

# Cheltenham & Gloucester Branch of The Western Front Association

## Remembering one of Gloucestershire's Fallen



### Second Lieutenant Charles Constance Lionel Straker 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion Monmouthshire Regiment

**Charles Constance Lionel Straker** was born in 1890, the son of Jacob Straker of Hygrove House, Minsterworth. He joined the King's School, Gloucester in November 1902, going on to distinguish himself as a member of the 1<sup>st</sup> XI football team – Straker is the tall boy, second from the right on the back row. He was a contemporary of the war poets Ivor Gurney and Will Harvey, both celebrated sons of the King's School. When he left the school, he went to live in Abergavenny, Monmouthshire.

He enlisted into the Monmouthshire Regiment in Abergavenny in September 1915, being gazetted to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, joining them some time during pioneer work as part of the 49<sup>th</sup> Division in the forward area on the Somme around Englebelmer.

On the first day of the Somme, the battalion was in Thiepval Wood in support of the 36<sup>th</sup> (Ulster) Division in their attack on the Schwaben Redoubt. By 3 July, the battalion was making good the captured German front line trenches now serving as the British front line. This work continued for several days, and on 6 July, 'A' Company came under heavy attack. Their pioneering work was put aside as the men defended their trenches against the German counter-attack and were ordered to hold the line until relieved. Fourteen men were killed, including Straker, who died of his wounds the following day.

Second Lieutenant Charles Constance Lionel Straker is buried at Connaught Cemetery, Thiepval. His grave was visited by pupils of the King's School in October 2005.