Introduction

The **Eccleshall Great War Project** was inaugurated during the summer of 2013 to participate in the commemoration of the start of **The Great War**. The objectives were to research the family and military history of the 46 names on the War Memorial in **Holy Trinity Churchyard** and to create a more detailed and lasting epitaph.

A WEB site was created for this project inviting volunteers to participate in this demanding task. Within a few short weeks several volunteers had come forward, some with experience in genealogy, some with interest in military history, and some who just wanted to get involved. This mix of experience and interests were shared amongst ***the team*** to achieve what can only be described as amazing results.

By the spring of 2014, all 46 names had been identified and substantial family and military history, including some old photographs had been researched and documented on the WEB site.

The criteria (or reason) why any of those names were eligible to have been included may never be known as the Parish records of the time have long since been lost. It is not quite as simple as they lived in the Parish and marched off and never returned. They all had some connection to Eccleshall, not always obvious, but some are also commemorated on other War Memorials, one as far as Downham Market in Norfolk.

By the spring of 2014, it was decided that there may not be much more information that could be researched and it would be fitting to use what was available to create a commemorative book that would be available for the centenary of the start of the Great War on the 4thAugust 1914.

The **Eccleshall Great War Project** remains open to this day so that if any further information comes to light, the WEB site will be updated accordingly.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the time and effort taken by the following team of volunteers without whom, the success of the project would not have been achieved:

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Finally may I thank Stafford County Council for providing the funding for the costs incurred of the printing of this Commemorative Book.

Jan Baker
Eccleshall Historical Society

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A Family at War

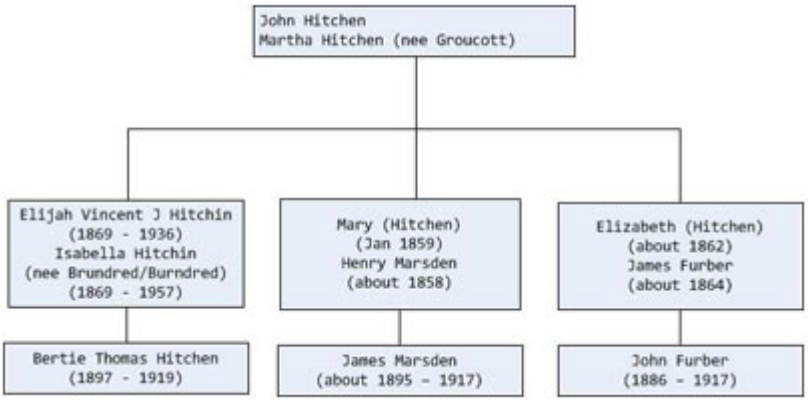
This commemorative book documents many very sad stories of individuals who made the supreme sacrifice. During the research, it was discovered how four of those individuals, all with different surnames, were related.

The following family tree shows that:

Bertie Thomas Hitchen

James Marsden

John Furber



were cousins.

One of the cousins, **John Furber** had a sister, **Lavinia (Maud)** who married **Bertram Harding**, another of the fallen remembered on the War Memorial

This meant that:

Lavinia lost a brother, husband and two cousins.

The widowed mother of John Furber, Elizabeth Furber, lost a son, a son-in-law, and two nephews.

Each of these four lads has a section telling their own story.

Allen Annie

Annie is the only woman remembered on the war memorial and she did not die in the Great War as such. Dr John M. Sneddon produced an article that was published some time ago in the Trinity magazine. With their kind permission, this article is reproduced below.

As a student of the First World War I am always interested in the names of the individuals commemorated on war memorials and it is my custom to read the names to myself as an act of remembrance. When I first saw the Eccleshall memorial I was surprised to see that the first name inscribed upon it is that of a woman, Anne E. Allen VAD, and I immediately wanted to find out more about her. Who was she? Why was a VAD so commemorated? Did she die on active service? I have managed to carry out some research on Annie that may be of interest to readers of TRINITY.

First what is a VAD? In 1909, as part of the general reorganisation of the army, the War Office issued the Scheme for the Organisation of Voluntary Aid in which the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St. John of Jerusalem were given the role of providing supplementary aid to the Territorial Forces Medical Services and these units were called Voluntary Aid Detachments (CVADs), but soon after their formation the initials VAD started to be used as a sort of nickname or shorthand to describe the members of the units rather than the unit itself. To become a VAD a woman had to achieve certification in first aid and in home nursing while male VADs (there were many during the war but now so forgotten that most of us think of VADs as exclusively female) only had to obtain a first aid certificate. The first VADs were mostly upper and middle class women who wanted to do some voluntary work, usually associated with their local hospitals, within a respectable and socially acceptable framework but during the war their role expanded and becoming a VAD was the route by which many sheltered young women swapped the certainties of an Edwardian drawing room for hospital wards full of the pain of the dying and mutilated from the battlefields. Two VADs who became famous in later life, but remained marked by such experiences, were Vera Brittain and Agatha Christie.

By November 1914 the unexpectedly high casualties convinced the government that the standard three-year nursing course was not capable of providing the number of nurses that would be required and they turned to the voluntary sector and formed the Joint War Committee of the Red Cross and St John's. By early 1915 the Committee had recruited, trained and certi ficated hundreds of VADs who were to play an essential role in the provision of medical services to wounded servicemen. For VADs serving at home their most important contribution was raising the funds, and then providing the staff, for the dozens, if not hundreds of auxiliary and convalescent hospitals set up in hotels and country houses to meet the needs of the recovering wounded. Some VADs, usually through family influence, served in the war zones and acted as ward clerks, dressers and so on to the trained nurses dealing with severe casualties in the forward casualty clearing hospitals. VADs, both male and female, also provided the first motorised ambulance service in France.

Our Annie Allen was a VAD but why is she commemorated on the War Memorial? The decision to have a war memorial in the first place was made by the local community, who would also have to raise the necessary money, and in the case of Eccleshall, it was probably the Parish Council, who decided who should be commemorated on the memorial. Unfortunately we will never know how the names were chosen as the minutes of the Parish Council were destroyed by tire in the late 1920's. Women on War Memorials are quite rare - I do not know how many there are in the country hut I have only seen one other, Zoe K. Bryan-Daunt, a nurse commemorated on the Coverack memorial in Cornwall.

So who was our Annie? She was Annie Elizabeth Allen the daughter of William Allen. Vicar of Eccleshall 1883-1915 and Prebendary of Sandiacre in the Cathedral of Lichfield. William Allen died on 13th September 1915 aged 85 and was predeceased by his wife Emily Ida Allen who had died on 20th November 1914 aged 74 years. Annie was born on 5 February 1872 and was educated privately at home but as a result of ill-health spent much of her early life abroad. When

at home, as far as her health permitted, she was an enthusiastic assistant in her father's parochial work and her contributions were widely recognised in the reports of local goings-on that appeared in the Staffordshire Advertiser and Staffordshire Chronicle of the period For example we find that, with the rest of her family, she helped to raise the funds required to build the new church at Slindon, and at the party organised for the villagers after the service of dedication on 15th October 1894, the Advertiser noted that Miss A.E. Allen was one of the people that sang at the entertainment.

When war broke out Annie Joined the Red Cross and became a VAD. In September 1915 Sandon Hall was opened as a Military Convalescent Hospital run by the Sandon and Eccleshall Red Cross. VADs and Annie rose through the ranks to become one of the two Quartermasters to the hospital. In her obituary the Advertiser notes that she was very happy in this work. very popular with staff and patients and that during this period her health had much improved. We also know from the local newspapers something of what Annie was doing in the last two weeks of her life. The Advertiser for 4th January 1919 reported her involvement in an evening of entertainment, held in Eccleshall, and attended by soldiers from the VAD Red Cross Hospital, and on the 18th the Chronicle carried a report of a supper, followed by presentations and fancy dress ball, to mark the closure of the Sandon VAD hospital. On this occasion the Commandant, Miss Parker-Jervis CBE, was presented with a large silver mirror by the officers and sisters past and present while the VADs, some eighty-four in number, who had worked at the hospital presented her with a beautiful Red Cross. In her reply Miss Parker-Jervis said that she had spent some of the happiest years of her life at Sandon and knew that she had the best staff any hospital ever had. Quartermaster Caudler was presented with a pair of silver candlesticks, Quartermaster Allen with a silver frame and Sister Dean with a silver brush, comb and mirror. After the presentations the dancing commenced which, as the Advertiser notes, continued until a late hour.

Sadly her next appearance in print is the notification of her death on 20th January 1919 at Sandon Hall Auxiliary Red Cross Hospital. The cause of death is given as a sudden attack of severe laryngitis but whether this diagnosis is accurate we will never know. Young persons sent abroad for their health in Victorian England usually had a history of respiratory disease and it may be Annie had severe asthma or less likely consumption (tuberculosis) but early 1919 was also the time of the great flu pandemic in Staffordshire, as witnessed by the number of young Canadians who lie in the British Military Cemetery on Cannock Chase, and she may have been a victim of this.

Annie Allen's funeral was a major event reported in great detail by the press. Her body was brought from Sandon Hall on the afternoon of Wednesday 22nd January to Holy Trinity Church, the route lined by a large silent crowd. The coffin was placed in the aisle where hundreds filed past the flag-draped coffin flanked with an honour guard of VAD nurses. The funeral next day was officiated by no less than four members of the clergy, and the church was packed to overflowing with family, friends and detachments of VADs so that the crowds spilled out to fill the churchyard from where they took part in the singing of the hymns. As the coffin was lowered into the grave the last post was sounded and a Company from the Nottingham and Derby Regiment fired volleys over the grave. There were so many beautiful wreaths that they totally covered the grave and surrounding area.

Annie Allen was obviously widely liked and respected throughout the Parish of Eccleshall and the surrounding area, and her funeral, with its military overtones, is quite exceptional for a civilian, even if she was a VAD. Perhaps the sudden death of one so beloved within the community served as a focus for the grief for those who would never return from what, in British terms, remains ***The Great War.***

Article reproduced from the Stafford Advertiser 25th June 1919 reporting Annie's funeral

FUNERAL OF THE LATE MISS A. E. ALLEN.


ECCLESHALL.

The remains of the late Miss Annie Elizabeth Allen, daughter or the late Rev. Prebendary and Mrs. Allen, formally vicar and rural dean of Eccleshall, were interred at Eccleshall Parish Church on Thursday afternoon. Many friends of the deceased lady were present in the church, in addition to the mourners, who were Miss W. G. Allen, Messrs. Lonsdale Allen, Arthur Allen, and Herbert Ellen (brothers). Mrs. Addenbrooke. Miss Allen, and Mrs. Rosdale (sisters): Messrs. Addenbrooke and Gardner (brothers-in-law), and the Revds J. B. Hazard and R. Large (former curates of Eccleshall). The officiating clergy were the Revds. W. Harrison, W. W. Holdcroft (Eccleshall), Wilkinson (chaplain at the Sandon Hall Red Cross Hospital), and R. D. Cheetham (vicar of Northwood). The Rev. C. M. S. Patterson, rural dean of Eccleshall, was also present. The British Red Cross was represented by a contingent of nurses from the V.A D. Hospitals at Sandon Hall and Eccleshall. The hymns were "The Saints of God," "How bright those glorious spirits shine," and a verse of "Jesu, lover of my soul." And the Nune Dimittis at the grave. A company of the Notts and Derby Regiment fired a volley over the grave and sounded the "Last Post." Many beautiful wreaths were sent. Miss A. E. Allen was the third daughter of the late Rev. Prebendary Allen. She was educated privately at home, and owing to ill-health, spent much of her early life abroad, but when at home assisted in parochial word so far as her health permitted. When war broke out she took up Red Cross work and became assistant quartermaster at Sandon Red Cross Hospital. She was very happy in this work and her health much improved. Her death, which was the result of a sudden attack of laryngitis, is mourned by a wide circle of friends.

Annie's grave is to the left of the church door next to that of her parents. Unfortunately the lettering on the stone surround has faded with time but it is just possible to identify her when the light falls on the faded lettering.



The photograph is of some Eccleshall nurses taken at Trentham Gardens, date unknown.



Dr John M. Sneddon

Bache Henry *(or Harry as stated on the War Memorial)*

- **Full name:** Henry Bache
- **Place and Date of Birth:** Eccleshall 1872
- **Parents:**
  - John Bache.
  - Phoebe (nee Boulton).
- **Rank:** Private.
- **Regiment:** Cheshire Regiment 1st/7th Battalion.
- **Service number:** 63079
- **Location of Enlistment:** Bury
- **Age:** 46
- **Date of death:** 14th May 1918

- **Interred at:** Gaza War Cemetery (grave reference: XXXII. B. 4.)

Gaza is 3 kilometres inland from the Mediterranean coast, 65 kilometres south-west of Tel Aviv. From Israel stop at the Erez Crossing point and enter the VIP cabin for a pass to enter Gaza. Walk through "no man's land" to the taxis on the other side. Gaza War Cemetery is 1.5 kilometres north-east of the city near the Bureir Road and 370 metres from the railway station.



Gaza War Cemetery

- **Family History:**

Harry Bache was born in Eccleshall in 1872. He was named as **Henry** (Harry, being a diminutive name) and was the son of John Bache and Phoebe (Boulton). John was a stonemason, the son of a Welsh born stonemason, he had moved from Oldswinford into Staffordshire, where in 1869, he had married Phoebe Boulton, the daughter of Elijah Boulton who was a wheelwright in Eccleshall.

John and Phoebe lived in Chebsey Lane and had seven children:-

- Elizabeth (1870)
- **Henry(1872)**
- Harriet(1874)
- Mary(1876-1877)
- Frederick(1877-1884)
- Annie(1879)
- John(1885)

By 1901 John and Phoebe had moved into Castle Street, with Harriet and John. The other children had either died or moved away. **Henry** had moved to Garston in Liverpool and in 1896, he married Ada Byrom(1879-1904) and had the following children:

- Mary Elizabeth (1897).
- John William 27 Dec 1901.

Ada died in 1904 and the 1911 census shows **Henry** and his son (known as William) at 23 Walker Street Middleton. Also in 1911, **Henry's** daughter, Mary Elizabeth was working at a hotel in Middleton. **Henry** was working as a labourer for a coal agent

and he was head of the house, which had a number of lodgers, and in total there were 13 people, four of whom were children.

Significantly amongst the household was Ann Healey (born in Blackburn 1885) and living there with her 2 children, Maria and Charles. Although she was married, her husband was not in the house. The baptism of Maria in Blackburn shows that Ann was known as Elizabeth Ann and married to Jack Healey, and by the time Charles was born in 1906, Ann had moved to Middleton.

Elizabeth Ann Healey married **Henry Bache** in 1914.
We have no record of what happened to her first husband.
Henry Bache died on the 14th May 1918.

More family history relating to Henry Bache

After his death, Elizabeth Ann married George Maymon in 1920.

- Mary Elizabeth Bache married Charles Halliwell in 1923. They had 5 children, all of whom lived in and around Oldham.

John William Bache married Elsie Saxon in 1928. They had 6 children, all of whom lived in the Manchester area.

- By the time of his death Henry's father and mother had died

  * John died in 1912
  * Phoebe had died in 1911

- Henry's remaining siblings, Elizabeth, Harriet, Annie and John all married.

Elizabeth married John Marsh and moved to Wolverhampton and then to Birmingham.

- Harriet married Arthur William Gaywood in 1903.
- They stayed in Eccleshall, but it seems likely that they had no children.
- Annie married George Henry Seabridge in 1904.
- John married Ida Royles in 1911 and went to live in Wolverhampton.
- This was where his uncles lived, although it is not certain if that was the reason that he went there. John and Ida had 11 children.

- **Miliary History:**

Henry enlisted at Bury. He was placed with the Lancashire Fusiliers and then transferred to the Cheshire Regiment. He died on 14th May 1918. An entry in the ***Soldiers who died in the Great War*** states *he died*, which possibly means his death might have been caused by illness or some other cause than enemy action.

Baker Sydney J

- **Full name:** Sydney Joseph Baker
- **Parents:** James Baker and Belinda Elizabeth (Guest)
- **Occupation:** Butcher
- **Wife:** Sallie (Bullock) married 1917
- **Place and Date of Birth:** Ellenhall 1892
- **Rank:** Driver
- **Regiment:** Royal Engineers - 21st Signal Coy. attd. 95th Bde. Royal Field Artillery
- **Service number:** 249154
- **Location and date of enlistment:** Wednesbury - 3rd November 1914
- **Age:** 27
- **Date of death:** 22nd January 1919 (cause: bronco - pneumonia)
- **Medals Awarded:**
  - Victory
  - British
  - 1915 Star
- **Interred at:** St Sever Cemetery Extension, Rouen
- **Grave reference:** S. IV. F. 17.



Driver Sydney Baker

St Sever Cemetery and St. Sever Cemetery Extension are located within a large communal cemetery situated on the eastern edge of the southern Rouen suburbs of Le Grand Quevilly and Le Petit Quevilly.



St Sever Cemetery Extension, Rouen

Family history relating to Sydney Baker

- **Parents:**
  - James Baker married
  - Belinda Elizabeth (nee Guest) at Ellenhall in 1892
- **Children** (of above marriage):
  - **Sydney Joseph Baker** (1893)
  - Martha Emily Baker (1894)
    - At some time, Martha was sent to live in West Bromwich, where her mother, Belinda is thought to have come from.
    - Martha was adopted by James Henry Rogers (1877) and his wife, Elizabeth (Watson)
    - Martha is mentioned in Sydney's records
    - In the **1911** census, Martha is living with James Rogers and his wife, but also there is Lesley Baker aged 3 who was born in Manchester
    - Martha married George Tilley in 1925 and lived in the Walsall area
      - Children:
        - Sidney J (1931 - 1988) and married Patrica A Taylor
- **1894 or 1895:** Sydney's father, James died
- **1895:** Sydney's mother, Belinda Elizabeth Baker married John Bates at Eccleshall
- **Possible children** (of Belinda's second marriage), but not yet fully confirmed:
  - George A

    - John W
    - Alfred (1903)
- **1905:** Belinda married William Whalley (as John Bates had since died (date unknown)), who lodged next door to the Bates family in Eccleshall. Belinda married as Sarah and in Sydney's records she is mentioned as Sarah Ann Bates.
- **Children** (of Belinda's third marriage):
    - Belinda Harriet (1906)
        - Belinda married James T Slack (1911 - 1967)
            - children:
                - Elizabeth A who could have married Eric L Jackson
    - Albert (1908)
    - William (1911)
        - William married Marjorie Morley
            - children:
                - Patricia, who could have married John E Baddeley
- **1912:** William Whalley died
- **1917: Sidney Joseph Baker** married Sallie Bullock
- they had no children
- **Sidney** died of bronco-pneumonia on 22nd January 1919.
- **1920:** Sidney's widow, Sallie married John Perrins
    - Children:
        - Colin (1921)
        - Eileen E (1927)
        - Kenneth J (1930)
        - Doreen M (1932)

Military history relating to Sydney Baker

WW1 Medal Roll
This shows that Sydney J Baker enlisted as a Gunner in the Royal Garrison Artillery, Reg. No. 49968. However he was subsequently transferred to the Royal Engineers, Reg. No. 249154, by means of AO 204 of 1916, on account of benefit of service. At this point his rank would presumably have become Sapper (*see the last section below*).
He arrived in France 12th July 1915, which qualified him for 15 Star, War and Victory Medals. It is uncertain whether the transfer occurred before or after he moved to France.

Commonweath War Graves Commission (CWGC)
Shows that Driver S. J .Baker. No. 249154, 21st Signal Coy. Royal Engineers was attached to 95th Bde. Royal Field Artillery.

General Notes
For a time, including WW1, the Royal Artillery was divided into three:

- Royal Horse Artillery (light, mobile artillery)
- Royal Field Artillery (medium artillery)
- Royal Garrison Artillery (heavy artillery)

The RHA and RFA, who often fought alongside each other, would be providing support to the infantry. The RGA in contrast would be long range, and might well concentrate on attacking the enemy artillery, or strategic targets.
The most numerous sections of the Royal Engineers were the Field and Signal Companies, whose job was to provide technical expertise to the front line.
As the Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers operated in small sections and were moved around as required, it is almost impossible to trace the movement of individual sections. It is however known

that 95th Bde RFA, was a New Army Brigade, and part of 21st Division, which took part in many of the major battles of 1918. Sydney must have been involved in many of these.

Our guess is that Sydney originally volunteered for the RGA but was transferred to the R.E. as a Driver 28th April 1917 before going to France because he displayed some level of technical competence or ability to learn quickly. This raises some questions about his pre-war occupation, stated as ***Butcher*** on his army records.

Beeston Frank

- **Parents:** James and Agnes Beeston, of Little Sugnall, Eccleshall, Staffs.
- **Regiment:** West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own) 2nd Battalion
- **Rank:** Private
- **Service number:** 52924
- **Initial medical examination:** Stoke-on-Trent 19th August 1914
- **Enlisted:** Lichfield, Staffs
- **Date of birth:** 1899 (registered at Stone)
- **Date of death:** 21st July 1918
- **Age of death:** 19
- **Interred:** Glageon Communal Cemetery (Grave Reference: G2)



Headstone: F Beeston





The village of Glageon is about 3 kilometres west of Trelon, 11 kilometres south-east of Avesnes and 56 kilometres east of Cambrai. The Communal Cemetery and Extension lie west of the village.

The cemetery was used for German soldiers and Allied prisoners who subsequently died, from September 14 to August 18, the extension was used until October. Only British and Russian graves now remain. All of those in the cemetery died in June, July and August 1918

Family history relating to Frank Beeston

- **Parents:**
  - James Beeston (1869 -1935)
    - Baliff on farm in 1911
    - Reginald William (Brother) who enlisted 1914 6th Battalion
    - South Staffs Regiment, Service Number: 8871
  - Agnes Beeston (nee Perkins 1870 -1951)

- **Siblings and their history:**
  - William (1890-1969) - Waggoner in 1911
  - James (1892)
    - James married Annie Simkin in 1913. Their children:
      - Reginald (1914) who married Henrietta Dobson in 1945.
      - Agnes (1917)
      - Alice (1920)
      - Dorothy (1921)
      - Nora (1923-1990)
      - WilliamT (1926)
      - Elsie (1929) who married Howard Atkins in 1953
      - Ina B (1931) who married Alan Brookesin 1958
      - George Edward (1936-1990)
    - Charles (1894 –1967) Cowman in 1911
      - Charles married Vera A Latham. They had a son, Sydney (1925-2000)
    - Thomas (1896)
      - Thomas married Mary Dutton. Known children:
      - Nora (1920-2006)
      - Joyce (1924-2006) - Joyce had 4 children
      - Rosaline (1935-2007)
    - Arthur (1901 - 1973)
      - Arthur married Florence Whitfield in1931.
    - Albert (1903-1985)
    - Amy (1905-1979))
      - Amy married Edward Perrins in 1940,
    - Alice (1908)
      - Alice had a son Kenneth Beeston (1929-1935)
    - Annie (1910-1941)
      - Annie married Joseph Bailey in 1936.

It is believed that Frank was a prisoner of war
(Princes Own Regiment, Prisoner of War records number RL77487).

Military history relating to Frank Beeston

Battalion Notes:

- **5th November.1914** Mobilised for war and landed at Havre and engaged in various actions on the Western Front including :
  - **1915:** The Battle of Neuve Chapelle, The Battle of Aubers, The action of Bois Grenier.
  - **1916:** The Battle of Albert.
  - **1917:** The German retreat to the Hindenburg Line, The Battle of Pilkem, The Battle of Langemarck.
  - **1918:** The Battle of St Quentin, The actions at the Somme crossings, The Battle of Rosieres, The actions of Villers-Bretonneux, The Battle of the Aisne 1918, The Battle of the Scarpe, The Final Advance in Artois.

Battle of Aisne (where it is thought that Frank was captured):

At 1am on 27th May 1918, a heavy German bombardment with gas and high explosive hit the entire area between the front line beyond the Chemin and Fismes itself. The infantry began to attack three hours later. The Division was instructed to hold the second line of defence, except for the poor 8th Border which was sent off to hold the Aisne bridges at Pontavert and Concevreux.

By 10am, all three Brigades had come under orders of the 21st, 8th and 50th Divisions respectively, which by now were fighting for their lives north of the river. By mid-day the Germans had broken through and crossed the Aisne: the units of 25th Division were thrown piecemeal into action. They were all but destroyed. The 11th Lancashire Fusiliers, holding high ground north of the Vesle, held out to the last man.
The remnants of many units were temporarily joined into composite units, fighting a withdrawal as the enemy pressed on many miles across the River Marne. Casualties between 26 May and 14 June amounted to 4338 officers and men, of whom 2511 were missing.

Military history relating to Frank's brother, James

James enlisted on 10 December 1915 (Service no 35017) and was placed in the Staffs Regiment Battalion Training Reserve. He was living in Pershall at the time with his wife, Annie and their child Reginald James.

He was mobilised in February 1917 and arrived in Italy in November 1917 as part of the 1st Battalion South Staffordshire Regiment. He is recorded has having lost 2 days pay on 25 October 1917 for overstaying his leave pass by 9 hours!

The 1st Battalion South Staffordshire Regiment was moved in November 1917 from Passchendaele to Italy to strengthen the Italian resistance against the Austria-Hungary forces and engaged in various actions between Mantua and Marcaria before taking over the front line at the Montello on the 4th December. In 1918 they were in action during the fighting on the Asiago Plateau and the Battle of Vittorio Veneto, including the passage of the Piave and the Monticano. Demobilisation took place in January and February 1919 although James was transferred to the Suffolk Regiment in March 1919, then based in Taranto, Italy.

He was granted 2 weeks leave at the end of April and rejoined the battalion on 8th May. It is recorded that he was hospitalized for food poisoning from the 9th - 19th July 1919 and hospitalized again from 18th August - 9th October. He was finally discharged on 30th December 1919 when his medical condition was classed as **A1**. It is also noted on his records that he was of ***good character***.

Blackston William

- **Full name:** William Blackston
- **Born:** 1888 in Croston Chorley
- **Parents:**
  - Thomas Blackston (1863)
  - Mary Ellen Blackston (nee Trafford) (1861)
- **Enlisted:** Hanley 1914
- **Regiment:** North Staffordshire Regiment 1st/5th Battalion
- **Service No:** 2820

Date of death: 21st July 1915

Commemorated: Ypres (Menin Gate) - panel 55



Menin Gate (Ypres)

Ypres (now Ieper) is a town in the Province of West Flanders. The Memorial is situated at the eastern side of the town on the road to Menin (Menen) and Courtrai (Kortrijk). Each night at 8 pm the traffic is stopped at the Menin Gate while members of the local Fire Brigade sound the Last Post in the roadway under the Memorial's arches.

