

Guy Spencer Bryan-Brown (1885 – 1917) First World War Roll of Honour

'...he is a sterling man, the best of fellows, and one who has no enemy'
(The Griffin, Lent 1908)

Guy Spencer Bryan-Brown was born on 3rd July 1885 in Stroud, Gloucestershire, the second son of Grace Margaret Bryan-Brown, and the Reverend Willoughby Bryan-Brown (formerly Rector of Amberley, Stroud) of Royal Parade, Eastbourne.

Guy came up to Downing College in 1904 from Tonbridge School, studying for the Theological Tripos. He followed his elder brother Willoughby (1903) and was followed himself by his younger brother Douglas in 1905. He was a fine cricketer and hockey player, and played in University Freshmen's and Seniors' matches, securing his Blue for Hockey in 1908. This photograph, of the Downing College Hockey team in 1906, includes all three Bryan-Brown brothers (Willoughby standing centre, Guy seated centre and Douglas, sitting front right) in possibly the only instance of three brothers at the College at the same time.

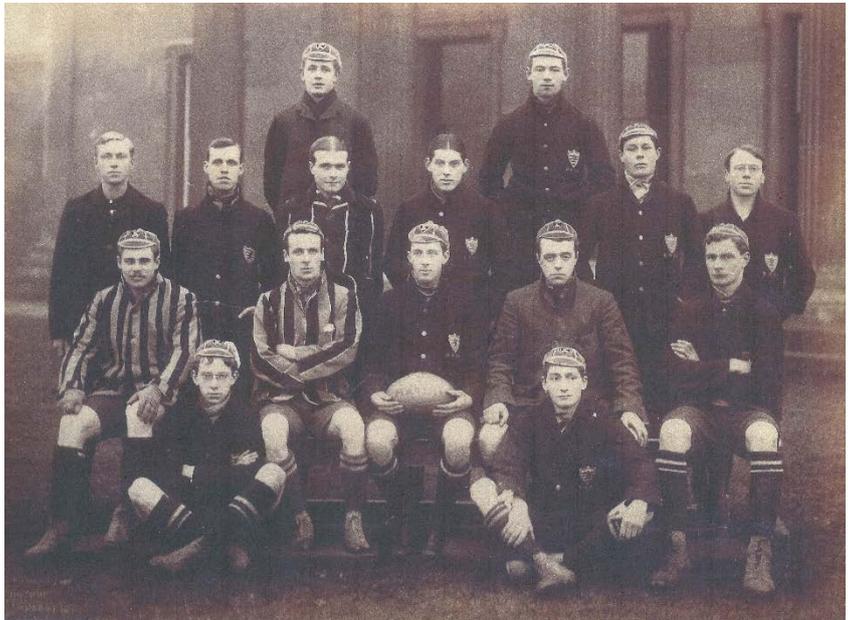


In addition to Hockey and Cricket, Guy also represented Downing at Rugby Football and Lawn Tennis (pictured below in the 1904-5 Rugby team photograph). In 1906, a poem written by Guy about the family's sporting achievements was published in The Griffin:

My brother is a batsman
Whose like is seldom seen,
And often makes a mighty stand
Upon our village green.
So when he played for Downing
And only made a duck,
I offered him his colours
To console him for his luck.

My other brother's hockey
Is sight for gods and men,
And when he shoots he hits the ball
Quite once in every ten.
So when one day a flying shot
Bounced from his stick in goal,
The paltry gift of colours
Seemed the only fitting dole.

So, when you dine with Griffins,
You'll see us brothers three,
There's Old Cow, and there's Scullion,
And the middle one is me.
And later on, in after life,
When we have all gone down,
They'll know the use of having
The glorious name of Brown.



He proceeded to his degree in 1907 and then spent a year 'in ascetic seclusion' at Ridley Hall reading for Holy Orders and qualifying for a Teaching Diploma. In 1908 he was appointed to a Mastership at Trinity College, Glenalmond, and was ordained in 1909 before proceeding in 1913 to Christ's College, Christchurch, Canterbury, New Zealand, as Chaplain-Master. There he continued his sporting interests including representing Canterbury in cricket.



In 1913 the now Reverend Bryan-Brown became Chaplain to Christ's College Cadet Corps, and Chaplain to the Forces (4th Class) with the New Zealand Chaplains Department in March 1914. In the Christmas holidays of 1916-17 he was at Trentham Training Camp and was assigned as Temporary Army Chaplain (and Captain) with the 21st New Zealand Expeditionary Force 21st Reinforcements and later with the 3rd Canterbury Battalion. He returned to England briefly in early 1917, and left for the Western Front on 29th May 1917.



On 6th June 1917 official records report him as 'wounded in action and remained on duty'. He was killed in action on 4th October 1917 at Otto Farm near Ypres, during the Battle of Broodseinde (*Third Battle of Ypres, Passchendaele Campaign*). He was at an advanced dressing station, which was so full that many of the wounded had to be left outside, and while attending to the sick and wounded he was instantaneously killed by a shell, age 32.

The Reverend Bryan-Brown is commemorated at Tyne Cot Memorial and on memorials in Downing College, Tonbridge School and Christ's College (New Zealand), where there is a stained glass memorial window in the College Chapel.

Images:

- 1) 1906 Hockey and 1905 Rugby photographs with thanks to the Bryan-Brown family (copyright Lafayette Photography Ltd)
- 2) Photograph courtesy of Christ's College Archives, New Zealand
- 3) Bryan-Brown in uniform, courtesy of Tonbridge School

Sources:

The Griffin, Easter Term 1908 and Michaelmas 1917.

Archives New Zealand/New Zealand Defence Force, *Military Personnel Records* [Available at: http://ndhadeliver.natlib.govt.nz/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE14749902]

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Wellington probate files. *Guy Spencer Bryan-Brown*. [Available at:

<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-892Q-XFB?i=472&wc=Q6SB-BQK%3A1045248401%2C1072967502%3Fcc%3D1865481&cc=1865481>]