

Cowbridge War Memorial

Like many cities, towns and villages in the British Isles, after the Great War of 1914 – 1918, the borough of Cowbridge commemorated the young men of the town who had lost their lives in that conflict with a memorial on which their names were inscribed. Twenty-nine names are engraved on the plinth beneath the statue of a soldier, standing with arms reversed, in front of the town hall.

To the memory of the men of this borough
who volunteered for active service and
gave their lives for King and Country
in the Great European War
1914 – 1919

Lieut. T E H Torney	3 rd Welsh Reg
2 nd Lieut M J Marsden	MGC
2 nd Lieut W H O Moynan	SWB
2 nd Lieut W D Owen	4 th Welsh Reg
2 nd Lieut Joshua W Payne	DLI
Sergt Cecil Chard	4 th South Staffs.
Sergt David Fitzgerald	SWB
Sergt Fred C Lord	Gren Guards
Sergt Arthur Stockwood	Rif Brig
Corp William Burley	15 th Welsh Reg
Corp Owen Evans	Royal Sussex Reg
Lance Corp A W Jones	5 th Welsh Reg
Lance Corp Ronald Wall	Nthbd Fus

PRIVATES

William Archer	RWF	Richard Morgan	Austn IF
David Robert Bond	RFA	Alexander Pates	2 nd Welsh Reg
Bassett J Davies	10 th Welsh Reg	David R Spencer	Mer Mar
Albert Gibbs	16 th Welsh Reg	William Trew	1 st Leicester
Arthur Gibbs	Loyal North Lincs	William Willment	Royal Sussex
William Eton Lane	SWB	Herbert Williams	12 th Glos Reg
Charles Lewis	Tank Corps	Ralph S Goulden	RGA
Arthur Miles	1 st Mon Reg	Lance Corp S Hayward	14 th RWF

This is a surprisingly large number of casualties from a small market town which in the census of 1911 had a total population of just over a thousand people. At least twenty of the young men named on the plinth were the sons of Cowbridge families; the remaining nine, which included three of the five officers, had probably been living and working in the town for at least long enough to be honoured with those who had been born and bred in Cowbridge.

It is a sad fact that the Great War was not 'the war that ended all wars'. A further nine names would be added to the memorial after the war of 1939-1945 but, unlike those who had died in the previous war, the casualties of the second war died while on active service with different branches of the armed forces and in diverse theatres of war. Apart from one merchant navy officer, all the men of the 1914-1918 war were soldiers and all except two of those twenty-eight died as a result of serving on the Western Front in France or Flanders.

By midnight on 4th August 1914 seven European nations were at war: the Central Powers of Germany and Austria formed one group to be opposed by the Allies comprised of France, Britain, Russia, Belgium and Serbia. Of these combatants Britain alone had no form of compulsory military service, the security of the nation depending entirely upon a regular army of enlisted volunteers but also, as an island, shielded by a massive navy. Throughout the nineteenth century British armies had been engaged almost continuously in small wars and colonial campaigns of conquest or annexation which culminated in the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902. The three-year war in South Africa, which eventually involved nearly half a million British and colonial troops who suffered a heavy death toll from disease more often than injury on the battlefield, exposed the many failings of the British system and fuelled demands for wholesale reforms of the War Office and of army organisation, training and equipment.

Despite growing unease over German expansion of its army and navy, British governments from 1902 onwards had no desire to be involved in any European conflict and were, in any case, constrained by the unpopularity which would result from expenditure on a greatly enlarged army and all the necessary armaments. The Liberal government of 1906, with R B Haldane as Secretary of State for War, successfully introduced reforms of the regular army and replaced the old militia and yeomanry, which had been the basis of home defence against any possible invasion, with a Territorial Force. The Regular army would consist of men enlisting for seven or eight years service with the Colours followed by three or four years in the Reserve. With the exception of the Guards battalions, regiments would recruit in their home areas and would normally consist of two battalions – one overseas on garrison duty in India, the Suez Canal Zone, the far East, the Caribbean or the West African colonies, with the second battalion in the UK and very often consisting of young new recruits and drafts preparing to join the overseas battalion. The new Territorial Force was to be organised by County Associations, would be loosely linked with the local regular army regiment, was mainly intended for home defence and was composed entirely of volunteers. These 'Saturday afternoon soldiers' whose training consisted of rifle practice and drill in their spare time with two weeks in camp in August every summer, were often treated with scorn by professional soldiers.

On 28th July 1914, exactly one month after the assassination of the heir to the Austro-Hungarian empire, archduke Franz Ferdinand, at Sarajevo, Austria declared war on Serbia, the fatal decision which triggered the mobilization, in turn, of the armed forces of Russia, Germany, France and Belgium. The first active steps towards mobilization of the British army were made on the evening of 27th July. Although the government still hoped that involvement in a European war could be averted, during the ensuing week officers and men on leave were recalled, all training courses terminated, railways brought under

government control and train time-tables organised, horses requisitioned, equipment brought out of store and mobilization telegrams prepared for sending to reservists.

With the prospect of war on two fronts, against Russia to the east as well as France to the west, the German high command threw its main pre-emptive attack westwards and on 2nd August demanded passage for its troops through Belgium – a demand which was refused. Two days later German troops crossed the frontier into Belgium and bombarded the fortress town of Liège. In the afternoon, citing a treaty guaranteeing Belgian neutrality, the British government sent an ultimatum to Berlin demanding the withdrawal of German troops before midnight; the War Office had already sent out mobilization telegrams and, with no reply from Berlin, the two nations were at war from midnight on 4th August 1914.

Discussions between French and British politicians and military leaders in the years leading up to the outbreak of a continental war had resulted in an offer of British support on the left of French forces facing any German attack. Compared with the massed millions of the German and French conscript armies the British expeditionary force would be insignificant. Six infantry divisions and one cavalry division had been pledged to support the French armies but half the regular army battalions were, as was customary, at overseas stations and to bring the home battalions up to strength reservists had to be recalled and kitted out with uniforms and rifles but, nevertheless, within three weeks of mobilization four infantry divisions and one cavalry division (in all about 80,000 combatants) with artillery, horses and supplies had been transported to France. In September the BEF was augmented by two more divisions.

The original six infantry divisions of the regular army (soldiers who would later be called the 'Old Contemptibles') which went to France in 1914 strictly conformed to the numbers laid down in the War Establishment. Divisions formed later in the war could not always adhere to the numbers suggested, particularly as there was a shortage of artillery. In 1914 a division consisted of three brigades (372 officers and 11,793 other ranks) which each had four battalions. A battalion therefore had 31 officers and just under 1000 men. In support of the infantry battalions there were three brigades of field artillery and one howitzer brigade (about 3000 officers and men): an artillery brigade of the regular army in 1914 consisted of three batteries each responsible for six guns whereas the Territorial and New Army artillery brigades had only four guns to a battery. It was unusual for artillery units to be at full strength. A division also included an ammunition column, two Royal Engineer field companies (about 500 officers and men), one signal company, one cavalry squadron, one divisional train and three field ambulances. Divisional headquarters staff consisted of 15 officers and 67 other ranks and, at full strength, a division totalled 585 officers and 17,488 men, all under the command of a major-general.

All the warring nations were convinced that the campaign would be brief, that God was on their side and that their armies would be victorious; all the troops would probably be home again before Christmas! The exception to this very optimistic view of the future was held by the newly-appointed British Secretary of State for War – Field Marshal Lord Kitchener. He alone forecast a war that would last for at least three years during which time both German and French armies would sustain enormous casualties. By the force of his prestige and personality Kitchener persuaded the British Cabinet that the army should be massively

expanded and he immediately appealed to the nation for volunteers with the famous poster 'Your country needs you'. In 1914 the army numbered less than half a million men; by 1918 five million men had served their country – and nearly one million had died during that service. Kitchener's volunteers, to be termed the New Army, enlisted for the duration of the war, and were organised into 'Service' battalions within existing regiments.

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Despite the wording of the citation on Cowbridge's war memorial the twenty-eight soldiers who 'gave their lives for King and Country' were probably not all volunteers. The majority were young men under twenty-six years of age and of differing social backgrounds. Most of them were in the infantry; a few were recalled reservists of the regular army, some had joined territorial battalions, the majority were in the New Army either because they had enlisted after Kitchener's appeal or, in the last two years of war, when there were no longer sufficient volunteers to replace all the casualties, they had been conscripted.

On 23rd October 1914 the *Glamorgan Gazette*, under the heading "Cowbridge Roll of Honour" printed "*a list of the names of those who have responded to the call of duty in Cowbridge. The list would be largely increased if all the eligible young men left in Cowbridge who can offer no excuse for staying at home could but realise their plain duty.* Sixty-seven men are named: *W Thomas, H Thwaites, J Wigmore, D Wilmot, F Gibart, F Tren, C Morgan, F W Gibbs, W H Moynan, J R Dunn, G D Llewellyn, O D Williams, J C Griffiths, A W Jones, H Thomas, A E Roberts, D John, W G Goulden, W Dunn, H J Lush, R E Goulden, J Pell, J O Foulkes, B Bird, F Dunn, G Beer, T Lleyshon, D Jones, E Morgan, W Lane, G Thomas, R Moynan, W G Thomas, T Llewellyn, H Cantle, A Niblett, A Gunter, J Bishop, T Brakenwell, J Case, C Chard, W Chissell, E Crowley, T David, T E David, O Evans, H Hawkins, D H Harris, V Hopkins, J Hughes, R Jenkins, W H King, E Lane, L Marks, T McCarthy, D Miles, A Morgan, J W Nicholl, A Pates, G Scott, T G Tanner, A Gwyn, G Russell, D Evans, A Miles, D H Goulden, B Stockwood.*" The underlined names are all recorded on either the Cowbridge or Llanblethian war memorials as having died while serving their country during the Great War. The first of these would die just three days after the *Gazette* was published.

8891 Private **Alexander Pates**, 2nd Welch Regiment
Died of wounds, 26th October 1914.

Alexander Pates was born in Aberdeen and appears to have had no family connection with Cowbridge. Possibly he had worked and lived in the town before the war. He had enlisted in the Welch regiment in Cardiff and was almost certainly a reservist recalled to the colours on the mobilization of the army. As many of the men in the battalions stationed in the UK were young recruits and under the minimum age of 19 years for overseas service, three-quarters of the men in the four infantry divisions which arrived in France by 16th August were reservists. On 1st August 2nd Welch had been training at Aldershot; the battalion mobilized on the 4th with 571 reservists recalled to the regiment and on the 12th it embarked at Southampton on the *Braemar Castle*, landing at Boulogne the following morning, to serve in 1st Division 3rd Brigade of the British Expeditionary Force; by 22nd August the BEF was in battle positions along a twenty-five mile front near Mons in

Belgium. Brussels had already fallen to the German invaders who then wheeled south and, although briefly halted near Mons, forced French and British troops into a two-week retreat to the river Marne. French counter-attacks in September halted the German offensive which was followed by the development of trenches and static front lines which remained basically unchanged for almost four years.

Two more British divisions had arrived in France by mid-September and plans were made to transfer the BEF north to Flanders in Belgium where an attack might turn the German flank. Troop movement by train started on 3rd October and was completed by the 20th but the planned offensive never materialised for on the 21st the BEF was forced into a desperate defence against the last great attempt by German armies to break the Allied line and march on Paris. 2nd Welch, stationed north of the historic town of Ypres, suffered heavy losses when attacked on the 23rd; **Alexander Pates** died from his wounds three days later. His grave (I L 12) is in Poperinghe old military cemetery which is located 10.5 km west of Ypres town centre in the town of Poperinghe. Although occasionally bombed or shelled at long range it was the nearest place to Ypres which was both of considerable size and reasonably safe. At first it was a centre for casualty clearing stations prepared in readiness for the British offensive planned for October 1914 but later on these units were placed further back from the front line. The old military cemetery was made in the course of the 1st Battle of Ypres and used until May 1915.

By the end of November 1914 and the onset of what would be an exceptionally long hard winter, the battle had ground to a halt and all the armies were busily entrenching. The New Year saw a Western Front extending for four hundred miles from the Franco/Swiss border to the English Channel. Military high commands had to reassess their strategy and reorganise their armies. Although the allied line had not been broken, the six infantry divisions of the BEF, in their heroic defence of Ypres, had been shattered by the German offensive. Kitchener's New Army was still training and unlikely to be ready to 'take the field' until the end of the year. The British army could only be reinforced by recalling regular battalions serving overseas, by accepting the generous offers of troops by the self-governing dominions of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, by transferring native Indian army regiments to Europe and by calling on the territorial battalions. The fourteen territorial divisions had been created primarily for home defence and each man had to volunteer individually if his service was required overseas. Initially it had been proposed that overseas service would mean replacing regular army battalions on garrison duty but the staggering losses that had been incurred in Flanders meant that territorial battalions started arriving in France for front line duty in December, the numbers escalating in January and February 1915.

