

COMMEMORATING THE DEATH
OF GEORGE HENRY GIBBINGS

Born: Spring 1886, Dawlish
Died 17 June 1916, Bombay, aged 30



1st/6th Battalion, Devonshire Regiment
Died in hospital in Bombay (now Mumbai) of typhoid
17th June 1916



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



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 George Henry Gibbings who volunteered for action but died on 17th June 1916 from enteric fever.

After the First World War, it was decided 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.

There will be opportunity to talk to the leader of the service afterwards when light refreshments will be served.

Please join in the words which are in heavy type

You are invited to take a reproduction of St John's Gospel which was given to every service person during the First World War.

**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 100th anniversary of his death we remember George Henry Gibbings who died in India to serve his country.

Prayer

Almighty God, the Lord of all,
today we pause to remember with gratitude
the life and death of George Henry Gibbings
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 George Henry Gibbings

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 George Henry Gibbings

Lord, have mercy

Today we commit George Henry Gibbings 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 George Henry Gibbings
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,
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.

George Henry Gibbings was the oldest son of Henry Frank and Mary Ann Gibbings (nee Bennett) who lived in Chapel Street, Dawlish.

- Henry F Gibbings (1855-1928) was the son of William Gibbings (1811-1862), a baker, and Jane Potter Loutten (1818-1875). They were both born in North Tawton and had moved to Teignmouth ca. 1840 where all their children were born.

- Mary Ann Bennett (1859-) was the daughter of John and Sarah Bennett. John Bennett (1826-) was a farm labourer, born in Bristol, South Gloucestershire. His wife, Sarah, was born in Rockbeare and they may have lived in Welford, Glos, before moving to Dawlish ca. 1853 where all their children were born. Mary Ann Bennett was baptised at Welford on the 19th June 1859.

Henry Frank Gibbings married Mary Ann Bennett in the April - June quarter of 1877. In 1881 Henry Gibbings is shown as a 'companion to a gentleman' and recorded at Oak Glen, Eastcliff, Dawlish in the household of Mary Ann Grace, 77 and her son Edwin Grace, 44, gentleman.

By 1891 Henry and Mary Ann Gibbings were settled at Chapel Street, Dawlish with Loveday, daughter, 10, George, son, 5, and John, 3, all born in the town. Henry Gibbings was a cellarman and his wife a laundress.

In 1901 **George** was 15 and working as a yard boy on a cattle farm. The family of Henry Gibbings, 45, Mary, 42, **George**, 15, John, 13, Gertrude, 7, William, 5, Archibald, 3, and Millicam, 2, were living at Manor Row, Dawlish.

The census return for 1911 shows Mary Ann Gibbings living at 5 Regent Avenue with her sister, Louisa and five children. Since her marriage at the age of 18 she had ten children of which eight survived by 1911. It is not clear where her husband was at that time.

George's birth is shown in the March Quarter of 1886.

In January 1903 George enlisted at Teignmouth with the 2nd Battalion of the Devonshire Regiment.

George Henry Gibbings married Florence Batters in Devonport in the April – June quarter of 1907. They had no children.

By 1911 George H Gibbings was a Lance Corporal in barracks in Malta. The 2nd Battalion was in Cairo, Egypt, when war broke out in August 1914 and it returned to England on the 1st October, leaving for France and arriving at Le Havre on 6th November 1914.

At some point George was returned home after a breakdown in his health and was then attached to the 1st/6th Battalion, the Devonshire Regiment. This was one of Kitchener's New Army battalions of volunteers that were being trained before being sent into active service. In this case they were sent to India, being based in Lahore (Northern India, now Pakistan). From there, they were ordered to mobilize for Mesopotamia on December 17th, 1915. Of the 722 men on the strength no fewer than 127 were not passed for service, but after the trying experience of an unusually hot summer at a very hot station in the "Plains" so large a sick-list was hardly remarkable. (*The Devonshire Regiment by Atkinson*)

An extract from the *Dawlish Gazette* of 24th June 1916 records some of his early life:

"He was the eldest son of Mr and Mrs H F Gibbings of Manor Row, Dawlish. The sad news (of his death) was received by the deceased's wife at Devonport in a communication from the War Office, expressing regret and sympathy with her in her loss. Sergt. Gibbings is of course well known in Dawlish. All his young days were spent in the town. A good-natured, obliging man, a steady, trustworthy soldier, his friends were many and his enemies nil."

The following records his army experience:

Exeter and Plymouth Gazette of Friday 23 June 1916

"Mr Frank Gibbings of Manor Row, Dawlish, received news yesterday of the death of his eldest son, Sergt. George Gibbings. When war broke out deceased was serving in Egypt. He returned to England with the regiment and was sent to France. After a few months active service there he was invalided home in consequence of a breakdown in health. He recovered, and subsequently went to Mesopotamia. He contracted enteric fever, and died in a Bombay hospital on June 17th. He was 30 years of age and had served in the army 13 years. He leaves a widow, but no children. Much sympathy is expressed with the widow, the parents and members of the family." (*Enteric fever is also known as Typhoid fever*)