

## SURGEON LIEUTENANT CHARLES HENRY FAIRBANK ATKINSON RNVR OBE



It is not clear when Charles Atkinson became the doctor for St Tudy however, on marrying Maude Marion Tregaskis, of Stratton, Cornwall on 12<sup>th</sup> January 1914 the marriage certificate states that he was a General Practitioner whose place of residence was Mount Villa on Redvale Road, St Tudy.

He was born in 1884 in Stoke Newington, London, attended Epsom College 1894 -1902 and completed his medical training at Charing Cross Hospital. By 1911 he was practicing as a doctor, living at 50 St Charles Square, North Kensington.

He died on 14 January 1920 and is buried in the St Tudy cemetery - his grave is registered with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. At the date of his death he was living at Butts Park, St Tudy, which was also the residence of other village doctors including Dr Bailey,

The Cornish Guardian reported that his funeral was probably the largest attended ever seen at St Tudy. Half of those attending had to remain outside. The report stated that Dr Atkinson was held in high esteem in the district. Services were also held at St Breward and St Teath in his memory. The Vicar of St Teath said his

death was a great loss to the neighbourhood, he was loved by all who knew him, not only for his skill, but for the kindness in ministrations which he always showed, especially for the poor.

**War Service:** It appears Dr Atkinson joined the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve in 1912. He was appointed to HMS CANOPUS as Surgeon Lieutenant prior to the outbreak of WWI. CANOPUS took part in the Battle of the Falkland Islands, a British victory over the Imperial German Navy on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1914.

After the battle Surg Lt Atkinson was appointed to the hospital at Port Stanley and was Mentioned in Despatches for the able manner in which he conducted the hospital. He returned to UK in February 1915 and was appointed to Trevol Fever Hospital, Torpoint in September 1915. He joined the Destroyer HMS TIPPERARY sometime in early 1916 and is believed to have been serving aboard when she was sunk at the Battle of Jutland on 1 June 1916. He was subsequently appointed to HMS PRINCESS MARGARET, a mine-layer operating in the North Sea. Surgeon Lieutenant C H F Atkinson was awarded the OBE for his war service as a doctor in 1919.

Dr Atkinson's name did not originally appear on the St Tudy War Memorial. However, the Commonwealth War Graves Committee confirmed that, as a serving member of a Commonwealth Military Force who died between 4<sup>th</sup> August 1914 and 31<sup>st</sup> August 1921, he was entitled to be recognised as a Casualty of War.

Efforts led by Mr Chris Selby, founder of the St Tudy Historical Society, resulted in his name being added to the War Memorial in October 2018 in time to be part of the Centenary marking the Armistice and the end of World War One.



HMS CANOPUS