send me. It will I am afraid cost a little to pack, my British Army (Uniform?), a hairbrush, some literature, about 4 or 5 books and last, my camera. You can also get me as many films as you can for it and if Dunscombes haven't any in stock put my name on the waiting list.*

*I am not feeling very fit just now, I have got a touch of flu and vile toothache, (in the tooth Kinnersley stopped. It will have to come out this time.) Apart from that the new officers in my company are a rotten lot, make noises like pigs when they eat, in fact do everything which common decency demands they should not do. So I am at present pretty bored with life. Tell me what England is like and whether she has gone off her head or not. Tell Dad not*

*to forget to give Mrs Harvey the drink he promised her. Best of love, Donald.*



In 1925 Donald married Gwendolen Spear and they had two daughters, Ann and Rosemary. Gwendolen's father Egbert was a colliery proprietor.

***The Spear family. Back Row: Arthur, Gwendolen, Philip, Doris; front row: Fanny Murlis (the nanny), John, Hilda (Clements).***

Elizabeth Henrietta Spear who died in 1933, was well known for her political and social work. Their son Arthur Egbert, a mining engineer, is photographed with the family in the



garden of the family home, The Elms, Brislington in 1917 wearing the kilt of his Canadian Regiment. He survived the war. The Elms was demolished in 1939.

Donald's younger brother Edwin became an officer cadet and passed out from Sandhurst on 17 July 1919. Marjorie, his sister, never married and was buried at Keynsham in 1980. In 1939, Donald was an Army Major, at Colchester, though is recorded with his parents, sister and Gwendolen at Hicks Gate House. In World War Two he served in North Africa and Italy. He and Gwendoline moved to Maidstone, Kent where Donald died in 1969 and Gwendoline in 1974.

In the ensuing months the survivors gradually came home but the emphasis quickly shifted away from them to the sacrifice of the dead. A "universal soldier", Private Edward Hurd of the 1<sup>st</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Gloucesters said

*"It's a strange thing but all through my life nobody has ever wanted to know about my experiences in the war. Nobody ever asked and I've never really wanted to talk about it."*<sup>206</sup>

### 1919: Beyond the Armistice

*"...the pain gets acuter when peace comes because one thinks of what might have been."*  
Rudyard Kipling.

The guns had gone quiet but most of the soldiers were still in the army, and influenza continued on its deadly way.

**19<sup>th</sup> February, France. Sapper Henry Augustus HARVEY, 1890-1919**, was the youngest of three children of Henry Harvey and his wife Mary, nee Cocks. He lived at the family home, Glenmore, Charlton Road, Keynsham until his marriage to Helen, the daughter of William and Ellen Panes of 73 Wick Road, Brislington.

This tribute to Henry, written by his granddaughter, Jenifer Prosser, is reproduced with her permission:

*"Henry Augustus was the brother-in-law of Fred Panes (qv. 17.4.1916). He was idolised by his younger sister, my grandmother, Helen, known as Nell. She was two years younger than Fred, and was absolutely devastated by his death. Nell and Henry, a house painter, were married in January 1915, prior to his enlistment in the Royal Engineers with whom he went to France. Needless to say Nell worried for his safety, especially following the death of her beloved brother. In May 1918, she*

*"gave birth to their daughter but not long afterwards she was struck down with influenza during the pandemic. It affected her so badly that Henry was granted leave, as it was feared that she would die. However, she recovered and Henry subsequently had to return to France.*

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<sup>206</sup> Quoted "No Thankful Village" by Chris Howell


"He survived the war but while engaged 'clearing up' in France in the aftermath, he succumbed to that same Spanish Flu, and died on 19 February 1919. At the time Nell was still weak but subsequently the Ministry arranged for her to visit the grave at Denain. The death of first her brother and then her husband hit her very hard, and had future repercussions for her and her family."

Officially Henry died from pneumonia which often "set in" following the 'flu. A notice in the "Roll of Honour", WDP, 1 March 1919 reads: "HARVEY. Feb. 19 at Somain, France, Henry Augustus, dearly loved son of Henry Harvey of Keynsham, aged 29." He is buried at Denain Communal Cemetery, Grave: C.17 and is remembered on the Memorial Gates at Keynsham.

**Helen & Henry Harvey, engagement photograph, 1915.**



No. 182/240219/197  
(If required please quote above No.)



ARMY FORM B. 104-8  
 Record Office,  
 5th March 1919.

Madam,

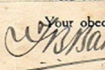
It is my painful duty to inform you that a report has been received from the War Office notifying the death of:-  
 (No.) 217401. (Rank) Captain.  
 (Name) Henry Augustus Harvey.  
 (Regiment) Royal Engineers T.D.A.  
 which occurred in 33. Casualty Clearing Station France on the 19th February 1919.

The report is to the effect that he died of (Influenza Pneumonia).

By His Majesty's command I am to forward the enclosed message of sympathy from Their Gracious Majesties the King and Queen. I am at the same time to express the regret of the Army Council at the soldier's death in his Country's service.

I am to add that any information that may be received as to the soldier's burial will be communicated to you in due course. A separate leaflet dealing more fully with this subject is enclosed.

I am,  
 Mrs Helen Emily Harvey, Madam  
 Lansdown Villa  
 West View Road  
 Keynsham

Your obedient Servant,  
  
 W. S. C. P.  
 OFFICER IN CHARGE OF RECORDS.

18640. W. 5529/M 2328. 150w. 7/17. R. & L. Ltd. Form B 104-8/12. P.T.O.

**The letter Helen received from the War Office with the news of her husband's death.**



*Helen at Henry's grave at Denain with the battlefield crosses. The graves now bear the familiar headstones.*



*Henry's grave as it now appears*

**24<sup>th</sup> February, at Home. Private Frank WYATT, 1891-1919** who enlisted in the SLI at Exeter on 8 March 1916 for the duration of the war, was transferred to the Worcestershire Regiment and latterly to the Royal Army Service Corps. Like Henry Harvey, he became ill, and died of pneumonia, following 'flu. His parents had already lost their son James, (*qv* 27.6.1918), and to lose another son after the war was over must have been beyond devastating. His obituary under "*Roll of Honour*", 1 March 1919, reads "*WYATT. Feb .24<sup>th</sup>, War Hospital, Croydon, Private Frank Wyatt, 3<sup>rd</sup> beloved son of James Taylor & Ellen Jane Wyatt, 52 Sandy Park Road, Brislington, aged 28. Heaven's morning break.*"

Frank is buried at the Queen's Road Cemetery, Croydon in Grave KK.I.35059 and is remembered at St Luke's (F. Wyatt). Ellen, his mother, died aged 56 just over a year later in May 1920; her obituary notice contains the text "*How long O Lord?*" and a request that there should be no flowers or mourning.

**16<sup>th</sup> August, France. Corporal Frederick William VEAL, 1892-1919**, a clerk in civilian life, was one of ten surviving children (of 13) of Francis and Emily Veal of 16 Manworthy Road. He enlisted on 21 March 1916 and served with the BEF in France from 21<sup>st</sup> July the same year. He was promoted Corporal, 4 November 1918 and was then in France with the Royal Engineers Railway Operating Division.

Fred Veal accidentally drowned whilst bathing in a lake near to the army camp at Malhoue on 16<sup>th</sup> August 1919. Several fellow soldiers gave evidence at the Court of Enquiry from which it transpired that he had been swimming with a friend, Corporal Dingley, when he got into difficulties. Dingley heard him call out and swam towards him: Dingley said: "*he did not speak but threw his arms round my neck and tried to climb on to my back and we both sank. I tried to get him to the bank but because of his struggles I had to release him. He clutched at my ankle and we sank again. I had great difficulty releasing myself and was losing consciousness. I got away and reached the bank. I shouted for help and some of the escort of the POW party who were approaching instantly undressed and dived several times. They did not find Corporal Veal*".

Others who were nearby tried to help but could not swim; one apparently imagined the men in the water were "playing about", though quickly realised a tragedy was unfolding. He ran up the bank and shouted to a Scottish soldier called Sandridge, "*Quick, Jock, there's someone in the water.*" Sandridge said "*The man in the bathing suit was looking very white. I dived in several times but could not find the missing man. Then others from the R. O. D. camp arrived. They also tried without success.*"

Fred was buried at Longueness, St Omer, in War Grave V.F. 65 and the shocking news was relayed to the family. Francis Veal

On 7<sup>th</sup> October, Fred's father, Francis Veal wrote to the authorities asking for his son's effects to be returned to him and received an abrupt memo two days later stating that they were awaiting clearance from the War Office. More than three months went by until eventually the lad's pathetic belongings were received by Mr Veal in late January 1920. These were listed as "Two discs, letters, photos, wallet, diary, 2 razors and cases, wrist watch and strap, pipe, a pair of scissors, knife, cards, programme, 3 coins, a small chain, 2 coins".

