

Several years ago, we became aware that there was a member of the family, from Newport, who was killed in WW1. The interesting thing was that he had the same name as my grandfather, and that he died on my birthday. It was enough to make me interested to find out more.

The first place we started with was the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, and we found the entry:

HYDE, GEORGE HARRY

Rank:	Rifleman
Service No:	2087
Date of Death:	08/05/1915
Regiment/Service:	Monmouthshire Regiment 1st Bn.
Panel Reference:	Panel 50.
Memorial:	YPRES (MENIN GATE) MEMORIAL
Additional Information:	Son of Josiah and Jane Hyde, of 54, Clarence Place, Newport, Mon.

And that was all we knew until comparatively recently. Back in 2008, we started a dialogue with Bill Hyde, our second cousin who had a segment of our family tree on the Ancestry website. So, to cut a long story short, we've been able to piece together the fragments of information we have.

George was born in the Wolverhampton area, and like many other families from that time, came to Newport. However, the circumstances of his arrival are slightly unusual. The family were still living in the Midlands, when his mother, Jane, became ill and died. It was 1900, and he was 6 years old, the youngest of three sons. The loss of Jane caused the splitting up of the family, as his father Josiah looked to cope. Josiah and the eldest son, Ephraim, stayed in the Midlands for a while. George and his next eldest brother, another Josiah came to live with a cousin, already in Newport.

With this year being the 100 year anniversary of what we now know is the devastating events of the Monmouthshire Regiment in WW1, Rob and family decided to go and pay our respects. It was a flying visit, but we thought it was a fitting thing to do.



*George Harry Hyde (1894 - 1915), taken soon after his enlistment in 1914.
Image courtesy of Bill Hyde*

On Friday 8 May 2015, the family caught the plane to Brussels, and then the train to Ypres (Ieper). Luckily we arrived in Ypres in late afternoon, and managed to attend the last post ceremony at 8pm that evening.



In town town that evening was the Princess Patricia's Light Infantry from Canada, who also had a devastating evening 100 years before (<http://www.ppcli.com/frezenberg-service.html#>). We were very pleased to have been able to attend the moving ceremony that evening, and to remember not only George, but the Monmouthshire boys, and all the other over 2,300 that were lost on that single day. The size of the Gate and the scale of the amount of names on it is astonishing. The Monmouthshire Regiment's panel is upstairs to the right (as you leave from the town centre) – number 50. In the image below, it is the second segment in the colonnade from the right.



The following day, we went to the newly created Welsh Memorial on the Frezenberg Ridge, which is in the hamlet of Hagebos, a few miles outside Ypres. Out in front of this monument is where the trenches were, and where they all ultimately met their end in the 2nd Battle of Frenzenberg.



It is a magnificent 20 feet tall dragon on cromlech, which we feel very well represents the spirit of those Welshmen that went there. Also in Hagebos is the memorial to Hedd Wyn, marking his death in the 3rd Battle, some 2 years later. Further up the road is the Cement House Cemetery, with some 3000 graves in.

We now have a copy of the war diaries, and we will put together a description of the days leading up to and the end of 8 May 1915.

It was only a fleeting visit to Ypres, and we're sure it will not be the last.

On behalf of the family, we have not forgotten...

2087 – Rifleman
George Harry Hyde
1st Battalion Monmouthshire Regiment
died 8 May 1915 - aged 20.

*Trwy ddwr, a thân, a marwol nwy
Ymladdai rhai o ffos i ffos ;
A brwydra eraill ar y don
Mewn stormydd draw o nos i nos ;
A rhoi y cwbl a fu eu rhan
Cyn cyrraedd glan eu Gwalia dlos.*