

Arthur B. Workman 1887 – 1914

In January 1915 an article in the Minchinhampton Parish Magazine read: *“It must be a long time, probably as far back as the times of the Civil Wars, since one who died of wounds received in battle was buried in our churchyard. All who were present at the funeral of Albert Workman must have been deeply impressed by the solemnity, we might almost say grandeur of the Service – the final volleys and the “Last Post” on the Bugles. The sympathy of the whole parish goes out to the widow and relatives”*



Arthur was born in Minchinhampton, the youngest son of Frederick and Hannah, who kept the public house at the Point in Forwood, known as the Kings Head. One brother, Henry also helped with the inn, particularly after his father’s death in 1905, but Arthur went to work as a machinist in local mills and by 1911 was living with his elder brother, Frederick, in Swindon where his skills were employed at the Great Western Railway works. Later that year he returned to marry Mary Clark of Forwood (whose sister had married Frederick in 1908) in Holy Trinity Church, but they made their home in Swindon. A son, Harry, was born in 1913.

Arthur volunteered in 1914 and joined the 1st Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment. He went out to France with the British Expeditionary Force and *“was present at the retirement from Mons to the Marne where the enemy was turned. He was in the fighting until the battle of the Aise, where he was wounded on 15th September, a bullet having pierced his left forearm.”*

Repatriated on medical grounds he was sent first to Plymouth, then, still suffering great pain, to Woolwich. Here it was found that the bullet had penetrated an artery and following a two-hour operation he died of heart failure. His death as a result of wounds inflicted in September suggests he was the first soldier from the parish to die in the conflict.

Private Workman’s body was brought back to Minchinhampton. Local newspaper reports tell of a funeral procession from Forwood, with the two local policemen at its head, a firing party from the Reserve Battalion of the 5th Gloucestershire Regiment, the flower-covered bier and coffin draped with the union flag and the family and friends, as well as a contingent from the Minchinhampton Boy Scouts. Blinds were lowered in the houses and the flag at the Cross was flown at half-mast. Boys from Minchinhampton School made a guard of honour to the church and a detachment of the local Red Cross were in attendance. In the evening following the funeral a muffled peal was rung. Arthur was laid to rest with full military honours in Holy Trinity churchyard; his is one of four Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstones from the Great War in that place.

