

129: Alan Appleby Drew

Basic Information [as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC]

Name as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC: Alan Appleby Drew

Rank: Lieutenant

Battalion / Regiment: Cameronians (Scottish Rifles)

Service Number: Date of Death: 10 March 1915 Age at Death: 30

Buried / Commemorated at: Royal Irish Rifles Graveyard, Laventie, Departement du Pas-de-Calais, France

Additional information given by CWGC: Son of Daniel and Rhoda Drew, of Burnley.

Whilst, in the Introduction to this work, it was stated that ex-pupils of Mostyn House School who had attended as boarders whilst being having residency outside the district were excluded for consideration, an exception has been made for Alan Appleby Drew. Drew was one of the 78 known ex-pupils of Mostyn House who died in, or as a consequence of, WW1 and the exception has been made as he later returned to teach at the school. As a result of intensive family research conducted by his descendants (particularly Turtle Bunbury ¹) a considerable amount is known of Alan and his family and this is used in the following abbreviated account.

The Drew family traces its origins to the area of Wishaw in North Lanarkshire, Scotland, a township on the edge of the Clyde Valley, near Motherwell, and about 15 miles south-east of Glasgow.

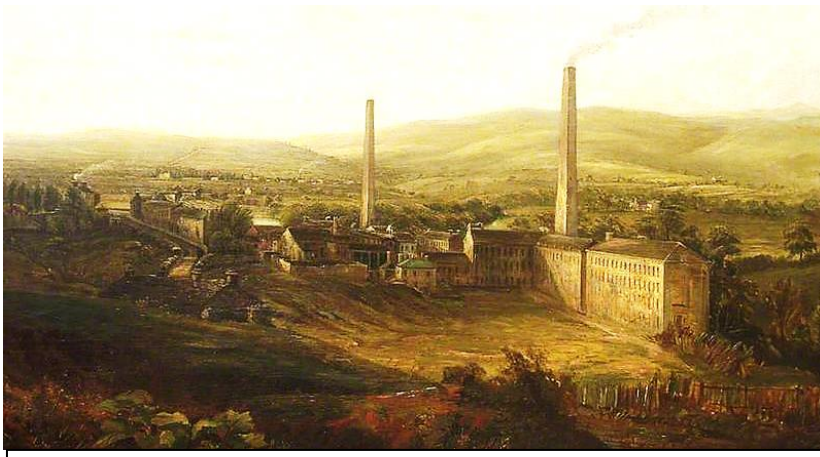
By the late 1860s the family had a significant involvement in the textile and calico printing industry of southern Scotland which, rivalling Lancashire in importance, dominated the Vale of Leven north of Dumbarton. By 1866, Alexander Drew began a five year term as a partner in a calico printing firm on the banks of the River Leven at Dalmonach, near Bonhill, a company which then became James Black, Drew & Co. In 1871 Alexander Drew retired from this company ² as his wish to bring his three surviving sons (Alexander jnr, Daniel and Thomas) into the organisation was resisted by the other partners. Rather than withdrawing from the calico printing trade, Alexander decided to relocate to Lancashire where he could establish his own factory and so sent Alexander jnr to the Burnley area to look for suitable premises. The following year, 1872, the Drews leased a textile factory/printworks, the Lowerhouse Printworks, established by the Dugdale family in 1815, this newer mill having being built in 1836.

¹ In his biography, Turtle Bunbury is described as *a best-selling author, historian, public speaker and TV presenter based in Ireland*. The biography notes that *He was a co-presenter of the first two series of 'Genealogy Roadshow', the pioneering RTE television series. He was also Newstalk Breakfast's Resident Historian from June to December 2013, as well as co-founder of the History Festival of Ireland, curating the event in 2012 and 2013. He is the founder of Wistorical, an innovative concept for promoting Irish history globally, as well as the Vanishing Ireland Facebook page.*

A past winner of Ireland's Long Haul Travel Journalist of the Year Award, Turtle's work has been published in National Geographic Traveler (April 2014), Playboy, Vogue Living, The Irish Times, The Financial Times, The New York Post, The Australian, The Guardian and The World of Interiors.

For complete details of Turtle Bunbury, see his biography at <http://www.turtlebunbury.com/biography.html>

² Its name reverted to James Black & Co., before becoming the Dalmonach Printing Company.



The Lowerhouse Printworks, and looking over Burnley, in about 1830

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lowerhouse_Printworks_c1830.jpg]

The lease of May 1872 taken out by Alexander Drew was originally for fourteen years, at an annual rent of £2,120, but it was extended in 1879 and again in 1886.

Alexander Drew's wife, Isabella, had died in February 1853 following the birth of Thomas and, following their move from Scotland to Lancashire, Alexander very much left the operation of the Lowerhouse Printworks to his three sons. Whilst

Alexander jnr and Thomas became involved in the commercial side of the enterprise ³, Daniel (who would become Alan Appleby Drew's father) became the works manager and oversaw production.

Daniel Drew was born on 13 October 1850 and studied at Glasgow Academy, an independent school which had been established in the city in 1845. A keen sportsman, Daniel played rugby for The Glasgow Academical Football Club ⁴, the third oldest rugby football club in Scotland and in 1871 he was selected as a forward for the first ever Scottish international rugby team, playing England in Edinburgh, on 27 March 1871; in front of an attendance of over 4000 Scotland won by a goal.

Daniel earned his second cap for Scotland against England in a match played at The Oval in London on 6 March 1876; this time England won by a goal. Almost five years later Daniel received another Scotland call up to play against England (6 March 1876) at The Oval.

