



# *Levens in the Shadow of the Great War*

Stephen Read, Allan Steward, Lesley Ormrod,  
Gillian Wood & Ian Hodgkinson

Levens Local History Group

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2020



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## *Credits and Acknowledgements*

A book of this nature is a community enterprise that draws widely on the goodwill and knowledge of those living within the Parish of Levens and beyond. Levens Local History Group thanks profusely each of the following groups and individuals who have generously contributed their time, knowledge and expertise, shared family knowledge or loaned us their memorabilia and other items. This ensured the initial success of a highly popular village exhibition relating to the Great War out of which this book has now emerged. We have tried our utmost to ensure that all those who have helped are included below but we humbly apologise to anyone whom we have inadvertently omitted.

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## *Foreword*

Recent years have seen a flood of Great War commemorative publications by historical societies all over Britain. Levens Local History Group (LLHG) is no exception. Our initial motivation was to commemorate the First World War by staging an exhibition containing whatever we could discover about Levens and its inhabitants during that period. The exhibition was staged over the Armistice Day centenary weekend in the Levens Institute and the Church of St. John the Evangelist. It was facilitated by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund and the kindness of those who allowed us to exhibit their treasured family mementoes.

The exhibition contained many artefacts, memorabilia, period posters, and information displays etc. that were not necessarily Levens-related but which informed visitors about the war. This book evolved from our research for the exhibition. It aims to portray Levens and its people during the Great War. It does not have academic pretensions, so there are no foot or endnotes and no detailed citations for the many original sources referred to in passing. We have focussed on the people whose lives were revealed by our research. Contextual material is used to highlight Levens' participation in the conflict and illuminate events that otherwise might prove obscure.

We started with the names on the village war memorial and fleshed them out with whatever personal details could be unearthed. We aimed to make our book more than a collection of stark obituaries of named, but otherwise anonymous, participants in a distant historical convulsion.

The Great War is beyond memory, so all that has survived is recorded in private or public records or related within family anecdotes. Our discoveries are thus analogous to a long-buried Roman mosaic floor recently uncovered but disrupted by the plough over time. Some parts remain clear and complete whereas others are fragmentary or missing.

As each generation clears out the houses of its predecessors, documents and photographs are destroyed or mislaid. Some survivors doubtless preferred to forget. The public record is, however, relatively complete, making it easier to research those killed, or the prominent people connected to named institutions. It proved harder to do justice to the survivors, to describe how war affected our village and to appreciate how typical the Levens experience was of rural communities.

*Allan Steward,  
Chair of Levens Local History Group*

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# 1. Introduction

When Levens Local History Group started work to commemorate the Great War we initially wished to stage an exhibition. This firstly involved gathering and presenting all available information regarding the men named on the village war memorial, secondly accumulating objects and pictures to provide the exhibition's essential visual impact and finally, providing contextual information about Levens' participation in the war. These intentions were successfully realised but this book's requirements differ somewhat. Here the combatants still come first and foremost, but time is also taken to reflect on Levens' broader experience of the conflict and consider the extent to which it matched that of other communities.

Britain declared war on Germany on 4 August 1914 and Levens was soon involved. On 7 August Lord Kitchener, the Secretary of State for War, appealed for 100,000 volunteers to enlist as the first step in the creation of his 'New Army' and on 28 August he appealed for another 100,000 to come forward. On 6 September Lady Bagot of Levens Hall took a Church Army hospital to France and on 11 September at an 'enthusiastic' meeting in the school, presided over by the district's leading citizens, nine men came forward. The following week the *Westmorland Gazette* reported that there were twenty-three Levens men 'already serving or about to serve'. On 14 November the same paper noted that recruiting for the new Border Regiment battalion, sponsored by Lord Lonsdale, was complete and included at least one recruit from Levens. He was Robert Henry Mallinson, who went to France a year later, where he served until he died of wounds in 1917.

Seventeen names are on our war memorial and research has unearthed two more Levens men who appear no less qualified than some of the seventeen, but who are commemorated on memorials elsewhere. At the end of the war the *Westmorland Gazette* reported on the Armistice celebrations in Levens and commented that 'for its size Levens has been hard hit', which suggests that Levens suffered more than its fair share of grief. This observation was made before reliable

national statistics became available, leading us to ask whether nineteen was a disproportionate number.

The historian Dan Snow estimated that c.12% of ordinary British soldiers lost their lives during the Great War. Unfortunately, as we do not know exactly how many Levens men became ordinary soldiers we cannot easily estimate whether the casualty rate was typical, though we are aware of about fifty men with Levens connections. In January 1914 a list was put up in the church to record the names of those who had joined up and by January 1915 it contained forty names. This document is now missing. Almost a year later the *Westmorland Gazette* reported on arrangements being made to send Christmas gifts to 46 Levens soldiers. Seventeen would represent a huge proportion of this total but we lack equivalent data up to the end of the war. We thus have to resort to another crude measure. British Army fatalities in the war were about 702,000, equivalent to c3% of the male population recorded in the 1911 census. Levens with nineteen fatalities represents c 5½% of the village males, significantly more than the national average. This estimate is far from perfect but suggests that Levens bled more than its fair share.

Notwithstanding the severity of Levens' losses, the experiences of the villagers who went to war echo those of the nation. The British force sent to France in 1914 represented the greater part of an army that was small compared with those of other continental powers. In Levens there were few regulars or reservists and our contribution to the army comprised, until conscription was introduced in 1916, overwhelmingly of volunteers in Kitchener's New Army. These New Army recruits did not go immediately to the front or into training but 'attested' i.e. they registered their willingness to be called up for service. Meanwhile, by the end of 1914 the first battle of Ypres had thwarted the Germans' attempt to outflank the French and British but created the stalemate that became trench warfare. The cost was the destruction of the regular British army. The Border Regiment's 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion lost 60% of its nominal strength in First Ypres and among the dead was Malcolm Harrison of Levens who had joined up before the war. Henceforth, the fate of the British cause rested on the New Army volunteers and the post-1916 conscripts.

Most of the Levens dead were recruited to the yet untried New Army 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> battalions of the Border Regiment. 11 Border (the

convention adopted here when referring to battalions by their number and regiment name) were better known as 'The Lonsdales'. This was formed on 17 September 1914 and largely recruited and paid for by Lord Lonsdale, the famously extravagant 'Yellow Earl'. Lonsdale encouraged friends to join up together, making 11 Border more of a 'Pals' battalion than the others in the regiment. This led to some particularly poignant outcomes. Five Levens men in 11 Border were killed in 1916, four of them in the lengthy battle of the Somme: four more from other units were also killed in that battle. On the dreadful first day of the Somme, 1 July, Levens lost three men, with another killed sometime between 3 and 5 July. At the battle of Messines, a prelude to Third Ypres (Passchendaele), two Levens men of 8 Border were killed on 4 June 1917 and another on 7 June, with two more in the third battle of Ypres, which also claimed three Levens men from other units, including one from 11 Border.

In March 1918 the German high command ordered a last desperate offensive aimed at achieving what they had failed to do in 1914, which had condemned them to a war of attrition. The offensive failed and the allies began to push the Germans back to the Rhine, still incurring heavy casualties. By this time a British manpower shortage forced the amalgamation of many units. 8 Border was disbanded in June 1918 and the Lonsdales the following month. The last Levens man to be killed in the conflict died on 9 September 1918, serving in the Kings Own Royal Lancaster Regiment.

Levens men also served in subsidiary theatres of the war and amongst the survivors can be found mention of Gallipoli and Mesopotamia as well as postings to India and Burma where there was no war but where colonial garrisons still had to be maintained.

Amongst information about the Levens survivors we find several references to service in the Machine Gun Corps (MGC). The escalating demands of a war, involving holding ground against mass attacks, required ever increasing defensive firepower. In 1914 the Machine Gun Section (MGS) of an infantry battalion was equipped with 2 Maxim (later Vickers) guns. Experience soon showed that more fire-power was needed and in 1915 the MGS was doubled to 4 guns. Lessons learned in the first year of war proved that the most effective use of machine guns required special tactics and organisation, and in October 1915 the MGSs were transferred to the newly formed MGC.

Their weapons were soon replaced within the battalions by the more easily portable Lewis light machine guns. By July 1918 each infantry battalion possessed 36 Lewis guns plus the support of at least one MGC Section of 4 Vickers guns, from a divisional MGC battalion allocation of up to 70 Vickers guns.

The experience of a volunteer or conscript in the Great War was overwhelmingly that of the infantry foot-soldier, artilleryman or MGC soldier. That of the Levens men was no different. But what of the Navy? We have found little trace of Levens sailors. In 1914 The Royal Navy was huge, unlike the army which was small and often stationed around the Empire. The navy was created with the intention of maintaining the superiority of British sea power to protect imperial trade from hostile acts. Its great contributions were the slow strangulation of the German raw material and food supply, by blockade and the eventual suppression of the U-Boat threat. This was largely achieved with the ships in service or under construction before the war started.

On the Home Front Levens' participation in the war effort through voluntary work was immediate and sustained, ranging from Lady Bagot's Hospital of Friendship in Belgium to the collection of blackberries and chestnuts by the schoolchildren. Lady Bagot's activities may strike one as highly unusual in a world in which bureaucracy, professionalism and standards would now deter such ventures. The same could also be said of the formation of the Lonsdales. Lady Bagot was an obvious testament to the ability of a determined and well connected upper-class woman to get her own way. She was, however, not unique. Others such as the Duchess of Sutherland and Elsie Inglis (Scottish Women's Hospitals for Foreign Service) were similarly taking unofficial hospitals to the front, initially to meet the unprecedented flow of wounded following the German invasion of Belgium.

Voluntary involvement in caring for the wounded in the UK was, however, an official provision. A report written in 1909 by the then Director General of Army Medical Services, Lt. Gen. Sir Alfred Keogh, identified the need to supplement the existing medical reserve capacity in the event of a war. As a result a nationwide network of Voluntary Aid Detachments (VADs) was formed, organised by county. By April 1911 the British Red Cross and the Order of St. John had

together raised 659 detachments with a combined total of 20,000 personnel. The men worked primarily in transport and as hospital orderlies while the women became nurses or cooks. Many of the people attracted to 'do their bit' in VADs were middle class, particularly women. This was a common thread in all the voluntary services, including Levens, where like elsewhere, the Women's Suffragists put their energies into voluntary war work for the duration.

Readers will by now be impatient to get to the substance of our story documenting the people of Levens during the Great War. We hope that as you become immersed in the personal details you will come to appreciate that Levens played a full part in our nation's endeavours and was not a by-standing backwater.

Finally a note about our sources: for ease of reading we have not cited in detail the sources of evidence for the specific facts and opinions expressed in this book. It is only right, nevertheless, to state that we have made extensive use of microfilmed copies of the *Westmorland Gazette* in Kendal Library Local Studies collection (including pictures of the fallen) and other newspapers online via [Britishnewspaperarchive.com](http://Britishnewspaperarchive.com). The websites of The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC), [Ancestry.co.uk](http://Ancestry.co.uk), [Forces-War-Records.co.uk](http://Forces-War-Records.co.uk) and the *London Gazette* also figured prominently among our prime sources.

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## 2. Reflections of those at home

### *Selected thoughts from the diary of Joseph Anthony Barnes*

The following selected diary extracts express eloquently the spectrum of emotions and feelings experienced by one who remained behind in Westmorland. The words encapsulate the thoughts of this former resident and Methodist minister of Levens, as the war progressed. They set the tone for any book that hopes to capture the far-reaching impact of the Great War on a rural Westmorland community. The words, however, also speak to the world. Contrasting emotions expressed extend from horror, helplessness, hopelessness and despair, through guilty indifference and tranquil calm to the relief and muted elation of the armistice.

*Easter Sunday, April 4<sup>th</sup> 1915*

For eight months the greatest war of all time has been going on and left no trace in this diary. It is impossible to record all one's thoughts about it. One admits its inevitableness and the justice of England's cause, but one remains aghast that such an inversion of the normal instincts of human nature should be possible. Even the satisfaction with which one hears of a British success is saddened by the thought of the cost in human life and suffering not only to us but to our enemies. They imagine themselves, however mistakenly, to be fighting in defence of home & country, and the individual soldier, with his love of life and of family, is only obeying orders and has no direct responsibility for the war. One is oppressed by all the horrors that war breeds, both physical & moral; the unspeakable sufferings of the wounded, the privation & slaughter of non-combatants, the waste of effort & of wealth, the brutal instincts let loose, the cold-blooded calculating ruthlessness of the military spirit, the foul brood of hatred, suspicion, blind incapacity to see anything but bad in the enemy. And mingled with this one cannot but admire the self-sacrifice, the heroism, which has brought such an overwhelming rush of volunteers to the colours, the general calmness and resolution of the English temper; the

integrity and capacity of our rulers, the quiet acceptance of losses and hardships, the outflowing of helpfulness, the sweeping away of petty political quarrels, the quickening of thought and moral purpose, the readiness to deal drastically with drink and other evils. One hopes that good may be the final goal of all this ill, & on the other hand the pendulum sometimes swings back to the dread that the end of the war may find us in the grip of a universal militarism, which can only breed another terrible death-struggle.

Visions of men torn by shells, lingering in agony between the hostile trenches, struggling for life in icy waters, suffocating in submarines, facing an agonising death in burning houses, of terror-stricken children clambering over the dead or vainly crying for food, continually invade one's thoughts, and at the back of it all, questionings as to the Power that permits such horrors, & its regard for human happiness & well-being. War is a relapse into racial madness, & whatever may be the final gain to the survivors when the paroxysm is over one cannot see any compensation for those who have fallen & been trodden to death in the struggle.

*August 26<sup>th</sup> 1917*

Strange to say my own life has never been so peaceful as during these years of terrible war. My garden seems to have become part of myself; it interests without wearying me and I find something to do in it from morning till night. In the special effort for food production & consequent large increase in the number of allotment holders I find something to do in giving lectures and informal advice, & have a quiet sense of satisfaction in being useful to others. So too my daily visits to the hospital, though only to do various odd jobs in the way of amateur carpentry, are a little contribution to the stream of kindness which strives to alleviate the sorrow of the world. Few books interest me, and I have almost ceased to read. The impulse of my life is to be making things, however humble, or helping things to grow. I have found no key to the problems of life, they still lurk in the background, but I no longer struggle to solve them. I have given up the effort to reach ideal peaks of happiness, and am content to plod along the valleys. I can sometimes imagine a touch that would crystallise all the past of my own life into order & beauty & show the meaning and purpose of all the agony of this great world conflict, but at other times no solution



seems possible, and the strife seems one great purposeless welter of mistakes and misery. All my hopes are for some world-wide peace on stable foundations. There are increasing signs of a trend towards internationalism, the sublimating of patriotism into a higher devotion to mankind instead of limiting it to the accidental frontiers of nationality. On the other hand in many minds war seems to harden & embitter the narrowest of selfish patriotism, & many talk and write as if after the war we were to be more insulated and antagonistic to the rest of the world than ever.

*December 31<sup>st</sup> 1918*

My first entry since the Armistice was signed nearly two months ago. One rejoices greatly that the terrible slaughter is at an end & the strain relaxed, but yet with a sense of the awful waste it has been. When the firemen extinguish a fire one feels more sadness at the destruction & ravage of fire & water than the joy that it is ended – most of all if human lives have perished. And one's gladness is tempered by looking at the present & future as well as the past – half the world famine & plague stricken, hate & mistrust on every hand. There is no true end to war unless there be an end also to hate. The leaders in France & Italy are evidently greedy for what they can get, our own are too much concerned with the interests of Britain to rise to the larger conception of the interests of the world, & many of them have been only too ready to appeal to the worst passions of the crowd during the recent election, in which the only rousing battle-cries were "Harry the Kaiser; keep the Germans out; make them pay". Saner voices have had no hearing, & the Coalition has carried all before it. Possibilities of conscription, Protection, territory grabbing & internal strife between Labour & Capital loom in the foreground. President Wilson alone continues to state with dignity & clearness the high ideals of world welfare and universal peace & goodwill, and the one ray of hope in the darkness is the enthusiastic welcome he has just received in London & Manchester .....

..... One must still have patience. Time has healed great bitterness in the past; many old enemies are now friends; & if only our leaders do not perpetuate the hatred by rash & vindictive measures, this heat will cool, & the world may advance on the path of peace.

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### 3. The Fallen of Levens

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

*For the Fallen*, Laurence Binyon, 1914

The deaths of seventeen men with Levens connection in World War I are commemorated on the War Memorial in Levens Churchyard. The brief biographies below follow the same order as the men appear on the memorial, which is also the order in which they died.

#### **Malcolm John MacCullum Harrison, died 18 December 1914**

Malcolm Harrison was born 11 January 1895 at 3 Basil Street, Colne. His birth was registered by his mother Margaret Annie Harrison, domestic servant, on 20 February 1895. There is no entry for the father. He was a grandson of John Harrison, the former postman for Levens. In 1901 Malcolm (aged 6) and his brother Alfred (aged 12) were living with their grandparents, John and Margaret at what is now [2019] Hawthorn Cottage, Levens. By 1911 Margaret had died, but John (aged 72), his daughter Margaret Ann (Malcolm's mother), and Malcolm's brothers Frank (aged 12), Bertie (aged 6) and Cyril (aged 5), were living in the same cottage. Malcolm himself now resided with Miles Mason and his family at Moss Side, a farm in Crosthwaite, where he was a farm labourer.

Malcolm attended Levens School from 1898 until 1902. He joined up in 1913 and became a Private (10658) in 2 Border. He died on 18 December 1914 and was the first Levens soldier killed in action. 2 Border was based at Pembroke Dock when war broke out in August 1914. On 5 September the battalion moved to Lyndhurst to join the 20<sup>th</sup> Brigade in the 7<sup>th</sup> Division, and on 5 October embarked on the

troopships *Turkoman* and *Minneapolis* at Southampton, landing at Zeebrugge the next day.

2 Border participated in First Battle of Ypres in October 1914 and took part in an attack on 18 December 1914 from Sailly-sur-Lys during which two officers and 110 men of the battalion, including Malcolm, were killed. The attack was described by the historian Colonel H.C. Wylly, author of *The Border Regiment in the Great War*, as follows:

On the 18<sup>th</sup> an abortive attack was attempted upon the portion of the German trenches immediately in front of the Battalion whereby considerable loss was suffered. Towards midday Captain Warren received orders from the Brigadier that two companies of the Battalion, in conjunction with two companies of the Scots Guards, were to make an attack at 6.30 that night, and arrangements were accordingly made for the attack to be delivered at that hour by "A" and "C" Companies, the left being the road running S.E. of La Cordonniere Farm, while the left of the Scots Guards, who advanced on the right, was to be the Sailly-Fromelles road. The advance commenced at 6.15 p.m., and though they were fired on throughout "A" and "C" Companies reached the enemy's trenches, suffering many casualties not only from the German fire, but also from that of our own guns. In consequence of this latter, the companies withdrew some fifty yards, lay down and waited for orders. These came after an interval of an hour that the advance was to be resumed. The attack, however, failed and the line again retiring lay down in front of The Border Regiment's trenches. Captain Warren now collected what remained of these companies and bringing up two platoons of "B" Company under Captain Jenkins again led the attacking line forward, but it was checked by the enemy's uncut barbed wire, and finally the men were withdrawn and the operations abandoned on receipt of orders from the Brigadier that "no further attack was to be attempted unless it could be done without heavy losses.

Malcolm's name is on the Ploegsteert memorial, which is maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission [CWGC]. The inscription on the memorial (below) states:

In Memory of Private MALCOLM HARRISON 10658, 2nd Bn., Border Regiment who died on 18 December 1914 Remembered with honour.



The CWGC records that:

The Ploegsteert Memorial commemorates more than 11,000 servicemen of the United Kingdom and South African forces who died in this sector during the First World War and have no known grave. The memorial serves the area from the line Caestre-Dranoutre-Warneton to the north, to Haverskerque-Estaires-Fournes to the south, including the towns of Hazebrouck, Merville, Bailleul and Armentières, the Forest of Nieppe, and Ploegsteert Wood. Most of those commemorated by the memorial did not die in major offensives, such as those which took place around Ypres to the north or Loos to the south. Most were killed during the day-to-day trench warfare which characterised this part of the line, or in small scale engagements, usually carried out in support of the major attacks taking place elsewhere. Berks Cemetery Extension, in which the memorial stands, was begun in June 1916 and used continuously until September 1917.

## William Arthur Fell, died 9 February 1916

William Fell was born 6 February 1893, the son of Thomas and Margaret (née Powley) Fell of Gilpin Farm, Lyth. He was a pupil at Levens School from 18 April 1898 until 4 April 1899. On the 1911 census he was aged 18 and described as 'farmer's son working on farm'. In addition to his parents, his siblings John Thomas (aged 21), Mary (aged 20), George (aged 16), Edith (aged 14), Leonard (aged 12) and Minnie (aged 10) were also at Gilpin Farm, together with Roland Mark Fell (grandson aged 3 months) and Dorothy Ullock (niece aged 3). William enlisted on 27 October 1914 and became a Lance-Corporal



(17355) in 11 Border (the Lonsdales) and was killed on 9 February 1916. The *Westmorland Gazette* of 11 February 1916 reported his death. It said that William's father was a well-known farmer in Lyth and William had worked with him up till the time he enlisted. He was 23 years old when he died, having been hit by a piece of shrapnel while in the trench. He was buried the same day. He died 'while doing the duty for a comrade who was ill', having volunteered to leave the rest camp and go as relief. He is buried in Aveluy Communal Cemetery Extension.

The CWGC records that:

Aveluy village was held by Commonwealth forces from July 1915 to 26 March 1918. The extension to the communal cemetery, begun by the French who held this part of the line previously, was continued by our units and field ambulances from August 1915 to March 1917. In the latter month, the 3rd and 9th Casualty Clearing Stations began to use it, the 9th remaining until November 1917. On 26-27 March 1918, the village and the cemetery were lost during the German advance, but were retaken at the end of August. Aveluy Communal Cemetery Extension contains 613 burials and commemorations of the First World War. 26 of the burials are unidentified and three graves, the exact locations of which could not be found, are represented by special memorials. The extension was designed by Sir Reginald Blomfield.

William is also recorded on the memorial at St. Mary's Church, Crosthwaite.

### **Robert Garnett, died 6 June 1916**



*Robert Garnett's memorial in St. Pierre Cemetery, Amiens.  
(Image courtesy of David Shackleton)*

Robert Garnett was the son of Joseph Garnett and Frances Richardson (née Langhorn) of 3, Bridge End, Levens. He was born 6 February 1896 and attended Levens School from 1899 to 1902. In 1911 he was a farm servant living in and working for Matthew Walling and his family at Dawson Fold in Crosthwaite & Lyth. He was a Private (13205) in C Company of 11 Border (Lonsdales) and died of wounds on 6 June 1916, aged 20, and is buried in the St. Pierre Cemetery in Amiens. He was the stepbrother of Private Thomas Richardson who was killed later. The Lonsdales online record states that The Lonsdales provided working parties for the Royal Engineers. Nothing out of the ordinary occurred for the next few days until the night of the 5/6<sup>th</sup> June when an important raid was led into enemy territory with the purpose of gaining valuable information about the trench systems at the "Bull's Eye" and "Granatloch" (quarry) on the Leipzig Salient. Unusual activity meant cause for concern, especially as the mining and laying of high explosives under each other's trench systems was a very real threat that, if undetected, could result in a high number of casualties. Finding out what this unusual activity was and how any potential threat could be deterred was tasked to the Lonsdales: a small group of volunteers led by Lieut. Barnes, the outcome of which was a success but with a tragic loss to the battalion. Lt. Col. P.W. Machell, C.O. of 11 Border who was himself killed in action on 1 July, recorded:

Complete success last night, only unfortunately Barnes, the O.C. Raid, was killed just before they got back, with five others. We took 11 prisoners alive, about 25 others killed. Men did splendidly, and I have telegrams from Division—(Major-General Rycroft), Corps—(Lieut.-General Sir T. Morland), and Army—(General Sir H. Rawlinson) Commanders to-day. A party of correspondents was sent down from G.H.Q. to-day to get information about it, brought here by a staff Officer.

The *Westmorland Gazette* of 17 June 1916 later reported:

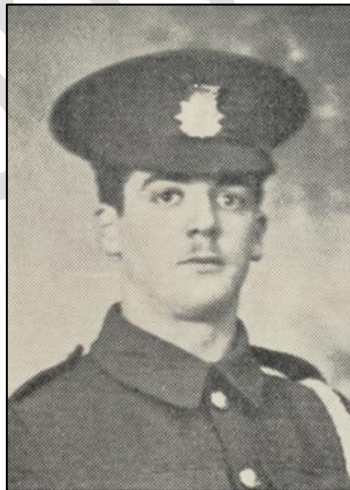
His mother received a letter from the Chaplain saying he was in the S. Midland Casualty Clearing Station, badly wounded in several places and in a serious condition. Next morning Robert had passed away. I had prayer with him, and helped to give him oxygen as he



had difficulty in breathing. He was quite cheerful, and suffering no pain, but shortly afterwards passed away without any pain or struggle.

Robert is buried in St. Pierre Cemetery, Amiens. The CWGC records that during part of August 1914, Amiens was the British Advanced Base. It was captured by the Germans on 31 August, and retaken by the French on the following 13 September. The German offensive which began in March 1918 had Amiens for at least one of its objectives but the Battle of Amiens (8 - 11 August 1918) is the Allied name for the action by which the counter offensive, the Advance to Victory, was begun. The 7th General Hospital was at Amiens in August 1914; the 56th (South Midland) Casualty Clearing Station from April to July 1916; the New Zealand Stationary Hospital from July 1916 to May 1917; the 42nd Stationary Hospital from October 1917 to March 1919; and the 41st Stationary Hospital in March 1918, and again in December 1918 and January 1919. The Commonwealth plot in St. Pierre Cemetery was first used in September 1915 and closed in October 1919 and was designed by Sir Edward Lutyens.

### **Joseph Scott, died 1 July 1916**



*Image courtesy of Colne Library, and taken from The Nelson  
& Colne Leader*

Private Joseph Scott (23299) was one of two Levens soldiers who died on the first day of the Battle of the Somme. He was the grandson of Joseph Scott and his wife Dinah (née Prickett), who on both the 1891 and 1901 census were at East View Farm, Causeway End, Levens (now Causeway End Farm), with their family, but by 1911 they were on their own renting a cottage from Nicholas Addison on Chapel Lane. They had three sons and two daughters and Joe was the son of their second son, James and his wife Barbara (née Frith), who in 1911 and at the time of Joe's death were living at 44, Glen Street, Colne. In 1911 Joe was aged 14 and employed as a 'roving carrier' in a cotton mill, but before enlisting in December 1915, he was employed by Mr. Tyson at Spout House Farm, Levens. Joe briefly attended Levens School in 1900 and was readmitted in 1902 and stayed until 1906. He was in 11 Border (Lonsdales) and was aged 20 when he died. His name is to be found on the Thiepval Memorial, which commemorates British and South African forces who died in the Somme sector before 20 March 1918 and who have no known grave. It was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens and was unveiled on 1 August 1932 by Edward, Prince of Wales. Each year on 1 July, a ceremony is held at the memorial to mark the first day of the Battle of the Somme. He is also named on the Colne, Lancashire, memorial.

The *Burnley Express* of 29 July 1916 contained the following:

#### FORMER COLNE SCOUT KILLED

Mr. and Mrs. James Scott, who reside at 44 Glen Street, Colne, have this week received intelligence of the death of their son, Pte. Joseph Scott, of the Border Regt., who was killed on July 1<sup>st</sup>. The deceased soldier, who was 20 years of age, had been at the front since the last week of April last. Before joining the Army, he was a weaver at Messrs. Pickles, Bunker's Hill Mill, Colne. He was also connected with the St. John Street Mission, Colne, and was an active member of the Boy Scouts' corps connected with that institution.

#### **Joseph Willshaw, died 1 July 1916**

Joseph Willshaw was the second Levens soldier to die that day. He was born in 1890 and was a native of Troutbeck. In 1911 he was a horseman for William Henry Mason, farmer of Lindeth, Windermere. For two years before the war he was employed as a cowman by Henry Cottam Hodgson of Foulshaw and lived at 3 Bridge End Cottages, Levens. He married Frances Annie Chapman at St. Paul's Church, Witherslack on 12 October 1914, and their daughter Dorothy Margaret was born 17 January 1915. He too was a Private (19518) in 11 Border (Lonsdales), which he joined 28 May 1915. He embarked at Folkestone for France on 19 December 1915 and is recorded on 1 January 1916 as being with '2<sup>nd</sup> Entrenching Bt.'. The *Westmorland Gazette* said that 'his brother John was with the King's Own and his death was notified a short time ago.' His widow received his 1915-1916 Star and his Victory



*Image courtesy of David Shackleton*

Medal on 14 May 1921. He is buried in the Lonsdale cemetery, Authuile. The CWGC records that:

On 1 July 1916, the first day of the Battle of the Somme, the 32nd Division, which included the 1st Dorsets and the 11th (Lonsdale)

Battalion of the Border Regt attacked the German line at this point and stormed the Leipzig Salient, but were compelled to retire later in the day. In the spring of 1917, after the German withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line, V Corps cleared these battlefields and made a number of new cemeteries, including Lonsdale No.1 and No.2. Lonsdale Cemetery No.1 (the present Lonsdale Cemetery) contained originally 96 graves (now in Plot I), the great majority of which were those of officers and men of the 1st Dorsets and the 11th Borders. It was enlarged after the Armistice when graves, almost all of 1916, were brought in from the surrounding battlefields and from other small burial grounds, including LONSDALE CEMETERY No.2, which was about 500 metres further East. It contained the graves of 38 soldiers from the United Kingdom (31 of whom belonged to the 11th Borders) and two German soldiers.

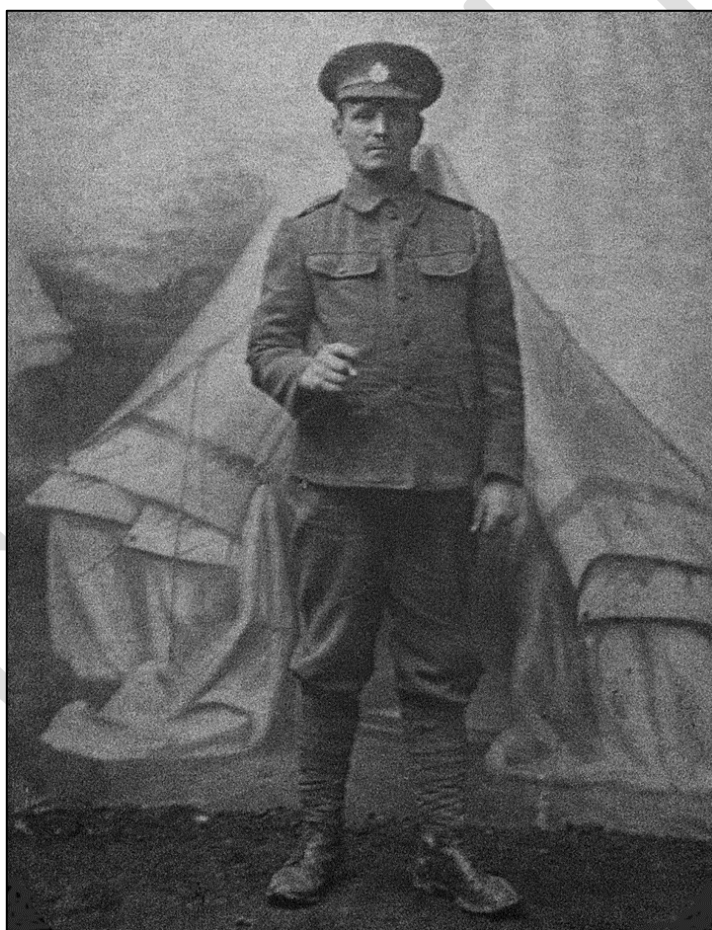
Joseph is also commemorated on the war memorial at St. Mary's, Windermere.

### **Arthur Cheeseman, died 3-5 July 1916**

Arthur Cheeseman was 32 years old when killed in action. He was born 14 September 1883, the third son of Thomas Cheeseman, a cooper at Sedgwick gunpowder works, and his wife Jane (née Phillipson), who lived at 1 Jackson's Cottages, Sizergh. The Cheeseman family had been employed at the Sedgwick works since John Cheeseman (grandfather to Arthur) and his wife Fanny had moved from Kent to Westmorland in 1858 with their sixteen children. John had been recruited by Wakefields to assist in the manufacture of gunpowder in the newly established New Sedgwick Gunpowder works. John had previously been employed in the gunpowder works at Ramhurst Mills to the west of Tonbridge, where in 1847 he was described as a powder worker. One of John's sons, Thomas (born 1852), was father of Arthur and Albert Cheeseman. Thomas was a cooper at the powder works and also lived on Sizergh Fellside. In April 1883 the Cheeseman family suffered a disaster when an explosion killed Thomas's brother Arthur, then aged 25 and a foreman at the works, and his nephew Henry aged 18. Arthur attended Levens School from 1889-1890. On the 1911 census,

Arthur lived at Force Cottages, Levens, and was a labourer at Sedgwick gunpowder works. He had married Jane Agnes Coupland at Beetham Church on 8 June 1904, and by 1911 they had two children, Lily Hope Cheeseman (aged 6) and Tom Cheeseman (aged 4). A daughter, Daisy, was born 13 March 1914.

