

# EAST BRENT REMEMBERS

**THE GREAT WAR**

**1914 – 1918**

**A CENTENARY TRIBUTE TO ALL OF THE  
MEN OF EAST BRENT WHO SERVED IN  
WORLD WAR ONE**



**ALSO TO THE  
FAMILIES  
WHO LOST  
LOVED ONES  
AND THOSE  
WHO LIVED IN  
FEAR OF  
LOSING  
SONS,  
HUSBANDS  
AND FATHERS  
DURING  
THOSE LONG  
4 YEARS.**

**COMPILED BY JOHN RIGARLSFORD**

**NEW REVISED EDITION**



**2nd Expanded Edition**

**reprinted 2018**

**Includes much new information.**

Due to the varied sources and limited public research material available some errors are likely!

As publisher the East Brent Parish History Group cannot be responsible for any errors. But would appreciate any corrections or omissions.

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**This work is dedicated in remembrance and thanks to not only those who were casualties, but to all of the young men of our parish, who served in World War One. Also to their families, who suffered anxiously while their men were away....**



*A lost hero ...  
or 'Just a photo on Grandma's piano'?*

**Almost every family has a connection to the armed forces in their history. Especially in World War One.**

**But how many of us know, or are even aware, especially among the younger generations, that their grandfather, great grandfather or great uncle almost certainly served and suffered in that terrible conflict One hundred years ago?**

**None of these brave men remain with us now to tell their story!**

From stories passed down to us from parents and relatives, we may possibly be aware that our grandfather or Great-uncle Charlie served or was killed in WW1?

But what of those relatives who survived, came home and carried on with life as best they could? Such were the horrors they endured, that they rarely spoke of their service or war experiences. So in many cases the younger generations of many families never even knew of the bravery and hardship that their grand parents or great grand parents had endured over 100 years ago not only on the battle front but here on the home front.

During this Centenary of the Great War this is an attempt to find out and record for future generations, who some of these brave men of East Brent were and what do we know of them? Also of the wives, mothers and families who suffered and survived the war as well as those who made the ultimate sacrifice and to pay tribute to them all.

*Many superb books, films, videos etc on the history and battles of World War One have been published. So here I will try to confine the historical battle details of the war to a brief outline of events mainly relevant to the men and families of our East Brent parish and the affect it may have had upon them.*

***John Rigarlsford (2018)***



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## **Introduction**

### **THE GREAT WAR**

#### **A TRIBUTE TO ALL THE MEN AND FAMILIES OF OUR EAST BRENT PARISH WHO DID THEIR PATRIOTIC DUTY**

**World War One or the 'Great War' as it was known then, was for the first time in history to become a GLOBAL WAR that started one hundred years ago in Europe on 28 July 1914 and lasted until 11 November 1918.**

It would draw in people from almost every country and community around the world.

Many believe that the aftermath of this conflict with the hardships imposed on a defeated Germany by some of the Allied nations especially France, contributed to the rise of the Nazi party and the outbreak of World War Two.

Unknown to those who eagerly volunteered to do their patriotic duty, this war was to be unlike any conflict before it, and the tragic events that followed would touch the people of our village of East Brent just as it would every other community in the world!

From available military and electoral records and other sources, we know that possibly over 130 men of our parish served in WW1.

More than twenty of the men who left our parish to fight would not return and are buried or lost in foreign soil. However 116 or so of our servicemen survived the war and gave their birth, home address or that of their next of kin as 'East Brent', Rooksbridge or Edingworth. Very little is known about the lives of many of these survivors after their return? Some we do not even know their names?

**THEY ARE ALL DEAD NOW.  
We owe them. We must not forget them!**

## IN MEMORY

For most of human history, war memorials were erected to commemorate great victories and the commanders of those victories.. Drake, Nelson, Wellington, Napoleon etc.

But remembering the dead was a secondary concern. Indeed in Wellington, Nelson and Napoleon's day and before, the dead were merely shoveled into mass, unmarked and forgotten graves on the battlefield.

The Arc de Triomphe in Paris or Nelson's Column in London for example, contain no names of those killed.

It was after the Boer War and during the great losses of the First World War that commemorating those who died was beginning to be felt important, and some Regiments created memorials to their fallen comrades. These were usually installed in cathedrals or garrison churches. Some schools or colleges and large companies etc. would erect a roll of honour to its students or employees who were lost or served during the wars.

At first there was no plan to commemorate the fallen of the First World War. But in some towns or villages street shrines were placed to commemorate the men who had died or served their country. Some of these were merely a notice board with names of local serving men sometimes decorated with flowers where relatives and friends could gather to pray for their safety.

When the war ended there was no government guidance, aid or administration regarding War Memorials. Each parish, district or town made its own decisions. Committees were set up to raise money and decide on designs and locations etc. Many memorials were placed in the local Anglican parish church or churchyard. Which sometimes created problems with relatives of Non-Conformists requesting the name of their relative be removed.

Seventeen men from our parish are commemorated on our East Brent War Memorial. But we know that at least eight others with strong family connections with the parish also died.

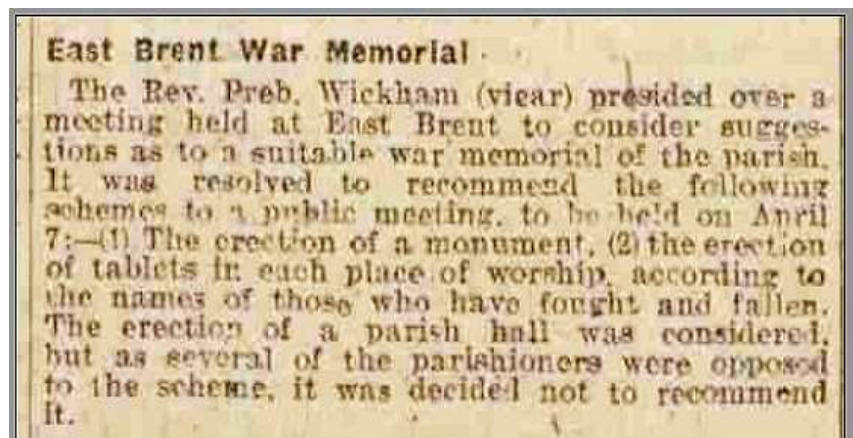
There were no strict rules as to who was to be commemorated on a memorial. It appears to have been down to the decisions of those who made up the local community War Memorial committee. Some names

were omitted because the families had moved elsewhere, others as said previously, were taken off because of religion, some families even asked to be taken off because their son had been declared as 'Missing' and the family held onto the forlorn hope that one day he would return. Others just wanted to be left alone with their grief. While other sometimes influential families with a tenuous connection would ask for their relative to be included on a particular memorial.



