

CRAPSTONE WAR MEMORIAL

short biographies of those who lost their lives in WWI
compiled by Peter Hamilton-Leggett
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In this, the centenary year of the Great War, it is a fitting tribute we owe to those who sacrificed their lives for the freedoms we so cherish today.

There was a "naivety and innocence" among the men who signed up for the First World War. They had no idea of what they were going into. They didn't just sacrifice their lives, they sacrificed their future and left a sad and depleted generation behind.

Recruitment was intense both in Tavistock & Plymouth - bright uniforms, interesting military equipment, brass bands, local dignitaries, friendly recruiting officers, enticing leaflets (see Europe for Free) and press coverage. However, the people of Devon were reluctant to come forward especially as war broke out at harvest time. In Devon many stayed at home to farm. The national average who went to war in each village was 11% whereas Devon averaged only 5% but our part of West Devon seems to have kicked this trend. Of the 1,788 inhabitants in Buckland Monachorum 208 went off to fight. (11.6%) 36 lost their lives. The area also led the way in generosity by collecting eggs & sphagnum moss, knitting garments and sending food parcels let alone collecting £1000s..



The hotly debated Military Service Act came into force on 2 March 1916. From this date, most single men between the ages of eighteen and forty-one years old were considered to be in the military and could be called-up to fight at any time. A second Act in May 1916 included married men and a third, in 1918, raised the upper age limit to 51.

Out of more than 14,000 parishes in the whole of England and Wales, there are only around 50 so called 'thankful parishes', who saw all their soldiers return. Of the 839 inhabitants from Horrabridge parish, 162 went off to fight. This was almost twice the national average. Of those that went 17 are remembered on our memorial. Others, born or connected with the parish, are remembered on other memorials.

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Major Reinhold Meitzen ADAMS (no service number)

Born in India. Son of William and Clara Adams. Family lived at 5 Park Villas, Yelverton. Joined army before the war. Killed during the Mesopotamia campaign on 22 April 1917 whilst serving with the 51st Sikhs (Frontier Force). Aged 31, he left Nancy his wife, who had moved to The Rest Harrow, Budleigh Salterton. Remembered on a memorial in Basra, Iraq.

34020 Gunner John Austin BAGGALEY

Son of Charles Chapman and Alice Baggaley of Dronfield Grammar School, nr. Sheffield. Signed up for a three year commission in August 1914 with the XII Corps HQ, the Royal Field Artillery. Whilst serving in the Balkans he died of dysentery 11 July 1917 aged 24. Buried in Sarigol Military Cemetery, Kriston. His connection with this area is unknown.

Captain David Humphrey BELLAMY (no service number)

Born in Plymouth. Educated at Blundells School. He joined the Devonshire Regiment at the outbreak of war. Served in France, the Balkans & Salonica. Aged 22, he was killed on 17 April 1917 and is remembered on the Mory-Ecoust memorial near Cambrai. Son of Lt. Colonel Charles Bellamy DSO and Ellen Bellamy, Leigh Holt, Crapstone.

10422 Sergeant William John BENNETT

Born Milton Combe 1894. Son of William and Elizabeth Bennett. Family moved from Milton to Winsborough, BM and then to Winsbeer Cottage, BM. William joined the Devonshire Regiment. Saw action at Loos, Soome, Ypres and Passchendaele. Awarded Military Medal for bravery. He was discharged 7 January 1917 and died 14 January 1918, aged 24. Buried in the cemetery at Buckland Monachorum.

283083 Mechanician Alfred James BOVEY

Born near Totnes but little known of his early life. In 1912 he married Beatrice Richards at Greenwich. Just before the war they moved to Plymouth where he joined the Royal Navy. He served aboard HMS Indefatigable, losing his life on 31 May 1916 aged 39 at the Battle of Jutland when the Indefatigable was sunk. Only two of the 1,019 crew survived. His wife was notified of his death at their new home, 16 Beechfield Avenue, Yelverton. He is also remembered on the Plymouth Royal Navy memorial.

2nd Lieutenant Arthur Robert BROWN (no service number)

He was born in Plymouth in 1894. His parents, John & Alice moved to Torlands, Whistley Down, Yelverton during the war. Arthur Roberts Brown enlisted with the Royal Engineers, became attached to the Royal Horse Artillery and the Royal Field Artillery before becoming a 2nd Lt in the Royal Flying Corp. Died 6 April 1917 one active service aged 22. He is also remembered on the Arras Flying Services Memorial, France

174322 Driver Arthur Anderson CANNON

Son of George and Eliza Cannon he was born at Rame in 1883. In 1905 he married Elizabeth Doidge of 1 Glen View, Yelverton. They later moved into 3 Grimstone Terrace, Crapstone. He joined up 4 June 1916 becoming a driver in the Royal Engineers. It seems that he did not see active service for he died of Double Pneumonia and Double Emphysema on 17 November 1916 whilst in Connaught Army Hospital, Farnborough. He was aged 34. He is buried in the cemetery at Buckland Monachorum.