On 28<sup>th</sup> January Mr Veal acknowledged receipt, stating, *It is impossible to conceive the official personal effects [which] you have forwarded are the whole of the deceased's belongings or that some [of the things] returned was at any time actually his. I am returning the wrist watch for this reason; the one in his possession was given to him by his younger brother<sup>207</sup> when they met on one occasion in France and [he] could now identify it. I unhesitatingly say it has been surreptitiously taken by some other individual and the one now returned substituted. Of this I have no possible doubt. Again it is impossible to realize that he was absolutely penniless [sic] being by no means a spendthrift. Further, to our knowledge he had various sketches, black and white and in coloured pencil in which he was particularly gifted in his locker at the place he carried on his duties. I fully realise my helplessness to present positive proof to ensure the guilty ones being positively dealt with. I trust you will pardon me should I further communicate with you. I am unable to adequately express my disgust at the odious conduct of these....."*

The rest of the letter is missing. It is infuriating to read that the deference which prevailed at the time made Mr Veal feel that he should be the one to apologise for bothering the officer again. There is no evidence he ever received a reply and such indifference must surely have exacerbated his distress. In the fullness of time he might say (in the Tommies' well known expression) "*San Fairy Anne*" to the watch and the money, but the line drawings were of course, irreplaceable. It is hard not to believe that the army failed dismally in its duty of care.

At Arno's Vale, the last Australians were buried: Privates Richard Gossage, William Walker and George Richards in December 1918, and Private Thomas Rowlands in February 1919. Also far from home, were two Portuguese seamen, Jose Baretto, 27, and Francis Dais, 30, who died in Bristol, 1 December 1918 and are named on the Screen Wall at Holy Souls. Their history is unknown.

A South African infantryman interred at Holy Souls has a complex history. Private William Hazard the son of Thomas and Bridget was born in Louisiana, USA. When he died, aged 41, on 20<sup>th</sup> April 1920, (at the "The Workhouse", Stapleton) a rumour circulated that he had starved to death, which caused outrage among fellow ex-servicemen and others. This was denied by the authorities who stated that Hazard died of tuberculosis. A large group of ex-

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<sup>207</sup> This was Ralph Veal, see November 1915

soldiers assembled at the Ropewalk and made arrangements to attend his funeral and that of another former soldier, Thomas Smith of the Northumberland Fusiliers at Avon View. The old comrades marched with the corteges to both graveyards accompanied by several policemen. A suggestive postscript explains the presence of the police, and reminds us again that this was not the land fit for heroes that had been promised: *“There was no attempt at demonstrating en route.”*<sup>208</sup>

Concerts and fund raisers for the wounded still continued apace in 1919. Mr Strong the manager of Brislington Tramways Depot speaking in January at an entertainment which catered for 160 men, praised “the War Heroes Fund” which had provided similar events for 120 at Arno’s Castle<sup>209</sup>, trips to the Museum and Zoo for 400, plus prizes. Donations had been made to charities which included St Dunstan’s Home for Blinded Soldiers and the RAF Prisoner of War Fund. At Christmas a parcel to the value of ten shillings had been sent to each employee of the Company’s local Depot. Variety artistes from the Hippodrome entertained at the events which had been well supported with donations of cigarettes by Wills’ and chocolates from Fry’s. Miss I.M. Keeling, the woman’s welfare supervisor, ably provided the catering. Their next effort would be to send gifts to those who could not attend.<sup>210</sup>



Local churches continued with their bazaars and sales of work, as did Brislington Women’s Institute. The WI, which originated in Canada to encourage women to support the war effort by growing and preserving food, commenced its British operations in 1915 and provided an avenue

***Brislington’s “Lady Conductors” in 1917. About 100 were employed.***

whereby women could get out and about in the community without raising too many hackles. The war had provided opportunities for women to work outside the domestic

<sup>208</sup> WDP 30.4.1920

<sup>209</sup> “The Black Castle”.

<sup>210</sup> WDP 19.3.1919

environment, and as we have seen they had found jobs making such diverse articles as jam, aircraft and munitions, and were also “on the trams” as “lady conductors”.

The local marriage registers provide a very rough guide to the changes in the status of women. The familiar form of the marriage certificate has a helpful column whereby the occupation of both bride and groom may be shown. As it is unlikely that Brislington and St Anne’s had that many “ladies of leisure”, though of course there were a few, it is surprising how often the space for the bride’s occupation is left blank. Whilst those of St Luke’s are usually completed at St Anne’s, if you believe the marriage registers, few of the brides had jobs, and as for the Congregational Church, then none of the women worked at all. The column may have been left empty at the behest of either the bride’s father or her new husband, thus proudly implying that they were “able to keep her” (financially), without her going out to work or perhaps it reflects the vicars’ own prejudice.

We can assume that love blossomed between Dorothy Millie Moss of 127 Winchester Road and Lance Corporal Herbert Henry Stronghill of the RAMC as they tended the wounded in one of the Bristol war hospitals. Dorothy was Nurse No. 899 of Queen Mary’s Army Auxiliary Corps but nevertheless it would appear from her marriage entry in 1919 that she had no occupation! By comparison, the status of another nurse, Sister Lily Mary Rea of 76 Sandy Park Road (recipient of the Territorial Army Nursing Service Medal in 1917) was included when she married Frederick Tranter in 1920. (One of their witnesses was George Chown of the well-known Brislington family.) Another nurse, Gertrude Rosina Pople, 24, of 27 Grove Park Avenue, who married Jack Macpherson at St Luke’s had been a waitress before she joined the Red Cross as a VAD; she served in military hospitals, first in France, from December 1918 until March 1919, and then at Eaton Hall, Cheshire. A professional woman of a different kind was Vera Doris Owen, 23, a landscape artist, of 528 Kensington Hill who married William Tidman at St Luke’s in 1921. Finally, Mabel Maud Stowell aged 25, of Oakenhills, the sister of Frank, (*qv.* 7.7.1918), Albert, William and Harry was another modern young woman, a professional “motor driver” when she married Robert William Robertson Smith of 46 Winchester Road in 1921.

A problem now existed to get the women back inside the box. After the war domestic service declined in Brislington just as it did everywhere else. Newspaper correspondence columns are filled with the wailings of those who had difficulty finding skivvies to work for them; but help was at hand for the moaners. With the men returning to civilian life many of women workers found themselves redundant, like two Brislington conductresses who wrote to the papers concerning their plight. Editorial advice put a flea in their ears, more or less telling them to get back to the kitchen: “*there is plenty of work for domestic servants*”.

In 1919 there are dozens of advertisements for domestic staff. In some random cases the advertisers, evidently believing they were acting charitably, requested “*Soldier’s widow for*

housework, with daughter to train as housemaid" (Westbury Park); "Soldier's widow for two weeks to clear house; sleep in" (Weston-Super-Mare) even "Disabled soldier (or soldier's widow) for housework" (Clevedon). A century later these ads leave a patronising taste.



**Members of the Stowell Family in jolly mood. The young woman, 3<sup>rd</sup> left is believed to be Mabel Stowell in her chauffeur's uniform.**

For women in general the tide had begun to turn in any case. The year before, 6 February 1918, the "Representation of the People Act" had been passed giving voting rights to all men over 21 and to certain women over thirty who also qualified through right of property. It has been suggested that the age restriction was in part due to the carnage of the war. If women had been granted parity with men then they would have formed the majority of the electorate. And that would never do. It is unlikely that many of Brislington's factory girls (or those forced to return to domestic service) were affected by the new order: they would have to wait until another ten years for parity with men.



In January, Rev Ignatius Jones, a welcome visitor, returned to Brislington to conduct the wedding of the latest "Empire bride": Hilda Louise, the daughter of the late Albert and Mrs Sweetman of "Beechwood", 46 Winchester Road to Private James Brown, 33, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry and Montreal. The bridegroom had recently returned after two and a half years in a German Prisoner of War camp.<sup>211</sup> In August, at St Luke's, Lieutenant Charles Henry Golding, 25, of the Australian Imperial Forces, currently of 7 Oakland Road, Redland, the son of the

<sup>211</sup> WDP 24.1.1919



late Henry, a clergyman, married Amy Blanche Knight, 19, of 1 Grove Parade, the daughter of the late Joseph, a licensee, formerly of the Rock, Brislington.

In January 1919, the Belgians who had been accommodated at the Imperial Tobacco's Sports Ground (situated between Brislington and Knowle) were set to go home. On behalf of these, 76 in number, Monsieur V. de Stobbeleir thanked their hosts who had *"looked after us as parents would their children"*.<sup>212</sup> A large bronze tablet was presented to Bristol *"given as a tribute of gratitude by the Belgians who found a home in this City during the Great War, 1914-1918"*.<sup>213</sup> There was no specific mention of Brislington's own Belgians, M. Thonon and the rest.

