



Aging in the peace of St Peter's Churchyard, Wellesbourne is the grave stone for Captain Basil Gordon Nicholas and his infant son.

(The above photo of Captain Nicholas has been kindly provided by his great grandson Edward Seyfried)

Capatain Nicholas was a casualty of the Great War who settled in the village far from his birthplace in Tasmania Australia. He planned to make a life with his new bride and two young children.

But he could not escape the horrors of the Great War and died in the winter of 1922 and his infant son a few days later

Basil Gordon Nicholas born in 1885 and his older brother Henric Clarence Nicholas born in 1881 were the two sons of George Clarence Nicholas whose grandfather had emigrated to Van Diemens's Land (later Tasmania) in 1821. Henric and Basil were the only two sons but had five sisters.

The family were successful farmers and owned a number of properties, Cawood one of the family homes is still to be seen in its orginal state. The house was built round 1824 and acquired years later by the Nicholas family. It was designed to reflect the style of "manorial" property of that time in the "old country".



The Nicholas family were obviously successful and Basil and Henric were sent to England for their education which was first at Harrow and then Henric went on to Cambridge University.

After Cambridge, Henric certainly seems to have returned to Tasmania because during the Great War he joined the 1st Australian Imperial Light Horse. He was to lose his life in one of the toughest battles of the war. He was serving as a Lance Corporal and was shot in the Battle of Romani in Egypt in early August 1916. This battle ended the ambition of the Turkish and German forces to seize the Suez canal.^{1 2}

Henric Clarence Nicholas is honoured on the site WW1 Pictorial Roll of Tasmanians.
(<http://www1tas.gravesecrets.net/ni.html>).



**NICHOLAS, Henric
Clarence**



Service No: 464
L/Corporal
3rd Light Horse

Son of George Clarence Nicholas
Killed in Action 04 August 1916.
Buried Battlefield Romani – et – Mater Military Cemetery.

Tasmania Weekly Courier 24 August 1916 Insert 4

¹ <http://cawoodcottage.com.au/?p=672>

² For details of the Battle of Romani see : <http://www.lighthorse.org.au/> (Australian Light Horse Association website)

Basil, as had his brother, left Tasmania as a boy and it seems unlikely he returned permanently to Tasmania after his education. In his obituary in the Hobart Mercury, he is described as obtaining a commission after Harrow in the 12th Royal Lancers (Prince of Wales Own). He joined the battalion in India in 1905. Whilst in India he became known as a promising polo player.

At the outbreak of the Great War he went with the Expeditionary Force on August 16th 1914. He was in the retreat from Mons and took part in the famous charge of the 12th Lancers and the Scots Greys. He was mentioned in Lord French's dispatches. He was badly wounded in September 1914. After several operations he recovered enough to go back to the trenches where he was badly shell shocked from which he was never to recover.³

In 1915, he had married Geraldine Grazebrook, daughter of Mr and Mrs Grazebrook of Overthorpe Oxfordshire. When he was eventually invalided out of the army together with Geraldine he bought "The Lowes" at Hunscombe, near Wellesbourne and in 1920 or 1921 moved in also with his daughter Doris born in 1916 and Peter born in 1918 intending to breed shorthorns and polo ponies.

In January 1922 Geraldine became ill with influenza and his infant son Peter had whooping cough. As a result of the shellshock Basil had continued to suffer severe bouts of depression and witnesses at his inquest reported he was troubled by his son's illness.

On the 17th January 1922, he was found in a field near the house shot dead by his own service revolver. The inquest concluded it was suicide. Sadly his son Peter was to die a few days later.⁴



The above photo was taken in the early 1900s and was probably much like the house would have looked in 1922.

³ Information from Major Nicholas' obituary in the "The Mercury, Hobart, Tasmania"

⁴ Stratford Herald 27 January 1922