- **Family History:**
  - **Parents:**
    - Thomas Blackston (1863)
    - Mary Ellen Blackston (nee Trafford) (1861)
  - **Siblings:**
    - Maggie (about 1885)
    - Joseph (1891)
    - John(1894)
    - Janet (about 1896)
    - Richard(1898)
    - Thomas(1900)
  - **William Blackston**
    - 1891 and 1901 census show William in Croston Lancashire
    - 1911 census shows William in Eccleshall
    - William worked as a gardener at Johnson Hall, Eccleshall in 1911, and around ths same time, William was working alongside another gardener, **Nathan Goorum**, another of the Eccleshall fallen.



Johnson Hall

William had a younger brother, John who also fell in the Great War.

John Blackston: L/Cpl. 16057 (brother of William)

- John Blackstone served in the Machine Gun Section. He was shot in the neck as he left the trenches at Serre on the start of the attack on the 1st July 1916.
- John Blackstone is buried at Euston Road Cemetery, behind the lines, and close to two other Chorley Pals.

- Born in Croston near Chorley in 1893, he lived with his parents Thomas and Mary Ellen at 30 Grape Lane in the village; he was one of six children. John worked as a Gardener on the Croston Estate and worshipped at St. Michael's Church. His family name is recorded as Blackston on all the Census records from 1841 to 1901 (although it is Blackstone on the 1881 Census, the original records / transcript clearly show Blackston).
- John's brother William served as Private 2820 in the 1st / 5th Battalion of the Staffordshire Regiment and was killed in action on the 21st July 1915, being commemorated on the Menin Gate in Ypres - his name being spelt **Blackston**.
- The 1911 Census shows the family still at 30 Grape Lane in Croston but their name is recorded as Blackstone - William had left the family home by this time.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Chorley Pals Memorial

for their kind permission to publish this information.

Bonner Arthur H



Headstone:

A Bonner Inscription: The King's (Liverpool Regiment)

- **Full name:** Arthur Herbert Bonner
- **Date of birth:** 1884 in Tilford Surrey
- **Date of death:** 18th October 1916
- **Age of death:** 32
- **Enlisted information:**
  - **Date of Enlistment:** unknown
  - **Birth place:** Tilford, Surrey
  - **Place of Enlistment:** Lichfield, Staffs
  - **Residence:** Eccleshall, Staffs
- **Regiments and Service Numbers:**
  - Initially: The North Staffs - 25032
  - Then with: The King's Regiment (Liverpool) 13th Battalion - 48675 (engraved on his headstone), the photograph of which was kindly supplied by The Channel Islands Great War Study Group where Arthur is included in the Guernsey Roll of Honour (see Military History below).
- **Rank: Private**
- **Medals awarded:**
  - Victory
  - British
- **Interred at:** Varennes Military Cemetery

Grave Reference: I. B. 31.

Varennes is a village 11 kilometres from Albert and 18 kilometres from Amiens.



Varennes Military Cemetery

Family History:

- **Parents: Charles Bonner (1860) and Matilda (Woodger)**
- **Siblings:**
  - Albert (1886)
  - Nellie (1887)
  - Harvey William (1890)
  - Harry (1893)
  - Leonard (1896)
  - Ethel (1898)
- **Wife:**
  - The Commonwealth War Graves Commission **(CWGC)** documents Arthur's wife, **Ruth Bonner** (about 1882 to 1978) as resident at Bank Lodge, Eccleshall, Staffs.
  - We believe this was **Ruth Dyer** and they married in 1911 at Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire. She was working in Epsom, a district in Croyden and was a cook in a household, but probably travelled back to Chipping Norton as that was her parish, possibly for a family wedding. She was born around 1882.
- **Children**
  - Constance Ruth (born Hexam 1913, died 1978)
    - Ruth married Charles William Dixon 4th April 1936 at Holy Trinity Church, Eccleshall. They were both 23, Charles father was given as William Dixon.
- **Occupation:**

- The records show Arthur as a gardener, as was his father.
- **1891 Census:**
  - Shows the family living at Tilford Green, Farnham, Surrey
  - Arthur's father, Charles is a gardener
  - Arthur is 7 and living with his parents and siblings Albert, Nellie and Harvey
- **1901 Census:**
  - Shows Arthur as under gardener at Farnham
- **1911 Census:**
  - Shows Arthur in Croydon - The Gardens Addlington Park Surrey
- **On the move:**
  - Having married Ruth, Arthur moved to Hexham, where he and Ruth had Constance Ruth in 1913. The reason they moved away was that Addington Park's owner had died in 1909 and the house and grounds were up for sale in 1911, with a view to building a large housing development.
  - Currently we have no information about them moving to Eccleshall, the address on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission records for Arthur.

Military (and more Family) History (some information still under research):

- **The Guernsey connection**
  - The Guernsey connection could be related to Arthur's first regiment, the North Staffs. The 4th North Staffs which was a territorial group went from Lichfield to Guernsey to take over the training. In 1916, they moved to Marske, and in December 1916 the 1st The Royal Guernsey Light Infantry was formed.
  - There is no current evidence to confirm if Arthur was in Guernsey, but he is mentioned on their **Roll of Honour** (see above) which implies that he had been based in Guernsey and had formed local connections.
  - We believe he was there with the North Staffs and then was transferred to the Liverpool Regiment. The Liverpool Regiment was not in Guernsey, and so perhaps he was just transferred as being suitably trained.
- **Arthur's brothers who also served:**
  - **Leonard**
    served in The Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment) 7th Battalion but was killed on the Somme on the 14th July 1916. He is commemorated on Pier and Face 5 D and 6 D at the Thiepval Memorial.
  - **Harvey**
    is thought also joined in 1906. He transferred to the Canadian Force and was buried in Canada, having still been in the army. He was in the Royal Canada Corps of Signals and died 8th Nov 1947 aged 58.
  - **Albert**
    joined the Manchester Regiment (possibly around 1906)
    and was in India in 1911 as a corporal in the 2/East Lancs Rgt

Buttery Edward G



Lance Corporal Edward Buttery

- **Full name:** Edward Gladstone Buttery
- **Parents:** William and Hannah Buttery, of Tillington, Stafford
- **Date of birth:** 1889 (registered Stafford)
- **Regiment:** Coldstream Guards 2nd Battalion
- **Rank:** Lance Corporal
- **Service number:** 11616
- **Date of death:** 16th September 1916
- **Age:** 28
- **Interred:** Guards' Cemetery Lesboeufs



Guards' Cemetery Lesboeufs

Lesboeufs is a village 16 kilometres north-east of Albert. From Arras take the N17 south. Then after Bapaume, take the D19 to Lesboeufs. Take the right fork by the Church through Le Transloy to Leboeufs village, then take the C5 towards Ginchy. The Cemetery is on the right hand side.

Grave reference: VIII. P. 4.

The family inscription on Edward's headstone reads **ALOAHOE ALWAYS**.

Currently there are two theories for its meaning:

- It is the gone away call sounded when the fox has gone to earth.
- Its origin may be Hawaiian, although strange to see it on a War Grave headstone in France. It may be a variation (or misspelling) of **ALOHA OE** which has the following meanings:
  - love to you
  - greetings
  - farewell

Either of these theories would make sense because the inscription was most probably from his wife, and as both were school teachers, they would have been more literate than most.



Lance Corporal Edward Buttery

Family History:

- **1889:**
  Edward Gladstone Buttery is born (registered Stafford)
- **1911 census**
  - **Butterys**
    There were 8 surviving children in 1911 out of a total of 13.
    Those registered as living at 14 Eccleshall Road, Tillington:
    - William Buttery (*Albert Willie*) age 59 - Head of household
    - Hannah Buttery age 55 - wife
    - **Edward Gladstone Buttery** age 21 -Son -Assistant School Master
    - Alfred Theodore Alexandra age 13 - son
    - Gwenllian Victoria Amy age 8 - daughter
  - **Parkers**
    The Parkers had 4 children, all of whom were surviving in 1911.
    Those registered as living at High St. Eccleshall:
    - James Parker age 66 - Head of household - Income Tax Collector
    - Elizabeth Parker age 65 - Wife
    - **Kathleen Jane Parker** age 23 - Daughter - Assistant Elementary School Mistress
- **1915**

  Edward was posted to France on the 22 January.
  Edward Gladstone Buttery marries **Kathleen Jane Parker** at Holy Trinity Church, Eccleshall..
  As they were both School Teachers, they may have worked at the same school.
  There where no children of the marriage.
- **16th September 1916**
  Edward Gladstone Buttery is killed in action at the Battle of Flers-Courcelette.

Observation:

They married during his leave (probably his first) from the front. Typically, a soldier got six days leave, but this usually involved two days travel home and two days back! He died a year later, so they probably had, at most, 4 days together.

More family history relating to Edward Gladstone Buttery

Memorials to Edward inside of Holy Trinity Church

- **From his widow, Kathleen - West Wall, North of Tower**

IN MEMORY OF MY HUSBAND
CORPORAL EDWARD BUTTERY
OF THE
2ND COLDSTREAM GUARDS
WHO WAS KILLED IN ACTION
SEPTEMBER 15TH 1916
'A VERIE PARFAITE GENTLE KNIGHT'



- **Inside Main Porch, right wall, facing door**



Transciption

CORPl E Buttery
2nd Coldstream Guards



Stafford Advertiser—4thNovember 1916


STAFFORD SCHOOLMASTER'S DEATH IN ACTION.

An article appeared in the Stafford Advertiser.
Unfortunately the full text cannot be read, but the heading **Stafford Schoolmaster Death in Action** can be clearly seen.

What about Edwards widow, Kathleen?

Mrs. Kathleen Buttery continued teaching at Offley Hay School and we have the following personal anecdotal story as remembered by one of our own researchers:

> *One evening mother-in-law was sitting in at the school house. Mrs. Buttery did not have any children, but it appeared that she kept a monkey! A small, but definitely real monkey! This monkey must have had the run of the house as every time mother -in-law got up and tried to leave the room, the monkey grabbed a candlestick and seemed about to throw it at her. She was quite frightened by it and was relieved when Mrs. Buttery returned. It seems rather an eccentric thing for a school teacher to have a monkey but it is no doubt true as mother-in-law was not the type to invent a story like that and it must have made an impression for her to relate it to her children.*

Military History:

The individual battalions of the five Guards Regiments went to France as part of separate Divisions. In August 1915, whilst in France, they were amalgamated into the Guards Division. Edward died on 16th September 1916. This was the second day of the Battle of Flers-Courcelette, part of the Battle of the Somme. It is notable for two events: the first time ever that the entire Guards Division went into action together, and the first time tanks were used. It was also the most successful advance of the Somme campaign. An advance of 2,500-3,500 yards over a 12,000 yard front was achieved. The village of Flers was taken and Courcelette was reached. However, the breakthrough to Bapaume, the German Headquarters on the Somme, was not achieved.

Carter Arthur M

- **Full name:** Arthur Morgan Carter
  - **Parents:**
    - **Father:** Joseph Morgan Carter (1858 - 15th November 1937) 1 Austin Villas, Goodyear Street, Gloucester - a builder's foreman
    - **Mother:** Lucy Jane Carter (nee Cooke)
- **Date of birth:** late 1889 (Gloucester)
- **Enlisted:** Stoke-on-Trent - 29th August 1914 (age 24 years, 11 months) (living in Eccleshall at the time as a grocers assistant)
- **Regiments:** Originally The Hussars, then The East Surrey Regiment - 8th Battalion
- **Rank:** Private
- **Service number:** 10043
- **Medals awarded:**
  - 15 Star
  - War Medal
  - Victory Medal
- **Date of death:** 4th April 1918
- **Age:** 28 (single)
- **Interred:** Villers Bretonneux Military Cemetery
- **Grave reference:** XV. A. 3
- Villers-Bretonneux is a village 16 kilometres east of Amiens on the straight main road to St Quentin. The Cemetery is about 2 kilometres north of the village on the east side of the road to Fouilloy.



Private Arthur M Carter



Villers Bretonneux

Military Cemetery

Family History:

- **Arthur** was born in Gloucester and was apprenticed to Whittaker for 3 years in Cheltenham c1909.
  - Relatives:
  - Father, Joseph Morgan Carter - appears to have been married several times to:
    - Elizabeth Gabb in 1880
    - Lucy Jane Cooke in 1888 (she died in 1892) - children
      - **Arthur Morgan Carter** in late 1889
      - Jessie Carter in 1892
    - Ann Elizabeth James in 1894 the 1901 census shows **Arthur** age 11 with Jessie (sister) age

9, Harold J (half brother) age 5.

- The 1911 census shows Harold J age 15, Alfred H age 7
  - Half brother - Harold James Carter born 1896 (23 in July 1919) - a miller
  - Harold also served—see below
  - Half brother - Alfred Henry Carter born 1905 (15 in July 1919) - a driller
  - Sister - Jessie L M Fox (28 in July 1919) living at 53 Acton Head, Long Eaton, Notts (possibly died 1952)
  - Uncles - W A Carter and J L Cooke
  - Aunts - Emily Cooke and Lydia Cooke (possibly Kidderminster)

- At sometime **Arthur** moved to Eccleshall where he was a grocer's assistant before enlisting.

- The Carter family remained in Gloucester.

Arthur is also listed on a memorial plaque alongside the City of Gloucester war memorial on the screen wall that commemorates all services 1914-1918. The Cenotaph itself seems to be restricted to those who served in the Gloucester Regiment.



City of Gloucester War Memorial.

Military History:

- **29th August 1914** enlisted at Stoke on into the 20th Hussars No 12941
- **2nd June 1915** transferred to East Surrey Reg, 8th Battalion No 10043 - Private. (East Surrey Regiment was part of Kitchener's Army.)
- **15th July 1915** first went to France
- **During 1915** wounded in the calf.
- **5th October 1916** wounded and suffered shell shock.
- The family saw a report in the local paper and wrote to the army at Hounslow to enquire as to where Arthur was as they had heard no information about his injury from the army.
- **4th April 1918** he was killed in action aged 28. (On this date, his Battalion was part of 18th Eastern Division, which was in action in the Battle of Avre, part of the 1918 Somme campaign).
- The only property sent back to the family was his identity disc, which the family acknowledged in 1920.
- The family asked for information about where he fell and where buried.

It seems to be a common theme that men enlisted in cavalry regiments at the start of the war were transferred to infantry, presumably because of the casualty figures.
The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment provides an excellent web site that includes a comprehensive set of ***War Diaries*** including the time Arthur was killed.

Military History regarding Arthur's half brother, Harold:

Harold enlisted on 12th August 1914 aged 19. He joined the 2nd battalion of the Gloucestershire Regiment, service number 10347.

He was posted to the Balkan front in 19th June 1915 and received no wounds during his service although he suffered frostbite in December 1915.

In June 1916 he qualified as a First Class Signaller. Signallers were usually close to the frontline troops, providing signals communications back to the Company and Battalion HQ. Visual signals were used (the sun and mirrors in the day and lamps at night), morse code and field telephones. Signallers were also used in forward positions to assist the artillery and provide information on enemy targets.

Harold was discharged in July 1919 and by January 1920 was living in London.

Medals:

As well as the British War Medal, the 1914-15 Star and the Victory Medal he was awarded the **Medaille d'Honneur avec Glaives en Bronze**. This medal was awarded for acts of courage during a rescue and the Bronze grade was awarded if the rescuer exposed himself to a life threatening condition. The medal ranked after the Croix de Guerre and was awarded to service members of the Allied forces.

Supplement to the London Gazette 21st July 1919

Harold was mentioned in the Supplement to the London Gazette 21st July 1919 regarding his ***Medaille d'Honneur avec Glaives en Bronze*** (bottom right of the clipping) and reads:



SUPPLEMENT TO THE LONDON GAZETTE, 21 JULY, 1919. 9229

279480 Serjeant (acting Battery Serjeant-Major) George White, 138th Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery (Devonport).
13405 Regimental Serjeant-Major Frederick William Whitehead, 10th Battalion, Devonshire Regiment (Misterton, Somerset).
8950 Company Serjeant-Major William Wigley, D.C.M., 1st Battalion, York and Lancaster Regiment (Leslie Driffield).
18953 Serjeant Harold Williams, M.M., 13th Battalion, Cheshire Regiment (Tenbury).
10767 Private William Henry Butler, 8th Battalion, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry (Birmingham).
T2/038/01848 Driver John Henry Cann, Royal Army Service Corps (Stratton Audley).
428037 Lance-Corporal (acting Second Corporal) John Carmichael, Royal Engineers (Territorial Force) (Widnes).
10347 Private Harold James Carter, 2nd Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment (Gloucester).

10347 Private Harold James Carter,
2nd Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment (Gloucester).

Challener William

- **Full name:** William Challener
- **Parents:** Thomas and Annie Challener of Southwell House, Eccleshall.
- **Date of birth:** 1889 (registered Stone)
- **Regiment:** North Staffordshires 5th Battalion
- **Rank:** Private
- **Service number:** 201810
- **Date of death:** 14th March 1917
- **Age:** 26
- **Interred:** Shrine Cemetery, Bucquoy
- **Grave reference:** I. A. 3.



Private William Challener

Bucquoy is approximately 19 kilometres south-south-west of Arras and Shrine Cemetery is on the outskirts of the village, on the south side of the road to Hannescamps.

Family History:

- **1888:** Thomas Challener marries Annie Bray (registered Newport Salop)
- **1889: William Challener** is born (registered Stone)
  1901 census living at High St. Eccleshall:
  - Thomas Challener age 41 - Head - Plumber
  - Annie Challener age 39 - Wife
  - Arthur Challener age 12 - Son
  - **William Challener (1890)** age 10 - Son
- **1911 census** living at High St. Eccleshall:
  - Thomas Challener age 51 - Head - Plumber and Housepainter
  - Annie Challener age 48 - Wife
  - Arthur Challener age 22 - Son - Housepainter
  - **William Challener** age 20 - Son - Housepainter
  - Reginald Thomas Challener (1901) age 9 - son
  - Agnes Bailey age 19 - General Servant (domestic)
- Arthur married May Fisher in 1920, had one daughter, Georgina in 1925.
- Reginald Thomas married Irene L Wilcox in 1928 and had:
  - Ronald T (1931)
  - Irene M (1928) (Irene married Robert P Stephens and had Catherine and Andrew)
  - Patricia (1936) (Patricia married John Wood and had Fiona)



Shrine Cemetery, Bucquoy

Military History:

William served with 5th Bt. North Staffordshires which in March 1915 moved to France as part of 46th (North Midland) Division. In January 1916, the battalion was sent to Egypt, only to be recalled within days of their arrival. In spring 1917, as Haig reported to the War Office, he became aware that German units were withdrawing from the Somme. The Germans had decided to set up the Hindenberg line, as a more easily defensible line to the rear. Haig conducted an offensive campaign, 'the operations of the Ancre', which involved the 46th Division. William died on 14th March 1917, the last day of that campaign.

Cooke John

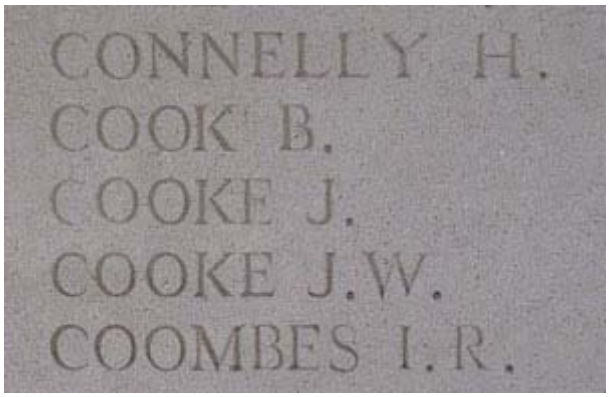
(also remembered on the War Memorial, Croxton)

- **Name:** John Cooke
  The photograph is almost certainly one of John himself.
- **Enlisted:** 8th December 1915
- **Regiment(s):**
  - Iinitially the North Staffs
  - Transferred to the 12th Battalion York and Lancaster Regiment
  - Transferred to the 13th Battalion (Barnsley Pals)
- **Rank:** Private
- **Service number:** 31570
- **Age at death:** 23
- **Date of death:** 25th March 1918
- **Remembered:** Arras Memorial (Bay 8)



Private John Cooke

The Arras Memorial is in the Faubourg-d'Amiens Cemetery, which is in the Boulevard du General de Gaulle in the western part of the town of Arras. The cemetery is near the Citadel, approximately 2 kms due west of the railway station.





Arras Memorial

- **Family History:**

John Cooke was the son of John Cooke who was born in 1864 at Muckleston he married Caroline Adelaide Timmis from Whittingham Farm Croxton, they had 6 children Colin, William, Frank, Walter, John and Florence and they lived and farmed at Woodlands Farm Sugnall.

There is a large poster from WW1 that was obviously issued to all families of servicemen killed.
The inscription (bottom - centre) reads:

> *COOKE, Pte John 31570. 13th Btn York and Lancaster Regt. 25th March 1918, age 23. Son of John Cooke, late of the Woodlands Farm, Sugnall, Eccleshall, Staffs.*



Acknowledgements

Many thanks to his Great Niece, Christine for help with the research.

Military history relating to the John Cooke

John enlisted at Eccleshall on December 3rd 1915 he was 21. He stated that his occupation was a cowman; his height was 5ft 9 inches chest 36 inches with 2 inch expansion and with no distinctive marks. His enlistment was approved on 12th June 1916 at Lichfield and he was appointed to 3/6th North Staffordshire Regiment which was formed at home base in May 1915 then moved to Grantham in October 1915 and in April 1916 was renamed 5th and 6th North Staffordshire Regiment. John was sent to France arriving at Boulogne on 29th September 1916 and then compulsorily transferred to the 5th Reserve Bn York and Lancaster Regiment and then posted as a much needed reinforcement to the 12th Bn York and Lancaster Regiment and allotted a new army number.

The 12th Battalion known as the City of Sheffield 'Pals' Battalion fought on the first day of the Somme Battle (1st July 1916) at the heavily fortified village of Serre and were very severely mauled, after three days they were taken out of the line and were gradually returned to strength but never again recovered the 'Pals' character. 'Pals' battalions were never again used because the small communities they came from were devastated by the losses, in Accrington there was not a household that didn't lose someone.

During the harsh winter of 1916/17 887 officers and men of the 12th were evacuated to hospital with various ailments and again numbers were depleted reinforcements came from all over.

John stayed with the 12th and he was given home leave on 24th November and returned to the front on the 7th December.

In May 1917 the Battalion defended the vital Windmill Spur in the Gravelle sector suffering 143 casualties before playing a successful part in the attack at Oppy-Gravelle on 28th June. The battalion was again to suffer in the German gas attack at Vimy Ridge in August and September 1917. Finally, in the early weeks of 1918 the weakened battalion was

forced to disband and the survivors joined with 13th battalion (Barnsley Pals). The 13th battalion until February 1918 had been part of the 94th Brigade but as this too was disbanded the13th battalion went to the 93rd Brigade 62nd West Riding Division and it was with this unit that John Cooke was to fight in his last engagement in the battle of Bapaume.

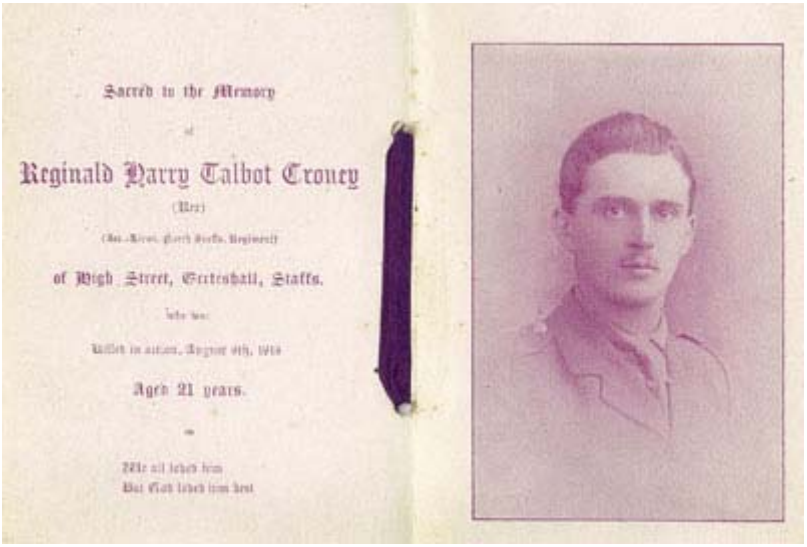
The Battle of Bapaume. 24th-25th March 1918 Operation Michael.

The Allies suspected that the German forces would soon make a decisive move. They were right. On the 14th March General Ludendorf was planning a surprise offensive to divide the French and British forces. As anticipated the German army amassed its troops and launched an offensive on 21st march on a front south of Arras in the St Quentin sector. General Byng commanded the Third Army defending the area from Arras south to Flesquieres Salient, to the south General Hubert Gough and the 5th Army held the line down to the junction with the French at Barisis.

In the late evening of the 24th March after enduring unceasing shelling, Bapaume was evacuated and then occupied by German forces on the following day. After three days the infantry was exhausted and the advance was bogged down it became increasingly difficult to move artillery and supplies over the wasteland that had been the Somme battlefield of 1916. Fresh British troops were hurried to the region but the German breakthrough occurred just north of the boundary between the French and British armies and they came close to splitting the two armies. As the British were forced west the need for French reinforcements became increasingly urgent. The movements of 25th March were extremely confused the weight, of fighting developed to the north of 54th brigade who were now fighting with the French and survivors of the 18th Division. By 10 am on the 25th the left flank of 7th Bedford's was exposed as the French around them retreated. Midday saw them in a stronger position until the French artillery thinking they were Germans opened fire with shells and machine gun fire forcing them to retire to high ground west of Grandu. More orders were received and countermanded and rear-guard actions by many isolated groups took place throughout the rest of the day and night, the men of the third army slowed the German advance but further retirement was ordered beyond the Ancre. Throughout the night the positions were attained but in the process gaps appeared and it was during all this confusion that John Cooke was killed in action.

Croney Reginald H

- **Full name:** Reginald Harry Talbot Croney (known as Rex)
- **Parents:** James and Hephzibah Mary Croney, of Eccleshall, Staffs.
- **Occupation:** Worked in a Solicitor's Office in Eccleshall
- **Regiment:** North Staffordshire Regiment 1st Bn. attd. 8th Bn
- **Rank:** Second Lieutenant
- **Service number:** 122723
- **Age at death:** 21
- **Date of death:** 9th August 1918
- **Medals Awarded:**
  - Victory
  - British



Reginald Harry Talbot Croney

- **Interred: Sandpits British Cemetery, Fouquereuil**
- **Grave reference: IV. B. 2**

Fouquereuil is a small village in the Department of the Pas- de-Calais between Bethune and Bruay la Buissiere. Leave the village on the D181 heading towards Gosnay. 1.5 kilometres from the church turn right onto Rue des Potieres. After 200 metres turn left and pass under the Motorway. The cemetery is 400 metres from the Motorway bridge slightly to the north, on the edge of a woodland.



