



From Forward to France



A personal tribute to Henry Berry
Soldier and England Rugby International

Sue Horton
2003

Revised 2007

For Henry

INTRODUCTION

My maternal grandmother, Florence Eliza Goddard was born in Gloucester and fiercely proud of her roots and family and yet, despite lovingly listening to her many stories and recollections, I realised when I started looking at individual members of her family, how little I really knew. I had heard about Henry Berry and knew that we were related, but not how. My only clue to the man behind the name was that he had played Rugby for England in 1910 and that he had been killed in the First World War, so in April 2001, I began my quest to discover more about Henry and my connections to him.

At this point, I knew nothing about Rugby and even less about the First World War. History and sport had been the most uninspiring subjects on the school curriculum and yet, when I stood looking up at the plaque at the Gloucester Rugby Club and read the names of the sixteen Gloucester players, including Henry, who had lost their lives in the First World War I knew that that was about to change, and I was right. What I discovered was to change my world and my perception of it.

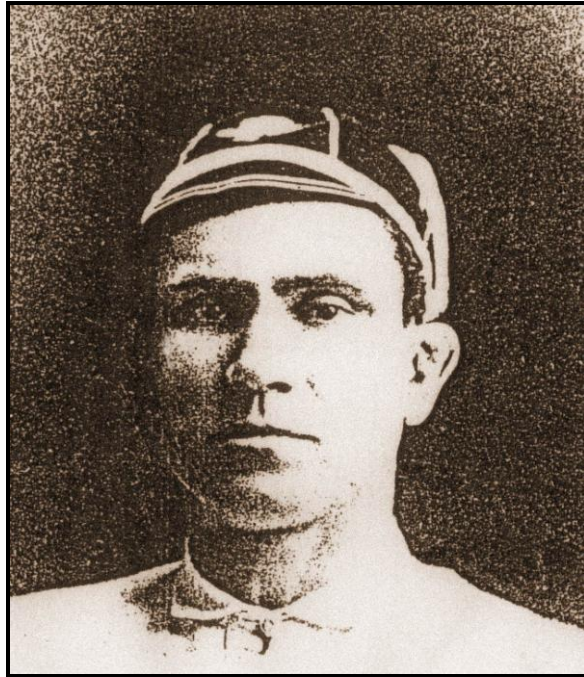
After contacting the Gloucester, Gloucestershire and England Rugby clubs I was surprised by how little was known about Henry, even though at the time there was an exhibition at Twickenham celebrating those England Internationals who had died in the First World War. Henry had been a reserve in 1909 and had played for England in all four games in 1910, so I was disappointed that there was little information about him. I decided to rectify this and for the next two years Henry took over my life.

A trip to the Local Studies Library in Brunswick Road, Gloucester one Saturday morning was a real turning point, when a very kind and helpful Library Assistant brought out a box from their archives and asked if I might be interested in the contents. I will be eternally grateful to this person, because inside the box was a scrap book, collated by a young rugby fan and I found myself looking at Henry's picture for the first time. The young boy, the son of the newspaper's editor, had collected together newspaper cuttings, pictures and some details of matches for Gloucester, the County and England. From the dates given, I pored over microfilmed copies of newspapers and found more pictures and reports.

I visited the Soldiers of Gloucester Museum in Gloucester Docks and read the War Diaries held there. I devoured everything I could find about the First World War, including Martin Gilbert's book devoted to the subject; first-hand narratives and fiction. Other factual books included those about the Gloucestershire Regiment and the Battle of Aubers Ridge, on 9th May 1915, in which Henry was killed. A trip to Kew revealed the Official History series and finds in bookshops at Ypres, also detailed the Battle. The Western Front Association provided me with a Battle Plan for May 9th 1915, which enabled me to research the other regiments involved, including the opposition. But the most valuable book that I read was the one written by Brigadier-General A.W.Pagan, who had been a young Captain left in charge of the Regiment on that fateful day. I have shamelessly reproduced his description of the Regiment's movements from the time Henry joined them in France on 7th February 1915 to the day of the battle, as he describes with such beautiful detail those days spent with his men. He is almost poetic in his descriptions of the weather and the countryside, perhaps finding beauty in a broken world. To have tried to edit or précis this, would have been a crime.

This is dedicated to the men and women of Henry's generation who gave and lost so much.

Sue Horton



*Henry Berry wearing his England cap
1910*

Courtesy of the Berry family

Henry Berry, or Harry to family and friends, was born on 31st January 1883 at 42 Columbia Street in the Kingsholm St Mary district of Gloucester, to James and Hannah Berry. Both James and Hannah were born and grew up in Gloucester but the Berry family, as far back as I can trace, originally came from the rural Gloucestershire parishes of Churcham and Highnam, where they had lived for over 200 years. The main occupation for the men was as gardeners, possibly at Highnam Court and it was Harry's grandfather Henry, born in 1810, who had moved away to Gloucester in the 1830's, possibly looking for work in the rapidly growing Gloucester Docks. Unfortunately for his young family, Henry succumbed to a virus in 1848 and died after only six days, from influenza and bronchitis aged just 38, leaving his wife Sarah and three young sons. James, the eldest son, after working initially for a printer and then a builder, also settled for work on the docks. James married Hannah Harding moved to Sweet Briar Street and raised nine children, the youngest of whom was Harry. James died when Harry was just 10 years old and Hannah, when he was 14, so his parents were never to see what he was to achieve.

Harry is my grandmother's uncle despite there only being an eight year difference and he is therefore, my great grand uncle.

He was educated at St Mark's Church School, Sweet Briar Street, Gloucester and would have left school in 1897 aged 14, presumably working in Gloucester for two years, before beginning his long career in the Army.

There are three things of which Gloucestersians are immensely proud and Harry was associated with all three. The first of these is the Gloucestershire Regiment, the second being the Rugby team and thirdly, the Cricket team.

In 1899, at the start of the second Boer War Harry, aged sixteen, enlisted with the Gloucestershire Regiment, the Glorious Glosters, and served with them between 1899 and 1909 in South Africa (St Helena), Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and India. At the outbreak of war on 4th August 1914 Harry, with the other reservists, was recalled for duty and served at Woolwich and in France.

Between 1909 and 1913, Harry played rugby for Gloucester, the County and, in 1910, England. The Gloucester team, based at Kingsholm Road, were known as the 'Cherry and Whites' because of their red and white striped jerseys, borrowed originally from Painswick.

...and, finally Harry was associated distantly with cricket as his sister Clara, married into the Goddard family and her nephew was Thomas William John Goddard, (1900 – 1965) Gloucestershire and England cricketer.



*Men of the 1st Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment,
wearing the service dress for South Africa, 1899 which
Harry would have worn aged 16.*

From his regimental number 5711, it is possible to tell that Harry enlisted in the last couple of weeks of November 1899.

Aged only 16 he was too young to serve and so he joined the 4th Militia Volunteers, who traditionally served only within the United Kingdom. However, with the whole nation at this time concerned that the Boer's could challenge the might of the British Empire, the Battalion had volunteered for service in South Africa "or anywhere".

When Lord Roberts captured the Boer forces under General Cronje at Paardeburg on 27th February 1899, it was decided to send the Boer prisoners to St Helena, a small island in the South Atlantic Ocean and the 4th Battalion was asked to go to St Helena to guard the prisoners and accepted.



"Her majesty has been graciously pleased to accept the voluntary offer made by the under-mentioned Militia Battalion to serve out of the United Kingdom : -

4th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment."

And so Lieutenant-Colonel Earl Bathurst formed the 4th Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment (Royal North Gloucester), at Cirencester on January 11th 1900.

On January 11th 1900, just days before his seventeenth birthday, Harry boarded the train at Cirencester with the battalion. Travelling through Cheltenham, Birmingham and Crewe, they arrived in Holyhead where they boarded a ferry to North Wall in Ireland and then, on to Athlone.



Upon arrival in Athlone, the Battalion was joined by 400 young soldiers from the 2nd Glosters, divided into companies and dispatched to Castlebar and Galway on the far west coast of Ireland, for training.

On April 2nd 1900 they embarked on the RMS Goth at Queenstown (Cobh) in Cork, which was to become famous as the last port of call for the RMS Titanic twelve years later. After a short stay in Gibraltar, they arrived on St Helena on 21st April 1900.



The 4th Battalion arriving at Deadwood Plain, St Helena April 1900

Picture from website <http://members.tripod.com/~glostern>

The Battalion and prisoners were stationed at Deadwood Plain. Apparently the prisoners were well cared for often being given fresh meat, whilst the guards ate tinned meat.

A guard, consisting of a captain a subaltern and around 50 men, was mounted daily. The rest of the men were drilled, trained and games of football, hockey and cricket were arranged between the Glosters, the other troops and the crew of the guard cruiser, HMS Niobe. This is perhaps when Harry's talent for sport was first discovered.

On January 22nd 1901, the news of Queen Victoria's death reached the island and in February another 2000 Boer prisoners arrived.