### The Memorial at East Brent

In 1919 a meeting was held in East Brent to consider the erection of a war memorial commemorating the dead of the parish. Several suggestions were put forward including the building



of a commemorative Parish Hall. A committee separate from the Parish Council was set up chaired by the Rev, Archie WICKHAM vicar of St Marys.

Mr. Dixon WARD, who became a committee member, said 'No scheme was too big, and they shouldn't be afraid of a four figure sum, for now was a time of great prosperity. Any sum raised would only be a small installment of the debt owed to the young men who had died and easily got by living for a week on a shilling a day.' *From: Some Memorials of War in the County of Somerset: Steve DIBBLE.*

At a subsequent public meeting held in November 1919 it was agreed that a memorial cross should be erected at the junction of the then Bristol and Weston roads, plus three plaques to be installed in St Mary's church, the Wesleyan Chapel at East Brent and the Baptist Chapel at Rooksbridge.

**East Brent War Memorial!**  
A largely attended meeting of East Brent parishioners, over which the vicar (Preb. A. P. Wickham) presided, decided to rescind previous resolutions and that the War Memorial should take the form of a Memorial Cross. It was decided to ask Capt. Gaskell, the Lord of the Manor, to give a piece of land opposite the Council School as the site. It was further decided that £60 should be devoted to the erection of a memorial tablet in the Church and £20 each to the Wesleyan and Baptist Churches for a similar purpose. Some £100 was collected in the room.

The East Brent Memorial was designed and built by stonemason A. Ruscombe EMERY of Burnham on Sea. He also built the memorials at Catcott, West Huntspill, East Huntspill and Brea.

The East Brent memorial is unique in that it depicts life size statues of men of the three military services and also that of a man of the Merchant Navy, who.. unarmed risked danger from submarines daily to keep not only Britain supplied with



food and vital supplies but also food and weapons to the men serving on the front.

By 1920 enough funds had been raised and our rather unique East Brent war memorial was dedicated on May 27th 1921.

£459 had been collected, Mr. A Ruscombe-Emery had received £327-19-0 for his work in executing the monument and Mr. Frederick Bligh Bond was paid a fee of three Guineas for his original plans. Among other payments was the sum of 15s-Od. to a bugler for sounding the Last Post and Reveille at the dedication ceremony. The balance was donated to Weston Hospital. In 1920 a 'Welcome Home' party was given for one hundred and sixteen returned ex-servicemen of East Brent. It was later proposed and carried that the monument should be placed in the care of the Parish Council.

The memorial stands proudly in East Brent at what was then the junction of the main Bristol and Weston Super Mare roads. And would have been seen by all who travelled North or South to and from the west country until the late 1920's when the A38 was widened and straightened bypassing the village.



East Brent was known by many as the War Memorial village.

In the late 1980's a brass memorial plaque similar to that in St Mary's Church was discovered in an outhouse at Beaconsfield House, Rooksbridge, by owner Arthur POPHAM. (Probably removed when the Baptist Chapel opposite was converted to a private residence in the late 1950's).

Dave WALDON the owner of residence that was once the old Baptist Chapel at Rooksbridge restored the brass plaque and mounted it on the wall inside his ex-chapel home.

The name Harry DINWIDDY is missing from this memorial plaque maybe due to its Baptist location or perhaps his family religion? But his name was added to the main war memorial after its inauguration.

A plate had also been added to this memorial to commemorate WW2 casualty Louis William TAYLOR who died at Anzio. in Feb 1944 aged 20.

Louis William was the youngest of the five children of Annie and Louis William Taylor Snr. who was a steam roller driver and who came to East Brent from Lympsham. At the time of his call up in 1942 18 yr old Louis was a steam roller driver's mate working on local road schemes in the area. At the time of his service the family were living in a cottage near the Knoll Inn.

Another WW2 casualty who was not listed on any of our village memorials is Lieutenant Francis STOKES son of Maurice and Alice STOKES and husband of Rosemary STOKES of East Brent who died in Normandy in August 1944. aged 34.

Also added to the main East Brent memorial was Sapper Ernest COMER of the Royal Engineers, son of Frederick and Millicent COMER of East Brent who died in April 1950 soon after the outbreak of the Korean war.

Interestingly, the last four men who became casualties in 1918 as the war ended were omitted from the memorial. This is probably due to the fact that, although they had a strong connection with East Brent, their families at the time of their deaths had moved away. Some of these men are commemorated on memorials where they or their families were living at the time of their deaths. It is hoped that at least some of these may be added soon?

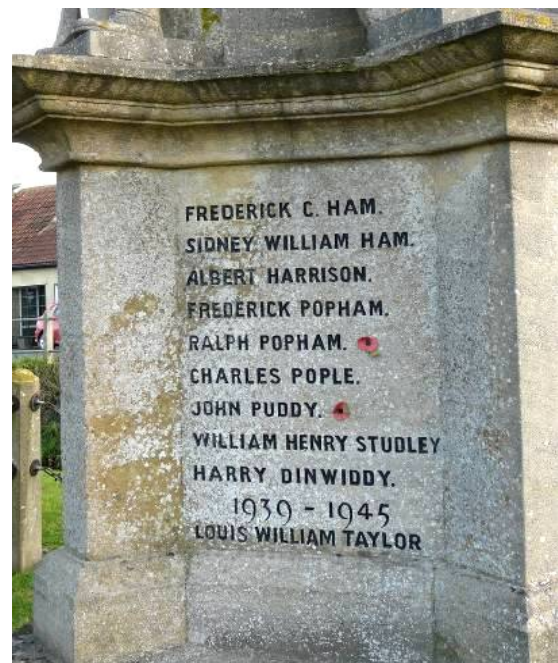
**We know that at over 120 probably more? Young men, sons and fathers etc with strong family connections to East Brent served in World War One.**

A whole generation of men who were born or had families in our East Brent Parish took the "Kings Shilling". Many volunteering. Bearing in mind that many of these young volunteers or conscripted men of the parish were mostly farm workers and men who had rarely seen a rifle let alone fired one!

