

**St. Francis R.C. Church
Hill Chapel
Goosnargh
The History of the Parish War Memorial**



**An account of the lives of those young men
from the parish who lost their lives in
the service of our country during
two World Wars
Mike Bryan & Maria Peel
2016**



They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

For the Fallen
Laurence Binyon (1869-1943)
Born in Lancaster, the son of a clergyman.

Introduction

The parish war memorial, which stands in the centre of the churchyard, was erected in 1922, when Fr. H.B. Polding, O.S.B. was Parish Priest. It is built in stone and contains the names of eight soldiers from the parish who perished in the Great War. In the early years these men would have been fondly remembered by their families, friends and parishioners. A century later, however, many of their identities and life stories have been forgotten. Whilst we do briefly refer to the causes and consequences of conflicts and to certain major fields of battle, our main aim is to tell the men's story; their lives prior to war, their service and, sadly, the account of their deaths in fighting for king and country. Some are buried in Commonwealth War graves in England, France or Belgium; others have no known grave but are remembered with honour on war memorials within the three countries.

During the course of our research we have identified two other servicemen from St Francis' parish who were killed in action; one from WW1, the other from WW2, their names do not yet appear on the parish memorial; their stories are included.

Many of the documents we have acquired are stored in the parish archives. These are available to borrow or to view should you wish to do so. They include census returns, marriage certificates, attestation and service records, Commonwealth War Grave details, and copies of wills and accounts of conflicts linked to both wars.



Section One - The Great War

Chapter One

The First World War began in central Europe in late July 1914. There were many factors that led Europe to war, such as the conflicts and hostility between the great powers over the previous four decades

Germany and Austria-Hungary (the Central Powers) are seen, at the very least, as creating the conditions for conflict. Some go much further, blaming Germany for planning and waging a deliberate war of aggression.

Under Kaiser Wilhelm II, Germany moved from a policy of maintaining the status quo to a more aggressive stance. He decided against renewing a treaty with Russia, effectively opting for the Austrian alliance. Germany's western and eastern neighbours, France and Russia, signed an alliance in 1894 united by fear and resentment of Berlin. In 1898, Germany began to build up its navy, although this could only alarm the world's most powerful maritime nation, Britain. Recognising a major threat to her security, Britain abandoned the policy of holding aloof from entanglements with continental powers. Within ten years, Britain had concluded agreements, albeit limited, with her two major colonial rivals, France and Russia. Europe was divided into two armed camps: the Entente Powers and the Central Powers, and their populations began to see war not merely as inevitable but even welcome.

The immediate origins of the war, however, lay in the decisions taken by statesmen and generals during the July Crisis of 1914. This crisis was caused by the assassination of the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand by Gavrilo Princip, a member of a Serbian nationalist organisation. Britain declared war on Germany 4th August 1914.

Europe was divided into two armed camps: the Entente Powers and the Central Powers...



Chapter Two

The War Comes to Goosnargh

Prior to the war the majority of local men were employed either in agriculture, cotton weaving or were working in various trades or as attendants at the Whittingham Hospital, or Asylum, as it was then known. The Asylum was one of the biggest in Europe and offered reasonably secure employment to men and women alike. At least six of the men named on the Hill Chapel memorial had been employed at the Asylum prior to the advent of war. A Roman Catholic chapel, St. Luke's, was sited in the hospital and was served by priests from St. Francis'.

Men were also encouraged to spend a short period of time as members of the Territorial Army, or 'Territorial Force', as it was then called. Preston and Longridge established T.F's in 1908 to provide home defence but also to quickly bring men into regular service should the need arise. The threat of war increased the importance of the T.F, in 1914.

Once war was declared the pattern of life changed dramatically. Members of the T.F. were enlisted almost immediately, other men were encouraged to volunteer for duty at patriotic rallies held in Preston and Longridge; scores of them did so and quickly found themselves in training camps that had been established at Wesham near Blackpool and at Heaton Park in Manchester. Within weeks they would be marching to war in France.

They enlisted with their friends and neighbours and were encouraged to form units of 'PALS', as they became known. *They would fight the enemy more effectively if they were fighting with and for each other.*



‘In the early years of the war, research indicates that the British troops were full of optimism and confident that they could match anything an enemy might throw at them’. (Stedman, ‘Manchester’s Pals’, Published by Pen & Sword Books Ltd. 2004) At the time, Britain was at the height of its industrial power and Lancashire’s cotton trade was booming, many engineering companies were thriving and commerce was growing and diversifying. On his arrival in France Captain Alfred Bland, 7th City Battalion wrote: “It’s a case of just putting the lid on it; it will all be over by Christmas”. It would not be long, however, before all this optimism disappeared.

The war would drag on for four years with both sides losing thousands of men. Of the 180,000 men who joined the services in 1914 only 60,000 approximately were alive at the end of the campaign. The life expectancy of a junior officer was just six weeks!

On the surface, it is strange that despite the military deadlock, the belligerents did not reach a compromise peace. However, since Germany's aims were fundamentally incompatible with those of the Allies, and almost to the end both sides believed that the war was winnable, it is not surprising that the struggle went on. Despite some sporadic attempts to find common ground, it was not until autumn 1918 that Germany, clearly defeated, staged a deathbed conversion to the idea of a compromise peace.