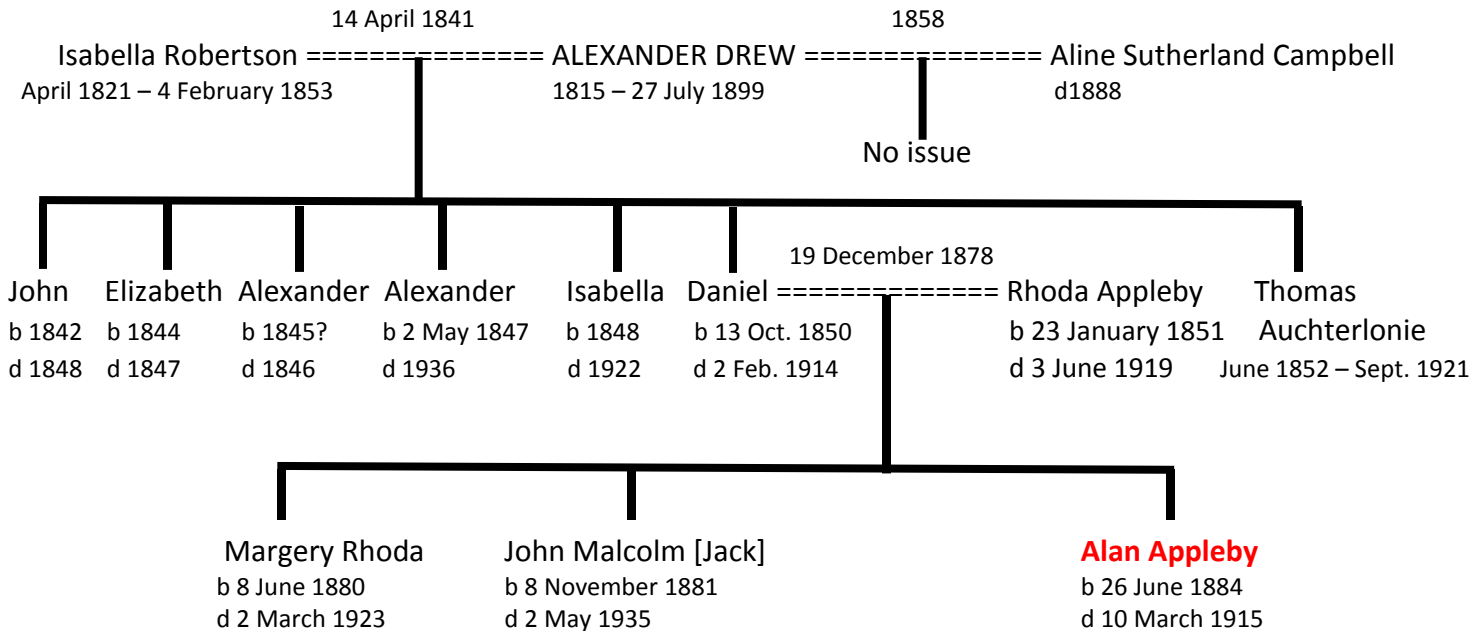
Daniel's brother, Thomas Auchterlonie Drew, also played for Glasgow Academicals. Although Thomas never made the Scotland national team, he did play for Glasgow District and was involved in his own first, playing for Glasgow District against Edinburgh District on 23 November 1872, the world's very first inter-provincial and inter-city rugby union match. [[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_Drew_\(rugby_union\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_Drew_(rugby_union))]

³ Separate offices were set up in both Manchester and Glasgow.

⁴ The Glasgow Academical Football Section was founded in 1866 when a number of former pupils of Glasgow Academy, under the chairmanship of the Rector, Mr Morrison, adopted a resolution that an Academical Club should be formed. At a time when the rules of rugby were far from formalised, the new club elected to play on the lines of the Edinburgh Academical Club. The club played their first match in the season 1867–68 but despite formalising their own rule set, disputed matches based on rule interpretation still abounded. The Glasgow Academicals in their history record that in *a match against West of Scotland in 1869 the ball was kicked over the West's goal-line, but over a fence into the adjoining field, whereupon a West of Scotland player went to the fence, but Arthur, for the Academical, got over and touched down. It was taken to be a try, but West of Scotland disputing the touch, a goal was not attempted. As the History of Glasgow Academy so rightly observes, 'The dead ball line now fortunately renders it unnecessary for the players to indulge in obstacle races'.*"

By 1871 the Club had a membership of almost 200 and by 1889 it was well over 500. The team had established itself as one of the best in Scotland with a record from 1867 to 1882 showing that of 145 matches in sixteen seasons it lost only 11 of them. In eight of these seasons it was undefeated. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glasgow_Academicals RFC]

On 19 December 1878 Daniel married 26-year-old Rhoda Appleby at All Saints Church, Clayton, in Blackburn. Rhoda was a daughter of Joseph Appleby, a wealthy corn miller of Burnley, and they had a daughter and two sons:



Abbreviated lineage of the Drew family
Alan Appleby Drew is the subject of this account

Daniel and his family lived in a house, also called Lower House, with a large garden and tennis court, located close to the centre of the printing works. Daniel had a wide range of interests in addition to running the factory; in the early days of the bicycle, he was a keen cyclist, and once built himself a wooden machine to a design he purchased at the Paris Exhibition. His favourite hobby, however, was yachting, at the family home in Scotland, and he was an enthusiastic amateur photographer and one of the founders of the Burnley Photographic Society.

When Daniel Drew died, aged 63, on 2 February 1914, he left £68,479 2s to his wife Rhoda, John Malcolm (Jack) and Alan although it appears that his oldest child, Margery Rhoda, did not benefit. In fact Margery had, on 20 January 1912, married a John Oscar Sillem at All Saints Church, Habergham Eaves, to the south of Burnley. John Sillem was born in 1876 in Kingston, Middlesex, and it appears that he and Margery divorced in 1920 and Margery died just three years later. John Sillem died in 1958 in Hove, Sussex. Daniel was buried at Burnley Cemetery on 5 February.

John Malcolm (Jack) Drew, Alan’s older brother, was educated at Charterhouse from about 1894 and married Edith Sylvia Peart Robinson at St Peter’s Church, Burnley, on 5 August 1909. They had three daughters and two sons but only the eldest child, Pamela,

had children. Edith Robinson was born in 1887 in Liverpool, a daughter of William and Elizabeth Robinson, and she died in 1970 in Westmorland.

Alan Appleby Drew, the subject of this account, was born in Burnley on 26 June 1884 and baptised at the Parish Church of St Leonard, Padiham, near Burnley, on 26 July 1884, when his father was recorded as a *gentleman*.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
No. of Schedule	ROAD, STREET, &c., and No. or NAME of HOUSE	HOUSES	Number of Persons in the House	NAME and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	CON-DITION as to Marriage	AGE last Birthday of	PROFESSION or OCCUPATION	WHERE BORN	(1) Deaf-and-Dumb (2) Blind (3) Lame, Paralytic or Idiot							
1	Lower House	1		Daniel Drew	Head	M	41	Master Calico Printer	Scotland								
				Rhoda A.	Wife	W	40		Lancashire, Clayton-le-Moors								
				Margery R. A.	Daughter	S	10	Scholar	Hab Eaves *								
				John M. A.	Son	S	9		Hab Eaves *								
				Alan A. A.	Son	S	6		Hab Eaves *								
				Emma H. Hodgson	Servant	S	34	Cook	Liverpool								
				Ellena S. Hall	Do	S	30	Waitress	Durham, Sunderland								
				Fanny Jones	Do	S	18	Housemaid	Shropshire, Bishop's Castle								
				Anne C. Terkelson	Do	S	36	Laundress	Denmark, naturalised British Subject								
				Hannah Williams	Do	S	28	Housemaid	Yorkshire, Sedburgh								
				Anna Nicholas	Do	S	38	Nurse	Montgomeryshire, Caerows								

1891 census (extract) – Lower House, Burnley

Daniel Drew	41	master calico printer	born Scotland
Rhoda	40		born Lancashire, Clayton-le-Moors
Margery R.	10		born Hab Eaves *
John M.	9		born Hab Eaves *
Alan A.	6		born Hab Eaves *
Emma H. Hodgson	34	servant, cook	born Liverpool
Ellena S. Hall	30	waitress	born Durham, Sunderland
Fanny Jones	18	housemaid	born Shropshire, Bishop's Castle
Anne C. Terkelson	36	laundress	born Denmark, naturalised British Subject
Hannah Williams	28	housemaid	born Yorkshire, Sedburgh
Anna Nicholas	38	nurse	born Montgomeryshire, Caerows

* *Hab Eaves* is a contraction of Habergham Eaves, a civil parish in the borough of Burnley. The parish consists of a rural area south of Burnley, and suburban areas on the outskirts of the town.