Of the five Cowbridge men who died in 1915, four were serving in territorial battalions.

2352 Lance Corporal **Arthur Wynne Jones**, 1/5th Welch Regiment.

Killed in action, 10th August 1915

Like Alexander Pates, Arthur Jones seems to have had no family in Cowbridge. He was born in Llanfyllin in Montgomeryshire and may have moved to South Wales to work in the Glamorganshire coal-field. He enlisted in Pontypridd where 1/5th Welch (TF) had its headquarters. In July 1914 the battalion was at its annual training camp at Porthmadog but

on mobilization in August moved to Pembroke. With 1/4th Welch, recruited in Carmarthenshire, the battalion was then transferred to garrison duty in East Anglia and the building of coastal defences in readiness against an anticipated German invasion. In the summer of 1915 the battalion moved to Devon and on 18th July, as part of 53rd (Welsh) TF Division and having received no training for modern mobile warfare, it embarked on the *SS Huntsgreen* and, with eight other transport ships, left Devonport bound for the eastern Mediterranean. The grossly overcrowded troopships took nearly three sweltering hot weeks to steam across the Mediterranean, via Malta and Egypt, to arrive on 5th August at Mudros in the Aegean Sea where they prepared for an assault landing at Suvla Bay on the Gallipoli peninsula.

The almost complete standstill by early 1915 of any military movement by the combatant armies in France and Flanders had resulted in an ambitious British/French campaign to assist their Russian ally by gaining the sea route to the Black Sea via the Dardanelles and Bosphorus, capturing Constantinople en route! Undeterred by a complete failure to clear the heavily mined Dardanelles by an unsupported naval force in February it was decided to attack in April overland from the Gallipoli peninsula. This was a total disaster; Turkish defence was determined and deadly and by July the allied troops had advanced only a few miles from the original landing beaches. A decision was made to send reinforcements to land at Suvla Bay to the north of the position held by an Australian and New Zealand division at Anzac Cove.

At 6 p.m. on the evening of 8th August 5th Welch stormed the beach at Suvla - with no maps, artillery support, transport or signallers. Fortunately there was little opposition but on the morning of the 10th the battalion was ordered to take Scimitar Hill, an outlier of the ridge to the east of Suvla Bay salt lake. Shell fire ignited all the ground cover and scrub and a vicious fire swept across the hillside; there was complete confusion and many casualties. **Arthur Wynne Jones** was killed in action on the 10th as also was Frank Dunn of *The Cross*, Llanblethian. His older brother Jack Dunn died ten days later. The Dunn brothers were both serving as second lieutenants with 5th Welch.

The three men have no known graves; their names are inscribed amongst the 21,000 names on the memorial at Cape Helles at the end of the Gallipoli peninsula. The monument can be seen from all the ships passing through the Dardanelles.

By mid-June the French general staff had begun to develop plans which culminated in the battle of Loos, in which the main objective was the recovery of the coal-field around Lens and the important town of Lille. The Germans were fully aware of the coming attack and had three months in which to strengthen their defensive line and transfer heavy guns from the Russian front. British divisions were expected to advance on the north of the mining district, the main defence of which was a fortification known as the Hohenzollern Redoubt. William Willment, Cecil Chard and Arthur Miles were all killed in action during the three-week attempt to capture this fortress.

G/1120 Corporal **William Willment**, 2nd Royal Sussex Regiment, D Company,
Killed in action, aged 27 years, 25th September 1915

William Willment (recorded as Willmott by the CWGC) was born in Llantwit Major, son of Fred and Margaret Willment who were living in Cowbridge at the time of his death. His wife, Ethel May Firman, lived at Lavender Hill, London. William was probably a regular soldier as records show him to have been in the original BEF which landed in France in August 1914. 2nd Royal Sussex was in 1st Division 2nd Brigade.

The battle of Loos (which achieved only limited success) is notable for being the first time that territorial soldiers and volunteers in New Army divisions were used in offensive actions. After a preliminary bombardment, which had little effect on thirty-foot deep dugouts, an attack was launched, in heavy rain, on the morning of 25th September against the Hohenzollern Redoubt. The 9th (Scottish) Division and 7th (London) Division made slight advances but the Sussexs, positioned in the centre of the line for a second-wave attack, were repelled with very heavy losses.

William Willment most probably died during this attack. His grave (IV E 14) is in St. Mary's advanced dressing station cemetery which is in open farmland near the village of Haisnes between Lens and La Bassée. The ADS was established during the Battle of Loos and the cemetery, named from it, is at the same place. The cemetery was made after the Armistice by the concentration of graves from the battlefield, the majority are those of men who fell in September and October 1915.

Although Hohenzollern Redoubt was partially captured in the opening assault it was retaken by the Germans and remained in contention for another two weeks until the final British attack on 13th October. William Willment died on the first day of the Battle of Loos; Cecil Chard and Arthur Miles died on the final day.

8791 Sergeant **Cecil Richard Trevor Chard**, 1/5th South Staffordshire Regiment

Killed in action, aged 30 years, on 13th October 1915

Cecil Chard was the eldest son of Harry and Kate Chard who, in 1901, lived with their five children in East Village, Cowbridge. Harry Chard, born in Tavistock, was an assistant schoolmaster. Cecil was born in 1885 in Burry Port, Carmarthenshire so the family had moved around before reaching Cowbridge. In 1901 Cecil was an apprentice printer and on completing his training he must have moved to the Midlands for he had joined 5th South Staffs (a territorial battalion) at Walsall.

5th South Staffs was in 46th (North Midland) Division. This was the first division composed entirely of territorial battalions to go to France, landing there at the beginning of March. The division was not involved in the opening attacks at Loos but after almost two weeks of continuous assault the allies had achieved only very slight gains. The Guards Division moved south, with North Midland Division, to relieve divisions at Loos and to make, on 13th October, what would be the final attempt to take the Hohenzollern Redoubt. It was not successful: 5th North Staffs and 5th South Staffs were on the right of the assault and both battalions sustained heavy losses, as also did the Guards.

Cecil Chard was killed in action on 13th October and has no known grave. His name is inscribed between panels 73 and 76 on the Loos memorial.

On the same day that Cecil Chard died, the Hohenzollern Redoubt claimed the life of another Cowbridge man.

2757 Rifleman **Arthur Stuart Miles**, 1st Monmouthshire Regiment,

Killed in action, aged 19 years, 13th October 1915

Arthur Miles was the youngest son of Frederic Augustus and Wilmot Agnes Miles. In 1901 the family lived at 4 High Street where Arthur's father had a grocery shop but by 1915 Mrs Miles was a widow but still managing the business. Arthur and his twin brother Harry were both born in Cowbridge.

Only just 18 when war was declared, Arthur must have volunteered for the army almost immediately; he enlisted at Newport, choosing to join 1st Monmouthshire, maybe because uniforms and rifles (and training) were acquired more quickly by enlisting in a territorial battalion than in one of Kitchener's New Army battalions. The three battalions of the Monmouthshire regiment were part of the Territorial Force and attached to the South Wales Borderers. All three battalions mobilized and reached full strength very quickly and it seemed probable in October that they would be sent to India to replace regular army battalions. However the casualties sustained by the BEF in the 1st Battle of Ypres resulted in 1st Mons being sent to France in December 1914 and 2nd and 3rd Mons in February 1915 where they were placed with newly formed divisions mainly composed of regular army battalions hastily transferred from tropical India to bitterly cold Flanders.

1st Monmouthshire was assigned to 28th Division 84th Brigade which had four battalions of regular army soldiers and two territorial battalions. The newcomers received some rapid training in trench practice and were then sent north to replace French troops at the apex of the infamous salient created when the German armies had been halted in front of Ypres in 1914. On 22nd April the Germans unleashed the first chlorine gas attack and, despite desperate defence by British, French, Canadian and Indian troops, by the end of May the Germans had gained possession of ridges which overlooked the salient. On 25th May the survivors of the three Monmouthshire battalions were amalgamated into one battalion and moved south to a quiet sector to await reinforcements. Fresh drafts, which probably included Arthur Miles, started to arrive from South Wales and by mid-August the three battalions had separated but now had a change of purpose. It had been decided that every division would have a Pioneer battalion assigned to it with responsibility for trench maintenance, drainage, road building and light railway construction. Since its inception in 1908 the Monmouthshire regiment had recruited in the mining valleys; it was perhaps inevitable that, with most of its other ranks being former coal miners, all three battalions would be selected for pioneering. 1st Mons was assigned to 46th (North Midland) Division.

Pioneers were always trained soldiers and therefore, in addition to their maintenance work, were used, both in attack and defence, as reserve troops. **Arthur Miles** was killed in action near the Hohenzollern Redoubt on 13th October. His grave (II B 3) is in Arras Road cemetery in the village of Roclincourt between Lens and Lille.

25/1504 Lance corporal **Ronald Sinclair Wall**, 25th Northumberland Fusiliers
Died, aged 24 years, 15th October 1915.

Ronald Wall was born in London and educated at Cowbridge Grammar school where he was also, for a short period, an assistant master. In *Cowbridge & District Remembered 1900-1950*, Ralph Bird's reminiscences record "*I was at the school for six years; my headmaster was the Revd. William Franklen Evans and the assistant masters were David Perceval Jones, Charles Mayo, R C Hadland, Ralph Jones and Ronald St Clair Wall. Of these, Ronald Wall (who was a former pupil) and Charles Mayo were killed in the First World War*". Ronald Wall enlisted in Cardiff so it is somewhat strange that he should have served with the 'Tyneside Irish' territorial battalion which mobilized in Newcastle-on-Tyne on 9th November 1914. After basic training the battalion moved at the end of August 1915 to Salisbury Plain where **Ronald Wall** died on 15th October, most probably in the very large (1200 beds) hutted military hospital at Sutton Veny which is near Warminster, Wiltshire. His grave (236 B I) is in St John's churchyard in Sutton Veny.

The six Cowbridge men who gave their lives in 1916 all fought on the battlefields of the Somme and four of them died there.

G/1025 Corporal **Owen Evans**, 7th Royal Sussex Regiment,
Killed in action, aged 24 years, 7th July 1916.

Owen Evans was born in Llancafán. His father, William Edgar Evans was the minister of Carmel Congregational church and in 1916 he and his wife, Mary, lived in the Manse at Llanbethery. Owen worked in John Hopkins monumental masons in Cowbridge before he enlisted in 7th Royal Sussex. This Service battalion was raised at Chichester in August 1914, trained in England until May and landed at Boulogne on 1st June 1915 as part of 12th (Eastern) Division 36th Brigade. It was only marginally involved in the battle of Loos, relieving the Guards Division north-east of Loos on 30th September.

On 1st July 1916, the first day of the 1st Battle of the Somme, 12th Division was in reserve behind 8th Division, which was roughly in the centre of the British front line and had been detailed to capture Ovillers spur, and 34th Division which attacked La Boisselle. Both divisions came under severe enemy machine-gun fire and sustained the loss of 11,000 men. On the following day 12th Division was ordered to assault Ovillers; it took five days to gain part of the village which was not completely cleared of enemy forces until 17th July.

On 7th July 36 Brigade was directly involved in a continuous attack until relieved the following day – too late for **Owen Evans** who was killed in action on the 7th. His grave (IX F 3) is in Ovillers military cemetery which was begun before the capture of Ovillers as a battle cemetery behind a dressing station. After the Armistice the cemetery was greatly enlarged with a concentration of graves from the battlefields of Pozières, Ovillers and Contalmaison.

Two years later Edgar and Mary Evans suffered the loss of a second son. Lance Corporal Emrys Morgan Evans, whilst serving as a Lewis gunner with 2/4th Oxford and Bucks Light

Infantry, was killed in action on 12th September 1918. He was 23 years old and, unlike his older brother Owen, has no known grave. His name is recorded on panel 7 of Ploegsteert Memorial in Berks Cemetery extension near Ypres.

William Lane and Albert Gibbs, both serving in 38th (Welsh) Division, may not have been involved in that division's week-long battle in July 1916 for control of Mametz wood. They both died in Flanders and not in Picardy.

22226 Sergeant **William Eton Lane**, 11th South Wales Borderers,
Killed in action, aged 23, 23rd August 1916

William Lane was born in Cowbridge, the eldest of four sons of Sidney and Mary Lane. In 1901 the family lived at 6 Westgate where Sidney Lane was a storekeeper. William was educated at Cowbridge Grammar school. He enlisted at Newport, joining 11th (2nd Gwent) Service battalion of the SWB, which was raised in Brecon in December 1914, trained at Colwyn Bay and disembarked at Le Havre, with 38th (Welsh) Division, 115th Brigade, on 4th December 1915.

