One Life Amongst Many Lost at Gallipoli in 1915:
Remembering Lt Edward Bligh
by Julie Adams

Introduction

One of the most interesting 20th century windows in Winchester Cathedral is by Christopher Whall, a stained glass artist working very much in the Arts and Crafts tradition, commending the idea that the designer should also be the fabricator. There is only one window in our cathedral made by him, and it is a memorial to Lieutenant Edward Henry Swinburne Bligh, who served as an officer in the Royal Naval Division and died at Gallipoli on 10th September 1915. He is buried in a cemetery named Lancashire Landing, on Cape Helles.

Edward’s father was the Rev the Hon Henry Vesey Bligh (1834-1905), 3rd son of the 5th Earl of Darnley, who served in the parish of St James in Hampton Hill, Middlesex, for many years before moving to Fareham Hampshire, and then retiring to Winchester. The Rev the Hon Henry Bligh was married firstly to Emma Armytage with whom he had two daughters, and secondly to the Hon Anne Elizabeth Dobrée Bligh (née Butler) in April 1883, with whom he had a son. By the time that son, Edward Henry Swinburne Bligh was killed in 1915, Anne had been a widow for over 10 years.

She lived at Priors Barton, close to the Hospital of St Cross; the 1911 census shows Edward was living there too, and she had three resident servants.
The Bligh Memorial Window

The subject matter for the window was carefully chosen to be a fitting memorial to Lieutenant Edward Bligh. There are three coats of arms at the top of the window, the one at the centre is for the Earls of Darnley (Azure, a griffin segreant or armed and langued gules between three crescents argent), the second is for his school, Clifton College in Bristol (Argent, a chevron between two trefoils slipped in chief and a garb in base azure, a chief gules thereon a ducal coronet or between two books argent, clasped and garnished.
gold), and the third is for the Inner Temple (Azure a pegasus salient argent), where he had trained to be a barrister on leaving Pembroke College, Cambridge, having first gained a degree in Natural Sciences.

The central panel is of St Michael overcoming the devil in the form of a dragon. The left hand panel is of St George, and the face of St George is a portrait of Edward Bligh himself. The right hand panel is an unusual subject, that of St Hubert who is not frequently seen represented in church windows or sculptures. St Hubert is the patron saint of hunting; the legend relates how Hubert went out hunting on Good Friday instead of attending church, and whilst he was out hunting he saw an image of the crucified Christ between the antlers of the stag he was about to shoot. Hubert realised the error of his ways, and became a devout follower of the faith. We have no evidence that Lieutenant Bligh was keen on hunting, but he was an avid cricket player, like many others in the Bligh family, and as there is no patron saint of cricket, the family may have felt that St Hubert was a near match to his interests.

One of the noticeable things about Christopher Whall’s work is that he uses a much wider palette of colour than many of his fellow glass makers, so there is a range of greens and browns included in the design. Whall is known to have said “The design of a window must relate to the architecture of its frame”, and also, “a window should sing”.

Early Life of Edward Bligh

Edward Bligh was born on 16th April 1884; Henry and his second wife, Anne, were to have just the one son, so he was brought up without siblings. Edward’s father was 49 when he was born, so when he died at age 70, Edward was just 21. He was educated at Stubbington House Preparatory School near Fareham, (his father’s parish); the school had
been founded in 1841 by a Rev William Foster, in a Queen Anne building, and it was served by successive headmasters from the Foster family.

He moved from there to Clifton College, which had nurtured many cricketers. Although Edward enjoyed cricket he never made it into the XI at Clifton College. The Archives at Clifton College have been able to provide more details of his athletic prowess. In both 1902 and 1903, he was a competitor in the Long Penpole, a gruelling cross country race, which in a modified form is still the sporting highlight of the Lent term. In 1902 he was 20th out of 69 competitors, finishing in just under 75 minutes and “coming in” within ten minutes of the winner.

By the time Edward went up to Cambridge in 1903, his parents were already living at Prior’s Barton House near St Cross (Fig 13); he entered Pembroke College as an Exhibitioner to read Natural Sciences. On leaving Cambridge, he trained at the Inner Temple and became a barrister. He was a Freemason and a member of the Western Circuit Lodge based at the Masonic Hall in Duke Street; that lodge was newly founded in 1906 and had amongst its members a number of judges on the Western Circuit.
War Service

Edward Bligh joined the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve and was instructed to report to the Royal Naval Depot at Crystal Palace on 18th October 1914. [1] He was given the rank of Sub-Lieutenant.

At the start of the First World War there were between 20 and 30,000 men in the Reserves of the Royal Navy who were unable to find a post on a warship, and consequently it was decided to form two Naval Brigades and a Brigade of Marines to assist the army as infantry in operations on land.

