

THE FALLEN OF SUTTON-IN-CRAVEN



RICHARD WHITEHALL

EAST LANCASHIRE REGIMENT

KILLED IN ACTION 1ST JULY 1916

BORN IN 1882 AT BRADFORD, YORKSHIRE, THE SON OF  
ELLEN WHITEHALL

# Whitehall Family History

- **1891 census** shows Ellen as the head of the family and her 5 children living at 10, Halstead Street, Worsthorne-with-Hurstwood near Burnley, Lancashire as follows:

Name	Age	Work	Birth place	Birth year
Ellen (Head)	33		Dublin, Ireland	1858
James	12		Bradford, Yorkshire	1879
Richard	9		Bradford, Yorkshire	1882 - 1916
Thomas	6		Bradford, Yorkshire	1885
Joseph	3		Bradford, Yorkshire	1888
Ellen	baby		Bradford, Yorkshire	1891

- **1901 census** shows Ellen, still as the head of the family, living with 3 of her children and a boarder at the same address; 10, Halstead Street, Worsthorne-with-Hurstwood near Burnley, Lancashire as follows:

Name	Age	Work	Birth place	Birth year
Ellen (Head)	42	Charwoman	Dublin, Ireland	1859
Joseph	12	Cotton drawer reacher	Bradford, Yorkshire	1889
Ellen	10		Bradford, Yorkshire	1891
Effie	4		Worsthorne, Lancashire	1897
Albert Barker (boarder)	27	Stone quarryman	Worsthorne, Lancashire	1874

### Note:

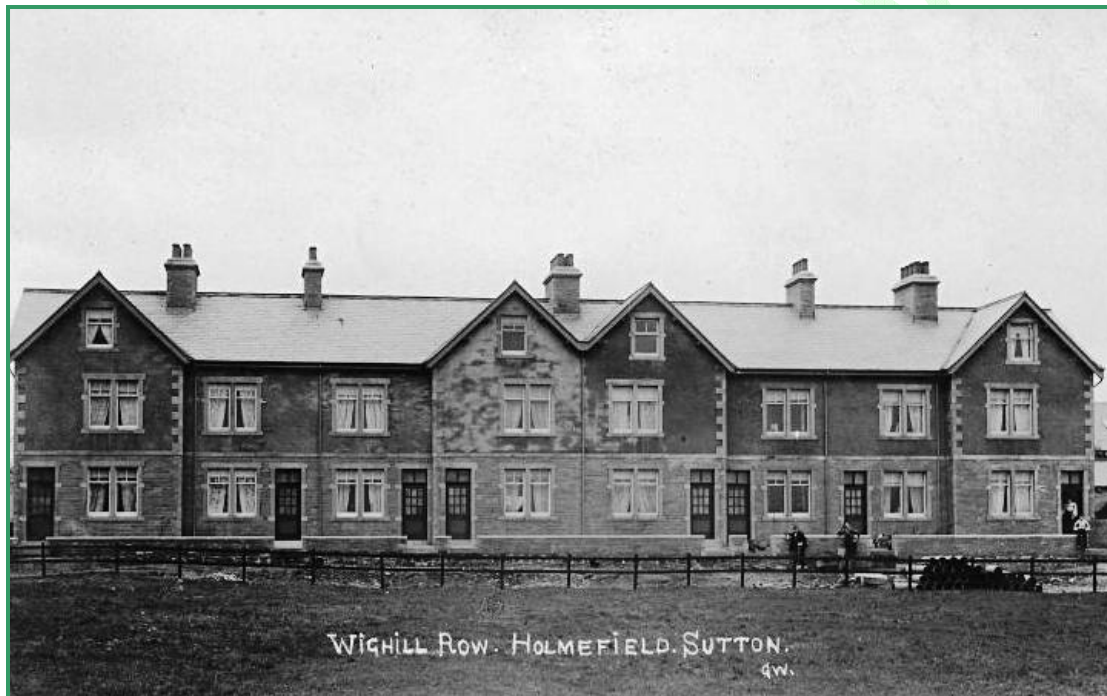
At the time of the 1901 census, Richard Whitehall was away serving in the South African Boer War with the 5th Royal Irish Lancers. His brother James also fought in the South African Boer War (regiment unknown)