At least 24 young men with a connection to East Brent gave their lives in WW1 and are buried in foreign soil. Seventeen of these are commemorated on our village War Memorial.

**Just to stand in front of our village memorial, the carnage of WW1 can be realised by comparing the numbers of men of the parish killed in WW1 to those of WW2 and the Korean war!**

One also wonders about the affect over those four long years on so many mothers, young wives and children of these brave young men when and after they received the dreaded letter or telegram telling them that their loved one had been killed or was missing?



Some of the men who were born or had lived in East Brent before the war and became casualties are not commemorated on our East Brent memorial. Probably because they or their families had moved away from the parish before or during the war and are commemorated on war memorials in towns and villages where they or their next of kin were settled at the time of their deaths.

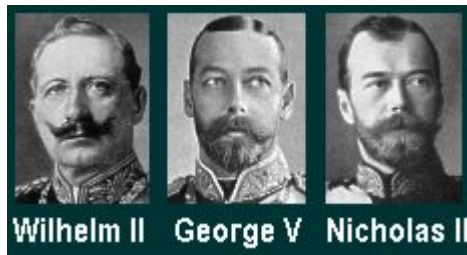
Similarly, some of the returning survivors and or their families had also moved away before or during their service.

*In the listings that follow where possible, I have tried to include as much available information that is publicly available about all of the men with a*

*strong family connection with the parish of East Brent, both the Casualties, the Survivors and those that had moved away. however I am convinced that this list is far from complete? There is more to discover.*  
*John Rigarlsford*



## Three Cousins, Three Empires and the Road to World War One



**At the outbreak of World War One, Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany, King George V of England and Tsar Nicholas II of Russia, rulers of the three largest Monarchies based in Europe were all descendants of Queen Victoria.** Victoria herself was of German descent, she was daughter of princess Victoria of Saxe-Coburg and she married her first cousin prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha.

*(In fact with rising anti German feeling in Britain it was only in 1917 that the British royal family -- once it was seen which side would probably be victorious -- changed its name from Saxe-Coburg to Windsor)!*

By the end of the war only one of the cousins would be victorious, Tsar Nicholas II would be assassinated by his own people and Kaiser Wilhelm II would be a cowering wreck in exile in Holland!

Despite having extremely experienced and capable Generals, both Wilhelm II of Germany and Nicholas II of Russia promoted themselves as Commander in Chief of their military, but George V left the planning and logistics of the British war machine to his Generals and parliament while he was more at home concentrating on his stamp collection.!

Of the three, the egotistic and belligerent Kaiser 'Bill' Wilhelm II had long been sabre rattling, building up both his Army and Navy, wanting to gain territory to build his Greater German Empire with the aim of becoming ruler of the whole of Europe. The Kaiser even believed that his British cousin George V would take his side against Britain's old enemy France.

An opportunity for the Kaiser came when an event occurred which would eventually plunge almost every nation in the world into a war that resulted

in over 16,000,000 deaths and 20,000,000 wounded world wide, both military and civilian.

On 28th June 1914, 19 year old Gavrilo Princip, a Bosnian Serb student and member of the 'Black Hand Gang' who were opposed to Serbia being governed by Austria-Hungary assassinated the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria, in Sarajevo, Bosnia. Kaiser Wilhelm used this event to ally Germany to the Austro-Hungarian Empire when it declared war on Serbia.

Due to earlier Russian alliances with Serbia, Russia went to the assistance of Serbia. this inevitably drew into the war the allied forces of France and England, who's Triple Entente was a pact with Russia to aid each other in the event of any threat by Germany etc. Eventually the commonwealth, even Japan and the USA would be drawn in on the side of the allies.

During the 1800s, Britain was more concerned about Russia and France than Germany. Relations between Britain and Germany were very good. This began to change however when Kaiser Wilhelm II took control of Germany and started showing a militaristic interest in expanding his empire in Europe and Africa and building up his Battle fleet with the aim of equaling the that of the British, which he had always envied. Britain saw this as a threat and joined Russia and France to form the Triple Entente.

### **Life in East Brent in the early 1900's**

The population Of East Brent reached its peak around 1851 when it stood at approx 850. There was a steady decline until about 1921 when it stood at 640. Agricultural mechanisation, emigration and also the coming of the railway through the region in the 1850's was no doubt part of the reason for this earlier decline, making it easier for people to move away or seek employment elsewhere.

The main occupation here in East Brent for many was in agriculture. The parish being on the very edge of the Somerset Levels, the land here consists mainly of clay-silt over peat. This land with its rich grassland pasture is ideal for cattle and dairy farming. A Dairy was built in

Rooksbridge in the 1870's to process the large volume of local milk into Cheese and butter etc.

With minimal daily transport to the towns available.. unless you were a local skilled tradesman such as a carpenter, mason, Inn or shopkeeper etc.... then dairying and farm work were the main occupations available to many of the male working population of East Brent parish. Also the occupation for working women too, would be mostly limited to helping on the farm or domestic service. At the turn of the century with farming becoming more mechanised and tractors beginning to replace horses etc the need for farm workers was becoming less. As you will find in many of the personal stories that follow, some looked for work on the railways or even moving to the South Wales mining area. Others migrated overseas to parts of the British Empire, some as children with their families and others trying to make a new life on their own.

As with many other rural communities in the late 1800's to early 1900's, most members of our community never had the opportunity to travel abroad and some even, had rarely been out of the County!

