

“Lest we forget”

The 27 England Rugby Internationals who died in World War 1



Mike Hagger

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Introduction

I am honoured to provide the introduction to this publication, which contains biographies of the 27 England rugby internationals who died in the First World War.

The volume is produced as part of the RFU's First World War commemoration strategy, which will provide support for local remembrance activities, encourage young people to learn about the war in relation to the rugby community and fundraise for identified military causes.

The men commemorated in these pages are included because of their excellence in rugby. In many ways, however, they are most important because of the window they hold up to the war as a whole. The poignant and moving accounts in this collection – the number of young men who died young and without children, for example – provide one way to connect with the incomprehensible scale of the sacrifice of the war as a whole.

This volume has been produced by Mike Hagger and is testimony to his knowledge and dedication. Mike's initial aim was simply to ensure that his fellow volunteer Tour Guides had sufficient information for their tours. He has succeeded admirably in that, and a great deal more, and for that we are exceptionally grateful.

It is hoped that this publication will inspire further research into the stories contained within, as well as the lives of all other rugby players who served and died in the war. The World Rugby Museum is committed to helping all those who wish to contribute to this process, as well as providing a long-term home for the resulting research.

Michael Rowe
Curator, World Rugby Museum
August 2014

Players (in alphabetical order)**Date of death**

Alexander, Harry	17 October 1915
Berry, Henry	9 May 1915
Dingle, Arthur James	22 August 1915
Dobbs, George Eric Burroughs	17 June 1917
Haigh, Leonard	6 August 1916
Hands, Reginald Harry Myburgh	20 April 1918
Harrison, Arthur Leyland	23 April 1918
Hodges, Harold Augustus	24 March 1918
Inglis, Rupert Edward	18 September 1916
Kendall, Percy Dale	25 January 1915
King, John Abbott	9 August 1916
Lagden, Ronald Owen	3 March 1915
Lambert, Douglas	13 October 1915
Maynard, Alfred Frederick	13 November 1916
Mobbs, Edgar Roberts	31 July 1917
Nanson, William Moore Bell	4 June 1915
Oakeley, Francis Eckley	1 December 1914
Pillman, Robert Lawrence	9 July 1916
Poulton Palmer, Ronald William	5 May 1915
Raphael, John Edward	11 June 1917
Schwarz, Reginald Oscar	18 November 1918
Slocock, Lancelot Andrew Noel	9 August 1916
Tarr, Francis Nathaniel	18 July 1915
Todd, Alexander Findlater	21 April 1915
Watson, James Henry Digby	15 October 1914
Wilson, Arthur James	31 July 1917
Wilson, Charles Edward	17 September 1914



(Photo – Author’s collection)

HENRY BERRY

Born 8 January 1883

Died 9 May 1915

Henry Berry, known as Harry, was born in Gloucester. His father James was a dock worker in the city and, he and his wife Hannah had a total of nine children. Henry had a straightforward education at St Mark’s School in Gloucester, leaving at the age of 14. By 1899 he had enlisted in the Gloucestershire Regiment 4th Militia Volunteers and, being too young for a combat role in the Boer War, was sent to the island of St Helena to help guard prisoners.

In March 1902 he went to South Africa to help reinforce the 2nd Glosters. This period qualified him for two clasps (Cape Colony and Orange Free State) with his Queen’s South Africa Medal. He later transferred to the 1st Battalion of the Gloucester Regiment and served in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and India, but after contracting malaria returned to UK (probably in 1907) and became a reservist.

Having developed a keenness for rugby he joined the Gloucester rugby club in 1907 when he returned from Ceylon. Playing at first on the wing, he was quickly persuaded to become a wing forward. Such was the success that he made 135 appearances for the 1st XV in six seasons, scoring 24 tries, and also played nine times for the County XV. In 1909-10 he gained his four England caps, the first of which being in the inaugural international at Twickenham v Wales. He scored tries v Scotland and v Ireland. He also played for the 2nd Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment but, not being an officer, he was never selected for the Army due to the protocol applicable at that time.

He was recalled by the Glosters at the outbreak of war, serving firstly as a military policeman at Woolwich, but he eventually landed in France in February 1915 with the 2nd Battalion. He was killed at Festubert during the Battle of Aubers Ridge in Artois on 9 May 1915.

Corporal HENRY BERRY has no known resting place.

He is remembered on the Le Touret Memorial, Pas de Calais, France [Panel 17], and also in his home city on the Gloucester Regimental Cenotaph, on the Kingsholm Stadium War Memorial (unveiled in September 1913) and Gloucester FC’s earlier WW 1 plaque, and (right) in St Mary de Lode Church.

Henry had married Beatrice Eveline Arnold in January 1910 at St Catherine’s Gloucester, and they had a son and a daughter, Henry and Phyllis, though he never lived to see his daughter. In marriage he had become a publican and, at the time of his death, Beatrice was at the Stag’s Head in Gloucester. She never re-married and died in 1965.



(Photo courtesy of St Mary de Lode Church)



(Photo – “Roll of Honour”)

ARTHUR JAMES DINGLE

Born 16 October 1891

Died 22 August 1915

Known as “James/Jimmy” or “Mud”, **Arthur James Dingle** was born in Hetton-le-Hole, County Durham, one of four children of the Reverend Arthur Trehane Dingle, and his wife Beatrice. He was educated at Durham School, becoming Head of School in 1910, and then went to Keble College Oxford. After university he returned to Durham School as an Assistant Master.

His sporting prowess at school extended to cricket, rowing and gymnastics, but it was at rugby that he made his mark.

He was an Oxford blue in 1911 and played regularly for Richmond and Rosslyn Park in London, but his main love was with Hartlepool Rovers (Captain 1914) and Durham County, scoring four hat-tricks of tries for the latter in one season. He was rewarded with three England caps, one in 1913 and two in 1914. His one in 1913 was away to Ireland, where the 4 points that England conceded were the only ones in a season that brought the first of their two consecutive Grand Slams.

During his short time as a master at Durham School he founded the Officer Training Corps. Within a few days of the outbreak of war he enlisted with the East Yorkshire Regiment eventually being posted to its 6th (Pioneer) Battalion. By August 1915 they were in the Dardanelles at Gallipoli, where Dingle was appointed Officer Commanding ‘B’ Company. The campaign had become deadlocked, so allied forces landed at Suvla Bay early in August 1915. From the start the campaign was badly mismanaged though the 6th Battalion did make early gains, but these were soon lost when a change of attack was ordered. A short period of trench warfare then ensued, followed on 21/22 August 1915 by one final push in an attempt to break the stalemate. Dingle, with his battalion, was to attack Scimitar Hill in a bid to unite the allied forces across the peninsula but this, the largest battle of the Gallipoli campaign, failed, essentially ending any hope of an allied victory.

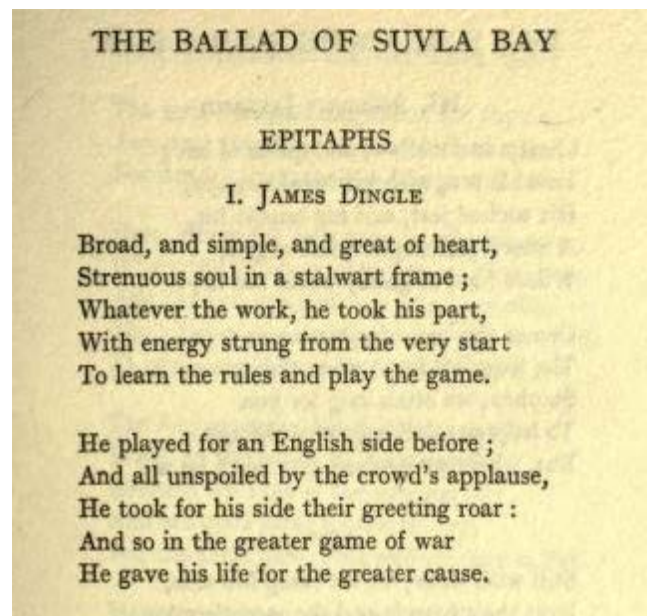
In the aftermath of the battle Arthur Dingle was posted as missing presumed killed. Contemporary accounts say that he was shot in the head, but he could not at the time be moved from the trenches. His body was never recovered.

Captain ARTHUR JAMES DINGLE is remembered on grave panel 51-54 of the Helles Memorial, and also at Durham School, St Margaret’s Church, Durham, Keble College and the family grave at St John the Baptist church, Egglecliffe. His rugby clubs at Richmond, Rosslyn Park, Hartlepool Rovers all have memorials, as does Oxford University RFC.

He is also the subject of Epitaph 1 (right) in “The Ballad of Suvla Bay” by John Still.

He did not marry.

His parents lost their other son, Hugh John Dingle, at the Battle of Jutland.



(Copy of poem courtesy of Stephen Cooper)



(Photo – Author's collection)

GEORGE ERIC BURROUGHS DOBBS

Born 21 July 1884

Died 17 June 1917

George Eric Burroughs Dobbs was born in Co Kilkenny, near Castlecomer where his father Joseph owned a coal mine. Joseph had married Mary Augusta Harte in Dublin in 1878 and they had seven children, George being the 2nd of four boys.

After early education at St Stephen's Green School in Dublin, he won a mathematics scholarship to Shrewsbury School, where the sport was association football. Dobbs was house captain and goalkeeper, but never in the school XI.

