

## COMMEMORATING THE DEATH OF

**Peter Snell**

Gunner Royal Field Artillery



Who died on 28 March 1918 in Jordan  
aged 21



Dawlish World War One Project 1914-18 /2014-18  
Funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and  
Dawlish Town Council

[www.dawlishww1.org.uk](http://www.dawlishww1.org.uk)



## Welcome to this Act of Commemoration.

Dawlish Town Council and Churches Together in Dawlish and District are commemorating the death in the service of the nation of every Dawlish person who was killed as a result of enemy action during the First World War.

Today we remember the death of Peter Snell who volunteered for action but died in action on 26 March 1918.

After the First World War, it was decided in Dawlish that a single town War Memorial would be erected close to the parish church, and no church would have its own War Memorial. In keeping with this decision, these Acts of Commemoration take place in the town centre churches without regard to the denomination of the person they commemorate and they are led by a minister or pastor of the host church. The same Order of Service is used at each service. When we remember men listed on the War Memorials in St. Mary's Cofton or St. George's Holcombe, the service is held in the appropriate village church.

There will be opportunity to talk to the leader of the service afterwards. You are invited to take a reproduction of St John's Gospel which was given to every service person during the First World War.

Please join in the words which are in **heavy type**.

Churches Together in Dawlish & District  
28 High Street,  
Dawlish, EX7 9HP

## THE ORDER OF SERVICE

### Introduction

We have gathered today as part of our commemoration of those Dawlish people who were caught up in the courageous but tragic events of the First World War.

We remember those who were killed in action,  
those who were maimed and those whose minds were disfigured  
by conflict.  
the bereaved and the lost and those who lived in darkness,  
the families which were shattered,  
and all who held in silence the unspeakable memories of warfare.

In particular today on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death we remember Peter Snell who died in action during the assault on Amman while in the service of his country.

### Prayer

Almighty God, the Lord of all,  
today we pause to remember with gratitude  
the life and death of Peter Snell  
knowing that he was, is and always will be  
known and loved by you.

We thank you for his willingness to fight for our country  
even if necessary to the point of death.

And today we remember his family and friends  
who grieved at his death  
and whose lives were never the same.

Amen.

We hear about the life and death of Peter Snell

**Reading Romans 8:31-39**

What, then, shall we say? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all — how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord

*please stand*

**A prayer of Commemoration**

We remember before God Peter Snell

**Lord, have mercy**

Today we commit Peter Snell to the love of God

**We give thanks for his life, and grieve at his death**

May he rest in peace

**and rise in glory.**

**He shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;**

**age shall not weary him, nor the years condemn.**

**At the going down of the sun and in the morning,**

**we will remember him.**

**We will remember him.**

**A candle may be lit or a bouquet may be placed before the pieta.**

## A time of silence

*We remain standing*

The Commitment to all those who died in the service of the nation.

Lord God, Father of all,  
in thankfulness for Peter Snell  
and in his memory  
we pledge ourselves  
to bring comfort to the sad, the lonely and the distressed;  
to bring relief to all who are in need  
and to serve you and to work for peace.  
Keep us ever mindful of the struggles  
and achievements of former generations  
and so make us grateful  
now and in the days to come.  
Amen

O Lord, our maker and our strength,  
from whose love in Christ we can never be parted  
either by death or life:  
Look in mercy on those for whom we pray this day,  
and grant us your protection and peace,  
that we may be saved in body and soul,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

As we ask for deliverance from the forces of destruction  
and for peace in our time and In our lives  
we pray together:

Our Father who art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come.  
Thy will be done,  
On earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
As we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever.  
**AMEN.**

### **The Blessing**

God grant to the living grace,  
to the departed rest,  
to the Church, the Queen,  
the Commonwealth and all the world  
peace and concord:

The Lord bless you and keep you;  
the Lord make his face shine on you  
and be gracious to you;  
the Lord turn his face toward you  
and give you peace.