At the time of the 1891 census the family and household was living at Lower House: Alan was educated at Mostyn House School, Parkgate, until 1898⁵ when he moved to Charterhouse School⁶ in the Oration Quarter (OQ - early September to mid-December). He was a boarder at Charterhouse at the time of the 1901 census:

Administrative County	Civil Parish	Ecclsiastical Parish	County-Borough, Municipal Borough, or Urban-District	Rural District	Parliamentary Borough or Division	Town or Village or Hamlet
Surrey	Godalming Rural	St. Peter and Paul (part of)	Godalming Rural	Godalming	Surrey	Godalming
			Alan A. Drew	16	school boarder	born Lancs., Burnley

1901 census (extract) – Charterhouse School, Godalming, Surrey

Alan A. Drew 16 school boarder born Lancs., Burnley

⁵ Algernon George Grenfell ('AGG'), one of the foremost educationalists of his time, was then the Headmaster. 'AG' was born at Mostyn House in 1863 and he became headmaster at the school in 1890 (when he described it as *a decrepit, insanitary wreck*). The following sixteen years was spent in rebuilding and substantially extending the school and constructing the chapel (1895-97). By 1900 there were 103 pupils and Mostyn House was one of the largest preparatory schools in the country. [For an account of the school see *150 Years of Mostyn House School: A Short History, 1854 – 2004* Geoffrey W. Place The Parkgate & District Society 2004]

⁶ Over 3500 former pupils of Charterhouse School - Old Carthusians - served in WW1 (including at least one who served with the German army) and around 670 died in the conflict. De Ruigny's Roll of Honour appears to have incorrect dates for Drew's time at Charterhouse.

Alan Appleby Drew, a member of the Football 1st XI at Charterhouse in 1902
 [The Memorial Carillon : Charterhouse 2014]

Alan Drew left Charterhouse in the Cricket Quarter (CQ - late April to late June or early July) 1903 and it is recorded that *The School records show that his academic progress went spectacularly downwards during his time at Charterhouse. However, The Carthusian describes him as a 'conspicuous' member of the 1st XI that he was a member of the Rifle Corps, served in the Fire Brigade and on the Athletics committee. He was also a talented singer and entertainer.*
 [The Memorial Carillon : Charterhouse 2014]



On leaving Charterhouse Alan became a partner in the family business at Lowerhouse Printworks and undoubtedly, although the dates around this time are uncertain, he worked out of the Glasgow office of the company and, in 1904, enlisted in the 1st Volunteer Highland Light Infantry (Territorials) where he was commissioned as a Lieutenant. It appears that he was based in Glasgow for 3 or 4 years before, resigning his commission, he went to Shanghai in 1907 for business purposes and it is possible that he returned from there in early 1911. Oddly, it appears that Alan is the person recorded in the 1911 census for Westminster as an actor:

1	Edward Coxhead	Head	47	Married	26		Art Metal Work	679	Employer	Kent Deptford	
2	Alice Coxhead	Wife	46	Married	26	H H				Sussex Fernhurst	230
3	Percy Coxhead	Son	22	Single			assistant ironmongers		Worker	London Kensington	
4	Leslie Coxhead	Son	13	Single			School	390	0	Hampshire Grayshott	160
5	John Makaffy	Boarder	78	Widower			Rev? R.D. C.V.O. B.C.S.			Switzerland Irish	11 Irish
6	Harold Tatum	Boarder	36	Single			Army Officer, Capt. India Army			India London Kensington	
7	Bernard Molloy	Boarder	67	Single			Barrister	627		Ireland King's Co.	600
8	Allan Drew	Boarder	26	Single			Actor	466	Worker	Lancashire Burnley	056
9	Elizabeth Wagstaff	Servant	41	Single			General (Domestic)	010	Worker	Manchester Gorton	050

(To be filled up by the Enumerator)				(To be filled up by, or on behalf of, the Head of Family or other person in occupation, or in charge, of this dwelling.)			
I certify that— (1) All the persons on this Schedule are entered in the proper sex column. (2) I have entered the males and females in Columns 3 and 4 separately, and have compared their sum with the total number of persons. (3) After making the necessary enquiries I have completed all entries on the Schedule which appeared to be defective, and have corrected such as appeared to be erroneous. Initials of Enumerator: <i>[Signature]</i>			Total.		Write below the Number of Rooms in this Dwelling (Houses, Townships, or Apartments), count the kitchen as a room but do not count outhouses, landing, lobby, closet, bathroom, nor washhouse, office, shop.		I declare that this Schedule is correctly filled up to the best of my knowledge and belief.
Males	Females	Total	Rooms	Signature	Postal Address		
7	29	36	1	<i>[Signature]</i>	1 Prince's Place, SW		

1911 census (condensed) – 1, Prince's Place, Westminster, London.

Edward Coxhead	47	Art Metal Work	born Kent, Deptford
Alice	46		born Sussex, Fernhurst
Percy	22	assistant ironmongers	born London, Kensington
Leslie	13		born Hampshire, Grayshott
John Makaffy	78	lodger, widower, Revd.	born Switzerland, Irish
Harold Tatum	36	lodger, Army Officer, Capt. India Army	born London, Kensington
Bernard Molloy	67	lodger, barrister	born Ireland, King's Co.
Alan Drew	26	actor	born Lancashire, Burnley
Elizabeth Wagstaff	41	servant, general (domestic)	born Manchester, Gorton

No other Alan / Allan Drew was born, or baptised, in Lancashire in the period 1885 ±10 years.

It would appear that, whilst the evidence to support the date is lacking, Alan Drew returned to Mostyn House School as a teacher shortly after the 1911 census. There is no known record of the principal subjects that Alan taught at his brief time at Mostyn House although it is reported that A G Grenfell commented that, as a teacher, he was

*full of enthusiasm and understanding love for boys He also loved and believed fervently in music and that Alan was Simple-minded, self-sacrificing, full of enthusiasm and understanding love for boys with a humorous scorn of humbug and with no trace of sacerdotalism or use for Theology, he just loved the Chapel, in which he took services and Scripture Union meetings for the pure joy of making real religion the basis of happy, purposeful, useful life..... I cannot exaggerate the indelible influence of his pure example and activity for good upon the School; such work as Alan Drew's can laugh at time and Death as surely as any Saint ever canonized*⁷.