The Motto of Drake Battalion, “Auxilio Divino” means with the help of God

Edward Bligh found himself in the first of these naval brigades in a battalion known as “Drake”; the battalions in the first two brigades were named after famous naval commanders, Drake, Hawke, Benbow, Collingwood, Nelson, Howe, Hood, and Anson.

These men went to war woefully unprepared, with no basic equipment, many without khaki uniform, and in the early stages they had no artillery or field ambulances. They were deployed at Antwerp in October 1914. It was an unfortunate experience for them; some of the units managed to withdraw from Antwerp and escape back to England but a large number crossed the border into neutral territory in The Netherlands and were interned.

After more appropriate training the Division travelled to Egypt to prepare for the Gallipoli campaign, which started in February 1915 and was to continue until January 1916. The Royal Naval Division were involved from 25th April 1915; they were equipped with rifles, and they fought alongside men from French, Indian, Australian and New Zealand armies. In July 1915 Bligh was promoted to the rank of temporary Lieutenant.

Fatal Shooting on 9th September 1915

Extraordinarily, an on-line History of Amersham, [2] has provided information about the day Lt Bligh was shot, as the person who accompanied Bligh and was also shot on that day was a resident of Amersham. After the fatal shooting, Bligh was attended by Surgeon Williamson, who wrote in his report:

“Was called last night about 11 o’clock to see two casualties. One was [Lieutenant] Bligh, who was shot through the head. He was quite unconscious but breathing quietly and I sent him down [to the Casualty Clearing Station ED] as quick as possible. The other was a man shot through the chest [Able Seaman B.A. Bizzell . . . . . . . . . ] Bligh and his men had been out putting up wire entanglements in front of our firing line and having finished that job without accident they went out again to collect some rifles which were lying about when the Turks opened fire and got Bligh and the other man . . . . . . . Got a message about lunch time today to say Bligh had died at the Casualty Clearing Station.”

One account suggests that he actually died on the hospital ship Soudan, in which case, he would have died at sea. [3] Further information was supplied by someone who had known a survivor from the First World War, a Chief Petty Officer named Flook, who had remembered Lt Bligh well.

Apparently CPO Flook had high regard for Lt Bligh, who was known for sound judgement and good leadership. The unit’s War Diary records that on 29 August 1915 Lt Bligh and Lt
Arthur Melland Asquith 2 (third son of the Prime Minister Herbert Henry Asquith) went forward from the front line on reconnaissance. It seems quite likely that Able Seaman Bizzell was with them on this sortie and it was on a similar dangerous operation two weeks later that both Bizzell and Bligh were killed. It was known that a Turkish sniper was in the area and had fired on the line several times. CPO Flook remembered that when Lt Bligh said he was going out to the front of their position, he warned him of the sniper and said he should not proceed. Nevertheless, Lt Bligh went forward out of the line, accompanied by Able Seaman Bizzell; both were shot. Lt Bligh had only gone a few feet when he was shot. CPO Flook, who went immediately to his aid, found he was unconscious and had a head wound which was bleeding, but he was still alive. He dragged Lt Bligh back into the trench. He was surprised then and reflected ever afterwards that though he was totally exposed and could have been shot by the Turks, they left him unharmed. He promptly arranged for Lt Bligh to be taken for treatment, but his wound proved fatal, and he died the following day.

Cemetery at Lancashire Landing, Cape Helles

![Cemetery at Lancashire Landing, Cape Helles](image_url)

**Fig 15** Site of Lt Edward Bligh's Burial, Lancashire Landing, Cape Helles, taken from website of Commonwealth War Graves Commission and reproduced with their permission

**Fig 16** Plan of Lancashire Landing Cemetery, taken from website of Commonwealth War Graves Commission, and reproduced with their permission
Edward Bligh was buried the day he died, 10th September 1915. His grave is named, and is in position A.75, close to the top of the site, and the third from the south east perimeter. The site is extraordinarily beautiful, and very well looked after. There are 1,237 Commonwealth servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated in this cemetery, the majority of them in named graves. [4]

Consequences of the Gallipoli Offensive

There are conflicting reports as to the numbers of casualties during the Gallipoli Campaign so the following is an estimate. The British had contributed 468,000 in the battle. Of these over 33,000 were killed, 7,600 were missing and 78,000 were wounded. In addition about 8,000 Australian soldiers died along with 2,500 New Zealanders. The French also suffered considerable losses, around 10,000, and the Indians about 1,400. The Turks lost a number similar to the combined losses of the allies, which means that all together upwards of 110,000 lives were lost.

With the benefit of hindsight the campaign was ill conceived, and has been the subject of much controversy ever since. Once the Turks entered the war and sided with the Germans, they gave German warships access to the Black Sea, and Winston Churchill, as First Lord of The Admiralty, championed the idea to take the Dardanelles and deny Germany that advantage.

