

MEN WHO MARCHED AWAY

The story of men from West End in the Great War

1914 - 1919

INTRODUCTION

In 1914 West End was a small, self-contained community of under 2,000 people with shops, houses, a school, a church and the Union Workhouse. Like anywhere else in Great Britain in that hot idyllic summer, life went on as normal. Events in middle Europe had little effect on the people of West End as they went about their business.

Four years later, the war to end wars had taken a ghastly toll of these people. Over forty of their men folk were dead and many others were scarred – physically or mentally – by what they had experienced. Life was never the same again.

This small token of remembrance aims to bring some of the faceless names on West End's War Memorial to your mind. They were sons and brothers, husbands and fathers. What they did and saw we can only imagine from the distance of nearly ninety years, but their sacrifice should not be forgotten.

Gallipoli and the loss of the 'Royal Edward'

In August 1915, the 2nd Battalion of The Hampshire Regiment was serving on Gallipoli. Having landed on 25th April, from the "River Clyde", the Hampshires had suffered terrible losses. Indeed, West End's first casualty of the campaign was **Hubert Pavey**, of Moor Hill, who had died in the landing, along with his Commanding Officer (Colonel H Carrington-Smith) and so many of his men that one officer wrote that 'it was impossible to walk the shore without treading on the bodies of dead men.'

Hubert was 21 years old. The fighting on Gallipoli was fierce. The enemy were brave and committed, and the conditions difficult. On 6th August the Hampshires with the rest of their Division - the 29th - were involved in heavy fighting; over 450 men were lost, one of them **Albert Withers** (aged 26) of South Road, West End (now known as Chalk Hill). To reinforce them, 31 officers and 1335 men were embarked on board ship in Alexandria.

The ship was **HMT 'Royal Edward'**. She was an 11,000 ton trans-Atlantic steamer, built in 1908 as the 'Cairo', and owned by the Canadian Northern Steamship Company. Mastered by Captain P M Wotton, she had been taken into service as a troopship. On Thursday 12th August 1915, she left Alexandria, bound for the island of Lemnos, the main base of the British forces. She made course off the Adriatic coast of Turkey; previously a safe route, although close to the enemy's shore.

Unfortunately, the German Navy had recently set up a U-Boat base in the area. U14 was on patrol. She had been brought overland in sections, and assembled in Orak Bay.

At 9.15 on the morning of Friday 13th August, one torpedo from U14 hit '**Royal Edward**' on the port side, just forward of the mainmast. She quickly listed to starboard, settled by the stern, and sank in under five minutes. The boats on the

starboard side had been got away, but there were many casualties – 205 men from the Hampshire Regiment perished.

An hour-and-a-half after the sinking, a Hospital Ship, the '**Soudan**' arrived and took on 441 survivors. She was joined by the Blue Funnel SS '**Ajax**', two French Destroyers and the French Battleship '**Jules Ferry**'. In all, around 600 survivors, 29 from the 200-plus Hampshires on board, were taken back to Alexandria. One was a West End man – **Reginald Barfoot** went on to survive the war. Only one other troopship – the '**Southland**' with a handful of casualties – was torpedoed during the whole campaign.

West End suffered heavily in this tragedy. Eight men from the village perished: **Sidney Brown, George and Frederick Curtis**, both of Moorgreen Road, (George was 22, Frederick, 26) **Frederick Jurd, Bertie and Walter Light**, (aged 21 and 23 respectively) of 5 New Road, **Frederick Thompson**, who lived in the cottage opposite what is now the **West End Local History Museum**, and **Alfred Webb** were all lost. Two sets of brothers had died; looking at the Regimental Numbers of the men, they must all have joined up together.

Tragically, the deaths of George and Frederick were not the only losses to befall the family. On the 10th August, their brother, **Leslie**, had also died, serving with the 10th Battalion of the Hampshire Regiment in the attack at Suvla Bay. In this action, the Battalion lost every officer but one, and over 80% of its strength. Frederick and Elizabeth Curtis, who lived at Mayfield, in Moorgreen Road, paid a heavy price. Leslie was 17 years old when he died. In the same action, **Lewis Jacobs**, (27), who lived in the High Street, and **Arthur Mitchener** also died. **George Harding**, (also aged 27), of Moorhill died of wounds on the 13th, and was buried at sea.