It is clear that Alan Drew had returned to Britain only about two years before the declaration of war on 4 August 1914 but it seems that (it was now the school holidays) he applied immediately for a commission in the Highland Light Infantry, the regiment with which he served during his time in Scotland.

However, this unit was at full complement and so Alan took a commission with the 4th (Extra Reserve) Battalion Cameronians (Scottish Rifles), a training unit which was then based in Gourock, on the Clyde near Greenock⁸. Alan was gazetted as 2nd Lieutenant on 16 September 1914 and promoted on 4 November. It is not certain when, but Alan Drew then became attached to the 2nd Battalion Cameronians (Scottish Rifles), a unit of the 23rd Brigade of the 8th Division, joining his regiment and leaving Britain for the front line on Saturday 13 February 1915, just 25 days before he was killed on Wednesday 10 March.

Alan's arrival at the front line trenches (on 26 February), and his observations of the conditions, are recorded in a letter written to his mother - this is reproduced on the following page.

In this letter - the last received by his family - Alan notes that his unit was relieved by the Sherwood Foresters when there was a full moon on Monday night; this was the night of 1 March.

Alan Appleby Drew was killed on 10 March 1915, the opening day of The Battle of Neuve Chapelle, the first large scale organised attack undertaken by the British Army during the war. This battle followed the prolonged, attritional, conflicts of the winter which resulted in significant casualties but few gains; at Neuve Chapelle a combined force of British and Indian troops had the objective, within two days, of breaking through the German lines and taking control of the Aubers Ridge, the higher land to the east of the village. The area around, and east of, Neuve Chapelle had been captured by the Germans in October 1914 and Allied forces held the low, marshy, plains of the Lys valley to the west. Aubers Ridge, some 40ft high, was a strategic location being well-drained and providing good observation over the surrounding lowland.

⁷ *Sacerdotalism* is the belief that priests are essential mediators between God and man and that individuals cannot approach God on their own - Catholic, Orthodox, and Anglican forms of worship are sacerdotal. This second quotation is from http://charterhousewarmemorial.org.uk/RollofHonour.aspx?RecID=193&TableName=ta_factfile

⁸ The 4th (Extra Reserve) Battalion remained in the UK throughout the war being, in 1917, involved in coastal defence work near Edinburgh.

LIEUT. DREW'S LAST LETTER. VIVID DESCRIPTION OF TRENCH LIFE.

The last letter received by his mother from Lieut. Alan Appleby Drew, of the Cameronians (Scottish Rifles), who was killed at the storming of Neuve Chapelle, describes his advent to the trenches. A report of Lieut. Drew's death, together with a photograph, appeared in our issue of March 20th.

"The day (Friday) after I wrote last," he says, "I left in the morning by the transport train, and, after some wanderings, eventually reached our headquarters about six that night, and was packed off at once, under the guidance of two signallers, down to the trenches where the regiment was. I am in "C" Company, under the command of Major Ellis. All the officers I have met seem very good sorts. It was rather exciting going down that night, about half-a-mile across "fields" in the moonlight—the fields being all mud. It was one's baptism of fire—though we did not seem to realise it—stray bullets whizzing past you every two or three minutes. You probably were not seen at all, but a stray bullet can do as much harm as an aimed one—if you happen to collide with it. Before you knew where you were, you were there, ushered through a waterproof curtain into a dug-out, about eight feet long, four feet wide, and about four feet high, where a stove was vomiting some heat and much smoke and fumes, fear which were sooted the major, and Captain Dodd, another captain, Clarke by name—the machine gun officer—and a subaltern called Dew. There were two tables at the end, and six chairs huddled together, two cartridge boxes fitted into the mud walls as shelves, and a candle.

"That was my introduction to the headquarters of "C" Company. The floor mud—fairly dry in itself—but when you entered with wet boots your feet were apt to stick slightly. There were three platoons of our company in that trench, the fourth was slightly isolated just next to us, under command of a subaltern named Harley. After

dinner of oxo and sardines, toast, butter, and jam, I was very kindly given the major's own dug-out in which to sleep. The "bed" was straw on the mud shelf, and you covered yourself up with empty sandbags, pulling one half filled with straw up over each leg to keep your feet warm. It was very cold that night, but I slept quite decently, and at 5-30 received 'early morning tea' and breakfast at 8-30—on tea, ham and eggs, toast, etc.

"During the night the Germans don't fire much artillery, but all the time there was sniping going on—on both sides—every minute or so—a shot from one trench or the other. The moon was nearly full, so it was never very dark, and the sort of fireworks display the enemy indulge in—of a sort of fireballs to light up the scene, helping our side as much as the other—keeps everything fairly light. We use that sort of rockets too, but not half as much as they do. Next morning after breakfast Captain Dodd showed me round. Our trench, he told me, was luxury compared with most; it was certainly much better than I had expected. Of course, the weather has greatly improved from what they have had, and only here and there was there water, and that only ankle deep in the bottom of the trench.

"The actual trench is just sufficiently wide to let two men pass, and about six feet deep, then towards the enemy is a step up with just room for a man to stand to fire over the sandbags and earth that make the parapet, and in front of the trenches in many cases barbed wire. The men have dug-outs, in which they sleep, and during the night it is a most weird sight to see the men on guard—not actually on sentry—huddled round a brazier, all muffled up, keeping warm. I peeped over the top of the trench, and only about a hundreds yards off was the parapet and sandbags showing the line of the German trenches. I believe in some cases they are only 50 yards apart, in others more.

"Nothing very eventful happened that day. One man had a very slight scalp wound, but about 6-30 they sent over a half dozen or so shrapnel shells. It made one feel a bit jumpy at first, but when you found they were going beyond you and doing no damage, you quickly regained your equilibrium. That night was again uneventful, as was Sunday—one shrapnel coming our way, without effect also, in the evening. Again only one man slightly grazed in the scalp. That night I was on duty for the first time, from six to eight, then from two to four, but all was very quiet. It rained a bit during the night, and from that you could gather what the trenches could be like. Of course, one anyhow got very muddy, and by the time we were relieved that night—unshaven and unwashed since one entered the trenches—nobody looked altogether their best.

"By bad luck full moon on Monday night, when the Sherwood Foresters relieved us, and about seven o'clock we filed out. None of the company were hit, but Captain Clarke—the machine gun man—got a bullet in the foot, luckily only a flesh wound. A sergeant and a man of the machine gun section were also hit, though none of them badly, probably only stray bullets, but it was so very bright with the moon that they may have been spotted. We marched back to a billets farm—four or five miles behind the firing line, and there had a peaceful night again.

