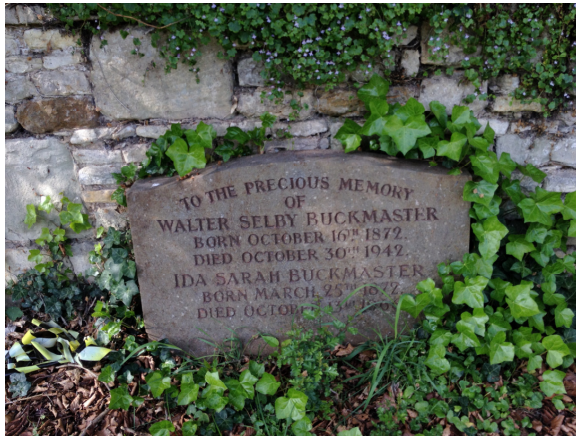


Walter Selby Buckmaster

In the grave yard of Moreton Morrell Church there is a grave stone for Walter Selby Buckmaster and his wife Ida Sarah.



Walter was born on 16th October 1872 and had a career in the stock exchange. He was a keen sportsman with a strong interest in polo. He was part of the 1900 Summer Olympics polo team which won a silver medal. He was also a member of the winning team in the International Polo Cup in 1908. This trophy had been created in 1876 and was played by teams from the United States and Great Britain.

He is described as being one of the all time greats of polo and the most graceful horseman ever seen on a polo ground.

When the Great War came he was considered as too old for active service so he volunteered to work with the French Ambulance Service (Service Sanitaire) for which he was awarded the Croix De Guerre.

We have not found out about how he won the Croix de Guerre but he is mentioned in the book "Mr Poilu Notes and sketches with the Fighting French" by Herbert Ward. The following extract mentions him as well as giving an indication of what his war service was like.ⁱ

"As time passed, we were treated to an increase of attention from the enemy batteries. Shells fell fairly close around us, and our ambulances were continually in danger. To add to many other physical discomforts, the weather was against us. Everything was dripping ; the moss-covered ground was more than ankle-deep in water which flowed from the hill above us. The lack of sun and the depressing effect of dripping fir trees, the continual wearing of wet clothes, the want of sleep, the incessant artillery fire, and the sight of much suffering, all this in combination was not enough to dampen the gaiety of my comrades. Indeed, I noticed that as things grew worse, our friend Tommy Hudson sang the louder. One very bad day, when things were really far from comfortable, Walter Buckmaster, most sympathetic of

comrades, remarked :' Tommy, if you ever put your spirits up to auction, I 'll be the last bidder.'

After the war he eventually retired from polo to concentrate on his other passion riding to hounds. ⁱⁱ

Walter and Ida Sarah had married in 1896 and came to reside in Moreton Manor, Moreton Morrell. They are shown living there by the time of the 1911 Census. Although he maintained a home in London at least until the 1920s he pursued the country life and was Master of the Warwickshire Fox Hounds after he gave up polo. Thomas Bouch of Ashorne wrote in a memoir that Charles Tuller Garland who also had a passion for polo had persuaded Buckmaster *“who may be termed the W. G. Grace of polo history, to come and live in the old manor house with its monastic fish ponds”*.

They had two daughters. Walter died in 1942 and Ida Sarah in 1966.

ⁱ “Mr Poilu Notes and sketches with the Fighting French” by Herbert Ward

ⁱⁱ “Polo in Britain: A History” by Horace A Laffaye