**Frederick Neil Le Mesurier**

Frederick Neil Le Mesurier, born on 7 March 1875 in Alderney, Channel Islands, was the son of Colonel Frederick Le Mesurier and Louisa Browne. He married Rachel Whitford Gillham in Bushey in 1906 and the 1911 census shows Rachel living at ‘Bourne Place’, 101 Herkomer Road, Bushey with her sister, Alexandra, and their widowed mother.

Frederick had an army career and was involved in Winston Churchill’s dramatic escape in South Africa in 1899 when Churchill headed to South Africa as a newspaper correspondent for the Morning Post to cover the Boer War between British and Dutch settlers. He was present at an ambush of an armoured train and captured by enemy Boer soldiers. On November 18, 1899, Churchill along with the other prisoners arrived in Pretoria at the prison called the State Model Schools. On the night of December 12th, when the prison guards turned their backs on Churchill, he took the opportunity to climb over the prison wall. Wearing a brown flannel suit with £75 and four slabs of chocolate in his pocket, Churchill walked on leisurely through the night in hopes of finding the Delagoa Bay Railway. So began his great escape and journey to freedom.

Details of the escape are not alotether clear and Churchill, when asked, was not very forthcoming. It appears that to the north of the main entrance of the State Model Schools there were three rooms facing Van der Walt Street. The central room was occupied by Winston Churchill. Some of those who shared the room were Captain Alymer Haldane, Gordon Highlanders; Lieutenant le Mesurier, Dublin Fusiliers; Captain A. E. Haserick and Sergeant A. Brockie of the Imperial Light Horse. Haldane and Brockie intended to escape with Sir Winston but were prevented by the vigilance of the sentries. Haldane, Brockie and le Mesurier escaped subsequently.

During the First World War Frederick served as a Captain in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and was killed in action in 25 April 1915. His death was recorded in the St James’ Parish Magazine and at the Inner Temple. He is remembered with hour at the Menin Gate at Ypres and is commemorated on the Bushey Memorial and at St James’ Parish Church, Bushey.