Sandpits British Cemetery, Fouquereuil

Family History:

- **1878** sees the marriage (registered in Colchester) of:
  - James Croney
    - Born **Jesmondine** 1854 in Newcastle, Northumberland
    - Died 1924 in Eccleshall
  - Hephzibah Mary Smith
    - Born 1869 in Peldon, Essex
    - Died 1934 in Lichfield
- **1897** Reginald Harry Talbot born (registered in Newcastle-u-Lyme)
- **1901 Census** documents the Croney family living at High St, Eccleshall
  - James Croney Head (47)
  - Hephzibah M Croney Wife (42)
  - Katie Croney Daughter (18)



Second Lieutenant R H T Croney

- Elizabeth Croney Daughter (16)
- Dorothy T. Croney Daughter (6)
- **Reginald H.T. Croney Son (3)**

- **1911 Census** documents the Croney family now living at Kings Head, High St. Eccleshall
  - James Croney Head (58) - Landlord
  - Hephzibah M Croney Wife (50) - assisting in the business
  - Dorothy T. Croney Daughter (16) - assisting in the business
    - Dorothy never married but had a daughter:
      - Esther M (Stella 1920 - 1998) married Richard Cobb (date not known) and remembered on the family grave children:
        - Adrian
        - Andrew
        - Graeme
        - David
  - Reginald H.T. Croney Son (13) - school



Croney Family Grave
Holy Trinity Churchyard
Eccleshall

The census also records the fact that there were 5 children, 4 of whom were still alive.

Betty (Elizabeth) died in 1907 and is buried with her parents.
Also remembered on the grave is **Reginald** with the following inscription.

Also of REX,
2nd Lieutenant, North Staffs Regt,
Son of the above
who was killed in action
Aug 9th 1918, aged 21 years.
Interred at Bethune, France.

The following notes have been taken from the log of Offley Hay School:

- 5th July 1918
  Miss Croney was granted leave of absence today on account of her brother having forty eight hours leave from France.
- 13th August 1918
  Miss Croney was absent today owing to the death of her brother, who was killed in action.
- 16th August 1918
  Miss Croney has not been to school since Tuesday, and has resigned her post as Supplementary Teacher.

Military history relating to the Reginald Croney Family

What follows is substantial and fascinating **Military History** relating to:

- **Reginald**
- Reginald's brother, **Bertram**
- Reginald's father, **James**

Reginald Harry Talbot Croney, known as Rex, (1898-1918)

Prior to enlistment, Reginald worked in a Solicitor's office in Eccleshall. He was enlisted as a Private Soldier in the 1st Battalion North Staffs Regt and was promoted to the rank of Sergeant. Reginald deployed to France on 8th May 1916 and was subsequently commissioned and as a 2nd Lieutenant in the 8th Battalion North Staffs.

Reginald was killed on the 9th August 1918.

The 8th Battalion was a Service Battalion raised on the 18th September 1914 at Lichfield and came under the command of 57th Brigade of the 19th (Western) Division and deployed to France on 18th July 1915. The Battalion was transferred to the 56th Brigade within the same Division on 17 February 1918. Reseach has not find out in which action he was killed, but by August 1918, the final advance to victory was in swing, so it could have been in any minor skirmish.

James Croney (Reginald's Father)

James was initially a Ship's Engineer and joined the Northumberland Fusilers before transferring to The Grenadier Guards. Whilst based in Colchester with the Grenadier Guards, James met and married Hephzibah Smith from Peldon in Essex. James, together with Hephzibah, deployed to Egypt with the Grenadiers for the campaign against the forces of Ahmed Orabi, which culminated in the decisive battle of Tel-el-Kabir. James was awarded the Egyptian Medal.

James transferred to the North Staffordshire Regt and in 1891 had attained the rank of Colour Sergeant and was living at 13 Croft Street, Newcastle-under-Lyme. By 1901 he had moved to Eccleshall and was the Licensee of the Kings Head, whilst still serving as a Sergeant Instructor of Volunteers.

- In 1911 James was still the Licensee of the Kings Head.
- James re-enlisted on the 7th November 1914 at the age of 61 and served until the 10th May 1919 *at home*, probably Lichfield.
- James advanced years is extremly unusual, however, as a Colour Sergeant and a Sergeant Instructor, he would certainly have expertise in the training of new recruits.
- James died in 1924 at the age of 70.

Bertram James Croney (Reginald's Brother) Born Pelden, Essex in 1880

Bertram enlisted at Colchester into the Essex Regt in 1896, transfered to 2nd Battalion North Staffordshire Regt in 1897 and deployed to India. In 1899 Bertram sailed to South Africa and was present at the Relief of Mafeking. By 1901 Bertram had been awarded the Queen's South Africa Medal and had been re-deployed to India. In 1911 Bertram had attained the rank of Colour Sergeant. Bertram returned with the Battalion to England in 1914 and most likely transferred to the 1st 6th North Staffordshire Regt at this time and was deployed to France in 1915.
Bertram was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal in 1918.
The Citation reads:

> *CSM(T/RSM) BJ Croney, 2nd Battalion North Staffordshire Regt, attached to 1/6th Battalion. For gallantry and devotion to duty. During the whole of the fighting since 26th September 1918, he has organised special carrying parties for ammunition, and he personally conducted them to the firing line. It was due to his energy on the 6th November 1918, near La Sart, that the supply of ammunition and rations were got to the companies.*

After the war Bertram was posted to the TA Centre in Loughborough as RSM. In 1924 he retired from the army after 28 years service, becoming the Private Secretary to the Countess of Loudon, in Kilmarnock. His subsequent life saw him return to Eccleshall and hence to Abbots Bromley and Rocester where he was the Licencee at the Goats Head and Red Lion Hotel respectively. Upon

retirement in 1946 Bertram moved to Birmingham where he became Company Secretary and accountant at Wragg Brothers, Stonemasons until his death in 1951.

Bertram is buried in Moseley Cemetery.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Avril Simons, the Granddaughter of Bertram James Croney for providing the photograph and so much of the information.

Davison Ernest

- **Full name:** Ernest Davison
- **Parents:** Frederick and Harriet (Bennett)
- **Place and Date of Birth:** Eccleshall 1891
- **Occupation:** Platelayers Labourer
- **Location of enlistment:** Coventry
- **Regiment:** Royal Field Artillery 10th Bty
- **Rank:** Driver
- **Service number:** 66763
- **Age:** 24
- **Date of death:** 27th October 1915
- **Medals Awarded:**
  - Victory
  - British
  - 1915 Star
- **Interred at:** The Pieta Military Cemetery, Malta (Plot: A. XVIII. 6.)







Pieta Military Cemetery Malta

The Pieta, Northern Harbour Military Cemetery is located in Triq id-Duluri (Our Lady of Sorrows Street), 2 kilometres south-west of Valletta on the road to Sliema. On the edge of the Gwardamanga district, the entrance is on Triq Il-Principessa Melita, leading to Triq Tal-Pieta and Msida Sea Front and Creek.

Military History

Ernest was in 10th Battery, part of 147th Brigade, Royal Field Artillery, which was part of 29th Division. The Division left Avonmouth for Eygpt on 16th -22nd March 1915, sailing to Alexandria in Egypt via Malta. **Driver Ernest Davison** is recorded on the WW1 Medal Role as arriving in Egypt on 2nd April 1915. The Division re-embarked on 7th April for Gallipoli, where they landed on 21st April. The Division was fully involved in the Gallipoli campaign.

Malta was never in the front line in WW1, unlike WW2, but gained the reputation as ***Nurse of the Mediterranean***. From spring 1915, it set up 27 hospitals and throughout the war, dealt with 135,000 sick and wounded British, Australian, and other allied troops from Gallipoli and Salonika. In these campaigns, as well as those killed by enemy action, many men died of malaria, dysentery, and other diseases.

It is likely that Ernest was evacuated from Gallipoli to Malta, where he died either of wounds or disease. (On his record he is described as ***died*** rather than ***died of wounds***.)

Family History

- **1901 Census** shows the Davison family living in Newport Road, Eccleshall
  - Frederick (father) age 43
  - Harriet (mother) age 46
  - Elizabeth age 12
  - **Ernest age 10**
  - Harvey age 8
  - Agnes age 6
  - Herbert age 3
- **1911 Census documents:**
  - The following family members still living in Eccleshall
    - Frederick (father) age 54
    - Harriet (mother) age 57
    - Herbert age 13 (groom domestic at Johnson Hall)
  - **Ernest Davison** (still single)
    - Lodging at 3 Railway cottages Coventry,
      the home of Thomas and Esther Russell,
      working as a Platelayers Labourer for the L.N.W.R

Farnsworth Ernest J

- **Full Name:** Ernest Job Farnsworth
- **Born:** 1892
- **Parents:** Son of Ernest and Eliza Farnsworth (nee Bannister) of Badnall, Eccleshall, Staffs
- **Place of Wartime Residence:** Eccleshall
- **Regiment:** Suffolk Regiment, 2nd Battalion
- **Rank:** Private
- **Service Number:** 19209
- **Date of Death:** 16th August 1916
- **Age:** 24
- **Ernest's name was not added to the war memorial until 2001**
- **Interred at:** Dive Copse British Cemetery, Sailly-le-Sec
- **Grave Referenc:** II. E. 45



Private Ernest Farnsworth



Dive Copse British Cemetery,
Sailly-le-Sec

Sailly-le-Sec is a village in the Department of the Somme, about 20 kilometres east of Amiens. The Cemetery is a little more than 1.5 kilometres north-east of Sailly church.

Family History:

- **Ernest Job Farnsworth**
  - **Born 1892 at Derby**
  - **Siblings:**
    - **Ernest was the only child, but there was an adopted brother, Leslie Sayers**
      - Research suggests that **Leslie Mannington Sayers** was born in 1906 or 1908,
        in Wirksworth or Burton on Trent.
      - Leslie took the Farnsworth name
      - Leslie had a daughter, Patrice who went to America
        - The Revd **Patrice Farnsworth Sessions** lived in Harrisburg PA.
          Organised the Farnsworth one-name group, but ***disappeared*** after 2006



Ernest Job
Farnsworth

- **In 1911, Ernest is living with his grandfather, Job at Walton on the Hill (Weeping Cross Stafford), with them is Constance and Frederick**

- **Grand Parents (Farnsworth side):**
  - **Job Farnsworth** (1833)

    Siblings:
    - **Frederick** (did not marry)
    - **Constance** (did not marry)
    - **William Job**
      research ***suggests*** that William Job:
      - was married and had several daughters, one of which:
        - Jessica Beverley (1896)
          - She married William Fisher and possibly had a daughter, Margaret J. Born in 1924
            - She may have married Richard Pattern, (possibly in Birmingham).
            - In Sussex they had a daughter, Jane B Pattern.
          - was a schoolmaster
          - lived in Cornwall
  - **Emma Farnsworth**
  - **In 1911 Job lived at Longdon(Rugeley)**
- **Parents:**
  - **Ernest Farnsworth**
    - Worked for the railways and at some stage was a station master.
    - In 1911 Ernest and his wife, Eliza are living at Wirksworth.

      Although there is a son living with them and it is stated that the couple have had only one child, the son, Leslie is in fact, Ernest's son with another lady.... Leslie was Leslie Sayers.

      Ernest died in 1929, the result of a fire, he was paralysed...(possibly by a stroke) and unable to escape. At the time he was being cared for by his brother, Frederick who we believe was unmarried. Eliza, his wife, by this time had died and Leslie had gone to London.
  - **Eliza Farnsworth (nee Bannister)**

Stafford Advertiser - 9th September 1916

Official notification has been received by his parents of the death of Pte. Ernest Job Farnsworth, aged 24 of the Suffolk Regiment who is reported to have died of wounds. He is the son of Mr E. Farnsworth, clerk in the goods department of the London and North Western Railway at Crewe who formally lived at 174, Corporation Street Stafford and now resides in a cottage at The Hollies, Newport Road.

The late Pte. Farnsworth is well known in Stafford and before he enlisted was a clerk in the time and stock department at Messrs Siemens Works under Mr Giles Buckingham, having been previously a School Teacher. He enlisted soon after war broke out in the Hussars and subsequently in the Suffolks. Proceeding to the front in June of last year he took part in the severe fighting and came through unharmed. Recovering from the effect of a fall he sustained while billeted in a barn, he re-joined his regiment on Aug 8 last and was dispatched with a draft to the front. He met his death on Aug 16, having apparently just entered the firing line.



Whilst at Stafford, the late Pte. Farnsworth was a member of Siemens Institute and frequently took part in boxing contests. He was a well known athlete and had won numerous valuable prizes from running. He was a member of St Mary's Church choir at Stafford and a capable performer on the violin at local concerts. Mr John Farnsworth, his Grandfather, who lives at Walton-on-the -Hill is a gardener for Dowager Lady Salt and is still active despite his 80 odd years.

Furber John F

- **Full name:** John Francis Furber
- **Parents:** Son of James and Elizabeth (nee Hitchen)
- **Regiment:** Prince of Wales's Own (West Yorkshire Regiment)
- **Battalion:** 1/8th Battalion
- **Enlistment Location:** Stafford
- **Rank:** Rifleman
- **Service number:** 46078
- **Date of death:** 9th October 1917
- **Age:** 31
- **Awards:**
  - Victory Medal
  - British Medal
- **Comments: Formerly** 26350, North Staffs Regiment
- **Interred at: Tyne Cot Cemetery, Flanders**
- **Grave Reference: XV. D. 7**



Rifleman John Furber

Tyne Cot is well signposted, and is located just south-west of Passchendaele and is the largest CWGC Cemetery on the Western Front with 11,953 burials. This includes those believed to be buried in the Cemetery, or whose graves had been destroyed. This would have occurred because the Cemetery was started in October 1917, after the taking of the nearby village of Paschendaele, but fighting continued in the region and the Germans retook the ground and held it between 13th April to 28th September 1918.



Tyne Cot Cemetery

Family History
(see also - A Family at War - page 5)

1901 Census living in Gaol Butts, Eccleshall

- James Furber age 37
- Elizabeth Furber age 39 (nee Hitchen)
  - **John F Furber age 15**
  - Elizabeth G Furber age 12
  - Vincent J Furber age 10

1911 Census still living in Gaol Butts, Eccleshall

-
  - Elizabeth Furber age 49 (widow)
    - **John F Furber age 25 (insurance agent)**
    - **Edward Ernest Furber age 19**
    - **Frederick Furber age 17**
    - **Lillian Ethel Harding (grand daughter) age 1**

Further family history

- John Francis Furber married Beatrice Bickley in 1913
- John and Beatrice Bickley had Neville in 1916
- Beatrice re-married Owen Mancell Dix in 1922
    - Beatrice had a son with Owen Dix..... Rowland Dix
    - the descendent of Rowland is Linda A who married Martin L Eagle and they live in Kidlington Oxford.
- Neville Furber married Lily M Binns in 1940
    - Their daughter, Frances L Furber married Bernard T Smith in 1962
        - They had a son Andrew, but currently have not been able to locate Frances who was born in 1940.

Gallather Peter

Peter Gallather is one of the three people listed on the War Memorial, but also buried in the churchyard, very close to the War Memorial itself.



Grave of Peter Gallather
the family request reads:
FOR ALL OF US
HE DID HIS BEST
GOD GRANT TO HIM
ETERNAL REST

- **Full name:** Peter Gallather
- **Regiment:** South Staffordshire 2nd/6th Bn. transf. to (459272) 490th Agricultural Coy. Labour Corps
- **Rank:** Private
- **Service number:** 20089
- **Age at death:** 52
- **Date of death:** 27th November 1918

Additional Information: Son of John Gallather; husband of Sarah Ann Gallather, of Castle St., Eccleshall. Born at Eccleshall.

Family History:

Research of varying historical records has found that the family name varies to that of **Gallather**. Variations include Golather, Gollather and Gallagher (see **Parents** in the next section).

- **1866 (about)** Peter Gallather is born
  - **Parents:**
    - John Gallather (born 1833) from County Mayo
      - The family name at the time was either **Golather** or **Gollather**,
        but some of family changed the name to **Gallagher**
      - John may have had a brother, Michael living in Eccleshall
    - Mary Emery from Eccleshall
  - **Known siblings:**
    - Henry 1881 **(also enlisted)**
- **1892** Peter Gallather married Sarah Ann Dean
  - **Children:**
    - James 1892 **(also enlisted)**
    - George 1893 **(also enlisted)**
      - George married Eliza Bratton
        - **Children:**
          - Ida
          - Doris
          - George H (killed in **WW2**, possibly buried in Uden)
    - George re-married Alice Sargeant in 1922
      - **Children:**
        - Dennis (1925 - 1996)
        - Jean (1928 - 1996)
    - Peter (Jnr) 1895 **(also enlisted)**
      - Peter married Mary Allen
        - **Children:**
          - Cyril
          - Marion

- Sidney 1897 **(also enlisted)**
  - **Sidney married Charlotte Latham (both buried in Holy Trinity Churchyard)**
  - **Children:**
    - Sidney (Jnr)
    - Reginald
  - **Nellie 1899**
    - Nellie did not marry and died, date unknown.
    - Close to Peter's grave is a headstone for Douglas Massey and Nellie is affectionately remembered as ***Aunt Nellie Gallagher***.
  - **John 1901 (also enlisted)**
    - John married Mary Cook
      - They had a son, John who was killed in **WW2**, possibly died in Burma.
  - **Violet 1904**
    - Violet married George Massey (brother to Frederick)
  - **Agnes 1907**
    - Agnes married Frederick Massey (brother to George)
- 1918
  - **Peter dies on the 27th November 1918.**
  - **Peter's death is recorded in the Stone district in 1918, under the name Peter Gallagher.**
  - **His age was given as 50, implying that he *shaved off* 2 years when he enlisted!** He was still in his regiment as a **General Labourer.**
  - Cause of death:
    1. Influenza (14 days)
    2. Broncho Pneumonia
  - Certified by: **Dr Wilkes Gosse** ironically who lost his son, **Robert Gosse**, another of the names on the war memorial.
  - Location of death: Castle Street, Eccleshall with his wife, Sarah, present.

Military history relating to Peter Gallather

It should be noted that Peter's father and four brothers also enlisted.

Military History - current research suggests the following scenario:

Peter is listed as serving in the 2nd/6th Bte. South Staffordshire Regiment. The 6th Bte was a unit of the Territorial Force (later to become the Territorial Army). The T.F. Battalions were recruited from 1908 onwards and were made up of part time volunteers, known disparagingly as the ***Saturday Night Soldiers***. The original plan was that the T.F would be a home-based force, filling in the gaps left if the Regular Army were to be involved in an overseas war. As a result, the age and health requirements for Territorials were less stringent than for Regulars.

At the outbreak of war however, the Territorials could volunteer to serve overseas, or remain in Britain to do home service. The 6th Bte was divided into the 1st/6th Bte, which moved to France in March 1915. and the 2nd/6th and 3rd/6th Bte which remained in the UK. It is probable that, even if Peter volunteered, he would be refused frontline service because of his age. The 2nd/6th was stationed initially in Walsall and was later moved to Luton and St Albans. In April 1916, the Bte went to Ireland at the time of the Easter Rising. (As Ireland was part of the UK, TF soldiers who had not volunteered for overseas service could be sent, and they would not qualify for War Service or Victory Medals).

In 1917, the Labour Corps was inaugurated. It was made up of men who did not have the **A1** medical rating to serve in the frontline. Many were older, or were wounded officers and men who had returned from the trenches. The Labour Corps was not disbanded until the early 1920's. In total, 390,000 men

were deployed of whom 175,000 remained in Britain. Each company served according to its skills, and Peter transferred to 490 Agricultural Coy. Labour Corps. We do not know if Peter served overseas, but it is likely he remained in Britain working on farms, where labour was desperately short. There is no record of Peter receiving War Service or Victory Medals, which also suggests he never served in a theatre of war. The efforts of the Labour Corps, even those who served near the frontlines, have largely been forgotten. Peter should be remembered as a man who was prepared to ***do his bit*** at an age when he could quite legitimately have avoided it, without fear of any recriminations.

Gilbert William A

- **Full name:** William Alfred Gilbert
- **Rank** Private
- **Regiment(s)** and **Service number(s):**
  - The **CWGC** states the **Training Reserve 13th Battalion TR6/8790**, with whom he died (the **TR** prefix suggests that William may have been based at Brocton, one of two Military Training Camps on Cannock Chase).
  - His headstone states the **North Staffordshire Regiment 330346**, with whom he originally joined.
- **Date of death:** 2nd November 1916
- **Age:** 18
- **Interred:** Rugeley Cemetery
- **Grave ref:** II. 405
-

This adjoins St. Augustine's Churchyard. The majority of the War Graves are in a group and a War Cross is erected at the entrance. Rugeley Camp Military Hospital contained 750 beds.



William Gilbert

Headstone

Family History:

- **1898** William Alfred Gilbert is born
- **Parents:**
  - Hiram Gilbert (from Derbyshire)
  - Mary Ann Gilbert (nee Phillips)
- The **CWGC** refers to William as the son of Hiram and Mary Ann Gilbert, of Walton, Stone. Born at Eccleshall.
- **Siblings:**
  - Ralph Bernard (1901)
    - Ralph married Mary Phillips in 1920
  - Reginald Henry (1907)
    - Reginald married Annie Skellern in 1928, children:
      - Evelyn
      - Derrick J
      - Margaret J (who married Elvin C Leese)
      - Barbara
        - Barbara married Ronald G Guildford

Military History:

With the outbreak of the War, the North Staffordshire Regiment formed 5 Battalions of the New (Kitchener's) Armies:

- 7th (Service) Battalion Posted to Gallipoli 1915
- 8th (Service) Battalion Posted to France 1915
- 9th (Service) Pioneers Bte, Posted to France 1915
- 10th (Reserve) Battalion
- 11th (Reserve) Battalion

The Reserve Battalions were training units, to supply soldiers to the regimental Service Battalions. The 10th and 11th Bte's moved to Rugeley Camp on Cannock Chase in Nov 1915 and Sept 1915 respectively.

On 1st September 1916, largely as a result of conscription and the greater number of recruits, all training was centralised and Reserve Battalions were re-designated Training Reserve Battalions, each with a specific number, but losing their Regimental designation.

William was only 18 at the time of his death, on 2nd November 1916, so he could have been a volunteer or a conscript. He would thus have been recruited into the North Staffs prior to 1st September 1916, which became a Training Reserve Battalion shortly before his death.

Circumstances of death taken from his death certificate:

- **William** died on the 2nd November 1916 in the military isolation hospital, Rugeley Camp, Cannock chase.
- The cause was **cerebrospinal fever**.
- His home address was Horsley, Eccleshall.
- His rank was **Private, 13th Training Reserve Battallion**.
-

Goodrum Nathan

- **Full name:** Nathan Goodrum (1882 - 1915)
- **Enlisted:** Hanley, 1914
- **Regiment:** North Staffordshire Regiment 1st/5th Bn
- **Rank:** Private
- **Service number:** 2819
- **Date of death:** 13th October 1915
- **Age:** 35
- **Medals:**
  - Victory
  - British
  - 1915 Star
- **Commemorated:** Loos Memorial (Panel 103 to 105)



Loos Memorial

The Loos Memorial forms the sides and back of Dud Corner Cemetery. Loos-en-Gohelle is a village 5 kilometres north-west of Lens, and Dud Corner Cemetery is located about 1 kilometre west of the village, to the north-east of the N943, the main Lens to Bethune Road.

Family History

- **1882**
  - **Nathan Goodrum** is born at Downham Market in Norfolk
- **Parents:**
  - George Goodrum - agricultural labourer and died in 1897 age 43
  - Harriet Goodrum
- **Siblings** (the brothers **highlighted** also served, see the Military History):
  - Caroline 1875
  - **George 1879**
  - **William 1880**
  - **Robert 1887**
    - Robert married Daisy Victoria in 1913
    - Robert was killed in 1917 (see Military History)
    - Daisy remarried in 1919 to a Norweigan Amel Nelson and they emigrated to Detroit Michigan USA.
  - **Gertrude 1890**
  - **Horace 1892**
  - **Augustus 1895**
    - Augustus married in 1926 and he died in 1981
    - We believe that he had two children:
      - John A Goodrum
      - Wanda Goodrum who married Brian W Winter
- **1911 to 1914**
  - The census of 1911 documents **Nathan** was working as a gardener at Johnson Hall, Eccleshall.



Johnson Hall

- Around this time, **Nathan** was working alongside another gardener, **William Blackston**, one of the other Eccleshall fallen (see Military History).

Military history relating to Nathan Goodrum and his brothers

Nathan Goodrum (remembered in Downham Market as well as Eccleshall)

Nathan was working as a gardener at Johnson Hall Eccleshall for Major William Moat who was a retired engineer and a Justice of the Peace. He was also a Major in the North Staffordshire Yeomanry and involved with Territorial Force.



Downham Market War Memorail

Nathan enlisted in Hanley 1914 along with fellow gardener **William Blackston** (another of the names on the Eccleshall War Memorial), into 1/5th Bn North Staffordshire Regiment.

Nathan Goodrum was killed on 13th October 1915 as part of the renewed offensive of The Battle of Loos (see below) and The Hohenzollern Redoubt in which the 137th Brigade was part of the 46th Division (North Midlands).

Robert Goodrum (remembered in Downham Market)

Robert enlisted in Dover where he was living with his wife Daisy. He served as Private 5697 Royal Fusiliers and then Private 34452 6th Bn Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry and was killed 10th April 1917 the second day of the Battle of Arras and is buried at Tilloy-Les-Mofflaines.

George Goodrum

George enlisted in the territorials on 24th October 1914 as Private 3176 5th Bn Norfolk Regiment but due to an accident that left him with 70% hearing loss he was medically discharged on 21st January 1916.

William Goodrum

William enlisted 21st May 1913. His occupation was a sawyer. He served as Private 880276 Essex RFA. He served in France and rose to the rank of Shoeing Smith on 5th June 1918 and was eventually discharged on 31st March 1920.

Augustus Goodrum

Augustus enlisted 1st May 1913 and served as Private 4354 in the RASC. Augustus rose to supply corporal and saw service in India and South Africa where he caught malaria and the effects of this led to his being discharged medically unfit on 23rd January 1917.

The Battle of Loos 25th September to 18th October 1915

Until this time compared with the small scale British efforts of Spring 1915 this attack of six divisions was a mighty offensive and was referred to at the time as ***The Big Push*** taking place on ground not of their choosing and before stocks of ammunitions and heavy artillery was sufficient.

The opening battle was noteworthy for the first use of poison gas by the British Army. Despite heavy

casualties there were considerable gains but the reserve troops were held to far away to be able to exploit the successes and in the succeeding days were bogged down into attrition warfare for minor gains.

On 13th October 1915 there was a renewal of the offensive and it was here that Nathan Goodrum was killed.

The 46th Division was freshly arrived from Ypres and had no prior knowledge of the ground to be fought over.

At Noon Heavy British bombardment opened up for two hours approaching The Hohenzollern Redoubt.

1 pm
Gas and smoke was discharged on three fronts, the gas was stopped at 1.50pm.

