

**Rake Lane Cemetery,  
Wallasey, Merseyside  
War Graves**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**SECOND LIEUTENANT**

**A. G. N. WALL**

**ROYAL FLYING CORPS**

**6TH AUGUST, 1917 Age 20**

## Arthur Geoffrey Nelson WALL

Arthur Geoffrey Nelson Wall was born on 3rd March, 1897 at Liscard, Cheshire, England to parents Arthur Eccles Wall & Mary Jane W. Wall (nee Nelson).

The 1901 England Census recorded Arthur G. N. Wall as a 4 year old, living with his family at 7 Denton Drive, Liscard, Cheshire, England. His parents were listed as Arthur E. Wall (Foreign Superintendent for Insurance Company, aged 32, born Cheshire) & Mary J. W. Wall (aged 36, born Egremont, Cheshire). Also listed was Catherine A Cairns (General Servant, aged 21).

Arthur Geoffrey Nelson Wall attended school in England at the Sea Bank Road High School.

Arthur Eccles Wall, father of Arthur Geoffrey Nelson Wall, was appointed manager of the Australasian branch of the London and Lancashire Fire Insurance Company & as a result the family moved to Australia.

The Wall family were listed as passengers on *Moldavia* which had departed from London, England on 31st January, 1907 & destined for the port of Melbourne, Australia. The family consisted of Mr A. E. Wall, Mrs Wall & infant & Master G. Wall.

Arthur Geoffrey Nelson Wall first attended Wesley College, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia in 1907. While at College, Arthur had taken to writing verses, some of which were published in the Wesley College's School magazine – *The Lion*.

A. G. N. Wall was listed in the *The Age* Newspaper, Melbourne, 14th December, 1909, as being awarded a Special Prize for Essay at the Wesley College Preparatory School Speech Day in 1909.

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The Wall family were listed as passengers on *Mongolia* & had embarked at Marseilles, France bound for Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. They arrived at the port of Melbourne on 12th November, 1912. The family consisted of Mr Arthur Wall (Insurance Manager, aged 43), Mrs Mary Wall (aged 46), Arthur Wall (Student, aged 15) & Mary Wall (aged 7).

A. G. N. Wall was listed in the *The Argus* Newspaper, Melbourne, 18th December, 1913, as being awarded a Special Prize – second place for Essay at the Wesley College Speech Day in 1913.

A. G. N. Wall was listed in the *Spectator and Methodist Chronicle* Newspaper, Melbourne, 31st December, 1915, as being awarded a Special Prize – Original Poem at the Wesley College Speech Day in 1915.

Arthur Geoffrey Nelson Wall attended Queens College, Melbourne University in 1916.

Arthur Geoffrey Nelson Wall attempted to enlist at the outbreak of World War 1 but was rejected due to his slight build. He sailed for England in November, 1916 to join the Royal Flying Corps.

Arthur Geoffrey Nelson Wall was a Cadet with the Royal Flying Corps from 1st February, 1917. He was attached to S.M.A. (School of Military Aeronautics) at Oxford from 4th April, 1917 then transferred to 8 R. S. (Reserve Squadron, later Training Squadron) at Netheravon, Wiltshire from 11th May, 1917.

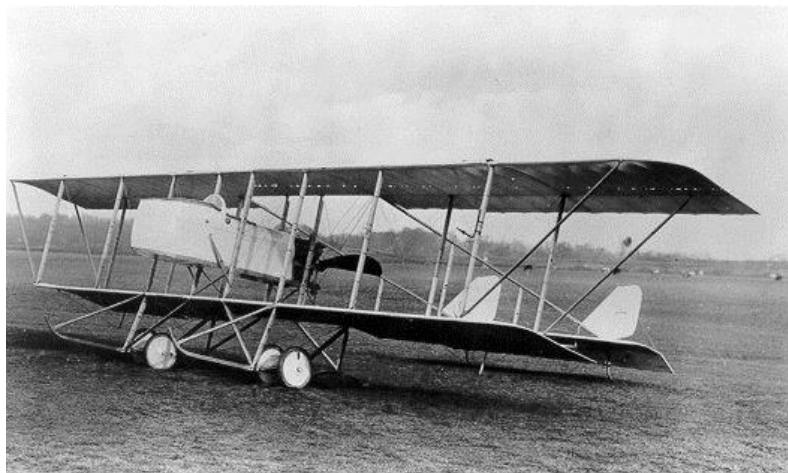
Cadet Arthur Geoffrey Nelson Wall was appointed temporary Second Lieutenant (on probation) from 10th May, 1917. This appeared in the *Supplement to the London Gazette* on 29th May, 1917.

