

# WEST DEAN WAR MEMORIAL

A short history of the nine men from this village  
who lost their lives in two World Wars

Prepared by Dr Christine Warry and Brigadier (Retired) Pat Hargrave



Their name liveth for evermore

Intentionally Blank

## INTRODUCTION

In mid November 2017, Matthew Rowe of No 2 West Dean, said to Pat that each year the names of those men on the war memorial are read out at the Remembrance Sunday service with great solemnity before the two minutes silence, but that there were few if any people present who had any idea about where they lived in the village, their occupation before the wars or any details of them or their families. Pat agreed that this was a matter that should have been addressed long ago and set about gathering information.

Shortly after he started to collect material for this booklet Pat discovered that Dr Christine Warry of "Cobwebs" 14 West Dean had made a start some time ago researching the names on the war memorial with a similar aim in mind. It soon became apparent that this booklet should not be a solo effort. Christine has lived in the village all her life and has a fund of local knowledge and material. It was obvious that we should work together as co-authors, drawing a great deal on Christine's expertise and her local knowledge.

We are indebted to the late Mrs Kathleen Parsons (aged 102½) for her help. Kathleen provided valuable information for this booklet and continued to do so until only three days before she passed away in February 2018. We would also like to thank Dr Margaret Hargrave for all her help in gathering information that she found from genealogical organisations and other sources. Mrs Teàn Dallaway (Née Holland) provided valuable information on two of those named on the war memorial and to her we are also most grateful. We would also like to thank all those who helped us by providing information and photographs particularly the relatives of those whose names appear on the war memorial. We are most grateful to the War Graves Photographic Project for allowing us to print their pictures of war graves.

We would like to give particular thanks to John and Sara Hunter for ordering Pat's computer to do what he wanted it to do rather than it doing its own thing, for spending many hours knocking the draft of the booklet into some sort of readable shape and for persuading the photographs to appear the right way up!

Finally, and by no means least, Pat would like to thank his wife Susan for putting up with him disappearing into the study for long periods and more often than not re-appearing to regale her with the latest snippet of information.

What follows is a small tribute to the men of this village who died in two World Wars and whom we remember with pride and gratitude each Remembrance Sunday. It is hoped that by reading this booklet you will be able to have more of an idea about their backgrounds and the life that they lived in West Dean never to return.

**Christine Warry**

**Pat Hargrave**

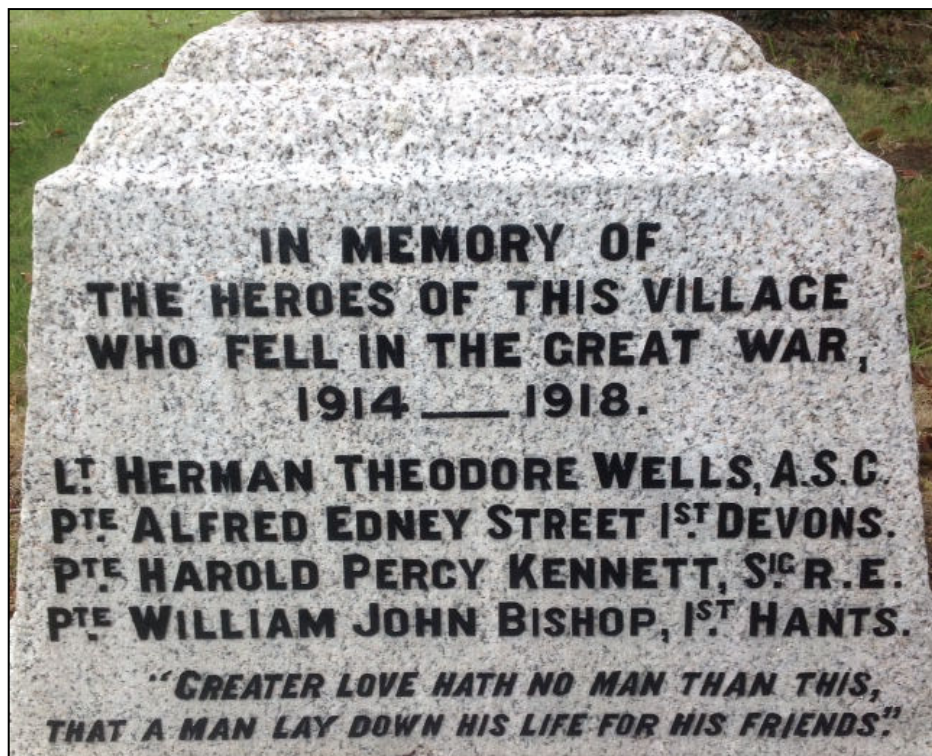
**November 2018**

## West Dean War Memorial

The war memorial structure in the church yard of St Mary's West Dean is made of Cornish granite and is listed in the National Register as a Grade II listed building registered number 1430890. It is described in the Register as *a Celtic cross with a tapering shaft, tapering plinth, set on a square base. The inscription and names are on the south face of the plinth in black lettering.*

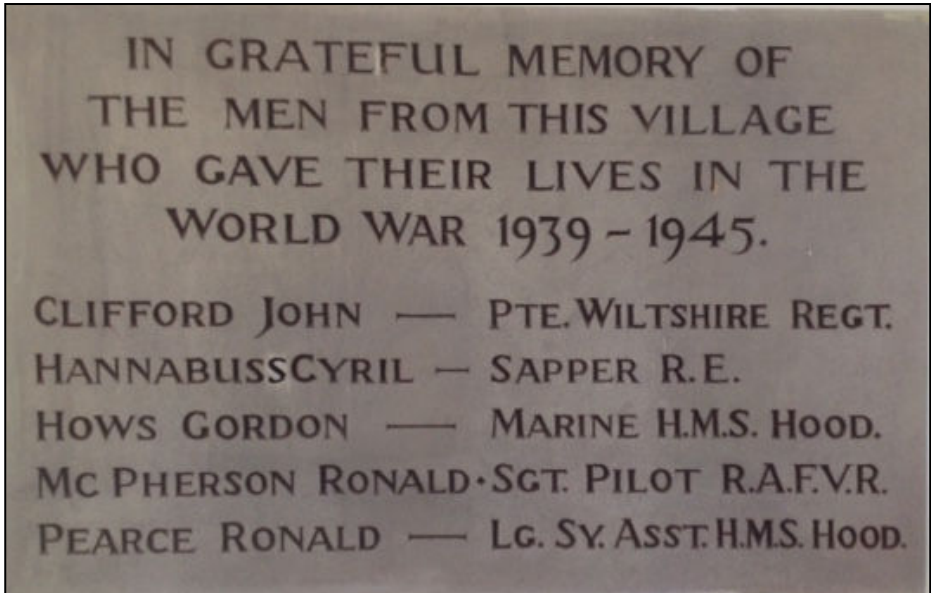
The stone plaque commemorating those who died in the Second World War was not added until November 1991 – some 46 years after the end of the War.