Medal ceremonies were held. Billy Babb's father attended the medal ceremony at the Colston Hall, in February 1919 and received Billy's Military Medal, awarded posthumously. In July, Mabel Gertrude Smith, of the Lodge, 550 Bath Road, married a living holder of the MM, George Evans Jew, formerly of the Worcester Regiment. William Liddiard, a quiet hero, a "Blue Coat Boy", appears in the history of his school, Queen Elizabeth's Hospital:

*"William Liddiard had a memorable First World War. He was awarded the Croix de Guerre with Palms and the DSM. A reluctant hero, he did not actually receive his medals until 60 years later. He had a long career at Fry's Chocolate Factory at Keynsham. On his death his wife presented his medals to the School. They are now displayed in the Library."*<sup>214</sup>



**William's insignia is on display in the Library at QEH.**

In 1901, aged two, William, was living at 4 Frederick Street, Barton Hill, with his parents, William and Elizabeth and two younger brothers; in 1911 he was a boarder at QEH. He

<sup>212</sup> WDP 17.1.1919

<sup>213</sup> It is currently in store at the City Museum. BRO 43207/7/64, 66/67

<sup>214</sup> Steve Ryan, "The City School: 425 years of Queen Elizabeth's Hospital" Shire Publications

enlisted on 27 April 1916 as a Boy Mechanic in the RNAS and was awarded the DSM for gallantry on 18 September 1917.<sup>215</sup> Promoted to Leading Sergeant Mechanic he transferred to the RAF in April 1918, and was finally demobbed on 24 February 1919. He was decorated with the French *Croix de Guerre* on 13 June 1919.

The Liddiards were a patriotic family: William's brother Reginald served in the RAF and his father William, once a young soldier in the Wiltshire Regiment re-enlisted in 1914 aged forty and served throughout the war, first in the Suffolk Regiment and then as a Sergeant in the Labour Corps. He was demobbed in February 1919.

William Liddiard returned home after the war, and worked as a clerk at J.S. Fry and Sons, Somerdale, which seems a sad waste of his aero-engineering talent. (It seems that skilled RAF men such as William were cast adrift when the war was over.) He married Ellen Charlotte Stephens, known as "Nell", in 1923 and in 1939 the couple were living at 1 Coronation Avenue, Brislington Hill, near the former Hollybush pub.

William Richmond Liddiard, DSM, Croix de Guerre, died 5 September 1980 aged 81, and lies buried at Brislington Municipal Cemetery alongside his wife and sister-in-law.



Generic medals were struck for all those who had fought and distribution began. The full set, comprising the 1914 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal, was nick-named "Pip, Squeak and Wilfred" after a popular strip cartoon in the Daily Mirror.

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<sup>215</sup> RNAS Ref. ON F13497



The majority received “Squeak” and “Wilfred”, issued to those who served from 1915-16 onwards and are the ones most likely to be found among family heirlooms, like those I inherited from my uncle Private Tom Unsworth of the Middlesex Regiment, who survived. A more sombre memento, a Memorial Plaque known as “The Dead Man’s Penny” was issued to the next of kin of those who lost their lives.

The Treaty of Versailles which marked the official ending of the war was at last signed on 28 June 1919 which was designated “Peace Day”. A wedding at Hotwells was a threefold celebration: Bristol’s first “Peace Wedding”, the City’s first “Women’s Land Army Wedding”, as well as yet another “Empire Wedding”. The bridegroom, Private Harry Collins of the AIF, who had volunteered in 1915, had survived a POW camp; the bride Miss Violet A’Court, proudly wore her WLA uniform and carried a bouquet of roses. After the ceremony, the newly-weds walked arm in arm under an arch formed by eighteen of the bride’s colleagues, then left by taxi for the Reception at Whiteladies Road. There they were greeted by our own Mrs Bonville Fox, who had played a large part in the organisation of the local WLA, and other lady officials of the Women’s Agricultural Committee. Land Workers’ Hut no. 23 had been decked out with flowers and, appropriately, with the Union Jack and Australian flags, miniature versions of which also adorned the wedding cake.<sup>216</sup>

The “Peace” itself was marked on the 19<sup>th</sup> July when Bristol celebrated with a grand parade, which (true to form) was accompanied by a deluge. The next day, Sunday afternoon, between 2,000 and 3,000 people took part in a thanksgiving procession in Brislington. Among them were members of the Parish Council, the Fire Brigade, the choirs, congregations and Sunday Schools of St Luke’s, St Cuthbert’s, the Congregational and Wesleyan Churches with clergy and ministers, the Church Lads’ Brigade, whose band led the procession, the 5<sup>th</sup> Bonville Boy Scouts Troop, and the Girl Guides.

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<sup>216</sup> WDP 2.7.1919

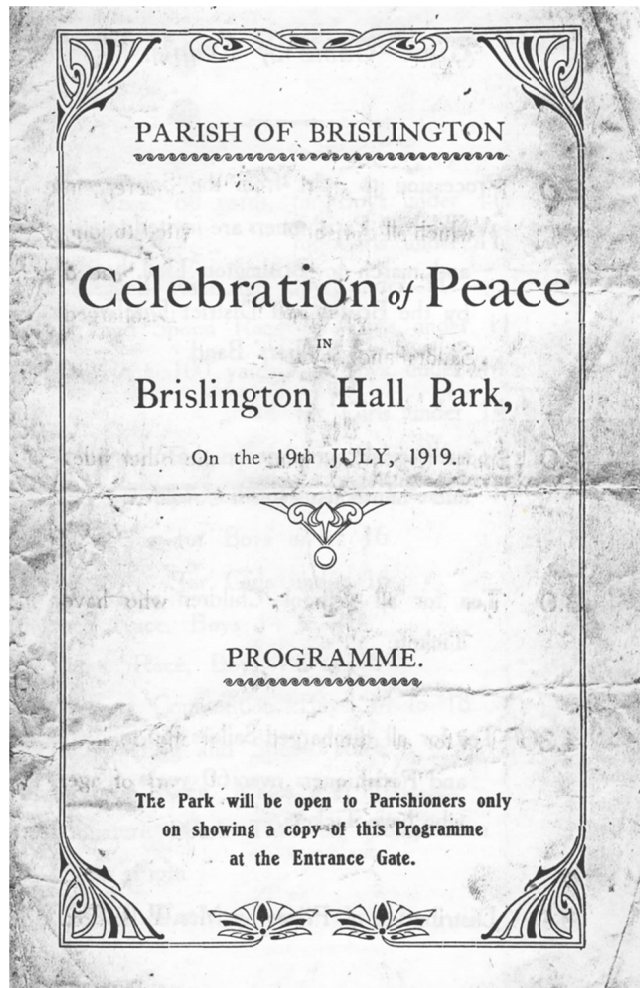
**Brislington Peace Day 1919**



***The Procession at Brislington Hill. (W.G. Chown – in cap – can be seen with his wife and daughter walking on the pavement at the back.)***



An open air service in Sandy Park Road followed. The village also celebrated at Brislington Hall, the home of Squire Ireland with games, sports, refreshments and the distribution of commemoration mugs to the children.



### The Programme of Events

<i>Time Table of Events.</i>	<i>Sports Programme.</i>
<p>2.0 Procession to start from the Square, in which all Parishioners are invited to join, and march to Brislington Hall, headed by the Bristol and District Discharged Sailors' and Soldiers' Band.</p>	<p>Flat Race, 80 yards, for Boys under 11  " " " " for Girls under 11  3-Legged Race for Boys under 11  Egg and Spoon Race for Girls under 11  Flat Race 100 yards for Boys under 14  " " " " for Girls under 14  3-Legged Race for Boys under 14  Egg and Spoon Race for Girls under 14  Flat Race for Boys under 16  " " " " for Girls under 16  Sack Race, Boys 14 to 18  Potato Race, Boys 14 to 18  Dressing Competition, Boys 14 to 18  Ladies Egg and Spoon Race  Obstacle Race, Males over 16  Miniature Bomb-Throwing Competition  Pillow Fight  Tug of War</p>
<p>3.0 Sports (see Programme on the other side) and Amusements for the Children.</p>	
<p>3.0 Tea for all School Children who have Tickets.</p>	
<p>4.30 Tea for all discharged Sailors and Soldiers, and Parishioners over 60 years of age, who have Tickets.</p>	
<p>8.0 Distribution of Prizes by Mrs. B. B. Fox.</p>	



***Hallelujah, War is Over! Obviously not a laughing matter.....only one of the girls could raise a real smile.***

Though the attitude of some was “Forget and Move On”, others began to devise ways of keeping their memories alive. The secretary of one “Old Comrades” Association was Andrew Spreckley of “Old Brislington” who had served in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 2<sup>nd</sup> Company, Grenadier Guards.<sup>217</sup> Spreckley was born at Sheerness, Kent, the son of a Royal Naval Pensioner, who in retirement was steward of Brislington Unionist Club. He had been a schoolmaster, living at Laurel Cottage, Grove Road with his wife Laura (nee Dorman) and their young son when he enlisted in November 1915. He was then thirty three years old, but hardly the image of the strapping guardsman for he was only 5 feet 7 inches tall. In 1917, “*briefly home on leave from France*”, Private Spreckley provided humorous sketches during one of the frequent concerts held to keep up morale.<sup>218</sup> The Grenadier Guards Association became a way of life and he took part in its proceedings until well after the end of World War Two, though by then he had moved to Ashley Down. He was active regarding the welfare of unemployed former soldiers<sup>219</sup> and was among those who petitioned for a War Memorial in Bristol, favouring College Green<sup>220</sup> though eventually the site at Colston Avenue was somewhat reluctantly accepted “*rather than risk never getting a memorial at all.*” One can understand the frustration: this was in October 1930, 12 years after the Armistice! Andrew and Laura’s only son had a very distinguished career in the RAF becoming Air Marshal Sir Herbert Dorman Spreckley, 1904-63, making three generations of the Spreckley family, one in each branch of the armed services.

