

The Men of the Bramhall War Memorial - First World War

This presentation is based on the work of Ian Cameron and Jeff Tuck.

The Bramhall War memorial is set in a Garden of Remembrance on the west side of Bramhall Lane South, across the road from the railway station.

The memorial, which is Grade II listed, was designed by Arthur Davies, a local man. It sits on an octagonal base and the upper portion is based on the Cross designed by Sir Reginald Blomfield for cemeteries in France and Flanders. It was unveiled on Sunday 18 December 1921 by General Sir Henry de Beauvoir de Lisle and dedicated by the Vicar of Bramhall, Rev. John F. Jones. His son, David, planned to follow his father into the church, but sadly was killed in Burma in 1945 and his name is on the 1939-45 memorial.

Inscriptions:

THE GREAT WARS, 1914-1918 1939-1945

YOU GAVE YOUR LIVES FOR COUNTRY, HOME AND DUTY

WE REMEMBER YOU AND ARE GRATEFUL. WE ERECT THIS MONUMENT TO YOUR HONOUR AND MEMORY

“THEY SHALL GROW NOT OLD AS WE THAT ARE LEFT GROW OLD, AGE SHALL NOT WEARY THEM, NOT THE YEARS CONDEMN, AT THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN, AND IN THE MORNING WE WILL REMEMBER THEM”

Roll of Honour: 1914-1918

There are 48 names – 6 of which are also on the Cheadle Hulme war memorial, 38 on the memorial in St. Michael's Church, and 9 on the memorial in the Methodist Church. Three are on the St. Michael's memorial but not on the civic memorial.

Sydney BARBER	C/Hulme	
Joseph BARDSLEY	C/Hulme	
Bertram BAYLEY		St.Michael's
Vernon W.L. BAYLEY		St.Michael's
Edward BOUSKILL		
Ralph BOWETT		
Frank S. BROOKS		
Alec W. BRYDON	C/Hulme	St.Michael's
R. Henry BURGESS		St.Michael's
Leslie BUTLER		St.Michael's
J. Arthur CHAPMAN	Methodist	St.Michael's
Arthur FORD		St.Michael's
Thomas H. GARNER		St.Michael's
Henry GRAHAM		St.Michael's
Malcolm B. GREEN		St.Michael's
Frank H. HALLIDAY	Methodist	St.Michael's
Herbert W. HEATON	Methodist	St.Michael's King's*
Harold W. HIGGINS	Methodist	St.Michael's King's*
H. Ronald HIGGINS	Methodist	St.Michael's King's*
Tom W. HOOLEY		St.Michael's

Fred HORTON			St.Michael's
Stephen ISHERWOOD	C/Hulme		
Stanley JEPSON			
Desmond JONES			St.Michael's
Edwin J. JONES			St.Michael's
M. Guy KENNY			Woodford**
Fred LAMB			St.Michael's
David E. LANGTON			St.Michael's
Fred LEAH			St.Michael's
Alfred LEE-WOOD			St.Michael's
T. Arthur MADDOCKS			Woodford**
Alfred S. O'DWYER			St.Michael's
Douglas PADFIELD			St.Michael's
Frank PEARSON			Woodford**
Samuel PEARSON			Woodford**
J. Eric PERCY			St.Michael's Woodford**
G. Harold PIKE			St.Michael's
Norman PINKERTON			St.Michael's Woodford**
Tom. A. PUGH	C/Hulme		St.Michael's
R. Leigh REDFERN		Methodist	St.Michael's (King's)
Alfred J. REDFERN		Methodist	St.Michael's King's*
Alfred E. ROBINSON			St.Michael's
Robert B. RUSSELL			St.Michael's
William J. SIVEWRIGHT	C/Hulme		St.Michael's
Reginald S. SPENCER		Methodist	St.Michael's
Godfrey R. STEINTHAL			St.Michael's
J. Stanley WHITLOCK			St.Michael's
James B. WOOD		Methodist	St.Michael's

On the St Michael's Church memorial but not on the Bramhall civic memorial

Albert REYNOLDS			St.Michael's
Horace S. STEAD			St.Michael's
George WOOD			St.Michael's