In this booklet, the details of those who died in the two World Wars are set out in the order that their names appear on the war memorial in the church yard with one variation. The order for the First World War does not appear to follow any pattern, but for the Second World War they are set out in alphabetical order.



In September 1948, it was reported to the Parish Meeting that there was insufficient space on the existing war memorial to inscribe the names of the five men who were killed in the Second World War. It was agreed that a plaque should be placed in the church at a cost not exceeding £15.

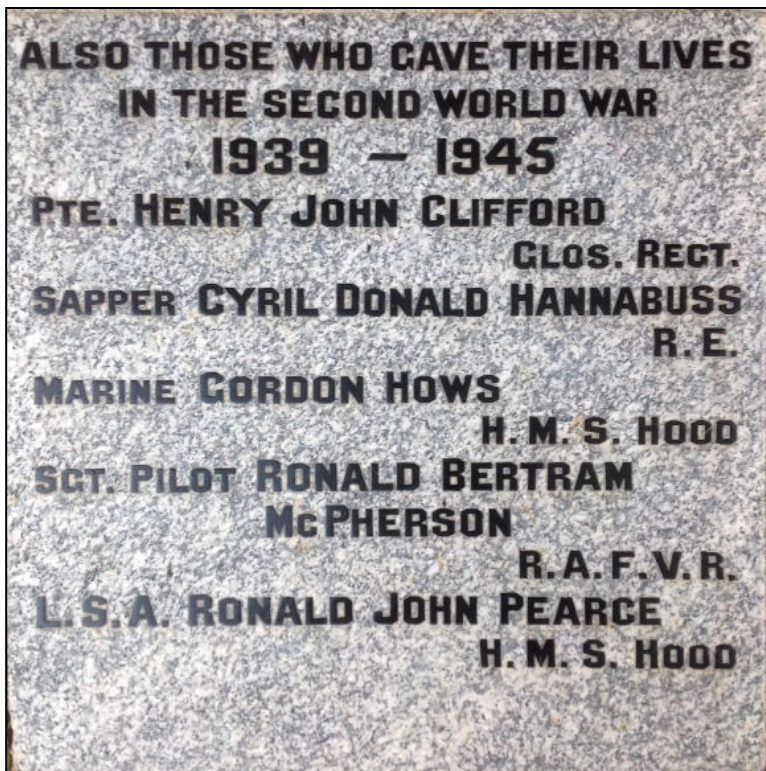
It was not possible to obtain a faculty (the equivalent of planning permission) so it was decided to place the plaque in the village hall. This was done in March 1950, with £3 10s left over which was given to Mrs McPherson, the Headmistress of the school, for the benefit of village children. The plaque is shown below.



At a meeting of the Parish Council on 13<sup>th</sup> March 1990, it was highlighted that the war memorial in the church yard did not have individual names of those people from the village killed in the 1939-45 war. Mr Parsons offered to make enquiries as to the cost of putting these on, and once known the Council would consider the matter.

At a meeting of the Parish Council in March 1991, it was agreed to accept a quotation of £307.55 to inscribe the names of the five men killed in World War Two. This was originally to have been on the west side of the war memorial but, for reasons not known, this was changed to a plaque laid on the south side of the memorial. The plaque is shown overleaf.





History does not relate why five years passed after the end of the war before a plaque was placed in the village hall, and 46 years before a memorial plaque was laid by the war memorial in the church yard.

Neither is it known why Henry John Clifford is shown as being in The Gloucestershire Regiment on the war memorial and The Wiltshire Regiment in the hall. He was killed whilst serving with 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion The Gloucestershire Regiment - perhaps he served for some time in The Wiltshire Regiment?

# World War 1

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Herman Theodore Wells

Herman Theodore was the fourth son of the Rector Rev Edward and Anna Maria Wells of West Dean Rectory. Rev Edward Wells was the Rector of West Dean for 34 years from 1886 to 1920. Herman was born on 10<sup>th</sup> January 1895 at the Rectory and was baptised by his father on 20<sup>th</sup> January 1895. He would have lived his childhood and early adult life at the Rectory which, at the time, would have looked like the picture below.



*The Rectory, now Dean House*

He was educated at Marlborough College from September 1908 to March 1912 in B3 House. He was a Foundation Scholar which was an academic scholarship available to the sons of clergy.

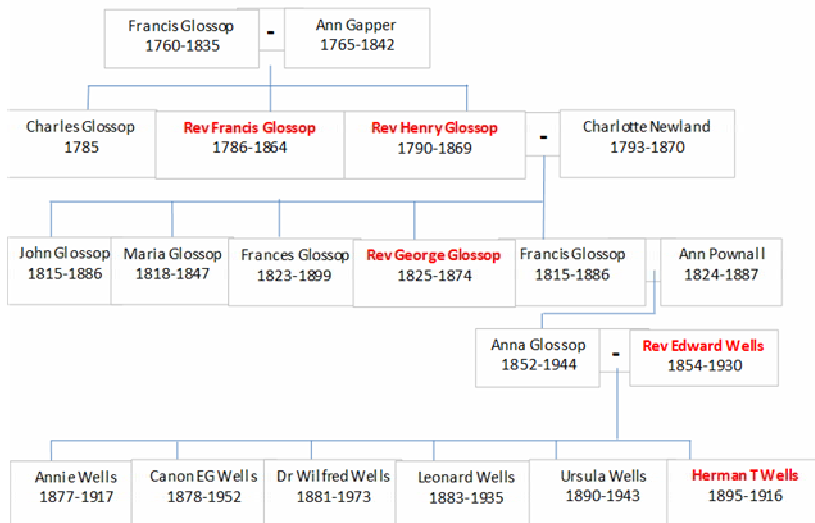
Herman matriculated (was formally admitted) to Exeter College, Oxford on 14<sup>th</sup> October 1913 to read for a Pass degree, a general degree taken by many undergraduates at the time consisting of three papers covering classics, divinity and another arts subject. He had only taken his “Mods” (Moderations – an intermediate examination), before he enlisted and had passed two papers in June and September 1914.