An idea for remembering the war dead came from a Mr J.A. Sanders of Cotham who made what seems to be an innocuous suggestion: that several pauses should be made in church

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<sup>217</sup> WDP 23.6.1919

<sup>218</sup> WDP 10.3.1917

<sup>219</sup> Ibid 30.6.1931

<sup>220</sup> Ibid 21.10.1930

during the “*Te Deum*” before and after the Chant “*the noble army of martyrs praise thee*”. The first hiatus, he thought, would give everyone an opportunity to offer up silent prayers for the repose of the souls of the departed and the second to give thanks for their sacrifice.<sup>221</sup>

“All a bit High Church” for a number of cranks, the first of whom, Mr J. Charles Searles of “Livorno”, Bristol Hill, Brislington, protested vehemently against the idea of prayers for the dead. This was, he declared, “*a Protestant country and a largely Nonconformist city. It was an idea foreign to Scripture and one to which the Reformation had put an end.*” A purple newspaper debate ensued which cited the epistles of St Paul and included the prophecies of Job; the Apocrypha, chapter and verse; whether there was evidence for life after death; a spiritualist who objected to the idea of “*repose*”, presumably because the souls would be prevented from getting through the ether (spiritualism for obvious reasons was enjoying a vogue) and a dour correspondent who opined that “*death was the sentence imposed on our first parents for their disobedience*” and therefore on all of us forever and ever. Mr Searles wrote again; several times. The correspondence reached its nadir when a “J. Rays” submitted several lines of doggerel.....

*The dead are dead and not alive  
Despite what Sherlock Holmes<sup>222</sup> may say  
Saints cannot live till Christ may come  
And the rest not till Judgement Day.*

.....upon which the editor apparently lost patience for no more letters on the subject appeared.<sup>223</sup> The various “philosophers” might have benefited from a film shown in Brislington Picture House at Christmas 1919 depicting the Church Army at work in the field, with the troops in the trenches and civilians at home, demonstrating practical Christianity in contrast to pointless wrangling over pious interpretations of one sort or another.<sup>224</sup>

Surprisingly, if our area is typical, there appears to have been little hooliganism among newly demobbed youths (some of whom were out of work) who had been snatched as teenagers into the cauldron of the war. In fact the only instance I can find concerning anything like it was a case of car theft. Herbert Henry Harding, aged 22, of 70 Newbridge Road, St Anne’s, and two others from Easton, Francis Taylor, 20, and William Newlands, 22, stole the vehicle, valued at £375 (something like £13,000 today!) from a Mr Tasker in St Paul’s. They drove to Devon where they stopped at a cycle dealer’s, a Mr Galliford’s, in Kennford for some water, and when asked where they were going, said “to Plymouth”. Harding tried to buy some paint saying “*the number plate had become worn*” and offered to sell the car to Galliford for £150, urging him “*to give it a try*”. Galliford who had become suspicious “*poured some water into the carburettor and the magneto*” (!) which, not

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<sup>221</sup> Ibid 17.5.1919

<sup>222</sup> Conan-Doyle was a well-known proponent of Spiritualism

<sup>223</sup> WDP 18.5.-5.6.1919 passim. Conan-Doyle the author of Sherlock Holmes was a well-known Spiritualist

<sup>224</sup> WDP 20.12.1919

surprisingly, prevented the car from starting. The trio were then seen pushing the car by a police constable who noticed the plate had been altered from 3917 to 3847; he went to find a telephone to call for assistance, but when he returned, the men had gone, the car presumably abandoned. Taylor and Harding were arrested in Teignmouth and Newlands in Dawlish. Harding told the detective who made the arrest that it was *“more of a joy ride than anything else.”*

The parents were summoned to court as character witnesses. Mrs Harding said Herbert had always been a good son. He had joined the army aged seventeen in 1914, had served in the Gloucesters and then the Royal Flying Corps until discharged in May 1919, with a “very good” character.

Mrs Newlands said her son had first enlisted in 1915 but had been sent back owing to his age. In 1917 he joined up again and served in France and Belgium. He was gassed and wounded in 1918. Since coming home he had been *“bad in the head.”*

Taylor’s father said his son *“had joined up before he was 15 and served 2 years when he had claimed him from the Army.”* He had re-joined aged 18½, *“and went to France during the terrible onslaught by the Germans which had put a little more devil in him. He was just as worthy as the two others for his military service. The lad had ten sisters and it was a great grief to them to see him in that position.”*<sup>225</sup>

They were each sent to prison for one month “in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division”, a device which took their war service into consideration and kept them apart from other prisoners.

This is an abridged version of a much longer report. Not only would such a crime get scant attention nowadays, but it is a marvel that without modern communications an investigation which covered three counties, with three policemen involved, one a detective, the time between the theft, 10<sup>th</sup> November, and the report of the trial took less than 10 days!

Guns “liberated” from the enemy seem to have been easily retained by returning army personnel and kept as souvenirs. In Brislington alone three cases are recorded involving such firearms, two of which resulted in death. In December 1919, an inquest was held on the body of 16 year old Reginald Goodland, of 44 Addison Road, St Anne’s Park who had been killed on 21<sup>st</sup> November by a shot from a revolver.

The boy had *“come home that evening and had a tune on the gramophone, after which, being fond of mechanics, he went upstairs to draw a plan of a small steam engine he had bought. He then went to the workshop at the back of the house where shortly afterwards a noise was heard like someone letting off a firework.”*

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<sup>225</sup> WDP 20.11.1919



His mother went to investigate and found him lying on his back, unconscious. He was taken to the General Hospital where he died four hours later. The boy was shot through the forehead from which it appeared that he must have been looking down the barrel when it was discharged. He would have had to pull the trigger three or four times before he came to the magazine which contained the bullet.

Herbert Goodland, Reggie's brother, told the court he had brought a revolver home from active service; it had eight chambers and was of Austrian make. He usually kept it in a drawer with three rounds of ammunition, but one of these was found spent. (Herbert had enlisted in Bristol on 31 December 1914 aged 19 and served throughout the war as a driver with 1<sup>st</sup> Midland Brigade, Royal Field Artillery. He was discharged in 1919.)

The deceased boy was not in any trouble and had never expressed suicidal thoughts. The verdict was "*died from a pistol shot, probably accidentally*".<sup>226</sup> If a reprimand concerning the danger of keeping such souvenirs was expressed by the coroner, it was not reported.

Another event, though much less serious, could have had similar consequences. Thomas Arthur Pitt Bickley of 119 Winchester Road, formerly in the Royal Engineers, a standard bearer in the British Legion,<sup>227</sup> had also brought a weapon home, a matter which came to light when his son, Thomas junior, aged eighteen, was summonsed for "firing a gun fifty feet from a carriage way". The elder Bickley said he had given the boy permission to fire the gun, which was a souvenir from his time in France. Several hawks had been harassing their pigeons and he had told his son to shoot at them. Junior admitted "*I knew it would kill a man.*" He was fined five shillings and was mildly rebuked that "*a gun must not be used in a public place when there are other people about.*"<sup>228</sup> No reference was made to the Goodland tragedy of the previous year.

Thomas Bickley, senior, who had previously come to the notice of the court in January 1916 in a matter concerning pigeons, was a standard bearer in the British Legion<sup>229</sup> and prominent in the Brislington Unionist Club where he played billiards and occasionally took the chair. He and his wife Beatrice were still living at 119 Winchester Road in 1939.

On 19<sup>th</sup> December, Brislington played a part in a national murder case in which a souvenir firearm was involved. Albert Edward Redfern, aged 24, was arrested in Brislington village, and charged with the murder of a bank official, Mr E.T. Oates, during a robbery at Leeds two days before. Redfern, a former Lieutenant in the Devonshire Regiment had enlisted in 1915 in the 2<sup>nd</sup> West Riding (Yorkshire) Field Ambulance as a bugler. He served in France until 1917 when he was commissioned and sent to Palestine where he was severely wounded in his spine (a bullet had remained lodged in his back) and right shoulder. He was confined to bed in hospital for twelve months after which he was sent to a convalescent home for

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<sup>226</sup> WDP 25.12.1919

<sup>227</sup> WDP 18.7.1934

<sup>228</sup> WDP 20.6.1911; 7.1.1916; 11.3.1920; 25.11.1925; 9.11.1926

<sup>229</sup> Ibid 5.3.1933

officers in Bristol. Here, he was befriended by a woman called Marian Hopkin, the wife of a fellow officer, Hugo Hopkin. Redfern who was interested in fashion design, showed some of his sketches to Mrs Hopkin who had a dress shop in Bath and was encouraged by her enthusiastic response. The acquaintance prospered and when Redfern left hospital he went to lodge above Mrs Hopkin's quarters at Savile Row, Bath. The couple conceived an unlikely plan to go into business together, in Paris, along with Mrs Hopkin's assistant, Mrs Molly Birch. This, despite Mrs Hopkin witnessing Redfern having *"terrible seizures, a dozen or so times, in which in his delusion he went through charges in the Army"*. She also saw Redfern openly going about with a revolver, *"for self-defence"* as there was some suggestion that Hugo Hopkin was *"after him"*. On 10<sup>th</sup> December Redfern went to Leeds, where he had previously lived, with a plan to rob the Yorkshire Penny Bank. He had been engaged to be married to a young woman from the City but this arrangement had been broken off. Friends there described him as a lovable boy, *"he brightened us all up"*, but his demeanour had changed when he came back from the war, *"he bore the traces of suffering and his wounds still troubled him"*. He had saved a little money during his time in the army but lost it all *"in shares"* and had described himself to them as *"down and out"*.