Chapter Three



The Hill Chapel 1st World War Dead

Frank Shanley

Richard Holden

Frank Cooney

Richard Moon

Arthur James Hart

George Shea

Thomas Naylor

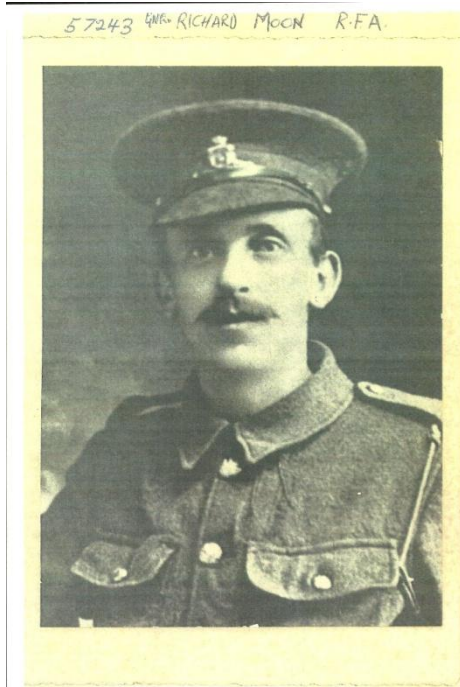
Joseph Danton

Charles Charnley (Name not currently inscribed)



Chapter Four

Richard Moon: Born 1887 – K.I.A. 25 April 1918



Richard Moon was a local man born in Broadway Lane, Goosnargh to parents William and Margaret Moon. The 1891 census indicates that there were two other children, an older brother John and a younger sister Ann, together with Elizabeth Coupe, Margaret's sister, living at the property. William was a farm labourer and Elizabeth a handloom weaver.

Ten years later, at the age of fourteen, Richard was himself working as a yardman on a farm and was living with his employers, Richard and Margaret Wareing at Cross House Farm, Goosnargh. He remained working in agriculture but transferred to Hay House Farm in Chipping around 1910. It was here, whilst working as a farm labourer for Elizabeth Well, a widow, that Richard met his future wife, Bertha Coates. The couple were married on 13th October 1911 at St Mary's R.C. Chapel, Chipping. His brother and sister were both present. A copy of the marriage certificate is in our parish archives.

The couple had four children, Margaret Ann, 9th April 1912, Winifred, 14th June 1913, Robert, 4th August 1914 (the day that war was declared) and Richard, 19th November 1917.

The exact date that Richard joined the army is not known but is likely, from the information we have, that it was probably in 1915. He joined the Royal Field Artillery and trained as a gunner. The regiment embarked for France in July 1915 and by November of that year it was engaged in the Battle of Loos, providing the manpower for the heavier mortars.

The Battle of Villers Brettoneux

The Second Battle of Villers-Bretonneux took place during the Battle of the Lys, 24–27 April 1918, when an assault was launched against the Allied lines to the east of Amiens. It is notable for the first major use of tanks by the Germans, who deployed fourteen of their huge twenty A7Vs, and for the first tank-versus-tank battle in history.



The tank battle occurred when a group of three advancing A7Vs met and engaged three British Mark IV tanks, two of which were smaller female tanks armed only with machine-guns. The two Mark IV females were damaged and forced to withdraw but the larger male tank, armed with 6-pounder guns, hit and disabled the lead A7V, which was then abandoned by its crew. The Mark IV continued to fire on the two remaining German A7Vs, which withdrew. The "male" then advanced with the support of Whippet light tanks which had arrived, until disabled by artillery fire and abandoned by the crew. The German and British crews recovered their vehicles later in the day. A counter-attack by two Australian and one British brigade during the night of 24 April partly surrounded Villers-Bretonneux and, on 25 April, the town was recaptured. It was probably during this battle that Richard was killed.

Richard Moon is buried in a Commonwealth War Grave at Beacon Cemetery, Sailly- Laurette, France, along with 771 other British casualties.



Beacon Cemetery, Sully- Laurette, France.

The fighting around Villers-Bretonneux in April resulted in the following Allied casualties: the Australian brigades had taken 2,473 casualties, British casualties were 9,529 and French losses were c. 3,500. German losses were 8,000–10,400 men. A very bloody battle indeed.

Like many other soldiers Richard had made an informal Will in his army pay book. He wrote the Will on 12th May 1917 and was killed on 25th April 1918. He left all that he possessed to his wife Bertha. Army records show that after the war she received £22.12.6. All these records are now in the parish archives.

Chapter Five

(Arthur) James Hart born 14th Dec 1891 – K.I.A. 23rd July 1918

James Hart was born on 14 Dec 1891 in Blackrod, Lancashire, the son of James and Aliciam (Alice) Hart (nee Worthington). He was baptized on 29 Dec 1891 at Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, Aspull, (the baptism entry also includes his date of birth).

He had two older sisters, Florence and Ambrosia and two younger brothers John and William.

He was counted on the census in 1901 living at 9, Tatton St, Chorley. Prior to enlisting he worked at Brindles Ltd, Greenfield Mill, Chorley, a character reference letter is contained within his army service record. There is no record of James, his mother or siblings on the 1911 census.

He enlisted on the 18 Jan 1912 (4th Battalion Loyal North Lancashire Regiment, Territorial Force). His TF military serial number was 1379.

On 01 Feb 1912 he attested and was posted to the 3rd Battalion Loyal North Lancashire Regiment, his military serial number 1872. On his army service record at attestation he gave his mother Alice and younger brothers John and William, as his next of kin.

Immediately prior to the war he lived in Preston and worked as an attendant and musician from 20 October 1913 to 5 August 1914 at the Whittingham Asylum. He would have worshipped at St Luke's Hospital Chapel which was served by Hill Chapel. The day after war broke out he was recalled to the army.

