A POEM : WW 1 : and Family BEATON

William <u>BEATON</u>, an Aberdeenshire lad, settled in 'Forfarshire' with his wife **Ann** in the early **1870s**. Many of their years together were to be spent in **Southmuir**, **Kirriemuir**, firstly in **Sawmill Row** and later in a cottage in **Mill Street** where they raised their **10** children.



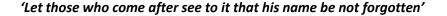
Their youngest child was named John McHardie Beaton born on 17 July 1894 at Sawmill Row. The poem which is so central to this story was written by John shortly before he was killed on 9 May, 1915 when serving with the 5th Battalion, Black Watch in France.

The existence of the poem was first brought to the notice of the Westmuir Village website in the **summer of 2011** by an earlier resident, **Margaret Gray**. In **1957**

Margaret emigrated to Australia with her husband, children and mother, Mary Beaton. Soon Australia became home to all the family although Margaret and her husband Ron enjoyed a visit back to Scotland in 1996 when they visited Edinburgh Castle to seek out John Beaton's name in the Black Watch records.

Margaret kindly sent a copy of the poem and the details of where Lance Corporal John Beaton (her mother's cousin) was **buried** at **Fleurbaix**, **France**. With the information now to hand it was decided to include the story of John Beaton in the village website.

At much the same time however an article appeared in the local Courier and Advertiser stating that a Mr William (Bill) Beaton, from Ottawa in Canada had kindly gifted part of his collection of Rabbie Burns books to Southmuir Primary school, where many of Bill's ancestors had been taught. The article also mentioned that an uncle of Bill's had been killed in France during the First World War. There had to be a family connection here and quite heart warming to find that two distant branches of the Beaton family should be remembering and protecting the memory of young John Beaton. The commemorative scroll as issued by King and Country came to mind.





Margaret (Australia) tells us that her mother **Mary** was the daughter of **Karl Beaton**, a **Norwegian**. There were two Beaton families in Kirriemuir in the early 1900s and **Karls** family lived in the **Knowehead** area. Mary's sister, **Karen Beaton** (and family) also moved to **Australia** whilst their three brothers **Archie**, **Bob** and **Jock** remained in **Kingoldrum**, **Kirriemuir** and **Westmuir's Roman Road** / **Main Road** cottages.

Bill (Canada) finds his family tree is directly traced to Mill Street, Southmuir as revealed in the 1891 and 1901 census. Sadly, as was often the case in those early days, three of the children were to die in infancy prior to 1891. Bill's father David was born in 1887 the 8th child of the family and he chose to emigrate to Canada some time after his marriage in South Parish Church, Kirriemuir on 8th October 1918 thereby following in the footsteps (in 1910) of Maggie the eldest child and Archie. Bill remembers his Aunt Maggie well as she enjoyed a good long life in Canada. Archie however also fought in WW1 having returned to fight with the 29th Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force. He was killed on 26 May, 1916 - one year after the loss of his young brother John Beaton. Archie is buried at Poperinghe in Belgium. The eldest brother William emigrated to Canada in 1933.

The **Black Watch Museum in Perth** already have records and details of **Lance Corporal John Beaton**. The copies of John's **poem**, **military burial details** and **family photographs** given to the **Westmuir Website** by Bill and Margaret will be presented to the **Kirriemuir Museum** for safekeeping.



Lance Corporal John BEATON

5th Battalion

Black Watch (Royal Highlanders)

Killed in action, France & Flanders, 09/05/1915

Born: Kirriemuir, Forfarshire. Enlisted: Kirriemuir.



"He whom this scroll commemorates was numbered among those who, at the call of King and Country, left all that was dear to them, endured hardness faced danger and finally passed out of the sight of men by the path of duty and self-sacrifice, giving up their own lives that others might live in freedom".

Let those who come after see to it that his name be not forgotten.



Photo taken in **1910** prior to **Maggie** and **Archie's** departure to **Canada**.

John 16 yrs of age

Archie 19 yrs of age.

Please 'click' to read the poem written by John in 1915, a few days before he was killed in action.