At the bank, a clerk, Miss Eleanor Fluck, who heard the command *"Hands Up!"* thought it was someone playing a joke, but Mr Oates, the cashier, closed with the man and tried to disarm him. Then a shot rang out. The bullet went through Mr Oates' head and he fell. Miss Fluck and the under-manager managed to lock themselves in a lavatory whilst *"the assailant"* grabbed the cash in the drawers, a sum of about £400 and escaped by taxi to the railway station where he took a train to Bath. Redfern gave Mrs Hopkin a sum of money (she later handed £374 to the Police) and met a friend, a Mr Longhurst, as he was about to get on a train to Bristol. The pair sat together in third class. Redfern appeared glum and Longhurst asked him if his business had been successful, meaning the shares, to which Redfern replied *"Mediocre"*. He then asked Longhurst to go to Thomas Cook's and get him three first class tickets to Paris and showed him two passports, Mrs Hopkin's dated 26<sup>th</sup> November and Mrs Birch's 1<sup>st</sup> December. Redfern then got off the train at St Anne's Station. Longhurst had heard nothing of the murder and robbery until he arrived at his office in Victoria Street, where it was being discussed. He became suspicious and called the Police who devised a plan to make an arrest. Redfern phoned Longhurst's office from Brislington Post Office to enquire whether he had the tickets. Longhurst said he would bring them to him by taxi. Redfern was waiting outside the Post Office when Longhurst arrived and suggested they should go to a nearby pub (The King's Arms?) where the Police were waiting and Redfern was arrested. The trial was sensational and reported all over the country. Numerous witnesses gave testimony as to Redfern's physical and mental state.

*"He would be left confounded, exhausted, unable to use his legs."*

*"After such an attack on a dozen or so times it would take five or six men to hold him down."*

*"His fits would last 5 or 6 minutes."*

*“He would relive his battles and after the delirium would remember nothing for 48 hours, before or after.”*

In the dock *“Redfern’s eyes were a fixed stare;<sup>230</sup> he had to be carried bodily from the Court,”* and much of the trial proceeded without him as he was confined to the gaol hospital at Arnley. A plea of insanity was rejected and he was duly convicted of wilful murder and sentenced to death. The Jury added a strong recommendation to mercy. On 31 March 1920 he was reprieved to penal servitude for life.<sup>231</sup>

More than 300 years before, Shakespeare had written a soliloquy for Hotspur’s Lady, who witnessed the disturbed sleep of her husband, an old soldier:

*“In thy faint slumbers I by thee have watch’d,  
And heard thee murmur tales of iron wars;  
Speak terms of manage to thy bounding steed;  
Cry ‘Courage! to the field!’ And thou hast talk’d  
Of sallies and retires, of trenches, tents,  
Of palisades, frontiers, parapets,  
Of basilisks, of cannon, culverin,  
Of prisoners’ ransom and of soldiers slain,  
And all the currents of a heady fight.  
Thy spirit within thee hath been so at war,  
And thus hath so bestirr’d thee in thy sleep,  
That beads of sweat have stood upon thy brow  
Like bubbles in a late-disturbed stream.....”<sup>232</sup>*

In October, a man who originally gave his name as Charles Thorne was later identified as Thomas Higgs, 34, an engineer, of Teddington, Middlesex. He had been found in a field in Brislington with his throat cut. Asked why he had done such an awful thing, he answered *“Trouble my boy, trouble.”* Attempting to commit suicide was then against the law and he was duly arrested. The court, which heard that he was a former soldier who had served 11 months in France, imposed a minimum sentence, binding him over for twelve months in the sum of £20.<sup>233</sup>

By the end of the war the British army had dealt with 80,000 cases of “shell shock”. Many men suffered to the end of their days. The condition is now recognised as Post-Traumatic Shock Disorder.

Philip Silvester of 1 School Place was “a well-known Brislington ex-Serviceman”, who had fought in the Boer War as well as the Great War, for which he was the recipient of the Mons Star awarded for service in Belgium 5 August to 22 November 1914. He died in March 1930

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<sup>230</sup> “The two thousand-yard stare” which recognised combat stress was coined in WW2.

<sup>231</sup> WDP, Bath Journal, Hull Daily Mail, Leeds Advertiser, 13.12.1919-1.4.1920

<sup>232</sup> Henry IV, Pt 1, 2.3.86

<sup>233</sup> WDP 16.10.19

having been found with his throat cut, by Elsie, one of his three daughters.<sup>234</sup> He had been ill for twelve months with TB, and thus unable to work. It cannot be known whether his war service contributed to his illness and depression. He was born in the village in 1880 and married Alice Fitzgerald in 1904.

A soldier who returned an invalid was forty one year old Bath-born Charles Edwin Palmer, who came home to Brislington in May 1918. After going to boarding school in Trowbridge, he became a Merchant Navy officer. He married Agnes Loveless in 1899 and in 1901, aged 23, he was “between ships” at Churchill, Somerset with his wife and young daughter. Sometime within the next decade Charles and Agnes arrived at 60 Grove Park Road where they are recorded in 1911. By then Charles had settled down ashore as a commercial clerk with his wife and seven children (another child, Alec, had died in 1907, aged two), but in common with other MN men, he was in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve. He was called to the Colours, 5 November 1915, despite the fact that by then he was the father of ten children, the youngest, Barbara, a baby born that year. Reserves were not needed by the Royal Navy at that time, hence his being placed in the Army, the Cyclists’ Battalion, (25<sup>th</sup> London Regiment) whilst remaining in the RNVR.



*Charles Edwin Palmer with Agnes his wife & Lilian, Muriel, Florence, Frederick, Frank, John Percival, William Loveless, Marjorie, Winifred, and the baby, Barbara, in 1915; and in the Cyclists’ Corps.*



<sup>234</sup> Ibid 10.3.1930

Charles was discharged by the Army 20 June 1917 after one year and 79 days, and drafted immediately into the Royal Navy, but any hopes he may have had of going to sea were dashed. He was placed in the RN Brigade, which, as noted previously, consisted of sailors, surplus to sea requirements, who served in combat to augment land forces. Thus with the rank of Able Seaman, he arrived in Calais on 1<sup>st</sup> August, with the Drake Battalion as part of the BEF.



*Cap badge of Drake Battalion*



*Charles Edwin Palmer A.B. in Army uniform and wearing the Cap Badge (above) of the "Drake Battalion" which is part of the family memorabilia.*

At Wimereux in November 1917, he reported sick and was diagnosed with Albuminuria, a kidney disease. He was taken to the Birmingham War Hospital at Northfield where he was an in-patient until January 1918 when he was transferred to the Camp Hospital at Saltash, Cornwall. There he was stated to be suffering from "Trench Nephritis" of which the earlier Albuminuria was a component. Trench Nephritis was first noticed among soldiers in the spring of 1915, characterized by breathlessness, swelling of the face or legs, headache, sore throat, and the presence of albumin and renal casts in urine. There was no consensus as to cause, though infection, exposure and diet, (including poisons), were all cited. Trench Nephritis was a serious problem for the Allies, with thousands of troops taken ill, which in hundreds of cases proved fatal. It accounted for 5% of all medical admissions and 10% of military bed occupancy.<sup>235</sup> Whether Charles' current illness was attributed to previous service in the trenches when he was with the London Battalion or contracted later with the RN Brigade is not recorded, but he was discharged due to invalidity on 9 May 1918; he went home to his

<sup>235</sup> Information "Great War Forum" on-line. I cannot pretend any medical expertise.

family at 60 Grove Park Road. Even then he was kept in the Reserve for 150 days. He was paid a £10 gratuity on 17 February 1919 and “notified re medals” 23 December 1920.

Charles had paid a heavy price for doing his duty “For King and Country”, and even then his ordeal was far from over. His wife Agnes had managed so well during his absence that when he returned his arrival seemed to upset the family dynamic. They had grown apart from him and he apparently became something of a cipher, glowering in the corner, a prisoner of his thoughts. His children found it difficult to communicate with him.



He had a terrible illness when he could hardly breathe or swallow. According to his daughter Lilian, *“the cancer had broken through his back and was a running open wound, but he was perfectly conscious all the time”*. Towards the end he appeared at last to be able to talk about *“everything and everybody”*. Lilian said *“Dad begged all of us to give him affection, take him into [our] confidence and let him be one of us; it was the most pathetic thing I ever saw, his pleading for that, and I feel now there is a better understanding all round, than ever there has been before.”* He died at Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex in 1936, his wife having predeceased him three years before. The address on his funeral leaflet is 23 Kensington Park Road.



The determined tentacles of the War reached into every family in the land. Another of Charles’ daughters, Winifred, married Lewis Powell, whose father Jack, of Totterdown, otherwise Pte Jack Powell, 202092 of the Kings Own Royal Lancaster Regiment was killed in action, aged 40, on 16 September 1917.

