

A GOOD MAN AND A BRAVE MAN

**THE STORY OF A GLOUCESTERSHIRE SOLDIER,
CECIL THOMAS PACKER, 1885 – 1916**

by Alan Gaunt



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“This is not the story of a traditional hero in the mould of Nelson or Wellington but that of a village shepherd, a local man who did not come from the nobility or the ranks of the nation’s leaders but simply loved his family and died in the service of his country.”

Cecil Packer was a farm labourer, a factory worker, a shepherd and a devoted family man who, like so many others, was sent to France to fight for his country in the First World War, and never returned.

Cecil survived both the Gallipoli and Somme campaigns, so for his descendants, his death on the Western Front when his battalion was far from the front line was a mystery as well as a tragedy.

Alan Gaunt, whose wife Shirley is Cecil’s great-granddaughter, set about researching Cecil’s humble but interesting life and finally established the tragic circumstances of his accidental death in December 1916, aged 31.

Cecil Thomas Packer was born in 1885 in Minty, Wiltshire and grew up in Poole Keyes, Gloucestershire. He enlisted in 1915 in Cirencester and served with the 8th Service Battalion of the Gloucestershire Regiment. He died on 13th December 1916 in Flanders.



Flo and Cecil Packer in 1915

This book is a moving account of a humble man who fought for King and Country will appeal to all those with an interest in military and social history; local historians (in Gloucestershire/Wiltshire) as well as anyone who wishes to research their own family history.



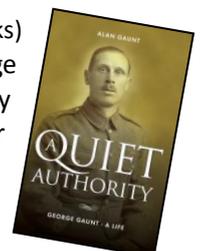
Author, Alan Gaunt was born in **Salisbury** (Wiltshire) and grew up in **South Cerney** (Gloucestershire). He was educated in **Cirencester** and, later, in **Bushey** (Herts). He is a retired civil servant. Alan is married (with two grown-up children) and lives in **Swindon**.

Media opportunities: Extracts/serialisation; Photos available. The author is available for interviews. **Local interest: Wiltshire & Gloucestershire:** Poole Keyes, Swindon, Cirencester.

Feature suggestions: Remembering Gallipoli and The Somme • Villages that lost so many young men in WW1 • Researching your own family history

By the same author: *A QUIET AUTHORITY – George Gaunt: A Life* (2013, Mereo Books)

George Gaunt was a quiet and gentle man who served with honour in the Coldstream Guards. George became a respected publican in a Gloucestershire village, and the entire community mourned his early passing. Thirty years later, his son Alan learned that George had been married before and had two other children. Alan set off on a trail of enquiry to piece together a comprehensive and fascinating account of the father he had lost when he was only 13 years old. This book is the result of Alan’s research and tells the story of his father and how Alan learned about his half-brother.



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