

TO THE SEARING HEAT OF MESOPOTAMIA

Edward Parker Wilkinson loved to travel and had the money to indulge his passion.

He came to Longparish in 1884 aged 13 when his father was appointed Vicar and later Rector.



At boarding school Edward showed a talent for music and sang in the choir. (Back row, fifth from right.)

His fine tenor voice and skill at the organ earned him a place at the Royal College of Music and later at the Guildhall School of Music.

Back in Longparish he married Mary Jane Faithfull and settled at Eastfield House, Forton.



Edward became involved with village life, producing the annual pantomime in the newly built village hall. He often entertained with oratorios and concerts.

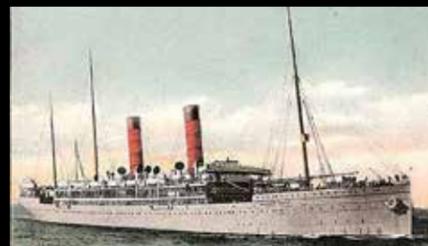


Among his concerns as a parish councillor was renovating the Ashburn Rest, then known as "the fountain".

Edward's travels took him all over Europe. He recorded his progress with regular postcards home. His other passion was the Territorial Army and when war came he was soon in uniform serving in the Royal Army Medical Corps.



After service at Portsmouth, Private Wilkinson boarded the hospital ship Kildonan Castle for the Mediterranean and then Mesopotamia.



Promoted to Acting Sergeant, he served with the 20th Base Field Ambulance in Basra, Amara and Baghdad, tending the wounded and dying of the bloody campaign against the Turks.

In June 1917 Edward overstayed his leave in India saying he was "undergoing dental treatment." As a result he reverted to Private and assigned to the Deccan Military hospital in Poona.



By July 1918 he was back in Mesopotamia but four months later he was dead, succumbing to bronchial pneumonia. He was 47 years old. Private Edward Parker Wilkinson was one of hundreds of British soldiers who died of illness in the heat and dust of Mesopotamia.

He was buried near where he died but in 1962 his remains were moved to the new Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery in Tehran, Iran.



Among his possessions sent home to his widow and her mother (left) was a sheaf of negatives and photographs – and a set of broken dentures. Mary lived at Eastfield House until her death in 1941.

LONGPARISH AT WAR

LANOE HAWKER: 'ATTACK EVERYTHING'

Lanoe George Hawker VC DSO was born at Homecroft across the road from the old Longparish Vicarage on New Year's Eve 1890.



He spent his first ten years in the village. His brother wrote of how the two boys played on the railway embankments and tobogganed down a snowy Southside Hill.

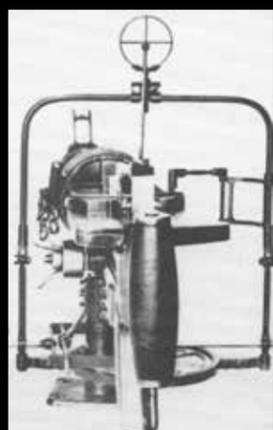


Hawker's luck ran out on November 23, 1916. Ten thousand feet above Bapaume



on the Somme, he met Manfred von Richthofen – the Red Baron. The two fighters circled each other for thirty minutes, each trying to get on the other's tail. Low on fuel, Hawker made a break for the British lines. A burst of fire from the Red Baron's faster Albatross fighter (*above*) killed the British pilot instantly.

Hawker was a quick learner, uttering his first words at six months. He soon showed a curiosity about



how things work and in the army devised a revolutionary gun mounting and an optical machine gun sight (*left*) which allowed much greater accuracy.



As a fighter pilot Hawker's aggressive "attack everything" ethos won him a DSO in April 1915 for bombarding a zeppelin hangar with hand grenades.



Hawker was 25. He was buried alongside the wreckage of his aircraft. The cross erected on his grave is seen below but the site was obliterated as the war raged on.

Three months later he earned the Victoria Cross for shooting down two enemy aircraft over Ypres and forcing a third to the ground.

Richthofen (*left*) mounted Hawker's Lewis machine gun above the door of his billet. The German ace himself was killed seventeen months later, probably hit by a bullet fired from the ground.



While on leave and wearing civilian clothes a white feather, the symbol of cowardice, was thrust into his hand. The incident appealed to Hawker's sense of irony and he kept it alongside his VC – the symbol of courage.



Promoted to Major, he took command of 24 Squadron RFC, flying DH2 fighters. His reputation grew as Britain's first "air ace", claiming seven victories.

In 1967 a stained glass window was installed in St. Nicholas' Church, Longparish to honour Hawker. In 2011 his old squadron commissioned



a memorial which stands in the village of Ligny-Thilley, close to the crash site on the Somme.

Soon after Hawker's death, one of his fellow pilots described him as "a leader of men who combined modesty with great courage and unselfishness".

"HE DIED YOUNG AT THE HEIGHT OF HIS GLORY AND HIS DEATH CAST A SHADOW FAR AND WIDE."