So it follows that a few of the more adventurous young men of our parish sought something of a more exciting and fulfilling lifestyle. i.e. anything that would be better than the drudgery of long hours haymaking, making butter/cheese, cleaning out pigs or milking cows twice a day. So a number of our young men had turned to a career in the military or navy. Which gave them good food and a reasonable standard of living plus the opportunity to travel outside the parish boundaries and see other parts of the world. Even if a privates pay was only 1s-2d a day all found! In 1914 a farm workers wage had risen to 16s-9d (85p) a week.

In Peacetime to relieve the daily drudgery of those working on the farm etc, a number of young men tied to the land in the parish had also volunteered into the local part time North Somerset Yeomanry or West Somerset Yeomanry or later into the Territorial units which were set up in 1908 from these earlier voluntary Yeomanry units mainly to train for Home Defence duty in times of emergency. 'Saturday soldiers' as they were known by the regulars! (Originally these part time Territorial men were not obliged to serve overseas, but as the war progressed and the need for more men on the front due to the high casualty rate, many of these semi trained part time voluntary units were eventually embodied into the regular army and fought bravely).

## D.O.R.A



### 'Defence Of the Realm Act'

By August 8th just days after Britain committed itself to the war, DORA or 'Defence Of the Realm Act' was quickly passed to enable the government to place the public on a war footing where it could bring in measures to prioritise and control vital sections of normal life to the needs of war. Which gave it the power to control, or direct manufacturers to change production to vital supplies such as arms and ammunition etc. also control ship building for instance, censor newspapers and even private mail if it thought necessary. One instance was to preserve the country's gold reserves with the introduction of the One Pound and Ten Shilling paper notes. The gold sovereign and half sovereign were still in use at the outbreak of war and were gradually withdrawn and the sovereign virtually disappeared from circulation. (The pound note would survive right up until 1988). While in 1914 with wages at less than £1 a week, very few residents of East Brent would be carrying sovereigns or pound notes in their pockets anyway! The Church bells were also silenced by the Act, only to be rung if invasion was imminent.

An Act that remains today was the introduction of British Summertime to maximise working hours. Another Act that partly remains with us was introduced in order to concentrate minds toward the war effort, restricted licensing hours - lunchtime and evenings - were introduced. And pub landlords were told to water down the beer! It was even illegal to buy a round of drinks in a pub! We have no records or reports of the affect of this act on the residents of East Brent if any??

Possibly for rural areas such as ours, apart from the loss of labour to the war, the greatest inconvenience to farmers etc, was the fact that the

government could control the land and what crops farmers were to grow and also commandeered for the war effort, any fit horse that was regarded as surplus to an owners requirement!

While the war took away farmers sons, workers and horses from the land, making life difficult those on the Home Front, food rationing did not start until early 1918. when unrestricted German submarine attacks were taking a heavy toll on merchant shipping and threatening food imports. Among the first items to be rationed was imported meat, sugar, wheat and butter and margarine. Although as far as the housewife in East Brent would be concerned, rationing of bread and sugar etc. would be hard. But, there would most likely be some extra dairy products like butter and cheese available if you knew the right farmer or someone who worked at the Dairy! And with the abundance of pigs in the area fed on whey from the cheese making farms in the village, a bit of off ration pork and bacon were likely available!

### **Britain Declares War against Germany**

Germany ignored a neutral treaty and invaded England's neutral ally Belgium on its way to invade France. England declared war against Germany on 4th August 1914. Britain did not want Germany to get control of the Belgian Channel ports.

The ensuing war would eventually touch almost every country and community and family in the world including ours here in East Brent! From where more than a hundred and twenty or so young men would serve their country. Over 20% of that generation of men of our parish who were caught up in the aftermath would perish!

Only 40% of service records of the men who served, survived the WW2 bombing of London Dockland where they were kept. Sadly there are rarely any records of the lives of those who returned after the war, some wounded both physically and mentally. Very little is known about these men and what became of them in peace time once they were released from the army? Only fading family memories!

Not only have I searched for those who gave their lives, I have also attempted to find out a little about the lives of the survivors in an effort to

preserve some of the stories and maybe look at the affects that their war service had upon them which has largely been forgotten, and to commemorate them here.

When war was declared on Germany on August 4th 1914, a number of young men from our village were already serving as regulars in the armed forces or were members of local part time Territorial units. Others had completed various terms of three, six years to twelve years etc. and were time served men on 'Reserve' and were recalled for 3 years or "D.O.W." The Duration of War!

For example: Men like Frank COMER who served in the military for a total of over 22 years from 1896-1919, and served in both the Boer war and also in WW1. Reg CURRY son of the landlord of the Wellington Arms who had signed on in the North Somerset Yeomanry for 6 years in 1910 and who was there with the BEF at Mons and also took part at the first battle of Ypres.

Charlie DAUNTON who joined the Navy in 1912. Also, his father Charles Sen'r. who, born 1871 in the Axbridge Workhouse, served for 30 years having signed up for the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry as early as 1888 and also served in the Boer War.

30 year old carpenter Bert CREES son of the East Brent Policeman on reserve at the outbreak of war was recalled on Aug 4th and was the first East Brent man to become a casualty.

George DAVIS, Len DINWIDDY, Fred FISHER, Edward EMERY were also among these regular soldiers recalled when war was declared. Many others called up at the same time had trained in local part time Territorial units.

Because of their earlier service and experience, these trained men were among the very first to be sent to various fronts and numbered high among the early casualties. For many, even though they were professional soldiers this would be their first experience of real war, which for most came at Mons in August 1914. While wholly outnumbered they attempted to slow the German advance through Belgium. These regulars were the men who would be among the first to go into the earliest theatres of war, fighting battles fought with outdated tactics resulting in huge casualty numbers!

But their names live on, inscribed on our village war memorial. Some examples of casualties among the Regulars are.... Edward EMERY who was caught up in the Siege of Kut in Mesopotamia and died as a POW of the Turks.

Territorial reserve soldier Frederick Ham was among the nearly 20,000 killed on the first day of the 2nd Battle of the Somme in 1916. George COMER who died at Gallipoli serving with the ANZAC's and many more..

The Generals were conducting attrition tactics using old cavalry methods, which involved attempting to overwhelm the enemy with numbers, which may have worked in earlier Colonial wars and to some extent the Boer war where you could see the "Whites of the eyes of the enemy".