As part of a British Expeditionary Force, Arthur embarked for France on the 01 Mar 1916. He was wounded on the 11 Apr 1916 and he returned home on the 10 May 1916. After a short break he was transferred to the 2nd Battalion when, on 19th August, he would embark for East Africa. He later served in Egypt and finally in France. He died on **23 July 1918** in France and is buried in Raperie British

Cemetery, Villemontoire, close to where he was killed in the battle for Soissonais. He was awarded the Victory and British War Medals.



Soissonais 1918

In this battle the Allies suffered 107,000 casualties while the Germans suffered 168,000 casualties. Interestingly Adolf Hitler, the future Fuhrer of Nazi Germany, earned and was awarded the Iron Cross First Class at Soissons on August 4th 1918.

A copy of Arthur Hart's Will, service papers and family census records are held in the parish archives.

Chapter Six

Frank Shanley Born 1889 - Died of Wounds 4th July 1917



Frank Shanley was born in February 1889 in Barrowford, Nelson. His parents were Joseph and Catherine (nee Igoe). The family moved to Brierfield, Burnley and Frank attended Holy Trinity RC Church Brierfield. He was a fine footballer and played in goal for Nelson and, during the 1913/4 season, for Preston North End. On 13 December 1913 he kept goal in the match against Derby County, PNE won the game 2 – 0. Prior to the war Frank also worked as an attendant at the Whittingham Asylum, he was a good pianist and played for staff dances and other hospital functions. Whilst working at Whittingham he would have attended St Luke's RC Chapel served by Hill Chapel.

He volunteered for Active Service in May 1915 with a request to serve in the Gordon Highlanders. Frank was a physically fit man weighing 11st 5lbs and standing 5' 8", much heavier than many of the other volunteers. He enlisted in Aberdeen and a copy of his enlistment sheet is kept in the parish archives, his service number was Private S/10264.

Frank had two younger brothers both of whom served in the army during WW1

He embarked with the Highlanders for France from Southampton on 9th June 1916 and began active service on the front line on 22nd June.



Gordon Highlanders Belgium 1918

Frank was wounded in action on 3rd July 1917, this was during the battle of Aisne as the French and British troops were attempting to push the Germans back into Belgium. The German offensive was on a front of 11 miles north of the Aisne and was repulsed with heavy loss. A German attack towards Verdun was also repulsed. Frank was taken to the Canadian casualty clearing station with multiple shell wounds in his back and legs; sadly, he died the day after he was wounded on 4 July 1917 aged 28 yrs.

The Burnley Express and Advertiser, July 14 1917, carried a report of his death which included a section of a letter sent to his parents by a R.C. Chaplain who wrote: ***“It will be a comforting thought in your sorrow that the poor boy did not expire on the battlefield alone, but was here amongst friends and had the opportunity of receiving the sacraments. He was conscious to the very end and repeated the prayer that I said for him. He had the grace of a very happy death and, when sooner or later, we walk the same path may we receive the same favour. I shall assist at his burial tomorrow and bless his grave”***. He is buried and remembered with honour along with 9,901 other Commonwealth servicemen at Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery in Belgium.

The following hard copies of Frank’s records are held in the parish archives:

- PNE Season 1913/4 match statistics and reports
- Service Records including – Attestation Short Service Record, Service Medical History, Military History Sheet, Telegram to his Parents informing them of his death.
- Copy of the Burnley Express Report of his death.
- Photographs of Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery and grave plans.
- Frank’s Register of Effects left to his parents after his death.

Chapter Seven

George Shea Born 1886 - Died of Wounds 5th June 1915

George Shea was born in Preston to parents John and Mary Shea nee Evans (or Ivans). The 1891 census, however, shows George at the age of four, living with his step grandparents Patrick and Alice Logan in Broughton St, Preston. 1901 census returns still show him living with his grandparents but by this time, at the age of fourteen, he had left school and was working as a biscuit maker. On 23 July 1904 he joined the army and was initially based at Havelock Barracks in Preston. When he attested he weighed just 8st. 2lb and was 5' 7" tall. His papers describe him as having 'a fresh complexion, grey eyes and dark brown hair'. When he joined the army he trained as a blacksmith and served with the Royal Lancashire Regiment in India.

Records show that his mother was still married in 1911 and had had six children, four of whom had died. George and his sister Mary, born 1891, were the only two to survive into adulthood. There is no mention of the father at this time.

George left the army in May 1912 with a very good service record and became a reservist. In June 1912 he was employed at the Whittingham Asylum and worked as an attendant. He too would have attended mass and the sacraments at St Luke's chapel.

On 5th August 1914, the day after war was declared; George was recalled to the army to serve with the 1st Bn. King's Own (Royal Lancaster) Regiment as part of the British Expeditionary Force. He would serve in France and Flanders.

The Battle of Mons



The **Battle of Mons** was the first major action of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) in the First World War. It was a subsidiary action of the Battle of the Frontiers, in which the Allies clashed with Germany on the French borders. At Mons, the British Army attempted to hold the line of the Mons–Condé Canal against the advancing German 1st Army. Although the British fought well and inflicted disproportionate casualties on the numerically superior Germans, they were eventually forced to retreat due both to the greater strength of the Germans and the sudden retreat of the French Fifth Army, which exposed the British right flank. Though initially planned as a simple tactical withdrawal and executed in good order, the British retreat from Mons lasted for two weeks and took the BEF to the outskirts of Paris before it counter-attacked in concert with the French, at the Battle of the Marne.

