

## WW 1 Commemoration Service Address by Elizabeth Bryson for 21<sup>st</sup> October 2018

In her autobiography *Testament of Youth* Vera Brittain movingly describes 11<sup>th</sup> November 1918. In the First World War Vera worked hard nursing the wounded. She was a VAD – a Voluntary Aid Detachment Nurse in London, Malta and France. In November 1918 she was nursing in London. She suffered deeply when the man she loved, and later her brother, died, serving as soldiers in the First World War. In the chapter *This Loneliest Hour* she writes:<sup>1</sup> ‘When the sound of victorious guns burst over London at 11 am on November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1918, the men and women who looked incredulously into each other’s faces did not cry jubilantly: ‘We’ve won the War!’ They only said: ‘The War is over.’ Vera listened ‘to the merriment with a heart that breaks and ears that try to keep out the mirthful sounds.’ She ended this Chapter writing:<sup>2</sup> ‘The War was over; a new age was beginning; but the dead were dead and would never return.’

These feelings of relief that the War is over accompanied by deep grief and mourning for loved ones who had died, must have been how the family and friends felt of all those we remember today. While we honour and remember those who died we feel sympathy, compassion and sorrow for the sufferings of those who mourn and for the **800** soldiers returning to this Parish, after suffering so much in the horrors of the War.

It is wonderful to see the renovated Remembrance Board in the North Porch and the new Board with the 7 missing names of those from this Parish who died in the First World War whose names were not on the Original Board. Here at All Saints Boyne Hill you can now **remember them** - remember those **133** from this Parish who died in the First World War because you can now see their names clearly. Those who came on my Guided Walks in 2015 found it hard to read the names on the Remembrance Board. I am so glad that Derek Smith continued the Project so that today the Original Board can be re-dedicated in its restored position and the new Remembrance Board dedicated at this special Service where we commemorate the end of the First World War, 100 years ago.

I will now tell you about the seven soldiers from the First World War who are on the new Board.

**Charles Edward Cox** was born in 1892. He was the husband of Elsie Cox of 27 Grenfell Road. Charles was a Sapper in the Royal Engineers. He died aged 28 on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1920, from his War Service, so he was given a Commonwealth War Grave in our Churchyard after the Remembrance Board was finished, which is why he is not on the Original Board.

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<sup>1</sup> Testament of Youth: Vera Brittain, Virago Press, 2004, p. 421-422

<sup>2</sup> Testament of Youth: Vera Brittain, Virago Press, 2004, p. 424



**Edward Cutler** – lived at 5 High Town Rd, Maidenhead, in this Parish. He was a Serjeant Major in the Royal Field Artillery, where his battalion was "B" Battery 291st Brigade. He was killed in Action at the Somme on 25<sup>th</sup> July 1916. 'Edward Cutler RIP' is recorded in the Roll of Honour in the September 1916 Parish Magazine. I think his name was on the War Memorial at St Paul's Church, a daughter Church of All Saints, which was demolished in the 1960s when the dual carriageway was built near High Town Road.

**William Lipscombe's** family are here today and wrote to me saying: 'Thank you especially for all your efforts in getting the missing names added. Our great-uncle is finally remembered alongside his brother and comrades. It means a great deal to us.' William's parents were Mr. and Mrs. Charles Lipscombe, of 4 North Star Lane, Maidenhead; his mother's name was Sarah. Oliver Percy Lipscombe, who is on our original Board was his brother. His great-nieces Joy Neville and Diana Patten were surprised that their Great-Uncle William was not also on our Board, as he lived in the Parish. William was a Private in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Royal Berkshire Regiment. He was killed in Action at Cambrin on the 16th December 1915 at Boyau, Bethune in the Battle of Cambrai, and he was buried in the Cambrin Churchyard Extension, behind the Church. I have visited his grave in that peaceful Churchyard.

