

Stutton Local History Journal



No 33
2017

Editor's Preface

As 2017 draws to a close, we look again at Stutton residents who have served in the Great War, walking with them through the four years of hostilities; battles won and lost, and sadly lives lost too. But memories of the Second World War are also getting dim and we draw out the story of some Stutton residents who served in that War, as well as looking at what was happening locally in the nearby River Stour.

Photographs that illustrate the articles are often from our Stutton Archive, ably curated by Vic Scott over many years and to whom we should all be so grateful. Many will have been copied from those of Stutton residents who have loaned them to him temporarily, and his pleas in *Stutton Roundabout* for more to add to our collection are repeated here.

Philip Willis's collection of photographs and slides was bequeathed to the Suffolk Local History Council and is on deposit at the Ipswich Branch of the Suffolk Record Office in Gatacre Road. It is presently being catalogued by a group of us each Tuesday afternoon. It is a long haul to complete but will be so useful in years to come. But, like all of us, Philip didn't label a lot of his photos or slides and working out who is who and where is where is stretching us all. Please be warned! You need to label your own photos now whilst you remember those holiday and family get-together snaps; your children and later descendents will need all the help they can get! And if you think that they won't want to keep all the paperwork and photos that you have acquired over your lifetime, short or long, then remember that it isn't just kings and queens who drive history, it's the 'worker bees' who keep the story going too and their collections are a wonderful source for future local historians. The Friends of the Suffolk Record Office provide a simple 'Document Donor Card' which can be left with your will.

See <http://www.fosro.org.uk/Donor%20card.pdf> or speak to Vic Scott who has a small supply of them.

Finally, we have re-launched our website and updated it with all the Journals from 2014 and we are grateful to Will Pritchard for helping us with this.

Paul Simmons

Cover image: dazzle camouflage on a model ship by Alistair Brown (see p30)

<https://stuttonlocalhistoryresearchgroup.wordpress.com>

Days of Yore at Stutton School

'John Brown' (Alistair D Brown)

Avid readers of the Stutton Local History Journal, will remember the request for information in Journal No 30, 2014, made by Ann Bowden in her article, *Stutton Hairdressers and Fish and Chip Shop, mid-1940s-1950s*.

Having been a pupil at Stutton School in the 1950s, leaving for secondary school in 1956, I recalled the name of Mr & Mrs Clooney, who ran the Fish and Chip shop at the time, since they had a daughter, Heather who had joined the school at that time.

Being surprised how quickly that memory came into my mind, I decided to mine that particular seam from the past and to see where it went.

So....I started in the Infant's Class with Mr Bishop; our form room being the Mission Room, the single storey red brick property, now a private dwelling, situated on the extreme left hand side of the school site. The windows that looked out onto the playground have been filled-in during the conversion to a private dwelling.

Mr Bishop lived, I believe, in neighbouring Tattlingstone, and travelled to and from school by bicycle, deftly removing his cycle clips before pushing his bike across the playground. When it rained he wore a proper cyclist's rain cape which had an integral hood and which spanned the handlebars – just like in the picture books but never seen by me in real life before!

I remember Mr Bishop as a quietly spoken and kindly teacher. Not only did we have our lessons in the Mission Room but we infants also had our dinners there. Those of course were the days when children were expected to eat up everything on their plates. I could stomach most things, though the occasional piece of fatty meat would find its way into my trouser pocket. My undoing was always mashed swede and despite tears, had to be eaten at least in part so that I might *grow-up big and strong*. I was touched to see in the article the late Philip Evans wrote in Journal No 19 how he too had a disliking for mashed swede.

More on school dinners later, but two other dinner items that aroused little in the way of 'gastric delectation' and in my mind's eye at least occurred only with infant dinners were tapioca or *frog spawn* and another pudding going by the name of *melting moments*, and

which consisted of a frothy white concoction, which put one in mind of meringue, though it had a bitter taste and was possibly served with a shortbread biscuit.



Left to right: Miss Tuffs, Mr Bishop, 'Miss' Wade

Ask me what I remember of actual lessons and it is very little, though no criticism is implied by this observation. As infants we did practise handwriting exercises, repeating individual letters looped together, with the aid of the stave lines in small musical composition exercise books.

Two incidents stand out whilst in the Infants: firstly the expedition down Watery Lane (Alton Hall Lane) to the stream, all armed with string-handled jam jars and a selection of shrimp and tiddler nets, in order to stock-up an aquarium set up for the purpose back in the classroom with water weeds, tadpoles and a stickleback or two. No Health and Safety risk assessment do I recall, but there were wet feet aplenty.

The second incident that is firmly fixed in my mind's eye was the occasion when The Reverend Mr Tong, Rector of St Peter's, showed the class lantern slides, in black and white, of views of the Holy Land. The slide show took place in the Mission Room 'proper', adjacent to our classroom.

Here the windows could be fully blacked out by heavy curtains. The room was fitted with pews, the floor was of uneven wooden blocks, and the room heated by a large coke fired 'tortoise stove' in the middle of the room.

The slide show must have taken place in winter since the stove was fully banked up with coke and the damper door open. In the dim light of the room as the Reverend Tong projected and explained the scenes from the Holy Land, those sitting behind the stove could see that its lower half was glowing a cherry red colour and this interested me and a number of other children more than the slide show.

Playtimes as I recall were busy with all the children in the playground at the same time. During the winter months the ice slides were quite lethal (hence exciting) when you got to school in the morning. Brave hearts from all the classes would queue up together to take their turn. Winter time too meant that the 1/3rd pint bottles of milk had been standing in their crates beside the radiator in the school's main entrance since first thing that morning; by the time we received it, it did taste 'a bit different'.

Recollections of milk bottles leads on to the bottle tops; the cardboard ones that is, which we used to thread wool around to make woollen pom-poms.

Moving up into the Juniors, the Junior Class Room was on the left as you entered the main building, and was a later addition to the original building, and better lit and more airy than the top junior classroom that faced Holbrook Road.

Our teacher now was 'Miss' Wade, whose grown up daughter was sometimes in the classroom with her mother, possibly to gain teaching experience before going to Teacher Training College? The name, Mrs Blaxhall also comes to mind but do not have any clear recollection of her I fear.

With no disrespect to our teachers, I have very little recollection of actual lessons. Though with 'Miss' Wade I do remember the class producing a large painted frieze, possibly about the changing seasons or the farming year since tractors were part of the painting. We did however have 'Music and Movement'. The voice from the radio instructed us *to spread out and find a space*, which we all dutifully did, but having found it, the space that is, I do not recall what we did with it.

Back to school dinners: swede was now a thing of the past and my recollection of meals here in the upper school was that they were sumptuous. Stew could well have been my favourite first course, and as for the second courses, all seemed equally wonderful, custard occurring seemingly every day girding fruit crumbles, jam roly poly and syrup pudding. The meals came ready prepared from a central kitchen, kept hot in insulated aluminium containers and delivered in a dark green painted van.

The upper school dining area was situated in the far left hand end of the classroom and was curtained off from the classroom during preparations for dinner each day.

You can imagine the daily distraction as dinner time arrived with the rattle of the food containers and the tantalising smells that emanated from behind the curtain.

Now for the fly in the ointment, so to speak. I think that what follows occurred whilst we were with 'Miss' Wade in the Juniors.

The fly in the ointment was dancing lessons, held in the Victory Hall. So there you are, whether it was folk or country dancing or a combination of the two, made little difference, the problem was, of course, having to hold hands with the girls.

To add to the general sense of discomfort on the afternoons we went dancing it always seemed to be, or to have just been, raining.

By way of a rather macabre highlight on our visit to the Victory Hall was that our route, the only route of course, took us past the group of terraced cottages that are the first group of houses as you leave the hall and turn left *en route* back to the school. In one of these cottages, so we believed, a man had died by electrocution having turned on or been tuning his mains electric wireless as he sat in his bath. Whether any of this was at all true I do not know, but we did believe it!

Our next move was into Miss Tuff's class and of course she was the Head Mistress and she taught in the oldest part of the building, just across the passage from 'Miss' Wade's classroom.

Here the ceiling was high, as too the windows, quite narrow and set high in the wall that faced the Holbrook Road. The walls were not plastered but were just painted brick, and the room always seemed gloomy. In this room the pupils sat in cast-iron framed desks, two children to a desk. The desk lids were deeply incised with *graffiti* though not described thus back then, and the seat would crash down if you did not take care to hold it as you sat down. The desks were also fitted with ink wells, so we must have been writing in ink like grown-ups by now!

I would describe Miss Tuffs as a firm and fair teacher who dedicated her life quite literally to teaching. Again I have little recollection of her lessons, save for the occasion, when having been called up to her desk to show her how I was getting along with a work card for arithmetic, on the lines of, *if apples cost 3¼ d how many can you buy for 1 shilling and 7¾d?* On this occasion I had pulled a more fanciful than usual answer- a guess really and received a sharp smack across the back of my legs!

Another fly in the ointment appeared: shortly after we had become top juniors Miss Tuffs decided to teach us how to play the recorder. Miss Tuffs was not happy if you had not done your recorder practice. Once we had mastered the basic techniques I think we all rather enjoyed playing and on one occasion we played in a school concert at Kesgrave. Art and craft lessons too became more interesting. We had access to fret saws and used them to cut out jigsaws from a piece of plywood, to which you had glued a picture from a magazine. I remember too making a marionette puppet in the form of an angel with wings recovered from a wood pigeon!

The village fete was held annually – I think at Nugents' with many prizes for us school children for handwriting and arts and crafts. All very handy should you win a prize, always cash and prizes were awarded in most categories judged to three places!

The mobile library visited with marked regularity, expanding the school's own selection of books to have on loan, with individual children being invited to make selections of books for their particular class.

