

Battlefield Cross - Stanley Herbert Hall

Lance Corporal Stanley Herbert (Bert) Hall (Service No. 25927), 7th Battalion Somerset Light Infantry, died on 7 June 1917 (aged 36). Interestingly, Lance Corporal Hall is not commemorated on the Abbots Leigh War memorial. He is, however, listed on the neighbouring village war memorial in Pill. Stanley Herbert Hall, a schoolteacher was born in Pill in 1881 - his father was a master mariner and he had six siblings - John, William, Jim, Sophia, Ada and May. He lived with his widowed mother in Elton Villa Church Path Road in Pill. On 21 December 1911 he married Nellie Maud Hare, the daughter of James William Hare, the headteacher at Abbots Leigh School. They had three children - Sybil, Lillian and, the youngest, Herbert.

Stanley attested to join the British Army under the so-called 'Derby Scheme' in December 1915, was mobilised in June 1916 and joined the British Expeditionary Force in October of that year. The 7th Battalion Somerset Light Infantry War Diary reveals the circumstances of his death:



7th June 1917. Battalion in line. Seven casualties; three sniped and four shell-fire - all killed.

Four of these casualties (including Stanley Hall) are buried together in Lagnicourt Hedge CWGC cemetery - a small plot containing just 63 graves of which the majority are from the 7th Battalion Somerset Light Infantry.

So why is Lance Corporal Stanley Hall's grave marker in Abbots Leigh and not in Pill where his name is included on the local memorial? Given that Hall lived in Pill and his family had deep roots in Pill and that he was an active member of the local Lodway Cricket Club, it would have been odd for him not to have been included on the former.

Stanley's wife Nellie went to live with her parents at Severn View Abbots Leigh (now known as the Old School House) opposite the church, and their third child Herbert was born there a few months before Stanley died. Nellie and her children were still living there with her parents in 1921. The battlefield cross would have been returned to Nellie and she surely chose to put it in the church across the road from where she now lived.