***Jack Powell, centre, kia 16 September 1917.***

Clement Cartledge, from Nottingham, born in 1885, joined the Royal Garrison Artillery after escaping life as a farm servant, and in 1911 was serving as a Gunner at Quetta, Baluchistan. His only surviving record shows he was “sent from the lines” with a “fever, NYD” (otherwise not yet diagnosed) and it is possible he was among the hospital casualties in Bristol when he met a “munitionette”, Annie Webb. They were married in Brislington in 1917 and he was evidently so enamoured with the place that he returned when he was demobbed. In 1939 they lived at 153 Bloomfield Road with their daughter Barbara, aged 19, a “fitter for khaki overcoats”, a portent of things to come and son Ronald.

At Christmas 1919, the new vicar, Rev C. R.G. Norris was the only eye-witness to an awesome event: St Luke’s church tower was struck by lightning during freak weather.<sup>236</sup> Some may have thought that it was a warning signal from the Almighty that the worst was not yet over.

### **1920: Those we lost**

**25<sup>th</sup> January, Canada. Private John Owen JAMES, 1897-1920.** The 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion (1<sup>st</sup> British Columbia) Canadian Expeditionary Force was created in September 1914 and sailed for England aboard the “Virginian”, arriving 14<sup>th</sup> October with 49 officers and 1083 men. The 7th was in action along the Western Front throughout the war and returned to Canada on 18 April 1919. John died in Canada on 25<sup>th</sup> January 1920, aged 23, probably of wounds, and is buried in the family plot at Strong Township Cemetery, Sundridge, Ontario. The CWGC records his parents as Thomas A. and Catherine James, and his wife Lilian of 29, Addison Road, St Anne’s Park. Lilian must have been a war bride and was very likely planning to join her husband in Canada when she heard the news of his death. On 18 October 1920, under “Domestic Situations Wanted” she advertised in the Western Daily Press: *“Young widow wants daily housework (no cooking) or assistant in confectionery store. Mrs James, 29, Addison Road, St Anne’s Park.”* So different from the life she must have envisaged.

**1<sup>st</sup> May, Canada. Captain William Armitage COOKE – HURLE, RN, 1875-1920** “the son of Joseph Cooke-Hurle, gentleman, and his [second] wife, Florence Anne, nee Forbes, of Brislington Hill House” was baptised at St Luke’s on 20 September 1875,

In 1881, six year old William was living at home with his landowner father, aged 67, his mother, aged 46, who was born in County Down, Ireland, and an assortment of relatives and servants: his widowed aunt Henrietta Robinson, Florence’s sister, aged fifty four, Henrietta’s sons Arthur, 25, a “clergyman without cure of souls, BA” and Joseph, 23, a theology student; there was also a resident cook, Elizabeth Rawle, plus a nurse, parlour maid, housemaid, and kitchen maid. I have to say it doesn’t sound too much fun for a little boy.

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<sup>236</sup> WDP 27.12.1919

By 1891, William had become a cadet at Dartmouth Royal Naval College but was home on leave on census night, the 5<sup>th</sup> April, as was his half-brother, Edward, 27, a Lieutenant in the SLI and his half-sister Susannah, aged thirty. Henrietta Robinson was obviously a permanent fixture, as was the faithful cook, Mrs Rawle.<sup>237</sup> There were three different maids but no longer a nurse.

Ten years later William was a Lieutenant aboard HM Sloop, "Jearns" with a large complement of officers, ratings and Royal Marines, "position at midnight 31<sup>st</sup> March 1901, Honolulu, Hawaiian Islands" which does not sound at all bad. He was on leave from HMS "Antrim" in 1906 when he married Miss Bertha Josephine Agnes Shore (the sister of Hamilton Shore who would marry Letitia Cooke-Hurle in 1915) at St George's Church, Whatley, near Frome. Bertha, the second daughter of Mr and Mrs J.H. Shore, JP, of Whatley House was attended by four bridesmaids, her sister Emmeline, her cousin Victoria Clarke plus Mary and Violet Cooke-Hurle, nieces of the groom. William's best man was Lieutenant R. Brooks, RN, also of HMS "Antrim". Both officers wore full dress uniform. The Dean of Westminster, a cousin of the groom, officiated along with the bride's uncle, Rev T.A.W. Wadmore and the Rev Samuel Laing, the Vicar of Whatley. The ceremony took place before a packed congregation though the reception was small owing to both families being in mourning for various relatives. The honeymoon was spent in the Thames Valley.<sup>238</sup>

William served in a variety of ships where his career achievements were rather mixed. In between such remarks as "capable", "reliable and careful", "a very good pilot" on occasions he also "showed a want of appreciation of orders" and "incurred severe displeasure in not adhering to orders". He was placed on the retired list 1909/10 with the rank of lieutenant and left with his family for a new life in Canada. On the outbreak of war he returned to England and reported to the Admiralty. From 14 November 1914, he served at Leith aboard HMS "Vulcan" as "a promising executive" and was "very zealous" though his application to command a sloop was turned down, despite a letter of recommendation. He continued at Leith from June 1916 to July 1918 aboard HMS "President" as Commander of Convoys. Unfortunately he was dogged by indifferent health, spending several periods of up to six weeks in hospital suffering from "dilation of the heart". He retired again on 13 January 1919 with the rank of Captain and was granted a free passage to Canada. He died on 30 April 1920, according to RN records, of a "cerebral haemorrhage" which differs slightly from the account in the Bath Chronicle of 8 May 1920:

*"DEATH OF CAPTAIN W.A. COOKE-HURLE, RN"*

*"The death has occurred at the age of 44 from the effects of war exposure, of Capt. W.A. Cooke-Hurle, R.N., brother of Mr. J. Cooke-Hurle, J.P. He retired from the Navy as Lieutenant with a pension in 1909, and settled with his wife and children on the shores of Koolena Lake,*

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<sup>237</sup> Mrs Rawle died aged 58 on Good Friday 1898. Her tombstone reads "erected by the family of J. Cooke-Hurle for her faithful service of 19 years."

<sup>238</sup> WDP 13.7.1906



*British Columbia, where he commenced fruit farming. On hearing of the outbreak of war in August 1914, he left his home within a few hours for England and reported at the Admiralty; he was at once given employment and was promoted to commander the following year. He was on HMS "Hermes" when she was sunk by a submarine in the Straits of Dover. Afterwards he was for some time officer-in-charge at the Leith Naval Dockyard and towards the end of the war was in charge of convoys to and from Alexandria with the acting rank of Commodore. After the war he returned to British Columbia. He leaves a wife, the second daughter of Mr John Henry Shore, J.P. of Whatley, near Frome, a young son and a daughter."*

William was buried at the Nelson Memorial Park, British Columbia, and his name is inscribed on the family grave in St Luke's churchyard, *"the youngest son of Joseph and Florence Cooke-Hurle. He served King and Country faithfully through the Great War and died from the effects of war exposure 1 May 1920 aged 44."* He is also commemorated on the RN Officers Medal Roll and on the War Memorial at St Luke's and on a separate plaque. His medals, the 1914-15 Star, plus the Victory and British War Medals, were issued to his widow, Bertha. Their son, Captain Maurice Cooke-Hurle was killed in action in Normandy in 1944.

**19 May, Flanders. Company Quartermaster Sergeant Frank PRITCHARD, 1876-1920** was born in Birmingham, a son of John Owen Pritchard, a jewellery dealer, and Victoria, his wife, who died in 1890. In 1891 Frank was an office boy living with his father and younger brothers Arthur and Clifford at 4 Victoria Road, Handsworth. His father died in 1894 aged fifty five. In 1900 Frank married Helen Elizabeth Kyle at West Bromwich. Their daughter Madeleine Mary was born 13 December 1901 and baptised at the Birmingham RC Cathedral in January. In 1911 Helen and Madeleine were living at Spencer Street, Birmingham with Helen's stepmother Elizabeth who had recently married her second husband, a pencil manufacturer called Alfred Harley. Frank's absence suggests that he was already in the Army.



The men of the Royal Army Service Corps are unsung heroes. Soldiers cannot fight without food, equipment or ammunition and cannot move without horses or vehicles. The job of the RASC was to maintain the flow of supplies

to all fronts. The Mechanical Transports supplied motor convoys, ambulances and buses wherever they were required. As QMS, Frank would have been at the sharp end of the organisation. He stayed in the Army after the war as a Lance Corporal in the Labour Corps, where like Henry Harvey, he was engaged in “clearing up” operations. He died on 19 May 1920 of an unspecified cause and is buried in Grave XXX1 at Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Vlaanderen, Belgium. He is remembered on the Birmingham Employers’ Roll of Honour (Gas Dept., Windsor Street). The CWGC records his wife Helen at 44 Winchester Road, Brislington; she married secondly in Bristol, 1923, Harry Moreton, a jeweller’s clerk, and returned to Birmingham.

William John Stevens, of 588 Bath Road, also took part in the aftermath. He had served throughout the war, (1914/15 Star), and following demob in 1919, requested work with the CWGC. He wrote to the RASC for a reference. A Captain Francis Hawks replied, 27 October 1920, *“He is a very good motor driver and a capable NCO. He is willing, honest, sober, trust worthy and gave satisfaction.”* He worked with the War Graves Commission at Blaudacques, Calais.