Then there were the School Trips. One year we went to the Tower of London. Were the coaches we travelled on provided by Messrs Grey-Green, Beestons or Swallow? Norwich Castle (or was it the Cathedral?) was the destination another year. Could it have been on the same Norwich trip that we also visited Sawston Hall, used by the USAAF during the War and in some way connected to Father Trevor Huddleston, the African missionary? Why should I remember that? A visit to a small pottery on that same trip comes to mind.

On the subject of visits, we made at least one visit to the open air swimming pool on the foreshore at Mistley Walls. The boys changed into and out of their trunks in the adjacent bus shelter, facing the road whilst the girls changed their clothes on the beach side of the shelter. I cannot recall whether we learnt to swim or not, but I think I can recall real and or imagined crabs, broken glass and tin cans biting our toes! We played games; rounders, football, and also held our Sports Day on the field at the top of Hyams Lane, though on one occasion we did use land at School Farm, close by to Wiseman's for at least part of Sports Day one year.

Other incidents that appear uppermost in my memory are the demolition with explosives of the War-time pill box in Larks Field. And the occasion when Lyons Bakery had a promotion for their Swiss rolls which resulted in Wiseman's shop being almost besieged by children from school. The promotion was in the form of a cardboard baseball type cap wherein the domed section to fit onto the head was in the form of a spiral which just needed to be gently pushed upwards so as to fit your head.

The road past the school was very quiet back then, certainly by current standards, though you will remember that Ron Cobb's garage did sport petrol pumps. Shoppers came to and from Wiseman's with a quiet regularity, and I clearly remember in particular two gentlemen that would pass by the school. One was Mr Haste whose legs were cruelly bowed owing to having developed rickets as a child. The other was a gentleman who had a three wheeled invalid carriage which I recall he propelled by means of hand operated pedals which he operated at chest height. A short while later I believe the gentleman had a blue, fibre glass-bodied invalid tricycle powered by a two-stroke engine.

To conclude with one or two village notables and the names of fellow pupils I remember: The Reverend Tong, he of the lantern slides and Rector of St. Peter's Church. I have a very vague recollection of a fancy dress parade *cum* pageant held in the grounds of the rectory, or have I imagined it?

Then Mr & Mrs Clooney and family: Mr Clooney had been in the RAF and at some time served in Malaya. Anyway, they took over the Fish and Chip shop and called he called his wife 'Honey' which to my young ears sounded decidedly racy. They had two children, a boy I think of secondary school age and a daughter Heather who was in the lower junior class.

Mr & Mrs Woods: again the husband was in or had recently left the RAF and his most recent posting had been as an Attaché, perhaps in the British Embassy in Bucharest, the capital of Romania. They had two sons, the elder Andrew again very bright, and who joined us in the top junior class, and his younger brother was perhaps in the infants. The Woods family were renting School Farm on the occasion Sports Day transferred there. Andrew, I remember, broke his ankle playing football on the field at the top of Hyams Lane which might well explain why the school were invited to use land at School Farm.

Just before I recall the names of fellow pupils at Stutton School, I must mention that I do not recall the name of the village policeman, which perhaps means we never got into any trouble with The Law?

A goodly number of fellow pupils' names come to mind as I cast my mind back to those distant days at Stutton School.

So here goes, and in no particular order as they say on *Strictly*:

Ralph Firmin, Roger Whittle, the Late Philip Evans (a year ahead of me), Margery and Tony White, Geraldene Wade, Ann Gower, Mollie Cornish, Peter Gildersleeves (possibly a year ahead), John Wilson, John Smith, John Driscoll, Andrew Woods, Kay Abbott, Russell Welham, Marshall Griffiths, Ashley Ship, Nicholas Heriz-Smith and not forgetting my brother, Christopher.

Where are they now? (I know about Christopher!)

Editor Please either contact Vic Scott or email via

<https://stuttonlocalhistoryresearchgroup.wordpress.com/contact-us/>

Myrtle Abbott - Her Story

Vic Scott

Myrtle was born in Stutton to her parents Walter and Margery White in 1926. She actually arrived in Orchard House, the home of the local wheelwright for whom Myrtle's mother worked. (Orchard House no longer exists, and has been replaced by Wheelwright's Close).

Her father Walter worked at Stutton Lodge, later at Argent Manor and finally at Stutton House for Mrs Okeden. During the War he was a member of the Stutton Home Guard. Myrtle had three brothers: Anthony, Leonard and Kenneth, and one sister, also named Margery. At this time the family were living at No4 Council Bungalows, Lewis Lane.

In 1945 Myrtle met and married Joe Abbott from East Bergholt; Joe was born in 1919. They began their married life in one of the thatched cottages in Lower Street, opposite the entrance to Crowe Hall. These cottages were pulled down after the War and replaced by the present bungalows. When they were pulled down, Myrtle and Joe moved to one of the three Chapel Cottages (now converted into one). Later they moved to one of the red brick houses opposite Stutton Manor, moving much later into the bungalow at the entrance to Stutton Close, where Myrtle still lives.

At the age of six, Joe was riding in a 'go-cart' (a box on pram wheels) that was being pushed by older boys. They were going rather fast and unfortunately lost control and the cart went up a bank, turning over with Joe underneath, breaking his left arm in two places. Although the arm was set in hospital, he slowly lost the use of it, and at the age of fourteen the arm was removed.

Joe worked for twenty seven years at Keebles of Brantham, and later for Compair Reavell in Ipswich. Joe also loved his garden, and there was never a weed to be seen.

When the Victory Hall was opened in 1920, Mrs Leah Scott was caretaker for the next seventeen years; when she died in 1938 Mrs Fred Gladwell took over. Both ladies lived in the two cottages next to Chapel Cottages, and like those, they have been converted into one. When Mrs Gladwell gave up as caretaker, Myrtle took over the job for the next twelve years. Having previously worked for two years in the laundry at the Royal Hospital School, Myrtle eventually returned there in charge for the next thirty years.

Joe died in 2014 at the age of 95; he and Myrtle had been married for 69 years, raising a daughter Kay. Now at the age of 90, Myrtle has a family of grandchildren and great grandchildren to visit her. She still recalls the holidays in Scotland she shared with Joe, a place they both loved.

In 1926 when Myrtle was born there was no Cattsfield, that was all allotments, one of which Joe worked; no Community Hall, the new Victory Hall had only been open six years. No Orwell Bridge or Alton Reservoir, and the Ipswich Power Station at Cliff Quay, now gone, had not even been built. Children walked to Stutton School and computers and mobile phones were things of science fiction.

The area of Stutton Close was all allotments owned by the Catchpole family; a footpath from the present entrance on Holbrook Road ran across them to a little wooden shop attached to Rose Cottage, also owned by Miss Catchpole who sold sweets and groceries. Myrtle remembers going there for sweets, and to another small shop in the front room of Bay Tree Farm owned by Charlie Halls.

She also remembers walking to school past the Old Manor House, and being given apples by Sally Keeble who lived there.

She spoke of Cobb's shop next to the King's Head before it was turned into a garage, and eventually pulled down for the two present houses to be built. She also remembers before Cobb's shop, a little wooden hut sold papers and cigarettes on the site. This was before the last War, and was run by Mrs George Willis who lived in one of Crowe Hall Cottages. Her daughter Vera owned the ladies' hairdressing salon near Post Office Corner; it later became a Fish and Chip shop owned by Mr Mullet and is now privately owned.

Other memories include the Evans family who lived in and worked Brooke Farm. They owned a small gravel pit at the end of Lewis Lane. This was before the massive extraction of gravel in 1946 from the area known as the Knoll, by Rogers the contractors, to build the Ipswich Power Station. This large pit was slowly filled with fly ash from the power station when it was running, plus a lot of local rubbish dumped on top of it. Myrtle recalls the meadow before the War, where Larksfield Road is now. During the War there was a searchlight battery and Army huts sited there. After the War it returned to a meadow until 1957 when the present road and first bungalows were built.

At the age of almost 91, Myrtle is a lively and active lady who has only recently given up driving her car, and it was a pleasure to spend an afternoon talking to her, and listening to her memories of Stutton as it used to be!



Above Myrtle Abbot née White



Left Joe Abbott



Walter and Margery White

Walter John Whinney

Vic Scott

Walter was born in 1872 and started work aged eleven; he remained a land worker for most of his life. He worked as a gardener at the Rectory (now The Old Rectory) when it was built in 1897 by The Revd Barrington Stopford Thomas Mills, Rector of Lawshall. He was the son of The Revd Thomas Mills, Rector of Stutton from 1821 to 1880.

Walter helped to plant the trees which surround The Old Rectory, working there for fifteen years. He regularly attended church and sang in the choir. He worked on the land during the 1914/1918 War, and at Stutton Hall for a number of years.

Married to Venis May, they lived in part of Barnfield, off Lower Street. They had a son Walter John Junior, born in 1907; he died at the age of ten. They also had a daughter, Maggie Dora, baptised in 1929.

Walter was very regular with his daily routine, always dinner at one o'clock, tea at four o'clock, and early to bed. We don't know if he had any breakfast.

He acted as Parish Clerk and Sexton, leaving a record of all the burials he was involved with from 1921 to 1940. Each name and age is listed; he also added short comments as he thought appropriate, such as 'Church Cleaner', 'Died Sudden', 'Fell Down Stairs', 'Drowned at Frinton' etc.

Walter John Whinney was another of Stutton's characters, retiring in 1947. He and Venis lie together in St Peter's Churchyard. Venis died in 1952 aged 82 and Walter joined her in 1962 at the age of ninety.

Right Walter John Whinney at Barnfield





I John Richard Heble of Brantingham
Hall Brantingham in the County of Suffolk Esquire do
solemnly and sincerely declare as follows:

1. I am forty four years of age and for forty years heretofore
and was well acquainted with the late Robert Coules of
Mutton in the said County of Suffolk Merchant Londoner who
did on the eighth day of March one thousand nine
hundred and eleven.

