

The Lawrence Brothers

The story of these two brothers and their connection with Box goes back to their parents and grandparents. Grandfather was Sir John Lawrence, who was raised to the peerage after his spell as Viceroy of India in the 1860s. During her widowhood, grandmother, Harriett, continued to divide her time between Kensington and Box. Following her death in 1917 she was interred at Minchinhampton; her husband was buried in Westminster Abbey. Henry Arnold was their second son and following his time at Cambridge, when as a talented rugby player he captained England twice, traded in goods from the Indian sub-continent. He and his wife, Constance, also spent much time in Gloucestershire; they are recorded as purchasing Box House in 1893, although they happened to be living in Kensington at the time of the 1901 Census. In 1902 Henry died whilst at Box and just over two years later Box House belonged to A.T. Playne, but the family continued to visit, taking an active part in local life. Of their four sons, one died at birth, the eldest died aged just thirteen but Malcolm Eyton and Christopher Hal reached adulthood, only to die during the Great War.

Christopher, following his education at Eton, was attending Trinity College, Cambridge at the outbreak of hostilities. He was a member of the Officer Training Corps and applied for a commission on the day war was declared. Two weeks later he was made Second Lieutenant in the Kings Royal Rifle Corps and sailed for France in September. His death came during the Battle of the Aisne, on 13th October 1914; the records show he was killed by a sniper.



Meanwhile, following his degree, Malcolm had left England for Canada in 1911. He apparently cleared some land and built a house whilst working for the British Columbian government. He too enlisted on the day war was declared (the 88th Victoria Fusiliers) and came over with the first contingent of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. Upon landing, he was told



of his younger brother's death and he applied for a commission in the Kings Royal Rifle corps, which was granted. In early December he went to France and at the beginning of 1915 he gained promotion to Lieutenant. However, on 10th January he was killed in action near Givenchy whilst leading a storming party. His commanding officer wrote; *"On reaching the position he found that a brother officer, who had led another storming party, was in need of assistance, as he had lost more than half his men. Lawrence dashed over the intervening 70 yards with some of his men and was no doubt responsible for getting back his brother officer, who had been left alone and would have been cut off."*

Back in Box, Constance Lawrence was supported by the congregation of Holy Trinity Church, where she, her sons and daughters had worshipped when in Gloucestershire. The deaths of the two brothers exemplify the loss of experienced officers in the first months of the war; most brigades suffered similar deaths. Both Constance and her mother-in-law spent considerable time in this area during the war and at the armistice in 1918 Mrs. Lawrence offered a Calvary in memory of both her sons and all the men who fell in the Great War from Minchinhampton and Box. This monument, close to the west door of the Parish Church, had to be moved to its present position in 1973 when the Porch Room was built. Although residing in Surrey up to her death in 1929, Mrs. Lawrence named her house Box Cottage in memory of her happier times here.



Box House in
Victorian Times



The Lawrence Calvary in its original position