T/ 2nd Lieutenant Henry Featherstone CLARK (no service number)

Son of Henry and Julia Clark, he was born at Kingsclere, Hants in 1894. Before the outbreak of war the family were living at Rose Hill, Horrabridge. In 1911, when he was 17, he was working as a journalist on the Marlborough Times. Henry joined the 11th Battalion, the Devonshire Regiment and was killed in action on 3 May 1917 aged 23. Probate that year gave his address as Crapstone Cottage, Buckland Monachorum.

K/22305 Stocker 1st Class Sydney CROCKER

Born in Milton Combe in 1894. Son of the late Samuel & Mary Crocker. Educated locally he went on to become a general labourer. He join the Royal and eventually found himself on the submarine HMS E30. The sub left harbour on 22 November 1916 and hit a mine off Orford Ness sinking with loss of all on board. He was 22 years old.

K14884 Stoker 1st Class George Hedley CROSSMAN

Born in 1894, son of Joseph and Amelia Crossman of 2 Richmond Terrace, Buckland Monachorum. After a village education he joined the Royal Navy eventually serving aboard HMS Indefatigable. He died on 31 May 1916 aged 22 at the Battle of Jutland. He is also remembered on the Royal Naval Memorial on the Hoe. His eldest brother, William, was also killed during World War I.

3497 Lance Corporal William John Brown CROSSMAN

Born in 1890, eldest son of Joseph and Amelia Crossman of 2 Richmond Terrace, Buckland Monachorum. After leaving school, William began work as a waggoner on the Willcock's farm, Long Ash. Just before the outbreak of war he emigrated to Australia and in October 1915 enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force. By early 1916 he was fighting in France. He was killed in action in Belgium 27 October 1917 aged 27. He is buried at the Belgium Battery Corner Cemetery.

Lieutenant Herbert Theodore Penryhs EVANS

Son of Major General; Thomas and Florence Evans, he was born in Chatham, Kent in 1895. Just before 1914 the family moved to Crapstone. Herbert had been educated at Cheltenham College, and after the usual course at Woolwich joined the Royal Artillery two months before the outbreak of war. He was killed in action whilst fighting at Salonica, Greece. He is buried in Struma Military Cemetery, Kalokastron, Greece.

Lieutenant Henry Mills GOLDSMITH (no service number)

Born in Compton Gifford 22 July 1885. Son of John Philip and Elizabeth Goldsmith. Whilst at Jesus College, Cambridge he partook in the boat race winning in 1906 & 1907. He was also part of the GB Olympic Squad which won a bronze medal. He became an articled clerk to a London solicitor. He married Sybil Perrens in 1913 at Newton Abbot. He joined the Devonshire Regiment in 1909 and became attached to the 2nd Battalion, the Lincolnshire Regiment as ADC. He was killed at Fromelles during the second battle of Ypres on 9 May 1915. He was 29. His remains were never recovered but he is remembered on the Ploegsteert Memorial, Maker Church memorial and at Jesus College, Cambridge. His wife, Sybil was living at Rockmoor, Yelverton.

345614 Private Bernard William HALLS

Born in 1887, the son of William and Fanny Halls of the Shop, Roborough. By 1911 he was working as a groom at Scorrier, Cornwall. Meanwhile his parents had moved to the Old Rock Chapel Cottage. Bernard joined the 16th Battalion, the Royal Devon and Royal North Devon Yeomanry. He saw action in Palestine and was killed 3 December 1917 aged 30 whilst defending Jerusalem. He was buried in the Jerusalem War Cemetery.

Midshipman Malcolm Alfred Milner HARRIS (no service number)

The son of Admiral Sir Robert Harris and Lady Florence Harris. He was born in South Africa in 1900. By 1911 his father had retired to The Brake, Yelverton. On the 1st January 1916, before his sixteenth birthday, Malcolm joined the Royal Navy and served on HMS Defence. Five months later he was dead when the Defence was sunk at the Battle of Jutland with loss of all 903 lives. He is remembered on the Plymouth Naval Memorial.

2nd Lieutenant Harold Victor HOWARTH (no service number)

Born in Surrey in 1895 to Frank & Rhoda Howarth. His father was a civil engineer and the family moved to work in the Plymouth City Waterworks. Harold joined the Devonshire Regiment seeing action in Palestine. He died of wounds received in action 2 May 1918. He was buried in the Ramleh War Cemetery, Israel. At the time of his death his parents were living at 1 Greenbank Terrace, Yelverton.