But the weapons of war were now more sophisticated and deadly. The overall commander French Army General Joffre, soon learned that repeatedly sending in hundreds of Frenchmen on horseback or on foot

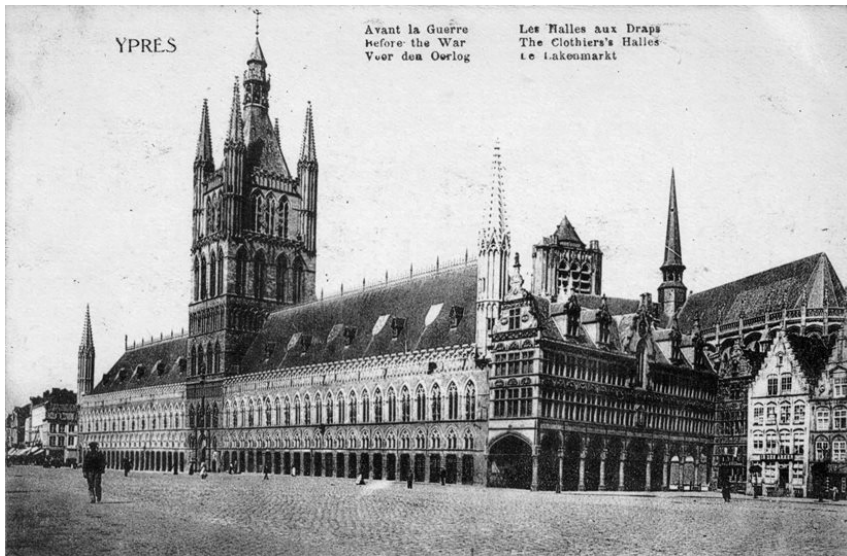


cross 'No Man's Land' Or even infantry dressed in red breeches and bright blue tunics with swords and pikes drawn or even a single shot rifle, made them a sitting target for the Germans and would be no match for the modern machine guns, artillery and barbed wire of the modern German army!

*(Even tin helmets were not provided for British soldiers until 1916! The Germans were amazed to see the British soldiers going into battle wearing just flat caps)* This was now a war on an Industrial scale with casualties to match!

An early WW1 French uniform

After the initial retreat from Belgium by the overwhelmed British and French, the allies managed to stop the German invasion just north of Paris and by Christmas 1914 the German front line had been pushed back and both sides 'Dug-in' and became locked into a 'stalemate' of virtually static 'Trench warfare' never encountered before and which would last for the next four years! Apart from several hard fought battles attempting to break through by both sides at various places along the Western Front Verdun, Loos, Somme, Paschendale etc, the Front Lines remained almost static.



## YPRES

By some miracle against overwhelming numbers and suffering huge casualties, the battered city of Ypres on the borders of Belgium was held by the BEF throughout the whole of the war!

The magnificent Cloth Hall at Ypres before the war.



The same scene in late 1915

It is said. "At the end of the war a man on horseback could see from one side of Ypres to the other"!

Some of the young men from East Brent who had enlisted and were already trained regulars or men on reserve and Territorial men before the war, would have been part of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) sent to the Western Front -- "Britain's contemptible little army" as the Kaiser called them -- and would prove their worth in the battle at Mons and the subsequent retreat in order to protect Paris and the Channel ports at the end of August 1914 and would also have seen action in the numerous battles at Ypres etc.



*(If among your relatives belongings, you find your relative was awarded the 1914 'Mons' Star medal, it is most likely that he was one of the trained pre-war regular soldiers. Or had been on reserve, or in a Territorial unit at the outbreak of war and was sent to France with the original BEF). Sadly as you will read later, many of these awards were posthumous!*

Outnumbered and facing a superior trained army of over two million men, some these Regulars were among huge casualties during the early German advance through Belgium into Northern France during the first weeks of the invasion.

In the first 12 months of the war starting, six of the soldiers from our parish were killed. Followed by a further five in 1916. In 1917 we would lose another eight.

By the time peace was declared on 11th November 1918 at least twenty-five young men with a connection to our parish of East Brent would not be coming home!

Four of those who died in 1916, were casualties of the disaster that was the ill fated 'Battle of the Somme' By the end of the battle, the British Army had suffered 420,000 casualties. Over 19,000 men of the BEF died on the very first day alone. Mostly within the first hour. 1917 saw eight of our East Brent men die. The latter half of 1917 saw the horror and mud of Paschendaele where at least four of our mostly inexperienced East Brent conscripts perished. Many others were wounded.

Not only did men from East Brent fight on the Western front, a number of our East Brent servicemen fought in other theatres of the war such as Gallipoli, Italy, Africa and Mesopotamia etc.

Men like John DERRICK who survived the ill fated campaign at Gallipoli, only to die in the mud of Paschendaele in 1917.

George COMER who's family had migrated to New Zealand when he was a child, died as part of the Anzac Forces at Gallipoli.

Also Edward EMERY of Rooksbridge 2nd Dorsetshire Regiment who was taken prisoner at Kut in Mesopotamia (*Modern Iraq*) and died in appalling conditions in captivity.

Three of the sons of the Rev. Archie WICKHAM vicar of East Brent served in WW1. In 1914 when WW1 was declared his two eldest sons were in the rubber trade in German East Africa. They and their families were immediately interned as Prisoners of war by the Germans and their

assets and belongings confiscated. Eventually on release by British East African forces in late 1917 both signed up into the Kings African Rifles. A third son by Rev Wickham's 2nd wife Harriet.. Archdale Kenneth Wickham, served in the Machine Gun Corps. (*Sometimes known as 'Suicide Squads'. Because of the carnage that could be inflicted by the machine gun, captured machine gun crews on both sides were often shown no mercy and were killed outright!*) Other known POW's were George HAM of the S.L.I. and Albert TAYLOR, also of the Machine Gun Corps, who somehow managed to survive capture at St Quentin during the last months of the war in 1918 to be released at the end of the war!

Many of our local lads who volunteered, had enrolled into the local Somerset Light Infantry Regiment, or in the neighbouring Dorset L.I. and Gloucester L.I. etc. And it was these Light Infantry regiments who were first 'Over the Top' and suffered great losses.