In May 1915, less than a year after he joined his regiment, George was wounded during this retreat from Mons. He was struck on the left side of his neck and was so badly injured that he was immediately

repatriated to England. He was treated in a military hospital in Brighton but died from his wounds on 5th June 1915.

His grandparents requested that his body be brought back to Preston and he is buried with honour in a Commonwealth War Grave in New Hall Lane, Cemetery, Preston. George was awarded the 1914/15 Star, the Victory Medal and the British War Medal.

During his time in France he made an informal, yet legal, Will, leaving everything he owned to his step grandfather Patrick Logan. The Will was signed on 6th February 1915 four months before he died.

A copy of his Will, together with Census returns for 1891, 1901, & 1911 are kept in the parish archives. Other documents include; a copy of his attestation certificates, the army record of soldiers' effects upon death, his grave registration document, photographs of his grave, his army record and the Preston Herald newspaper report of 7th June 1915 reporting his death. All are available to view or to borrow.



Chapter Eight

Frank Cooney Born August 1891 – K.I.A. 9th October 1917

Frank Cooney was born in Achill Sound, County Mayo, Ireland in 1891. At that time Ireland was part of the British Empire and his parents, John and Anne, are shown on the 1901 Census of Ireland as having six children, four girls and two boys; Francis (Frank) being the eldest. At some stage, and in common with many other Irish families, the Cooney family moved to England and took up residence in Preston. Frank initially worked as a farm hand at Park Farm, Wrea Green, Kirkham, but on 7th November 1912 aged 21 yrs he joined the Scots Guards enlisting in Preston. His attestation papers show him to be a relatively tall man standing 5'11½" and weighing 9st 4lb. He had blue eyes, brown hair and a fresh complexion; his pulse rate was 96. He gave his occupation as 'Motor Mechanic'.

Having joined the army in November 1912, Frank's initial military career did not last very long. Military records show that just one month later on 5th December 1912, and, on a payment of £10, a tremendous amount of money for a working man at that time, he discharged himself from the Guards. This is when he moved to Whittingham and gained employment at the Asylum on 28th December. He then worked as a farm attendant and lived in staff quarters at the institution.

His earlier army career became extremely important when two years later war was declared and Frank re-enlisted with a different regiment, the 1st Bn. The Irish Guards; he was to serve in France and Belgium.



Irish Guards - The Ypres Salient 1917

During the First World War, the Irish Guards were deployed to France and they remained on the Western Front for the duration of the war. During the course of the war, the Regiment was awarded 406 medals, 4 of which were Victoria Crosses and lost over 2,300 officers and men.

The 1st Battalion was initially stationed at Wellington Barracks and was mobilised for war very early in August 1914. It landed at Le Havre and immediately engaged in various actions on the Western front. Frank would have been with the battalion at this time and would have fought in the Battle of Mons, the Battle of the Marne, the Battle of the Aisne and the First Battle of Ypres all before the end of the year.

It was during a period of home leave in August 1917, that Frank was married to Delia O'Connor, a hospital nurse from the Whittingham Institution. They were married by Fr. Davies O.S.B. at St Francis' Hill Chapel; both were 29 years of age. (Marriage Certificate in Archives) Frank very quickly had to rejoin his battalion the Irish Guards and would return to Ypres in September 1917. During September and October of that year, the battalion was involved in the Third Battle of Ypres, known as the Ypres Salient. It was during this 'Third Ypres', at Broenbeek, on 9th October 1917, that Frank was killed; just two months after he had been married at Hill Chapel. His body was never found but he is remembered with honour, along with 35,000 Officers and men whose graves are not Known, on the Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium. £21.9.3. was paid to his widow in 1918.



Chapter Nine

Joseph Danton Born 1880 -- K.I.A. 8th May 1915

Joseph Danton was born in Malta in September 1880. Little is known of his early years other than on leaving school he trained as a 'mosaic fixer'. By the age of 21yrs he had moved to Liverpool and, on 16 July 1902, he joined the regular army and was assigned to the King's Royal Rifle Brigade.

When Joseph attested he agreed to serve three years with the colours and a further nine years with the reserves. He would serve the full twelve years. He was quite a small man in height standing just 5' 5" he weighed 10st 1lb and had a sallow complexion; brown eyes and black hair.

Initially he spent some time at the Duke of York's Royal Military School but, in November 1902, he was posted to his home country, Malta, where he served for just over two years. In February 1905 he completed his training as a stretcher bearer and was posted to Egypt. Joseph spent four years in Egypt and on 16 January 1909, a month before his posting ended, he was appointed as a 'bandsman' playing trombone. He returned to England where he served the remainder of his twelve years' service, leaving the army in April 1914. His service was formally terminated on 15th July 1914 but he was reengaged as a reservist the day after on 16th July. This was probably due to the threat of war that was very much looming at that time.

During Joseph's first period of military service he suffered many bouts of poor health. He was particularly prone to chest problems, bronchitis and pleurisy and spent a total of 253 days in hospital due to these complaints. In December 1913, he had a serious liver complaint and spent a further 56 days in the military hospital. The problem with Joseph's liver may have been indicative of something that was to change the course of his military career and his life in future years.