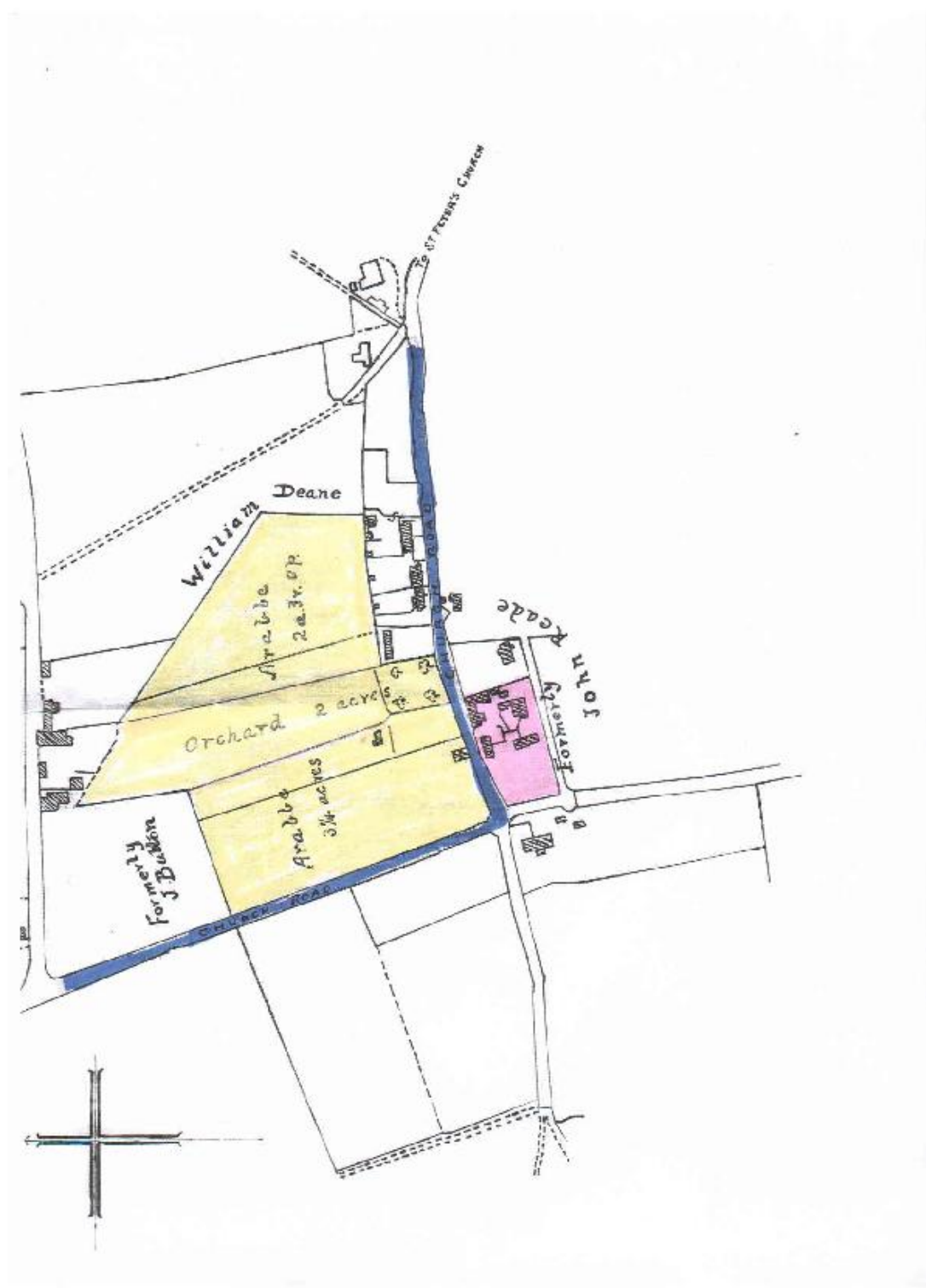
2. I know and am well acquainted with the
property occupied and used by the said Robert Coules for
the purposes of his business.

3. The father of the said Robert Coules built a
brick and tiled house at Mutton aforesaid adjoining the
house in which one Thomas Danson formerly dwelt and
from the date of such erection to the date of his death Robert
Coules the Elder occupied the house built to him. After his
death the above named Robert Coules used such two houses
as one and continued so to do until the date of his death
as herein before mentioned. The said premises with the
outbuildings adjacent thereto and occupied therewith are
coloured pink on the plan hereto attached and I verily
believe form the property formerly known and described
as first set forth in the Schedule hereto which I have
carefully read previous to making this declaration.

4. The roadway coloured blue on the said plan
is now known as Church Road and was formerly known
as Church Road or down Mutton aforesaid.

5. The said Robert Coules also occupied for the
purposes of his business three enclosures of land situate
on the opposite side of the road to the said premises
first set forth in the said Schedule and coloured yellow
on the said plan. The said enclosures were formerly
divided, contained the area and were used for the
purposes shown on the said plan in red ink. I
verily believe that the said enclosures coloured yellow
on the said plan formed the enclosures formerly
known and described as secondly thirdly and fourthly
set forth in the said schedule which I have carefully
read previous to making this declaration.

6. I am able to declare as above by reason of my



A Description of Land off Lower Street: accompanying map

Transcribed by Catherine Kent

Dated 12th December 1911 Re Property at Stutton, Suffolk

Statutory DECLARATION of J R Keeble Esq.

I John Richard Keeble of Brantham Hall, Brantham in the County of Suffolk Esquire do solemnly and sincerely declare as follows

I am forty four years of age and for forty years knew and was well acquainted with the late Robert Cowles of Stutton in the said County of Suffolk Market Gardener who died on the eighth day of March one thousand nine hundred and eleven

I know and am well acquainted with the property occupied and used by the said Robert Cowles for the purposes of his business

The Father of the said Robert Cowles built a brick and tiled house at Stutton aforesaid adjoining the house in which one Thomas Dansie formerly dwelt and from the date of such erection to the date of his death Robert Cowles the Elder occupied the house built by him After his death the above named Robert Cowles used such two houses as one and continued so to do until the date of his death as herein before mentioned The said premises with the outbuildings adjacent thereto and occupied therewith are coloured pink on the plan hereto attached and I verily believe form the property formerly known and described as first set forth in the Schedule hereto which I have carefully read previous to making this declaration

The roadway coloured blue on the said plan is now known as Church Road and was formerly known as Church Road or Lane Stutton aforesaid

The said Robert Cowles also occupied for the purposes of his business three inclosures of land situate on the opposite side of the road to the said premises first set forth in the said plan The said inclosures were formerly divided contained the area and were used for the purposes shown on the said plan in red ink I verily believe that the said inclosures coloured yellow on the said plan formed the inclosures formerly known and described as secondly thirdly and fourthly set forth in the said schedule which I have carefully read previous to making this declaration

I am able to declare as above by reason of my long residence in Brantham aforesaid and of my close acquaintance with the said Robert Cowles And I make this Declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true by virtue of the provisions of the Statutory Declaration Acts 1835.

THE SCHEDULE

'First **All those** two messuages or tenements in one of which Thomas Dansie formerly dwelt and the other has been recently built by the said Robert Cowles the Elder upon some part of he land hereinafter described and hereby conveyed situate and being at Stutton aforesaid And together with the barn stable outhouses edifices buildings yards gardens and orchards to the same two messuages or tenements belonging containing by estimation with the sites of the said buildings one acre be the same more or less As the same premises are bounded by land now or late of John Reade Esquire on the North and East parts by land formerly in the occupation of John Baker and then of Benjamin Battle and others and now of I Abbott on the South part and by the Church Road or Lane there towards the West part

Secondly **All that** inclosure of arable land on the West side of the said Church Road or Lane containing by estimation three acres and a quarter be the same more or less bounded by the next mentioned inclosure of land or orchard on the North part by the said Church Road or Lane on the East part by the other part of the said Church Road or Lane on the South part and a small inclosure of land now or late in the occupation of Joseph Button a Butcher on the West part

Thirdly **All that** other inclosure of land planted with fruit trees and called the Orchard containing by estimation two acres be the same more or less bounded by the first mentioned inclosure of arable land in part and by the inclosure now or late in the occupation of the said Joseph Button in the other part on the South part of the Queens Highway on the West part by the next mentioned inclosure on the North part and by the first mentioned Church Road or Lane on the East part

Fourthly **All that** other inclosure of arable land containing by estimation two acres and three roods be the same more or less bounded by land now or late of William Deane Esquire on the North part by the said Church Road or Lane on the East part by the last mentioned inclosure called the Orchard on the South part and now or late by the said Queens Highway on the West part Together with the appurtenances to the same belonging'

Declared at Ipswich in the County of Suffolk this 12th day of December one thousand nine hundred and eleven

John R Keeble

Before me E P Ridley

A Commissioner for Oaths

The Holbrook Bay Dive Bombing Range

Alistair D Brown

2017 marks the 73rd Anniversary of the three fatal crashes of P51 Mustang aircraft of the US 9th Air Force over the Holbrook Bay Dive-Bombing Range and it also happens to replicate the dates of the month to the days of the week on which the crashes occurred in March 1944:

- (1) 2nd Lt Stewart J Jones, died on Saturday 11 March.
- (2) 2nd Lt Newman E Tyree died on Saturday 25 March.
- (3) 2nd Lt George F Parker lost his life over the Range on Thursday 30 March.

With the passing of time there are fewer and fewer village residents who lived in Stutton during the War with specific recollections remembered first hand; but possibly there are stories of incidents and events between 1939 and 1945 which have been passed down through families in the village.

