

9: Christopher Bushell VC DSO

Basic Information [as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC]

Name as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC: Christopher Bushell VC DSO

Rank: Lt. Col

Battalion / Regiment: 7th Bn. The Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment)

Service Number: ?

Date of Death: 08 August 1918

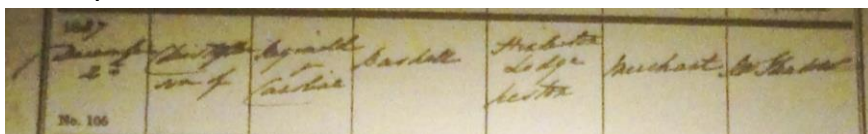
Age at Death: 30

Buried / Commemorated at: Querrieu British Cemetery, Departement de la Somme, Picardie, France

Additional information given by CWGC: The younger son of the late Reginald Bushell, of Hinderton Lodge, Neston, and of Mrs. Caroline Bushell, of Hillside, St. Margaret's-at-Cliffe, Dover Husband of Rachel Bushell, of Boughton Aluph, Kent, late of Wye Vicarage, Kent

As a consequence of distinguished military service during WW1, two 'local' men were awarded the Victoria Cross - Christopher Bushell and William La Touche Congreve. No one from Heswall or other adjacent communities gained this honour.

Christopher Bushell was born at Neston on 31 October 1887 (not 1888 as often reported), the son of Reginald and Caroline Bushell of Hinderton Lodge, a large house, since demolished, which adjoined Hinderton Road. The site is now occupied by modern bungalows in Cedar Grove; an account of Hinderton Lodge can be read on the website www.nestonpast.com. Christopher was baptised at Neston Parish Church on 2 December 1887:



Reginald Bushell, the second son of Liverpool wine merchant Christopher Bushell and Margaret Smith Bushell (née Easton) of Hinderton Lodge, married Caroline Hope (born 27 April 1855) of Seaforth, Lancashire, in Kensington in April / June 1883 and Arthur Reginald, their first child, was baptised at Neston on 29 August 1884. Lilian Hope Bushell was baptised at Neston on 4 September 1885; Reginald was described as being a merchant and, somewhat strangely, their address was recorded as Oakhill, Neston. Christopher jnr was their third and last child.

Reginald Bushell	48	Wine Merchant	Y	Caroline Hope	35	born Liverpool
Caroline	35			Arthur R.	6	born Neston
Arthur R.	6			Lilian Hope	5	born Neston
Lilian Hope	5			Christopher	3	born Neston
Christopher	3					

1891 census (extract) – Hinderton Lodge, Neston

Reginald Bushell	48	wine merchant	born Liverpool
Caroline	35		born Liverpool
Arthur R.	6		born Neston
Lilian Hope	5		born Neston
Christopher	3		born Neston

Four servants are also recorded in the house.

Reginald was a partner in the family business founded by his father, Bushell Brothers and Co, Wine Merchants and Shippers of Castle Street, Liverpool. He was also a member of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board and a JP for Cheshire.

At the time of the 1901 census Christopher, 12, was at the Colledge (sic) Boarding School in Heswall:

The Colledge Boarding School	1	Leonard Dobie	Head	S	37	Schoolmaster	Employed at home	Cheshire Chester
		Elizabeth Dobie	Sister	S	41	do	do	do
		Maria C. Minnis	Serv	S	41	do	do	Yorkshire Driffild
		Kate Figgot	do	S	17	do	do	Lancashire Liverpool
		Joan Mc Culloch	do	S	17	do	do	Wiltshire Wootton Bassett
		Rose Bennett	do	S	48	do	do	Lancashire Liverpool
		Stephen H. Ellis	Boarder	S	11	do	do	do Wigan
		John F. Bramble	do	S	12	do	do	do Scotland
		Arthur M. Ruston	do	S	13	do	do	Lancashire Rochdale
		Christopher Bushell	do	S	12	do	do	Cheshire Neston

Located on Hillside Road, previously known as College Road, the preparatory boarding school (often called Dobie's College) was based in Moorland House (now demolished) and run by Leonard Dobie and his sister 'for the education of the sons of gentlemen'.

At the time of the 1901 census Arthur (16), Christopher's brother, was at School House, Malvern College, and his parents and sister were at Hinderton Lodge:

Hinderton Lodge	1	Reginald Bushell	Head	M	58	Wine Merchant	do	Liverpool
		Caroline	Wife	M	45	do	do	Seaford
		Lilian H.	do	F	15	do	do	Neston
		James H. Graham	Visitor	S	30	Teacher (Grammar)	do	Seaford
		Martha J. Morris	Serv	S	35	Cook (Domestic)	do	Seaford
		Mary E. Burgess	Serv	S	26	Housemaid (Domestic)	do	Seaford
		Edith M. Dore	Serv	S	22	Parlourmaid (Domestic)	do	Seaford
		Joseph Scott	Serv	S	15	Kitchenmaid (Domestic)	do	Seaford

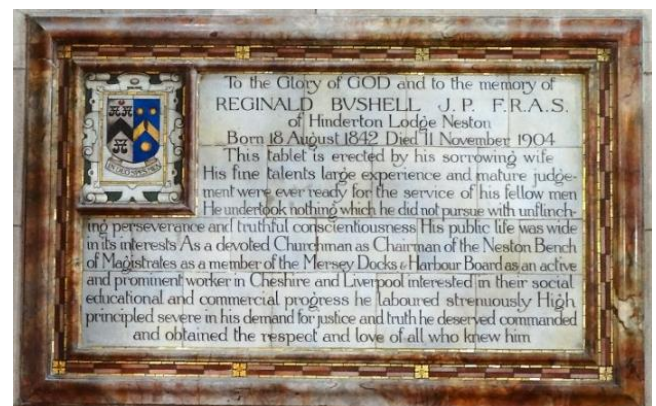
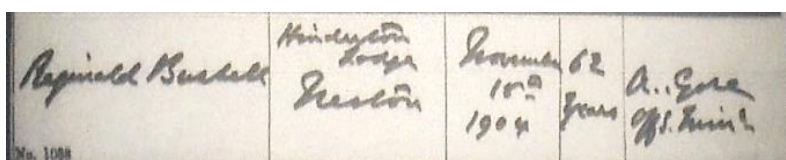
1901 census (extract) – Hinderton Lodge, Neston

Reginald Bushell	58	wine merchant	born Liverpool
Caroline	45		born Seaford
Lilian H.	15		born Neston

Also in the household were one visitor and four servants.

Christopher left Dobie's College in the summer of 1901 and, later in the year, moved to Rugby School where he was educated until 1906 and was actively involved in many sports, particularly rugby with the Notting Dale Club.

Reginald Bushell, Christopher's father (born 18 August 1842) died at Hinderton Lodge on 11 November 1904, aged 62, and was buried at Neston Parish Church on 15 November:



Memorial to Reginald Bushell inside Neston parish church.

On leaving Oxford Christopher moved to a Solicitor's office in Liverpool and was called to the Bar, Inner Temple, in 1911. He was in chambers at 2 New Square, Lincolns Inn, London and resided at his mother's Knightsbridge home where he was recorded as a law student at the time of the 1911 census:

Page | 365

NESTON CASUALTIES.

A deep feeling of regret is experienced throughout the Neston district at the news that Mr. Christopher Bushell, a son of the late Mr. Reginald Bushell, of Hinderton Lodge, and a grandson of the late Mr. Christopher Bushell, of Hinderton Hall, has been seriously wounded. Mr. Bushell, who holds a commission in the Royal Surrey Regiment, is at present lying at Versailles. His speedy recovery will be hoped for by all.