From school he went to the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, being gazetted as 2nd Lieutenant, Royal Engineers on 23 March 1904. Before WW1 he served in Singapore and in Limerick, where he rode with the local hunt.

He developed his rugby skills at Woolwich, playing for them and for the Royal Engineers and the Army. At club level he had associations with Plymouth Albion and Devonport Albion and, quite surprisingly, with Llanelli, being part of the team that lost 16-3 in front of over 15,000 supporters, to the touring Springboks in 1906. His forward play earned him two England caps that year, versus Ireland and Wales, but both games were well lost in an era of moderate England performances.

As a full-time soldier he was immediately part of the war effort with the British Expeditionary Force, and fought at the Battle of Mons in August 1914, which was the first engagement of the war for British troops. His determination in maintaining communications during the retreat earned him the French award of the Legion d'Honneur. His speciality was with signals, which underwent a rapid change during the war, with physical messages, via foot and via motor cycle despatch, being superseded by radio and telephone, a transition that eventually brought about the formation of the Royal Corps of Signals.

For his capabilities and service he was three times Mentioned in Despatches. He rapidly rose from Lieutenant eventually by 1917 being Lt Colonel and assistant director of signals.

His death came near Poperinge in Belgium on 17 June 1917, which was after the battle of Messines Ridge, but before Passchendaele (3rd Battle of Ypres). He was prospecting for a new cable trench in the front line when he was hit by a shell. He died shortly afterwards.

Lt Colonel GEORGE ERIC BURROUGHS DOBBS is buried Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery (Grave Reference: XIII. A. 25).

He is also remembered on the war memorial at Shrewsbury School (right), and on the Dobbs Family grave in St. Mary's Castlecomer.

He did not marry.



(Photo courtesy of Shrewsbury School)



(Photo – “Roll of Honour”)

LEONARD HAIGH

Born 19 October 1880

Died 6 August 1916

Leonard Haigh was born in Prestwich, Manchester, one of two sons of Charles Henry Haigh, a yarn merchant, and his wife Alice Clara. His only known education was at Sandringham House School in Southport, where his sporting activity was association football and cricket. Little is known of the school, which closed in the mid-1930s when it became a Hotel.

Working in and around Manchester during the early 1900s in the cotton spinning trade, Leonard Haigh started playing rugby with the Manchester club, for whom he was captain in 1910.

Having played for Lancashire, the Barbarians and North of England, his first England cap came v Ireland in 1910. He played a total of seven times for England in that and the following season, including in the inaugural international at Twickenham v Wales (15 January 1910) famously won by England and leading to the team being unbeaten at HQ for some 18 years.

In 1912, at the age of 31, he married Eudora Mason in Timperley, Cheshire, and they had one son, John Guy Leonard Haigh.

Haigh was a keen motorist who had developed a strong interest in workings of these rapidly developing vehicles. He was therefore assigned to the Army Service Corps as an Officer Cadet. The Army Service Corps was huge, with some ten thousand officers and three hundred thousand men at its peak. As motorized transport gradually took over from horses, men such as Haigh with good mechanical knowledge were kept away from front line duties. Whilst still in officer training at Woolwich, Haigh developed double pneumonia during exercises, succumbing to the illness on 6 August 1916. He was thus never commissioned and never able to turn his mechanical knowledge to the benefit of his country.

Private LEONARD HAIGH is buried in Pott Shrigley (St. Christopher) Churchyard, Cheshire – New part, Grave 99.

His son, John Guy Leonard Haigh, is buried with him in Grave 99, and a single Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone (right) records both names. John was a Pilot Officer in the RAF in WW2 and died on 20 October 1939.

Leonard Haigh is also remembered on Bollington War Memorial, Cheshire, and in St Oswald’s Church, Bollington.

Every season Manchester RFC awards the Haigh Cup to the player making most 1st XV appearances. The cup itself had been won by Haigh at his other main sport – golf.

His wife Eudora did not re-marry, dying in 1981 aged 95.



(Photo – Author’s collection)



(Photo courtesy University College, Oxford)

REGINALD HARRY MYBURGH HANDS

Born 26 July 1888

Died 20 April 1918

Reginald Harry Myburgh “Reggie” Hands was born in Claremont, near Cape Town, South Africa, one of three sons of Sir Harry Hands KBE and his wife the Lady Aletta Catherine Hands (néé Myburgh) OBE. Sir Harry was a British colonial politician, serving in the legislative assembly of the Cape Colony from 1912–1913, and in 1916-1918 he served as mayor of Cape Town. Sir Harry originated in Worcestershire, but his wife was South African.

Reginald was educated at the Diocesan College, Rondebosch, known as Bishops, from where as a Rhodes scholar he went up to University College Oxford in 1907, took a degree in jurisprudence and became a lawyer, being called to the bar (Middle Temple) in May 1911.

His rugby talent earned him blues in 1908 and 1909, and he also played as a forward for Manchester and for Blackheath. His brothers Philip and Kenneth also came to Oxford as Rhodes scholars, also gained blues and also played for Blackheath, though they did not match Reginald in being capped for England. He made two appearances in 1910, playing in England’s away victories in Paris and Inverleith. Cricket also occupied the brothers, with Reginald (one) and Philip (seven) making test appearances for South Africa. Kenneth played in one unofficial test match.

Reginald joined up in November 1914, going quickly to German South West Africa (now Namibia), with the Imperial Light Horse and then the Heavy Artillery. After the end of that campaign, and as part of a re-formed SA Heavy Artillery, he was then one of the volunteers going to the Western Front and was seconded, with his unit, to the Royal Garrison Artillery. On 21 March 1918 the Germans embarked upon a final attempt, “The Spring Offensive”, to land a decisive blow before significant numbers of American troops could arrive at the front. Despite employing tactics that targeted command and logistical posts, and avoided more heavily defended areas, the German initiative ultimately failed.

Reginald Hands was at this time second in command of his battery. During the Georgette Offensive he was badly gassed and succumbed to his wounds at Boulogne on 20 April 1918.

Captain REGINALD HARRY MYBURGH HANDS is buried Boulogne Eastern Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France [Grave VII. A. 39.] (right).

He is also remembered at the Diocesan College and at University College and the Oxford University RFC, as well as the memorial at Blackheath FC.

In South Africa the Heavy Artillery has memorials bearing his name in Johannesburg, Kimberley, Cape Town and Port Elizabeth. Two others [Durban and Pretoria] bear no names.

He did not marry.



(Photo – Author’s collection)



(Photo – Author's collection)

ARTHUR LEYLAND HARRISON

Born 3 February 1886

Died 23 April 1918

Arthur Leyland Harrison was born in Torquay. His father Arthur John Harrison was a Lieutenant Colonel in the Royal Fusiliers and his mother Adelaide Ellen came from a landowning family. He had a younger brother, Percy.

He was educated at Brockhurst Prep School in Church Stretton, Shropshire, and at Dover College. The two establishments had very strong links with each other, and with the Royal Navy. In 1901 he went on from Dover College to Britannia Royal Naval College, training as cadet officer. At the time the college was on board the hulk of HMS Britannia in the River Dart; the present college not opening until 1905.

His rugby playing dates from school, and he subsequently played for the Naval College, United Services and the Navy. Outside this circle he played for Rosslyn Park, not far from his family home in Wimbledon. For England he gained two caps in the final season before the war, playing in the forwards in the victories against Ireland at Twickenham and then France in Paris which clinched the Grand Slam. After this, international rugby in the northern hemisphere did not resume until New Year's Day 1920, when Scotland beat France 5-0, also in Paris.

As a full-time naval officer he was immediately active. During the first half of the war he served aboard HMS Lion in the Battles of Heliogoland Bight in 1914, Dogger Bank in 1915 and Jutland in 1916, and was Mentioned in Despatches. In 1918 he volunteered for the raid on Zeebrugge where he was in charge of fitness training and was to lead a storming party from HMS Vindictive on the night of 22/23 April 1918, the main objective of which was to block the Zeebrugge-Bruges Canal with sunken ships. Harrison was knocked unconscious and had his jaw broken in the early minutes of the raid. On regaining consciousness he insisted on joining the assault team in an attempt to silence the guns on the mole, and thus safeguard the main British attack. All the members of the assault team were killed or badly wounded; Harrison was one of the fatalities.

He was posthumously awarded the VC, one of eight as a consequence of the raid. Only four international rugby players have received the VC – Harrison from England, and three others from Ireland.

Lt Commander ARTHUR LEYLAND HARRISON VC lies at an unknown spot in Zeebrugge. He is remembered on a memorial in the local churchyard, along with three others whose remains we never found.

He is also remembered at Roehampton (Wimbledon Common) and in St Mary's Church, Wimbledon. The restored memorial board at Rosslyn Park FC includes him, as does the chapel at Dover College. Brockhurst School (now in Berkshire) has a special memorial in the entrance lobby.

As part of a Millennium project a stone (right) in his memory was set at Roundham Head, Paignton.

He never married.



(Photo - Various websites)



(Photo – “Roll of Honour”)

HAROLD AUGUSTUS HODGES

Born 22 January 1886

Died 24 March 1918

Harold Augustus Hodges was born in Mansfield Woodhouse, Nottinghamshire to William Abraham Hodges and his wife Augusta. William was a bank manager and a local Justice of the Peace; Augusta’s family were shipping owners on Merseyside. Harold was one of six brothers, all of whom served in the war. They had one sister, Jessie.