* The King's School, Macclesfield, memorial

** Christ Church memorial, Woodford

Where and when they died

Arthur FORD	11 March 1915	?	28
R. Leigh REDFERN	4 June 1915	Gallipoli	23
Thomas H. GARNER	5 June 1915	Gallipoli	24
Frank H. HALLIDAY	5 June 1915	Gallipoli	24
Harold W. HIGGINS	6 June 1915	Gallipoli	21
Sydney BARBER	10 August 1915	Gallipoli	20
Alec W. BRYDON	31 August 1915	Gallipoli	31
Godfrey R. STEINTHAL	1 June 1916	Jutland	19
Frank S. BROOKS	1 July 1916	Somme	23
Leslie BUTLER	1 July 1916	Somme	20
Alfred LEE-WOOD	1 July 1916	Somme	30
Tom A. PUGH	23 July 1916	Somme	37
Alfred J. REDFERN	23 July 1916	Somme	23
Robert B. RUSSELL	23 July 1916	Somme	29
Alfred S. O'DWYER	29 July 1916	Somme	19
Ralph BOWETT	5 September 1916	Somme	22
G. Harold PIKE	13 November 1916	Somme	39
Stephen ISHERWOOD	25 January 1917	Mesopotamia	33
R. Henry BURGESS	14 March 1917	France	23
Desmond JONES	3 April 1917	Arras	23
Fred HORTON	9 April 1917	Arras	26
David E. LANGTON	10 April 1917	Arras	20
Reginald S. SPENCER	14 April 1917	Arras	25
Vernon W.L. BAYLEY	3 May 1917	Scarpe, France	36
Bertram BAYLEY	5 May 1917	?	38
J. Eric PERCY	13 May 1917	Woolwich	23
Douglas PADFIELD	4 June 1917	Conway (drowned)	22
Edwin J. JONES	13 June 1917	Givency	28
Samuel PEARSON	16 July 1917	?	27
Joseph BARDSLEY	2 September 1917	Passchendaele	37
Tom W. HOOLEY	3 September 1917	Passchendaele	45
Herbert W. HEATON	5 September 1917	Passchendaele	21
Edward BOUSKILL	4 October 1917	Passchendaele	20
William J. SIVEWRIGHT	2 November 1917	Belgium	22
H. Ronald HIGGINS	24 January 1918	France	20
J. Arthur CHAPMAN	30 January 1918	Netley	21
Frank PEARSON	27 February 1918	Belgium	?
James B. WOOD	26 March 1918	France	24
Fred LEAH	9 April 1918	Flanders	28
J. Stanley WHITLOCK	25 April 1918	Flanders	32
Norman PINKERTON	21 July 1918	India	27
Fred LAMB	23 August 1918	France	23
M. Guy KENNY	18 September 1918	Haslar	20
Henry GRAHAM	20 November 1918	France	21
Stanley JEPSON	24 February 1919	France	26
T. Arthur MADDOCKS	9 March 1919	UK	34
Malcolm B. GREEN	24 December 1920	?	?
Alfred E. ROBINSON	?	?	?

Where they lived

Sydney BARBER	Cheadle Hulme
Joseph BARDSLEY	Acre Lane (born Hurst Head Farm)
Bertram BAYLEY) Park Hill, Woodford Road (?now 75)
Vernon W.L. BAYLEY)
Edward BOUSKILL	Romanhurst, Bramhall Lane (South)
Ralph BOWETT	124 Acre Lane <i>Distinguished Conduct Medal</i>
Frank S. BROOKS	Redcot, 270 Bramhall Lane
Alec W. BRYDON	Bramhall Park
R. Henry BURGESS	Maple Road
Leslie BUTLER	Ashbourne, 91 Ack Lane
J. Arthur CHAPMAN	Market Square
Arthur FORD	Moss Lane
Thomas H. GARNER	Dairyground Farm (or Thornbank)
Henry GRAHAM	Haytor, Woodford Road
Malcolm B. GREEN	
Frank H. HALLIDAY	Wynhurst, 187 Bramhall Lane (South)
Herbert W. HEATON	Combermere, (83) Woodford Road
Harold W. HIGGINS) Ashdene, Kitts Moss Lane/Cromwell Road
H. Ronald HIGGINS)
Tom W. HOOLEY	The Thorns, Syddal Road
Fred HORTON	40 Ack Lane
Stephen ISHERWOOD	Grove Lane, Cheadle Hulme
Stanley JEPSON	
Desmond JONES	Elvyn Cottage
Edwin J. JONES	Arden Grange, Manor Road, Bramhall Park
M. Guy KENNY	Hatherlow, Syddal Road
Fred LAMB	54 Moss Lane
David E. LANGTON	Lindow, Thorn Road
Fred LEAH	Kitts Moss Lane
Alfred LEE-WOOD	Arundel, 33 Bramhall Lane South
T. Arthur MADDOCKS	The Hand Cottage, Woodford
Alfred S. O'DWYER	Glencoin, Bramhall Lane
Douglas PADFIELD	Brierfield, Moss Lane or Cromwell Road
Frank PEARSON	Woodford
Samuel PEARSON	Victoria Cottage, Woodford
J. Eric PERCY	Silvadale, Bramhall
G. Harold PIKE	Hope Cottage, Hawthorn Grove, Bramhall
Norman PINKERTON	Newholme, Woodford
Tom. A. PUGH	
R. Leigh REDFERN) The Gables, Carr Wood Road, Bramhall
Alfred J. REDFERN)
Alfred E. ROBINSON	?Cheadle
Robert B. RUSSELL	
William J. SIVEWRIGHT	
Reginald S. SPENCER	Endsleigh, Bramhall
Godfrey R. STEINTHAL	Wyncote, Bramhall
J. Stanley WHITLOCK	125 Grove Lane, Cheadle Hulme
James B. WOOD	Sunnyside, (91) Woodford Road