Arthur joined 8 Border on 6 September 1914, when his address was given as 1, Force Cottages. He died between 3 and 5 July 1916. He was a Private (14743) and went to France on 26 September 1915. He was appointed Lance-Corporal on 25 October 1915, but voluntarily gave up that promotion on 14 December 1915. The *Westmorland Gazette*

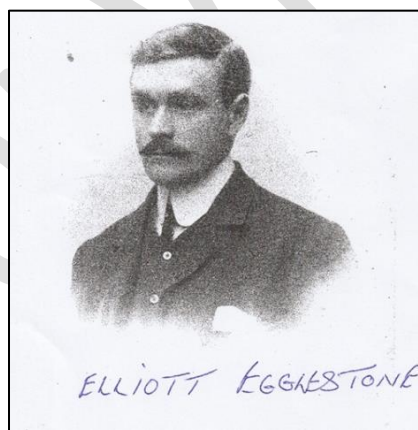


*Image courtesy of Mr. C. Fletcher*

said he was 'of a very kind and cheerful disposition, he was a general favourite with all his workmates and neighbours'. His memorial is at Thiepval. Arthur is also named on his widow and her second husband's memorial in Levens. His widow, Jane Agnes, married John George Hindson. Arthur's daughter, Lily Hope, became Mrs. Charles Fletcher. The couple built the Central Stores, Levens, which they ran until her death in 1968. Two of Arthur's brothers also fought in the War. His youngest brother, Albert James, was in the Dragoon Guards and was severely injured in 1918 and was in hospital in Leeds. At the same time his eldest brother, Thomas William, was fighting in France.

### **Elliott Egglestone, died 1 October 1916**

Elliott Egglestone is next on the Memorial. In 1911 he was a domestic gardener, boarding with the family of Enoch John Middleton at 7, Newboro Road, Needwood, Burton on Trent. The census form was originally signed, and then crossed out by, a second boarding gardener, Percy W. Broadley, who wrote the address as 'The Gardens', Kings' Standing. Elliott was the son of Elliott and Maria (née Chaplow)



*Image courtesy of Mr. T.E. Egglestone*

Egglestone of North Road, Kirkby Stephen and the husband of Lily Egglestone (née Hird), whom he married in the first quarter of 1916. Elliott and Lily lived at Force Cottages, Levens. Before the war Elliott was foreman gardener at Brettargh Holt and played full back for

Levens Football Club. He was a Private (3809) in 5 Border. He died aged 29 in a hand grenade attack around Le Sars on the Somme on 1 October 1916 and is buried at the Adanac Military cemetery, Miraumont. The *Westmorland Gazette* of 31 October 1916 reported: 'He leaves a wife and child. He was a gardener at Brettargh Holt. From a comrade I am enclosing a letter which I found in his pocket ... it must have been wrote in the morning of the day he was killed. He died doing his duty and has been buried decently'.

This action, the first day of the Battle of the Transloy Ridges, part of the Battle of the Somme, had been planned by General Sir Henry Rawlinson, commander of the 4<sup>th</sup> Army, to straighten the allies' line by capturing Eaucourt l'Abbaye and the Flers line of defence as far as the village of Le Sars. The bombardment began at 7 a.m. on 1 October, along the entire Fourth Army front. At 3.15 the infantry went in and they captured the Flers Trench by 9.30 p.m. To paraphrase Colonel H.C. Wylly, 5 Border [in trenches at the S.W. corner of Mametz Wood] was ordered to attack the German trenches near the village of Flers. It had only 3 companies at this time, as A Company had not fared well in Hook Trench and was in an Isolation Camp, due to an epidemic of Dysentery in the men. The 8 Durham Light Infantry were their partners in this attack to take a section of enemy line that was problematic in the Flers area. Taking place on the night of 1 October 1916, the attack was to be in four waves, with the first two waves being 5 Border, on a platoon sized frontage. This time the assault went well, and the first two lines and all objectives were captured before the enemy realised the barrage had ended. The position was then consolidated, and the new line held until the following evening. The 5<sup>th</sup> Border withdrew on the 2 October and marched back to Albert, then on to huts at Hennencourt Wood. This was the end of the 1916 fighting on the Somme for the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Border Regiment.

The CWGC records that:

The villages of Miraumont and Pys were occupied on 24-25 February 1917 following the German withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line. They were retaken by the Germans on 25 March 1918, but recovered by the 42nd (East Lancashire) Division on the 24 August. Adanac Military Cemetery (the name was formed by reversing the

name "Canada") was made after the Armistice when graves were brought in from the Canadian battlefields around Courcellette and small cemeteries surrounding Miraumont, including ... AQUEDUCT ROAD CEMETERY, between Pys and Le Sars, made by the 6th and 99th Infantry Brigades in March, 1917, and containing the graves of eleven soldiers from the United Kingdom. ... There are now 3,187 Commonwealth burials and commemorations of the First World War in this cemetery. 1,709 of the burials are unidentified but special memorials commemorate 13 casualties known or believed to be buried among them. The cemetery was designed by Sir Herbert Baker.

Elliott is also commemorated on the Kirkby Stephen war memorial.

### **Walter Thomas Coward, died 12 October 1916**

Walter Coward was the son of Edward and Eleanor Coward of Mountain View, Levens. In 1911 he was living with his parents at Causeway End, together with his sister, Leonora Addison Coward. He



was apprenticed to his father, who was a joiner. Walter was a Private (11575) in 6 Border and was first posted with them to the Dardanelles, where he was wounded. He was later transferred to 2 Border (A Company) in France and was aged 24 when he died on 12 October



1916. He is remembered on the Ploegstreet Memorial. The Battalion diary states:

Pont de Nieppe, 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> October 1916. [Arrangements had been made for a raid on the German trenches] When the barrage commenced 2nd Lieut. R.B. Wood led the way to the triangular trench in front of the point of attack. Unfortunately, No.1 and 2 parties following in rear of him came under heavy machine gun fire from the right & losing both leaders (save for a few isolated cases) took no further part in the raid. 2nd Lieut. R.B. Wood's party pushed on & finding the wire cut satisfactorily entered the German trench at the point of attack. 2nd Lieut. Wood assumed command of the Right party & himself bombed down the German trench accounting for two Germans who were seen to fall. This officer went back to find the remainder of the raiders & during the journey was wounded, dying shortly afterwards. The 10 minutes allotted having elapsed his party retired. Of the left party 3 men entered the German trench. A German who was making his way towards what appeared to be a fixed rifle was bombed. This party also retired bringing in some wounded. The fact that not more than 8 or 9 men entered the German trench was most probably due to both leaders being wounded by Machine Gun Fire early in the venture. Our casualties were Officers: Killed 1 (2nd Lieut R.B. Wood) wounded 1 (2nd Lieut. S.B. Bendle). Other Ranks: Killed 1, Wounded 8. Missing believed killed 2.

Walter Thomas Coward was one of those killed. The *Westmorland Gazette* of 28 October 1916 initially reported:

Coward Private Walter T. Border Regiment. Mrs. Coward, Causeway End, Levens has received official confirmation that her son Pte. Walter T. Coward has been missing since October 12th. On that day he sent a field card which said he was writing, but no further tidings have been received. Earlier in the war Pte. Coward was wounded in the Gallipoli Peninsula. He has two brothers serving in the army.

But on 11 November 1916 the *Westmorland Gazette* further reported:

Coward Pte. Walter Thomas Border Regt. who was reported missing is now reported killed. His mother Mrs. Coward, Levens, has received a letter from Captain P. R. Dowding who says that on enquiry he finds out from a man who was near him on October 12th that Private Coward was hit by a shell. Captain Dowding adds "I hope this will relieve the anxiety and I want to express my sympathy with you on the loss of your son. He was a thorough good man and always did his work splendidly as you no doubt know".

### **Leo Nicholas Knowles, died 24 April 1917**

Leo Nicholas Knowles, like Arthur Cheeseman, lived at Force Cottages, Levens. He was the son of Thomas and Jane Ellen Knowles and was born in 1885. He attended Levens School and was later employed by the Ford Motor Company. He enlisted in the Machine Gun Section of the Manchester Regiment (Private 33772), on 25 April 1917. He was married to Edith Frances, who later remarried and became Mrs. Summerfield of Manchester. He died on the 24 April 1917 and is remembered on the Arras Memorial.

The *Westmorland Gazette* of 19 May 1917 reported:



News has been received from a comrade that Pte. Knowles, the third son of Mr. & Mrs. Knowles, Force Cottages, is reported missing. He was a Lewis gunner, and went out to France in June '16. Before he enlisted he was a foreman tester at the Ford Motor Works, Old Trafford. He is 31, any news of him will be welcomed by his parents.

On 30 June 1917, the *Westmorland Gazette* stated: 'Now officially reported killed in action'.

### **George Wright Mason, died 7 June 1917**

George Wright Mason was born in 1891 and was the son of Sam Mason, Levens. He was a pupil at Levens School from 1895-1898. He was a Private (24687) in 8 Border. He died 7 June 1917 at Messines Ridge. The 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion War Diary for June 1917 states: 'Warm. Consolidation proceeding. Shelled at intervals all day. Heavy shelling



*Image courtesy of David Shackleton*

at night. Reported counter attack at night on Australian Division in front. Relieved about midnight by 2 companies of 1st Wilts. Total Casualties 1 officer killed 2 wounded. 13 OR killed 15 wounded.'

The *Westmorland Gazette* of 30 June 1917 states:

Before enlisting he was a farm worker; owing to an accident in falling from a cart he was somewhat lame, and many thought him unfit for the army, but keen to go he joined up in March '16. During his training he was so much improved that he was able to go to France last November.

He is buried in the Westhof Farm Cemetery. The CWGC records that:

Westhof Farm was used by the New Zealand Division as headquarters in May and June 1917. The cemetery was begun in May 1917 and used by fighting units and field ambulances until April 1918, when it passed into German hands for five months. There are now 131 Commonwealth servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated in this cemetery, including special memorials to six casualties whose graves were destroyed by shell fire. There are also five German war graves in the cemetery. The cemetery was designed by G H Goldsmith.

### **Fred Butterfield, died 4 June 1917**



Fred Butterfield was born in September 1892, the son of John Butterfield and his wife Marion, who in 1911 were living at Cut Side, Levens. Fred was a gardener at Levens Hall. Fred's story is perhaps

one of the most poignant of the Levens soldiers. He was a Private (15088) in 8 Border and was killed on 4 June 1917 and his death, near Gapaarde Farm, east of Messines, is reported at length in the *Westmorland Gazette* of 30 June 1917, under the heading 'Chums killed by the same shell':

Private Fred Butterfield and Private Arthur Louth joined the Border Regiment in September. They worked together as gardeners at Levens Hall, they enlisted together, and word has been received that they died together, both being instantaneously killed by the same shell. The two were in a dug-out when a shell landed right into it and the two friends were killed; there was no suffering for death was instantaneous. They were laid in a grave side by side and a couple of wooden crosses put up to mark the place. Private Butterfield was 24 years of age and the only son of Mr. John Butterfield who has himself worked for many years in Levens Hall gardens. Fred was the mess cook. Private Arthur Louth was 28 years old and was a foreman gardener at the Hall. He was a good footballer and played full back for Milnthorpe and occasionally helped the young Levens team. His home was in Northants.

### **Arthur Louth, died 4 June 1917**



Arthur was the son of Mrs. Jane Louth of Polebrook, Oundle, Northamptonshire. He too was a Private (14328) in 8 Border. Arthur is also commemorated on the Polebrook War Memorial. Both Fred Butterfield and Arthur are remembered at the Menin Gate, Ypres.

The CWGC records that:

The Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, designed by Sir Reginald Blomfield, often referred to simply as the Menin Gate, bears the names of more than 54,000 soldiers who died in Belgium and have no known grave. Between October 1914 and September 1918 hundreds of thousands of servicemen of the British Empire marched through the town of Ypres's Menin Gate on their way to the battlefields. The memorial now stands as a reminder of those who died who have no known grave. Building of the memorial began in 1923 and on 24 July 1927, it was unveiled by Field Marshal Lord Plumer. Veterans, relatives of those commemorated and local people attended. Dignitaries included King Albert I of Belgium and Marshal Ferdinand Foch, Commander of French forces during the war. Every evening since 1928, buglers of the Last Post Association sound the Last Post in the roadway under the Memorial's arches. The ceremony has become part of the daily life of Ypres and traffic is stopped from passing through the memorial each day at this time. Only during the German occupation of the Second World War was the ceremony interrupted. At that time it was held at Brookwood Military Cemetery in Surrey, England.

### **James Harold Routledge, died 3 August 1917**

James Harold Routledge was born 15 May 1892. He was the nephew and adopted son of William and Roseanna Routledge. William was a tailor and, in 1911, lived at Sea View, Levens. Harold attended Levens School from 1895-1899. His baptism record states that his parents were John Routledge (labourer) and his wife Elizabeth of Keswick. Harold was a Lance-Corporal (14900) in 8 Border. The *Westmorland Gazette* of 17 August 1917 states, 'Age 23, he joined the Border Regiment in September 1914. In May 1916, his right eye was injured by fragments

from a rifle grenade. At home he was secretary of the village football club. He has a brother serving in France.' He died of gunshot wounds on 3 August 1917 aged 25. His grave is in the Brandhoek New Military Cemetery No. 3 at West-Vlaanderen, Belgium.



*Image courtesy of David Shackleton*

The CWGC records that:

During the First World War, Brandhoek was within the area comparatively safe from shell fire which extended beyond Vlamertinghe Church. Field ambulances were posted there continuously. Until July 1917 burials had been made in the Military Cemetery, but the arrival of the 32nd, 3rd Australian and 44th Casualty Clearing Stations, in preparation for the new Allied offensive launched that month, made it necessary to open the New Military Cemetery. The New Military Cemetery No 3 opened in August and continued in use until May 1918. Brandhoek New Military Cemetery No 3 contains 975 First World War burials. The cemetery was designed by Sir Reginald Blomfield.

## Thomas Richardson, died 10 September 1917



*Images courtesy of Mrs. K. Davidson and David Shackleton*

Thomas Richardson was born 27 June 1887 and was a pupil at Levens School from 1892-1895. He married Florence Mallinson of Witherslack. He joined 8 Border and died on 10 September 1917.

The *Westmorland Gazette* records his death as follow:

On Saturday Mrs. Richardson, The Square, Levens, received official notification from the War Office that her husband, Pte. Tom Richardson, Border Regt., died of wounds on the 10<sup>th</sup> September. A day or two before Mrs. Richardson received a telegram from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Casualty Clearing Station saying that he was dangerously wounded, back and chest, and this was followed by a letter from the Chaplain, who said: 'I am indeed sorry to have to send you the sad news that your husband died here yesterday at 10.30 p.m. He was brought in here in an ambulance the night before with a severe



wound in his back penetrating the chest. From the nature of his injuries there was very little hope from the first, and he was too weak to allow of an operation being attempted. Practically all that could be done was to make him as easy as possible, and you may be sure that that was done. Beyond weakness and difficulty in breathing I do not think he suffered much actual pain. He was half unconscious, half asleep, most of the time. When he spoke at all it was with difficulty. He was glad when I told him I would write to you. Towards the end he was completely unconscious and passed away very quietly. I do not know how he came to be wounded'.

Pte. Richardson joined the Border Regt. in June, 1916, just about the time that his brother, Pte. R. Garnett was killed, so that he is the second son of Mrs. Jos. Garnett, Bridge End, Levens, who has made the great sacrifice. Before enlisting he worked for Messrs. Nelson and Hodgson, builders, Heversham. He leaves a wife and three young children. He is the fourteenth Levens man killed in the war.

Thomas's grave is in the Lijssenthoek Military cemetery.

The CWGC records that:

Lijssenthoek was the location for a number of casualty clearing stations during the First World War. The village was situated on the main communication line between the Allied military bases in the rear and the Ypres battlefields. Close to the Front, but out of the extreme range of most German field artillery, it became a natural place to establish casualty clearing stations.

### **Robert Henry Mallinson, died 25 September 1917**

Robert Henry Mallinson was born 22 August 1895 and was the third son of Robert and Mary (née Hogg) Mallinson of Rusmickle, Lyth, but formerly of Causeway End in Levens. He attended Levens School from 1899-1902 and at the time of the 1901 census the family was living at Cinderbarrow Cottage. Robert was one of a family of seven. Before enlisting he was in farm service with Mr. Park, of Preston Hall, Preston Patrick. He was the brother-in-law of William Brennand. He enlisted



*Image courtesy of David Shackleton*

with 11 Border (Private 16336) at the Levens Welcome when the Lonsdales were formed and went out to France in 1915. He was slightly wounded in 1916, but was not invalided home. At some time, about late summer 1916, he transferred to the 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Manchester Regiment. On 9 September 1917 he was on the wounded list of 'A' Company in the Witschaete Trenches, and died of his wounds in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Australian CCS on 25 September. He was 22 years old. He had two brothers in the Army, one of whom was a prisoner in Germany. Robert's grave is at the Outtersteene Communal Cemetery Extension, Bailleul.

The CWGC records that:

Outtersteene was captured by the III Corps on 13 October 1914 but no Commonwealth burials took place there for nearly three years. In August 1917, during the Third Battle of Ypres, the 2nd, 53rd and 1st Australian Casualty Clearing Stations came to Outtersteene, and the first and last of these remained until March 1918. The hamlet was captured by the Germans on 12 April 1918, and retaken by the 9th,

29th and 31st Divisions, with the ridge beyond it, on 18 and 19 August, but the cemetery was not used again during hostilities. After the Armistice, over 900 graves of 1914 and 1918 were brought into Plots I, II and IV from the battlefields surrounding Outtersteene and from certain small cemeteries.

Robert is also commemorated on the Crosthwaite war memorial.

### **William Brennand, died 1 October 1917**



*Image courtesy of Sandra Robinson*

William Brennand was the son-in-law of Mr. and Mrs. Mallinson, parents of Robert Mallinson, having married their daughter Ellen in the March Quarter, 1917. He worked for Mr. Cottam of Nether Levens before joining 11 Border (Private 202842). He died of wounds less than one week after his brother-in-law on 1 October 1917 and is buried in Coxyde military cemetery.

The CWGC records that:

In June 1917, Commonwealth forces relieved French troops on 6 kilometres of front line from the sea to a point south of Nieuport (now Nieuwpoort), and held this sector for six months. Coxyde (now Koksijde) was about 10 kilometres behind the front line. The village was used for rest billets and was occasionally shelled, but the cemetery, which had been started by French troops, was found to be reasonably safe. It became the most important of the Commonwealth cemeteries on the Belgian coast and was used at night for the burial of the dead brought back from the front line. The French returned to the sector in December 1917 and continued to use the cemetery, and during 1918, Commonwealth naval casualties from bases in Dunkirk (now Dunkerque) were buried there. After the Armistice, the remains of 44 British soldiers were brought into the cemetery. Ten of them had been buried in isolated graves. Nineteen came from Furnes Road British Cemetery, Coxyde, a cemetery made in July 1917, by the 2nd Manchesters and the 49th (West Riding) Division on the East side of the road to Furnes (now Veurne). Twenty-five (of whom 22 belonged to the 49th Division) came from Oosthoek Military Cemetery, Adinkerke, 4 Kms South-West of Coxyde. The cemetery was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens.

The *Westmorland Gazette* of 13 October 1917 reported: 'Mrs. Brennand has received notification that her husband, who was wounded on the 30<sup>th</sup>, died in the dressing station the next day. He leaves a widow and a ten-week-old daughter whom he had never seen. His daughter was Maggie Brennand'.

11 Border had spent some time in the neighbourhood of Coxyde, and then in late August/early September was at Oost Dunkerque in camp. The camp was heavily shelled by a long-range gun and the shelling became more regular with hardly a day passing without casualties. The Battalion was moved back to the front. Capt. C.H. Margerison, who kept the Battalion's diary at this time, noted:

(27/9/17 at La Panne) Battn finding Working Parties. 1 Coy practicing Apron Fence Wiring. Operation Orders received from Bge. (28/9/17 at La Panne) Battn relieved 15th Lancashire Fusiliers

as Support Battn in the Lombardzyde Sector with BHQ in Rubber House. Transport inspected by Div Com. In the Line. (29/9/17 in the line) Battn finding Working Parties for Front Line Battalion. B Coy carrying party led astray by HLI guide, which resulted in 1 O.R. being wounded and missing and 1 O.R. wounded (S.S.) 1 O.R. killed at BHQ. (30/9/17 in the line) Battn finding Working Parties. 2/Lt D WALKER and 3 O.R. wounded, 2 O.R. killed, 1 O.R. Died of Wounds.

It appears that William was one of these men. Three letters were written to his widow. On 7 October, 2<sup>nd</sup>. Lt. H.C. Johnson, of B Company, 11<sup>th</sup> Border Regiment, B.E.F. France, wrote the commanding officer's standard letter:

Dear Mrs. Brennand, I regret to inform you that your husband Pte. W. Brennand 202842 No. 7 Platoon 11<sup>th</sup> Border Regt (B Coy) died of wounds received on the night of Sept 30<sup>th</sup>. He only lingered a few hours and his end was quite peaceful being unconscious up to the last. His body was conveyed to Coxyde [this last word has been inserted in paler ink and perhaps in another hand] and buried with all honours due to a good and noble soldier. As his Platoon officer I deem his death a personal loss, as he was one of my most reliable men. In your hour of trouble Dear Mrs Brennand please accept my sincerest sympathy for your great loss. Any other information you require I will gladly supply.

His friend Henry Lancaster, who was from Levens (the letter is headed - Pte H. Lancaster, No. 202932, B Coy. No. 8 Platoon, 11<sup>th</sup> Border Regt., B.E.F. France) wrote on 11 October 1917:

Dear Friend, I am just writing a few lines to tell you the sad news about your husband Bill. You will likely have got to know about it. I am sorry that I have not wrote before now I would have done had I been with the Batt: at the time he got wounded. I did not get to know for a week after. I only saw him three days before, he was lively then. Him and I was at a small town together. Me and him were always the best of Pals and he was in the same Company. It was a big blow to me, but it will be a bigger to you. He was on a

fatigue when hit. I think him and two or three more were carrying big iron bars up the trenches when a shell came over and killed his mates outright and wounded him. I thought he was not so badly hurt, but he must have been hurt inwardly as he only lived 3 hours, that is what I heard. I got your address of Billy more than a month since. I told him I would write to you if anything should happen to him. Oh how I do miss him for he was my best mate as I have known him nearly all my life. We are out on rest at present, that is all I can tell you. Had I been with him at the time I would have told you more. It is about 9 days since this happened. I will close now, trusting that this note finds you as well as it leaves me at present. I remain your Aff. Friend, H. Lancaster.

The letter from J. Sherventon, the platoon Sergeant, who wrote on the 14 October 1917 states:

Dear Mrs Brennand, Just a few lines to let you know that your parcel arrived alright and I gave it to his Chums to share as poor Billy got wounded before it came. No doubt the Chaplain will have wrote and let you know about him. I was with him at the time and did what I could for him, but I learned afterwards that he died in the dressing station. He was quite brave about it and was conscious all the time. We do miss him in the Platoon as he was always so willing and cheery. I will now close offering on behalf of myself and the Platoon our sympathy on the loss of a good chum.

These three letters all appear to have been written in the same hand, so perhaps they have been dictated to one scribe.

William's widow, Ellen, remarried to Sam Rockcliffe of Milnthorpe in the June quarter of 1919. William is also commemorated on the Witherslack War Memorial.

## **George W. Robinson, died 9 September 1918**

George Robinson was the son of George Robinson Junior and his wife Sarah, and was born 15 June 1897. George (the father) was a mill



*Image courtesy of David Shackleton*

keeper at Sedgwick gunpowder works. George attended Levens School between 1901 and 1904. In 1911 George, a scholar aged 13, was living with his parents and brothers (Michael aged 10, Richard aged 8, John aged 6, Edward aged 4 and Benjamin aged 1) in a cottage at Cotes (next door to Benson Hall). He became a Lance-Corporal (201785) in the 1<sup>st</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment. He was killed on 9 September 1918 and was the last Levens soldier to die in the Great War. Kevin Shannon wrote, in discussing the capture of the Givenchy craters, that early on 7 September, B and D Company launched a surprise operation against the southern part of Canteleux trench and seized the outposts there .... The gains were not held for long, as the enemy counter attacked with around 200 men at about 1.30 p.m. and won back the ground, the battalion being forced back to its previous positions. Overall the battalion suffered nineteen casualties ... Twenty-one-year-old (785) L/Cpl. George Robinson's third wound of the war would also be his last, as the young NCO died from his injuries on 9 September. George is buried at the Houchin British cemetery.

The CWGC records that:

The cemetery was opened in March 1918 when the 6th Casualty Clearing Station came to Houchin. From April to September the German advance made Houchin unsafe for hospitals, and the cemetery was used by the 55th (West Lancashire) Division. In September 1918, the 6th Casualty Clearing Station returned to Houchin and was joined by the 15th CCS in October. Houchin British Cemetery contains 700 Commonwealth burials of the First World War and two from the Second World War. There are also 39 German and one Belgian war graves. The cemetery was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens.

### **Sir Alan Desmond Bagot, died 11 January 1920**

The local gentry were not immune to misfortune during the War. Sir Alan Desmond Bagot of Levens Hall was injured whilst training in Ireland. The following account appeared in the *Westmorland Gazette* on 2 January 1915:

Sir Alan Bagot is at a nursing home in Dublin and Lady Bagot [His mother] has been at the Hibernian hotel since she hurried back from Dunkirk to be near him. Sir Alan was drilling with his squadron in Phoenix Park when the serious accident occurred. He was trying to catch a trooper's horse which had got away, when his own horse got excited and swerved with great violence into a tree, causing a compound fracture of the thigh and a dislocated shoulder for Sir Alan and so injuring itself that it had afterwards to be shot. Sir Alan is going on well.

His obituary in the Times of 15 January 1920, says he was educated at Eton, and from late 1913, Sandhurst, the intention being of keeping up the family tradition of service in the Grenadier Guards. He inherited the Hall and its estates in 1913 when his father Josceline died before the process of conferring a Baronetcy on him was completed. Alan was the first Bagot of Levens to have the title. When the First World War broke out, Alan was commissioned into a cavalry regiment, the 12<sup>th</sup>



(Prince of Wales's Royal) Lancers, and was sent to Phoenix Park, Dublin, for training, where the accident reported above occurred.



*Sir Alan Desmond Bagot 1915 Image courtesy of Mr. & Mrs. H. Bagot*

It took a long succession of operations before he was passed as fit for service, though afflicted with a limp. In August 1916 he transferred from the Lancers to the Royal Horse Guards. In February 1918 he was promoted to Lieutenant and, in the summer of that year, went to France where, according to his obituary in the *Westmorland Gazette* he 'saw a lot of the fierce fighting which led up to the last German retreat.' He served as ADC to Major General Sir Neville Maskelyne Smyth, commander of the 59<sup>th</sup> (2<sup>nd</sup> North Midlands) Division, in General William Birdwood's Fifth Army. After the Armistice in November 1918 he served on the staff at army General Head Quarters at Montreuil. He took over the Levens estate in 1917, and had alterations, including the installation of electricity done to the Hall to make it "a comfortable and up-to-date residence". Still being a serving

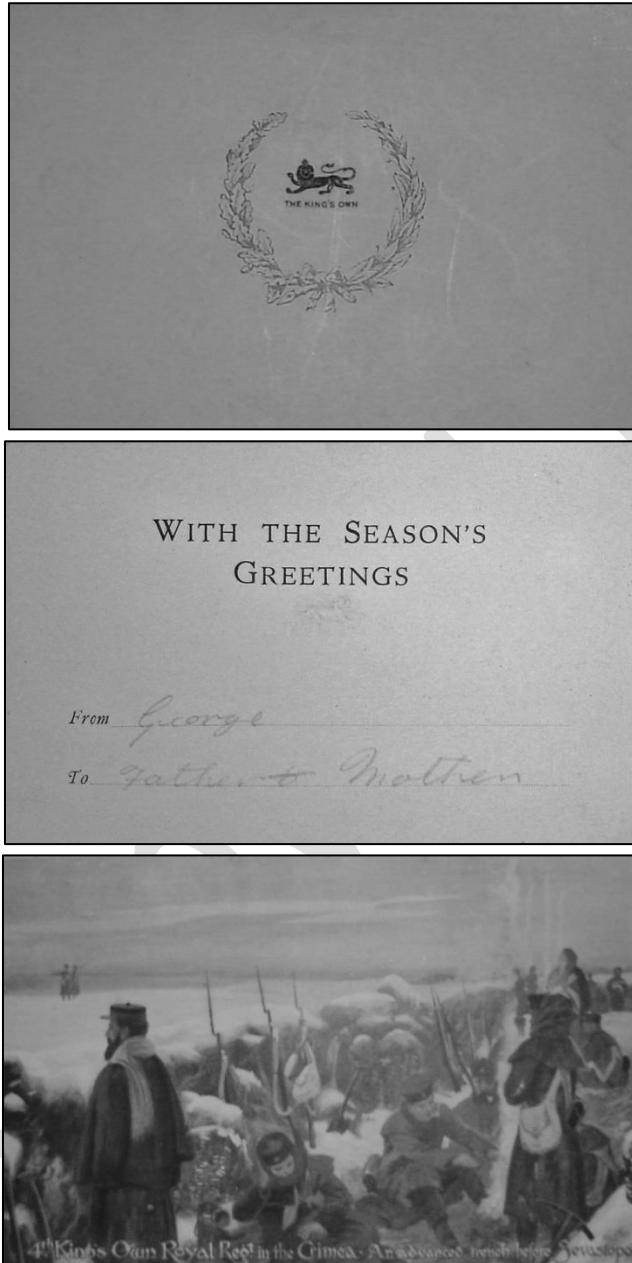
career officer, his presence in Levens Hall was limited. He returned to hospital for a further operation on his leg injury and then travelled to the Riviera to recuperate. While there he contracted double pneumonia and died on 11 January 1920 in Nice. He was buried in Heversham churchyard and commemorated at St. John's, Levens. Posthumously, his mother, Lady Theodosia Bagot, applied to the Army Medal Office for his campaign medals (Victory Medal and the British War Medal). Having no children, the title died with him. He is buried in Heversham churchyard.



An individual memorial window to Sir Alan Desmond Bagot is in St. John's church Levens. On 2 December 1921 the *Westmorland Gazette* reported:

FACULTY FOR MEMORIAL – At Carlisle Consistory Court on Tuesday, Chancellor Campbell granted a faculty authorising Lady Bagot to remove from the east window of the parish church of Levens the existing stained glass, and to substitute for it other

stained glass as a memorial of her late husband, Josceline Fitzroy Bagot, who died in 1913, and of their son, Alan Desmond Bagot, who died in 1920. Mr D J Pennington and the vicar made the application, and it was stated that the only surviving daughter of a previous vicar, in whose memory the glass at present in the window was inserted, had no objection to its removal. At the same time the Chancellor granted a faculty authorising the erection of a small glass plate in the chancel of the church in memory of the first two incumbents – the Rev. W Stephens, 1828 – 1864, and the Rev. A J Smith, 1864 – 1912; and, further, sanctioned the erection in the churchyard of a memorial cross in honour of the 17 men of the parish who lost their lives in the war.



A family's poignant memento of war. A King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment Christmas card sent from the trenches by George Robinson to his father and mother before he was killed in 1918. The image shows a scene from the Crimean War.

## 4. Levens war memorial and roll of honour

*Commemorating the war meant privileging some versions of the war and discounting others: memorials were a means of forgetting as well as remembering. Dr. Dan Todman*



*Levens War Memorial 1921. Image courtesy of Mrs. A. Coxon.*

Levens, in common with all other parishes and a substantial number of private organisations, had to decide how to honour their war dead. We know that a committee was formed and their deliberations resulted in the form of the memorial at St. John's Church. However, detailed minutes of those meetings are lost. Thus, we do not know how the names were chosen nor the identity of the memorial designer and stone mason, and how the costs were met.

The Parish Council minutes of 17 April 1919 contain the earliest reference resolving to 'call a Parish Meeting for 1<sup>st</sup> May to consider what steps should be taken to commemorate those seventeen young lives that had been lost in the war.' Clearly someone had already decided that there were seventeen men to be commemorated. No minute of the public meeting or any other reference has been found until the *Westmorland Gazette* of 26 March 1921 reported: 'WAR MEMORIAL - The committee met in the school on Monday, Major Watson-Gandy [of Heaves] presiding. It was reported that all was now ready for erection and the work would begin next week'.

