

Name, Rank & Regiment of Soldier:

**Browne, Montague Bernard**

2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. 2/8<sup>th</sup> Sherwood Foresters No: 17271



Date of birth	Date died of wounds	Age
2 <sup>nd</sup> June 1876	April 25 <sup>th</sup> 1916	39

#### Background: **Montague Browne**

Montague Browne was born in Suffolk where his father was the Rector at Framsdon. Rev. Samuel Browne later became Rector at St Mary's Church, Plumtree, Nottinghamshire, which is where Montague's brother, Percival, was born in 1883. Montague also had two sisters, Althea (later Mrs Macauley) and Dorothy<sup>1</sup>.

Montague attended Rugby and then Harrow School and later gained a BA in business from Trinity College, Cambridge.<sup>2</sup> In 1898, aged 22, he began work as a brewer at Hole's Brewery, Newark.<sup>3</sup>

Mrs Mary Browne appears to have moved with her family to Collingham around 1909/1910. She lived in South Collingham House, the Green, until 1922 and then moved to Rutland House on Low Street with her youngest daughter, Dorothy.

It is not clear where Montague lived at the outbreak of the war although in 1911 he was a lodger for a Mrs Mary Bamber in Swinton. He was single and a brewer. His address is given as South Collingham House on his death certificate.

<sup>1</sup> Eleanor Dorothy Browne (Miss Browne) founded the Collingham Girl Guides in 1914 & was involved in many good causes such as the British Red Cross Working Party during the war. Her mother, Mary, always permitted Dale Field for use by the Sunday School annual treats.

<sup>2</sup> Newark Advertiser clipping Box AA 1/Browne See also Trinity College Roll of Honour. Clipping includes photograph used here. Collingham and District Local History Society Archives

<sup>3</sup> see above Hole's Brewers were established c 1885 by James Hole who took over from Castle brewery on Albert Street. He built a new brewery there in 1890 [*Brewing* by Dr Denise Amos, Nottinghamshire Gate Way website]

## Military History: Lieutenant M B Browne

Montague Browne volunteered for 'home service' as soon as the war broke out (24<sup>th</sup> Aug. 1914) He enlisted with the City Battalion of the Sherwood Foresters and was called up in July 1915. Unlike the other soldiers from Collingham who died in the 1914-1918 War, Montague Browne met his end closer to home.

### Dublin, April 1916

The newly-raised 2/8<sup>th</sup> Sherwood Foresters were given orders to move at once to an 'unknown destination' at 7.30 pm April 24<sup>th</sup> (Easter Monday). This was to be their first time in combat and most presumed they were being mobilised to the Western Front.

For some reason, several attached officers were left behind. Even more catastrophically for the soldiers, so were two of the four Lewis Guns with which they had been issued. It is clear those in charge felt there would be little opposition from the Irish rebels. No one had predicted the determination of the Rebels or that they would risk firing from rooftops in built up areas of the city centre.

The soldiers, marching along Balls Bridge and Mount Street, were 'sitting ducks.' Many in the 2/8<sup>th</sup> had had only three months training and according to Col. Coape Oates (commander of 'B' Company in which Browne was serving): *'...young soldiers were subjected to cruel and accurate fire from front, rear and flanks with no cover or supporting fire from Artillery or Machine Guns to help them.'* Lieutenant Daffen and Lieutenant Browne were leading an attempt to capture Clanwilliam House but *'although he (Daffen) and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut Browne succeeded in crossing the fire-swept bridge, they were both shot down just beyond its North-West Corner. Lieut Daffen being killed instantly and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut Browne dying of his wounds two days later.'* Oates went on to describe Browne as *'a man of the mature age of 40, who had no previous military training but who patriotically obeyed his country's call and set a fine example to younger men.'*<sup>4</sup>

Browne's death certificate states he died 'from Peritonitis following bullet wounds.'

### Tribute in the South Collingham Parish Magazine written by Rev. A. Maxwell:

*'Once cannot issue another number of the Parish Magazine without expressing the sorrow felt by all in this neighbourhood at the death of Lieutenant Montague Bernard Browne, and the deep sympathy that goes out to his mother and sisters. Like his brother before him he fell while fighting in defence of his country.'*

*Very soon after the war broke out, at the call of duty, he left his occupation in civil life and enlisted in the ranks as a private soldier, later on he accepted a commission in the 2<sup>nd</sup> 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion Sherwood Foresters. On the outbreak of the miserable rebellion in Ireland his battalion at once went to Dublin, and as soon as it landed it was in the midst of the fiercest of the street fighting.'*