LONGPARISH AT WAR

HE WITNESSED OUR FIRST GAS ATTACK



Private Alfred William Locke fought in the Battle of Loos in 1915, where Britain used gas for the first time. A thick cloud of chlorine rolled over the German trenches. Some drifted back towards the allied lines and shells smashed several gas cylinders, engulfing British troops.

By the armistice 188,706 British gas casualties were recorded including 8,109 dead. Well into the 1960s coroners often recorded gassing as a cause of death.



Private Locke, who also fought at Neuve Chapelle, Ypres and Armentières was apparently unhurt although it is unclear whether he caught a whiff of gas.

At 43, Locke was an old soldier who had already “done his bit” by the time war was declared.

Born in the village he joined the 3rd Battalion Rifle Brigade in January 1890, serving in India for the next eight years.

After a short spell at home Private Locke was posted to South Africa where the second Boer War was raging. He took part in the disastrous Battle of Colenso and the relief of Ladysmith where more than 13,000 soldiers were besieged for 118 days.



He sailed for England in 1902 and was put on the reserve list, spending the next 12 years working as a builder's labourer. He lived with his mother, Mary, at Home Rule Cottages, now renamed Park View Villas.



With the outbreak of war Locke was among the first to be called back to the colours. Just over two years later he was discharged as “totally disabled for further service”.

Private Locke died at home on August 31, 1917 of exhaustion and pyloric obstruction, a cancerous growth in his throat. He was 46 years old.

The Andover Advertiser proclaimed: “His was a life well spent in his country's service.”

THE GARDENER WHO DIED AT SEA

The official grave of Officers' Steward (2nd class) Cecil Percy Mills lies 30 metres beneath the English Channel off Dungeness.

Mills was the eldest of six children, the son of a railway worker. They lived at Meadow Farm Cottage, opposite the turning to Upper Mill. Mills left his job as a gardener in November 1915 and volunteered to join the Navy at Portsmouth.



Mills was serving dinner aboard the destroyer HMS Gurkha on a stormy February night in 1917 when a German mine struck just in front of the forward funnel. The 900 ton warship was cut in two.

A survivor described how the officers' mess was “cleared in about twenty seconds” and in that short time the upper deck was almost awash.



Many crewmen were killed in the explosion and others were trapped below as the ship went down. It was too late to launch life rafts so desperate sailors dived into the cold sea. Only six were rescued. Cecil Mills was among the 75 who perished. He was 23.

Two days later a pro forma letter from the Admiralty arrived at Meadow Farm Cottage informing the family that Mills was not on the list of survivors and “must be regarded as having lost his life”.

Cecil Mills is the only man named on the Longparish memorial who has family still living in the village. They say that until the day she died, his mother, Ann, refused to accept that he had gone.



The Gurkha was extensively salvaged for scrap metal until she was declared a War Grave in 1988. Her stern still stands eight metres proud of the seabed.

1916: FRA. JEARRAD BOWKER CHA. BOWLEY. ALBERT BRACKSTONE
ALBERT BURGESS. LANOE GEO. HAWKER. THO. CHA. LANGFORD READ
CHARLES THOMAS SMITH
1917: LEONARD GOODYEAR. ALFR. WILL. LOCKE. CECIL PERCY FRED MILLS
ARTHUR WESSON

HE DIED TO SAVE HIS OFFICER

Corporal William John Poore died a hero according to his comrades who fought with him in the mud of the Western Front.

Poore was a regular soldier, a drummer with the 2nd Battalion Munster Rifles. But in battle his task was to abandon his drum and pick up his gun.



He joined the army in 1909 aged 18. Based at Aldershot, it was an easy journey home to Longparish to spend leave with his wife, Bessie.



Padre Father Gleeson later wrote to Bessie: "He sacrificed his life by shielding his officer, Mr. Hewitt, from certain death." He added: "He seems to have known almost that the deadly bullet was intended for the officer and moving up close to the latter he received the bullet which struck him in the head".

Father Gleeson wrote that Poore's death was "worthy of the noble and unselfish man he was".



Poore sailed from Southampton with his battalion nine days after war was declared. Within a fortnight he was in action at Mons.



By early November the Munsters were in the Ypres Salient. As the first Battle of Ypres raged they were tasked with defending the line at the woods near Klien Zillebeke.

They faced heavy shelling, deep mud and the elite Prussian Guard. On one occasion the Munsters forced the enemy back with a bayonet charge "scattering them in wild disorder".

On November 12 1914 Poore was killed as the Munsters dug trenches under heavy rifle fire. He was 23.

Bessie had been worried about her husband's safety as she had not received a letter from him for a month. She asked the Rector, the Rev. Parry Woodcock to investigate and he discovered from the war record office that Poore had been killed.

A wooden cross was erected over Poore's grave on the battlefield but as the war moved on the grave was lost. With 54,000 others he is commemorated on the Menin Gate (above) at Ypres.



Before leaving for France and Belgium Poore had asked his brother Harold to look after his wife if he were killed. Harold was true to his word and eventually married Bessie.