**Amen.**

## **Peter Snell**

Born Q2 1896, Exeter

Died 28 March 1918, aged 21

Gunner, Service No: 966604

Royal Field Artillery, 60<sup>th</sup> Divn

**Peter Snell** was the son of Peter Snell (1865-1896) and Elizabeth Harriet Johns (1858-1936). Peter Snell senior was 15 when he left his family at St Giles in the Wood near Torrington and moved from farming to become a blacksmith's apprentice in Dawlish. He married Elizabeth Johns of Dawlish in 1892 and they had a son, also Peter Snell.

Peter Snell senior died in 1896, aged 31, in the year of his son's birth, and in 1901 his widow and her son, aged 4, were living with her sister Minnie Johns, a piano teacher, at 8 King Street, Dawlish and her younger sister, Maud, 16.

In 1902 Elizabeth Harriet Snell married the widower William Cook Chaffe (1847 - 1938). William Chaffe was a blacksmith and wheelwright, who had been born in Buckfastleigh but was established in Dawlish by 1881, at Weech. His first wife, Elizabeth Jane Boyer, had died in 1898.

In the 1911 census William Cook Chaffe is at 6 Myrtle Place, Old Town Street, Dawlish, with his wife and a child and step-son, Peter.

Peter Snell junior was 18 when the Great War started. He was killed in action with the Royal Field Artillery, far away from home and is buried in the Jerusalem War Cemetery. His family placed a memorial in St Gregory's churchyard, "His life for his country His soul to God."

The 60<sup>th</sup> Division had been sent to France in 1915 but on 1 November 1916 the Division received orders to reorganise, preparatory for a move to Salonika. Units entrained at Longpre between 14-25 November and, going via Marseilles and Malta, assembled at Salonika on 25 December 1916. The Division then remained in Salonika. In June 1917 the 60<sup>th</sup> Division was once again re-organised in preparation for a move to Egypt for operations in Palestine. It embarked on 12 June and by 4 July had completed concentration at Moascar in the Southern Suez Canal Zone. The Division began to

advance to Palestine and by 23 July was at Deir el Balah (8 miles SW of Gaza).

In 1918 the Division was involved in the capture of Jericho (19-21 February), the battle of Tell'Asur (8-12 March), the first Trans-Jordan raid (as part of Shea's Force, 21 March - 2 April) and the attack on Amman (as part of Chaytor's Column, 27-30 March).

Amman, the main objective of the raid, is about 30 miles north east of Jericho. "The Raid" being the first trans-Jordan Raid.

On the 28th March the attack on Amman began with the 2nd/23rd Battalion on the right and the 2nd/21st on the left. The advance was held up soon after commencing, with withering rifle fire as they moved over open ground. During the afternoon the 2nd/17th and 2nd/18th were ordered up in support as well as the 2nd/20th, who were sent to help the Australian Light Horse. This advance by the Londoner's and Australians was driven back. They were able to move through the Artillery fire, however, it was the small arms that forced them out.

At 2:00am on the 30th the attack on the city was renewed. The Imperial Camel Corps captured two lines of Turkish Trenches, but the 181st Brigade failed in taking the 'Citadel' in spite of capturing 135 prisoners. The 2nd/18th got within half a mile of the hill and then the 2nd/21st was counter attacked but held the line after brutal hand to hand fighting. The 2nd/18th tried again at 3:00pm and was stopped 400 yards from the top by heavy machine gun fire from the flanks.

The raid had not gone well from the outset and by April 2 the 60th London Division had withdrawn back across the River Jordan. A week later they were heading back.

It appears that **Gunner Peter Snell** was killed in that last attack. The record in the Register of Soldiers' Effects simply says 'in action'. He is buried in Jerusalem War Cemetery, about 4.5 kilometres north of the walled city and situated on the neck of land at the north end of the Mount of Olives, to the west of Mount Scopus.