His early education was at Roclaveston House (a small private prep school in Nottingham), from where he went on to Sedbergh in 1899, and then to Trinity College Oxford in 1904. After gaining his degree he spent four months at the Sorbonne in Paris where they recall that he “n'a pas passé d'examen”. In the September of 1909 he went to Tonbridge School as a master, also joining the school’s Officer Training Corps.

As a prop forward he gained blues in all four years at Oxford, being captain in 1908 and, in 1906 gained his two England caps, though sadly they were home defeats against Ireland and Wales. His main club rugby was with Nottingham. He also played cricket to a good standard, being captain of the XI at Sedbergh and playing a few 1st class cricket matches for Nottinghamshire.

At the outbreak of war, he quickly became commissioned into the Third Battalion of the Monmouthshire Regiment, and served in France from February 1915. He was severely wounded by shell fire at Ypres in May 1915 but returned to the front in July, with some pieces still in his body. His Battalion had suffered so severely that in July 1916 it was disbanded and he became attached to the 11th Battalion South Lancashire Regiment. His courage was such that he was twice Mentioned in Despatches by Sir Douglas Haig.

His death came at night on 24 March 1918 whilst fighting in the region of Ham to the south of the River Somme. He and his company were trying to make contact with adjacent Battalion but stumbled upon a building that was occupied by the Germans. Although quickly surrounded, Hodges used his revolver on the Germans until he was shot down.

Captain HAROLD AUGUSTUS HODGES was originally buried in a German Military Cemetery in Ham, but now rests in Roye New British Cemetery (grave III.E.1).

He is remembered at Sedbergh School, Oxford University RFC and Trinity College Oxford. His name is also on the local memorial at St Peter, East Bridgeford, Notts (right).

He did not marry



(Photo courtesy of St Peter, East Bridgeford)



(Photo courtesy of Sarah Duncan)

RUPERT EDWARD INGLIS

Born 17 May 1863

Died 18 September 1916

Rupert Edward Inglis was easily the oldest of the 27 England internationals to die in service in WW1. He came from a distinguished background. His father, Major-General Sir John Eardley Wilmot Inglis, K.C.B. was the “Defender of Lucknow” (Indian Mutiny), and his grandfather was Bishop of Nova Scotia. His mother, The Hon Julia Selina Thesiger, was the daughter of a Lord Chancellor and sister to an Attorney-General. Queen Victoria was Godmother to one of his sisters.

By the time Rupert was born in London, his father had been dead for 7 months. He was educated first at Lindley Lodge School and then at Rugby, from where he went on to University College Oxford and then Ely Theological College.

Ordained in 1889, he held curacies at Helmsley and in Basingstoke, before becoming Rector at Frittenden in Kent in 1900, the same year as his marriage to Helen Mary Gilchrist by whom he had three children, Joan, John (“Tommy”) and Margaret. During the 1950s Tommy became Head of UK Naval Intelligence.

As well as gaining two blues at Oxford, Rupert Inglis played his club rugby at Blackheath and, in 1886, was selected for all three of England’s matches. This was the final season before the introduction of a points system for deciding the result. Until then the number of goals decided the match, with a caveat that in the event of equality, the number of tries was then taken into account. On the latter basis England beat Wales and Ireland, but versus Scotland there was no score of any kind.

When the war came he firstly continued his parochial duties, but became increasingly concerned about the sacrifices of others and therefore volunteered in July 1915, becoming a Temporary Chaplain.

As well as his work as a chaplain Rev Inglis tended to the wounded on the Western Front. Whilst acting as a stretcher-bearer near Ginchy on the Somme, a German shell struck and killed him.

Chaplain the Rev Rupert Inglis has no grave; its site lost during the chaos of war. However, following his death, an Anglican Chapel (demolished 1931) was built in his memory at La Panne, Belgium.

More places are known where he is remembered than for any other fallen England international. As well as at Twickenham, he is listed on the Thiepval memorial (Pier and Face 4C), and in churches at Higham-on-the-Hill, Leicestershire (for Lindley Lodge School), All Saints’ Church, Basingstoke (right), and Frittenden, where the lychgate is dedicated to him. Elsewhere he is remembered at Rugby School, by MCC at Lord’s, Blackheath FC, at University College, Oxford and Oxford University RFC and by the Royal Army Chaplains’ Department on their war memorial at All Saints, Aldershot.



(Photo courtesy of All Saints Church, Basingstoke)



(Photo courtesy of Liverpool Scottish Regiment)

PERCY DALE KENDALL

Born 21 August 1878

Died 25 January 1915

Percy Dale Kendall, known as 'Toggie', was born in Prescott, Lancashire. His father and mother, Francis and Margaret, had four children, of whom Percy was the third. Francis was a solicitor.

After early education at Ellaray School in New Brighton, Percy followed his older brother Francis to Tonbridge and then up to Cambridge at Trinity Hall. He then joined his father's firm of Banks, Kendall and Taylor in Liverpool as a solicitor.

He was in the 1st XV at school and might have hoped for a blue, but it never came. Instead he gave sterling service to Birkenhead Park, being captain in 6 seasons and treasurer for 10, and to his county of Cheshire, captaining them against the 1905 New Zealand All Blacks. His three England caps came one in each of 1901, '02 and '03. In the last of these, versus Scotland at Richmond, Kendall was made captain, but it proved to be a disappointing honour as England completed a Wooden Spoon season, losing all three matches.

As early as 1900 he had joined 8th (Volunteer) Battalion, The King's Liverpool Regiment, known as the Liverpool Scottish, and upon the outbreak of war he not only presented himself for immediate duty but, together with James Baxter (also an England international), he was responsible for offering Birkenhead Park's ground and pavilion to the authorities within 12 hours. He was posted to the 1/10th Battalion, commissioned in October 1914 and was in France by the beginning of November to take up a position about five miles south of Ypres at Kimmel.

A combination of a harsh winter and dogged trench warfare meant that the Scottish strength dwindled from nearly 900 to under 400 fit men by the end of January 1915. Percy Kendall fell in action at Kimmel on 25 January 1915.

Lieutenant PERCY DALE KENDALL is buried in Kimmel Churchyard, Heuvelland, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium.

Along with two other England internationals, John Abbott King and Lancelot Slocock, he is remembered in the Liverpool Scottish Regiment's Roll of Honour (right), as well as on memorials at the Birkenhead Park and Blackheath clubs, at Tonbridge School and at St Andrew's church, Bebington.

He left his wife Kathrine Minnie Bingham Kendall, whom he had married in 1910, and their two children, Janet and Timothy.



(Photo courtesy of Liverpool Scottish Regiment)



(Photo from Yorkshire RFU "In memoriam")

JOHN ABBOTT KING

Born 21 August 1883

Died 9 August 1916

John Abbott King, known as Jack, was born in Burley-in-Wharfedale, to the north-west of Leeds, and was the shortest man to wear an England jersey. His height of 5ft 5in (1.65m) was in contrast to his chest measurement of 46 inches, giving him the nickname of "Pocket Hercules".

His father, also John Abbott King, was a master cloth finisher, and he and his wife Mary Jane had 8 children, John Abbott junior being the oldest of the three boys.

After an elementary local education, he attended Giggleswick School in 1898-99, which was long enough to gain 2nd XV colours.

Early in the 1900s he spent time in South Africa, where he played rugby for Durbanville and Somerset West, but returned to England in 1906 where he became a staunch member of the Headingley team, and took a farm in Ben Rhydding, near Ilkley in his native Wharfedale. He rose to become captain of Yorkshire, for whom he played 46 times, and also played for the Barbarians and 12 times as a forward for England in 1911 to 1913, the last season being England's first as Grand Slam winners.

He volunteered for military service on 6 August 1914, leaving his sisters to run the family farm. Some of his fellow rugby players helped with the harvest. Having overcome the normal minimum height for service of 5ft 6in, he initially joined the Yorkshire Hussars and went France in April 1915. In 1916, in order to see more action, he transferred to 1/10th (Liverpool Scottish), Battalion, the King's (Liverpool) Regiment. By August of that year the Battalion was engaged in the Battle of the Somme, as part of the British attacks near Guillemont. These were stopped on the first day (8 August) by fierce resistance, but the 1/10th King's again attacked very early the next morning, although without success. John Abbott King was killed in action that day. Fellow England international Lancelot Slocock was killed on the same day, in the same battle also fighting with the Liverpool Scottish.

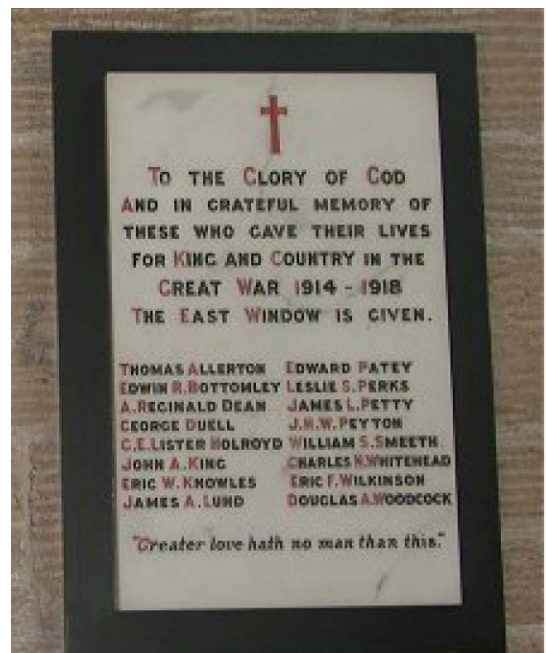
In his last letter home "Jack" King wrote "*So long as I don't disgrace the old Rugby game, I don't think I mind*"

Lance Corporal JOHN ABBOTT KING has no known resting place.

