

Maynard Colchester-Wemyss was writing about the first anniversary of the Declaration of War, when Britain's 'contemptible little army' had totalled around 200,000 men. Even after the losses of a year's fighting, he had been "credibly informed" that the total number of men 'under arms' was by now 3 million, all of whom were volunteers. And while we in England mainly remember the loss of life in areas where our own soldiers fought, we should also remember the huge loss of life on the Eastern front, where, by December 1914, over a quarter of a million Russian soldiers had already lost their lives.

However, Maynard Colchester-Wemyss also describes a lighter side of the war and the arrival in Westbury of three young female schoolteachers from London who had come to do their bit for the war effort by picking plums for a fortnight. For three days, they never ate a single plum as they thought it would be dishonest, but "the farmer's hearty laughter soon convinced them otherwise."

With a little space to spare, I must confess that although I wrote confidently in February that Christopher Warren was the first man from Westbury to die in the Great War, now I'm not so sure. I recently received an e-mail from a researcher who is telling the stories of bellringers all over England who died in the war. I had already belatedly discovered that Christopher Warren was

one of Westbury's bellringers but my fellow researcher had found a Christopher Warren who served in the 1<sup>st</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, whereas the one I had found had served in the Gloucestershire regiment. Her man had died of sickness in January 1919 in Kantara in Egypt whereas mine had died in Ypres in February 1915. Her Christopher Warren had left a widow, Jane, and she thought they had married in Westbury in 1912, and a child Joyce had been born here in October 1914, but when I went to check this, the marriage had taken place in Oxfordshire and I could find no trace of the child being born or baptised in Westbury. So I am still unsure and will have to get a copy of the child's birth certificate to see if this clarifies anything. So the search goes on.

I am also completely stumped by one name on the memorial—Cyril Heywood. I can find no trace on the census records of anyone with that surname, or variations of it, living in Westbury at any time and neither is there any trace of anyone with that name having been killed in the war. So I am just hoping that someone, somewhere, may come up with some clue as to who he might have been.

For further copies of this leaflet or if you have any information to add, please contact Di Landon on 01452 760531

## Westbury Remembers - Part 5

### Gallipoli—Samuel Windridge

Written by Di Landon  
and sponsored by

**Westbury-on-Severn Parish Council**



There are two or three names on our war memorial which have proved difficult, or seemingly impossible, to trace and Samuel Windridge was initially one of them. I could find no trace on the census of anyone by that name living anywhere in the UK, let alone in Westbury. However, one thing that I have learned on this project is that names, even in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, were not always correctly recorded and once I broadened the search to alternative spellings, I found Samuel Windridge.

#### **Samuel Windridge**

Samuel was born in Kings Stanley around 1892. His father, William, was a shepherd and the family seem to have moved several times, presumably following the work. William and his wife, Eliza, had eight children of whom three were born in Nympsfield, two in Owlpen, and the three youngest in Kings Stanley. Samuel was their seventh child and by 1901, the family had moved again to Uley. Financially, they were



probably better off by this time as three of Samuel's teenage brothers were adding to the family income – 17 year old James was a tiler's labourer, 15 year old John was a baker's labourer and 13 year old Francis was a farm labourer. Also living with them was William and Eliza's baby granddaughter. By 1911, William and Eliza had moved to Adsett with their youngest son, Arthur, who was also a farm labourer. Nineteen year old Samuel was by this time living with his eldest brother, George, and his family, in Swindon, and was working as a house painter.