The only other mention is when the memorial was completed. On 9 April 1921 the *Westmorland Gazette* reported:

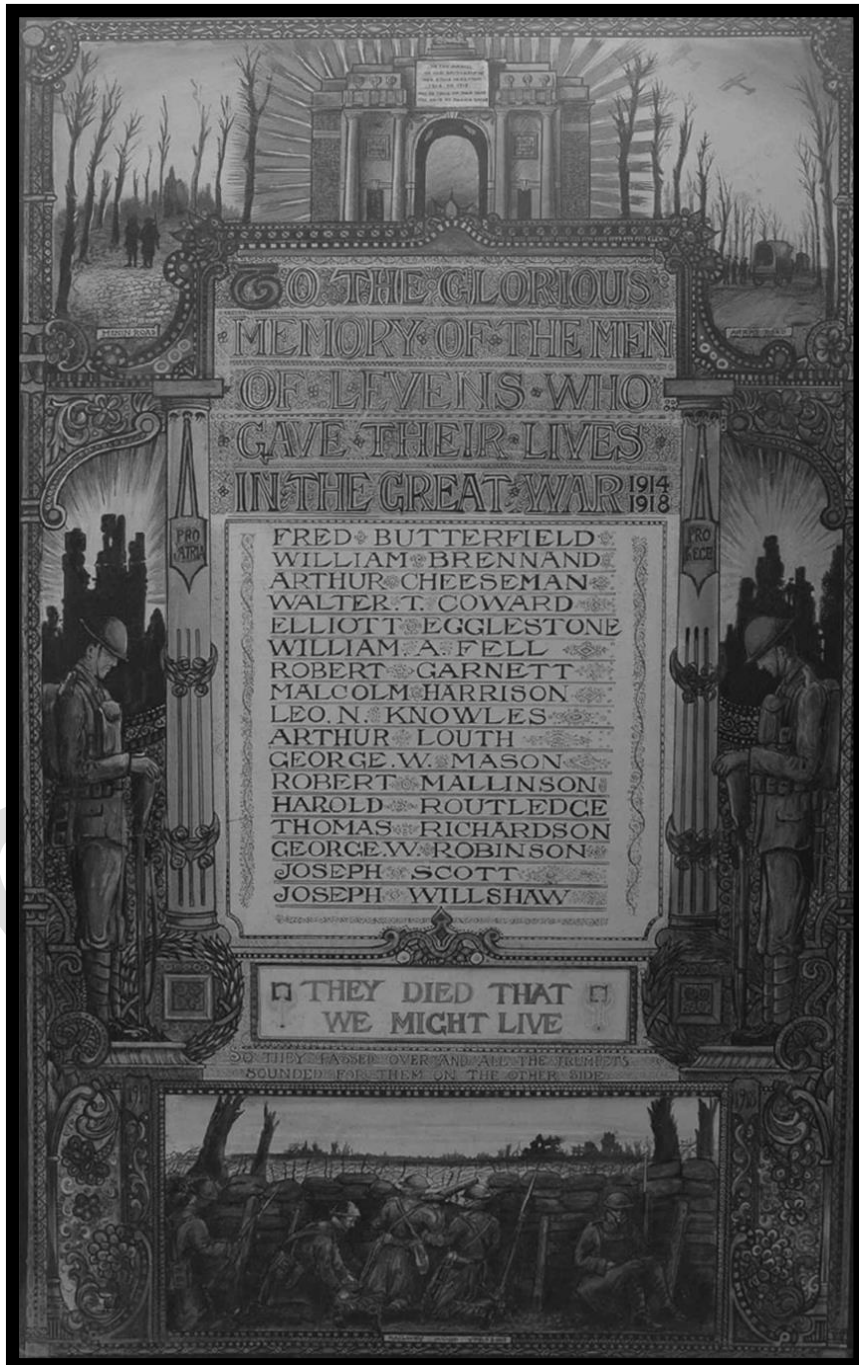
WAR MEMORIAL - St John's Church was filled to overflowing on Monday for the unveiling and dedicating of the war memorial by the Bishop of Carlisle. There was a large attendance of relatives of the fallen and these were seated on the south side of the church. A fair number of ex-servicemen were present, but many of them could not attend on a week-day, so they propose to pay another tribute of respect to the fallen on Sunday. The Bishop was accompanied by his secretary (the late vicar of Levens), Canon Symes (Kendal), and the Rev. B Langstaff (Heversham). The service opened with the hymn "The Supreme Sacrifice", followed by special prayers read by the Rev. B Langstaff. Special psalms were chanted and also the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis. The special lessons were read by the Rev. E U Savage, and after the hymn "They whose course on earth is o'er", the Bishop delivered an address. He referred to the waste of material, capital, etc., but said that what grieved us most was the loss of precious lives, the youth and beauty which had left our race impoverished. To what purpose was this waste? Was it waste? The answer to that question must depend upon us. We must imitate

their example, follow in their footsteps and make like sacrifices. These men died to save Europe, to secure justice and liberty, to prevent a great wrong, and if their lives were not to be wasted then we must dedicate ourselves to the cause for which they died; we must be less selfish. If we did that in 20 years' time England would be a better land, and would indeed be the true memorial of the men who had fallen. During the singing of "For all the Saints" the congregation proceeded to the memorial in the churchyard. Standing near the cross, Major Watson-Gandy, M. C., chairman of the war memorial committee, on behalf of the subscribers, requested the churchwardens to take charge of the cross and to preserve it in pious memory of those whose names were inscribed on it. Mr T. Halhead, the people's warden, replied that they willingly accepted the charge and would endeavour to see that the memorial was carefully preserved. The Bishop dedicated the memorial. Mr F Newsham, of Sandside, sounded the Last Post and the Bishop pronounced the blessing. Lady Bagot, Mrs Weston, and many of the friends and relatives of the men laid wreaths at the base of the cross. The memorial, which stands near the entrance to the churchyard, is of native limestone, standing on a base 7ft. 6in. square and about 11ft. high. The names are cut out on a bronze plate, which is let into the stone near the middle of the cross. No text appears on the monument, for the committee felt that the important thing was to have the names prominent, and this has been faithfully carried out. The inscription reads, "These men of Levens gave their lives for King and country. 1914-1918 - Malcolm Harrison, William A Fell, Robert Garnett, Joseph Scott, Joseph Willshaw, Arthur Cheeseman, Elliott Egglestone, Walter T Coward, Leo N Knowles, George W Mason, Fred Butterfield, Arthur Louth, Harold Routledge, Thomas Richardson, Robert Mallinson, William Brennand, George W Robinson.

## Levens Roll of Honour

In addition to the war memorial, St. John's also houses an illustrated Roll of Honour. The names are those from the war memorial, but the artwork is unique. It was perhaps commissioned by the Royal British

Legion, but its history has not been traced. The roll was cleaned, conserved and remounted by Levens Local History Group, with assistance from Levens Charity in 2010.





## 5. Levens men not on the memorial

Two Levens-born and educated men that died in the war are commemorated on memorials elsewhere but not on ours. We believe their names were omitted because they had left Levens before the outbreak of war and perhaps had no remaining relatives or other inhabitants who could plead their cases. Both men warrant having their names added to the village memorial.

### Nathan Graveson, died 1 July 1916

Nathan Graveson's name was added to the Parish Council's November 2018 display on The Green, Levens. He was a member of 1 King's Own Scottish Borderers (regimental no. 19930) and was christened on 23 October 1887 at Levens. He died 1 July 1916 (missing believed killed). He is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial in Picardy.



*Thiepval Memorial*

In 1881 the Graveson family (father Thomas, born Levens c.1849), lived in Bridge Row, which is now demolished but was near Gilpin Bridge. In the 1891 census he was the youngest child of his widowed mother, Elizabeth Graveson, a laundress at Levens Hall, then at 7 Garnett

Cottages (next to the Royal Oak alehouse in Main Street), where his siblings, John William (aged 13), Elizabeth (11), Betty (9), Jane Mary (7), also lived. In the 1911 census, Nathan was recorded as a live-in farm labourer in the household of Fred Teal Wood and his wife Jane, farmers, of Whins Lane Farm, Sicklinghall, Wetherby. Nathan, at the time of his death was recorded as living in Ilkley and is commemorated on the Ilkley War Memorial.

## John Henry Prickett, died 18 November 1916



*John Henry Prickett - Images courtesy of North West Evening News*

John Prickett was born in April 1892 at Lane End Farm, Levens and was baptised at St. John's, Levens on 26 May 1892. His parents were Henry and Dora Annie (née Barlow). The 1901 census recorded the family living at Lane End Farm and consisting of Harry Prickett (aged 42, born Levens), Dora Annie (32, born Preston Patrick), and their children John Harry (9), William Barlow (8), Thomas Edward (5), Ada Eleanor Mary (3) and Richard Lawrence (6 months), all born in Levens.

There were four farm servants in the household. John Henry would have attended Levens School. By 1911 the family had given up farming and were at 7 Lancaster Street, Barrow-in-Furness. Henry was an insurance agent, and John Henry a railway clerk. Dora Annie and Thomas Edward were in the household, together with two further

children, Joseph Brown Prickett, aged 4, and Winifred Anna Prickett, who was under 12 months old. Both were born in Barrow.

John Henry Prickett attested on 3 October 1914 simply giving his address as 'Levens' and stating that he was 22 years 210 days of age. John enlisted with 11 Border (Lonsdales) as Private 13420. He was appointed an unpaid L/Cpl on 15 April 1916 and L/Sgt on 10 October 1916. He was killed in action on 18 November 1916 and is buried on the Somme in Serre Road Cemetery No. 1.

CWGC records that in June 1916, the road out of Mailly-Maillet to Serre and Puisieux entered No Man's Land about 1,300 metres south-west of Serre. On 1 July 1916, the 31st and 4th Divisions attacked north and south of this road, and although parties of the 31st Division reached Serre, the attack failed. The 3rd and 31st Divisions attacked once more on the 13 November, but again without success. Early in 1917, the Germans fell back to the Hindenburg Line and on 25 February, Serre was occupied by the 22nd Manchesters. The village changed hands once more in March 1918 and remained under German occupation until they withdrew in August. In the spring of 1917, the battlefields of the Somme and Ancre were cleared by V Corps and a number of new cemeteries were made, three of which are now named from the Serre Road. Serre Road Cemetery No.1 was begun in May 1917 .... The rest of the cemetery was added after the Armistice, when graves were brought in from the nearby battlefields and from the following smaller cemeteries [including] BEAUCOURT-SUR-ANCRE BRITISH CEMETERY (V Corps Cemetery No.13), in the middle of the village, which contained the graves of 21 officers and men from the United Kingdom who fell in November 1916 and February, 1917. CERISY-BULEUX CHURCHYARD, in which one soldier from the United Kingdom was buried in November 1916. TEN TREE ALLEY CEMETERY No.1, PUISIEUX (V Corps Cemetery No.24), 700 metres South-East of Serre, which contained the graves of 37 soldiers from the United Kingdom who fell in November 1916 - February 1917 (the present Ten Tree Alley Cemetery was No.2.). There are now 2,426 casualties of the First World War buried or commemorated in this cemetery .... Most of the graves date from 1916. The cemetery was designed by N.A. Rew. John is commemorated on the Barrow-in-Furness War Memorial.

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## 6. The men who survived

As far as the eye could see was a mass of black mud with shell holes filled with water. Here and there broken duckboards partly submerged in the quagmire; here and there a horse's carcass sticking out of the water; here and there a corpse. The only sign of life was a rat or two swimming about to find food and a patch of ground. At night a yellow mist hung over the mud; the stench was almost unbearable. When gas shells came over the mist turned to brown.

*Private H. Jeary, Queen's Royal West Surrey Regiment*

It'll be no good telling about it, eh? They wouldn't believe you; not out of malice or through liking to pull your leg, but because they couldn't ... No one can know it. Only us.

*Henri Barbusse, Le Feu, 1916*

The *Westmorland Gazette* of 2 January 1915 reported: 'Since the war broke out a list has been placed on the church door at Levens giving the names of those on active service. This has been added to as recruits came forward until no less than 40 names appear.' Most of those men returned home, though many suffered injuries during the conflict. Sadly, the list has been lost, but, our evidence suggests that many of the following were named.

The story of many men is incomplete, either because it was impossible to identify them with certainty, or because their service files have not survived. At the end of the war, all the personal records of soldiers who had signed-on for the duration were stored at a War Office repository in Walworth, London, but during the blitz of September 1940, a major fire took hold. Of the six million sets of stored papers four million were destroyed. Searches have been made for further information on several Levens men, but with limited success. Our findings are set out below. We are missing many personal accounts of these men's experience of war and their return to Levens in peacetime. We can only imagine their suffering and their resilience.

## Addison, John, Labour Corps, Private 498186



*John Addison and his son Tommy, c.1950, Old Chapel Lane, Levens. Image courtesy of Ken, Tom and Roger Addison.*

John was called up on 7 January 1918, but was deemed to have enlisted on 2 March 1916 under the Military Service Act of that date, which made all single men over 18 and under 41 liable for conscription, unless medically unfit or in certain reserved occupations. The discrepancy suggests he was one or the latter. The perfunctory record of his medical examination at enlistment states: 'good' physical development, a 'slight scar on forearm and another on 'L' arm', some dental defect, a 'slight impediment of speech'; he 'Complains of exhaustion - No evidence of lesion in chest'. He was graded B3 - fit for home but not overseas service. Men enlisted in the Labour Corps Agricultural Companies, such as John, worked on farms throughout

the U.K. as there was a labour shortage. He was aged 26 years 8 months, occupation 'Carter and horse keeper.' His next of kin was his father Nicholas Addison of Levens. Religion - Wesleyan. Height 5 feet 6 inches, chest fully expanded 37½ inches. Distinguishing marks, '2 varicose blisters on R (?)'. His stated preference branch of service was the Royal Flying Corps, but instead he was initially enlisted to 557 Home Service Employment Co. in Cardiff, and almost immediately transferred, on 22 January 1918 to 422 Agricultural Co., which was also in Cardiff. His final posting on 6 July 1918 was to 417 Agricultural Co., based in Carlisle. He was sent to No. 3 Dispersal Area, Heaton Park, Manchester, on 12 January 1919 and demobilised 12 February 1919.

John was baptised in Levens on 24 May 1891, the son of Nicholas and Margaret (née Philipson) and attended Levens School. In 1901, aged 9, he lived with his widower father, aged 53, his sister Margaret J, aged 4, and a servant Mary J. Escolme, single, aged 40, born Bolton-le-Sands. They occupied the cottage now known as 3, Old Chapel Lane, Levens, and were still there in 1911. John was a carter, Nicholas was a carter on his own account, Margaret Jane was at school in Levens, but there was a different housekeeper, Jane Willan, 49, a widow born Dalton in Furness.

A redacted entry in the 1939 England and Wales Register shows John still resident in the same house, but now married to Nelly, née Nixon. He was a 'Caretaker Grammar School'. John died 15 January 1954 at Old Chapel Lane, with probate granted to his son, Thomas Nicholas Addison, of the same address.

### **Anderson, Henry, Royal Garrison Artillery, Bombardier 42249**

Henry, born in Beathwaite Green (Levens), was 28 years 8 months when he attested for military service at Barrow-in-Furness on 10 August 1914. His occupation was a labourer who had previously served with the Royal Garrison Artillery with whom he wished to serve again. On 11 August he enlisted at Fort Rowner, Gosport. He was posted (no details) on 5 September 1914 and appointed B/A Bdr (Bombardier) on 8 March 1917. 6 October 1917 saw him posted to 2 Depot and on 24 October 1917 to the Army Reserve 'Class W' (more

useful in civil than military employment). He was discharged at Dover on 14 December 1918 with his record marked 'Category A' (medically fit for frontline service).

Henry married Elizabeth Ann Bamber on 2 June 1906 in Barrow and they had three children, all Barrow born; Dorothy Priscilla May (b. 24 April 1910), Noreen (25 July 1911) and Cecil Dennis Jellicoe (18 September 1915). His service record shows him as 'Home - 10.8.14', 'Exp. Force France 17.5.15 to 5.10.17', 'Home 6.10.17 to 24.10.17'. On 19 August 1919 he wrote from 7 Granville Street, Barrow-in-Furness, to enquire about his medals with the details, '42249 Bdr. Anderson Henry, 9<sup>th</sup> Heavy Battery'.

In 1891 Henry was at 3 Hutton Lane, Levens (between Spout House and Quaggs, (possibly at what is now Cragg Foot) with his father Thomas Henry, aged 51, a labourer born in Levens. His mother Elizabeth (née Batty) was born in Cartmel, and his siblings, all born in Levens, were Ellen 14, Thomas 11, Isabella 9, Agnes 7 and Joseph 2. By 1901 Thomas (recording his birthplace as Barrow-in-Furness and now a limestone quarryman) and Elizabeth (now peat dealer) were living with Ellen, Joseph, Jessie aged 4 and Mary, a granddaughter aged 2 born in Levens. In 1911 Elizabeth, Henry's mother, resided in a cottage close to Cinderbarrow Farm and was a carrier, with two daughters, both carrier's assistants, Jessie Anderson (aged 34) and Eleanor Anderson (aged 36). There were three granddaughters, Mary, and Frances aged 5 and an 'Infant' aged one month.

By 1901 Henry, aged 16, was working for Mary Crossley at Skinner How, Hawkshead as an agricultural horseman, and a carter on the farm. Ten years later Henry, now an ironworks labourer, and his family resided at 7 Granville Street, Barrow. With him were his wife Elizabeth, aged 21 born in Elswick, Lancashire, a newly born daughter Doris, a son James aged 4 and Elizabeth's sister Janey Bamber, aged 14, a general servant also born in Elswick.

## **Anderson, J.**

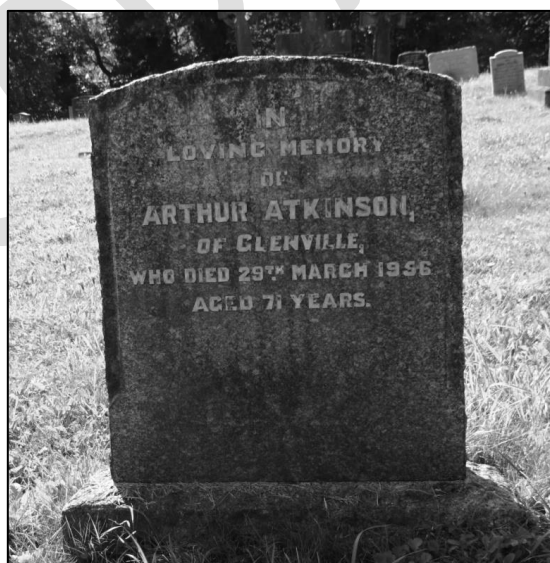
The *Westmorland Gazette* of 2 January 1915 noted, 'Twelve men have been enrolled for Kitchener's Army at the Recruiting Office, Town Hall, Kendal, during the week - [including] J. Anderson (Levens).' No



further reference has been found but it is likely that he was Henry Anderson's brother Joseph, born in 1889.

### **Atkinson, Arthur, 5 Border, Private 3558 and Machine Gun Corps, Private 148424**

Arthur was born in Levens 27 September 1884 and christened at St. John's, Levens 30 November 1884. On the 1891 census he was 6, a scholar living with his parents James (46, a farmer and builder) and Elizabeth (46) at Sizergh Fellside Farm, together with his siblings, John (13), George (11), Annie (8) and Dora (4). There were two live-in farm servants, Elizabeth Bunnels (19) born Kirby Ireleth and Matthew Tyson (22) born Ulverston. In 1901 he was a domestic servant 'hall boy', in the household of Lady Beaumont, The Towers, Carlton Park, Selby [Carlton Towers], Yorkshire. His enlistment papers are missing. He was originally in 5 Border (probably 3rd/5th) and was transferred to the MGC on 7 May 1918 from which he was discharged on 14 February 1919, when his address was given as Sizergh Cottages, Levens. He became the butler at Levens Hall. The 1939 registration shows he lived at Glenville, Church Road, Levens, which records his occupation as a 'private waiter'. He died at Glenville on 20 March 1956 aged 71 and is buried in Levens churchyard.



## **Borwick, C. of Low Levens**

The *Westmorland Gazette* of 12 September 1914 states, 'the following from Levens parish are now serving, or are about to serve'. C. Borwick, Low Levens, is one of the soldiers named, but this is insufficient to trace him or his military papers. However, he may be the Charles Borwick of Grange-over-Sands of King's Liverpool Regiment, whom the *Westmorland Gazette* of 28 October 1916 reported as wounded on 18 October.

## **Brockbank, Frank, Cheshire Regiment, Sergeant 15164**

Frank was born in Levens to Robert and Hannah (née Eccleston) Brockbank and was baptised at St. John's on 25 September 1887. In 1891 the family lived at Sea View and Robert was a blacksmith. In the household were Robert (38) born Galgate, Hannah (27) born Dalton, James H. (5) born Askham, Mary (9 months) born Levens and two lodgers. By 1901 Hannah and the children were at Jones's Yard, Burton-in-Kendal and Frank was employed as a domestic house porter. Ten years later he shared one room with two other grooms at The Stud Lodge, Wentworth, Greasbro', near Rotherham. His army record is limited to 3 pages, but shows that he served as Gunner 256, West Riding Royal Field Artillery, 25 January 1909 at Wentworth, aged 22, and confirms his birth place as Levens.

On 17 November 1917, the *Westmorland Gazette* reported that:

Corpl. F. Brockbank of the Cheshire Regt., has been awarded the D.C.M. for "conspicuous gallantry on September 20<sup>th</sup> when he took command of his company and captured and held objectives despite every effort of the enemy to retake them. After the engagement, Corpl. Brockbank was promoted sergeant. Sergt. Brockbank went to Levens and Burton and Holme schools, and was well known in the neighbourhood.

Frank, James and Mary Brockbank all attended Crosthwaite School from 9 November 1896. Frank's medal record has an additional service number of 267965, but no other regimental details survive, save those

above. A headstone in Arnside Cemetery, which may be him, records his marriage to Ethel Pearson in 1914 in Kendal and his death in 1953.

## **Burrell, R. of Leasgill**

The *Westmorland Gazette* of 12 September 1914 states, 'the following from Levens parish are now serving, or are about to serve'. R. Burrell, Leasgill, is named, but this is insufficient information to trace him. He was possibly the Robert Burrell, 8 Border, Private 21386, who went to France on 30 December 1915, was discharged from the army on 27 November 1916, and who was awarded the British, Victory and 1915 Star medals. Military papers contain no other information. In 1911 a Richard Burrell aged 17, born in Heversham and a tailor's apprentice, resided at Eversley Lodge with his grandparents, John Salthouse Winder (retired coachman aged 73) and Annie Winder (aged 73).

## **Butler, Thomas, 11 Border, Private 14868**

Like R. Burrell, the *Westmorland Gazette* of 12 September 1914 also named Thomas Butler of Levens Hall as 'one serving, or about to serve'. In 1911 a Thomas Butler, aged 23, 'labourman forester' born in Levens, was living at Mountain View, Levens with his wife, Eliza, and their children, Albert (aged 2) and Eva (3 m). In 1891 he resided at 5, Bridge End, aged 2, with his mother Ellen, a charwoman, and his siblings, James (aged 11), Samuel (7) and Elizabeth (5). He has not been found on the 1901 census. Military records show that he attested for the 'Border Pals', presumably the Lonsdales, on 6 September 1914 when he was 27, a married groom/gardener. Although of good character, he was discharged on 30 December 1914 being deemed medically unfit to become an efficient soldier, as he had 'dislocated cartilages in both knees'. His papers gave his next of kin as, Eliza, née Hayton, (address given as Levens Hall), whom he married in Kendal on 19 August 1908, Dates of birth of his children were given as 14 June 1909 and 17 December 1910.

On 6 August 1923 the family emigrated to North America on *S.S. Laconia*, sailing from Southampton. Their last given address was Hedgerly Green, Farnham, Surrey. Thomas was described as 'farmer',

and Albert as 'farm labourer'. Canadian Passenger Declarations confirm that Eliza was born at Helsington and was the daughter of Alice Grindal of Force Cottages, Levens. They had £20 between them. Thomas declared that he had no physical infirmity and gave his nearest relative in England as his sister, Margaret Machell of Grayrigg Foot, Grayrigg, Kendal. Their destination was Hodgeville, Saskatchewan, where they intended to take up farming and where Samuel Butler, who paid for their passage, already resided. Thomas died at Hodgeville in 1957.

### **Butterfield, Thomas Dixon, 1<sup>st</sup> Scots, Private**



*Thomas Butterfield. Image courtesy of Mrs. S. Allum.*

Thomas Butterfield's war service record is missing. However, the *Westmorland Gazette* of 12 September 1914 named him as one of three regular soldiers from Levens parish 'now serving, or about to serve'. The issue of 20 February 1915 interviewed him as follows:

.... when the Germans came in great masses. There was no need to take much aim; the order 'rapid firing' was given, and they simply blazed away at them until the rifle barrels became almost red hot. Sometimes, he says, they never saw a German for days, both sides

sitting tight in their trenches. Attacks were usually made at night, and this sometimes led to confusion, for it was difficult at times to know one's front, and he had known his own regiment come under fire of their comrades. The regiment had suffered terribly both in officers and men, and he deplores the loss of many pals. He speaks very highly indeed of the fine spirit shown by the officers. It was a case of 'Come on, lads', and he had seen officers, struck down during attacks, frequently refuse assistance from their men. The general reply was, 'Never mind me, go on lads.' Tom took part in several bayonet charges; indeed, it was during one of these, at Ypres, at three in the morning of New Year's Day, that he was shot. The bullet passed through his neck, entering below the right ear, and at first he thought he was 'done for'. After what he thinks must have been two hours he found himself lying in a muddy trench, longing for a drink of water, which he soon got from a comrade. He has, however, made a splendid recovery, and has now returned to Wellington Barracks, London, with the best wishes of all who know him. His elder brother William is in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Borders, and was a groom for the late Captain Andrews. Their father, James Butterfield of Levens, is an old soldier, and was through the Zulu War at Isandula and other engagements'.

The 20 November 1915 issue later reported:

Private Tom Butterfield, Levens, of the 1st Scots who is now in the Smith-Dorrien ward of the 2nd Eastern Hospital, Brighton suffering from wounds in the right arm received in the attack on Loos. This is the second time he has been sent back to England wounded and Levens people especially will be pleased to know that he is rapidly recovering.

Thomas was a son of James Butterfield and Isabella (née Dixon) and was born 12 June and baptised at St. John's, Levens, on 20 August 1893. In 1901, aged 7, he was with his parents and siblings at Causeway End, Levens, probably in the cottage adjoining the Hare & Hounds. He and his siblings all attended Levens School. In 1911 he was a farm labourer on his uncle Thomas Jackson's farm, Northgate, Heptonstall. He and Elizabeth Kate Swan had had a son, Frederick

Thomas Dixon Butterfield born 10 March 1919, before they married at North Ockenden, Essex, in June 1919. He died in South Ockenden on 28 August 1978.

### **Butterfield, William Dixon, 1 and 2 Border, Private 9366**

William's war service records confirm the grant of a British War Medal and the Victory Medal, and that he served with both 1 and 2 Border. The *Westmorland Gazette* of 12 September 1914 identified him as among the three regular soldiers from Levens parish 'now serving, or are about to serve'. He was the eldest brother of Thomas Dixon Butterfield, born 1890, who with his brother Thomas and his other siblings, attended Levens School. In 1891 he resided with his parents, James and Isabella, at Hill Top, Levens. Similarly, in 1901 he was with his family in Levens (see entry for his brother Thomas). By 1911 he was with 2 Border at Martinique Barrack, Headley, Hampshire, having married Eleanor Tigg on 7 October at St, Nicholas, West Worldham, Hampshire. Their first child, Florence, was born at Holybourne, Alton, Hampshire on 21 January 1912. Later children were; Marjorie (1914), Nellie (1916) and William J. (1919), all born in Levens, and Josephine (1921) and Isabella (1924) born at Grandview, Manitoba, Canada after the family emigrated on 24 September 1921. William died 5 November 1974 and is buried at Grandview.

### **Cheeseman, Albert James, Dragoon Guards, Trooper**

See also the story of Arthur Cheeseman in the section on the fallen of Levens for the story of the Cheeseman family.

The *Westmorland Gazette* of 27 April 1918 reported:

Cheeseman Trooper A. Mr Thomas Cheeseman of Sizergh cottages has received official notice that his youngest son Albert was severely wounded on March 24th in the right thigh. He is now in a Leeds hospital and progressing favourably. He joined the Dragoon Guards in August 1914. Mr. Cheeseman's third son was killed in action in July 1916 and his eldest son is now in France.

No other details of his military record have been found. Albert was born 2 June 1891, in Levens, the youngest son of Thomas and Jane Cheeseman (née Phillipson) of Jackson's Cottages, Sizergh and married Annie Lister (b. 20 December 1887) at Roundhay Road United Methodist Chapel, Leeds, on 30 October 1920. He was recorded as a grocer's manager, of 12 Howell Place, Leeds, she was a widow, a solicitor's clerk, of 35 Hamilton Terrace, Leeds. Her father, Alfred Hemsworth, was a witness, along with Albert's brother Cyril. Albert and Annie had one child, Philip H., born 30 November 1921, who in 1939 was described as 'incapacitated'. Records show them living at 14 Upland Road, Leeds from 1926 to 1944. Albert died in 1944, Annie in 1968 and Philip in 1993. Albert was a brother of Arthur Cheeseman, killed in 1916, who is commemorated on Levens War Memorial.

### **Cheeseman, Thomas William Royal Lancashire Regiment, Sergeant 2505**

See also the story of Arthur Cheeseman in the section on the fallen of Levens for the story of the Cheeseman family.

Thomas was the eldest son of Thomas Cheeseman and Jane Phillipson. He was born in Levens and baptised at St. John's on 10 November 1878. He was brother to Phillip (1881), Arthur (1883), who was killed in 1916 and commemorated on Levens War Memorial, Cyril (1886) and Albert James (1891). All the brothers attended Levens School. Thomas married Elizabeth Wilson at Kendal Parish Church, on 26 September 1912, and they had one child, Marjorie, born 26 September 1914. Only Thomas's Medal Index Card has been traced, which states he enlisted on 3 May 1915 and received the 1915 Star, British and Victory medals. He died on 11 March 1947.

### **Clark, George Dundonald, 4 Reserve Battalion, King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment, Private 49504**

George was working as a farm hand at Sampool Farm, Levens when he enlisted in the King's Own on 27 May 1918 in Lancaster. He gave his next of kin as his father James Clark and his home address as his

father's, 19, Holborn Hill, Millom. He was 18 years 3 months, 5 feet 5¾ inches, with a 29-inch chest. He was discharged not suffering from any disability in Dublin on 30 January 1919. On 27 December 1918, when in training at Kingstown, he was confined to barracks for 9 days for 'When on active service; Neglect of Duty; i.e. failing to examine his rifle when action cocked and pressing trigger so firing one round'.

**Cottam, Adam, 10 Royal Fusiliers, Private 1294 and Army Pay Corps, Corporal 17652**



*Adam Cottam. Image courtesy of Mr. A. Hayton.*

Adam was born in Levens in 1886. In 1891 and 1901 he and his parents, William (a farmer) and Eleanor lived at Nether Levens. He continued living there and in 1911 his occupation was bank clerk. His Medal Index Card records him as a Private, Royal Fusiliers until a transfer to the Army Pay Corps on 20 December 1917, at which point his number changed to 17652. Army Pension records show that he was discharged 12 July 1919 with the rank of Corporal. Adam had attested 9 Jan 1915



and was recorded as being 5 feet 3 and a half inches tall, with a weight of 128 lbs and an expanded chest measurement of 37 inches. He was enlisted first into 10 Royal Fusiliers, then posted to the 6 Royal Fusiliers on 17 March 1916, being subsequently promoted on 28 December.

Adam embarked for service in France on 17 March 1916. He was wounded in action on 15 July 1916 and sent back to England on 17 July 1916 from a hospital in Boulogne. He was slightly wounded in the leg and hospitalised at the 4th Northern General Hospital, Lincoln, for four days from 18 to 22 July 1916. The *Westmorland Gazette* of 22 July 1916 reported, 'Private Adam Cottam, son of the late Mr. W Cottam and Mrs. Cottam, Low Levens of the 10th Royal Fusiliers wounded in the left leg and in hospital in England. Private Cottam was well known in Kendal where he was employed at the London City and Midland bank.'

Adam's record further states: 'Embarked from 6th BN 16 Dec 1916, 7th Battalion 17 Dec 1916, WOUNDED IN ACTION 25 April 1917'. The *Westmorland Gazette* of 28 April 1917 read:

Cottam Pte. Adam, Royal Fusiliers, of Low Levens is officially reported seriously wounded in France. He has been admitted to hospital and is dangerously ill, being wounded by shrapnel. He was wounded in the Somme advance last year and was at home for a time. Before enlisting he was in the Kendal branch of the London, City Midland Bank.

Adam was in Southport Infirmary and the 1st Western General Hospital, Liverpool, for 68 days between 10 May 1917 and 13 July 1917 for injuries to his head, back and legs (specifically a thigh wound). The handwritten records are difficult to read, but it appears he attended two medical boards in 1918, eventually being categorised as B3\* (Sedentary Work only). Adam returned to the Midland Bank in Kendal after the war and died in Kendal in 1959.



*Southport Infirmary 1917. Adam Cottam is one of the men in the middle row.  
Image courtesy of Mr. A. Hayton*

### **Coward, John, Lancashire Fusiliers, Private**

John was a son of Frederick and Mary-Ann Coward (née Philipson) of the Post Office, Levens. The *Westmorland Gazette* of 27 April 1918 reported, 'Coward Pte. John, Lancashire Fusiliers, son of Mr. and Mrs. F Coward, Old Post Office, Levens and formerly of the London, City and Midland Bank at Kendal is in hospital in France suffering from severe wounds to his right foot. This is the second time he has been wounded.' John was baptised at St. John's, Levens on 24 October 1897. In 1911, aged 13 and attending Levens School, he lived with his parents at their grocery store on Main Street, Levens. His military service records have not been traced.

