



The School and the First World War

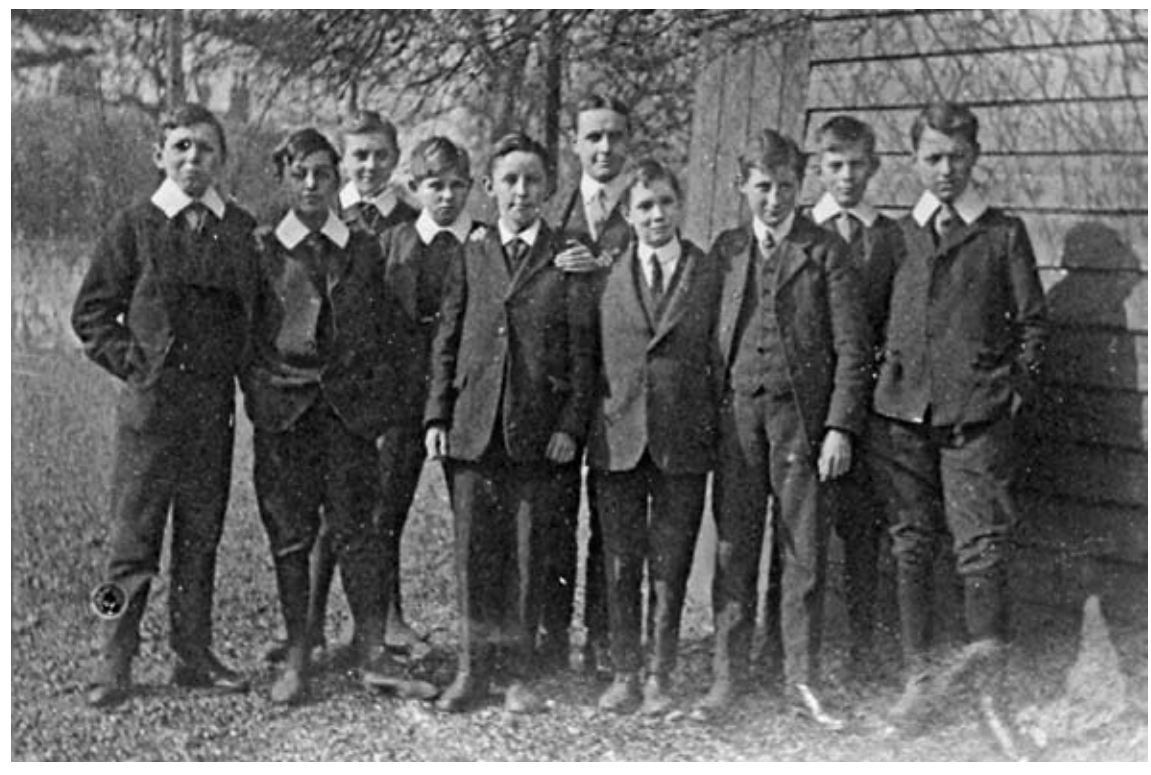
2: THE MEN WHO WENT TO WAR



Harry Dye



George Harry Gordon Dye was a Lieutenant in the Norfolk Regiment. Born on March 19th, 1891, he entered the School in January, 1899, and left in August, 1902, having won a Scholarship at Christ's Hospital. On leaving School he decided to go into the teaching profession, and, when war broke out, he was a master at Bracondale School, Norwich. In August, 1914, he enlisted in one of the University and Public Schools Battalions of the Royal Fusiliers, and was soon made a Corporal. He went out to France in 1915. In November, 1916, he obtained a commission and was promoted to Lieutenant in June 1917. He spent weeks mapping out Ribécourt village before the attack but was wounded and died 20th November 1917. He had a fiancée at the time. The Colonel of G. H. G. Dye's battalion wrote: "As you probably know, your son was acting as Battalion Intelligence Officer and came over the top with me. For some time past he has done all his work under my direct supervision, and I have therefore seen a great deal of him."