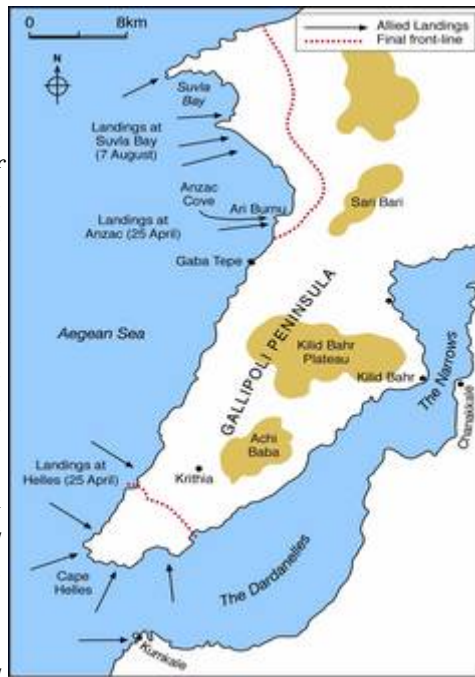
It was in Swindon in 1914 that he enlisted with the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Duke of Edinburgh's Wiltshire Regiment. The Battalion formed in Tidworth in August 1914 and moved to Chisledon in October, Cirencester in December, Woking in February 1915 and Bisley in May before sailing on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1915 from Avonmouth for the Dardanelles.

*When fighting in France and Fland-*

ers had clearly become deadlocked, some British politicians became entranced with the idea of attacking Germany 'by the back door' with an offensive through the Balkans or even a landing on Germany's Baltic coast. Initially sidelined, the idea gathered support when Britain's Russian allies were threatened by the Turks and appealed for help. A naval expedition was launched to bombard and take the Gallipoli peninsula on the western shore of the Dardanelles - the straits connecting the Aegean Sea with the Baltic. The British hoped to capture Constantinople, link up with the Russians, knock Turkey out of the war and possibly persuade the Balkan states to join the Allies. Bad luck and bad planning meant that the operation was a shambles. Bad weather caused delays, three battleships were sunk and three more damaged, and the Turks had time to strengthen their fortifications and multiply their troops sixfold. While the Anzacs (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps) managed to land at what became known as An-

zac Cove despite fierce opposition, the British also succeeded in landing at three points around Cape Helles. Thereafter there was little progress and the Turks took advantage of the situation by landing even more troops on the peninsula. The standstill led to a political crisis in London and, while the politicians argued, the troops suffered amid sweltering and disease ridden conditions. In July, the British reinforced the bridgehead at Anzac Cove and landed more troops at Suvla Bay further to the north, but both proved ineffectual and led to waves of counter-attacks by the Turks.

Accounts vary slightly about what happened when Samuel's battalion reached Gallipoli but it seems that they initially landed at Cape Helles in July 1915 but by the end of the month had been temporarily brought back to Mudros, a small Greek port on the Mediterranean



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island of Lemnos. In early August they landed on Gallipoli again, this time at Anzac Cove, in order to assist the British landings at Suvla Bay and to support the operations there. In conjunction with the Anzacs, they then mounted an attack north into the rugged country alongside the Sari Bair range with the aim of capturing the high ground and linking up with the Suvla landing. Their attack was successful, but the response from the Turkish Division, led by Mustafa Kemal was fast and very violent. On 10<sup>th</sup> August, the gunfire was said to be so intense it set the undergrowth ablaze. The positions of Samuel's battalion were overrun, many of the wounded were incinerated where they lay and half the battalion were never seen again. One of those missing was Samuel, who has no known grave. He was about 23 years old. His name is listed on the Helles Memorial on Gallipoli.

On 15 August, after a week of indecision and inactivity, the British commander at Suvla, Lieutenant-General Sir Frederick Stopford was dismissed. His performance in command was said to be "one of the most incompetent feats of generalship of the First World War."

The following words of Mustafa Kemal are inscribed on the memorial at Anzac Cove :-

*"Those heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives; you are now lying in the soil of a friendly country. Therefore rest in peace. There is no difference between the Johnnies and the Mehmets where they lie side by side here in this country of ours.*

*You, the mothers who sent their sons from far away countries, wipe away your tears. Your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace. After having lost their lives on this land, they have become our sons as well."*

Back home, in August 1915,



The Helles Memorial to the Missing on Gallipoli