The attack of the 10th Hampshires, part of the 10th (Irish) Division, was a disaster. They had landed only the day before, and had no real idea of their objectives. A letter is in the files of the Public Record Office, from their Commanding Officer. Writing to the Official Historian, Colonel W.D. Bewsher, DSO says: "I would like to bear testimony to the unflinching perseverance and pluck of all ranks of the 10th Hampshires who, without any clearly defined objective in the most difficult, trying and confusing country, never lost their pluck or willingness."

One West End casualty has not been mentioned. **Lieutenant Francis Molyneux Badham** fell on 4th June 1915, at the Second Battle of Krithia. His unit, The Collingwood Battalion of the Royal Naval Division (the Division with which Rupert Brooke served), was destroyed in a fruitless attack on the Turkish trenches. 25 officers and over 500 men became casualties, and the Battalion was never reformed. Lieutenant Badham's body was never found, and like all the other West End dead in Gallipoli – fifteen in all – he is commemorated on the Helles Memorial at Gallipoli.

A third of the war dead of West End died in this campaign. Gallipoli was evacuated in January 1916.

The Western Front

The fighting in France and Belgium lasted from August 1914 to November 1918. In all, over 1.7 million casualties were suffered by the British on the Western Front (compared to 45,000 in Gallipoli).

Men from West End played their part.

First to fall was **Lance Corporal Cecil Thorn** of the 1st Hampshires. Their Division – the 4th – was holding the line in the first winter of the war, and Lance Corporal Thorn died on 19th January 1915. Lance Corporal Thorn was a pre-War soldier. He was followed by **William Curtis**, a 34 year old married Private in the 1st Dorsetshire Regiment. He died in the Ypres Salient during a German attack on 12th June 1915. His name is on the Menin Gate Memorial at Ypres (now known as Ieper) in the West Flanders area of Belgium. It seems reasonable to assume that, from his age and the fact that he was married, Private Curtis was a Reservist called up at the outbreak of War. He had gone to France on 31st August 1914, two weeks after his battalion first sailed. A holder of the ‘Mons’ Star, he was a member of the original British Expeditionary Force – the “Contemptible Little Army” that the Kaiser was so wrong about.

There were no more deaths in 1915, but in 1916, the year of the Somme Offensive, brought a steady harvest. **Private Ernest Windust** died on 9th September, together with **Private Midford Willcox**. Their Battalion, the 11th Hampshires, was a Pioneer Battalion, attached to the 16th (Irish) Division. The Division was involved in the latter part of the Somme fighting, round the village of Guillemont, and the 11th Hampshires, although a Pioneer Battalion were heavily involved in an attack on the German line. The 6th Royal Irish Regiment and 8th Royal Munster Fusiliers were to attack German trenches; the 11th Hampshires were to support them.

Their attack started at 4.45am. The Hampshires were hit by, in the words of their War Diary, “Devastating” machine gun fire. Then, heavy shell fire made all movement impossible. The survivors took shelter where they could until 7.00am, when they made it to the German line. Shortly after a German counter-attack was launched, and what was left of the Hampshires retired to the British line.

Ernest Windust and Midford Willcox were not among those few lucky ones; their bodies were lost, and they are remembered on the Thiepval Memorial, which carries the names of 75,000 men whose bodies were never found in the Somme fighting.

Lieutenant Rudolph Preston was 23 years old. He had already been awarded the Military Cross for gallantry at the time of his death – 15th September. He was a pilot in the Royal Flying Corps when his aeroplane was brought down, and he is buried in a small French village. He had been born in Emsworth on the 30th August 1893. He had intended to make a career in the Navy, but poor sight in one eye made that impossible, so he had taken up farming in Australia.