Herman’s family had a long and very close connection with West Dean. Not only was Herman’s father the Rector but, as can be seen from the family tree reproduced overleaf, his great grandfather the Rev Henry Glossop was Rector of West Dean from 1811 to 1820. He also had a great, great uncle (Rev Francis Glossop 1839-1860) who was followed by a great uncle (Rev George Glossop 1860-1865) both of whom were Rectors of West Dean. The Rev George Glossop organised the building of the present St Mary’s Church which was opened in April 1866. He is remembered in the reredos above the altar.

The family clocked up between them a total of 69 years service as Rectors of West Dean. Perhaps Herman Theodore Wells was planning to follow in the footsteps of his ancestors?



*Extract from the list of West Dean Rectors from the year 1299 which hangs in St Mary's Church.*



*Wells Family Tree*





Herman enlisted into the Army in 1915 and was commissioned into the Army Service Corps (ASC). He died of pneumonia on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1916 at No 2 General Hospital, Havre, France aged 21.

He is buried at Ste Marie Cemetery, Le Havre, France. Grave Reference Div 19.V.8 Memorial ID 56320037. At the time of his death he was serving with ASC Mechanical Transport.

The Wells family gave a stained glass window to the church in memory of their son. The window is on the south side of the church. The late Colonel John Baker MC, who lived in West Dean, always maintained that the figure kneeling in the stained glass window was a likeness of Herman Wells.



*Ste Marie Cemetery*

*(It is interesting to note that the grave stone gives his regiment as Royal Army Service Corps. The prefix Royal was not awarded until late 1918 two years after he died).*

The only photograph of Herman shows a very pronounced centre parting which is certainly the case with the kneeling figure.

The petition for a faculty to the Lord Bishop of Salisbury dated 27<sup>th</sup> October 1916 (equivalent of a request for planning permission) proposed to erect a *“two light stained glass window, depicting St Peter and St John reaching the tomb, and an Angel standing by the same in memory of H.T. Wells,”*

Also included in the petition was the proposed brass plaque in memory of Herman Theodore Wells. This plaque is just above the steps to the chancel and is shown below.



*We glorify thee we give thanks to thee for thy servant Herman Theodore Wells*



On 17<sup>th</sup> June 1917, fourteen months after Herman’s death, his sister Annie Isabel died. The family gave a stained glass window in her memory, which is on the north side of the church opposite that of her brother.

## Private Alfred Edney Street

Alfred Edney Street's parents John Street and Caroline Edney were married at St Mary's Church on Whit Monday, 30<sup>th</sup> May 1898. Caroline was the daughter of Thomas Edney, a grocer who ran the shop at what is now No 5 West Dean, which would have looked like the picture below. After the marriage, John joined her there. Thomas Edney died in 1896, but John continued with his farming and also became a grocer. Alfred was born on 8<sup>th</sup> March 1899 and was baptised by the Rev Edward Wells at St Mary's Church on 9<sup>th</sup> April 1899. By 1906, John Street was one of the managers of Dean School which Alfred attended from 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1904 to 12<sup>th</sup> December 1909 when he left for Bishop Wordsworth's School in Salisbury. In the 1911 census Alfred is shown as a schoolboy aged 12, the only son of John and Caroline Street. At that time he would have been living at the shop with his sister.



*The village shop, now 5 West Dean*

Pte Alfred Edney Street 68421 The Devonshire Regiment enlisted at Devizes. In 1918 Alfred was serving with 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion The Devonshire Regiment in Northern France. In August 1918, the German army began to fall back and the Devons took part in the rapid Allied advances that characterised the rest of the war.

In September and October they suffered fewer casualties in successful attacks near Beauchamp and Oviliers, where despite a gas attack and terrible weather, they were the first battalion in their division to reach their final objective. Their last actions were in the final weeks of the war beyond the Sambre Canal south of Lille, when they advanced under heavy shell and machine gun fire, losing 19 killed and more than 60 wounded. It would have been in one of these actions that Alfred was killed at Briastre, France on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1918 aged 19. He is buried at Romeries, Department du Nord, Nord Pas de Calais France. (*His grave and cemetery are shown overleaf*).



*Romerics Communal Cemetery Extension  
Departement du Nord, Nord-Pas-de-Calais*

Alfred used to write to his parents regularly and the village postman always recognised the writing whilst sorting the mail before delivery. One day there was a letter from France in different hand writing. The postman, Stanley Fry (father of the late Mrs Kathleen Parsons) sensed that it contained bad news. It was from an officer to inform his parents that Alfred had been killed in action only 22 days before the end of the war.

News of Alfie's death was included in a post card posted on 4<sup>th</sup> November 1918 by Mrs Emily Warry of 16 West Dean to her daughter Mabel in Chandlers Ford, in which she said "you will be sorry to hear that Alfie Street has been killed in France memorial service last night".

Bournemouth Edie had another little  
girl on Saturday. M. went Tuesday  
You will be sorry to hear Alfie Street  
has been killed in France Memorial  
Service last night, old Mrs. Hensence

Miss M. Warry  
"Upwood"  
Chandlers Ford



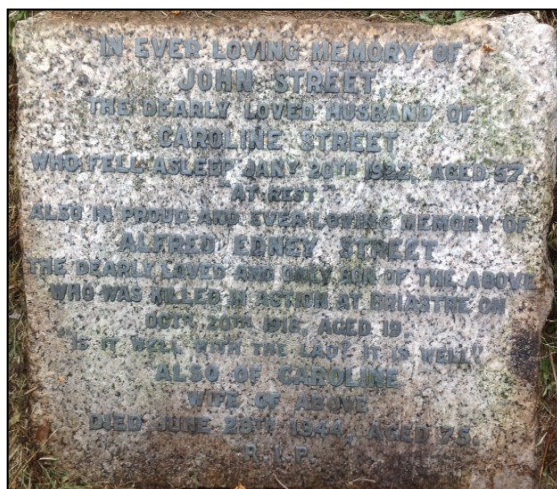
A brass plate in the church just below the altar steps records this sad event. A photograph of the plate is shown below.