17537 Private Harold John MAKER

Born in Tavistock in 1898 to Alfred and Kate Maker. His family moved to Marylebone and it was from here that Harold joined the Oxford & Bucks Light Infantry. He was killed at Flanders on 21 April 1917 aged 19. He is buried in the Peronne Communal Cemetery, France and is remembered on the Tavistock War Memorial along with his brother Guardsman William Francis Maker of the 4th Battalion, the Grenadier Guards who had been killed 27 September 1915 aged 22. Their connection with BM is unknown.

43240 Private Michael McASSEY

The son of Abraham and Sarah McAssey of Carlow Ireland where he was born in 1887. By the time he enlisted in the Devonshire Regiment he was living in Yelverton. He saw action in Flanders & France and on the 7 May 1917 was killed in action. His name appears on the memorial at Arras Cemetery. He was aged 30.

2nd Lieutenant James Voaden MOORE (no service number)

James was born at Fernleigh Cottage, Crapstone in 1887 to John & Emma Moore. After leaving school James became an assistant to an iron monger. James married Gertrude in 1916 in Plymouth and they resided in Mutley. He joined the 6th Battalion, the Oxford & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry and was killed in action on 2 December 1917. His name appears on the Cambrai Memorial, France. Aged 30.

J/1595 Leading Seaman Horace James PALMER

Probably born in Yelverton in 1891. He was brought up by his grandparents who lived in Buckland Monachorum. Joined the Royal Navy and served in submarines based at Devonport. He was aboard HMS E36 who, together with her sister submarine HMS E43, were patrolling an area off Terschelling. The weather was bad and the E43 collided with the E36 which sank immediately with loss of all on board. He is also remembered on the Plymouth Naval Memorial. Aged 25

K169 Leading Stoker Austin Cotton PARNELL

Son of Thomas and Elizabeth Parnell of Pancrasweek, he was born in Bridgerule in 1884. Joined the Royal Navy. Killed when HMS Indefatigable was sunk on 31 May 1916 at the Battle of Jutland. He was 30 years old. He is remembered on the Plymouth Naval Memorial. Connection with area unknown.

I35090 Gunner Herbert Arthur PARNELL

Born 1889 to James & Elizabeth Parnell of Poplar, Middlesex. Served in the 328th Siege Battery, the Royal Garrison Artillery and was killed in action on 21 September 1917. He is buried in the Klein-Vierstratt British Cemetery, Belgium. His connection with Buckland Monachorum is unknown.

Sub Lieutenant Algernon William PERCY [wrongly identified on memorial as R Percy]

Son of Lord Algernon & Lady Victoria Percy of Guy's Cliffe, Warwickshire. He was born in 1884 and educated at home. From Oxford he followed his father as a career soldier joining the Northumberland Fusiliers in 1902 but resigned in 1910. At the outbreak of war he joined the Royal Naval Reserve, eventually serving on the battle cruiser HMS Queen Mary which sank 31 May 1916 at the Battle of Jutland with a loss of over 1200 lives. His body was recovered off the coast of Norway and is buried in the Military Cemetery at Fredriksstad. He was 31 years old. His family were closely related to the Edgcombe & Lopes families and his parents spent most of the war at Bickham House, Buckland Monachorum.

K8930 Stoker 1st Class John Sampson PRIOR

Son of William & Henry Prior, John was born in 1893 at Milton Combe. Joined the Royal Navy as a stocker. Served on the submarine HMS E16 which hit a mine off Heligoland Bight on 22 August 1916 with loss of all lives. Body never found. Remembered also on Plymouth Naval Memorial. He was aged 23.

2nd Lieutenant Charles Bouchier RODD

Born in Plymouth 1897 son of the solicitor Richard Robinson & Mary Rodd. The family then moved to St Albans, Meavy Lane, Yelverton. After leaving Sandhurst in 1916, he was commissioned into the Devonshire Regiment. He arrived in France on the 10 September and was killed in action 6 weeks later on 30 October 1916. He is remembered on the Thiépval Memorial in Northern France. He was aged 19.

Lieutenant Leslie Hicks ROLSTON

Born in Devonport in 1896 to George & Elizabeth Rolston. In 1914 he was studying in London for the Indian Civil Service. He joined the Royal Garrison Artillery in 1916 and saw action at Vimy Ridge and Ypres. Whilst stationed near Villers Bretonneux the mess received a direct hit and Charles was seriously wounded, dying on 1 April 1918. He is buried in Picquigny British Cemetery, aged 21. At the time of his death his parents were living at Glen Maye, Yelverton.

