

Arthur Gilbert Walsh CHURCH

Born 13 July 1894, Darjeeling, India
Captain

Died, France, 20 July 1918, aged 24
Devonshire Regiment 1st/5th Battalion

The Church family connection to Dawlish has been traced to Frederick Church (1814-), a retired Royal Navy (officer?) who married Emma Walsh (1827-). Emma was born in Bramdean, Hampshire but whose family had been settled at Bridge House, Dawlish, since 1829.

Emma's father, Theobald Walsh (1795-1852) a retired vicar from Dublin, had married Arabella Jackson (1799-1878) and they had eight children including another Theobald and a Gilbert, both of which names recur in the Church family. Arabella Jackson does not appear to be related to the Jackson family who came to live in the Manor House ca 1885. Her father was Charles G Jackson, born in Hampshire, 1859 and died in Lyme Regis in 1816.

Frederick and Emma Church were settled in 6 Barton Terrace in 1861 with

Theobald	son	(1855-)	born in Starcross
Arabella A	dau	(1853-)	Dawlish
Frederick S	son	(1857-)	"
Charles T W	son	(1860-1937)	"

By 1871 Emma, aged 44, was a widow living in Woodbrook House, Dawlish with three of their children, Theobald W, 16, Arabella A, 15, and Charles Theobald Walsh Church, 10.

There is a tablet on the west wall of St Gregory's Church to
"Frederick Stephen Church, Second Son of Frederick Church, R.N., and Emma his wife.
Born 18 Dec 1857 Died 12 Feb 1904"

Charles T W Church (GRO ref Newton Abbot 1860, Oct-Dec, vol 5b, p 105) entered the army in the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Sussex Regiment and was stationed in India where he married Gertrude Rose Birch (1861-1894) who had been born in Murree, Bengal. They married in 1890 in Ferozepur, Punjab and he was stationed at Jalapahar, Darjeeling.

Their first son, Edward Theobald Walsh Church, was born in Darjeeling, in 1892 and entered the Royal Navy, following his grandfather. By 1911 he was a Midshipman serving aboard H.M.S. INDEFATIGABLE, at that time in dock, Prince of Wales Basin, Devonport. He left the ship before the battle of Jutland when she was hit and destroyed in a massive explosion. He retired with rank of Commander, R.N., and died in Bridgewater, Somerset on 3 March 1948.

Their second son **Arthur Gilbert Walsh Church** was born also in Darjeeling, in 1894. His mother, Gertrude, died there in the same year but it is not known if the two events were connected.

After the death of his first wife, Charles T W Church returned to Britain and married Emily Blanche Jackson (1861-1948) in the Newton Abbot district in December 1899.

Emily Blanche Jackson was one of eight daughters and two sons of George William Collins Jackson (1817-1893) and Catherine Price Lewis (1823-1898) and an aunt to Lieutenant Wilfred George Jackson (1895-1915) (q.v.). The Jackson family came to live in the Manor House, Dawlish, ca 1885. They stayed until the death of a sister, Katherine Anne Jackson, at the age of 74 in 1929.

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Charles and Emily had two children, Arabella Bathia M Church (1900-1994) and Theobald Frederick S Church (1906-). They lived first in Lancashire and by 1901 Emily B Church was living with step-sons Edward T W Church, **Arthur G W Church**, and her daughter Arabella in Piermont Place, Dawlish. Charles was absent.

In 1911 they were living on West Cliff and Charles was with the household again, having retired as a Major from the Royal Sussex Regiment.

1911 record:	Charles T W Church,	Head,	50	Royal Sussex Regt	b Dawlish
	Emily Blanche "	Wife,	47		Clifton, Glos
	Arthur G W "	son,	16		Darjeeling, India
	Arabella B M "	dau,	10		Eccles, Lancs
	Theobald F S "	son,	5		Dawlish

Arthur Gilbert Walsh Church was sent away in 1908 to board at Charterhouse school, Godalming, Surrey. Whilst at Charterhouse he joined the Rifle Corps, reaching the rank of Sergeant, represented Verites House at Rackets and was a keen member of the Debating Society. He was appointed as School Monitor and left with a School Exhibition to Hertford College, Oxford. He left Charterhouse in July 1913 and sought a commission in the 5th (Prince of Wales' own) Battalion of the Devonshire Regiment. He was awarded a commission as a 2nd Lieutenant on the 10th November 1913. His application shows him to be unusually tall at 6 ft 2 ½ ins. His headmaster, Frank Fletcher, subscribed to his good moral character in a reference dated 25 October 1913.

"The Devonshire Regiment 1914-1918" by C T Atkinson shows that the 5th Devons were transported to India in October 1914 aboard the transport "Nevasa" and **Lieut A G W Church** was among 28 officers and 800 men.

The 5th Battalion were based at Multan for over a year, a place with a reputation for being the hottest and dustiest cantonment in India. In the winter of 1914/15 the battalion had to send several companies on tours through part of the Punjab to counteract anti-British propaganda and show that there were plenty of British soldiers left in India.