- **1911 census** shows Ellen Whitehall now re-married to Leonard Simons of Sutton-in-Craven. They had been married for two years and were living together with 2 of Ellen's children and 6 of Leonard's children from his former marriage at 4, Lister Hill, Sutton-in-Craven as follows:

Name	Age	Work	Birth place	Birth year
Leonard (Head)	57	Postman & shoe maker	Belgrade, Leicestershire	1854
Ellen (wife) (nee Whitehall)	52	Employed at home	Dublin, Ireland	1859
Thomas Whitehall (step son)	26	Weaver	Bradford, Yorkshire	1885
Millicent	21	Burler & mender	Glen Parva Barracks	1890
William Robert	18	Apprentice spinning overlooker	Glen Parva Barracks	1893 - 1917
Agnes	16	Spinner	Glen Parva Barracks	1895
Effie Whitehall (step daughter)	15	Spinner	Worsthorne, near Burnley	1896
Samuel	14	Doffer	Sutton-in-Craven	1897
Sarah	11	School	Sutton-in-Craven	1900
Edmond	9	School	Sutton-in-Craven	1902

### Notes:

- At the time of the 1911 census, Richard Whitehall was now discharged from the army and was boarding with a family by the surname of Halstead back in Worsthorne, near Burnley where Richard had grown up. He was employed as a Cotton weaver and the address he was living at was 11, Lennox Street, Worsthorne. Richard was 29 years of age and still single.
- During the Great War, the Simons (and Whitehall) family had relocated from their previous address at Lister Hill and were now living at 2, Wighill Street, Holmefield, Sutton-in-Craven.



(source: photo provided by David Smith)

## Boer War 1899 - 1902

Prior to WW1, Richard Whitehall had served as a professional soldier with the 5th Royal Irish Lancers. He served throughout the South African Boer War from 1899–1902 earning the Queen's South Africa Medal with 5 clasps.



5th Royal Irish Lancers, Boer War 1899 – 1902



Charge of the 5th Royal Irish Lancers at Elandslaagte on the 21st Nov 1899, Boer War  
(source: **ARTIST Richard Caton Woodville II**)



## Boer War 1899-1902 - Soldier details

Name:	Whitehall, R
Rank:	Private
Soldier number:	5227
Unit:	5th (Royal Irish) Lancers
Notes:	The Queen's South Africa (QSA) Medal Clasps: Cape Colony, Orange Free State, Transvaal, South Africa 1901, South Africa 1902
Age:	
Literary references:	

(source: [www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk))



Queen's South Africa Medal as awarded to Pte Richard Whitehall

# World War 1



It had been **99 years** since Britain was last involved in a major European conflict following the defeat of Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815

## **August 4<sup>th</sup> 1914** **Britain declares war on Germany**

In the autumn of 1914, the young men of the nation came from town and village to take the King's shilling and to offer him their dedicated services in defence of their homeland. From mills and mines, from shops and farms, from office chairs and civic departments, from loom, lathe, bench, plough and counter they flooded into the recruiting centres in answer to their nation's call for young manhood. These new recruits came to be known as **'Kitchener's Volunteers'**

## **The New Armies: "Kitchener's Volunteers"**



Earl Kitchener recruitment poster 1914



Parliamentary Recruiting Committee  
London, 1915





British volunteer recruits, August 1914  
These men would form Kitchener's New Army

At the outbreak of the Great War in 1914, Richard Whitehall responded to the call and volunteered to enlist into the 1st (regular) battalion of the East Lancashire Regiment. His regimental number was 11278 and he commenced with the rank of Private.

The East Lancashire Regiment raised a total of 17 battalions during WW1.



WW1 East Lancashire Regiment Cap Badge

Pte Whitehall entered the Theatre of War on the 29th July 1915 arriving in France.