Like so many young men, he returned to the mother country on the outbreak of war, and had enlisted in the ranks of the Lincolnshire Regiment, in which his brother, James, was serving. Commissioned in late 1915, Rudolph had proceeded to France with his battalion, and had been awarded the Military Cross for bravery on the opening day of the Battle of the Somme on 1st July 1916.

He had then transferred to the Royal Flying Corps as an observer, and his aircraft was shot down by Oswald Boelcke, a German ace, on 15th September 1916. On that day his squadron – Number 70, flying Sopwith 1½ strutters – lost four aircraft, with all of the observers being killed.

Rudolph had four sisters. Their wartime occupations show the great effort the British people were making towards winning the war. His eldest sister, Antoinette Eileen Maude (aged 29) lived at Donadea Lodge, West End. 28-year-old Esme Hilda was nursing at The Hospital for Officers, Ecclestone Square, London, while Hermione Kathleen Mary (23) was at The London Hospital, Whitechapel. Another sister, the 25-year-old Irene, lived at Erwood Hall, Buxton.

Rudolph's Military Cross had not been presented before his death; his brother was given the option to either collect it from the War Office, have it sent in the post, or have it presented at an official ceremony. He took the latter option.

Finally, Rudolph's papers (at the Public Record Office) show us he was 5'4" tall, weighed 133 pounds and had a chest of 36" with a 3" expansion.

The Somme fighting dragged on into November, and on 23rd October, **Private Edwin Longman** died after the fighting in the battle of the Transloy Ridges. He was a member of the 1st Hampshires, who had been involved in this series of fights in the mud and ice of the late Somme battlefield, notable for its chest-deep mud and floating trench duckboards. He is buried in the Guards' Cemetery in the village of Lesboeuufs on the Somme. Private Longman was soon followed by **Albert Glasspoole**, a 24 year-old Private in the 8th Devonshire Regiment. Even after the battle ended (he died on 20th November), there was still death and danger, and a steady stream of losses – 'Wastage' in the terms of the time! Private Glasspoole died in a Base Hospital, and is buried outside the town of St Omer – so well known to those of us driving south from Calais – at the Souvenir Cemetery at Longuenesse.

1917 started as a year of hope for the Allies. The Germans, worn down by their losses on the Somme, withdrew to new positions, leaving a large area of France liberated. In April, the United States entered the war. Unfortunately, her armies were nowhere near ready, and her entry was followed by the Revolution in Russia, and the loss of that country as an ally. The end of 1917 found the British in little better positions than the start of the year, but much more tired and war-weary.

First to lose his life in 1917 was **Gunner Albert Glasspool**. A 36 year-old married man, he is given as living in New Town Road, Woolston with his wife Alice. He was serving with the 250th Siege Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery, equipped with the 6 inch Howitzer. He is buried in Northern France in the village of Aubigny, in an extension to the village cemetery. Although Heavy Artillery was positioned a mile or so behind the line, it was still the subject of enemy shellfire and bombing attacks, as Gunner Glasspool proves.

In April the British launched an attack at Arras – the battle of the Scarpe. One of the Divisions brought up for the attack was the 56th, a formation of territorial soldiers from London. **Lance Corporal George Moody**, aged 22 years old and whose parents lived at Jackson's Farm in Bubb Lane, West End, was serving with the Machine Gun

Corps. His Company – the 169th – had a quiet March behind the lines, but at the end of the month was ordered to the Line near Arras, where they set up positions to fire on the enemy. On 31st March, Number 1 Section went up to the Line on fatigues; on returning, one shell fell near them in the village of Achicourt. Two men died, seven were wounded. One of the dead was Lance Corporal Moody. On the War Roll in the Parish Centre he is listed as being in the Queen's Westminsters. This was one of the battalions in the 56th Division, and George Moody had transferred to the Machine Gun Corps.

