

**Stourbridge Cemetery,  
Stourbridge, West Midlands, England  
War Graves**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**2688 PRIVATE**

**H. W. KELLY**

**54TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.**

**4TH MAY, 1918**

## Hubert William KELLY

Hubert William Kelly was born at Appleby, Westmoreland, England on 21st March, 1896 to parents George William Calver Kelly and Margaret Douglas Kelly (nee Story).

The 1901 England Census recorded Hubert W. Kelly as a 5 year old, living with his family at Pembroke Street, Bongate, Westmorland, England. His parents were listed as George W. C. Kelly (Land Agent & Surveyor), aged 32, born at Sea & Margaret D. Kelly (aged 35, born Appleby, Westmorland). Hubert was one of three sons listed on this Census (all born Appleby) – Kenneth G. Kelly (aged 6) then Hubert & Harold C. (aged 2). Also listed in the household was Agnes M. Mabon – niece (aged 15).

Hubert William Kelly attended Knaresborough Rural Secondary School & Elles\_\_\_ School, Harrogate.

The 1911 England Census recorded Hubert William Kelly as a 15 year old at School, living with his family at St. James Street, Wetherby, Yorkshire West Riding, England. His parents were listed as George William Calver Kelly (Land Agent's Assistant, aged 42) & Margaret Douglas Kelly (aged 45). George & Margaret Kelly had been married for 17 years & had 4 children whom were listed on this Census – Kenneth George Kelly (at School, aged 16) then Hubert, Harold Craig Kelly (At School, aged 12) & Arnold Douglas Kelly (Aged 3, born Wetherby, Yorkshire, West Riding). Also listed in the household was Agnes Mary Mabon – niece (Assists in Housework, aged 25).

Hubert William Kelly came to Australia when he was 18 years old according to information provided by his father for the Roll of Honour.

Hubert William Kelly was a 20 year old, single, Station Labourer from Rankin Street, Forbes, NSW when he enlisted on 9th June, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 2688 & his religion was Methodist. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mr George William Calver Kelly, St. James Street, Wetherby, Yorkshire, England. As Hubert Kelly was under the age of 21 years – his parents were supposed to sign their consent for their son to enlist in the Australian Imperial Force for Active Service abroad. The form was marked *"Parents resident in Yorkshire, England. Have been about 2 years away."*

Private Hubert William Kelly was posted to 54th Reinforcement Battalion on 9th June, 1916 for recruit training. He was transferred to "C" Company, Depot Battalion at Bathurst, NSW on 12th June, 1916 then posted to "A" Company of 54th Battalion on 18th July, 1916. Private Kelly was transferred to Invalids Section, A.I.F. Victoria Barracks from 10th August to 4th September, 1916. He was posted to 6th Reinforcements of 54th Battalion (date not recorded).

Private Hubert William Kelly embarked from Sydney, NSW on HMAT *Ceramic (A40)* on 7th October, 1916 with the 54th Infantry Battalion, 6th Reinforcements & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 21st November, 1916.

Reinforcements were only given basic training in Australia. Training was completed in training units in England. Some of these were located in the Salisbury Plain & surrounding areas in the county of Wiltshire.

Private Hubert William Kelly was sent sick to Hospital at Hurdcott, Wiltshire on 19th December, 1916 with Influenza from 14th Training Battalion, Camps 5 & 6. He was transferred to Fovant Military Hospital, Wiltshire on 20th December, 1916 & discharged from Hospital on 1st January, 1917.

Private Hubert William Kelly proceeded overseas to France via Folkestone on 24th January, 1917 per S.S. *Princess Clementine* from 14th Training Battalion. He was marched in to 5th A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) at Etaples, France on 25th January, 1917. Private Kelly was marched out from 5th A.D.B.D. on 6th February, 1917 & was taken on strength of 54th Battalion on the same day.

The Salvation Army, Liverpool Military Camp, NSW wrote to Base Records on 28th February, 1917 with the following letter: *"The relations of Hubert William Kelly have written from Cornwall, they desire to find him & herewith I respectfully solicit your valuable assistance. Kelly was from information I have gained at Bathurst Camp on August 6th, 1916, previous to that date he was 6 weeks in Hospital with an ulcerated foot. He was in C. Company 54th Battalion, A.I.F. At the closing of the Camp at Bathurst he was transferred to Liverpool, since then his whereabouts are unknown to his father, I await with interest your reply & I trust definitive information. I am Sir, yours faithfully, John Ramage, Chaplain."*

A reply was sent by Base Records on 14th March, 1917 advising that the soldier that was being referred to has the following postal address – No. 2688 Private H. W. Kelly, 6th Reinfts., 54th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force, ABROAD.