The 4th Glosters returned home at this point but Harry stayed in South Africa. According to the UK Military Campaign Medal and Award Roll 1793-1949, on the 30th May 1903, Henry was stationed at Bloemfontein, Cape Colony, South Africa as Private 5711 with the 2nd Battalion Gloucester regiment and although not entitled to either the King's Medal or the South Africa 1901, he received clasps for the Cape Colony and the Orange Free State. On the Rolls, signed by the Lt. Colonel (name illegible) commanding the 2nd Battalion in May 1903, the column marked *Remarks, (including cases of men becoming non-effective, forfeitures etc.)*, Henry is recorded as 'Depot'.

At some point between South Africa in May 1903 and India 1903, Henry transferred again, this time to the 1st Battalion.



TO BE RENDERED IN TRIPLICATE.

2nd BATTN Gloucestershire Regiment or Corps.

ROLL of Individuals entitled to the Queen's South Africa Medal and Clasps, under the Army Order No. 233 issued on 1st October, 1902, or to additional Clasps to the Queen's South Africa Medal under that Army Order.

Space to be left blank for W.O. Stamp.

(This form of Medal Roll is supplementary to, and is not to supersede, that used for claims under Army Order 94 of 1901.)

To be left blank	Regional Number	Rank	NAME	Whether already made for Queen's South Africa Medal, under Army Order 94 of 1901.	Whether entitled to Clasp and already applied for on Roll issued in previous column			Whether entitled to South Africa Medal 1902		Any other Corps in which served in South Africa	REMARKS (including causes of men becoming non-effective, forfeitures, &c.)
					Application for the Queen's South Africa Medal already made, on what Roll name was submitted	Cape Colony	Orange Free State	South Africa 1901	South Africa 1902		
	5744	Private	Barber	L. no		/	/	-	/	no.	1st Bu
	5928	"	Bamford	L. no.		/	/	-	/	no.	Depot
	4056	Lt. Col.	Barrett	L. yes.	1st Bu. Home Regt	-	X	-	/	no.	Depot
	4055	Private	Barnett	L. yes.	do	-	X	-	/	no.	Depot
	5975	"	Bartlett	L. no.		/	/	-	/	no.	Depot
	6002	"	Bayless	L. no.		/	/	-	/	no.	Depot
	4737	Corpl	Bayless	L. yes.	1st Bu. Home Regt	-	/	-	/	yes.	Depot
	5752	Pte	Brynam	L. no.		/	/	-	/	no.	Depot
	6019	"	Beard	L. no.		/	/	-	/	no.	Depot
	1741	"	Beard	L. yes.	2nd Bu. Home Regt	-	-	/	-	no.	Depot
	5154	"	Beard	L. no.		/	/	-	/	no.	Depot
	4118	"	Beer	L. no.		X	X	-	/	no.	Depot
	3073	"	Bertram	L. yes.	2nd Bu. Home Regt	-	-	/	-	no.	Depot
	5759	"	Bennett	L. no.		/	/	-	/	no.	1st Bu
	5711	"	Berry	L. no.		/	/	-	/	no.	Depot
	5955	"	Berry	L. no.	White Medal C.C. 1903	/	/	off the roll	/	no.	Depot
	5955	"	Bevan	L. no.	1st Bu. Home Regt	/	/	-	/	no.	Depot
	5955	"	Bird	L. yes.	1st Bu. Home Regt	/	/	-	/	no.	Depot
	5970	"	Blackwell	L. no.		/	/	-	/	no.	Depot
	3694	"	Blakermore	L. no.	White Medal C.C. 1903	/	/	off the roll	/	no.	Depot
	5632	"	Blandford	L. no.		/	/	-	/	no.	Depot

[Every form submitted to be separately signed. Any forms locally printed to be exactly similar as regards int. size, and quality of paper.]

I certify that the Individuals named in this Roll are actually entitled to the Clasps, or the Medal and Clasps, as claimed above.

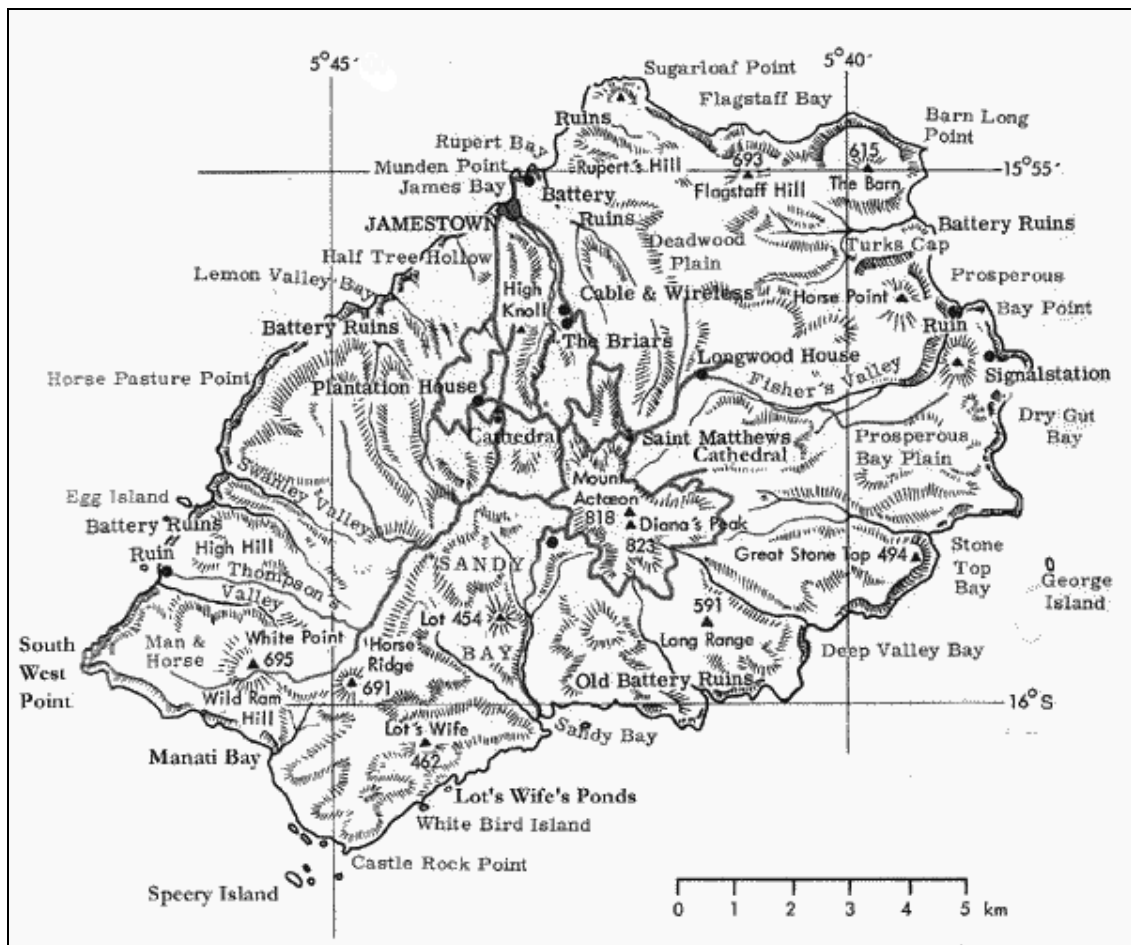
Place Bloemfontein
Date 30th May 1903

W. W. W. Lt Colonel
Signature and Rank of Officer personally cognizant of the Claimants' services.
Commandy 2nd Bu Gloucestershire Regt.

COPIES OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

Reference - WO 100 / 183

1 2 3 4 5 6



A map of the island of St Helena, showing the area of Deadwood Plain

The following is a letter, written in 1901 by a Private with the 4th Militia Battalion of the Glosters from the island of St Helena, to the editor of an English newspaper The Western Daily Press, explaining their situation. It describes the daily life and routine that Harry would have experienced from 1903.

"Sir,

I see with great regret that the people of England are being deceived by certain papers in descriptions of St Helena. The island is described in one paper as a perfect model of all an island should be. I beg to state in my humble way that it is not. Nearly twelve months of a miserable existence here have opened my eyes to this one fact: St Helena is a very undesirable residence, except for people who wish to die and be buried peacefully, to be forgotten by the world in general. I have been stationed in two camps, viz. Deadwood and Broadbottom.

First of all I will speak of Deadwood. I was there from May 28th 1900, to January 14th 1901. During the whole of that time, of which a portion is supposed to be summer, I don't remember counting more than twenty-five days, rain and wind continuing incessantly. Wet through on guard, wet through when dismounting and, generally speaking, drenched to the skin night and day. The bare ground to sleep on and very leaky tents. The bread at first was very bad, but it improved later on. One day we would mount guard at 10am and dismount next day at 10am. The same day we went on picket at 11am and very often fatigue was ready for us, such as pulling a heavy cart of water to various places in the camp, as the water supply was very bad. The next day we might count ourselves lucky if we were not on guard again.

I well remember those guard tents – the water running over the floor. Do not doubt that we shall remember St Helena, the ideal Paradise of a soldier. There were no amusements of any kind at first, though thanks to our officers, sports were got up after a few months or so, later on a coffee bar was opened and finally a nice recreation room with every convenience. All thanks are due to the officers for trying to make things comfortable for us, but still it was a hard job to get anything convenient in Deadwood, because the town is seven miles away and transport is very short. Most of the goods are brought up in very light wagons or on the back of mules. Nothing could be dried properly or kept dry for any time. Many a wet shirt have I had to take from the line and put on – at the risk of colds and sickness, which can be obtained in a miraculously short time here, free, gratis. I should be grateful to any intelligent man if he could inform us when the summer comes here.....