"The battalion had been in the trenches, three days in and three days out for a rest, for ten weeks on end—since before Christmas—so when we came out this time, after four days in—they were a day and a night before I arrived—we were ordered right back for a week's rest, which was an absolute godsend to all of them. The next day we consequently marched back another six miles, and are now doing short marches, physical drills, etc., to get some of the stiffness out of them all."

Burnley Express - Wednesday 7 April 1915

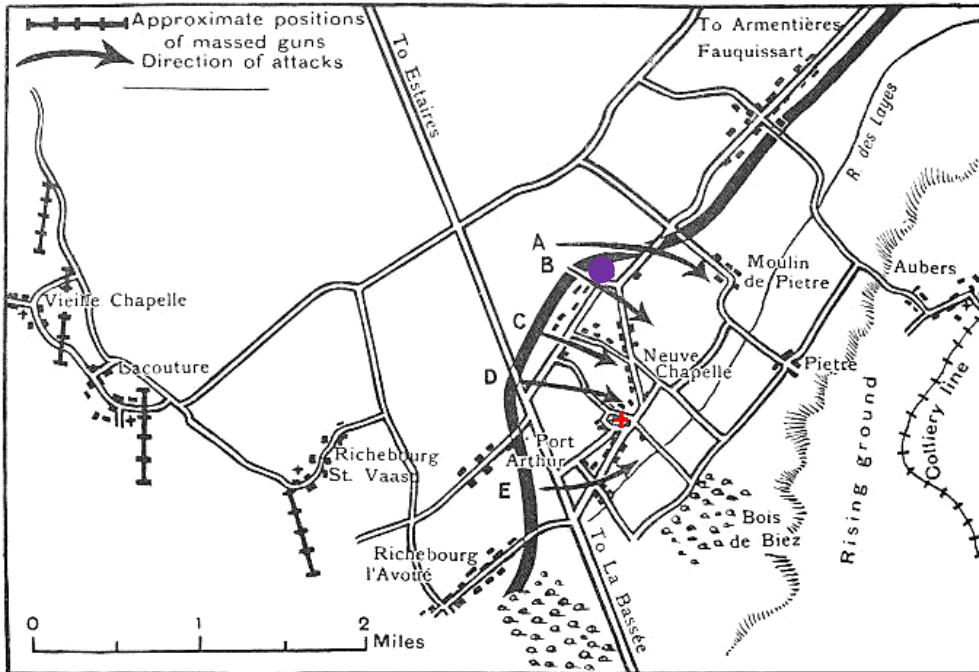
Whilst the capture of the ridge was the primary objective it was hoped that the Allied troops could continue their push and reach Lille, some 12 miles to the north-east of Neuve Chapelle. The taking of Lille, a major rail terminus used by the Germans to communicate to the east and south-east, would cause significant disruption to the German supply network.

The opening of The Battle of Neuve Chapelle was a continuous heavy bombardment of the German front line and wire entanglements which, using 66 heavy guns mounted on platforms (designed to provide stability on the marshy ground) and around 280 other artillery, began at 7.30am and continued for 35 minutes. For the first time in the war, aerial photographs had been used to provide specific targets for each artillery battery and, during the bombardment, 85 aircraft were used to provide updated information to the gun crews on the ground.

At 8.05am, with all the German front line trenches and barbed wire defences believed destroyed, Allied troops moved eastwards along an 8300 yard front. Overall, the mission was considered successful, Neuve Chapelle being captured after just three hours. However, along the northern sector of the German front line - the zone being assaulted by the Cameronians in the 23rd Brigade - the German defences and wire

remained intact along a 400 yard segment⁹ and three waves of Allied forces were caught in the open and decimated by the enemy. It was here that Alan Appleby Drew was killed.

A contemporary graphic account (written to educate children about the progress of the war!), recorded:



The black line shows the general position of the British front before the battle. A, 24th Brigade; B, 23rd Brigade (marked in purple); C, 25th Division; D, Garhwal Brigade; E, Dehra Dun Brigade. The 2nd Battalion Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) was a unit of the 23rd Brigade. The position of Neuve Chapelle church is shown in red.

The month of March has come. The trenches are in much the same position as they were in the preceding November. The gains and losses of the last five months have been trifling. But amongst the Allies there is a feeling that their day has at last arrived. Especially strong is this belief in the British lines. New troops are crossing the narrow seas every day; the Canadians and many Territorial divisions are in the field, and before the month is over there are half a million Britons on French and Flemish soil. Never before have we arrayed such a mighty army. By the middle of February our General Staff felt itself strong enough to take the offensive.

[The] French in Champagne had punctured the German line by means of an intense bombardment of the opposing trenches. We were now ready to make a similar attempt. [The map shows] a thick black line showing the position of our trenches about midway between La Bassée and Estaires. In front of the village of Neuve Chapelle this line makes a distinct sag to the westward. It was upon this section of the line that we meant to operate, and we hoped that we might not only capture the village and straighten out our line, but push the Germans off the Aubers ridge, from which coign of vantage the La Bassée-Lille railway line could be commanded. If fortune were kind, we might even reach Lille itself.

Neuve Chapelle is only a small village.....an unimportant collection of houses and small farms scattered about a junction of country roads, with a church in its centre. Our soldiers looking eastward from the British front could see the long, straggling line of houses among gardens, and the white church standing up tall and clear from the flat, marshy land. At the north-east of the village [purple circle] there is a small piece of ground filled with enclosures, and bounded on three sides by roads. Here the Germans have made a strong post so as to flank the approaches to the village from the north. Between the houses and the La Bassée-Estaires road are meadows and ploughland, seamed with German trenches. At the northern [end]

⁹ The artillery designated to shell this part of the German front line had failed to arrive in time although this was not known to the assault troops.

our own trenches are but 100 yards away from those of the Germans. In other parts of the line the distance is greater.

[Looking] eastward [we can] make out a clearly-marked ridge which is well known to us as the Aubers ridge. We see at a glance that Neuve Chapelle is the gateway to this ridge. Between the ridge and the village runs a small stream, and behind it, to the south-east, is the Biez wood. Along the stream is the German second line of defence, with strong posts at the bridgeheads. We notice that the stream crosses the La Bassée-Estaires road, and that to the north of it is a group of ruined buildings which our men call "Port Arthur." A mile eastward from the village is Pietre Mill, with a tall chimney, which is a landmark for miles around. From the mill to Port Arthur runs a great network of German trenches. Earthworks are also to be seen in the Biez wood to the south-east of the stream. It is clear that before our soldiers can attain the ridge and threaten Lille they must carry this formidable line.