As to specific memories of the Dive Bombing Range, I hope and imagine that the recollections of villagers who were children during the War, and who would have perhaps regularly watched the dive-bombing practice, remember two of the crashes that occurred on a Saturday, and perhaps also spoke regularly with some of the range personnel.

Following, are the names of range personnel who provided witness statements, for either the crash on 25 March and/or that which occurred on 30 March 1944:

- (1) Joseph S Moskovitz (2) Frank M Schlenk (3) T J Connolly.

Local civilian witnesses, whose statements are included in the Air Accident Investigation Reports, were both from Stutton. Mr Robert J Rush, who worked at the Royal Hospital School at the time and who provided a witness statement for both of the crashes, and Mr Ernest A Ling who provided a statement for Lt Parker's crash on Thursday 30 March.

Both these villagers have since died, but I would be grateful to hear from any of their surviving families who have remained in the village, in order to learn more about them.

As the late Philip Evans recounts in his article (Stutton Local History Journal No 19), children, presumably during and after the War, would seek out machine gun rounds scattered along the shoreline to detonate by means of a vice, hammer and a nail!

Mr Peter Kirk, a member of the Airfield Research Group, kindly forwarded to me information about the Dive Bomb Range gleaned from official US sources.

This information has proved to be most illuminating. Not only does it indicate the site of the target, situated in Black Fleet, but also confirms that there were two positions from which the fall of the practice bombs were viewed and registered. Firstly, the observation tower and 'control point' situated just inland from the foreshore by Graham's Wharf; the second observation point was also situated close to the foreshore with an unobstructed view of the target; in this instance on the eastern edge of the Stutton House Estate.

Two observation positions were necessary to record the fall of the practice bombs about a target accurately and needed to be positioned at right angles to one another, in line of sight to the target.

Depending upon the line of flight in the dive bombing run of the individual aircraft, one observation point would record whether the bombs were dropped to the left or right of the target and their proximity to it, which would then be combined with the observations of the other observation point which would determine the fall and proximity of the bombs ahead or behind the target.

The target is described as being triangular, with a length of side measuring 60 feet, painted yellow and mounted on two barges.

Flag poles were situated close by the two observation points from which red flags were flown to indicate to the public that the range area should not be entered.

I was told a few years back that one flag pole was situated close by Stutton Point which would have been readily visible to any shipping on the river.

The issue of shipping on the river leads us smartly on to the next element of this update of information on the Dive Bombing Range.

Witness accounts of crash on 11 March 1944, which took the life of 2nd Lt Stewart J Jones, have been provided by the late Roger Pattle, who in turn provided me with information given to him by the late John Giblin of Wrabness. Not only did John Giblin witness the crash, but also, assisted by men from the Mine Depot, he recovered the

body of Lt Jones the following day from Jacques Bay (on the Essex side of the river) where it was found close by the wreckage of his plane's fuselage and engine. These items were also recovered by means of a mobile crane and hauled up to the Searchlight Site at Wrabness.

The only witness statement contained in the Official Air Accident Investigation Report is that given by Major James A Goodson of the 4th Fighter Group U S 8th Air Force who happened to be flying in the vicinity of Bradwell Bay at the time of the accident.

As might be expected, Major Goodson's account of the accident is both analytical and perceptive. By way of example, he suggested that it might be possible to recover the fuselage from the shallow river at low tide and further, *how the various parts of the aircraft crashed into the water close to a small boat.*

No reference survives in the accounts given by either Roger Pattle or John Giblin of the presence of a boat being in the area where Lt Jones crashed, but in an eyewitness statement that I received back in the 1980s from a gentleman who had witnessed the crash as a 12 year old boy, he describes the wreckage falling around a sailing barge on passage down the Stour. What would be the chance of discovering which sailing barge this might have been, all that time ago?

The answer appeared some time back when Nigel Banham drew my attention to an item on YouTube. This proved to be one of a series of videos, produced by Mr Chris Rudland wherein he had filmed his late father-in-law, Derek 'Spearo' Ling, recounting episodes of his life on Thames Sailing Barges.

This particular video covered Spearo's' barging experience during the War when he was in his teens. In the video, he relates being on the sailing barge *Millie*, on route from Mistley to Felixstowe Dock with a cargo of barley. As they were approaching Wrabness, an American aircraft, diving on the target in Holbrook Bay, broke up in the air and wreckage from the plane and the two practice bombs it was carrying fell into the water around the barge. Luckily no wreckage actually struck the barge or her crew,

So, despite the passage of time, recollections of incidents come to light which confirm and build upon earlier information. I intend to produce as definitive account as possible of the Dive Bombing Range and the three fatal crashes that occurred over the bay in March 1944. If anyone in the village has any recollections they would be willing to share of the Range and these crashes, I would be very pleased to hear from them.

Stutton's Houses

A Yorkshire Family in Suffolk: Stutton Lodge

Nigel Banham

By the end of the First World War, many people's lives had changed. Young men who had joined the services found it hard to re-settle and those who came home often found that they needed to make a fresh start.

So it was for **Captain John Ownsworth Garland**, a doctor in the army who brought his wife, Mildred and family to live at Stutton Lodge in about 1920.

Their family was of fair size, five boys and a girl, with the eldest at 21 and the youngest at 11, had been born at a large house called *Wolvers* near Reigate in Surrey.

Early days

John had been born in 1872, into a large, 'well to do' family of landed farmers in Yorkshire at Netherwood Hall, Darfield, and was the second son of the family. They sent him to boarding school, St Peter's in York, where he thrived and I have found a record that he played cricket for the school, although judging by his batting scores he seemed less than brilliant at it!

His elder brother Arthur chose architecture as a career and went off to York to study, but John elected to do medicine and went to Guy's Hospital in London to train, qualifying in 1893. Part of his training in 1892 was spent as an assistant to a GP, a Dr Blackburn in Barnsley, and an incident there paints the sharp contrast of poverty vs plenty in England in those days.

Benjamin Bickerdyke, a young mill hand from Bradford had come begging to John Garland at the surgery for coppers. Begging was an offence; John gave evidence to West Riding Court and Benjamin was sent to prison for 2 weeks.

Change was coming to Netherwood Hall, originally bought by the Garlands in 1777, when two coal pits, Darfield Main and Mitchells Main were established nearby. What had been a charming Georgian house with extensive and delightful grounds and gardens, with estate farms owned by the family, became slightly less delightful!

There is an old Yorkshire saying *Where there's muck there's brass* (money), and as ever, the first casualty is the scenery.

Their father Harry had died in 1890 and Arthur inherited the house, which he sold after he married in 1896. It later became the offices for the Darfield Pit, whose yard it adjoined and later still, the miners' welfare club.



Netherwood Hall in 1963, shortly before its demolition

The good news is that the pits are gone and a modern school stands on the site with its grounds where the gardens once were.

Events now follow quickly. In 1896 John married an Irish girl in County Cork, Mildred Weekes, and their first house was in Upper Norwood, London. Maybe John was still studying at Guy's or maybe he had a job in a GP's surgery there. If he did, he did not keep it long because more good fortune came to him in 1897.

John and Arthur had been appointed executors to their maternal grandfather's estate and were beneficiaries to the tune of £35,000 each, some £12M in today's money. In 1898, John and his new wife moved to *Wolvers* near Reigate, a very large house, and are recorded as 'living off their own means'! Who can blame them?

Their first child, John Birks Garland was born in 1899 and another five followed until 1911, including one pair of twins, one of whom is of particular note to Stutton and another to Suffolk. We will leave the children for a time while we go with John to War

War Service 1915-1920

John volunteered for the RAMC and held a temporary commission as Lieutenant from 8 June 1915. His name first appears on the troopship *Olympic* (a sister ship of the *Titanic*) on which he had travelled from England. He appears as a witness at an Army enquiry in Mudros Harbour (Gallipoli), having been Medical Officer of the day at the time of this incident.

The soldiers of the Loyal North Lancashire (Lancs) Regiment had been involved in some of the heaviest fighting and had now been evacuated to rest. A soldier, Private J Howarth had, on 26 November, shut himself in one of the toilets and cut his throat. A comrade's opinion was that he had received a letter from his fiancée saying that she was leaving him for someone else.

John had treated him and to his credit, the young man survived and was later discharged from the Army as unfit. (A full account of this event can be found at the *Great War Forum* website under *Self inflicted Injury Troopship Mudros 1915*. It is taken from the ship's log.)

John's personal service record has been lost but it is likely that he was later sent ashore to work in one of the medical units in the bitter Gallipoli fighting.

He must have done well; he was promoted temporary Captain on 15 October 1915. The Gallipoli peninsular was successfully evacuated in January 1916 and the troops returned to Egypt.

There is no record of where he was during 1916 but there was much fighting in Iraq and Mesopotamia where the same units from Gallipoli were sent, but his name later appears in the campaign in East Africa, during the time 30 May to December 1917.

Few mainstream British units were involved in this protracted guerrilla war fought against the German forces of Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck (the 'Lion of Africa'), originally based in German East Africa.

Many local native units were used on both sides together with many South African soldiers fighting for England.

It is possible that he was attached to 259 Machine Gun Company, which was formed from the Loyal North Lancs Regiment, with whom he had served in Gallipoli but this is just a guess. With the nature of this War it is perhaps understandable that unit records were lost.

What is very clear is that all the medical services had a hugely difficult job with more casualties through a whole raft of nasty diseases than from the fighting, particularly in

the coastal areas which were very unhealthy, but the campaign continued all the way until the Armistice, ranging over thousands of square miles. A doctor working with the troops was very lucky to survive this.

The German commander, von Lettow-Vorbeck, fought a skilled and highly effective campaign and although he could not win, he tied down much larger forces than his own. He was never fully defeated and did not give up until the Armistice in Europe.