202474 Private William Henry ROWE

Probably born at Clearbrook, Buckland Monachorum in 1879. His parents, Jesse & Mary moved, before the outbreak of war, to Cumerew, Yelverton. A groom at Moordene, Yelverton, William enlisted at Tavistock, joining the Oxford & Bucks Light Infantry. Saw action in France and Flanders. Killed in action 19 October 1917, aged 38. He is remembered on the Tyne Cot Military cemetery, France.

2029 Private Walter Guy SANSOM

Walter, one of six children, was born in Plymouth to Louis & Emile Sansom in 1885. He followed his father's profession becoming a master tailor. After his father's death in 1907 the family moved to The Shanty, Meavy Lane, Yelverton. In 1911 he emigrated to Australia eventually joining the Australian 13 Light Horse Regiment. He survived the war and returned to Australia in January 1920 where he died 10 February 1921, described as an Orchardist. His reason for being on the Crapstone Memorial is unclear - he may have died of wounds suffered during the war.

240720 Private Charles SOUTHCOTT

Son of Henry and Mary Southcott, he was born at Lamerton in 1887. He became a carpenter and at some time moved to Yelverton. He enlisted into the Devonshire Regiment finally joining the 5th (P.O.W.) Battalion (Territorials). He died in Mesopotamia 8 March 1916 aged 28. Buried at Basra Cemetery, Iraq. His name also appears on the Lamerton War Memorial with his brother John.

Captain Charles Norman SPOONER

Son of Edwin (owner of Spooners of Plymouth) and Alice. He was born in Plymouth in 1878. Charles moved to Tavistock where he was managing director of the steam laundry. He later moved to Langriek, Yelverton. In 1913 he joined the 5th Battalion, The Devonshire Regiment with the rank of Captain. He was killed by friendly fire whilst serving in Palestine 10 April 1918, aged 39, and is buried in the Ramleh War Cemetery, Israel.

5736 Private Arthur WALTON

Son of James & Susan, Arthur was born in Arbroath in 1885. He became a cloth measurer. He married, and was stationed at Devonport when he was called up on the outbreak of war. He enlisted with 2nd Dragoons (The Scots Greys), the Household Cavalry and was killed in action whilst serving in France & Flanders 10 September 1914 aged 29. His address was given as Yelverton. He is buried in the Thierry French National Cemetery and is also remembered on The National War Memorial for Scotland, Edinburgh Castle.

PLY/18473 Private Harry WAYE

Youngest of nine children of William and Mary Waye, he was born at Calstock in 1889. In 1916 he enlisted into the Royal Marines Light Infantry joining the cruiser HMS Carnarvon. Whilst serving in Caribbean waters an accident occurred and Private Waye was taken ashore to a hospital in Bermuda where he died on 20 February 1918 aged 19.

8469 Private Frederick WEEKES

Born & baptised in Yealmton to Thomas and Jessie Weekes in 1890. Family moved to Tavistock, then to 3 Moor View, Yelverton & finally to 12 Beechfield Terrace, Yelverton. Frederick joined the 1st Battalion, the Devonshire Regiment. Killed in action 25 September 1916 aged 26.

63319 Robert Gordon WILLCOCKS

Born 1895 to Ambrose & Mary Willcock of Long Ash Farm, Buckland Monachorum. He worked on the farm alongside his father and William John Brown Crossman who also lost his life in the war. He enlisted in Tavistock in the Devonshire Regiment and later transferred to the Machine Gun Corps. Killed in action on 7 December 1917 and is buried in Wimereux Communal Cemetery, France. He was 21.

14591 Gunner James Reginald WILSON

Son of Charles and Caroline Wilson, James was born in 1893 in Plymouth. His father was a wine merchant who purchased the Devon Tors boarding House, Yelverton. Just before the outbreak of War James emigrated to Australia to become a farmer. In Dec 1915 he enlisted in the Australian Field Artillery. The regiment came to England to train before heading to France. He returned to Yelverton on leave but died of influenza on 2 November 1918. He was 25 and was buried in the family grave in Meavy Churchyard.

Private L. J. WYATT

No information can be found on this man. His name does appear in a local book as Private L J Wyatt from the Tavistock area. One person that may fit is Leonard John Wyatt, born in Laira, Plymouth in 1891 (baptised at Egg Buckland). Son of John & Sarah Wyatt. His father was a signaller and by 1911 a stationmaster in Cornwall. Leonard also worked on the railway and was up north in 1911. No military record can be found however. There was a J Wyatt living at Station House, Clearbrook in 1915