On 8th March Sir John French called his commanders together and explained his plans. The main assault was to be made by the First Army, and two Indian divisions were to share in it, while the Second Army was to form a general support. In order to prevent the Germans from sending up reinforcements to the scene of the main attack, two other attacks were to take place at the same time, the one from Givenchy, the other just south of Armentières. A great mass of artillery was to be brought up, and a bombardment four times as intense as any which we had yet made was to be undertaken. Then when the German trenches were wrecked, our infantry were to go forward and attempt to drive a deep wedge into the German line. If all went well, we might be in Lille within a few days.

On the 8th and 9th of March our big guns were brought up very quietly and placed in position. We were able to do this quite unknown to the Germans, because our aircraft had gained the upper hand of theirs. All sorts of big guns were massed together, and their positions are roughly shown on the map. Meanwhile, from ten o'clock that evening endless files of men marched silently down the roads leading towards our trenches. Watch the troops as they file by.

Before morning our trenches were literally wedged with men, waiting in silence for the dawn. From the enemy's front there was as yet no sign of alarm, though their trenches at many points were less than one hundred yards away. A prisoner afterwards said that his captain noticed the massing of our men, and sent urgent messages to the artillery to open fire, but with no result. Before sunrise on the morning of the 10th hot meals were served out all along our line, for, as everybody knows, a Briton fights best when his inner man is satisfied. Then came another long wait in tense silence. Aeroplanes buzzed aloft, and every now and then officers looked at their watches. Every man knew that with the earliest light of morning the guns would begin to speak, and that some time later he and his fellows would be out in the open, making for the enemy's line as hard as they could pelt. The minutes dragged on. Would the dawn never come?

Away to the east the faint light of a grey and sullen day now began to appear. The heavy clouds hung low in the sky, and ahead the mist shrouded the view. Before long the Germans knew that a big attack was preparing, but they took no steps to meet it. Our artillery now began to boom; "ranging shots" were being fired, but soon all was silent again. On the stroke of 7.30 some 350 guns suddenly spoke with an overpowering din that racked the brain and split the ears. The terrific roar was incessant, and the discharges were so rapid that it seemed as if they came from a gigantic machine gun. The very earth shook as though struck by Thor's hammer. The first shells that hit the German position raised huge clouds of smoke and dust, and nothing could be seen but

the green fumes of lyddite¹⁰ and the spouting columns of red earth.

Barbed-wire entanglements were blown into a myriad fragments, parapets crumbled like sand castles, and trenches on which men had worked for months were flung into shapeless ruin. Bodies of mangled men were hurled high into the air, and ghastly fragments were blown back into the British lines. Four shells were hurled on every yard of the German trenches, and more ammunition was used in the thirty-five minutes during which the bombardment lasted than in a year and a half of the South African War. Long before the awful cannonade ended the German trenches had ceased to exist. They were reduced to a welter of earth and dust.

While the bombardment lasted our troops could walk outside their trenches in safety, for the Germans were so "pinned to the ground" that those of them who remained alive dared not lift their heads. From behind the ragged clouds in the sky where the aeroplanes were sailing the sun now began to shine, making still darker the black pall that hung over the German position, and flashing back from the rows of gleaming bayonets in the British trenches. At five minutes to eight our gunners lengthened their fuses, and shells began to fall fast and furiously on the village itself. Some of the houses were seen to leap into the air. Columns of dust like the sand spouts of the desert sprang up; trees went down like wheat before a sickle; bricks and stones fell in torrents. Then came the great moment. Whistles blew; our men swarmed over the parapets and rushed towards the German trenches.

Five separate infantry attacks were made on the village. The first attack was made by the 24th Brigade, to the north of the village; the second, by the 23rd Brigade, against its north-east corner; the third, by the 25th Division, against the village itself; the fourth, by the Garhwal Brigade of Indians, against its south-west corner; and the fifth, by the Dehra Dun Brigade, against Port Arthur. The 25th pushed into the wreckage of the German trenches without difficulty. They were only occupied by the shreds and tatters of the dead and a few dazed and stupefied men, their faces yellow with fumes, their clothes torn from their backs, and their equipment and weapons destroyed. In some places a few machine guns which had escaped destruction kept up fire from concealed positions, and snipers took toll of our men as they advanced. The first to reach the goal were the 2nd Lincolns and the 2nd Royal Berkshires, who opened out to let the Irish Rifles and the Rifle Brigade pass through them and take the village. From a trench in front of the Berkshires came the rattle of machine-gun fire. Two German officers, alone, were working the gun, and they continued to fire until they fell beneath the bayonets of our men. Equally gallant deeds were done on the British side. A lance-corporal who had been wounded three times and had been told to lie down insisted on advancing with his fellows. Nor was he the only wounded man who plied bayonet and grenade on that red day.

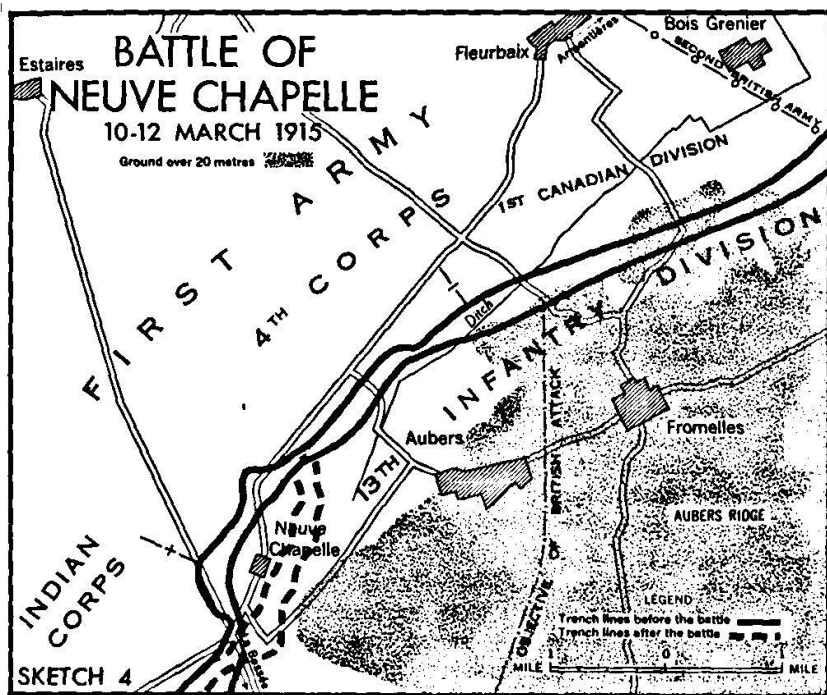
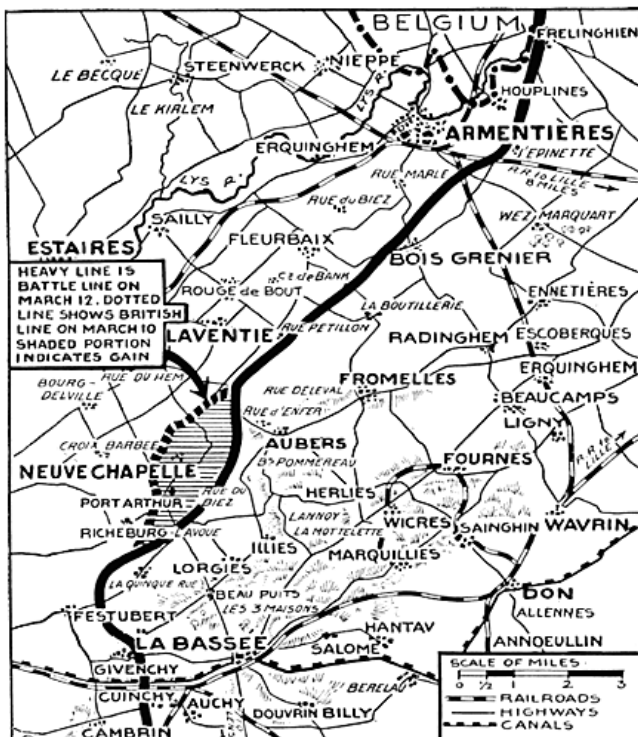
The village was now only a rubbish heap; the church was a broken shell, and the very graves in the churchyard had been torn open by our shells. Strange to say, while houses and trees were falling, a crucifix at the cross roads remained untouched, and spread its gaunt arms in mute protest above the terrible scene of slaughter and destruction. Once more our gunners lifted their sights and lengthened their fuses, and between the village and the German supports in the rear created a curtain of fire through which no living thing could pass. Then our men swept into the battered streets. Through the thick pall of smoke Germans were seen on all sides, some holding up their hands, others flying for life, and others, again, firing from the windows, from behind carts, and even from behind overturned tombstones. Machine guns clacked viciously from houses on the outskirts, and many a Briton fell a victim to them. Nevertheless, before long the village was wholly ours.