Many soldiers survived the battlefield only to die young a few years after the war was over. A letter to the Daily Telegraph in 2016 during the Somme centenary referred to the men who returned “wounded, shell-shocked, gassed” who died in the years after the war leaving widows and young children. The writer’s mother, desperate to pay hospital bills as well as feed her children was told “There’s always the Workhouse.” Most people do not want to know the unpalatable truth, she continued: *“war is not noble or romantic – just appalling”*.

Herbert Allen Thomas, a letterpress printer, enlisted on 11 December 1915 and according to his medal card served in the 2/9<sup>th</sup> Hampshire, a Cyclists’ Battalion:



***Herbert Thomas and his wife Ellen.***

He was invalided out of the Army on 27 June 1918; his only remaining military record has the one remark “sick”. It appears he never fully recovered and died at the Ministry of Pensions Hospital in Bath, aged 34, on 9 February 1921 of “Tuberculous Peritonitis & Meningitis”. He left a widow, Ellen, “Nell”, nee Davies, and three children, Mabel, Albert and Stanley, (who was born opposite Arno’s Vale Cemetery at 14 Albert Road, Brislington.) Ellen, who remained a widow for 41 years, spent the last years of her life living

with Stanley and his wife at 105 Talbot Road.

***Herbert's orphaned children, Mabel, Albert and Stanley Thomas.***

At least Nell Thomas was blessed with children. Another war widow, Laura Brewer, born Laura Ann Seldon did not have this solace. She was a twenty five year old draper's assistant when in the spring of 1918 she married a soldier, Iva Victor Brewer<sup>239</sup> at Pontardawe, Glamorgan. Vic never knew his father, who died when he was a baby, and in 1891, aged four, he was living with his elder sister Ellen, his mother Annie and her new husband, Thomas Dolman, the manager of the George Inn, Bathampton. Victor's other sister Kate, aged eight, lived nearby with an uncle and aunt, William and Kate Loveder. Annie Dolman died aged 36 in 1897. In 1901, Vic, then aged 14, a gardener lived at Norman Villa, with his step-grandparents, Henry and Elizabeth Dolman, whilst his stepfather lived nearby in a row called "The Normans" with



nineteen year old Kate Brewer, and three little Dolmans, Ellen, 9, Lilian, 7 and Ernest aged five. Tom Dolman died in 1903, aged thirty seven, thus Vic suffered a catalogue of loss, before he was sixteen years old. The same year, his sister Kate, to whom he was close, married William Tucker. Like many young men before him who questioned their place in the world, Vic joined the Army as a Bombardier and saw service in Bombay and Ceylon. In 1911 in Bathampton, his half-siblings, Lilian and Ernest Dolman were living with their Dolman grandparents, the elderly Henry and Elizabeth. Ernest, an enterprising young man, decided to emigrate to Canada, where, like William Cooke-Hurle, he found work on a fruit farm. At the outbreak of war he immediately enlisted and by 1915 was with the Canadians in France. On 17 June 1916 he was first reported injured by "a severe wound in his back" and then, a week later, came the sad news of his death, aged twenty, which was relayed to his sisters, "three of whom reside together at Mount Pleasant, Bathampton, Mrs Tucker, Mrs Fudge and Miss Dolman". The same report gives news of Victor - "Sergeant Brewer, R.G.A, whose name was in Monday's list of the wounded (though no information has been received by the family), is their half-brother. The husband of Mrs Fudge is also serving at the Front."<sup>240</sup>

Private Ernest Dolman, 57168 of the 20<sup>th</sup> Battalion Canadian Infantry "son of Thomas and Annie Dolman of 6 High Street, Bathampton," lies buried in Grave VIII B 100 at Boulogne Eastern Cemetery.

<sup>239</sup> His first name, "Iva", also appears as "Ivo" or "Ivor"

<sup>240</sup> Bath Chronical & Weekly Gazette, 17.6./24.6.1914

So through the tragedy of his younger brother's death is the news that Vic Brewer, by that time a senior NCO, in France with the Royal Garrison Artillery, had been wounded in action. His Medal Card shows that he was awarded the Military Medal for bravery in the field on 27 October 1916 during the Somme offensive. It is probable that he and Laura met when he was recovering, possibly in the military hospital, a former workhouse, at Pontardawe. In 1918 (by then ranked Battery Quarter Master Sergeant) Vic was again wounded in action, this time critically. He was brought to London, to the war hospital at Islington, where he underwent an operation to amputate his leg. He died on 7 May 1918.<sup>241</sup>

Laura had been married to Vic only a few short months and she was grief stricken, a sorrow which time, allegedly the great healer, failed to ease. Two years later, on a Monday morning, the 29 March 1920, she left her home, Ystalyera in the Swansea Valley, telling her family she was going to Bathampton to see her husband's grave, but planned to break her journey to meet her friend Angela. Instead of getting off the train at Cardiff as arranged she continued to Temple Meads, Bristol, where she hailed a taxi-cab which took her to Bathampton.

An inquest<sup>242</sup> heard that her body was recovered from the canal by the local constable, Pc Drake, who found a letter addressed to Kate Tucker, Vic Brewer's sister, which contained the message *"I cannot live without my loved one any longer. I shall go mad. My dying wish, please God may be granted, to lay next to my husband."* Mr William Tucker identified the body as that of his sister-in-law. Kate told the constable that she had invited Laura to go on holiday with her but had received no reply. Whilst the policeman was talking to Mrs Tucker the postman delivered a letter postmarked Cardiff, 9.45 a.m. March 29<sup>th</sup> which read:

*"My dear Kate*

*"I am on my way to end my sad life. I can't live without my darling Victor any longer. Do not put all the blame on me my dear. Remember the dreadful war is the result of all this. If they have not found me when you read this have Bathampton searched. I shall have passed away not far from my dear husband. What a dreadful loss to lose such a perfect man in the war. Be sure dear Kate and have me laid to rest in my dear Victor's grave and try to forgive me for doing so cowardly an act but it is to be. I cannot live any longer without my dear Vic. I shall always be near you now. I have written to my dear Ma but send for her when I am found. The letter may be delayed in the post. Good bye dear Kate. Remember me in your prayers. Love, Laura."*

The same morning Pc Drake was sent a wire passed on by the Police HQ at Cardiff with which read *"Have you arrived safely? Angela."* (The coroner was told this was Mrs Brewer's friend in Cardiff.)

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<sup>241</sup> Shared by his great-niece Susan Stone on the website "Lives of the Great War".

<sup>242</sup> WDP 3.6.1920

A Brislington taxi driver, Charles Edwin Davis of 75 Bloomfield Road, was interviewed by Pc Drake. He became involved in the tragedy when he picked up a fare, a young woman, at Temple Meads Station at twenty past midnight on 30<sup>th</sup> March. She declined to give a specific address and he dropped her at Bathampton Bridge at 1.15 a.m. She made no comment other than to say *"Good night driver,"* when she paid the fare. He does not appear to have been asked whether he waited to see if she was all right before driving off. Davis identified the clothes found as being those of the woman he had driven. The Constable found her handbag on her husband's grave which contained her gold wristwatch.

The case was reported under the heading *"The Trail of War: Determined suicide of a soldier's widow,"* going on to say that *"pathetic evidence was given that the poor woman's brain was turned with grief over her husband's death. Brewer was mortally wounded in France in 1918 and died in London being buried at Bathampton which was his home."*

Laura's father Thomas Seldon, a railway inspector, said his daughter never recovered from the blow caused by her husband's death. She had told him she was going to Bathampton and would break her journey in Cardiff.

The coroner recorded a verdict was that *"the deceased committed suicide by drowning whilst in a temporary state of insanity."*



Victor Brewer's grave is listed by the CWGC as "Brewer, J.V. Battery QMS 13167, RGA, 7 May 1918. Buried at St Nicholas, Bathampton."

This is a pre-existing family grave, marked by a five foot high granite cross, (no longer standing)

on a boulder base with matching kerbs, located two steps forward and two to the left of a cross erected to Queen Victoria. The inscription is illegible.<sup>243</sup>

<sup>243</sup> Not all Commonwealth First and Second World War dead are commemorated on CWGC headstones in the UK. Some were buried in existing family graves, where the families declined the offer of a CWGC stone. By coincidence, at the time of

**Victor Brewer is also remembered on the War Memorial at Bathampton Church:**



Unemployment among the returning heroes was a national scandal. Joseph Law,<sup>244</sup> of Arlington Road, formerly of the SLI, wrote to the War Office, 17 April 1920: his respectful letter hides quiet desperation:

*“Dear Sir*

*“I beg to draw your attention to a slight mistake made in my discharge papers and to ask you in you would mind altering it. The date of my enlistment was Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup> 1915 and not 1919 as it says in my discharge papers. It is only a slight mistake but it would make all the difference to me as I am out of employment and the Labour Exchange will not grant me any pay until I have the mistake put right. Hoping you will give this your earliest consideration and let me have the paper back as soon as possible, and oblige, yours truly, Joseph Law.”*

There is nothing to indicate a reply amid Joe’s papers. By 1939, he was a construction labourer, living at 272 Wick Road with his wife Rosina and their two youngest children.

