

Vincent Reiss

Hermitage Hall, Holmes Chapel

Returned - He left school in 1916 and was later involved in secret intelligence.



Vincent Reiss (1898-1980) – (left) in uniform, and (right) in this family picture with his sister Nancy, and brothers Peter and Raymond -always a sportsman he is seen fishing whilst holding a tennis racket!



His Story

Vincent Reiss was born on 2nd August 1898, the sixth child of Henry and Constance Reiss of the Hermitage, Holmes Chapel. Born a year after Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, his initials "VR" may well have been an expression of his parents' patriotism.

He was a boarder at Charterhouse School where he excelled at sports, captaining the cricket and football teams. Boys from prestigious Public Schools were preferred for selection as officers by the War Office, but suffered very high casualties: some 22% of those who joined up from Vincent's school were killed.

After the war he became a broker on the Liverpool Cotton Exchange.

In his retirement he much enjoyed fly-fishing and taking part in village life in Wherwell, Hampshire, where he lived with his brother Peter. He never married.

His War Record

In contrast to his brothers we know next to nothing about Vincent's record in the First World War. He left school in 1916 at a time when the Army was urgently seeking new recruits and conscription was about to be brought in, but no records of his career have surfaced.

Ironically we know more about his work during the Second World War at the top secret Bletchley Park establishment, where German "Enigma" codes were cracked. Vincent ran the transport section there. He features in a comic alphabet poem by a staff member about the main characters working there:

*"R is for Reiss, who can always be found
with a large coloured brolly and two feet of hound
When he goes up to Heaven and his name they record
We hope they will ask "Is it down on the board?"*

Like so many others, he kept this work secret, even from his family, for the rest of his life.