



The War Graves in Newchurch

“At the going down of the sun, and in the morning, we will remember them”

It is impossible to appreciate the feelings of people at the time of the Great War. The men went off to fight for their country against the forces of the Kaiser. War was just beginning to mechanise, but it was still kill or maim more of the enemy than your own side's casualties. Attitudes were different. The number of casualties were astronomic.

It was not just the men. As they went off to war the women had to go into their jobs to keep the country running. Although the casualties listed below are all servicemen many are described in the register of burials with their civilian occupation, mainly slipper workers.

The other thing that strikes me is that ten of our war casualties died outside the official dates of the wars. Private Caygill died on Armistice Day itself, he probably did not know that had been achieved.

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St Nicholas' Church Graveyard, Church Lane, Newchurch

There are 12 war graves at St Nicholas with two soldiers commemorated on one headstone citing there are buried elsewhere in this graveyard, there are a further eight with CWGC headstones and two in private graves.

Immediately to the south the main gate to Church Lane there is a CWGC headstone advising us that buried elsewhere in this graveyard are two veterans. I have been unable to establish where one is buried.

Gunner James William Hitchen, L/10248, Royal Field Artillery who died on the 24th of October 2018, a slipper worker who lived at 678 Blackpool Terrace, Waterfoot. Husband of Sarah Hitchen, of 22 Cookson Street, Blackpool. Spec. Memorial.

Private James Albert Sutcliffe, 64337, 5th Garrison Bn, Royal Welsh Fusiliers, who died on the 18th May 1917. Described as residing at Shipyard Barrow in Furness. Spec. Mem. (Old Ground. 496.).

The other veterans buried with CWGC headstones are:

Gunner Bertie Whitbread, 45605, "A" Battery. 187th Brigade. Royal field Artillery, who died on the 28th December 1915. A. New Yard. 167.

Private James Moorhouse, 52nd MT Company, Royal Army Service Corps, who died on the 20th March 1916. He is described as a finisher at slipper works and resided at 21 South Street, Stacksteads.

Private David Freeman Caygill, 241754, East Lancashire Regiment, a tailor, who died on 11th November 1918 aged 28, in the military isolation hospital Aldershot. His address is noted as 27 Castle Garden, Kendal. C. New Yard. 106.

Private William Cockle, 27417, East Lancashire Regiment, who died on 9th March 1919 aged 37 in the military hospital Pres Heath. He lived in Tunstead. C. New Yard. 304

Private Luke Barnes, 68073, Machine Gun Corps (Infantry), a slipper worker, who died on the 1st April 1919, aged 33, Son of J. R. Barnes, of 9, Pleasant View, Waterfoot; husband of Naomi Barnes, of Rough Lee Farm, Waterfoot C. New Yard. 448

Ship's Corporal 1st Class Edward Fairfoul, 175031, HMS Pembroke, Royal Navy, a slipper worker, who died on the 6th August 1920 aged 44. Son of Mrs. Alice Fairfoul; husband of Harriett Fairfoul, of 127, Edgeside Lane, Edgeside Estate, Waterfoot. Born in Ireland. Section C. New Yard. 109

Private James Leslie Edwards, 3715929, Royal Army Ordnance Corps, who died on the 30th May 1941 aged 26. Husband of Mary Jane Edwards, of Newchurch Grave Sec B plot 251.

Private William Henry Rushton, 14746721, Royal Army Medical Corps, who died on the 14th June 1945, aged 36. Son of Frederick and Margaret Alice Ruston, of Newchurch; husband of Margaret Ruston, of Rawtenstall. Sec. C. Grave 79.

The two interred in private graves are:

Aircraftman 1st Class Frank Haworth, 1699416, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve died 10th April 1944, Husband of Phyllis Haworth, of Rawtenstall. Sec A Grave 60

Private Norman Claxton, 1090396, Pioneer Corps, died 3rd October 1946 aged 34. Son of Edward Phillingham Claxton and Susannah Claxton, of Newchurch, Rawtenstall. Sec. A. Grave 430.

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Bethlehem Unitarian Chapel Graveyard, Turnpike, Newchurch

Private G T Scholes, 45567, 23rd Battalion, The King's (Liverpool Regiment), died 23rd December 1916, Son of Mrs. Martha Scholes of 20, Spring Terrace, Stacksteads. His headstone is a CWGC stone

Private H Scholes, 36322, 1st/4th Battalion, Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry died 3rd October 1919. He is in a private grave.

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St Michael's Churchyard, Lumb

(St Michael's Church was merged with St Nicolas and the churchyard is now closed to new graves)

Of the three war graves here, two have CWGC headstones and one is in a private grave. The two CWGC headstones sit by side abutting each other. They each are noted as plot 649. Both soldiers served in the same unit, The East Lancashire Regiment and both were killed in Egypt.

Private George Barclay, 20596, 6th Battalion, ELR, killed on the 3rd January 1920, aged 23. Private Barclay resided at 5 Hargreaves Street, Whitewell Bottom, Lumb. He was the son of Mrs. Mary Barclay, of 13, Hargreaves, Whitewell Bottom.

Corporal William Thoburn, 11505, ELR, killed on the 30th January 1920., aged 34. Corporal Thoburn resided at 13. Hargreaves Street, Whitewell Bottom, Lumb. It his recorded his wife had now gone to Stacksteads.

Both these graves are described as an earth mound but the CWGC headstones were added later.

The third grave is that of **Lance Bombardier Thomas Arthur Pilling**, 229045, 12th Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery who is described as residing at the Military Hospital Horncliffe. He died on 14th August 1919, aged 21. There is no headstone surviving but he is buried in plot 100. He was the Son of Arthur and Sarah Ann Pilling.

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There 4 war graves at **St Anne's Church, Edgeside** and a further 3 at **The Baptist Church, Lumb** but these are both open graveyards, so no details are included here.

May we all be eternally grateful for their sacrifice. Had we not been the victors in those wars life now would be very different for us.

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Their Name Liveth for Evermore



Iain G Blair

Bibliography – CWGC, and the church burial registers.