Name.	Corps.	Rank	Regtl. No.
WHITEHALL	E. Lancs R	Pte	11278
Richard			
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks
VICTORY	M/1/102 B/6	1316	
BRITISH	do	do	
15 STAR	H/1/348	91	
Theatre of War first served in	1		
Date of entry therein	29.7.15		S.7 28/2/6406 K.1386

**Correspondence.**

Acc 4. Imperial Institute. S. Kenington funds  
 app: for 1914 star on behalf of Mrs Whitehall in  
 respect of the services of the late Pte R. Whitehall  
 Eligible for 14 star treat as S.7 11.3.19

**Address.** 2 Wighell Street  
 Hornsfield  
 Sutton in Craven  
 Keighley Yorks

(25454-14a) Wt. W 3347-H.P. 6451 2000m. 10/19 H. St. Est. 5450/1269

MEDAL INDEX CARD front and back for Richard Whitehall.  
 (source: *The National Archives*)



From the information evident on the reverse of the Medal Index Card (above), Richard's mother Ellen felt that her son may have been entitled to the 1914 star, rather than the 1914/15 star that he was posthumously awarded.

Her application for the 1914/15 star to be replaced with the 1914 star in March 1919 was rejected on the grounds that Pte Whitehall first entered the Theatre of War overseas in July 1915, despite enlisting with the East Lancashire Regiment in August 1914.

During the Great War, Ellen Simons (nee Whitehall) and her second husband Leonard Simons had between them eight sons who enlisted into the forces.

Ellen's four serving sons were Tom, Richard, James and Joseph Whitehall.

Leonard's four serving sons were Leonard (Jnr), William, Charles and Samuel Simons.

Therefore the noble band of brothers within the Whitehall/Simons household who served their King and Country during the Great War totalled eight. Two of who, Richard Whitehall and his step-brother William Simons, would pay the ultimate sacrifice and are both commemorated on the Sutton-in-Craven war memorial.

In addition, Ellen's husband Leonard Simons was himself an old soldier. He served for 17 years in the British army as a Colour-Sergeant and Instructor in the 2nd Leicestershire Regiment, including 11 years service in India.

Throughout the Great War up until 1918, Leonard Simons served as a Company Sergeant Major and drill master to the local platoon of the West Riding volunteers.

# The Western Front

The Western Front was the name applied to the fighting zone in France & Flanders, where the British, French, Belgian and later American armies faced that of Germany.

It was marked by a system of trenches and fortifications separated by an area known as No Man's land. These fortifications stretched 475 miles and precipitated a style of fighting known as trench warfare.

From the moment the German army moved into Luxemburg on the 2nd August 1914 to the Armistice on the 11th November 1918, the fighting on the Western Front in France & Flanders never stopped.

Just as there were quiet periods, there were also the most intense, savage, huge-scale battles the world has ever known.



Hanging on the barbed wire, trench warfare, WW1



# Battle of the Somme

## 1st July – 18th November 1916

The Battle of the Somme was fought from the 1st July – 18th November 1916 and claimed more than 1.5 million casualties.

The battle was preceded by 7 days of preliminary artillery bombardment, in which the British fired over **1.7 million shells**. The logic behind this was so to destroy the German trenches and barbed wire placed in front of the trenches before sending in the infantry.



British Artillery, end of June 1916.

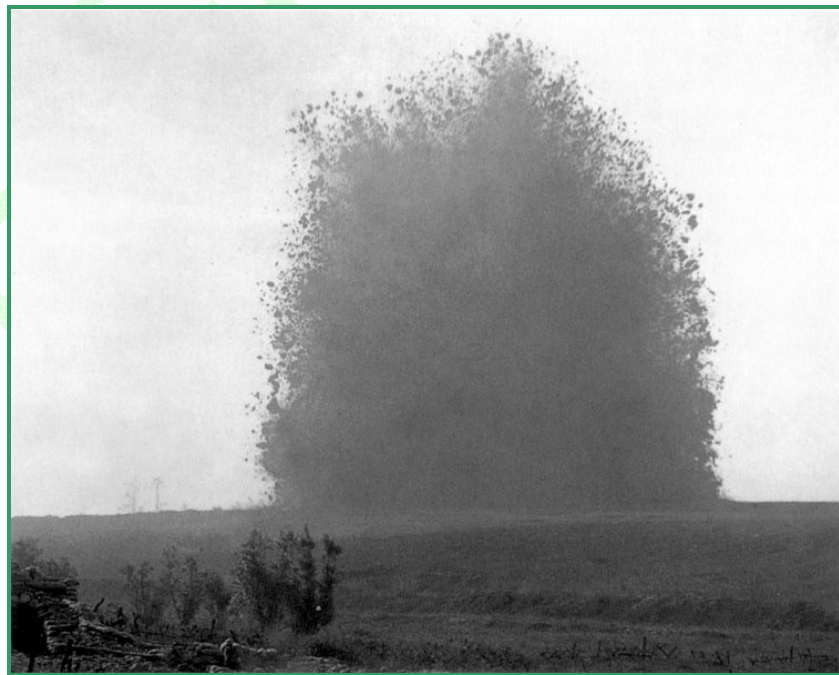
7 day preliminary artillery bombardment, Battle of the Somme, 1916