While the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Somerset Light Infantry served on the Western Front, those serving in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the S.L.I. and 2nd Battalion Dorset Regiment were sent to join the Indian forces and fought in the Middle East. Over the course of the war the S.L.I. lost over 4,750 men.

Even the life of the artillery man behind the front fared little better. They were targets of enemy retaliatory shelling and often their fate was to be blown to pieces! Huge numbers of artillery men are recorded as 'Missing with no known grave' all over the various battle fronts such as at cemeteries at Menin Gate and Arras etc.

Men serving in the RASC Service Corps and RE Royal Engineers fared little better having to get supplies of ammunition, food and fodder etc, right up there to the battle front, while engineers had repair roads and bridges lay cables etc unarmed and under fire!

### **Britain a Naval Nation.**

Throughout history Britain as an island dependant on imports, was a naval nation, and in the early 1900's, had the largest and most highly trained fleet in the world to protect our shores, trade routes and Empire. The British Navy was the envy of the German Kaiser. Around 1905 Wilhelm II began expanding his navy, building more battleships and cruisers etc, in the hope of outnumbering or at least equalling those of the Royal Navy.

Barring a couple of attacks by the German High Seas fleet on the East Coast at Scarborough etc in Dec. 1914 the German Navy never really got going and its defeat the early sea battles of Dogger Bank 1915 and Jutland in 1916 saw the Kaiser's navy scurry back to port never to emerge again.

Protecting our ports and keeping the French Channel ports out of the hands of Germany was vital. However nothing could prevent the heavy toll on shipping by Germany's submarines. Especially when the Kaiser declared unrestricted targeting of any ships going to or from Britain, including unarmed merchant and passenger vessels. In the later part of the war the 'Convoy' system was employed which did much to lessen the loss of thousands of tons of shipping in the Atlantic.

### **B.E.F.**

With the defence budget concentrated on our navy, at the outbreak of war in 1914 the British Army numbered less than 800,000 trained regular and reserve soldiers at its disposal. But many of these regular British soldiers were based abroad throughout the vast British Empire!

The tiny British Expeditionary Force which landed in France in August 1914 consisted of just 80,000 trained men and was outnumbered by the German army which could muster over 2,500,000 men. Leading the Kaiser to regard the BEF as.. "Britain's Contemptible Little Army" Later affectionately known as the "Old Contemptibles".

After the declaration of war, by mid August many of the early regular and trained soldiers who formed part of the tiny outnumbered British Expeditionary Force the B.E.F. were sent to Mons in Belgium on the Western Front. The first action involving British forces.

The BEF was under the overall command of the French General Joffre and tasked with the defence of northern France. Although overwhelmed and having to retreat from Mons along with the French, the B.E.F. against overwhelming odds, eventually managed to slow the German army's rapid advance into France, holding the Germans just north of Paris and also denying the Germans the Channel ports and therefore the Kaiser's expected speedy victory.

## 1914-1915 The Volunteer Army.

The Secretary of State for War, Lord Kitchener soon realised that the British Army was far too small compared to the French and German forces and wanted to build a new army of 70 divisions.



Soon this iconic poster of Lord Kitchener -- designed by Alfred Leete of Weston super Mare -- and other recruiting propaganda posters urging 'You' to volunteer and do your duty, appeared everywhere. By Christmas 1914 half a million men and boys had volunteered. By the end of 1915 two and a half million men had volunteered.

In the early days of autumn 1914, many brave young men were eager to take "The Kings Shilling" and join this "Exciting event" which promised to put the Kaiser back in his place, and be "Home by Christmas"! Which we now know did not and could not happen.



With all the encouragement of recruiting propaganda and the sense of doing your patriotic duty along with your mates was all very exciting and appealing, leading in 1915 to many more of our young village men volunteering for Kitchener's "New Army".

From a rural area such as ours here in East Brent many of these early volunteers would have been farm workers, some hardly able to read and write.

*(On some enrolment papers you will find an X (The mans mark). with the recruits signature in the same handwriting as that of the recruiting officer)!*

These young men would then undertake three months training, in many cases without adequate equipment, before entering one of the theatres of war. These men eager but without any battle experience would soon find

themselves thrown into the horrors that were Ypres, Loos, Arras, Somme and Paschendaele etc.

*(If your relative was awarded the 1915 Star medal as well as the British and Victory medals he would most likely have been among these early volunteers).*

Once the initial thrust of the Kaiser's army on the Western Front had been held and pushed back in 1914, both sides dug in. But unlike any previous land battles which were usually mobile and over in a few days, a stalemate of '**Trench Warfare**' began, - with opposing trenches reaching from the North sea to the Swiss border - which would last for the next four years. These men would have to endure horrific conditions and millions of lives would be lost. Much of the time existing just a few yards from the enemy.

### **May 1915 National registration act introduced.**

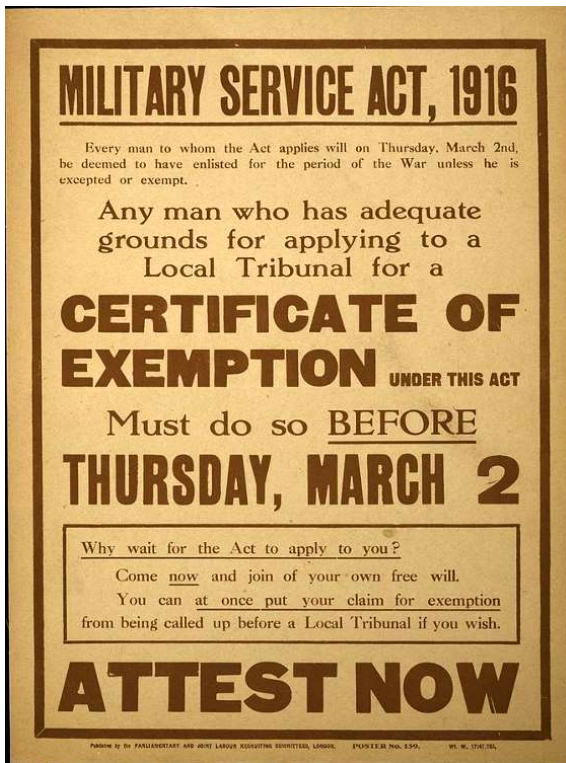
Despite news censorship, by late 1915 the high casualty rates were becoming apparent to the government and general public. Many of the men who were trained regulars and officers at the outbreak of the war had been killed or wounded. Replacements were needed and volunteer numbers were falling fast and the National Registration Act was created. It required all men who were still available between the ages of 16 - 65 and fit for military service to register.