Still graver news comes of another grandson of the late Mr. Christopher Bushell, Captain Gerald Lea, of the Royal Worcestershire Regiment, who is reported killed in action. Although not a native of Neston his mother is well remembered here.

Birkenhead Advertiser – Saturday 3 October 1914

On 8 May 1912 Christopher Bushell was commissioned as a Special Reserve Officer (Second Lieutenant) in the 1st Battalion The Queen's Royal (West Surrey Regiment) and on 4 August 1914 he was mobilised and went to France with the original British Expeditionary Force (BEF).

In August/September 1914 Christopher Bushell was in The Retreat from Mons, the long withdrawal to the River Marne by the BEF and the French Fifth Army

on the Western Front after their defeat by the German armies at The Battle of Charleroi (21 August) and The Battle of Mons (23 August). Shortly afterwards Christopher was in action at The First Battle of the Aisne (12 – 15 September 1914) where, on 14 September, he was wounded severely.

The First Battle of the Aisne

In dense fog on the night of 13 September, most of the BEF crossed the Aisne on pontoons or partially demolished bridges, landing at Bourg-et-Comin and at Venizel. At Chivres-Val east of Venizel, there was an escarpment the Germans had selected as their strongest position. The French 5th Army crossed the Aisne at Berry-au-Bac and captured the eastern tip of Chemin des Dames, a steep ridge. Contact was established along the entire front. East of Chemin des Dames, the French 4th, 5th and 9th armies made only negligible progress beyond the positions reached on 13 September. Under the thick cover of the foggy night, the BEF advanced up the narrow paths to the plateau but when the mist evaporated under a bright morning sun, they were mercilessly raked by fire from the flank. Those caught in the valley without the fog's protective shroud fared no better.

It soon became clear that neither side could budge the other and since neither chose to retreat, the impasse hardened into a stalemate that would lock the antagonists into a relatively narrow strip for the next four years. On 14 September, Sir John French ordered the entire BEF to entrench, but few entrenching tools were available. Soldiers scouted nearby farms and villages for pickaxes, spades and other implements. Without training for stationary warfare, the troops merely dug shallow pits in the soil. These were at first intended only to afford cover against enemy observation and shell fire. Soon the trenches were deepened to about seven feet. Other protective measures included camouflage and holes cut into trench walls then braced with timber.

Trench warfare was also new for the Germans, whose training and equipment were designed for a mobile war to be won in six weeks, but they quickly adapted their weapons to the new situation. Siege howitzers now lobbed massive shells into the Allied trenches. Skilful use of trench mortars and hand and rifle grenades enabled the Germans to inflict great losses upon Allied troops, who had neither been trained nor equipped with these weapons. Searchlights, flares and periscopes were also part of the German equipment intended for other purposes, but put to use in the trenches.

[Adapted from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Battle_of_the_Aisne]

Following his recovery, Christopher Bushell returned to France in November 1915. Back in Britain, recuperating, Christopher married Rachel Edith Florence Lambert at the parish church of Saints Gregory & Martin, Wye, Kent, on 24 August 1915. Rachel was the oldest daughter of the Reverend Edgar and Nora Lambert; in 1901 Edgar (42, born Hull) was the vicar at a church in Toxteth Park, Liverpool and Rachel (9) was recorded as having been born in Sunderland. In 1911 Nora and Rachel (19), together with three of Rachel's young siblings (all born in Liverpool) were recorded as living at Aber Uchaf, Abersoch, Pwllheli. Canon Lambert was not with his family on census night but is recorded as visiting a Frank Bright Summers in Alton, Hampshire.

Following recovery from his injuries Christopher Bushell returned to France in November 1915 and, until June 1916, he was the aide-de-camp (ADC) to the General Officer Commanding (GOC) the 33rd Division, then under the command of Major-General Herman Landon. ADCs were the personal assistant or adjutant to senior commanding officers and, as such, had significant authority. Towards the end of his service as ADC Christopher's first, and only, child was born on 15 June 1916 and baptised as Elisabeth Hope Bushell at Wye.

By July 1916, at the commencement of The Battle of the Somme (1 July – 18 November 1916) Christopher had become Staff Captain of the 100th Brigade within the 33rd Division. The 100th Brigade contained, with others, Christopher's own regiment, the 1st Battalion The Queen's Royal (West Surrey).

In December 1916 Christopher was placed in temporary command of the 7th (Service) Battalion The Queen's Royal (West Surrey) Regiment 7th (Service) Battalion; this had been formed at Guildford in September 1914 as part of Kitchener's Second New Army and was under the command of the 55th Brigade, 18th (Eastern) Division.

Christopher progressed to be the company commander, the second-in-command and finally the temporary lieutenant colonel - the commanding officer - of the battalion. In both January 1917 and November 1917 Christopher was Mentioned in Despatches (although the details of his actions are unknown) and on 1 January 1918 he was awarded the DSO for 'distinguished service in the field'.

Christopher Bushell was 29 years old, and commanding officer of the 7th Battalion The Queen's Royal (West Surrey) Regiment when, on 23 March 1918, west of St. Quentin's Canal and north of Tergnier, France, his actions led to him being awarded the Victoria Cross. The citation, reported in *The London Gazette* N^o. 30667 of 30 April 1918, was recounted in several newspapers.

Lieutenant-Colonel Christopher Bushell, Royal West Surrey Regiment, who was recently invested with both the V.C. and the D.S.O. by the King at Buckingham Palace, is the son-in-law of the Rev. E. Lambert, vicar of Wye, his marriage to Miss Lambert having taken place at Wye in August, 1915. The Victoria Cross was awarded to the gallant officer for most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty when in command of his battalion.

Whitstable Times and Herne Bay Herald - Saturday 25 May 1918

A LIVERPOOL V.C.

OFFICER'S GREAT COURAGE.

HERO OF MONS AND THE AISNE.

Five more Victoria Crosses were gazetted yesterday for conspicuous bravery in action. Among them is a Liverpool officer, Captain (Temporary Lieut.-Colonel) Christopher Bushell, D.S.O., Royal West Surrey Regiment, one of the heroes of Mons. The deed which gained for him the Cross is thus officially described:—

For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty when in command of his battalion. Lieutenant-Colonel Bushell personally led 'C' Company of his battalion, who were co-operating with an Allied regiment in a counter-attack, in face of very heavy machine-gun fire. In the course of this attack he was severely wounded in the head; but he continued to carry on, walking about in front of both English and Allied troops encouraging and reorganising them. He refused even to have his wound attended to until he had placed the whole line in a sound position and formed a defensive flank to meet a turning movement by the enemy. He then went to brigade headquarters and reported the situation, had his wound dressed, and returned to the firing line, which had come back a short distance. He visited every portion of the line, both English and Allied, in the face of terrific machine-gun and rifle fire, exhorting the troops to remain where they were and to kill the enemy. In spite of his wounds, this gallant officer refused to go to the rear, and had eventually to be removed to the dressing station in a fainting condition. To the magnificent example of energy, devotion, and courage shown by their commanding officer is attributed the fine spirit displayed and the keen fight put up by his battalion, not only on the day in question but on each succeeding day of the withdrawal.