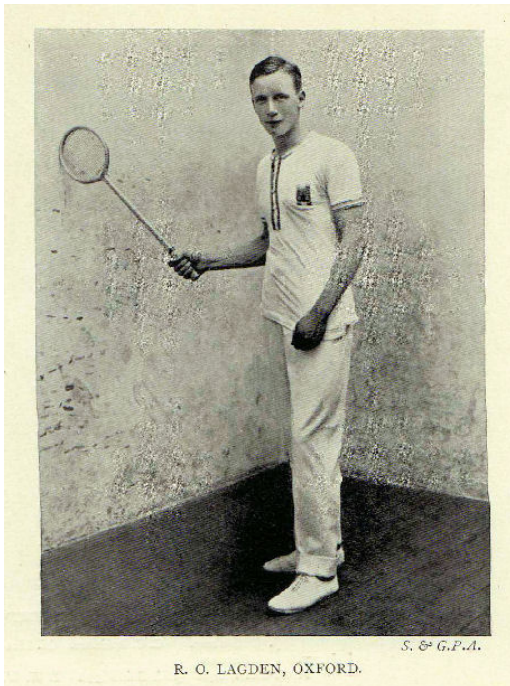
He is remembered on the Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France [Panels 1 D 8 B and 1 D 8 C], and also at Giggleswick School, by Yorkshire County RFC, and on the Liverpool Scottish memorial (St Georges Hall, Liverpool).

At St. John the Evangelist's Church in Ben Rhydding the tablet (right) lists him along with 15 other parishoners who fell.

He did not marry.



(Photo courtesy of St. John the Evangelist's Church, Ben Rhydding)



(Photo – Author’s collection)

RONALD OWEN LAGDEN

Born 21 November 1889

Died 3 March 1915

Ronald Owen Lagden was born in Maseru, Basutoland (modern Lesotho) on the border of present day South Africa, one of five children of Sir Godfrey Yeatman Lagden KCMG and Lady Lagden. Sir Godfrey was a career civil servant, mostly serving in West and South Africa, and his wife was the eldest daughter of the first Bishop of Pretoria.

Ronald began his formal education at Mr Pellatt’s School in Swanage, which was a notoriously spartan and uncomfortable preparatory school on the Isle of Purbeck (another pupil was Ian Fleming), before going on to Marlborough College and then, as a Rhodes Scholar, to Oriel College Oxford where he took an honours degree in science and chemistry.

At Marlborough and at Oxford he excelled in a range of sports, winning blues at rugby, cricket (he dismissed his brother Reginald in the 1912 varsity match at Lord’s), hockey and racquets. His single cap for England came in the 1911 match v Scotland at Twickenham, where England won 13-8. Lagden, playing in the back row, converted two of England’s three tries. After coming down in 1912 he took a post at Harrow School as a mathematics master, continuing to play rugby for Richmond, where he was vice-captain in 1912-13.

Having been an active member of the Officer Training Corps, attaining the rank of Lieutenant whilst at Oxford, he joined the Supernumerary Army Reserve in 1912 and, come the war, the 6th Battalion Kings Royal Rifle Corps.

He went to France at the end of February, 1915, and was posted to the 4th Battalion, and a few days later was called upon to lead his Company in an assault on the German trenches at St. Eloi, south of Ypres. His Colonel later wrote that “the task was an impossible one, and D Company did all that was humanly possible to carry it out.” When last seen Captain Ronald Lagden was lying badly wounded on the parapet of the German trench and, although reported as “wounded and missing,” it was noted that “there is little hope of his survival”. His date of death is given officially as 3 March 1915. He was Mentioned in Despatches.

Captain RONALD OWEN LAGDEN has no known resting place. He is remembered at the Menin Gate in Ypres (Panels 51 & 53), and at his schools and colleges (Mr Pellat’s (now Durnford), Marlborough, Oriel) and clubs (Richmond FC, Oxford University RFC, MCC), as well as in Weybridge, Surrey (right) where his parents lived at the time of his death.



(Photo from local website – Oatlands, near Weybridge)

He did not marry.



(Photo – “Roll of Honour”)

DOUGLAS LAMBERT

Born 4 October 1883

Died 13 October 1915

Douglas Lambert was born in South Norwood, and in adult life, being a tall man, was more commonly known as ‘Daniel’ or ‘Danny’, by allusion to the famous giant Daniel Lambert of 100 years earlier.

His parents were Ernest John and Elizabeth Jane. Ernest had a tobacco manufacturing company with his brother Allen Brooker Lambert. This later became part of “Lambert and Butler” and then a founding member of Imperial Tobacco.

Douglas was one of 5 sons that included his twin brother Percy, and he initially went to Cranbrook School before going on to St Edward’s, Oxford and then Eastbourne College, being afterwards taken on as an Assistant Manager with Imperial Tobacco.

Having played rugby at school, Douglas joined Harlequins and his ability soon came to the attention of the likes of Adrian Stoop. By 1907 he was selected to play for England against France at Richmond, and scored an amazing five tries on his debut. He gained three more caps the following year, but then did not represent his country again until 1911. This was an era of Welsh domination – 1911 saw their 3rd Grand Slam in four years.

In between times he played in the first game at Twickenham on 2 October 1909, where his Harlequins side ran out 14-10 winners over Richmond, and captained Middlesex in the County Championship. Like many young men of his day he had various sporting interests, and once turned out for the famous amateur football club Corinthians.

When the war came he quickly volunteered with the 6th Battalion of the Royal East Kent Regiment (the Buffs). During the summer of 1915 the Buffs were engaged in trench warfare, but detailed plans were eventually made to attack German positions around Loos. Lasting nearly four weeks from the end of September to mid-October, this was one of the largest actions of the war up to then. On 13 October 1915 a major attack under cover of smoke was launched. By the time the Buffs advanced the smoke had cleared and casualties were high. Douglas Lambert was one of 10 officers (out of 13) from the Battalion to die that day. British troops lost nearly 8,000 men in the Battle of Loos, with over 50,000 others wounded. One direct consequence was the replacement of Sir John French by Lord Haig as Commander-in-Chief.

Second Lieutenant DOUGLAS LAMBERT has no known resting place. He is remembered on the Loos Memorial, Pas de Calais, France [Panels 15 to 19] and also at St Edward’s School and Eastbourne College, plus the parish churches of Knapton (right) and Mundesley in Norfolk.

Two months after his death his wife Joyce, whom he had married in December 1914, gave birth to a son, whom she called Douglas after his father. He became a notable submarine commander in WW2, winning the Distinguished Service Cross and bar.



(Photo courtesy of the family)



(Photo courtesy of Katie Maynard)

ALFRED FREDERICK MAYNARD

Born 23 March 1894
Died 13 November 1916

Alfred Frederick Maynard was born in Penge, near Croydon, which is now part of Greater London. He was the youngest of six children of William John Maynard, and his wife Annie.

As a young man Alfred's father William (a Probate Registrar, ultimately in charge in Durham) represented England in their very first Association Football international (versus Scotland in November 1872). Alfred's mother was the daughter of an Anglican Rector.

Educated at Sussex House School, Seaford, he then went to Durham School where he captained the XV, as well as leading the school at cricket, fives and in the gymnasium.

He went up to Emmanuel College, Cambridge in 1912, gaining rugby blues that year and in 1913. In College vacations his rugby was played with Harlequins, Durham City and the Durham county team. His England chance came in 1914, gaining three caps as hooker in the team's second successive Grand Slam season.

At cricket he also played for the Borderers, Durham City and Durham county, and his sporting prowess extended to hockey, at which he captained the College team.

At the outbreak of war, in his final year at university, he volunteered for the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (RNVR) but, as with many thousands of others, was assigned to the Royal Naval Division to form land battalions. Eight were initially formed, and Maynard went to the 6th (Howe) Bn. He served at the Defence of Antwerp 1914, the first Suez Canal Raid 1915, and at Gallipoli, where he was wounded.

On the Western Front, Maynard took part in Battle of Ancre, the final act in the Somme campaign of 1916. His life ended at Beaumont Hamel where he was killed leading "A" company of which he was Officer Commanding. Aged 22, he was the youngest of the 27 England internationals to die in the war.

Lieutenant ALFRED FREDERICK MAYNARD has no known grave.

He is remembered on the Thiepval Memorial Somme, France [Pier and Face 1 A] (right), and also at St Margaret's Church, Durham; Durham School, Durham City RFC, Durham Town Hall, Durham City Comrades Club, and at Emmanuel College, Cambridge. The headstone of his father's grave at St Peter's, Harton, South Shields also commemorates him.

He did not marry.