On Attestation men could state a preference for which service or Regiment they preferred. Most were put on 'Reserve' to be mobilised when new replacements or extra Divisions were to be formed and were usually sent to whichever Regiment it was felt they were needed irrespective of their original preference!

### **1916 Conscription for "The Duration" introduced.**

Conscription was introduced in March 1916, for single men aged 18-41 and later to include married men and those with families. In 1918 toward the end of the war when more men were needed during the defeat and final victorious push against the German final 'Spring Offensive' conscription was raised to include men of 51!

## Exemption



Men in some essential or skilled occupations who got called up for service could appeal for exemption against their call up to a local Military Service Tribunal. Reasons for exemption included serious family commitments, health or handicap or being in an essential occupation, already doing important war work, or for moral or religious reasons. The last group became known as Conscientious Objectors. Some of these men served bravely as unarmed medics and stretcher bearers bringing in the wounded while under fire etc.

750,000 men appealed against their conscription in the first 6 months. Many were granted exemption of some sort, even if sometimes it was only temporary. In an agricultural area such as here in East Brent, Farmers and/or their eldest son could apply for exemption on grounds of agriculture and food production being classed as an essential occupation. Other essential agricultural workers were to sign up but sometimes allowed to remain on 'Reserve' until needed for service.

Some examples of local exemption appeals being 18 year old William John GRANT conscripted on the 24th July 1916 into the Devonshire Reg. but posted to the Reserves while given leave to help his widowed mother on the farm. He was recalled for service Feb 1917. He was transferred into the Royal Lancs Reg. and sent to Northern France in Aug 1917. And sadly 'Killed in Action' in horror that was Paschendaele just one month later on 23 September 1917.

—Mr. J. Joyce (Milverton) said the tribunal told one farmer that if his daughter could play the piano she could milk the cows.—Mr. Gilbert Parker (Long Ashton): The tribunal looked upon a farmer's womenfolk as conscripted labour.—Mr. F. Woodward (East Brent): When questioned about my daughter, a schoolteacher, who cycles two miles each way to her school every day, the chairman told me she must give up teaching and take to milking. That I call

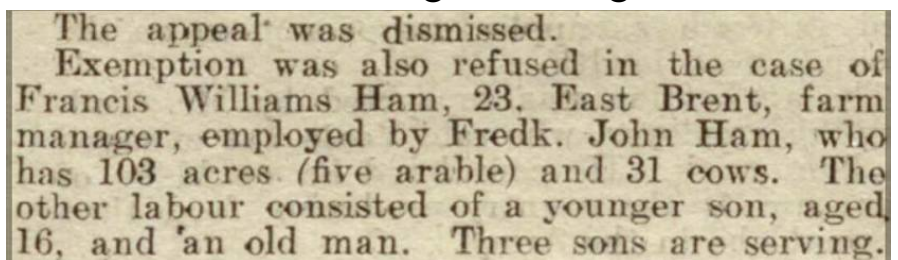
Another appeal that made it into the local newspapers was launched by farmer Frank WOODWARD of East Brent In 1917 who was

also representative for the Axbridge and Highbridge NFU.

With farming classed as an essential occupation, along with other Farmers Union members he campaigned for more leniency against conscription for farmers sons. However, the WW1 Enrolment Tribunal refused his own application to exempt his son for essential farm work and told him, "His daughter should give up teaching and take up milking"!

Reg CURRY son of the landlord of the Wellington Arms had completed a six year term as a regular, serving from 1910 until he was demobbed very early 1916. He was then *recalled* under the new 1916 conscription act. He had been released and returned home after serving his original 6 year term in 1916 and was helping to run his sick father's business who also farmed some livestock. He was eventually successful in his appeal to the tribunal on the grounds of 'Time served' and the need to upkeep the farm for his by now disabled father.

However, during the German spring offensive of 1918 huge numbers of casualties were being inflicted on the British and their allies. More and more fit and trained men were needed in Northern France. Which meant that to meet the numbers required the tribunals had to make some tough decisions on who they granted exemptions to. For instance, Harold FROST of North Yeo and Francis HAM of East Brent being eldest sons, were more or less running the farms of their fathers and had been granted Exemption. Both had registered at the same time into the Special Reserve of the Irish Guards in late 1915 and had signed an agreement to be mobilised if the need arose and in June 1918 despite appeals by their fathers they were both 'Called to the Colours'.



The appeal was dismissed.  
Exemption was also refused in the case of Francis Williams Ham, 23, East Brent, farm manager, employed by Fredk. John Ham, who has 103 acres (five arable) and 31 cows. The other labour consisted of a younger son, aged 16, and an old man. Three sons are serving.

By the last months of the war in 1918 the German final spring offensive was fading. The allies had managed to push the German armies back to a line where they were in 1914. However, many of the trained regulars and volunteers had become casualties. And the Military Service Act had raised the conscription age limit to 51.

For some of the older conscripts or those unable to pass the A1 medical fitness required for front line duty, and to replace the younger men who

were overseas, Agricultural Companies in Britain were set up attached to the Labour Corps. to take men with previous farming experience etc, to help on farms on the home front, to produce much needed food and forage for both home and overseas. Two of these older conscripts were Walter Randolph HUETT of Manor Farm Edingworth and Henry WILSON of Mudgley, Rooksbridge. Because these men had not served overseas in a 'Theatre of war' they did not qualify for service medals. Many Indian, African and Chinese civilians were also used as labourers and porters etc.