2 pm
Infantry attacked, the 46th Division sent 137th Brigade to attack on their right to cross ***Big Willie*** and ***Dump Trenches*** and to take ***Slag Alley*** and occupy ***Fosse Alley***. On leaving their positions the advancing troops of 137th Brigade were hit by concealed heavy machine gun fire and the attacking Battalions were annihilated.

The 46th Division lost 180 Officers and 3,583 men and achieved nothing, Nathan Goodrum was one of those men.

Although minor fighting continued for some days, The Loos Offensive was effectively at an end.

Gosse Robert B W



Second Lieutenant Robert Gosse

- **Full Name:** Robert Buchanan Wilkes Gosse
- **Parents:** Hope Wilkes Gosse and Mary Gosse, of Eccleshall.
- **Born:** 1889

Regiment(s) and **Service Number:**

The **CWGC** states that **Robert** was serving with the Cheshire Regiment - 7th Battalion, attached to 1st/6th Royal Warwickshire when killed, but does not give a service number (*but see next paragraph*). His family memorial (*see below*) confirms this.

The London Gazette published on 15th October 1915 gives details of **Sergeant Robert Buchanan Wilkes Gosse** of the **South Staffs Regiment** promoted to Second Lieutenant **Cheshire Regiment** (dated 1st October 1915). His South Staffs Regiment service Number **9323** suggests an enlistment between Oct 1912 and June 1913.

His medal card shows him entering the theatre of war on 3rd March 1915.



Perrone Memorial Cemetery

- **Rank:** Second Lieutenant
- **Age at death:** 27
- **Medals awarded:**
  - Victory
  - British
  - 1915 Star
- **Date of death: 1st April 1917**
- **Interred: Perrone Memorial Cemetery - grave reference: III. H. 10 (originally buried at Templeux-la-Fosse)**

From Bapaume take the N17 to Peronne. On entering Peronne, turn right towards the hospital. On reaching the hospital, which will be on the right, take the small road opposite and the communal cemetery is at the end of this road on the left. The extension is on the south-west side of the cemetery.

Family history relating to Robert Buchanan Wilkes Gosse

- **Family History**:
  - **1889** Robert Buchanan Wilkes Gosse was born and later became a Bank Clerk. there is no record that he ever married.
- **Parents:**
  - **Father**: Hope Wilkes Gosse (Surgeon Physician) retired to Hastings and the Index of Wills (1858-1966) shows he died 18 Jul 1946 at St Leonards on Sea.
  - **Mother**: Mary Gosse (nee Smith) Married 1886 (registered Aldebury, Wiltshire).



Doctor Hope Wilkes Gosse

- **Siblings**:
  - Brother: John
    - John married Margaret N Izard in 1933, children:
      - Margaret H
      - Robert
      - Timothy
      - Deborah
  - Brother: Phillip
  - Sister: Nydia Eileen
- **1901 Census**: shows the family living at 129 High Street Eccleshall, but there is no record of Robert. He was attending Yartlet school, assumed boarding there.
- **1911 Census**: shows Robert living with family, described as bank clerk. His sister Eileen is 18. This time his brother John Hope is missing as he was boarding at Ashton Grammer School, Dunstable.
- **Sunday 1st April 1917** Robert Buchanan Wilkes Gosse died of wounds

In Eccleshall at the time of Roberts death, there were twelve German POWs and their two warders, who were accommodated in vacant premises in the High Street. The POWs worked on local farms and in 1917 some of the POWs succumbed to flu. Dr. Gosse felt unable to treat them following the recent death of his son. Subsequently, Frank Hudson, the High Street chemist provided treatment.

Stafford Advertiser - Saturday 14th April 1917

LIEUT. R. B. W. GOSSE



2nd-Lieut. Robert Buchanan Wilkes Gosse, Cheshire Regiment, attached Royal Warwick Regiment, who died of wounds received on April 1, was the second son of Dr. H. Wilkes Gosse, of Eccleshall. Born in 1889, he was educated at Dunstable Grammar School, at the outbreak of war. He joined the 5th South Staffordshire Regiment (T.F.), and served six months in France as a sergeant. 1915, and obtained a commission in the Cheshire Regiment, but was for some time laid up with blood-poisoning in the leg. He eventually was attached to the Royal Warwickshire Regiment and went to the front again in September, 1916. His Commanding Officer writing to his father saysâ€¦.. In the absence of his Captain, he was in command of his company, had reached his objective, carried out all his orders, and was getting his men settled in their position when a shell exploded quite close to him and injured him fatally. Your son died as he lived, doing his duty. He was an indefatigable worker and displayed under all circumstances singular devotion to duty. He never spared himself, be the condition what they might. He has done consistently good work, especially on Feb. 4, when the Prussian Guard raided our trenches. Not only does the whole battalion deplore the loss of a gallant comrade. Your son was a thoroughly reliable, efficient, and loyal subordinate, and as such I appreciated him accordingly. Not only did he contribute materially to the success of the day, but he left behind him a memory which we shall cherish in esteem and in affection.. His company-sergeant-major writes:---"He was loved by his men. Your son has left a name that will always be admired and respected in the company.".

Robert is remembered inside Holy Trinity Church



Robert's original grave marker

In Memory Of 2nd Lieut R.B.W. Gosse 7th Cheshire Rgt Attd 1/6 R War R Died of wounds 1/4/17



IN MEMORY OF
ROBERT BUCHANEN WILKES GOSSE
2ND LIEUT-7TH BATT CHESHIRE REG
ATTACHED ROYAL WARWICK REGT
2ND SON OF HOPE WILKES GOSSE AND MARY GOSSE
OF THIS PARISH
BORN AT ECCLESHALL 19th MAY 1889
DIED OF WOUNDS RECEIVED IN ACTION
ON THE SOMME FRONT 1ST APRIL 1917
BURIED AT TEMPEAUX-LA-FOSSE NEAR PERONNE FRANCE
RE-BURIED IN PERONNE COMMUNAL CEMETERY

Gray Alfred

- **Full name:** Alfred Gray
- **Parents:** Thomas and Fanny Gray, of Ecceshall, Staffs, England
- **Wife:** Agnes Lothian Gray, of Fairfield Island, Chilliwack, British Columbia.
- **Occupation:** Provincial Prison Guard
- **Enlisted:** see Military History
- **Rank:** Corporal
- **Service number:** 791025
- **Date and circumstances of death:**
  - Killed in Action - 6th May 1917
  - According to the *Canada, War Graves Registers (Circumstances of Casualty), 1914-1948*, **Alfred** was killed whilst one of a party holding a ***block*** in a trench in the neighbourhood of La Coulotte. He was bayonetted resisting an enemy attack after having been wounded previously.
- **Age:** 32
- **Decorations:**
  - Victory Medal
  - British War Medal
- **Remembered with Honour at:** Vimy Memorial



Vimy Memorial

The Vimy Memorial overlooks the Douai Plain from the highest point of Vimy Ridge, about eight kilometres northeast of Arras on the N17 towards Lens. The memorial is signposted from this road to the left, just before you enter the village of Vimy from the south. The memorial itself is someway inside the memorial park, but again it is well signposted.

Family History:

- **1883** Alfred born on 12th August in the village of Sturbridge near Eccleshall
  - **Elder siblings:**
    - Harriet
    - John
- Alfred marries Agnes in South Leith, Edingburgh 12th July 1904
- Alfred is discharged from the army on the 15th October 1904 and becomes a reservest
- They had a daughter, Elizabeth and moved to England
- While in England, they had a son, John
- **1905-1907** Around this time, Alfred was in Canada, but he was not with his family.
- Having obtained Canadian citizenship, he then returned to pick up his family and take them to New Westminster.
- **1909**



Alfred can be found going to Canada with his wife, Agnes, and their children Elizabeth and John. They are on the ship **Tunisian** which is sailing from Liverpool to Halifax, Nova Scotia where they arrived on 20th March. He is already a Canadian Citizen according to the ship's passenger list. This confirms that it was not his first trip to Canada (see previous point).

- **1917** Alfred was killed in action on 6th May, but records show that Alfred's wife, Agnes and the family remained in Canada after his death.
-

> **Alfred** had a nephew, **Richard Clay** who was also killed in the war and remembered on the Speke war memorial (Lancashire) as follows:
>
> *Private 9392, 2nd Battalion, Prince of Wales's (North Staffordshire Regiment). Died in India on Thursday 21st October 1915. Born Eccleshall, enlisted Stafford, resident Bridgford. No known grave. Commemorated on KARACHI 1914-1918 WAR MEMORIAL, Pakistan.*

Military history relating to Alfred Gray

1899


17th Lancers

This year was significant for **Alfred**:

- He enlisted with the North Staffordshires, when he was only 15, but probably lying about his age as he did later in that year.
- He then purchased out in June, we suspect because of the following reason.
- His father died (June qtr).
- In late December he re-enlisted in the 17th Lancers, declaring his age as 18 years and 4 months, but he had *added* 2 years!. It could be that having bought himself out, his mother persuaded him to re-apply in order to ease the burden on her and get the purchase money back.

In **1900** the 17th Lancers left for South Africa and the Second Boer War.

The 17th Lancers Queen's South Africa Medal Roll for the Boer War of 1899-1902 includes **No. 5066 Private A. Gray**. This shows he was entitled to the Medal with clasps:

- Cape Colony
- Orange Free State
- South Africa 1901
- South Africa 1902

He had not completed 18 months' service before 1st June 1902, so he was not awarded the King's South Africa Medal 1901-1902 according to the records, even though he was in the country during those years as is evident from the awarding of the two 'South Africa' clasps.

The clasps do not narrow down the actual arrival in Africa as the Cape Colony clasp was for service in that area at any time during 11/10/1899 - 31/05/1902 and the Orange Free State clasp was between 28/02/1900 - 31/05/1902. The fact he did not get the Kings medal shows he was not in Africa before 31/05/1902 less 18 months - December 1st 1900.

The Lancers had a significant action on September 1901 - The Battle of Elands River in which 29 were killed and 41 wounded, there is no evidence either way as to **Alfred's** participation in this famous battle.
They returned to England at the end of the Boer War and left for India in 1905. **Alfred** left the regiment after serving 7 years.

The 17th Lancers are a famous regiment, perhaps their best know achievement was for being part of the 'Light Brigade' which during the Battle of Balaklava took part in the cavalry charge against Russian guns which became known as 'The Charge of the Light Brigade'. Of 147 men from the 17th Lancers who took part only 38 were at roll call the next morning. Of course, as this took place in 1854, **Alfred** was not even born then.

On the 3rd May 1916 **Alfred** enlisted in the **Canadian Over-Seas Expeditionary Force** and was allocated into the 47th Batallion of the Canadian Infantry. His Attestation Paper shows that he was working as a Prison Guard.



47th Canadian

A **Victoria Cross** was awarded to Private (Acting Corporal) Filip Konowal a colourful member of Alfred's Regiment.

Hall John C

John Clayton Hall is one of the three people listed on the war memorial, but buried in the churchyard itself (north-east).



Grave of John Hall
the familly request reads:
BRAVELY HE ANSWERED HIS DUTY'S CALL

Military history:

- **Regiment:** North Staffordshire 1st/6th Battalion
- **Rank:** Private
- **Service number:** 4535
- **Enlisted:** 8th December 1915 - living in Castle Street, Eccleshall, occupation Plumber and Painter
- **Embarked for France:** 20th May 1916
- **Wounded on or about:** 30th June 1916
- **Repatriated:**
  - To England No 1 General Hospital on or about 8th July 1916
- **Date of death:** 30th August 1916 (see details below)
- **Age at death:** 35
- **Medals awarded:**
  - Victory
  - British

Family history:

- **1881:** John Clayton Hall is born in Bucknall
  - **Parents**
- **Farther:** Henry Hall, a metal mounter and at some stage a manufacturer.
  - **Mother:** Emma Jane Clayton
    (it is not known if Henry married Emma as Henry had married Jemina Lecke about 1871,
    in fact John was originally named, **John *Hall Clayton***, but later changed)
- **1904:** John Clayton **(jnr)** was born, there is no current information known about John's **(snr)** first wife.
  The only possible information we have about John (jnr) is that he may have moved to Walsall.
- **1909:** John (age 27, widower) married Margaret E Austin (age 34) at Eccleshall.
  - The witnesses were Charlotte Alice Hall, John Austin, Henry Shore and Ellen Shore.
  - John's father was Henry, Margaret's father was John (deceased).
- **Children:**
    - John Clayton (jnr) (1904) - ***from previoius marriage (see above)***
    - Alice Mary Clayton Hall (1910 - 1911)
    - Reginald Austin Hall (1911 - 1979)
    - Wilfred James Hall (1913 - 2002)
      Wilfred married Edith Walker in 1934
- **30th August 1916 - John dies and his death certificate records the following:**
    - His home address is given as Castle Street, Eccleshall.
    - He died at **Birch Hill Auxiliary Military Hospital, Rochdale.**
    - The cause was **Septicaemia following wounds received in war**.
    - His wife was present so it is assumed that she brought him home for internment in Holy Trinity Churchyard.

- **22nd February 1917:** Margaret is awarded a pension for herself and her 3 children.

There is a family tree on **Ancestry** which deals partly with the Hall family and suggests that one of John's brothers, **James Clayton Hall** died in the Orpington Military hospital in 1918, he was a Canadian soldier, who died of Spanish Flu.

This is not yet verified as to being related to John.

Harding Bertram

- **Full name:** Bertam Henry Harding
  - No connection to Leonard Harding
- **Regiment:** Royal Engineers - 208th Field Company
- Rank: Sapper
- **Service number:** 61562
- **Enlisted:** 30th December 1914, age 31 but had previously served with the 4th North Staffords (see military history below),
  address given at enlistment: 12 St Chads Place, Stafford.
- **Date of death:** 11th December 1916
- **Age:** 33
- **Interred at:** Erquinghem-Lys Churchyard Extension (France)
- **Grave reference:** II. A. 29



Sapper Bertam Harding

The village of Erquinghem-Lys is situated approximately 1.5 kilometres west of Armentieres

The extension now contains 558 Commonwealth burials of the First World War (eight of them unidentified) and 130 German burials. One unidentified Russian serviceman is also buried in the extension.



Erquinghem-Lys Churchyard Extension

- **Family history:**
- **(see also - A Family at War - page 5)**

- **Parents** - married 1874
  - **William Harding** (1847 - 1904) born Croyden - bricklayer/labourer
  - **Susannah Poole** (1855) born Croxton
- **Children**
  - Edith (1875)
  - George (1877)
  - Esther Jane (1879)
  - Frederick (1880)
  - **Bertram** (1884)
  - Mary Emily (1886)
  - Ida (1888)
  - Louisa (1890)
  - Susan (1893)
  - Lilian (1895)
  - Annie (1897)
- **1891 census** shows the family living in Castle Street, Eccleshall
- **1909 - 11th December** Bertram married Maud Lavinia Furber in Stone
- **Children:**

- Ethel Lillian born in Eccleshall 11th March 1910
  - It is thought that Ethel married William C Sumner in 1938
- Constance May born in Stafford 29th September 1912
- Bertram Ralph born in Stafford 31st July 1914
  - It is thought that Bertram married Rita Harrison (or Rita Booth) in Bucklow in 1936 and had two children:
    - Brian R in 1942
    - June in 1947
- 26th June 1917 - Bertram's widow is awarded a pension.
- By the end of February 1917, Bertram's widow (living in Gaol Road, Eccleshall) had received his personal belongings and his medals:
  - Victory
  - British
  - 1915 Star (see the Military History)

- **Bertram's widow Maud:**
  - The CWGC states that Bertram's widow was Maud L. Harding, of 48, Cavendish Rd., Gorse Hill, Stretford, Manchester.
  - We can only conclude that she moved sometime after 1917.
  - **We suspect:**
    - Maud got married again in 1924 to Arthur Gleave
      - They might have had one son, George R Gleave in 1929
        - George married Doreen Roberts
          - There might have been a daughter, Susan A Gleave

Stafford Advertiser - 23rd December 1916.



A GALLANT ACTION-- News has reached his friends in Eccleshall of the death in action of Sapper B. Harding, of the Royal Engineers. While engaged on especially dangerous engineering work. The following extract from a letter from an officer in the Tyneside Scottish explains the circumstances: -- "Our battalion organised a raid on the enemy trenches, and it was thought necessary to take a man from the Royal Engineers with us. Sapper Harding very gallantly volunteered and came over with us. When I was going along the enemy trenches I found a German machine gun emplacement with an iron door. I called out for Harding and passed on. He came on and blew up the emplacement, which had included a German gun team and machine gun. He evidently did not get quite clear away as he was hit in the head by some of the falling material. We did our best and carried him back to our lines, but he died at the dressing-station. For his gallantry and devotion to duty, I have recommended him for decoration." The officer commanding Harding's section, in the course of a letter to the deceased soldier's wife writes :-- "He was a volunteer to accompany a raiding party and did splendidly. . . His was a particularly brave action, and I trust it will be officially recognised." Sapper Harding, who is a native of Eccleshall, leaves a wife and three children. His mother and several brothers and sisters also reside in the town.

Military history relating to Bertram Harding

It is difficult to work out the exact course of Bertram's military career because there were many Royal Engineer Field Companies attached to the various Divisions. However, one chain of events that would make sense is as follows:

- Bertram Harding enlisted in the **4th North Staffordshires** 30th December 1914. This was a Reserve Battalion, for training recruits and did not go to France until 1917. It is believed that this was a re-enlistment.
- He was transferred to the **Royal Engineers**, possibly because of his previous experience, either military or civilian.
- He arrived in Egypt 30th June 1915. Egypt was a ***Theatre of War***, firstly because of campaigns against the Turks who were expected to launch an attack on the Suez Canal, but was also the HQ and supply chain for the Gallipoli campaign which had just begun. As a result of this, he would have been awarded the 1915 Star (*the relevance of this becomes apparent in the next paragraph*). He may well have taken part in the Gallipoli campaign, which ended with the evacuation in December 1915, with the troops being returned, initially, to Egypt.
- The 208th Field Company Royal Engineers, with which Bertram served, were formed in 1915 as part of 34th Division, made up of Kitchener's Armies. The Division did not move to France until January 1916. Thus **no member of the Division** was awarded a 1915 Star (*see paragraph above*). We must assume that Harding was transferred to 208 Field Company after his return from Egypt.
- The 34th Division fought in many of the Somme Battles, including
  - **Pozieres Ridge**
  - **Bazentin Ridge**
  - **Flers-Courcelette**

  Bertram's death from wounds in December 1916 is consistent with him being part of that campaign.

Harding Leonard

- **Full name:** Leonard Harding
  - Served as **Leonard T Nixon**
  - No connection to Bertam Henry Harding
- **Enlisted:** Preston, Lancs
  (possibly resident in Worcestershire at the time)
- **Regiment:** The King's (Liverpool Regiment) 1st/10th Bn.
- **Rank:** Private
- **Service number(s):** 356384 (and 4876)
- **Date of death:** 20th July 1917
- **Age:** 22
- **Interred at:** Vlamertinghe New Military Cemetery (Belgium)
- **Grave reference:** I. G. 39.

Vlamertinghe New Military Cemetery is located 5 Kms west of Leper town centre and to the south of the village of Vlamertinge (Vlamertinge is the modern spelling of Vlamertinghe). Vlamertinge is located along the Poperingseweg.



Private Leonard Harding
(served as L T Nixon)

Family history:

- **Leonard Harding**
  - Born 1895 - registered Oct/Nov/Dec quarter in Stone
    (birth certificate reference 6b 33)
    - **Parents** (married in 1895):
      - Joseph Henry Harding (1869)
        only son of James Harding
      - Mary Harding (nee Nixon)
- **1901 Census:**
  - Documents **Leonard** living with his Grand Parents at The Ashtons Eccleshall:
    - James Harding age 56 head of household - farmer (born Holmes Chapel, Cheshire)
    - Mary Harding age 55 wife (born Lower Withington, Cheshire)
    - **Leonard Harding** age 5 - Grandson (born Eccleshall, Staffs)
    - William Cooper age 47 - brother-in-law farm labourer (born Lower Withington, Cheshire)
  - Documents **Leonard's** Mother and siblings living at 3 Wood Villas, Worcester
    - Mary Harding age 30 wife - living on other means
      born Nantwhich, Cheshire
    - Reginald George Harding age 4
      born Eccleshall, Staffs
    - Oswald James Harding age 4
      born Eccleshall, Staffs
    - Gladys Mary Harding age 3
      born Cotheridge, Worcester



Vlamertinghe New Military Cemetery

- **1911 Census:**
  - Documents **Leonard** still living with his Grand Parents at Ashtons Lodge, Eccleshall, Staffs:
    - James Harding age 66 head of household - retired farmer
    - Mary Harding age 65 wife
    - **Leonard Harding** age 15 Grandson - Electrical Engineer Apprentice
  - Documents **Leonard's** parents and siblings now living at 5 Derby Road, Blackpool
    - Joseph Henry Harding age 40 head of household - surfaceman
      born Hanbury, Cheshire
    - Mary Harding age 38 wife - Company Housekeeper
      born Nantwhich, Cheshire
    - Reginald George Harding age 13
      born Eccleshall, Staffs
    - Reginald may have married Gladys Allanson
    - Oswald James Harding age 13
      born Eccleshall, Staffs
    - Oswald may have married Emily Pickles
    - Gladys Mary Harding age 12
      born Cotheridge, Worcester
    - Eccleshall 1930
      Gladys married William Lawton (coal merchant)
      - Children:
        - William
        - Dorothy (1909-1922)

Military history relating to Leonard Harding

Additional Information provided by the **CWGC** states that **Leonard** served as **Nixon**, Son of Joseph Henry and Mary Harding, of 9, Brighton Parade, Blackpool, Lancs. This address slightly differs from that of the 1911 census. The reason he served with his Mother's maiden name is not known.

1st/10th Bte Kings (Liverpool Regiment) was originally a Territorial Regiment and deployed to France on 2nd November 1914. It was initially part of 3rd Division, but was transferred to 55th (West Lancashire) Division on 6th January 1916.

Leonard was posted to France on 18th November 1915. This would suggest that he had volunteered after the war had started. The battalion spent most of 1917 stationed on the Ypres salient. The first half of the year at Ypres was described as being ***comparatively quiet, if being surrounded by enemy on three sides and under constant artillery fire as quiet***. Leonard was killed on 20th July 1917. It is worth noting that 3rd Ypres began on 27th July 1917. One of the first battles was Pilkem Ridge where 55rd Division sustained heavy casualties.

- Medals awarded:
  - British
  - Victory
  - 1915 Star

Hill Albert

- **Full name:** Albert Hill
- **Date of Birth:** Eccleshall 1886
- **Parents** (married in 1870):
  - John Hill of Woodwall Green (1841-1913) - wheelwright
  - Ann Hill of Adbaston (1849)
- **Rank:** Private
- **Regiment:** Prince of Wales, (North Staffordshire Regiment), 1/6th Battalion
- **Service number:** 4390
- **Age:** given as 25 but more likely 28
- **Date of death:** 8th August 1916

The 1/6th Battalion became part of the 46th. Division which in February 1916 returned to France and the Division engaged in various actions on the Western Front including the diversionary attack at Gommecourt. The 1st July 1916 the Battle of the Somme began. The 6th. North Staffordshire Regiment were on the right of the battalion in the Battle at Gommecourt and sustained heavy casualties. It is likely that Albert was injured during this engagement before being transported to the hospital centre at Le Treport where he died of his injuries. The 46th. Division lost 2,455 men on the first day.

- **Interred at:** Mount Huon Military Cemetery, Le Treport (grave ref: II. C. 6.)

Le Treport is a small seaport 25 kilometres north-east of Dieppe. The Cemetery is 1.5 kilometres south of the town. As the original military cemetery at Le Treport filled, it became necessary to use the new site at Mont Huon. There are now 2,128 Commonwealth burials of the First World War in the cemetery and seven from the Second World War. The cemetery also contains more than 200 German war graves.



Mount Huon Military Cemetery,

Le Treport

Family History:

Albert was their youngest son. In 1881 the family were living at 44, Castle Street with their children Thomas 10, Mary 8, John 4 all at school along with William 2 and Ellen 1 week.

- The **1891 Census** shows the family living at 108, Castle Street, Eccleshall.
  - John Hill age 49 - Head of household - Wheelwright
  - Ann Hill age 41 - Wife
  - John Hill age 14 - Son - Scholar
  - William Hill age 11 - Son - Scholar
  - Ellen Hill age 11 - Daughter - Scholar *the age must be an error, more likely age 9.*
  - Hannah Hill age 7 - Daughter - Scholar
  - **Albert Hill age 4 - Son - Scholar**

1900 Hannah Hill died March 11th, age 16 and buried in Holy Trinity churchyard.



By the **1901 Census** the family had moved to 69, Castle Street. The family now comprised the following:

- John Hill age 59 - Head of household - Wheelwright
- Ann Hill age 53 - Wife *the age may be an error when looking at the previous census.*
- John Hill age 25 - Son - Journeyman Saddle & Harness Maker
- William Hill age 22 - Son - Journeyman Wheelwright
- **Albert Hill age 14 - Son - No occupation given**

The **1911 Census** shows that the family are still living in Castle Street, Eccleshall, household comprising of:

- John Hill age 68 - Head of household - Widower - Wheelwright - Own Account
- John Hill age 35 - Son - Single - Ostler - Hotel
- Ellen Hill age 30 - Daughter - Single - Housekeeper - At Home
- William Hill age 31 - Son - Single - Tree faller - Estate
- **Albert Hill age 22 - Son - Single - Grocer's porter - Grocer & Baker** *the age may be an error when looking at the previous census.*
- **Albert** never married.
- **Albert** was related to **Horace Hill**, another of the fallen on the War Memorial in that Albert's grandparents were also Horace's great grandparents.

Hill Horace I

- **Full name:** Horace Isaac Hill

  Horace was related to Albert Hill, another of the fallen on the War Memorial in that Albert's grandparents were also Horace's great grandparents.





- **Regiment:** Durham Light Infantry, 1/6th Battalion formerly with the North Staffs Regiment.
- **Rank:** Private
- **Service number:** 51876
- **Date of death:** 30th May 1918

The Third Battle of the Aisne which began on the morning of 27th. May 1918 when the German army broke through eight Allied Divisions between Reims and Soissons.

- **Age:** 19
  - The photographs are both of **Private Horace Isaac Hill (1898 - 1918)**.
- **Commemorated at:** Soissons Memorial

The Soissons Memorial is a World War I memorial located in the town of Soissons, in the Aisne departement of France and stands on the left bank of the River Aisne, approximately 100 kilometres north-east of Paris. The memorial lists 3,887 names of British soldiers with no known grave who were killed in the area from May to August 1918 during the Spring Offensive. The battles fought by those commemorated here include the Third Battle of the Aisne and the Second Battle of the Marne.



