

ARTHUR POWYS WODEHOUSE

2.6.1881–22.11.1915 aged 34 years

Capt Indian Political Dept attached 110th Maharatta Light Infantry.



Arthur was the son of Rev F A Wodehouse rector of Gotham from 1882 to 1913. Arthur was born at Gotham rectory and a memorial plaque to him in church reads “Entered the Army 1902, Deputy Commander Police Calcutta 1909, Capt’ 1911” He was killed in action at Ctesiphon Mesopotamia (present day Iraq) whilst serving with the 110th Maharatta Light Infantry. The ill fated Anglo Indian expedition, to what is now Iraq, to secure oil fields, was turned into an attempt to take Bahgdad, held by the Turks, by Major-General Sir Charles Townsend. Townsend took Kut under orders from his senior, General Sir John Nixon, but he went on an extra 190 miles on his own vainglorious initiative to Ctesphion. Townsend forced his lightly equipped force of 14,000 troops through hostile terrain, marauding tribesmen and rampant disease, to face a Turkish force which outnumbered his three to one, and who had time to prepare defences. Townsend’s attack was summarily repulsed with a loss of 4,500 casualties. He withdrew to Kut and decided to remain there rather than carry on to the safety of Amara. Townsend’s inept and selfish leadership finally came to an end on the 29th of March 1916 when the garrison surrendered. Townsend was ‘entertained’ royally in Constantinople. His men were forced marched 1200 miles by their captors. They died in their thousands of cholera, typhus, freezing cold, heat exhaustion and thee whips of their captors. Those who fell out were left to tribesmen who filled their mouths with sand to be left to die. 70% of the British troops and 50% of the Indians died in captivity. Arthur has no known grave and is recorded on the Basra memorial panel 59.