

MAJOR JOHN GILBY BULLEN OBE (G1903-13)

He was born on 4 February 1895 and was probably one of the College's most brilliant scholars.

The following is an address given at his memorial service by the Bishop of Isles and Argyll :-

Intellectually he was richly endowed. What impressed me as I look over his career at school and at Oxford before and after WW1, is the extraordinary range of his achievement. He was a kind of latter day Renaissance man (and this breed has all but vanished) who excelled not just in Mathematics and Science, but also in the Classics and Music and in dialectical skills – a clear thinker, an able debater, a sportsman, a man with qualities of leadership far beyond the ordinary. And severely practical. As his Oxford tutor remarked (having referred to his academic achievements as of the very highest order) "he possessed an excellent pair of hands."

Then again he belonged to that generation who met the full impact of WW1. He went through that hell for almost its full course. He knew the horror of the trenches and fought at Loos, on the Somme and in 1917 at the Battle of Arras, where he was wounded and finally sent back to England. He was mentioned in dispatches. His regiment was 9th Essex and he had the rank of Major.

His courage was to last to the end in years of infirmity, in the days when the excellent pair of hands no longer did what they were bidden, when a mind still vigorous and clear was frustrated by physical infirmity.

He was one of the few founding fathers of industrial Lochaber. In 1953 his contribution was recognised with the award of the OBE. But far too little has been written of the achievements of those dedicated men who in unpromising times against insurmountable odds, brought people and work to an ably neglected corner of the Kingdom.

I met him first in 1948. He was in the bowels of his church, covered in soot and grease and "the excellent pair of hands" were at work on ancient and sulky boiler. Quite a thing, I thought, that one of the most eminent men in the community should spend his Saturday in this way."

He died on 23 February 1987 at the age of 102.