### **Coward, Lawrence**

Lawrence, one of two reserve soldiers named by the *Westmorland Gazette* of 12 September 1914 as 'serving, or are about to serve' was a brother of Walter Thomas Coward commemorated on the Levens war memorial. He was born in Preston Patrick in 1882 to Edward Coward,

who, by 1911 was a joiner of Mountain View, Levens and his wife Eleanor (née Thwaite), whose other children were John (1873), Edward (1875), Isabella (1871), Eleanor (1878), Sarah Ann (1879), Clara (1885), and Leonora (1888). His service records have not been found, although there was a Private Lawrence Coward serving in the RAMC, who survived the war, but for whom details are lacking. Lawrence married Lilian Rosa Hewitt in Blackburn in 1917 and after the war returned to Levens before settling in Kendal, where, in 1939 he was a joiner living with his wife and son on Kirkland. He died in Kendal in 1958.

### **Crewdson, Bernard Francis, 6 Border and Irish Guards, Captain**

Bernard, born in 1887, first fought in the Dardanelles campaign with 6 Border, where he was wounded.. The *Westmorland Gazette* of 4 September 1915 reported: 'Lieut. Bernard Crewdson elder son of Mr. and Mrs. F.W. Crewdson of Beathwaite Green who was wounded a few weeks ago in the Dardanelles has landed in England and is at present at Torquay.' On 30 October the same newspaper stated: 'Lt. B F Crewdson 6 Border wounded at Suvla Bay has had a serious operation to his leg in London but is now doing well.' Later, on 24 June 1916 the *Westmorland Gazette* reported: 'Temp Captain B F Crewdson from the



*Bernard Francis Crewdson front row left. Image courtesy of Mrs. S. Ibbotson.*

service battalion has been gazetted Temp Captain in the second reserve. Captain Crewdson was wounded in the Suvla Bay landing when he was in the 6th Border Regiment.'

Bernard then served in France, transferring to the Irish Guards in 1917 and relinquishing the rank of Captain in June 1919. He was awarded a CBE on 1 April 1920 for his role as acting chief of the British Food Mission in Warsaw. These Missions were created in various countries to source food for Britain. He died in Kendal in 1966.

### **Crewdson, Eric, 4 Border, and 96th Field Company, Royal Engineers, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant**

Eric, born in 1888, was a brother of Bernard Francis Crewdson. He was awarded a commission in 4 Border on 17 July 1908, while working as an engineer for Gilkes in Kendal. He was proposed for Membership of the Institute of Civil Engineers on 31 December 1913. The *Westmorland Gazette* of 12 September 1914 recorded him as from Levens parish and 'now serving, or are about to serve'. By 30 September 1914 Eric had transferred to 96th Field Company, Royal Engineers and served in France from 24 August 1915.



*Eric Crewdson 1917. Image courtesy of Mrs. S. Ibbotson.*

On 1 January 1916 he was mentioned in despatches, and as an acting Major, was awarded the Military Cross on 4 June 1917. He relinquished his commission on 6 July 1921, became Chairman of Gilkes of Kendal. Eric had a love of flying joining the RAF as probationary Pilot Officer on 18 March 1924 and being promoted Flying Officer on 18 May 1925 and completing his RAF service on 18 March 1928. He was appointed Deputy Lieutenant for the County of Westmorland on 15 November 1946 and died in 1967.

### **Cross, Harry King, 7 Border, Private 260278**

Harry, born in Levens on 25 September 1893, was baptised at St. Johns, Levens on 26 November 1893. He attended the village school. In 1901 the Cross family, including Harry, lived at Causeway End, Levens, possibly in the cottage next to East View farm. His parents were Henry (aged 56) a general labourer, and Jane (46). His siblings were John H. (21, agricultural labourer), Lawrence (18, agricultural labourer), William (15, general labourer), Frances (13), Jane (10) and Jeffery (5). All were born in Levens except Harry's mother, born in Sedgwick.



*Harry King Cross in Yeomanry uniform.*

By 1911 Harry was a farm labourer, working for William Dobson at Low Sampool. His address on attestation (date illegible, as are most of his surviving records) was Cook House, Levens, confirming him as an existing volunteer with the Westmorland & Cumberland Yeomanry. Later on 13 November 1915, aged 22, he was a Private (3136) in the Yeomanry. It is unclear when he transferred to B Company, 7 Border. There are no further details of his service in France, save that he received a bullet wound through his left instep in July 1918 and was hospitalised at his base in France. The *Westmorland Gazette* of 20 July 1918 reported:

CROSS, Pte. Harry, Border Regt., is wounded and in hospital at the base. He writes quite cheerfully, and says that but for a bullet through his left instep he is quite well. He has been in the army over 2½ years, and over 12 months in France. Before joining he was engaged in farm work.

On 18 January 1919 Harry was transferred to Fusehill War Hospital, Carlisle from the 1<sup>st</sup> Southern General Hospital, Kings Heath, Birmingham, where he had been admitted on 25 July 1918. He was demobilized from there on 26 February 1919 and awarded a pension of 5s 6d per week, to be reviewed on 27 February 1920. His records include a letter of 22 July 1918 from his mother Jane Cross asking for more information about him, and pointing out that her postal address is Levens, Milnthorpe, not Levens, Kendal, and that using the correct address saves one day in the postal service.

Harry married Isabel Hawes in 1924 and they had two daughters, Ruth and Barbara. He worked for the County Council as a driver, which included road rollers and the Shap snow plough. In 1939 the family lived at Goody Nook. He died at Middle 'Sadghyll' [Sadgill], Longsleddale in 1978.

## **Dixon, Joseph, 1 Border, Private 21648**

Joseph gave his address as Rose Cottage, Levens, when he attested on 15 May 1915 at Kendal and was approved on 21 May at Carlisle. He was a labourer aged 24 years 8 months, the son of John Dixon, also of Rose Cottage. However, on 27 May 1915 in Chester it was recorded

that he was, 'not being likely to become an efficient soldier (radically unfit with curvature of the spine)'. He was discharged from the service.

## **Dobson, John**

Recorded by the *Westmorland Gazette* of 12 September 1914 as a Levens man 'now serving, or are about to serve' His military records cannot be traced.

## **Garnett, F.W., 2 Dragoon Guards, Private**

Private Garnett was captured in September 1914 and was also the recipient of a Military Medal. He lived at the Bungalow, Levens. Despite these details further searches of military and other records proved fruitless.

## **Gilbey, T.H., 8 Border, Private 15138**

Private Gilbey was one of the Levens soldiers named by the *Westmorland Gazette* of 12 September 1914 as 'now serving, or are about to serve'. The War Office Daily List No.5653 dated 26 August 1918, includes T.H. Gilbey Private 15138 of the Border Regiment being entitled to wear a 'Wound Stripe' as authorised under Army Order 204 of 6 July 1916. His next of kin was noted as being at Penrith. The list of those entitled to a decoration from 8 Border, states that T.H. Gilbey, Private 15138, embarked for France on 26 September 1915 and was later recorded 'to Class Z.A.R. 20.2.19'. There is, however, a second T.H. Gilbey, a Private in the North Staffordshire Regiment, but attestment in Westmorland suggests that the Borders was his most likely regiment. Similarly, a T.H. Gilbey took part in fundraising events for Levens Football Club in 1913.

## **Halhead, Thomas, Royal Field Artillery, Private 138767**

Thomas Halhead, born in Crook and a horseman at Cinderbarrow Farm, Levens, was aged 27 years eight months, when he attested on 15

December 1915. His listed next of kin was his father Thomas, also of Cinderbarrow Farm, but it appears that this Thomas had died three years earlier. In 1911, Thomas junior, a 'farmer's son working on farm' was at the farm with his father, mother and siblings. He completed his training in August 1916 and was posted to France as a gunner on 6 August 1916. He was gassed and on 3 November 1917 was in the 3<sup>rd</sup>. Canadian General Hospital in Boulogne. Later he was transferred to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Rest Camp at Marlboro but was 'back in the field' on 15 December. Thomas had a home leave pass 'with ration pass' from 179 Brigade in February 1918, but there was no further recorded service until his demobilization. He was posted to the Army Reserve in February 1919 and demobilized on 31 March 1920.

After the war Thomas returned to the Levens area and in 1939 was farming at Rawsons in the Lyth valley. He married Hannah Benson in 1922 at Ulverston, and they had two daughters, Ivy Elizabeth (1922-2008) and Ena M. (1928-1929) and two sons, John (1916-1987) and Percy (1925-2007). Thomas died at Nether Hall, Witherslack on 11 December 1969.

### **Halliwell, J. B., Border, Lance-Corporal**

The *Westmorland Gazette* of 8 December 1917 reported:

Halliwell Lance-Corporal J. B. Mrs Halliwell, Cragg Foot, Levens has received official notice that her husband is in Norfolk War hospital suffering from a wound in his thigh. A letter from him states that he was wounded on the 20th November and that he is getting on all right. He joined the army on the 1st. June 1916 and was drafted into the Border Regiment on going to France.

No further military records can be traced.

### **Hayton, Sidney Kirby, 11 Border (Lonsdales) and Machine Gun Corps, Sergeant**

Sidney, born at Underbarrow in 1895, was the son of Mrs. Grindal of Force Cottages, Levens. In 1901 he lived at Force Cottages with his mother and stepfather John and Alice Grindal, and their children



William and Margaret. By 1911, he was a farm servant in the household of Anthony Dixon Halhead at Low Plain, Underbarrow.



*Courtesy of Stephen Hayton*

Sidney enlisted and trained with the Lonsdale Battalion, but may not have embarked with them to France, as he was probably training for the Machine Gun Corps. He appears not to have received the 1914-15 Star, given to all those who landed in France before 31 December 1915. His MGC number, indicates an official transfer in between 17-24 February 1916. The war diary of 11 Company MGC of 25 May 1917 confirms his award of the Military Medal, following the 3rd Battle of the Scarpe (river), undoubtedly for action during that battle. He was wounded in the left knee on 4 October 1917 and hospitalised in London. The *Westmorland Gazette* reported:

Being in charge of a machine gun he and his men held a trench which was subjected to very heavy counter-attacks, and after a hard struggle beat back the enemy. The same night (after dark) he spotted a German movement planned to take them by surprise. At the right moment he opened fire and drove them back with heavy losses. In his own words, 'it was the time of my life'.

Out of hospital, he returned to the MGC base at Camiers, France, and was reallocated to 117 Company in the 39th Division, which in late 1917 was engaged in the campaign around Ypres in Belgium,

collectively known as Passchendaele. The *Westmorland Gazette* of 26 October 1918 further reported:

HAYTON, Sergt. S. - Mrs Grindal of Force Cottage, Levens, has received word that on the 13<sup>th</sup> inst. her son was wounded twice in the leg and once in the arm. He is in hospital at Oxford and is progressing favourably. This is the second time he has been wounded.

Sidney was honourably discharged from the army on the 25 January 1919, being physically unfit on account of wounds, and on 16 July, in recognition, he received the Silver War Badge (number B252511), alongside the silver British war medal and the bronze Victory Medal.

He married Annie Mary Snowden in Carlisle in 1919. They had three children. He returned to civilian work producing black powder at Sedgwick Mills and Gatebeck Mills until they were closed by Imperial Chemical Industries in 1936, when he was moved to Ardeer, near Stevenson, Ayrshire where ICI had a large explosives site. He retired in 1959.

**William Napier Head, 4 Border, Private 3878 and Machine Gun Corps, Private 64674**



William was born in Ambleside in 1879 and In 1881 resided with his parents Henry (wine merchant) and Jemima Head at Gale Bank Cottage, Ambleside. By 1891 the family (now 9 children) lived at Park Field Cottage, Ambleside. In 1901 William, aged 22, lodged at Hincaster, and was a gardener, probably at Greenside, the home of Thomas Rogers Shaw, a retired bank manager. William married Harriet Sisson of Levens on 3 July 1907 at Heversham Church. In 1911 William and Harriet lived in Levens adjacent to Greengate House, where he was perhaps employed. William and Harriet were dedicated supporters of female suffrage, and Kendal and District Branch of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies recorded their address as Lane End Cottage, Levens.

William's Medal Index Card is uninformative, but his Army Service Record shows that he attested 24 May 1916, had one child, Marjorie born 1 March 1912. He was posted to France on 31 July 1916, where he joined 10th Coy. Machine Gun Corps on 17 February 1917. Later, on 27 April 1917, he received 21 days field punishment No.1 for 'leaving his gun position without permission'.

William was wounded on 5 July 1917 and sent first to 19 Casualty Clearing Station (known as 2/1st Northumbrian CCS, at Agnez-les-Duisans), and then on 15 July 1917 to the 1st Canadian General Hospital at Etaples. He was transferred back to England on 10 August 1917, where he was hospitalised for 78 days with a bullet wound to his forearm, and nephritis. Once recovered, he was sent back to France to join the 2nd Battalion MGC on 17 April 1918. He was again in a field hospital with boils on 9 June 1918 but later embarked for demobilization on 13 February 1919.

He returned to Levens where he played a full part in village life. Newspaper reports show him officiating at village sports, leading the village concert parties, serving on the Institute committee and representing them in billiards and whist competitions. He acted as Father Christmas at children's parties, was a member of the Levens Brotherhood (men's bible classes), and served as a Churchwarden and on St. John's Vestry Committee. He acted as treasurer to the bowling club, as well as serving as a Parish Councillor.

William died 5 July 1952 at Greystones, Levens. This bungalow, opposite the bus stop in the centre of Levens village, was built by William and Harriet between the wars. It was reputedly the first

dwelling built in Levens using the new technology of breezeblocks made from clinker, sand, cement and small stones. William, however, was a coal merchant and the breezeblocks at Greystones contained a substantial proportion of coal dust.

### **Hewett, George Henry, Border, Private 16329, and 6<sup>th</sup> Company, 43<sup>rd</sup> Garrison Battalion, Royal Fusiliers, Private 108531, and Labour Corps, Private 583135**

George was the son of Isaac and Barbara Hewett of 8 Causeway End, Levens, and was recorded there on both the 1891 and 1901 census, but in 1911 he was at Hale End Farm. He is listed on the Beetham War Memorial.

### **Hindson, John George, 8 Border, Lance-Corporal**

John was born in 1885, and in 1891, aged 6, he was with his parents George (a railway signalman) and Isabella Hindson, in Church Street, Tebay. In 1901 he was a 16-year-old 'powder mills labourer' living with his widowed mother at Helmside, Natland and in 1911 he was still a 'gunpowder worker' living with his mother but at 19 Lound Street, Kendal. His military records have not been traced. However, his Medal Index card states he departed for France 26 September 1915. John married Jane Cheeseman, widow of Arthur Cheesman (killed in action in 1916) in the first quarter of 1925 but died 25 October 1925 in Levens and is buried in Levens Churchyard.



## **Hird, Tom, 4 King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment, Corporal 2592**

Tom was the third child of Thomas Hird and Hannah (née Hutchinson) who in 1891 lived with his family at 1 Force Cottages. Thomas was a cooper (presumably at the gunpowder works), then aged 36 and born in Levens, Hannah was 35, born in Nether Staveley, and their children were Isabella (10) and Mary (8) (b. Gatebeck), Tom (5), Edward (3), Ernest (1), and William (7 months), all born in Levens. Tom attended Levens School, where the register records his date of birth as 4 March 1886.

In 1901 the family was still at 1 Force Cottages, with Tom now working as a labourer at the gunpowder works. The census ten years later shows Tom's parents, together with Ernest, Lily and an adopted child, William Brockbank Dawson still at Force Cottages. Tom, now aged 25 and a gardener, was a boarder in the household of Matthew Septimus Tyson, a stone mason, whose wife was a boarding-house keeper, at Gowrie, Eskdale, Cumberland.

Tom enlisted at Ulverston 8 September 1914, in the 4 King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment, number 2592, (although 200532 appears on some documents and both appear on one). He was appointed acting Lance Corporal on 7 November 1914, and acting Corporal on 16 May 1915. The *Westmorland Gazette* of 24 July 1915 reported:

Corporal T Hird 4th Battalion King's Own wounded and missing since the 14th June, eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. T Hird, Force Cottages, Levens, and on 7 August, Mr. and Mrs. T Hird Force Cottages, Levens have received a letter from their son Corporal T Hird 4th King's Own, saying he is wounded in the right leg and a prisoner in Germany. He was reported wounded and missing a fortnight ago.

The *Westmorland Gazette* 21 July 1917 further reported:

*A prisoner of war's wedding.* One of the five weddings which took place in the English church at Mürren, Switzerland on the 23rd May was that of Sergeant Tom Hird, eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. Hird of

Force Cottages, Sedgwick and Isabella Ellwood, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ellwood, Whitbarrow View, Levens. The Rev. E. Bulstrode performed the ceremony. The bride was dressed in a mole-coloured costume with a black hat trimmed with sea pinks and carried a bouquet of pink carnations presented by Capt. Stopart, the Swiss commandant. The bride was given away by Corporal Snowden, of the 13th Canadians and was attended by Miss May Russel who acted as bridesmaid, her dress being of pale blue silk and she wore a wreath of mountain flowers. Sergt. Hird was attended by Lance-Corporal Kingsworth who acted as best man. As the bridal parties entered the church to the accompaniment of Mendelssohn's wedding march and afterwards were entertained to a wedding buffet by Miss Hill, senior escort of the British Red Cross. Sergt. Hird has been a prisoner of war since the 15th June 1915. He was captured at the battle of Festubert and was badly wounded in the leg, but has since been transferred to Switzerland where he has quite recovered.

The local Berne newspaper reported, in its births, deaths and marriages columns, 'Bird Thomas, Korporal, Kings Own Royal Lancashire, zurzeit internierter Kriegsgefangener in Mürren, ledig, von Levens (England), mit Ellwood, Isabella, ledig von Levens.'

Tom and Isabella married in Switzerland through the agency of the Red Cross, who brought Isabella from Levens to Mürren, and by a 1914 agreement between the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Swiss government. POWs who were too seriously wounded or sick to continue in military service were to be repatriated through Switzerland, with the assistance of the Swiss Red Cross.

Further agreements eventually extended to sick or badly wounded POWs who might still be capable of military work away from the front line if they were repatriated. If repatriation could not be countenanced, the agreements allowed for internment in Switzerland aiding their recovery without furthering the war effort. Swiss doctors visited POW camps to select potential internees. Once selected, a POW was brought before a board comprising two Swiss Army doctors, two doctors from the country holding him captive, and a representative of the prisoner's own nation.

The 1921 report from the Joint War Committee of the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St John of Jerusalem 1921 recorded:

Each camp at Chateau d'Oex and Mürren had its Tailor's, Shoemaker's, and a Carpenter's shop. In addition, Mürren started a Printing Office and Watch Repairing Shop, and Chateau d'Oex a Bookbinder's Shop. Classes of instruction were held in French, German, Spanish and Italian. Classes were also formed for Shorthand, Typewriting, Book-keeping, First Aid, Toy making, Bead chain making, Electric wiring, Surveying, Wood-carving and Motor Mechanics.



*Prisoners of War outside the Jungfrau Hotel, Mürren. Image courtesy of [grandeguerre.icrc.org](http://grandeguerre.icrc.org).*

All these arrangements were inaugurated in 1916. The International Committee for the Red Cross confirmed that visits of relatives to prisoners of war interned in Switzerland were organized by the Joint Committee at the end of September 1916. From that date onwards parties of wives and mothers of interned prisoners (and in some cases fiancées), in the charge of an escort, left London every few weeks for

the camps at Chateau d' Oex, Mürren, and Leysin. Excellent arrangements were made for the housing and general comfort of the parties during the fortnight's stay, one of the interned officers in each camp acting as the Red Cross representative in charge. The men concerned were given special leave to join their relatives, and highly appreciated the privilege, as many grateful letters testify. There is no doubt that in many cases their health and morale were sensibly improved by the renewal of home associations.

Thirty-seven parties in all, averaging sixteen per party, were conducted to and from Switzerland between September 1916, and October 1917, when difficulties of transport, connected with military operations, interfered with regular despatch, though sympathetic consideration was shown for special cases. Over 600 women enjoyed the hospitality of the Red Cross. From the moment of leaving home they incurred no expense whatever, the only condition required being a formal application for their visit from the interned prisoner of war himself, and the establishment of satisfactory *bona fides*. The escorts gave their services freely, and were selected from VAD members or from men and women of goodwill and experience.



YMCA Manager with Mürren Repatriated Soldiers. Image courtesy of [grandeguerre.icrc.org](http://grandeguerre.icrc.org)



By the end of 1916, some 27,000 former POWs were interned in Switzerland, about half of whom were French, one third German and the remainder mostly British or Belgian. When the war ended, nearly 68,000 men, of all nationalities, had been interned in Switzerland.

Tom was repatriated on 9 December 1918. A record of 13 December 1918 from Paddington Military Hospital, states that Tom was granted two months returned POW leave from 12 December 1918 to 12 February 1919. His record contains a section in which the signatory deemed him fit for 'employment' but not for 'duty' or the 'command depot'. He was discharged from the army 12 March 1919, with his address given as Broad Stone House, Holme, Westmorland. Undoubtedly, on repatriation he would be under-nourished and unfit for active service, but being granted leave straight away, indicates he was not ill. This process was routine before demobilisation.

A letter of 22 January 1919 from a William Barratt of Keppelwray, Broughton in Furness, confirmed that Tom was in his employment in August 1914 and that he was 'prepared to offer him employment as a gardener immediately on his return to civil life'. Such a formal offer of employment was required to accompany the demobilisation form. A further letter dated 21 May 1920 relating to a 'King's Certificate' of disability granted Tom his discharge, giving his address as Winder Lodge, Cark in Cartmel.

By 1939 Tom and Isabella, with their son, Thomas William, aged 15, lived at 15 Regent Close, Cheadle, with Tom's occupation a 'private gardener'. Tom died in June 1955.

### **Hoggarth, Richard Ormrod, Grenadier Guards, Private 30224**

The *Westmorland Gazette* of 7 September 1918 reported: 'Mrs. Hoggarth, Levens Post Office, has received word that her son, Richard, private in the Grenadier Guards, is severely wounded in the thigh. He is in hospital at Lincoln. He has only been in France a few months.' Sarah Jane Hoggarth (née Ormrod) was Levens postmistress in 1911, but her daughters Annice (later Bell) and Emily (later Powley) were the only family members of her household on the census day, as Richard was visiting his uncle, William Cottam and family, at Nether Levens.

Richard Hoggarth was born in 1899 at Bay Horse, Ellel, Lancaster, the son of Lancelot Hoggarth and Sarah Jane. Richard's full military records have not been found. However, he enlisted on 12 March 1917, received British and Victory medals and was discharged from the army on 30 July 1919 with 'wounds', when his address was 'The Post Office, Levens'. He married Mary Janet Rogerson in 1930, lived in Kendal in 1939 and died on 26 July 1962 in Prescott, Lancashire.

## **Holme, A.**

The *Westmorland Gazette* of 12 September 1914 recorded 'A. Holme of Heaves' among Levens soldiers 'now serving, or are about to serve'. In 1911, an Arthur Holme aged 18 and born at Preston Richard, was a horseman for Edward Powley at Greengate Farm, Levens. No further information has come to light.

## **Holme, John, Royal Field Artillery, Private 154560**

John gave his address as Levens Post Office when he attested on 25 January 1916 and joined the Royal Field Artillery. This address is the only discernible link with Levens, but, as shown on the 1911 census, Mrs. Hoggarth, the postmistress, occasionally took in lodgers. John was aged 27 years 9 months at that time, a joiner and wheelwright who married Maud May Robinson at St Mary's Church, Staveley in Cartmel, on 13 October 1914. His next of kin was given as his father Henry Holme of Graythwaite but, later crossed out and the address of Chapel House, Newby Bridge added, which may indicate Maud's address.

John's military records are damaged; he was probably a wheelwright in the RFA posted to 29 Divisional Ammunition Column on 30 December 1916. A damaged casualty form shows no injuries detailed on the surviving part. In June 1917 he had 5 days' pay docked for failing to obey a routine order, but no detail is given. A travel permit of October 1917 gave his destination as Newby Bridge. He was later given leave from 21 October to 11 November 1918 'via Calais', was posted to Southern DAC in March 1919 and given further leave 'from Calais' from 29 April 1919 to 13 May 1919. Interestingly, John

was sent from B. Gladbach, Germany to the U.K. for demobilisation on 10 October 1919.

### **James, John, Royal Field Artillery, Private**



John was born in Levens on 16 April 1891. In 1901, aged nine, he lived with his parents Isaac, an agricultural labourer, and Elizabeth James (née Parkinson), and his siblings, Ethel (12), William (6) and James (1) at Scarbank. By 1911 John was a horseman, living in at Low and Middle Foulshaw Farms. John married Mary Nelson in 1921 and they lived at Smithy Cottage, Heversham, where they were still registered in 1939. John was then a horseman, Mary a housewife. There were at least two daughters, Gladys (b. 1921), Maureen (later Dickinson) (b.1938) plus one other person redacted,

John was a brother of William James, another R.F.A. driver. The *Westmorland Gazette* of 9 January 1915 reported their joint enlistment 'Since the 31<sup>st</sup> of last month the following have enlisted in Kitchener's Army at the Kendal recruiting office, Town Hall: - [includes] John James and William James, Levens, R.F.A. drivers.'

The only military records found for John is a Border Regiment 'short service' form, where 'Border Regiment' has been scored through and replaced with a rubber stamp 'West Lancs. Div. Clearing Hospital,

R.A.M.C.'. This record, dated 23 November 1914, confirmed he was a farm servant, born in Beathwaite Green, 5 feet 4 inches tall, in good health and aged 22 years 7 months. He was 'at home' from 23 November to 24 January 1915, when he was discharged under paragraph 392 (iii) a of the King's Regulations. No explanation was in the record. However, the *Westmorland Gazette* of 3 June 1916 stated, 'Private John James, Levens, Cameronians wounded.' Is this John James the same man? The above photograph is from that article. Might there be more than one person involved? We may never know.

### **James, William, Royal Field Artillery, Private 70755**

In 1901 William, aged 6, lived with his parents Isaac, an agricultural labourer, and Elizabeth James (née Parkinson), and his siblings, Ethel (12), John (9) and James (1) at Scarbank, Levens. By 1911 William was a 16-year-old farm servant with John and Louisa Jane Bennett at Flodder Hall, Lyth. William attested at Kendal Town Hall on 7 January 1915, alongside his brother John, joining the Royal Field Artillery. His medical record gave his height as 5' 4", weight 131 lb. and expanded chest measurement 36½". He was 20 years 6 months, described himself as a farm hand, and gave his address as 'The Bungalow, Levens', his father Isaac's residence. 'The Bungalow' was the original boys' school on Church Road, which was converted to a dwelling and then stood where Church Close was subsequently built.

William was posted as a driver to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Section, 20th Divisional Ammunition Column on 17 January 1915, disembarking at Le Havre on 24 July 1915. Surviving scraps of his service record show that he suffered from cellulitis in his right foot in November 1915, and was treated at the 61<sup>st</sup> Field Ambulance Station. He was granted ten days home leave from 15 January 1917. He was admitted to 30<sup>th</sup> Casualty Clearing Station with impetigo in May 1918, returning to duty on 19 May. He was given 14 days UK leave on 27 December 1918 and demobilised in January 1919 to 'Class Z' Army Reserve, with his final date of army service 31 March 1920. Service medal records show that he was still at 'The Bungalow' in September 1921.

William married Dinah Scott in the December quarter of 1920. After the war he worked at the Gatebeck Gunpowder works, then owned by I.C.I. At some stage he tenanted Holly Bank Cottage,

Levens, from the Pennington family of Holly Bank, purchasing the cottage as sitting tenant in August 1931. The Gatebeck works closed in 1936, but William did not move with many of the workforce to the new works at Ardeer, Ayrshire, but instead became the gardener at Box Tree, Levens, working for the Misses Baker and the Rothwell family. In 1939 his occupation was 'market gardener and private services', and Dinah's was 'Unpaid domestic duties'.

### **Knowles, Frederick Herbert**

The *Westmorland Gazette* of 12 September 1914 named F. Knowles of Force Cottages, , as 'now serving, or about to serve'. In 1901 Frederick, aged 6, was living at Force Cottages with his parents, Thomas and Jane Ellen, two of their children, two 'nurse children' each aged one, and a boarder. By 1911 Frederick, aged 18, was a reed maker, still living with his parents and three siblings in the same cottage. His military service was short-lived, as he was deemed not physically fit to be a soldier. Frederick's brother Leo Nicholas was killed during the war and is commemorated on the Levens War Memorial.

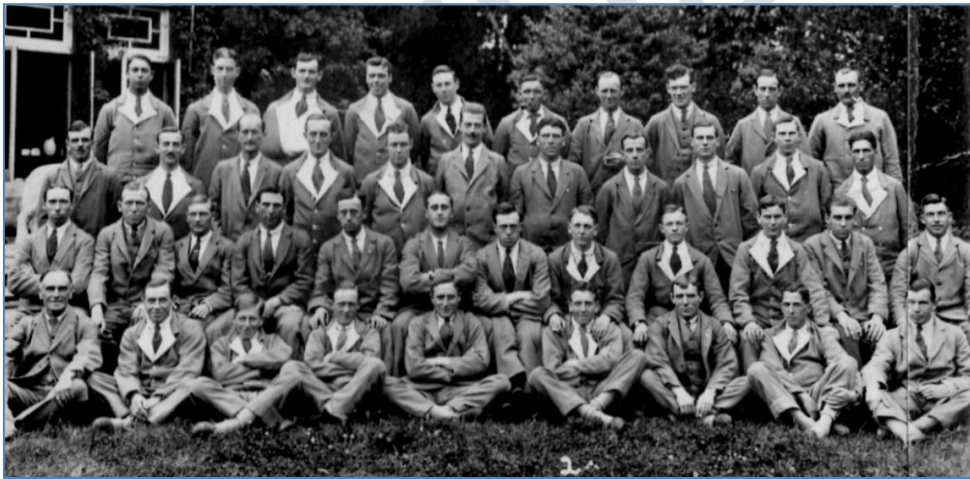
### **Lancaster, Henry, 4 Border, Private 202932**

Henry was born 28 April 1896 and baptised at St. John's, Levens, on 14 June 1896. His parents were Henry and Margaret (née Hudson) Lancaster of Frosthwaite Farm, Levens. In 1901 Henry was at Frosthwaite with his parents and siblings and by 1911 was working for his father at Frosthwaite. In the interim he attended Levens School. When he attested, on 12 December 1915, he was 19 years 9 months old. From this date he was in the Army Reserve, and a horseman at College Green farm. His surviving attestation is duplicated, indicating both a member of 'Class B, Army Reserve' and 'Cumb & Westm', with further illegible letters implying that he was a member of the Cumberland & Westmorland Yeomanry.

He enlisted on 22 January 1917, with his father Henry, of Frosthwaite farm, Levens, given as next of kin. From 31 May 1917 he was in France 'for record purposes' with 1 and 5 Border, and from 16 June with 11 Border. A partly illegible record, dated 26 January 1918,

states that he was court-martialled for desertion 'losing by neglect Government Property'. He was sentenced to five years 'P.S.' and stoppages of 15s 5d by Brigadier-General C.A. Blacklock, Commander, 97<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade. An Army (Suspension of Sentence) Act notice of 12 February 1918 confirmed that the sentence would be reviewed on 12 May 1918. Henry returned from France 14 August 1918 but remained aggrieved by the court martial for the rest of his days. The 'Government Property' he lost was his rifle, which he dropped when shot in the shoulder, and was unable to pick it up because of his wound. He was in hospital on the south coast receiving treatment for that injury, but his military record makes no mention of this. Consideration of his sentence was formally delayed, first until 12 November 1918, then until 12 February 1919, but, in the meantime, on 23 January 1919, the sentence was remitted. Henry was demobilized to Frosthwaite on 26 January 1919 with his record marked 'Class Z'.

Henry returned to Levens and continued farming. He married Mary Duckett in 1938 and they had two children. By 1939 they were



*Henry Lancaster front row, second left. The photograph, courtesy of Dorothy Cornthwaite, Henry's daughter, shows Henry in hospital uniform somewhere on the south coast.*

farming Low Sizergh, with the nearby Frosthwaite farmed by Henry senior and subsequently by Henry's brother, Bill. Henry died in 1971 at Hawesrigg, Prizet.

**Leeson, F.**

The *Westmorland Gazette* of 12 September 1914 named F. Leeson of Levens Bothy, as 'now serving, or are about to serve'. His address indicates that he was a gardener at Levens Hall but this information proved insufficient to trace his military records.

**Mallinson, Frederick, 11 Border, Private 4978**

*Image courtesy of Mrs. K. Davidson.*

Frederick was born in Levens on 30 July 1894, a son of Robert and Mary Jane Mallinson (née Hogg) of Rusmickle, Lyth, but formerly of Causeway End in Levens. He attended Levens School and in 1901 the

family was living at Cinderbarrow Cottage. He was one of a family of seven. In 1911 He enlisted in 11 Border (Lonsdales) and was taken prisoner in November 1916. The *Westmorland Gazette* of 30 December 1916 reported, 'Mallinson Pte. Fred Border Regt. was on the 18th November reported missing. His mother received a post card from him saying that he was a prisoner of war in Germany and was wounded in the stomach, but that he was going on well.'

A transcript of Fred's report of his imprisonment in The National Archives reads:

Mallinson, Frederick, Private, No. 24690, Border Regiment, Rusmickle Farm, Lyth, Westmorland.

Place and Date of Capture: Grandcourt, 18 November 1916

Nature of Wound if any: Rifle wound in body

I was taken prisoner at Grandcourt, 18 November 1916, by myself. I was taken to a church just behind the lines, where I found other prisoners. I stayed in the church two days. A German Red Cross man put on my own field-dressing on my wound - he seemed to do it properly. My jack-knife was taken away, but not my pay-book or money. I, personally, got no food because I was unable to get up to get it. Some soup was brought in and the other men had it. We had to lie on the floor with no covering at all. There were about 30 prisoners there all told, all British.