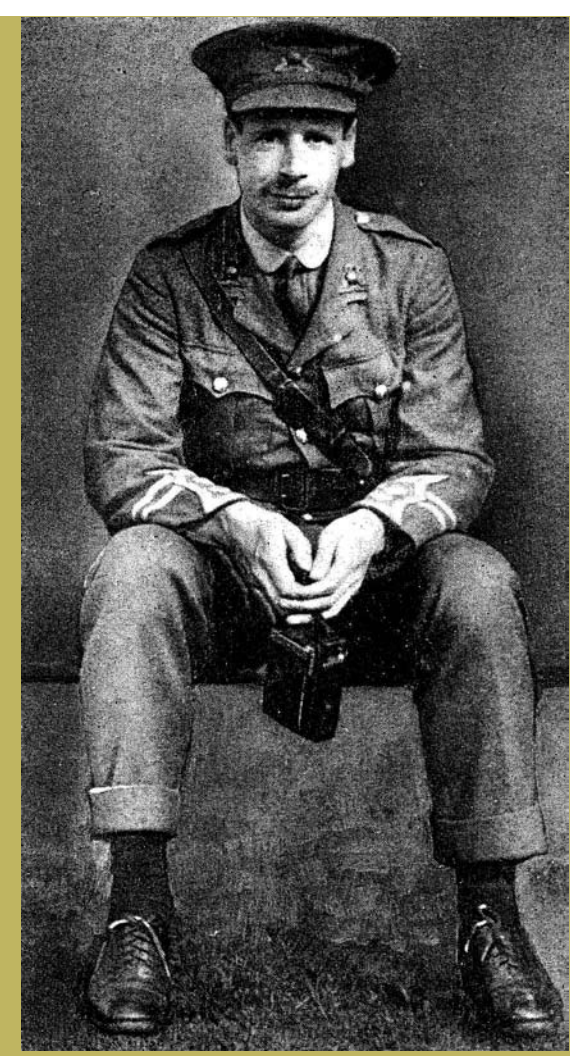
Harry Dye at Bracondale School

FALLEN STAFF

Charles Merryweather (1880-1916)

Educated at Retford Grammar and Trinity College, Cambridge, he taught French and German here from 1903-5. He left to teach at Manchester Grammar where he was a popular master in charge of athletics, ran the stamp club and wrote French textbooks. Anyone who got into 'Merry's' form knew they would have to work hard and be public spirited like their master who was involved in wartime digging parties in the School grounds and enrolled to help out during a coal strike. He returned to Gresham's several times after 1905 to play cricket. Merryweather joined the Salford Battalion of the Lancs. Fusiliers in 1914 as a Lieutenant. Promoted to Captain, he was wounded at Auteil in 1915 and convalesced back to Manchester. He returned to the Front and was killed in action on 23rd November 1916 trying to rescue prisoners, a gesture typical of this cool headed and good natured officer.

A Manchester colleague summed him up in the School magazine, "Through the death of Captain Merryweather the Army has lost a gallant officer, the School a splendid teacher, and many of us a faithful friend. In his teaching capacity the charm of his personality and his lucidity in explanation made learning almost a pleasurable pastime to his pupils, as many testify."



Vivian N. Smith (1881-1916)

Art teacher Vivian Smith was educated at Sherborne School, Dorset and trained at various colleges in London where he began to specialise in animal painting. He taught here from 1904 to 1914, the only member of staff employed on the outbreak to die in the War. The handsome young master was remembered by the boys for his enjoyable outdoor sketching classes and tea parties at his home. One OG wrote fondly of his sympathetic portrayal of horses and the tranquil beauty of the rural scenes he loved to paint in pictures such as 'Under the Hawthorn Tree' and 'The Evening's Return', both of which were exhibited at the Royal Academy.