Captain Bushell is the son of the late Mr. Reginald Bushell, Hinderton Lodge, Neston, and a grandson of the late Mr. Christopher Bushell, the well-known educationalist, philanthropist, and churchman of Liverpool. Captain Bushell was educated at Moorland House, Heswall, Rugby, and Corpus Christi College, Oxford. Shortly after completing his education he was called to the Bar. He was attached to the Royal West Surrey Regiment Special Reserve, and when war broke out proceeded with his regiment to France. He went through the famous retreat from Mons and was wounded at the battle of the Aisne. After recovering from his wound Captain Bushell served some time in England, and then went back to France as A.D.C. to General London. He was appointed temporary lieutenant-colonel, and in that capacity has been serving in France for the last twelve months. He received the D.S.O. just after Christmas.

He was invested with the VC, and the DSO which he gained in late 1917, by the King at a ceremony on Monday May 13 1918. He returned to the front line on 22 May. On 8 August 1918, less than five months after being awarded the VC and still serving as Commanding Officer of the 7th Queen's, Christopher Bushell was killed in action to the south of Morlancourt, on the Somme.

The day-to-day War Diaries of the 7th Battalion give only the outline of the action on 8 August

MORLANCOURT AREA.

8th Day of Great attack - & Success of Battalion. Objectives, result & Casualties are given in attached report. Lt. Col. C. BUSHELL. V.C. D.S.O. fell in action.

although the appendix to the Diary gives a great deal more detail and reveals that Christopher Bushell (the Commanding Officer, leading 'C' Company) was killed by a sniper at about 7.0am when his troops, somewhat disorganised but with the support of a single tank (six had been expected), were attempting to force the German troops back:

The Commanding Officer then proceeded along Trench to organise and cheer the men on his way to the Tank to give orders to the Tank Commander for the next movement he intended to make.

The Commanding Officer was fatally sniped whilst proceeding to carry out this mission.

August 8 1918 was the opening day of The Battle of Amiens (or The Third Battle of Picardy), the opening phase of the Allied offensive which later became known as The Hundred Days Offensive and led, ultimately, to the end of WW1.

The book *Advance to Victory 1918 : Somme* [Michael Stedman 2001 Pen & Sword Books, Barnsley] states that:

To the north of 36 Brigade the attack was carried out by 55 Brigade's 7th Queen's. Their task was to seize the ground on the north of the Bray - Corbie road. This battalion faced

a resilient counter attack by German soldiers belonging to the 120th and 123rd regiments of the 27th Division. Not waiting to be attacked through the mist in their own trenches the Germans had swept forward behind a shower of stick grenades, causing the 7th Queen's to lose their barrage and become engaged in close quarter fighting in the area of Cloncurry Trench, a part of the line which the 18th Division had lost on 6th August.

Liverpool Daily Post - Saturday 4 May 1918

Within a short time isolated parties of the Queen's were being overrun and it was left to their commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Christopher Bushell, V.C., D.S.O., to bring forwards the remaining details at 7.00am and drive the Germans back from the old British front line. Whilst directing the tanks, which were now making their way forward, and exhorting his men Bushell was shot through the neck and mortally wounded Cloncurry trench, an old British support position, lay almost directly opposite the site of Beacon Cemetery. The actual British front lines which had existed in this area and been lost in the German attacks of 6 August were located a little way to the east of Beacon Cemetery and lay some 300 meters west of the D42 Saily Laurette – Morlancourt road as it crosses the Morlancourt ridge. That slightly higher ground between Beacon Cemetery and the road... is immediately clear why this position was a vital one to recapture, prior to any subsequent advances eastwards along the Morlancourt ridge, since the location provided dominant observation in this area. The attack of the 18th Division therefore ended on their first objectives, although their advance could have seen the capture of Gressaire Wood with more good fortune and a better performance from the tanks. Many of the tanks had lost direction in the morning mist... Of one company four tanks broke down before arrival at their starting point. Of the second company, four were held in reserve, one lost direction and joined the 12th Division, and two broke down. The others are said to have engaged any machine gun posts which could be located. The reserve section went as far as the second objective. Seventeen of the 36 tanks rallied in the evening.

On 1 August 1918, a week before the commencement of The Battle of Amiens, the official effective strength of the 7th Battalion was 38 officers and 938 other ranks and the War Diary notes, for 7 – 10 August, four officers were killed (and another six were wounded) with 24 other men killed and a further 241 missing, wounded or injured.

Lieutenant Colonel Christopher Bushell VC DSO was buried at the Querrieu British Cemetery at a village 6 miles east-north-east of Amiens.

APPENDIX No.4.

CASUALTIES:

AUGUST 7th TO 10th 1918.

OFFICERS:

KILLED.

LIEUT.-COL. CHRISTOPHER BUSHELL, V.C., D.S.O.
 LIEUT. DONALD HOLMAN (MIDDLESEX REG) ATTD.
 2.LT. PERCY VALENTINE COOPER
 2.LT. HARRY MASON BARBER (E.SURREY R.) ATTD.

WOUNDED.

CAPT. LEONARD GORDON STEDMAN, M.C.
 2 LT. JOSEPH TORRY LANCASTER
 2 LT. WILLIAM MONTAGUE WATSON
 2 LT JAMES SCOVELL ADAMS
 2 LT WILLIAM LAURENCE ATKINSON
 2 LT HENRY PALLISTER CLARKE, M.C.

James Scovell Adams
 See Postscript
 towards the end of
 this account

OTHER RANKS:

<u>KILLED.</u>	<u>MISSING.</u>	<u>WOUNDED.</u>	<u>WOUNDED - GASSED</u>	<u>N.Y.D.N. (SHELL SHOCK)</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
24	26	140	68	7	265

Trophies

Over 40 Machine guns.
 One heavy Trench Mortar.
 6 light Trench Mortars.

AUGUST 8th 1918.

3.40 a.m. 10. Battalion in position. One wave in front of and three waves behind BURKE TRENCH. Battalion H.Q. - J.18.b.8.1 - Junction of COBAR and COOMA TRENCHES.

4.10 a.m. Tanks due to arrive but none heard. Heavy enemy barrage came down causing several casualties.

4.20 a.m. Our Artillery opened.

4.27 a.m. E 4 sent to Brigade. No Tanks heard. Heavy enemy Artillery fire round Battalion H.Q.

5.0 p.m. 2/Lt. W.L. ATKINSON, "B" Coy. reached Battn H.Q. having been badly wounded by M.G. fire after forming up had been completed. Reported no tanks seen.

5.30 a.m. 2/Lt. P.K. COOPER sent forward to ascertain situation and returned with C.S.M. B. REYNOLDS of "C" Coy.

6.10 a.m. C.S.M. B. REYNOLDS, "C" Coy. reported at Battn. H.Q. and stated that no tanks had appeared, the barrage was far forward and that the Battalion had lost direction in the mist. Capt. W.G. SIMMONS, "C" Coy., and Lt. D. HOLMAN, "A" Coy., collected all available men and occupied CROYDON TRENCH. A message was received at 8.10 a.m. from CAPT. W.G. SIMMONS "C" Coy. issued 6.10 p.m. that this had been done.

6.40 p.m. 2/Lt. P.K. COOPER sent forward to ascertain situation. This Officer was subsequently seen, in company with the Commanding Officer, the late Lt.Col. C. BUSHELL, V.C., D.S.O. and was sent back with information, but his runner and he were killed on their way.

6.45 a.m. Runner sent to H.Q. 9th Royal Fusiliers on right to ascertain their situation. This runner returned at 8.20 a.m. with the information that the Fusiliers were on their objective but disorganised.