(Photo – Commonwealth War Graves Commission)



(Photo – World Rugby Museum)

EDGAR ROBERTS MOBBS

Born 29 June 1882

Died 31 July 1917

Edgar Roberts Mobbs was born in Northampton. He was one of six children of Oliver Linnel Mobbs and his wife Elizabeth Anne. His father was an engineer and his mother came from a background in shoemaking, for which Northampton was famous.

Edgar's education was at Bedford Modern School, where records show him as a modest scholar who was taken away early and put to work, being at one time a car salesman and later director of the Pytchley Auto Car Company.

Although a promising sportsman, his early departure from school meant that he did not feature there in the 1st XV. He was soon playing rugby at club level though, first with Olney and then 234 times for Northampton, for whom he was captain from the 1907/08 season until 1913. He captained East Midlands (for whom he was also the RFU committee member) for a similar period and also played for the Barbarians. His seven caps for England came in 1909 and 1910, and included captaining the side to an 11-3 victory against France in Paris in 1910.

NOTE: A debutant for England on that day was Norman Wodehouse, who subsequently captained England to their first Grand Slam (1913) and survived the Battle of Jutland in 1916. In World War 2, by then Vice Admiral, he was killed on convoy duty in 1941.

When the war came he immediately volunteered (aged 32) but was too old for a commission. Mobbs therefore formed his own special corps. 264 men (out of over 400 who volunteered) joined and, as the Sportsman's Battalion, formed a large part of the 7th Battalion, Northamptonshire Regiment. They took part in the Battles of Loos, Somme and Arras. Mobbs was wounded three times, Mentioned in Despatches twice and awarded the Distinguished Service Order in 1917. His return to his Battalion after his third injury, and by now as Colonel, coincided with the 3rd Battle of Ypres, known as Passchendaele. Mobbs lost his life at Zillebeke.

Lt Colonel EDGAR ROBERTS MOBBS DSO has no known resting place.

He is remembered on the Menin Gate (Panel 43 and 45), and in Abingdon Square, Northampton via his own memorial (right). His name is on memorials in Northampton and Olney, as well as the Northampton club's one in Franklin's Gardens. Bedford Modern School has "Mobbs House" in his memory, and a connecting road from Northampton to the A45 is named "Edgar Mobbs Way".

He also has the distinction of an annual "Mobbs Memorial match", first played in 1921 and continuing to this day.

He did not marry.



(Photo – Local Northampton website)



(Photo courtesy of Carlisle RFC)

WILLIAM MOORE BELL NANSON

Born 12 December 1880

Died 4 June 1915

William Moore Bell Nanson was born in Carlisle. He was one of seven children of Charles James Nanson and his wife Elizabeth. His father was a slater and slate merchant and, after attending the local Lowther Street School, William followed in his footsteps.

At the time of the Boer War he joined the 1st Volunteer Battalion of the Border Regiment and served in South Africa, being awarded the Queen's Medal with three clasps, and the King's Medal with two clasps. He was invalided home and married Margaret McEwan in Carlisle in 1905, with whom he had children Marjorie and Charles.

In that era rugby union in Cumberland had suffered following the split that eventually became today's rugby league. Nanson however kept faith with his union club at Carlisle and, in 1907, gained his two England caps. He scored a try in the convincing win over France at Richmond, but after a 22-0 defeat by Wales in Swansea the following week was not selected again. By 1908 he had moved 100 miles south to Oldham and switched codes to rugby league. In his first year with Oldham he played 28 times, and also represented Cumberland RL in a pioneering match against an Australian touring side.

These were successful days for Oldham, but for Nanson the only honour was as part of the team that finished runners-up to Wigan in the Lancashire Cup. In the following season, now aged 30, Nanson was injured and missed out on further chances to shine with Oldham. His career ended playing the League code for both Coventry and Todmorden before retiring to his slating.

When war came he quickly volunteered, this time with the Manchester Regiment. After training he left with the 10th Battalion for Egypt in September 1914, and took part the following February in the defence of the Suez Canal against Turkish attack. In May they moved Gallipoli and in early June, as part of the 42nd Division, took part in the action to capture the dominating heights around the village of Krithia. Although this was judged to be one of the more successful actions of the campaign in Gallipoli, it did not prevent heavy losses. It was 13 months before William Nanson was officially declared dead.

Sergeant WILLIAM MOORE BELL NANSON has no known resting place.

He is remembered on grave panel 158-170 of the Helles Memorial (right) on the Gallipoli Peninsula, and on the civic war memorial in Oldham.



(Photo – Commonwealth War Graves Commission)



(Photo – “Roll of Honour”)

FRANCIS ECKLEY OAKELEY

Born 5 February 1891

Died 1 December 1914

Francis Oakeley was the fifth son of the vicar of Holy Trinity, Hereford. His father James and his mother Frances had 11 children in all. He was educated at the Cathedral School in Hereford from where he went at the age of 13 to the Royal Naval College at Osborne on the Isle of Wight, before transferring two years later to Dartmouth to complete his training. He passed out on 15 September 1908.

After experience with battle and cruiser squadrons he became, in 1913, one of the Navy's early submariners. Early RN submarines (Classes A, B & C) were essentially for coastal waters, so a posting in 1914 to the new ocean-going D class would have been an important step up for the young Lieutenant Oakeley.

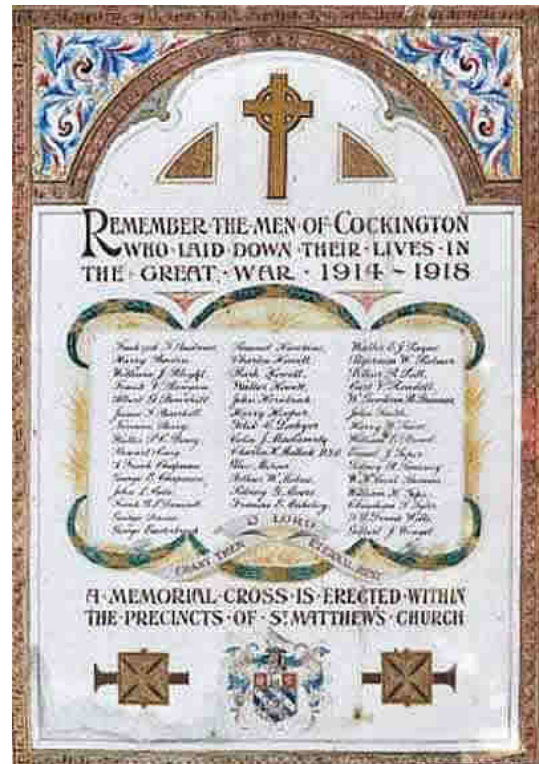
From his time at Dartmouth he had participated in association and rugby football, and also at fencing, where he won competitions for sabre and for foil. His promise at rugby was the most evident, and he was soon playing for United Services and for the Navy. The first of his four caps for England came v Scotland at Twickenham in 1913, where a narrow home victory secured the Grand Slam. The following year, again at HQ, Oakeley played in front of the King, Prime Minister Asquith and 40,000 fans when England beat Ireland 17-7. The remaining two matches, in what proved to be England's second successive Grand Slam, were away to Scotland and to France, the last being England's final international before war broke out. Including Oakeley, six of England's XV in Paris had lost their lives before the end of the war.

The submarines were quickly in action after war had been declared. By November 1914 HM Submarine D2 was patrolling in the rough North Sea where, on 23 November, her captain was swept overboard and Oakeley took command. After a fruitless search he returned to Harwich from where, within 48 hours, D2 was sent back on patrol under a new captain. She was never seen again.

Lieutenant FRANCIS ECKLEY OAKELEY died at sea. He has no known grave

His story is told in *“From Teddy Tail Collars to Itchy Tights”*, a history of the Hereford Cathedral Junior School. Oakeley, who was 23 when he died, is remembered there via a school house in his name. Before his death he lived with his mother in a small village outside Torquay, and his name is at the bottom of the middle column on the hand-written memorial board (right) at their local parish church of St Mary's, Cockington.

He did not marry.



(Photo courtesy of St Mary's Cockington)



(Photo – “Roll of Honour”)

ROBERT LAWRENCE PILLMAN

Born 9 February 1893

Died 9 July 1916

Robert Lawrence (or Laurence) Pillman was born in Sidcup, Kent the youngest of five children of Joseph Charles Pillman and his wife Mary Anna. His older brother Charles “Cherry” Pillman was, like Robert, an England international. Their father was a corn merchant in the company of Pillman and Phillips in the City of London, and he was a local Justice of the Peace.

Robert was educated first at Merton Court School and then at Rugby, where he played in the 1st XV for three years. After leaving Rugby he was articled to Messrs. White and Leonard, Solicitors, Ludgate Circus, but the war came before he could qualify.

Playing, like his brother, his club rugby at Blackheath Robert was good enough as a flanker to be selected for Kent and for London Counties. The latter honour, against the touring South Africans at Blackheath in late 1912, brought a notable 10-8 victory over a touring side that won all four internationals against the home countries that season. His only England cap in game against France in 1914, which was last before the lamps went out all over Europe. His cap owed much to the non-availability of Cherry, also a flanker, who had a broken leg from the previous game (v Scotland).

Robert Pillman especially excelled at one other sport – golf - where he played off scratch. Just before the outbreak of war he won the Gold Medal of the London Solicitor's Golfing Society.

