

Frederick Walker

by

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From the Garton Archive

Writing in the Lincolnshire Echo on 27 August 2015, Adrian Curtis pays tribute to more than 800 Lincolnshire soldiers who were either killed or wounded on the battlefields of Northern France.

On 13 October 1915, soldiers of the Lincolnshire Regiment were gunned down by the Germans during the Battle of Loos, which Adrian Curtis described as 'our bloodiest hour'. In total some 60,000 British soldiers died in the battle.

Adrian and Mike Credland, well-known Great War historian, have appealed for more information on those who died or survived the battle for a special publication to commemorate the centenary of the battle.

One of those brave men who lost his life on that fateful day was Frederick Walker, who attended Lincoln Grammar School, from 1901 to 1907. At that time the School was situated on Upper Lindum Street, before it moved to its new premises on Wrabgy Road in 1907, the site of the present Lincoln Christ's Hospital School.



Former Lincoln Grammar School building on Upper Lindum Street, now part of The Minster School

Fred Walker was born on 4 June 1889. It was recorded in the Lincoln Grammar School Register of Scholars 1898-1909 that his father was F Walker, a Machine Joiner, and that the family's postal address was 14 Spa Buildings, Lincoln. Fred had previously been a pupil at Rosemary Lane School, and Charles Garton's meticulously kept records of the Lincoln Grammar School Governors' Minutes reported that he was one of six pupils to be awarded a scholarship to the School in December 1901. In those days there were three types of pupil at the School; Exhibitioners, Scholars and Commoners.

There are few references to Fred Walker's career at Lincoln Grammar School in *The Lincolnian* magazines. However towards the end of his time there he was clearly a respectable half-back in the School football team, being awarded his First Eleven colours in 1906, and described in the list of 'Football Characters' as 'Energetic and useful. Tackles well, but is inclined to kick into touch.' Perhaps rugby might therefore have been his métier?

In view of his army career, it is perhaps more relevant to report that he was a stalwart member of the recently formed School Cadet Corps, being promoted to the rank of Sergeant in 1907, and appointed as the leader of Squad 'D' (see Item of Interest 34 for a detailed history of the Corps).

There is also a fascinating reference to the School's Debating Society in March 1907 in which Walker proposed 'That this house approves of the Channel Tunnel scheme. It was recorded that Foster, proposing the motion, spoke with his usual conviction, but with the proviso that the same result might have been achieved without so much facial contortion! Buss, opposing the motion, apparently seemed to have something to say, but 'rambled rather'! As part of other 'instructive' speeches, it was pointed out how difficult it was to cross the Alps by boat! The motion was eventually carried by eighteen votes to eight.

It is clear that Fred Walker trained as a teacher after leaving Lincoln Grammar School, but I can find no reference to where he was trained. The School Notes for the December 1907 edition of *The Lincolnian* recorded that he had passed the Preliminary Examination for the Elementary Teachers' Certificate with Distinctions in French and Mathematics, and the August 1912 edition reported that he had been awarded the Teachers' Certificate with distinction in the Principles of Teaching.

I now turn to Graham McAdam's definitive record of Old Lincolnians killed in action in the Great War (see Occasional Paper 15 from the Garton Archive). Graham, a former music teacher at LCHS for some 30 years, has painstakingly completed his researches from *The Lincolnian* magazines, the National Archive, and other primary sources. From Fred Walker's entry we know that his rank was CSM 220, that his regiment was the 1st and 4th Battalions of the Lincolnshire Regiment, that he was born and enlisted in Lincoln, that he was reported in the Lincolnshire Echo as on

24.11.1915 as 'Missing', and that his name is recorded on the Loos memorial Panel 31 to 34.

At the time when we as a nation commemorates the Centenary of the end of the Great War, and the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, it is a timely reminder that 94 former pupils of Lincoln School lost their lives during both wars, and a teacher at Lincoln Christ's Hospital Girls' High School was tragically killed when a Hampden bomber crashed on Greestone Stairs in July 1941. They are all remembered on the newly refurbished and re-sited War Memorial on the cloisters at Lincoln Christ's Hospital School.



The War Memorial at Lincoln Christ's Hospital School

Acknowledgement

Both photographs were taken by Catherine Forbes, Display and Promotions Manager at Lincoln Christ's Hospital School