At the end of the first week of July British attacking forces at the Battle of the Somme had made only small gains and, in so doing, suffered heavy casualties. A major obstacle to any advance was Mametz wood which had been allowed to grow wild until it was a tangled mass of brambles and fallen trees in which machine-gun posts and a maze of barbed wire were concealed. On 5th July 38th Division relieved 7th Division in front of the wood and 115 brigade was ordered to attack on 7th July; heavy fire forced a retirement; the assault was continued by all three brigades throughout the next three days until they finally succeeded in capturing the entire wood by 12th July.

The Welsh Division had suffered enormous casualties. It was withdrawn from the front line and before the end of July had been transferred from Picardy to Flanders. Welsh troops would not be involved in any major offensive near Ypres in 1916 but normal trench duty in the Salient was always dangerous and **William Eton Lane** was killed in action on 23rd August. His grave (III E 5) is in Essex Farm cemetery near the village of Bouzinghe to the north of Ypres. This cemetery was used by a nearby dressing station from April 1915 until August 1917, 38th Division using Plot III in the autumn of 1916. Essex Farm was the dressing-station in which Doctor John Macrae of the Canadian Army Medical Corps wrote the poem *In Flanders Fields* in May 1915.

6571 Private **Albert Gibbs**, 16th Welch Regiment,
Killed in action, aged 20, 14th September 1916

Albert Gibbs, born in Cowbridge, was the fourth of seven sons of Joseph and Florence Gibbs. Joseph Gibbs had moved to Cowbridge in 1895 to set up a printing business with his assistant David Brown, at 43 High Street. In 1901 the Gibbs family was living at 23 Eastgate, Joseph being recorded in the census as a printer, stationer and shopkeeper.

Three of Albert's brothers, Frederic, Harry and Arthur, also served in the army. Albert enlisted at Bridgend, joining 16th (Cardiff City) Service battalion which was raised in

November 1914, assigned to 38th (Welsh) Division 115th Brigade and landed in France in December 1915. Alongside 11th SWB the 'Cardiff Pals' fought their way into Mametz wood and lost so many of its men that after the action the battalion was transferred away from the Somme battlefield to Flanders. **Albert Gibbs** was killed in action near Ypres on 14th September 1916. His grave (III G 16) is two rows away from the grave of William Lane.

Three more Cowbridge men died in September battles.

S/2869 Sergeant **John Arthur Stockwood**, 10th Rifle Brigade,
Killed in action, aged 38 years, 3rd September 1916

Arthur Stockwood, born in Cowbridge, was the eldest of the five sons of John and Rachel Stockwood who lived at *Woodstock House* in the High Street. John Stockwood was a solicitor and Arthur, after attending the Grammar school, also qualified as a solicitor. By 1910 he was married and living next door to his parents at 81 High Street. However by 1914 he had moved to Park Street, Bridgend and was in practice with his uncle S H Stockwood.

Despite his age and family responsibilities, for Arthur Stockwood was married and the father of three children, he nevertheless enlisted in Cardiff, joining the Rifle Brigade, soon after Kitchener's appeal for volunteers. He was rapidly promoted to corporal and then sergeant and had applied for a commission in the Welch Regiment at the time of his death. 10th Rifles was a Service battalion assigned to 20th (Light) Division 59th Brigade and landed at Boulogne on 21st July 1915.

By September 1916 Arthur Stockwood had served in France for nearly fourteen months; his luck was due to run out. After two months of bitter fighting in Picardy the British front line had moved forward beyond Mametz, Delville wood, High wood and Pozières. On 3rd September 59th brigade, with 16th (Irish) Division on its right, launched a successful attack and captured the ruined village of Guillemont which had been one of the strongest of the fortified villages in the German line and a major British objective since the opening of the Somme offensive.

Arthur Stockwood was killed in action on 3rd September. He has no known grave. His name is inscribed on Pier 16B on the Battle of Somme Memorial at Thiepval which is just off the main Bapaume to Albert road. Thiepval village which had been an original objective at the start of the Somme offensive on 1st July 1916, was finally captured at the end of September. The memorial bears the names of more than 72,000 men who have no known grave and who died in the Somme sector before March 1918, the majority between July and November 1916.

16789 Private **Herbert Dudley Williams**, 12th Gloucestershire Regiment,
Died of wounds, aged 20 years, 3rd September 1916.

Herbert Williams was the son of John and Morfydd Williams. In 1901 the family of seven lived at 91 Eastgate, also known as *London House*, where John Williams had a thriving

business as a draper with workshops for tailoring and millinery. Herbert was born in Cowbridge and attended the Grammar school. In 1914 he enlisted at Bristol joining the 12th Glosters (Bristol) Service battalion which was raised on 30th August. The battalion was assigned to the 5th Division 95th Brigade and landed at Le Havre on 26th December 1915.

Herbert Williams died of wounds on 3rd September. His grave (II H 13) is in Dive Copse British cemetery which is a little more than 1.5 km north-east of the church in the village of Sailly-le-Sec which is about 20 km east of Amiens. In July, before the start of the Somme offensive, the area north of the later cemetery was chosen for a concentration of field ambulances which later became the XIV Corps main dressing station. Dive Copse was the small wood close by, named after the officer commanding this station. Plots I and II were used for the burials from these medical units between July and September 1916.

20673 **Sergeant Frederic Charles Lord**, 4th Grenadier Guards,
Died of wounds, aged 25 years, 14th September 1916

Fred Lord was born at Brooke, a Norfolk village about five miles south of Norwich, the son of Henry John and Maria Lord who, at the time of Fred's death, were living at Stibbard. This was also a small village but about fifteen miles north-west of Norwich.

It has been impossible, as yet, to find a reason for Fred's inclusion on Cowbridge's memorial. He enlisted at Cardiff, date unknown but probably in 1914. At the beginning of the war there were nine Guards battalions. There were never any Guards Territorial or 'New Army' battalions but in July 1915 an additional three Guards battalions were raised, one of which being the 4th Grenadiers. The new battalion was assigned to the Guards Division 3rd Guards Brigade. From January to March 1916 the battalion was in Egypt in the Suez Canal Defence Zone, but was in France before the Somme offensive opened in July.

The division was in action on 1st July, attacking on the extreme left of the British offensive near Beaumont Hamel. All the brigades in the division suffered heavy losses and had little success against German defences.

Fred Lord died of wounds on 14th September. His grave (II C 91) is in an extension to Corbie Communal cemetery. Corbie is a small town 15 km east of Amiens. It was about 20 km behind the front when British and Imperial forces took over the line from French troops south to the river Somme in July 1915. The town then became a medical centre with several casualty clearing stations set up. The extension to the town cemetery was opened in May 1916 for those who had died in the medical centres and the majority of the graves are of those who died in the 1916 Battle of the Somme.

The only man commemorated on the memorial who did not wear an army uniform was Second Engineer **David Robert Spencer** who was in the merchant navy and died on 20th April 1917 whilst an officer on the *SS Portloe*, registered at Cardiff.

David Spencer was the youngest of the three sons of Thomas and Margaret Spencer. In 1891 Thomas Spencer was recorded in the census as a brewer and inn keeper and the

family was living at the *Duke of Wellington*. Thomas had died before 1901 by which time Margaret was managing the business with the help of her eldest son, Arthur. Hugh, the second son, was a banker's clerk and David, by then 17 years old, was not recorded as being at home; presumably he had started his career at sea.

1917 would be the worst year of the war for British merchant shipping losses due to enemy submarine attacks. *Portloe* was torpedoed on the 20th April and David Spencer died at sea leaving a widow, Laurie Glaister Spencer, who lived at Lake Road East, Roath Park, Cardiff. **David Spencer's** name is inscribed on the Tower Hill Memorial in London to the men of the merchant marine and the fishing fleets.

2nd Lieutenant **Joshua William Payne**, 6th Durham Light Infantry,
Killed in action, aged 25, 14th April 1917.

Joshua Payne (recorded as James Payne by CWGC) was the son of James William and Francis Mary Payne of Lebanon House, Westoe, South Shields, County Durham and, like Alexander Pates, Arthur Jones, Fred Lord, James Marsden and William Owen, no connection with Cowbridge has been found for him; the reasons for their inclusion on the memorial remain a mystery.

6th DLI was a territorial battalion which mobilised on 4th August 1914 at Bishop Auckland and was placed in 50th (Northumberland) Division 151st Brigade. It landed at Boulogne on 17th April 1915 and then suffered very heavy casualties in the 2nd Battle of Ypres (22 April – 25 May).

50th Division took part in the opening stages of the Arras offensive in 1917. Slight gains were made in the 1st Battle of the Scarpe between April 5 and 14. **Joshua Payne** was killed in action on the 14th and has no known grave. His name is recorded on Bay 8 of the Arras memorial which is in Faubourg-d'Amiens cemetery in the western part of the town of Arras.

863 Private **Richard Thomas Morgan**, 3rd Australian Pioneers C Company,
Died of wounds, aged 30 years, 12th June 1917

Richard Morgan, born in Penarth in September 1886, was the son of a railway signalman also named Richard and his wife, Mary. By 1888 the family had moved to Cowbridge and in 1901 the parents, with seven children, were living at 10 Eastgate. The younger Richard was working as a railway clerk. In 1911, when he was 24 years old, he emigrated to Australia.

On 6th January 1916 Richard Morgan enlisted at Brisbane, Queensland for service abroad with the Australian Imperial Force. His trade was noted as 'mechanic'. Exactly six months later, on the 6th June, he embarked at Melbourne, with the 3rd Australian Pioneers, on the troopship *Wandilla*. It would be a long, slow voyage to England via the Cape of Good Hope, pausing en route at Cape Town where Richard would overstay his shore leave by six hours and thereby forfeit a day's pay! The ship reached Plymouth at the end of July and

the Pioneers then remained in England for four months of further training. It is to be hoped that Richard was able to visit his family and friends in Cowbridge before he went to France in November.

With the end of the Battle of the Somme in late autumn 1916 British and Imperial troops were gradually transferred north to Flanders. The German offensive at Ypres in May 1915 had resulted in the allied loss of all the low ridges which dominated the salient. Nearly two years of continuous small-scale attacks, shelling and rifle fire had caused many casualties and as early as 1916 plans had been made for a major British offensive to regain the high ground. This had had to be deferred to concentrate instead on the Somme offensive. However, preparatory action had been taken by undermining Messines and Wytschaete ridges which overlooked the countryside to the south of Ypres. Throughout 1916 twenty-one long mining galleries were driven from the British lines towards the ridges, ending in chambers which were filled with a million tons of ammonal.

At 3.10 a.m. on 7th June 1917 nineteen mines were detonated, to be followed by an intensive artillery bombardment on the devastated ridges and the stunned survivors of the explosions. British and Imperial forces attacked on a nine-mile front, with a New Zealand division directly assailing Messines, to be followed by Australian troops in a second wave attack. The ridges were captured within a week but **Richard Morgan** died on 12th June of wounds he had received in the action. His grave (I S 20) is in Trois Arbres cemetery in Steenwerck, a village to the south-east of the town of Bailleul. The cemetery was alongside the 2nd Australian casualty clearing station where Richard Morgan died.

The major British offensive of 1917 (officially entitled 3rd Battle of Ypres but more often known as Passchendaele) was launched at 3.50 a.m. on July 31st. The German defence had had six weeks after the Battle of Messines in which to establish many concealed concrete 'pill-boxes' and machine-gun pits. Three Cowbridge men died during 3rd Ypres and one in the 'waiting period' beforehand.

20893 Lance Corporal **Sidney Abraham Hayward**, 14th Royal Welch Fusiliers,
Killed in action, aged 24 years, 24th June 1917

Sidney Hayward, born in 1892, was the youngest of the eleven children of George and Elizabeth Hayward. George, from Chicklade in Wiltshire, married Elizabeth of Cowbridge in 1873 and in 1881 they were living, with four young sons, at the Causeway, Llanblethian. By 1891 they had moved to a house near the post office in Eastgate, George was working as a painter and decorator, Elizabeth was a dressmaker, seven sons and two daughters were still living at home. In 1901 the older sons had left home and George Hayward declared on the census that he was a coffee house owner as well as being a decorator. On leaving school Sidney started work at Court Herald colliery near Neath Abbey, and lodged at 99 Old Road, Skewen, the address which is also given for his parents at his death in 1917.

The eleven Hayward siblings all served their country in the Great War; eight of the brothers enlisted in the army, Benjamin had joined the Royal Navy in 1897 and was

recalled to the Service as a reservist, whilst the two sisters, Beatrice and Bertha, trained as nurses and served in France with Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service.

In January 1915 Sidney enlisted at Neath, joining the 14th (Service) Battalion of the RWF. This had been raised in Llandudno, trained in the UK and crossed to France in December 1915 with 38th (Welsh) Division, 113th Brigade. The division went into action on 5th July 1916 when it relieved 7th Division in front of Mametz wood. Six days of murderous fighting before the capture of the entire wood resulted in huge casualties and the division was withdrawn from the Somme to Flanders where new drafts could be gradually integrated.