On 20<sup>th</sup> inst., I left this church and marched on, I don't know where, and stayed one night in some church, prior to getting to Cambrai Hospital.

I stayed there one night, and received proper medical attention and food, and was well treated.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> inst., we left Cambrai for Germany. There was a party of about 21 British, the rest on the train were Germans. It was a Red Cross train, and we were quite well treated on the journey.

We arrived at Wesel on the 24<sup>th</sup> inst. I was put in hospital there where I remained three weeks. I was put in a hut with the other 20 men - all wounded. There were proper beds, and blankets, which were quite clean. My wound was dressed when I got there, but was never again looked at during the three weeks I was there. Only the very bad cases out of the 21 were attended to, the others were



neglected, like myself. Food was quite good, and there was a stove in the hut, which kept it warm.

After I had been there two days, I was given a postcard to write home. I wrote to my home address, and I think it was received safely. I also wrote a letter and another postcard from Wesel. The letter reached home, but I do not know about the card, nor do I know how long they took. I left Wesel about 14<sup>th</sup> December 1916.

I was taken to Munster I, with two others. My wounds were still bad, and I do not know why I was removed.

At Munster I was put in Lager I, and remained there until 18<sup>th</sup> February 1917. While there I got no treatment at all for my wound, except what our men could give me. It recovered there.

I used to go out about three days a week to work, but received no pay. It was general fatigue work, and not very hard. We were very badly fed, and I received my first parcel there. I received about eight altogether while I was there, and I lived on them. These were food parcels, but contained no clothes. I got an overcoat from the Germans, but no other clothes. My parcels were not pilfered, they were censored in my presence, and nothing was taken. We were allowed to have and keep the tins at that time, but they looked at and kept all paper and string which they found in our parcels. I received my first letter from home at Munster.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> February 1917 I was sent out on kommando by myself to Kommando 78, a sawmill on the outskirts of Gladbeck. This was two hours train journey from Munster. There were about 14 British and 22 French there when I got there. I remained there until about the 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1917.

We were put into a loft over a stable, separated from the French. It was very crowded, dirty and full of fleas. There were beds and bedclothes, which were also very dirty. We were locked in at nights, and it was lit up until about 9.30 p.m. We had to eat in this loft as well as sleep there. There was a latrine, which was very dirty and bad smelling.

The food was bad, but parcels came fairly regularly. Our parcels were not censored at Munster but at the kommando. We used to receive all the contents. The work was heavy, carrying logs of trees about, and other work in the sawmill. The hours were from 6.30 a.m. to 6.15 p.m., with spells of  $\frac{1}{4}$  hour at 9 a.m., 1 hour for dinner

and ¼ at 4 p.m. We were kept very hard at it, and if a man refused to work he would be knocked about by the guards with their rifles, or stood to attention for some hours – sometimes from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Two of the men at one time were struck and knocked unconscious for a time. Men were often badly bruised. If we worked we were left alone, but we were kept hard at it all the time. We worked six days a week, and were not given any liberty in the town. There were civilian workers in the sawmill as well as ourselves. They were all right to us, but the master of the sawmill used to knock us about. We received 90 pf a day pay, which was paid us very regularly. There was no canteen, but we could buy cigarettes and lemonade by ordering through the orderly. We were allowed four postcards and two letters a month. I received letters from home fairly regularly here; they were censored at Munster. This was a pretty bad kommando, but nothing like the mines. The accommodation was scanty and dirty, but it was dry and warm. The work was hard and long, but not unhealthy. At first, if a man reported sick he would be made to work, but later, when this was done, we effected a reprisal by refusing to work, and this had a good effect. There were two doctors, and they treated us fairly.

About April 2, 1917, I was removed, with ten British and two French, to another kommando. This was No. 66, situated at Hafen, close to Barop. This was a Munster kommando, and I remained there until I escaped on October 6<sup>th</sup> 1918.

This was a better kommando at first, but it got worse. We were here put all in one house, where we stayed all the time, six in a room. There were proper beds and bedclothes, and it was fairly clean. The house was in a proper condition, and was in the lager which was wired round. This accommodation was better than on the other kommandos. The food was bad, but we got our parcels regularly, except for the first six weeks, when they were held up. They kept back the tins here. The parcels were censored at the kommando, and the first lot that came had been pilfered, and about half the contents taken. I received two parcels of clothes at Hafen. We were given jackets by the Germans, that is, overalls to wear over our clothes to work in. The work here was the same as before, same hours, and we were kept hard at it. The treatment here was slightly better. There was a doctor in the town we used to go and see when we reported

sick, but he treated us very roughly. I had a bad abscess on my leg; he opened it and sent me straight back to work. The pay here was a mark a day. We were allowed to buy only cigarettes, but no food. We worked six days a week, but had no religious services, either here or at Gladbeck. I was not in a hospital at Gladbeck or here. I never did any work at munitions, simply the usual work at the sawmill. I don't know the names of any of the doctors or the commandant, or other officers at the camps. The facilities for washing both our clothes and ourselves were very bad. We had dishes to wash in, and were allowed one bath a week. We had to wash our own clothes and bedclothes.

At Hafen, Private Rigley, of the Manchester Regiment, broke his arm when at work. He went to the doctor in the town, whom either did not set it at all or set it very badly. He was given no splint, but only a bandage. It was very bad for some weeks, and was very much bent, and did not get set straight. He had great pain with it, and it was very unskilfully attended to. I do not know the doctor's name.

The discipline was not very severe, and the usual punishment was "standing to attention." There was a difference between the treatment of the French and British prisoners; the French were better treated. They were given all the easier jobs, but we got on all right together, however.

Our bread came from Berne; bread in the winter and biscuits in the summer. It came regularly, and the contents were usually in good condition, but sometimes the bread was mouldy. I don't think the bread parcels were pilfered.

I consider the treatment at Hafen was worse at the end of my time there than at the beginning. Food was worse, and we were made to work harder. We had to keep our rooms clean ourselves, and we were not allowed any liberty in the town. I was kept in the lager the whole 18 months I was there – within the wire. There were 10ft. boards, and four rows of wire above that. The conditions in the winter were worse than in the summer. We had to work wet or fine, and there were no means for drying our clothes. If they got wet they had to remain wet until they dried naturally.

I escaped on the 6<sup>th</sup> October 1918 with one other man – Private Smith, of the Canadian Mounted Rifles. We took six days to get to Holland.

Frederick returned to south Westmorland and in 1925 married Alice Marion Butterfield of Levens. They had three children; Dorothy, James and Phillipson. In 1939 they were farming Beck Head Farm, Witherslack. Frederick died in the September quarter of 1978. His brother Robert Henry Mallinson died in the war and is honoured on Levens War Memorial.

### **Mallinson, John, Royal Garrison Artillery, Private**

John, like Frederick, was the son of Robert and Mary Mallinson of Rusmickle, Lyth and attended Levens School. He enlisted in the Royal Garrison Artillery and was later gassed. John's family relate that he endured an extremely painful blister on his arm, which, upon his discharge from military service, hindered his farm work, especially when ploughing. However, the Army Pensions Board deemed his capability of ploughing using one arm, constituted a valid reason to refuse a pension. John's service records have not been found.

### **Nunns, W.**

The *Westmorland Gazette* of 12 September 1914 listed W. Nunns of Brettargh Holt, among those 'now serving, or are about to serve'. This information proved insufficient to trace his military record or other details.

### **Ormrod, Sydney, Despatch Rider/Gunner, Royal Garrison Artillery, 98074**

Sydney Ormrod was born 14 September 1888, at Low Foulshaw, his parents' farm. He married Mary Elizabeth Proctor on 8 January 1913 at St Thomas' Church, Milnthorpe. Sydney served in the Royal Garrison Artillery 202 siege battery from 1914 to 1920, as a Despatch Rider/Gunner, CE 98074. The RGA's 202<sup>nd</sup> Battery became part of 65

Brigade, 2<sup>nd</sup> Army in 1918. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Army was active in the Northern sector from around Armentières to a position north of Ypres. He was



*Image courtesy of Mr. & Mrs. Ian. Ormrod.*

wounded, sustaining just the loss of part of one finger and was awarded the Victory Medal, British War Medal and the Meritorious Service Medal.

Returning to Levens in 1920 Sydney farmed, firstly at Low Foulshaw Farm and later, from the 1930s, at Nichols Wood Farm, Witherslack. He retired in 1957 and died on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1963.

**Powley, John, Border, Private 6889, Royal Field Artillery, Gunner 40778, Machine Gun Corps, Gunner 40778 and 13 Tank Corps, Gunner 300417**

John Powley was 19 years one month old when he enlisted on 4 December 1902 for three years' service with the Border Regiment in Carlisle. However, he purchased his discharge for £10 after only 21 days service. He enlisted again on 9 January 1906 at Lancaster in the

Royal Field Artillery, with whom he served until 9 January 1912, when he was posted to the General Reserve. The form he signed in 1906 gave his address as 'Kildare,' and his unit as 141 Battery R.F.A. John's medal card records three regiments for him: Royal Field Artillery, Gunner, Machine Gun Corps, Gunner and Tank Corps Private. He was eventually mobilised from the General Reserve on 8 September 1914 and posted to Anti-Aircraft duties. His medical report stated that he was 5'9" tall, weighed 159 lbs, chest 39", blue eyes and brown hair. Most of his military records are not fully legible, but they confirm his service as; transferred to 'C' Company, Heavy Branch Machine Gun Corps (Tanks) in the field (date not known), wounded 24 April 1917 (gun-shot wound back and right buttock), sent to U.K. until 31 January 1918. He transferred again to the Tank Corps and was wounded 8 August 1918 during the Battle of Amiens (both legs).

John was discharged 'surplus to requirements' on 23 January 1919 and given a reference: 'Good conduct, honest, hardworking'. He was issued with a travel identity form on 30 December 1918, when he confirmed his address as Greengate Farm, Levens, and that he was a member of the Tank Corps.

Tanks were first used at Flers in September 1916 during the Battle of the Somme. The six tank companies were then grouped as the Heavy Branch of the Machine Gun Corps (MGC). In November 1916 the eight companies now in existence were each expanded to form battalions lettered A to H, with another seven battalions, I to O, formed by January 1918. On 28 July 1917 the Heavy Branch was separated from the rest of the MGC and given official status as the Tank Corps. At the beginning of 1918 fifteen Battalion numbers replaced the existing letters. John's MGC involvement suggests he may have been involved with tanks from the outset, although the Machine Gun Corps letter that indicates when and with which Heavy Branch he served is illegible.

The *Westmorland Gazette* of 24 August 1918 reported:

POWLEY, Gunner John. Mr and Mrs Powley, Greengate Farm, Levens, have received word that their nephew, Gunner J. Powley, R.F.A. is wounded in both legs and gassed. When war broke out, he

was a reservist engaged in farm work in Canada. He was recalled to the colours and is now wounded for the third time.

It appears that John had been employed on Edward Smith's farm near Crystal City, Manitoba, to which he returned in January 1920. He received the 1914 Star, British War Medal, and Victory Medal.

## **Postlethwaite, Robert Allan, 1 Newfoundland**

The *Westmorland Gazette* of 6 November 1915 stated:

A Postlethwaite of Grand Falls, Newfoundland, late gardener of Levens Hall, has joined the 1st Newfoundland Regiment now on its way to this country. His brother Richard Postlethwaite of Johannesburg, South Africa also came over with the South African infantry. He served through the campaign in German South West Africa.

Robert was born in Carnforth, Lancashire on 31 December 1887. In 1901, aged 13, he was living with his grandparents Robert and Elizabeth Postlethwaite on Main Street, Levens, next door but one to the Royal Oak inn.

After the war there are several references to Robert and his family in shipping lists as they travelled between Newfoundland and Cumbria. Whenever a destination address was given it was usually 28 Nether Street, Kendal and Robert was described as a papermaker. Robert aged 36, his wife Elizabeth aged 38 and their son Allan aged 4 sailed to Botwood, Canada on 6 August 1924. On 20 June 1927 Robert returned alone from Botwood to Purfleet, yet on 10 August that year the whole family sailed back to Botwood from Glasgow. Robert returned alone to Tilbury on 19 July 1930 from Botwood and was then described as a 'roller grinder'. Again, on 26 August 1934 it is Robert alone who sailed from London to Botwood. On 28 August 1937 Robert and Elizabeth return from Botwood and on 1 July 1951 Robert alone returns from St. Johns into Liverpool with his stated destination 7 Helme Drive, Kendal and his occupation 'roller grinder'. The purpose of his travel remains unknown. He was then 63.

## **Postlethwaite, Richard of Johannesburg**

[See also Robert Postlethwaite above]

In 1896 Mrs. Postlethwaite sailed from Southampton to Cape Town with her three sons, William aged 11, Robert aged 8 and Richard aged 1. The manifest gives her maiden name as Hewitt. A William Postlethwaite married Isabella Hewitt in the Kendal registration area in the June quarter 1884. This information, however, has been insufficient to find Richard's military service records.

## **Proctor, John, 8 Border, Sergeant**

A John Proctor was aged 6 months in 1891 in the household of his parents Joshua (general labourer) and Jane in Leasgill. In 1901 the details, save for ages, are the same, though Joshua was also recorded as a sexton. In 1911 John was a farm labourer for Prickett Bros., Lane End, Levens. His service records, however, cannot be traced. There are several Medal Index Cards for 'John Procter' in Border regiments, but none are for a Sergeant.

## **Purvis, T., 1 Border, Private 5429**

T. Purvis of Brettargh Holt, Levens was listed by the *Westmorland Gazette* of 12 September 1914 among those 'now serving, or are about to serve'. No definitive military record has been found, but there are three references to a T. Purvis, Private 5429 of 1 Border. The first is the wounded list for the Mediterranean dated 2 October 1915, the second the war list of 10 December 1917 where he is reported as missing, and the third the CWGC noting his death on 26 October 1917. CWGC record him as 2 Border and give his parents as Thomas and Annie of Willington Quay, Northumberland. There is however, a second T. Purvis in the Border Regiment. He was Corporal, 11256, who survived the war. Other T Purvis medal records exist, but none have full military service records. The true identity of the Brettargh Holt gardener remains problematical.



## **Rhodes, L., 7 Border, Private**

The *Westmorland Gazette* of 12 September 1914 listed L. Rhodes of Low Levens as among those 'now serving, or are about to serve'. The 5 December issue gave a list of the men from Witherslack and Meathop who were in the services, including a Lascelles Rhodes, who joined 7 Border. Military and other records, however, fail to identify him with certainty. In 1901 Lascelles Rhodes aged 4, born in Cape Colony, lived with his mother, Florence, and his brother Wynn, at Halecat Lodge, Witherslack. In 1911 a Lascelles Rhodes, born in Cape Colony, was a 14-year-old schoolboy at Kendal Grammar school and an Arthur Lascelles Rhodes died at Ivyhowe, Lindale on 26 February 1964.

## **Ridding, T.**

T. Ridding of Levens Bothy was another of those listed in the *Westmorland Gazette* of 12 September 1914 as 'now serving, or are about to serve'. However, there was no 'T' Ridding on the 1911 census for Levens, but there is a Richard Ridding, aged 20, a journeyman domestic gardener, born in Finsthwaite, Lancashire, living at Levens Bothy. A 'J. Ridding' was also reported as the third prize winner in the Levens Institute's whist drive in January 1911.

CWGC lists a 'RIDDING, RICHARD, Service Number 13383, Died 10/08/1916, Aged 26, "B" Coy. 9th Bn. Northumberland Fusiliers, Son of Thomas and Elizabeth Ridding, of Finsthwaite, Newby Bridge, Lancs.' The *Westmorland Gazette* of 22 July 1916 has a photograph which states, 'J. Ridding of Levens, killed in action'. Were T and J one and the same as Richard?

## **Robinson (=Lishman), James 117<sup>th</sup> Battery, 27<sup>th</sup> Brigade, Royal Field Artillery, Gunner 59248**

James Lishman, was born in Cartmel in 1887, but was adopted (informally?) by George and Elizabeth Robinson, who in 1891 were living at Hill Top, Beathwaite Green, where George was a saltpetre refiner, presumably at the Sedgwick Gunpowder works. By 1901 the

family were in Burton-in-Kendal and there was no further Levens connection.

**Robinson, John Edward, The Queen's Regiment, Private 5741**

John, the son of Thomas and Hannah Robinson, was baptised in Levens on 25 August 1895. By 1901 the family were in Burton-in-Kendal and there was no further Levens connection.

**Robinson, William, Lance Corporal, Border Regiment, 15288**

William was a brother of John Edward Robinson (above) and was born in Levens on 6 August 1896. There was no further Levens connection beyond 1901.

**Rockliffe, George, Machine Gun Corps, Sergeant 15165**

George declared on enlistment that he was born in 1884 at Cartmel, was a farm servant who resided with his father William Rockliffe at Nelson Square, Levens. In 1901 he was lived with his parents, William and Annie (née Leather) at 3 Park View, Milnthorpe, together with his siblings Joseph Leather (b. Milnthorpe 1887), Mary E. (Cartmel 1890), William (Cartmel 1892), Sam (Cartmel 1896) and Thomas F. (Milnthorpe 1900). A further brother, Septimus, was born in Levens in 1902.

George enlisted on 14 September 1914 into the Border Regiment but, his medical history reveals that he was discharged on 14 November 1914 as 'not being likely to become an efficient soldier - Para. 392(iii)(e) King's Regulations'. This form, signed by H.R. Brander 'Col. Commanding 8<sup>th</sup> Border regiment', was addressed from Codford St. Mary, on Salisbury Plain. The records failed to disclose why he was deemed unfit for service. It may be that, as a volunteer, and after further investigation, George's past behaviour was deemed unsuitable. He was an inveterate poacher with a criminal record. In 1908, aged 14, the Milnthorpe Magistrates sent him to the Akbar Nautical Training

School for Boys at Heswall, Cheshire. He had twice stolen cash, a total of 19s. 9d. His father, William Rockliffe, when ordered to pay 2s. per



*Private George Rockliffe. Image courtesy of Mr. K. Rockliffe.*

week for George's maintenance at the school, commented he would, 'get his son cared for at less cost than at home'. Later, following conscription, George served with distinction in the Machine Gun Corps. He was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal, with the *London Gazette* of 4 March 1918 citing him 'for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. After his officer and sergeant had been wounded, he held his position in the front line for two days under heavy shelling. His cheerfulness and good example were the means of keeping his detachment in action under most difficult conditions'. George was then a Lance Corporal, but later was promoted to Sergeant. The *Westmorland Gazette* of 16 November 1918 stated:

ROCKLIFFE, Sergt. G., D.C.M. - Mr. and Mrs. Rockliffe, Nelson Square, Levens, received official notice on Tuesday from the Machine Gun Corps Record Office that their son George had been

admitted to the 83<sup>rd</sup> General Hospital, Boulogne, suffering from gunshot wound in the left hand and knée (severe). He was slightly wounded and in hospital in France early in September last. Sergt. Rockliffe, who won his D.C.M. for conspicuous bravery last year, is one of five brothers serving in his Majesty's forces.

George was discharged on 17 January 1919 under Kings Regulations 392 (xvi), which translates as, 'no longer physically fit for war service, by reason of wounds'. He received a Silver War Badge - a small circular silver lapel badge bearing the Royal Cypher as a visible mark



*The promoted Corporal George Rockliffe. Image courtesy of Mr. K. Rockliffe.*

of his honourable discharge, and also the King's Certificate of Honourable Discharge - a large parchment document, meant for framing. He was 24 years and 8 months at the time. George served with 106 Company, in the 35th Division. His DCM almost certainly relates to his gallantry during the Second Battle of Passchendaele.

After the war George moved to Manchester where he worked in a furniture factory, though much hampered by the loss of his knee cap.

He married twice and regularly returned to Levens to visit his family in Nelson Square.

### **Rockliffe, Sam, 8 Border, Private 14899 and Royal Field Artillery, Lance Corporal 71125**

S. (Sam) Rockliffe, George's brother, was one of the soldiers named in *The Westmorland Gazette* of 12 September 1914 as 'now serving, or are about to serve' In 1911, aged 15, Sam, then a gardener, resided with his family at Park Road, Milnthorpe. It is unclear when the family moved to Levens, save that it was before 1914 and that they lived in one of the cottages at Nelson Square, all of which belonged to Elizabeth Rockliffe, William's mother and Sam's grandmother. She died on 7 July 1918 at Nelson Square.

Sam's military records are scant. He was posted to France on 16 September 1915, was reported 'sick' and on 21 April 1916 was discharged as 'no longer physically fit for war service'. He received the Victory, British and 1915 Star medals. The Rockliffe family believe that he was a sniper during the war. Later he worked as a gardener at Sizergh Castle and then at the Belsfield Hotel in Bowness, where he lived in the hotel lodge.

### **Rockliffe, Thomas Frederick, Machine Gun Corps, Private 154858 and Military Police**

Thomas was the brother of George and Sam Rockliffe, living at Nelson square, Levens when he enlisted. He was discharged from the army on 23 December 1918. The only military record mentions him as a recipient of the Victory Medal while a private in the Machine Gun Corps. His family, however, relate that he was a Military Policeman. As a schoolboy aged 11 in 1911 he lived with his parents and family at Park Road, Milnthorpe.

After the war Thomas lived in Kendal where he died aged 46 and was buried in Parkside Road Cemetery. He married twice and with his first wife had a daughter, Clara, who lived with Mary Rockliffe in Nelson Square. A younger daughter, Patricia, was born to

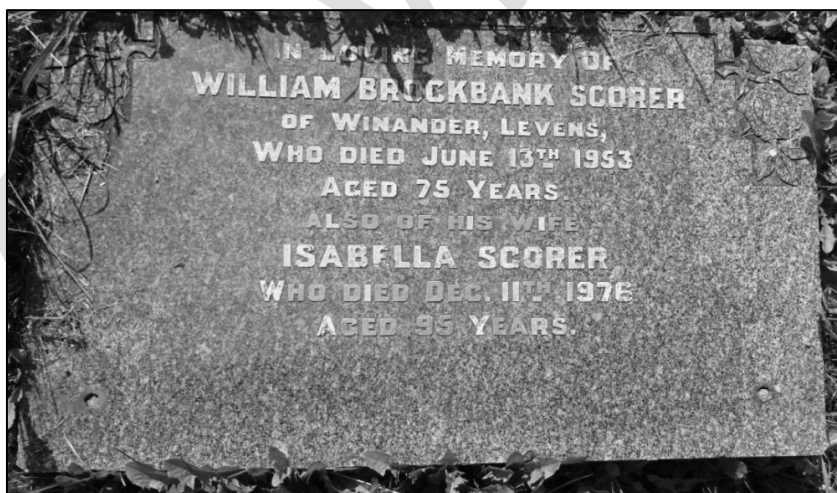
his second wife Lottie Tedcastle. Thomas had various jobs in Kendal, his last being in Insurance.

## Scarborough, John

John, born in Beetham in May 1869, was one of the two reserve soldiers from Levens named by The *Westmorland Gazette* of 12 September 1914 as 'serving or about to serve'. John was stepfather to Malcolm Harrison, who was killed in the war and is commemorated on Levens War Memorial. He married Malcolm's mother, Margaret Anne (Annie) Harrison on 23 February 1913 in Kendal. John and Annie had a son Christopher, born on 6 May 1914. John's military records have not been found and he died in 1938.

## Scorer, William Brockbank, Corporal, Royal Engineers, 26568

William attested on 6 June 1916, aged 38 and two months. His address was then 56 Main Street, Windermere, and he was a market gardener.



The attestation was countersigned by a Major of the Road Troops Royal Engineers at Aldershot on 18 May 1917, but no other military document has been found. William came to live in Levens before 1939 and died at Winander, Levens on 11 June 1953, aged 75. William and

his wife Isabella (the sister of Tom Hird, see above), married in the June quarter 1908 and are buried in Levens churchyard. She died 11 December 1976 aged 95.

### **Sisson, James**

The *Westmorland Gazette* of 12 September 1914 stated, 'the following from Levens parish are now serving, or are about to serve'. James is listed as a Territorial soldier but no further details are available.

### **Slingsby, Henry Laurence, 2 King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, Captain and 10 Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, Adjutant**

The *Westmorland Gazette* of 5 December 1914 stated: 'Lieut. Lawrence Slingsby of Whitbarrow Lodge, and the Quartermaster are the only two officers who are unwounded of the K.O.Y.L.I. This regiment has seen most severe fighting and has lost a large proportion of their men since they went to the front on August 14<sup>th</sup>'.

The Slingsby family lived in the Levens area for many years, including at Lawrence Brow and Whitbarrow Lodge. See the book *Beetham Soldiers* for a short history.

### **Oswald Stabler, King's Liverpool Regiment, Private 70668 and Labour Corps, Private 46581**

Oswald Stabler was born 27 November 1875, the youngest son of George Stabler the headteacher at Levens School. In 1911 he was recorded as resident at 147 Meadow Street, Moss Side, South Manchester, a boarder in the household of Septimus Mitchell and his family. He was a student land agent and surveyor. His attestation dated 11 December 1915 record him as single, aged 40, living at 96 Lloyd St., Chorlton-on-Medlock. A barely discernible address, 71 Wilmslow Road, Didsbury, is scribbled in a corner of one of the forms, which was the address of his brother Edgar. Oswald was mobilised on



11 April 1916 and then allocated to the Army Reserve, before being remobilized on 20 February 1917. Six days later he was posted to France, travelling from Folkestone to Boulogne on 14 March. Oswald served first in the 13th Labour Company of the Kings Liverpool Regiment (no. 70668), and from thence into the 'field' on 21 April 1917. He appears to have been hospitalised almost immediately (reason unknown) for a couple of days and returned to duty on 29 April. He was transferred to the 78th Company of the Labour Corps (no. 46581) on 13 May 1917.

Oswald was demobilised on 17 March 1919 with the rank of Private. His form bears the remark 'over 41', presumably the reason for his discharge. Discharged at Wahn, Germany he signed the 'Disability Statement' that he was not suffering any disability owing to his military service. He subsequently applied for the Victory and the British campaign medals. Having stated that he suffered no disability, reports after his return to Levens stress his eccentricity, and the belief that he had been invalided out of the army owing to shell-shock, a view echoed in the memories of a family who were closely associated with Edgar Stabler who revealed that 'Oswald returned from the war mentally battered and became a recluse'. Perhaps the war was not the whole cause, nor the whole story. After the war Oswald was a winner in many categories at the Levens Horticultural Society shows, and was secretary to the Levens and Sedgwick ex-servicemen's re-unions. He inherited South View, Levens from his parents and lived there until his death in 1956.



## Thomson, Christopher Gardner, 4 Border, Captain

Christopher Gardner Thomson was always known as 'Kit' both to his family and others. He was probably born in Kendal but after war service became a respected member of the Levens community. He was born 9 March 1895 and started his schooling at Stramongate School, Kendal on 7 March 1905, before moving to The Leys School, Cambridge. He left school in August 1914 and joined up immediately, aged 18, as a Private in 2/4 Border Regiment, formed in Kendal in October 1914. He was almost immediately moved to Blackpool for training.

Early in the conflict 4 Borders' new volunteers and older recruits were sent to India and Burma to replace the more seasoned regular soldiers, who were needed in France. They embarked at Avonmouth on 4 March 1915 and arrived in Burma on 30 March 1915, where Kit was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant on 7 September. He was soon transferred to the 62 Punjabis, and later to the 6 Jats, where he was commissioned as Captain. In July 1916 he contracted paratyphoid and was treated on board HM Hospital Ship *Assaye*. Kit served in Burma and India, latterly on the North West frontier, Baluchistan and Mesopotamia and Waziristan. He was awarded the Victory Medal and British War Medals, as well as being mentioned in despatches when in Iraq. After 1919 he continued serving in the Indian Army.

In 1922 Kit returned to Kendal, and was articled to his father, C.G. Thomson, of the solicitors Thomson and Wilson, a year later, qualifying as a solicitor in 1928. He designed 'Mains' on Church Road, Levens, which became his family's home, where he personally constructed the summer house and greenhouse as well as a caravan and the wooden garage in which it was housed. A canoe, he constructed he paddled in the Kent estuary at Sandside and through the railway viaduct at Arnside. Kit lived in Levens for the rest of his life. He was a Manager of the village school and actively engaged in the British Legion. He married Margaret Lonsdale Nanson in Beetham



*Kit Gardener Thomson on left, Image courtesy of Mr. P.A.G. Thomson*

Parish Church on 20 December 1927. He died on 30 June 1935 following an operation for a brain tumour, which was believed malignant.

### **Watson-Gandy, Major William Donald Paul, J.P., M.C.**

William Donald Paul Watson was the elder son of William Clarence Watson, Esq., J.P. of Colworth House, Bedfordshire. Before coming to Levens, he was a J.P. for Bedfordshire, and Captain and Brevet Major, Reserve of Officers, late Lieutenant 2 Dragoons (Royal Scots Greys). William married Annis Vere, the only child of James Gandy Esq. of Heaves, Levens and Annie Lucy Stanley (née Tyndale), at Heversham



*William Donald Paul Watson-Gandy, J.P., M.C. Image courtesy of Professor M. Watson-Gandy.*

Church on 12 December 1906. On the death of James Gandy, the *Westmorland Gazette* wrote in his obituary of 14 July 1917 that: 'Mr. Gandy is survived by his wife and their daughter, the wife of Captain Donald Watson of the Scots Greys who is on service in the campaign against German East Africa.' William Gandy's war service records have proved elusive.

On the death of James Gandy, William and Annis assumed the additional surname of Gandy by deed poll on 26 October 1917. The requisite *London Gazette* notice gave his address as Princethorpe, Rugby, Warwickshire, as well as Heaves, Levens, and described him as 'temporary Captain (Lieutenant, reserve of Officers)'. William was appointed to the Westmorland bench in December 1919. He and Annis had three sons, James Donald Watson-Gandy-Brandreth (born 3 September 1908) at Princethorpe (died. 2008), Campbell Vere Watson-

Gandy (b. 25 July 1911) at Princethorpe (d. 1995) and Anthony Blethyn Watson-Gandy (b. 29 June 1919) at Heaves (d. 1952).

After the war William and Annis made their home at Heaves and became involved in village life. William was the Parish Council representative at the Ruri-Decanal Conference, a trustee of Levens Institute and the Women's Institute and chair of the Levens War Memorial Committee, whose minutes are sadly lost. William and Annis divorced in 1932, he relinquished the name Gandy, and died in South Africa in 1947.

## **Wilson, Lt. Col. Herbert Duckworth, Royal Garrison Artillery**

Lloyd Brodrick has written a detailed biography of Herbert, who was associated with Whinthwaite, Levens. The extract is reproduced with his generous permission.

A distinguished Territorial gunner and pre-war member of the 55 (West Lancashire) Division, Herbert Duckworth Wilson was born 18 April 1869 at Crosthwaite Vicarage near Kendal. His father was the Rev Edward Wilson MA, and his mother was Mary, daughter of Laurence Duckworth of Edenfield, near Bury. He had at least one brother, who followed his father into the Ministry.

Herbert was educated at Heversham School, after which he entered the legal profession. He served his articles with the firm of Holden and Whelon in Lancaster, and was admitted as a solicitor in May 1891. After admission, he continued with Holden and Whelon, eventually being made a partner, when the firm name changed to Holden, Whelon and Wilson and later still Holden & Wilsons.

In July 1892, Herbert married Eleanor Isabel Webster, daughter of Francis Webster of Kendal. There had two children - Geoffrey (b. June 1893) and Naslie (b. February 1898). In addition to his legal work and family life, Herbert became a prominent member of the Lancaster community. Before the Great War he was Deputy Coroner, Vice-Chairman of the South Lonsdale Education Committee and Clerk to the Lancaster School Board. He was also a keen fly-fisherman and was reputedly the second motorist in the Lancaster district: his first vehicle was a 1.5 hp motorcycle, followed by a 5 hp French car.



*Herbert Duckworth Wilson. Image courtesy of Mr. L. Brodrick*

Shortly after the outbreak of the South African War, on 29 November 1899, Herbert was commissioned as Second Lieutenant in the 5th Lancashire Artillery Volunteers (Royal Garrison Artillery), a heavy artillery unit. He was promoted Captain on 7 February 1903. When the Volunteer Force was abolished in 1908 and replaced with the Territorial Force, Herbert elected to join. He was promoted Major on 29 August 1914 (backdated to 20 December 1913) and given command of the 10th Lancashire Battery of the 2nd West Lancashire Brigade. His son Geoffrey joined the unit in early 1915.

Herbert's Battery was part of 55 Division but did not go to France until September 1915 as the artillery of 2 Canadian Division. On 2 January 1916, 10 Lancashire Battery became B/276 Brigade. Herbert's

service record for 1915-16 has not been found, but he would have taken part in the bombardment of 7 August 1916 for the attack on Guillemont the following day, described as 'almost awe-inspiring in its intensity'. Nevertheless, the attack on Guillemont failed and the artillery, along with the infantry, suffered badly from German fire, including a gas bombardment. Herbert remained with his battery in the line until 28 August, when he was evacuated with a back injury (sciatica) sufficiently serious that, after several weeks of treatment in France, he was sent back to England on 17 September for three weeks' recovery and leave. He did not resume command of his battery until 13 December 1916.

