Caius WW1 War Dead

Caius College offered places to undergraduates from a variety of places in the world, both near and far. George Martin Chapman was a New Zealander and John Maurice Williamson came from Lincolnshire and was a pupil at The Leys. This school sent several men to the College on account of its reputation for the teaching of sciences and medicine.

These two men came from opposite ends of the earth and probably knew each other. They were contemporaries in times when the College was much smaller than it is now. They were both gifted sportsmen. George won a blue for rugby and a half-blue for boxing. John won colours for cricket and tennis and was captain of the University lacrosse team.

George was Head Boy and read medicine. He died on the 13th May 1915 near Zonnebeke during the 2nd Battle of Ypres, attached to the 2nd Dragoon Guards (Queens Bays). He was killed by a shell whilst tending the wounded on the battlefield.

John was a school Prefect and then read History and Law at Caius. He died on the 16th May serving with the 2nd Battalion, the Gordon Highlanders on the first day of the Battle of Festubert. This was the continuation of the disastrous Battle of Aubers Ridge. The Gordons were reinforcing the Guards and achieved their objective. However, they pushed too far ahead and were left isolated and unsupported. Whereas Aubers Ridge won no territory, Festubert gained about one mile at the cost of 16,000 British casualties. Once again, losses were high due to lack of and inadequate equipment causing a scandal back home that was the subject of much comment in the press.

George Martin Chapman (1907)  
Photo: Wanaganui Collegiate School

John Maurice Williamson (1908)  
Photo: The Leys