In 1917 38th Division was not actively engaged in the Battle of Messines. **Sidney Hayward** was killed in action on 24th June, before the start of the 3rd Battle of Ypres, during a German barrage on trenches held by 113 brigade in front of the Yser canal. His grave (II G 15) is in Bard Cottage cemetery near the village of Boezinghe which is in the northern sector of the Ypres salient. Boezinghe village directly faced the German line across the Yser canal and Bard Cottage was a house slightly set back from the British line, close to a bridge called Bard's Causeway. The cemetery was made nearby in a sheltered position under a high bank and burials were made between June 1915 and October 1918.

Sidney was not the only Hayward casualty of the Great War; his brother Benjamin, served for twelve years from September 1897 in the Royal Navy and was recalled from the Royal Naval Reserve on 2nd August 1914 to serve as a stoker on *HMS Challenger*. *Challenger* was a 5,880 ton cruiser, built in 1906, with a complement of 454 officers and men and armament consisting of eleven 6 inch and some smaller guns. On 5th August she was cruising in the Bristol Channel and five hours after the declaration of war captured, off Nash Point, the *Ulla Boog*, a German merchant ship loaded with timber. Escorted into Barry Dock the *Ulla Boog* was later sold at auction as a war prize and renamed the *Mary Baird* but in 1917 she was sunk by a mine off the coast of Cornwall with the loss of all hands. By September 1914 *Challenger* was stationed off the west coast of Africa and then played a major part in the successful Franco/British invasion of the German colony of Cameroon. However, in January 1916 Benjamin Hayward, on landing in London and afterwards sent to Chatham, was discharged from the navy on grounds of ill-health. He returned to his wife, Ida Margaret Williams, whom he had married in 1914 and who lived at Broughton shop near Wick where he died of malaria on 25th January 1916.

2nd Lieutenant **Harold Otho William Moynan**, South Wales Borderers,
Killed in action, aged 30 years, 31st July 1917.

Harold Moynan was the younger of the two sons of Dr Richard Moynan and his wife Emma. Dr Moynan was the medical officer of health for the borough of Cowbridge and at some date between 1901 and 1914 the family moved from Eastgate to *Woodstock House*. The two brothers both enlisted before October 1914, Harold joining the SWB (Brecknockshire) territorial battalion. It is, however, unlikely that he was serving with this battalion at the time of his death as the Brecknockshires spent almost the entire wartime

years in India where the battalion replaced a regular army battalion recalled for service in France.

The start of the 3rd Battle of Ypres was scheduled for the 31st July; the preceding artillery bombardment and continuous heavy rain completely devastated the fragile drainage system of this low-lying farmland and the assault troops could make only very slow progress over terrain which had reverted to swamp. The main objective was the arc of low hills, including Pilckem ridge, which overlooked the salient. **Harold Moynan** was killed in action on 31st July, the first day of an offensive which would grind on for more than three months. He has no known grave and his name is recorded on panel 22 of the Menin Gate Memorial at Ypres.

56618 Private **Basset James Davies**, 10th Welch Regiment.

Died of wounds, aged 22 years, 6th August 1917

Basset J Davies was born in Cowbridge, the son of Mathias and Jane Davies who were living at 16 High Street in 1901, Mathias stating in the census that he was a decorator. By 1912 the family had moved to 34 Westgate and Basset was a pupil at the Grammar school.

Basset enlisted at Cardiff, joining 10th Welch (1st Rhondda) Service battalion which was assigned to 38th (Welsh) Division 114th Brigade. The division suffered heavy casualties at the battle for Mametz wood from 7 to 12 July 1916 and after it was relieved the survivors were transferred north to Flanders. 38th Welsh was not in action again until the start of the 3rd Battle of Ypres more than a year later. On 31st August, despite torrential rain, 38th Division successfully attacked the Steenbeck defensive pill-boxes and Pilckem ridge to the north of the town of Ypres. **Basset Davies** may have received the wounds, from which he died on 6th August, during this assault. His grave (III A 13) is in Dozinghem military cemetery which is north west of Poperinghe near Krombeke. In July 1917, in readiness for the forthcoming offensive, groups of casualty clearing stations were set up at three positions called by the troops Mendinghem, Dozinghem and Bandaghem. There were three casualty stations at Dozinghem which used the military cemetery opened nearby until early in 1918.

2nd Lieutenant **Morris James Marsden**, Machine Gun Corps 214th Company,

Killed in action, aged 22 years, 20th September 1917

Morris James Marsden is a very mysterious inclusion on Cowbridge's memorial. He is also commemorated on a tablet (*In loving memory of Morris James Marsden, son of John and M A Marsden, Rhydybannau, MGC, 214 Company, killed September 20 1917 in the Menin Road battle, aged 22 years*) in St Silin's church, Cribyn and among the twelve names on the war memorial in the churchyard is the following inscription:

2nd Lt. M J Marsden, Rhydybannau, MGC 214 Company, Syrthiodd yn Menin Rd.
Medi 20 1917 yn 22 oed.

Cribyn is a small settlement on the hillside above the afon Rannell, a tributary of the afon Teifi. It is about four miles north-west of Lampeter and in the Cardiganshire parish of Llanfiangel Ystrad.

Morris was the youngest of the three sons of John and Mary Ann Marsden. There were also five daughters and in 1901 the family (the children's ages ranging from 17 years down to 1 year) lived at *Rhydybannau*, a large farm to the south of Cribyn. After John Marsden retired from farming he and his wife moved to *Maesyderi* and *Rhydybannau* was then farmed by his second son, John George; the more usual succession in this part of Wales would have been for the youngest son (Morris James) to have inherited the farm.

The British army had entered the war with little enthusiasm for machine-guns but with the development of trench warfare quickly realised the need to change from reliance on concerted rifle-fire to bombing with various types of hand grenades and supplying battalions with lighter, more manageable Lewis guns to replace Vickers machine-guns. The Machine Gun Corps, using the heavier 19 kg Vickers machine-guns, was formed in 1915.

The second stage of the 3rd Battle of Ypres, after the capture of the ridges to the north of the salient, was an attack towards the east along the Menin Road ridge; the assault started at dawn on 20th September and all objectives had been taken by the 25th. **Morris James Marsden** was killed in action on the 20th. He has no known grave. He is commemorated either between panels 154 and 159 or on panel 163A on the Tyne Cott Memorial which is located 9 km north east of Ypres. The memorial forms the north-eastern boundary of Tyne Cott cemetery and bears the names of nearly 35,000 men whose graves are unknown and who died after 16th August 1917.

After more than three years of warfare it had become obvious to most of the politicians and military hierarchy of the three main protagonists, Germany, France and Britain, that hostilities would only end when there was a total defeat of either the French and British armies by a German offensive against the allied front or, conversely, a successful allied breakthrough of the German Hindenburg line. By the end of 1917 neither French or British armies were in any state to launch an attack anywhere against a German army but could only hold their ground until the arrival of American troops expected since the USA's declaration of war on Germany in April 1917. The German armies in the west had been strengthened by the arrival of many divisions released from service on the eastern front by the armistice signed at Brest Litovsk with the new Bolshevik government in Russia. All the warring nations were aware that Germany would need to make its expected attack before the arrival of the Americans; the only unknown factors were the timing of the offensive and on which part of the allied front it would fall.

The British sector of the Western Front now extended for 123 miles. Throughout an extremely cold winter a series of defences were constructed; the full depth was meant to extend for nine to ten miles but in most areas completion was foiled by the weather and the shortage of time and labour. To impede matters further the entire British army was restructured; huge losses of manpower in 1917 had left nearly all battalions under strength and a decision was made to reduce divisions from twelve battalions (in three brigades) to nine battalions (still three brigades) and in so doing disband 141 battalions altogether, the surplus men being dispersed to other battalions, sometimes in other divisions. Unlike the defence system this complicated reorganisation was completed before March 1918.

Ten Cowbridge men died in the final year of the Great War.

63239 Sergeant **David Fitzgerald**, 2nd Welch Regiment, D Company,
Killed in action, aged 26 years, 9th April 1918

David Fitzgerald was the second son of John Fitzgerald who was born in Cork and in 1901 worked as a railway platelayer and lived near the *Farmers Arms* in Aberthin with his wife, Elizabeth, and their four children. They had moved before 1918 to 5 Aubrey Terrace, Cowbridge. Although born in the parish of Llanblethian and enlisting in Cardiff, David may have considered himself Irish for he served with the Royal Dublin Fusiliers before his transfer to the Welch regiment. Even more confusingly the war memorial places him in the South Wales Borderers. The Dublin Fusiliers 8th, 9th and 10th battalions, 16th (Irish) Division, 48th Brigade were all disbanded in February 1918. The division had been in action at the battle for Wytschaete ridge in June 1917 and again at Langemarke in August and had suffered very heavy losses.

2nd Welch, a regular army battalion, had also been engaged in the 3rd Battle of Ypres and had then wintered north-east of Ypres until it was reinforced. The German Spring Offensive of 1918 was fought in Picardy, over the old battlefield of the Somme, from 21st March to 5th April, but it petered out before reaching the major and vital railway town of Amiens. On 6th April, 2nd Welch was railed south to Bethune in readiness for the next German offensive which came three days later, starting from the Lille ridge, on a twelve-mile front across the valley of the river Lys. The Battle of the Lys continued until 29th April; **David Fitzgerald** was killed on the first day of this battle, 9th April. His grave (III A 11) is in an extension to the communal cemetery at Beuvry, a town about 3 km east of Bethune. The extension was begun in March 1916 and used until October 1918 with graves being concentrated into it after the Armistice from the battlefields north and east of Bethune.

23807 Private **William Trew**, 1st Leicester Regiment,
Killed in action, aged 23 years, 21st July 1918.

Willie Trew was the eldest of the four sons of James and Catherine Trew. In the census of 1901 James Trew is recorded as an agricultural labourer and he and his family were living near the mill in Llanblethian. They had moved to Westgate, Cowbridge before Willie's death and had another son serving in France to worry about whilst a third had been discharged badly wounded.

Willie Trew was living in Cowbridge when he enlisted in Cardiff and joined the Welch regiment. He transferred to 1st Leicesters, a regular army battalion, probably during the February 1918 army reorganisation and was serving with the machine-gun section when he was killed. His grave (XV B 3) is in Nine Elms British cemetery which is near Poperinghe, a small town west of Ypres. The cemetery was first used in the autumn of 1917 by the Australian 44th casualty clearing station and then again between March and October 1918 during the German offensive in Flanders.

110363 Private **Charles Lewis**, 9th Battalion Tank Corps,
Died of wounds, aged 20 years, 23rd July 1918

Charlie Lewis, born in Cowbridge, was the only son of Alfred and Elizabeth Lewis, who lived at Croft Street in 1901 but on the Aberthin road in 1918. Alfred was a plasterer. Charlie enlisted in Bridgend, joining the Royal Field Artillery, but he later transferred to the 'Tanks' which was originally the Heavy Section of the Machine Gun Corps before being renamed the Tank Corps in June 1916. These new armoured caterpillar-tracked vehicles first came into action in September 1916 and by August 1918 were in sufficient numbers to lead the opening assault at the Battle of Amiens.

Charles Lewis died of wounds on 23rd July. His grave (IV F 4) is in the New British cemetery at Roze, a town about 40 km south-east of Amiens and which was held by the Germans from March to August 1918. The New British cemetery was made after the Armistice when graves were brought in from the battlefields and other burial grounds in the neighbourhood.

By the beginning of August 1918 British, French and American armies were all engaged in major offensives which would continue until 11th November: this was the 'Hundred Days' during which the German armies were decisively beaten.

Three Cowbridge men died while serving with 38th (Welsh) Division in the 2nd Battle of the Somme. From 21st August until 5th September all three brigades, the 113, 114 and 115, of the division would be continuously engaged with the enemy, driving the German line back fifteen miles and recovering much of the old 1916 Somme battlefield which had been lost in the retreat of March 1918. Inevitably there were many casualties during the advance.

18485 Private **William Archer**, 2nd Royal Welch Fusiliers,
Killed in action, aged 23 years, 27th August 1918.

Willie Archer was born in Cowbridge and in 1901 was living in Eastgate in the house to the west of 'The Shield, with his grandmother, Maria Archer, his uncle John and aunts Alice and Mary; none of the young people were old enough to be the parent of six-year old Willie who may have been the son of an older child of Maria's. When he enlisted at Tonypany he was living in Williamstown in the Rhondda valley – possibly working in the coal-field

Although the headquarters of the RWF was at Wrexham the regiment also recruited in South Wales; Frank Richards, author of '*Old soldiers never die*', was a Monmouthshire man and a private in the 2nd battalion. Robert Graves, author of '*Good-bye to all that*' was an officer in the same battalion. Stationed at Portland in August 1914, 2nd RWF mobilized on 4th August, with reservists such as Frank Richards recalled to the regiment at Wrexham. By 11th August the battalion was in Rouen with 2nd Division. In 1914 Willie would have been too young for overseas service and to have been part of this force but by November 1915,

when 2nd RWF was transferred to 33rd (New Army) Division 99th Brigade, which had just arrived in France, he was most probably on active service.