The Methodist Church War Memorial

The memorial takes the form of a carved oak commemorative screen. It was unveiled on 4 February 1923 by Brigadier-General Sir John Barnsley, chief recruiting officer for Birmingham, and the names read out by Mr E.W.Meggitt.

Inscription

TO THE GLORY OF GOD AND IN LOVING MEMORY OF THE YOUNG MEN OF THIS CHURCH WHO FELL IN THE GREAT WAR, 1914-1918

Private James <u>Arthur</u> Chapman	30 January 1918	Netley Hospital	21
Lance Corporal <u>Frank</u> Holden Halliday	5 June 1915	Gallipoli	24
2 nd Lieut. Herbert Walter Heaton	5 September 1917	Passchendaele	21
Private Harold Williamson Higgins	6 June 1915	Gallipoli	21
Private Harry <u>Ronnie</u> Higgins	24 January 1918	France	20
Private Alfred James Redfern	27 August 1916	Somme	23
Private Robert <u>Leigh</u> Redfern	4 June 1915	Gallipoli	23
Rifleman Reginald Stanley Spencer	14 April 1917	Arras	25
Captain James Buckley Wood	26 March 1918	France	24

Harold Higgins and Ronnie Higgins were brothers, as were Leigh Redfern and Alfred Redfern.

Frank Halliday, the Higgins brothers and James Wood attended Pownall Green County Primary School. The Higgins brothers, the Redfern brothers and Herbert Heaton all attended The King's School, Macclesfield, although for some reason (probably an error or misunderstanding) Leigh Redfern is not on the school's war memorial like the others.

Leigh Redfern and Harold Higgins were close friends and had consecutive service numbers, 2460 and 2461, which means that they queued and enlisted together. They were killed together at Gallipoli along with Frank Halliday.

Frank Halliday, Herbert Heaton and another of the men (?Leigh Redfern) were Sunday School teachers plus one who was the Sunday School Secretary. Leigh Redfern was the secretary of the Wesley Guild.

James Arthur Chapman

Arthur was born in 1897 in south Manchester, the younger son of James and Lizzie Chapman. In 1901 the family was living at 638 Stockport Road, Longsight. The father was a butcher and by 1911 they had moved to Market Place (Square), Bramhall, as the area at the crossroads of Woodford Road, Bramhall Lane South and Ack Lane was known. The property is now 1 Ack Lane with the inscription "AD 1904". They took it over from a Mr Metcalfe; today it is Corry's butchers and it always seems to have been a butchers. The two sons, Ernest and Arthur, joined their father in the business and the family lived over the shop.

Arthur enlisted in the 7th Battalion of the Black Watch in Dunkeld, Perthshire, in 1917. He died in Netley Military Hospital on 30 January 1918 from wounds he received in action on 28 December. He was 21 and was buried at Christ Church, Woodford. The Stockport Advertiser reported that his coffin was taken in an "open funeral car completely enveloped with flowers" and the names of several Bramhall shopkeepers were on the list of floral tributes.

The father's butchers shop is thought to have changed hands about 1930 when it became Bromley's who kept it until at least the 1980s.

Frank Holden Halliday

Frank was born in Bramhall on 6 November 1890, the son of Frank and Rebecca Halliday. His father was a solicitor's clerk and they lived at 46 Bramhall Lane. In 1906 the family was living at Wynhurst, Bramhall Lane, later called 187 Bramhall Lane South. By 1911 his father was a partner in the stockbroking firm of Halliday, Blakeway and Teasdale of 4 St. Ann's Square and a member of the Manchester Stock Exchange. The family was living at 241 Bramhall Lane. Frank attended Pownall Green County Primary School. On leaving school he worked briefly for Commercial Union Insurance before joining his father's firm. He was a Sunday School teacher and a member of the Stockport Garrick Society*.

