

# John Chantry Elliot Inchbald

## Family History

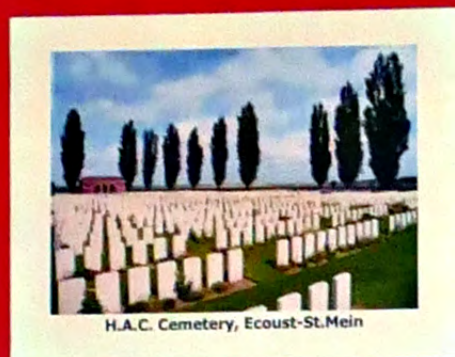
- The roots of the **Inchbald** family (with various spellings) lie in Boroughbridge, Yorkshire and can be traced back through a line of yeoman farmers to 1700. This branch of the family descends from **Rev Dr Peter Inchbald** (1777-1838) of Adwick Hall, near Doncaster, which he ran as a school for boys. In 1815 he married **Sarah Shipton** of Whixley, and they had twelve children.

- Their third son, **William Inchbald** (1818-1893), a scholar of mathematics at St Catherine's College, Cambridge, became a teacher and rector. In 1851 he was teaching mathematics in the grammar school at Kingsbridge, where he married a local girl, **Elizabeth Elliot** (1822-1902). They had three sons, William Elliot, Henry, and **Charles Chantry Inchbald**, during the following four years while he was second master at Crediton grammar, before a move to Cheltenham College where he was assistant master and clergy for 25 years. He returned to Kingsbridge in 1881 before a final move to Paignton, where **William** died in 1893 and his widow **Elizabeth** in 1902.

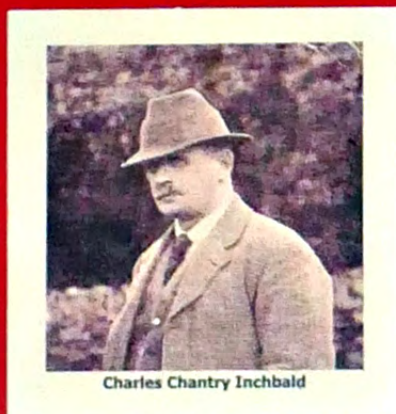
- The youngest son, **Charles Chantry Inchbald** (1856-1940), was educated at Cheltenham College and went straight from school into the London office of bankers Comptoire d'Escompte de Paris. After a bout of cardiac asthma he took a convalescent trip to China, where he joined Comptoire's branch in Shanghai. Over the next twenty years he remained in China, where he amassed considerable wealth through banking, investments, and brokering deals. He came back the UK to marry his cousin **Mary Catherine Elliot** in Kingsbridge in 1888, but the couple returned to Shanghai for the birth of their first son, **Pierre (Peter) Elliot Inchbald** in 1890. Their second son, **John (Jack) Chantry Elliot Inchbald**, was born in Plymouth in 1894 on another visit to UK, and the youngest, **Geoffrey (Geoff) Herbert Elliot Inchbald**, in Hong Kong in 1896.



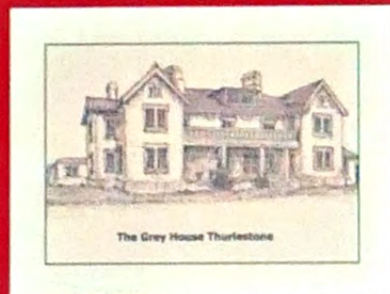
Captain "Jack" Inchbald



H.A.C. Cemetery, Écoust-St Mein



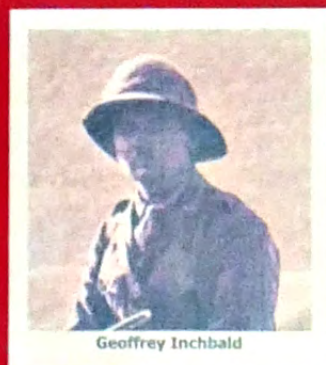
Charles Chantry Inchbald



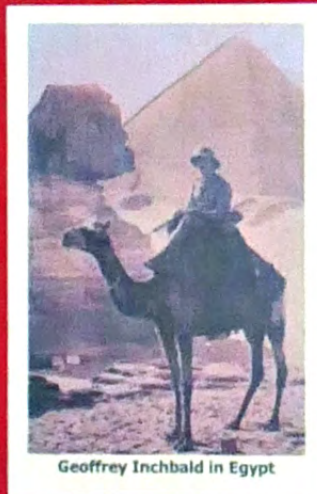
The Grey House Thurlestone



Captain "Jack" Inchbald



Geoffrey Inchbald



Geoffrey Inchbald in Egypt

## Service Record

- John Chantry Elliot Inchbald**, known as **Jack**, attended Cheam School, Winchester College, and went up to New College, Oxford in 1913 with a Classical Scholarship. He volunteered immediately war broke out, and was commissioned into the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Devonshire Regiment. He arrived in France in May 1915 and saw extensive action at Loos and on the Somme. The Regimental History refers to his deeds at Loos in September 1915, and the attempt to capture Cite St Elie, when he and his men became embroiled in hand-to-hand fighting, "with the Germans on top of them and all mixed up". After a spell in the reserve echelons he was called up again to the front in July 1916.

