

HARRIETSHAM TIMES

News from November 1914



Major Buckingham Killed in Action 17th November 1914

We much regret to announce the death, in action, on the Belgian Frontier, of Major Aubrey Webster Buckingham, who was attached to the 1st Battalion of the Gordon Highlanders. Major Buckingham, who was born in London in the year 1870 and educated at Elstree and Harrow Schools, before becoming a stock broker. He had already seen service having been through the South African campaign from 1899-1902. He was present in the operation in Natal in 1899 in command of Volunteer details, and was afterwards made Garrison Adjutant at Green Point Camp. He possessed the Queen's medal with three clasps, King's medal with two clasps, and the Coronation Medal (King George)

He came to Harrietsham in 1902, purchasing a large portion of the Stede Hill Estate, and became Lord of the Manor. On 2nd June 1907 he married Miss Mabel Felizarda Rudge, the only daughter of the late Lieut.-Col. Rudge R.E. and Mrs. Rudge of Stede Court, Harrietsham.

Among the numerous positions held by Major Buckingham were those of District Councillor for Otterden, Chairman of the local Conservative Association, Chairman of the Working Men's Club, Trustee of the Village Charities, Parish Councillor, and Manager of the School. Into each of these offices he threw his whole heart and energy. He was an earnest Churchman, and was Churchwarden for a long period. For many years he got together a cricket team against the Harrietsham Club on the August Bank Holiday and at Christmas time presented every child at the school with a new sixpence.

On 17th November, Major Buckingham was defending the trenches at Hooze, near Ypres, when destructive shells from the enemy had to be faced. With other officers he was well covered in the trenches, and eventually there was what was thought to be a lull in the enemy's attack. Suddenly the attack was renewed, and a shell burst right over the head of the gallant officer, penetrating the covering of the trenches. This one shell killed Major Buckingham, Major Roche, and Lieut. Chandler. It also smashed both legs of Lieut. Browne whose head alone was visible out of the debris. He was dug out and died a few days later at the Base Hospital at Boulogne. Major Buckingham was buried in a wood close to where he fell and the grave marked with a wooden cross South East of the village of Hooze.