Private Hubert William Kelly was sent sick to 8th Australian Field Ambulance on 24th October, 1917 & admitted with Diarrhoea. He was transferred to 5th D.R.S. (Divisional Rest Station) on 24th October, 1917 & was discharged to duty on 9th December, 1917. Private Kelly rejoined his Battalion on 9th December, 1917.

Private Hubert William Kelly was on Leave to UK from 4th February, 1917 & rejoined his Unit from Leave on 22nd February, 1918.

Private Hubert William Kelly was wounded in action – Gassed on 17th April, 1918. He was admitted to 55th Field Ambulance on 17th April, 1918 then transferred & admitted to 55th Casualty Clearing Station on 18th April, 1918. Private Kelly was transferred & admitted to 9th General Hospital at Rouen, France on 19th April, 1918. He was marked for transfer to England on 21st April, 1918 & embarked on Hospital Ship *Grantully Castle* on 22nd April, 1918.

### **54th Battalion**

The 54th Battalion was raised in Egypt on 16 February 1916 as part of the "doubling" of the AIF. Half of its recruits were Gallipoli veterans from the 2nd Battalion, and the other half, fresh reinforcements from Australia. Reflecting the composition of the 2nd, the 54th was predominantly composed of men from New South Wales. The battalion became part of the 14th Brigade of the 5th Australian Division.

Moving to France in June 1916, the 54th fought its first major battle on the Western Front at Fromelles, on 19 July. It was a disaster. The 54th was part of the initial assault and suffered casualties equivalent to 65 per cent of its fighting strength. Casualty rates among the rest of the 5th Division were similarly high, but despite these losses it continued to man the front in the Fromelles sector for a further two months.

After a freezing winter manning trenches in the Somme Valley, in early 1917 the 54th Battalion participated in the advance that followed the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line. It was spared the assault but did, however, defend gains made during the second battle of Bullecourt. Later in the year, the AIF's focus of operations switched to the Ypres sector in Belgium. The 54th's major battle here was at Polygon Wood on 26 September.

With the collapse of Russia in October 1917, a major German offensive on the Western Front was expected in early 1918. This came in late March and the 5th Division moved to defend the sector around Corbie. The 14th Brigade took up positions to the north of Villers-Bretonneux and held these even when the village fell, threatening their flanks.....

*(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)*

### War Diary – 54th Battalion

Wednesday 17th April, 1918:

The day was misty giving very poor observation. The wind was blowing from 5 to 8 miles per hour. At about 4 am the enemy commenced shelling C29B and D. and the village of VILLERS-BRETONNEUX with 8', 9.98, 4.2, and 77 gas shell. Yellow cross and green cross were used.

At about 10 am men began to feel the effects of the gas and by 5 pm every man three platoons of D. Company (Nos. 13,15,16) had been evacuated and the majority of Battalion Head Quarters as well. The Gas casualties included the C.O. – Major G. R. Lucas, M.C. – the Acting Adjutant – Lieut. Palmer, the Medical Officer – Captain C. H. Leedman, M.C. – the Intelligence Officer – Lieut. Askham – and the Signalling Officer – Lieut. H. Brewer. Tow Officers of D. Company were also gassed (Lieut. Small, F. and 2nd Lieut. Reid who has since died.) Total casualties for to-day are 7 Officers 104 other ranks, 2 of the other ranks being wounded by shell fire the remainder being gas casualties.....

*(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)*

Private Hubert William Kelly was admitted to 1st Southern General Hospital (Stourbridge Section), Birmingham, England on 24th April, 1918 having been Gassed.

Private Hubert William Kelly died at 8.40 am on 4th May, 1918 at C1 – 2 Ward, 1st Southern General Hospital (Stourbridge Section), Birmingham, England from wounds – Shell Gas Poisoning, result of enemy action.

A death for Hubert W. Kelly, aged 22, was registered in the June quarter, 1918 in the district of Stourbridge, Worcestershire, England.