Perhaps this was a precursor of some of the later wars of the century.

John's distinguished service was recognised in General Deventer's dispatches and published in *The London Gazette* and the *British Medical Journal*.

(As a *postscript*, his eldest son **John Birks Garland** was commissioned in the Royal Field Artillery on 25 January 1918.)

John gave up his commission on 19 September 1920 coming to live in Stutton Lodge at around that time and he spent the rest of his long life in Suffolk.

John and Mildred were both on the committee of the Horticultural Society and helped to organise the annual flower show which still runs today. Their daughter, aged 17 in 1921 (Also Mildred) started the Wolf Cub pack here in the 1920s and used to have the meetings in the garden of the Lodge, where she would read *Jungle Book* stories to them and play pack games..

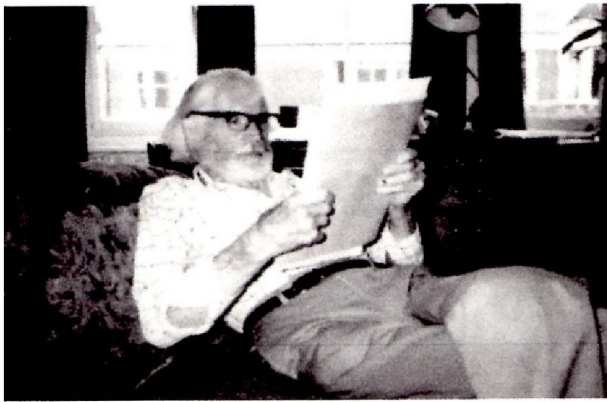
Later, she re-started the Boy Scouts, originally led by Lorimer Fison, who had been killed in the War. We know that there were 14 scouts and that they met in the Scout Hut in Manor Lane (see p25) and that members came from Brantham and Holbrook as well as from Stutton; all this was with the support of Julian St John of Stutton House. There is a record that they held a 'Social Campfire' at the Victory Hall (village hall) in 1931 in aid of Roland House (I believe an old people's home) and the East Suffolk Hospital in Ipswich. Mr Frank Lister took over the troop when she and her family left the village.

Whilst they were in Stutton, one of the sons, Mildred's twin, **Thomas**, probably the most distinguished of the Garland children, went up to Cambridge before qualifying as a doctor at Guy's, as his father had done. He was a keen rugby player and was selected to be in the reserve for the England team. However, he contracted TB and was confined to the Mundesley Clinic, Norfolk (later a cottage hospital) where he nearly died.

He discharged himself when his father could no longer afford the 8 guineas a week fees. (Perhaps John had made some poor investments and lost his fortune by this time?) Fortunately he recovered and went on to a distinguished career in occupational medicine, both here and in New Zealand. He married twice and in later years Thomas was active in the CND movement. He died in Oxford in 1993.

below left Thomas Ownsworth Garland in later life

below right Harry Earle Garland's grave in Parham Churchyard



Another who stayed in Suffolk was the second son, **Harry Earle Garland**, born 1901. He too became a soldier and rose to prominence, becoming Lt Col 3rd Queen Alexandra's Ghurkha Rifles. I went to Parham where he later lived and met someone who had known him well. He had had a bad time in WW2, becoming a prisoner of the Italians and although he later escaped, the experience convinced him to leave the Army and become a priest. This apparently did not please his wife, the Suffolk painter, Daphne Pocklington, who told him that she had married a soldier, not a priest and she promptly ran off with an American soldier. Harry later joined the Auxiliary RAF in 1953 as a chaplain. He finished his days as Vicar of Parham, dying in 1992. He lies in St Mary's churchyard there and, strangely, has a soldier's headstone.

John and his family left Stutton in 1932 after Thomas married and some of the other children had left home; they moved to Churchford Grange, Capel St Mary (now a mushroom farm), possibly to practise as a GP, and in 1942 downsizing to 20, Field Style Road, Southwold, probably on retirement.

Later he moved to Benhall Low Street near Saxmundham where he died in September 1966 at Ivy Cottage. He was aged 94.

We have little information about his life and circumstances after he left Stutton. He remained on the Medical Register until 1943, when he would have been 71 and it is likely that may have earned his living in medicine although this is not documented in the Medical Directories of the time. He was not wealthy when he died, leaving just £3,800.

Mildred is another mystery. She stayed with her parents and probably became their carer in their old age. Did she continue her work with the Wolf Cubs and the Scouts? We don't know.

Unmarried and aged 62 she was with her father when he died. His executor was his son, Harry, who was the then Vicar of Parham.

John's own wife, Mildred, had died in 1955, probably at Ivy Cottage, when she was aged 85. The house still stands but I have been unable to find John's grave.



An interesting note is that two of the sons married Suffolk painters; in 1932 Thomas married Margaret Withycombe in London. In 1933 his older brother, Harry married Daphne Violet Pocklington at Chelsworth. Both marriages ultimately failed.

Ivy Cottage, Benhall Low Street, today.

Sources

Kelly's Directory for Suffolk; BMJ online; Family Search.com; *Guy's Hospital Journal*; *British Medical Journal*; *Stutton Local History Journal*; The National Archives; *The London Gazette*; The National Newspaper Archive; Victor Scott of Stutton; *The Lincolnshire Chronicle*; The Imperial War Museum; *The Journal of Occupational Medicine*; Suffolk Painters.co.uk; *The Medical Directory*; Rightmove
A history of the family and Netherwood can be found on the Garland genealogy website, c/o 'lesthorntons'

If anyone has any information or memories of the Garland family I would be delighted to hear from them.

01473 328286 nigelbanham@gmail.com

Stutton Scout Hut

Vic Scott



Can you recognise any of the Scout Troup above?

Possibly the man on the left of the Troup is Lorimer Fison? (*see photo to left*)

The Stutton Scout troop started in 1910 with ten boys and J F Lorimer Fison the first Scoutmaster. We do not know where they held their early meetings, but at the beginning of WW2 there was a building called 'the Scout Hut' a short way down Manor Lane on the left, roughly where a modern bungalow now stands. Described as a small rectangular building with a pitch roof, it was constructed of corrugated iron sheets and at one time painted dark red. We know it was still there after 1945.

More information about the Stutton Scouts can be found in Journal No 15 or see <https://stuttonlocalhistoryresearchgroup.files.wordpress.com/2011/11/lhj-1997.pdf>

Stutton War Memorial

Able Seaman Stanley F Staff

Mary Boyton



Lerwick New Cemetery, Shetland

The collection of photographs held in our archives of the graves of the fallen listed on the Stutton War Memorial in the Church was complete except for just one. Able Seaman Stanley Frederick Staff was buried in Shetland in 1918, a long way from his home. As I am currently considerably further north than Suffolk, I decided to visit the island with the intention of completing the collection, but when I discovered Shetland was almost as far north again, I let my fingers do the exploring. I was really pleased to find a very good photo and this has now been added to our archive.

A visit to *HMS Ganges* Museum proved a great help in the general background to the Royal Naval training relevant to Stanley's service in World War I. Within merely three weeks of joining *HMS Ganges* in 1914 as a boy entrant, Stanley had been posted to *HMS Pembroke I* at Chatham Docks for more training and then three months later, in December 1914 he joined *HMS Penelope* where he served for the next 17 months. In times of war, training was fast.

Stanley had consistently good reports from his superiors and he signed on for 12 years in December 1916 so was obviously keen to stay in the Navy as a career. Sadly this was not to be. Having survived being torpedoed in 1916, it must have been a very bitter blow to his mother when he was killed in a random accident at sea just five months before the end of the War.

HMS Penelope was a new *Arethusa* class light cruiser which was deployed from Harwich to protect the eastern approaches to the Channel coast. However, in May 1916 she was hit by a torpedo from the German submarine *UB-29* off the Norfolk coast and once they had limped back to port, Stanley was transferred back to Chatham. Four months later, in September 1916, he joined the newly commissioned *HMS Viola Q14*. (see p30 for details of Q-ships) Stanley served on board for the next 21 months until, at the age of just 19, on 18 June 1918 the ship was attacked by the German *U96*, 150 miles due north of the Shetland Islands.

Following an accidental premature explosion of a depth charge, Stanley Staff was mortally injured and his body was taken back to Lerwick to be buried in the New Cemetery overlooking the sea. It appears that he was the only one who lost his life in this accident although others did suffer injury, and The Admiralty subsequently produced a report on this explosion.

We already knew from our records that Able Seaman Staff's mother was listed as a widow living in Manor Lane and that made me wonder why she had moved to the village from Westleton where she is listed in both the 1901 and the 1911 censuses.

The search then widened out and it was a lesson in just how much information is available on the internet, if only you know where to look! Stanley Staff was born on 1 September 1898 in Westleton, the first child of Frederick and Elizabeth Staff. They were living at somewhere called Scots Hall Wood at Bridge Farm in 1901 and are listed again in 1911 by which time a second child, Lilly, was 7 years old. Stanley's father Frederick is listed as being a gamekeeper/warrener who was born in Darsham in 1864, one of the ten children of Caroline and John Staff who again is listed as a warrener living at Brussel Green, Darsham in the 1881 census.

Elizabeth Smith, Stanley's mother, was one of 4 children of a warrener who also lived in Darsham. Elizabeth and Frederick were married in 1897 at Hoxne and by 1901 they had set up home in Westleton at Bridge Farm. This is a true example of people following in the family work tradition, and also not moving too far away from their original families. After 1911, the trail goes cold. Frederick's death must have been after 1911 because although it is unknown when Elizabeth moved to Manor Lane in Stutton, it would have been presumably because she had been living in a tied cottage and the Manor Lane home would have been similarly tied to a job.