**Walter James Bannister** was born at Hampstead, Middlesex in 1887 and later his family moved to Maidenhead and lived in this Parish at 54 Grenfell Rd. Walter was the brother of Frederick George, the father Barbara Bannister who is here today. Walter was a Serjeant in the Middlesex Regiment. He served in the Army in France and Flanders. He was killed in action near Le Touret on 14<sup>th</sup> March 1915 aged 26. Walter Bannister has no known grave, so his name is recorded on Le Touret Memorial. At the time of his death Walter's mother went to the Congregational Church in Maidenhead and probably had his name put on their Board. I have tried to find out but their Board was in storage while refurbishments were being made to the Church. His family lived in the Parish and Miss Barbara Bannister, his niece, who has attended All Saints Church for more than 80 years is pleased that her uncle's name is be on our new Board. She wrote: 'I am pleased to confirm that I have been consulted about the inclusion of my uncle's name, W J Bannister, on the new Remembrance Board. I am delighted that his name will be shown on the board in future. Although I was not born when he was killed I shall like to see it there when I come in to the church, his siblings often spoke of him and I feel I knew him.'

**Joseph Henry Edwards** lived at Boyn Terrace and later at 20 Prospect Place, Boyne Hill and The Stores, Boyne Hill. He was a Private in Royal Berkshire Regiment and a Sapper in the Royal Engineers. He was seriously ill in June 1918 and was discharged as medically unfit. He died in 1921 aged 31, leaving a wife and 3 children. He was honoured with a Commonwealth War Grave in our Churchyard, after our Remembrance Board was finished.



**William Henry Roadnight** lived at 27 College Glen and 6 Castle Hill Maidenhead. He was the husband of Mrs. Mary Anne Roadnight. He was a Private in the Royal Berkshire Regiment 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion. He served in France and Flanders and was killed in action on 5<sup>th</sup> August 1917. In the Parish Magazine of October 1917 William H. Roadnight is listed in the Roll of Honour as 'William H. Roadnight RIP' He may have been on the St Paul's Church Board and it is good he is on our new Board.

**Charles Stevens** lived at 3, Hope Cottages, High Town Rd., Maidenhead. He was Lance Serjeant in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Royal Berkshire Regiment, serving in France and Flanders. As well as receiving the Victory Medal and the British War Medal, the Level 3 Gallantry Medal was awarded to Charles for acts of gallantry and devotion to duty under fire. It was announced in the London Gazette Issue 29731: 'His Majesty the King has been graciously pleased to award The Military Medal to Charles Stevens for bravery in the field. 1 / 9 /1916'. He was killed in action on 29<sup>th</sup> November 1917. He is buried in France at Moeuvres Communal Cemetery Extension. His mother was Mrs Elizabeth Stevens. Charles' name is on his brother Frederick James Stevens's grave, in our Churchyard near the side gate. Charles may have been on the St Paul's Board as the family home in High Town Road was near St Paul's Church. It is good that Charles Stevens, this brave soldier honoured with the Level 3 Gallantry Medal should be added to the new Board.

Our Bible reading from St Paul's Epistle to the Romans reminds us that nothing in 'all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' (*Romans 8:39*) We heard the question: 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?' (*Romans 8:35*) For the soldiers we remember today they did indeed 'face death all day long' and felt they were 'considered as sheep to be slaughtered.' (*v.36*) How wonderful that in all the horrors, fear and pain that the love of Jesus was with them. St Paul writes: 'I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' (*Romans 8: 38-39*)

We can be encouraged by this to know that when we experience times of trouble, sorrow, anxiety, suffering and difficulties that we can still feel the love of God reaching out to us through Jesus and know His help and presence in our times of need as well as in times of joy. How wonderful that nothing can separate us from the love of Jesus!

Today we give thanks to the Lord for all the **133** from the Parish who served and died in the Great War and we are glad that around **800** from the Parish who served, survived and came home. They all served and suffered for our peace and freedom. We are deeply appreciative for their sacrifices and **we will remember them.** Amen