Soissons Memorial

- **Family History**:
  - **Parents:**
    - Farther: Samuel Thomas Hill of Ipstones (1870-1923).
    - Mother: Edith Richardson of Croxton (Married 1898).

Born 27th. Dec.1898
Samuel Thomas Hill marries Edith Richardson at Holy Trinity Church, Norwood, Hanley. Samuel Hill was a painter. Horace Isaac was the eldest of eight children and was born at Copmere, Eccleshall. He was given the name Isaac after his great uncle Isaac Richardson who emigrated to Canada in 1873 and with whom Horace corresponded during his teenage years. In February1907 he joined The Temperance Society along with his mother Edith. The 1911 Census records him as being a scholar and still living at Copmere. By November 1913 he had started work and was living on a farm at Knighton. He was confirmed at Eccleshall by the Bishop Lichfield, 15th. May1914.

There is an anecdotal story in the family, that when Horace came home on his

last leave prior to leaving for France, his mother Edith standing with family watching him walk down Vinegar Hill, said, ***That's it, we won't see him again!*** And of course they didn't.

Horace was distantly related to his friend **Frank Parton** (another of the *fallen*), in that **Horace's** sister was **Frank's** sister-in-law. In fact **Horace** mentions **Frank** in his letter's home.

More family history relating to Horace Hill

Letter from Horace to his Mother, dated Jarrow on Tyne 23rd November 1917



Dear mother, I now take the greatest of pleasure in writing these few lines to you hoping they will find you in the best of health as it leaves me quite the same. Well I must thank you very much for your letter which I received yesterday. Now mother I was pleased that you did not send me any money this week because I should not be able to have my photo taken tomorrow and if you had sent it I should only have spent it. Well I am sorry to tell you I have had another turn this week like I had before I listed. Well I was on guard a Wednesday morning so about seven o'clock on Wed. night I felt a pain coming in my side. So it got that painful I had to come off guard and then on Thur. morning I went sick so he gave me some medicine and I threw it up coming back so that did me no good and I can tell you I was in pain. Yesterday to this morning Frid. I went sick again and he gave me some more medicine and I can tell you that it has done me good this time and it has done me a great deal of good and eased the pain a lot I am pleased to say. Well I shall go sick again tomorrow morning and I think I shall be alright again tomorrow well I hope so. I have had two days light duty I did nothing yesterday and most today. Well mother I hope I shall be better again the next time I write you. Well I hope you will send me some money towards next Friday and then I shall have it for next Sat. I want to get it taken as soon as I am well. I am pleased to say I have had a lovely letter and P.C. from Uncle this last week. I am sending P.C with this letter if I can get an envelope to fit it. Dear mother I think I will close now with best love to all.

From your loving
xxxxxxx son,
xxxxxx Horace
xxxxx

Letter to Horace from his girlfriend, Ada, dated Eccleshall Thursday 14th February 1918



My dearest Boy,
Very many thanks, for your ever welcome letter to hand this a.m. I am pleased to hear that you had such a good journey. I am sorry to tell you but I couldn't help it. When I received yours this morning I had to have a weep, to think that you went back so down. But cheer up dear and look on the bright side, although I can quite understand your feelings under the circumstances. Edie didn't say anything about you going to Elford, if she had I should have also said something but I went on Tuesday. Oh by the way dear, would you mind sending me a copy of your different numbers, I saw them in your note book and fully intended to take them myself but forgot, as usual. Fancy you young boys sitting up so late. I guess you were tired. I wonder when Bert will send P.C. to M? Did you meet with any of your pals on the way? Or were

you with strangers all the way. Dear Horace, can you get me another P.C. of the tank, do you think. I'm sorry to say that I got the other frightfully broken. But what could you expect, after being in a pocket. Did you get my, (plain) P.C. that I sent on Tues. You must excuse me sending it but I thought it would be just a line. Have you had any Valentines today. It is five years on Friday since I left school, oh don't I wish I could go back. I think, there were two aeroplanes down close to here on Tuesday, one at the Four Lane Ends, don't know where that is though and the other in the Lea, Eccleshall. But I don't know if this is true or whether it is only a tale. Lucas that used to be here has come from France for fourteen days. He is very well with the exception of a bad cold. Will Emery from Attwood's is still about, he had an accident last week, the silencer of his car got too hot and from all accounts caused an explosion. He was in Stafford at the time and had to go to the Infirmary and have his ear dressed it had caught it rather bad I believe. Now my dear boy I shall have to ring off as it is P. time so with best love to you dear I will close.

From your ever loving Ada xx
xxxxxxxxxxx

P.S. I told you say would ask where I was Mon. & they did too ... but said nothing to me. I wonder how you are I never asked you but I hope you are alright. E is very amiable today & is letting me go home tomorrow & couldn't let me out when I wanted. Good night dear. xxx

Horace writes again to his mother on the 28th. March 1918 from South Shields.

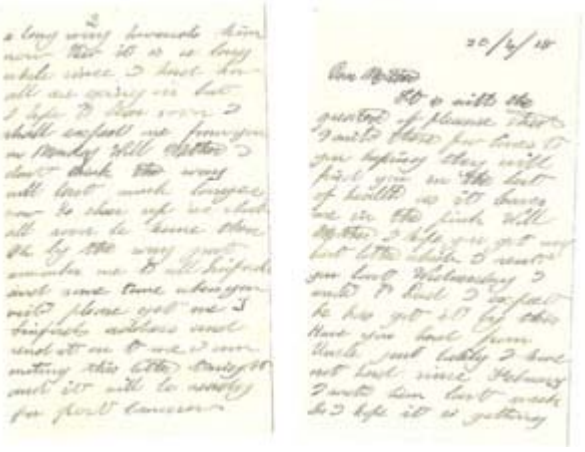

United Navy and Army Board.

Dear Mother, It is with the greatest of pleasure that I write these few lines to you hoping they will find all of you in the best of health as it leaves me in the pink. Well dear mother I was sorry I could not send you a litey sum. And I hope when you get my letter in the morning that you will not upset yourself. We go tomorrow for France and I am going in the hopes of coming back soon. I will write you as soon as I get, it won't take us long. I am send[ing] a parcel to you and I hope you will take care of my book as I may want it out there. We are going out as signalers. If it is that we don't go I will send you a letter from here as soon as possible. Well mother I hope you will excuse a short letter this time as I am in a hurry we have a lot of things to get tonight. Well mother I must close now with the very best health. So cheer up there is better days in store.

From your loving son

Horace

Horace writes again to his mother on April 20th. 1918 this time from France, a letter in which he also refers to F. Parton.



Dear Mother,
It is with the greatest of pleasure that I write these few lines to you hoping they will find you in the best of health as it leaves me in the pink. Well mother I hope you got my last letter which I sent you. Last Wednesday I wrote to Dad I expect he has got it by this. Have you heard from uncle just lately? I have not heard since February. I wrote him last week so I hope it is getting a long way towards him now. Now it is a long while since I heard how all are going on but I hope to hear soon. I shall expect one from you on Monday. Well mother I don't think the war will last

much longer now so cheer up we should all soon be home then. Oh by the way just remember me to all Linfords and same time when you write please get me J. Linfords address and send it on to me. I am writing this letter tonight and it will be ready for post tomorrow. Do you know if F. Parton has come out or J. Key please let me know if you can. Well mother I am sending you a card from France in this letter it is not up to much. Please try and send me a few cigs some of the old sort not B.D.V. they are not a bit like Blighty ones that we get out here. Well mother I must close now with lots of love and kisses.

From your loving son
xxxxxx Horace

That was the last letter received from Horace by his family who by that time were living in Walk Mill. His Uncle Isaac in Canada received a letter from Horace dated 21st. March 1918 and copied the contents in his letter back to the family in England after Horace's death.

Dear Uncle,

It is with the greatest of pleasure that I write these few lines to you hoping they will find you in the best of health as it leaves me in the pink. Well uncle I am out in France now. I have been out here three weeks and I can tell you I wish I was back in England. I wish this war was over but I don't think it will last much longer now. I hope uncle you got my last letter quite safe. I have not had one from you since the twelfth of February if you have sent me one I think I shall get it in time, you see we are travelling about a lot so it will take longer to come now. This is my address 71059 Pt. H.I. Hill, No. 2 Platoon, W. Coy, 6th. D.L.I. B.C.F. France. Well uncle I hope you will excuse a short letter this time, I will write you more next time. All at home are quite well the last time I heard and I hope they will keep up to the mark.

Well uncle I must close now, with the best of luck.

From your loving nephew,
Horace

Within days of writing this letter he was killed in action at the Battle of the Aisne.

Military Service:

- Horace enlisted in 23rd. December 1916 with the North Staffs Regiment and he was sent to join 3rd Training Battalion B Company at Rugeley. He was later transferred to the 3rd. Battalion, Durham Light Infantry, Jarrow on Tyne.
- By 14th. February 1917 Horace had been posted to the Signalling Section in South Shields.
- According to a letter that he sent to his mother on 28th. March 1918, he was expecting to be posted to France the next day.

Acknowledgements
Many thanks to Margaret Parton for providing so much family information.

Hinds George

- **Full name:** George Henry Hinds
- **Wife:** Elizabeth Hinds, of 170, Smithdown Lane, Edge Hill, Liverpool
- **Rank:** Gunner
- **Regiment:** Royal Horse Artillery "R" Bty
- **Service number:** 88110
- **Age:** 54 (but see below regarding death certificate)
- **Date of death:** 26th October 1915
- **Cemetery:** Greenwhich Cemetery (Screen Wall. 3 Gen. B. 179.)

  Greenwich Cemetery contains 556 First World War burials. More than half of these graves are scattered throughout the cemetery, but 263 form a large war graves plot known as ***Heroes' Corner***. Here, two curved screen walls bear the names of casualties buried both in the plot and in unmarked graves in the cemetery.

Family History:

- **1863** George Henry Hinds is born in Trentham
  - Parents:
    - Thomas Hinds
    - Emma Hinds
- **1885** George enlisted in the army
- **1894** George married Elizabeth Kenna in Newbridge, Ireland
- **1901** census documents the Hinds family resident in Woolwich, London
  - **George Henry Hinds** age 34 head of household
  - Elizabeth Hinds age 23 wife
  - May Margaret Hinds age 4 daughter
  - George Henry Hinds age 3 son
- **1904** George was honourably discharged on 27th January. His discharge papers state that he intended to live in Stone, in Staffordshire to work as a groom.
- **1911** census documents the Hinds family resident in Horsely Lane, Eccleshall
  - **George Henry Hinds** age 48 head of household - Groom Domestic (Army Pensioner)
  - Elizabeth Hinds age 40 wife - born Newbridge, Ireland
  - May Margaret Hinds age 15 daughter - born Newbridge, Ireland
  - George Henry Hinds age 14 son - born Woolwich, London
  - John Thomas Hinds age 5 son - born Eccleshall
- **1914** George re-enlisted as a reservist

Military History:

1885 - 1904:

George enlistted to serve for 21 years in the army on the 29th April 1885. For parts of this time he was stationed in Ireland where he married Elizabeth in 1894. They had two daughters but one unfortunately died. The family moved to Woolwich where they had a son. At sometime they moved back to Ireland where in 1904, George was offered an honourable discharge and accepted. He was discharged on 27th January 1904 and his discharge papers state that he intended to live in Stone, in Staffordshire and work as a groom. His army record stated that he was good with horses.

1914 - 1915:

In 1914 George (now 53 years old) re- joined as a reservist and was sent to "R" Battery X Reserve Brigade RHA which remained at Woolwich throughout the war. Currently there is little known of George's career during this time, but the following information about the Royal Horse Artillery may give some idea of his time with them until he died.

- There were three roles for home based units of the Royal Horse Artillery
    1. As depot or training units
    2. For providing mobile artillery forces for use in the event of enemy attack
    3. For providing static artillery forces to defend key ports and coastal installations
- Royal Horse Artillery:
    - Depot: Woolwich
    - HAC Depot: Finsbury
    - Riding establishment: Woolwich
    - "A" Instruction Battery: Shoebryness
    - "B" Instruction Battery: Larkhill
    - X Reserve Brigade consisting of P,R and AA batteries: Woolwich
    - 8th Reserve Brigade TF consisting of K and L batteries: Bulford
    - HAC Reserve Battery: Leeds
    - RHA School of Instruction: Woolwich

Hitchen Bertie T

- **Full name:** Bertie Thomas Hitchen
- **Parents:** Son of Elijah Vincent J. Hitchen and Brundred/Burndred
- **Regiment:** Royal Marine Light Infantry
- **Rank:** Private
- **Service number:** CH/18521
- **Date of death:** 3rd May 1919
- **Age:** 22
- **Commemorated at: Archangel Allied Cemetery**



Archangel Allied Cemetery

Archangel, in the north of the Russian Federation, is a town on the eastern side of the Dvina Estuary on the White Sea. Archangel Allied Cemetery contains 224 burials and commemorations of the First World War, including special memorials to 140 officers and men with known burials in cemeteries elsewhere in northern Russia. Two of the burials are unidentified.



HMS Glory III

At the time of his death Bertie T. Hitchen was serving with the Royal Marine Light Infantry attached to H.M.S. Glory III. H.M.S. Glory was re-commissioned on 1st August 1916 to serve as Flagship for Rear Admiral Kemp, British North Russia Squadron. In this duty, she was based at Archangel to protect supplies that arrived there for the Russian Army. As part of the Royal Marine Light Infantry Bertie would probably have been involved in fighting against the Bolshevik armies in order to protect the supply lines. The lines of communications south from Archangel were the Northern Dvina in the east, Vaga River, Archangel Railway, the Onega River in the west, and the Yomtsa River providing a line of communication between the Vaga River and the railway in the centre.

This campaign saw the first ever coordinated aerial and naval bombardment and amphibious landing in wartime, at the bombardment of the battery at Mudyug Island, Archangel. The Allied occupation of Archangel itself took place on 2nd August 1918. Fighting continued into 1919 until the final withdrawal in September.

Family History
(see also - A Family at War - page 5)

Overview

- Bertie was born 5 Jun 1897 at Offley Brook, Eccleshall.
- Grand Parents
  - John Hitchen
  - Martha Hitchen (nee Groucott)
- Parents
  - Elijah Vincent J Hitchin, (1869 - 1936)
  - Isabella Hitchin (nee Brundred/Burndred) (1869 - 1957)

1901 Census: shows the family living at 62, Greatwood, Offley Brook

- Elijah Hitchen age 32 - head of household - Bricklayer
- Isabella Hitchen age 32 - Wife
- Florence Hitchen age 9 - Daughter
- Vincent Hitchen age 8 - Son
- Elijah Hitchen age 6 - Son
- **Bertie Hitchen age 4 - Son**
- James Hitchen age 2 - Son

1911 Census: shows the family staying in Offley Hay with their Grandmother, Martha

- Martha Hitchen age 74 - Widow (head of household)
- Mary Ann Holland age 34 - Granddaughter - Married
- **Bertie Hitchen age 13 - Grandson**
- Daisy Hitchin age 10 - Granddaughter
- Vera Enid Holland age 13 - Great Granddaughter

Hodson Alfred A

- **Full name:** Alfred Allman Hodson
  - No relation to Thomas Hodson
- **Enlisted:** date and location unknown, but living at the time in Nuneaton, Warwickshire
- **Regiment:** King's Royal Rifle Corps
- **Rank:** Sergeant
- **Service number:** C/1181
- **Date of death:** 5th July 1918 (killed in action)
- **Age:** 25
- **Medals awarded:**
  - Victory
  - British War
- **Interred at:** Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery (Belgium)
- **Grave reference:** XXVIII. F. 18

Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery is located on the Boescheepseweg 37, 1 1/2 miles from Poperinge town centre.



Sergeant Alfred Hodson



Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery



Alfred's parents grave

Family History:

- **Parents:** married in 1890 (registered in Stone)
  - **Father:** Frederick Hodson (born Eccleshall abt 1867 - 1929)
  - **Mother:** Elizabeth Hodson (nee Breeze - born Manchester abt 1869 - 1946)
    - Alfred's parents are both buried in Holy Trinity Churchyard.
      Alfred is commemorated on the rather negleted grave with the following epitaph:

Also of Alfred Eldest Son Killed in France July 5th 1918 Aged 25.

- **1893** Alfred Allman Hodson born (birth registered in Stone)
- **1901 Census** documents the Hodson family living at 26 Newport Road, Eccleshall
  - Frederick Hodson (age 34) Head - Gardener
  - Elizabeth (age 32) Wife
  - **Alfred A** (age 8) Son
  - Harry B (age 2) Son

- **1911 Census** documents the Hodson family now living in High Street, Eccleshall
  - Frederick Hodson (age 45) Head - Gardener
  - Elizabeth (age 42) Wife
  - **Alfred A** (age 18) Son - Shop Assistant, Drapers
  - Harry B (age 12) Son - school
- **1915 (Oct-Dec)** Alfred marries Florence M Peabody (Kings Norton).
  - It is thought that this was after his enlistment and before his posting.
  - Alfred was expecting to go overseas shortly and in those circumstances, many couples rushed to the altar.
  - There are no records of any children
  - We have no information of what happened to Alfred's widow after his death.
- **CWGC**
  - On the Commonwealth War Graves Commission website, Alfred is described as *the son of Frederick and Elizabeth Hodson of 101 Corporation Street Stafford*, therefore at some point between 1911-15 his parents have moved to Stafford.
- **Postscript: Alfred's relatives**
  - Harry B Hodson (Alfred's only brother) married Sarah E Kinson in 1923 in Stafford, children:
    - Alfred W (born 1926 - presumably named after his late uncle)
      - Alfred married Barbara Newbrook in 1950, children:
        - Carol
          - Carol married Desmond Cosker and had two sons, Dean and Gareth
        - Christine
    - John B (born 1930)
      - John B Hodson married Margaret Pearson, children:
        - Catherine who married Graham R Sturgess
        - Diane who married Douglas S Lewis
        - Richard J
        - Christopher P who married Kathleen Kalter

Military history relating to Albert Hodson

The Long Long Trail Website: Kings Royal Rifle Corps, 18th (Arts & Crafts) Battalion.

The 18th Battalion owes its nickname **Arts & Crafts** to Sir Herbert Henry Raphael, 1st Baronet. He was a Liberal M.P. for S. Derbyshire from 1911-18. From 1897 he owned Gidea Park in Essex which he converted into a garden suburb, now known as Romford Garden Suburb. Two of the architects were members of the Arts and Crafts Movement. The idea was to demonstrate new ideas in town planning. Despite being 54 at the outbreak of the war, he enlisted as a private in the 24th (Sportsman's Battalion) Royal Fusiliers. In June 1915 he was commissioned as a major and raised the 18th Battalion of the KRRC.

The Battalion was raised mostly in the North and Midlands. The service of the battalion is shown on **Alfred's** Forces War Record . Their first major action as part of the 41st Divison was at Flers-Courcellette on the Somme, from 15th-22nd September. This battle is notable for several events: it was the only time in history that the entire Guards' Division went into action together, the first time that tanks were used, and the first time the New Zealanders and Canadians fought on the Somme. Though the German lines were not breached, it was the biggest single advance achieved on the Somme , 2,500-3,500 yds over a 12,000 yd front. The 41st Division distinguished themselves by taking the village of Flers.

The move to Italy in November 1917 was as a result of the Battle of Caporetto (24th Oct-17th Nov.) the Italian army was routed by the Austro-Hungarian army, reinforced by German units and allied

reinforcements were needed urgently. However after a successful fight back by the Italians, the British troops returned to Flanders.

Alfred died of wounds, but we do not know where he received them. The battles of St Quentin, Bapaume , Arras and the Lys all took place in March-April 1918, during the German Spring Offensive. However, the 100 Day Offensive which brought the war to an end began with the Battle of Amiens, shortly after his death.

It should be noted that **Alfred** rose to the rank of Sergeant. Even allowing for the high casualty rates, this rapid promotion suggests he must have been a good soldier.

Hodson Thomas W

- **Full name:** Thomas William Hodson
  - no relation to Alfred Hodson
- **Enlisted:** Stafford
- **Regiment:** The Royal Horse and Royal Field Artillery
- **Rank:** Driver
- **Service number:** 31469 RHA and RFA
- **Date of death:** 22nd February 1917
- **Age:** about 21
- **Medals awarded:**
  - Victory
  - British
  - 1915 Star
- **Interred:** Heilly Station Cemetery, Mericourt-l'Abbe
- **Grave reference:** VI. B. 21.

Mericourt-l'Abbe is a village approximately 19 kilometres north-east of Amiens and 10 kilometres south-west of Albert. Heilly Station Cemetery is about 2 kilometres south-west of Mericourt-l'Abbe, on the south side of the road to Corbie.



Driver Thomas Hodson



Heilly Station Cemetery,

Mericourt-l'Abbe



Driver Thomas Hodson

Family History:

- **Ref: freeBMD**
  - 1892 - William Charles Hodson marries Ellen Stacey
  - 1896 - Thomas William Hodson born (birth registered in Stone)
- **Ref: Census 1901** - Living at 79 Sugnall are:
  - William Charles. Hodson Head (age 30) coachman and domestic
  - Ellen - Wife (29)
  - Sarah - Daughter. (7)
  - **Thomas Wm. - Son (5)**
  - Martha Ellen - Daughter. (2)

- Ernest Harry - Son (1)

- **Ref: Census 1911** - Wincote Villas is owned by a Miss Sillitoe, who was not resident at the time of the census. Living there, along with two female servants is **Thomas Hodson (15)** groom domestic. Living at Wincote Lane are:
  - William Charles Hodson Head (age 40)
  - Ellen - Wife (39))
  - Charles Edward - Son (7)
  - Arthur Edwin - Son (4)
  - Martha Ellen - Daughter. (13)
  - Ernest Harry - Son (11)
  - Mary Edith - Daughter. (2)
- **Other known facts:**
  - Thomas married Florence (no actual details known, but it is thought her maiden name was Austin, as she gave her father's name as Harry Austin, (a farmer))
  - After Thomas's death, Florence aged 23 re-married Archie Brearley age 35 at Seighford 5th August 1919.
    - Archie came from Deepcar, where he was a stone mason.
    - Florence and Archie went to live up there, it is thought they had some children, but Archie died in 1929

Military History:

- **Regiment:** The Royal Horse and Royal Field Artillery
- **Rank and Number:** Driver 31469 RHA and RFA (the Driver would in fact be a horseman who would either take horse-drawn ammunition carriers to the front-line or would be part of the gun team, either on the gun carriage or on one of the horses, and bearing in mind that in civilian life, Thomas had been a groom and his father a coachman, he clearly grew up knowing about and working with horses.)
- Died: 22nd February 1917 (as the Royal Horse and Royal Field Artillery gave support to several divisions, currently it is not known in which action he may have been killed.)

Stafford Advertiser - 17th March 1917.

(note that the date of death differs by one day to that of other records)



DEATH OF AN ECCLESHALL

SOLDIER

Mrs. T. Hodson of Mitton Lodge Cottages, Penkridge, has received information that her husband, Driver T. Hodson, R.F.A, late of Castle-Street, Eccleshall on Feb. 21. He was a discharged soldier, and re-enlisted at the outbreak of war, going to France in November, 1915. He was 22 years of age.

Jones Llewellyn

- **Full name:** Llewellyn Jones
- **Regiment:** Royal Field Artillery 115th Bty. 25th Bde
- **Rank:** Driver
- **Service number:** 161370
- **Date of death:** 27th May 1918
- **Age:** 23
- **Medals:**
  - Victory
  - British
- **Interred:** Sailly-Labourse Communal Cemetery Extension
- **Grave reference:** K. 6.



Sailly-Labourse Communal Cemetery Extension

Sailly-Labourse is a village five kilometeres south-east of Bethune on the main road to Lens (N43). A CWGC signpost can be seen on this road.

Family History

- **1895**
  - Evan Jones married Mary Ann Morris
  - **Llewellyn Jones** is born, registered in Fenton, Staffs
- **1911 census** documents the Jones family living in Castle Street, Eccleshall
  - Evan Jones age 37 Head of household - Town Postman born Eccleshall
  - Mary Ann Jones age 39 wife born Welshpool
  - **Llewellyn Jones** age 16 son - Telegraph Messenger born Fenton
  - Rupert Jones age 14 son - errand boy born Eccleshall
  - Percy John Jones age 11 son born Eccleshall

Military History

Llewellyn was a Driver in 115 Bty., 25 Brigade of the Royal Field Artillery. This was attached to 1st Division which was originally made up of Regular Army men. They served in France/Flanders throughout the war.

Llewellyn must have joined the Battery as reinforcement after the end of 1915, as he did not receive a 1914 or 1914-15 Star.

On 3rd March 1918, the Germans and Russians signed the ***Treaty of Brest Litovsk***, ending the war on the Eastern Front. This immediately released 50 German Divisions to be transferred to the Western Front. On 21st March 1918, they launched their ***Spring Offensive.*** The objective was to attack, outflank and defeat the British. This was the last serious offensive by the Germans, as they realised that they must win the war before the Americans were engaged in force. The attacks were at first successful, and considerable ground was gained in a series of battles during March and April, known collectively as the Battles of the Lys. One of these, the Battle of Bethune commenced on 18th April 1918, with 1st Division involved in the defence of Givenchy.

Llewellyn Jones died on 27th May 1918. His grave is very close to Bethune.

The German offensive faltered, mainly due to their inability to keep their troops supplied.

Stafford Advertiser - June 18th 1918.


ECCLESHALL.

KILLED IN ACTION.—Mr. and Mrs. Evan Jones have received news that their eldest son, Signaller Llewellyn Jones, R.F.A., was killed in action on May 27. Before enlisting, he was on the Post-office staff at Brymbo, Wrexham, and formerly a telegraph messenger at Eccleshall. His officer, in a letter of sympathy to the parents, says—"Thank God we can and do know that those young lives are not sacrificed in vain. They have given their all in the greatest of causes. May God give you His comfort and strength in your affliction."

KILLED IN ACTION - Mr. and Mrs Evan Jones have received news that their eldest son, Signaller Llewllyn Jones, R.F.A. was killed in action on May 27. Before enlisting, he was on the Post-office staff at Brymbo, Wrexham and formally a telegraph messenger at Eccleshall. His officer, in a letter of sympathy to the parents, says - "Thank God we can and do know that these young lives are not sacrificed in vain. They have given their all in the greatest of causes. May God give you His comfort and strength in your affliction."

Key Arthur

- **Full name:** Arthur Key
- **Date of birth:** About 1896
- **Rank:** Private
- **Regiment:** Army Service Corps "K" Company
- **Service number:** S/3/025880
- **Enlisted:** Stafford
- **Age:** 19
- **Date of death:** 21st February 1915
- **Interred:** Aldershot Military Cemetery
- **Grave reference:** AF. 1814

Aldershot Military Cemetery is a permanent military cemetery, the property of the Ministry of Defence. The Commission is responsible for the care of graves of both world wars within the cemetery.