.....Don't imagine that I, or any of us complain of this island. No! We can put up with it. It is our duty to do so, as soldiers. But we must feel angry with such people who write to papers knowing nothing of the place, and say that Tommy is having such a nice time. It is no holiday, I can assure them, but a stern, monotonous routine of duty. The people at home forget this, and little know what we go through. Let them remember that "T.A." on the Boer guard is doing as much as "T.A." at the front, and runs as much risk. I hope you will publish these facts for our good.

Signed

A Private Soldier, 4th (Militia) Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment."

After the end of the Boer war and their tour of duty in South Africa, the 1st Battalion was despatched to Trincomolee in Ceylon (Sri Lanka), escorting and guarding Boer prisoners.

After Ceylon, the 1st Battalion's postings includedⁱ

1903	Lucknow, India
1905	Umballa, India
1907	Lahore, India
1908	Dalhousie, India
1909	Bombay, India
1910	Portsmouth.

Between 1903 and 1909 Harry was chosen to play for the Regimental Rugby team as a three-quarter and for five seasons led the team as their Captain. There was a proud tradition for Harry to follow as the Glosters, in 1898, had been the first Regiment to win the coveted Calcutta Cup made from melted down silver rupees. The magnificent original Cup is kept in the Museum of Rugby at Twickenham and it is a replica that the winning team now takes home.

During his captaincy, Harry did not disappoint and the Gloucestershire Regimental Rugby team never lost a match. Harry was often described as the "hero of the match" as illustrated in the following newspaper cutting from India.



Harry in 1907, aged 24

CALCUTTA RUGBY CUP THE FINAL

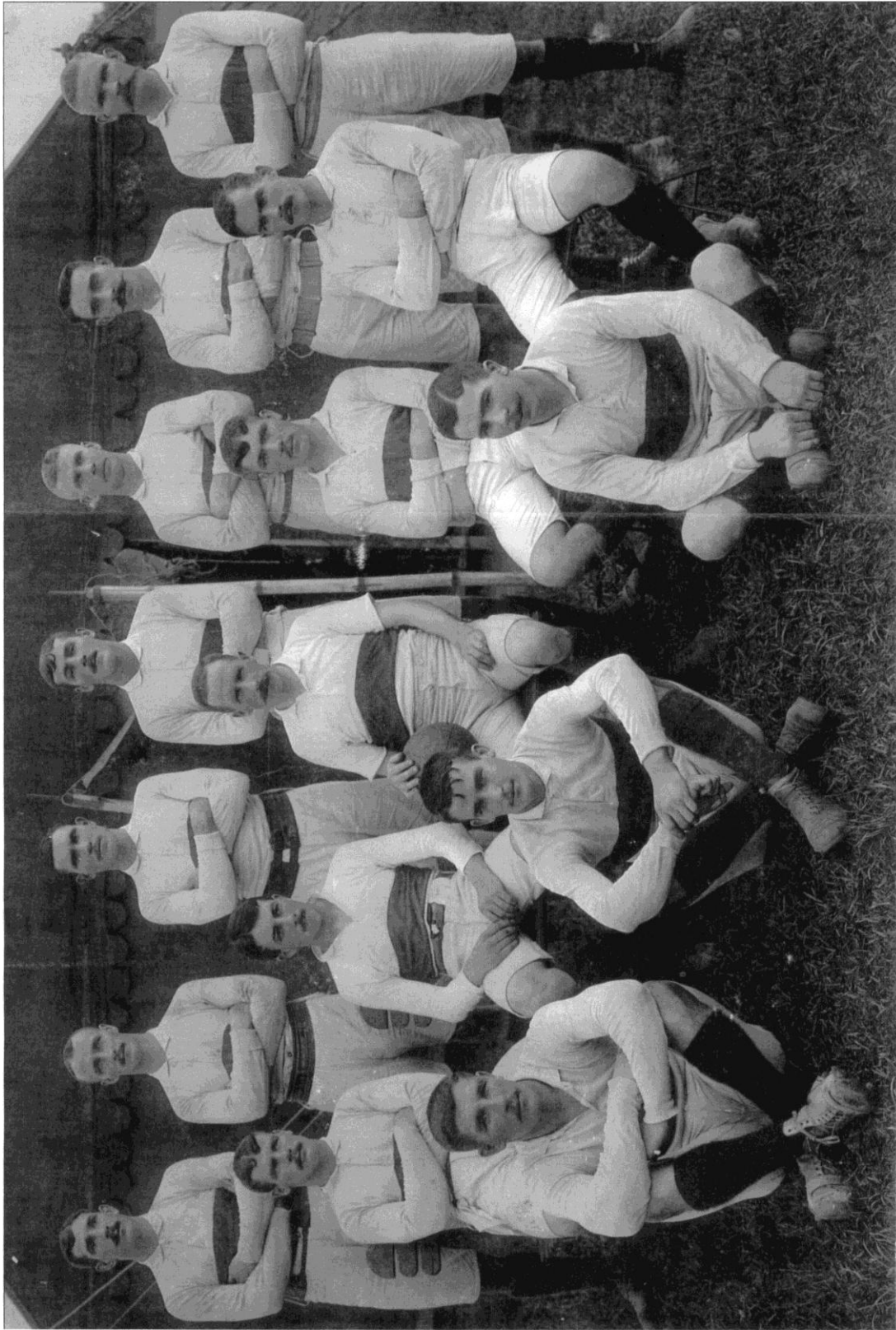
A SENSATIONAL DRAW

WEST RIDINGS (0) : GLOUCESTER (0)

AN exceptionally hard and close game was witnessed last evening on the C.F.C. ground when these two military teams met in the final of the Rugby Cup competition. Both the finalists enjoy considerable reputations – the “Dukes” being perhaps the most all round rugby team in India. The “Tykes” had a rather easy entry into the final, owing to the Bombay and Madras Gymkhana teams having scratched from the competition, the only team they had to dispose of being the United Services in the second round, whom they had trounced to the tune of 26 points to *nil*. The Gloucesters, on the other hand, came through the rough side of the tournament, having had to dispose of the Fusiliers and the C.F.C. in the preliminary rounds. That the final of the local tournament, would be the match of the season, everyone could anticipate, and it was indeed worth a day’s journey to watch the teams trying conclusions at a critical juncture. The Raniket team had out their full team, while the Punjab team had a crippled half-line owing to the departure of Lieutenant Nethersole for his station, and no stroke was so paralysing as the accident to Lieutenant Blythe, who had his shoulder put out in the C.F.C. v Gloucesters match last Tuesday. The heavy showers that fell during the day rendered the ground slushy, which was more to the advantage of the Yorkshiremen. On a drier turf, the Gloucesters might have done better. Turning to the play, the forwards on either side tackled hard and did some excellent footwork. The rival backs, Russell and Compton, acquitted themselves very creditably, the former especially being most prominent for his well-timed and judicious punts, which saved his side to some extent. In punting also the West Ridings are more sure, smart and accurate than the Gloucesters. *Berry was the hero of the Gloucester’ defence, and but for him there would have been trouble* though none the less prominent was Lieutenant Tweedie, who was mainly unsupported, and who was most conspicuous for his marks and dodging runs. Once he was looking around in vain, quite pathetically for support while being grassed to his utter chagrin and disappointment. The tackling was a bit on the rough side at times, as witness the number of jerseys that had to be changed. The climax was reached when one of the West Ridings was warned by Mr Martelli. The threes and halves did not get much chance of indulging in passing, as the operations were mostly confined to the forwards. *The “Dukes” kept their opponents on the defensive almost throughout, and Russell, Berry and Lieutenant Tweedie*

were the pick of the Gloucester’s team, while Tommy Hyland led his men with dash, speed and determination, fully justifying the expectations of the military supporters. *Gloucesters:-* Russell, back; Lieutenant L F Tweedie, Rogers, Berry and Arnold, three-quarters: Murray and Simmons, halves; Hopcroft, Travel, Wilson, Strong, Baylis, Wal*** and Powell, forwards.
Referee:- Mr Esmond Martelli (C.F.C)
Touch Judges:- Messers. T.C. Mauders and L.R. Buckler (C.F.C.)

