

Wartime and Military Links in St. Nicholas Churchyard, Winsley



The peaceful churchyard of St Nicholas lies in the centre of the village of Winsley and holds a surprising number of memorials which have Wartime & Military Service Links.

In addition to the three official War Graves in St Nicholas Churchyard there are a number of other memorials which record the Service links of members of Winsley families, and others from further afield, who are remembered there. They are listed below, with such information as I have at this time been able to discover about those memorialised.

1. The memorial to the Brooks family records the following two entries reflecting the Service history of the family, and the loss of a son in the First World War:

'Charles Alfred Brooks, younger son of George & Alice Brooks.
Capt. Wilts Regt. Att. RFC.
Killed In Action near Gaza
8 July 1917. Aged 29 Years.

'Commander L.C Brooks MBE RN
Eldest son of G W Brooks.
Died 18 October 1964. Aged 55.

2. A much worn and now barely readable memorial inscribed on the top of a large chest-form tomb reads:
'Sacred to the Memory of Thomas Murrell (rank unclear) of the (unclear) Royal Dragoons. Died
(unclear, possibly 1815 or 1855). Aged 62.

3. The memorial stone to Alfred Tanner proudly records a long and active period of service. It bears the heading 'Royal Marines Plymouth' in a semi-circle around the top of the stone, and the inscription below it reads:
'Lc. Cpl. Alfred Tanner, Died November 10, 1926.
He was in the Heligoland Bight, Dogger Bank and Jutland Battles on HMS New Zealand, and he served for the period of 22 Years.'

- Denys Brinckman is remembered on the Brinckman family plot, and his part of the memorial bears life-sized and three dimensional stone representations of his Army cap and sword (the sword now sadly broken beneath the hilt).

The text reads:

"Denys Brinckman, Lieutenant Royal Irish Fusiliers. Born 15th March 1896.
Killed in Action with his regiment near Ypres In Belgium June 10th 1915
Buried in the British Military Cemetery at Vlamertinghe 3 Miles West of (unreadable) but probably Ypres

- The memorial to members of the Summers Family records the tragic loss to John & Patience Summers of two of their sons in the space of two years during the First World War:

'Edgar Charles Summers, third son of John & Patience Summers
Killed In France October 23rd 1916. Aged 31 Years.'

'Frank Oliver Summers, their youngest son,
Died in France of wounds received in Action
28 August 1918. Aged 28 years
Buried at Daours near Amiens.'

- Remembered on a small memorial in a quiet corner is:
Edward Harding Bocket Pugh
Major, R.M.L.I.
Born Dec 9 1871. Died March 7 1940.

- A large and handsome slab, set into the ground, bears the following inscription:

'Leo Young
Beaufort
Victoria
Ex RAF
His Memory Lives in his Home Town
Sic Itur Ad Astra'

Leo Young was an Australian, from the town of Beaufort in Victoria. The son of a solicitor, he was a talented dancer and was touring Europe when the Second World War broke out. He managed to reach England, and joined the RAF. He then sadly seems to have been very ill for some time, and died 22nd of November 1941, aged 27.

- Colonel Spencer Graham Walker RAMC, who died 17th December 1968 is remembered on a large horizontal stone with other members of his family, including his daughter Cynthia. Cynthia was a student nurse at St Thomas' in London during the war, and died at the hospital during an air-raid in September 1941. She is buried in Lambeth, London.

There are two more recent memorials, from the 1970's, showing the continuing Service links in Winsley:

The first is that of :

George William Robert Nicholl, O.B.E.
Lieutenant Commander, R.N.
Died 20th April 1973
Aged 65

The second is:

Sidney George 'Ranji' Walker C.B. O.B.E
Air Commodore, Royal Air Force.
Died 29th July 1975
Aged 63.

Finally, two widows of military men chose to be remembered in that way on their own memorials:

Eliza Matilda Layard is described as 'Relict of George Henry Layard, late of H.M. 89 Regiment of Foot. Died Jan 1886'

Julia Ryder, died March 1902, 'widow of Lt. Colonel Spencer Charles Dudley Ryder, younger son of the Hon. Henry Ryder, Bishop of Lichfield.'



(Above: Memorial of Denys Brinckman)

A short description of the three official War Graves in St Nicholas churchyard can be found in a separate document on this site, and photographs are also on the Winsley Page.