¹⁰ A form of high explosive widely used, particularly by the British, during both the Boer War and First World War. It was used in armour-piercing shells as the explosive was less likely to detonate immediately upon impact.

The Garhwalis to the right of the 25th were equally successful. Within a quarter of an hour after the assault began they had carried the first line of German trenches, and soon afterwards the 3rd Gurkhas met the Rifle Brigade in the southern outskirts of the village. Together they swept on past the heap of ruins which had once been the hamlet of Port Arthur into the woods at the foot of the rising ground.

Now comes the tragical part of the story. The 23rd Brigade, which attacked to the left of the 25th, advanced, you will remember, against the north-east of the village. Unhappily, the artillery had not properly shelled this part of the German position, and in a slight hollow the wire entanglements and the trenches were almost untouched. When the 2nd Devons, the 2nd West Yorks, the 2nd Scottish Rifles (Cameronians), and the 2nd Middlesex pushed forward they found themselves up against unbroken wire. The Cameronians suffered severely. A storm of bullets from rifles and machine guns assailed them, but they never wavered. Go on they could not; go back they would not. Men were seen in that zone of death tearing at the wire with raw and bleeding hands, while their comrades were falling fast around them. Those who survived were obliged to retire and lie down in the open under a tornado of shot and shell, until one company made a gap and broke through the line of defence. Fifteen officers, including the commander, Colonel Bliss, were killed or wounded, and when the terrible day was over only 150 men out of 750 answered the roll call. "You have many noble honours on your colours," said Sir John French, when he addressed the gallant remnant some days later; "none are finer than that of Neuve Chapelle, which will soon be added to them."

[Text and map adapted from: *The Children's Story of the War* (Volume 4 of 10)
James Edward Parrott Thomas Nelson & Sons, London 1915 Available at:
<http://gutenberg.polytechnic.edu.na/3/5/3/8/35386/35386-h/35386-h.htm>]



<http://cobwfa.ca/?p=452>

<http://www.royalmontrealregiment.com/battle-of-neuve-chapelle-1915/>

Unfortunately, the Allied forces could not capitalise on the advances made on the first day of the battle and, by 12 March, the Germans had brought in new troops, consolidated and launched a counter-attack.

Whilst this failed the British forces ran low on ammunition and the Allied offensive was postponed on 13 March and abandoned totally two days later. It is estimated that 7000 British, 4200 Indian and 12 000 German soldiers died in these few days of conflict.

The War Diary of the 2nd Battalion The Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) for the period from when Alan Appleby Drew reached the front line trenches on 26 February until the close of the first day of the battle (10 March), when he was killed record additional detail:

25 Feb - Relieved 2/ Devons in the Trenches. One man wounded.

26 Feb - Trenches near CHAPIGNY: LIEUT A A DREW 4th Bn. Scottish Rifles joined from Base HAVRE. Two men killed & three wounded.

27 Feb - One man killed & one wounded.

28 Feb - One man wounded. W.B. GRAY- BUCHANAN CAPT.

1 March - Relieved by 1st Bn. Sherwood Foresters. CAPT. A.C. STANLEY CLARKE wounded, 1 man killed and two wounded. Billeted for the night at PONT RIRCHON

2 March - MERVILLE: Marched to MERVILLE and went into billets in vicinity.

3 March - LIEUT R.H.H. ROBERTSON 4th Bn. Scottish Rifles, one lance Sergt. & 19 men joined from Base.

4 – 6 March - Nothing to record.

7 March - LA GORGUE: Moved into close billets at LA GORGUE. Three men missing, absent without leave.

8 March - In billets at LA GORGUE. Nothing to record.

9 March - Nothing doing in the morning. Paraded at 10.45 pm & marched to "Cameron Lane " ie PONT du HOM- hot meal was issued there at 1am.

10 March - At 2am marched across country to Sign Post Corner - Single file - formed up in trenches as in map "A" by 5.30 am - guns started finished at 7am. Bombardment of enemy trenches (wire cutting) 7.30 to 7.45 am. 7.45 to 8 bombardment of first line enemy's trench - 8.5am.

A & B Coys left trenches and advanced on enemy front line in quick time - A Coy MAJOR EDE L. HAYES - B Coy CAPT FERRERS - C & D Coys then occupying trenches vacated by A & B. B Coy reached the first German trench with very little opposition - not so A Coy who met with a heavy rifle & M.G. fire - the German wire too was not well cut in front of this Coy by the Guns. A Coy experienced a heavy enfilade fire as the Bn. on its left - the 2 / Middx - could not get forward altho' making three gallant attempts. About 70 prisoners gave themselves up in the first line trenches. By the time the first line had been reached. Lt Col. W.M. BLISS & the ADJT. CAPT GRAY-BUCHANAN were killed close together practically leading the first line.