Temporary Second Lieutenant Arthur Geoffrey Nelson Wall was appointed Flying Officer on 23rd June, 1917. His appointment was posted in the *London Gazette* on 13th July, 1917.

Flying Officer Arthur Geoffrey Nelson Wall was transferred to No. 62 Squadron on 23rd June, 1917 on being appointed as Flying Officer.

Flying Officer Arthur Geoffrey Nelson Wall was transferred to No. 7 Training Squadron as Assistant Instructor (no date recorded on his British Royal Air Force Officers' Service Record sheet.)

Second Lieutenant Arthur Geoffrey Nelson Wall was instructing Second Lieutenant J. Clark in a M.F. (Maurice Farman) Shorthorn A7062 on 6th August, 1917 when the aeroplane crashed at Bulford Fields, Netheravon Aerodrome, Wiltshire. The aeroplane was last seen in a spinning nose dive from 700ft & broke up. A Court of Inquiry viewed the wreckage & were of the opinion that the machine was in good flying order - the machine nose-dived from some unknown cause.



*A Maurice Farman Shorthorn*

Second Lieutenant Arthur Geoffrey Nelson Wall & Second Lieutenant John Clark died at 8.45 pm on 6th August, 1917 as a result of an aeroplane crash. Second Lieutenant J. Clark, aged 19, of the Royal Flying Corps, was the son of Major Thomas Clark, V.D., and Maria Jane Jack Clark, of Colinsburgh, Fife.

A death for Arthur G. N. Wall, aged 20, was registered in the September quarter, 1917 in the district of Amesbury, Wiltshire, England.

Second Lieutenant Arthur Geoffrey Nelson Wall was buried in Rake Lane Cemetery, Wallasey, Merseyside, England – Plot number 10. N.C. 101. and has a Private Headstone. His death is still acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

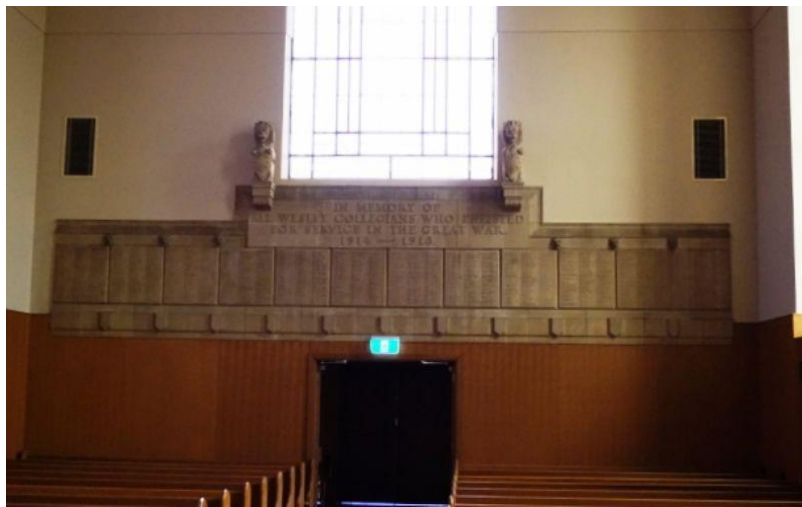
The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Second Lieutenant Arthur Geoffrey Nelson Wall, aged 20, of No. 7 Training School, Netheravon, Royal Flying Corps. He was the son of Arthur E. Wall, of Bromley, Kent, formerly of Melbourne, Australia. Educated at Wesley College, Melbourne University. Came to England to serve in 1916.

Second Lieutenant Arthur Geoffrey Nelson Wall is remembered on the Commemorative Roll Book, located in the Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra. The Commemorative Roll records the names of those Australians who died during or as a result of wars in which Australians served, but who were not serving in the Australian Armed Forces and therefore not eligible for inclusion on the Roll of Honour.