However, the enemy's position was situated on high, undulating tract of ground, in which they had deep trenches and bomb proof shelters for their men. When the bombardment started the Germans moved these men into the relative safety of the deep dugouts. When the bombardment stopped, the Germans knew that this was the signal for an infantry advance. They moved from the safety of their dugouts and manned their machine guns to face the British and French.



Infantry preparing to go 'over the top' during the Battle of the Somme

Ten minutes before the infantry advance, at 7.20 a.m. on the 1st July 1916, a British officer detonated a massive mine beneath the **Hawthorn Ridge** (photo below).



Explosion of the Hawthorn Ridge, 1st July 1916

At 7.30am, on a clear midsummer's morning, the British infantry emerged from their trenches and advanced in extended lines at a slow steady pace across the grassy expanse of 'No Man's Land'. There they met a hail of machine-gun and rifle fire from the German defenders. Accurate German barrages immediately added to the pandemonium, as shells engulfed the attackers and wrecked the crowded British assembly trenches. The advancing infantry and many more waiting to attack suffered enormous casualties.



Going 'over the top'

The Battle of the Somme is best remembered for its first day, 1st July 1916 on which the British suffered 57,470 casualties, including **19,240 dead** - the bloodiest day in the history of the British Army.

Ironically, going 'over the top' at the Somme was the first taste of battle many of these men had, as many were part of "Kitchener's Volunteer Army" persuaded to volunteer by posters showing Lord Kitchener himself summoning these men to arms to show their patriotism.





Roll call in the British trenches at the Battle of the Somme, afternoon, 1st July 1916  
(source: [www.gwpda.org/photos](http://www.gwpda.org/photos))

The battle became a metaphor for futile and indiscriminate slaughter. By the time the Battle of the Somme was abandoned the Allies had advanced only 5 miles.

The Somme campaign finally came to an end on the 18th November 1916 when the British 51st Highland Division took Beaumont Hamel that had in fact been an objective for the first day.

The British Army suffered, over the course of the entire 142-day Somme campaign, some 415,000 casualties, which works out to be around 3,000 per day. The French lost 200,000 men and the German's nearly 500,000

Having served throughout the South African Boer War from 1899–1902 and having also served almost one year on the Western Front during WW1, Pte Richard Whitehall was **Killed in Action** on the **First Day of the Battle of the Somme** on the 1st July 1916.

**He was 34 years of age**





Article Date: 28 July 1916

## SUTTON - MEMBER OF A PATRIOTIC FAMILY KILLED

Mrs. Simons, of Wighill St., Holmfild, Sutton-in-Craven, received an intimation from the War Office on Sunday that her son, Pte. Richard Whitehall, had been killed in action on the 1st, of July. Another of her sons, Sgt. Tom Whitehall, was wounded on the same day as his brother was killed, and is at present in the Military Hospital at Manchester, suffering from wounds in the arm. Pte. R. Whitehall was 34 years of age, and served through the Boer War in the 5th Royal Irish Lancers, without receiving so much as a scratch. He, along with his brother Tom, joined the East Lancashire Regiment when the War broke out. Mrs. Simons has two other sons serving with the Forces—James Whitehall, who also fought in the Boer War, has been in the Navy about 13 years, and is somewhere out on the deep; and Joseph Whitehall is with the 5th Royal Irish Lancers, and went to France with the British Expeditionary Force.

Mr. Simons has three sons serving with the Forces and a son-in-law, this making eight members of the family serving their King and Country. Leonard Simons, his eldest son, joined the West Riding Regiment at the outbreak of hostilities; Willie Simons was a member of the West Riding Territorials at the outbreak of war, and is a member of the Regimental Band, as also is his brother-in-law Joseph Godfrey, and Charles Simon was called up for service just recently and is with the West Riding Regiment.