Aldershot Military Cemetery

Family History:

- **1896** Arthur Key is born, parents:
  - Peter Key
  - Charlotte Key (nee Norcop)
- **1901** census documents the Key family resident in Swynnerton, Staffordshire:
  - Priscilla Norcop age 61 widow head of household
  - Peter Key age 37 son-in-law
  - Charlotte Key age 32 daughter
  - **Arthur Key age 15 grandson - born Swynnerton**
  - George E Key age 3 grandson - born Swynnerton
- **1911** census documents the Key family still resident in Swynnerton, Staffordshire (Peter is not listed because he was visiting the Kirkland family in Hanchurch):
  - Priscilla Norcop age 71 widow head of household
  - Eliza Norcop age 37 daughter
  - Charlotte Key age 42 daughter
  - **Arthur Key age 15 grandson - Labourer on Farm**
  - George Edward Key age 13 grandson

Military History:

Currently, little is known of what happened to Arthur after the census of 1911 and up to his death in 1915, but his death certificate records the following facts:

- Arthur died on the 20th Februray 1915 aged 19 in the Military Isolation Hospital Aldershot of Epidemic Cerebro-spinal Meningitis.
- His residence was given as **of Offley Road Eccleshall**.

It records his occupation as a **Driver Army Service Corps (Butcher)**. This raises the question of was he a Butcher before enlistment?

Although there is little information of Arthur's military history,
there is a profile regarding his Regiment, **The Army Service Corps**.

Military history relating to the Army Service Corps (ASC) - Arthur's Regiment

At its peak, the ASC numbered 10,547 officers and 315,334 men. In addition there were tens of thousands of Indian, Egyptian, Chinese and other native labourers, carriers and stores men. The ASC was organised into companies each fulfilling a specific role. Some were under orders of or attached to the Divisions of the Army the rest were under direct orders of the higher formations of Corps, Army or the GHQ of the army in each theatre of war.

1. Base Depots
2. Horse Transport Companies
3. Mechanical Transport Companies
4. The Army Remounts Service
5. ASC Labour Companies

The organisation of the lines of communication.

Lines of communication was an army term used to describe what today we might call the army logistics: the supply lines from port to front line and the camps, stores, dumps and workshops of the rear areas. The huge tonnages were moved through a complex chain of supply which usually went broadly like this:-

- From Britain via sea to base port.
- By rail from base port to a divisional railhead or advanced supply depot and Divisional refilling point.
- By horsed transport to forward dumps where goods were taken over by horse transport and man to the front line positions.

The ASC horse transport depot companies filled a variety of administrative, recruitment, induction, training and re supply roles. The base depots were based in Britain or at the port of entry to a theatre of war.

ASC Companies 1 and 52 were regular army and used depots at Aldershot, Catterick, Bradford and Southport. It was at the Base Depot of Aldershot where Arthur Key died. It is as yet unclear whether his death was from an accident in training or an illness but he is buried at Aldershot Military Cemetery Hampshire grave ref AF 1814

Kinnersley Edward Thomas

- **Name:** Edward Thomas Kinnersley
- **Regiment:** 7th Battion, North Staffordshire Regiment
- **Rank:** Private
- **Service number:** 17058
- **Date of Birth:** 1881 in Kerry Lane, Eccleshall, Staffordshire
- **Age at death:** Assumed 35
- **Date of death:** Thursday 25th May 1916
- **Interred:** Amara War Cemetery, Iraq
- **Grave reference:** XXII. D. 14

Amara is a town on the left bank of the Tigris some 520 kilometres from the sea. The War Cemetery is a little east of the town between the left bank of the river and the Chahaila Canal.

Amara was occupied by the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force on 3rd June 1915 and it immediately became a hospital centre. The accommodation for medical units on both banks of the Tigris was greatly increased during 1916 and in April 1917, seven general hospitals and some smaller units were stationed there.



Amara War Cemetery, Iraq

Amara War Cemetery contains 4,621 burials of the First World War, more than 3,000 of which were brought into the cemetery after the Armistice. 925 of the graves are unidentified. In 1933, all of the headstones were removed from this cemetery when it was discovered that salts in the soil were causing them to deteriorate. Instead a screen wall was erected with the names of those buried in the cemetery engraved upon it.

Plot XXV is a Collective Grave, the individual burial places within this are not known. There are also seven non-war graves in the cemetery.

Family history:

- Parents, of Castle St., Eccleshall (Married About March 1875)
  - Joseph Kinnersley
  - Ann Kinnersley (nee Turner)
- Siblings (note 2 sisters called May, assume one died)
  - Joseph Kinnersley (1875-1915)
  - George Henry Kinnersley (1877) - also known as Roger (also served in the Great War)
  - Ada Kinnersley (1888)
  - May Kinnersley (1891)
  - May Kinnersley (1895)
  - Noah John Kinnersley (1895)

We currently do not have a photograph of Edward, but we do have a photograph of the ***Dead Man's Penny*** (sometimes referred to as the ***Widow's Penny***) that was presented to his next of kin. It is engraved with his name that can still be made out when viewing the actual item.

As there is no record that Edward married, his ***Dead Man's Penny*** would most likely to have gone to his Mother, Ann. It was subsequently handed down through the family and currently in the possession of Edward's Great Neice, Joyce.



Dead Man's Penny
actual size: 12 cms diameter

Military history relating to Edward Kinnersley

The North Staffordshire's were involved in the attempt to relieve the beleaguered troops at Kut-El-Amara.

On the 15th April orders came to move up country and 700 men embarked. Officers and men were crowded like sardines exposed to the heat of the day and cold of night. The Shiekh Saad pack mules were waiting to be taken over as regimental transport, and further practise of all ranks in loading them ***they are singularly intractable animals on first acquaintance***.

Orders arrived for the Division to concentrate for the assault of the Turkish position of El-Hanna their front line of defence against the relief of Kut-EL-Amara.

As the battalion set out at night, rain descended in torrents and the wind blew a gale and the thunder caused the mules to stampede shedding their loads all over the countryside, the column lost its way so it wasn't until morning that Orah was reached. Here they found the trenches hopelessly water-logged and falling in for want of timber revetment the country being virtually treeless.

The rain at last ceased and it became hot and steamy food short and men on quartered rations. The Brigade went over the top and assaults the El-Hanna position with bayonet. The Turkish trenches were flooded in some parts but they got on well and by 6am had secured the front line system.

It was a splendid beginning for the relief of Kut-El-Amara but the losses heavy in proportion to the number in action ten officers and two hundred men.

A few days in re-organising was spent. On the right flank was a rapid and impassable river the Tigris on the left deep and treacherous marshes and in front several miles of ground as flat as a billiard table without a vestige of cover.

The advance of the Division commenced just after dark the men still wet and the mud bad, by 3am they had reached their allotted position. There was no barrage, no supporting, fire just cold steel. There was nothing to prevent the Turks firing as long as they wished, they were under good cover and subject to no fire themselves while our attack made with bayonet only. The attack failed, daylight disclosed the Turkish trenches full of men and further troops lying behind the parados.

The survivors remained out until 11pm when they were relieved and marched back to

Fellaheen where there were no tents and rest and sleep impossible owing to continuous storms and the flooded nature of the ground.

The losses during the time were the heaviest ever suffered in Mesopotamia.
It was here that Edward Kinnersley fought and died.

There is also a one Thomas Kinnersley, son of Alfred and Mary Ann Kinnersley; husband of Alice Kinnersley, of 89, Hougher Wall, Audley, Stoke-on-Trent. Despite the similarity of the name and that they served in the same regiment, current research has failed to show that there is a family connection.

- **Regiment:** 7th Battion, North Staffordshire Regiment
- **Rank:** Private
- **Service number:** 6083
- **Age at death:** 37
- **Date of death:** Monday 30th December 1918
- **Interred:** Tehran War Cemetry, Iran
- **Grave Reference:** III. F. 10.

Lindop Bertram M

- **Full name:** Bertram (Bernard) Macham Lindop
- **Parents:** Son of Richard and Caroline Lindop, of Stafford St., Eccleshall.
- **Regiment:** 2nd Battalion, Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry.
- **Rank:** Private
- **Service number:** 24323
- **Date of death:** 13th November 1916 On that date, his battalion was part of the 2nd Division in a major offensive on the Somme, at which the 51st (Highland) Division succeeded in taking Beaumont Hamel.
- **Age:** 26
- **Interred at:** Redan Ridge Cemetery Number One, Beaumont Hamel.
- **Grave Reference:** B. 49.



Private Bertram Lindop



Redan Ridge Cemetery Number One,

Beaumont Hamel.

Beaumont-Hamel is a village about 24 kilometres south of Arras and the Redan Ridge Cemeteries (Nos. 1, 2 and 3) are situated to the north of the village.

- **Medals Awarded:**
  - British Service Medal
  - Allied Victory Medal
  - The photograph shows Bertams's medal, passed onto his nephew after the death of Bertrams brother, Sydney. It is the **Allied Victory Medal** but the ribbon is missing.Bertram was also awarded the **British Service Medal**, but as this medal was silver, sadly it was common for these to be sold.



Medal Awarded to Bertram

Family History:

- 1877 Richard Barlow Lindop married Caroline Bagnell (registered Stone).
- 1892 Bertram Lindop born (at the Crown Inn, Eccleshall and registered Stoke-on-Trent).
- 1900 Richard Lindop died.
- 1901 census (All the children are registered as born in Eccleshall).
  - Caroline Lindop - Widow - age 46 - Born Cheshire
  - Sydney - age 20

- Gwyneth - age 19
- Gladys - age 15
- Berty - age 11
- Agnes - age 10



Bertram Macham Lindop

Also resident at the same time was **William Wright aged 14** working as a general farm labour. William James Wright is another of the names on the War Memorial.

- 1911 census
  - Caroline Lindop - age 57
  - Gladys - age 25
  - Bernard - age 21 - Shop Assistant, drapery.

Note, on the 1911 census and the CWGC, his first name is given as Bernard, everywhere else he is named as Bertram, Berty, or Bertram M. However, the evidence shows they are the same person. There is no evidence that he married.

Bertie is not only remembered on the War Memorial in Eccleshall, but also on his parent's grave that reads:



Richard Barlow Lindop of Eccleshall who died June 10th 1900 aged 53 Years Also in loving memory of Bertie son of the above, who fell in action at Beaumont Hamel November 13th 1916. Also of Caroline wife of the above R.B. Lindop aged 86 years.

Bertie had an elder Brother, Sydney who also served in the Great War.

Lindop Sydney (brother of Bertram)

Bertram had an elder brother, Sydney who also served in the **Great War**, but unlike Bertram, Sydney returned home to the family. He lived for many years with his unmarried sister, Agnes at the **Grey house** close to the Church, Eccleshall.

Attestation of Sydney Richard Lindop

The Attestation was the document each soldier completed on enlistment to which was added his subsequent service record. Over 60% of the attestations were destroyed in the blitz. Sydney's attestation shows signs of damage or deterioration and so his regiment and number cannot be read. However the following information can be deduced.

- **Date:** 24th November 1914
- **Age:** 34 years and 4 months
- **Residence:** Eccleshall
- **Occupation:** Farmer and Butcher
- **Unmarried**

- **Next of Kin:** Caroline Lindop (mother)
- **Volunteering to serve In Royal Army Service Corps**
- **Medals Awarded:**
  - 1914/15 Star
  - British Service Medal
  - Allied Victory Medal
- The photograph shows Sydney's medals, passed onto his nephew after his death.



Medals Awarded to Sydney

All three *recorded* medals were awarded in 1919. The first medal was awarded to any soldier who arrived in France or Flanders between 1st December 1914 and 31st Dececember 1915. The other two medals were awarded to any soldier who served in a theatre of war, on land or sea. (The three medals were disparagingly referred to by the recipients as ***Pip, Squeak and Wilfred*** after three cartoon characters that appeared in The Daily Mirror).

- Sydney rose to the rank of Sergeant during the war.
- He was discharged on 5th June 1919. He confirmed that he was not suffering any disability as a result of his war service. This was countersigned by an officer of the RASC, which would confirm that he did indeed serve in the corps for which he had volunteered.

Lowe Vernon

- **Full name:** Vernon V Lowe
- **Date of Birth:** 9th March 1878
- **Parents:** Son of
  - Vernon (1854-1908) from Mill Meece a Wheelwright.
  - Jane (nee Potts - born 1857, date of death unknown) of Offley Hay.
- **Rank:** Private
- **Regiment:** 6th Battalion Kings Own Shropshire Light Infantry (The Shropshire Pals).
- **Division:** 20th (Light)
- **Brigade:** 60th
- **Service number:** 25488
- **Date of Enlistment:** unknown
- **Age:** 40
- **Date of death:** 21st March 1918

  He probably died on the first day of the Battle of St Quentin which took place from 21st to the 23rd March 1918. The 21st of March 1918 was also the first day of the German Spring Offensive or Kaiserschlacht (Kaiser's Battle), also known as the Ludendorff Offensive, which was the final German attack on the Western Front. Designed to push through the Allied Front Lines and strike for the coast, effectively isolating the British forces from its lines of supply. By early 1918, Germany had been able to re-deploy 50 Divisions from the Eastern Front following the withdrawal from the war of the Russian Empire. The Germans intended to end the war by knocking Britain out of the conflict before the arrival of troops from the USA, who had entered the war in 1917, could be effectively deployed in significant numbers.

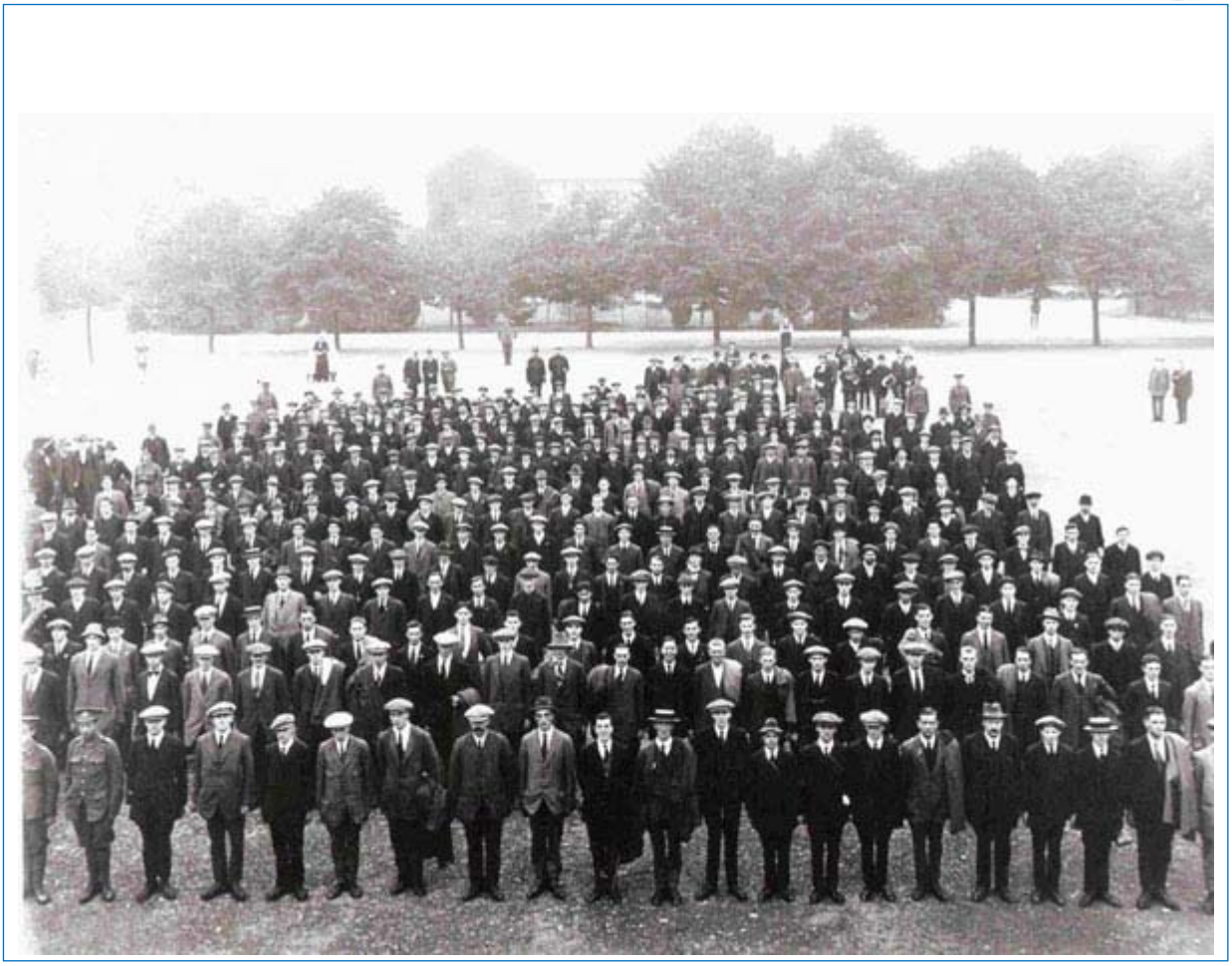
- **Commemorated:** Pozieres Memorial (Panel 60)
  - Pozieres is a village 6 kilometres north-east of the town of Albert. The Memorial encloses Pozieres British Cemetery which is a little south-west of the village on the north side of the main road, D929, from Albert to Pozieres.



Pozieres Memorial

Family History:

- **Wife:** Sarah E Pitt of Portobello, Staffs. Born 1885, date of death unknown.
- **Children:**
  - William Vernon Lowe (1910)
  - Lilian Lowe (1914)
  - John Vernon Lowe (1915)
  - Ruby Elizabeth Lowe (1918) Ruby was born between September and December in 1918, and so Sarah must have been in the first stages of her pregnancy when Vernon was killed.
- **Occupation:** Butcher's Assistant.
- **Address:** the Census of 1911 shows him resident at 20, Stafford Street in Drayton in Hales (now Market Drayton) Shropshire.



New recruits in 1914 : on the parade ground at Copthorne Barracks, Shrewsbury.

More military history relating to Vernon Lowe

Vernon and the Shropshire Pals

Vernon Lowe was a member of the 6th (Pals) Battalion King's Shropshire Light Infantry. This was one of the so called **Pals** battalions that were specially constituted units of the British Army comprising men who had enlisted together in local recruiting drives, with the promise that they would be able to serve alongside their friends, neighbours and work colleagues (pals), rather than being arbitrarily allocated to regular Army regiments. As with all the other infantry regiments of the British army, the K.S.L.I. was greatly expanded during the First World War. In all, twelve battalions were raised, of which eight saw active service overseas.

The 6th (Pals) Battalion King's Shropshire Light Infantry formed part of the 20th Division in the 5th Army under Lieutenant General Hubert Gough. It was a war-raised Service Battalion, formed in Shrewsbury in September 1914, posted to the 60th Brigade of the 20th Division. It landed at Boulogne on 22nd July 1915 and then served entirely on the Western Front. The 6th fought at Loos in September 1915, around Ypres in 1916 (where it relieved the 1st Battalion) and then on the Somme, including the capture of Guillemont. It then fought at Langemarck (3rd Ypres) in August 1917 and on the Menin Road, Ypres, in September. Served against the Hindenburg Line near Cambrai at the end of the year and throughout the German Spring Offensive in 1918, seeing severe fighting at St. Quentin. 6/ KSLI ended the war north west of Mauberge, France and was disbanded in Shrewsbury in June 1919.

More Battalion Details:

6th (Service) Battalion, The King's Shropshire Light Infantry was raised at Shrewsbury in September 1914 as part of Kitchener's Second New Army and joined 60th Brigade, 20th (Light) Division. After initial training in the Shrewsbury area with little equipment, they moved to Aldershot and then to Larkhill in April 1915 for final training. They preceded to France on the 22nd July 1915, landing at Boulogne, the division concentrating in the Saint-Omer area. They moved to the Fleurbaix area for trench familiarisation. In 1916 they were in action at The Battle of Mount Sorrel, in which the Division, along with the Canadians, recaptured the heights.

They were in action on the Somme in The Battle of Delville Wood, The Battle of Guillemont, The Battle of Flers-Courcelette, The Battle of Morval and The Battle of Le Transloy. In 1917 they were in action during The German retreat to the Hindenburg Line, The Battle of Langemarck, The Battle of the Menin Road Ridge, The Battle of Polygon Wood and The Cambrai Operations. In 1918 they fought in The Battle of St Quentin, The actions at the Somme crossings and The Battle of Rosieres engaging in heavy fighting in each battle, on the 20th of April they were withdrawn to the area south west of Amiens and received many new drafts of men during the summer. They returned to action at The Battle of the Selle and fought in The Battle of Valenciennes, The Battle of the Sambr and the passage of the Grand Honelle.
At the Armitice the Division was in the area between Bavay and Maubeuge and later that month the units moved to the Toutencourt-Marieux area. Demobilisation of the Division began in January 1919 and was complete by the end of May.

Maddox Charles

- **Name:** Charles Maddox Son of Henry Maddox (5/12/1867-10/9/1948) and Fanny (Parton) (abt 1869-14/12/1945), of Slindon, Eccleshall.
- **Regiment:** 4th Battalion, Prince of Wales (North Staffordshire Regiment)
- **Rank:** Private
- **Service number:** 45602
- **Enlisted :** 4th June 1917 at Hanley, Staffs
- **Date of death:** Monday 15th October 1917
- **Age at death:** 22
- **Medals awarded:**
  - Victory
  - British
- **Interred:** Louverval Military Cemetery, Doignies, France (grave ref: B. 4.)

  The small village of Louverval is on the north side of the N30, Bapaume to Cambrai road, 13 kilometres north-east of Bapaume, 16 kilometres south-west of Cambrai. Louverval Military Cemetery is situated on the north side of the N30, south of Louverval village and CWGC signposts on the N30 give advance warning of arrival at the Cemetery.



Headstone: C Maddox



Louverval Military Cemetery

Military History

Currently we do not have much information of what happened to Charles between the time he enlisted on the 4th June 1917 and when he was killed on Monday 15th October 1917. We know the movements of his Regiment during this period:

- **June 1917:**
  moved to Westerner and came under the orders of the 200th Brigade in the 67th Division.
- **7th October 1917**
  moved to France, landing at Le Havre and were placed under the command of the 167th Brigade in the 56th (London) Division.
- **Passchendale (3rd battle of Ypres):**
  Throughout August and September, the 56th Division had been in the front line of the battle. They were not in the line during October 1917, presumably recovering from their losses, hence the attachment of Charle's Battalion. The summer of 1917 had been notorious for heavy rain and some soldiers ***just disappeared into the mud of Passhendale*** which caused the British Offensive to be suspended. As Charles was killed on 15th October, and although it is not certain, the most likely place was this battle (only 8 days after landing in France).

Family History relating to Charles Maddox

Charles father, Henry worked as a farm servant at Plant's Purshall. He and the family moved to Browns Bridge, just north of Slindon. Henry gave up the tenancy at Browns Bridge on 19th February 1921 when the Rev. F.J. Salt sold the church properties. The farm was sold for £650. On the same date Henry purchased Yew Tree Cottages, in Slindon, from the Rev. Salt for a sum of £350.

The census of 1901 shows **Charles** aged 5 with the following siblings:

- George Henry age 11
- Alice age 9
- Bertie age 7
- Arthur age 3



Private Bertie Maddox
1893-1941

What happened to Charles Siblings and Parents?

- George Henry
  - Moved to Crewe, where in 1911 he worked as an engine cleaner on the railways eventually progressing to a driver and and acccording to a family member, drove the **Royal Scott.**
  - He married May Hannah Palmer (daughter of John Palmer and Harriet Parton),
    in Stone June 1914 (civil).
  - Children:
    - Charles Palmer Maddox (1917 - 1993)
      - Charles married Ada Cork in 1943
      - Charles and Ada had Keith C Maddox in 1945
        - Keith married Patricia Ratcliffe in 1974
        - Keith and Patricia could have had:
          - Simon Charles Maddox in the 1970's
          - Sarah Louise Maddox in the 1980's.
      - George (jnr) in 1926.
        - George could have married Mary Bird in 1956
    - There might possibly have been a Sarah in 1918.
  - George (Snr) died in 1962 in Warrington and May died in 1973.
- Alice
  - Married James William Hassall in 1913 in Stone (civil).
  - She had 2 children, Norman and Kathleen and moved into Cheshire.
- Arthur
  - Died 10.3.1927 (Aged 28)
- Bertie (pictured)
    - Also served in the Great War and died 25.12.1941 (Aged 48).
    - Bertie's widow re married,
    - Graham, Bertie's son (age 3 when his father died) retained the surname and lives today near the town of Eccleshall.
- Charles parents (Henry died 14.12.1945 aged 80 and Fanny died 10.9.1948 aged 76) are interred in the churchyard, Slindon.
- Also interred in the same churchyard is Charles young brother, Arthur. The epitaph ***In memory of Charles Maddox, Killed in Action Oct 15 1917 Aged 22. Interred in France*** is engraved round the side of the plot.



Arthurs grave

(Charles young brother)

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Graham Maddox, the son of Bertie and the nephew of Charles and to Graham's wife, Maggie for help with the research.

Marsden James

- **Full name:** James Marsden
- **Parents:** Son of Henry Marsden and Mary (Hitchen), of Walk Mill, Eccleshall
- **Regiment:** The Prince of Wales (North Staffordshire Regiment)
- **Rank:** Private
- **Service number:** 7882
- **Date of death:** 25th January 1917
- **Age:** 22
- **Interred at:** Amara War Cemetery, Iraq
- **Grave Reference:** XXII. C. 8



Amara War Cemetery

Amara is a town on the left bank of the Tigris some 520 kilometres from the sea. The War Cemetery is a little east of the town between the left bank of the river and the Chahaila Canal.

The Battle of the Khadairi Bend was fought as a prelude to the main offensive at the Second Battle of Kut. Following a series of diversionary attacks launched along the Tigris on 7th and 8th January 1917, and preceded by an unusually effective artillery bombardment, a major British assault against the town was initiated by Commander-in-Chief Sir Frederick Maude on 9 January. British progress was good in the face of impressive Turkish opposition. Khadairi Bend itself fell, after heavy fighting (including two concerted Turkish counter-attacks), on 29 January. It would seem likely that James Marsden was killed in action during this offensive.

Family History
(see also - A Family at War - page 5)

Overview

- James was born about 1895 at Walk Mill, Eccleshall.
- Grand Parents
  - John Hitchen
  - Martha Hitchen (nee Groucott)
- Parents (both of Staffordshire)
  - Henry Marsden (about 1858 at Great Heywood)
  - Mary Marsden (nee Hitchen) (January 1859)
- They were married at St. Mary's Church, Hales in 1881.

The 1891 Census: shows Henry and Mary Marsden living at 40, Walk Mill Road, Eccleshall.