After the Arras battles had ground to a halt, the Battles of Third Ypres took place. Often called 'Passchendaele', these started on 31st July and finished in early November. Our perception of these battles is of more mud – worse than the Somme. But this was not always right, and much of the fighting was done in weather so fine that dust was more of a problem. The middle stages of the battles, in September and October, were successful and this is often forgotten. Two of West End's dead fell in the same battalion, on the same day. Privates **James Ryman** and **Alfred Spiller** served with another territorial battalion, the 1st/5th Gloucestershire Regiment. On 4th October the battle of Broodseinde saw the Australians rout the Germans and take the ridge overlooking Passchendaele. Ryman and Spiller's Battalion, part of the 48th Division, was on the left flank of the attack of the New Zealand Division. The attack was preceded by a bombardment, which fell slightly too far ahead of the attacking troops. Heavy enemy fire and heavier rain caused the British line to be advanced by only 200 yards.

In the Glosters, two officers and 24 men were killed, among them James Ryman and Alfred Spiller. As with so many men, their bodies were lost, and their names are among the 34,888 engraved on the Tyne Cot Memorial. Private Ryman was 23 years old, and is given as being the son of Mrs Ellen Walker (formerly Ryman) of 16 Winton Street, Kingsland, Southampton, while Private Spiller was 34 and husband of Rosa Spiller of Chalk Hill, West End.

1918 was the year of victory, but it was a close thing. The year started with the British Armies at a low point. Manpower was scarce, and many Battalions were disbanded. The Germans, free from any worry on the Eastern Front transferred thousands of fresh troops to the west, and in March unleashed the most dramatic offensive of the war so far. **Private Henry Soffe**, 35 years old, and married to Ethel, of The Lodge, Harefield, Bitterne, died on 19th April. He served, as had so many others, with the 1st Hampshires. They were involved in heavy fighting in Northern France, round Bethune and Hazebrouck. Although the defence held firm, Private Soffe was not to know. His body was not found, and his name is on the Memorial at Loos.

After the German offensive stalled, there was time for breath. Sadly, 20 year-old **Gunner Frank Ings**, of Moorlands Cottage, Chalk Hill, West End, died in this period. He was killed on 20th June, serving with 119th Army Brigade, Royal Field Artillery near Hazebrouck. His Brigade was equipped with 18 pounder guns, and would have been close to the front Line. He is buried in Morbecque British Cemetery.

The last to die on the Western Front was **Private Thomas Othen** who was killed on 13th July 1918. He was with the 49th Field Ambulance of the Royal Army Medical Corps. His brother, Mr A C J Othen, lived at Broad Oak Cottages, Botley. The 49th

Field Ambulance was part of the 37th Division, and at the time of Private Othen's death was holding the Line during the lull between the close of the German Offensives and the series of battles known as the 'Hundred Days' which led to victory for the Allies. Private Othen is buried at St Amand, a village 12 miles from the northern French town of Doullens.

Further Afield

West End's memorials bear witness to the fact that this was truly a 'World War'. British and Empire soldiers fell in all corners of the earth, in heat and cold. **Major Reginald Edwin Bond** lost his life on 3rd March 1915 in Mesopotamia (now Iraq). He was an officer in the 4th Prince Albert Victor's Rajputs, a regiment of the Indian Army, sent to fight the Turks.

Commissioned into Princess Alexandra's Yorkshire Regiment (now known as the Green Howards) in January 1892, he transferred to the Indian Army in July 1896 joining the 4th Rajputs of the Bengal Army. He rose steadily, being promoted Major on 9th January 1910, and proceeding overseas with his regiment.

He died at the head of his men in a small action against hostile Arabs. In a scene reminiscent of the North-West Frontier, his regiment, together with a sister regiment, the 7th Rajputs, were sent to deal with an encampment of Bedouin. In brief, the attack was a shambles, and the two Indian units were pursued back to their camp in a confusing running fight in the dark.

The War Diary states that the retreat was "an unorganised stream....confusion....increased by loose and wounded animals dashing through the already crowded defile". Major Bond was lost, together with one havildar (sergeant), three naiks (corporals), two drummers, nine sepoy (privates) and two saises (grooms). None of their bodies were recovered, and Major Reginald Bond is commemorated on a Memorial at Tehran. His widow also erected a memorial tablet in St James' Church, West End.