Stanley had joined as a Royal Naval boy entrant in 1913 just after his 15th birthday, so maybe the whole family had moved for a new gamekeeping job in Stutton as his occupation was entered as *Farm Boy* and of course *HMS Ganges* might have been an attractive alternative to farm work. However, we have been unable to find any mention of Frederick Staff being employed at Stutton Hall. We do know they were already living in Stutton by the time Stanley was old enough to enlist as an Able Seaman in the Navy. However, we do know that by the 1939 Census, Lizzie Staff was living at 13 Manningtree Road, Stutton and her daughter Lilly was working as a nurse/midwife in Ipswich Hospital. When enquiring for any further information, Mrs Gay Strutt was amused to relate that Lilly Staff had attended her at the home birth of her youngest daughter many years later.

The family was mentioned in an article *Families in Stutton – 1920 -1945* in Journal No11 written by Vic Scott:

*The second of the two public houses in the village comes next on our route. This is the Gardener's Arm, the landlord being Mr Suckling. Six cottages follow, occupied by the families of Smee, Askew, **Staff**, Heffer, George Chapman and R Chapman.*

In the period between the Wars, we believe Lizzie Staff was employed at Stutton Hall and from records, we know she was given gifts at Christmas after she had retired and so was obviously a valued member of the staff. Lizzie Staff was a member of the Women's Insitute and took an active part in village life. She died in 1943 and is mentioned in the parish records but we have yet to find out where she was buried as it appears her grave is not in St Peter's churchyard, nor listed in the on-line parish records at Westleton.

If anyone in the village has any further information about any of the Staff family, it would be satisfying to be able to completely reveal the mystery.

With help from Caroline Waller and additional research by Nigel Banham



Dazzle camouflage was used extensively in World War I. Credited to the British marine artist Norman Wilkinson, it consisted of complex patterns of geometric shapes in contrasting colours, interrupting and intersecting each other. Unlike other forms of camouflage, the intention of dazzle is not to conceal but to make it difficult to estimate a target's range, speed, and heading. *Ed*

The Role of Q-Ships in World War I

Mary Boyton



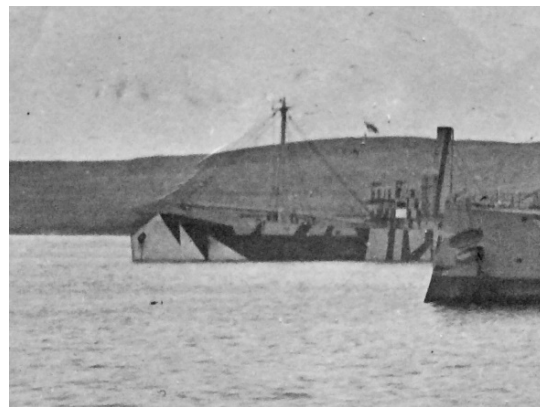
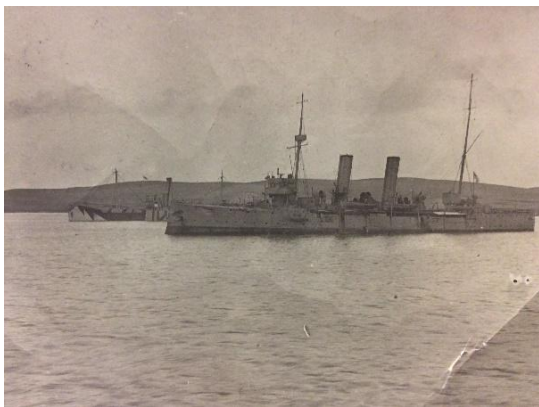
Aubretia class Q ship without camouflage (*HMS Tamarisk*: Wikipedia)

By 1915, Britain was in desperate need of a countermeasure against the German U Boats that were attacking the sea-lanes. Depth charges of the time were relatively primitive, and almost the only chance of sinking a submarine was by gunfire or by ramming it while it was on the surface. The problem was how to lure up the U-boat.

A solution to this was the creation of the Q-ship, one of the more closely guarded secrets of the War. Their codename referred to the vessels' home port, Queenstown, in Ireland, (now known as Cobh). These ships became known by the Germans as a *U-Boot-Falle* (*U-boat trap*). A typical Q-ship would appear to be an easy target, but in fact carried hidden armaments. The idea was that it would resemble a tramp steamer sailing alone in an area where a U-boat was reported to be operating. By posing as a suitable target for the U-boat's deck gun, it encouraged the U-boat captain to make a surface attack rather than stay submerged and use one of his limited number of torpedoes. These boats appear to have been camouflage-painted which rather belies their supposedly innocent presence in the sea but most of the photos show them similarly adorned. The Q-ships carried a cargo of balsa wood, cork or wooden casks, so that if they were torpedoed this could help keeping the ship afloat. Once the U-boat surfaced, the Q-ship's panels would drop down to reveal the deck guns, which would immediately open fire. Simultaneously, being British, and no doubt in the spirit of fair play, the White Ensign would be raised. With this element of surprise, the object was to overwhelm the U-boat, and a large fleet of Q-ships was deployed around the coast.

When I was sorting through some old family photographs recently, I found several that must have been taken by my grandfather who was serving on *HMS Brilliant*, an *Apollo* class cruiser, in the same area at the same time. I was amazed to realise that one of the 'boring' faded photos of ships I was about to throw away featured a cruiser (possibly *HMS Brilliant*) and behind it, more or less unnoticed at a first glance was a Q-ship complete with crew on the deck! Sadly it is impossible to identify this Q-ship, but who knows, it could have been the *Viola*! My grandfather served in the Royal Naval Reserve and nearly drowned transferring from ship to ship in the North Sea at around the same time as Stanley Staff's death. As a result of the damage to his lungs, my grandfather died two years later aged 42, leaving a wife and three young daughters.

After the War, it was concluded that Q-ships were greatly overrated, diverting skilled seamen from other duties without sinking enough U-boats to justify the strategy. In a total of 150 engagements, British Q-ships destroyed 14 U-boats and damaged 60, at a cost of 27 Q-ships. Q-ships were only responsible for about ten percent of all U-boats sunk, thus ranking them in effectiveness well below the use of ordinary minefields. It seems surprising to learn that Britain had commissioned well over 150 submarines during the First World War, (Germany had around 350 U-boats), and one can only imagine the bravery of the crews in such basic vessels. At this time, the Royal Navy had over 200,000 serving personnel and the largest overall fleet in the whole world.
Truly Rule Britannia!



'Snap' (enhanced) taken by my grandfather Enlarged Q-ship lurking in the background with 'dazzle camouflage' (see p30)

Richard Ransome Riches

Claudia Kirk

Dick Riches was a farmer's son, born at Amor Hall in Washbrook in 1898. A favourite story he often told was of his father, a frequent visitor to the White Horse Hotel in Ipswich: at the end of the evening he was helped into his pony and trap and thankfully the pony knew its way back along the London Road. Imagine that happening today!

Dick served very briefly in the 1914-18 War as a soldier (*below left*). He was shipped to France and whilst vacating a lorry, slipped on ice, broke his arm and was shipped back home.

He often came to Stutton old village hall to attend the weekly Saturday dances. Later, when I used to go to the dances, Francis Suckling, whose father farmed Crowe Hall Farm provided the music on the piano. Dick travelled to the village hall on a very old noisy motorbike. It was said you could hear its approach from as far away as Bentley. It was at the dances he met his future wife Dolly Ford, a seamstress from Liverpool. She worked at some of the big houses in and around Stutton. One such house was Crowe Hall in Stutton and that is how the family came to live in Crowe Hall Cottages.

Dick was standard bearer for Stutton British Legion for 41 years retiring in 1982 at the age of 83 (*below right*). At the church services his powerful voice encouraged the congregation to sing heartily. His various occupations included gamekeeper on the Fison estate as well as keeping his flock of Rhode Island Red hens. Dick died in 1991.



Feedback

A Stutton Family at *The Grove* - An Englishman comes home : *Nigel Banham*

Journal No 32, 2016

Patrick Carnegie 15th Earl of Northesk writes:



Colonel Charles Gilbert Carnegie (CGC)

Thank you very much indeed for your letter and for the impressive and enjoyably readable Stutton Local History Journal No 32.

You've discovered far more about CGC than any of his grandchildren ever knew! And you've made wonderful use of your diligent and skilful researches, particularly into military history.

On p 54 I think the question of 'ie' or 'y' is perhaps rather more complex. All kinds of theories abound, as we discovered at the Carnegie/y Clan Gathering hosted by my kinsman the Duke of Fife* at Kinnaird Castle in August. For instance, although the Southesk branch generally goes with 'ie', the Carnegie-Arbuthnots who are very much part of it have always had the terminal 'y'.

CGC's MVO indeed remains a mystery. My brother Colin has old letters and documents that may throw some light.

I think you're right to suggest that CGC may well have retired early because he was confidently expecting to inherit Lour. We do have lots of papers relating to the Carnegie v [Isabella] Joseph (née Carnegie, CGC's first cousin) that was resolved against him in 1915 in the House of Lords, including a copy of the judgment. Our own belief is that it would have been given in his favour if the plain intention of the 1815 entail had been followed and not its literal, faulty drafting. But in English Law it was not until a ruling by Lord Denning a decade or so ago that 'intention' was to be given precedence over the (often faulty) text of the document.

There is no question that CGC was mightily impoverished by the case. Isabella had offered to share the costs of the appeal to the House of Lords with CGC, but the over-confident Lt Col refused, with the result that all those costs were given against him.

*David Charles Carnegie, 4th Duke of Fife *Ed*

Village Born (Vintage 1925)

Arthur Lilley

It was on 23 August 1925 that I first saw the light of day, this at my maternal grandparents' (Frank & Gladys Coomber) home in Tandridge, Surrey.

It was an old house, two rooms up two rooms down with an attic, an outside toilet to which you had to take a bucket of water to flush, no bathroom, no electricity; oil lamps in the kitchen and sitting room, candles to light your way to bed. That was life at Crowhurst Lane End, Surrey.