On 10 January 1917 when engaged in wire-cutting operations in front of Wieltje (about one and a half miles north-east of Ypres) Herbert's bravery led to the award of the Distinguished Service Order. The *London Gazette* of 12 March 1917 recorded:

For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. He maintained observation throughout the day under very heavy fire. He was wounded on three different occasions during the day but remained at his observation post until the light failed and his work was accomplished. He has on many previous occasions done fine work.

Herbert at the same time recommended the immediate award of the Military Medal to Driver E.C. Watson for his bravery. Watson was one of three who helped keep Major Wilson's line open, when that Officer won the DSO on the 10th January 1917, in front of Wieltje. During 7½ hours of wire-cutting he succeeded in maintaining communication across the open under heavy shell and trench mortar fire to the place where Major Wilson was observing from a crater in No Man's Land, and although the wire was cut numerous times, communication was not interrupted for more than a few minutes at a time.

Despite his three separate wounds on the same day, none were serious and Herbert appears not to have left his battery for any length of time. On 30 March the battery was heavily shelled and Herbert was seriously wounded in the leg when a shell splinter entered his outer right thigh and emerged behind. A great deal of the muscle was shot away, and the bone exposed. He was also hit in the forehead. Herbert was evacuated to England on 5 April 1917 on *HT Cambria*. He was

subsequently mentioned in despatches (*London Gazette* 18 May 1917), possibly for his actions on 30 March. He was out of action for over a year, recovering and convalescing. He was in hospital at Exmouth, Devon, on 18 July 1917 when he wrote a letter to the father of Lieutenant Christopher Hodgson, who had been killed in action.

Herbert recovered sufficiently to attend Buckingham Palace on 29 August 1917, when he was presented with the DSO by King George V. He was promoted Lieutenant Colonel in the Territorial Force on 1 March 1918. He crossed to France again on 11 April, re-joining the 55th Division in action at Givenchy and taking command of C/275 Battery on 16 April. Two days later the Germans subjected the unit to an appalling seven-hour barrage, and, after two days in command, Herbert was again wounded, this time so severely that he would be troubled by his injuries for the rest of his days. The upper third of his right humerus was fractured by a shell fragment and he suffered a severe haemorrhage. His condition was stabilised and he was evacuated to England on 24 April, first to Darrell Hospital in London, then successively to Ilfracombe Hospital in July, to Streatham Hall Hospital, Exeter in December, to Troyle Hospital, Torquay in the following January, to the Officers Hospital, Fowey in March and finally to Calgarth Park Hospital, Windermere in June.

While at Calgarth, Herbert had Whinthwaite, his house in Levens, improved and decorated, but many of his possessions were stolen in his absence. He bought the house in 1896 and immediately improved it by connecting it to the new mains water supply. Whinthwaite was the residence of Herbert's mother Mary until her death in 1918, and then of his sister-in-law, Miss Webster. Herbert also owned the cottages in Levens now known as Hawthorn Cottages on Main Street. He gave to Levens Women's Institute the land off Brigsteer Road on which they built their hall, and which is now a community garden owned by Levens Charity.

At a Medical Board in late August 1919, sixteen months after being wounded, Herbert was assessed as medically unfit. In September, while still requiring daily treatment, he resisted a proposed discharge from the army. A note recorded:

This officer states that he still has two wounds in his right arm, both of which are still open and have to be dressed daily and was

informed at the last Medical Board to report to the Grange Thorpe Hospital Manchester, at the end of October and if the wounds were not healed then another operation would be performed to remove the dead bone that is still in the arm, causing the puss that comes from the wounds daily.

He therefore asks that before he is gazetted out he may be allowed to have the operation and the necessary treatment that follows it. He also states that he is incapacitated following his employment. Herbert's request was denied and the *London Gazette* of 6 November 1919 noted that 'Lt Col H.D. Wilson DSO TD, 2nd West Lancs. Bde, relinquishes his commission on account of ill-health caused by wounds, 5th Nov. 1919, and retains the rank of Lt Col, with permission to wear the prescribed uniform'. Awarded the Territorial Decoration on 15 July 1919, Herbert was recommended for the permanent command of his brigade, but his wounds prevented him from taking it up.

Herbert eventually returned to legal practice and Deputy Coroner for Lancaster. His son Geoffrey, who had reached the rank of Captain in the battery but had been invalided out (gassed) in 1918, was also with the practice. As a distinguished local officer, Herbert was heavily involved in various commemorations in local communities. In June 1920 he unveiled the memorial to the 29 men of Bolton Le Sands who had died. On 10 April 1921, in a speech when he unveiled the Over Kellet memorial, and reported by the *Lancaster Guardian*, he mentioned that he had just returned from France and had been over the greater part of the line in France and Belgium. 'I have visited very many of the English cemeteries' he added. 'It may be some satisfaction to the relatives to know that the bodies of soldiers are being most reverently moved from temporary burial places to cemeteries that will be for ever a part of England, with English soil, all fenced in and bearing temporary wooden crosses with number, rank, name and regiment. The grass over the graves was as carefully kept and the paths of gravel weeded as if they were in their own churchyard at Kellet. In a short time permanent stone walls would be erected around the cemeteries and stone crosses would be placed over English graves for all time. Two months later, on Sunday 26 June 1921, Herbert attended the unveiling in the Old Drill Hall in Lancaster, by Brigadier



General Tom Topping, of a plaque commemorating the 46 members of his own battery who had died.

According to the *Lancaster Observer* of 1 July 1921:

A moving speech was made by Lt Colonel Wilson, the Commanding Officer of the battery, who said it was now seven years since he and the men under him had marched out to war, so full of hope that early August morning in 1914. He then went on to make an impassioned appeal on behalf of the men who had returned from the Front; 'They came back, after receiving only 1s.2d per day, to find those people whom they had left at home rolling in money'. He appealed to employers of labour, if they had a job and could get ex-servicemen to do it, for God's sake give him a chance, and let the man who has been having a fat time since 1914 wait a bit, for the ex-servicemen had been having an uncommonly thin time. These sentiments were met by cries of 'Hear Hear' from the audience.

In September 1938 Herbert retired both from private practice and as Deputy Coroner to go to Algiers for his health. He died from a stroke at the British Cottage Hospital in Algiers the following year, aged 69. He was buried in Algiers and was survived by his widow, son and daughter. His Levens properties were sold in 1946.

Obituaries in the *Westmorland Gazette*, *Lancaster Guardian* and *Lancaster Observer* referred to Herbert Wilson's 'distinguished legal and military career', stating that 'his death removes a familiar and popular figure from the life of the city and district'. One ex-serviceman who served under Wilson described him as 'one of the best soldiers who fought in the late war' and in the court where he presided as Deputy Coroner he was described as 'a very fine type of Englishman ... an exceptionally capable advocate and a fine soldier'.

## **Yapp, John Winder, Marconi Operator, Mercantile Marine, 17480**

John Winder's number and job description are all that has been found in the Mercantile Marine Index records. He was the son of Ernest and Annie Yapp, who, in 1911 were the publicans at the Hare & Hounds



*John Winder Yapp at his Bridge End works. Image courtesy of Messrs. P.V. Dobson.*

Inn, Levens. John was then aged 10 and attended Levens School. Winder's grandfather was John Salthouse Winder, who in 1911 lived at Eversley Lodge (see R. Burrell above). In November 1916 he was appointed to the British Postal Service and by March 1918 he is recorded as being a ship's radio operator on trans-Atlantic voyages to New Orleans and New York. After the war John returned to Levens and ran a bicycle and vehicle repair shop at Bridge End, Levens, and resided at Moorcroft, Bridge End. He took part in the Levens peace celebration in July 1919, appearing in fancy dress as 'The League of Nations'. He married Catherine Leah Barnsley in 1931. In 1939 she was recorded as disabled. Winder was a member of Levens Parish Council, being last recorded in the minutes in 1943, although he had sold Moorcroft and his workshop in 1941. Catherine died in Wigton, Cumberland in 1947. At some time before her death she and Winder had moved to the Sebergham Castle farm in Dalston, Cumbria. John died in 1970.

## 7. Levens and the Navy

While we have no evidence of Levens men serving directly in the Royal Navy, Levens attracted several important figures to stay here from time to time during the war, perhaps because Sir Charles Walker, of Brettargh Holt, was Assistant Secretary at the Admiralty, at that time. They included:

### Sir Charles Walker



Charles was born 12 December 1871, eldest son of C. Walker, J.P., D.L., of Brettargh Holt, Levens. After attending Trinity College, Cambridge he joined the Admiralty in 1895 as a civil servant. His career was then as a Private Secretary to Admiral Sir A.L. Douglas, 1901 and Sir John A. Fisher, afterwards Lord Fisher, 1902; Principal Clerk, 1909; Assistant

Secretary of the Admiralty 1917, Accountant General of the Navy, 1918-1921; Deputy Secretary of the Admiralty, 1921-31. He received the Order of the Rising Sun (2<sup>nd</sup>. Class) from the Japanese Government. In his book, *Thirty-Six Years at the Admiralty*, he only recounts going to sea once, and that was on the full Navy inspection at Scapa Flow. He had been put ashore to return to London the day before. When his father died in 1920, he sold Brettargh Holt. His sister Louis was a noted campaigner for votes for women, and his sister Liliias a VAD nurse during the war.

### Lord Charles Beresford



The *Westmorland Gazette* of 10 July 1915 reported, 'Lord Charles Beresford has taken Levens Hall for the autumn months.' He was a

controversial figure in both the Navy and Parliament, and was a cousin of Lady Theodosia Bagot, supporting her Hospital of Friendship and her Church Army activity. His reason for taking Levens Hall is not known. However, by this time Beresford was nearing the end of his parliamentary career (he retired from parliament in 1916), and his naval career had already finished. The pursuance of both had often giving rise to conflicts of interest. An example being when in 1911, Churchill resolved to replace him with the Second Sea Lord, Prince Louis of Battenberg, Beresford challenged Churchill in the House of Commons. Churchill responded, saying of Beresford that: 'since I became first lord of the admiralty ... within a fortnight he made a speech in which he said I had betrayed the navy ... and ever since he has been going about the country pouring out charges of espionage, favouritism, blackmail, fraud, and inefficiency ... . The noble Lord nourishes many bitter animosities on naval matters'. In 1916, he was raised to the peerage as Baron Beresford of Metemmeh and of Curraghmore in the County of Waterford. Lord Beresford died in 1919.

### **Admiral Sir Cecil Burney**



At the outbreak of the First World War Burney commanded the Channel Fleet. In December 1914 he was given command of the 1st Battle Squadron, in which capacity he also served as second-in-command of the Grand Fleet under Sir John Jellicoe. He commanded the squadron at the Battle of Jutland on 31 May 1916, where his flagship HMS *Marlborough* was torpedoed, necessitating the transfer of his flag to HMS *Revenge*. On 9 June 1916 he was promoted Admiral and he was also promoted to Knight Grand Cross of the Order of St Michael and St George (GCMG) and awarded the Russian Order of St. Vladimir, 2nd Class (with Swords) 'for distinguished service rendered in the Battle of Jutland'. Although Jellicoe had great faith in him this faith was not shared by many other flag officers, who regarded him as over-cautious, lacking in initiative, and they worried that he might succeed Jellicoe in command of the Grand Fleet. In November 1916 Burney was appointed Second Sea Lord. In July 1917 he was at Lawrence Brow in Levens writing letters to those he knew who had influence over Navy matters to try and retain his position. However, in September 1917 he was removed, despite the opposition of Jellicoe, now First Sea Lord, on the insistence of the Prime Minister and the First Lord of the Admiralty, who believed he was too old and too inefficient for the post, and they instead appointed him Commander-in-Chief, Coast of Scotland. In March 1919 he became Commander-in-Chief, Portsmouth. He effectively retired due to ill-health the following year.

## 8. Lady Theodosia (Dosia) Bagot and the Hospital of Friendship



In 1914 British organizations, individuals and groups of friends were accustomed to giving freely of funds, equipment and the services of trained nursing and medical staff to their French, Belgian and Serbian allies. Foremost among individuals making a substantial personal contribution was Theodosia, Lady Bagot, initially through her 'Hospital of Friendship' and later through the establishment of Charmy's, a social club for servicemen in London. At the start of the Great War she was a widow living at Levens Brow, her husband Josceline Bagot, owner of Levens Hall having died in 1913. A chronological account of her activities is given below.

**1914** Theodosia Bagot was a long-serving member of the Church Army. She had gained experience of establishing war hospitals during the Boer War 1899 to 1902 and in 1913 in Serbia. She had gained valuable experience in carrying out an extensive range of nursing tasks, for which in 1902 she was awarded the RRC, (Royal Red Cross) and in 1913 The Serbia Red Cross. She also held the rank of Lady (later Dame) of Grace of the order of St John of Jerusalem.



*An early picture of Theodosia Bagot taken during the Boer War*

The 33<sup>rd</sup> Report of the Work of the Church Army covers the period from 1 October 1913 to 30 June 1915 including the 'special war-work' of the society during the first year of the Great War. Within the opening pages Lady Bagot is listed as a member of the General Consultative Committee, the Emigration Committee, Honorary Secretary of the Lads Ladder, the Helpers' Guild and Hospital. She had also carried out Church Army duties as one of the 'Lady Visitors' for the Youths' Labour Home in Notting Hill.

In August 1914 at the start of WW1 she began the formidable task of organising a Church Army hospital for the British war effort. On 15 August 1914, at the request of the Church Army, she went out to Brussels and met with Dr Depage, head of the Belgian Red Cross. He offered the Observatory at Brussels for the site of the Church Army Hospital. The German occupation of the area a few days later negated this offer.

On 22 August Lady Bagot accompanied by her French-speaking nephew Shane Leslie, took several cases of chloroform out to Ostend for the use of the Belgian Red Cross. In his book 'A Long Shadow' Shane Leslie describes the excited welcome they received from the 'crowds' in Ostend. Lady Bagot and her nephew were taken to a 'conseil de guerre and saluted by an armed gendarme'. The chloroform



was handed over to the Belgian Red Cross. They were informed that the Germans had reached Brussels.

The *Church Army Review* reports that whilst in Ostend Lady Bagot and her nephew found themselves unexpectedly placed in sole charge of a convoy of Belgian wounded which had just arrived at an Ostend hotel, the Hotel des Thermes. They then had the task of moving the wounded out quickly to the Docks and onto Dunkirk as an alarm for a German attack came through in the early hours. On Lady Bagot's return to London her nephew Shane Leslie reported to the Belgian Ambassador and to his cousin, Winston Churchill at the Admiralty.

In late August the *British Nursing Journal* reported that Lady Bagot had returned from Ostend after taking four cases of chloroform supplied by the Church Army for the use of the Belgian military hospitals. Lady Bagot reported in the journal that many Belgian wounded had been put on board ships at Ostend to avoid capture by the Germans.

On 29 August the Church Army chief, Prebendary Carlile, requested of Lady Bagot that she meet with the French Red Cross authorities in France. She duly met with the Head of the French Red Cross in Amiens. A few days later the request came through for the Church Army Hospital to be sent to Caen. The 33<sup>rd</sup> *Church Army Report* pays tribute to the inspiration of Lady Bagot, 'refusing to be damped by difficulties and discouragements'. On September 12 1914 her Church Army hospital unit left for France, sailing on Mr Farquhar's yacht 'Medusa', chartered by the Admiralty. The 100 bed unit was based at Caen, running under the French Red Cross and sanctioned by the St John Ambulance Association. The hospital unit was well staffed with surgeons and a physician working under the guidance of Mr Cruickshanks, Mr Pimm and Mr Woodward. The staff team also included two dressers, a dispenser, a Matron with six fully trained hospital nurses, fourteen orderlies, the Rev HSR Thornton and Mr Farquhar.

All equipment required was provided, including the use of a well-equipped motor ambulance. Lady Bagot put in many hours carrying out nursing tasks for wounded soldiers at the Church Army hospital unit and also for the injured housed in the nearby railway sheds. The *Church Army Review* of October 1914 reports that

following the Editor's successful appeal to the Friends of the Review, enough monies had been received to support two Church Army Review beds in the Church Army Hospital at Caen. The Editor reports that he has written to Lady Bagot to request that she names two beds accordingly.

In October, her nephew Captain Norman Jerome Beauchamp Leslie was killed in action at Armentières. At the outbreak of the War, he served as a Captain in the 3rd Battalion of the Rifle Brigade. While on a reconnaissance patrol at Armentières near Lille, he was killed by a German sniper. He was hastily buried. His eldest brother Shane, heir to the baronetcy of Glaslough was serving in France and organised for his body to be re-coffined in December 1914. He wrote to his mother, Lady Bagot's sister-in-law, that her son lay 'about a mile behind the trenches occupied by his regiment and within sound of the guns of both armies whose shells pass daily above his head . . . the sky was ripped with the flashes of the guns, while a gigantic German searchlight threw the surrounding countryside into sepulchral relief'. Her nephew, Shane reported that when the grave was opened, his brother's clothes were unsoiled and clean. His hands were white and pink at the edges and rested on the wound which had killed him. Norman had shown promise as a writer. Some days after he was killed, the *Westminster Gazette* printed his colour piece about the Front: 'high up an English aeroplane sails over us, the red lights glinting on some metal, a moment's glow, then silver'. He kept a war diary (now in the National Library) and had looked forward to publishing it after the conflict was over.

In early November, aware of shortages of nurses and chloroform, Theodosia travelled to Dunkirk with supplies of both. She was immediately asked to work with the French wounded at the 'dressing' station within the goods station area under the medical chief Colonel Arnaud. In late November 1914 the Church Army reported a continuing serious shortage of nurses and chloroform at Dunkirk and further supplies were dispatched at Lady Bagot's urgent request. Theodosia remained at Dunkirk up until 24 December, working nightly in the station sheds, carrying out the re-dressing of wounds of the seriously injured men arriving from the conflict on the Yser. These station sheds were used as a 'clearing hospital', with many hundreds of men passing through to be treated before being taken on to Base.



*Theodosia Bagot in her nurse's uniform*

Sarah MacNaughtan in her text *My War Experiences in Two Continents* published posthumously in 1919, recorded meeting Lady Bagot at Dunkirk in late 1914:

7 November. St. Malo les Bains. — Lady Bagot turned up here to-day, and I lunched with her at the Hotel des Arcades. Just before lunch a bomb was dropped from a Taube overhead, and hardly had we sat down to lunch when a revolver shot rang through the room. A French officer had discharged his pistol by mistake, and he lay on the floor in his scarlet trews. The scene was really the Adelphi, and as the man had only slightly hurt himself one was able to appreciate the scenic effect and to notice how well staged it was. A waiter ran for me. I ran for dressings to one of our ambulances, and we knelt in the right attitude beside the hero in his scarlet clothes, while the 'lady of the bureau' begged for the bullet! In the evening Lady Bagot and I worked at the railway-sheds till 3 a.m. One immense shed had 700 wounded in it. The night scene, with its inevitable accompaniment of low-turned lamps and gloom, was one I shall not forget. The railway-lines on each side of the covered platform were spread with straw, and on these wounded men, bedded down like

cattle, slept. There were rows of them sleeping feet to feet, with straw over them to make a covering. I didn't hear a grumble, and hardly a groan. Most of them slept heavily.

Early in December Lady Bagot recorded that she motored over to Furnes. At the railway station she saw a great number of Belgian wounded straight from the trenches being moved onto the train. It was apparent to her that Britain's ally Belgium was in dire need of better support for their wounded prior to transportation to Base.

In late 1914 a committee was formed under the chairmanship of Theodosia's cousin Admiral Lord Beresford and an appeal for funds made. Lady Bagot held the position of Honorary Secretary. She assessed the location in most desperate need of a hospital unit was Furnes. A convent was offered for use but the building proved beyond serviceable use. Theodosia judged that a portable hospital unit would be of more use. Whilst in Dunkirk she met with Inspector General Melis, medical head of the Belgian Order. He was delighted with Lady Bagot's proposed transportable hut hospital with its staff team and equipment. The *Morning Post* of 1 February 1915 recorded the uniqueness of the design: 'it is perfectly novel in its nature, being of mobile or hut construction, in order that it may be used for dangerous cases straight from the firing line and yet being substantial can afford them greater comfort than a field hospital and better sanitation than local houses'.

Theodosia reported to her Committee at her delight in how quickly the unit came together through the great generosity of friends and others. Enough money was raised for three months' work and maintenance. A motor ambulance was loaned by Lady Congleton and the building was given by Mrs Frank Stoop. Official approval was granted by the Anglo-French Hospitals Committee (British Red Cross and St John's Ambulance). The *Westmorland Gazette* of 26 December 1914 recorded that 'Mr Wm Hewartson of Leasgill is proceeding to Dunkirk to join the Church Army Hospital as Lady Bagot's orderly.

## The Hospital of Friendship,

1915—16.

*Registered under the War Charities Act, 1916, and  
approved by the Anglo-French Hospitals' Committee  
(B.R.C. and S.J.A.).*

*President :*

The Belgian Minister (M. PAUL HYMANS).

*Chairman of Committee :*

ADMIRAL LORD BERESFORD, G.C.V.O., &c.

*Hon. Secretary :*

LADY BAGOT, R.R.C.

*Hon. Treasurer :*

MRS. ROBERT CRAWSHAY.

*Committee :*

SIR JOHN B. LONSDALE, Bart., M.P.

REV. PREBENDARY CRONSHAW.

LIEUT.-COLONEL T. H. OPENSHAW, F.R.C.S.

C. FRANK STOOP, Esq.

FRANK S. TURNER, Esq.

LADY LONSDALE.

MRS. C. FRANK STOOP.

MISS CURTIS.

*Secretary :*

MR. A. J. WRIGHT.

*Bankers :*

MESSRS. CHILD & CO.

*Auditors :*

MESSRS. HARDY HISLOP & CO.,

Chartered Accountants.



*Officials of the Hospital of Friendship with Lady Bagot as secretary*

**1915** The *Church Army Report* for 1915 to 1916 continue to list Lady Bagot as a serving member of the General Consultative Committee, Honorary Secretary for the Lads' Ladder and one of the Lady Visitors for the Youths Labour Home at Notting Hill.

In late January Lady Bagot took the mobile field 'Hospital of Friendship' with a male staff team (a head surgeon, 4 nurses and two helpers), full hut equipment and a motor ambulance with two

volunteer drivers, to Adinkerke, Belgium. The unit was set up in a field close to the railway station. The Hospital of Friendship became the surgical section of the Hopital d'Evacuation. As the hospital unit was to be based close to the fighting General Melis would not permit female staff to work in it. The hospital hut was a clever design of interlocking wooden panels, bolted together, which made it instantly transportable to whichever location was most in need.

The Hospital had a ward 70 foot long containing 26 iron bedsteads, a good operating theatre also serving as a wound dressing area, a kitchen and 'destructor' and sanitary provision. Two extra wooden buildings were provided for staff. The only female present, Lady Bagot stayed on during 1915 and 1916, living in a tiny hut, ten feet square. The staff team lodged in the village of Adinkerke. Theodosia worked tirelessly, assisting the surgeons with operations, dressing wounds and attending to the needs of the patients. She was roused each time patients were admitted at night. French, Belgian and English wounded were all admitted to the unit. The hospital was also used by a Canadian Labour Corps, based at Adinkerke.



*The Hospital of Friendship, Adinkerke*

In February the *Church Army Review* carried a piece entitled 'a tearful German'. Lady Bagot had found a wounded sixteen-year old German amongst the wounded arriving at the Hospital of Friendship. She

found the youngster crying and sought to reassure him that his wound is not serious and that he will soon be home. He pleaded to go to England where he will be safe.

During March and April Lady Bagot recorded a French request that severely wounded French soldiers from the action at Nienport might be brought in for treatment before moving on. Colonel Arnaud visited in March 1915, reviewing the French wounded. Theodosia writes of the gratitude of the French wounded: '... in for just 24 hours a French Zonave, badly wounded in the throat opens his ragged pocketbook, draws out a four-leaved 'trefle' [trefoil] and gives it to Lady Bagot. His six-leaved 'trefle' he says is for his mother.'

One of the two voluntary ambulance drivers of the Talbot Car, the Rev. Sidney Bellingham Swann, (vicar of St Johns, Levens 1912 - 1914) noted in his autobiography that he took alternate months away from his parish, Holbrook in Derbyshire to carry out voluntary work as a motor ambulance driver at the Adinkerke hospital. The other voluntary driver was the son of Prebendary Carlile. Swann described engaging a locum to care for his parish during his absence. He records his official endorsement from R. McKenna, First Lord of the Admiralty to facilitate dealing with officials in Belgium: 'Mr Swann is going to Belgium via Calais to drive a motor ambulance for the Hospital of Friendship at Adinkerke. I have known him for 30 years and can answer for him'. R McKenna, Home Office. 10 May 1915.

Theodosia wrote proudly that within two hours of bringing the wounded in by ambulance they were tucked up in bed having received treatment. The promptness of the initial treatment of the severely wounded at the mobile field hospital meant many more lives were saved. Inspections by Belgian surgeons recognised the excellent work carried out by the unit. The staff worked hard to create a 'home' atmosphere and the wounded men were given time to chat, express the anguish of war experiences and enjoy as much freedom as was permitted under military rules. Many of the patients were very young.

Prince Alexander of Teck and Elizabeth, Queen of Belgium were active supporters of the Adinkerke hospital, frequently visiting the wounded soldiers. Sidney Swann similarly recorded frequently seeing the King and Queen of the Belgians out supporting the troops.



*Prince Alexander of Teck meets Belgian, French and Canadian doctors at the Hospital of Friendship for Belgian wounded*

Bernard A Cook in the book *Women at War* described how Lady Bagot and the staff team worked under almost constant bombardment. Sarah Macnaughton in her *A Woman's Diary of the War* recorded her encounter with Lady Bagot at Adinkerke in April 1915:

It is impossible to leave La Panne without saying something about a little hospital which established itself just opposite the station where I worked. It belonged to Lady Bagot, and I always thought that there was something particularly attractive about it — a quietness and serenity that was good for sick people. The one plain wooden ward, with its well-scrubbed boards, had a friendly air of goodness about it, which, of course, was due to herself and her staff; and although the little brown wooden building was only a 'flying' one, it always looked restful and at peace. *Note:* The badge of the Hospital of Friendship was a pair of wings signifying its mobility.



In another book *Medecins de la Grande Guerre* P Loodts, described that when Sarah Macnaughton, who provided a 'flying kitchen' at Adinkerke station, felt lonely, she often went to tea with Lady Bagot, whose wooden shacks were next to the station. Many evacuee English soldiers were victims of gas and found temporary shelter in Theodosia's hospital. Sarah recorded the arrival of Highlanders, Seaforths and Highland Territorials, for whom she prepared mulled wine that she distributed on the platform.



*Caption reads 'Goodbye Hospital of Friendship. I am being taken to the Base.'*

In late May a party of severely wounded British soldiers arrived unexpectedly from fighting over in Ypres. Many were also suffering from gas asphyxiation. The unit was only partially full and all the Belgian patients unselfishly offered their beds to the newcomers. The wounded allies became great friends laughing and joking with each other. Theodosia recorded one Highlander offering his kilt to a Belgian patient. The Highlander then departed in a most odd pair of pants! After the British casualties were moved only Belgian wounded were admitted.

The *Church Army Review* of June noted that Mr Edward Carlile, son of the Church Army chief was driving one of the Hospital motor ambulances. It also carried a piece written by Lady Bagot. She described how much of the work took place at night with the critically wounded, who were brought in by motor ambulances. Many of the men were suffering from severe lung wounds. Others were severely affected both mentally by their experiences and physically by their wounds. She described the harrowing nature of the effect of the German gas on its victims. Again, and again she noted how touchingly grateful the men were for what was done for them. 'I have not been to bed for seven months' is a comment from a wounded soldier appreciating the luxury of a bed. A 'tiny' service was held every evening in the hospital. The doctors read verses from the gospels and said prayers in French, with the Lord's Prayer said in English. The patients took away little copies of the gospels with them. Rev Sidney Swann records how touching it was to see the Belgians read the little Belgian new testaments that Lady Bagot gave them: 'They would read insatiably, day and night'.

Lady Bagot went on to explain that the Hospital of Friendship has to be ready to be moved within 12 hours and that six railway trucks were held on standby to facilitate this.

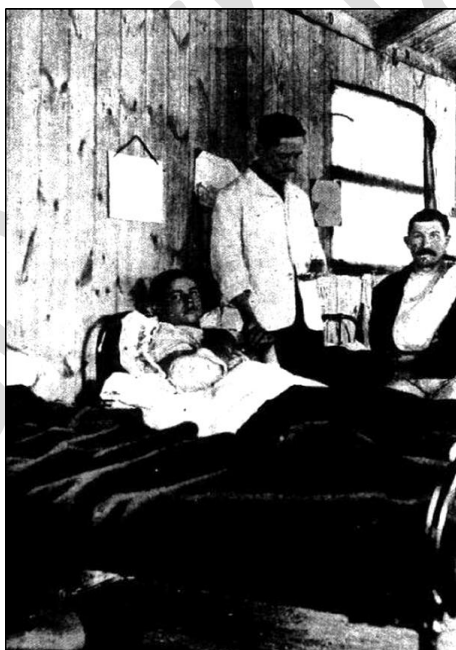
The Rev. Swann recorded in his memoirs that he and Theodosia, with the hospital's doctors, would visit a café on the sea-front for an hour and watch the daily naval battles. The Allies' steamers, equipped with naval guns, would shell the German boats at Zeebrugge. Fire would be returned and would last an hour or so until the Allies' boats returned to Dunkirk.

Lady Bagot and staff noted in Spring that a pavilion was needed to shelter sick or less severely injured soldiers whilst awaiting transportation to Base. She again pleaded in the press for financial gifts to assist the Hospital of Friendship. For example, in a letter of 4 May to the *Manchester Guardian* she wrote movingly of the plea of the Head of the Staff team at Adinkerke for the creation of another wing to the hospital, describing Dr Dupont as 'a man as able and resourceful as he is humane'. She indicated that the Doctor expected increasingly large numbers of wounded men to arrive early each morning and urgently require shelter and food until they could be moved on by the evening train. Theodosia indicated that only the cost of the structure was

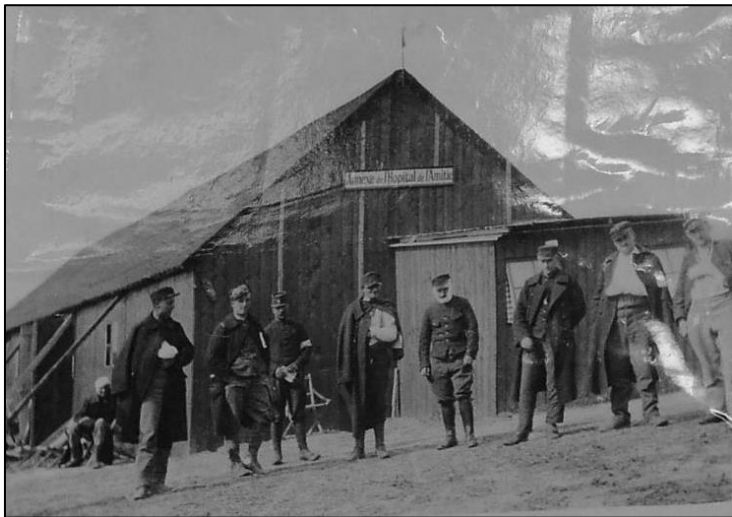
needed as the Belgian team would staff the additional ward. The appeal was successful and the Committee of the Hospital dispatched another 60 foot long portable building furnished with 60 comfortable chairs, some tables and a small kitchen area.

The resultant 'annexe' was sited next to the Hospital and run by Belgian staff. In the summer of 1915 an outbreak of gastroenteritis filled this wing with sufferers! Thanks to the generosity of an American, Mr Caldwell, a new operating theatre was also provided for the Hospital of Friendship. The theatre was also used as a 'salle de pansements' [dressing room].

In September Lady Bagot wrote to her 'comrades' in the Lads Ladder Department of the Church Army. She described a summer of great heat followed by severe downpours of rain, resulting in flooded trenches with some soldiers drowning. She reports of the bravery of Airman Liddell VC arriving at the unit and calmly asking for a cigarette after a sortie to Ghent. Badly wounded, his leg was a mass of pulp and he died a fortnight later.



*Dr. Liley M.C. examines a patient on arrival*



*Arrival at the Hospital of Friendship*



*Inside the Hospital of Friendship*

During September Lady Bagot returned briefly to Levens. The Levens School records describe her visit to give the children a magic lantern show of her Hospital of Friendship.

In November, as gunfire sounded unceasingly from nearby Nieuport and Dixmude, Theodosia noted that the hospital team were fully aware that the coming winter would see more and more wounded coming through. In an appeal for additional money she stressed the vital need to keep the unit afloat financially. Costs amounted to around £200 per month to keep the unit operational with its 26 beds. Many beds were sponsored, such as The Levens Bed: £2 covered the cost of a bed for a week, £25 sufficed for three months. Being so close to the fighting, the hospital was kept in a continual state of readiness to move immediately. Theodosia explained the importance of mobility for the prompt management of the Belgian army wounded.



