

A Walthamstow Family In the 'Great War'

Henry Allpass & His Sons Esmond & Henry



Henry Blythe King Allpass (1893-1916)

Henry Blythe King Allpass was born in Walthamstow in 1893. He was the oldest of four boys who were the children of Henry and Alice Allpass. His father, Henry Allpass, was a well known person in Walthamstow. He was the headmaster of Monoux Grammar School from 1886-1903. He was headmaster at a very critical time in the school history because the school had closed seven years earlier. Henry Allpass was the new headmaster at the school's re-opening on the West Avenue site and oversaw the transfer of the school to its new site in the High Street in 1901. He was twice elected as the Vice Chairman of the Walthamstow School Board and he was also Rector of St John's Church in Chapel End. Many Walthamstow old Monovians will know of him through their membership of Allpass House at the school.

Henry BK Allpass attended Oxford University where he was friends with J R Tolkien (Author of Lord of the Rings) and an enthusiastic member of the Fabian Society. He graduated with 1st Class Honours in Modern Languages and in the summer of 1914 took up a post as Senior Language Master at St Bees, a prestigious northern Grammar school. In December 1915 he transferred from St Bees Officer Training Corps to the Essex Regiment and volunteered for active service in June 1916.

In 1914, his younger brother Esmond, born in 1894 volunteered to serve in the army and became a commissioned officer in the Sherwood Foresters Regiment.

On the 21st August 1915, twenty one year old Esmond, a 2nd Lieutenant in the 9th Battalion of the Sherwood Foresters Regiment was killed in action at Suvla Bay, Gallipoli in Turkey. On the 16th September 1916, Henry, a 2nd Lieutenant of the 4th Battalion of the Essex Regiment was killed in action on the Somme in France.

This is how news of his death was reported by the St Bees school magazine to the boys at the school.

From the ST. BEES SCHOOL MAGAZINE,

July, 1917

It is almost a year since the news came from France that Mr. Allpass was reported wounded and missing after leading a bombing raid on German trenches on September 16, 1916. Although he was too badly wounded to move, and our stretcher-bearers were unable to get to him, he was seen within the German wire, and there seemed to be good reason to hope he was still alive and a prisoner. But each month has made that hope fainter, till at last his death has been officially presumed, and it is with the deepest sorrow that we at St. Bees realise our loss. Mr. H. B. K. Allpass, sometime Scholar of Exeter College, Oxford, was appointed to succeed the late Mr. Ziillig as Senior Modern Language Master in the summer of 1914, just after he

had won first-class honours in the Final School of Modern Languages at Oxford. In December, 1915, he transferred from St. Bees O.T.C. to the Essex Regiment, and in June of last year volunteered for service in France with the 1st Battalion of the Cambridgeshire Regiment, and at once obtained the position of Battalion Bombing Officer. In this capacity he proved his efficiency and courage again and again, and was recommended by his Colonel for the Military Cross, "for most gallant behaviour under fire." Many letters from fellow officers and others all tell the same tale of extraordinary bravery and "unfailing cheerfulness even in torrents of rain and shells."

Henry BK Allpass was very highly regarded by his contemporaries at Oxford University and was regarded as one of the best poets of his generation. After his death some of his friends published a small book containing his letters from the front, his verse and prose. In the dedication the author wrote:

The verse and prose contained in this little volume – written at Oxford, St. Bees, and in camp – have been collected and compiled with reverent love, and in memory of him who lies sleeping in France ; whose watchword was duty ; whose desire was to serve his generation; whose life was achievement; whose death sacrifice. With Rex Allpass went out a light that shone. The Fabian Society has lost one of its keenest students : the Isis the best topical poet in Oxford : and Exeter a scholar whom it will sadly miss.

A. M. A.

Perhaps his best memorial is contained in his own prescient words.

HONOUR TO WHOM HONOUR

It shall not be war-time,
When dim in the far time
And life be not death, and pleasures increase ;
When dazzle the cheering,
And the end of the fearing
And the manifold blessings of Commerce and Peace.
When pulpits are crowing,
And wine is a-flowing,
And friends are a-meeting who long have not met ;
When fair is Earth's promise, And you patronise " Tommies " –
In the day of rejoicing you shall not forget : –
'Tis Ours that you're reaping,
Ours, who lie sleeping.
Princes of Ypres and Loos and the Aisne :
To us be the glory.
Us, mangled and gory,
First honour to Us, whom you honour in vain.
Then, sorrowing greatly.
Your Jubilee stately

You shall keep for a fast to the friends who are fled ;
And solemnly voicing
Shall cease your rejoicing
To toast and keep toasting the health of The Dead.

At the time of his death his family were living in Endlebury Road, Chingford. Both Esmond and Henry are remembered on the WWI monuments in Turkey and France and on the Chingford War Memorial at the junction of the Ridgeway and Kings Head Hill in Chingford. His father also died in 1916 so Alice Allpass had to bear the loss of her husband and two eldest sons in the space of one year. I have not been able to find out what happened to the third son but I know that Elliott, the youngest son, had a successful commercial career in South America and retired to live in New Zealand.
Alice Allpass died at the age of 61 in London.

Bill Bayliss
Chingford ,September 2011

Notes:

Esmond Theodore Allpass died leading his troops on an assault on the enemy in the battle at Suvla Bay in Gallipoli. (Also known as the Dardanelles campaign) This was one of the bloodiest episodes in WWI. British, French , New Zealand and Australian soldiers suffered heavy casualties and were repulsed by the Turkish army.

Henry Blythe King Allpass was a Bombing Officer at died leading his troops in an attack on German trenches at the Somme. Bombing squads were high profile targets for the Germans and casualties in these squads were very high.

Some websites that will provide further information on this story are:

1914-1918.invisionzone.com/forums/index.php?showtopic=104405

<http://www.firstworldwar.com/weaponry/grenades.htm>

<http://www.oldmonovians.com/text2/schoolnotes1963.htm>

www.exeter.ox.ac.uk/documents/alumni/publications/roll-of-honour-09.pdf

www.johngarth.co.uk/php/tolkien_exeter_great_war.php

<http://www.archive.org/details/oxfordstbeesfron00allp>

<http://www.exeter.ox.ac.uk/documents/alumni/publications/roll-of-honour-09.pdf>

www.oldmonovians.com/text/history.htm

www.archive.org > ... > [California Digital Library](#)

www.chingfordwarmemorial.co.uk/bookofhonour.php?...ALLPASS.

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