7.0 a.m. 11. Commanding Officer went forward with his runner to deal with the situation. Gathering all available men together he led them from CROYDON TRENCH to the assault and captured CLONCURRY TRENCH between CULGOA & CLOUD SUPPORT. He had sent for Tank assistance, but the Tank had only proceeded 50 yards along CLONCURRY TRENCH from BRAY - CORBIE Road when operation had been completed. The Commanding Officer then proceeded along Trench to organise and cheer the men. On his way to the Tank to give orders to the Tank Commander for the next movement he intended to make. The Commanding Officer was fatally sniped whilst proceeding to carry out this missive

8.30 a.m. The Commanding Officer's runner reported to Battalion H.Q. that the Commanding Officer had been seriously hit. Lt.Col. A.L. RANSOME, D.S.O., M.C., 7th BUFFS was placed in command of all the troops of the Brigade in the forward area.

1918.

Appendix.

August REF. SHEET 62 d N.E. 62 d N.W.

5th Details of M.G. co-operation during (Contd.) attack arranged. Casualties wounded O R one. The Battalion moved to LA HOUSSEY (Appendix 3) 3.

LA HOUSSEY.

6th During the morning the Battalion was shelled by 5.9" H.v gun. One shell fell into Bn H.Q. but caused no casualties. Warning order received that Bn should stand by owing to 9.30am enemy attack astride BRAY - CORBIE Rd and capture of our front & support line.) 4.

1.10pm Orders received to return at once to BALLARAT line - See Appendix 4.

7th Failure to Counter attack by 8th E. Surrey R & 11th RI Fus.)

MORLANCOURT AREA.

8th Day of Great attack - & Success of Battalion. Objectives, result & Casualties are given in attached report. Lt.Col. C. BUSHELL, V.C. D.S.O. fell in action.)

9th Attack by 12th Div.) 5.

11th August, 1918.

I congratulate all ranks under my Command on their successful fighting during the 6th, 7th and 8th inst.

Your splendid resistance on the 6th and 7th inst. was of great value in helping forward the major operation of the 8th for, although owing to vast superiority of numbers on the 6th, the enemy made slight gains of ground, the losses inflicted upon him were considerable and he started the battle of the 8th with two less fit Divisions on our front than he would have done had there been no preliminary fighting.

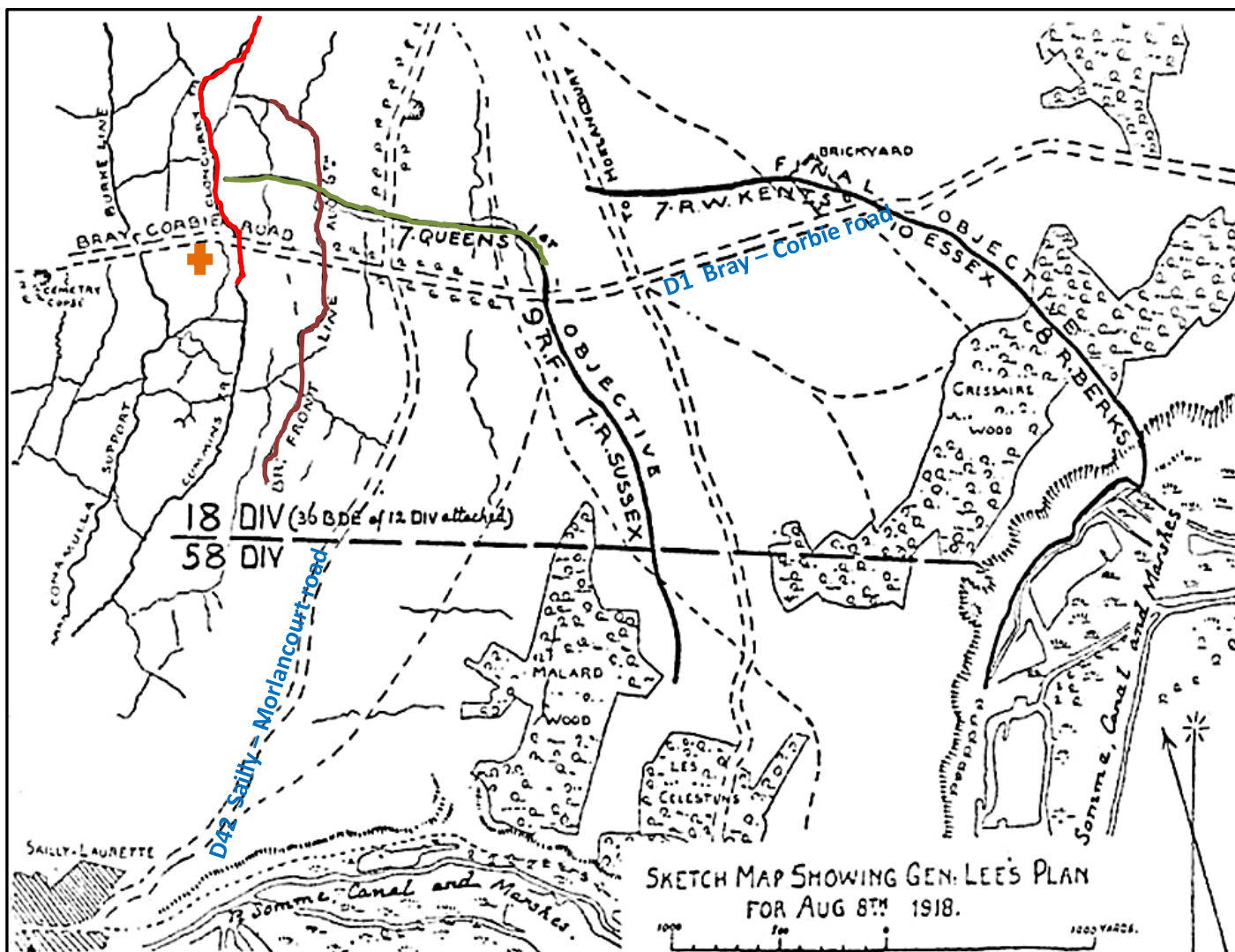
The resistance of the 7th Buffs and 8th E. Surrey Regt. on the 6th and 7th, the assault of the 7th Queens on the 8th and the continuous good work of the Trench Mortar Battery throughout the operation, fill me with the greatest pride.

My one desire now is that you should remember that the battle is but started and that it is the duty of everyone of us to keep himself fit for further action against an enemy who is now in a most vulnerable position.

At the loss of so many gallant officers and men - a large number of whom were personally known to me - I can only express my great grief. In particular I wish to extend my sympathy to the Officers, Warrant Officers, N.C.Os. and men of 7th Queens in the loss of their most beloved and gallant Colonel.

E. A. WOOD

Brigadier General,
Commanding 55th Infantry Brigade.



Sketch map, with later (coloured) additions, showing the relative positions near Morlancourt ridge on 8 August, 1918, the day when Christopher Bushell was killed by a sniper. The heavier black lines indicate the proposed objectives as the British and Allied troops moved eastwards. The section of the 1st Objective line, shown in green ——— was the goal of Christopher Bushell's 7th Battalion.

