

Cheltenham & Gloucester Branch  
of  
The Western Front Association

Remembering one of Gloucestershire's Fallen



Lieutenant Harold Courtnay Woollcombe-Boyce  
Royal Navy, *HMS Gurkha*

**Harold Courtnay Woollcombe-Boyce** was born on 30 March 1887. Both his parents died within a week of one another in January 1892 and he was brought up by his grandfather, the Rev WFR Woollcombe-Boyce, who taught mathematics at Cheltenham College for 37 years, and his aunt, with whom he lived at Oriel Road, Cheltenham.

Harold was educated at Brandon House, Painswick Road from where he entered *HMS Britannia*, Dartmouth, as a Naval Cadet in September 1903. Appointed Midshipman in October 1903, he was made Sub-Lieutenant in 1906 and Lieutenant in 1909. He was then serving in *HMS Cambrian* on the Australian station and took part in the landings of a punitive

party in the South Sea Islands. In July 1914 he was given command of *HMS Gurkha*, an 880 ton destroyer, built in 1907.

On the 8 February 1917, the vessel was on patrol four miles south of Dungeness buoy when she struck a mine and sank within a few minutes. Of her complement of 80, only five were saved. All the officers on board were lost.

Lieutenant Harold Courtnay Woollcombe-Boyce has no known grave and is commemorated on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial, Cheltenham Borough War Memorial and in All Saints' Church.

*(Taken from Leaving All that was Dear - Cheltenham and the Great War by J Devereux and G Sacker)*