Private Hubert William Kelly was buried at 3 pm on 6th May, 1918 in Stourbridge Cemetery, Stourbridge, West Midlands, England – Plot number D. 803 and has a Private Headstone, however his death is still acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. From the burial report of Private Kelly - *Coffin was good polished Elm. The coffin was borne to the grave by members of the R.A.M.C. attached to the Hospital and a firing party of 6 wounded Australian soldiers was in attendance. The "Last Post" was sounded. Wreaths were placed on the coffin. The parents of the deceased were present at the funeral – Mr & Mrs G. W. Colvert Kelly, Wetherby, Yorkshire.*

Private Hubert William Kelly requested in his Will dated 22nd February, 1918 that in the event of his death the whole of his property & effects be given to his mother – Mrs Kelly "Givioley", Mt. Pleasant Rd, Camborne, Cornwall, England.

The Commonwealth Bank, Saving Bank Department, Sydney, wrote to The Secretary, Department of Defence, Melbourne, Victoria on 9th August, 1918 requested the Certificate of Death for Hubert William Kelly & also asked for the name of his next-of-kin.

Base Records replied on 23rd August, 1918 enclosing a certificate of death for Private H. W. Kelly, 54th Battalion & also advised that the name and address of the person nominated as next-of-kin as shown on their records was George William Calver Kelly – father, of St. James Street, Wetherby, Yorkshire, England.

The Public Trust Office wrote to Base Records on 27th August, 1918 to request a Certificate in duplicate relating to the death of 2688, Pte H. W. Kelly, 54th Battalion also the address of the deceased prior to enlistment & the name and address of the person nominated as his next of kin.

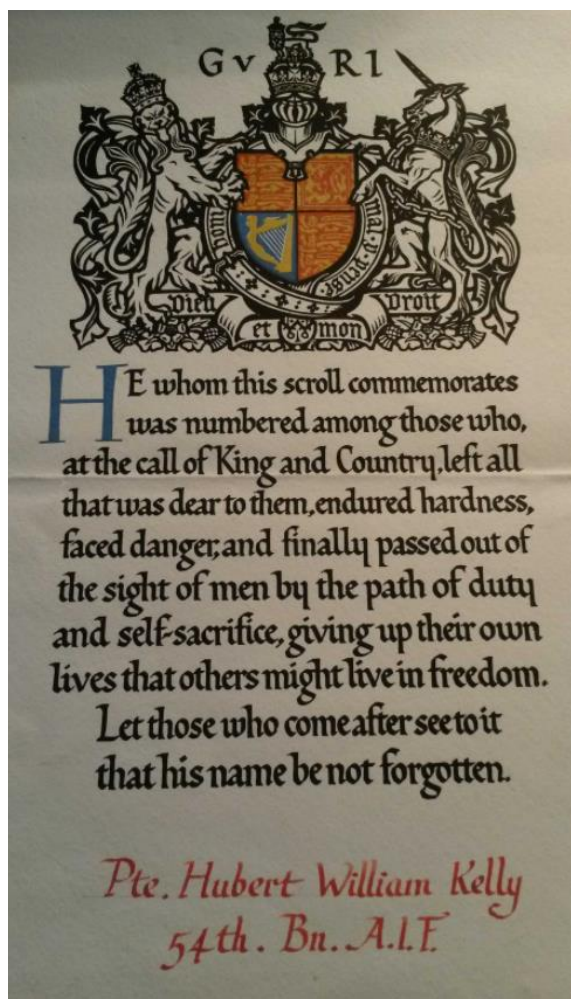
Base Records replied on 10th September, 1918 enclosing a certificate of death, in duplicate, for Private H. W. Kelly, 54th Battalion. His address prior to enlistment was shown as Rankin Street, Forbes, NSW & also advised that the name and address of the next-of-kin was George William Calver Kelly – father, of St. James Street, Wetherby, Yorkshire, England.

Miss Minnie Mann, Kenilworth, Spring Creek, via Narromine, NSW, wrote to Base Records on 25th September, 1918 with the following: *"Will you please let me know if Pvt H. W. Kelly No. 2688 54th Battalion is Killed have not heard from him for three months."*

Base Records replied on 7th October, 1918 to advise *"....regret to state he died on 4-5-18, at 1st Southern General Hospital, Stourbridge Section, England, of shell gas poisoning, and was buried at Stourbridge Cemetery, Grave No. 803, Section D. Consecrated Portion, on 6-5-18."*

Base Records wrote to Mr G. W. C. Kelly. "Southend," Stockport Rd, Timperley, Cheshire, England on 20th June, 1924 with the following letter: *"I am in receipt of a communication from Mr L. M. Instone, 26 Lea Rd., Wolverhampton, England (formerly a member of the Australian Imperial Force), who on Anzac Day last visited the grave of your son, the late No. 2688 Private H. W. Kelly, 54th Battalion, and other Australian soldiers buried in the Stourbridge Cemetery. No doubt this action will be appreciated by you and it is thought you may desire to personally communicate with him."* The letter was returned to Base Records as *"Undelivered – Return to Sender – Gone away."*

Private Hubert William Kelly was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Kelly's father – Mr G. W. C. Kelly, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll & Plaque issued in England November, 1922).