Also fighting the Turk was **Herbert Grendon Powers**, a Captain with the 1st/1st King George's Own Gurkha Rifles. Herbert Powers, son of the local GP, had been commissioned into the Hampshire Regiment at the outbreak of war, in a Territorial battalion. He had been sent to India on garrison duties with his battalion, but had tired of this role, and transferred to the Gurkhas in November 1915, going to Palestine with them.

Having already been awarded a Military Cross for gallantry, he had been appointed Adjutant, but fell in an attack near Jerusalem on 19th September 1918. He now lies in a British cemetery at Ramleh in Israel.

Apart from Turkey, the Germans had other allies, some more reliable than others. Bulgaria, hoping for easy spoils from Serbia, had entered the war on the German side, but was restricted mainly to a sterile campaign in northern Greece. It was here that **Sergeant Harry Busby** of the Royal Field Artillery died. Sergeant Busby, the son of George Busby of Thornhill Park Farm, was serving with "B" Battery of the 116th Brigade of the Royal Field Artillery.

On 22nd September 1917 the Brigade's War Diary reports: "has been on active service for two years today. Batteries fired on dugouts and trenches and at night on roads. Enemy retaliated at night on B/116, causing two casualties – No 38613 Sergeant Busby (died next day) and No. 1695 Bombardier Longstaff (killed)".

Sergeant Busby is buried in Karasouli Military Cemetery in northern Greece.

The war to end wars had ended. Nearly a million British and Empire servicemen had lost their lives and countless others had been wounded. West End had done its bit, and now thoughts were to turn to Peace and the erection of a suitable memorial to those who did not return.

Wellesley Bigsworth: The name of **Wing Commander Arthur Wellesley Bigsworth** is also on the Service Roll in the Parish Centre. Born on 27th March 1885, he had served with the Merchantile Marine, joining the Royal Naval Reserve and later the Royal Navy. He had transferred to the Royal Flying Corps Naval Wing in 1912; this became the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS) in 1914. At the outbreak of war he went to Belgium with No.1 Naval Air Squadron, and in 1915 was on Home Defence service. Airship raids had caused a good deal of damage – both to property and morale – and the Royal Flying Corps and RNAS had formed units to combat the Zeppelin raids.

In the early hours of 17th May 1915, Bigsworth was patrolling near Ramsgate in an **Avro 504**. A German Zeppelin airship, **LZ39**, had bombed Ramsgate and Dover, and was returning to its base near Ostende. Bigsworth climbed his machine above the airship – no mean feat in itself – and dropped two 20-pound bombs on it. After the war, it was found that one German airman had been killed, and several wounded, and that fires had done extensive damage. This remarkable feat was noteworthy on two counts: it was the first Zeppelin ever to be attacked, and the first ever success for a night fighter. Bigsworth was awarded a **mentioned in despatches** for his work and promoted to Squadron Commander.

Later in 1915 – in August – he was awarded the **Distinguished Service Order (DSO)** for sinking a German submarine. Despite heavy fire from German coastal batteries he pressed home his attack – thus becoming the first person to sink a submarine by air attack.

In 1917 he received a **Bar to his DSO** (that is a second award of the medal) for "bombing and reconaissance work" in the Mediterranean (although this Bar is not mentioned on the Service Roll). He was later made a **CMG** (Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George), and was awarded the Air Force Cross.

Most memorably, he was the model for that hero of aviation fiction, **Biggles**. Readers will no doubt recall that **Biggles'** full name was **Bigglesworth** – the author of the Biggles books, **W.E.Johns**, served with Arthur Wellesley Bigsworth in the Air Ministry in 1922, and was apparently so struck by his exploits that some of these featured in two of Johns' early books.

George Henry Gater: Also appearing on the Service Roll is Brigadier General George Henry Gater, son of W.H.Gater of Winslowe House in Quob Lane. Born on

Boxing Day, 1886, Gater had been educated at Winchester and New College Oxford. At the outbreak of war he was deputy Director of Education for Nottinghamshire County Council. He enlisted in the local regiment – the Sherwood Foresters – and went to Gallipoli with their 9th Battalion.