Frank enlisted in the 1/6th Battalion of the Manchester Regiment in August 1914. His battalion served in Egypt before being posted to Turkey. He was killed at Gallipoli on 4 or 5 June 1915. His body was never found and he is commemorated on the Helles Memorial. A memorial service for him was held on Tuesday 6 July in the Methodist Church. His name appeared in a list in the Manchester Evening News which was prefaced "Another appalling list of casualties among the men of the East Lancashire Territorial Division at the Dardanelles is issued today. The list contains the names of no fewer than 120 men who have given their lives for the country's honour. The total losses of the Division, so far as the casualty lists reveal up to the present, are about 870 killed".

Frank was 24 and his effects were valued at £505 12s, with administration granted to his father. His name is one of 36 on the WW1 memorial that for decades hung in the Manchester Stock Exchange on Norfolk Street, which was purchased in 2013 by former Manchester United players Gary Neville and Ryan Giggs to turn into a hotel. The brass memorial plaque is now in storage at St. Ann's Church nearby.

*The Stockport Garrick Society was founded in 1901 to address "the great need in Stockport for an energetic society whose aim should be mainly educational, i.e. To perform the best plays by the most capable amateur actors and with the finest scenic effects, whose efforts would be directed to fostering and furthering the highest forms of dramatic art and literature.

Herbert Walter Heaton

Herbert was born on 22 May 1896, the son of Hugh and Mary Emma Heaton. His early life was in Manston, near Leeds. In 1908 the family were living in Heaton Norris and by 1911 were at Combermere, on Woodford Road (now 83) with a live-in servant. In 1909 Herbert had been enrolled at The King's School, Macclesfield, and is remembered on their war memorial. In 1912 he passed the Cambridge Senior Examination and started as a clerk with the Royal Insurance Company. He was a Sunday School teacher and a scout leader.

Herbert volunteered to join the 28th (Reserve) Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers a few months after the start of the war. According to the Stockport WW1 website his army record survived the Luftwaffe raid in WW2 and is said to show that he was exceptionally tall for the time, at 6ft 2in. He weighed 12st 6lb and had a 39 inch chest. His battalion was one of the public school battalions made up of middle and upper class young men from the best schools. Many were quickly selected to become officers and Herbert received his commission as a 2nd lieutenant in the 2/7th Battalion of the Lancashire Fusiliers on 19 October 1915.

Herbert's battalion was sent to France in February 1917. He was killed on 5 September at the Third Battle of Ypres (Passendaele) and is buried in Ypres Reservoir Cemetery, Ieper.

Harold Williamson Higgins

Harold, one of five children, was born in Crumpsall on 24 September 1894, the second son of William and Ellen Jane Higgins. His father was a wholesale drapery buyer. Harold and his older brother Stanley enrolled at Pownall Green County Primary School on 10 January 1900. Harold left on 27 August 1906 for Bramhall Grammar School. In 1901 the family were living in Cromwell Road, close neighbours to another young boy, Douglas Padfield, who is also on the civic war memorial. The family later moved to Ashdene on Kitts Moss Lane. Harold attended The King's School, Macclesfield, and his name is on the school's war memorial. On leaving school, Harold worked as a clerk for Hall, Higham & Co., a firm of clothes dealers on Dale Street, Manchester.

At the declaration of war, Harold enlisted in the 1/6th (Territorial) Battalion of the Manchester Regiment ("D" Company) and was posted to Egypt for the next seven months. At Christmas that year he sent an inspiring letter home expressing his thoughts about being with his family. In May 1915 the Battalion was sent to Gallipoli where Harold was badly wounded on 4 June. He was evacuated to a hospital ship bound for Malta but he died on board and was buried at sea. He is remembered on the Helles Memorial.

A memorial service for Harold was held in the church at the end of June. His effects were valued at £97 6s 8d and administration was granted to his mother.