NOTE: The War Medals (also Cap Badge & a tunic button) issued on account of the service of Private Hubert William Kelly were up for sale on Ebay on 1st September, 2019.



The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Hubert William Kelly – service number 2688, aged 22, of 54th Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of George William Calver Kelly and Margaret Douglas Kelly, of "Southend," Stockport Rd., Timperley, Cheshire, England.



Private H. W. Kelly is remembered on the Wetherby War Memorial, located on Boston Road, Wetherby, West Yorkshire, England.



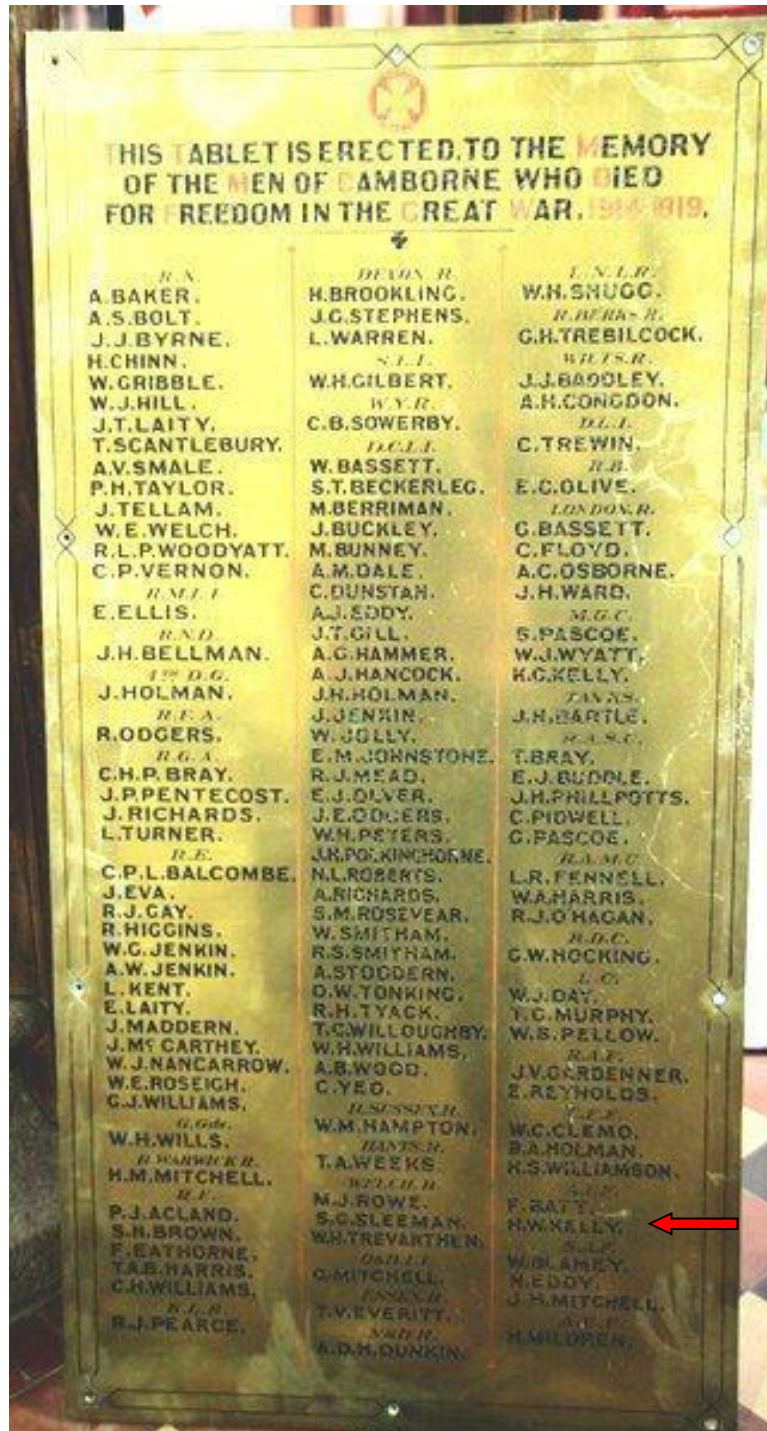
**Wetherby War Memorial**

*(Photo above from War Memorials Online; below from Military Images -28th61st)*





H. W. Kelly is remembered on the Camborne Roll of Honour, located on west wall under Stained Glass Window to St. Martin & St. Meriadoc Church, Camborne, Cornwall, England.