Whittingham Asylum

On leaving the army, in May 1914, Joseph gained employment at the Whittingham Asylum as a musician; he was a single man and lived in staff quarters. He would have attended mass at St Luke's Chapel. His supervisor was Jack Richardson who had been employed at the hospital since 1899. Joseph was to become a close friend of Jack but, within two months, at the outbreak of war, Joseph was recalled to the army to the King's Own Rifle Corps, his service number was Rifleman 4552.

Probably as a result of his previous regular army service, in September 1914 he was promoted to Lance Corporal, then Corporal and finally Lance Sergeant. During the remainder of 1914 and early 1915, Joseph was stationed in England and was engaged in helping to train volunteers for the British Expeditionary Force. However, on 16th April 1915 he was found guilty of drunkenness whilst on active service and a Regimental Court Martial ordered that he be reduced to the rank of Private. Had his drinking been the cause of his liver problems during his regular army service? Whatever, having been reduced to the rank of Private, Joseph was almost immediately dispatched to France and left Southampton on 28th April 1915 with the BEF for the front line.

Within nine days, on 8th May 1915 Joseph was killed in action at Ypres. His body was never found but he is remembered with honour on the

Menin Gate, Memorial, Ypres, Panels 51 & 53. A very tragic end to a life devoted to military service.



Ypres 1915

Following Joseph Danton's death, army officials tried in vain to contact his next of kin in Malta and letters informing his family in Valetta of his death were returned undelivered. Communications were then sent to Whittingham and to Jack Richardson who was able to inform the military authorities that Joseph had expressly refused to give him details of his next of kin when he was employed at the asylum. An informal Will had been written on 14 August 1914 and in it Joseph left all his effects to Jack Richardson. Along with a small amount of money, Jack received a watch, a cigarette case, a gift box and some letters.

A copy of Joseph's Will, his attestation papers, military service record, health records and copies of communications from Rifles Record Office Winchester are available to view in the parish archives.

Chapter Ten

Richard Holden 1879 – KIA 25th November 1914

Richard Holden was born into a farming family at Higher Syke House Farm, Goosnargh, in 1879. His parents George and Elizabeth had ten children, nine boys and a girl, Richard was the third youngest boy, born just twelve months before his sister Margaret. The family would probably have worshiped at St Francis' Hill Chapel.

Sadly, their mother Elizabeth was to die sometime between 1891 and 1901. The 1901 census returns show that Richard's father George had by then been remarried to Margaret (maiden name not known).

In 1901 Richard was still living with the family and working as a farm hand at their new home, Bought (or Boot) Farm, Alston, Preston. By this time Richard, along with many other local men, had joined the Territorial Force, Loyal North Lancashire Regiment, his service number was 6078.

The next ten years would see a major change in Richard's life. He married Mary Hannah, eight years his junior, from Carnforth near Lancaster in c. 1906, and took up an appointment as an attendant at the Royal Albert Institution for Feeble-minded Persons in Lancaster, a sister hospital to the Whittingham Institution. The family had four children, Mary Elizabeth (16.07.1907), Margaret (29.01.1909), Winifred (23.10.1912) and Richard (06.04.1914). It is likely, that Richard would have spent some time working at Whittingham prior to the war.

In 1914, life for the Holden family was to be torn apart as Richard was called up the day after war was declared in August. He joined the 2nd Battalion The Scots Guards as Private, 2599. His attestation papers show that he was 5'8" tall with a fresh complexion, grey eyes, fair hair and a scar above his right eye. He was to serve with the British Expeditionary Force in France and Belgium; he would not be home for Christmas.



Scots Guards 1914 Ypres

The 1st Battalion, part of the 1st (Guards) Brigade of the 1st Division, was part of the British Expeditionary Force which arrived in France in 1914. The Battalion took part in the Battle of Mons in, August 1914, the First Battle of the Marne in September 1914 and the Battle of the Aisne also in September 1914

Men from the 1st and 2nd Battalions, which would have included Richard, then took part in the First Battle of Ypres in November 1914.

British casualties from 14 October – 30 November were 58,155, sadly Richard was amongst them. He was killed on 25th November 1914 and has no known grave.

Richard is remembered with honour on the Ploegsteert Memorial which bears the names of 11,000 servicemen of the United Kingdom and South African Forces who died in this sector during WW1 and have no known grave. Richard's name can be seen on Stone No. 1.H. Richard was awarded the 1914 Star and the Victory Medal. He left all his effects to his widow.



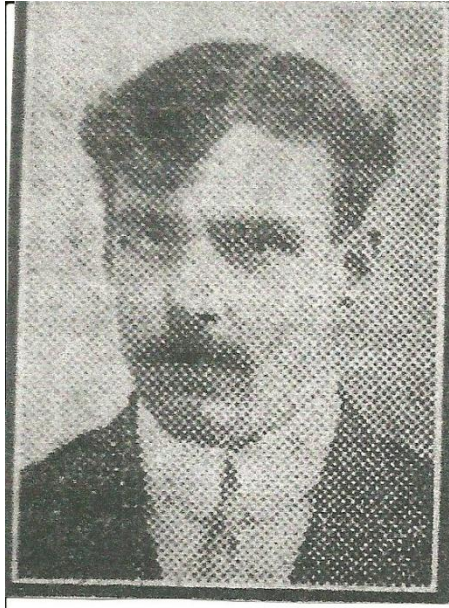
Ploegsteert Memorial Belgium,

Census figures suggest that Richard's widow Mary Hannah, remarried after his death and became known as Mary H Woodend. Richard has descendants still living and worshipping at St. Francis, Hill Chapel.

Census records, army registers, plans and photographs of the Ploegsteert Memorial are held in the parish archives.