2nd RWF would distinguish itself at both the Somme and High Wood battles in 1916 and in Flanders in 1917. Army reorganisation in February 1918 found the battalion transferred yet again, this time to 38th (Welsh) Division 115th Brigade. On 23rd August, after all the bridges had been demolished, the battalion crossed with difficulty the flooded river Ancre, met strong opposition at Ovillers but eventually captured the village and then Contalmaison and Pozières. On the 25th all three brigades advanced in line, 113 regaining Mametz wood and 115 taking Bazentin but 114 were thwarted at High Wood and was withdrawn from the attack. On 27th August 115 brigade led the advance up the valley south of High Wood leading to Longueval ridge and Guillemont but deadly flanking German machine-gun fire caused many casualties. **William Archer** was killed in action on 27th August: his name is inscribed on Panel 6 on Vis-en-Artois Memorial which is about 10 km south-east of Arras on the Arras to Cambrai road. It commemorates more than 9000 men who fell in the period between 8th August and 11th November 1918 in the 'Advance to Victory' in Picardy and Artois between the river Somme and Loos.

32696 Corporal **William Henry Burley**, 15th Welch Regiment,
Killed in action, aged 21 years, 29th August 1918

William Burley was the third son of George Burley, a general labourer, who had died before 1918. His widow Elizabeth was living at 46 Westgate in 1918. William enlisted at Cardiff, joining 15th (Carmarthenshire) Service battalion which, with 13th (2nd Rhondda) and 14th Welch, comprised the 114th Brigade 38th Division.

Despite the setback which 114 brigade suffered in its assault on High Wood on 25th August it was again in action two days later attacking up Caterpillar Valley which rose eastward to high ground at Guillemont. The defence of this strongly fortified village in July 1916 had claimed many lives, including that of Arthur Stockwood. In this wasteland crossed by old trenches, dugouts, shell holes and rusting barbed wire, and now being fought over for the fourth time in four years, **William Burley** was killed in action on 29th August. His grave (III B 11) is in Caterpillar Valley cemetery which is just west of Longueval, a village between Albert and Bapaume. After the Armistice a small cemetery (now Plot I) was hugely increased when the graves of men were brought in from other small cemeteries and the battlefields of the Somme, the majority of soldiers who died in the autumn of 1916 and the rest (many of them from 38th division) who died in August and September 1918.

Lieutenant **Thomas Frederick Hastings Torney**, 3rd Welch Regiment attached
13th Welch, killed in action, aged 20 years, 3rd September 1918

Tommy Torney was the only son of Dr Hastings Torney and his wife, Jessie, who in 1901 all lived at *Sorrento* in Cowbridge High Street. Hastings Torney, who would be commissioned as a captain in the RAMC, was born in Ireland.

According to the *Glamorgan Gazette* of 13th September 1918, Tommy was commissioned on his seventeenth birthday and had been in France for two years which implies that he joined his battalion, aged eighteen, in September 1916 after 38th Division had been transferred from the Somme battlefield to Flanders for rest, refit and reinforcement with fresh drafts from South Wales.

Like 15th Welch, in which William Burley was serving, 13th Welch was in 114 brigade. After the fall of Guillemont on 28th August 38th Division continued its offensive (later to be termed the Battle of the Scarpe) towards the formidable barrier of the Canal du Nord and the Hindenburg Line to which the German armies were making a fighting withdrawal.

Thomas Torney was killed in action on 3rd September. His name, like William Archer's, is inscribed on Vis-en-Artois Memorial.

879 Gunner **David Robert Bond** Royal Field Artillery,
Killed in action, aged 19 years, 28th September 1918

Robert Bond was born in Cowbridge, the second son of John and Margaret Bond who, with their family of eight children, lived at *Rock House* (then called *Rose Cottage*) at the foot of Bond's Hill. John Bond was a general labourer. Robert enlisted at Bridgend and at the time of his death he was serving in D Battery of the 15th Brigade of the RFA and had only recently returned to the Front after compassionate home leave to attend his mother's funeral. He was killed in action on 28th September; his grave (III B 11) is in the British Extension of Metz-en-Couture communal cemetery. Metz-en-Couture is a village to the south-west of Cambrai which was captured from the Germans in April 1917, evacuated in March 1918 and then retaken on 6th September. Plot III was added to the cemetery after the Armistice by the concentration of graves from the immediate neighbourhood.

2nd Lieutenant **William David Owen** 15th Welch Regiment,
Died 11th October 1918.

William Owen is another mysterious name on Cowbridge's memorial about whom very little has been discovered. He held a temporary commission in the 4th Welch (a territorial battalion) but was attached to 15th (Carmarthenshire) which was in 38th (Welsh) Division 114 Brigade, so he may have been in action in the final offensives in which the division was involved. He died many miles away from the Western Front for his grave (B 76) is in the communal cemetery of St.Germain-au-mont-d'or, which is a village about eight miles north of Lyon, and is on a hill overlooking the river Saone. The extension for war graves is quite small as it was used only from October 1917 until November 1919 for deaths at a Rest Camp and small British hospital nearby.

41342 Private **Arthur Gibbs**, 9th Loyal North Lancashire Regiment,
Died, aged 19 years, 24th October 1918

Arthur Gibbs was born in Cowbridge the sixth son of Joseph and Florence Gibbs who were living at 23 Eastgate in 1901. Joseph Gibbs had moved to Cowbridge to start a printing business at 43 High Street. When Arthur enlisted at Cardiff it was probably after his older brother, Albert, was killed in action near Ypres in September 1916.

9th North Lancs was a Service battalion raised in Preston in 1914 and originally in the 25th Division 74th Brigade. By the time Arthur Gibbs joined it in France it had been transferred to 50th (Northumberland) Division. This was one of the five extremely unfortunate divisions who faced the first German Spring Offensive in March 1918, were later moved north to refit and train new drafts in Flanders where they met the second offensive on 9th April and were thrown into the Battle of the Lys and finally, after being moved to a quiet French sector in the south, were overwhelmed by the third German offensive and the Battle of the Aisne in May. Ten weeks of being under almost continuous enemy attack resulted in many casualties, both killed and missing, and also many prisoners of war. 9th North Lancs suffered such heavy losses that the survivors were ordered back to England on 30th June and the battalion was disbanded on 8th August.

In July a brief report in the *Glamorgan Gazette* stated '*After being missing for a considerable time news has been received that Pte Arthur Gibbs is a prisoner of war in Germany*'. The *Gazette* listed six Cowbridge men, all living in Eastgate, as prisoners: J Oakley and his brother A Oakley, Fred and Arthur Gibbs, E Lloyd and Jack Conway. **Arthur Gibbs** died in Germany as a prisoner of war on 24th October. His grave is in Worms (Hochheim Hill) cemetery and his name is carved on a screen wall in the Allied plot.

Ralph Goulden is not listed by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission as he died a civilian at home in Cowbridge. He served with the Royal Garrison Artillery and was as much a casualty of the Great War as all the other men on the war memorial. He was the third of five sons of Henry Goulden who had a confectionary shop in the High Street. An older brother Richard had a very distinguished war-time career being awarded both a Distinguished Conduct Medal and a Military Medal whilst another brother, Edgar, served in the Royal Navy and their sister Alice served in France with Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service. The *Glamorgan Gazette* in October 1918 carried the report '*Edgar Goulden RNR was handed a token of appreciation from the Mayor of Cowbridge to convey to his brother, Ralph Goulden, who lies in a precarious state in his home suffering severely from gas poisoning*'.

In the three and a half years from October 1914 until April 1918 the ferocious war in France, Gallipoli and Flanders claimed the lives of nineteen young Cowbridge men. After the desperate, but ultimately unsuccessful, German offensives in the last Spring of the Great War the tide turned and the Allies launched their final great assault on the German armies. The Hindenburg Line was broken in late September and everywhere along the front German forces, fighting to the last, were retreating to their homeland. The two months from July to September brought tragic news to six more Cowbridge homes but victory was, at last, in sight. A new German government came to power on 1st October. Austria, Bulgaria and Turkey all capitulated by the end of the month, the High Seas Fleet

(perhaps emulating the Russian fleets in 1917) began to mutiny whilst British naval blockade had resulted in near starvation for the civilian population in Germany. On 7th November a German armistice delegation arrived at Compiègne, headquarters of the allied high command, to begin negotiations which ended with its acceptance of the allied terms, a signed armistice and a cease-fire at 1100 hours on 11th November 1918.

For the first time for more than four years the guns were silent along the Western Front. Prisoners of war held in Germany were released and gradually, over the next few months the British armies were demobilized. The Great War ended officially with the signing of a peace treaty with Germany at Versailles on 28th June 1919.

‘Their Name Liveth For Evermore’

As memories of the horrors and anguish of war began to recede communities all over the British Isles felt impelled to honour their fellow citizens, family members and workmates who had not returned safely home. The years after 1920 would witness the dedications of more than 36,000 memorials inscribed with the names of those who had given their lives ‘For King and Country’ in what was then called the Great War.

On 2nd March 1920 a public meeting was held in Cowbridge town hall to consider the recommendations of a committee which had been appointed at a previous public meeting and at which, no doubt, suggestions as to what form a proposed memorial should take had been welcomed and discussed. The committee chairman was a former mayor, Councillor W L Jenkins and the secretary the town clerk, Mr W T Gwyn, and their proposal was that the memorial should be a marble statue of a soldier standing with arms reversed on a stone base to be erected in front of the town hall. The names of the Cowbridge men who fell in the war would be inscribed on the base. From the proceeds from various events such as a Victory Dance, a collection at Holy Cross church on Peace Sunday, part of the surplus balance of the Peace Celebration fund and donations from the mayor, Alderman Edward John, and other leading citizens more than £100 had already been raised towards the estimated cost of £320. On 15th March 1920 an appeal was launched for contributions towards the cost of the memorial and its installation and letters were sent out “*to solicit your kind and generous help towards carrying out and completing the work of the Memorial*”.

Meanwhile the parish of Llanblethian had also appointed a committee which was busy soliciting contributions towards a memorial to its lost young men. This memorial would be a new west window for the church with the names of the sixteen men of the parish who had died on active service engraved on a tablet placed in the nave. With commendable speed both window and tablet were completed and installed before the end of July and a service of dedication was held in the crowded church on 1st August 1920.

Holy Cross church in Cowbridge would also be graced with a memorial window and tablet, in this case for the remembrance of former pupils of Cowbridge Grammar School who had died on active service. The stained glass window is in the centre of the south wall of the Llanquian aisle and depicts archangel Michael in the centre flanked by the warrior saints George and Martin. Underneath the three figures in the window is the inscription:

Ad Gloriam Dei et in memoriam alumnorum scholae Boviensis qui pro Patria se devoverunt. The marble tablet at the side of the window records thirty-nine names (including Basset Davies, William Lane, David R Spencer, John A Stockwood, R Wall and Herbert D Williams who are all named on the town memorial) with these words underneath: *Alumnorum Scholae Boviensis Qui Pro Patria Militantes Morte Praeclarissima in Vitam Sempiternam Iniere MCMXIV – MCMXIX.*

There are other memorials in Holy Cross: opposite the Grammar School window, to the left of the north door of the nave, is a framed 'ROLL OF HONOUR For King and Country', which lists the forty-four dead from the parishes of Llanblethian, Cowbridge and Welsh St Donats. These men are listed in chronological order of their deaths starting with Alexander Pates, died of wounds, Oct 26 1914 in France. To the right of the door is a marble tablet '*sacred to the memory of Thomas Francis Torney, beloved and only son of Dr and Mrs Hastings Torney. Killed in action in France, 3rd September 1918. Pro Patria*'. In the chancel there is a brass plaque '*In memory of Ronald Wall, lance corporal Northumberland Fusiliers, pupil and assistant master at the Grammar School 1905 – 1915, died October 14th 1915.* And also in the chancel another marble tablet '*in loving memory of Alick, son of John and Rachel Stockwood of this town who was drowned at sea by falling from aloft on the barque Penrhyn Castle in a gale off Cape Horn on October 6th 1899. Also John Arthur, their son who fell in action at Guillemont September 3rd 1916, aged 38 years*'

On 11th May 1921 Cowbridge's memorial to the men of the borough who had 'made the supreme sacrifice' was complete and ready for unveiling and dedication in front of a large gathering of the public, the mayor and members of the Corporation, the War Memorial Committee and the clergy and ministers of the town. The Sicilian marble statue of a British soldier was unveiled by the mayor, Councillor Mills, who said that '*the Corporation would have been pleased if they had had a larger open space in the centre of the town in which to erect it but they had given it the best position they had. It was a memorial of which the borough would ever be proud and he, on behalf of the Corporation, now took it over as a sacred trust and would see that this monument was preserved with loving care and reverence*'.