A War Gratuity of £9 18s 9d was paid to Alfred's father, John Street. The war gratuity was introduced in December 1918 as a payment to be made to those men who had served in WW1 for a period of 6 months or more home service, or for any length of service if a man had served overseas.

John Street died in 1922 and Alfred's sister Edna married Joseph Whaley in 1926, but the 1939 Register shows that his mother was still running the shop in September of that year. At the time of her death she was aged 75 and living in 'The Gardens' in Romsey. She was buried at West Dean on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1944.

Alfred is also remembered in West Dean church yard on a tablet at the foot of his father's grave. This is pictured below.



*In ever loving memory of  
John Street  
The dearly loved husband of  
Caroline Street  
Who fell asleep Jan 20<sup>th</sup> 1920 aged  
57  
"At rest"*

*Also in proud and ever loving  
memory of  
Alfred Edney Street  
The dearly loved and only son of the  
above  
Who was killed in action at Briastre  
on  
Octr 20<sup>th</sup> 1918 aged 19*



## Private Harold Percy Kennett

At the time of the 1881 census Charles Alfred Kennett was a single man working as a railway clerk and living in lodgings. In the ten years to the 1891 census he had married his wife Amelia, had four children of whom Harold Percy Kennett



was the third, and had moved into Station House, West Dean to be the Station Master. Station House at that time would have looked like the photograph left, (taken in the 1900s) with the signal box opposite. Harold was born in 1888 and on 24<sup>th</sup> June that year was

baptised at St Mary's church by Rev Edward Wells. By 1911 Harold had become a railway clerk and was living at Station House with his parents, his older brother Augustus (also a railway clerk) and sister Edith.

Harold enlisted at Southampton and joined 1<sup>st</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Battalion (Territorial Force) Hampshire Regiment. At some stage he also served in 1<sup>st</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> Battalion Hampshire Regiment. On the war memorial however, he is shown as Pte Harold Percy Kennett, Signaller Royal Engineers which is strange. After some research it was discovered that Harold was attached to The Royal Engineers as a Wireless Signaller and was serving with them when he was killed, as can be seen from the extract from the War Graves Commission below.

Soldier's Name	Regiment, Rank, No.	Date and Place of Death
Kennett <del>H.P.</del> Harold Percy	15 Hants attached to No. Wireless Sig. Sqdn Pte (74) 2592	25/7/16 Mesopotamia  WAR GRA 19.20

Private Kennett died in Mesopotamia on 25<sup>th</sup> July 1916 aged 28. He is buried in Al'Amara War Cemetery, Al 'Amara, Maysan, Iraq.



*Al'Amara War Cemetery*

The Al'Amara cemetery contains more than 4,600 graves, including three recipients of the Victoria Cross, but is now in poor condition as the Commonwealth War Graves Commission has not been able to work in Iraq since 1991.

Harold Kennett is also remembered on the family grave stone in St Mary's church yard three rows away from the door. The inscription states that Harold died in Mesopotamia serving his King and Country.

Mesopotamia is now mostly in modern day Iraq but also in parts of Iran, Syria and Turkey. On the family grave stone it is recorded that Harold's father Charles died on 7<sup>th</sup> August just eleven days after Harold was killed. One wonders if news reached West Dean before Charles died or if the death of his son was a contributory factor leading to his own death. In any event it must have been an extremely sad time for Charles's wife and family.

Much later a war gratuity was paid to his brother, Augustus.



## Private William John Bishop

William John Bishop was born near Wimborne, Dorset in 1887, the second of four children of George and Harriett Bishop. His family were farm workers and moved around a great deal. In the 1901 census the family was living near Amesbury. In 1911 the Bishop family was living in Spring Cottages, East Dean Road, Lockerley (part of the Lockerley Hall Estate) but William was not with them. In the 1911 census, William John is shown as a boarder at a farm in Nursling Street, Nursling, Southampton where he was working as a farm labourer. The head of the household was Mr Frank Stratton and his wife Agnes. At the time he was aged 23. He also lived in Romsey at some stage. At some time after 1911 the family moved to West Dean.

Unfortunately his enlistment papers have not survived, but judging by the service numbers of others held by The Royal Hampshire Regiment Museum, it is likely that he enlisted at Winchester in September 1904 as 7289 Private WJ Bishop. He was posted to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Hampshire Regiment – a regular service battalion. He may have enlisted on a 7 and 5 engagement (7 years regular service with 5 years on the reserve). If that is the case then he could have completed his seven years service with the Colours and joined the reserve and still appear on the 1911 census. But to do this he would have to have enlisted at the age of 16, which was not unusual in 1904. (In the 1911 census 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion The Hampshire Regiment recorded four soldiers aged 16 and seven boy soldiers aged 15). This has been confirmed in the UK Register of Soldiers' Effects which shows Private Bishop enlisted on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1904.

He was killed in action on 30<sup>th</sup> October 1914, aged 26. His death was recorded in The Hampshire Regiment Journal of January 1915 as shown below.

OFFICERS.			
KILLED.			
Major G. H. Parker	-	-	19-12-14
Lieut. H. A. B. Harington, 3rd Batt., died of wounds	-	-	9-12-14
WOUNDED.			
Captain H. G. F. Frisby (attached Royal Welsh Fusiliers)	-	-	-
Lieut. A. F. C. V. Prendergast, 3rd Batt., wounded	-	-	19-12-14
2nd Lieut. W. H. Day, wounded	-	-	30-12-14
RANK AND FILE.			
KILLED.			
7197 Pte. Piper E., killed in action	-	-	16-9-14
8697 " Finn, J. E., " "	-	-	30-10-14
7289 " Bishop, W., " "	-	-	30-10-14
8931 " Morris, T., " "	-	-	30-10-14

The Regimental diary of 30<sup>th</sup> October 1914 recorded the action in which he was killed:

30<sup>th</sup>

*At 6.30am the Germans commenced a terrific bombardment lasting until 4.30pm when the German infantry commenced to advance to the attack. On our opening fire, the enemy could make but little progress and the attack practically ceased till dusk. Owing to some dead ground the enemy were able to work their way close up to C Coy's line, and it was during this advance that Capt Harland was killed by MG fire. Lt Trimmer was holding a trench some 20 yards in front of the line and suffered heavy losses from the German guns and MGs both of which were concentrated on his trench.*