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<sup>4</sup> p54 The Sherwood Foresters in the Great War 2/8<sup>th</sup> Battalion by Col. William Coape Oates DSO pub 1920 (copy in Newark Library Reference)

*The Sherwoods were mainly responsible for suppressing the rebellion, but at the heavy cost of many killed and wounded. The glorious achievement will be deeply inscribed on the annals of Nottinghamshire, and we in South Collingham are particularly proud of the gallant part taken in it by Lieutenant Browne. Nevertheless his sad death is deeply deplored by us all. May God comfort those who feel it most. RIP.<sup>5</sup>*

### **Tributes to M B Browne in local newspapers:**

Saturday 6 May 1916: The *Newark Herald* began to spell-out the terrible local cost of the Irish Rebellion that had flared in Dublin over Easter. "Newarkers have suffered grievously. Up to the time of going to press information has been received that three local lads have been killed by the fanatics and several wounded." Vicar's widow Mary Browne at South Collingham House, already mourning her son Percy lost in Gallipoli last autumn, was informed that her only surviving son, Montague Bernard, was born in 1876, and educated at Harrow School and Trinity College, Cambridge, where he gained his BA degree in 1897. He went into brewing at James Hole's Castle Brewery in Newark and at the outbreak of War had been promoted to the 'rank' of second brewer at their Nottingham Brewery. He enlisted in the Sherwoods and was given a commission last July.

Sunday 7 May 1916: Word spreads through the villages that Montague Browne had died. Preaching at the North Collingham evening service, the Reverend Reginald Freestone Gould referred to the sad circumstances surrounding the death of "one who knelt in this church only three weeks ago and now lies in a grave in Ireland, having fallen in a dastardly attack". Montague's grave in Dean's Grange Cemetery is marked by a Celtic Cross.<sup>6</sup>

**Montague Browne is remembered on the South Collingham Parishioners' Plaque and Roll of Honour and on a plaque in St Mary's Church, Plumtree & on their Roll of Honour. The inscription on Montague Browne's grave in Dublin reads:**

***"be thou faithful unto death,  
and I will give thee a crown of life"***

### **Memorial in St Mary the Virgin, Plumtree:**

*'To the memory of Montague Bernard Browne, 2nd Lieut. Sherwood Foresters who died in hospital April 28th (sic) 1916 from wounds received in action in Dublin on April 26th during*

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<sup>5</sup> June 1916 South Collingham Parish Newsletter Box B CDLHS Archives

<sup>6</sup> Trevor Frecknall 'Collingham in the Great War' published 2015

*the Irish Rebellion. Aged 39. Elder son of the late Reverend S. B. Browne. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God"*



*Above: the brass plaque in St Mary's Church, Plumtree, dedicated to Montague Browne*

*Photo: Peter Gillings via the Nottinghamshire Roll of Honour website with kind permission.*

## **Montague Browne's Grave in Deans' Grange Cemetery, Dublin**

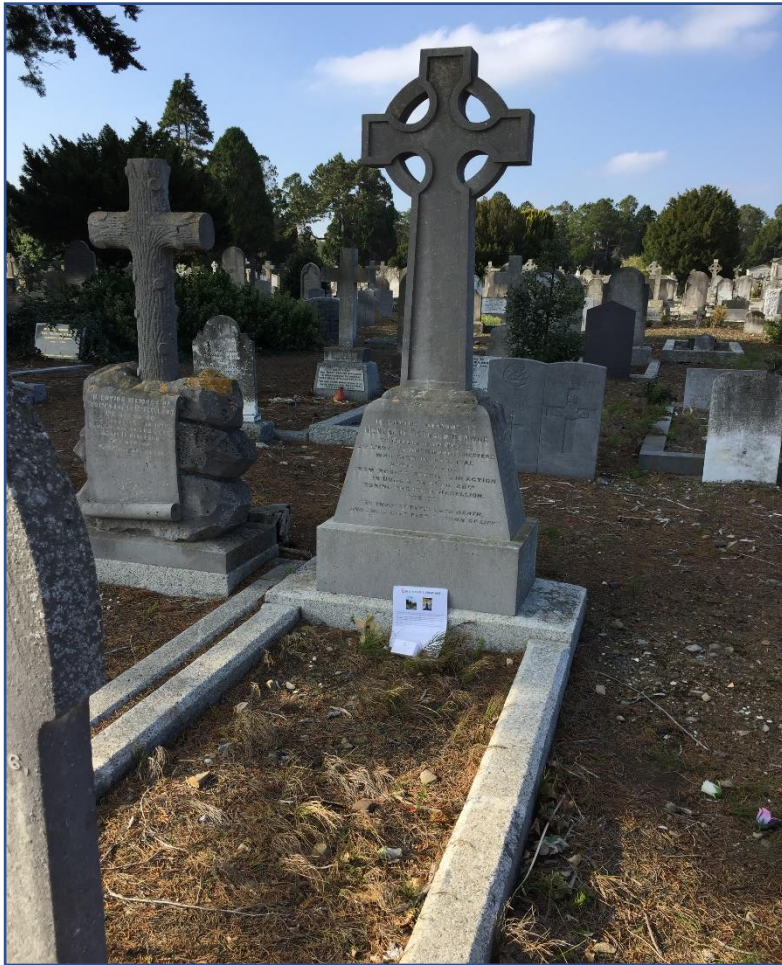
On October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018, Helena Pielichaty visited Browne's grave as part of Jerome Wright's 'To Honour our Heroes' project. She left Browne's cards and a link to the website on the grave.