Along with many thousands of others, Pillman followed the call to arms, enlisting on 1st September 1914 as a private soldier in the 10th Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers. Rapidly selected for advancement Pillman was gazetted as a Second Lieutenant in the Queens Own (Royal West Kent) Regiment in July 1915, swiftly being promoted to full Lieutenant in October that year and Captain in January 1916.

Very quickly “D” company of the 10th Battalion arrived in France, where Robert volunteered for special duty and was appointed as Brigade bombing officer. As the Somme offensive opened Pillman was hit on 9 July 1916 as he led his men back from a night raid near Armentieres, succumbing to his wounds a few hours later after just two months of active duty at the front.

Captain ROBERT LAWRENCE PILLMAN is buried at Calvaire (Essex) Military Cemetery Ploegsteert, Comines-Warneton, Hainaut, Belgium [Grave IV. D. 10.].

He is remembered on the local memorial in Sidcup, and at Merton Court and Rugby Schools. Like many rugby clubs, Blackheath suffered grievous losses, and Robert Pillman is amongst a list (right) that includes six other England internationals.

He did not marry.



(Photo courtesy of Blackheath FC)



(Photo courtesy of the Dragon School, Oxford)

RONALD WILLIAM POULTON PALMER

Born 12 September 1889

Died 5 May 1915

Ronald William Poulton (later unofficially known as Poulton Palmer) was, by general acclaim, the most celebrated rugby player of his day. He was born in Headington, Oxford, one of five children of the eminent pro-Darwinian Professor, Sir Edward Bagnall Poulton and his wife Emily. Emily's father was an MP and her brother was chairman of Huntley and Palmers in Reading.

After early education at the Dragon School in Oxford, Ronald, usually known as "Ronnie" went on to Rugby and then, as a Williams Exhibitioner, to Balliol College Oxford where he took an honours degree in Engineering Science.

His sporting achievements at school included three cups for athletics and being a member of the 1st XI at cricket, but he especially excelled in the 1st XV at the spiritual home of the game of rugby, being a member for three seasons (captain in 1907), and playing alongside Rupert Brooke, later well known as a war poet.

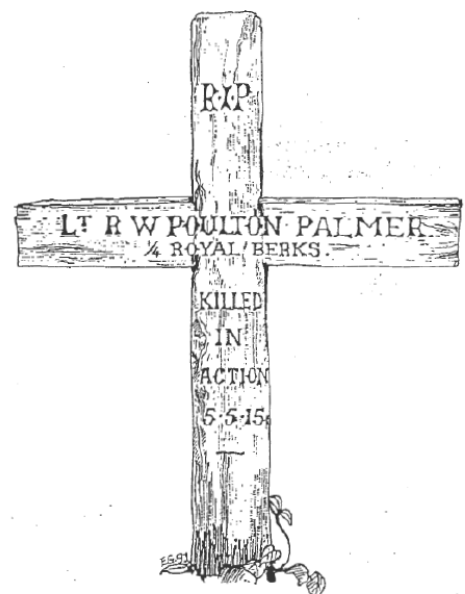
Such was his ability that he gained his first England cap (v France in 1909) before winning the first of three blues. He went on to play 17 times for England, including v Wales in the first international at Twickenham in early 1910, and as captain of the 1914 Grand Slam winning team. Along the way he appeared for his club Harlequins in the first ever match at Twickenham Stadium in October 1909, scored a record 5 tries in his first varsity match the same year, and found time to play for the Liverpool club in 1913/14 in a unique 1st XV containing three international captains - F.H. Turner (Scotland), R.A. Lloyd (Ireland) and himself for England.

During his time at Balliol he had been in the Officer Training Corps, and was later a volunteer with the Royal Berkshire Regiment. It was with the regiment that he volunteered as part of the 1st/4th territorial Battalion as soon as war came. By that time he had inherited significant wealth from his maternal uncle, George Palmer. Implicit in his inheritance was a change of name to Palmer which, by royal licence, he did, but he was known thereafter as Poulton Palmer. Despite wealth and fame, he was a modest man who gave his spare time, often with his brother Edward, to social work and improving the lot of working men and their children.

By the spring of 1915 he was at the front in Flanders, where he managed to play his final game of rugby, captaining South Midland division (Forty-Eighth) v Fourth Division. It was whilst supervising engineering works in a trench just north of Ploegsteert Wood in Belgium that he was shot dead by a sniper. His last, possibly apocryphal, words were reputed to be "I shall never play at Twickenham again."

Lieutenant RONALD WILLIAM POULTON PALMER is buried in the Royal Berks Cemetery, Hyde Park Corner, in Belgium (Grave reference B.11). He is widely remembered elsewhere, including in the chapel at Rugby School, at Oxford University RFC and at Balliol College, at Aigburth (Liverpool FC) and in St Mary's Marlston, Berkshire (Marlston House was home to the Palmer family). In common with many of the fallen, his grave originally had a wooden cross (right). This is now preserved on the wall at Holywell Cemetery, St Cross Church, Oxford.

He did not marry.



(Image from World Rugby Museum collection)



(Cigarette card)

JOHN EDWARD RAPHAEL

Born 30 April 1882

Died 11 June 1917

John Edward Raphael was born in Belgium and died in Belgium, though this did not prevent him becoming one of England's most accomplished sportsmen of his day, exemplified by the fact that at Oxford he won 14 Blues across four sports. This was two more than the legendary C B Fry, who has been described as England's greatest all-round sportsman.

His father Albert was a stockbroker, whilst his mother Harriette hailed from Pembrokeshire. John was their only child, and was initially educated at Streatham School near the family home. He then went on to Merchant Taylors' and to St John's, Oxford where he read modern history. By 1908 he had been called to the bar at Lincolns Inn, and a year later he stood for parliament as the Liberal candidate in Croydon. Though unsuccessful, he did increase his party's vote to a record level.

Cricket and rugby were his main sports; swimming and water polo his other Blues. He captained the school XI and, in 1904, Surrey CCC. For Oxford he remains the only batsman ever to score a double century against Yorkshire. At rugby from 1905 to 1910 he captained the XV for Old Merchant Taylors (OMT), for whom he played his club rugby, and he went on tour to Argentina in 1910 as captain of what eventually became the British Lions. He won nine caps for England as a three-quarter, spanning the years 1902-06, including playing against New Zealand during their inaugural tour of 1905-06.

When the war came he was, like so many rugby players, one of the earliest volunteers, first joining the Officer Training Corps, and then being gazetted to the Duke of Wellington's West Riding Regiment, and finally to the Kings Royal Rifle Corps, where the 18th Battalion had been raised by his uncle Sir Herbert Raphael, MP for West Derby. He was wounded on 7 June 1917 at the Battle of Messines, which was a prelude to the much larger 3rd Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele). He died four days later.

Lieutenant JOHN EDWARD RAPHAEL is buried in Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery Poperinghe, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium [Grave XIII. A. 30.].

He is widely remembered elsewhere, including at Merchant Taylors' School and by the OMT Society in its War Memorial Clubhouse. The Society lost 13 of its 1st XV from 1913-14, and two were disabled.

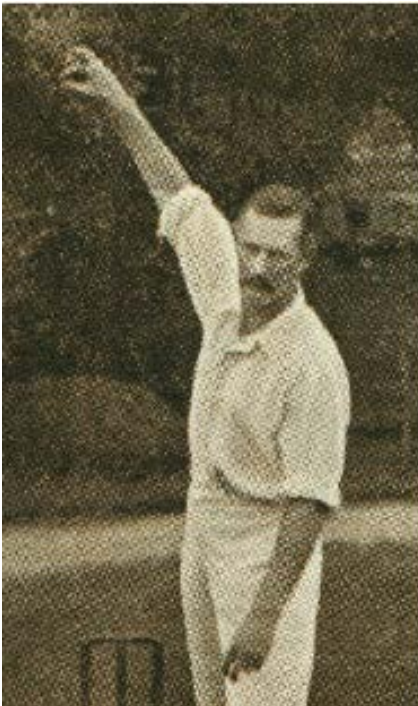
His mother instigated the erection of a memorial plaque (right) at St Jude on the Hill, Hampstead Garden Suburb. Other memorials at Lord's (MCC), Surrey CCC at The Oval, St John's College, Oxford University RFC and Lincoln's Inn also bear his name.

In the year after his death, his mother published his book "*Modern Rugby Football*".

He did not marry.



(Photo courtesy of St Jude on the Hill)



(Photo from "Great War – London")

REGINALD OSCAR SCHWARZ

Born 4 May 1875

Died 18 November 1918

Reginald Oscar Schwarz, who was born in Lee in South London, is perhaps better known as a South African test cricketer than as an England rugby international. His father Robert was a merchant who had been born in Germany, but had become a naturalized British citizen, and his mother Florence came from an industrial background in north-east England. As well as Reginald, they had a son Robert, and a daughter Elsa.

Reginald went to St Paul's School, and then on to Christ's College Cambridge, but did not complete his studies. He did however play rugby, gaining a blue in 1893, and subsequently playing for Old Paulines, and for six seasons with Richmond, being captain in 1899-1900. During this time he represented Middlesex and played for the Barbarians. His three England caps came at fly half in 1899 (v S) and 1901 (v I & W), but he was on the losing side on each occasion.