Then most births were at home, the National Health Service was twenty three years and a World War away; babies came into the world with the help of family and friends, or perhaps a local doctor or midwife, who had to be paid.

I remember being taught to read and write by my parents, using a slate and chalk; no playgroups or nursery school, just the kitchen to play in, or outside in the fresh air.

The year after my birth, 1926, came the General Strike, at a time in England of mass unemployment between 1921 and 1937. Men walked miles and miles looking for any work they could get, a great depression. The Unemployment Insurance Act of 1920 created a dole system of payments*, but not every one was covered; it was a global disaster.

I well remember being taken to school to be introduced to the Head Teacher Miss Slater. Schooling started at five years of age.

We were now a family of Mum, Dad, and two brothers and two sisters living at South Godstone in a house belonging to my father's father, Much later on in life my mother told me we paid four shillings (20p) a week in rent; the average weekly wage was about £1 a week.

I left school at the age of 14, just as the Second World War started in 1939.

I got a job at an old house that had been commandeered and converted into a small factory making aircraft instruments; this gave employment to men, women and boys. We all cycled to work; that was the only means of transport.

Sadly my father, Arthur George Lilley, died in October 1939 at the age of 39. My mother along with my two brothers and sisters moved us back to live with my grandparents at Crowhurst Lane End Surrey.

Mother was fortunate to get a small Widow's pension of a few shillings a week, not paid to every one, only those whose husbands had paid into the newish National Insurance Scheme which Neville Chamberlain included in the Widows', Orphans and Old Age Contributory Pensions Act of 1925. There was no alternative but for my mother to go out to work while my grandparents looked after us. In 1940 my grandfather also died and my mother found us a home at Blindley Heath, Surrey. That home had electricity, a bathroom, and an inside toilet; Oh what joy!

Up until the War starting much of the local employment in my rural childhood was in big houses and their estates, employing men, women and children as butlers, footmen, housekeepers, cooks, maids, nannies, gardeners, grooms and chauffeurs. Their Home Farms employed labourers as herdsmen for sheep, cows, pigs and chicken.

Agricultural labourers were supplemented at harvest time by women and children who took time off from school (hence the long school holidays they have now).

Builders employed bricklayers, carpenters, scaffolders, and general labourers. The number of qualified teachers depended on the number of pupils there were. Rural policing was a Bobby on a bike.

Butcher boys made their deliveries on a bicycle with a big basket on the front. Deliveries such as coal, and bread were by horse and cart. In the smaller pony and trap came the milk in churns; large metal containers direct from the farm and cow to be dispensed into jugs left on the doorsteps.

For public transport, we had a railway station at South Godstone, A bus ran about every two hours. If you were fortunate enough your personal transport was a bicycle.

The local pub had a landlord and a barman; beer was 4d (2p) a pint, spirits 10d (5p), cigarettes 6d a packet of 20 (2.5p). The only food that was served was bread and cheese; a packet of crisps 2d (1p today).

Some of the other prices that I remember were bread 4d a loaf, butter 6d for 1lb. Tea was 1 Shilling a quarter of a lb, sugar 6d a lb, milk 2d a pint, cheese 10d a lb, bacon 10d a lb, eggs 1 shilling a dozen; beef 1/6d a lb, chicken 5 shillings each. Newspapers were 1d and petrol 10d a gallon.



**Sterling pre-decimal
currency (before 1971)**

4 farthings = 1 penny 1d
12 pennies = 1 Shilling 1s
4x Threepenny pieces= 1s
2x sixpenny pieces=1s
240d = 20 Shillings = £1

24 pennies = 2s = 1 Florin
1 Half Crown = 2 shillings
and sixpence 2/6d
8 Half Crowns =£1
1 Guinea =£1 and 1 shilling
£1-1s.

At the age of 17, I joined the Royal Navy, and after only 10 weeks training went to sea, and served in two destroyers until the end of the War 1946.

Catherine Kent adds: 'Arthur has lived in a bungalow in Stutton Close for the past thirty or so years and previously worked and lived at RHS with his wife Peggy. At RHS he taught the boys sailing.'

*The dole (weekly cash unemployment benefits)

The 1920 Act passed at a time of very little unemployment, when the Conservatives were supporting the Liberal Lloyd George's coalition which had succeeded the earlier War time coalition under Asquith. It set up the dole system that provided 15 weeks of unemployment benefits to over 11 million workers, practically the entire civilian working population except domestic service, farm workers, railway workers, and civil servants. Funded in part by weekly contributions from both employers and the employed, it provided weekly payments of 15s for unemployed men and 12s for unemployed women. Politicians were surprised when the costs to the Treasury soared during the high unemployment of 1921. *Ed*

Our War Memorial Uncle 'Bas': From Shepherd Boy to Tank Gunner

Nigel Banham

Those of you who knew our very active and much missed village historian and local character, Philip Willis, will know that he came from a well known local Methodist family, who lived in Crepping Hall Lane.

His father, Samuel, was the third son of George and Amelia Willis, and the family lived in a farm cottage owned by Mr Graham (of the now ruined *Graham's Wharf* at Stutton Ness), who farmed the estate mainly now owned by the Strutt family.

After Samuel, George and Amelia had three more sons and the first of these was Victor Basil, (known in the village as 'Bas') born on 9 July 1897....how they must have wished for a girl!



William Isaac Graham and his estate workers at Crepping Hall

The caption on the back of the original print written by Robert's daughter, Annie reads *Taken on or before September 1906 by Robert Graham.*

William is centre seated and Donald is standing behind him and the workers are:

Standing: (*left to right*) George Willis, Walter White, Bert Scott, Harry Whinney (left for health reasons 1909) Maurice Robinson - groom and gardener, Herbert Keeble.

Seated: Robert Keeble (left May 1910), Charles Keeble, Harry Bennett, Walter Pollard (left 1909), Harry Scott, Harry Haste.

Harry Scott was Vic Scott's grandfather and Bert Scott his great uncle.

The 1911 census shows that the family worked on the land as did most villagers in those days and Bas, aged 13, had left school in 1910. Children at Stutton School usually completed a 'School Leaving Letter' in those days and we have a copy of this and a photograph of him taken at the time:

Basil Willis
My name is Basil Willis. I was born on July 9th 1897. I have 5 brothers and no sisters. My Father and two of my brothers work for Mr Graham at Stutton. Stutton is my village where I was born. It is about 8 miles from Ipswich. Stutton contains about 500 people. It is not as large as Holbrook. I am soon going to leave school and I hope to work for Mr Graham. Mr Baker is my school master and I like him to teach me very much. I have been in the sixth standard over a year. I am the fourth oldest brother in my family. There are about 80 children in Stutton School. I am one of the gardening boys at Stutton School. I hope to come to night school next year.
Basil Willis. 1910



He is clearly in his father's or an older brothers' suit and he really looks most uncomfortable! However, we can see that he is good-looking boy and his face shows character. Like his father and brothers, he too worked on the land and the census shows him as *Shepherd's Page*.

When War came, the earliest that he would have been allowed to join up would have been 1915, although we know that many boys joined under age. Conscription was not introduced until January 1916 (for men over 18) but his service number indicates an earlier date, so Basil, to his credit, was a volunteer and likely as not had a battle with his father to get his way.

We have very little on Basils' personal service career; many WW1 service records were lost in WW2 bombing of London but I have recently found that he first joined the Suffolk

Regiment and later transferred to the 'Tanks'. We do have records of where his unit went and what they were doing and he, most assuredly, went with them.

Maybe he had some experience of trench warfare as an infantry soldier/machine gunner because the tank section was quite choosy as to whom they took; they wanted quality! Tanks were both secret and exciting. Before the name 'The Tank Corps' was introduced in July 1917, the unit was known as the 'Heavy Branch of the Machine Gun Corps'.

The photograph of Basil in uniform (right) shows a Machine Gun Corps cap badge and this indicates that he must have been in on the 'ground floor' in 1916 before the name was changed.



Seen as a means of breaking the static nature of warfare when the defensive power of barbed wire and machine guns ruled the battlefield, plans were agreed in 1915 for around 9 battalions of 72 tanks each; some 650 odd machines.

You can imagine that for a farm boy, who had probably rarely if ever seen even a motor car, the idea of going to War in a huge, 28 ton monster must have seemed stellar. The reality of course was that fighting in the early tanks was a dreadful business. The engine exhausts leaked poisons as did fuel; interiors were hot and deafening. Visibility was poor so that the tank commanders usually had the hatch open or walked in front so that they could shout directions to the drivers; very early tanks were extremely difficult to get out of and if they did get hit by shellfire were death traps. Ammunition and petrol saw to that. Crews had to wear anti-splatter masks, chain mail and goggles as heavy rifle fire would

cause dangerous molten splinters to fly around inside. Steering was primitive and they did less than four miles per hour. Breakdowns were frequent and the crews had to be engineers as well as gunners. They often finished up fighting on foot: tanks were not called the 'devil's chariots' for nothing!

Basil was involved in training, developing tactics and solutions to being 'ditched' (stuck in a ditch) fuelling, reloading, gunnery and in greasing, servicing and mending the tanks. Everything was new and untried. 'Male' Mark IV tanks had two 6 pounder guns and three machine guns and 'Female', just 5 machine guns. The original idea was that they should fight in pairs so that females could cover males against infantry attack.

There were also supply tanks, wire-pulling tanks and salvage tanks. Supplies (petrol, oil, ammunition, food and water) were often towed on wooden sledges. Like the bombers of WW2, they had carrier pigeons for messages/distress calls. There was also a radio/signal tank but the equipment was very unreliable. A quarter of the tanks on the battlefield were un-armed supply tanks.