The West Ridings kicked off from the Garden end and the ball bounced into touch. From the scrum for a crooked, Hyland kicked and Russell replied with a skier, but Chapman returned to the attack, and clever footwork by the Yorkshiremen brought the ball well inside the Gloucesters’ territory, and Russell was called upon to save in the face of a most determined rush by the opposing forwards, and he committed himself splendidly amidst the plaudits of the Gloucesters’ supporters. The punt gained considerable ground. Lieutenant Tweedie was next conspicuous for a dodging run down the right, and the Gloucesters’ forwards pressed matters home to the West Ridings defence. *Not to be denied, Hyland led his men in return, but Berry stopped their career by a judicious back-kick, which Arnold, failing to receive was taken up by Russell.* Lieutenant Tweedie made his mark in self-defence and Wilson returned the kick, but Russell sent to touch in the West Ridings half. For a couple of minutes the game swept from one end to the other, which was really exhilarating to see. A spell of attack by the Gloucesters’ forwards and Hyland found touch in his own 25. Wheeling around the West Ridings pack got down, and midfield scrums characterised the operations for the following five minutes. The Cup-holders however, continued to attack and the Gloucesters’ defence was sorely tried and a score seemed certain as frequent scrums ensued within a yard of the Gloucesters’ line. A free kick by the Ridings resulted in Russell touching down. *Pressing, the “Dukes” almost got over, but Berry ran across and collared Wilson just in the nick of time and averted a sure score.* A foul against Ryan for illegal tackling relieved pressure but temporarily, and Lieutenant Tweedie while being grassed, looked around in vain for support and by hard tackling the Gloucesters’ defence forced the ball to the sideline. *An overhead pass by the “Tykes” looked dangerous, but Berry was again to the fore and was just in time to touch down in self-defence.* Shortly after half time arrived with no score on either side. The second half was not productive of any improved game, for the Gloucesters’ had to touch down frequently. A temporary cessation of hostilities, while Hyland was laid out by a kick on the head, was followed by a terrific burst by the Yorkshire forwards, who dribbled down with determination, and the Gloucesters’ threes misjudging. *Sutcliffe went for the ball like a greyhound just beyond the Gloucesters’ line but Berry most judiciously kicked the ball out of play to the surprise of the former, who fell without the ball under him.* Soon after Mr Martelli whistled time!



Gloucester Rugby XV 1907
 Winners of Brian Aldred Cup (Gloucester Rugby League) 1907

Picture courtesy of Gloucestershire Regimental Museum

As there is reference to Harry playing Rugby in India in 1908, then in England in 1909, followed by his marriage in January 1910 to Beatrice Eveline Arnold, Harry must have returned to England before the Battalion.

By November 1909, Harry would have served ten full years with the Regiment. Whilst in India, he had contracted malaria, and it may have been because of one or both of these reasons, that he returned to England in 1909.



Beatrice Eveline Arnold 1914

Picture courtesy of Berry family

It is fair to assume that Harry, as with all soldiers leaving the colours, would have received a retaining fee of £10.0s.0d. with the promise to serve on mobilisation, in the event of future outbreaks of fighting.

Harry was awarded the South Africa campaign medal, the Queen's Medal.

On his return to England in 1909 Harry worked in civilian life, either with the Great Western Railway or with the Gloucester Railway and Carriage Company in Bristol Road, as an apprentice steam engine driver.

In his spare time, he joined the Kingsholm Rugby Football Club and played Rugby for Gloucester between 1909 and 1913. Gloucester appointed him in the three-quarter position that he had played with the Glosters, but quickly converted him to forward. He was later described by a contemporary as "a fast and clever forward, who shone in the line-out and in loose footwork".

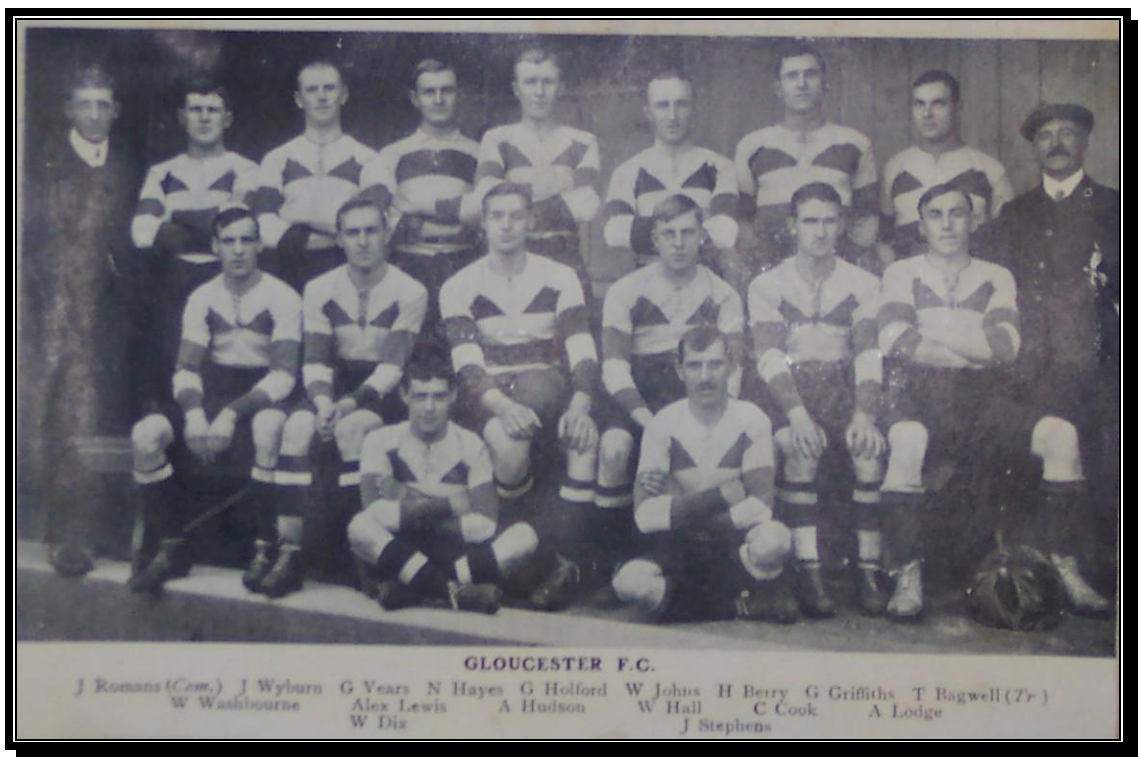




The Gloucester Team

Harry is in the middle row, first player from the left

CHEL TENHAM CHRONICLE AND GLOUCESTERSHIRE GRAPHIC NOVEMBER 20 1909



The Gloucester Team

Prior to a game with Swansea

Harry also played for the County, but unfortunately there are no records of which games he played in, as all their records were destroyed by fire in 1950.



GLOUCESTERSHIRE RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION COUNTY CHAMPIONS 1909-1910

Harry is third from the left in the middle row

Four other Gloucestershire players, selected to play for England in 1910, are in the front row

Johnston, Gent, Johns & Haywood



The five England & Gloucestershire players

Johnston

Johns

Gent

Berry

Hayward



Gloucestershire Rugby Team

*prior to the game against Glamorgan
Wednesday 26th October 1910*

Henry is the third player from the right. .C Williams is resting his hands on Harry's shoulders



The Gloucestershire Team before their match with Yorkshire

I think Henry Berry is third from the left in the middle row

PLAYING FOR ENGLAND

In 1906, the RFU decided it was time to find a permanent home for the England side and the site, proposed by committee member and former Harlequins and Middlesex player, William Williams, was a ten acre market garden in the London suburb of Twickenham. This became affectionately known as Billy William's cabbage patch ⁱⁱ. Perhaps having a base gave the side a greater sense of permanence and determination to succeed or perhaps the teams that had been selected for 1910, were of such high quality and so superbly suited, that they could not fail to do well. It was a particularly proud moment for Gloucestershire, as they had five of their players on the team, including Harry.

The first game, against Wales, was the first ever international game to be played on the newly opened grounds at Twickenham and the first that an England team had won against the side for eleven years. It was also the first game in the first ever Five Nations, now that France had joined the tournament. ⁱⁱⁱ

The four matches were as follows

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. 15 th January 1910 | ENGLAND v WALES at Twickenham. |
| Captain: A.D.Stoop | England won 11 – 6 |
| 2. 12 th February 1910 | ENGLAND v IRELAND at Twickenham |
| Captain: A.D.Stoop | Drew 0-0 |
| 3. 3 rd March 1910 | ENGLAND v FRANCE at Paris |
| Captain: E.R. Mobbs | England won 11 – 3 |
| 4. 19 th March 1910 | ENGLAND v SCOTLAND at Edinburgh |
| Captain: J.G.G. Birkett | England won 14 - 5 |

In 1909, Harry had toured with England as a reserve and in 1910 was chosen to play in the team. He played in all four of the Five Nations Championship games, scoring in two of the matches. The match against Ireland was played in front of the future King George V, the then Prince of Wales.



THE ENGLAND TEAM

England v Wales

15th January 1910



THE ENGLAND TEAM

England v Ireland
12th February 1910

Back: Chapman Haigh Berry Chambers Smith Barrington-Ward Pillman

Centre: Johns Morton Stoop Birkett Mobbs

Front: Johnston Gent Hayward



A tackle in the England v Ireland game

I think Harry may be the one in the foreground, carrying the ball and being tackled



THE ENGLAND TEAM

England v Scotland

19th March 1910

Back: Haigh Barrington-Ward Hands Berry Pillman Hind

Centre: Chapman Lawrie A.D.Stoop Birkett Dibble Johnston Ritson

Front: F.W.Stoop Gotley



Henry Berry's Rugby Caps

Courtesy of the Berry family

Sadly, Harry's International career was cut short by recurring bouts of malaria, but he continued to play for Gloucester.

On 22nd January 1910, just before his 28th birthday and just a week after playing his first International, Harry married Beatrice Eveline Arnold.

