

War Graves and Memorials

At St James' Church, Benwell

A Heritage Guide

COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES

Commonwealth War Graves headstones mark the burial places of 17 people who died in the UK and were buried at St James (numbers 1–17 on the plan). These graves can be identified by their distinctive white headstones. The Commission only commemorates those who have either died while on military service or died of causes attributable to military service during specified periods – 4 August 1914 to 31 August 1921 for the First World War and 3 September 1939 to 31 December 1947 for the Second World War.



FAMILY GRAVES Most of those who are remembered on memorials in St James' Graveyard died overseas and are commemorated there but their names are incorporated onto family headstones in Benwell. There are also two people who died in the UK and are buried at Benwell (18 and 33 on the plan). They are recognised by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission but do not have CWG headstones.

WAR MEMORIAL The war memorial for Benwell is inside St James' Church, carved in oak around the walls of the baptistery. It lists the names of 357 people from the parish who died from a range of causes. There is a separate war memorial in the grounds of St Margaret's Church in Scotswood, and a memorial plaque inside the church, commemorating 95 people from the parish of Scotswood.

MEMORIAL PLAQUES There are two brass plaques inside St James' Church, commemorating Lieutenant Angus, killed in the Boer War, and Lieutenant Atkinson, killed in World War One (41 and 42 on the plan).

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St James' Heritage & Environment Group is an independent voluntary organisation originally set up in 2010 to support the restoration and improvement of St James' graveyard and building and to develop these as resources for people of all ages to explore and celebrate the history of the west end of Newcastle. The Group now runs a varied programme of exhibitions, publications, events and activities.

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Commemorated at St James' Church



ROBERT ALEXANDER lived in South Benwell Road. After the early death of his parents (Robert and Isabella), Robert and his sister Mary Anne brought up the younger members of the family. Robert worked as a brickyard labourer before joining up to fight in the First World War. He served with D Company, 1st/6th Battalion, Northumberland Fusiliers and was killed in action on 12 June 1916 at the age of 25. He is buried in Belgium. His brother David was gassed in the war but survived and became a successful builder in Scotland.

Buried at La Laiterie Military Cemetery, Belgium, and commemorated on the War Memorial at St James' Church.



CHARLES BELL was the oldest son of Charles and Elizabeth Bell. One of eight children, he was born in 1896 and lived at 3 South View Terrace, Paradise. He was an apprentice fitter and turner at Armstrong's factory, following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather. Charles served with the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve and was killed in action at the age of 18 during the Gallipoli campaign in May 1915.

Commemorated on the War Memorial at St James' Church and on the Helles Memorial, Turkey.



JOSEPH LUCK lived on Whickham View, Benwell, with his parents Edwin and Annie. He was lost at sea in June 1940 at the age of 33. He served on the aircraft carrier HMS Glorious during the Norwegian campaign, part of a task force charged with evacuating troops and equipment before the German invasion. HMS Glorious was sunk by the German battleships Scharnhorst and Gneisau with the loss of more than 1,200 lives.

Commemorated on the family grave in Benwell (25) and on the Plymouth Naval Memorial, England.



SAMUEL WILLIS was a miner living with his family in Condercum Road when the war broke out. He was just 17 when he joined the army on 17 July 1915, claiming to be 19. The third of seven children, he was only 5ft 1 inch tall and looked even younger than his age. Samuel was killed in France in September 1918, serving in the Machine Gun Corps. *Buried at Queant Communal Cemetery British Extension, France, and commemorated on the War Memorial at St James' Church.*

From the West End to the Western Front

John Batey was born in Delaval in 1894, the fourth of eight children born to James and Margaret Batey. Before the War, John lived with his parents in Delaval Road and worked as a screener at a local pit. While serving with the 7th Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers, he went missing in action and was later presumed killed on 14 November 1916.

Commemorated on the War Memorial at St James' Church and on the Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France.

Percy Charlton was born in Benwell in 1895, the fifth of eleven children, to Thomas and Rachel Charlton. Before the War, he lived with his family at 126 Hugh Gardens. He joined his father and brothers at Armstrong's factory, having previously worked in a glass bottle works. During the War, Percy served with C Battery, 250th Brigade, Royal Field Artillery. He died at a Casualty Clearing Station after being wounded on the Somme, and is buried at Heily Station Cemetery, Mericourt-l'Abbe, France.

Commemorated on the War Memorial at St James' Church.

Francis Connolly was born in North Shields but moved first to Aline Street and later to Buddle Road in Benwell with his parents Peter and Mary and his nine brothers and sisters. Francis was a coal miner driver. While serving as a Private with the 13th Battalion, Northumberland Fusiliers, he went missing in action and was later presumed killed on 11 July 1916.

Commemorated on the War Memorial at St James' Church and on the Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France.



Charlotte Pit on Condercum Road was one of several working coalmines in the west end.



Armstrong's engineering works on the riverside once employed thousands of people, reaching an all-time peak of 20,000 during the First World War.



The northern section of Hugh Gardens still stands today. The rest of the street was demolished during the 1970s, and Hugh Street, which continued further south below Buddle Road, disappeared even earlier.



The Elswick Battery (pictured here at the Somme in 1918) was formed in 1900 as part of the Royal Artillery and was armed with guns manufactured by Armstrong's at Elswick.