Chapter Eleven

Thomas Naylor 5th January 1885 – K.I.A. 25th September 1915



Thomas Naylor was born in Walton le Dale in January 1885 to parents James and Catherine (nee Brogan). He initially attended St Patrick's school but when Thomas was eight, the family moved to Preston and he transferred to St. Augustine's school.

Thomas became a full time soldier at the age of twenty when he joined the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment. He signed up to serve seven years with the Colours and five years on reserve. After a short period of training, he was posted to the 2nd Battalion and joined the troops in South Africa. He was later to serve in Mauritius and finally in India where he remained until 1912

On leaving the army, Thomas was employed as an attendant at the Whittingham Asylum and would have worshipped at St Luke's Chapel. On 5th August 1914, however, he was recalled to the Colours and to the 1st Battalion Loyal North Lancashire regiment. He became a Private on board the SS Agapenor which carried the 1LNL across the Channel to Le Havre where they disembarked on 12th August 1914 becoming founder members of *The Contemptibles*.

The battalion was not engaged in any serious action at Mons or during the retreat south of Paris. However, it suffered severe casualties north of Aisne in mid September 1914. Thomas was wounded in one of these conflicts and this was reported in the Preston Guardian.

During the remainder of 1914 and the first six months of 1915, the 1LNL received a large number of reinforcements in preparation for coordinated attacks on the German lines in Champagne and Artois, and Thomas had by then been promoted to the rank of Lance-Sergeant. By the beginning of September 1915 the 1LNL was a very strong battalion and from 21st to 25th September it was engaged in a major conflict around the town of Loos.



During this period the enemy position was subjected to heavy bombardment to which, however, the German guns made little response. On 24th September the battalion moved forward towards enemy lines; the advance was to have been heralded by a gas attack,

but the hour for this was more than once altered, and when at 6.34 a.m. on the 25th gas was at last released from the British lines, the wind changed and blew it back on its own troops.

The front and support lines suffered considerably, while the presence of the gas also had the effect of causing the advancing line to become disorientated. The losses of the Battalion on the morning of 25th September were very heavy, comprising sixteen officers and 489 other ranks killed or missing. Thomas Naylor was amongst the missing presumed dead.



Thomas is remembered with honour on the Loos Memorial, Pas de Calais, France along with over 20,000 other British casualties. He was awarded the 1914/5 Star, the Victory Medal and the British War Medal.

Thomas had never married and at the end of the war his mother received just £27.13.10.

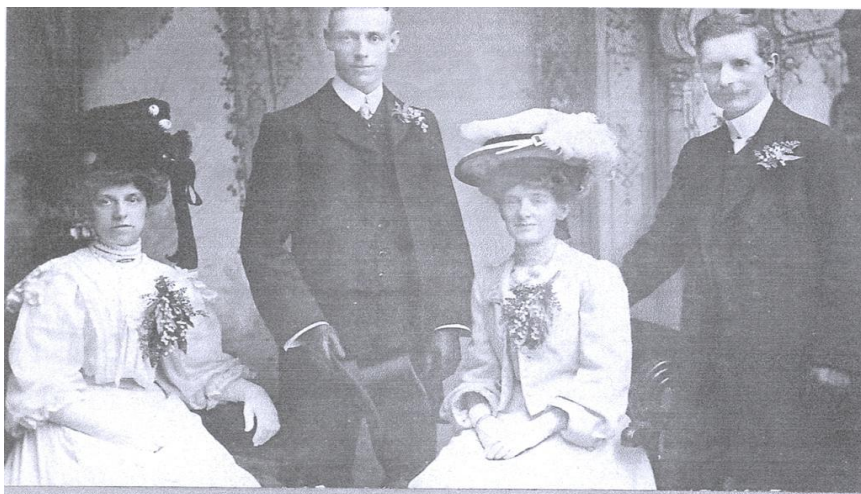
Census returns, army service details, newspaper reports, a copy of 'The Western Front Despatch' dated May 1915 containing details of Thomas' army career, and school admission records are available to view in the parish archives.

Chapter Eleven

Charles Charnley – Born 1882 – KIA 9th April 1918



Charles Charnley was born in Preston to parents James and Agnes, (nee Cardwell). There were five children in the household, Charles being the only boy. Mother and father were both employed in the cotton mill. When he was nineteen years old, Charles was still single and living at home in Margaret St., Preston, he was working as a clogger or shoe maker. His oldest sister, Mary Ellen, was also living at the house with her baby infant daughter Mary Elizabeth. Mary Ellen's husband, John Tattersall, is not recorded on the 1901 census at Margaret Street with his wife, but this was possibly due to his work commitment as an attendant at the Whittingham Asylum.



Charles & Ethel's Wedding

In 1907 Charles married Ethel Jane Turner at St. Augustine's R.C. Church Preston, Ethel's brother Charles Edwin Turner was the best man.

The 1911 census indicates that Charles and Ethel were living at 2 Moore St., Preston and had two small children, Agnes and Francis. Charles was still working as a clogger or shoe dealer. However, Charles subsequently sought employment at the Whittingham Asylum and his family moved to a new home in Church Lane, Goosnargh. His occupation at the asylum is recorded as a shoe and boot maker for the residents.