Beatrice was born on 1st October 1886 at 9 Davis's Court, Chepstow, in the Counties of Monmouth and Gloucester, to William Charles Arnold, and Emily (nee Child) from Cardiff, Glamorgan. On Beatrice's marriage certificate in 1910 her father's profession is given as Blacksmith. Sadly, Beatrice's father died in the September quarter of 1889 when she was only 3. Her mother remarried in 1893, and in 1901 the whole family were living at 3 Upper Church Street in Chepstow. Beatrice had three full brothers, William, Arthur, and Edgar, and two sisters, Amelia, and Rosie, two half-brothers Richard, Albert, and one half-sister Florence, all born in Chepstow.

Harry and Beatrice were married at St Catherine's Church, Gloucester following Banns and their witnesses were Mrs Alice Barnes, Harry's sister and Mr Arthur Arnold, Beatrice's brother. Both bride and groom's address is given as 29 St Catherine Street, the home of Alice and Arthur Barnes.



*St Catherine's Church Priory Road Gloucester
where Harry and Beatrice were married on 22nd January 1910*



The corner of St Catherine's Street as it is today.
2003

Number 29, where Harry and Beatrice lived when they were first married,
is still standing on the left hand side, just beyond the brick building.

Number 26, where my grandmother was living in 1910,
would have stood just beyond the white van on the right.

After their wedding, Harry and Beatrice moved to 12, Vine Terrace, Kingsholm Road, Gloucester. In 1914, Harry was working as licensee / innkeeper of the Red Lion Inn, 41 Northgate Street and in 1915, as both soldier and wagon maker, possibly at the Gloucester Railway and Carriage Company on Bristol Road. In 1915, Beatrice was working as the licensee of the Stag's Head at 68, Alvin Street.



Henry George Berry circa 1913

Courtesy of the Berry family

Beatrice and Harry had two children. The eldest, Henry George, was born 19th August 1911. The second child, Phyllis Irene was born on 14th April 1915.



Beatrice and Henry George 1914

Courtesy of the Berry family

At the start of the First World War, Harry was recalled for duty. All reservists were mobilized between the 3 – 4th August 1914 and after saying his farewells to his son, Henry George just two weeks away from his third birthday and to Beatrice, Harry left Gloucester for Bristol. Unbeknown to them both, Beatrice was now expecting their second child, a daughter Phyllis Irene.

Harry reported to the regimental depot, then at Horfield Barracks.



Like many of the older reservists Harry, aged 32 years, did not go straight to Tidworth to make up the numbers of the 1st Battalion before they went to France, but was posted with the other spare reservists to the 3rd (Reserve) Battalion, sent to guard Woolwich Arsenal and the associated Thames Forts.

As he does not have the Mons Star, but does have the 1915 Star, awarded on the basis of going overseas on 2nd February 1915, this would be compatible with his having arrived with the 1st Battalion at Marles-les-Mines on 7th February 1915.

The Regimental War Diary for the day of his arrival states...

“7th February 1915: Draft of 202 Rank and file arrived to reinforce battn. Good material.....”

The Gloucestershire Regiment: February 1915 – May 1915

Marles-les-Mines, where Harry joined the 1st Battalion on February 7th 1915, was a mining village lying six or seven miles west of Béthune. It was a pleasant village, despite the many slag heaps and mine buildings. The undulating country was dotted with small coverts and just east of the village lay the Bois des Dames, a magnificent wood of mixed trees.

The billets first occupied; dilapidated barns, the lofts of the village school and the goods yards at the station, were draughty and uncomfortable, but by degrees most of the men were lodged, two or three together, in private houses; miners' cottages and farms, which made up the village. The people of Marles-les-Mines were very friendly and more than willing to board the soldiers; the children of some miners being bitterly disappointed by the refusal of their requests to put up "Cinq ou six soldats". Gloucestershire men always get on well with everyone and the villagers looked after them well, some even cleaning their boots for them in the morning.

Baths were available at Fosse 3 at Bruay. These were badly needed by the men who had been involved in the fighting at Givenchy, as they had not bathed since January. Clean clothes were issued although not clean service dress, which was equally necessary. Hot irons were used for treating the seams of jackets and trousers and the application of these made a sound similar to the crackle of musket fire.

In the indifferent February weather, a good deal of elementary training was carried out. With the arrival of Harry's draft, plus others, the 28th was up to strength again and since a number of experienced officers remained, only a small amount of hard training was needed to build them into an efficient fighting machine. Unfortunately, according to Captain Pagan, they did not receive it.

Digging practice, probably ordered by a commander so high as to not have an intimate knowledge of the ordinary routine of the infantry, was a waste of valuable time. When in line, the soldier moved an enormous amount of earth every month and what a soldier didn't know about digging was not worth knowing. Most men could be entrusted with the layout of the trenches, provided that the trenches were sited for them.

The Bois des Dames provided an ideal area for routine training and inter platoon competitions. A shooting competition, held on the French rifle range, was won by No. 12 Platoon. 'A' Company beat 'C' Company at football, by 3 tries to 2 in a match on a somewhat diminutive field. Did Harry lend his talents here?

During this time, the men were paid regularly once a week, which had not happened since the war began.



H.M. REGULAR ARMY OLD AND NEW RATES OF PAY COMPARISONS N° II

	RANK	REGIMENTAL PAY PER DAY		PROFICIENCY PAY PER DAY IF QUALIFIED	
		AUG. 1914	JULY 1919	AUG. 1914	JULY 1919
REGIMENTAL SERGT. MAJ.		5/-	14/-	6°	-
COMPANY SERGT. MAJ.		4/-	10/-	6°	-
COMPANY QUARTERMASTER SERGT.		3/6	9/6	6°	-
SERGEANT		2/4	7/-	6°	-
CORPORAL		1/8	5/-	3° 6°	6°
PRIVATE		1/-	2/9	3° 6°	6°

TRADESMEN'S RATES 3/- PER DAY TO 16/- PER DAY ACCORDING TO CLASSIFICATION AND GRADE

P. 19/361. Z. 0482. W. 6047/19.340. 75,000 1/10. 6.412. 4.5829.

Although this is an advertisement from after the war, when the Army needed to show some of the advantages of being a soldier, it also illustrates the rates of pay that Harry and his contemporaries would have received in 1914.

On 23rd February, the Regiment was inspected by the brigadier, General RH Butler; by the divisional general, Major-General RC Haking and by the corps commander, Lieutenant-General CC Monro. The turnout and drill at these inspections were excellent. Lt-Gen Monro addressed the men and complimented them on their smart appearance and said he was sure that the 28th would keep up their reputation. He felt confident that he could rely on them to perform any task required of them.

The rest period at Marles, ended the next day and the Regiment marched to Bethune on its way to the front line, going through Labeuvriere and Annezin, to the deserted Ecole des Jeunes Filles, where they billeted for the night. The following day at 2pm, 'C' and 'D' Companies paraded and marched to relieve the reserve companies of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers of the 2nd Division. At 4pm, 'A' and 'B' Companies relieved the front line companies of the same regiment.

The line, part of the Festubert defences, ran north and south, approximately 500 yards east of the hamlet of Le Plantin and was reached by way of Aire-La Basse canal bank, Gorre and the Tuning Fork. Previously, in 1914 when the Regiment had occupied these trenches, they had found them waterlogged. The Glosters set to work repairing the breastworks, consisting of solid earthen walls, revetting with sandbags. The troops lived for eleven days behind these walls, which in most places were sufficiently high to conceal them from the enemy. The Glosters also built several shelters whilst there. Despite the repair work, the line was still a "sea of slush; the roads were morasses". The weather continued to be cold and wet with a good deal of snow and frost. Sometimes the sun shone giving a sense of spring and the birds were beginning to sing.

The enemy had also replaced their wet ditches with breastworks, which were not continuous. After dark, each side sent out large working parties to complete their defences and, consequently, rifle and shellfire only occurred when provoked by daylight activity near the gaps and low places. There were casualties nightly, but few apart from these. In No Man's Land lay many dead from an attack that had occurred the previous December. Some were brought in for burial. In the graveyard behind the lines, lay Company Sergeant Major James, number 7866, who had been killed in the attack of December 1914. He had had the distinction of scoring the try that won the Army Rugby Cup for the 2nd Battalion of the Glosters, in 1910.

At 4am on alternate days, the four companies of the Glosters, carried out relief, so that each company spent a maximum of forty-eight hours at the front and forty-eight in reserve. This system was abolished after this tour in the trenches, as it proved infinitely more fatiguing for the men than the usual routine of relief soon after dark, or in the afternoon. 'A' and 'C' Companies relieved each other on the right, 'B' and 'D' on the left. The companies holding the line, had two platoons in the front breastworks by day and three by night. The remaining platoons were in the most easterly houses of Le Plantin, near to the breastworks, in case of attack. The companies in reserve were billeted in the cottages about 1,500 yards from the front-line on the roads between the Tuning Fork and Le Plantin. These were damp, uncomfortable ruins, having neither roofs, nor cellars to protect them from the elements.

On 7th March, the 2/Royal Munster Fusiliers and 4/Royal Welch Fusiliers relieved the 1st Glosters, who moved back into brigade reserve, 'C' and 'D' Companies going with Headquarters, to Gorre, while 'A' and 'B' Companies went to the houses on the southern arm of the Tuning Fork. The billets at Gorre were abominable, but most of the men were found better accommodation after the first night. In Bethune were many bathing establishments, where the men could get much needed, hot baths. These, were a pleasant walk from Gorre,

along the banks of the canal.