*During this bombardment Lt Trimmer was killed.*

***Casualties:***

*Killed :- Lt Trimmer, Capt Harland 3 Other Ranks*

*Wounded:- 16 Other Ranks*

*Missing: 1 Other Rank*

*Admissions to Hospital during month: Capt P Hackett, 40 Other Ranks.*

*Discharged :- 15 Other Ranks.*

*(One of those ORs killed would have been William John Bishop).*



*Ploegsteert Memorial, Hainaut Belgium*

William is commemorated at Ploegsteert Memorial, Hainaut Belgium. (Ploegsteert became known as “Plug Street” during the war). This memorial commemorates more than 11,000 servicemen of the United Kingdom and South African Forces who died in this sector during the First World War and have no known grave. William Bishop’s name appears on Panel 6.

A War Gratuity of £6 12s was paid to William’s father, George James Bishop, on 13th February 1915 via the Exeter office.

William’s younger brother Walter Herbert Bishop was aged 18 in the 1911 census and the 1939 Register shows him living at No 30 The Rookery together with their mother Harriett. A photograph of No. 30 is below.





## First World War Medals

Those from West Dean who died during World War I would have been eligible for the award of at least one of the three medals shown below. The left medal, the 1914 Star, was awarded to any officer or soldier who served in France or Belgium between 5<sup>th</sup> August and 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1914.



The middle medal is the British War Medal which was awarded to all officers and men of British and Imperial forces who had served for a prescribed period during any stage of the war, or who had died on active service before the completion of this period.

Instituted in 1919, the right hand medal is the Victory Medal which was issued to all who received the 1914 Star and the British War Medal.

It is not known if the next of kin of those from West Dean who died ever actually received the medals of their deceased relatives.

When the medals were issued in the 1920s it coincided with a popular comic strip published by the Daily Mirror newspaper. It was written by Bertram J. Lamb (Uncle Dick), and drawn by the cartoonist Austin Bowen Payne (A.B. Payne). Pip was a dog, Squeak a penguin and Wilfred a young rabbit. It is believed that A. B. Payne's batman during the war had been nicknamed "Pip-squeak" and this is where the idea for the names of the dog and penguin came from. For some reason the names of these three characters became associated with the three campaign medals being issued at that time to many thousands of returning servicemen, and the medals became affectionately known as "Pip, Squeak and Wilfred".

## **“Dead Man’s Penny”**

A Memorial Plaque was issued after the First World War to the next-of-kin of all British and Empire service personnel who were killed as a result of the war. Four such plaques would have been issued to the next of kin of those from West Dean who died in World War I.

The plaques were made of bronze and hence became popularly known as the "Dead Man’s Penny", because of the similarity in appearance to the somewhat smaller penny coin. Over one million plaques were issued, which used a total of 450 tonnes of bronze, and continued to be issued into the 1930s to commemorate people who died as a consequence of the war.



*Memorial Plaque or “Dead Man’s Penny”*

The design of the plaque was picked from submissions made in a competition and the winning design was submitted by Edward Carter Preston.

Around the picture the legend reads (in capitals) **"He died for freedom and honour"**, or for the six hundred plaques issued to commemorate women, **"She died for freedom and honour"**.

The plaques were issued in a pack with a commemorative scroll and a letter from King George Vth although sometimes the letter and scroll were sent first.

## World War 2

### Private Henry John Clifford

Henry John Clifford, always known as Jack, was born in Mottisfont on Christmas Day 1909, where his father Alfred was a cowman. In October 1925 the family moved to 27 West Dean (now Heron Cottage) and the younger five children joined Dean School. Jack joined the village football club in 1927 when he was 18, and was a member from 1927-1939, after which the club disbanded because there were insufficient players. He was Vice Captain from 1931-1937. Clearly, the football club took great care of their finances as, according to the Minute Book, the then groundsman H. Wiltshire was asked in 1930 if he would do his duties for 2s per match. He said that he wanted 2s 6d per match, whereupon Jack Clifford said that he would do the work for 2s per match and he was duly appointed groundsman. After doing the groundsman's duties for a number of years, in 1937 Jack asked for a rise of 6d per game, whereupon the club decided to advertise for someone to do it for 2s. Mr Wiltshire applied and was duly re-appointed!

Jack was also a very active member of the West Dean cricket team from 1928. He was a member of the cricket club from 1928-1939 and was Captain from 1933-1938, including 1935 when the team won the cup of the Salisbury and District Cricket League. Every time the football or cricket teams had a significant success a photograph was taken, some of which can still be seen in the village hall. The photograph (left) shows Jack as Captain of the cricket team in 1935.



On 25<sup>th</sup> January 1936 Jack married Lucy Doris Harris in St Mary's Church West Dean, the Register of Marriages recording that they were both living at 7 West Dean. A year later Jack and Lucy were living at 31 The Rookery when their daughter Audrey was born and Frederick Clifford (Jack's older brother) and his wife Dorothy were living at 7 West Dean. By September 1939 Frederick and Dorothy had left 7 West Dean and Jack and Lucy had returned. Jack's parents were living close by at No 17 (later Yew Tree Cottage). Jack was a labourer but in the 1939 register he was recorded as a builder's labourer heavy duties.

The photograph below is from the Norman Court Estate Sale Catalogue and shows what No 7 looked like in 1945. It was recorded that Jack's widow was living at No 7 rent free. The Estate did not charge rent to any of their tenants whilst they were serving in the Armed Forces during the war, and it seems likely that this generous gesture was extended to widows of those killed.



*7 West Dean*

Henry John Clifford 5576102 was serving with 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion The Gloucestershire Regiment in Burma when the Japanese invaded at the beginning of 1942. The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was guarding the approaches to Rangoon but, after heavy defeats at Sittang and Pegu, the road to Rangoon lay open and the decision was taken to evacuate the city. Rangoon fell to the Japanese in early March and over the next two months the British, fighting many rear guard actions, were driven out of Burma into India. At one stage the Battalion was down to 177 officers and soldiers. Jack was killed on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1942 aged 32. He is remembered on the Rangoon Memorial, Burma, Panel reference F12.