- Henry Marsden age 30 - Head of household - General dealer
- Mary Marsden age 30 - Wife
- Vernon Edward Marsden (Vern) age 10 - Son - Scholar
- Elizabeth Julia Marsden (Lizzie) age 7 - Daughter - Scholar
- Winifred Marsden age 5 - Daughter - Scholar
- May Marsden age 2 - Daughter (listed as Mary on census)

The 1901 Census: shows the family now living at Offley Rock

- Henry Marsden age 42 - Head of household - Greengrocer own account
- Mary Marsden age 42 - Wife - Hucksters hawk
- Vernon Edward Marsden (Vern) age 19 - Son - Farm agricultural labourer
- Winifred Marsden age 15 - Daughter
- Henry John (Jack) Marsden age 10 - Son
  (does not appear to have been in the family home during the census period and is recording as being with his great grandmother Martha Hitchen and her son Elias)
- Frederick Marsden age 8 - Son
- **James Marsden age 6 - Son**
- Ethel M Marsden age 4 - Daughter
- Rose Marsden age 2 - Daughter

1911:

The family seemed to have moved to 95 Birke Street, Stoke-on-Trent, Henry Marsden is still a greengrocer. Some of the children including James appear to be no longer living in the family home, however there are two new additions to the family (Francis) Rupert age 5 and William age 2. The family moved back from Stoke and settled in Walk Mill.

James was the only one who ***didn't return***.
The following family members survived the war:

- Henry (father)
- Vernon (brother)
- Henry John (Jack) (brother)
- Frederick (brother)

Marsden - Family at War

James Marsden was killed in action on the 25th January 1917.
The following close family members also served, but unlike James, returned home.

Henry (father)
Unfortunately we have no information on Henry (senior) other than he enlisted.

Vernon (elder brother)

- **Full name:** Vernon Edward Marsden
- **Regiment:** Royal Horse and Royal Field Artillery
- **Rank:** Gunner
- **Service number:** 28728
- **Enlisted:** 31st. August 1914,
- **Born:** Great Haywood
- **Eyes:** Grey
- **Occupation:** General dealer
- **Military Character:** Very good
- **Served In France:**
  - October 1915 - 1916
  - 28th April 1918 - May 1919
- Wounded**:** 23rd. October 1916 Shrapnel wound to knee, treated at
  - No. 2 Canadian General Hospital Boulogne
  - Thorncliffe War Hospital, Sheffield
- **Discharged:** 18th June 1919 age 34 at Woolwich
- **Pension application:** Rejected

- **Medal Awards:** Victory, British & 15 Star

The above information is from his service record.

- **Family information:**

  In 1924 at the age of 42 he married Lilian Linford. Vernon remained a general dealer. They lived on Vinegar Hill, Walk Mill. He died aged 81 in 1962.

Henry John (Jack) (elder brother)

- **Full name:** Henry John Marsden
- **Regiment:** Royal Artillery
- **Rank:** Sergeant
- **Born:** 24th. August 1891 Offley Hay
- **Occupation:** General labourer
- **Military Service:**

  Rose through the ranks to become a sergeant, was mentioned in dispatches by General Lord Douglas Hague which was signed by the Minister of War at the time, Winston Churchill.
- **Family information:**

  Henry John (known to family as Jack) married Beatrice Whittle and had four sons, the youngest being Terence F. Marsden, father of Professor Terry Marsden.

Frederick (elder brother)

- **Full name:** Frederick Marsden
- **Regiment:** North Staffordshire
- **Rank:** Private
- **Service number:** 10490
- **Enlisted:** 19th August 1914

  Although no previous record can be found, it appears that he may have tried before to enlist.
  In answer to question 13. Of the Attestation:

  Have you ever been rejected as unfit for the Military or Naval Forces of the Crown. If so what grounds? **Answer:** Rejected for teeth

- **Born:** Walk Mill, 1893
- **Eyes:** Good
- **Occupation:** Collier
- **Discharged:** 2nd. November 1914 Not likely to become an efficient soldier.
- **Length of service:** 78 days

The above information is from his service record

- **Family information:**

  Frederick Marsden married Kitty Dunn at the Parish Church, Stoke-on-Trent on 16th. June 1912 aged 18, witnessed by Samuel Murray and Florence Hitchen. At the time of his military service they had one daughter, Millicent Elsie born 21st. March 1913 and were living at 3, Pump Street, Stoke.

Neville William H

Although we are confident that the following research is the person on the War Memorial, no actual connection to **Eccleshall** has yet been established.

- **Full name:** William Henry Neville
- **Regiment:** North Staffordshire Regiment, 1st Battalion
- **Rank:** Sergeant
- **Service number:** 7751
- **Date of death:** 16th March 1916
- **Age at death:** 34
- **Medals awarded:**
  - 1914 Star with Clasp
  - War Service Medal
  - Victory Medal
- **Location of Internment:** Rue-du-Bacquerot No.1 Military Cemetery, Laventie (grave ref: II. F. 7.)



Sergeant William Neville

Laventie (behind British lines for most of the war) is a village in the Department of the Pas-de-Calais, 6 kilometres south-west of Armentieres and 11 kilometres north of La Bassee. Rue-du-Bacquerot No.1 Military Cemetery is 3 kilometres south of Laventie on the north side of the road to La Couture.

Family history



Rue-du-Bacquerot No.1 Military Cemetery

- **1882** (*about*) **William** was born, Newport, Shropshire
- **Parents:**
  - Thomas Neville
  - Sarah Neville
- **1901 census** shows **William** with his family at Gnosall (Great Chatwell)
- **1911 census** shows **William** in the army and his birthplace is given as Newport Shropshire (see military history below for confirmation)
- **1913 - William** married Elizabeth Hall in Lichfield
- At the time of **William's** death, he may have been registered as living at Shifnal
- **William's** widow, Elizabeth (Lizzie) married George H Terry in 1919
  (the **CWGC** states that she was living at Railway Cottage, Shenstone, Lichfield, Staffs).

Military history

- **WW1 Campaign:**
  - British Expeditionary Force (**BEF**) 1914 - France and Flanders
  - Disembarkation Date: 10th September 1914 - for St Nazaire
    (the arrival of 1st Staffordshires and attachment to the **BEF** is given as 12th September

1914.)

- **Notes:**
  1st Staffords were a Regular Army Battalion. So **William** was a regular soldier, who had been a serving soldier prior to the outbreak of the war and records show that in 1911, **William** was with the 2 Battalion North Staffs in India. He is also, we believe, the first soldier on our list to hold the 1914 Star, awarded to those in France/Flanders prior to midnight 22nd November 1914 (the end of the initial deployment of the BEF) and so entitled to call himself an ***Old Contemptible*** after the Kaiser's description of the **BEF** as ***a contemptible little army***. The Clasp, a bar on the medal ribbon of the 1914 Star, was awarded to those who had faced enemy fire during that period.
- **1911 census:**
  This shows that the North Staffordshire Regiment is serving in India. Serving with them is L/Cpl. **William Henry Neville**, aged 28, unmarried, born Newport Shropshire. This clearly confirms that **William** was a regular soldier, and must therefore have been in either the 1st or 2nd Bte. It was the usual practice for one Bte of an infantry regiment to be based in Britain as a training Bte and one to be serving overseas. It is known that at the outbreak of the war, the 2nd Bte were based in Rawalpindi and the 1st were back in Britain.
- **1st Battalion and/or the 8th Battalion?**
  All the evidence is that **William** was in 1st Bte from at least 1911 through the deployment of the BEF in 1914. Throughout this time he was a Lance Corporal. The 8th Bte was part of Kitchener's (New) Armies, and not deployed to France until July 1915. One of the major problems for the New Armies was a shortage of experienced NCO's. Note that **William** was promoted two ranks, directly to Sergeant. The army were always cautious about promoting men directly over men who were previously their seniors. Thus it is entirely possible that Neville, as a very experienced NCO was transferred or seconded to 8th Bte whilst in France.

Oakley Frederick J

- **Full name:** Frederick James Oakley (1878 - 1918)
- **Enlistment:**
  - Lichfield, 14th December 1915
  - Age: 37 years and 9 months
  - Residence: Kerry Lane, Eccleshall
  - Occupation: Labourer
  - Single
- **Regiment:** Middlesex Regiment 1/7th Bn
- **Rank:** Private
- **Service number:** 53114
- **Date of death:** 1st August 1918
- **Age:** 40
- **Medals:**
  - Victory
  - British
- **Interred:** Wanquetin Communal Cemetery Extension
- **Grave reference:** 11.C.5



Wanquetin Communal Cemetry Extension

Wanquetin is a village approximately 12 kilometres west of Arras and approximately 6 kilometres north of Beaumetz. Wanquetin Communal Cemetery Extension lies to the north-east of the village on the road to Warlus (D.59).

Family History

- **1878**
  - **Frederick James Oakley** is born at Dunstan, Staffs
- **1901 census:** documents the Oakley family living at the Crown Hotel, High St, Eccleshall
  - James Oakley age 49 Head of household - publican
  - Eliza Oakley age 44 wife
  - Louisa Oakley age 24 daughter - barmaid
  - **Frederick Oakley** age 23 son - porter/groom
  - Amy E Oakley age 15 daughter - public pianist
- **1911**
  - The census documents the Oakley family now living at Redhill, Eccleshall (**ancestry.com** miss-transcribed the family name as **Takley)**
    - James Oakley age 59 Head of household - wagoner on farm
    - Eliza Oakley age 54 wife
    - **Frederick Oakley** age 33 son - groom (domestic)
    - Amy Elizabeth Oakley age 25 daughter
    - Dora Louisa Oakley age 5 months granddaughter
  - **Louisa**
    - Louisa is missing from the census and we believe that she had died.
    - Interestingly, there is a granddaughter Dora **Louisa** with the family name, **Oakley**.
    - One *(speculative)* scenario could be that Louisa had a child out of wedlock and possibly died in or after childbirth.
- **1912**
  - James Oakley died
- **1913**
  - Amy E Oakley married Thomas Cooper
  - The couple are living The Firs, Grove Bank Eccleshall.

- We believe Eliza Oakley is also resident (see 1919).

- **1918 - 1st August**
  - **Frederick** died of wounds sustained in action.
- **1919**
  - Eliza Oakley is living with her daughter, Amy and husband, Thomas Cooper at the Firs, Grove Bank Eccleshall. Army records confirm this because that is where **Frederick's** medals where sent.

Military History

After Frederick enlisted, serving as a Private, he was mobilised and posted to the Lincolnshire Regiment. On the 22nd of July 1916 was transferred to the Middlesex Regiment and served as Private 53114 1/7th Bn.

Frederick embarked for France on the 20th August 1917.

The 1/7th and 1/8th were amalgamated and transferred to the 167th Brigade 56th Division which took part in the Battle of Arras. It was as part of this force that Frederick James Oakley died at 41 casualty Clearing Station, Wanquetin France. At the end of November 1916 it became necessary to build an extension to the cemetery, Frederick James is buried, and his grave ref is 11.C.5

Parton Frank



- **Full name:** Frank Parton
- **Parents:** Son of Francis Thomas and Elizabeth Parton, of Bishops Offley, Eccleshall.
- **Regiment:** 2nd Battalion, Lincolnshire Regiment (part of 21st Division).
- **Rank:** Private
- **Service number:** 51876
- **Date of death:** 21st August 1918 The first day of the Battle of St Albert (part of the 2nd Battle of the Somme) in which the 21st Division took part.
- **Age:** 19
    - The photograph to the right is thought to be that of Frank Parton, but there is a possibility that it may just be another Parton, John William (Jack), who also served in the Great War. You can view Jack's military history, see bottom of page.

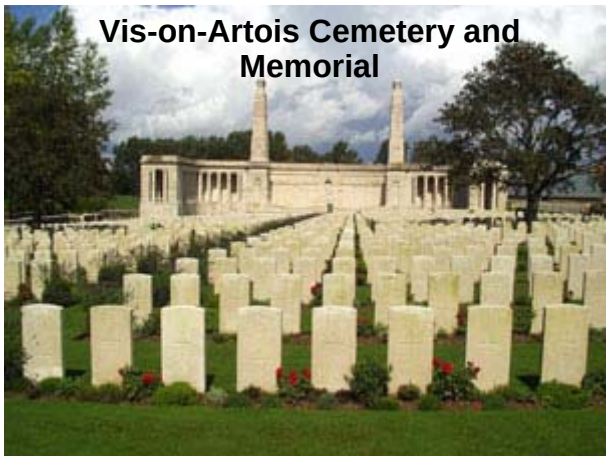
The photograph just below that, shows 3 of the Parton brothers.

- John William (Jack) is the tall lad at the back.
- **Frank** is the lad to the right.





- Sutton
    - The photograph above is a group of soldiers presumably from the North Staffs Regiment. Frank Parton is on the right hand-side standing holding a brush.
- **Commemorated at:** Vis-on-Artois Memorial (panel 4) Vis-en-Artois and Haucourt are villages on the straight main road from Arras to Cambrai about 10 kilometres south-east of Arras. The Memorial is the back drop to the Vis-en-Artois British Cemetery, which is west of Haucourt on the north side of the main road.



Vis-on-Artois Cemetery and Memorial

Family History:

- **1894**
  Francis Thomas Parton married Elizabeth Grocott, Market Drayton.
- **1899**
  Francis Parton born (registered in Stone).
- **1901** census shows those living at Cheswardine (possibly Bolas or Balas farm).
  - Mary Grocott - widow - age 64 - head of household - employer
  - Ada Grocott - grandaughter - age 12
  - Francis Parton - son in law - age 36 - carter on farm
  - Elizabeth Parton - daughter - age 34
  - Mary Parton - grandaughter - age 7
  - John Parton - grandson - age 5
  - Francis Parton - grandson age 2
  - Sutton Parton - grandson - age 4 months
  - Thomas Lovatt - servant age 17 The 4 children, Mary, John, Francis (jnr) and Sutton are registered as born in Croxton. Currently the significance of Croxton is not known, it may have been a registration centre.
- **1911** census shows the Parton family living at Offley Marsh, Eccleshall.
  - Francis Parton - age 45 - farmer
  - Elizabeth Parton - age 44
  - Mary Parton - age 16
  - John Parton - age 14
  - Frank Parton - age 12
  - Sutton Parton - age 10
  - Sidney Parton - age 6

Note that Francis Jr is now referred to as Frank, the name on CWGC.

> **Frank** was distantly related to his friend **Horace Hill** (another of the *names on the memorial*), in that **Frank's** sister-in-law was **Horace's** sister.
> *In fact, **Frank** is mentioned in **Horace's** letters home, please see his page.*

Military history and more family history relating to John William (Jack) Parton

- **Full name:** John William Parton
- **Parents:** Son of Francis Thomas and Elizabeth Parton, of Bishops Offley, Eccleshall.
- **Regiment:** Army Service Corps (M.T.) driver.
- **Rank:** Private
- **Service number:** 121371
- **Enlisted:** 21st September 1915 aged 19 yrs & 4 mths
- **Born:** Sugnall
- **Height:** 5 feet, 10 inches
- **Occupation:** Employed as a caterpillar and lorry driver with ASC
- **Military Character:** good
- **Medals awared:**
  - Victory
  - British
  - 1915 Star

- **Served in France:**
  Served with the Army Service Corps Unit 590 from 03/02/1916 until 07/02/1918. Left Southampton for Rouen 03/2/1916 arrived Rouen 05/2/1916. Unit 590 formed part of the ASC MT Auxiliary (Petrol) Companies, transport units, using petrol-driven vehicles. It was formed September 1915. 20th Company provided local transport and worked on forestry at Rouen.

- **A little more family history:**
  John William (Jack) married Clara Beeston in December 1925. He lived in the Parton family home at Pudding Bag Lane, Fair Oak until his death in March 1979. He and Clara had one son, John Parton (1926-2009). Jack spent much of his working life in forestry, alongside younger brother Sutton who was a self-employed tree-faller. Jack is buried at Croxton Church. Jack's son, John, kept The Red Lion, Cheswardine in the latter part of his life.

Pitt Thomas

- **Full name:** Thomas T Pitt
- **Enlisted:** Market Drayton
- **Regiment:** King's Shropshire Light Infantry - 1st Battalion
- **Rank:** Private
- **Service number:** 7864
- **Date of death:** 29th March 1915 (died of wounds)
- **Age:** 30
- **Decorations:**
  - Victory Medal
  - British War Medal
  - 1914 Star
- **Remembered at:** Ploegsteert Memorial - Panel 8



Ploegsteert Memorial

The Ploegsteert Memorial stands in Berks Cemetery Extension, which is located 12.5 kms south of Leper town centre, on the N365 leading from Leper to Mesen (Messines), Ploegsteert and on to Armentieres.

Family History:

- **Parents** married 1st April 1880 in Birmingham
  - William Thomas Pitt
    - born 9th April 1853 in Pencombe
    - died 1st October 1918 in Eccleshall
  - Elizabeth Maria (Rogers)
    - born 26th May 1852 in Bromyard
    - died 10th November 1911 in Eccleshall
- **1885**
  - **Thomas** was born 1st February at Newbold, Tredington, Warwickshire.
- **1891 Census** documents the Pitt family living parish of St Paul, West Bromwich
  (all registered as born in Bromyard, Herefordshire, but
  the army records for **Thomas Pitt (Jnr)** state born in Worcester)
  - Thomas Pitt age 36 Head of house
  - Elizabeth Pitt age 34 wife
  - Jessie Pitt age 8 Daughter
  - **Thomas Pitt (Jnr)** age 6 Son
- **1901 Census** documents the Pitt family living at the Hamlet of Walk Mill, Eccleshall
  They were all registered as born in Bromyard, Herefordshire, but
  the army records for **Thomas Pitt (Jnr)** state born in Worcester.
  Thomas Pitt (snr) and family had moved from Herefordshire to work Walk Mill that was owned as now by Sugnal Estate.
- Thomas Pitt age 46 Head of house
- Elizabeth Pitt age 46 wife
- Jessie Pitt age 19 Daughter
  - Jessie married Thomas Brown (son of Thomas Brown, farmer), on the 4th May 1908 in Eccleshall. For some reason, Thomas changed his name to Bratton.

    - We believe Jessie and Thomas Bratton only had one child, Harry, who married Doris Potts.
  - **Thomas Pitt (Jnr)** age 17 Son - Assistant Miller
- **1911 Census** documents one person, Thomas Pitt age 60 living at the Hamlet of Walk Mill, Eccleshall. His birthplace is given as **Pencombe, Herefordshire**, but this makes sense as the small village of Pencombe is very close to the town of Bromyard. His occupation is given as a Miller.

  The Hamlet of Walk Mill lies in the valley of the river Sow where 6 mills existed, one still survives, Offley Mill operated as a corn mill by Charles Howell.

Military History:

WW1 Medal Role Shows that Pte Thomas Pitt, 1st Battalion Kings Shropshire Light Infantry arrived in France 20th September 1914. This confirms that **Thomas** was an ***Old Contemptible*** and received the 1914 Star, War Service and Victory Medal.

The **1st Battalion - King's Shropshire Light Infantry** was a Regular Army Battalion, based in Tipperary in 1914. They were made part of 6th Division, which began its deployment to France on 10th September 1914 landing at St Nazaire. They were immediately deployed to reinforce the BEF in Northern France and took part in the Battles of the Aisne and Marne. They were then transferred to Ypres, where they were engaged in many of the actions there.

Plant Arthur F

- **Name:** Arthur Frederick Plant Son of the late John and Jane Plant, of Church St., Eccleshall.
- **Regiment:** 8th Bt. King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, part of 23rd Division
- **Rank:** Private
- **Service number:** 8/17205
- **Age at death:** 21
- **Date of death:** 1st July 1916 the first day of the Battle of St Albert (part of the Somme offensive) in which the 23rd Division were engaged.
- **Remembered at:** Thiepval Memorial Pier and Face 11 C and 12 A.
- The Thiepval Memorial will be found on the D73, next to the village of Thiepval, off the main Bapaume to Albert Road (D929).



The Thiepval Memorial

Family History

- 1894 Arthur Frederick Plant born in Eccleshall (birth registered Stone)

The census of 1901 shows Arthur aged 6 living in Church Street, Eccleshall:

- Jane Plant - Widow - age 49 - Church Caretaker
- John Plant - son - age 27 - Church Sexton
- Minnie Plant - daughter - age 27 - General Servant
- Annie Plant - daughter - age - 13
- **Arthur F Plant - son - age 6**

The census of 1911 shows the following still living in Church Street, Eccleshall:

- Jane Plant - Widow - age 58 - Church Caretaker
- John Plant - son - age 35 - Church Sexton
- **Arthur F Plant - son - age 18 - Gardener, Domestic** The age of 18 does not correlate in respect to his age given in the 1901 census (10 years before) and his age when he died (5 years later).

Sergeant E Richard

Richard Sargeant is also remembered on the Market Drayton War Memorial, his home town, but current research has not discovered any connection to Eccleshall.

Full Name: Richard Edward Sargeant Son of Mrs Emma Sargeant, of 82 Frogmore Road, Market Drayton, Shropshire

- **Enlisted:** Stoke-on-Trent
- **Regiment:** Suffolk Regiment - 12th Battalion
- **Rank:** Private
- **Service number:** 19227
- **Date of death:** 22nd November 1917
- **Age at death:** 25
- **Medals awarded:**
  - Victory
  - British
  - 1915 Star
- **Commemorated:** Cambrai Memorial Louverval (Panel 4)

The small village of Louverval is on the north side of the D930, Bapaume to Cambrai road, 13 kilometres north-east of Bapaume and 16 kilometres south-west of Cambrai. The Memorial stands on a terrace in Louverval Military Cemetery, which is situated on the north side of the D930, south of Louverval village. CWGC signposts on the D930 give advance warning of arrival at the Cemetery.



Cambrai Memorial Louverval

Family History:

- **1892** Richard Edward Sargeant is born in Market Drayton
- **Parents**
  - Adam Gregory Sargeant (1853 - 1892) born Nantwich, occupation: tailor
  - Emma Sargeant (nee Adam)
- **1901 Census**
  shows the Sargeant family at Great Hales Street, Market Drayton
  - Emma (widow) age 41 - self employed Laundress
  - Gregory age 19 - Printer's Compositor
  - Herbert age 11
  - **Edward age 9** (assumed Richard Edward)
- **1911 Census**
  - Documents the following family members still at 29 Great Hales Street, Market Drayton
    - Emma (widow) age 51 - self employed Laundress
    - Gregory (single) age 28 - Workhouse Manager
  - Documents **Richard** age 19 boarding with Robert and Eva Lowe at 28 Innage Rd, Shifnal, Salop - occupation: shop assistant

Sillito Charles Orlando



Gunner
Charles Sillito

- **Regiment:** Royal Garrison Artillery, 323rd, Siege Battery
- **Rank:** Gunner
- **Service number:** 122723
- **Age at death:** 24
- **Date of death:** Thursday 18th October 1917
- **Circumstances of death:**

On the 18th October 1917, the 323rd. Battery had been tasked to send a working party of 1 Sergeant and 9 Gunners to help the neighbouring Battery manhandle its guns into position. The whole line had advanced from the old gun line at Tugela Farm, Boesinghe, towards the Pilkem ridge, some handful of kms in front. At around 21:00 hours, an enemy shell landed in the middle of them and 2 were killed instantly, and four wounded (including the Sergeant). By Charlie's name it says in brackets, (***Severely***).

The next entry is dated the 19th and says they had received notice that Charlie had ***died of wounds*** at No 56 Advanced Dressing Station. Presumably this had been late on the 18th October, as that is the date on his headstone. So from wounding he would have been taken to the Advanced Dressing Station, the first port of call, where he died. It is suspected that it was blood loss and shock. A relative used to say that he had lost both legs but this cannot be confirmed. Given the local conditions there, it is not surprising that such a wound would prove fatal.

- **Location of Internment:**

Bard Cottage Cemetery, Belgium (grave ref: VI. A. 22.)







Charles and Emmie, his Mother

- **Parents:** Son of Frederick William and Emmie Sillito, of Wooton, Eccleshall.

Clearly his mother, Emmie had great love for Charlie and we cannot comprehend the feeling of loss that she must have felt for her son, as did so many other mothers, wives and siblings when the dreaded telegram arrived.



Emmie and Original Cross

Emmie visited Charles's grave after the war. The date is not known but as the ground is rather rough, it is assumed very soon afterwards. She is pictured with the original simple cross.

Emmie commissioned a more elaborate replacement and brought the original back with her and placed it in the churchyard in Ellenhall. It is assumed that it rotted away.



Emmie's Replacement Cross

Stafford Advertiser - Saturday November 11th 1917



Gunner Charles Orlando Sillito, who died of wounds received in action in France on the 18th of October, was the oldest son of Mr. and Mrs. Sillito of Wooton, Eccleshall. He received his earliest education under the kindly care of Mrs. Hamlet, who kept a private school in Stafford Street, Eccleshall. At the age of eleven he became a day boarder with Mr Powell, head-master of Stafford Grammar School, where he remained until 16 years of age. On leaving school, he took his place on his father's farm, and his knowledge and judgement of stock and land, he was very good. When war broke out, he was very eager to join the marching throng; but, recognising that his duty lay on the farm to help his aged father, he remained for a time, but attested under the Derby group system, and finally called to the Colours on Sept. 23. 1916. He joined the R.G.A., and was in training in various parts of England and Scotland until the end of May or beginning of June last, when he was ordered to France. That he did his duty nobly as a soldier is quite evident from various letters received from his officers by his mother. Had he been spared, it was his intention to apply for commission after he had served in France for six months.

A memorial service was held in Ellenhall Parish Church on Sunday, which the service was taken by the Rev. Gerald Goodwin (vicar of Eccleshall). Special hymns chosen by his mother and brothers were sung and special lessons and Psalms were read, and the preacher gave an impressive sermon from the texts (chosen by his mother) St John, xii, chapter, verse=7 "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter," and Rev., vii chapter, verse 9, "lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." The organist played the "Dead March" in "Saul," the congregation all kneeling. After the service, Holy Communion was administered. The sermon is to be published, together with some lines from the pen of his mother. Much sympathy is felt for his father, mother and only brother in their bereavement.

In Memorian

A clipping from a local newspaper dated St. Lukes Day 1929 placed by Emmie in the format of a quote from the bible followed by one of her poems:



IN MEMORIAM

To the Sacred Memory
of
CHARLES ORLANDO SILLITO,

Who, from the battlefield of Flanders, on St. Luke's Day, 1917, passed from pain and suffering into a haven of Love.

"Lo, a great multitude, which no man could number of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the Throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands."—Rev. 7th chapter, 9th verse.

LOVE IN HEAVEN.

Love in Heaven! O love divine,
Most perfect love may thou be mine;
While Angel hosts in Heaven sing
Their love and homage to its King.

Love in Heaven! Can Angels tell
On earth that love they know so well?
And could they tell it, might we see
That love, by faith, our own to be?

Love in Heaven! O, perfect love,
On earth begun, complete above:
For God is Love, and Love's divine,
And Love and Heaven they both are thine.

E. SILLITO,
Wootton, Eccleshall, Staffs.
S. Luke's Day, 1929.
(ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.)

To the sacred memory
of
CHARLES ORLANDO SILLITO

Who from the battlefield of Flanders on St. Luke's Day. 1917, passed from pain and suffering into a haven of Love.
"Lo. a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands" - Rev. 7th chapter, 9th verse.