When the allied forces withdrew in defeat in early 1916, Prime Minister Asquith was forced to take opposition Conservatives into a coalition government. Meanwhile, Churchill had been demoted in the cabinet before leaving it altogether. 3

Medals

Lieutenant Bligh's war record reveals that he was awarded the 1914-1915 Star. It was normal practice for recipients of the Star to be awarded the British War Medal and The Allied Victory Medal, [5] once the war was over, but these are not recorded on his service record. Officers would not necessarily receive them automatically, and relatives of those killed would have to apply in retrospect.

Fig 17  Examples of 1914-1915 Star, British War Medal and Allied Victory Medal, to which Lt Bligh would have been entitled
Additional Memorials

In addition to the window in the north transept of the Cathedral, and his gravestone in The Dardanelles, there are several other memorials by which Lt Edward Henry Swinburne Bligh was commemorated. Some of them name him specifically, and others are collective memorials for the Royal Naval Division or for citizens of Winchester.

(a) All Saints Church, Winchester

A memorial board used to be attached to the outside of St Peter’s Chesil, on the north side, but it was moved to the inside of All Saints church, Petersfield Road in the 1960s, when the little church on Chesil Street became a theatre. The board has now been replaced by a framed handwritten Roll of Honour. The first name recorded, at the top, is that of Edward Henry Swinburne Bligh.

(b) Hospital of St Cross, Winchester

Names of the fallen are recorded on two panels to either side of this memorial. Edward Bligh’s name is given half way down the left hand panel. The citation across the top reads:

"ALL THESE WERE HONOURED IN THEIR GENERATION
AND WERE A GLORY IN THEIR DAYS"

Below the stone memorial is a small brass plaque recording the fact that the chapel was rededicated as a memorial chapel by The Bishop of Winchester, Edward Talbot, in October 1918.

The Parish of St Faith had been quick to get themselves organised, before Armistice Day on 11th November 1914.
To the Glory of God and in remembrance of those Parishioners of St Faith who fell gallantly in defence of their King and Country in the Great War of 1914 - 1918 this Chapel was restored for the purpose of Divine Worship and was dedicated by the Lord Bishop of Winchester on October 14 1918

(c) The Royal Naval Division Memorial on Horse Guards Parade

The Memorial designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens was unveiled on the 30th Anniversary of the landing of the division on April 25th 1953, the 90th Anniversary of the landing on Gallipoli.
There are no names recorded on the Royal Naval Division Memorial situated on the north west corner of Horse Guards Parade, adjacent to Old Admiralty Building, but badges of all the named Battalions such as Drake are included. The division was of course short-lived, being formed in 1914 and disbanded in 1919. The memorial was commissioned by surviving members of the Division and was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens and unveiled in its present position in 1925. It takes the form of an obelisk and a fountain, and includes words from Rupert Brooke, who was himself a member of the Royal Naval Division. He also died in the Dardanelles in 1915, from disease following an insect bite;

BLOW OUT YOU BUGLES, OVER THE RICH DEAD
THERE’S NONE OF THESE SO LONELY AND POOR OF OLD
BUT, DYING HAS MADE US RARER GIFTS THAN GOLD
THESE LAID THE WORLD AWAY: Poured out the red
SWEET WINE OF YOUTH; GAVE UP THE YEARS TO BE.
OF WORK AND JOY, AND THAT UNHOPED SERENE
THAT MEN CALL AGE: AND THOSE WHO WOULD HAVE BEEN
THEIR SONS, THEY GAVE THEIR IMMORTALITY

The memorial was removed in 1939 when the Admiralty Citadel was built, and later installed at The Royal Naval College in Greenwich in 1951. It was returned to its original position and rededicated on 13th November 2003.

(d) The Memorial Archway at Clifton College

![Image](image_url)

Fig 26 The Memorial Archway at Clifton College, Bristol. A statue of Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, also an Old Cliftonian, is in the foreground to the right.
The memorial arch at Clifton College, designed by Charles Holden, serves as a war memorial to all those pupils who gave their lives in the first and second world wars. Close by there is a statue of Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, Commander of the British Forces, who was an Old Cliftonian; the arch was dedicated in Haig’s presence in 1922.

There is a dedication along with names on the wall inside the arch to either side:

T0 THE MEMORY OF
853 CLIFTONIANS WHO SERVED
AND OF 578 WHO FELL
IN THE WAR 1914-1919

From the great Marshal to the last recruit,
These, Clifton, were thy Self, thy Spirit in Deed,
Thy flower of Chivalry, thy fallen fruit,
And Thine Immortal Seed.