Mr. Simons is himself an old soldier. He served for 17 years in the Army, being a colour-sergeant and instructor in the 2nd Leicester Regiment, and was 11 years in India. He is now employed by the State as a postman in the Cross Hills Post Office. He is a Sergeant Instructor to the Local Volunteer Training Corps, and is doing excellent service in training these men.

(source: *Craven's Part in the Great War* [www.cpgw.org.uk](http://www.cpgw.org.uk))



## Casualty Details

**Name:** WHITEHALL, RICHARD

**Initials:** R

**Nationality:** United Kingdom

**Rank:** Private

**Regiment/Service:** East Lancashire Regiment

**Unit Text:** 1st Bn.

**Date of Death:** 01/07/1916

**Service No:** 11278

**Casualty Type:** Commonwealth War Dead

**Grave/Memorial Reference:** Pier and Face 6 C.

**Memorial:** THIEPVAL MEMORIAL

(source: *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* [www.cwgc.org/](http://www.cwgc.org/))

## THIEPVAL MEMORIAL

The Thiepval Memorial, the Memorial to the 'Missing of the Somme', bears the names of more than 72,000 officers and men of the United Kingdom and South African forces including Pte Richard Whitehall, who died in the Somme sector before the 20th March 1918 and have no known grave. Over 90% of those commemorated died between July and November 1916.

The memorial, designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, was built between 1928 and 1932 and unveiled by the Prince of Wales, in the presence of the President of France, on the 31st July 1932.

Pte Richard Whitehall is also remembered on the Sutton-in-Craven war memorial and on the Cowling war memorial

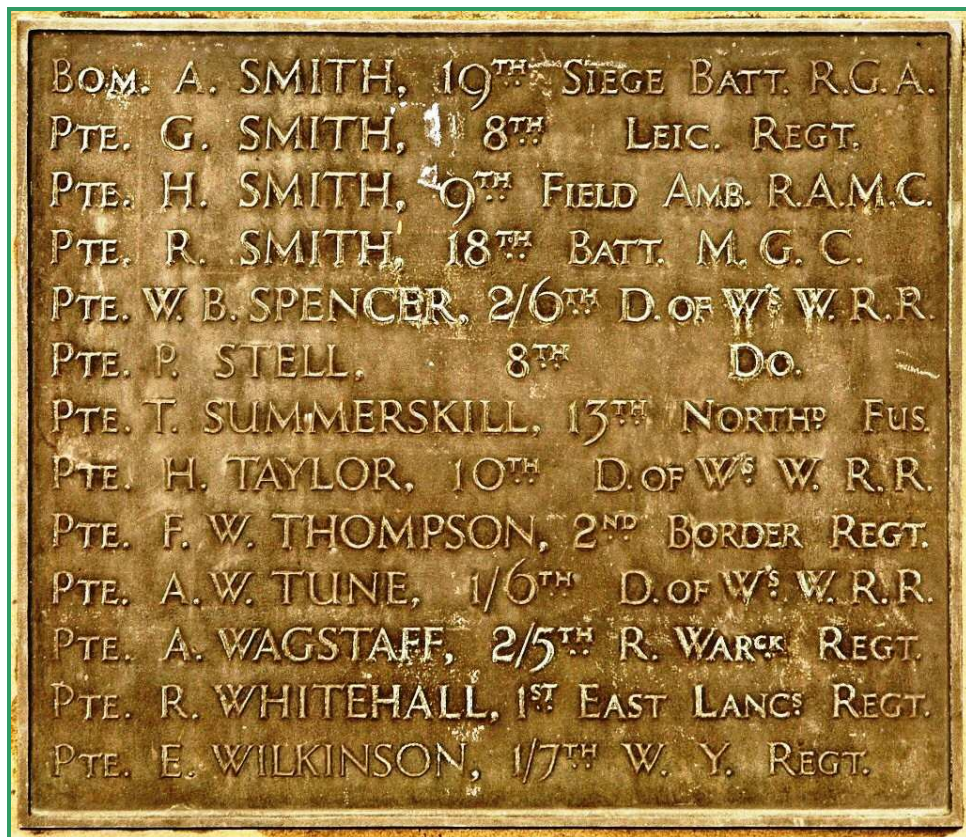


Thiepval Memorial  
(source: *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* [www.cwgc.org/](http://www.cwgc.org/))