- On the night of 30 September 1916 **Jack** led a trench raid at night into the enemy lines, inflicting numerous casualties, and losing only two of his own men. It was probably this action that led to his Mention in Despatches in the London Gazette of 4 January 1917.

**Jack** was killed in action in the advance to the Hindenburg Line, leading his No 2 company in the attack in the early morning of 2 April 1917 when the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Devons captured Écoust-St Mein, near Bapaume, in a blizzard. German snipers and machine gun fire contributed to battalion losses of 16 killed, 68 wounded, and 8 missing. It is believed he fell victim to a machine gun position located in the cemetery and protected by uncut wire which proved "very troublesome".

- John Chantry Elliot Inchbald** is buried alongside four subalterns who died with him and commemorated on a headstone in the Honourable Artillery Company Cemetery, Écoust-St Mein, and is remembered in the War Cloister at Winchester College. His memorial in Devon is a large stained glass window in All Saints, Thurlestone, which has an inscription (in Latin) by his Winchester headmaster, Montague Rendall:

*In memory of their treasured son John Chantry Elliot Inchbald, scholar of Wykeham College, and Devonshire Regiment Captain, who died at Bapaume aged 23 in 1917, this beautiful west window was placed by his parents.*

The window in three sections depicts Sir Galahad flanked by Sir Bors and Sir Percival, three knights of the Round Table - believed to signify the three Inchbald brothers, with **Jack** looking over the shoulder of Sir Galahad.

- Eldest brother **Pierre Elliot Inchbald** spent two years at Woolwich as a Gentleman Cadet in the Royal Military Academy, and became a professional soldier, commissioned into the 36<sup>th</sup> Brigade Royal Field Artillery attached to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division. He was mobilised as a Lieutenant at Aldershot and arrived in France with the BEF on 19 August 1914. Within two months he was one of four officers named in General French's first dispatch to be awarded the **Military Cross**, a new decoration for gallantry announced on the same day the awards were made. His battery was heavily engaged in the battle of Mons, and was the last to retreat to safety on 20 September 1914 as the Germans surrounded them. He fought on for three years without any significant break, gaining the rank of Major, and somehow survived the war unharmed, but not unscathed. He was blown up more than once, saved by a silver cigarette case that stopped a bullet, and suffered severely from shell-shock and battle fatigue which brought his war service to an end.
- Geoffrey Herbert Elliot Inchbald** joined the Berkshire Yeomanry in May 1915 straight from Winchester College as an Officer Cadet. He sailed from Liverpool on 16 January 1916 for Egypt. He had volunteered for the No 8 Company, Imperial Camel Corps, which was to engage in fighting the Turks and defending the Suez Canal. In heavy fighting in April 1918 he took a bullet in the left forearm fracturing both bones. After three months in hospital in Alexandria, the arm had not healed and he was suffering from undiagnosed malaria. He returned to UK on a hospital ship.
- Geoffrey's younger son Lieutenant **Anthony Ilbert Inchbald** of the Grenadier Guards died of wounds in Italy on 6 December 1943 in fighting to cross the River Garigliano. He is buried in the Minturno War Cemetery some 50 miles north of Naples.

- The family returned to England in 1900 and **Charles Chantry Inchbald** became general manager, later chairman, of the Russo-Chinese bank in the City of London. With the fall of Czar Nicholas in 1917 the bank collapsed, and Charles felt personally responsible to those people he had persuaded to invest in it. He refunded them out of his own pocket, significantly depleting his own wealth.

- During his time in the City the family lived in Cheam, but as a holiday and retirement home **Charles Chantry** built **The Grey House** high on the downs at Thurlestone. The Grey House phone number was Thurlestone 2; the Post office being Thurlestone 1. They all loved the house and the beach and estuary. It was their "Arcadia" where the boys learned to swim, shoot, fish, and handle a boat from their boathouse, built in the crook of Bantham Ham. The boys played with lead soldiers - "the battles could go on for two or three days" - a foretaste of their military service in WW1. Their mother died at the house in 1925, and it was sold in the 1930s, and later became **The Downs Hotel**. It burnt down in a dramatic fire in 1960, was rebuilt, and is now apartments. **Charles Chantry Inchbald** married again in 1933 to **Audrey Lilian Boyce** in Rochester, Essex, who had previously given him two more sons, Hugh G Inchbald (1918-1941) and Norman Charles Inchbald (1920-1970). **Charles Chantry Inchbald** died in Bromley, Kent aged 84 in 1940.

- The three eldest sons all served in WW1, and **Jack**, still single, was the only one not to survive and return home. **Pierre Elliot Inchbald** left active service at the end of 1917, convalescing in Scotland. He married **Esme Lyle Bingham** in 1918, and returned to the army as an instructor before retiring to become a stockbroker. He was recalled to the army in WW2, survived that war too, and died at his home, Wraxall Manor, Dorchester, in 1958. **Geoffrey Herbert Inchbald** returned from the war on a hospital ship, married **Evelyn Rosemary Ilbert** in 1919, read Law at Oriel College, Oxford, later rose to become senior partner in the City law firm of Bischoff & Co., and died in London aged 85 in 1982.

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