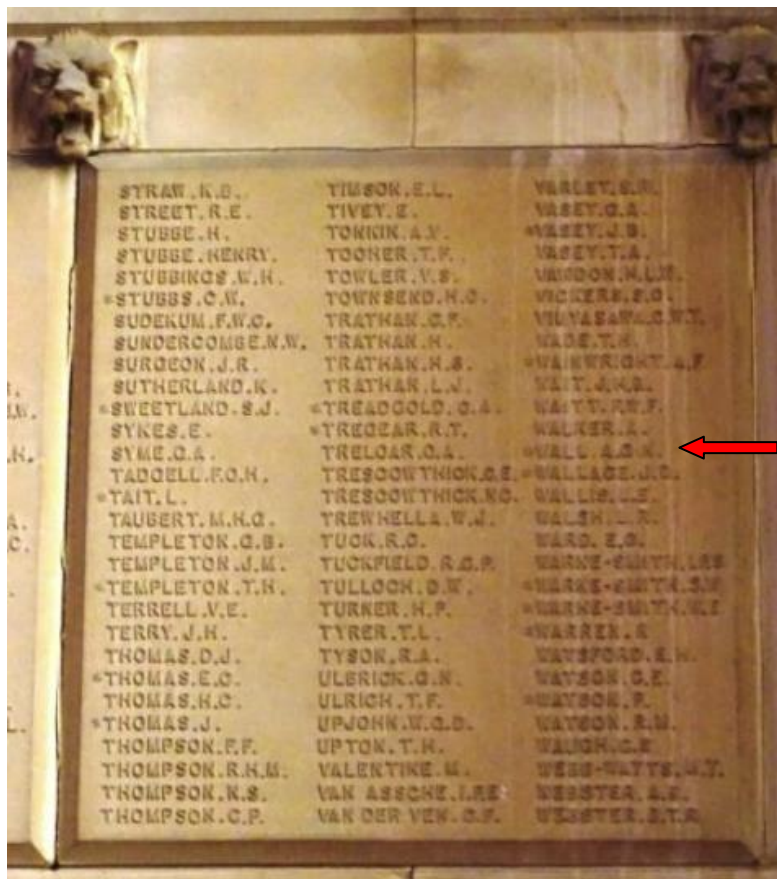


**Commemorative Area of the Australian War Memorial** (*Capital Photographer*)

Arthur Geoffrey Nelson Wall is remembered on the Wesley Collegians Roll of Honour, located in Wesley College Memorial Chapel, Prahran, Wesley College, Melbourne, Victoria.



Roll of Honour in Wesley College Memorial Chapel, Prahran (Photos from Monument Australia)





The Adamson Hall stairway at Wesley College was erected in memory of Lieutenant Geoffrey Wall by his parents.



**Adamson Hall Stairway** (Photos courtesy of Margot Vaughan, Wesley College)







THIS STAIRWAY  
WAS ERECTED BY HIS PARENTS  
In Memory of  
LIEUT. GEOFFREY WALL R. F. C.  
WHO WAS ACCIDENTALLY KILLED IN FLIGHT  
WHILST INSTRUCTING AT NETHERAVON AERODROME, WILTS.  
6<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 1917.

ADAMSON HALL  
THIS MEMORIAL STONE  
WAS LAID BY  
L.A. ADAMSON, ESQ., M.A.  
HEAD MASTER  
ON 6<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 1908.



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WAS ERECTED BY HIS PARENTS  
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6<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 1917.

Left side of Stairway



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***This Stairway  
Was Erected By His Parents  
In Memory Of  
Lieut. GEOFFREY WALL R.F.C.  
Who Was Accidentally Killed In Flight  
Whilst Instructing At Netheravon Aerodrome, Wilts.  
6<sup>th</sup> August 1917***



**Right side of Stairway**

*“Still True To Thee Shall Each One Be  
Where'er He Wandereth,  
And Scorning Fame, Shall Play The Game,  
Altho' The Prize Be Death.  
A Cairn Of Stones, Or Bleaching Bones,  
To Show The Breed Was True,  
And Though They Died, Their Souls Shall Fly,  
Old School, Once More To You.”*