This was the highly technical world in which our young man found himself but tank crews had tremendous camaraderie. They saw themselves as coming to the aid of the foot soldiers and the early tactics of fighting together were being thought through. The early training centre was at Elvedon near Thetford, where large dummy trenches were built (traces can still be seen) and battle practice with live ammunition/explosives was carried out. Headquarters was then at Bisley, Surrey and later at Bovington, Devon. Initially formed into 6 companies in 1916, small numbers of tanks were first tried in the Somme battles of Summer 1916 with mixed success and these companies were used as the basis for the expanded battalions A through to F in November 1916.

Bas joined F Battalion, later re-named the 6th Tank Battalion.

The battalion was then organised into 3 companies (In Bas's case, 16, 17 and 18); 12 fighting tanks in each, plus a company of wire-pulling, supply tanks and spares. Each battalion named its tanks from its battalion letter so in F Battalion the tanks all had names beginning 'F' eg F1 *Firespite*, F5 *Fervent* and F41 *Fray Bentos*: you get the idea. Each tank had a crew of 8; an officer, 3 drivers and 4 gunners. Basil was a gunner and was trained in the use of both 6 pounder guns and Lewis machine guns.

When tanks were first used, the enemy was totally overwhelmed by them, but they later realised their weaknesses, particularly their tendency to get stuck, which made them sitting targets. They also learned how to use new artillery and anti-tank guns against them; armour piercing bullets were devised for their rifles and machine guns.

F battalion was formed at Wool, Dorset in December 1916 and we can trace Bas's movements in France through the Unit War Diary. Transport of the machines was, as today, on tank carriers. Flat cars on trains were also used. Tanks were secret and along their route in England the police knocked on the doors of their houses, and told people to stay in their back rooms while the convoy passed.



A British Mk IV Tank on a Railway Flat Car

Note the fascine for crossing trenches. More than one might be needed.
This was the kind of tank that 'Bas' took to war.

To War

Initial training for the tank men was a minimum of two months and intensive training continued after moving to France. All crews were cross trained in one another's skills. Basil's battalion moved from Bovington Camp to Southampton by road on 14 May 1917 and embarked for France on board *SS Viper* travelling without their tanks. They arrived in Le Havre on 15 May at 2.15am, but did not disembark until 7.30am, to No 1 Rest Camp. They marched smartly through the streets with the band playing but the camp

was up a long hill and marching with full kit was a challenge, so they became a little more ragged by the end of it!

Awaiting orders, they spent time on physical training, route marches and kit inspection...I can still hear the grumbling.... It was their first experience under canvas; spirits were high, and the men were allowed to bathe on the beach and to visit the town. They entrained and left on 20 May, the first of a long series of rail journeys via Etaples, to camp at Auchey Les Hesdin.

Soldiers always have an eye for their own comfort and they quickly learned that the best way to get boiling water for tea was to make friends with the engine driver, who had a plentiful supply.

At full strength (374 men and 32 officers) they were inspected with C Battalion, brigaded as the 3rd Tank brigade, by the Corps Commander, General H J Elles DSO.

June 1st saw a move to the Tank Driving School at Wailly. They passed through Arras, by then a ruined city, and carried out training on previously used trench systems in Wailly, Blairville and Ficheaux, which all crews found extremely valuable. The very deep German dugouts had hardly been touched and provided much entertainment.

On 5 June, just before the battle of Messines Ridge, two sections of tanks (eight machines) of F Battalion were sent forward to Croiselles and told to move forward, so that German aircraft must see them and thus mislead the enemy into thinking that an attack would come in that sector. Tanks were employed in this battle but there is no record that F Battalion took part, other than in this deception. The battle was an allied success with limited objectives to gain high ground near Ypres for the sprig-board of a much larger battle in July.

Huge mines were exploded beneath the German front lines, killing 10,000 enemy soldiers. (This was the biggest non-nuclear explosion ever used until the British explosion on Heligoland to destroy the fortress after WW2.)

A creeping barrage followed and the infantry advanced behind it, supported by tanks. Messines showed how close co-operation between artillery could bring results.

General Plumer used the lessons learned in the later successful advances in 1918, and which resulted in allied victory.

Passchendaele: Third Battle of Ypres 31 July-10 November 1917

During July, F Battalion received detailed movement orders to leave billets in Auchy and to move into the forward area to prepare for an attack. Basil was among these crews. The battle opened with an 11 day continuous artillery barrage, which was designed to destroy the German defence lines, but it also wrecked the drainage system for the area and in addition, torrential rain continued for some days during the build up. The result was a quagmire. This huge battle went on for over three months and although casualty figures were disputed for years, approx 250,000 on each side is probably about right.

The Allies did gain some ground but the cost was very high. I have copies of a vast number of plans, movement orders and reports for the Battalion; fighting was bitter and complicated with the tanks supporting the foot soldiers to advance and take strong-points and defended villages.



Above British Mk IV tanks at Rollencourt Tankodrome in June 1917

The soft ground meant that many tanks became ditched in trenches or canals with no hope of recovery and one crewman was even drowned. The War Diary shows high losses in tanks and crews but Basil came through it, no doubt with some new idea of what war could be like. Some tanks made it to their objectives and returned back to their

rallying points. Overall, the use of tanks here was a costly failure, mainly due to the unsuitable ground. They were regularly in action through the battle during August and were withdrawn for re-equipping and training from the beginning of September. The Army Commander, Earl Haig's Chief of Staff, when he visited the morass that was the battlefield is reported to have said:

Good God, did we really send men to fight in that?

Cambrai 20 November-4 December 1917

Cambrai, originally conceived as a limited 'bite and hold' battle was an attempt to breach the formidable Hindenberg Line and was, initially, a great success and although not fully followed up with sufficient weight of troops, it showed what could be done. The soil here is chalky and well drained; much better suited to the use of 28 ton tanks.

A number of innovations were tried and as far as the tanks were concerned, used in large numbers (there were 437 of them), they advanced behind a creeping artillery barrage and were used to flatten the wire with the infantry following in lines behind them. New shells; no wire cutting parties; no preparatory gun barrage; thorough practice with the troops, artillery and aircraft; all movement at night and above all, secrecy. The British were learning. Security, camouflage and tactics had changed. Surprise was complete. One tank commander described 20 November as *the happiest day of our lives*.

Basil's F Battalion spent the night before the battle at Gouzeaucourt, just behind our lines and was to work with the 36th Infantry Brigade, comprised of some battalions of Royal Fusiliers, Royal Sussex and Royal Berkshires.

F Battalion's objective was to establish a bridgehead at Masnieres and the rallying point was the La Vacquerie valley. The rising sun meant that the light was behind the German line and so the crews had great difficulty seeing their targets.

There followed a day's heavy but successful fighting with deep penetration through enemy strong-points. Tank F22, *Flying Fox II*, was crossing a bridge that collapsed under its weight. It was itself then used as a bridge support for the rest of the war, even when the Germans re-took the area.

The objectives were taken, some 3½ miles beyond the old British front line; in Western Front terms this was one of the best results of the War.

Church bells were rung in Britain for the first time in the War.

Casualties were light but the attack lost impetus, partly due to being held up by fierce resistance at Bourn Wood, to the left of Basil's unit. F Battalion was involved in heavy fighting there on 27 November and casualties were then much heavier than one week earlier as a grim battle of attrition developed. High Command insisted that it be taken and ultimately it was but the battle was not over. On 30 November, the Germans counter-attacked with 20 divisions and using new tactics regained much of the ground that they had lost.

Ultimately, the outcome was a partial failure but valuable lessons had been learned, which substantially contributed to the eventual Allied success in 1918. Casualties were about 45,000 on each side.

Right

Knocked out
British Tanks in
Bourn Wood
Was Basil here?



Cambrai was Basil's last battle.

Ribecourt was the base depot/HQ and tank workshop for F Battalion from 24 to 30 November. F Battalion had its own medical officer but he would have been running a battalion aid post nearer to the front line.

Advanced Dressing Stations (ADS) were further back and were run by the infantry divisions with whom the tanks were working – in this case the 6th, a Yorkshire Division. It was usually better sheltered against shellfire than an aid post and had space for perhaps 100 stretchers, a medical store and an operating room.

Such places were usually prepared before an attack but in this case, the troops had advanced so far that the medical units had to move forward.

The 18th Field Ambulance War Diary (a *Field Ambulance* is a mobile medical unit with its own structure, not a vehicle) shows that they established an ADS at Ribecourt on the evening of 20 November. Basil had been in action for several days and although I am unsure on which day he was hurt, his location shows that he may have been in the attack on Bourlon Wood on 27 November or on Fontaine Notre Dame on the same day; F Battalion tank casualties are recorded on both. Either way, he was brought back in the tank or by stretcher bearers to this ADS and then was probably too ill to move back to the Main Dressing Station and thence to a Base hospital.

He died of wounds on 1 Dec 1917 and he lies in Ribecourt British Cemetery. He would have known that the battle was a success and he died being cared for in a skilled medical unit among his own countrymen.



The 'Foreign Field':
Bas's Last Resting Place



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Photo Credits

Willis Family Archive in the care of Vic Scott of Stutton.

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Ed Keeble of East Bergholt.

Footnote

Our perception of war and of the First World War in particular is one of horror at the waste, loss and futility in such dreadful conditions as happened on the Western Front. All of this is true; the War Poets paint the picture well and it is not for nothing that most villages in Britain have a memorial such as ours.

However, in the preparation of this piece, I have come across anecdote, much humour, humanity, kindness, pride and success. For instance, our medical units treated a huge number of French civilians in the areas that they liberated and organised clean water and the feeding of thousands, often from their own rations and for which the French government was very grateful.

Our returning soldiers were rightly proud of what they had done and we ought to remember that too.

nigelbanham@gmail.com



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