The local correspondent of the Andover

Advertiser wrote: "Whatever great acts may yet be accorded to Longparish sons and fathers, it will ever be remembered that William Poore set foundation stone and the pattern, for we were taught even at school that the noblest act of life and death was to give one's life for another".

Poore did not receive a gallantry award for his sacrifice. The Munsters were disbanded in 1922.



LONGPARISH AT WAR

BRAVE MEN OF THE VILLAGE

Thomas Charles Langford Read was born in 1888 to labourer John Read and his wife Marie at their cottage in West Aston, Longparish. He was one of six children. By 1911 he was working as a waiter at the United Services Club in Pall Mall. Rifleman Read sailed for France with the 169 Brigade, 56th London Division. He was killed aged 27 on the Somme

on Sept 19 1916 leaving a young wife Beatrice. Rifleman Read has no known grave and is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial.



Charles Bowley was born and raised in a cottage just along from the George Inn, now Buck Services. His father John was a general labourer. Private Bowley fought with the 76th company Machine Gun Corps. He was mortally wounded during fierce fighting around High Wood and Delville Wood (right) on the Somme. The woods were described as a "charnel house". Private Bowley died on July 30 1916 aged just eighteen. He is buried in Abbeville Communal Cemetery.



Albert Henry Brackstone Born in Forton in 1892. His parents Isaac, a cowman, and Alice were to lose two of their five children to the war.

After working locally as a gardener he enlisted as a private in the Royal Sussex Regiment. Albert was killed in action on the May 3 1917 aged 27 (although the memorial inaccurately states 1916) leaving a widow Daisy. He has no known grave and is commemorated on the Arras Memorial. Daisy remarried in 1921.



George Victor Brackstone's war ended in a German prison camp but he didn't come home. Four years older than his brother, Albert, he married a Whitchurch girl Ethel May Sutton. Their daughter Georgina was born the year war broke out. He served with the 96th (County Palatine) Field Ambulance R.A.M.C. and was wounded and captured at St. Quentin in March 1918. He died aged 31 in the Kassel POW camp on December 3 1918, probably from tuberculosis. (the memorial wrongly states 1919.) He is buried at the Niedierzwehren Cemetery.



Reuben (Albert) Burgess was born in a rented cottage in "Middleton Street" Longparish in 1885. His father left home before the turn of the century and the boy's mother Sarah worked as a courier to raise the family of four. Albert moved to Suffolk where he married and worked as a bricklayer. By April 11 1917 Private Burgess, 10th Battalion Royal Fusiliers, was advancing in the snow on the village of Monchy Le Preux as part of the Battle of Arras. He was wounded, possibly by friendly shellfire, and died in Etaples Military Hospital nine days later. Private Burgess is buried in the military cemetery there.



Charles Edward Burrows was raised at 5 Railway Cottages, Longparish. In 1905 aged 19 he joined the 1st Battalion, Hampshire regiment. Lance Corporal Burrows landed in France three weeks after war broke out. He fought in the battle for the village of St. Julien, part of the second Battle of Ypres. The village had been captured by the enemy, using gas for the first time. L. Cpl Burrows was killed on April 26 1915 as the battalion attempted the "futile" and unsuccessful task of retaking the village. He is remembered on the Menin Gate

William Challis

left his job as a baker to sign up with the 2nd Battalion Hampshire Regiment on the outbreak of war. On April 25 1915 Private Challis landed from the



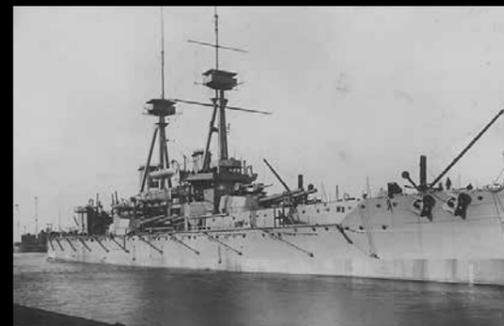
collier River Clyde at Cape Helles, Gallipoli. "The beach became a bloodbath" according on one soldier. Private Challis was evacuated to Alexandria with severe wounds and died a month later aged 21. He is buried at Chatby Military Cemetery, Alexandria.

George Thomas Griffiths Clark had a wanderlust. He was born into a British family in Poona, India in 1885 and at the age of 16 he was an engineering apprentice in Swindon. After a spell in Canada

as a wheat farmer he returned to stay with his widowed mother in Southside, Longparish. He then emigrated to South Africa and at the outbreak of war joined the South African Irish Regiment. Private Clark died in October 1914, probably in a training accident. He never fired a shot in anger. He is buried in the Johannesburg (Brixton) Cemetery.



Leonard Charles Goodyear, the son of Longparish shepherd Charles Goodyear, was a Royal Marine gunner aboard the dreadnaught HMS Vanguard. He died in Scapa Flow with 800 of his crewmates. On July 9 1917 the ship exploded while at anchor and sank within moments. It is thought smouldering bunker coal detonated a nearby magazine. Gunner Goodyear aged 21, had survived the Battle of Jutland 14 months earlier.



LONGPARISH AT WAR