*Rangoon War Memorial*



Jack Clifford is mentioned in the book "A Brief History of West Dean" on page 49. An extract from this page is repeated below:

*At their first post war meeting in July 1946 members stood in silence to honour the memory of four of their playing members who had been killed, Stan Knight, Cyril Hannabuss, Jack Clifford and Ron McPherson. Their president, Mr GA Singer, had also been killed in the war bringing to an end a long period in which members of the Singer family had acted as its President.*

The meeting was of the football club. Cyril Hannabuss, Jack Clifford and Ron McPherson are remembered on the West Dean war memorial. Stan Knight and Grant Singer are remembered in West Tytherley church.

Of interest is the report at the meeting by the Treasurer Mr RF Warry, who said that the £15 deposited in the Post Office Savings Bank in 1938 had increased by approximately £10 during the war years.

### **Sapper Cyril Donald Hannabuss**

Cyril Donald Hannabuss was born in West Tytherley on 19<sup>th</sup> December 1918 with the birth being registered in Stockbridge. He was the son of Ernest Victor and Lily Hannabuss. In November 1925 the family moved to No 1 New Cottages (later known as The Council Houses) pictured overleaf. Cyril moved from West Tytherley School to Dean School being admitted on 19<sup>th</sup> November 1925. He left Dean School on 20<sup>th</sup> December 1934 and went on to become an engineer working at the Spitfire factory in Southampton.



Dr Keith Cyril Hannabuss, Emeritus Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford told us that Cyril was the younger brother of his father, Kenneth, who was also born in West Tytherley. The Hannabuss family came from Halberton and Tiverton in Devon, where they had lived for many centuries.



Kenneth and Cyril had a small kiosk in Tiverton where they did cycle repairs whilst they were still at school, probably during the school holidays whilst visiting their grandfather, Frank Hannabuss. Frank had been a boot maker until at least 1911, but subsequently entered the cycle business. He was followed into it by his son Charles, the uncle of Kenneth and Cyril. Kenneth, Cyril and their three sisters Pearl, Joyce and Barbara were very musical and played chamber music together. They were a Methodist family and Kenneth and Cyril were local preachers.

Cyril was a member of the cricket club in 1938 and 1939. He was also a member of the football club and, at the AGM on 10<sup>th</sup> July 1939, he proposed that the club should continue for the 1939/40 season. The proposal was adopted by the club but later had to be abandoned as there were not enough players left once the war began. Cyril also seconded a proposal that Christine Warry's father should be appointed Treasurer, an office in which he continued until his death in 1949. The family is mentioned in the list of prize winners at the Coronation Sports in 1937 when Joyce Hannabuss came second in the egg and spoon race and the girls 6-12 race and Pearl Hannabuss came third in the girls 12-16 race.



*No 1 New Cottages (Now No 1 Rectory Hill Cottages)*

Sapper Cyril Donald Hannabuss 1908848 Royal Engineers, having been stationed at Brompton Barracks, Chatham, Kent, was killed aged 21 on 10<sup>th</sup> October 1940 in a big air raid on Chatham Docks whilst awaiting embarkation. He was buried in West Dean on 15<sup>th</sup> October 1940 with a standard war cemetery gravestone, the grave being maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.



## HMS Hood

Although the names of those killed in WW2 are listed in alphabetical order on the war memorial, it makes sense to vary this slightly and to give details of two of the crew from West Dean who died at the same time as Stanley Knight of West Tytherley, when HMS Hood was sunk. (*Stanley Knight is shown on the West Tytherley memorial with the rank of Petty Officer*).



*HMS Hood*

On 24<sup>th</sup> May 1941, German Battleship Bismarck and Heavy Cruiser Prinz Eugen set sail from the Polish port of Gdynia. Their mission was to head for the Atlantic and cause as much damage and disruption as possible to convoys carrying vital supplies to Britain. The progress of the two ships was monitored by British aircraft and ships from a safe distance. The ships skirted Iceland and then sailed south down the Denmark Straits between Iceland and Greenland. It was at this point that the Battle Cruiser HMS Hood and Battleship HMS The Prince of Wales were ordered to attack.

At 0552hrs on the 24<sup>th</sup> May HMS Hood opened fire on the leading German ship which was Prinz Eugen. Thirteen miles apart, the ships fired one ton shells which, travelling at 1,600mph, took almost a minute to reach their intended target. At 0600hrs HMS Hood was hit by a 1700lb armour piercing shell which struck deep into the bowels of the ship and hit the magazine where hundreds of tons of cordite were stored causing an almighty explosion.

The battle lasted merely 20 minutes and both the Bismarck and HMS Prince of Wales took direct hits, but it was the fate of HMS Hood that stunned the world. The shell from Bismarck hit HMS Hood on its vulnerable upper deck and tore through the ship. The ship sliced into two, its front end dramatically lifting out of the water. The forward turret fired one last salvo from the doomed gun crew just before the bow section sank. A huge fireball rocketed into the sky, followed by dense black smoke with pieces of molten metal shooting like so many stars as one German sailor described it.

Within three to four minutes, HMS Hood, the pride of the Royal Navy, had sunk. It was no more. All of its crew of 1,421 men were killed apart from three. The three who survived were Midshipman William Dundas, Able Seaman Ted Briggs and Able Seaman Bob Tilburn.

Three days later Bismarck was sunk by the combined efforts of several ships of the Royal Navy – but this is another story.

### Marine Gordon Hows



Gordon Hows was born to Harry and Marion Hows in Gillingham Kent on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1921. He joined the Royal Marines as PO/X3426 Marine Gordon Hows. He died on 24<sup>th</sup> May 1941 aged 20 and was buried at sea. His personal number was PO for Portsmouth Home Port Division for all admin, training and support. X means that he was engaged after the 1930 Pay Code was introduced.

Gordon's father Harry served in the Royal Navy and after a full career reaching the rank of Chief Petty Officer, became a constable with the Admiralty Constabulary.

In the 1939 census he was at Priddys Hard, Gosport and was living in married quarters in Gosport. At some stage in 1942, he was transferred to West Dean as part of the Admiralty Constabulary responsible for the security of the new Royal Naval Armaments Depot (RNAD) West Dean. The family moved to the Police Quarters (now Hillside Close) and lived in one of the houses in the North East corner of the estate.