The names follow, arranged alphabetically by year with initials and surname. The verses are by another Old Cliftonian, Sir Henry Newbolt, and were composed in 1919 before the form of the memorial was decided. Originally, after the Great War only 578 names were recorded, but later names of those lost in the Second World War were added on the east and west walls, and the wording was recut in the form shown above.

A memorial book is kept in an area just outside the College Chapel. Each of the names is recorded twice, firstly in a complete alphabetical list, and also listed under the separate services.
Fig 28  The Memorial Book kept outside the Chapel at Clifton College, displaying Bligh’s name at the top of this page

(e) Pembroke College, Cambridge

Fig 29  First World War Memorial at Pembroke College, Cambridge
The First World War Memorial at Pembroke College is just to the right of the chapel entrance in Old Court. The names of the war dead are given under the year in which they entered college, and Edward Bligh’s name is the first given under 1903. [6]

308 former members of Pembroke were lost during the first world war. At the time this photograph was taken a field of remembrance had been set up in front of the memorial - and individual crosses were being added on the 100th anniversary of the death of each of the Pembroke men who had died on active service.

(f) Masonic Memorial Cup

According to information from The Masonic Great War Project, Lieutenant Bligh is one of three brethren remembered on The Memorial Cup that belongs to a Lodge associated with Hampshire and The Isle of Wight, and cited at each installation. This lodge has the curious name “Economy Lodge No.76”. [3] As mentioned previously Edward Bligh was actually on the roll of The Western Circuit Lodge, but was clearly considered to be a citizen of Hampshire.

Conclusion

Singular WWI memorials are unusual in the cathedral, and Bligh’s memorial window is the only window commemorating an individual killed in that conflict. It is not the only place where he is named personally; five other sites have been identified, and he is remembered collectively on others.

Over 100 years have passed since Edward Henry Swinburne Bligh was killed in the Gallipoli offensive. His portrait glows in the early morning sun in the Cathedral, so we do continue to remember him.

His story is a sad one; he was a capable young man with huge potential who had just made his way as a lawyer. It is impossible to think of his short life without realising how difficult it must have been for the country coping with the loss of so many young men during the four year period that was The Great War.
The total number of military and civilian deaths during the First World War amounted to approximately 22 million worldwide. In Britain, the total was roughly 1.65 million, approximately 4% of the population. Virtually every British family was touched by the tragedy, and for each family the loss was just as poignant as the loss of Edward Henry Swinburne Bligh.

Photographs

a. With the exception of the cemetery at Lancashire Landing, Cape Helles, the photographs of extant memorials have all been taken by the author.

b. The photographs of Edward Bligh taken whilst at Clifton College have been reproduced with kind permission of the Principal Assistant Keeper of Archives at Clifton College.

c. The photograph and plan of Lancashire Landing cemetery has been reproduced with kind permission from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

d. The photograph of Edward’s father, the Rev the Hon Henry Vesey Bligh has been reproduced with kind permission of the parish of St James, Hampton Hill.

e. The photographs of Prior’s Barton House and St Peter’s Chesil Street, were provided by Hampshire Record Office, and the attributions are as shown beneath them.

Acknowledgements

I am most grateful to staff at both Clifton College, Bristol, and Pembroke College, Cambridge, for allowing me to take photographs of their war memorials. I would especially like to acknowledge the assistance of Dr Charles Knighton, Principal Assistant Keeper of Archives at Clifton College, and David Rymill, archivist at Winchester Cathedral and Hampshire Record Office.

Notes

1. An uncle of Edward Henry Swinburne Bligh, The Rev’d The Hon Edward Vesey Bligh (1829-1908) was a well respected amateur cricketer. His son, Lodovick (1854-1924) played for Kent, and his grandson, Algernon (1888-1952), played for Somerset. The 4th Earl Darnley, John Bligh (1767-1831) was also a keen amateur Kent cricketer and great-grandfather of the England cricket captain Ivo Bligh (1859-1927), later the 8th Earl. A talented sportsman, Ivo Bligh, played cricket for Cambridge University and Kent in addition to England, and had won Blues at both racquets and tennis.

2. Lt Arthur Melland Asquith, who was in the front line with Bertram Bizzell and Lt Bligh, was wounded in Gallipoli, was awarded the Distinguished Service Order then, and on two later occasions when he was serving on the Western Front. He lost a leg in action and was withdrawn from front-line duty. He had attained the rank of Brigadier General.

3. Churchill later resigned from government and returned to the army. He became Commander of 6th Battalion, the Royal Scots Fusiliers for the remainder of the war.

References

1. Royal Naval Records - The National Archive
2. Bertram Alfred Bizzell - History of the Amersham Area
6. At Pembroke College, Cambridge the memorial to those of the College...