

Lieutenant Pendarves C F Gibson

7th February 1880 - 10th April 1917

Lieutenant Pendarves Christopher Foll Gibson was a member of 13th Battalion Royal Fusiliers, who died 10th April 1917

Pendarves Christopher Foll Gibson entered this world on 7th February 1880, his father Edward Pendarves aged 36 was the Rector of All Saints, Stock his mother Flora Elizabeth then aged 41 (according to the 1881 Census). He had two older sisters Flora Mary and Edna, the latter had been born in Stock, whilst Flora had been born in West Coker, Somerset where Edward had been the Curate.



The 1881 Census also goes on to show that in the Rectory seen on the left in 1908, there also lived a Cook, Housemaid and Nurse.

Tracing the family from the relevant census records shows that in 1851, Edward who by then was 6 years old, had been born in St. Clement, Cornwall and was the middle son of two brothers, Archibald and Henry.



His father Christopher, Pendarves grandfather was the Vicar of St. Clement, Mary Ann his wife and Pendarves grandmother lived in the Vicarage on the Church Lawn. Interestingly there were two additional residents in the Vicarage, a cook and a housemaid, history repeating itself later.



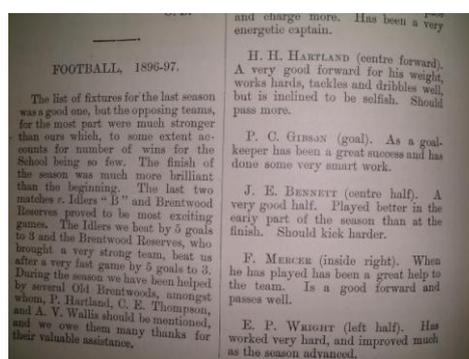
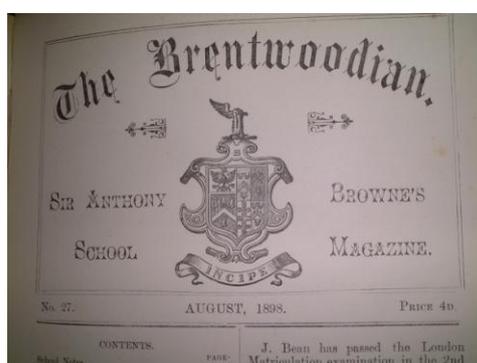
Photos of St Clement Church and Vicarage, Cornwall by Pat Naylor

The census records for Pendarves maternal side show that his mother Flora was born in Dunstable, Berkshire. In 1861 she was 21 years old and the eldest of three children, she had a sister Louisa and brother Hattit. Her father Hattit Foll was a magistrate and (deciphering this is not easy) 'Landed proprietor (?) occupying 540 acres of land employing 19 men and boys'. Consequently they lived in a large house unrecorded on the census form, as a further five people were in service to them, a cook, butler, ladys maid, and two housemaids. In the 1871 Census this prosperity continued to grow as Hattit is registered not only as a JP but also as a 'landowner of 546 acres employing 18 labourers 6 boys and a bailiff'. The number of servants had increased to include a ladies maid/domestic servant, housemaid, kitchen maid, butler, page, two coachmen, groom and gardener.

Both set of parents came from privileged Victorian backgrounds and it is into this that Pendarves and his siblings were born.

I raised it earlier about the Christian names that are chosen by parents for their children. Pendarves was named after his father, Christopher was his grandfather's name, Foll was his mother's maiden name.

He attended Brentwood School as a boarder from 1893 – 1898, the school records are patchy regarding his academic prowess, but he was a member of the school football and cricket teams. Each year the Brentwoodian would publish various results and give a brief overview of each players performance. In 1896-7 Pendarves played in goal and 'was a great success and done some smart work', in cricket he was 'greatly improved as a bat especially in his forward strokes'



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In 1898 Pendarves went up to Selwyn College Cambridge, when he arrived the college was just twenty years old so a comparative youngster on the Cambridge scene. He matriculated in the Michaelmas term 1898 and spent the next three years at the college.



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After Selwyn College, Pendarves followed the customary route laid out by late privileged Victorian families and that was either the Civil Service or the Military. He chose the latter and joined the 17th Middlesex Volunteer Rifle Corps (enlistment date unknown) the evidence for this came from the London Gazette dated May 3rd 1901 which stated that '*the undermentioned University candidates to be Second Lieutenants*' as Pendarves was seconded to the Lancashire Fusiliers. He was also recorded on the Army list for 1901 as a Second Lieutenant in the Indian Staff Corps placing him in India. Subsequent research has shown that the first census of British soldiers in India took place in 1911, so using the Army List of 1901 has here replaced the 1901 Census completed in the UK.

The Indian Staff Corps was a branch of the Indian Army during the British Raj. They were meant to provide officers for the native regiments and for the staff and army departments. They were also designed to offer placements for civil and political appointments for posts which Indian Army officers might be eligible.