Greater fortune came his way at cricket which he had played at school, being four years in the 1st XI, and also at Cambridge (no blue) and for Oxfordshire and Middlesex. But when, in about 1903, he went to work on the Johannesburg railway, he played for Transvaal and then in 20 test matches for South Africa. Whilst there, he also became secretary to Sir Abe Bailey (gold mine owner and politician in South Africa, and instigator of the formation of the Imperial Cricket Conference (ICC)).

Reggie played in four series against England between 1905 and 1912, and was a leading exponent of the googly or "Bosie" (after its inventor Bernard Bosanquet). In all he took 55 test wickets at an average of just over 25, and such was his skill that he was named a Wisden Cricketer of the Year in 1908, as Bosanquet had been three years earlier. Less proficient as a batsman, he has the dubious distinction of being the only player in test match history to be dismissed off the bowling of England's master batsman Jack Hobbs.

At the outbreak of the war he joined the South African army and served in German South-West Africa. By early 1916 though he was in France with the 6th Battalion King's Royal Rifles as Deputy Assistant Quartermaster General (DAQMG) for the 47th (London) Division. He served with the division for a year and was awarded the Military Cross. He then served in a number of posts commanding labour companies but, with increasing poor health, was transferred to the salvage corps in early 1918. Seven days after the Armistice he died of pneumonia.

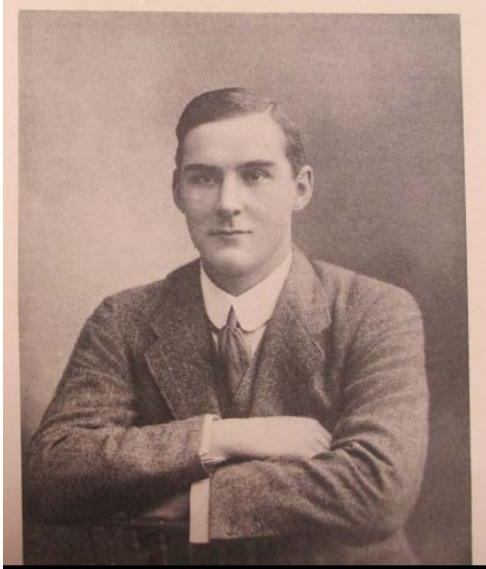
Major REGINALD OSCAR SCHWARZ MC is buried Etaples Military Cemetery (Grave XLV A 4).

He is also remembered by Richmond FC (right), at the London Stock Exchange, of which he was a member, and on three separate memorials in the pavilion at Lord's (MCC, Middlesex CCC and Incogniti).

He did not marry.



(Photo courtesy of Richmond FC)



(Photo – “Roll of Honour”)

LANCELOT ANDREW NOEL SLOCOCK

Born 25 December 1886

Died 9 August 1916

Lancelot Andrew Noel Slocock, more often called Andrew or Noel, was born in Wooton Wawen, near Stratford-upon-Avon. He was one of ten children of Reverend Frederick Henry Slocock and his wife Judith Emily, who also came from an ecclesiastical background.

His father became Rector at Mottisfont in Hampshire, and Lancelot was educated at Marlborough College where, as well as playing in the 1st XV, he also represented the College at cricket and hockey.

After his education finished he moved to Liverpool and worked in the cotton trade, but found good time to play rugby as a forward for Liverpool, for whom he became secretary.

After honours for Lancashire and the North, he first played for England in 1907, though he had been chosen earlier for the match against the South African tourists in December 1906. Sadly a clerical error sent the invitation to Arnold Alcock of Guy’s Hospital, who thus gained his one and only cap. Slocock subsequently played in all internationals for 2 years, including being captain in 1908 game versus Scotland at Inverleith, where he scored his final international try.

He had little time for rugby after that as his business took priority, and often involved trips to the USA. In 1912 he married Elinor Cook, and they moved in 1914 to live in Savannah, Georgia. He nevertheless returned to England in 1915 and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the 1/10th Battalion of the Kings (Liverpool) Regiment. This was a Territorial Battalion, more commonly known as Liverpool Scottish.

Slocock arrived in France in January 1916 to join his Battalion. The 1/10th, part of the 55th division, was shortly afterwards to take part in the Somme offensive. He died on 9 August 1916 at Guillemont. His Battalion colleague and fellow England international John Abbott King, fighting alongside him, died on the same day.

Lieutenant LANCELOT ANDREW NOEL SLOCOCK has no known resting place.

He is remembered on the Thiepval Memorial (Pier & Face 1D 8B & 8C), and also at Marlborough College, the Liverpool club at Aigburth, Birkenhead Park FC, the Liverpool Cotton Exchange and on the Liverpool Scottish memorial in the city’s St Georges Hall.

There is also (right) a wooden plaque in Frieth Church, Bucks, which he shares with his younger brother Cyprian.

He was survived by his wife Elinor and son Anthony. In 1919 Elinor re-married, to William Wilson.



(Photo courtesy of Frieth Church)



(Photo from Yorkshire RFU "In memoriam")

FRANCIS NATHANIEL TARR

Born 14 August 1887

Died 18 July 1915

Francis Nathaniel Tarr, known as Frank, was born at Ironville near Belper, Derbyshire, the only son of Frederick Tarr and his wife Emma. Francis had an older sister, Mabel.

Frederick was a coal merchant, later a lithographic printer, whilst Emma's family had an engineering background.

Educated first at Stonegate School, Leicester and then at Uppingham, Francis went on to University College, Oxford (1906-10) where he read law, and became a solicitor in Leicester.

He began playing rugby at Stonegate, and at Uppingham played for 2 years in the 1st XV. At Oxford he gained three blues (1907-09). The last of these was the famous match where Ronnie Poulton (later known as Poulton Palmer) scored five tries. Tarr unfortunately broke his collar bone after 10 minutes by which time Poulton Palmer had scored two of his five tries that afternoon.

Three of Tarr's four England caps, playing at centre, came in 1908-09, including v France, where his two tries were in front of his home crowd at Leicester, though he also played for Headingley and Richmond. The 4th cap came in the Calcutta Cup match four years later as part of England's first Grand Slam.

At Oxford Tarr had been a Cadet Sergeant in Officer Training Corps, and had joined the 1/4th Battalion of the Leicestershire Regiment as a Territorial Second Lieutenant in 1911, gaining promotion to full Lieutenant in 1913. When war came he enlisted almost immediately and went with the battalion to the Western Front in March 1915.

The battalion occupied dug-outs between Lake Zillebeke and the nearby railway line to the south-east of Ypres. The strategic higher ground known as Hill 60 had been taken by the British but by July was back in German hands. Francis Tarr was killed on the afternoon of the 18 July 1915 whilst visiting the dug-outs nearer the lake. Under normal circumstances being hit by a splinter from a shell would result in wounds that would heal, but Tarr was struck in the face and died.

Lieutenant FRANCIS NATHANIEL TARR is buried in the Railway Dugouts Burial Ground, Zillebeke, Ieper, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium [I. E. 8.].

He is also remembered on the family headstone in Welford Road Cemetery, and on memorials at Uppingham School, University College, Oxford (right), Oxford University RFC and the Richmond Athletic Ground (Richmond FC).

He did not marry.



(Photo courtesy University College, Oxford)



(Photo – “Roll of Honour”)

ALEXANDER FINDLATER TODD

Born 20 September 1873

Died 21 April 1915

Alexander Findlater Todd, known to the family as “Fin”, was born in Lewisham, South London, one of six children of Bruce Beveridge Todd and his wife Phoebe. His father was a wine merchant in the firm of Findlater, Mackie, Todd & Co Ltd, for whom Alexander briefly worked before the war. The company became part of Waitrose in the 1990s.

Alexander was educated at Mill Hill School and then went up to Caius College, Cambridge, from where he won three rugby Blues in the mid-1890s. Like many of his contemporaries he played a wide variety of sports, including hockey and lawn tennis but, second to rugby, he excelled at cricket and went on to play for WG Grace’s London County, and in the Minor Counties for Berkshire.

After coming down from Cambridge in 1896, he went on tour to South Africa, with what later became known as the British Lions. Demands on rugby tourists were significantly different in those days, and Todd wrote home from Kimberley to say *“I went to lunch with the rest of the team to Cecil Rhodes’ place. Miss Rhodes, his sister, presided and gave us a very good spread, with Veuve Cliquot ’89 to drink. It was a good job that we had an hour or two to spare after lunch before playing.”*

His two caps for England both came in 1900 whilst with the Blackheath club (he also played for Rosslyn Park), in the matches v Ireland and Scotland. England won the first of these 15-4 at Richmond, and then drew 0-0 in Edinburgh.

Military service had started for Todd in the Boer War. In 1900-1901 he served as Squadron Commander of Roberts’ Horse and Carrington’s Horse, being wounded at Diamond Hill. At the outbreak of World War 1 he was already aged 41, but volunteered, and went as a Lieutenant into the Norfolk Regiment. By October he had been sent to France and was already Mentioned in Despatches and gazetted Captain in the 3rd Bn, attached to the 1st. He was shot through the neck whilst in the trenches during the Battle of Hill 60, south of Ypres, on 18 April 1915 (the day after returning from leave) and died of his wounds three days later.

