Caius WW1 War Dead

Cyril Anthony Hudson Hillier (1914)

Cyril Anthony Hudson Hillier was the youngest Caian to die in WW1 and he was also the youngest pupil of his school, Cheltenham College, to die. He was 17 and would have reached 18 had he survived one more week until the 2nd March. Like so many young men at that time, he was quick to join up and, indeed, never matriculated. The College would have held his place for him so that he could study after the war.

Cyril was a 2nd Lieutenant with the 2nd Battalion, the Monmouthshire Regiment and had arrived in France on the 7th November 1914. His Battalion was one of those where over Christmas, as the war diary records, ‘practically no firing took place by mutual agreement’.

The weather was very wet at the start of 1915, so wet that the communications trenches were unusable. To get to the front line, the soldiers had to cross open country under enemy fire. Cyril was shot through the right shoulder. He was evacuated back to England and sent to Farnborough where the elderly Empress Eugenie (the wife of Napoleon III) had opened her home to wounded soldiers. She made it her habit to greet the newcomers each day. Unfortunately Cyril’s wound became infected and he died on the 26th February for want of antibiotics that today are commonplace.