

**NOTES FOR “COMPRIS HOUSEY” IN FEBRUARY 2008 ISSUE
OF THE OLD BLUE.**

The author wishes to acknowledge the invaluable help of Rex Sweeny in preparing these references.

1. Faulkner; regiment not known.
2. Captain WC Green; Coleridge B, 1904-1907; South Staffordshire Regiment. MC* Croix de Guerre with Palms). Green was not a member of the Royal Artillery, so it is probable that he was serving with a Trench Mortar Battery at the time. [Note. An asterisk after an award indicates a further award of the same decoration; also known as a “bar”.]
3. Captain F Llewellyn Hughes, Lamb A/Peele A, 1904-1913. MC, MiD***; General Staff. Letter to the Editor, published in *The Blue*, December 1917, page 81. [Note. MiD = Mention in Dispatches, the basic battlefield award, indicated by a metal oakleaf on the relevant campaign medal]
4. Captain AJS Simmance; Thornton A, 1906-1913; 4th Bn, King’s (Liverpool) Regiment. Died in action 28 August 1916.
5. Captain GJ Partridge; Barnes A, 1904-1912; 10th Battalion, The Sherwood Foresters. MiD**** .
6. *The Blue*, February 1916, page 91.
7. *Undertones of War*, Edmund Blunden; Folio Society, London, 1989; page 130.
8. Lieut EC Blunden, Coleridge A, 1909-15; 11th Royal Sussex Regiment. MC; “*The Feast of Five*,” *The Blue*, July 1917, pp 162-163. At this stage in the war Blunden was Battalion Signals Officer; i.e., responsible for all communications (telephone, buzzers, runners, lights and flags) within the battalion.
9. 2nd Lieutenant EW Tice, Maine A, 1901-1907; 11th Battalion, Royal Sussex; died 1 August 1917.
10. There are other references in C.H. literature of this period to Wednesday afternoon detention for various misdemeanours.
11. In the 19th Century “gag” was Housey slang for fat, but it appears to have later been used to describe fatty meat, as well. It is possible that this cart was engaged in taking swill to local farms beyond Shelley’s Wood.
12. Lieutenant (Acting Captain) AGA Vidler, Peele A, 1902-1908; 11th Battalion, Royal Sussex. MC. His brother, 2nd Lieutenant BH Vidler; Peele A 1905-1910; Royal Sussex; died 12 April 1917.
13. Captain H Amon, Thornton A, 1906-1910; 11th Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment. MC*
14. Second Lieutenant WJ Collyer. Peele A, 1902-1908; 11th Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment. Died 31 July 1917
15. An “owl” was a severe blow given with the knuckles of the clenched

- fist on the top of the victim's head.
16. "Trades" = serving tasks in the Dining Hall carried out by the boys.
 17. It is not certain who this was.
 18. Blunden's use of the term "barrack damages" is probably an unconscious use of the military term, when soldiers have to pay a collective charge for loss or damage to military property in and around a barracks.
 19. "Jehu" was the term commonly applied to a coachman, particularly one who drove fast; "...*the driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi; for he driveth furiously*" II Kings 9.20. In this case, Blunden was being ironic.
 20. Charles Lamb (1775-1834), poet and essayist, at C.H. 1782-1789, was famously fond of a drink, and of Old Blue company.
 21. George Robey (1869-1954), one of the most famous music hall artists of the day.
 22. "E.V.X. and Kite" were heartily disliked exercises in exact freehand drawing that C.H. boys were required to do in the Drawing School (as it then was). E Boyer Harding (Peele B 1906-1913) wrote that: 'Cards about 8 in. x 6 ins. bore an outlined block letter. These were the E.V.X. and Kite (with a curved top). First one had to make dots by eye at exact distance of each corner of the letter. Jimmy [Owers, junior art master] would rub these out with abuse if wrong. One drew timourously [sic] lines between the dots when passed and if shaky, were rubbed out with blows or abuse.' It is presumed that "First Handglass" was a similar drawing exercise.
 23. "Skiffing" was Housey slang for upsetting something and in later years meant to tip someone's mattress and bedding on to the floor. Vidler and Collyer were both in Peele A, so presumably 'Blood' is Arthur Gordon Blood (Peele A, 1901-08), later a missionary priest in Zanzibar and Masai, and author of a two-volume history of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa, published in the 1940s. Thus, this appears to mean that Blood's books were pushed off a table or shelf, or out of his arms, one minute before the crucial 'second-bell,' although the significance of this is not known.
 24. "dish-gravy." Possibly a culinary delight of the day.
 25. "Grecian's boys." Possibly, an earlier name for "swabs" (junior boys who ran errands for monitors, cleaned their shoes, etc; equivalent to "fag" in other schools).
 26. None are visible today.
 27. Southwater is a small village, close to the school. Its meaning in this context is no longer clear, but would doubtless have meant a lot to contemporary readers of *The Blue*.
 28. The Skinners' Company has a long relationship with C.H. going back many years and elects its master annually on the Feast of Corpus Christi (Thursday following Trinity Sunday). It is possible that this Housey slang usage is an ironic reference to a less sumptuous repast

- at the school. It should be remarked that in Blunden's text the apostrophe is before the "s" suggesting that it might have a quite different meaning and refer to some individual at the school.
29. This refers to the Tuck-Shop where the counter displaying the goods on offer was protected by a high wire grid, with a shelf at the top. Taller boys could be served over the top, but for the shorter ones there was a specially-cut hole. Thus, "serve the hole" was a plea to the lady behind the counter, Mrs Flowers, to give some consideration to the smaller boys. "For a master" was doubtless intended to raise the importance of the order.
 30. The meaning of "Shaking Neck" is not known.
 31. taff = potato.
 32. asphalt = the playing grounds in rear of the boarding houses, a relic from the days at Newgate Street. Shouting rude remarks at workers and farmhands, known for obscure reasons as "bockers", is one of the more unfortunate Housey customs, but is clearly of long standing.
 33. *A Tribute from the Field*, EC Blunden, *The Blue*, October 1917, pp 10-11
 34. This was the second day of what is now known as the Passchendaele offensive. 11th Royal Sussex were part of 39th Division and this early action was an undoubted success, although losses were heavy – and were to increase dramatically over the remainder of the offensive.
 35. Vidler never recovered from the emotional and mental strains of the war, in which he had also lost a brother. He committed suicide in 1924. Blunden was deeply distressed and paid tribute to his friend in the poem "A.G.A.V.":

"...If one cause I have for pride, it is to have been your friend,
 To have lain in shell holes by your side, with you to have seen
 impend
 The meteors of the hour of fire..."

Undertones of War, Blunden, Folio Society, p 199
 36. *Out of a Long Silence*, Ioné Bates, privately published, 2007. Copy in C.H. Museum.
 37. The final reckoning on this dreadful day was three ships sunk (75 percent) and 252 men killed (77 percent); of the 46 survivors from the three sunken ships, 45 were from *Torrent* and *Surprise*, just one from *Tornado*. Only *Radiant* returned to port, unscathed and without loss.
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