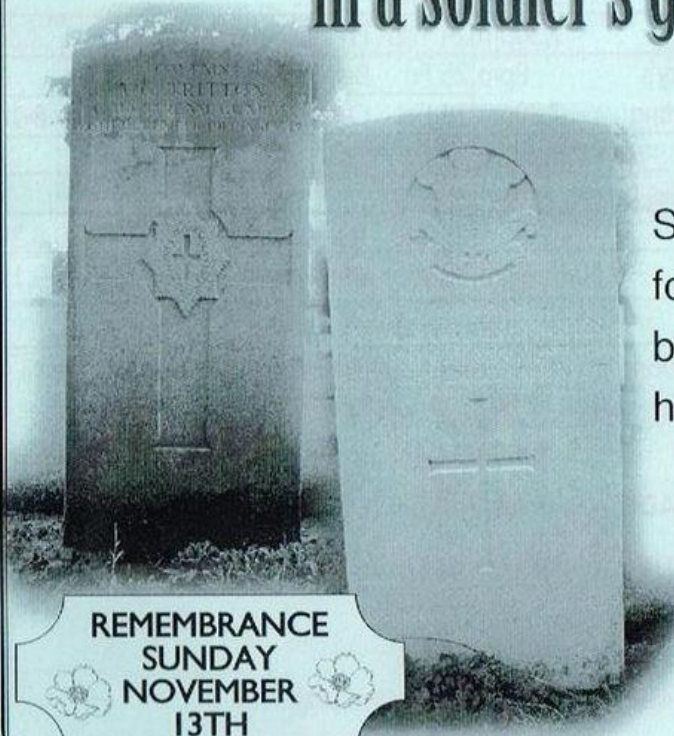


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Great & Little Leighs

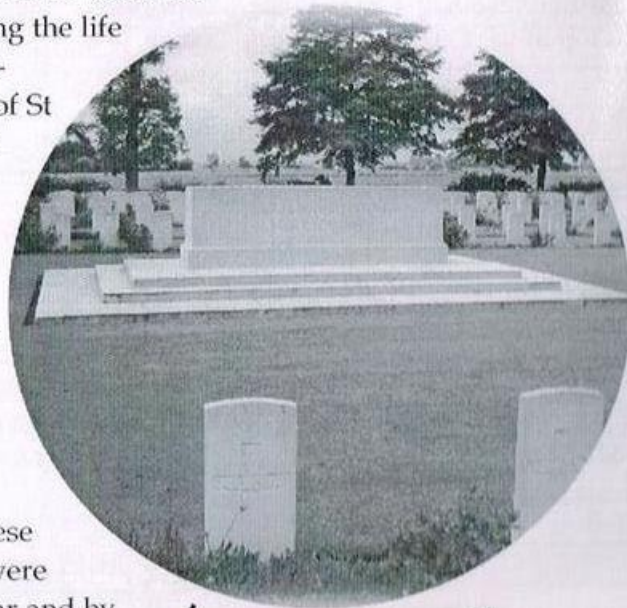
**"His body rests
in a soldier's grave"**



See Page 4
for the story
behind these
headstones

HIS BODY RESTS IN A SOLDIER'S GRAVE

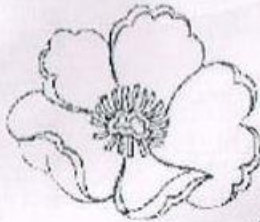
In the chancel of St John's Church there is a brass plaque commemorating the life of Captain William Hughes-Hughes and in the chancel of St Mary's Church there is one commemorating the life of Captain Alan George Tritton. Alan was the youngest son of Joseph Herbert and Lucy Jane (née Abel Smith) of Lyons Hall, and William was the son of Montagu Edward and Lydia Margaret Hughes-Hughes of Leez Priory. These two young men of Leighs were killed in the First World War and by coincidence are buried within two miles of each other in France, not far from Béthune. In



Le Touret Cemetery

August my family visited their graves when we visited the grave of my husband's great grandfather, Lieutenant Colonel Wilfrid Abel Smith (Grenadier), who lies in the same cemetery as his cousin, Captain Alan Tritton.