There he landed at Suvla (this was the action commemorated in the television programme “All The Kings Men” with David Jason). In that campaign he was promoted to Major, and in March 1916 was awarded a DSO. When Gallipoli was evacuated he went with his battalion to France, and served on the Somme. In October 1916 he was appointed to command the 6th Battalion of the Lincolnshire Regiment (as a Lieutenant Colonel), his award being made for “Conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty ... he remained in command for three days although severely wounded in the face early in the attack”.

His skill was recognised later that year, when, in November 1917 he was promoted to Brigadier General and given the command of the 62nd Brigade. He was a General at the age of 31 and had been a soldier only three years!

In 1918 his Brigade was heavily involved in the massive German attacks in the spring; he was again wounded, and commanded several collections of stragglers after his Brigade was surrounded. At the end of the war he was apparently next on the list for promotion to command a Division, but in January 1919 he returned to civilian life – he went to Lancashire as Director of Education.

In later years he was a Whitehall mandarin, and he ended his days as Warden of Winchester, dying in the 1960's.

The War Memorial Committee.

On **Wednesday April 30th, 1919**, a Parish meeting was held in the Parish Hall at 8.00pm, “To consider the question of a Village War Memorial, and to form a Committee to carry out the scheme”. **Mr Haines** presided, by virtue of his Office as Chairman of the Parish Council, and there was, we are told, a large attendance of Parishioners.

Mr Haines stated that: “There should be entirely Free and Open discussion on the Subject, and then form a Committee to carry out the Scheme decided upon”. **Mr G.H. Elliott** was unanimously elected Hon. Secretary. Apologies were tabled from the Vicar (**Rev. F.R. Dawson**), **Colonel E.K. Perkins, JP** and **Mr F. Woolley**. It is noted that each had expressed their opinions on the matter.

The Parish Council had already discussed the matter, and tabled two proposals:

1. Provision of a Recreation Ground.
2. Failing this, erection of a Lych Gate at the Cemetery.

Mr W.H. Gater (whose son, **George**, had served with great distinction in the War) proposed a resolution: “That the Parish Meeting ... records its deepest sense of sorrow, mingled with pride, at the sacrifice of the brave men who left the village to serve their country and have perished by sea, land, or in the air; also its heartfelt

gratitude to their comrades who survived, with the earnest hope that those amongst them who still suffer from wounds, disease, or the effects of captivity may ere long be restored to health.” As a rider, he added: “That a sealed copy of this resolution be sent to the families of all those who have laid down their lives.”

Mr G.E. May seconded the resolution, and it was passed unanimously. Were these sealed copies of the resolution issued?

Mr W. Light proposed that a collection be made from every house, except those who had lost someone in the War, and a brass plaque be erected in the village carrying the names of the fallen. Any surplus money should be distributed to the bereaved.

Mr. W. Scott proposed a Lych Gate, and a memorial tablet in the Church. Mr Light agreed with this.

At this point, the Chairman felt bound to point out that any scheme would be voluntary, and could not come out of the Rates. He would take any suggestions forward to the next parish meeting.

Mr H. Mitchener supported the erection of a Lych Gate.

Mr Hatley suggested a memorial tablet in or in front of, the Parish Hall. He liked the idea of a Recreation Ground, but thought it ‘too big a thing’ to tackle voluntarily.

Other suggestions included providing a house for an Old-Age Pensioner, a Village Library, or a Drinking Fountain. **Mr Spencer Tucker** said that he felt sure that those who joined in 1914, '15 or '16 (*i.e. volunteers rather than conscripts – ed.*) “did not want any praise for what they had done”.