Llanblethian War Memorial

The memorial to the men of Llanblethian, as befits a parish war memorial, is in the parish church. A tablet placed high in the north-west corner of the nave bears the following inscription:

The soldiers here commemorated
are those who left this parish
and nobly fought in the Great War
MCMIV – MCMXIX
and finally passed out of the sight of men
by the path of duty and self-sacrifice.
'yet is their hope full of immortality'

Noah Brakewell	William M Jenkins
Richard H Collins	Arthur M Jones
Evan T David	Charles Lewis
Hugh A F Dunn	David Miles
Francis W M Dunn	Edward Miles
John R C Dunn	Aubrey L Morgan
Thomas Edwards	William Williams
William James	William Willment

This tablet and the west window were erected to their
glorious memory by their friends.

Neither rank nor regiment were added to the sixteen names, which are in alphabetical order, but the badges of the eight regiments in which they served are depicted in four small windows above the three main lights of the west window. These are the regiments: Welch Regiment, Royal Field Artillery, Royal Engineers, Welsh Horse, Royal Tank Corps, Royal Sussex, South Lancashire and Royal Welch Fusiliers. The centre figure in the window below is Saint George with Saint David on his right side and Saint Bleddian on his left side and with the following inscription below the three saints: 'To the glory of God and in memory of those who fell 1914 – 1919'.

The impact of war would occur much sooner on Llanblethian than on Cowbridge. For eight families living in the borough, in just three months of 1918 between the 21st July and the 24th October, the dreaded news arrived that a son had lost his life on the Western Front. The very last year of a war, which must have seemed endless to those who lived through it, resulted in more casualties amongst the young men of the town serving in the British army than in any of the first three years of conflict. In Llanblethian, however, the worst year for casualties was 1915 when seven soldiers died, almost a half of the final count of sixteen. All but one was serving in a battalion of the Regular Army or of the Territorial Force.

21379 Private **William James**, 2nd Welch Regiment.

Killed in action, aged 23 years, 9th May 1915.

William was the son of John and Harriet James of Aberthin. The family was not living in Aberthin in 1901 and nothing further is known about William or his parents.

2nd Welch (1st Division 3rd Brigade) embarked for France with the BEF in August 1914. By 22nd August the British force was in previously agreed battle positions near Mons in Belgium but the overwhelming German advance from Belgium south towards Paris resulted in a headlong retreat by the allies which only halted at the river Marne. By mid-September trenches and a static front line had started to develop and plans were made to transfer the six divisions of the BEF north to Flanders where a British offensive might turn the German flank. This planned attack never materialised but changed into a desperate defence as fresh German divisions made a final attempt to break the allied line and march on to Paris. 2nd Welch was stationed north of the historic town of Ypres and, like all the other British battalions, suffered heavy casualties from the initial attack on 23rd October until it was withdrawn from the salient a month later; six officers and 197 other ranks were killed in action, one of these being Alexander Pates from Cowbridge. A further 400 other ranks were wounded. Reinforcements, which may have included William James and Noah Brakewell, joined 2nd Welch before 20th December.

On 22nd April 1915 the Germans launched an offensive against the British front line entrenched along the shallow ridges to the east of Ypres. By the end of May the Germans had possession of the ridges which overlooked the extremely vulnerable Ypres salient. Whilst British and Imperial divisions were resisting German attacks north and east of Ypres a combined Franco-British offensive was launched against the German line between La Bassée and Arras to the south of the salient, partly with a view to relieving the pressure upon Ypres but also aiming to recapture the important town of Lille and the coal-mining region around it.

The attack on Aubers ridge, which was the chief obstacle in front of Lille, opened on 9th May. 1st Division attacked in the first wave on a 2000-yard front south of the Estaires to La Bassée road and east of Richebourg. 3rd Brigade (including 2nd Welch) covered a 650-yard front and the attack entailed advancing, under fire, across 150 yards of flat meadow and marsh crossed by a stream, before reaching the German lines. The German defenders were securely entrenched, artillery bombardment had failed to reach its targets and machine-gun fire was deadly and accurate. Within two hours many of the soldiers had been cut down by bullets or drowned. The attack had been a disaster and 2nd Welch, having suffered heavy casualties, was withdrawn from the action in the evening.

William James was killed in action on 9th May 1915. He has no known grave and his name is engraved on panel 23 or 24 (Welch regiment panels) on Le Touret Memorial at the east end of a military cemetery near the village of Le Touret which is between Bethune and Lille. Over 13,000 names are listed on the memorial of men who died before 25th September 1915.

G/1126 Private **David Miles** 2nd Royal Sussex Regiment.

Killed in action, aged 17 years, 9th May 1915

David Miles was the eldest son of David and Angelina Miles. He was born on 15th December 1897 in Cadoxton, Barry but within a few years the family had moved to Dinas Powis where David attended school. Leaving school at fourteen he then worked at *Ysguborgoch* farm, St Andrew's Major, moving a year later, with the farmer, Mr Jones, to *Hollybush* farm on Stalling Down. Early in 1913, his father having died, his mother moved her family to *Rock House*, Cowbridge and then to *The Malthouse*, Llanblethian from where David enlisted on 4th September 1914. He was three months short of his seventeenth birthday, still only a boy whose prize possessions were his Raleigh bicycle and a mouth organ, which he played so well that he soon gathered crowds of listeners around him.

When David Miles died he was two years under age for military service overseas. 2nd Royal Sussex (in which another Cowbridge/Llanblethian casualty, William Willment, served) was in 1st Division 2nd Brigade. The Sussexs, like the Welch, suffered heavy casualties in the 1st Battle of Ypres in the autumn of 1914. David Miles landed in France on 11th January 1915 after new drafts had to be hastily sent from England to reinforce the battalion.

David Miles was killed in action on 9th May 1915 at Richebourg St Vaast, most probably in the same failed attack on Aubers Ridge in which William James died. David Miles also has no known grave; his name is engraved on panel 20/21 (Royal Sussex panels) on Le Touret Memorial.

2nd Lieutenant **Francis William Morgan Dunn** 5th Welch Regiment,
Killed in action, aged 29 years, 10th August 1915
2nd Lieutenant **John Robert Collard Dunn** 5th Welch Regiment
Killed in action, aged 30 years, 20th August 1915.

Jack and Frank were the second and third of the five sons of Frederick William and Jennet Dunn. Frederick Dunn died in 1911 and his wife in 1915 both, perhaps fortunately, before the deaths of their sons. They had moved from Kent in 1884 to live at *The Cross*, just below Llanblethian church. Frederick was recorded in the 1901 census as a mining engineer, born in Carmarthen whereas Jennet was born in Llantrisant. The brothers were all educated at Cowbridge Grammar school, were keen cricketers and, with older brother Fred, were listed in the *Glamorgan Gazette's* Roll of Honour on 23rd October 1914.

Jack and Frank Dunn were both commissioned in 1/5th Welch. This was one of the four territorial battalions attached to the Welch Regiment. Headquartered in Pontypridd 5th Welch drew its recruits from amongst the mining communities of the east Glamorgan valleys. In July 1914 the battalion had been at its annual training camp in Porthmadog but on mobilization in August it moved to Pembroke and, eventually, was stationed on garrison duty in East Anglia in readiness for an anticipated enemy invasion. Apart from the three Monmouthshire territorial battalions which were all in France by February 1915 fighting in divisions of regular battalions mixed with territorial battalions, 53rd (Welsh) TF Division remained in England for the first six months of 1915 whilst battles were raging around Ypres.

In May 1915 a combined British, French, Australian and New Zealand force landed on the beaches of Gallipoli. This invasion, which had been planned with little knowledge beforehand of the rugged terrain of the peninsula and with quite unrealistic expectations of quickly overcoming Turkish defences, taking control of the Dardanelles, capturing Constantinople and thereby gaining passage to the Black Sea, very quickly ground to a halt. By the end of July it was obvious that the original plan for taking the Gallipoli peninsula had failed and it was decided to land a second force of two New Army divisions and two territorial divisions at Suvla Bay twelve miles north of Anzac Cove and from there advance and take control of the Anafarta Ridge.

On 18th July, 53rd Division, completely untrained for mobile warfare, left Devonport in nine transport ships bound for the east Mediterranean Sea. 5th Welch embarked on *SS Huntsgreen* for a gruelling voyage to Port Said and eventually the British base at Mudros in the Aegean Sea which was reached on 5th August. Landings by the two New Army divisions began at Suvla Bay on the 6th, the two territorial divisions being kept in reserve at Mudros. Despite meeting very little initial opposition, lack of decisive orders and hesitation resulted in only a slight advance from the landing beach before Turkish defences rallied. The Welsh territorial division was called from the reserve and 5th Welch, with no artillery support, transport, maps or signallers, landed at Suvla Bay on the night of the 8th/9th. On the morning of the 10th the battalion was ordered to take Scimitar Hill, an outlier of the ridge east of the bay. An attack on the previous day had been repulsed and wounded men, British and Turks, still lay on the hillside when shell-fire during this second attack ignited the ground cover and, fanned by a strong wind, swept across the face of the hill. The attack floundered in complete confusion with many casualties which included **Francis Dunn** who was killed in action on the 10th and **John Dunn** who died ten days later.

The two brothers have no known grave but are commemorated between panels 140 and 144 on the Helles memorial at the end of the Gallipoli peninsula, as also is Arthur Wynne Jones from Cowbridge. The monument can be seen from all the shipping which passes through the Dardanelles.

G/1120 Corporal **William Willment** 2nd Royal Sussex Regiment, D Company,
Killed in action, aged 27 years, 25th September 1915

William Willment (recorded as Willmott by the CWGC) is also commemorated on the Cowbridge war memorial. He was the son of Fred and Margaret Willment who in 1915 lived at an unknown address in Cowbridge. William had been born in Llantwit Major but his family has not been found in any census for Llantwit, Cowbridge nor Llanblethian and he may have been living in London before enlisting as his wife, Ethel May Firman lived at Lavender Hill.

2nd Royal Sussex (1st Division 2nd Brigade) landed in France with the first four divisions of the BEF in August 1914. The battalion suffered heavy casualties in the 1st Battle of Ypres in November and again in the action at Aubers Ridge during the 2nd Battle of Ypres in May 1915. Nevertheless, by September the Sussexs had been reinforced and regrouped ready to be engaged in a British offensive at Loos in the coal-mining region south-east of

Bethune. The attack was launched on the morning of 25th September, unfortunately in a thick mist followed by heavy rain, against the heavily fortified Hohenzollern Redoubt. The Sussexs, positioned in the centre of the line and attacking in the second wave after the opening attack, were repelled with very heavy losses.

William Willment most probably died in this attack. His grave (IV E 14) is in St Mary's advanced dressing station cemetery which is near the village of Haisnes between Lens and La Bassée. The cemetery was made after the Armistice by the concentration of graves from the battlefield, the majority are those of men who fell in September and October 1915.

6072 Private **Noah Brakewell**, 2nd Welch Regiment,
Killed in action, 12th October 1915

Noah Brakewell (recorded as Breakwell on CWGC) is yet another soldier, like William James, William Willment and Richard Collins, who is not recorded in any Llanblethian census. He is listed on the Roll of Honour printed in the *Glamorgan Gazette* on 23rd October 1914 and was most probably recalled to the regiment as a reservist. In 1915 he had a wife living at 17 Market Street, Abergavenny but nothing is known about her or his family.

During the last days of September the Hohenzollern Redoubt was the scene of fierce and continuous fighting and on 3rd October German counter-attacks recaptured the sector taken by the British. A British assault was planned for the 8th but then postponed until the 13th as the Germans started an intense bombardment of the line. On 12th October accurate shelling, by two howitzers, for more than four hours, completely demolished 75 yards of the Welch trench in which fourteen soldiers were killed, including Noah Brakewell.

Noah Brakewell, with eleven of his companions, was buried in Crucifix Cemetery in Loos but all twelve soldiers now have no known graves. They are commemorated on the Crucifix Cemetery Memorial in Dud Corner cemetery in Loos-en-Gohelle, a village north west of Lens. There were very few burials in this cemetery during the war and the majority of the graves are unidentified as they were concentrated here after the war from small cemeteries, including Crucifix Cemetery, and isolated positions near Loos and to the north.

G/1028 Private **Aubrey Lloyd Morgan** 7th Royal Sussex Regiment, B Company
Killed in action, aged 21 years, 21st October 1915.