In 1902 he had married Alice Mary Crean. Alice was the sister of Tom Crean, who had been a fellow tourist to South Africa in 1896. An Irishman who played for the Wanderers, Crean also served in the Boer War, winning the VC at the Battle of Tygerskloof. Alexander and Alice had two children, Constance and Bruce.

Captain ALEXANDER FINDLATER TODD is buried in Poperinge Old Military Cemetery (Grave II. M. 7), but somewhat oddly is also listed on the Menin Gate in Ypres. Memorials are also known at Mill Hill School, Caius College, Blackheath FC, Rosslyn Park FC, and at All Souls’ Church, South Ascot (right) close to his home.



(Photo courtesy of All Souls Ascot)



(Photo – "Roll of Honour")

JAMES HENRY DIGBY WATSON

Born 31 August 1890

Died 15 October 1914

James Henry Digby Watson was born in Southsea, Hampshire, and named after his father, who was a Royal Navy engineering officer. His mother Eliza was Canadian. He was sent to King's School, Canterbury at the age of eight, and thence on to Edinburgh Academy, where he quickly gained the nickname "Bungy", by asking for a rubber in the usual slang of King's which was unknown in Edinburgh. From 1908 he studied medicine and surgery at Edinburgh University, graduating in 1913.

At the outbreak of war he joined the Royal Navy as a temporary surgeon.

Watson was an accomplished sportsman, being High Jump champion at Edinburgh Academy, Middleweight boxing champion at Edinburgh University, representing the University at cricket and Scotland at Long Jump. On the rugby field he captained Edinburgh Academicals in 1912-13, toured Wales with the Barbarians, and was once chosen as reserve for the Scottish national team. Coming south he played for London Hospital and Blackheath, and in 1914 played three times for England in the second of their successive Grand Slam seasons, missing only the game against Ireland because of injury. In the final game against France in Paris, Watson scored his only international try.

When the war came he was posted to an old, almost obsolete, armoured cruiser, HMS Hawke. She was being used largely as a training ship for cadets and reservists, but on 1 October 1914 was sent on patrol with her sister ship, HMS Theseus, in the North Sea some sixty miles from Aberdeen. The ships were slow, and had no destroyer screen against the U Boats.

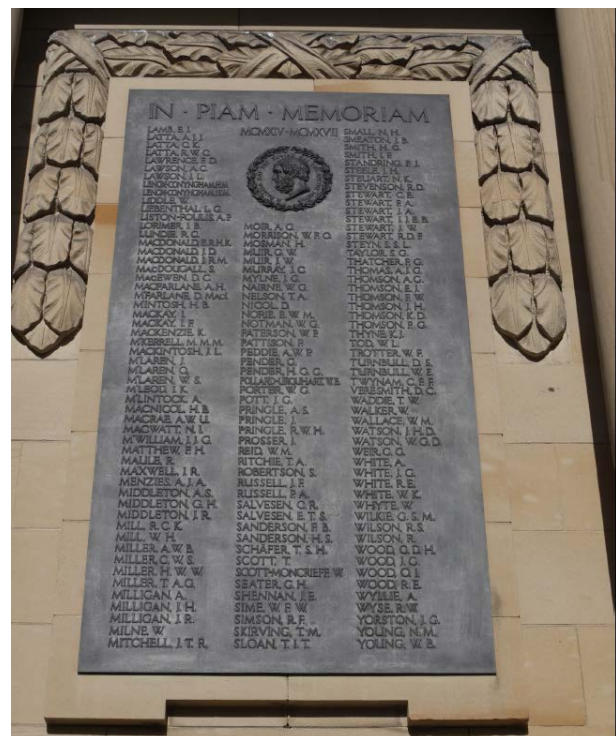
The U9, which had earlier sunk the cruisers Aboukir, Hogue and Crecy, attacked the two ships, missing the Theseus, but hitting HMS Hawke and igniting her magazine. HMS Hawke sank in only eight minutes with the loss of 525 men. HMS Theseus was under strict Admiralty orders not to attempt to pick up survivors. Watson was 24 years old.

Surgeon JAMES HENRY DIGBY WATSON

died at sea. He has no known grave.

He is remembered on memorials at King's School, in the gymnasium at Edinburgh Academy (right), at Edinburgh University, at Blackheath FC, and in the church in Helensburgh, Scotland, to where his parents had moved.

He did not marry.



(Photo courtesy Edinburgh Academy)



(Photo courtesy of Glenalmond College)

ARTHUR JAMES WILSON

Born 29 December 1886

Died 31 July 1917

Arthur James Wilson was born in Newcastle upon Tyne, the son of Henry Bainbridge Wilson and his wife Emily Jane. Henry was a wool, skin and hide broker, and Emily's father was a master rope maker. In all they had five children, of whom Arthur was the youngest.

From 1900 he spent four years at Glenalmond College in Perthshire, where he became a prefect and was a regular member of the rugby XV and of the cricket XI in his final two years.

Upon leaving school he went to the far south west, and studied at the Camborne School of Mines. This was the most significant part of his rugby career as he not only played for the mining school, but represented Cornwall 17 times, including in their 1908 championship win at Redruth against Durham. Another such success did not come for Cornwall until 1991.

1908 was also the year of the Olympic Games in London, based around the old White City stadium. Rugby featured and Great Britain, represented by Cornwall and with Wilson in the team, won the silver medal, though sadly only they and Australia, the victors, participated. The following year he won his solitary England cap playing in the forwards in the 11-5 win over Ireland at Lansdowne Road. Poulton Palmer (two) and Mobbs scored England's three second half tries.

After Camborne, he took his mining skills to the Gold Coast (now Ghana) and to South Africa, but also diverted to India as a tea planter.

There is scant record of his service in the war, but his Medal Card records him in France by November 1915 with the Royal Fusiliers. The paucity of information is also reflected by uncertainty over his Battalion – 18th on the Medal Card, but 12th according to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC).

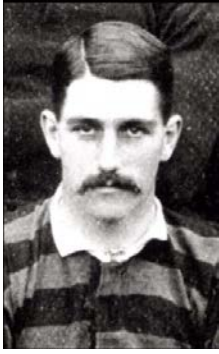
The CWGC records his death as 31 July 1917, which was the 1st day of The Battle of Pilckem Ridge, being the opening attack of the main part of the Third Battle of Ypres known as Passchendaele. His Medal Card gives the same date as "Presumed dead". Other sources quote 1 July or 3 July as his date of death.

Private ARTHUR JAMES WILSON has no known resting place. He is remembered on Panel 6 and 8 of the Menin Gate at Ypres (right), and also in the chapel at Glenalmond College, at the Camborne School of Mines (Penryn Campus) and in Camborne church.

He did not marry.



(Photo – Commonwealth War Graves Commission)



(Photo courtesy of Blackheath FC)

CHARLES EDWARD WILSON

Born 2 June 1871

Died 17 September 1914

Charles Edward Wilson, who was born in Fermoy, Co Cork into a military family, was the first of 27 England rugby internationals to die in service during World War 1. After education at Dover College he joined the army in 1892 and, after passing out from Sandhurst, joined the Queen's (Royal West Surrey) Regiment.

During the Boer War he was seconded from his battalion to the staff and saw action at the Relief of Ladysmith and Spion Kop, from where he gained the Queen's Medal with two clasps, the King's Medal with two clasps and was Mentioned in Despatches.

Charles Wilson, like so many Army officers, had played rugby for his College, and went on to play for his regiment, for the Army, for Blackheath and Surrey. He played only once for England, at the Richmond Athletic Ground on 5 February 1898 v Ireland. England lost 6-9. Although England subsequently drew (v Scotland) and won (v Wales), the championship that year was not completed due to a dispute between Scotland and Wales.

He was promoted to Captain in 1901 and on the outbreak of war, as a regular soldier in Britain's relatively small full-time army, was immediately sent overseas with the British Expeditionary Force as Adjutant of the 1st Battalion of the Queen's (Royal West Surrey) Regiment. Their history records them at Paissy Ridge in mid-September 1914 in the First Battle of the Aisne. Here, in the face of formidable German forces occupying a key position, Sir John French ordered the troops to dig trenches. This, in a small way, set the pattern across the whole of the Western Front.

After two days (15/16 September) under enemy shell fire, the activity increased and the Queen's was called up to redress the balance. The support companies were turned out by Captain Wilson. By 2.30pm on 17 September 1914 Wilson had been mortally wounded by a shell just after bringing up the supports.

Wilson was found sometime after he was hit, lying in the field within a few yards of where he had left the company to go to report to the Colonel. He died at 8pm. He was 43. Shortly before his death he had been awarded the order Chevalier of the Legion d'Honneur.

Captain Adjt CHARLES EDWARD WILSON is buried (right) in Paissy Churchyard, Aisne, France [Grave 2]. He is also remembered at Dover College and Blackheath FC.

His wife Mabel, whom he had married in 1896, pre-deceased him. They had two sons, Royal Claude and Hugh Edward. Hugh served with his father's regiment in WW2, losing his life in Tunisia in 1943.

Footnote: Three days earlier, in the same battle, Ronald Francis Simson, who was capped for Scotland in 1911, had become the first rugby international from the home countries to die in the war. The first international from any country to die was Xavier Adrien Alfred Mayssonnié (6 Sept 1914 – 1st Battle of the Marne). He had three caps for France.



(Photo – Author's collection)