———— The British front line on 6 August – this was lost, until 8 August, when the German forces moved westwards.

~~~~~ The Cloncurry Trench where Christopher Bushell died. After the German forces had overwhelmed the British front line on 6 August this trench became the German front line and, when the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion The Queen's Royal (West Surrey) Regiment, advanced to re-take it on 8 August they found it heavily reinforced and heavily guarded with machine gun posts.

✚ Beacon Cemetery

A detailed trench map of the area is reproduced at the end of this account.

Adapted from: *The 18<sup>th</sup> Division in the Great War* Captain G.H.F. Nichols 1922 Blackwood, Edinburgh & London

## ROLL OF HONOUR.

### KILLED IN ACTION.

BUSHELL—Killed in action, on the 8th August, 1918, Capt. (T./Lieut.-Colonel) Christopher Bushell, V.C., D.S.O., Queen's Regiment, younger son of the late Reginald Bushell, of Neston, and Mrs. Bushell, of Hillside, St. Margaret's Bay, and beloved husband of Rachel Bushell, aged 30.

Chester Chronicle - Saturday 17 August 1918

## V.C. COLONEL KILLED.

Lieut.-Col. Christopher Bushell, V.C., D.S.O., Queen's Royal West Surrey Regiment, of Liverpool, was killed in action on August 8th. He was awarded the Victoria Cross in May last for his bravery in leading a company who were counter-attacking. Though severely wounded, he continued to carry on, and had eventually to be taken to the dressing station in a fainting condition.

Lancashire Evening Post - Saturday 17 August 1918

|       |         |                  |              |          |              |          |         |
|-------|---------|------------------|--------------|----------|--------------|----------|---------|
| #1274 | 19774/8 | Bushell: V.C.    | R. D. Lurray | 8.8.18   | Cox & Co     | 9/822    | 121 6 3 |
|       |         | Capt. T. E. Col. | b.           | 11 in a. | Transfer 422 | 15.11.18 | 364 8 8 |
|       |         |                  |              |          | C. P. Base   | 9/18     | 15 10 - |

### Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929

In June 1919 the army paid outstanding credits – mainly remaining wages – to soldiers or, in the case of those who had died, their family or nominated representatives.

Three payments were made: £21 6s 3d was paid to Cox & Co., £364 8s 8d was transferred (possibly to Cox & Co.) and £5 10s was paid to 'C.P. Base' (the significance of this is unknown).

The total payment, £391 4s 11d, is approximately equivalent to a *labour value* (ie wages) of about £60 000 in 2016.

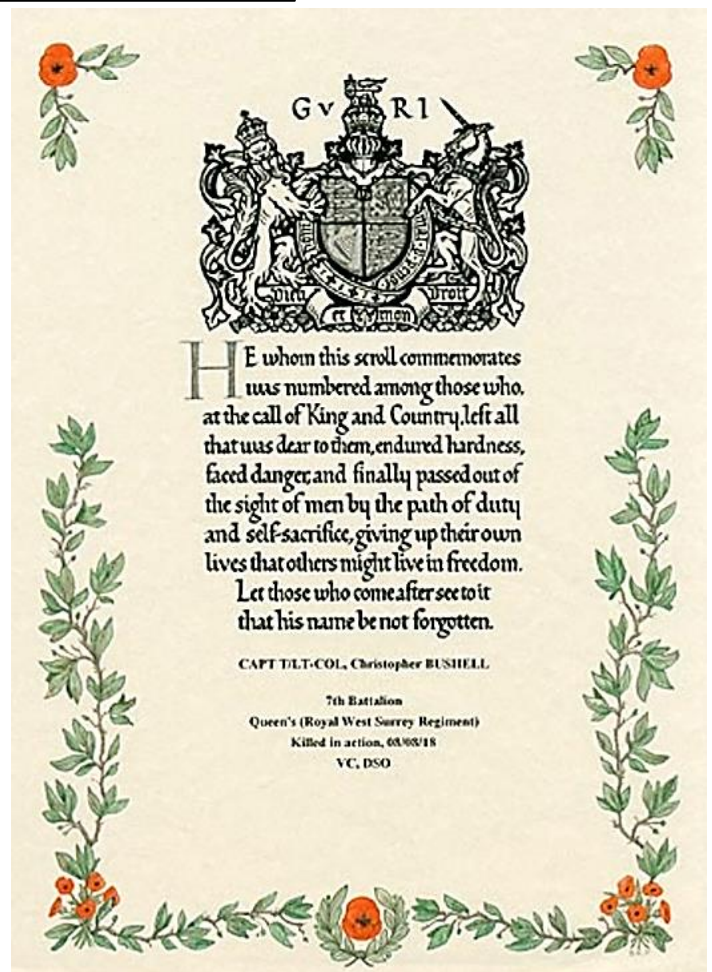
Established in 1758, the family business of Cox & Co served as the bank of choice for British military personnel. Known as the "Army's bankers" it provided banking services for officers, soldiers and their families. Cox & Co merged with its great rival Henry S. King & Co in 1922 to form Cox & King which had branched out from banking to provide travel agency services. Cox & King was itself taken over by Lloyds Bank in 1923.

**BUSHELL** Christopher of The Firs Wye **Kent** lieutenant-colonel 7th battalion Royal West Surrey regiment V.C. D.S.O. died 8 August 1918 in France on active service Probate **London** 15 November to Rachel Edith Florence Bushell widow and Cecil Dunstan Webb solicitor O.B.E. Effects £919 13s. 10d.

National Probate Calendar  
(Index of Wills and  
Administrations), 1858-1966



Christopher Bushell's grave at Querrieu on the Somme, France [Source: CWGC]



Rachel Bushel, Christopher's widow, received his Victoria Cross from HM King George V at Buckingham Palace on 11 May 1919. Following Christopher's death Rachel left their house in London and moved to The Firs, 114 Lower Bridge Street, Wye, Kent and in 1919 Rachel left Wye and moved the short distance northwards to Hinderton, Church Lane, in the small village of Boughton Aluph. This large house, close to All Saints Church, is now known as Downs Court. In 1931 Rachel again moved, this time to Hookers Green (named after Richard Hooker, one-time rector), Bishopsbourne, a rural and wooded village about 5 miles south-east of Canterbury in the Elham Valley. For 15 years Rachel was the churchwarden at St. Mary the Virgin, Bishopsbourne, and she became strongly involved in the Women's Voluntary Service (WVS) to the extent that she was awarded an MBE in 1959 for services to that organisation. After Elisabeth, her daughter, married in 1938 Rachel moved to Canterbury Cathedral Precincts where she died, aged 73, on 8 February 1965. Rachel was buried at St. Mary the Virgin, Bishopsbourne where, inside the church is a plaque that celebrates the lives of Rachel Bushell MBE and her husband Christopher.

National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1966

IN MEMORY OF  
**RACHEL BUSHELL M.B.E.**  
 WIFE OF THE LATE LT.COL.  
**CHRISTOPHER BUSHELL V.C. D.S.O.**  
 FOR 25 YEARS PEOPLE'S WARDEN  
 OF THIS PARISH AND  
 W.V. S. COUNTY BOROUGH ORGANIZER  
**1891 - 1965.**

**BUSHELL Rachel Edith Florence** of 11d The Precincts Canterbury died 9 February 1965 at Kent and Canterbury Hospital Canterbury Probate Liverpool 30 June to Alexander Maclehose publisher and Elisabeth Hope Maclehose married woman. £1807.



The Victoria Cross and DSO