*“L'Envoi” By Geoff. Wall*



N. J. McCLURE	1905	F. G. KELLAWAY	1909
D. L. BILSON	1902	J. R. EDDY	1910
F. R. W. OSBORNE	1910	E. J. KERR	1907
E. N. LEAR	1906	E. S. WORRALL	1912
A. C. N. WALL	1907	A. WESTON	1912
LES. BOULLY	1905	N. GULLIFER	1907
H. L. HYNDMAN	1901	H. B. CHITTICK	1911
A. G. MACKIE	1902	J. S. MACKIE	1902
H. L. RINTEL	1906	H. J. COOK	1909
H. S. DICKINSON	1906	S. B. CRAGG	1906
W. R. HATCH	1910	H. R. HUNTSMAN	1906
T. H. TEMPLETON	1892	A. J. BARCLAY	1912
G. R. STOCKFELD	1910	N. S. EDMONSTONE	1910
A. P. H. SPEEDIE	1901	C. D. WILLIAMS	1906

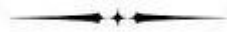
Wesley College Roll of Honour Tablet & Book of Remembrance (below) (Photos courtesy of Philip Powell)

Stirling J.M.	1913	Thomas J.	1910
Stockfeld G.R.	1910	Treadgold C.A.	1907
Stubbs C.W.	1910	Tregear K.J.	1906
Sweetland S.J.	1895	Vasey J.B.	1907
Tait L.	1913	Wainwright A.F.	1893
Templeton J.H.	1892	Wall A.G.N.	1907
Thomas E.C.	1909	Wallace J.V.	1911





**Geoffrey Arthur Nelson Wall**



## **WESLEY COLLEGE CHRONICLE**

### **Second Lieutenant A. G. N. Wall, R.F.C.**

*(Accidentally killed at Brooklands, 6<sup>th</sup> August, 1917)*

*We know him better as "Geoff Wall"; so many of us now at school were at school with him. He came here in 1907 in the Prep.- a little lean brown "nipper" – and he left for the University at the end of 1915. In between the Wesley Prep. and Big School he had a year's trip to England in 1912, and before Wesley there was England also, as he lived there till he was ten. Considered from the cold sociological point of view he was an interesting subject – a human document, One of the English of the island, gifted with a with a high order of imagination, and subjected early to the free independent life of Australia in a school of aristo-democratic tone, he became when he returned to England last year, in some ways more Australian than the Australians, but always with an added old-world taste and fastidiousness which saved him from a young country's social defects. There really are some—such as touchiness, through not being quite sure of oneself; over-assertiveness, which comes from youth being too cocksure of everything, and that form of intolerance which does not recognise the underlying good in what is strange or what is older than itself. He went back to his birthplace as an Englander who had seen England from the outside, and now was to see her from the inside with a clearer vision. His letters show a poet's love for her beauty and for the greatness of the soul in her. But the shams and the injustices (oh! we have our own kind in Australia, too) he saw through with unflinching clarity, and touched with the flame of satire. He proved all with which he came in contact; the old, unless it was comely and good in soul, he showed no respect for. But when it satisfied his critical mind was unstinted. For one so young his insight seemed to us remarkable.*

*He wrote no poetry on his last visit to England; he was engaged in storing up impressions and in real hard work. But the poetry was there. If he had written nothing else, his "Prize Poem" of 1915, "The Road," written while a boy at school, would have been enough to place him among the chosen few of great promise which this war devoured. And there remains also, not to mention others, his School song, "After the Boat Race, 1914," in which the real soul of Wesley and of all true Public Schools as regards "Sport" is made articulate. In words of unimpeachable taste it expresses the generous recognition by the losers of the victors' merit, and the determination to never "despair of the republic," but to look forward to a confident to-morrow.*