The City Council may have been tardy in their efforts to erect the now familiar Cenotaph in Bristol but Brislington and St Anne’s were a decade quicker off the mark. Much activity was under way to raise money for memorials to be placed in the Anglican and Congregational churches. St Anne’s church held a fancy dress dance at Arno’s Court in April 1920, the prize winners judged by the local GP, Dr Harry Finzel and his wife Isabel, with the Rev Urch in the chair<sup>245</sup>, along with a bazaar to fund a new organ on which to place tablets to commemorate the 68 St Anne’s parishioners who had perished. This effort was praised as “Utility combined” and the report of the organ’s installation and memorial with the names of those who fell appeared on 12 August 1920.<sup>246</sup>

Another Roll of Honour inscribed with the names of the boys from St Anne’s school who died in the war was unveiled the following spring.<sup>247</sup> The former Congregational, now the United Reformed Church<sup>248</sup>, and St Luke’s<sup>249</sup> followed suit with their own memorials and ceremonies. At the St Luke’s service the choir sang the anthem “What are these?” by Sir

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our visit, to look for the grave, my daughter Celia and I had lunch at The George which is beside the canal opposite the church. It was then unknown to us that the pub had been managed by Tom Dolman in 1891.

<sup>244</sup> See 3.2.1915

<sup>245</sup> Ibid 27.4.1920

<sup>246</sup> Ibid 26.5./9.8.1920

<sup>247</sup> Ibid 26.3.1921

<sup>248</sup> Ibid 22.7.1921

<sup>249</sup> Ibid 8.12.1921

John Stainer which was followed by the congregation with the hymn "For all the Saints". Two boys from the Church Lad's Brigade, (with Lieut. E.C.H. Harris still in command) Cpl. H. Willcocks and L/Cpl. H. Macey sounded "The Last Post" and "The Reveille".

Alas, Mr Cooke-Hurle's preferred name for his gift to the Brislington people, "Peace Park" was over-ruled by Mr W.G. Silcocks, Chairman of the Parish Council who proposed the name "Victory Park", and was seconded by Mr D.G. Sherwell. As "Victory Park" it was officially opened on 28 March 1920 with a procession from Brislington Square led by the Kingswood Training School Band, followed by the local dignitaries and organisations as for "Peace Day" though this time with more levity: a section of the crowd wore fancy dress.

Mr Cooke-Hurle, who according to Diddie Williams, had "a voice like a cat!"<sup>250</sup> addressed the assembly saying

*"There could be no more fitting Memorial to the Peace than a place where young people could meet in friendly rivalry for games, the elderly could stroll about, refreshment for mind and body amid green fields and flowers."*

He kicked off a football match between "Brislington Old Crocks" and the Church Lads' Brigade followed by fancy dress football in which everyone joined. The proceedings ended with a drill display by the CLB and the distribution of buns to the children. Sadly, this was the last function that William and Norah Cooke-Hurle attended in Brislington before they left for their new abode, Kilve Court.



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<sup>250</sup> The late Diddie Williams. What did she mean?

The final chapter of Brislington in the Great War came on Armistice Day 1922 when the War Memorial on Kensington Hill was dedicated before a large crowd including Mrs Bonville Fox who instigated the proceedings and chaired the organising committee.

The Dean of Bristol in his dedication said *“There is only one true war memorial that we can offer to the memory of the men who gave their lives, and that is a better world – a world without war, without injustice, without impurity, without meanness, and without the worship of money.”*

For everyone in Brislington, and indeed the whole country, the ‘war to end all wars’ was over, or so they believed; a dream that seems more distant than ever. We must still live in hope.

And the man whose gunshot had wrought so much carnage? Gavril Princip, self-proclaimed Yugoslav, died on 23 April 1918 aged 23, not on the battlefield where millions of other young men died, but in gaol, of tuberculosis. After the war his body was disinterred and brought to Sarajevo where he was buried at St Mark’s Cemetery beneath a chapel "built to commemorate for eternity our Serb Heroes".

### **“Known unto God”**

The men on the Brislington War Memorial plaques are listed by surname and initial only. In some cases, particularly where the surname is a common one, there is no parentage or address shown and no military record can be found, then identification is difficult, if not impossible. I have expressed doubt about the identities of a few men named within the text, but have been entirely baffled by the following:

St Luke’s: **W. King**. There are 218 men called “W. King” in the list of “Soldiers who Died in the Great War” of whom four have definite Bristol connections, but I have been unable to cross match Brislington’s man of this name with any of them.

Likewise the following have not been traced:

St Anne’s: **C.R. Davis; F. Sanders; E.A. Webb**

St Anne’s School: **T. Burnett; F. Frampton**

If anyone can solve the identities of these mystery men, please let me know by email at [dplindegaard@gmail.com](mailto:dplindegaard@gmail.com) or by writing to me at 49 Clayfield Road, Brislington, Bristol, BS4 4NH.



## Sources and Abbreviations

**CWGC:** the Commonwealth War Graves Commission which may be accessed online free of charge.

**Military Records** can be found on [www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk) and other subscription sites. Many WW1 Army records were, ironically, destroyed by enemy action during WW2. Records for the Royal Navy, which includes the Royal Marines and RNAS, in general survive.

**The Western Daily Press** (WDP) an invaluable source for local news, may be found on microfilm at Bristol Reference Library. Many thanks to the librarians, who in “olden times” (pre-microfilm) with unfailing patience and good cheer humped the bound originals upstairs for me. Since then thankfully, I have been able to verify these through Find My Past. Other newspapers consulted are **Horfield & Bishopston Record** (HBM) & **Montpelier Free Press** (MFP).

**A Census** has been taken every ten years from 1841. The details found here most often come from the record taken on 2 April 1911, three years before the outbreak of war. The information for 1939 comes from registration records for the next war.

**The War Memorial Plaques** are in the Brislington churches, St Luke’s, St Anne’s (including St Anne’s Board Mills) and the Congregational, (now The United Reformed Church). The School Plaque is at St Anne’s School.

**The Parish registers of St Luke’s and St Anne’s** are at Bristol Archives Office. “Baptism” and “Christening” are the same in this context. I have used both words.

Miscellaneous: For more on Beaufort War Hospital: Glenside Hospital Museum, and see <http://www.bristolpost.co.uk/wish-postcards-asylum-war-hospital/story-21341126-detail/story>; for Newport’s Casualties in both World Wars, see the brilliant web page: [www.newportsdead.shawnmcguire.co.uk](http://www.newportsdead.shawnmcguire.co.uk); ‘Flanders’ is Belgium; ‘Mesopotamia’ is Iraq. I have occasionally used both names.

There is, of course, a huge bibliography covering the period. I have particularly enjoyed “The Reluctant Tommy” a memoir by Ronald Skirth which deals extensively with his time in Italy, a rather less well known theatre of the war; “A Long, Long Way” by Sebastian Barry, is a novel loosely based on the experience in France of his great uncle, who carried the double burden being a British soldier and an Irishman at a very difficult time. I was delighted by “Veiled Warriors” by Christine E. Hallett, a history of the Allied Nurses of the First World War and with Thomas Kenneally’s novel “The Daughters of Mars” on the same theme. Richard Broadhead’s “Calne District Soldiers” gave me many ideas. And of course, I could not recommend more highly the inspirational “No Thankful Village” by Chris Howell, which concerns the people of many Somerset villages in WW1, though not Brislington.

I have also been inspired to finish the project having attended performances of “Stony Broke in No-man’s land” by “The Hotwells Howlers”, “The Gas Girls” by Acta’s Community Touring Theatre and “Never Such Innocence”, words and music, performed by Christopher Kent and Gamal Khamis.

### **Post Script.**

A research project such as this can have unintended consequences. The memorial to the young soldier Sidney Aitken who is remembered at St Anne’s, led me to one of his sea-faring relatives who was serving aboard the SS. Sappho, owned by Bristol Steam Navigation Company when the ship was taken prisoner in the port of Hamburg on the day war was declared. Merchant Seamen POWs were considered “Civilians” and they were incarcerated for the period of the war at the large prison camp at Ruhleben, near Berlin. Among the POWs there were a considerable number of Bristol and Gloucestershire seamen, as well as local students, businessmen and tourists who were also rounded up in Germany in 1914 and spent the war years as prisoners. This was a subject entirely unknown to me. I became engrossed in parallel research and the outcome was a short book “Sappho & her Sisters” which tells the story of these POWS as well as other stories of seamen from the Port of Bristol, 1899-1965.

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Jane Bambury of Arno’s Vale for memories of her grandparents, Herbert & Ellen Thomas and for pointing me towards biographical notes on Hugh Byrne’s family:

<http://www.dia.ie/architects/view/852/BYRNE-PATRICKJAMES>

Janet Beaven, in respect of her kinsman Walter Winchester.

April Blackmore, great niece of Harry Nicol Skinner, and her mother Lynda, his niece, for memories and photographs.

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Pauline Luscombe of Barton Hill History Group for the photos of the Lysaght's Memorials after my enquiry at "the Castle" drew a mystified stare. Pauline found the tablets in the chapel at the Avon View Cemetery, "not being treated very respectfully".

Alan Jessop of Muller's Orphanage.

Ray Poole for his memories of Reggie Poole, another brilliant website.

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