The 10th March saw the Battle of Neuve Chappelle and from the 9th, the Regiment was ready to move at ten minutes notice. The attack, successful to begin with, petered out and the 1st Battalion was never used. On 14th the whole of the 3rd Brigade were relieved and moved back into reserve. The Glosters marched to Hinges, staying at Gorre and Bethune en route. The two days at Gorre were drier and warmer and after leaving Bethune, they saw dust blowing up along the roads. After the waterlogged conditions, dust was a welcome sight. Hinges, was a pretty village, perched on a hill. It had the appearance of a typical English village with its trees, budding hawthorn hedgerows and fields and the warm spring like weather must have been a relief from the damp and cold. The prospect of dry trenches was cheering. The hill, only 130 feet above sea level, seemed almost mountainous in comparison to the flat plain surrounding it. The billets were comfortable and the rest that they offered proved enjoyable to everyone. Battalion headquarters was in the village; 'A' and 'B' Companies were billeted in the outlying cottages called Pont l'Hinges, while 'C' and 'D' Companies were in farms on high ground at Le Vertannoy. The men had baths and clean clothes and various higher commanders inspected the Battalion regularly. The days were spent doing mild training and route marches; football matches were organised and a boxing meeting was held. Unfortunately, as no one knew the French word for weighing machine, there was some delay in sorting out the men into their different fighting categories.

On Monday 22nd March, this rest period came to an end and the Battalion paraded at 11am for their return to the line. The march to Rouge Croix, on bad roads, was long and tiring. They marched past Le Vertbois Farm to Vieille Chapelle and across the River Lawe to a road junction on the main Estaires-La Basse Road where a collection of houses stood. These were the new billets for the greater part of the Regiment, while 'C' Company were to proceed to a vast old farmhouse at the next junction to the South. None of the billets were particularly pleasant, having been heavily shelled although it was still possible to see that the farmhouse had once been a very charming place.

On 23rd March, the billets of 'D' Company were shelled without causing too much damage. The Glosters moved forward to the line East of Neuve Chapelle to relieve the Royal Berkshire Regiment. The relief was completed by 8.30pm. The Glosters set about repairing the breastworks.

Great care had to be exercised by day, as enemy snipers in the houses on the western edge of Bois de Biez were extremely offensive, but the Glosters were equally energetic in retaliation. In the portion held by 'C' Company, it was particularly necessary to keep close to the parapet and to hurry past the low places. This was made evident when Captain Pagan, whilst proceeding somewhat aimlessly about his business, had strayed beyond safety (his own words) and was wounded in the arm. Lt Russell and two men were also wounded. According to Capt. Pagan, Lt. Russell, later killed at Loos on 13th October 1915, was a fine example of an old head on young shoulders. He showed exceptional personal bravery and his care for his men had made him a good leader.

Casualties continued on an almost daily basis, usually as a result of enemy snipers. By 7th April, the total number of casualties for the past sixteen days were: 5 killed, 1 died of wounds and 40 wounded. The Medical Officer assigned to the Regiment was Lt Clauson R.A.M.C. He was relieved by Lt R Montgomery R.A.M.C., S.R. on 20th March.

The trenches in the front line were held by all four companies. Each company had one platoon in support, lodged in dugouts and short lengths of trench along the main street of Neuve Chapelle at its northern end. Battalion headquarters was in one of the northernmost houses in the village.

The weather had turned for the worst and not lived up to the men's high hopes. Frosts returned and cold winds were prevalent. Yet the spell in the line was not unpleasant and there was more comfort than previously enjoyed in other trenches held.

On the 25th March, Frederic Palmer, an American war correspondent was sent by General Headquarters to spend a night in the front line with the Glosters. Apparently he enjoyed himself immensely and was thrilled with everything. Two chapters of his book "My year in the War" are devoted to this visit. When America joined the war, Mr Palmer commanded a battalion in the American Army.

When, on the 26th March, the Glosters were relieved by the 2/Welsh Regiment and 4/Royal Welch Fusiliers, they withdrew about half a mile to the support trenches behind Neuve Chapelle. Formerly part of the old German line, these had been heavily shelled during the attack on 10th March and, although containing many good dugouts, the actual trenches were wet, lousy and filled with many dead Germans. Much hard work was needed to make them habitable and derelict pumps were mended, to get rid of the water. The weather became intensely cold, with an icy northerly gale, which froze the water. The only water for washing had to be collected from shell holes, which had also frozen over and needed to be broken with pickaxes. Three or four times a day, heavy hostile shelling damaged the reserve breastworks which, were repaired at night by many large working parties.

On 31st March, the Regiment took over the Port Arthur section from the 1/South Wales Borderers. These trenches were good and deep, the dugouts and shelters being fairly habitable, though much enloused. 'B' company occupied the right of the line, 'C' in the centre and 'D' on the left. Headquarters and 'A' Company were at Port Arthur.

The weather varied; it was generally much warmer and more pleasant, though there was a lot of rain.

It was customary for any new unit arriving at the Front, to be attached to a more experienced one for training and initiation. So, when the 47th Division arrived, they were attached to the 1st Battalion for instruction. While 'D' Company took care of the new arrivals, the 22/London Regiment took their place in the line.

On 3rd April, at 4.30am in accordance with orders from above, all troops in the line opened three bursts of rapid fire at the opposing trenches. The object of this manoeuvre was unknown to the firers, but had the unfortunate circumstance of annoying the Germans, who shelled the British trenches at regular intervals until 11.30am, wounding 14 soldiers.

Four more days passed until the evening of the 7th April, when the Glosters were relieved by the 1/Northamptonshire Regiment. Unfortunately, one of the relieving companies got lost and so the last company did not arrive in their billets, in farms west of Locon, until 8.45 am on the 8th April, after a very weary march. No one was sorry to get back to billets again, after sixteen days spent in the dirt and discomfort of Neuve Chapelle and Port Arthur. During that time the Regiment had suffered 45 casualties in total.

The billets in Locon were crowded both for officers and men, but the country was pleasant, the fields full of cowslips and the weather fine. Unfortunately for the men, the much desired baths, after such a long spell in unclean places, were not available.

On the 14th April, Beatrice gave birth to their second child, back home in England. Harry's sister Alice, of 29 Pitt Street Gloucester, was present at the birth of his daughter, Phyllis Irene. News of her birth would have reached Harry by post, but he was never to see his daughter.

On the 15th April, after a rest of seven days, the regiment returned to the front line, taking over from the 1/Cameron Highlanders. The trenches of the 1st Brigade, lay about 300 yards south-east of the village street of Richebourg l'Avoué. The foremost line, was new and incomplete, and would eventually link up with trenches at Port Arthur. With two companies in the front line, one immediately behind in support and the fourth in reserve, relieving each other every forty-eight hours, the regiment remained here for eight days. Headquarters and the reserve company were in pleasant orchards just behind the village, but exposed to "overs" from the front.

The losses, 4 killed and 23 wounded, were mostly caused by these and by German retaliation to the fire of our trench mortars. According to A.W. Pagan, this was due to two "lunatics", one an infantryman the other a gunner, descending daily into the line, firing off a few rounds and then retreating, not staying to deal with the situation they had created.

The weather was so delightful that the discomforts of trench life were greatly ameliorated.

On 22nd April, the 2/Royal Munster Fusiliers relieved the Glosters, who went into brigade reserve. Headquarters, 'B' and 'D' companies withdrew to farms around Le Touret and, 'A' and 'C' went to deserted village of Richebourg St. Vaast. The churchyard at Richebourg had been heavily shelled, but the rest of the village was undamaged and offered the men comfortable beds and billets.

On the 24th April, each half battalion marched back to it's old billets in Hinges and for ten happy days did gentle training in and about the village. The weather was balmy and nightingales sang under a red moon, set in cloudless skies. The fields, with their elms, whose branches showed dark through a mist of the palest green, their hedges and bright spring grass, reminded everyone of England and no one was pleased to move from this blissfully peaceful place. A church parade was held on the Sunday and on Monday 3rd May, the regiment moved to billets on the main Locon-Bethune Road, just south of Locon, where the billets were dirty and incessant lorry and other traffic covered everything with dust.

The next four days until the 7th May, were spent training and cleaning the billets.

The Glosters

On Thursday 6th May, the Commanding Officer and the Company Commanders of the 28th (Gloucestershire Regiment) went to Richebourg l'Avoué to reconnoitre the ground over which the attack was to take place.

The operations were ordered to take place on Saturday 8th May and a regimental concert, held on the evening of the 6th in Locon, offered the Glosters a little light entertainment. General Haking, the divisional commander, was present.

At 7pm on 7th May, the Glosters had actually paraded to march to the position of assembly, when orders were received that the attack had been postponed for twenty-four hours and that the 28th should proceed to billets round Lannoy and Gonnenghem, at least three miles further from the battlefield. The Regiment moved off at once and were in their billets, in large farms amid lush meadows, by midnight.

At 6.30 on the evening of the 8th May, the Glosters again prepared to move forward, reaching Windy Corner, near Richebourg l'Avoué at 11.30pm after marching a distance of eleven miles in all, by way of Hinges, Locon and Lacouture. The Regiment occupied the 4th line trenches at Rue du Bois and that night before the battle, was spent drawing bombs, respirators, rations and other stores.