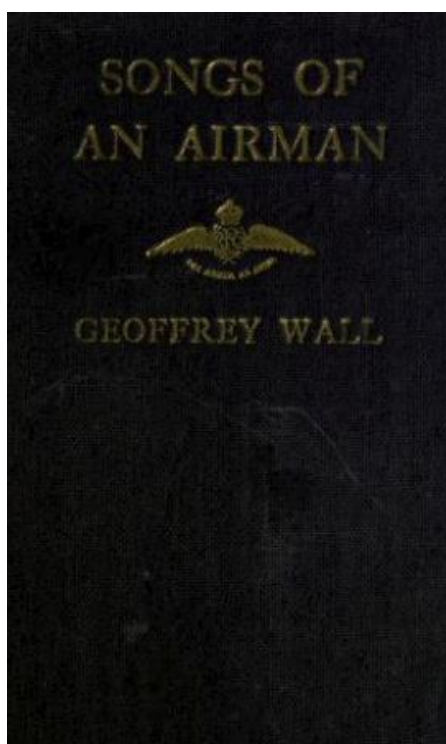
*If Geoffrey Wall had lived to have actual war experience one may feel that he must have come out of it a great—perhaps a very great—writer of both prose and verse, for literature was his chosen career. But he has gone the way of so many other bright lives of promise. He passes away from us a loss to Australia, a loss also to "the land that gave him birth," retaining to the end that high quality of fastidiousness which kept him from anything common or unclear—*

*"An airman close to Heaven's Gate,  
Beneath the very walls of Paradise."*

L. A. ADAMSON

(With thanks to Philip Powell for the copy of the Obituary in the School Magazine)

A book – *Songs of an Airman* by the late Geoffrey Wall was first published in Melbourne in October, 1917 by Australasian Author's Agency with a memoir by L. A. Adamson, Headmaster, Wesley College, Melbourne.



A digital copy of *Songs of an Airman* can be located at [Archive stream](#).

One of late Geoffrey Wall songs:

*SOMEWHERE*

*October, 1916*

*SOMEWHERE a voice is singing,*

*Over the twilight moor,*

© Cathy Sedgwick 2017



*Out through the darkness ringing,  
    Calling the ghosts of yore.  
Somewhere across the gloaming  
    Radiant and fair she waits;  
After the toil and roaming  
    Wide lie the gates.*

*Somewhere the wind is sighing  
    Low to the empty night,  
Over waste headlands crying,  
    Moon waters bright;  
Somewhere the voiceless singer,  
    Somewhere the viewless wind,  
Moonlight and magic linger,  
    Love lurks behind.*

*Letters of an Airman* was published a year later which were letters & poems that Arthur Geoffrey Nelson Wall had written while on board S.S. *Medina* in 1916 on his way to England & included letters up until the day before his fatal accident.



## **Newspaper Notices**

### **DIED ON SERVICE**

WALL – On the 6th August, 2nd Lieutenant Arthur Geoffrey Nelson Wall, Royal Flying Corps, only surviving son of Mr and Mrs Arthur E. Wall, “Heathfield”, Kew, accidentally killed whilst flying, aged 20 years.

(*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia – 10 August, 1917)

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### **SECOND LIEUT. G. A. N. WALL**

Second Lieutenant Geoffrey Arthur Nelson Wall, son of Mr and Mrs Arthur E. Wall, of Melbourne, has died as the result of an accident while carrying out his duties as instructor in the Royal Flying Corps at Netheravon. Lieutenant Wall was an old Wallasey boy, and received his early education with Mr Wrigley, Sea Bank High School. He came to this country last year in order to join the corps in which he recently obtained a commission.

(*Liverpool Echo*, Liverpool, Merseyside, England – 10 & 11 August, 1917)

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### **AN AVIATOR'S LETTERS**

#### **THE PSYCHOLOGY OF FLYING**

Word pictures of the life of an aviator and an interesting psychological study of flying are contained in letters to his parents from 2nd Lieutenant Arthur Geoffrey Nelson Wall, Royal Flying Corps, who was accidentally killed in England while in an aeroplane on 6th August. The late Lieutenant Wall was the only surviving son of Mr and Mrs A. E. Wall “Heathfield,” Sackville-street, Kew, and was an old Wesley Collegian.