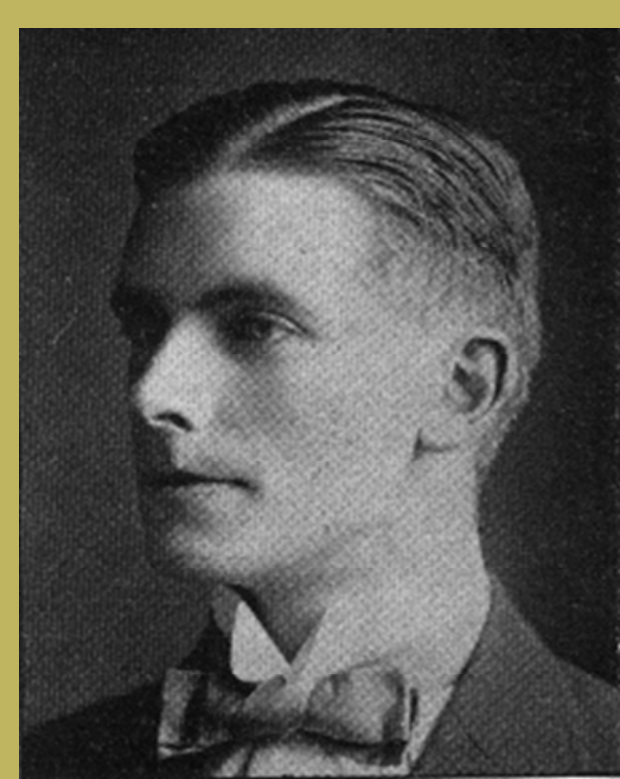
A colleague remembered him as "the best and merriest of companions by the fireside", strolling out to the cricket nets on a summer evening or walking down to Salthouse by moonlight. A fellow officer gave an inkling of the personal difficulties war presented to a sensitive soul who was chosen to train men to sketch the sordid scenes in the trenches. Smith joined up as a Private in 1914 and became a Captain in the Wiltshire Regiment. He died on 13th November 1916 whilst tending to a wounded man, and was Mentioned in Despatches 'For gallant and distinguished service in the Field.'



Geoffrey Reynolds Day (1888-1916)

The son of Rev Archibald Day of Malvern Link, Geoffrey was educated at Marlborough and went on to Peterhouse College, Cambridge where he obtained a double first in history. He taught history here briefly between 1911 and 12, going on to taken up the appointment of Fellow of History at Emmanuel College. The Gresham Magazine described him as "An able and inspiring teacher, gifted with a keen sense of humour and an attractive personality." He enlisted in 1914 and was commissioned as a Lieutenant into the Bedfordshire Regiment. In August 1915 he sustained wounds at Gallipoli, breaking his jaw in two places. An officer in the next hospital bed spoke of "his amazing fortitude in bearing intense suffering."

He was killed in action on 27th August 1916 whilst serving near Thiepval on the Western Front with the Royal Warwicks after being wounded during an attack. His name appears on the memorial at Thiepval with several of his pupils. He was 28 years old and left behind a young widow, Jane. Geoffrey's father wrote a tribute to his son in the local parish magazine, saying "Lt. G.R. Day was a good son and a brave soldier, of whom his parents and the parish in which he was reared may justly be proud and the sorrow in one in which there is happily no bitterness. You will pray for his acceptance and for his mother's restoration to health and strength."



COMRADES OF THE 5th BATTALION LINCOLNSHIRE REGIMENT



Officers of the Fifth Battalion Lincolnshire Regiment 1915. Neill Newsom stands third from right in the back row, with Christian Schiller to his left. Charles Goodall is at the other end of the row, extreme left.

Louis Christian T. Schiller

Louis, known as Christian, was a bright boy recommended for a scholarship in 1909, winning a prize for Latin and speaking at the debating society. Like Goodall he too presented a paper to the Literature Society and became a School Prefect. He played cricket for Farfield House, hockey and football for the School and was made School Captain in 1913. In the following year he obtained a scholarship to study Maths at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge but War intervened and he joined up in 1914.

Christian was instrumental in organising the fundraising for the Chapel, and later gave to the new buildings fund and served on the Howson memorial committee. At a meeting of the Chapel committee in 1914 he was called on to voice the feeling of the School, and The Gresham reports that he "spoke with amazing assurance of the keenness he found throughout the School, and tickled the fancy by positively lecturing the parents, declaring that if they were as keen as their sons the money would be forthcoming ten times over. It was the speech of a lifetime, delivered without a trace of hesitation or uncertainty."

In 1916 the magazine records that Schiller has been appointed Intelligence Officer to his battalion of the Lincs. Regt. It also reports his wounding in the following year and his subsequent MC. By 1919 he has taken up his place at Cambridge and is often reported as attending OG dinners there and in London. The final entries concern his appointment as Assistant Inspector of Schools with the Board of Education in 1924, and his marriage in 1925. He went on to teach at the progressive Rendcomb School in Gloucestershire, and ended his distinguished career as senior lecturer at the Institute of Education.