Wilfrid Abel Smith sailed from Southampton on 13th September, 1914 and on 15th wrote to his wife, Violet, 'We have seen a lot of wounded French and prisoners pass here. I saw Tritton in the Coldstream yesterday, shot through the hand. He hopes to be back in a fortnight'. Christmas, 1914, was extraordinarily bleak. According to Wilfrid, 'The country about here is dead flat, the most horrible country you can imagine. We took over the most horrible trenches, they were so wet and muddy, and you cannot



approach them without being shot at, so all communication has to be by trenches, which are sodden and mostly under water. On our way here four men sank in up to their hips. It took nearly four hours to dig them out, and they all fainted several times from cold.' On 27th December he wrote, 'Poor Alan Tritton (Coldstream) was killed here yesterday'.

Back in Great Leighs, the Rector, Andrew Clark, was keeping a War Diary and he preserved the 'brave letter' from Alan's father, telling him of his son's death: 'The blow has fallen - killed in action Dec. 26th is the brief official - and only - communication. We shall doubtless hear particulars soon. We give thanks to God for him and ask prayer for ourselves.' On Sunday, 10th January, 1915 the Rector wrote: 'Twelve noon. Memorial Service: in memoriam Captain Alan George Tritton, Coldstream Guards. Private Richard Fitch, Essex Regiment. Private Arthur Fitch, Royal Marines Light Infantry, HMS Formidable.' Alan was the youngest of five brothers and he had four sisters, none of whom married. When the sisters moved to Finchingfield, they made a shrine for their brother in the corner of the sitting room of their new house. Christmas is never again the same for those bereaved, but it must have been a particularly difficult time for the Trittons, their brother having been killed on Boxing Day. Alan George Tritton is buried at Le Touret Military Cemetery, Richebourg-L'Avoue, just outside Festubert. He was aged 32 and at the bottom of his head stone is written 'One that Feared God'. (Wilfrid Abel Smith, buried a few yards away, died from wounds received at the Battle of Festubert on 19th May, 1915, aged 44. Letters from his two

St John,
Little Leighs

William Montagu Hughes-
Hughes
Captain 9th Battalion The
Welch Regiment
Elder son of
Montagu Edward Hughes-
Hughes
Born April 5th 1884
Killed at Givenchy 25th
September 1915
Buried in Festubert
Cemetery



young sons were found in
his pockets.)

On Sunday, 6th September, 1914 there had been a recruitment meeting held in Lyons Hall Barn. Montagu Hughes-Hughes, JP and church warden of Little Leighs, cycled over from Leez Priory and spoke: 'You who know me, know I am a man of few words. I may tell you that I have an only son (a few months after the meeting, Mrs Hughes-Hughes had a baby son). He has been hard at drill in the Inns of Court Territorials. He has, as I learn this morning, been offered a commission in Lord Kitchener's army, has accepted it and will go wherever he is sent. I am getting an old man; but I have always stuck to the motto: It's dogged that does it. This war has been thrust upon us, and there is no question that we must, and will, see it through.' His son, William, was educated at Hertford College, Oxford and was a barrister in the Inner Temple. On 1st October, 1915 the Reverend Andrew Clark wrote, 'It was known in Little Leighs, by telegram on Wedn. Evening (29 Sept.) that 'Willie' Hughes-Hughes, son of M.E. Hughes-Hughes, of Leez Priory, had been killed. He was a captain (in the Welch Regiment).' William is buried at the Browns Road, Military Cemetery at Festubert. He was aged 31.

Julia Abel Smith

St Mary, Great Leighs

Captain Alan George Tritton
Coldstream Guards
Youngest son of Joseph Herbert &
Lucy Jane
Tritton of Lyons Hall
Served in the Boer War 1900 - 1902
And in the European War 1914
Killed in action near Bethune
Born Jan. 28th 1882
Died Dec. 26th 1914
Twice mentioned in despatches
His body rests in a soldier's grave
near the village of Le Touret
TILL HE COME