© Cathy Sedgwick 2017

Of his first flight-with an old college chum, he writes: —

"We went down to the hangar— very big and weird, with a 120 h.p. aero standing like a great skeleton inside. A lot of oily mechanics appeared from nowhere, pushed the ungainly thing out on the grass, and Harry (Rigby) remarked casually, 'Well, like to come up for a bit? Of course I didn't refuse, so climbed gingerly over the planes and wedged myself in the observer's seat. A steady stream of petrol poured on to my feet, and everything else was deluged in lubricating oil from the engine, which was right in front of me. Harry wandered round, pulling wires about, threw his cigarette away (this is apparently part of the formula) and climbed in behind me. A mechanic swung the propeller, and the engine coughed, fired and spluttered again. Then someone behind me yelled 'contact,' and the propeller melted into a blue mist in front of me. The din was positively deafening and the machine was wreathed in blue smoke, and quivered from stem to stern. Then Harry dropped his hand, the mechanics jumped away, and the machine leapt forward like a bullet on the plain. We taxied until we were clear of the buildings then with nothing but miles of plains before her the engine settled down to its 1200 revolutions a minute. Faster and faster, and bumpier and bumpier, till I thought the great propeller must tear itself out of the framework. Then just as one felt that something was bound to go the bumping stopped, the engine seemed to stop, and then some titanic power I had never felt before, something outside and uncontrollable, took hold of us and we were climbing right into the dawn at 45 degrees. She climbed 'all out' for 2000 feet. The Harry flattened her out and 'stalled.' 'Stalling' in an operation which, a year ago, was looked on as an exceptionally sticky form of suicide. It consists of shutting off your engine and climbing until the machine loses way, and falls backwards. Just before she falls, however, you put her nose downwards, and keep on see-sawing like this, while she gradually settles down. Curiously enough, I did not notice the noise of the engine after we left the ground, until it stopped. Once that happened you could only hear the wires singing in the wind, and the air rushing past the little culluloid wind screen....Then Harry said. 'Shall I "stunt" her for a bit?' and I replied that he was as probably as fond of his own life as mine, and. that he could 'carry on'. He carried on,' and for the next five minutes I hung on to the seat, while earth and sky reeled round us in concentric circles. First we dropped 300, feet in a vertical nose dive — you know what starting in a lift feels like. Then he did a vertical 'bank,' which, I believe, is about three times as hard as 'looping the loop.' At any rate, our inside planes were pointing straight down to earth— at right angles to it. Then we 'zoomed' up 3000 feet, and hung there for a bit, while Harry inquired if I was feeling all right. I told him he could loop if he liked— but, to do him justice, if it had been anyone but Harry, I would have been in a state of chronic blue funk. Then he remarked that Australia was 12.000 miles away, and I said, 'No, but the cousin of my grandmother has a black torn cat,' and the absurdity of it tickled him so much that we spiralled down 1000 feet in 30 seconds. Finally, we drove down at a hangar in a gorgeous 'volplane,' with the engine shut off. We hit the ground with a slight bump, bounced 20 feet; then bump, bump, bump, and slower and slower. Then it was all over!"

And of his first solo flight the writer gives the following interesting 'account of his impressions: — "The instructor gave me a few parting instructions, restarted the engine for me, and dropped his hand— all clear. So I opened the throttle a bit, and started trundling across the short grass, quite slowly at first, for as a bit of an epicure in sensation I wanted to study my experiences then. I had done all this before, but always with someone in behind me, who jerked the controls just at the proper time. ... So I climbed until the altimeter was at 1000 feet and the landscape was not so objectionably near. Then I shut the engine down a bit, and remarked to whoever it might interest, 'So this is what I came 10,000 miles for.' My first and chiefest impression was of terrible 'aloneness.' It was a perfect evening; below me a lot of schools were conscientiously circuiting at 300 feet. I immediately felt very superior when I saw that there was nothing above me. Then I hit a 'bump,' and the nose went down. This, I thought, is Nature pulling me down, for I was never intended to get up here; and if she can she will get her claws into me. 'Come up, you brute (this to the machine). I am M— A— N, savvy.' It came up, but for the first time I realised fully what Stevenson meant by 'the beauty and terror of the world,' alone up there in the violet blue vault, with nothing between me and 1000 feet of blue evening air but a frail, man-made thing of wire and canvas, with a mass of bottled sunlight howling its energy out behind me. And suppose it stopped. For a moment I was panic-stricken at the thought, but the engine took no notice. I glanced at the speed indicator— 65— yet no sensation of speed. I seemed to be standing still, the only thing left alive in the lonely dizziness of the blue. It was almost disappointing; nothing happened; the big grey planes vibrated and lifted. The noise of the engine seemed to have become a part of the cosmos of things. Of course it had always done that ever since the beginning. Why should it ever stop? I felt like making faces at nature. I was greater than this big, blind, blundering thing that would so dearly love to pluck me down and crumple my frail support up. But this was dangerous egoism in its worst form; in fact I'd better be conciliatory. It was about time I turned. Over went the 'joy stick' and down went one wing tip. I trod on the rudder at the same time, an alarming sensation, but, of course, this was centrifugal force. I had read about it; it always worked if there was sufficient speed at least, it always had worked, but suppose it didn't this time? The horizon revolved around me - it was working. I hauled the 'joy stick' up again, and settled down into the seat. . . . Somehow I was on the edge of something I had never experienced before,