The Attack

On Sunday 9th May 1915, the sun rose at 04.06hrs and all was quiet on the front. According to Captain A W Pagan, commanding the regiment in the absence of Major Gardiner, it was a delightfully fresh spring morning with a cloudless sky. The stage was now set for the Battle of Aubers Ridge. The secret of the proposed attack had been well kept, at any rate from our side.

The enemy called across No Man's Land to the 3rd Brigade, that they were expecting an attack.

At 05.00hrs the British began their bombardment, with field guns firing shrapnel at the German wire and Howitzers firing high-explosive, onto their front line. German troops were seen peering over the parapet, even while the shelling was going on. In this crucial preliminary bombardment, fewer than 8 per cent of the artillery shells fired were really high-explosive, and the total time during which a sustained artillery barrage was possible was only forty minutes, severely limiting the amount of damage that could be done to the German barbed wire and trench defences. Many of the shells were too light to do serious damage to the German earthworks. Others were defective. One German regimental diary reported that shells falling on its front were duds, made in the United States and filled with sawdust instead of explosives. Some shells, fired from over-used and worn-out guns, fell far short of the German lines.

Immediately before the British troops went over the top, the British bombardment was intensified. Field guns switched to high-explosive and fired at the enemy's breastworks. The lead battalions of the two assaulting Brigades of 1st Division (1st Northants; 2nd Sussex; 2nd King's Rifle Corps; 5th Royal Sussex; 2nd Munster Fusiliers; 2nd Welsh and the 4th Royal Welch Fusiliers; 2nd Gurkhas; 4th and 1st Seaforth Highlanders) attempted to go over the top to take up a position 80 yards from the German front.

The German regimental diary described how, as the British artillery bombardment lifted and the smoke of the exploding shells cleared away, 'there could never before in war have been a more perfect target than this solid wall of khaki men, British and Indian side by side. There was only one possible order to give – "Fire until the barrels burst."

They were cut down even on their own ladders and parapet steps, but men continued to press forward as ordered. The front-line and communication trenches were soon filled with dead and wounded men.

For those who reached the enemy lines, they found that the barbed wire had not been breached and few lanes had been cut. Men were forced to bunch together to get through the wire, making an easy target for enemy gunners. These leading Battalions suffered significant losses, particularly among officers and junior leaders. Around 100 men of the Northants and Munsters got into the German front, but all were killed or captured.

Men who were lying wounded in No Man's Land were killed by a forty-five minute British artillery bombardment of the very shell holes in which they had found shelter. British troops running back to the safety of their own lines were being fired on by the Germans as they ran, but as they had with them a number of German prisoners, they were thought by the British to be an enemy counter attack, and were fired on from the British trenches as well. Few could survive the crossfire.

That afternoon Haig, hearing of the French success at Vimy Ridge, ordered a second attack, despite the reports of air force reconnaissance of the steady forward movement of the German reinforcements. The commander of the Indian troops, General Willcocks, protested at the order to attack again. General Gough, commanding the 7th Division, also reported to Haig that, after personal reconnaissance of the ground, he was convinced of 'the certainty of any further attempt to attack by daylight being a failure.' Only General Haking, commanding the 1st Division, had confidence in a further assault. Haig accepted Haking's judgement.

Initially set for 12 noon, this was moved to 14.40hrs, to be preceded by a forty minute bombardment, when I Corps informed him how long it would take to clear the trenches of wounded and dead and to move the supporting units forward. As the supporting units were moving forward to take up their position in the front-line trench, there was much confusion and more losses under renewed enemy shellfire ^{iv}.

The attack in the afternoon, by both 1/Black Watch and the Cameron Highlanders, lacked coordination. The Cameron Highlanders had had difficulty getting to the front and had therefore arrived too late to go over the top with the Black Watch. At 15.57hrs the leading companies led by the kilted pipers of the 1st Black Watch, playing their bagpipes, attacked again. A few minutes later the Cameron Highlanders joined them. Fifty men reached the German line and some entered it, but all were destroyed by the enemy.



At 16.00hrs the support units of 1/Glosters and 1/South Wales Borderers, went over the top. They were savaged by German machine-gun fire. The fire here was so great that the leading companies could only move a hundred yards forward or less. Then they stopped and took cover.

The Glosters and the South Wales Borderers lost 495 men between them, one of whom was Harry.

When Haig ordered the attack 'to be rushed in with bayonet at dusk', the commanders on the spot made it known that they regarded such orders as mistaken. Haig cancelled them, but told the commanders that they must succeed the following day. However, at a further conference with Haig on the morning of May 10th the three commanders, Haking, Gough and Willcocks, each made it clear that they did not have enough artillery ammunition to start a second day's offensive.

Harry's body was never recovered.



CORPL. HARRY BERRY.
*1st Gloucester Regt., killed in
Flanders on May 9th in a
desperate attack of the glorious
Gloucesters. He is the famous
old International Rugby foot-
baller. His wife keeps the
Stag's Head Inn, Alvin-street,
Gloucester.*

Henry Berry's Obituary

Gloucester Graphic, 5th June 1915.

The photograph must have been taken at the time of his mobilization.

Harry has no known grave, and is commemorated at the Le Touret memorial, Pas de Calais.

The following newspaper article appeared shortly after.

LETTERS FROM THE FRONT

1ST Gloucestershires in Desperate Fighting.

“CASUALTIES RATHER HEAVY”

HARRY BERRY REPORTED KILLED

That the 1st Gloucesters have been again hit badly in the desperate fighting near Ypres is evident by a letter received from Pte. George Young says :-

‘I have been in the thick of a big fight and pulled through safe. I must not describe the fight as the censor says we are not to do so until the battle is over. The fight is still in progress. Harry Berry, the Gloucester and International footballer was killed and several other local men were killed and wounded. Our casualties are rather heavy.’

The fate of Harry Berry - the report that he has been killed is not officially confirmed - will be received with great regret by footballers in Gloucester. Berry was a reservist when called up at the outbreak of the war, but still did not go out to the front with the regiment at the start. For some time he was on military police duty at Woolwich, but subsequently proceeded to France with a draft. Car Cummings, C.Rose, F.Goulding and others went out about the same time. Berry had finished playing first class football but his valuable services to the City and County teams will ever be remembered. In 1910, Berry gained International honours, playing for England against Wales, Ireland, Scotland and France and scoring in two of the matches.

Lest We Forget

Men of the 1st Battalion who died with Harry at the Battle for Aubers Ridge on 9th May 1915

Private Frederick ALDER 3028
Sidney Benjamin James BACON 7801
Private Alfred BAKER 7499 (29 years)
Private Charles BARHAM 9047
Private Herbert Henry BARNES 8424
Private John Herbert BRIDGEMAN 1997
Private Reginald BRINTON 2345 (18 years)
Private Alfred BROOKS 812 (24 years)
Private Thomas BROWN 7635
Private John BUCKLEY 10011 (24 years)
Lance Corporal George BURLOW (18 years)
Private Robert H. COLLETT 7644 (31 years)
Private Maurice COMPTON 16060 (18 years)
Serjeant John Robert DEAN 7183 (29 years)
Private Francis C DOWDESWELL 15488 (24 years)
Private Fish ECCLES 7149 (30 years)
Private John Watkin EVANS 11897 (27 years)
Private James FLEMING 8491
Private Robert FLEMING 7385
Private George GARDNER 1761
Private Albert HAWKER 7486
Private George HENDY 7196 (31 years)
Private Herbert William HILL 7416
Private Thomas HOOK 15502
Private Alfred William HYDE 2002 (23 years) 'B' Coy
Private Edward J INNES 2598
Corporal Archibald T JENNINGS 2095 (18 years)
Private Frederick JOBBINS 7450
Private Henry JOHNS 11704
Private Jesse JONES 7802
Private William JONES 111291 (33 years)

Private Frank KEARSEY 2548 'A' Coy
Lance Corporal Ernest KEVEREN
Private Alfred LEWIS 2503
Corporal Thomas Alfred LEWIS 4708
Private Charles Edward LYES 2879
Private Arthur NORRIS 8637
Lance Corporal William NORTH (33 years)
Private William PAKER 15431
Private John Arthur PETERS 3293
Lance Corporal Ernest John PORTCH 12345 (20 years)
Serjeant Henry J PORTER 7462
Private Arthur George PUGH 7389
Private Edward Alfred READDY 11746
Private Charles Thomas ROWE 12316
Private Charles William STEVENS 10047
Private Charles STURGES 11879 (32 years)
Private Thomas SYOTT 16116 (34 years) 'C' Coy
Private George H TAYLOR 7883 (25 years)
Lance Corporal Sidney James TRIST 3025 (40 years)
Private Robert TUCKER 1838
Private John VICKERY 8340 (24 years)
Private Walter WATHEN 2312 (20 years)
Private Albert WHITE 7700 (29 years) 'C' Coy
Private Harry Henry Albert WHITE 12376 (18 years)
Private William David WILLIAMS 12318 (21 years)
Private John George WOODMAN 11457
Lance Corporal Allan YOUNG 5575
Serjeant Albert Edward YOUNG 10004 (19 years)
Private Thomas YOUNG 11823 (22 years)

In addition to these 60 men a further 202, including 10 officers, were lost at the Battle of Aubers Ridge and this list is obviously incomplete.