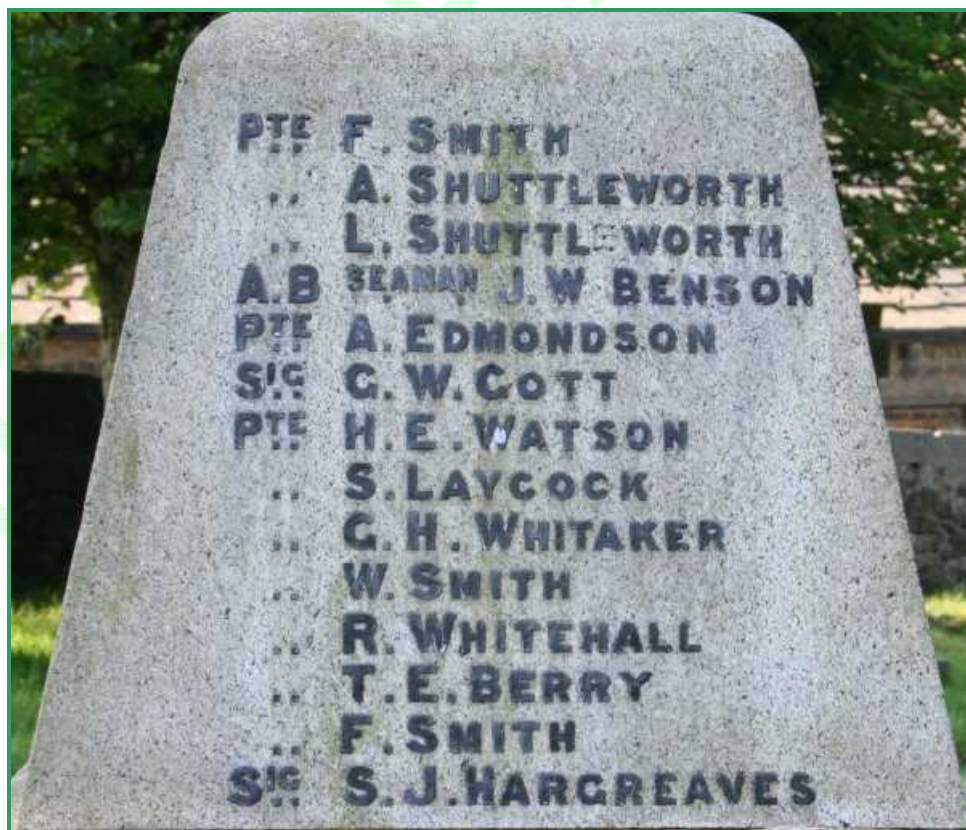


Thiepval Memorial





Sutton-in-Craven War Memorial (photo taken by Paul Wilkinson)



Cowling war memorial

(source: *Craven's Part in the Great War* [www.cpgw.org.uk](http://www.cpgw.org.uk))





Sutton-in-Craven War Memorial

(source: Rachel Simpson & Richard Whiteoak from the Glyn Whiteoak collection)



Cowling war memorial  
(source: *Craven's Part in the Great War* [www.cpgw.org.uk](http://www.cpgw.org.uk))



Pte Richard Whitehall was posthumously awarded the  
1914/15 Star, British War Medal & Victory Medal



Original trio of WW1 medals, obverse (1914/15 star unnamed original)



Original trio of WW1 medals, reverse (1914/15 star unnamed original)  
(source: owned by Andrew Monkhouse)



A Memorial Plaque inscribed with the soldiers name was also given to the family of those who were killed during WW1



Original WW1 Memorial Plaque (name digitally altered)  
Also referred to as a Death Plaque or Dead Man's Penny  
(source: owned by Andrew Monkhouse)



# FOR THE FALLEN

*THEY SHALL NOT GROW OLD, AS WE THAT ARE  
LEFT GROW OLD*

*AGE SHALL NOT WEARY THEM, NOR THE YEARS  
CONDEMN*

*AT THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN AND IN THE  
MORNING*

*WE WILL REMEMBER THEM*

**LAURENCE BINYON, 1869-1943**



(Information compiled by Andrew Monkhouse 2011)