something imminent and tremendous. This must be nerves; time I went down. Glanced at the clock on the dashboard, already been up an hour, and the country below was beginning to darken. The west was still light, and streaked with faint yellow streamers; lower down it was vivid green. Ahead and below was the aerodrome, very tiny, and along way down. I cut the engine oft and put the nose down. For the first time I was conscious of the noise the engine had been making. Now the comparative silence was far more terrifying. The air boomed past the planes, and the rigging wires sang softly to themselves, all in different keys. At 200 feet the bumps were very bad, the machine bucked and side-slipped like a dinghy in a rough sea, and the controls were neatly wrenched out of my hands. I began to get frightened. I felt that I would lose my head— that would never do. The sheds were getting very big, and the ground swirled up out of the twilight. What a devil of a speed, something was bound to smash when I hit. The ground was only a few feet below me now. A frantic jerk of the 'joy stick,' and we flattened out just in time. Bump — bump-bump — slower and slower — stop. A mechanic had hold of either wing. So I climbed down, and stamped the earth as one does after six weeks at sea.”

(*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia – 13 August, 1917)

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## **BRIEF NOTES**

Mr Arthur E. Wall, manager of the London and Lancashire Fire Insurance Co. Ltd., has received a cable message conveying the news of the death of his only son, Second-Lieutenant Arthur Geoffrey Nelson Wall, Royal Flying Corps, who was accidentally killed whilst flying. Lieut. Wall was educated at Wesley College, where he showed great literary ability, and had taken his first year's law course at the Melbourne University. We would express our sincere sympathy with Mr and Mrs Wall.

(*Spectator and Methodist Chronicle*, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia – 15 August, 1917)

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## **HEAD MASTER'S RECOLLECTIONS**

### **ADAMSON OF WESLEY**

**By R. W. E. Wilmot**

There are not many men to whom can come such a day as that which greeted Mr L. A. Adamson, the head master of Wesley College, when, on Friday, July 22, in the school which he has ruled for 30 years, he received the thanks of the college council, the sincere admiration, love, and respect of the boys of the school, you and old, past and present, and of the staff with which he has worked.....

I had enjoyed my hour with "the head." I had seen as if in a mirror the years passing, had listened to his reminiscences, his references to old school events, to victories and defeats, to school heroes past and present, and as I walked away and looked on the old Grey Towers a verse of one of the college songs "l'Envoi," by A. G. N. Wall, lieutenant R.F.C., one of Mr Adamson's old boys who was killed in flight in August, 1917, came to my mind, and it seemed to fit the occasion and to express just what Mr Adamson has so well instilled in the mind of every Wesley Collegian:

*Still true to thee shall each one be  
Where'er he wandereth  
And scorning fame, shall play the game  
Although the prize be death.  
A cairn of stones, or bleaching bones,  
To show the breed is true,  
And though they die, their souls shall fly.  
Old school, once more to you.*

(*The Australasian*, Melbourne, Victoria – 30 July, 1932)

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## WESLEY COLLEGE JUBILEE

Wesley College has just celebrated its diamond jubilee, and Wesley Collegians, young and old, can look back with pride to January 11, 1866, when the college was formally founded.....