*Gordon's family lived in one of the houses top right corner*

Gordon's name is on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial, Panel 50 column 1.



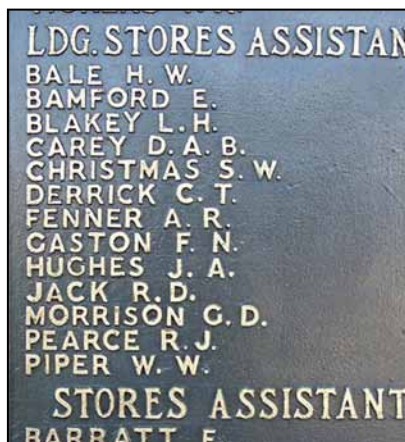
*Portsmouth Naval Memorial*

### Leading Stores Assistant Ronald John Pearce



Ronald John Pearce was born in Portsmouth on 13<sup>th</sup> December 1920, the son of Walter John and Lillian Victoria Pearce who had married there. He joined the Royal Navy as P/MX585581 RJ Pearce and became a Leading Stores Assistant. He died on 24<sup>th</sup> May 1941 when HMS Hood was sunk. Buried at sea his name is on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial, Panel 57 column 2.

His personal number was P for Portsmouth Home Port, M for artificer electricians or supply specialisation and X for being engaged after the 1930 Pay Code was introduced.





His grandfather John Pearce lived in West Dean from at least 1901, firstly in The Rookery and later at No 34, near the village hall, now part of Quill Cottage.



*Quill Cottage*

Ronald would therefore have been familiar with the village. John Pearce had served in the Royal Navy and Walter, Ronald's father, was a career sailor serving in the Royal Navy from 24<sup>th</sup> May 1913 until 10<sup>th</sup> September 1945, when he retired as a Chief Petty Officer.

In 1939, with both her husband and her son Ronald in the Royal Navy, Lillian was living in Thomas Street, Portsmouth with her son Walter. After that she moved to West Dean to live at No 43, commonly known as Keepers Cottage, a photograph of which is shown below. Her husband Walter joined her there on leaving the Royal



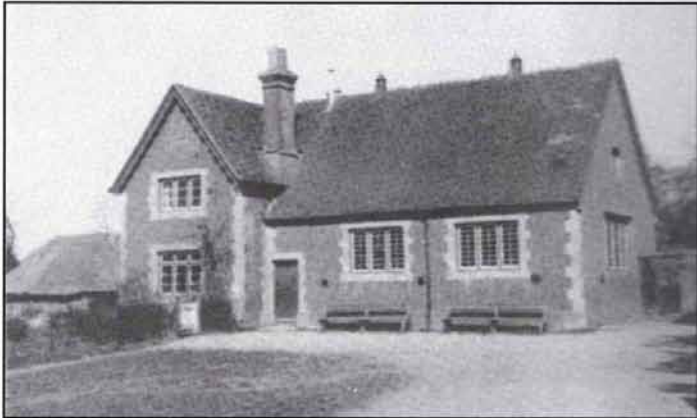
Navy and Ronald may have visited when on leave. The late Mrs Kathleen Parsons recalled Johnnie Pearce umpiring a cricket match when there was an appeal by the bowler. Johnnie said that the batsman was not quite out but that if he did it again he

would be out. It would have been interesting to have asked the MCC's view of this variation of the Laws of Cricket.



## **Sergeant Pilot Ronald Bertram McPherson**

Ronald Bertram McPherson was born on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1916. He attended The Modern School in Salisbury which is no longer in existence. Ron's father, Alexander, was a sea going engineer but he died when Ron was 17. Ron's mother, Mrs Lucy McPherson (known in the village as "The Governess"), was the Headmistress of the school in West Dean which would have looked like the picture below.



Mrs McPherson's sister, Mrs Ruth Reynolds, also lived in School House before she married Fred, who was Carl Reynolds' brother. Carl was married to one of the great characters of the village, Winifred Reynolds, about whom another book could be written.

Always known as Ron, he was a member of the West Dean Cricket Team and the Football Team. In 1932 he was the only member of the cricket team under 17 which meant that his subscription was 1s 3d instead of the adult rate of 2s 6d. He was a very active committee member of the football club from August 1937. In the 1937 Coronation Sports, to celebrate the coronation of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, Ron was the winner of the slow bicycle race whilst his sister Olga, was first in the thread needle race, the girls aged 12-16 race and the ladies cycle race.

Ron joined the RAFVR on 12<sup>th</sup> December 1939 having been an insurance agent. After he joined the RAF he spent an initial period at RAF Uxbridge, Middlesex and was then sent to the Recruits Centre, near Grimsby. From there he was posted to RAF Cranwell and was based in the initial training wing.

On 1<sup>st</sup> November 1941 he went to Aircrew Despatch Centre, Heaton Park, Manchester and from there to No 39 Service Flying Training School at RAF Swift Current, Saskatchewan, Canada as part of the British Commonwealth Training Plan. He returned to UK in April 1942 and, following a short period at Bournemouth, was posted to RAF Ternhill in Shropshire and then to RAF Rednal, Oswestry, where he stayed until his transfer to 610 Squadron on 16<sup>th</sup> March 1943.

On 22 August 1942 he married Olive Smallbone, whom he met at the wedding of Leslie Wiltshire, a member of the well known West Dean family. Ron was Leslie's best man and Olive was bridesmaid to her sister Mary whom Leslie was marrying.

On being posted to 610 Squadron he was based at RAF Westhampnett, Chichester and flew operations from RAF Tangmere. He had a daily routine of flying his Spitfire at 0530hrs and ending at 0930hrs with alternate mornings starting at 0900hrs.



Just over a month later Ron was flying his Spitfire EE634 as Wingman to Sqn Ldr "Johnnie" Johnson near Abbeville in France.

The duty of the Wingman was to fly beside and slightly behind the lead aircraft to protect the leader. Whilst acting as wingman on 21<sup>st</sup> April 1943 he was shot down by German fighters. He crashed near Abbeville and was killed. He was aged 26. Ron's baby son Nicholas was born in October 1943. Ron knew that his wife was expecting a baby before he was killed.

The newspaper cutting shown below was published in a local paper some time after Ron was shot down and killed.