Dean's Grange Cemetery is a large cemetery containing the graves of several noted Dubliners including Frank O'Connor (writer). Buried here are also 17 Republican soldiers who died for the cause of Irish Independence between 1916-1922.

One of the groundsmen at the cemetery, John, confirmed that Montague's mother, Mary, had paid for the impressive headstone and had covered the cost of burial for two other internments in the same grave: John Samuel Blissitt of the 2/7<sup>th</sup> Sherwood Foresters who died of wounds the day before Montague and one other. However, there seems to have been a mix up with the third internment, who was either sent home to Nottingham or who lies (by mistake) in the plot next to Browne's where a 4<sup>th</sup> casualty lies instead.



## Montague Browne's Grave (no 85) October 2018



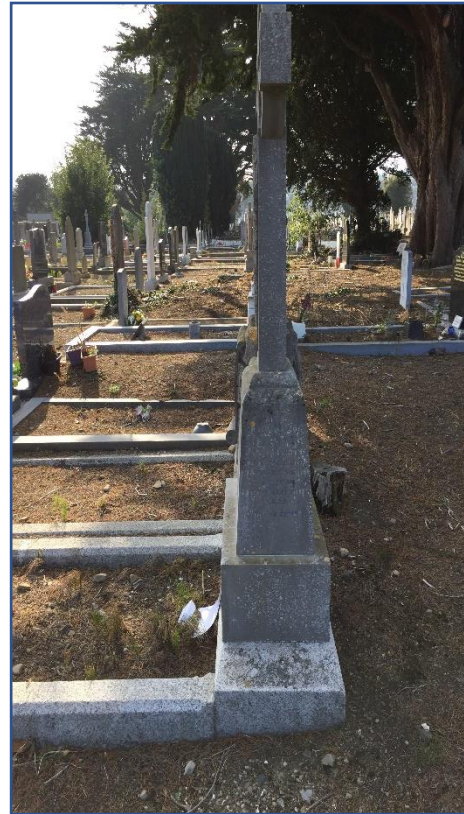
The inscription reads:

In loving memory of Montague  
Bernard Browne of Collingham Notts

2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant of 2/8 Sherwood  
Foresters who died in hospital April  
28<sup>th</sup> 1916 from wounds received in  
action on April 26<sup>th</sup> during the Irish  
Rebellion Aged 39

'Be thou faithful unto death and I  
will give thee a crown of life'





Above and right: Inscription on the side of Browne's headstone to John Samuel Blissitt

The inscription reads:

Also in memory of J S Blissitt of Nottingham

Private

2/7 Sherwood Foresters

Who fell at the same time

Aged 23

'Till He come'

John Blissitt (1893-1916) was a saddler and harness maker before the war. His address was given as 71 Alfred Street South, Sneinton, Nottingham, though he was born and raised in Kirton-in-Lindsey in Lincolnshire.

Also in Dean's Grange Cemetery is Captain Christian Frederick Dietrichsen, one of the officers killed in the Uprising, and Pte William Lang. Others are buried in Grangegorman Military Cemetery, Dublin or home in Nottinghamshire. Link to Dietrichsen here:

[https://www.britisharmedforcesthebest.com/single-post/2018/04/25/Captain-Frederick-Christian-Dietrichsen-27th-Battalion-The-Sherwood-Foresters?fb\\_comment\\_id=1347093308701222\\_1403848303025722](https://www.britisharmedforcesthebest.com/single-post/2018/04/25/Captain-Frederick-Christian-Dietrichsen-27th-Battalion-The-Sherwood-Foresters?fb_comment_id=1347093308701222_1403848303025722)

Further Reading: The Sherwood Foresters in the Easter Rising Dublin 1916 by Cliff Housley. Copies available in Newark Library and Collingham and District Local History Society



HP 30/3/2018 updated 11/10/2018