In 1923, the Christopher Bushell Prize of books, for Modern History undergraduates, was established at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, where he read Modern History from 1906-9.

Lilian Hope Bushell, Christopher's sister, had married Douglas W. Hobson in Kensington in April / June 1911. They appear not to have had children.

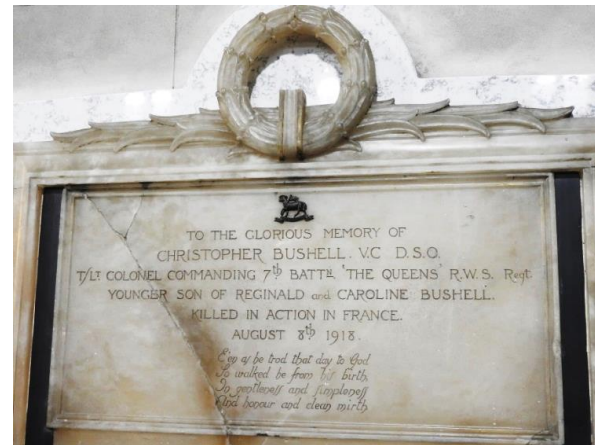
Douglas, born in Douglas in the Isle of Man in 1875, was a Church of England clergyman and Chaplain Superintendent of the Mersey Mission to Seamen. It was he, as Christopher's brother-in-law, who had married Christopher and Rachel at Wye in August 1915. Douglas died in Aldershot in late 1950 aged 75 and Lilian died in the Midhurst district of Sussex in early 1964 aged 79.

Arthur Reginald Bushell, Christopher's brother, died in the Medway district of Kent in July / September 1926 aged 42. It is believed he was unmarried.

Elisabeth ('Betsy') Hope Bushell, Christopher's only child, married Alexander MacLehose<sup>1</sup> (born 20 December 1904) in Kent in early 1938. It is believed that Alexander was an author and book-publisher and that they lived at The Old Vicarage, Lockerley, Romsey. Alexander died September 1989 in Salisbury and Elisabeth died in Glamorgan in early 2002.

Christopher Bushell is commemorated also in Neston Parish Church by a plaque, measuring 30 inches by 18 inches.

Unfortunately, this plaque fell from the wall some years ago and was damaged. It has since (April 2016) been remounted in the church.



In addition to being recognised on the WW1 memorial plaque in Neston parish church, Christopher Bushell is known also to be commemorated on two church memorials in Kent and on the plaque at the London Temple Church:



War Memorial plaque, St Margaret's-at-Cliffe (between Deal and Dover, Kent). Photos: <http://www.kentfallen.com/PDF%20REPORTS/BUSHELL%20C.pdf>



<sup>1</sup> The name appears to have several variants including MacLeHose and Maclehorse



War Memorial - London Temple Church Members of Middle and Inner Temple who Died In WW1 and WW2.



Church of St Gregory & St Martin, Wye, Kent. Photo: <http://www.roll-of-honour.com/Kent/Wye.html>

Additional source: *Lieutenant Colonel Christopher Bushell VC, DSO* recorded in: <http://www.kentfallen.com/PDF%20REPORTS/BUSHELL%20C.pdf>

Caroline Bushell, Christopher Bushell's mother, may have died in the Medway district, aged 77, in early 1934.

In addition to memorials in Neston parish church (there are stained glass windows commemorating Christopher snr and, as well as the marble plaque there are elaborate



Christopher Bushell

Although some men did not have the benefit of full training, there was no lack of gallantry. Many members of the Inner Temple won awards for bravery, including the VC. On 23 March 1918, at the beginning of the German Spring Offensive, Christopher Bushell of the Queen's Royal West Sussex Regiment led his company in a counterattack near St Quentin against the German onslaught. His citation tells the story.

Source: Inner Temple Yearbook, 2014 - 15

wrought iron gates between the nave and the tower to the memory of Reginald Bushell) the family is commemorated in Neston by the Bushell Fountain on Neston Cross (erected in 1882) and Bushell Road, and adjacent Bushell Close, in Little Neston.

In Kent, Ashford Borough Council in 2004 agreed naming a new residential road in the Kennington area of the town as Christopher Bushell Way despite Christopher having no immediate connection to the town.

Following the death of Elisabeth ('Betsy') Hope MacLehose, Christopher Bushell's only child, in Glamorgan in 2002 his medals and some personal letters were presented to the Queen's

Royal Surrey Regiment by the family on 27 April 2003 at a ceremony at the Surrey Infantry Museum at Clandon Park.



The caption on the photograph [The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment website, [http://www.queensroyalsurreys.org.uk/vc\\_gc/vc14.shtml](http://www.queensroyalsurreys.org.uk/vc_gc/vc14.shtml) ] reads:

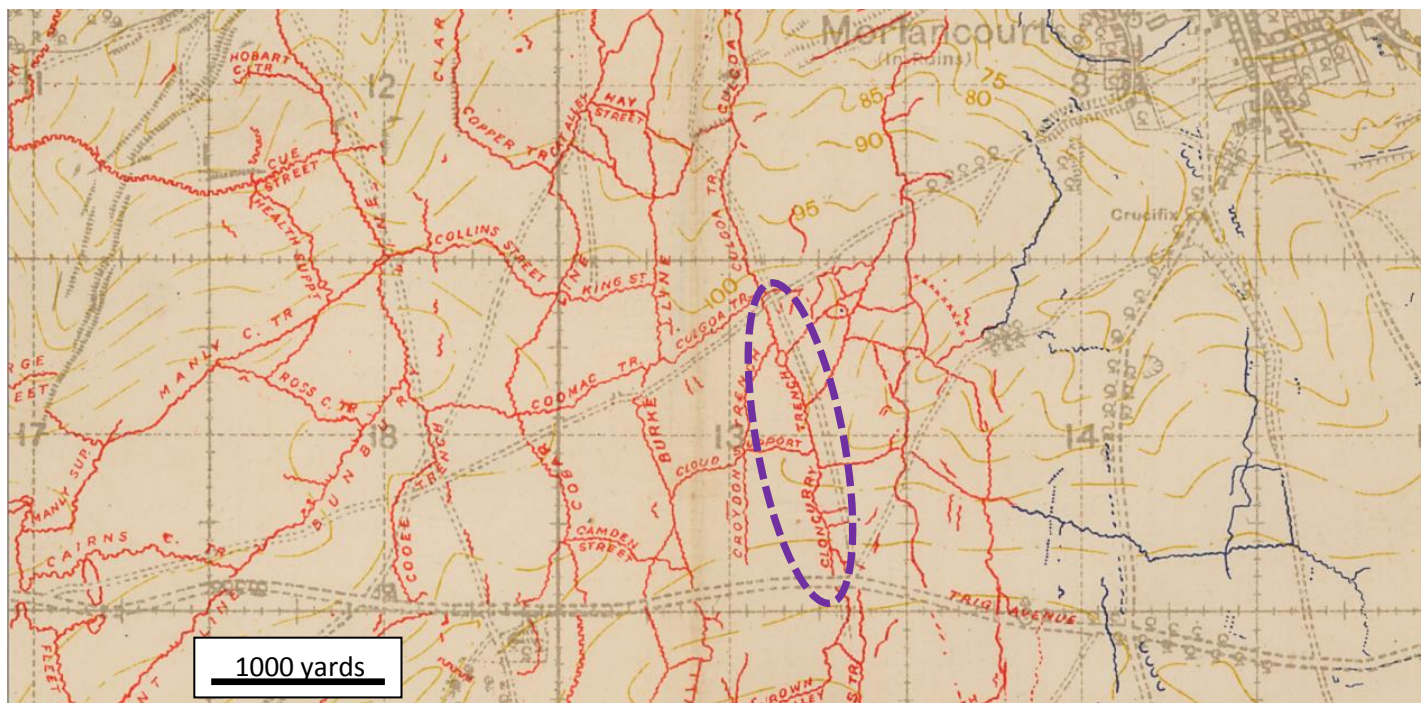
*On 27<sup>th</sup> April 2003 the family of Lieutenant Colonel Bushell met in the Museum at Clandon, where Mr Andrew Macklehose on behalf of the family handed over the Victoria Cross, Distinguished Service Order and campaign medals of his grandfather to the Chairman of the Trustees of the Museum.*

Following the amalgamation of The Queen's Royal Regiment and the East Surrey Regiment in 1959 the combined museum became based in the basement of the National Trust property of Clandon House in Clandon Park to the east of Guildford. The museum opened in 1981 and was later upgraded and, in 2011, merged with the museum of the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment and Queen's Regiment. The enlarged museum was renamed The Surrey Infantry Museum.



On 29 April 2015 a fire gutted Clandon House leaving only the external walls and one room which was almost undamaged; the museum also suffered considerable damage. Currently, a rebuilding operation is underway on Clandon House but it is unknown what damage was done to Christopher Bushell's papers although it is understood that his medals survived.

[The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment website, [http://www.queensroyalsurreys.org.uk/vc\\_gc/vc14.shtml](http://www.queensroyalsurreys.org.uk/vc_gc/vc14.shtml) ]