(Photo by Geoffrey Gillon)

The Cheshire Roll of Honour Remembers - Private Hubert William Kelly.



Private H. W. Kelly is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 159.



*Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia*

(52 pages of Private Hubert William Kelly's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

*Information obtained from the CWGC, Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour, First World War Embarkation Roll, Red Cross Wounded & Missing) & National Archives*



## **Newspaper Notices**

### **PERSONAL**

The latest recruit at Forbes is Mr Herbert W. Kelly

*(The Forbes Advocate, NSW – 6 June, 1916)*

---

### **DEATHS**

KELLY – On the 4th inst. at Stourbridge Military Hospital, of gas poisoning, Hubert William Kelly, of the Australian Imperial Force. second son of Geo. W. C. Kelly of Tehidy Office, Camborne and Margaret D., his wife, aged 22 years.

*(Cornishman, Penzance, Cornwall, England -15 May, 1918)*

---



## **N.S.W. Casualties**

### **Lists Nos. 400 and 401**

Wounded

Pte H. W. KELLY (England) gas.

*(Australian Town and Country Journal, Sydney, NSW – 22 May, 1918)*

---

## **N.S.W. Casualties**

### **Lists Nos. 404 and 405**

Died of Wounds

Pte KELLY, H. W. (England) gas 4/5/18.

*(Australian Town and Country Journal, Sydney, NSW – 5 June, 1918)*

---

## Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstones

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission cares for cemeteries and memorials in 23,000 locations, in 153 countries. In all 1.7 million men and women from the Commonwealth forces from WWI and WWII have been honoured and commemorated in perpetuity.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission, as part of its mandate, is responsible for commemorating all Commonwealth war dead individually and equally. To this end, the war dead are commemorated by name on a headstone, at an identified site of a burial, or on a memorial. War dead are commemorated uniformly and equally, irrespective of military or civil rank, race or creed.

Not all service personnel have a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. In some instances the relative chose to have their own memorial/headstone placed on the deceased's grave. These private headstones are not maintained by the CWGC as they have no jurisdiction to maintain them.

Private Hubert William Kelly has a Private Headstone.

## **Stourbridge Cemetery, Stourbridge, West Midlands, England**

The cemetery contains 47 Commonwealth burials of the 1914-18 war, (including those of 13 Australian soldiers, near which a Cenotaph is placed); and a War Cross is erected on the main roadway close to the entrance. The 1st Southern General Hospital had a Section in the Stourbridge Infirmary.

Most of the First World War burials are scattered but 17 form a small plot. The cemetery also contains 20 scattered burials of the Second World War and 1 Non World War burial here.

*(Information from CWGC)*



*(Photo by cookie – Find a Grave)*



**Australian Plot** *(Photo courtesy of Margaret Carter)*

### **Stourbridge Cemetery Overseas Soldiers Sarcophagus**

Adjacent to the Plot where the 13 Australian WW1 War Graves are located sits a Sarcophagus Memorial (listed by CWGC above as a Cenotaph) which reads:

*“In Grateful Memory Of Our Comrades From  
Overseas Who Died In The Stourbridge Military  
Hospital During The Great War 1914-19.”*



The names of the 13 Australians are listed on the Plaque along with a Soldier from Canadian Contingent & 2 Soldiers from U.S.A.



*(Photo courtesy of Peter Bennett)*



**Stourbridge Cemetery Overseas Soldiers Sarcophagus/Memorial**

*(Photo courtesy of Peter Bennett)*





Arrow showing the Plot where Australian WW1 War Graves are located (Photo courtesy of Margaret Carter)