*The Levens Bed*

**1916** On 23 January Lady Bagot's father, Sir John Leslie, 1<sup>st</sup> Baronet of Glaslough died.

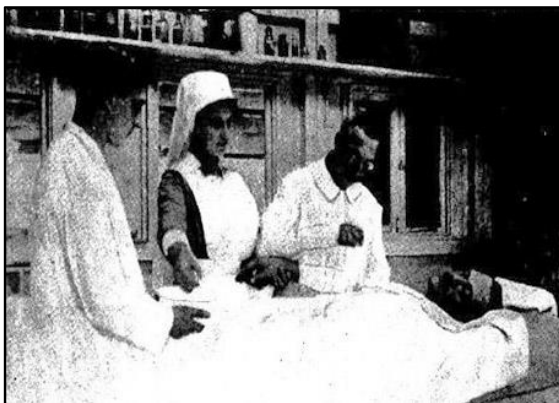
The *Church Army Report* (Blue Book) for 1916 to 1917 continued to list Lady Bagot as a serving member of the General Consultative Committee, Honorary Secretary for the Lads' Ladder and one of the Lady Visitors for the Youths Labour Home at Notting Hill.

In April the committee of the Hospital of Friendship reassigned the two surgeons to the British army and their surgical work was taken over by Belgian doctors. The number of patients treated at this point has risen to 2000.

Lady Bagot in one of her regular update letters to the *Westmorland Gazette* on 30 September reported the appointment of a new Belgium head whose responsibilities were to oversee the work of the Hospital of Friendship. He asked to assign more beds for officers. He appeared impressed by the mobile operating theatre and indicated that the unit may need moving closer to the fighting. Lady Bagot went on to describe the 'lively' nights experienced when the British airmen were active and finished by expressing her deep sadness for the loss of lives affecting so many homes in Westmorland.

On 9 November the committee of the Hospital of Friendship resolved to hand over the unit to General Melis and the Belgian Military Authorities. The unit was duly handed over to the Director, Monsieur le Majeur Nemery, by Lady Bagot on 1 December. He requested that she continue to hold herself in reserve to assist if needed but the remaining British staff were withdrawn. Melis continued to run the unit successfully until the final days of the War when it was destroyed by German shellfire. A letter of appreciation from Melis to Lord Beresford expressed how much the unit was valued and appreciated by the Belgians.

As the news of the transfer of the Hospital of Friendship to the Belgian Medical Service filtered through, Theodosia received many letters of appreciation from the wounded Belgian soldiers whom she had nursed and cared for.



*Theodosia and Major Némery dressing a wound.*

In her summary report to the Committee she reported that in accordance with their wishes she had also organised small comforts and supplies to be made regularly to patients at the Hospital of Evacuation at Adinkerke Station.

The *Church Army Review* of December referred back to the L'Hopital Anglais established at Caen for Red Cross work by the efforts of Lady Bagot in 1914. It announced that the equipment and staff from this hospital were to move to a unit at Dungavel to provide for wounded Scottish naval fleet officers and sailors.



*The Everyman Bed*

**1917** The *Church Army Report* for 1917 to 1918 continued to list Lady Bagot as a serving member of the General Consultative Committee, Honorary Secretary for the Lads' Ladder and one of the Lady Visitors for the Youths Labour Home at Notting Hill. Additionally, she is recorded as serving on the sub-committees for the Selection of Lady Workers.

On her return to London she founded Charmy's, a Church Army mixed club/restaurant for servicemen, their wives and friends in London, to which she had by then returned. *The Report* had stressed 'a great need having arisen for a Social Club where men of the Services could take their women friends'. Lady Bagot held the post of President of Charmy's, with Admiral Lord Jellicoe and Lieutenant-General Sir Francis Lloyd as its patrons and Lord Beresford as Honorary Treasurer. Suitable premises were found at No 8 Marble Arch.

A letter from Lady Bagot was printed in the November *Westmorland Gazette* in connection with the establishment of Charmys:

*LADY BAGOT'S LEAVE-TIME RESTAURANT.*

Sir, Thanks in great measure to the generosity of our friends in Westmorland and elsewhere, the clearing station for Belgian wounded, known as the Hospital of Friendship, has been able to do a merciful work in Flanders for nearly three years and still continues its work under Belgian staff. It is for another cause I now venture to plead, and although the area is in London, it will easily be seen that the North-country boys belonging to the Navy and Army must be greatly affected by the scheme. Thousands of our brave men are constantly passing the Marble Arch centre of London, and as often as not, they are accompanied by their wives and dear ones. Some of them are just back from the front; others are awaiting their return. They tell us quite simply that they sadly need some place to rest the sole of their foot, some cheerful rendezvous where they may stop for an hour or more and feel they are at home. Some are tired, some need tea and light refreshment, some would like to smoke or write, read the newspapers or play games. There are others who only want to talk to their wives and friends in peaceful happy surroundings.



# CHARMY'S

8, MARBLE ARCH, *corner of* EDGWARE ROAD.

*Church Army Mixed Club-Restaurant.*



FOR H.M. FORCES, THEIR WIVES & FRIENDS

**OPEN 3.30 TO 10 O'CLOCK**

DAILY, INCLUDING SUNDAY.

Patrons  
ADMIRAL LORD JELlicoe, G.C.B., G.C.V.O.  
LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR FRANCIS LLOYD, K.C.B., C.V.O.  
Hon. Treas.  
ADMIRAL LORD BERESFORD, G.C.B., G.C.V.O.

## CHARMY'S

8 MARBLE ARCH (facing Marble Arch).  
CHURCH ARMY MIXED CLUB-RESTAURANT  
FOR H.M. FORCES AND THEIR WIVES AND FRIENDS

Cheques and P.O.O. should be made out to "Charmy's Club," and crossed "Barclay's, at Church Army." Treasury Notes should be registered.

Kindly address your reply to LADY BAGGOT (President of Charmy) (55 BRYANSTON STREET, W. 1.) or Miss FLORENCE DECRET, Hon. Sec. Tel. 3445 PADDINGTON.

Aug 1.

Dear Mr. Salmon,

of course I should be delighted to see you - for I remember often seeing your aunt helping the Belgian Nurses at the Admiralty Soup Kitchen. Equally, she helped them at Tinsbury when they were the first to start the work. But alas! about

PS 8/12

photos I am helpless! I have nothing except the whole stuff on the platform - so it is true - but I think your aunt did put in the charity for that. I have my 100 photos of Lord's ready to send you, but not the film. I am so sorry I have nothing. Prudie has Ryan, one of the nurses, and helps you - her address is 109 Z. Avenue Belge in campagne - Belgium. She is a very nice Irish girl.

I often had a talk to your aunt -

*Patrons*  
ADMIRAL LORD JELlicoe, G.C.B., G.C.V.O.  
LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR FRANCIS LLOYD, K.C.B., C.V.O.  
*Hon. Treas.*  
ADMIRAL LORD BERESFORD, G.C.B., G.C.V.O.

**CHARMY'S**  
8 MARBLE ARCH (facing Marble Arch).  
CHURCH ARMY MIXED CLUB-RESTAURANT  
FOR H.M. FORCES AND THEIR WIVES AND FRIENDS.

*Cheques and P.O.O. should be made out to "Charmy's Club," and crossed "Barclay's, a/c Church Army."*  
*Treasury Notes should be registered.*

Kindly address your reply to LADY BAGOT (President of Charmy) 55 BRYANSTON STREET, W.1.  
or Miss FLORENCE BECKETT, Hon. Sec. Tel.: 3440 PADDINGTON.

*I also went once or twice to her nice villa at La Pauze.*  
*My own address is 50 Hillbank SE. I am easily be at home some morning if you let me know - with week - if I could answer any questions with pleasure*  
*Yrs Sincerely*  
*L. Bagot*

DEC 9/112

For a long time the Church Army has realised this great need, and now they have asked me to be President, Miss Florence Beckett Hon. Secretary, and Admiral Lord Beresford Hon. Treasurer, of an enterprise, which will we believe, just meet the urgent demand. Many ladies have offered themselves as voluntary helpers and we have found admirable premises facing Marble Arch which will be known as 'Charmy's Restaurant and Club for men of H.M. Forces - British and Overseas.' Admiral Sir John Jellicoe and Lieut.-Colonel Sir Francis Lloyd (in command of the London district) are giving us warm support and have become the patrons of Charmy's. But before the house can be taken, we are obliged to raise the initial cost of the undertaking, namely, rent, furniture and equipment. The sum of £2000 will cover this entirely, and once the restaurant is started we shall easily pay our expenses. From this great city of untold danger, I venture to plead with all those who care for our boys. Will they

add just one more proof of their great generosity and trust, and so help us to get on with our House of Welcome and Friendliness for the man on leave and the man on duty in our midst? Cheques made out to Charmy's Restaurant, Barclays Account, will immediately be acknowledged gratefully by, - Yours etc. - Dosia Bagot (President of Charmy's), 53. Bryanston Street, W.1.

The *Church Army Review* for December featured Charmy's. It was described as a:

bright and hospitable restaurant and free club for our sailors and soldiers passing through or on leave in London and a rendez-vous where they can meet their wives and dear ones in cheery, cosy and convenient surroundings with the safe and happy facilities of light refreshment, innocent gaiety, pleasant recreation and comfortable rest.... under one roof.

Situated in a mansion house in Marble Arch and offered to the Church Army at half-rent cost, Charmy's set out to offer servicemen an alternative to the public houses. It was intended, according to the *Review*, to have a roomy restaurant on its ground floor with recreation, practical and private spaces including a chapel on its other floors. There were to be fourteen 'hostesses' working one four-hour shift per week, 3 to 7 pm or 7 to 11 pm. The hostesses with their maids were to be supported by a staff of volunteers and salaried workers. The intrusion of undesirable women into the club was not seen as a problem and could be managed: 'If any poor creature of the undesirable world happens to stray in she flies at the first and immediate suggestion of the watchful guardian that she has made a mistake!' The *Review* initially appealed for £2000 to be raised to establish Charmy's for its first year, after which it was expected to be self-supporting.

Earlier, in March of that year, Admiral Lord Beresford had sent a letter to subscribers and donors enclosing a short report by Lady Bagot on the Hospital of Friendship's two years of work with the Belgian Army. He confirmed the handing over of the unit to the Belgian Military Authorities who were then in a position to staff and run the unit successfully, thus releasing the British staff to be allocated

to areas of greatest need. However, Theodosia was to retain the remaining balance of funds to use for the immediate needs of the Hospital.

Beresford paid tribute to its work in treating such a large number of men over its two years of operation. He drew attention to the extreme conditions under which the staff worked, such as the intense cold of the living huts in winter, the privations endured to save money to prolong their activities and the incessant bombing by hostile aircraft around them. He described the determination and courage of Theodosia in spending the greater part of two years with the Hospital and enduring the same hardships as other staff, often under heavy fire when out with the ambulance. Hostile aircraft were frequently in the skies above the unit. On one occasion 23 bombs were dropped nearby and on another two men were killed by a bomb dropped outside the door. He attributed the success of the unit being mainly if not entirely due to Lady Bagot.

The *Church Army Review* in April had advised that Lady Bagot was hoping to give a Grand Concert in the Queen's Hall on the evening of 3 May for the men of HM Forces. Admission was to be free for the men as it was at the very successful concert she arranged after the General Meeting in 1916. The *Review* also noted the closure of the Church Army Hospital at Dungavel and recognised again the achievement of Lady Bagot who had initially set it up at Caen at the start of the Great War. Subsequently, the *Review* in June reported that Lady Bagot held 'a very successful evening concert for soldiers and sailors after the General Meeting on 3 May. An excellent programme was given by eminent artistes who gave their services free'.

**1918** On 11 January Lady Bagot attended a Service of Thanksgiving for the capture of Jerusalem from the Turks. She was dressed in the uniform of St. Johns Ambulance Service and wore her War medals.

The *Church Army Review* for February again featured Charmy's, with Theodosia appealing for aid to complete the decoration and furnishing. Gifts of money, furniture, equipment such as a billiards table, bagatelle table, piano, pianola, carpets, rugs, writing requisites, tables, comfortable chairs, pictures, books, weekly papers, current music, etc. were solicited. Around that time Theodosia, according to

the electoral register, resided at Harley Mews North, with her home address listed as Levens Hall.



*Theodosia Bagot in 1918 attending a thanksgiving service for the defeat of the Ottoman Empire at Jerusalem*

Charmy's opened in February: 'its hospitality glows without a break from cellar to roof'. The club was busy from its inception with as many as 2000 men attending daily and on its first Sunday it was packed with delighted patrons. Servicemen came into the club rooms to rest, write letters and get refreshments at nominal prices in the large restaurant. The chapel on the second floor was reported to be much used. The club provided four billiard tables, pianos, a large library, a good kit-room, an information bureau and the latest war news on tape for the club's patrons to make use of. A soldier commented to Lady Bagot 'you've given this the right name, it's charming'.



*Charmy's on Marble Arch.*

The *Church Army 37<sup>th</sup> Report* for the year July 1918-1919 again listed Lady Bagot as a serving member of the General Consultative Committee and as both the President and the Honorary Secretary for the Lads' Ladder. The report noted that the work of this committee was severely restricted during the war years but since the Armistice they had dealt with a large number of lads, passing them out into employment or assisting them in other desirable ways. The organisation focussed on ensuring that the 'lads' were not settled in 'blind-alley' employment and on offering an opening that would result in learning a trade or gaining knowledge that would lead to a permanent remunerated position. The Lads Ladder Committee strove to keep in touch with all the lads on the Register through the Church Army's League of Comrades. Each member promised to be a comrade to members less fortunate than themselves. In the *Report* Theodosia thanked the kind friends who provided cast-off clothing from their own boys to assist the destitute lads. As secretary she appealed to

employers to continue to send her offers of employment opportunities for the lads.

Theodosia was also listed as a Committee Member for Emigration and continued to serve on the Ladies' Selection Committee, formed in 1916. This committee sourced lady workers who were posted to France, Belgium and Germany to assist their male counterparts in the devastated areas. They were involved in general clearing up and attending to graves. Theodosia also served as a committee member on the Church Army's board for work among bar-maids in public houses. Church Army sisters visited between 30 and 50 pubs daily, offering the bar-maids rest facilities and practical support.

On 1 April 1918 Lady Bagot was awarded the *Medaille de la Reine* by Elizabeth, Queen of Belgium in recognition of her services to the Belgian Army at the front. For two years, from taking out the mobile Hospital of Friendship in January 1915, Theodosia remained the only woman with the unit. The *Church Army Review* of June 1918 reported on the award and also commented sadly that the Hospital of Friendship had recently been destroyed by enemy shellfire.

The *Church Army Review* of April advertised the Annual meeting on 2 May at Langham Place, to be followed by an evening concert free for soldiers and sailors at the Queen's Hall. A limited number of tickets at a moderate price were to be available for other members of the public.

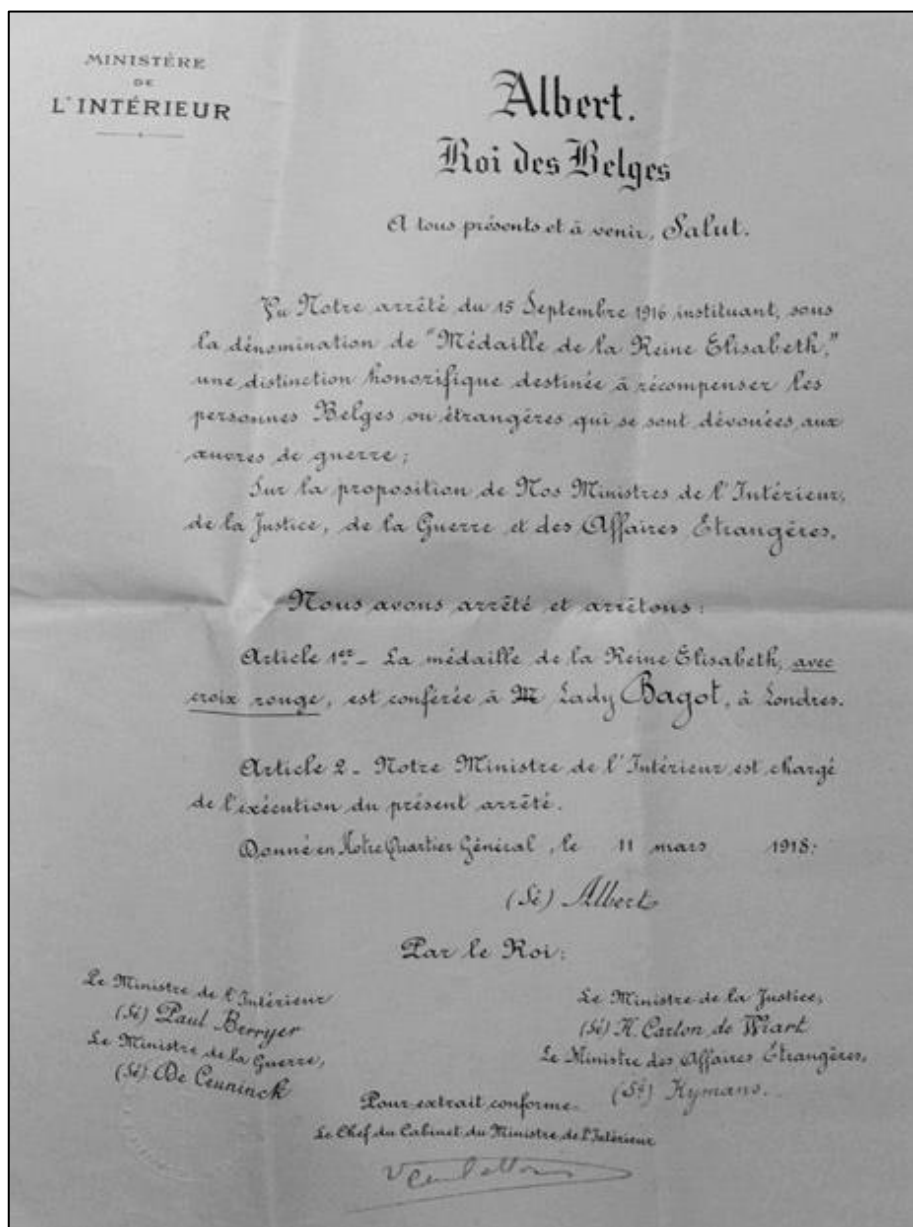
On 13th June 1918, Lady Bagot, acted as one of the hostesses for an 'At Home for Nurses' at 3 Grosvenor Place, London hosted by kind invitation of Viscount and Lady Hambleden. Four to five hundred nurses attended.

**1921** 24 February. A document entitled British Committee French Red Cross lists Directrice Theodosia Lady Bagot as one of those entitled to be awarded The Victory Cross and the British War Medal for her First World War service between September 1914 and March 1916.

The material effect of Theodosia's efforts on behalf of the Hospital of Friendship can be measured in the amount of money raised and the equipment that was purchased as a result. A total of £3949 was



subscribed, of which all was spent. This was in addition to the provision of the buildings.



Letter from Albert King of Belgium confirming Theodosia Bagot's award of the Queen of Belgium's medal.

## **Subscribers to the Hospital of Friendship.**

The full list of subscribers is too long to include here but amongst recognisable Levens and district subscribers to the fund were:

### ***General subscriptions***

Lady Bagot, Levens Bed (proceeds of whist Drive), Levens Bed (proceeds of Concert, per Mr. Head), Mrs Benson (sale of work), Mrs E.M. Benson (x2), Jas Gandy Esq., Welcome Club, Levens (per Mr. Gibson.)

### ***Subscription for the Annexe***

Mrs Benson

### ***Subscription for the operating theatre***

Lady Bagot

### ***Gifts of hospital clothing etc***

Mrs Benson, Levens Girls School (per Mrs Gandy), Heversham working party (per Mrs Argles)

## List of Equipment given to the Hospital of Friendship on 1 November, 1916.

36 Bedsteads.

44 Mattresses.

Full complement of Blankets, Linen, Bedding, etc., for the Hospital, and Linen for the Kitchen Department.

42 Cushions.

Ward and other Tables, Bed Rests, Cradles, Stretchers, etc.

About 1,200 Articles of Hospital Clothing.

Furniture and other Ward equipment.

Kitchen Range and complete Kitchen equipment.

Destructor, Boiler, Ward Stoves and "Primus" Stoves.

Rubber Baths.

Invalid and Deck Chairs, etc.

Carpentry Tools.

12 Rolls Roof Asphalt.

20 gallons Wood Preservative for outside of buildings.

Paint, Paint Brushes, etc.

### OPERATING THEATRE.

Operating Table.

Ambulance Ditto.

2 Glass Instrument Cases and Wash Stand.

Large equipment of Instruments, Chloroform, Drugs, etc.

Sterilizers.

Sterilizing Kettles.

Jugs, Dishes, Glass Jars, Measures and other Operating Theatre Utensils.

Complete outfit of Linen.

A large supply of Lint, Cotton Wool, Gauze, Dressings, Bandages, Rubber Sheeting, etc.

Oil Stoves and "Primus" Stoves.

Cylinder of Oxygen Gas and appliances.

Scales and Weights.

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## 9. Vicars of Levens: Sidney Swann and Ernest Urmston Savage



*The Reverend Sidney Swann*

Sidney Swann was Vicar of Levens from 1912 until just before the outbreak of the Great War in 1914, when he accepted the living of Holbrook in Derbyshire, but retained his close links with the village and with Lady Theodosia Bagot (see Chapter 8). His parting words to Levens were 'You have shown me the greatest kindness, and we leave, if you will believe me, with the very greatest regret. I have wandered about the parish for some days in a sad state of mind thinking of our friends and looking at the lovely hills. I hope some have been helped upwards a little'. It is beyond the scope of this section, however, to dwell at length on the subsequent exploits of Sidney Swann, a man described by John Julius Norwich as the epitome of muscular Christianity whose record during the war served to justify that description. On his appointment to Levens the *Westmorland Gazette* reported:

Mr Swann took his M. A. at Cambridge, being a Trinity man. He gained a big reputation as an all-round athlete, and rowed in the Cambridge boat. He has piloted a boat up the Eden, and late last summer established a record by crossing the English Channel in a skiff. He is an enthusiast concerning aviation, and has constructed an aeroplane and made several attempts to fly, so far, without success.

During the Great War Swann acted as chauffeur and ambulance driver for Lady Theodosia Bagot's Hospital of Friendship in Belgium (See the previous section). He said that he would travel to France for one month, then return to Derbyshire for one month, before again returning to France. He recorded in his diary for 1916, that, while returning from France and wearing a Captain's uniform, which a chaplain was entitled to wear, a policeman asked to check his papers and tried to stop him boarding a train. Sidney simply knocked him to the ground and sprinted to leap into a carriage as the train left the platform.

One may never fully understand the relationship between Sidney Swann and the widowed Theodosia Bagot but in 1920 the couple married and 'set many tongues wagging'. He later moved to livings in Hampshire, and died in 1943.



*The Reverend Ernest Urmston Savage*

The successor to Sidney Swann at St. John's Levens in 1914 was the Reverend Ernest Urmston Savage. He served throughout the war, living with his wife Mabel Bertha and their children, Betty and Peter, at Levens Vicarage.

It must have been a time of great strain dealing repeatedly with the families of the bereaved. Later in 1921, he became domestic chaplain and secretary to the Bishop of Carlisle. He was the 'Nature Notes' writer for the *Westmorland Gazette*.

The little information we have about him during the Great War comes from contemporary newspaper articles. In addition to his parochial and ministry work, it is recorded that in December 1914, shortly after his ordination, he took charge of the village's concert to raise money for the Belgian Relief Fund. Thereafter, he regularly performed at and supported other village events such as the old-folks Christmas concerts and fund-raisers for the war effort (notably Lady Bagot's Hospital) where he acted as both auctioneer and organiser. He and his wife were entrusted with the task of purchasing the presents sent to village servicemen at Christmas. He must also have been heavily involved in the meetings to create the village war memorial and he officiated at its formal consecration, shortly before he left the village. There is no evidence to show that he served a wider community during the war, but his dedication to Levens appears paramount.

His obituary in the *British Birds* journal records that Ernest died at Staveley on 23 June 1939 aged sixty, leaving his wife and two children. During his ministry he also held livings at Barbon and Ings in Westmorland, and Raughton Head in Cumberland.

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## 10. Hyning and the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) hospitals

The Voluntary Aid Detachment was a voluntary unit of civilians who provided nursing care for military personnel in Great Britain and other countries in the British Empire. Its nurses worked in both field hospitals and longer-term places of recuperation back in Britain.

Several Westmorland Auxiliary hospitals were opened in 1915 in response to increasing numbers of casualties on the fronts. The large house Hyning in Levens formed an annexe to the Stramongate Auxiliary Hospital in Kendal.



*Hyning just before the Great War*

Stramongate itself fell within the 'primary' category – those taking the sick and wounded direct from the hospital ships and arriving any time at 8 hours' notice by ambulance train from Dover or Southampton. It opened on 11 March 1915 with 72 beds, which had increased to 130 by June 1918. A total of 2009 patients were treated, of which only 7 died. These primary hospitals often had associated convalescent annexes, such as Hyning, to which men were transferred when the arrival of

another convoy of arrivals was imminent. The hospitals were funded by donations and run by a finance committee. Rations, provided by the Government, were ordered in bulk by county directors on a ratio to authorized beds. All registered auxiliaries received tea, tobacco and medical alcohol duty free.

The four-bed Hyning unit, which operated between 7 July and 14 October 1915, was donated by the house's occupant Mrs. C. W. Benson, probably in response to the returning wounded from the Dardanelles. The VAD nurse was Miss Mary Benson and the Medical Officer Captain James Lang Cochrane. Mrs. Benson, Mrs. Atkins and Miss Lilius Walker served as VAD Cooks, with the assistance of Miss Gertrude Barton from VAD Bedfordshire. It is thought that the total number of patients was seven.

The *Westmorland Gazette* described several fund raising events showing that the hospitals were well-supported by local people. For example, on 6 January 1917 it reported:

On New Year's Day the workers connected with the Levens Voluntary Aid Detachment held a successful Whist Drive in the Institute to raise funds for the sewing class which is engaged in making comforts for wounded soldiers. The refreshments for the supper and the prizes- pheasants, rabbits etc. had all been given with a view to helping the funds. The remaining cakes etc. were sold and the total amount realised after paying expenses was just over £12. 10s. At a meeting of the Parish Council on Friday Mr. Pennington reported that £10. 4s. had been received as charities, with a recommendation that part be held back till next year with a view of harder times. It was resolved to distribute the whole.

Miss Emily Bannerman, sister of the vicar of Kendal, kept an autograph book for the soldiers in the Stramongate hospital. Signatures of men who possibly convalesced at Hyning include:

**Sergeant J. Brown**, 1247 1/5 King's Own Scottish Borderers, Wounded Achi Baba Cape Helles, 1915.

**Lieutenant Corporal S. Proctor**, 1/4<sup>th</sup> Royal Sussex Regiment, Gaba Tepe and Suvla Bay, 1915.

**Private William Lane**, 9682, 9<sup>th</sup> Worcester Regiment. Suvla Bay, Aug 1915.

**Lance Corporal W. Timms**, 4088, 9<sup>th</sup> Royal Worcester Regiment, Achi Baba and Suvla Bay, August 1915.

**Private J. R. Norman**, 26985, 8<sup>th</sup> Welsh Pioneers Regt., Anzac, Dardanelles.

**Corporal Fred Kershaw**, 12717, 6<sup>th</sup> battalion King's Own Royal Lancasters, Wounded Aug. 10<sup>th</sup>- 15<sup>th</sup> advance Suvla Bay, Sedal, Bare, Achi Baba, Anzac.

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## 11. The ladies of Levens

An unnamed editor of the *Yorkshire Post* made a prescient comment in September 1916: 'In the ultimate analysis it is the nation with the best women that's going to win the war.'

In Levens, for the majority of women, this meant nurturing their family through the thick and thin of the war, through the wider family and national ups and downs and through the trauma of their menfolk leaving to serve in the war effort. Unfortunately, their individual stories are now largely lost to us. However, a few remarkable individuals' stories can be told. First and foremost is Lady Theodosia Bagot (see Chapter 8). Others include Mary Benson, who can be found in the articles about horses, the Hynning hospital annex and Levens Women's Institute, but there were many others and some of their stories are set out below.

As more men fought in the services, it fell to women to earn money for their families. Many jobs that had been previously considered 'unladylike' and unsuitable for women, such as bus driver, poultry farmer or industrial worker, were now performed by women. The Board of Trade labour exchanges developed the register of women for war service, which allowed many women the opportunity to work in paid positions throughout the war in the hope that thousands of men could be released for active service. Under the 'general service' scheme in September 1915, women could apply for civic positions as well as any other job that might be suitable, but the most prevalent occupation for women was working as a Voluntary Aid Detachment volunteer (VAD).

Female VADs undertook a variety of work during the war, organising and supplying aid to naval, military and auxiliary hospitals alongside 'general service' duties throughout the UK and overseas. In 1914, 40,018 women were members of Red Cross detachments compared to 17,696 men. The Red Cross worked with The Order of St John during the war, which had a membership of 6,773 women and 5,865 men. The nearest VAD establishment to Levens was the

Stramongate Hospital in Kendal and six Levens women are known to have served there, or at the auxiliary hospital at Hyning, Levens.

**Miss Mary Wakefield Benson** of Sizergh Castle, Kendal, Westmorland was the unpaid Commandant VAD 20, Westmorland, and thus a voluntary nurse at the 'Hyning Annexe' to Stramongate Auxiliary Hospital, Kendal from 07 July 1915 to 14 October 1915.

**Mrs Annie Atkins** of Hyning, the Benson family's cook, continued and served as a volunteer VAD cook while Hyning was an auxiliary hospital from 7 July 1915 to 14 October 1915.

**Marjorie Harrison**, of Levens, near Kendal, [no other address details were given] gave over 1,000 hours of voluntary work over 18 months as a Store Keeper at the Westmorland 2 VAD Stramongate Auxiliary Hospital in Kendal.

**Ruth Eveleen Pennington** of Holly Bank, Levens, volunteered at the Stramongate Hospital as a general ward nurse from 20 July 1915.

**Mrs Ruth Tillotson**, then of The Park Farm, Staveley, but later of Deerholme, Levens, was a full-time, unpaid night nurse at Stramongate Hospital, Kendal from February 1916. She is recorded to have volunteered 396 hours of nursing since she enrolled with the Westmorland 4 VAD (Stramongate Auxiliary Hospital).

**Miss Lilius O. Walker** of Brettargh Holt, volunteered from 7 July 1915 to 14 October 1915 as a VAD cook at the Hyning auxiliary hospital, and later at a Child Welfare Centre in London, followed by seven months' work in a hospital in Glasgow.

Two other women with Levens addresses are included in the VAD records elsewhere:

**Miss Helena Helen Burrow**, of Fernbank, Leasgill worked for the West Riding of Yorkshire Reserve Department from 1 June 1917. She worked as a full-time clerk at the Fulford Military Hospital in York, her pay at engagement being 27 shillings per week and when she left in 1919 it was 35 shillings per week.

**Mrs Harpham**, Walnut Tree Cottage, Levens, served as a VAD 'nurse worker' from 1917 to 1919 at Newton Heath Comfort Section, Lancashire. She received the Red Cross East Lancashire Certificate for her service.

The only qualified nurse from Levens who has been traced is **Miss Sarah Ann Prickett** of Owlet Hall. She was the daughter of Thomas, a retired butcher and Jane Prickett of Owlet Hall, but she was not on the 1911 census. A 'fully qualified nurse', she served from 5 April 1917 at Mulgrave Castle Hospital, Whitby to where she had been posted from the Red Cross Head Quarters in London as a Ward Sister. She received £54.12s 0d p.a.

The *Westmorland Gazette* of 9 August 1919 reported:

Miss S. A. Prickett of Owlet Hall, Levens, who has been a Sister in the British Red Cross, and is now at Guy's Hospital, London, was invited and was present at the Royal Garden party at Buckingham Palace on Friday last.' Her career is recorded as; Guy's Hospital, 1904-1907, Private Nursing in Leeds from 1907, a District Nurse in Leeds 1915-1916, Pupil House-Keeper, Charing Cross Hospital March-July 1916, Nursing Sister, British Red Cross 1916-1919, Guy's Hospital 1919-1921, from where she went to the City of Leeds Hospital before ending her career at the Convalescent Home, Royal Aberdeen Hospital for Sick Children.

**Gertrude Barton** served at Hyning throughout its operational period. She was a friend of Mary and Eleanor Benson. In 1911 Eleanor was living with Gertrude and her sister Frances Emily Barton at the Benson's London home, where Gertrude, aged 41, is a certified maternity nurse. Her record lists her nursing service at Ampthill VAD Hospital, Bedfordshire (her home town) from December 1914 until October 1918, and her previous engagements at the Relief Hospital, Hinwick House, Wellingborough and the Red Cross Hospital in Ampthill. There is no mention of her time at Hyning. She was probably an unpaid volunteer, as no payments are detailed, though she recorded 987 hours of part time nursing at the Ampthill (VAD Bedfordshire 30) Hospital.

Perhaps the most renowned nurse from Levens was **Lady Theodosia Bagot** from Levens Hall (see Chapter 8).

**Mrs. T.A. Argles** also registered the residence named Eversley to be an auxiliary hospital, although there is no evidence that it was later used for nursing. She possibly, however, ran a War Hospital Supply Depot from her home (see Chapter 16).

Other women went into military roles. **Doris Mary Caroline Glover**, née Copland (1889-1976), who later lived at Whinfield, Force Lane, Levens, was Deputy Administrator of the Women's Royal Air Force (WRAF). In 1911 census, she was at 17 North Terrace, Newcastle on Tyne, occupation cookery student. She married Arthur Stanley Glover M.C. at Gateshead in 1923. The WRAF was formed in 1918 (when the RFC & RNAS merged to form the RAF) by the amalgamation of the relevant elements of the women's branches of the Royal Naval Air Service and Women's Army Auxiliary Corps. The WRAF was disbanded in 1920. No known WRAF officer service records survive. Those who successfully went through WRAF officer training used the term 'Asst. Administrators W.R.A.F.'