Field map showing the trenches (red), south-west of Morlancourt, on 3 August 1918. The Germans, pushing westwards, had re-taken much of this area and Cloncurry Trench (ringed in purple) formed, briefly, their front line position. On 8 August British troops pushed the German forces eastwards and, again, occupied these trenches – and Cloncurry Trench is where Christopher Bushell was killed.  
 [Source: <http://digitalarchive.mcmaster.ca/islandora/object/macrepo%3A4309>]

## First Postscript

By a curious coincidence, Christopher Bushell was not the only man serving with the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion The Queen's and with a local Neston connection to die on 8 August 1918 in the attempt to reach the First Objective having recaptured Cloncurry Trench.

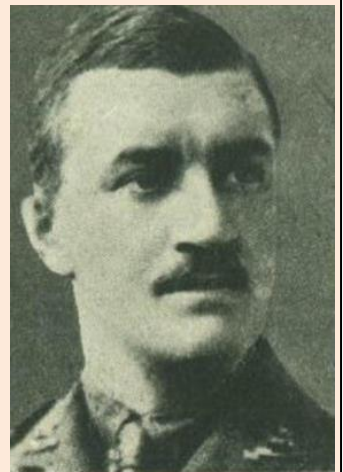
Second Lieutenant James Scovell Adams was listed in the War Diary as one of the officers wounded on that day but it is recorded by the CWGC that he died later on in the day. Aged just 19, the son of stockbroker James and Nora Adams of Limpsfield in Surrey (and baptised at Holy Trinity Church, Paddington, on 12 November 1898) he was educated as a boarder at Mostyn House School, Parkgate.

After Christopher Bushell had been killed by the sniper Colonel Ransome of the Buffs was placed in command and, finding that Cloncurry trench was held by about 100 men of "D" Company, he reinforced the position with "C" Company under Captain Simmonds. He decided that the objectives could still be taken and he ordered Captain Snell to effect this. Snell urged the men in Cloncurry Trench to follow him and led them down the trench. Despite enemy resistance the trench was eventually cleared and consolidated, the Queens being relieved at 5pm when a Brigade of 12<sup>th</sup> Division passed through them to capture the ridge and continue the advance. It is believed that James Scovell Adams was injured in this later action.

James Adams was commissioned as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion on 1 August 1917 and he embarked for France the following month. He is commemorated on the war memorial in the chapel at Mostyn House and was buried at Pernois British Cemetery, Halloy-Les-Pernois.

Of Christopher Bushell's fame as a soldier I know no more than the newspapers have recorded; for in his letters he seldom said much of himself. But from our school-days at Rugby until the outbreak of war I was intimately connected with him as any of those who delighted to call him their friend. Since he went to France with the first seven divisions we were able to meet on three occasions, one being that of his marriage.

Of Bushell at Rugby I remember little. At the School House, to which he belonged, the Arnold tradition was rigorously maintained. Friendship between its members and boys of other houses were few, and these, as a rule, were formed in the XV, XI or VIth, School institutions where Houses met on a neutral field.



Christopher Bushell was intensely loyal to his House. He did not attain in work or games to a School distinction, and therefore outside his house he was perhaps but little known.

It was in Bushell's second year at Oxford that we really met. The men of Bushell's year at Corpus were so united as to be called "the Push". Having discovered his powers on the River he became their acknowledged leader. It was customary then, and it may be again, for those who lodged in the front quad to find room daily in turn for all members of the College present at lunch. These heterogeneous banquets initiated the Freshmen into Corpus society, but it was Bushell's special genius to secure that their embarrassments did not completely overwhelm the tyro hosts. He knew how to exercise authority with tact and to smooth over the most painful situations. So it was at the College Dining Club and in other spheres of hospitality. It was to him that first anxious College authorities looked to preserve a semblance of decorum in the excitements of a College Bump Supper. They did not look in vain.

On his gifts for leadership the writer remembers that strenuous calls were made when a party of thirteen undergraduates (how few of them, alas, are now alive!) set forth at three sailing craft, of various peculiarities but all unstable, to learn navigation and cooking and to explore the Norfolk Broads. Bushell was not the most skilful helmsman. Anthony Simpson was a born shipmaster, and George Willink an apt apprentice. But it was Bushell who maintained discipline in the fleet. He saw to it that we dived for the cutlery which, unwashed, had lain overnight on deck, and eventually had pitched overboard. Standing ankle-deep in a sunny beach, he would forbid strong swimmers in the waves to tempt further the treacherous currents of the Norfolk coast. It was he who painfully calculated the daily cost of our messing, and withheld the extra sardine-tin which would have brought it above the figure which economy enjoined. Later on, in London, the Rugby Home Mission Clubs for Boys afforded more serious exercise to his talents. Perhaps the layman is apt to underrate the amount of exertion which a day's devilling in chambers demands. Bushell, at any rate, did not spare himself when it was over. He threw himself into the practical side of social work in Notting Dale, seldom missing his night in charge of a boys' club, while he was on the managing committee of the Cavendish Club, and one of the original founders of the Cavendish Association. Once a week throughout the season he rode to hounds in Essex. Again, in company with the writer he walked many a weekend and public holiday over the south-eastern cliffs and down the pilgrim-roads, debating the while some question of the day with a vigour that has seldom seemed since the War to have deserved.