Harry Ronnie Higgins

Harry was born in Heaton Chapel on 8 August 1897, the third son of William and Ellen Higgins. His name can be confusing as Harry is a diminutive of Harold, the name of his older brother above. He became known as Ronnie, which may have been formalised to Ronald – he is on the church memorial as Ronald H. Higgins and on the civic memorial as H. Ronald Higgins. He enrolled at Pownall Green County Primary School on 13 October 1902 and left on 10 September 1906 to move on to Bramhall Grammar School. He went to The King's School, Macclesfield, from 1908 to 1913 after which he worked at Tootal, Broadhurst, Lee & Co. at its Manchester offices on Oxford Street. He was a scout and a keen sportsman, playing cricket and football.

Ronnie was only 17 when his brother Harold was killed and possibly discouraged by his parents, he did not volunteer for the army but was conscripted on reaching military age in June 1916. He was assigned to the 8th Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers, going overseas a few weeks later after training. After a period on the front line, Ronnie and comrades were moved near Neuve Chapelle on 21 January 1918 for labouring duties. On 24 January he was hit by shrapnel from an exploding shell and killed outright. He is buried in the British Cemetery at Croix-du-Bac, Nord, France.

Administration was granted to his mother on the first anniversary of his death, an unexplained delay. She had lost her husband in the spring of 1918 not long after Ronnie was killed and she had moved to Ack Lane. Ronnie's effects were valued at £186 2s 6d. He is also remembered on his school memorial (as R. Higgins), the Tootal, Broadhurst Lee memorial in Crowngate House, Oxford Street (as H. Higgins), and the St. Michael's memorial (as H. Ronald Higgins).

Alfred James Redfern

Alfred was born in Salford in 1893, the son of John Edward Redfern, a brush manufacturer, and his wife, Alice Mary. He was the third of four children. They lived at 324 Lower Broughton Road, Salford, before moving to 2 Melbourne Villas, Middleton Road, Crumpsall, with two servants. In 1906 the family was living at The Birches, Bramhall Lane, and in 1910 at The Gables, Carr Wood Road. They had a resident cook and a housemaid.

Like his brother Leigh, the Higgins brothers and Harold Heaton, all on the memorial, Alfred attended The King's School, Macclesfield. On leaving school he joined the family's brush-making business, James Redfern & Co. of Market Street, Manchester. He appears to have been a talented artist.

Alfred enlisted in the Cheshire Regiment in 1915 but probably didn't go on active service until the summer of 1916 when he went to France where he was transferred to the 1st Battalion of the South Wales Borderers. They joined the Battle of the Somme and Alfred was killed on 27 July at Bazentin-le-Petit. He does not have a grave but is remembered on the Thiepval Memorial, Somme.

The month before Alfred was killed, his parents had received official confirmation that his brother Leigh had been killed a year earlier at Gallipoli. Alfred's effects were valued at £409 3s with probate granted to his father. Both brothers' names are also on St. Michael's Church memorial and Alfred's is on the school memorial but for an unknown reason Leigh's is not. In a blog dated 6 May 2017, Her Majesty's ambassador to Austria, Leigh Turner CMG, explained that his mother was a cousin of the Redfern brothers.

Robert Leigh Redfern

Leigh was born on 6 January 1892 and baptised at the family home, 94 George Street, by Charles Garrett, the minister of the Victoria Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Cheetham Hill. He was the second child and first son of James Edward and Alice Mary Redfern. His middle name, Leigh, which he used in preference to Robert was his mother's maiden name. As described above, the family moved to Salford then Crumpsall before settling in Bramhall, first at The Birches, Bramhall Lane, and then at The Gables, Carr Wood Road, with two resident servants.

Like his brother, Leigh attended The King's School, Macclesfield before joining his father's brush-making business, James Redfern & Co. of Market Street, Manchester. Leigh was a strong supporter of the Sunday School at the Methodist Church and was secretary of the Wesley Guild. He was a keen sportsman, playing for Bramhall Cricket Club and was secretary of the Bramhall Football Club. He enlisted in the 1/6th Battalion of the Manchester Regiment in August 1914. His service number was just one higher than that of his close friend Harold Higgins meaning that they enlisted together. They both attended The King's School although Leigh is not on their war memorial. David Hill, who has researched and written about the men on the memorial has consulted the school's archives and concluded that Leigh was omitted in error.

Leigh's battalion was sent to the Dardanelles Campaign, now more commonly known as Gallipoli, on 6 May 1915. After his first tour of duty in the trenches, Leigh sprained his ankle but stayed on duty for two weeks before he had to report for medical treatment. He was sent to a hospital ship moored just off the peninsula and was deemed fit to return to duty on 3 June. The following day 770 men of the 6th Manchesters went into action in one of the main actions of the campaign, the Third Battle of Krynithia, but by nightfall only 160 returned. Leigh was reported as missing and it was only the following June that his parents received confirmation that he had been killed that day, 4 June. He has no known grave and is remembered on the Helles Memorial. His good friend Harold Higgins, with whom he enlisted, was fatally wounded in the same action on the day Leigh was killed and it seems likely that their friend and neighbour, Frank Halliday, was fatally wounded with them.