Whilst in Goosnargh Charles and Ethel had two more children, Edith and Kathleen; the children attended Goosnargh Oliverson's school as it was too far for them to walk to Hill Chapel



Ethel, Kathleen, Edith Margaret, Francis, Agnes and Charles. circa 1915

Charles volunteered for active service whilst his daughter Kathleen was still a baby on 20 November 1915. His attestation papers show that, like many other local men, he joined the 1st/4th Bn. The Loyal North Lancashire Regiment. From May 1915 the regiment had been engaged in various actions on the western front; new recruits, like Charles, would spend some time in the UK but would then join the rest of the regiment in France. Charles had two periods of training, at home in UK in November 1915, and in France in May 1917.

On 7 January 1916, the regiment transferred to the 164th Brigade of the 55th Division, again fighting on the western front.

Charles is seen on the left of this photograph.



It was in April 1918, when Charles' was fighting with the 55th Division close to the small village of Givenchy in northern France, that the Germans made their last major offensive of the war against the allies. On 9th April the Portuguese Brigade, fighting to the north of the British, was pushed into retreat but the 55th Division held their line and their position. Had it not done so the channel ports in France would have been in danger and the end of the war may have been extended into the following year.

Sadly fifty British soldiers were reported missing that day, Charles was one of them. His body was never found and he is remembered with honour alongside Thomas Naylor, a fellow parishioner and work colleague, on the Loos Memorial.

When Ethel heard of her husband's death she moved back to Preston and St Augustine's Parish where the Charnley family gave her support with her children. In August 1918 she received her husband's possessions: a pocket wallet, religious medals in a case, letters, photographs, a wallet, a crucifix and a religious book. In 1937 Ethel, along with her family, moved back to Goosnargh, to Dun Roamin, Whittingham Lane. She never re married and remained there until her death. Ethel's granddaughter, Pat Turner and their grandson, David Charnley are, at the time of writing, both still living locally. Ethel is buried at Hill Chapel Goosnargh and her grandson David tends the grave weekly. Charles' name is also on the grave along with his wife.



Charles' Widow Ethel (circa 1937)

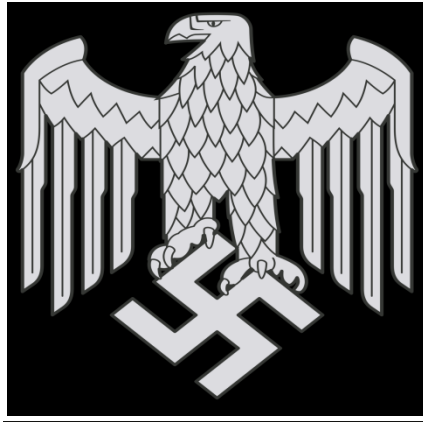


(circa1970)



Section Two

World War 2 1939 - 1945



Chapter Twelve

Among the many factors that led up to World War 2 were Italian fascism in the 1920s, Japanese militarism and invasions of China in the 1930s, and especially the political takeover in 1933 of Germany by Hitler and his Nazi Party with its aggressive foreign policy. The matter came to a head in September 1939 when Germany invaded Poland and Britain and France declared that they were at war with Germany.

Problems in Weimar Germany arose almost immediately after the Treaty of Versailles which concluded World War One and acknowledged the allies victory. Strong feelings of revenge, dissatisfaction with the treaty provisions which included the demilitarization of the Rhineland, the prohibition of unification with Austria and the loss of German-speaking territories such as Danzig all contributed to the unrest. However, perhaps the most

serious internal cause in Germany was the instability of the political system, as large sectors of the politically active Germans rejected the legitimacy of the Weimar Republic.

After his rise to power in 1933, Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party heavily promoted these grievances and also ideas of vastly ambitious additional demands based on Nazi ideology such as uniting all Germans (and further all Germanic peoples) in Europe in a single nation; the acquisition of "living space" for primarily agrarian settlers, creating a "pull towards the East", where such territories were to be found and colonized, the elimination of Bolshevism; and the superiority of an "Aryan"/"Nordic" so-called Master Race over the "sub-humans" or inferior races, chief among them Slavs and Jews.



Jewish children forced to wear the Star of David

As Nazi attentions turned towards resolving the "Polish Corridor Question" during the summer of 1939, Britain and France committed themselves to an alliance with Poland, threatening Germany with a two-front war. War was again declared in September 1939.

Chapter Thirteen

Richard Potts Born 1915 – KIA 13th November 1944

The only parishioner from St Francis', Hill Chapel, known at the time of writing, who was killed in WW2, is Richard Potts. Until 2016 there has been no official record or memorial of his sacrifice at Hill Chapel but his name will now be inscribed on the church war memorials.



Richard Potts was born in 1915 to parents Richard and Mary Potts. He was educated at St. Joseph's R.C. School Preston and then was employed as an assistant by the Co-operative grocery store in Preston. It is believed that Richard's work tasks included delivering groceries to local households. He would have travelled as far as Goosnargh and it was whilst he was doing this that he met his future wife Kathleen Charnley; the daughter of Charles Charnley killed in WW1 when Kathleen was just a baby. Kathleen was to endure a second major tragedy in her life; after losing her father before she even got to know him, she would now suffer the loss of her husband within seven months of their marriage.

In 1940, shortly after war had been declared, Richard joined the army and volunteered to join the 1st Airlanding Brigade. He served in North Africa and Sicily and reached the rank of Lance Corporal. The brigade would then see action in Arnhem, Holland.

It was during a period of leave in April 1944 that Richard married Kathleen at St Francis' Hill Chapel and they set up home in Goosnargh. Kathleen worked as a nurse at the asylum.