He was the most exhilarating of companions. He knew how to draw out the best in men. He broke down their reserves of shyness or sullenness, and healed their discontents with the magic of his sympathy. He was ever admiring the hand of Providence and rejoicing at the goodness which he saw about him. At Oxford he had not spared time to think seriously of soldiering. Not until after some months in London did he feel the claims of military service. Then, without interrupting his other activities, but at some loss of his society to his friends, he proceeded to qualify for and obtain a commission in the Special Reserve of Officers, being gazetted to the Queen's, in which Roderick Haigh and Colonel Mackworth were then both serving. There he has since displayed in their full development the signal gifts of comradeship, endurance, leadership, and self-sacrifice of which his College and his friends had seen the promise. Their fame will enrich the annals of Corpus; to have known their possessor is the proud consolation of his friends.

## Second Postscript

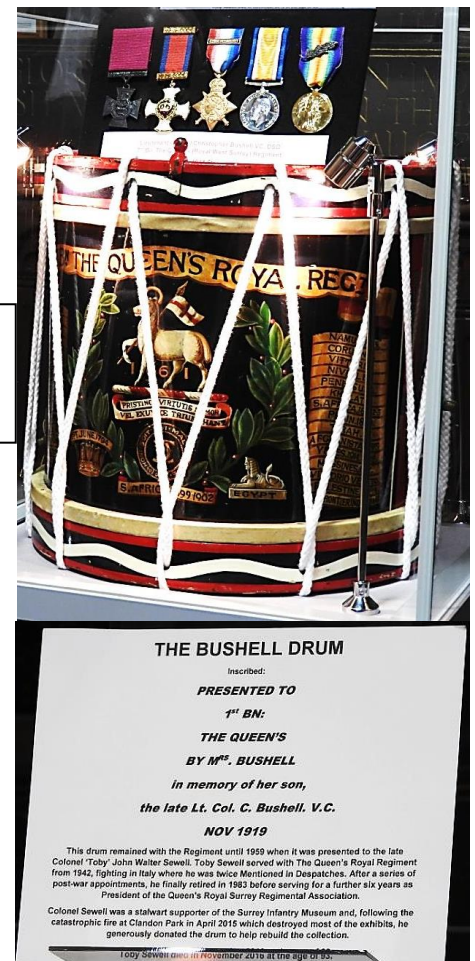
Christopher Bushell, commanding officer of the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion The Queen's Royal (West Surrey) Regiment, was awarded the Victoria Cross for his military actions in France on 23 March 1918. The VC citation was reported in *The London Gazette* on 30 April 1918, and he was invested with the VC, and the DSO which he gained in late 1917, by the King at a ceremony on Monday May 13 1918.

On the morning of Saturday 24 March 2018, exactly 100 years and one day after the action for which he was cited for the VC, a commemoration was held in Neston to mark the award. Attended by members of the Bushell and MacLeHose families, local and civic dignitaries and representatives of the military, a service of commemoration held in Neston Parish Church (the Church of St Mary & St Helen) was followed by the unveiling of a commemorative stone close to the War Memorial.



Sister and brother Jane Marsh (née Bushell) and Christopher Bushell with the 'Bushell Drum' and replicas of the WW1 medals in front of the WW1 Window in Neston Parish Church. Jane and Christopher are great-grandchildren of Charles John Bushell, the eldest son of Liverpool wine merchant Christopher Bushell and Margaret Smith Bushell. Charles (died late 1909) married Katharine Torr and lived in Bromborough.

The 'Bushell Drum', surmounted by the replica medals (and photo below; the VC is to the left, the DSO to its right) and the plaque relating to the drum. The significance of the drum is unknown to the author.





Neston Parish Church prior to the commencement of the commemorative service and (above) the Christopher Bushell commemorative plaque in the church with a garland of poppies



The unveiling of the Christopher Bushell commemorative stone outside Neston Parish Church. Left to right:  
Mr David Briggs MBE, KSTJ (Lord-Lieutenant of Cheshire)  
Cpt Thomas Edward Scriven Baker (Regimental Adjutant, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment)  
Councillor Pat Kynaston (Mayor of Neston)  
Rev. Alan Dawson (Vicar of Neston)  
The two schoolchildren are the Deputy Junior Mayor and Junior Mayor of Neston



The location of the Christopher Bushell commemorative stone near the Neston War Memorial





The 1914 – 1919 Memorial Window and Commemorative Plaques in Neston Parish Church with the Bushell Drum

Left to right: Mr Steve Johnson (Curator, Surrey Museum) : Councillor Pat Kynaston (Mayor of Neston) : Mr David Briggs MBE, KStJ (Lord- Lieutenant of Cheshire) : The Junior Mayor of Neston : The Deputy Junior Mayor of Neston : Mr Justin Piers Richard Madders (MP for Ellesmere Port & Neston) : Councillor Nigel Jones (Little Neston & Burton) : Councillor Louise Gittins (Little Neston & Burton)

[Copyright : Bernard Rose, Neston]



The top table at the commemorative lunch in Neston Town Hall

From left to right:  
Mr Steve Johnson and Mrs Johnson : Rev. Alan Dawson : Mr Justin Madders MP (hidden) : Cllr. Pat Kynaston : Mr David Briggs : Cllr Louise Gittens : Cpt Thomas Scriven Baker : Mr Alan Carmichael : Mrs Barbara Carmichael (Secretary, Neston British Legion)

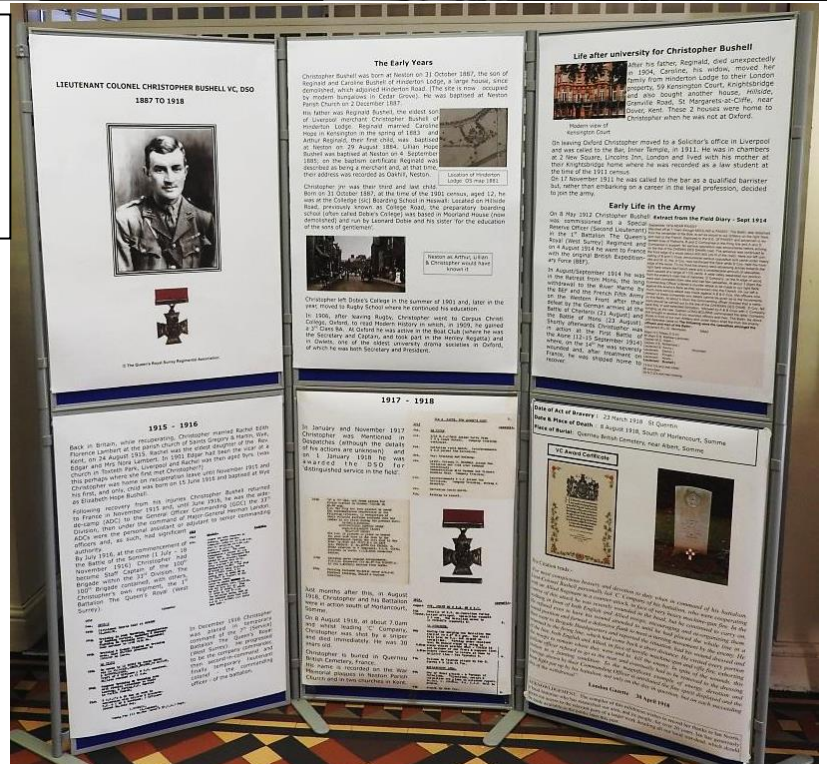
[Copyright : Bernard Rose, Neston]



The lunch in Neston Town Hall following the service in Neston Parish Church and the unveiling of the commemorative stone by the War Memorial. The service was attended by local representatives and members of the Bushell and MacLeHose families; Andrew MacLeHose is seated, far left. The event was attended also by radio/TV presenter Adrian Chiles (above, standing centre).



The information board depicting the life and death of Christopher Bushell. This board was at the entrance to Neston Town Hall at the time of the lunch which followed the church service and unveiling of the commemorative



Christopher Bushell's grave in Querrieu British Cemetery on 8 August 2018, the centenary of his death.