The ladies of Levens were also instrumental in establishing war hospital supply depots and work parties, of which there were more than 2,700 throughout the United Kingdom and overseas. Among the named individuals who registered such work parties were **Mary Benson** at Hyning and **Mrs Argles** at Eversley (see above) (both listed under Milnthorpe).



## 12. Levens Women's Institute

At a foundation meeting held on 29 November 1917 at Levens Institute, it was agreed to form a Women's Institute, to be named 'Levens Women's Institute'. The following committee was proposed:

President - **Mrs. Gandy of Heaves** (proposer Mrs. Benson of Hyning, seconder Miss Brougham (Beathwaite House).

Vice-President - **Mrs. Watson-Gandy, also of Heaves** (proposer Mrs. Benson, seconder Mrs. Hargreaves of Levens Post Office).

Treasurer and secretary - **Miss Brougham** (agreed).

Mrs. Hargreaves and Mrs. Savage, the wife of the vicar Ernest Urmston Savage, were noted as 'Founder Members', but it is not clear whether that denoted membership of the committee, the first meeting of which took place on 6 December.

A special meeting on 10 January 1918 discussed the distribution of the Agricultural Organization Society's 'Food Economy Notices' and the first full meeting was held on 24 January 1918. At this meeting the 'Founder Committee' was listed as Mrs. Hayes, Mrs. Newall of School House, wife of Robert Newall the Levens School head teacher, Mrs. Shackelford (Box Tree), Miss E. Cottam (Nether Levens), Miss G. Halhead (Inglewood), Miss A. Hoggarth and Miss Pennington (Holly Bank). The minutes recorded 'Programme first meeting by Savage and Brougham', and that Mr. T.W. Lawrence gave a lecture entitled, 'Poultry Ready for Sale', and Miss F. Coward demonstrated killing and dressing fowls, for which Mrs. Savage provided the bird.

At the On 31 January, it was agreed that as the previous meeting had been so successful, they should hold a series of four classes on poultry rearing. It was also decided to obtain and distribute food efficiency recipes. This self-help theme continued with suggestions for future meetings including, 'salads and soups', 'bee keeping', 'how to get rid of flies', 'cereals', 'cooking of vegetables' and 'how to spend a happy winter's evening', though not all seem to have come to fruition. 1918 meetings were 'blouse cutting demo' in April, 'the building of the ideal five room cottage' in June, 'using waste materials' in July and 'cottage vegetable gardening' in August. In May members reluctantly

agreed that it was impractical for them to keep a pig on one of the village allotments.

The minutes of the 17 June 1918 meeting included a suggestion that 'a prisoner of war should be adopted by the W.I. as parcels are allowed to be sent every three weeks.' However, no confirmation of this proposal was recorded. Later, in November, it was suggested that the membership should become active in distributing leaflets against Bolshevism. The December meeting, however, was cancelled because of influenza, with the next recorded meeting being a general meeting on 29 January 1919. Meetings in 1919 were held alternately between Tuesday mornings and afternoons 'for the benefit of workers on the land'.



*Levens Welcome, the hall adjacent to Levens Hall (now demolished) where several Levens soldiers enlisted and where the W.I. provided entertainment for returned soldiers.*

In addition to the committee and monthly meetings, which usually rotated round the larger houses including Hyning barn, Beathwaite

House, Heaves, Sizergh Castle, the Post Office and Levens Institute, an open meeting was held on 3 June 1919, with over 70 attendees, when Miss McCormack spoke about the YMCA.'s work in France, and there was a display of war trophies. The minutes recorded, 'A revelation ... an insight into the lives and hardships of the men at the front and the splendid work which was carried on just behind the lines by the Y.M.C.A.' The July 1919 meeting held at Sizergh Castle, while making no mention of the Peace Bank Holiday, occasioned the singing of patriotic songs during a garden party, followed by dancing and games in the house. Towards the end of that year in October the W.I. gave 'an entertainment for local returned soldiers' in the Levens Welcome and in December the minutes recorded that a play by Mr. Head was chosen to be given as part of another concert 'for disabled soldiers'. The ex-servicemen were invited to a whist drive in February 1920.

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## 13. Votes for women

Before and throughout the war some Levens people, mainly women, continued their campaign to obtain the right for women to vote.

A Westmorland branch of the National Union of the Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) was formed on 3 April 1909, with Miss Louis Walker of Brettargh Holt, Levens as secretary. At Catherine Marshall's instigation, the National Unions of Cumberland and Westmorland formed themselves into a federation, with the arrangement officially confirmed at a conference held in Penrith on 28 May 1910. The Federation's first secretary was Miss Louis Walker with, from 1911, Catherine Marshall. A Kendal NUWSS society had already been formed in 1910, with Mary Benson of Hynning, Levens as secretary. By 1912 she had been succeeded by Miss Harrison (Hill Cote, Kendal) and then one year later another Levens resident, Mrs. Gandy of Heaves, who became the society's president. Other notable suffragists were Annie Argles of Eversley and William and Sarah Sisson of Lane Foot, both of Levens.

The suffrage organisations continued to hold meetings throughout the war. The *Westmorland Gazette* of 16 June 1917 reported:

**Women's suffrage.** The annual meeting of the National Union of the Women's Suffrage Societies was held in Kendal on Friday evening, Mrs. Benson (Hynning) presiding. Mrs. Acland spoke of the favourable attitude in the country towards women's suffrage. Principally she emphasised the great need of activity to see to the health and welfare of the children. A resolution of congratulation and esteem was sent to Mrs. Henry Fawcett, it being her 70th birthday. At Milnthorpe a meeting held on Tuesday presided over by Mrs. Gandy, Miss G Cooke of London gave an address on 'Women citizens and their responsibilities'. Mrs. Marshall, Keswick, followed with an address on the women's movement and the outlook for the future. Mrs. Gandy read a letter which she had

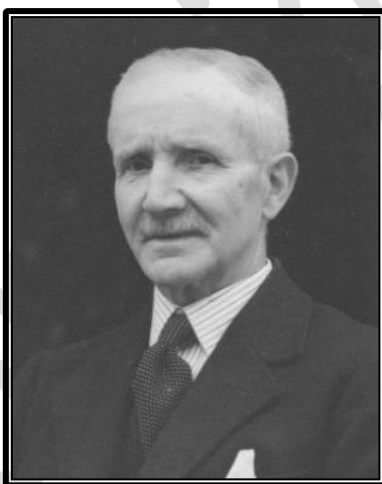
received from Colonel Weston MP in which he admitted that he was now fully converted to the cause of women's suffrage. (Applause) A resolution in favour of the Bill now before Parliament was carried.



*A local outdoor meeting of NUWSS with representatives from throughout Westmorland and Cumberland.*

## 14. Levens School

Events at Levens School mirrored the problems of rural schools throughout Britain, yet the children contributed to the war effort, where possible, but often under difficult circumstances. Snippets from the school logbook have provided a few glimpses inside the school. When war started in August 1914 there were 117 children on the registers under the headship of Mr Robert Newall, the long-serving teacher who taught there from 1895 to 1932. During the war years the school was troubled by outbreaks of sickness, serious staffing problems, extra demand for farmers' children to work at home, and two very cold winters.



*Robert Newall, Levens School's wartime teacher and headmaster*

In October 1914 the school was closed for six weeks due to an outbreak of measles. This was followed by bad colds and the threat of scarlet fever, which had come as close as Hincaster. This resulted in several Levens pupils who lived in Hincaster being excluded. The winters of 1916 and 1917 were very cold with a great deal of snow. This led to many bad colds and poor attendance, with the roads often being too bad for the more distantly dispersed pupils to walk to school. In 1918 there was another outbreak of measles, but luckily not sufficiently bad

to close the school. However, in October 1918 a serious 'flu epidemic began and the school was closed for three weeks. The teachers also suffered and closure lasted until the end of the year.

Staffing problems were at their worst in 1917 and 1918, when the school functioned for most of the time with only two out of four teachers present. This was partly due to the teachers coming some considerable distance by bicycle or on foot. One lived in Coniston and one near Shap and both stayed in Levens for some of the time: another walked each day from Whitbarrow. When one teacher left in 1916 to go to college there were no supply teachers available. One teacher, Miss Just, was seriously ill and in hospital during 1917, being absent for five months. This meant that several girls from the top class were used as monitors and the head teacher took responsibility for the infants as well as the 9 - 15 age group.

The extra demand for farmers' sons to work at home came about because several farm workers were enlisted for military service. There was also extra demand for food production owing to the war. Special efforts thus had to be made to make school holidays fit in with the farming year. In 1916, for example, an extra two weeks were added to the summer holidays because of the harvest. As the war continued more boys, some as young as 12, were granted total exemption from school to work full-time on the farm. The blacksmith's son had to leave school early, aged 13, because his father's apprentice was called up.

From early in the war, efforts were made by the schoolteachers and scholars to do what they could for the cause. In September 1915 twelve of the girls attended a cookery class in the old Infants' school where they took a short course in 'Economical cookery for wartime'. Lady Theodosia Bagot showed the children a Magic Lantern Show about her 'Hospital of Friendship' in Belgium. At the same time the girls were busy knitting mittens for the soldiers.

On 22 November 1917 the log book recorded that the school had 'Sent off three sacks of chestnuts to Milnthorpe Station. They have been collected by the children, and are to be used in the making of propellant munitions. They take the place of grain in their manufacture'. Later, in September 1918, fifty scholars picked 1cwt 13lbs of blackberries on Whitbarrow for the Ministry of Food.

Finally on November 11th, 1918, when Armistice was declared, the flag was hoisted and the National Anthem was sung.



## 15. Betty – The Levens War Horse

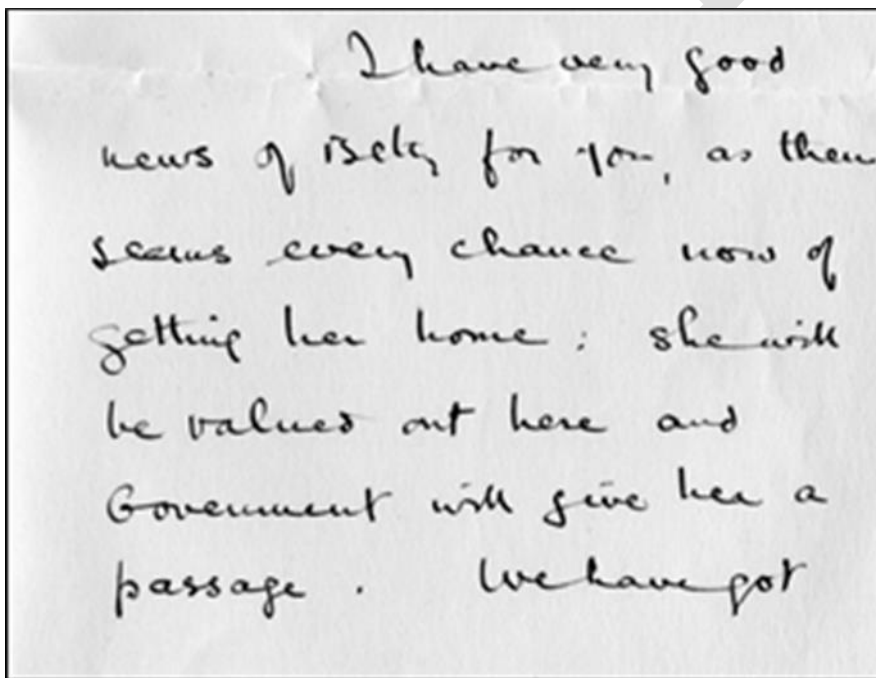
During the Great War, the Army could not have functioned without horses. They were vital for cavalry roles, but were also needed for moving supplies, equipment, guns and ammunition, and for transporting the wounded to hospital. The requisition, transportation and care of these animals was of huge importance.



*Photograph of Betty sent to 'Miss Benson' at Hyning by Bertie Gay in April 1919.*

Betty was a horse belonging to Mary Benson of Hyning, Levens. At the outbreak of the war, officers were permitted to take their own horses with them and Mary's brother, Captain Robert Benson, duly took his own horse Peter to war. Mary, by contrast, deliberately gave up Betty for the war effort in 1914-15, allowing it to be ridden by Robert's friend, Arthur Bertie Gay (1896-1959), son of Major General Sir Arthur William Gay. Bertie and Robert were together in the 4th (West Lancashire) Brigade, Royal Field Artillery, Territorial Force and the Bensons were long-standing friends of the Gay family.

Bertie had a high regard for Betty and managed to guide his horse carefully through the Western Front and Balkan conflicts and finally ensured that Betty returned home safely to Hyning from Salonika (now Thessaloniki) in Greece in April 1919. As an officer's horse Betty was lucky; most were killed in action, sold in the country in which they had served, or simply slaughtered because the cost of returning them home was prohibitive. Bertie himself was awarded the Military Cross in June 1919 for his service in the Balkans.



I have very good news of Betty for you, as there seems every chance now of getting her home; she will be valued out here and Government will give her a passage. We have got

*Excerpt from the letter to 'Miss Benson' from Bertie, advising her of Betty's repatriation.*

It would be satisfying to know whether Betty enjoyed many happy years back in Levens as her reward. Sadly, the other Hyning horse, Peter, does not appear to have survived the conflict.

## 16. The Home Front

Some Home Front activities like those of the school, the WI, the Voluntary Aid Detachments (VADs), Women Suffragists, and Lady Bagot and her Church Army work have their own sections. Inevitably there is some necessary overlap when attempting to provide a coherent account of how and to what extent the Home Front developed and impinged on the daily life of the village.

From what we can glean from the *Westmorland Gazette* it appears that the village's first wartime experience was the recruitment of men to form Kitchener's 'New Army'. This was soon followed by events such as a concert in the school, which raised £7 for the Belgian Relief Fund, primarily concerned with support of the flood of refugees from that country, and Lady Bagot's appeal for clothing for the Church Army hospital at Dunkirk. This latter activity was organised locally by Mrs. Agnes Argles at Eversley (Leasgill), who was also local secretary of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association, a national charity for the relief and support of servicemen's families. Mrs. Argles later set up a 'War Hospital Supply Depot' at her home, where volunteers gathered to make bandages, bed jackets and nightshirts, etc., for soldiers in hospital. Nationally the scale of this activity was enormous, with over 2000 such depots. A similar one was also run by Mrs. Benson at Hynning. Mrs. Argles was likewise a leading light in the Westmorland Red Cross and in 1918 organised a special 'Gifts Sale and Fete' in Kendal Town Hall, which raised over £1500 in aid of the 'Our Day' national event.

Fund raising became a prominent community activity as the war progressed. In January 1916 two separate social events in Levens, a whist drive and a concert, raised a total of £37 10s towards the 'Levens Bed' in Lady Bagot's Hospital of Friendship. On New Year's Day 1917 the Levens VAD workers held a whist drive to raise funds for the sewing class which was making comforts for the soldiers, the prizes – pheasants, rabbits etc. were all donated as were the cakes and other refreshments. Anything left over was sold and the total amount realised was over £12 10s. Fund raising continued to the end, with a

whist drive in October 1918 contributing £32 for Christmas presents for the village's soldiers.

Nationally the rush of volunteers responding to Kitchener's recruitment appeal was so great, especially from rural communities, that by December 1914 the *Westmorland Gazette* quoted a *Times* report that an agricultural labour shortage was making itself felt. This appears not to have affected Levens significantly until later in the war, as in April 1916 the *Westmorland Gazette* reported that the Levens farmers were making good progress with spring work and that 'there is no apparent shortage of labour as yet'. Potato planting and corn sowing were 'in full swing'.

Conscription was introduced in early 1916 and County Tribunals were set up to deal with applications for postponement of, or exemption from, the call-up. The tribunal members were appointed from the leading citizenry, many of whom were magistrates; F. W. Crewdson J.P. of Beathwaite was one of the twenty serving Cumberland and Westmorland. The *Westmorland Gazette* reported a couple of tribunal appeals by Levens men in 1917 (Sewell and Thexton) and in both cases the defendants argued that their agricultural labouring activities necessitated them being exempted from service. Both eventually lost their cases.

Another case highlights aspects of both conscription and labour shortage. In January 1918 a case at Kendal Petty Sessions considered an alleged breach of contract between a Lyth farmer and a farm horseman named William Bell, who wanted to work somewhere else. The farmer argued that he could not find a replacement horseman and would not be able to get the ploughing done. Intriguingly, however the farmer stated he had 'two very capable soldiers working on the farm', but Bell did not like working with them. One of these men was William Brooks, a private in the Agricultural Labour Corps who, giving evidence, said there was no other horseman on the farm and they were behind with the ploughing.

One point of interest is that given the prevailing conditions Bell felt able to do what he liked. Another is the presence of men from the Agricultural Labour Corps. Brooks had been invalided home from France but had not been discharged from the army and had been redeployed to farm work. The Army Labour Corps, formed in 1917, was made up of men who had been wounded or were ill and thus unfit

for further combat postings, or those who on enlistment were too old or unfit. Many of these companies served overseas in the theatres of war, working in the supply lines, etc., but some were specifically allocated to farm work at home, owing to the acute labour shortage in the later part of the war. Men from Agricultural Labour companies were clearly needed in our area.

In a separate scheme to replace farmworkers the Board of Agriculture created a civilian organisation called the Women's Land Army. It would be some of these 'land girls' that the *Westmorland Gazette* correspondent had in mind in early April 1918 when he wrote: 'There were few visitors to the district except about a score of khaki-clad men and maidens who are billeted on the village and engaged on neighbouring farms trussing hay, etc.' It is unlikely one of them was John Addison of Levens as at the time he was in 422 Agricultural Company based in Cardiff.

George Hewett, a Levens man about whom we know little, served in the Royal Fusiliers before transferring to the Labour Corps. He first served in France in November 1915 but we do not know whether he transferred because of injury/sickness or whether, like Oswald Stabler, he went straight into a regimental labour company that was later amalgamated into the Labour Corps in 1917.

Although food controls were not imposed until 1916, the U-Boat campaign of 1917 and a poor wheat harvest restricted food supply and by 1918 forced compulsory rationing of meat, butter, lard, margarine and sugar. Concern about food supplies and prices had existed from early in the war and in 1915 county and district War Agricultural Committees were formed to give farmers advice on improving productivity and which land to turn over to arable production. While we lack any knowledge of effects locally in Levens, the public record gives some insights.

In March 1916 the *Westmorland Gazette* reported that a Kendal nurseryman, Clarence Webb, invited by the Levens War Food committee, visited Levens School 'where there was a fairly good gathering of people interested in cottage gardening'. Doubtless this included the headmaster Mr. Newall who had earlier instituted the school garden. The implied lack of local enthusiasm was also evident in another *Westmorland Gazette* report of an attempt by a Board of Trade organising officer, a Miss Rockcliffe, to promote a national

scheme to persuade women to register as available for farm work, either locally or further afield, to help 'in the present crisis'. At the meeting in the school around 56 were present, mostly women, and no farmers. The appeal largely fell on deaf ears and the meeting closed with a request for all who could do so to go in for poultry keeping.

Nevertheless, in April 1916 the *Westmorland Gazette* reported that Levens had up until then contributed 11,392 eggs to the collection since the start of the war. This was the 'National Egg Collection for Wounded Soldiers and Sailors', a War Office scheme launched in 1914 to bolster the diets of the recovering wounded in hospitals. These eggs were very necessary. When the Somme offensive opened on 1 July 1916 over 38,000 British soldiers were wounded. Egg collection was an ongoing activity and in December 1918 the village contributed 52.

Levens people also participated in the birth of National Savings. The war proved ruinously expensive. Military expenditure in 1918 was 13½ times that in 1913 when it had then absorbed 21% of government spending. Huge loans were made to our allies, and inflation was rampant. Much higher taxes were not producing enough revenue so the government looked for alternative ways to raise money from the public. In April 1916 War Savings Committees were set up for England and Scotland and these promoted the formation of local associations and within a year there were thousands, the one in Levens starting in December. Savings Certificates were introduced in June 1916 and for a 15s 6d payment you could buy a certificate worth £1 in five years' time. Unsurprisingly, this 29% return proved highly popular. The *Westmorland Gazette* reported in July 1917 that the Levens association had 91 members and had issued 617 certificates. In the six months to 31 March 1918 Levens bought 970 more.

A minor highlight, reported in late November 1915, was that Levens people 'had a good view of an airship which sailed over the bay...' These people would have been well aware of the German Zeppelin air raids which had started at the beginning of that year in the South East. All told there were approximately fifty-one such raids. Though they had little military effect they caused much alarm, to the extent that when the White Lund munitions factory in Morecambe blew up on the night of 1 October 1917 Gertrude Benson of Hynning wrote in her diary that the family thought 'a big Zeppelin raid was taking place over Barrow'. Barrow suffered no such raids in the Great

War but the fear of them extended as far as 'this out-of-the-way corner' as Gertrude characterised Levens.

There was some minor war damage much closer nearby not caused by the enemy, but by increased road traffic. Two such incidents occurred in 1914. On 22 June an 'engine with a gun shield and sleeping car' passed over the Ulverston, Milnthorpe and Lancaster road from Levens Bridge to the Lancashire Boundary at Meathop Bridge (this was in fact armour plates in transit to the shipyards in Barrow-in-Furness). The haulage contractor later repudiated responsibility and said the journey had been made on behalf of the Admiralty. The Council withdrew their claim for compensation but said that in future this type of traffic required licences under the Locomotives Act and that persons carrying weights over 8 tons on portions of that road would be liable to a claim for expenses. The total weight claimed was 34 tons - 'far too heavy for this road which was badly cut up and badly damaged'. The repair bill for £12 9s was to be sent to the haulage contractor from Manchester. This event was followed a few days later by another engine with total weight of 33 tons, with an associated cost of repairs at almost £5. Levens Bridge carried the A6, which at that time was the main north-south road artery on the west coast. In 1915 the Westmorland County Council Highways/Main Roads Committee minutes recorded damage to the bridge parapet 'caused by one of the heavy motor lorries proceeding from Scotland to the front'.

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## 17. The Armistice and Beyond

Unlike the exuberant and sometimes frenzied celebrations that were reported from around the country, leading to claims of indecent excess, Levens appears to have an extremely measured, if not muted, reaction to the announcement, if the only report in the *Westmorland Gazette* of 16 November 1918 is accurate:

Levens - News of the signing of the armistice reached Levens at noon on Monday and spread rapidly through the village. At the school the children paraded at the flag-staff in the school yard. The vicar, the Rev E.U. Savage accompanied by a few friends, attended and spoke a few words to the children, emphasising the importance of the occasion. The school flag was then hoisted and a verse of the National Anthem sung, followed by rounds of hearty cheers. For its size Levens has been hard hit during the war and many householders marked the stoppage of hostilities by a display of flags and bunting, whilst at Heaves a large bonfire was kindled in the evening. The church bells rung merrily and almost continuously from 7 to 9 pm.

Compare this with the scenes below at Buckingham Palace on 11 November 1918.



The inference from the Levens report is that this was not a spontaneous outpouring of joy but a weary expression of relief. A much more upbeat mood is evident in Levens' contribution to the 'Peace Day' bank holiday events on 19 July 1919. This was to be a national 'festival of victory', following the signing of the Versailles peace treaty the previous month. In London there was a huge parade and the Cenotaph, which Sir Edwin Lutyens had been given just a fortnight's notice to prepare, was unveiled. In Levens the end of the horror was celebrated a couple of days in advance and the *Westmorland Gazette* reported:

Levens held its celebration on Thursday last week, for by so doing they were able to secure the services of the Kendal Borough Band, which helped to make the affair the huge success it was. The school children, carrying numerous flags and banners, and the cyclists in costume, met at the Institute. Led by the band, a procession paraded part of the village, and then marched to the big pasture lent by Mr. Cottam for the occasion. Here they were met by the vicar, the Rev. E. U. Savage, and sang two verses of the Old Hundred and two of the National Anthem. The day being beautifully fine, the children, under the direction of Mr. Pennington, formed up in circles and sat on the grass for tea, each child receiving a bag containing five different cakes. Meanwhile the cyclists, 35 in number, formed up in a circle for judging. Many of the costumes and machines were really excellent, and the difficult task of judging was undertaken by Mrs. Harold Brougham and Mrs. J. Wakefield, who gave their awards as follows; - Ladies - 1. Miss D. Bindloss (War Savings), 2. Miss M. Richmond (Ragtime), 3. Miss B. Mason (England). Special prizes in this class were allotted to Miss M. D. Prickett (Peace) and Mrs J. Stainton (Joy Bells). Gents - 1. Messrs. F. Rockliffe and J. Addison (Mr. and Mrs. Profiteer off to Blackpool on a tandem), 2. Messrs. G. and S. Rockliffe (a British Tommy with a German prisoner), 3. Mr. Winder Yapp (League of Nations). Children - 1. Miss Shackleford, 2. R. Garnett, 3. A. Mattinson, 4. R. Hoggarth. After the children had refreshed themselves, tea was provided for every adult in the parish in the large marquee lent by Sir Alan Bagot, and it was very gratifying to the committee to see so many really old people turn out. Before the tea was over the children were again busy at their

sports. The Sports Committee had arranged nearly 40 events for them, and these were keenly contested by the youngsters and much enjoyed by their elders. Then followed races for adults, i.e., threading needle race, wheelbarrow race, slow race for cyclists, zig-zag race for cyclists, driving race, etc. For some of these the entries were large, and they had to be run in heats, whilst many of them were the cause of much merriment to both competitors and spectators. The sports were kept going with a swing: there was no dragging, so that at eight p.m. (the advertised time) the excellent bellman (Mr. W. Head) was able to announce that entries would be taken for 10 ½ st. and all weight wrestling. The prizes for all weights were given by Sir Alan Bagot and included a beautiful silver cup for the first. The wrestling was confined to residents and quite a large crowd of spectators witnessed some real good bouts. Sir Alan was present and at the close presented the prizes as follows:- All weights- 1. Ed. Hayhurst, 2. T. Butler, 3. Jas. Newby. 10 ½ st. - 1. Jas. Newby, 2. W. Nicholson, 3. T. Butler. The band played for dancing until ten p.m., when very many of the younger folks adjourned to the Institute, where dancing was kept up till three a.m. The catering was well done by Mr. Townley, Kendal, and special praise is due to the ladies' committee under Miss Brougham, for the excellence of their arrangements, and to the Sports Committee for their management of the sports. - On Saturday night quite a number of Levens people climbed up to the Clump on Sizergh Fell. This point commands one of the most extensive views in the district, and from it about 20 fires could be seen, from Morecambe in the south to Scafell and Helvellyn. A couple of naval flares were carried up and fired, along with a number of rockets.

Perhaps it had taken some time for what we nowadays might call 'moving on' to be admissible, or maybe this represents that part of our historical mosaic destroyed by the plough, but the next public celebration reported in the *Westmorland Gazette* was not until New Year 1920, when:

All returned soldiers, who had either joined up from Levens or had since come to live in the parish, were invited to a supper and entertainment in Levens School on New Year's Eve. A representative

committee, with Mr. Pennington as chairman, made excellent arrangements for giving the 'boys' a very good time. Each was invited to bring a lady friend, and the responses numbered about 100. All sat down in a large room of the school to a substantial meal well served. Afterwards each gentleman received a packet of cigarettes, and each lady a satchel of chocolates. Whilst the men enjoyed their smokes, the 'Levens Sparklets', under Mr. Head, entertained them to a concert, lasting an hour, and the various items on the programme were much appreciated. Following the concert those who liked dancing adjourned to the Infant room, whilst those who were fond of cards enjoyed a whist drive in one of the class rooms. Here the prize winners were: Ladies - 1 Mrs. Larcombe, 2 Mrs. J. Sisson, 3 Miss Morgan, booby, Mrs. Sewell; Gentlemen - 1 T. Lancaster, 2 G. Tarves, 3 J. Dobson, booby, Ed. Coward. After the drive all were again invited to a second repast. The remainder of the night was spent in dancing, which was kept going in full swing until early morning. Just before the clock struck 12, all joined hands and sang lustily 'Auld Lang Syne'. All the rooms had been tastefully decorated and looked very nice indeed. The whole affair from beginning to end was a great success, creditable to the committee whose aim throughout was to make everybody happy.

Following Armistice Day 1918 there were far fewer items in the *Westmorland Gazette* that carry overtly 'Home Front' characteristics. The WI continued and in February 1919 Miss Parr, the County Secretary of the War Agricultural Society of Lincolnshire talked on the work done in all parts of the country by other institutes. The interesting thing about this report was the comment 'Many came from considerable distances ... showed that a healthy interest was being shown in the movement ... at present there are over 850 women's institutes in England and Wales'. Formed in 1915 to encourage countrywomen to get involved in growing and preserving food, the WI gave an opportunity to those women to have an acknowledged public role that they did not subsequently relinquish.

Some of the food rationing introduced in 1918 remained in force: butter continued to be rationed until 1920, and in late 1919 both Lady Bagot and Sir Alan were among the defendants in a case brought by the Ministry of Food against a 'Hampshire woman' for selling

butter at prices above the maximum allowed by law. Lady Bagot pleaded guilty to a technical offence and the case against Sir Alan was dropped as he was away serving in France. Though these offences occurred amongst the upper classes it is probably reasonable to assume that many people in Levens, as elsewhere, could not afford to over-pay and resented the continuance of restrictions, just wanting a return to normal life. Who can blame them?

## 18. Demobilisation

An ARMY FORM Z18, issued to all men on demobilisation, was a certificate of his employment during the war. In addition to confirming a soldier's name, rank, regiment and regimental number, it also stated his trade before enlistment, the nature of his regimental employment, e.g. 'Wheelwright' or 'Transport manager', and included 'Special remarks'. The latter was intended as a form of recommendation to a future employer. It was usually signed by the soldier's Commanding Officer, but his words were formulaic, if not trite. Whilst no example for a Levens man has been found, others include 'Steady and reliable', 'A good horseman', 'He takes care of his animal(s)', 'A very good groom/driver/labourer' [insert the appropriate occupation as required], which in modern terms makes the recommendation almost valueless.

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## 19. The Aftermath

We know from a newspaper report in October 1920 that Lady Bagot was in charge of a department of the Church Army for the special care of shell-shocked soldiers and the homes for motherless children of disabled ex-service men but other evidence of the aftermath of war in Levens is sparse or undiscovered. Though the community must have been scarred by the fatalities and the return of men physically or mentally maimed we have little notion of the scale of the effect. We similarly lack evidence for the economic effects of the return of peacetime agricultural conditions that reinstated the general depression in British agriculture that wartime shortages had interrupted by causing farm incomes and farmworkers wages to rise. The inference, by no means certain, is that the big changes in Levens agriculture came in the post-second world war era and that the 1920s saw a settling back into the pre-war status quo. Nationally we know of the post-1919 setbacks to the wage earning opportunities for women as the wartime labour shortage evaporated under the impact of demobilised soldiers returning to seek work in a deflationary economic environment. Concurrently the drastic fall in demand for munitions cost tens of thousands of women their jobs, For example, the Gretna cordite plant, which opened in 1916, employed over eleven and a half thousand female workers in 1917 but closed in November 1918. Assessing such impacts on Levens is nigh impossible.

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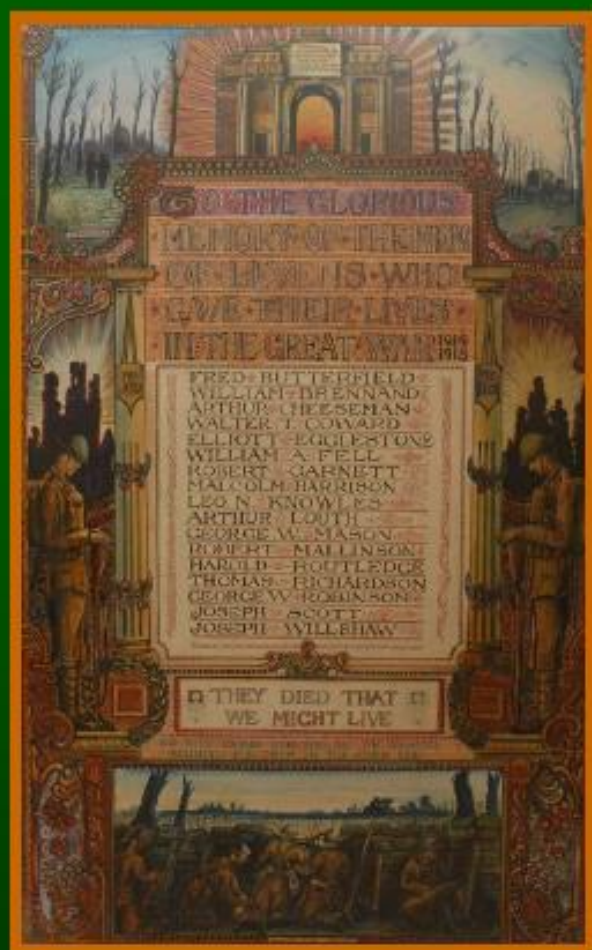
# *Pastscript*

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## *Levens Remembers – 100 years ago*



*Poppies commemorating each of the fallen - on The Green, Levens - 2018*



**Front Cover: Causeway End in Levens village around the time of World War 1.**

**Back Cover: Levens Roll of Honour in St. John's Church.**