Aubrey Morgan was the elder son of Thomas Henry and Emily Anne Morgan who were living at *Cusop* at the junction of Broadway with Love Lane in 1915 but previously lived at *Greenfield*. He was one of the many hundreds of thousands of young men who responded to Kitchener's call for volunteers to serve in a New Army, enlisting in Cowbridge with Owen Evans (G/1025) the son of Edgar Evans, Congregational minister at Llanbethery. Both men are listed in the *Glamorgan Gazette* of 23rd October 1914.

On 6th August the British War Cabinet approved Lord Kitchener's proposal to raise a New Army of 6 divisions and on the following day the press published his call for 100,000 volunteers, aged between 19 and 31 years, to serve their country for three years or for the duration of the war, whichever would be longer. The first 100,000 would be called K1, to be followed fairly quickly by a further 6 divisions (K2) and then by K3. The raising, organisation and training of this new army would be managed by the regular army and not by the territorial force for which Kitchener had little regard and the new battalions would be called Service battalions.

Why the Royal Sussex Regiment recruited in Cowbridge is a mystery unless the two men, William Willment and David Miles, who were serving in 2nd battalion, were very persuasive spokesmen for their regiment and there may also have been other Sussexs locally who were more fortunate and survived the war years. The 7th battalion was raised at Chichester on 12th August as part of 12th (Eastern) Division 36th Brigade. It trained in England until May and landed in Boulogne on 1st June 1915 going into action on 30th September when it relieved the Guards division north-east of Loos. After initial successes the battle of Loos had resulted in only small gains of territory but the offensive continued, with heavy casualties, until 4th November when the battle officially ended.

Aubrey Morgan was killed in action on 21st October 1915. He has no known grave and is commemorated between panels 69 and 73 on the Loos Memorial which forms the side and back of Dud Corner Cemetery near the village of Loos-en-Gohelle.

After the seven Llanblethian war casualties in 1915 the following year resulted in only one new name to be recorded on the parish memorial.

2nd Lieutenant **Hugh Aubrey Fairfield Dunn** Royal Monmouthshire Royal Engineers
Drowned, aged 28 years, 21st May 1916.

Hugh Aubrey Fairfield Dunn is listed as Tom Dunn on the Roll of Honour in Holy Cross church. He was the fourth of the five Dunn brothers and he joined the RMRE in November 1915 after the deaths of John and Frank. This was a territorial battalion, like 5th Welch, but had originated as militia, recruiting in rural east Monmouthshire and with its headquarters in Monmouth town. The youngest brother, Augustus (Guy) who would survive the war, also joined the RMRE.

Like all his brothers Tom was a keen sportsman who played in the regiment's cricket eleven and was also a good hockey player and an excellent swimmer. His death by drowning in the river Monnow was inexplicable. On the afternoon of Sunday 21st May, with another 2nd Lieutenant named David Williams, Tom Dunn went for a bathe in the river in a pool which was seventeen-foot deep behind a weir. The two men changed and then entered a boat from which they let themselves into the water. Williams went in first and swam to the bank but then, turning, he saw Dunn entering the water feet first and sink. Rising to the surface he appeared to be in difficulties and made a grab at the boat which he failed to grasp and disappeared. Although not a strong swimmer Williams returned to the boat but failed to keep hold of his friend who sank a third and final time.

Although help came quickly Tom Dunn died during the fifteen minutes it took to find and retrieve his body with a boat hook.

The inquest, held on Monday the 22nd, was reported in the *Monmouthshire Beacon* on 26th May. The chief witness was David Williams who, besides describing the tragic event, said that he had heard that his friend was very much subject to cramp. The Coroner, in summing up, said that the river Monnow was of very ill repute and always exceptionally colder than the river Wye. The jury returned a verdict of 'Accidentally drowned'.

The *Beacon's* lengthy report of **Monmouth Bathing Tragedy, R.M.R.E. Officer Drowned. Lieutenant's brave attempt at rescue**, concluded with an account of the funeral which took place on 24th May with full military honours: the regimental band played Chopin's 'Funeral March' with muffled drums whilst the coffin was escorted to Monmouth Troy station led by a firing party of one officer, one sergeant, one corporal and forty rank and file. The coffin was carried on a hand bier with eight sergeants as bearers and eight officers as pallbearers, followed by the officers of the regiment, the deceased's company, Depot B, Depot A and No 6 siege company. The firing party proceeded with the body on the 9 a.m. train from Monmouth for the funeral service at Llanblethian and at the graveside the 'Last Post' was sounded by three buglers of the RMRE and three volleys were fired.

Within a year another soldier would be interred in Llanblethian churchyard.

22094 Private **Evan Thomas David** 2nd Welch Regiment
Died from the effects of gas, 4th April 1917.

Thomas David is listed in *Glamorgan Gazette's* Roll of Honour in October 1914 so he was almost certainly a recalled Welch Regiment reservist like Alexander Pates, William James and Noah Brakewell. He is not recorded by the CWGC so had been discharged from the army before his death at home in Llanblethian. Nothing is known about his family but there is a white cross to his memory behind the choir stall on the south side of the chancel of Llanblethian church.

12484 Sergeant **Thomas A J Edwards** 8th Somerset Light Infantry, C Company.
Killed in action, aged 25 years, 9th April 1917

Tom Edwards was the son of Samuel John and Elizabeth Edwards. The family is not recorded in the 1901 Llanblethian census and Samuel had died before 1917 when his widow was living in the parish at an unknown address.

Sgt. Edwards was killed in action on 9th April during the 1st Battle of the Scarpe which opened the major offensive launched from a system of tunnels beneath the town of Arras. He has no known grave and his name is recorded on Bay 4 (Somerset regiment bay) of the Arras Memorial which is in Faubourg d'Amiens cemetery in the western part of the town of Arras.

32482 Private **Edward Miles** 2/5th South Lancashire Regiment
Died of wounds, aged 21 years, 31st December 1917

Ted Miles, born in 1896, was a cousin of David Miles, his mother being a sister of David Miles senior. His mother died young and Ted, after some years in a children's home, lived with his uncle's family in Dinas Powis, changing his surname from Brown to Miles. He worked as a chauffeur for a Dr Costello in Dinas Powis before joining 5th South Lincs, a territorial battalion, and then served in Flanders.

The 3rd Battle of Ypres officially ended on 10th November after the capture of Passchendaele ridge, but the Ypres salient continued to be hazardous and **Edward Miles** died of wounds on 31st December 1917 at one of three casualty clearing stations at Dozinghem. His grave (XIV H 25) is in Dozinghem Military Cemetery which is north-west of Poperinghe near Krombeke.

105632 Bombardier **Richard Henry Collins** Royal Field Artillery
Y/12th Trench Mortar Battery. Died, aged 26 years, 18th June 1918

Richard Collins is not recorded on any local 1901 census and he is not on the Roll of Honour in Holy Cross church. His wife, Alice Maud Collins, lived at 50 Pantbach Road, Birchgrove, Cardiff but otherwise nothing is known about his family.

Richard Collins's grave (Plot IIa 18) is in Schoonselhof Cemetery which is located in a suburb of Antwerp. After the fall of Brussels to the German invaders in August 1914 Antwerp became the seat of the Belgian government and was of critical importance in delaying the German advance into France. It was defended by the Belgian field army and by a British Royal Naval division but on 27th September the Germans laid siege to the city and it was heavily bombarded until 10th October when it capitulated. Antwerp was then under German occupation until the Armistice in November 1918. Schoonselhof Cemetery contains 101 Commonwealth burials of the Great War, some of which were brought in from other burial grounds in the area.

A possible explanation as to why Richard Collins should have been buried in a place so distant from the battlefields of France and Flanders is that he may have been captured by German forces during enemy offensives in the Spring of 1918 in Picardy, Flanders and Champagne and he subsequently died while being transferred as a prisoner of war to Germany.

110363 Private **Charles Lewis** 9th Battalion Tank Corps
Died of wounds, aged 20 years, 23rd July 1918

Charlie Lewis is also commemorated on the war memorial in Cowbridge, possibly because his parents, Alfred and Elizabeth Lewis, had lived in Croft St. before moving to the Aberthyn road. He was an only son and enlisted in Bridgend, joining the Royal Field

Artillery but he later transferred to the 'Tanks', originally the Heavy Section of the Machine Gun Corps before being renamed the Tank Corps in June 1916.

Charlie Lewis died of wounds on 23rd July, his death being reported in the *Glamorgan Gazette* on 2nd August and in the edition of the 9th was a further entry: *A muffled peal was rung for Charlie Lewis after a Remembrance Service was held at the Town Hall on the 4th August. The annual parade held by the Cowbridge branch of the National Union of Railwaymen marched via Eastgate, Crossways, Marlborough and the Verlands with collections en route and concluded with a service at Ramoth chapel.*

Charles Lewis's grave (IV F 4) is in the New British cemetery at Roye, a town about 40 km south-east of Amiens which was held by the Germans from March to August 1918. The cemetery was made after the Armistice when graves were brought in from other burial grounds in the neighbourhood and from the battlefields.

56281 Private **William Morgan Jenkins** 9th Welch Regiment
Died, aged 19 years, 9th August 1918

Morgan Jenkins, born in Llanblethian, was the son of William and Margaret Jenkins who in 1901 were living at *The Malthouse*. He enlisted in 9th Welch, a Service battalion raised in Cardiff on 13th August 1914, trained in Salisbury and sailed for France on 18th July 1915 with 19th (Western) Division 58th Brigade. By the time Morgan joined the battalion it had served, with distinction, in many of the major actions in France and Flanders: at Loos in September 1915, in the capture of La Boisselle, High Wood and Pozières Ridge during the battle of the Somme in 1916 and at the Battles of Messines and the Menin Road in 1917.

The long anticipated German Spring offensive was launched on 21st March 1918 when twenty-five British divisions (all battle-weary after 3rd Ypres) were assailed by seventy-six German divisions over a front of fifty miles across the former Somme battlefield. 19th Division had moved to Picardy from Flanders in December and was in reserve near Bapaume on the 21st; the following morning 58th brigade was ordered to hold Beugny to cover troop withdrawals, for which 9th Welch earned the rare distinction of a special mention in General Haig's dispatches. However, the British line was driven back forty miles, almost reaching the important railway town of Amiens where it came to a halt at the beginning of April. Exhausted and depleted British divisions were moved north while reinforcements of trained, but inexperienced, young soldiers (which may have included Morgan Jenkins) were rushed out from England.

On 9th April, after the failure to capture Amiens and Arras, German forces made a sudden drive towards the channel ports of Dunkirk, Calais and Boulogne from the ridges south-east of Ypres. The ensuing three weeks offensive, which again drove the British line back and, in so doing, lost the towns of Armentières and Bailleul, would be known as the Battle of the Lys. Again 9th Welch suffered heavy casualties but, having been relieved by French troops, was withdrawn to integrate further drafts of recruits and fresh officers. In mid-May five divisions, including 19th Western, which had been most heavily engaged in the battles since 21st March, were withdrawn from Flanders and moved south to the French sector in

front of the river Aisne. This sector was chosen for its supposed impregnability and so that the exhausted troops from Flanders could rest and continue training newly arrived drafts.

The front line ran along high and well-fortified ground behind which lay the valleys of the Aisne and Vesle and then hilly, difficult country reaching to the valley of the Marne. Despite warnings from the British commander about German 'storm troopers' and the greater effectiveness of 'defence in depth', General Franchet d'Esp  r  y, in overall command, insisted on deploying the four tired British divisions massed in forward positions. 19th Division would be held in reserve, arriving at Chalons-sur-Marne on 16th May. On the 27th the Franco-British front was overwhelmed by seventeen German divisions which broke through a twenty-five mile gap in the Allied line. Within two days they had crossed both rivers and were at the outskirts of Rheims. The infantry of 9th Welch based at Chalons, thirty-five miles south-east of Rheims, were bussed up to the crumbling front on the night of 28th/29th May leaving its artillery batteries to follow on foot. By 6th June two battalions, 9th Welch and 9th South Wales Borderers, could between them muster only one company (which was divided between six machine-gun posts) to hold the 600m Bligny Hill until it was relieved thirteen days later.

William Morgan Jenkins was reported missing on 29th May; he was one of the many thousands who had been taken prisoner although his anxious parents would not know this until more than two months later when they received a postcard to say that he had been wounded and was a prisoner of war. In October they were told that their son had died in hospital at Quedlinburg in Saxony on 9th August through wounds received in action. His grave (VIII A 10) is in Niederzwehren cemetery near Kassel in Hesse, which had been opened by the Germans for prisoners of war who died at a local camp.

On 8th December a memorial service was held at Ramoth chapel for Morgan Jenkins and a tablet was later placed in his memory on the west wall of the chapel.