C & D Coy followed A & B at a short interval and the whole regt. went on taking the German 2nd line - the regt. had now arrived at points 21 q 82 & the right flank advanced past 41 as far as 18. The line now held 18, 41, 82 q 21 9.30am, our guns now shelled 18. Heavy German rifle & machine gun fire came from 22. The 2/ Middlx were now able to advance and our gunners had cleared 22 - the whole line was now able to advance - the Bn. occupied 53 & 19 - The Bn. reached this point before our scheduled time - the (our) gunners opened fire on this line but fortunately the Bn. retired before any material damage was done - they occupied a position 18, 65. At 2.15p.m. MAJOR CARTER-CAMPBELL who by this time was the only officer left except 2/Lt. SOMERVAIL - was hit in the head & the Bn. reoccupied 19, 53 where the 5th Black Watch were digging trenches. Very heavy M.G. from direction of Pt 5 began & was finally silenced by our machine guns time about 4pm. The night of the 10th/11th was spent in trench 19. 53 and defended house 19. A hot meal and tea & ample rations were brought up Lt & Qr Master GRAHAM About 8 pm. the Sherwood Forresters came through the Bn. advancing to a night attack. The night of 10th/11th was spent in digging & improving defences of house.

THE DEATH ROLL

BURNLEY OFFICER KILLED.

LIEUT. ALAN APPLEBY DREW'S FATE.

It is with the deepest regret that we have to announce that Lieut. Alan Appleby Drew, of the Scottish Rifles (Cameronians), has been killed in action in France on the 12th instant.

Lieut. Alan Appleby Drew was the younger son of the late Daniel Drew, Esq., J.P., of Lower House, Burnley, and only left this country on February 13th to join the 1st Battalion at the front.

The late Lieut. Drew was educated at Mostyn House, Parkgate, and at Charterhouse. Whilst in Glasgow, he was for three or four years a Lieut. in the Highland Light Infantry (Territorials), which commission he resigned on going out to Shanghai for business purposes. He had been returned about two years, and when war broke out applied for a commission in the Highland Light Infantry, which was, however, full up, and he took one with the Cameronians (Scottish Rifles).



LATE LIEUT. DREW.

Burnley Express - Wednesday 17 March 1915

This report gives an incorrect date for Alan's death

<http://www.burnleyinthegreatwar.info/burnleyrollofhonourmend/drewalanappleby.htm>

MEMORIAL SERVICE TO OFFICER.

A memorial service to the late Lieut. Alan Appleby Drew, who fell at Neuve Chapelle on the 12th inst., was held in Habergham Church on Sunday. In addition to a very large attendance of parishioners and friends of the family, there were present Mr. J. M. Drew (brother), Mr. T. Drew, Mr. E. Drew, Miss L. Drew, Dr. and Mrs. Scott, Miss Stokes, Miss A. Wilkinson, the Mayor and Mrs. Sellers Kay, Mr. H. L. Joseland, and others.

The service consisted of Morning Prayer with special Lessons, followed by a portion of the service of intercession with the Collects from the Burial Service, and those appointed for All Saints' Day, etc. The hymns, "Soldiers who are Christ's below," "When our heads are bowed with woe," and "God of the living, in whose eyes," were sung, and the full choir gave a beautiful rendering of Goss' anthem, "I heard a voice from Heaven saying unto me." At the conclusion of the service the Dead March was played by Mr. E. Hitchon, the congregation standing.

The Vicar (Rev. T. H. Taylor), who conducted the service, preached from the text, "They shall see God," St. Matthew v., 8. He said they had assembled in church that morning to pay a tribute of respect to one who had given his life in the service of his country. Lieut. Drew had grown up from boyhood in their midst, and they had seen the ripening of powers and the broadening of outlook which had come to him in the fulness of early manhood. When the war broke out he was amongst the first who felt it his duty to offer himself for his country's service, and little did one think, seeing him in the King's uniform, that his career would be so short. They had hoped he would be spared to be a help to the community and the church, but it was not to be. They could not but grieve for a life cut short in its early prime as his had been—could only express deepest sympathy with his family, who mourned for his loss. Though such a death was finer far than many another, it was but natural that their first thought should be one of sorrow.

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Burnley Express - Wednesday 24 March 1915 (extract)



Alan Drew's grave at the Royal Irish Rifles Graveyard, Laventie, France [Source: http://charterhousewarmemorial.org.uk/RollofHonour.aspx?RecID=193&TableName=ta_factfile]

Campaign :- 1914-15.		(A) Where decoration was earned.		Correspondence.		
		(B) Present situation.				
Name	Corps	Rank	Reg. No.	Roll on which included (if any)		
				MEDAL	ROLL	PAGE
(A) DREW	2nd SCOTTISH RIFLES.	Lieut X		VICTORY	X OFF 61	22
(B) A. A.	✓	Lieut		BRITISH	16 STAR X OFF 61	6
<i>Alan Appleby</i> Action taken		NOM ROLL N.W./9/967/4				
		K. in A. 10/3/15.				
		15 Stars				
		1vx/1322 of 13-14-22 NW/5/19956.				
		(U).				
THEATRE OF WAR.		FRANCE.				
QUALIFYING DATE.		19/2/15.				
(6 34 46) W234—HP5590 500,000 4/19 HWV(P240) K608		NW/5/19956 [Over.				

Address. *(Brother) J. M. Drew. Esq.*
The Bluff.
Canford Cliffs
N. Bournemouth

British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920

Following the death of Alan's father, Daniel, in February 1914 Rhoda, Alan's mother, moved to Harrogate. She died in Yorkshire on 3 June 1919, aged 68, and was buried with Daniel in Burnley Cemetery on 6 June.

Alan's Will (proved in London on 19 November 1915) left £25,767 10s. 9d to his brother John Malcolm Drew, calico printer, of Canford Cliffs, Bournemouth.

John (27, calico printer) had married Edith Sylvia Peart Robinson (21) on 5 August 1909 at St Peter's Church, Burnley, and he took no part in WW1. John and Sylvia had three daughters and two sons; although it is uncertain when John ['Jack'] died, Sylvia (then a widow) died on 11 January 1970 at High Leasghyll, near Milnthorpe, Westmorland.

In November 1918 A. G. Grenfell sent out letters to past pupils, and parents of existing pupils, to ask for

donations towards an envisaged war memorial at Mostyn House. John Malcolm Drew, Alan's brother, donated £500 of the total cost of £1300 for a carillon of 31 bells for the school. [Details of the bells and memorial plaque at Mostyn House School are recorded on pages 20 - 24 of the Introduction to this work, *The Chapel of the former Mostyn House School, Parkgate*].

The grave of Alan's parents, Daniel and Rhoda, in Burnley Cemetery.

Below: A side view of the plinth with Alan's death recorded.

<http://www.ww1cemeteries.com/royal-irish-rifles-graveyard.html>