Charles Eric Griffith Goodall

Charles attended from 1910 and boarded in Farfield. He took a full part in School life, speaking at the debating society, playing football, appearing in several Shakespeare plays, ending in 1914 as a School prefect. He won prizes for Latin, Geography and Literature, as well as giving a paper to the English Literature Society. In November 1914 he applied to join the army and served from October 1915 until the end of the War. In 1916 he wrote an angry letter to The Gresham in response to adverse press comment, saying –

"I am sorry to see already adverse criticism of the results of our offensive – if only the writers at home could realise the insuperable nature of the 'Fourth Element'. It is ridiculous beyond words to cavil at our inability to break though and the apparent dying down of the advance. Thank goodness, the taking of Beaucourt gives the lie to all who say that our force is spent. Critics at home leave the weather out of consideration. We are quite ready to go forward when that permits, as recent events prove."

Charles was wounded in 1917 and awarded the MC for 'showing great skill and courage in handling his Company under heavy machine-gun fire.' He was mentioned in despatches in the following year.

After the War Charles went on to Cambridge, being awarded a History exhibition to Sidney Sussex College. He was ordained deacon at Ripon Cathedral in 1922 and became curate at the Church of the Holy Spirit, Beeston Hill, Leeds. He later went out to South Africa and was made sub-deacon of a new cathedral in Johannesburg. He died in 1952.



Goodall, Newsom and Schiller together in the Lincolnshire regiment.

Clement Neill Newsom

Neill attended from 1909-14 and was one of many promising boys from Howson's own House who were killed. He won prizes for History and English, was a keen sports player, and attended meetings of the debating society. Howson made him Captain of his House and later School Captain. During the Christmas holiday of 1914 he decided to leave school in order to join the army, and was commissioned into the Lincolnshire Regiment in February 1915. At the age of 21 he was promoted to Captain and led a successful assault at the battle of Polygon Wood in Belgium in 1917. He fell at Ypres later in that year, killed by heavy shellfire after his company had reached its objective.

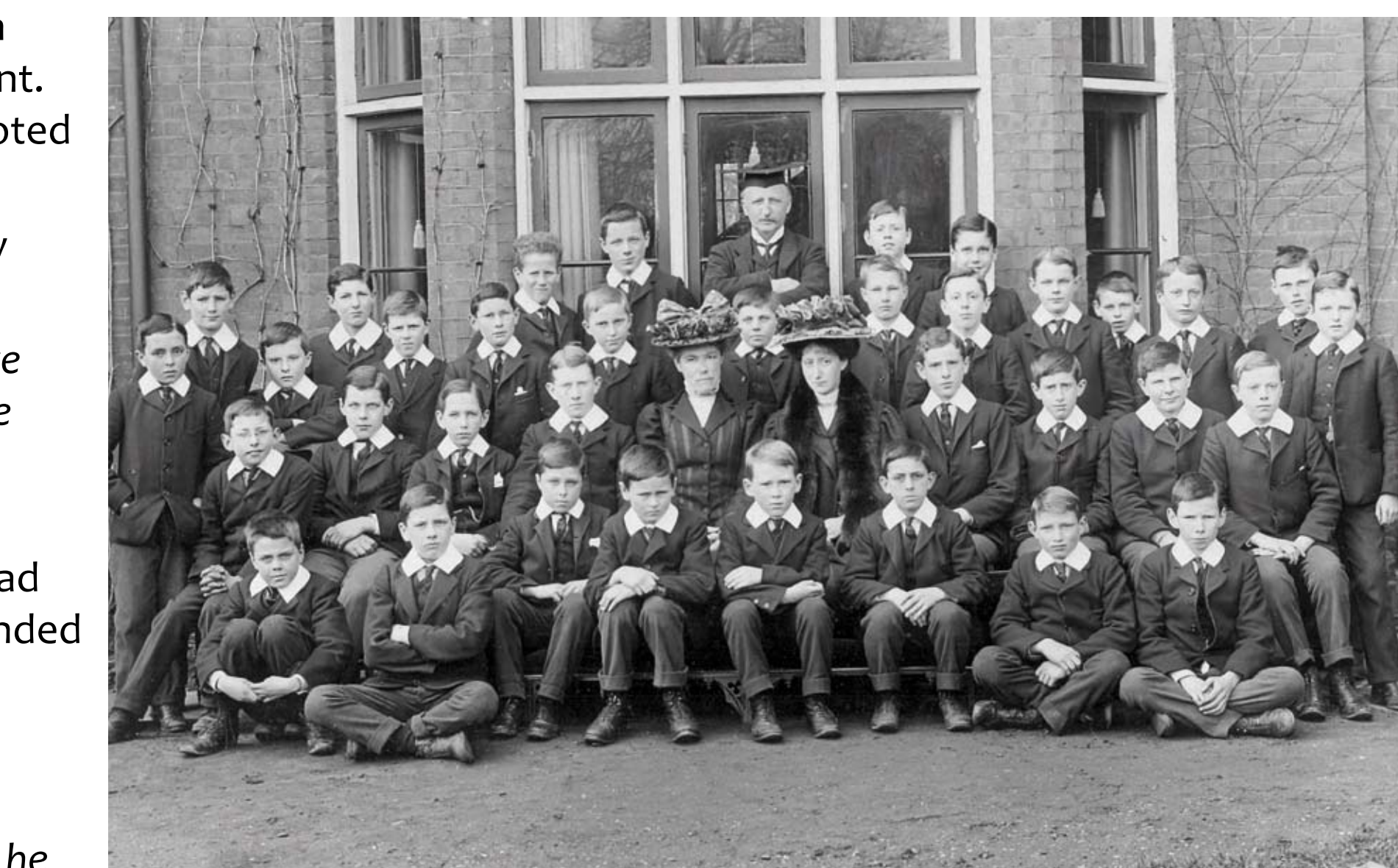
Newsom was one of four out of the 21 Lincs. Regt. officers who fought on 26th September 1917 who died. His Colonel wrote:

"His is a great loss to the regiment both on account of his soldiery qualities and kindly disposition; both officers and men were very fond of him, and in him I have lost one of my best officers."

A fellow officer wrote a more personal tribute – "He was a long way the best Company Commander in the battalion, essentially unselfish, thoughtful for his men, the essence of common sense and thoroughness, with a wonderful pride in his Company, a pride which his men answered to and never betrayed."



The wood-paneled study in Howson's house commissioned by his family as a memorial to Neill Newsom.



J.N. Proctor is the serious boy to the right of the lady in the hat in this Junior House photograph.

Norman Proctor



John Norman William Atkinson Proctor was born in 1894 at Rylestone, near Skipton in North Yorkshire. He attended Gresham's from 1907 to 1912, firstly in the Junior House and then in School House(Howson's) He won a prize for English in 1908 and went on to captain his House and represent them at cricket. He joined up in 1914 and became a 2nd Lieutenant in the West Riding Regiment. After training in England he set sail for France in August of 1915. In the following year he was mentioned in despatches and promoted to Lieutenant.

The newspaper from his home town, the Craven Herald printed a letter from Proctor in response to gifts for soldiers organised by Miss Ashton –

"Thank you and the subscribers very much for the parcel. It was an excellent combination. We have been having a lively time out here lately. We are at present in a rest camp after a turn of 4 days in some very wet trenches; in fact the trenches no longer exist – they are fallen in. Our men are in very good spirits however. Again, thanking you for your splendid idea in setting up the scheme."

Proctor's regiment took part in many battles including those of the Somme and Ypres, and he was awarded a Military Cross for 'gallantry and most consistent devotion to duty as a signalling officer' for laying new communication lines to replace those that had been cut in the trenches near Hulloch, under mortar, shell and gun fire. During the Battle of Kemmel Hill in April 1918 he was wounded

in the shoulder and chest and died in a base hospital on 2nd May, aged 23.

Norman Proctor was buried in Esquelbecq military cemetery, Northern France. His commanding officer, Brigadier General Lewes wrote the following in a letter to his parents –

"Your son was a model of an English officer and gentleman. As regards to his work, I cannot speak too highly of him; he was most able and devoted to his duty; he was of the greatest assistance to me and my commanding officers, and I shall be quite unable to replace him ... Your son died doing his duty in a way that should not have been better. We sadly mourn his loss."

Army application form for George Goodall, 1915.