Leigh's effects were valued at £214 14s. with administration granted to his father but not until 13 months later, on 24 July 1916, due to the uncertainty about his death. Three days later his brother Alfred was killed.

Reginald Stanley Spencer

Reginald was born in 1892 in Hebden Bridge, one of six children of Joseph and Emily Spencer. Joseph was a tailor and outfitter and the family lived at Heath House, then Brentwood on Birchfield Road with a resident servant.

The family moved to Bramhall around 1903 and the boys went to a local school, either Pownall Green County Primary School and/or Bramhall Grammar School. They moved first to Rostrevor on Bramhall Lane and then to Endsleigh also on Bramhall Lane, which was probably close to Pownall Hall.

Following school Reginald worked as an insurance clerk but moved to Grove Park, a suburb of Lewisham in London, near his sister Lilian in Sydenham. He enlisted in the 1/9th Battalion London Regiment (Queen Victoria's Rifles).

In 2016 a party of schoolchildren from King Edward VI School, Stafford, visited the Western Front and at Arras one of their teachers told them about his great granduncle Rifleman Spencer who had enlisted in October 1914 and trained at Crowborough in Sussex, landing in France in March 1915. On 1 April he was wounded and suffered shell shock but recovered and returned in September 1915 for the Battle of Loos. His trench was blown up and he was buried alive. He was rescued but did not regain consciousness until he had been shipped back to London, suffering memory loss and shell shock. However by February 1916 he was back on the front line in France. He was wounded again and suffered shell shock once more. He was admitted to hospital in France in September 1916 until March 1917. He was the only survivor from his platoon. His luck finally ran out on 14 April 1917 when he was killed at the Battle of Arras. His body was never found and he is remembered on the Arras Memorial, Pas de Calais.

A year after Reginald was killed his brother Norman was married in the Methodist Church. It is believed the Spencers left Bramhall in the 1920s moving down to Billericay, Essex, where his father died in 1932.

James Buckley Wood

James was born on 25 October 1893 in Moston, the son of James and Mary Wood. Both his parents had been widowed and he had a stepsister Mary and a younger sister Sybil. His father was a master warehouseman. By 1900 they were living at Sunnyside on Woodford Road (now 91). Neither James nor Sybil seems to have been registered with the state. James Senior died in January 1904 and James Junior transferred from the Warehousemen and Clerks' Orphans School (now Cheadle Hulme School) to Pownall Green County Primary School in May. A year later in April 1905 he left for Manchester Grammar School.

James was apprenticed in "home trade" in Manchester, this being trade within the nation. James joined one of the Public School Battalions of the Royal Fusiliers. He served abroad as a private but was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Lancashire Fusiliers in 1916, later being promoted to Captain. In 1918 his Battalion was in retreat from the front line in France near Mametz when he and all his Company were taken prisoner and he was badly wounded. There is some confusion about his exact date of death but the official date is 26 March. He was buried by the Germans but after the war a new CWGC cemetery was created at Harbonnières and James's body was reinterred.

James's effects were valued at £1128 17s 7d, with probate granted to Henry Martin Whitefield, a retired cashier who had been one of the administrators of his father's will in 1904. His name is also on the St. Michael's Church memorial and on the Manchester Grammar School memorial.

In December 1915, a few months before he was killed, James wrote the following letter home and it was published in the church's Portfolio, a manuscript magazine.

"I am in excellent spirits and even better health. A very small candle is affording me the light for me to scribe this epistle. Am writing in comparative luxury; a table, a roof over my head, a box to sit on for a chair; in fact, excellent conditions. Have had two baths – hot ones – in two consecutive days, so am feeling "top hole".

You in "Blightey" cannot realise what it means for us to have a nice hot bath, and a change of clothing. After living unshaven, unkempt and unwashed for a week, then

having a nice shave, bath, and change, it is like heaven. Your spirits spring up into a flame, instead of a glowing ember.

I am situated in a very unimportant part of Flanders as regards beauty of landscape, etc, yet, nevertheless viewed from a purely military standpoint the last great advance was from where I have been. I am forbidden to mention any names, so must rest content."

Bibliography

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Janet McMurray, February 2019