*Abbeville Communal Cemetery*

He is buried at Abbeville Communal Cemetery Extension Somme, France Plot 6. He is also remembered on a family grave stone in St Mary's church yard approximately half way between the church door and the war memorial.



*Abbeville Communal Cemetery Extension, Somme, France Plot 6*



*St Mary's Church, West Dean*

## Captain GA Singer

Captain Grant Singer, who lived at Norman Court, was also killed during the Second World War. His name is on the West Tytherley war memorial but, as the owner of most of the village of West Dean, it seems appropriate to include details of him in this booklet. As a consequence of his death, from June 1945 the village of West Dean was sold in individual lots with the rest of his estate. King George's Hall, a one time milk collecting station, was presented to the village in his memory.

We are most grateful to Colonel Robin Garrett who wrote "Military Graves and Memorials in St Peter's Church, West Tytherley" for permission to use extracts from his booklet in the preparation of this section about Grant Singer.

Grant Singer was born on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1915 to Ellen Allen wife of Alfred Longsdon who died at Le Havre in 1915 driving an ambulance whilst serving with the Red Cross. Ellen then married Washington Singer one of the sons of Isaac Singer who invented the domestic sewing machine. Grant became the adopted son of Washington Singer who bought Norman Court in 1906. On Washington's sudden death in 1934 at his home Steartfield House near Torquay, he left an estate with properties in London, Devon, Suffolk and the main family home at Norman Court worth in total £1,018,018.11s 7d, all of which passed to Grant.

It is not known when Grant joined the Army but on the outbreak of war he was in The Royal Wiltshire Yeomanry in which he might have been serving before the war. He transferred to the 10<sup>th</sup> Royal Hussars (10RH) and joined the Regiment just after the Dunkirk evacuation in June 1940. After re-training and re-equipping 10RH was sent to North Africa whilst Grant, now a Captain, became ADC to Lt Gen Willoughby Norrie at XXX (30) Corps HQ. Grant returned to his Regiment in early 1942 to become Troop Leader of the newly formed Recce Troop equipped with Dingo armoured cars.

On 4<sup>th</sup> November 1942 Captain Singer went forward to capture the crew of a German tank that had bailed out of their tank which was on fire. The Commander of the German tank started to walk towards Grant with his hands raised. It was no ordinary prisoner who Grant captured – it was General Wilhelm Ritter von Thoma, the acting Commander of the German Afrika Corps.

Captain Singer was ordered to take General Von Thoma back to Brigade HQ and then on to General Sir Bernard Montgomery's HQ. After arrival, General Montgomery invited General Von Thoma to dine with him in his trailer. News of this event filtered back to Britain which horrified many people. On hearing of this disquiet Winston Churchill then Prime Minister said "I sympathise with General Von Thoma – defeated, humiliated, in captivity and ...dinner with Montgomery".

At 0700hrs on 5<sup>th</sup> November after some hasty orders, Grant moved off from General Montgomery's HQ in the lead of his Recce Troop capturing a German 88mm crew who were in the process of withdrawing. The Recce Troop advanced a further 400 yards when an as yet unseen German 88mm gun opened fire destroying Grant Singer's Dingo scout car and killing both him and his 25 year old driver, Trooper George Hyatt, instantly.

On hearing of Grant's death General Von Thoma was greatly upset and requested permission to write to his widow personally. This was granted by General Montgomery and a letter was duly sent.



*Grant Singer and George Hyatt are buried in El Alamein Cemetery.*



*Plaque in King George's Hall, West Dean*

There is a memorial to Grant Singer on the north wall of St Peter's Church, West Tytherley and the church organ was reconstructed in memory of Grant and three others who lost their lives during the war. There is also a memorial in West Dean Village Hall, shown left.



## Second World War Medals



The 1939-1945 Star (left) was awarded to those who had completed six months operational service overseas between 2nd September 1939 and 8th May 1945.

The three colours of the medal ribbon represent the RN and Merchant Navy, the Army and the RAF. Most men from West Dean would have qualified for this medal.

The Atlantic Star (right) was awarded for 180 days operational service in the Atlantic and home waters between 3rd September 1939 and 8th May 1945. The colours of the ribbon represent the Atlantic Ocean. Gordon Hows and Ronald Pearce would have qualified for this medal.



The Air Crew Europe Star (left) was awarded for operational flying from the UK over Europe between 3rd September 1939 to 5th June 1944 (outbreak of war until the start of D Day Normandy invasion). Ron McPherson would have qualified for this medal.

The War Medal 1939-1945 (right) was awarded to those who completed 28 days operational or non operational service between 3rd September 1939 and 2nd September 1945. All men from the village would have qualified for this medal. Those from the village who had their qualifying service cut short by death were still eligible for the medal.



It is not known if all relatives ever received the medals.

## **POST SCRIPT**

In this booklet we have tried to set down what we knew and what we have found out about those from West Dean who died in the two World Wars. There are almost certainly many other facts that more research would have unearthed but the draft had to go to the printer in order to meet a publication date before 11<sup>th</sup> November.

One snippet that we did receive came from Chris East who used to live in the village. It was too late to include it in the main part of the booklet without a great deal of adjustment but it was too good to leave out. Chris told us that he used to play football with Jack Clifford and he told us the Jack was as tough as old boots. One day when riding to a village football match Jack fell off his bicycle and broke his ankle. Undeterred, he broke the ice on the cattle trough, dipped his leg into the icy water to deaden the pain and then proceeded to play football.

We would welcome more information which we will record and, should this booklet ever be re-printed, the new facts will be included.

It has been a most interesting project and one which both of us have very much enjoyed even if it has been very time consuming.

We only hope that we have provided you with some facts about those who lived in West Dean and who are remembered on the war memorial. We also hope that this booklet will serve as a tribute to the nine men of West Dean who left their families never to return to this very special village.

**Christine Warry**

**Pat Hargrave**

**November 2018**

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They shall grow not old as we that are left grow old  
Age shall not weary them nor the years condemn  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
**We will remember them**

*From the poem "For the Fallen" by Robert Laurence Binyon 1869-1943*

When You Go Home, Tell Them Of Us And Say,  
For Your Tomorrow, We Gave Our Today  
*Epitaph carved on the Memorial of the 2<sup>nd</sup> British Division  
in the cemetery of Kohima (North East India)*