Finally a Committee was appointed to discuss the various options: twelve names were proposed and seconded, and the following Committee was elected en bloc: **Rev. F.R. Dawson** (Vicar), **Mr J. Knowlton**, **Mr G.E. May**, **Colonel Perkins**, **Mr H. Haines**, **Mr C. Reeves**, **Miss Roberts**, **Mr J. Welch**, **Mr W. Light**, **Mr W.H. Gater**, **Mr W. Scott** and **Mrs Wood**. Next meeting to be held on 12th May.

At the meeting on 12th May, Mr Haines was elected Chairman, with Mr Knowlton as deputy. Mr Gater wrote resigning from the Committee, but enclosed a letter from **Mr Blakiston**. This letter pointed out that a Recreation Ground would be too expensive to be done privately, and that a Lych Gate would also be expensive, if done properly. Mr Blakiston suggested a Cross of red or white granite, about 10 feet high, to be erected in the cemetery. Names of the fallen would be engraved on it. He enclosed a sketch.

The Committee entered discussions. Mr Haines reported that he had been offered 6 acres of Hope Farm (*where St. James Road meets the High Street now – Ed.*), at a very reasonable price, but this offer had been withdrawn subsequently. Another site was available in the centre of the village, 6 to 7 acres, to which were attached two small cottages. The cost was £900, but another £1,000 would have to be spent on drainage, fencing and the erection of a Memorial.

It was agreed that this was too great a sum to be raised voluntarily, but that it should come from the rates, so all should pay their share.

The Lych Gate was next discussed. Colonel Perkins felt that estimates should be sought and a design drawn up. The Committee passed this, but with three members abstaining. It was felt that the cost would be around £350, and there was some doubt as to whether the village could raise this voluntarily. Colonel Perkins felt it would be “utterly unworthy of the Parish if this amount could not be raised.”

The Committee went on to discuss the erection of a Cross, as suggested by Mr Blakiston, and decided that a plan and estimate be sought.

Finally, Mr Haines and Messrs Welch and Knowlton were appointed to obtain a list of the fallen.

At the next meeting, on 26th May, the Chairman tabled plans for the Lych Gate. It was to be of English oak, upon a brick base of between 3 and 4 feet, with stone tablets for the names. There would also be two semi-circular stone walls to replace the existing wooden fence. Cost: £450.

For a red granite Cross in the Cemetery, an estimated cost of £220, with another £10 for cutting names onto it.

Several members of the Committee voiced opinions of residents to whom they had spoken. Mr Light then suggested a Chapel in the Cemetery to obviate the need to take funerals in the Church and then down to the burial ground. This suggestion was ruled out of order, as the Committee was meeting specifically to discuss suggestions already made. Mr Light then suggested that the Committee do not recommend the erection of a Lych Gate. This had no seconder, and lapsed.

Eventually, at Colonel Perkin's suggestion, the Committee agreed to lay the two schemes – Lych Gate or Cross – before a meeting of Parishioners for them to decide. Finally, it was left to the Chairman to obtain 50 window bills to advertise a public meeting.

The meeting was held on **Monday, 2nd June.**

40 to 50 Ratepayers were present at the meeting.

A resolution ‘For’ the Lych Gate was defeated 21 against 19, and a resolution was carried calling upon the Parish Council to call a Parish Meeting to consider providing a Recreation Ground for the Parish – **out of the Rates!**

At this point, the Chairman, Mr Haines, probably in a state of despair, stated that “...as the Meeting had practically decided against a Village War Memorial, the work of the Committee had now come to an end.” A vote of thanks to the Committee was passed, and the meeting ended.

So we are left to wonder, after nearly 100 years, why it is that West End now has no fewer than **three** War Memorials: a stained glass window in St. James' Church, a

Cross outside the Cemetery and a Roll of Honour and Service Roll in the Parish Centre.

Following the inability of the Parish to agree to a War Memorial, **Colonel Perkins** undertook to erect one. The granite cross we now see on the corner of West End Road, by the Old Burial Ground, was unveiled on **Saturday 5th June 1920**. On the back is an inscription: "Erected in thankfulness for the preservation of their three sons by a mother and father 1914-1918". The Perkins' three sons – Noel, George and Hew – all served, and all returned to their home.