Subsequently the London Gazette in October 1903 '*The king has approved of the following promotions among officers of the Indian Army, Indian Medical Service, and Indian Army Departments, and Admissions to the Indian Army made by the Government of India*' which tells us that Pendarves had remained in the same regiment and rank and in India two years later.

Pendarves Indian service from 1901- 1909 was documented in Alumni Cantabrigienses: A Biographical List of All Known Students, Graduates. He served in Burma with the Royal Fusiliers, in India with the native Lancers and Gurkhas on the NW Frontier. So really followed the traditional pathway of the Victorian/Edwardian gentleman. Pendarves stint in India came to an end 25th March 1909 when he retired from the Service (as seen in the London Gazette June 11 1909) with the approval of the King.

For the next five years he is quoted as being an assistant surveyor on railway construction in Western Australia and in Ocean Island, Gilbert and Ellice Islands in the Pacific.

Research into his Great War record has proved a challenge, but the most logical appears to be this scenario. When war broke out in August 1914, he ultimately returned having been half way around the world. He was commissioned into the Royal Fusiliers which according to the Alumni Cantabrigienses he had had connections with in Burma some years before.

According to his medal roll his entry into the war was in Gallipoli in 1915 and the only battalion to serve in that theatre was the Second Battalion. It had been raised in Calcutta in August 1914 and returned to England in December the same year. The London Gazette April 13 1915 noted that Pendarves was to become a temporary Lieutenant. They sailed in March 1915 and landed in Gallipoli April 25th. The book, Royal Fusiliers in the Great War called the campaign The Great Adventure, the subsequent narrative written in 1922 by H C O'Neill devotes much detail to what occurred in the peninsular. By September the Battalion had sustained some 90 officers and 1646 OR killed, wounded or missing, none of the original officers who landed were left, so it can be presumed that Pendarves was a replacement Lieutenant who arrived in the period April - September. The remaining men were transhipped on to the SS Caledonia on January 2nd 1916 and sailed for Alexandria where they arrived some six days later.

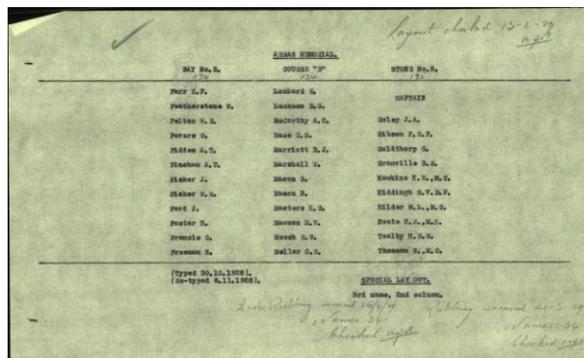
From this point until his death the evidence is hazy, did he return to England? His Medal Card points him as being in the 14th Battalion, which was a reserve, from which he would have been sent out as a replacement. The Commonwealth war Graves information list him as being in the 13th Battalion, which were on the Western front. So was he seconded from one to another?

Pendarves fell in the Arras Offensive in April 1917 as the regiment was being used in the tactical incident of capturing Monchy le Preux. The 37th Division comprising was involved in the first battle of the Scarpe 9 -14 April 1917. The nature date and recording of Pendarves death is contradictory and needs more research. Both the medal roll card and the commonwealth war graves information state the 10th April 1917, the former states the 14th battalion (which was a reserve battalion) and the latter 13th Battalion, which was involved

in the taking of Monchy Le Preux at the right time of his reported death. Reporting death in battle is not always an exact science especially in the confusion of a battle. However the war diary of the Royal Fusiliers Page 164 - 166 in its account of the attack on Guemappe speaks of a Captain Gibson leading men from the 4th Battalion, being severely wounded on the 13th April. Two Captain Gibsons in different battalions of the same regiment fighting next to each other pushes the bounds of coincidence. I tend to go with the former account because



of the 13th Battalion and the fact that Pendarves is commemorated on the Arras Memorial to the missing suggests that his body was never found. The memorial has the names of over 35000 men who died in the area, and entries are categorised according to the regiment served.



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‘Our men advanced with the greatest dash and determination, and I could see your son constantly rallying his platoon and leading them forward in a way that commanded my deepest admiration, and more than upheld the splendid traditions of our battalion. Your son was always foremost in the attack, exposing himself in the discharge of his duty in a way which showed him perfectly regardless of his personal safety’
As was read by parents of Lieutenant Pendarves C F Gibson’s on the event of their only son’s death.

After his death, probate was determined at £228 and sent back to his father as executor of his will. His medals were sent to his sister Edna, who by then was living in Dulwich, as both Edward and Flora had by then passed away.



In addition he is remembered on a fine memorial in Brentwood School chapel, to the left of the altar. The school has memorials to the boys of the school from the Boer War, Great War and World War Two and there is even a small German war memorial present.

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Acknowledgements

[ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com)

[commonwealthwargraves.org](https://www.commonwealthwargraves.org)

[Alumni Cantabrigienses: A Biographical List of All Known Students, Graduates ... - Google Books](#)

<https://archive.org/details/royalfusiliersin00onei>

[Brentwood School Archive](#)

Pat Naylor