### A Wesley Poet

Early in the last war A. G. N. Wall wrote some delightful verses, which breathe devotion to the college thus:

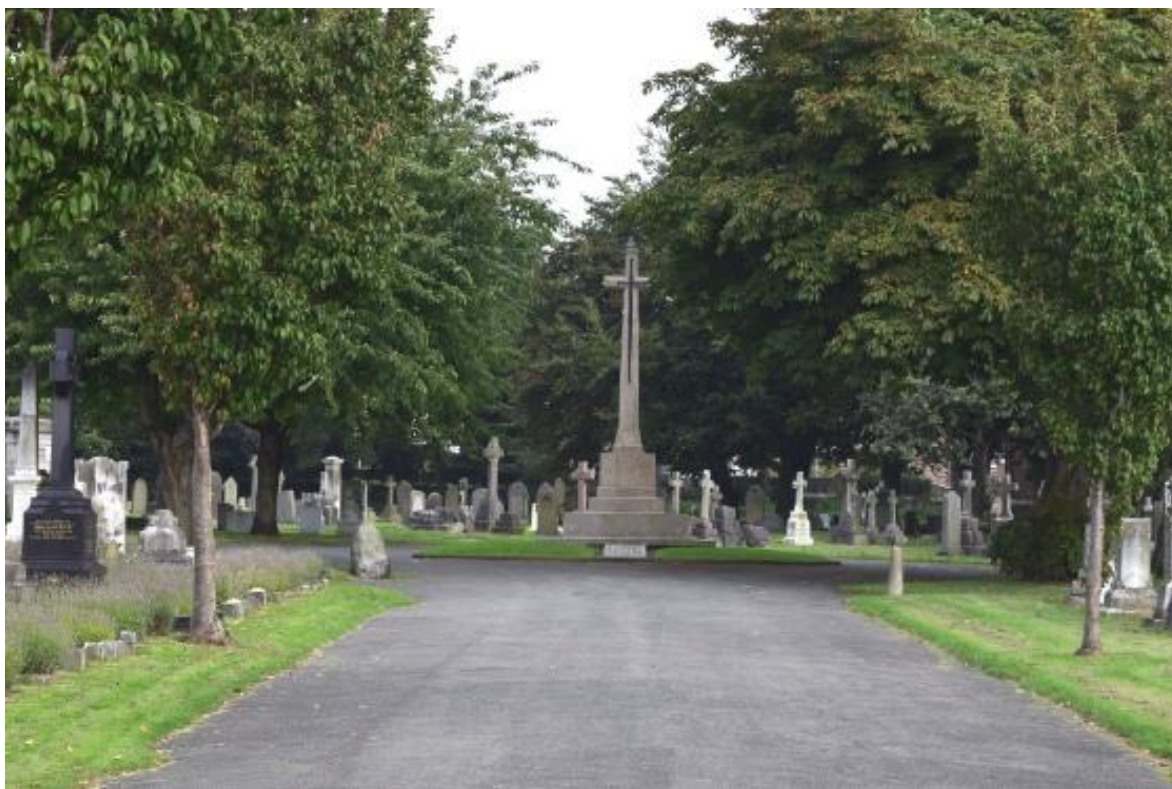
*“Still true to thee shall each one be  
Where'er he wandereth  
And scorning fame, shall play the game  
Although the prize be death.  
A cairn of stones, or bleaching bones,  
To show the breed is true,  
And though they die, their souls shall fly.  
Old school, once more to you.”*

*(The Australasian, Melbourne, Victoria – 17 May, 1941)*

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### Rake Lane Cemetery, Wallasey, Merseyside, England

Rake Lane Cemetery, Wallasey, Merseyside contains 256 Commonwealth War Graves – 131 from World War 1 & 125 from World War 2.



**Rake Lane Cemetery** (Photo from CWGC)



Photo of Second Lieutenant Arthur Geoffrey Nelson Wall's Private Family Headstone in Rake Lane Cemetery, Wallasey, Merseyside, England.



*In*

*Loving Memory Of*

*WILLIAM RONALD WALL,*

*Who Departed This Life*

*15<sup>TH</sup> March 1904.*

*"Suffer little children to come unto me."*

**ARTHUR GEOFFREY NELSON WALL,**

**Lieut. Royal Flying Corps**

**Born 3<sup>RD</sup> March 1897. Killed Whilst Flying**

**At Netheravon, Wilts, 6<sup>th</sup> August 1917**

**Only Surviving Son of A. E. And M. J. W. Wall,**

**Of Melbourne, Australia**

MARY JANE WILSON WALL

Died 27<sup>TH</sup> February 1959, Aged 94.

ARTHUR ECCLES WALL

Her Father and JOY'S, And The Beloved Husband Of

MARY JANE WILSON WALL,

Born 4<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 1869

Died At Bromley, Kent 25<sup>TH</sup> August 1927