On 22 March 1917, 27 officers and 877 other ranks embarked at Bombay for Palestine after spending more than two years on garrison duty in India. They reached Suez on April 4th and proceeded to Ismailia where they re-equipped. In June they went to Deir el Behah for instruction in trench warfare against the Turkish lines. On November 1st they were held as a reserve force in the attack under General Allenby on the Gaza-Beesheba front. On the 13th they took part in the assault on Junction Station and on the 20th were in the advance towards Jerusalem as the vanguard. On 12th March 1918 **Captain Church** led "D" Company to clear Kh.Baraish in the move to Jerusalem, capturing Turkish prisoners and lots of equipment.

The 5th Devons were next ordered to France and left Egypt on 26 May 1918 in convoy for Marseilles. On arrival they were moved up to the Western Front to join the 62nd Division. On 20 June their C.S.M. Carman (q.v.) was killed and **Captain Arthur G W Church** wrote to say that Carman was "an upright and gallant soldier, and a faithful and loyal friend." He had been on continuous service without home leave since 1914.

Captain Church was to die in action himself only a few weeks later.

On 14 July they were under Marshal Foch to resist a new German offensive south of the Aisne.

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On 19 July they detrained at Arcis sur Aube for an attack down the valley of the Ardre. This was defined by steep hills on either side and German strong points at Marfaux and Cuitron. The attack began at 8.10am on 20 July but casualties were heavy: the 5th Devons had two officers and 34 men killed, among them was **Captain Church**, a "splendid company commander and a pre-war officer of the battalion."

On 28 July the battalion stormed the Montagne de Bligny, ending the second battle of the Marne and marking the turn of the tide in 1918.

(extracted from "The Devonshire Regiment 1914-1918" by C T Atkinson)

Probate record shows that administration of his Will was by Edward Theobald Walsh Church, Lieutenant R.N. and effects amounted to £1,292 -11s- 2d.

Commonwealth War Graves entry: CHURCH, A G W Captain 20/07/1918 Age:24
Devonshire Regiment 1st/5th Bn.

Grave Ref: I. H. 10. [Marfaux British Cemetery](#), Marne, France (see below)

Son of Maj. C. T. W. Church, (Royal Sussex Regt.), of "Gortlee", Dawlish, Devon.

Dawlish War memorial inscription: Church A.G.W. Capt Devon Regt

Devon Heritage site info: Captain A.G.W. Church of the 1st/5th Battalion, the Devonshire Regiment. Son of Major C.T.W.Church, (Royal Sussex Regiment), of "Gortlee",Dawlish., Died 20 July 1918 aged 24.

He is recorded on the Devon Roll of Honour

Next of kin: Father, Charles Theobald Walsh Church

Last known address: Gortlee, Dawlish (Gortlee has been converted to flatted accommodation and lies a short distance up Elm Grove Road, on the left side and is now renamed 'Westlands')

References:

Free Birth Marriage Death records

Commonwealth War Graves Commission site

www.charterhousewarmemorial.org.uk

The Sphere, 31 August 1918 - photo

www.militaryarchive.co.uk/library/infantry-histories/library/The-Devonshire-Regiment-1914-1918

"The Devonshire Regiment 1914-1918" by C T Atkinson

Army officer records at the National Archive, Kew

Subscription websites:

Ancestry for Walsh, Jackson and Church family histories

Probate record

UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects.

Marfaux is a commune 18.5 kilometres from Reims and 16 kilometres from Epernay. Marfaux British Cemetery is about one kilometre south-east of the village along the RD386, on the north-east side of the road to Nanteuil-la-Forêt and on the south-east side of the crossroad from Bois-de-Courton. The Marfaux (New Zealand) Memorial takes the forms of a panel stone erected in the shelter in Marfaux British Cemetery, and commemorates, by name, 10 casualties of the New Zealand Cyclist Battalion who fell in July 1918 and who have no known grave.

Marfaux was captured by the Germans in May 1918, and retaken, after severe fighting, on the 23rd July, by the 51st (Highland) and 62nd (West Riding) Divisions and the New Zealand Cyclist Battalion. The cemetery was begun after the Armistice by the concentration of graves from the battlefields and from other Military Cemeteries in the Marne; and all these burials, with perhaps three exceptions, are those of soldiers who fell in the months from May to August 1918.

There are over 1000, Commonwealth World War I casualties commemorated at this site. Of these, over 300 are unidentified and special memorials are erected to eight soldiers from the United Kingdom known or believed to be buried among them. Other special memorials record the names of 12 soldiers from the United Kingdom, buried in other cemeteries, whose graves could not be found. Ten of the New Zealand Cyclist Battalion who fell in July 1918, whose graves could not be found, are commemorated on a memorial erected in the shelter. The cemetery covers an area of 4,162 square metres and is enclosed on three sides by a low rubble wall.