

## What is the Story behind Lt. Guillebaud's death?

Further to investigating the soldiers named on the St Swithun's War Memorial, one was found to be buried in the St Swithun's churchyard, instead of in one of the overseas cemeteries, as was the norm. From the Bath Chronicle archive of his funeral at Bathford, I found that he had been an Exhibitioner at Pembroke College, Cambridge. From the Pembroke College website one learns that his school was Marlborough. From these sources, the Worcestershire Regiment website, our census records, etc. it is possible to piece together the story, at least in outline.

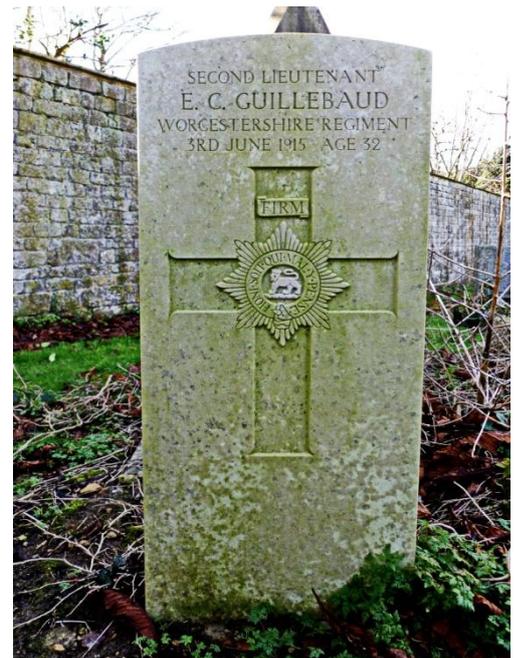
Eric Cyril Guillebaud was born on the 4th of March 1893 at Calne, Wiltshire, his parents were the Rev. E. D. Guillebaud, rector at Yatesbury, and his mother was Mabel Louisa Guillebaud. He had three brothers, Harold, Walter, and Claude.

He attended Marlborough College before going up to Pembroke College, Cambridge, as an Exhibitioner in 1912. I was curious as to how the son of the rector of a fairly small village church could attend a well-known public school. Further research revealed that Marlborough College was founded in 1843 for the sons of Church of England clergy. The Pembroke College's records don't say what he was reading at college but confirms that he was a 2nd lieutenant in the Worcestershire Regiment when he died on the 3rd June 1915 from an illness contracted whilst on active service. Assuming the usual three years for a degree these dates imply that he left college before graduating as he was reported as having had to resign 4 months (February 1915) before his death on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June 1915. He had been in a nursing home during that time.

His father had died in 1907 at Calne aged only 51, which is presumably why Eric's mother, Mabel Louisa, came to live with her brother, Charles William Marshall, in The Sycamores (now Sycamore House). Sadly she too died not long after in 1912, leaving him living with his uncle and cousin Arthur Marshall. Arthur also lost his life during WW1.

I have not yet found how Eric became ill, or the nature of his illness. However, it does explain why he was buried in St Swithun's churchyard rather than one of the European war cemeteries.

What a tragic story. Obviously a gifted boy to attend Marlborough College and Cambridge University as an exhibitioner, who joined up to fight for his country during his studies only to die of an illness contracted whilst in the army. His battalion, the 11<sup>th</sup> Worcestershire Regiment, didn't arrive in France until the September following his death, so I don't think he saw active service.



David Howells  
August 2014.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> August 2014 the Right Honourable Jacob Rees-Mogg M.P. visited St Swithun's churchyard and laid a single red rose at the grave. The stone is maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

**Note:** As he was born on the 4<sup>th</sup> March 1893 the age engraved on his gravestone is incorrect; it should be 22, not 32. The Cambridge data and the 1911 census agree on 1893 as his birth year. The CWGC certificate shows a photograph of a CWGC gravestone with the church in the background. This is not correct since the stone shown is that of our other CWGC grave, that of Lieutenant David Wickham, R.N. who died in action during the Second World War. DAH.