



HENRY ANTHONY BIRRELL-ANTHONY

8 May 1915

Henry Anthony Birrell-Anthony was the only child of Henry Anthony Birrell - Anthony and Mary Annette (née Reynolds). He was born in Maindy, Cardiff on 16th June 1887. In 1895 he went to Llandaff Cathedral School and was vice-captain of the cricket XI in 1899. He was also selected for the football XI and described as “*A promising full-back he kicks neatly and low with either foot, but is rather apt to leave his place*”. Henry moved to Stancliffe Hall Preparatory School, Derbyshire in 1899, when the headmaster of the Cathedral School, Ernest Owen opened a new school there. All of the Llandaff pupils, except for two, transferred with him.



Going on to Repton School also in Derbyshire in 1902, he represented Latham House at hockey and was selected for the cricket XI in 1904, becoming Captain in 1906. According to Wisden, his best season was his last, when he had a batting average of 13.61 and took nineteen wickets for 24.21 runs each. He was also good at long jump, taking the school record in 1906 with a jump of 21 feet and half an inch, the record having previously been set by C B Fry, a future world long jump record holder and England cricketer. After matriculating at the school in 1906 he went on to University College, Oxford and whilst there played cricket for the Freshmen's in 1907 and represented the University in Athletics, before going on to gain a BA in Jurisprudence in 1909.

Following his family's move to Thame to live at Glenthorne, High Street * (his father being a solicitor) Henry took up a post as an articled clerk at the law firm of B L Reynolds in High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire. When war broke out in 1914, he enlisted with the Monmouthshire Regiment, being commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant with the 1st Battalion on 9th September 1914.

The Battalion embarked for France on 13th February 1915, landing in Le Havre the following day and were immediately deployed to the Ypres Salient with the 84th Brigade. On 8th May 1915 Henry was killed when the Battalion suffered horrendous casualties during the valiant defence at Frezenberg Ridge, part of the Second Battle of Ypres. He was 27 years old. In the Battalion war diary the day after the battle, a total of 20 officers and 434 other ranks were listed as killed, wounded or missing. His father, who as a reservist commanded the second line 2/1 (Reserve) Battalion of the Monmouths throughout the war, erected a Memorial near St Julien to his son and all other officers and men of the 1st Monmouths who fell in the battle on that day.

Second Lieutenant Henry Anthony Birrell-Anthony, Monmouthshire Regiment, has no known grave and is commemorated on The Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres. He is remembered in Thame on the War Memorial and on the Memorial Boards of St Mary's Church and All Saints' Church.

*The Thame Remembers Cross was placed at The Menin Gate Memorial on 31st October 2015
by Thame Museum Chairman, David Dodds and Jenny Dodds.*

* **Note on address:** “Glenthorne” was 23 High Street, Thame and which is now called “Starbank House”