355919 Sergeant **Arthur M Jones**

25th Royal Welch Fusiliers (Montgomery and Welsh Horse Yeomanry)
Died of wounds, 20th September 1918

Arthur Jones, born in Llantrisant, was the son of William Jones who was living at Paradwys, Aberthin in 1918 although the family was not there in 1901. It was a large family and four sons would serve with the Colours. Arthur enlisted in the Welsh Horse, a yeomanry regiment of mounted Territorials, which was, however, dismounted in February 1916 before sailing from Devonport on 3rd March, bound for Alexandria and the Suez Canal Defence Zone. The voyage was uneventful and took ten days. From April to December 1916 25th RWF was engaged in operations across Sinai against Turco-German forces eventually clearing them from Egyptian territory.

In January 1917 24th RWF (Denbighshire Yeomanry) was brigaded with 25th RWF (Montgomery and Welsh Horse Yeomanry) and 10th Shropshire Light Infantry (Shropshire and Cheshire Yeomanry) to become 231 Brigade of the 74th (Broken Spur) Division. The brigade was in action at the 3rd Battle of Gaza, the capture of Beersheba in October, the advance on Jerusalem at the end of November and the city's surrender to General Allenby

on 9th December. At some time during the year Sgt A M Jones was awarded a Meritorious Service Medal. This medal was originally awarded only to senior NCOs for long and meritorious service. However, in January 1917 conditions for the award were redefined and it was then awarded for 'devotion to duty in a theatre of war and for gallant conduct such as saving life'.

No doubt the 74th (Broken Spur) Division would have remained in Palestine if the situation on the Western Front had not become critical in 1918. The German offensives in Picardy in March and in Flanders in April had wrought havoc on British divisions which had to be reinforced and regrouped as quickly as possible. On 1st May, 74th Division embarked at Alexandria, bound for Marseilles which was reached six days later and where it entrained for the Western Front.

There then followed a short period of training in trench warfare in northern France before entering the line to take part in the advance on Merville on the river Lys and on into Flanders in August. The division was then transferred south to Picardy for a British assault on the formidable defences of the Hindenburg Line. On 18th September 25th RWF went into action at Templeux-Roussart across a large and difficult area of quarried ground with numerous pits and spoil heaps. There were heavy casualties in the three-day assault and the division was withdrawn back to Flanders.

Arthur Jones was fatally wounded and died on 20th September, his brother Sgt-Major W Jones being with him at the end and at his burial. His grave (III F 39) is in Peronne Communal Cemetery. Peronne was a town which changed hands several times during the war but it was finally taken by the Australian Division on 1st September. After 1918 graves were brought in from small cemeteries in the area and from the battlefields north and east of the town.

Arthur Jones was the last Llanblethian man to die on active service before the armistice on 11th November 1918 but one more name would be added to the memorial in the church. **William H Williams** died as a result of his war service on 4th February 1919 and his grave is in Llanblethian churchyard.

On 1st August 1920 the new East window and tablet in memory of the soldiers from the parish of Llanblethian who had fallen in the Great War were unveiled at a service of dedication in the church. Families and friends crowded into the church, the service was conducted by the vicar, the Revd. Hopkin James and the sermon was preached by the previous vicar, Revd. Isaiah Roberts. The committee which had carried the project forward watched as the unveiling ceremony was performed by Margaret Dunn who had suffered the loss of three brothers. And at the close of the service the 'Last Post' was sounded by a bugler.

SOURCES

A major source of information about the men commemorated on Cowbridge war memorial and on Llanblethian parish war memorial has been the Commonwealth War

Graves Commission. This was established by Royal Charter of 21st May 1917, its duties being to mark and maintain the graves of forces of the Commonwealth who died during two world wars, to build and maintain memorials to those whose graves are unknown and to keep records and registers. The Commission is responsible for 1,700,000 commemorations. The Debt of Honour Register, launched in November 1998 and available on the Commission's web site at www.cwgc.org, has details about each casualty, his regiment or unit, service number, rank, date of death, place of burial or commemoration and, occasionally, his age and next of kin. Inevitably with such a large database there are sometimes discrepancies between the CWGC record of a name or rank and the name inscribed on a memorial. In all instances in this study the name on the war memorial has been used and the highest rank, whether on the memorial or the CWGC entry, has been chosen.

Two other British government sources are *Soldiers died in the Great War* and *Officers died in the Great War*. The soldiers are listed under their regiments and battalions with their place of birth and residence at their date of enlistment and also place of enlistment. There is very little information about the officers with temporary (war-time) commissions.

The following regimental histories were very informative.

History of the Welch Regiment 1914 – 1918 General Sir Thomas O Marden

2nd Btn: Noah Brakewell, E Thomas David, David Fitzgerald, William James, Alexander Pates.

3rd Btn: Thomas Torney (attached 13th)

1/4th Btn: W D Owen (attached 15th)

1/5th Btn: Francis W M Dunn, John R C Dunn, Arthur W Jones.

9th Btn: William M Jenkins

10th Btn: Basset J Davies

15th Btn: William Burley

16th Btn: Albert Gibbs

Kitchener's Army Ray Westlake

38th (Welsh) Division. Detailed record of war service pages 149 – 155, including capture of Mametz Wood in July 1916 on page 153.

113th Brigade: 14th Royal Welch Fusiliers - Sidney Hayward

114th Brigade: 10th Welch - Basset J Davies

13th Welch - Thomas Torney

15th Welch - William Burley and W D Owen

115th Brigade 16th Welch – Albert Gibbs

11th South Wales Borderers – William Eton Lane

History of the South Wales Borderers 1914 – 1918 C T Atkinson

The 53rd (Welsh) Division T F C H Dudley-Ward

Regimental Records of the Royal Welch Fusiliers compiled by C H Dudley-Ward

Glamorgan Gazette. Apart from the 'Cowbridge Roll of Honour' listed in this local paper on 23rd October 1914, very little news of Cowbridge servicemen featured in any issue until 1918 when the column headed 'Cowbridge Siftings' by Velox had occasional

entries about the 'lads'. The only exception to this complete disinterest is Arthur Stockwood. On 6th November 1914 the *Gazette* reported that Corporal Stockwood was serving with the Rifle Brigade. On 29th September 1916, under the heading **Bridgend Toll of War. Mr Arthur Stockwood killed**, a brief obituary included the following information: *We regret to announce the death in action on the 3rd September, of our respected townsman, Sergt Arthur Stockwood, solicitor and nephew of Mr S H Stockwood, clerk to the Bridgend magistrates.*

The news was received a day or two ago in a letter from one of his fellow-sergeants. Sergt. Stockwood, who was a native of Cowbridge, was a member of a leading Vale of Glamorgan family, was in practice as a solicitor at Bridgend and Cowbridge at the outbreak of war, and almost immediately joined Kitchener's Army as a private, being rapidly promoted to the rank of bombing sergeant. He served eighteen months at the front and went through some of the hottest fighting with his regiment, the famous Rifle Brigade.

Glamorgan Gazette did, however, carry short reports of the unveiling and dedications of the two memorials.

6th August 1920 *'Impressions of a solemn dedication service at Llanblethian church'*

20th May 1921 *'Cowbridge War Memorial.'*

Cowbridge's War Memorial

Like many cities, towns and villages in the British Isles, after the Great War of 1914-1918, the borough of Cowbridge commemorated the young men of the town who had lost their lives in that conflict with a war memorial on which their names were inscribed. The statue of a private in the infantry stands in front of the town hall with twenty-eight names engraved on the plinth; this is a surprisingly large number of casualties from a small market town which, in the census of 1911, had a total population of just over a thousand people. From the list of *Soldiers who died in the Great War*, published in 1920 by HM Stationery Office, and the records of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission which together record each man's place of birth, which branch of the armed forces he joined, the town of enlistment, theatre of war where he died and occasionally his next-of-kin, and by checking with the 1901 census, at least 19 of the 28 were found to be the sons of Cowbridge families. The remaining nine, which included three of the five officers, had probably been living and working in the town for at least long enough to be honoured with those born and bred in Cowbridge.

The edition of the *Glamorgan Gazette* published on the 23rd October 1914 listed, by name, 69 Cowbridge men who had joined the army since the declaration of war with Germany on the 4th August; the short paragraph ended with a strident call for all eligible men in the district to follow their patriotic example and serve their country. The *Gazette* did not, however, record the first Cowbridge death three days later on the 26th October. Alexander Pates, born in Aberdeen, was almost certainly a reservist recalled to his regiment on its mobilisation in August. He died in a casualty clearing station of wounds sustained whilst fighting with the 2nd Welch regiment north of Ypres in

defence of the town against the last great German offensive before trench warfare dominated the Western Front. Almost exactly four years later, on the 24th October 1918, nineteen-year old Arthur Gibbs was the last of the Cowbridge men to die overseas. He too died of wounds but in a German hospital as a prisoner of war captured during the final desperate German offensives between the end of March and early July in the last year of the war. Between these two October days there would be twenty-six other deaths spread over four years and mostly occurring during British offensives at Gallipoli, Loos, the Somme, Arras, 3rd Ypres and the final advance towards Germany.

There were five deaths in 1915, three of which were of men serving with Territorial battalions. Army reform after the South African war from 1899-1902 resulted in better training for the professional regular army and the creation of a Territorial Force to replace the old militia and volunteer battalions. The civilian 'Saturday afternoon soldiers' who practised drill and rifle-shooting in their spare time and spent two weeks at an annual camp, were not obliged to serve overseas unless they volunteered to do so. After the disastrous losses sustained by the regular army divisions in the first three months of war, some Territorial battalions were already in France before Christmas 1914 to be followed by many more in early 1915. However, the diversionary assault on Turkey in May 1915 would result in the next Cowbridge death; Arthur Wynne Jones, born in Montgomeryshire and serving with the 5th Welch, fell on the landing beach at Suvla Bay in Gallipoli on the 8th August. William Willmott, a reservist with the Royal Sussex regiment, died during the opening attack on the German line on the first day of the battle of Loos whilst Cecil Chard and Arthur Miles both died on the 13th October in the closing stages of that battle and Ronald Wall, a former master at the Grammar school, died two days later at a military hospital in Wiltshire.

Six Cowbridge men died in the six weeks between the 7th July and the 14th September 1916, all in British attacks on German defences during the battle of the Somme: Owen Evans (son of Congregational minister William Evans of Llanbethery), William Lane of Westgate, Herbert Williams (son of John Williams, draper of London House), Arthur Stockwood, solicitor, aged 38 and leaving a widow and three children, Fred Lord, a Grenadier guardsman born in Norfolk and Albert Gibbs, (son of Joseph Gibbs, printer of Eastgate who would also lose Arthur, the sixth of his seven sons, in 1918).

The year 1917 would see the deaths of three of the Second Lieutenants on the memorial: James (Joshua) Payne, whose parents lived at South Shields, was killed in action at Arras in March, Harold Moynan (son of Dr Richard Moynan) and Morris James Marsden, whose parents lived at Cribyn, Cardiganshire, died in July and September during the 3rd battle of Ypres, as also did Private Bassett James Davies from Westgate. The only man commemorated on the memorial who did not serve in the army also died in 1917; he was David Spencer, son of Margaret Spencer landlady of the *Duke of Wellington*, who, in the worst year for German U-boat attacks on British merchant shipping, died as second engineer on the *SS Portloe*.

The last year of war brought the most losses among the many Cowbridge men who were now serving in the armed forces. Two would die as a result of the final desperate German attacks on the allied front line: David Fitzgerald of Aubrey Terrace, killed in action in April near Bethune and Arthur Gibbs who died of wounds in captivity. Seven

more Cowbridge men fell during the final allied offensive between July and November. William Trew, eldest son of James Trew of Westgate, struck down whilst manning his machine gun and Charles Lewis of Aberthin Road, serving in the newly formed Tank Corps, both died in July. William Archer fell during an allied attack launched from the Arras tunnels at the end of August as did Lieutenant Thomas Torney, only son of Dr Hastings Torney who was also in uniform with the Royal Army Medical Corps. David Bond and William Burley, both from Westgate, were killed in action advancing across the old battlefield of the Somme, on the 28th and 29th September. Second Lieutenant William Owen died in a British military hospital near Lyon on the 11th October. Exactly one month later, on the eleventh hour of the 11th November 1918, the guns were silenced.

The Great War was over, the boys came home and no-one thought to write down their memories of the friends and fellow townsmen who had not returned. Every year on the anniversary of Armistice Day and then after 1945, when nine more names had been added to the plinth, on Remembrance Sunday *'We will remember them'* is solemnly intoned in front of the memorial but eventually the survivors themselves grew old and passed away. For *'Time like an ever-rolling stream bears all its sons away; they fly forgotten, as a dream dies at the opening day'*.

Two of the men commemorated on Cowbridge's war memorial are not listed in *Soldiers who died in the Great War* and their graves were not recorded by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Any information about Ralph Goulden and Richard Morgan (Australian Imperial Force) would be greatly appreciated as indeed would be any family recollections about the other twenty-six men who gave their lives in 'the war to end all wars'.

José Rawlins.