The 1st Airlanding Brigade was an airborne infantry brigade of the British Army during the Second World War and the only glider infantry formation assigned to the 1st Airborne Division, serving alongside the 1st Parachute Brigade and 4th Parachute Brigade. The brigade was formed in late 1941 through the conversion of an existing infantry brigade previously stationed in India, the 31st Independent Infantry Brigade.

The brigade Richard was attached to saw action on two major occasions during the Second World War; in Operation Ladbroke, as part of the Allied invasion of Sicily in July 1943, and later in Operation Market Garden in September 1944. During the second operation, in the fighting around Arnhem, the 1st Airlanding Brigade along with the rest of 1st Airborne Division held out against overwhelming German odds, sustaining very heavy losses. Only around 20 percent of the brigade was evacuated south of the River Rhine. The rest had either been killed, were missing or became prisoners of war.

Richard, who was with the brigade in Holland, was, unfortunately, one of those captured by the Germans and taken prisoner at Arnhem. He was very seriously wounded and, despite attempts to save his life by amputating both his legs, he died of his wounds on 13th November 1944, he was 29 years of age.

Following his death and the subsequent German retreat out of Holland, Richard's helmet was found by a Dutchman, Mr. Oordgeist, who visited the site of the landings in 1945. He found the helmet in a

house in Duitsekampweg, Wolfthezen which had been used as a First Aid Post in 1944. He kept the helmet as a souvenir for forty years but then gave it to Mr. Hans van der Velden at an Arnhem Battle exhibition in 1984. This gentleman has kindly sent us photographs of the helmet to accompany our research. Inside the rim of the helmet Richard's name and service number are easily visible as the photograph below shows.



Richard was awarded the 1939-45 War Medal and the 1939-45 Star. His death was reported in the Lancashire Evening Post in February 1945 and again on the first anniversary of his death on 13th November 1945. Richard is buried and remembered with honour in the Arnhem

Oosterbeek, British Commonwealth War Cemetery. His headstone contains a cross and the words, ***“The greatest sacrifice, the gift of his unfinished life”.***



Arnhem Oosterbeek, British Commonwealth War Cemetery

Army record details for Richard: newspaper reports; grave photographs; helmet photographs and 1939 local electoral register extracts are all available to view or borrow from the parish archives.



Chapter Fourteen

Their Legacy - Our Freedom

The first half of the twentieth century has gone down in history as one of the most unsettled and violent fifty years ever known. Those who were alive at the time witnessed two major global conflicts, political unrest and revolution, economic and social depression, ethnic cleansing on a scale inconceivable and, finally, the horror of an atomic bomb, which totally destroyed the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.



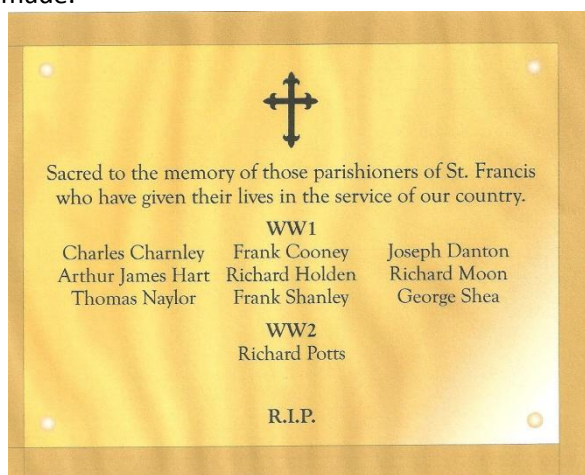
Millions of innocent people were killed; many more were driven from their homes, or lost their sons, main bread winner or parent. All this occurred during and after the war that had been christened, 'The War to End All Wars'.

The Great War of 1914 – 1918 claimed the lives of young men from practically every corner of the globe. Europe was torn apart and northern France and Flanders left as a wilderness of mud and destruction, but, just twenty-five years later, the world was torn apart again.

Our research has focussed on just ten young men from our parish who bravely volunteered to serve their country; there may be more, but, at the time of writing these are the only ones we know about. They were Lancashire men who had probably never left the county before. They

went freely to defend our country against an alien foe that was determined to rule the European continent. They did not know what they would face or whether they would ever return; sadly, none of them would return. They made the ultimate sacrifice so that we who follow are able to live in relative freedom and peace. It is hard in just a few brief paragraphs to do justice to the short lives that these men experienced. We hope that you, the reader, will now look at our war memorials in a different light. You will know a little more about the men's background, their military service and when and where it came to an end. These men had worshipped at our church, some had been married at our altar and they are all still part of our parish community.

Please remember them in your prayers and never forget the sacrifice they have made.



The New Memorial Plaque, St. Francis Church, 2016

*Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord.
And let perpetual light shine upon them.
May they rest in peace.*

Amen

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Our research has been helped tremendously by Elizabeth Prior and Richard Stirzaker. Elizabeth, who lives in London, is a member of the Society of Genealogists and is able to trace her own roots back to the Goosnargh Beesley family. Richard is a local man who has a keen interest in local history. Both have gone out of their way to help us with research, resources and personal expertise; without their help this publication would not have been possible.

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- Commonwealth War Graves Commission
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- Forces War Records
- The National Archives
- Lancashire County Council Records Office
- Fr. Philip Smith, St. Francis Hill Chapel
- Whittingham & Goosnargh Heritage Group
- Friends and Family of Combatants



Lest We Forget

For The Fallen

They went with songs to the battle, they were young.
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.
They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted,
They fell with their faces to the foe.