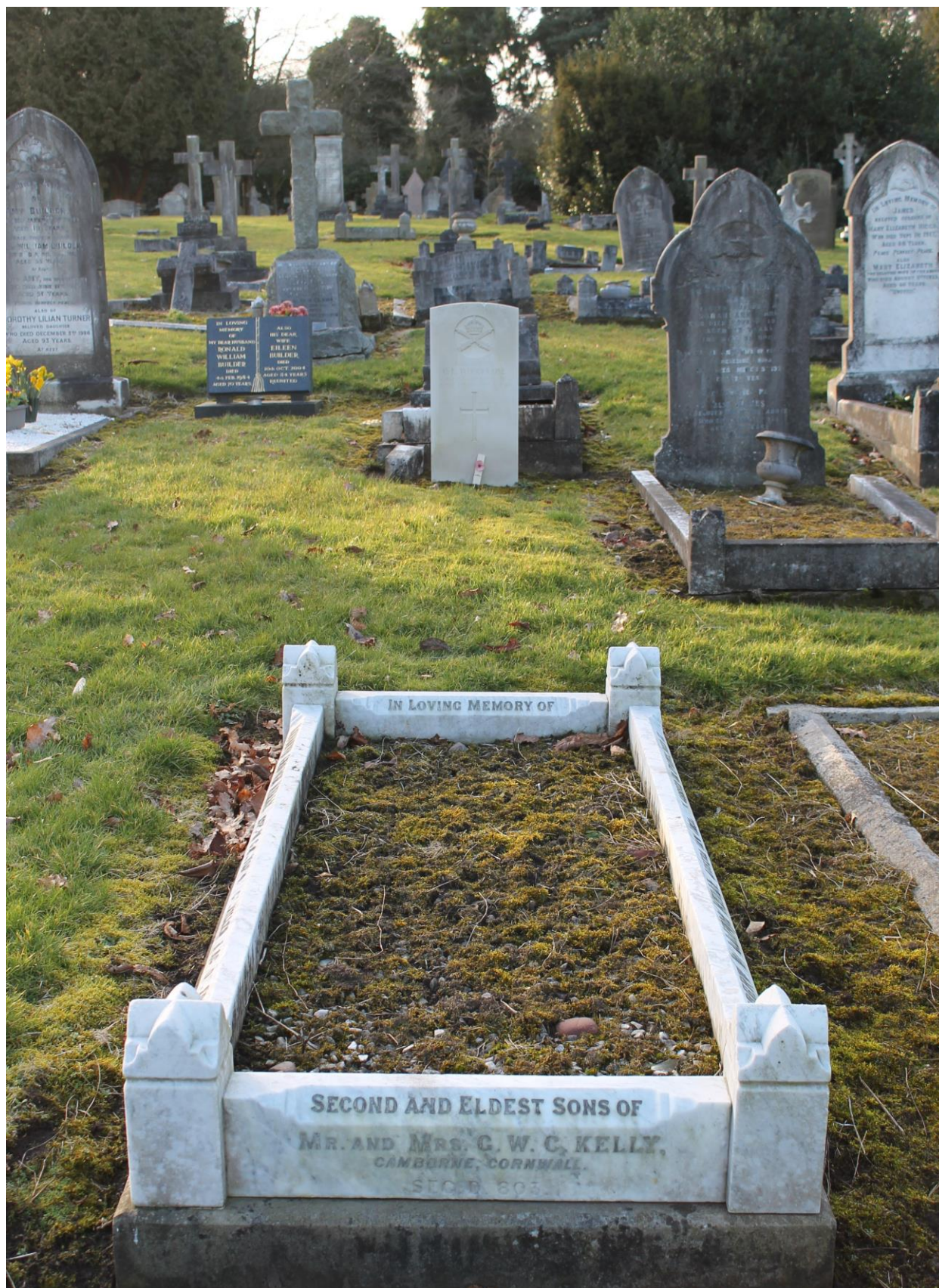


Stourbridge Cemetery showing Australian WW1 War Graves (Photo courtesy of Margaret Carter)



Photo of Private H. W. Kelly's Private Headstone in Stourbridge Cemetery, Stourbridge, West Midlands, England.

(\*\*\*\*\*Note: See update below – CWGC have installed a Pedestal Plaque within the Private kerbing surrounds – March 2023)



(Photo courtesy of Peter Bennett – Private Collection)





*(Photo courtesy of Peter Bennett – Private Collection)*

***Hubert William Kelly, Australian Infantry, Gassed In France. Died at  
Stourbridge Hospital 4TH May 1918. Aged 22 Years***



*(Photo courtesy of WW1 Family Inscriptions)*





**New CWGC Pedestal Marker added inside private kerbing** (Photo courtesy of CWGC – March 2024)





**New CWGC Pedestal Marker added inside private kerbing for Private H. W. Kelly**