I apologise to those I have missed.

It was not for want of trying to find you.



Henry's Campaign Medals

*The 1915 Star; the Queen's Medal; the British War Medal and the Victory medal,
& the England Rose from his rugby shirt.*

Courtesy of the Berry family

Of the one hundred and eleven international Rugby players who lost their lives in France, twenty-six were English and fifty were Scottish, Welsh and Irish. Four of the English team, including Harry all played together in 1910.



Deeply sensible of the loss to the manhood of the City during the great war of 1914-1918, The Citizens of Gloucester, through their representatives, the Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors, desire to show their gratitude to those who made the supreme sacrifice for their King and Country.

Ever mindful of the ready response made to the Country's call, of the hardships endured, of the courage displayed by all branches of the Services on Sea, on land and in the Air, the Citizens pay humble tribute to those who, thinking only of their Country's welfare, fearlessly and readily faced death for the vindication of a noble cause.

Their example of Christ-like sacrifice for the good of others will live through the ages, for "greater love hath no man than this, That a man lay down his life for his friends."

"Their name liveth for evermore."

J. D. Roberts

Mayor.



No. _____
(If replying, please quote above No.)

Record Office,

Station,

29 May 1915

SIR,

It is my painful duty to inform you that a report has this day been received from the War Office notifying the death of

(No.) 5711 (Rank) Capt

(Name) H Perry (Regiment) GLOUCESTERSHIRE REGT.

which occurred at

on the 9

of May 1915, and I am to express to you the sympathy and regret of the Army Council at your loss. The cause of death was

Killed in Action

If any articles of private property left by the deceased are found, they will be forwarded to this Office, but some time will probably elapse before their receipt, and when received they cannot be disposed of until authority is received from the War Office.

Application regarding the disposal of any such personal effects, or of any amount that may eventually be found to be due to the late soldier's estate, should be addressed to "The Secretary, War Office, London, S.W.," and marked outside "Effects."

I am,

Your obedient Servant,

31 MAY 1915

Major, for Colonel,
i/c Infantry Records,
Office No. 7, Whitehall, London, S.W. 1.



HE whom this scroll commemorates
was numbered among those who,
at the call of King and Country, left all
that was dear to them, endured hardness,
faced danger, and finally passed out of
the sight of men by the path of duty
and self-sacrifice, giving up their own
lives that others might live in freedom.

Let those who come after see to it
that his name be not forgotten.

*Cpl. Henry Berry —
Gloucestershire Regiment*

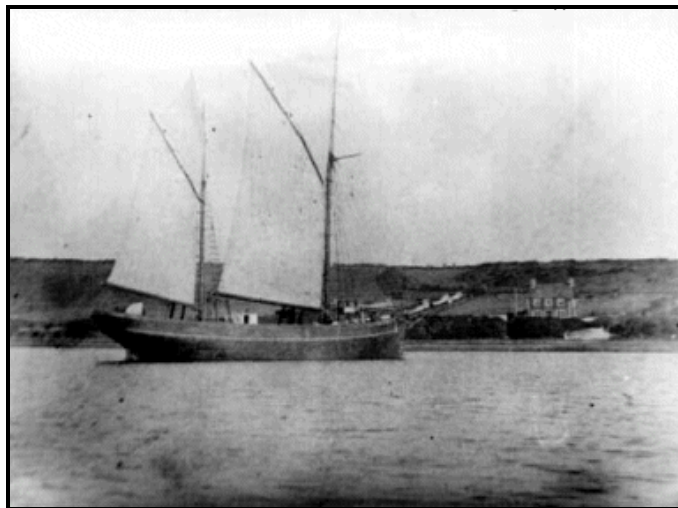
Beatrice as previously mentioned was, at the time of Harry's death, the licensee of the Stag's Head in Alvin Street, Gloucester.

The Stag's Head was referred to the compensation authority for closure on at least two occasions, but it survived. Plans had been passed in 1914 for alteration and improvement at a cost of £200 and it was referred to the compensation authority again in 1919. The Stag's Head presumably closed soon afterwards. Was Beatrice still the licensee upon its closure in 1919, four years after Harry's death, or did she leave in 1915?

Beatrice never remarried, but raised her two children single-handedly, working at various places, including the New Inn, Bryant and May match factory and the Wagon Works, where Harry had worked before being recalled.

Their eldest son, Henry George, married Maureen Page and they had two sons, Michael Henry, born in 1945 and Peter George, born in 1951.

Phyllis Irene married John Norman Murdoch and they had one daughter, Jane born in 1944. Jane's paternal grandfather was Captain Alexander Murdoch of Gloucester, Master and owner of the Garlandstone circa 1919 to 1941 which regularly carried cargo, mainly coal, from Wales to Ireland and famously, on one voyage during the Second World war, when his Irish crew deserted him having refused to travel back across to England in the rough mine-infested seas, strapped himself to the wheel and single-handedly brought the ship back to England.



The Garlandstone

All in all, a formidable family!

In April 2003, I visited Belgium and France and went to the battlegrounds upon which Harry was killed and his nephew Charles Henry Goddard was wounded, and to see the memorial at Le Touret where Harry is commemorated.

Using the Battle Plan, obtained from the Western Front Association, it was possible to find the area in which Harry was killed.

It is now, thankfully, a blissfully peaceful place where the only sound is that of birdsong. The cemetery overlooks, but is slightly averted away from, the battleground.

On May 9th 2003 at precisely 4pm, eighty-eight years to the minute after Harry's death, I planted three poppies in my garden; one for Harry; one for his family and one for the Regiment. I also 'shared' a bottle of wine with him, something I had wanted to do at Le Touret.

These poppies turned out to be salmon pink and not the deep red that I had hoped for but immediately behind them, a mass of wild, red 'Flanders' poppies mysteriously appeared and filled this whole area of garden. They have never reappeared.

I realise that I cannot change the past; alter his, or his family's life course, but I hope that by writing his story, his life and all the lives that were affected by this international tragedy, will not be forgotten.

Siegfried Sassoon, First World War poet, who was born in Kent in 1886, enlisted with the Sussex Yeomanry on 3rd August 1914. He was then commissioned in the Royal Welch Fusiliers and wrote a poem in 1928 after attending the opening of the Menin Gate Memorial, at Ypres. The memorial contains 54,889 names of men, simply missing in action in the Ypres Salient alone, who have no known grave. This cynical, sad poem, from one who was so deeply involved in and affected by the First World War, suggests that no one will care, or remember the 'unheroic Dead who fed the guns'.

To quote the man himself, from "Memoirs of an Infantry Officer".....

"I venture to disagree".

Appendix

In May 2003, I was asked, by the Gloucester Regimental Museum, for a copy of my research. I was concerned that Harry might have surviving ancestors who might either be interested to see what I had uncovered or possibly, object to their grandfather's story being open to public viewing.

With this in mind, I set about finding them. My first step was to try a site suggested by a fellow family historian, genesreunited. Realising in this day and age that many people migrate and few stay in their place of birth, I tentatively searched for those bearing the surname Berry who were born in Gloucester. There were many appropriate names, George, Henry, James, but the one that caught my attention was Jonathan Michael born 1982 in Gloucester, neither of which name nor date had any connection with the information I had to that point. It was the first email I had sent in my search for Harry's ancestors and it was to be the only one, as within five hours I had received this reply...

"Hello Sue.

Jonathan Michael is my son and Henry Berry my grandfather. Tell me more....Peter."

I arranged to meet Henry's three grandchildren, Michael, Peter and Jane, in Gloucester. The weekend was organised well in advance and as the date approached, it became more and more evident that another incredible event was to take place on the day of our initial meeting.

The England Rugby team had made it through to the final of the Six Nations World cup. I travelled to Gloucester listening on the radio to an incredibly exciting game and arrived in Gloucester just as the team were stepping up onto the podium to receive their cup. Amazing!



Sunday 23rd November 2003

Michael Henry

Sarah

Jane

Peter George

Rob

Maureen

Sue Horton

I would particularly like to thank the following

Henry's three grandchildren, Michael, Peter, Jane and their families for personal photographs, documents and a lovely welcome.

A D Wadley, secretary of the Kingsholm Rugby Football Club, who set me off on my journey in April 2001.

Mr George Streatfield, Curator at the Soldiers of Gloucester Museum.

Mr Graham Blake for allowing me access to material, held in the Gloucester Collection

Mr Keith Plain, Hon. Secretary and Sheena Druggan, Personal Assistant, at the Gloucestershire Rugby Football Club.

Mr Ross Hamilton, the Library Officer at the Museum of Rugby, Twickenham for the photographs of the England teams in 1910.

Dr Roger Pritchard, whose knowledge of the Gloucestershire regiment is legendary.

Michelle Young, Public Relations Officer for the Western Front Association, who kindly put me in touch with Dr Pritchard, after months of frustration trying to find him myself.

Mrs Paula Bramley of Cirencester Library.

The Western Front Association for the Battle plan.

Mr Chris Blake for giving me permission to use material on his superb website 1914-1918.net and for his encouraging words

The staff at the Monmouth, Newport and Gloucester Register Offices, who have always been so courteous, efficient and helpful.