A PLAN OF THE MEMORIALS AT ST JAMES'



COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES

1. **John Baron**
Died 2 February 1944, age 28.
Son of William and Margaret Annie Baron.
Husband of Stella Roberta Baron.
2. **Charles Henry Boakes**
Died 20 August 1918, age 37.
Son of William John and Elizabeth Ann Boakes.
3. **Louis Graham Brown**
Died 1 January 1921, age 44.
Husband of Dora Brown.
4. **Luke Carr**
Died 26 June 1917, age 48.
Husband of Ellen Carr.
5. **Patrick Dillon**
Died 7 June 1919, age 45.
Husband of Annie Dillon.
6. **Robert White Dykes**
Died 25 November 1946, age 28.
Son of Robert White and Isabella Dykes.
7. **James Fenton**
Died 27 April 1920, age 40.
Husband of Dora Fenton.
8. **Fred Gray**
Died 24 January 1920, age 22.
Husband of Mary Gray (later Mary Wilson).
9. **Thomas Hall**
Died 19 December 1915, age 33.
10. **John Greener Nubley**
Died 15 October 1941, age 26.
Son of George Renshaw and Eliza Jane Nubley.
11. **Adam Pattison**
Died 7 June 1917, age 20.
Son of Adam and Mary Ann Pattison.
12. **George William Robson**
Died 6 November 1918, age 22.
Son of Joseph and Elizabeth Robson.
13. **Frederick Russell**
Died 19 December 1917, age 23.
14. **John Savage**
Died 16 July 1915, age 28.
Husband of Susannah Savage.
15. **Henry Jackson Turnbull**
Died 21 September 1943, age 27.
Son of Henry and Sophia Jane Turnbull.
Husband of Agnes Hilda McLean Ward Turnbull.
16. **Reginald Walpole**
Died 29 November 1946, age 39.
Son of William Richard and Margaret Fraser Walpole. Husband of May Walpole.
17. **Douglas Young**
Died 19 December 1920, age 20.
Son of Isaac and Janet Young.

FAMILY GRAVES

18. **Gordon Redvers Mitchell Alexander**
Died 22 February 1942, age 20.
Son of George David and Isabella Wilson Alexander.
19. **George Carse**
Died 1 October 1918, age 35.
Son of John and Hannah Carse.
20. **Alfred Richard Cross**
Died 9 April 1917, age 19.
Son of William and Margaret Ann Cross.
21. **Thomas Leslie Diment**
Died 1 December 1917, age 27.
Son of George Diment. Husband of Jane Menzies Diment (later Taylor).
22. **Arthur Haveron**
Died 20 September 1918, age 25.
Son of Thomas and Hannah Haveron.
23. **Frederick Keenleyside**
Died 6 May 1915, age 21.
Son of James and Annie Keenleyside.
24. **John Lakey**
Died 26 September 1918, age 30.
Son of John and Elizabeth Lakey.
25. **Joseph Edward Luck**
Died 1 June 1940, age 33.
Son of Edwin Flowers and Annie Luck.
26. **William Maughan**
Died 18 August 1915, age 28.
Son of James and Elizabeth Maughan.
27. **Richard Hedley McDougal**
Died 24 March 1916, age 29.
Husband of Florence McDougal.
28. **Edward Middlemiss**
Died 30 June 1916, age 29.
Son of Thomas and Hannah Middlemiss.
29. **Norman Nicholson**
Died 28 August 1917, age 19.
Son of Charles Ruddick and Hannah Nicholson.
30. **James Burton Pattison**
Died 31 May 1918, age 25.
Son of William Philip and Sarah Ellen Pattison.
31. **Thomas Peacock M.M.**
Died 3 October 1918, age 20.
Recipient of Military Medal.
32. **Thomas James Reed**
Died 1 June 1918, age 24.
Son of William Guy and Elizabeth Reed.
33. **Walton Scott**
Died 8 July 1940, age 22.
Son of Joseph Carlton and Jennie Ann Scott.
34. **Edwin Lough Taylor**
Died 16 November 1917, age 22.
Son of Swainson Thompson and Eleanor Margaret Taylor.
35. **Thomas Albert Thirtwell (Croix de Guerre)**
Died 1 October 1917, age 23.
Son of Henry Peter and Mary Ann Thirlwell.
36. **William Atkinson Thompson**
Died 28 May 1918, age 33.
Son of William Michael and Hannah Thompson.
37. **Edward Todd**
Died 18 April 1918, age 19.
Son of Edward Stobbie and Susannah Todd.
38. **Thomas Tweedy**
Died 1 November 1918, age 25.
Son of James and Ellen Tweedy.
39. **John Arthur Varey**
Died 5 February 1917, age 21.
Son of Richard John and Charlotte Varey.
40. **Arthur Davies White**
Died 22 April 1918, age 37.
Son of Jesse and Harriet White.

PLAQUES IN THE CHURCH

41. **William Gordon Angus**
Died 3 June 1901, age 20.
Son of William Mathwin and Julia Angus.
42. **Geoffrey John Buddle Atkinson**
Died 10 June 1915, age 21.
Son of Robert Hugh Montgomery Buddle and Mabel Atkinson.