LOVE IN HEAVEN
Love in Heaven! O love divine.
Most perfect love may thou be mine;
While Angel hosts in Heaven sing
Their love and homage to its King.

Love in Heaven! Can Angels tell
On earth that love they know so well?
And could they tell it, might we see
That love, by faith, our own to be?

Love in Heaven! O, perfect love,
On earth begun, complete above:
For God is Love, and Love's divine,
And Love and Heaven they both are thine.

E. SILLITO

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Audrey Sillito, the wife of the late John Sillito who was Charles's nephew and to Audrey's sister-in-law, Mary Wilson, and Mary's nephew, Nigel Price for providing so much of the information.

The Ellenhall Connection

Charles Silitto is one of four soldiers of **Ellenhall Parish** who died and all are remembered in **St Marys Church, Ellenhall**.

The other three are as follows:

•William Doody

- Private 35830
- South Staffordshire Regiment 4th Bn.
- Interred at Le Cateau Military Cemetery (grave reference: I. B. 121
- Died 24th September 1918 age 21
- Son of Thomas and Sarah Ann Doody, of Johnson Home Farm Cottage, Eccleshall, Staffs

•James Davenport Moore

- Gunner 204621
- Royal Field Artillery (2nd 'C' Reserve Bty.)
- Interred at Hipswell (St. John) Churchyard (North Yorkshire) - Screen Wall. 14. 5.
- Died on the 6th March 1917 age 23
- Son of Peter and Annie Eliza Moore, of Ellenhall Park, Eccleshall, Staffs.

•John Newcombe

- Private 40675
- West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own) - 12th Bn
- Remembered on the Arras Memorial (bay 4)
- Died on the 3rd May 1917 age 37
- Son of John and Sarah Newcomb; husband of Mary Ellen Newcomb, of Lower Knightley, Eccleshall, Staffs

Inside the Church





This is the only stained glass window in St. Mary's Church and that is the subject of the Great War. It was commissioned by Charles's mother and the fallen soldier (right) is that of Charles himself. He was one of four lads of the Parish who gave the ultimate sacrifice. Their names are carved into the stone surround immediately below the window which created an unusual, but very fitting, **Role of Honour**.

Beneath the window itself, is a more recent metal plaque listing:

- Those four who gave the ultimate sacrifice.
- Those others of the Parish who served.

On the opposite wall to the window, there is a brass plaque dedicated to Charles Orlando Sillito, assumed to have been commissioned by his mother and reads:

In loving memory of

Charles Orlando Sillito RGA

of Wooton

A regular Communicant in this Church

Died of wounds received in action at

Ypres 18th October 1917 aged 24 years

And Interred in the Military Cemetery

at Beosinghe

"The souls of the Righteous are in the hands of God"



Smith James

- **Full Name:** James Smith
- **Enlisted:** Eccleshall
- **Regiment:** North Staffordshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's) - 1st/6th Bn.
- **Rank:** Private
- **Service number:** 241901 (but also 5225)
- **Date of death:** 1st March 1917
- **Age at death:** 36
- **Medals awarded:**
  - Victory
  - British
- **Interred:** Bienvillers Military Cemetery
- **Grave reference:** VI. B. 8.



Bienvillers Military Cemetery

Bienvillers is a large village in the department of the Pas de Calais 18 kilometres south-west of Arras. The Military Cemetery is just beyond the village on the south road leading to Souastre (D2). A CWGC signpost indicating directions to the site is situated on the village square.

Family History:

- **Parents**
  - Richard Smith (1845)
  - Elizabeth Smith (nee Caddy) (1845)
    - Richard and Elizabeth had three children that were not included on the 1891 census (below). The reason is that they were resident elsewhere at the time:
      - George 1871
      - Richard 1874
        - Richard married Edith Smith and had children Rhoda E (1906) and Mary-May (1905).
      - Sarah Elizabeth 1876
- **1891 Census** documents the Smith family resident in Walk Mill Road near Eccleshall:
  - Richard Smith age 46 head of household - farm labourer
  - Elizabeth Smith age 46 wife
  - **James Smith age 10 son**
  - Mary Jane Smith age 6 daughter
- **1901 Census**
  - **James Smith** age 20 is documented to be resident in Croxton as a butcher's apprentice
  - Richard Smith is believed to have still been living in Walk Mill, but not with the family.
  - The family are believed to have been boarding somewhere in Offley Hay
- **1911 Census** documents the Smith family resident Offley Rock near Eccleshall:
  - Elizabeth Smith age 66 head of household widow (born Offley Rock)
  - **James Smith age 30 son single - farm labourer** (born Walk Mill)
  - Mary Jane Smith age 25 daughter single (born Walk Mill)
- **1917**
  - The **CWGC** documents **James's** mother as resident in Pershall Lane, Eccleshall.

Military History:

James served in 1st/6th Bte North Staffordshires. This was a Territorial Force Bte. It was mobilised and sent to France, landing at Le Havre on 4th March 1915. In January 1916 the Bte was sent to Egypt but the order was countermanded and they returned in Feb 1916 where they formed part of 46th (North Midland) Division.

As James did not receive the 1915 Star, he would have been posted abroad at the beginning of 1916 at the earliest. His relative age suggests that he was in a Territorial Bte before the war (as they took soldiers from a much wider age range than the Regulars) and may have been assigned initially to one of the Reserve Btes for home service, and later, as the casualties mounted, was accepted for overseas service. This could explain the fact that he had two service numbers.

From 11th January 1917 to 13th March 1917, 46th Division were heavily involved in the ***Operations on the Ancre***. These were a whole series of engagements along a tributary of the Somme in which the British succeeded in making significant advances. The date of James's death, 1st March 1917 and the place of his burial suggest that this is where he was killed.

Whittingham Leonard

- **Name:** Leonard Whittingham
- **Enlisted:** Stafford - stating Eccleshall as place of residence
- **Regiment:** 1st Battalion, Rifle Brigade (formerly 9125 9th Lancers)
- **Rank:** Rifleman
- **Service number:** 6014
- **Date of death:** 1st July 1916
  the first day of the Somme offensive
- **Medals Awarded:**
  - Victory
  - British
  - 1915 Star
- **Rembered at:** Thiepval Memorial
  Pier and Face 16 B and 16 C.



Thiepval Memorial

The Thiepval Memorial will be found on the D73,
next to the village of Thiepval,
off the main Bapaume to Albert Road (D929).

Family History

- **1894:** Leonard Whittingham born - Almington, Market Drayton
- **Parents:**
  - William Whittingham (1853-1914) and
  - Hannah (Wickstead) (1854-1923)
- **Siblings:**
  - Mary Jane 1876 - married George Robert Boughey
  - William 1878 - married Elizabeth Shone
  - Peter 1880-1898
  - Annie 1884 - married William Cooke
  - Frances 1886 - married William Brazenall
  - Hannah (Jnr) 1888
- **1901 Census:** documents the Whittingham family living in Almington, Market Drayton
  - William age 48 - head of household - waggoner on farm
  - Hannah age 47 - wife
  - William (Jnr) age 23 - agricultural labourer
  - Annie age 17
  - **Leonard age 5** born Almington
- **1911**
  - **Census documents**
    - The following members of the Whittingham family still living in Almington, Market Drayton
      - William age 57 - head of household - waggoner on farm
      - Hannah age 56 - wife
        (states that Hannah had a total of 8 children, 6 still alive)
      - Hannah (Jnr) age 24 - daughter
    - Some of those resident at the farm at Walton Hurst, Eccleshall:
      - James Lawton age 59 - head of household - farmer

- Francis Lawton age 34 - wife
- 3 sons
- 2 daughters
- **Leonard Whittingham** working as an under-waggoner at the farm, this matches his enlistment (top).

- **Notes:**
  - William Snr was living at Red Hill Eccleshall working as a waggoner
  - William Jnr was working as a waggoner at Maer Heath Newcastle Staffs

Military History



The **1st Battalion, Rifle Brigade** was, at the start of the war, a Regular Army Bte. and one of the first to be sent to France as part of the **BEF**, landing on 23rd August 1914, as part of 4th Division.

Leonard arrived in France on 13th July 1915 under the command of 4th Division under General Sir Henry Rawlinson. This strongly suggests he had volunteered at the start of the war and had been sent to reinforce the battalion. In the infantry battalions, most of the original members of the **BEF** were casualties by this date.

The 4th Division made up part of VIII Corps which took part in the **Battle of Albert**, the opening battle of the **Somme offensive**, commencing on 1st July 1916, the day Leonard was killed.

The bombardment began seven days before the infantry were due to attack it was as effective as hoped, leaving large portions of the German front line intact. The German lines on the Somme contained a large number of deep concrete bunkers which protected the German troops who emerged at the end of the bombardment unhurt. The attack on the 1st July was made by eleven Divisions along a fourteen mile front from Montauban to Serre. Haig hoped to capture the entire front and break through to the second and third lines. This was to prove a highly optimistic plan, on the northern two thirds of the front virtually no ground was taken. The British suffered 57,000 casualties on the first day including Leonard.

In the centre of Albert is one of the most famous icons of The Great War, **The Golden Virgin** on the top of the basilica it was visible from miles away and became an excellent target for artillery fire, it was damaged in January 1915 and was knocked of its mountings but did not fall completely it lay horizontal to the ground. A superstition grew up that when the Virgin fell the war would come to an end, it stayed in this position until the spring of 1918 when it was knocked down by British artillery to stop the Germans using it as an observation post in their spring offensive.

Wren Ernest E



Rifleman Ernest E Wren

- **Full Name:** Ernest Edward Wren
- **Enlistment:**
  - Medical examination in Stafford 14th June 1915
  - Enlisted in Stafford 17th June 1915
  - Resident at time: Walton Hall, near Eccleshall
  - Occupation: Railway Porter
- **Regiment:** Rifle Brigade - "D" Company. 7th Battalion
- **Rank:** Rifleman
- **Service number:** S/13151
- **Date of death:** 4th January 1916
- **Age at death:** 22
- **Medals awarded:**
  - Victory
  - British
  - 1915 Star
- **Interred:** Coln Valley Cemetery
- **Grave reference:** B. 2.

Boezinge is located north of the town of Leper on the N369 road direction Diksmuide. The Cemetery is located in Kleinepoezelstraat East of the village. From the N369 turn right into Brugstraat, over the bridge and bear right into Langemarkseweg. Carry onto the crossroads and turn right into Kleinepoezelstraat. Carry straight on and the cemetery is on the right hand side 500 metres along this road.


Coln Valley Cemetery, Belgium

Family History:

- **1893** Ernest Edward Wren is born
  - His later army records states in the parish of Tottenham, London.
  - Ernest later became a Railway Porter and at the time was living at Walton Hall Cottage, near Eccleshall.
    - At this time it is thought that his family were living at Much Wenlock.
- **Parents** married in London in 1889
  - Walter Christopher Wren born in Hertford around 1863
    - Walter was in the Coldstream Guards and served in Egypt
  - Jane (Jordan)
- **Siblings:**
  - Frances E Wren born in 1890
  - Stanley Christopher Warren Wren born in 1905
    - Stanley married Hannah Aitken in 1934
      - They had one daughter, Elizabeth A Warren-Wren.
- **4th January 1916** Ernest is killed in action, his army records document:
  - Next of kin is his mother, Jane
  - One brother, Stanley Christopher Wren age 15, resident with his mother at The

Vicarage, Tong near Shifnal
- No father or sisters
- Later addresses
  - Shrewsbury Lodge, Weston Park, Shifnal
  - 30, Shrewsbury Fields, Shifnal, Salop (reference: **CWGC**).
- Personal items returned to Ernest's mother:
  - 1 pocket book
  - 1 purse
  - 2 small gospel books
  - 1 photo

This is the full military history that is available for Edward, from enlistment up to and including his death as taken from the 7th Rifle Battalion War Diary

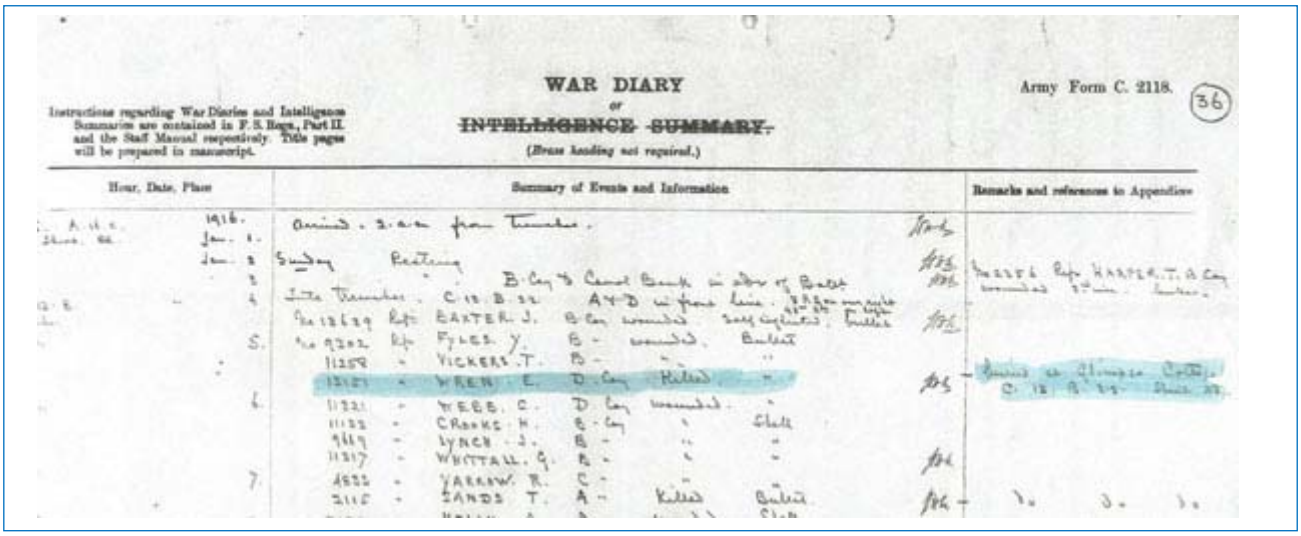
After **Edward** enlisted at Stafford on 17th June 1915 he was posted to The Rifle Brigade on the 26th, and on the 9th September he embarked for France. On 20th September he went to the front in The **Ypres Salient** as part of 100 Nco's and men 1 mile east of Poperinge and formed working parties. On the 25th September he was back in the line in support of 42nd Brigade attack on Bellewarde Farm.

- **27th September** gained more reinforcements 40 NCOs and men at Vlamertinge.
- **29th September** Lt Col JDH Maitland resumed command.
- **30th September** Railway Wood. No casualties. Heavy firing all afternoon south of The Menin Road. Fighting strength now 28 officers and 900 other ranks.
- **31st September to 3rd October** Quiet days.
- **4th October** another draft of 2 officers and 79 other ranks joined in the transport lines.
- **5th October** quiet day.
- **6th October to 10th October** relieved by 8th Bn KRRC. Resting and collected for baths in Poperigne.
- **11th October** Relieved 8th Bn KRRC
- **12th October to 16th October** very heavy bombardment about 6pm carrying parties delayed then quiet days.
- **17th October** Ordered to *Stand To* mine exploded in front of Railway Wood.
- **19th October** Relieved by Yorks and Lancs men in billets 1am.
- **27th October** H M the King inspected the 7th and 8th Bn ***Proud day***
- **30th and 31st October** Corps Commanders inspected and corps training.
- **1st and 2nd November** Wet wet! Resting
- **3rd November** Bn marched to Elverdigne Chateau attached to 147th Inf Bg as reserve Bn
- **4th to 12th November** about half Bn strength employed working in forward and back trenches for 147th Br
- **12th to 16th November** very steamy and wet mud everywhere.
- **17th to 21st November** Bn train to Ypres and take up positions on canal bank in support of 8th Bn in line at Wijtschate.
- **22nd to 26th November** in trenches 8th Bn KRRC to left and West Yorks to right. 3 men killed by bullet buried Essex Farm. 7 men killed or wounded buried La Brique cem.
- **26th to 30th November** relieved by 8th KRRC resting31st November Return to trenches new draft of 38 men.
- **1st to 4th December** in line 13 casualties killed or wounded**.**
- **5th to 8th December** in reserve Canal bank 2nd Lt Milward wounded by shell (died later) 6 men killed or wounded by bullet and shell.

- **9th to 13th December** returned to Canal bank 16 Ncos and men killed or wounded including 2nd Lt Baker. Lt Merriam joined Bn Lt Purdon machine gun officer of Bn wounded.
- **14th December** Route march
- **15th December** Cpl Wargettes DOW.
- **16th to 24th December** Very heavy bombardment**.**
- **24th December** Draft of 1 Cpl 2 Officers and 47 men.
- **25th December** Christmas day nothing to report.
- **26th December** Co visited trench
- **27th to 28th December** In trenches Lancashire Farm.
- **29th December** 14 NCO's and men killed or wounded mainly shells some bullets 2nd Lt Gosney wounded by shell.
- **30th December** Relieved by 8th Bn KRRC
- **31st December to 3rd January** Resting.

4th January In trenches A and D Coy in front line and 11 men wounded or killed. Rfl J Baxter self-inflicted wound and Ernest Edward Wren killed by a bullet and buried at Glimpse Cottage**.**

Part of the battalion diary that the adjutant has filled in with the names of the men killed on the same day. Ernest is highlighted. It was extremely rare for another ranks man to be named, it just shows what a thorough man the adjutant must have been.



WAR DIARY
or
~~INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.~~
(Brass heading not required.)

Army Form C. 2118. (36)

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F. S. Regs., Part II. and the Staff Manual respectively. Title pages will be prepared in manuscript.

Hour, Date, Place	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
1916.	Arrived 2 a.m. from Trenches.	
Jan. 1.		
Jan. 2	Sunday Resting	
3	B Coy & Canal Bank in [illegible] of Bullet	
4	Into Trenches. C 12 B 22 A & D in front line. [illegible]	
	No 12629 Rfl BAXTER J. B Coy wounded self inflicted bullet	
5.	No 9202 Rfl FYLES Y. B - wounded Bullet	
	11258 - VICKERS T. B - " "	
	12151 - WREN E. D Coy Killed "	Buried at Glimpse Cottage C 12 B 22 Sheet 28
6.	11221 - WEBB C. D Coy wounded "	
	11122 - CROOKS H. B Coy " Shell	
	9669 - LYNCH J. B - " "	
	11317 - WHITTALL G. B - " "	
7.	4822 - YARROW R. C - " "	
	2115 - SANDS T. A - Killed Bullet	

Wright William J

- **Full name:** William James Wright
- **Date of birth:** 10th March 1887
- **Regiment:** Grenadier Guards
- **Rank:** Private
- **Service number:** 12181
- **Date of death:** 1st February 1916

died of wounds received on 5th September 1914

- **Age:** 28
- **Interred:** Handsworth Cemetery, Birmingham
- **Grave reference:** 10C. 9632.



Private William J Wright

Birmingham (Handsworth) Cemetery contains 104 scattered burials of the First World War and 99 of the Second World War. A Screen Wall commemorates those whose graves could not be individually marked.



Handsworth Cemetery



Quarry Bank War Memorial

William is also remembered (last name but one) on the Quarry Bank War Memorial, Stevens Park, West Midlands.

Family History

- **1891** the census documents the Wright family living in Bowers (Standon Parish):
  - William B Wright age 30 Head of household - Gamekeeper - born Salt
  - Fanny Wright age 29 wife - born Stafford
  - **William J Wright age 4 son - born Salt (10th March 1887)**
  - Francis age 2 daughter - born Standon
  - Walter age 2 months son - born Standon
- **1901** the census documents the Wright family resident at the Railway Inn, Newport Road, Eccleshall:
  - William B Wright age 40 Head of household - Joiner and Innkeeper

- Fanny Wright age 38 wife
- Francis age 22 daughter
- Walter E age 10 son
- Florence age 9 daughter - born Standon
- Eva age 7 daughter - born Standon

- James age 5 son - born Standon
    - Another census return of the same year documents **William Wright** aged 14 working as a general farm labourer for Caroline Lindop. One of Caroline's sons was Bertram Lindop, another of the names on the War Memorial.
- **1905**
    - William enlisted 10th May 1905 at Lichfield
- **1908**
    - William was discharged from the army
    - William joined the Police Force 20th November and sent to his district on the 1st December
- **1909**
    - William is promted to 2nd class Constable on the 1st December
- **1910**
    - William married Lilian A Bridge on the 29th November, Stourbridge district.
    - William is promoted to 1st class Constable on the 1st December
- **1911**
    - William is transferred to the Birmingham City Police on the 9th November
    - One census return of that year documents the Wright family still living at the Railway Inn, Eccleshall. The public house was renamed in recent years to The Badger, but closed in 2013.
        - William B Wright age 50 Head of household - Publican and Farmer
        - Fanny Wright age 49 wife - assisting in business
        - Walter E Wright age 20 son - helping on farm
        - Flossie M Wright age 19 daughter - barmaid - born Standon
        - Laura E Wright age 17 daughter - housework - born Standon
        - James J Wright age 15 son - Draper's shop assistant - born Standon
        - Gladys M Wright age 9 daughter - born Eccleshall
        - Grace E Wright age 3 daughter - born Eccleshall
    - A separate census return of the same year shows **William James Wright**:
        - Resident at 25 Alexandra Road, Handsworth, Staffs
        - Age 26
        - Married (less than one year) but his wife is not registered in the census return.
        - Occupation: Police Constable
- **1913**
    - William and Lilian had a daughter, Gladys L M Wright
- **1914**
    - William is back in the army and in France 12th August
    - He is badly wounded on 5th September
    - He was shipped back home on the 26th October
- **1915**
    - William is discharged from the army on the 1st May having been found no longer physically fit for service, loss of right eye
- **1916**
    - 1st February William's death is registered in the Birmingham district
- **Notes:**
    - The **CWGC** documents William's widow, Lilian as of 177, High St., Quarry Bank, Staffs.

Currently we assume that this was William's address when he died.

- William's father, William Bartram was also in the police force for a short time (about 1884). He was also the longest serving landlord at the Railway Inn, Eccleshall from 1898 until 1940.
- William's sister **Frances Annie** married Frank Clayton in 1916
    - Frank was from Rochdale, and was a police constable.
    - Frank's military record shows that he joined the Military Foot Police.
    - Frank did serve abroad in the **BEF** and was demobilised in 1919.

Full military history relating to William James Wright

William joined the army in 1905 for 12 years 3 of which he served full time and 9 he had to serve as a First Class Army Reserve and it was the 1st Vol North Staffordshire Regiment that he joined.
On August 5th he was mobilized from Chelsea and was in France by the 12th part of the 4th Guards Brigade 2nd Division. At his medical in Lichfield he was described as very physically fit he was 6 ft. tall and had a 41 inch chest, a positive giant for the time.



On 12th August they left for Southampton and sailed on the Cawdor Castle along with the 3rd Bn Coldstream Guards, they were packed like sardines and it was fortunate it was a very smooth crossing, arriving in the early hours of the 13th at Le Harve. They disembarked to a large hangar on the quay to await their transport and as they moved off it was to rapturous applause from the French civilians.

Once on board the train their first stop was Rouen then Amiens, Arras finally arriving at Vaux at 7.15 pm in the pouring rain. By the 22nd of August The Grenadiers were outside Mons and as the battle started they were only to play a minor part as reinforcements. Despite the successes of the 23rd August it was clear that the BEF faced an enemy greatly superior in number and with both flanks unprotected so must withdraw.

The long and tiring retreat from Mons began.

25th August saw the troops just outside Landrecies here they met a German rear guard. The moment the Germans tried to advance a deadly rapid fire was poured into them, they charged pluckily three or four times, but each time they were mown down. 800 hundred dead Germans were collected next day.

28th August the Grenadier Guards moved off and marched about 19 miles in great heat to Devillet.
30th August Marched off at 3am through the Foret de St Gobain and the Foret de Coucy. They bivouacked about 6pm after a trying march in great heat and about 23 miles.
31th August crossed the Aisne by bridge at Pommiers and continued in blazing heat for another 11 miles to Soucy.

1st September Orders were to take up and entrench a rear-guard position on the Mont Gobert-Soucy spur north of Viviers, Grenadiers to right and Coldstream to the left. At 6.30am some German Cavalry patrols appeared in front of us and they opened up at about 1000 yards range almost at once they had orders to withdraw and just as they were moving a German battery came into action. They left patrols out on the northern edge of the forest and moved back into Villers-Cotterets.
2nd to the 8th September continued to advance until Fontenay was reached.

This effectively was the end of the retreat from Mons.

The Battle of the Marne opened up on the 5th September with the attack by the French 6th Army on the exposed flank of Von Kluck's 1st German Army.

8th to the 14th September - the British troops continued to advance and there were many skirmishes

on the way. They crossed at Pont Arcy. The bridge had been destroyed but the Royal Engineers had made a pontoon bridge. Their orders were to cross at 6.50 am but 6th Brigade started crossing before them so they sat and waited in the rain. The Bn was to be the advace Guard and to secure the heights about La Cour de Soupir and to make good the cross-roads east of Ostel. As they advanced they found considerable numbers of Germans to the west. Hearing that the Germans had advanced and that they had penetrated into the woods on the east side of La Cour de Soupir Nos 3 Coy went forward to the east side with orders to clear the wood and protect the flank. The company soon became hotly engaged with the Germans in the wood but eventually progress was made. Much heavy fighting broke out and the Coldstream and Irish Guards engaged and the German artillery was shelling far back into the woods and down the Soupir road. The Guards continued the advance. By now the German fire had increased especially from the ridge some 500 yards north east of the farm. With all that was going on the Coldstream, Irish and Grenadiers were all mixed up along with the Connaughts and they had not yet succeeded in clearing the wood. The heavy fighting continued.

The Grenadiers dug their trenches about 100 yards in front of the sunken road north of the farm and curving back to the wood where they joined the Irish Guards. Many German prisoners were taken and with the wounded the large farm was full both with British and German wounded. There were not enough orderlies doctors or stretcher bearers and it took until the 16th September to move the wounded back to the hospital at Soissons.

William Wright was wounded on the 5th September, shot in the head and was shot again in the hand. He was unconscious for a month in the hospital at Soissons. He had lost his right eye.

William was eventually evacuated to Britain on the 25th October 1914.

From William's pension records he went before the Medical board at the 2nd General Service Hospital at Bristol on 18th March 1915 where he was recommended for discharge from the army with his ability to earn a full livelihood reduce by three quarters, his discharge was approved on the 31st March 1915.

47th Name

It is quite possible that one or more names are *missing* from the War Memorial, for example, Ernest Job Farnsworth was not added until 2001.

This page is dedicated to any missing names.





A SOLDIER
OF THE GREAT WAR

KNOWN UNTO GOD

They shall grow not 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.