### **The Labour Corps is formed**

*The Labour Corps grew to some 389,900 by the time of the Armistice. Of this total, around half were working in the United Kingdom and the rest in the theatres of war. The Corps was manned by officers and other ranks who had been medically rated below the "A1" condition needed for front line service. Many were the returned wounded, such as Frederick BLOOD son-in-law of the manager of the Cheddar Valley Dairy at Rooksbridge, who first registered into the Sherwood Foresters aged 35 but due to his age and fitness was transferred to the Labour Corps. He was sent to France with the Labour Corps and was 38 years old when he was killed in May 1918. Labour Corps units were often deployed for work within range of the enemy guns, sometimes for lengthy periods. During the German Spring offensive in March and April 1918 on the Western Front some Labour Corps units were even used as emergency infantry. The Corps was often regarded as something of a second class organisation: for example, the men who died are commemorated under their original regiment, with Labour Corps being secondary. Researching men of the Corps is made extra difficult by this, as is the fact that very few records remain of the daily activities and locations of Corps units.*

### **1918 and on... Re-enlistment.**

After the Armistice, most of the men who had signed to serve for the 'Duration of Hostilities' were quickly released back to their homes, jobs and families to get the economy back on track.

However men were still needed in the Army of Occupation in Germany, Palestine, and in the garrisons of the Empire. And limited conscription continued into 1920. Also men due for demob were offered a bounty, with



the opportunity to re-enlist for a further 2, 3, or 4 years. This was £20, £30 or £40 respectively.

Because of the poor economic and jobs situation at home, or domestic problems... sometimes even to escape responsibility for an unwanted child, many took up the offer to re-enlist, including some of the men from our village! Beside the financial advantage, for some it was more exciting than coming home to clean out pigs and milk cows again twice a day!

### **For King and Another country. Armies of the British Empire.**

Many countries in what was then known as the British Empire, which included India, Australia, New Zealand, Africa, Canada, and Newfoundland etc, raised armies to join in the fight against the enemy. And in many cases were to bravely fight some of the fiercest battles of the war in Gallipoli and on the Western Front etc.

At the turn of the century, in order to gain a better way of life many young men and sometimes whole families from our village had migrated overseas. And some of these would volunteer into the Expedition forces of their adopted country to fight for Britain.

Among those migrants originally from East Brent who volunteered and fought with the Canadian Empire forces were William LEE, so too did Ernest POPHAM formerly from Rooksbridge who had migrated to Canada and became a lumberjack in British Columbia. In 1915 He volunteered into the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force and took part in the 1916 battles of the Somme and Passchendale etc where they fought alongside Australian, and Newfoundland regiments, who in particular fought bravely and suffered huge casualties. Ernest survived and eventually returned to live and work in Rooksbridge. Sadly John DURSTON who migrated to British Columbia along with Ernest POPHAM was killed in June 1917 during the battle for 'Vimy Ridge'

Others among those Commonwealth soldiers who died, were former East Brent men William STUDLEY who served with the Australian Imperial Force and died Nr Ypres aged 34 in 1917 and George COMER of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force who died in the ill fated Gallipoli campaign in 1915.



## **Women of East Brent during World War One. The Home Front.**

While the men folk were serving in WW1, many of the working women in our village would have been fully occupied helping and -- in many cases while raising children -- running the family farm, business or smallholding and having to cope with food rationing etc for the first time. Others would be in domestic "Service".

With all the propaganda urging the young men to volunteer to do their patriotic duty, many young ladies from middle class farming families and those for instance from the 'big house' with time on their hands, wanted to get away from the impression that they were weak and demure and had to be waited upon, being served afternoon tea by a maid and drinking it with a raised little finger! And to show that they too wanted to help the war effort in any way possible.

Women were gradually overcoming the Victorian moral and Edwardian style of class distinction and the male domination of the home and workplace, where it was assumed that the place for a female was in the home and capable only of childbearing or carrying out domestic duties.

The outbreak of war gave the opportunity for many women to gain some freedom of will and prove that they could do the work of men even though they were paid fraction of the wages that men earned doing the same job and others were volunteers for no wages at all!

It was also around the start of the Women's Rights movement, and its campaigners fought and won many battles for equality during this time. It was also an opportunity to press for Votes for Women. Which they succeeded in getting for women over 30 after the war. But even then, only if they were married to a registered voter!

In a rural area such as ours there were very few opportunities for women to take up factory work or clerical positions, or to act as post-women or bus conductors even shop assistants etc. Pre war, all jobs thought to be only capable of being done by men but now being done by women.

For the ladies our East Brent parish, one opportunity to aid the war effort lay in volunteering as a VAD (Voluntary Aid Detachment nurse) helping to tend the increasing numbers of wounded in the local Red Cross and St John's emergency military hospitals that were being set up all over the country.

Such as Annie SANDFORD of Rooksbridge – seen here in her uniform.

### **SANDFORD Annie**

Voluntary Aid Detachment.

Annie born Sep 1895 was the daughter of Thomas and Elizabeth Sandford of 'Riverside Cottage' Gills Lane Rooksbridge.

During WW1 she served as a Voluntary Aid Nurse at Ashcombe House Emergency Army Hospital WSM.

Recently a small number of records from the Red Cross have become available naming several local ladies from East Brent and the neighbouring villages who volunteered to train and work as V.A.D.s (Voluntary Aid Detachment nurses). Some of these ladies were known to be volunteer nurses at 'Harts House Emergency military hospital in Burnham on Sea. Also a number of young ladies who were untrained as nurses were able to help with more menial tasks at these emergency hospitals.



Initially, two local Emergency Aid Military Hospitals set up in our area by the Red Cross and St Johns. They were at 'Ashcombe House' Weston Super Mare and at the 'Gables' in Burnham on sea.

*\*"The hospital at Burnham was first opened in January 1915 at The Gables lent by a Mr Lysaght who equipped it with 25 beds. A further 25 beds were after a time added by the Detachment.*

*In July 1916, the hospital was transferred to 'Hart House' which accommodated 76 beds to which two wards were added with 40 additional beds. In 1917 two large gardens were taken over to supply the Hospital with vegetables and a poultry yard was added with about 60 hens. Wood cutting for firewood was also done on the premises, all work being Voluntary. A house was lent as a hostel for staff from outlying districts. The hospital was provided with an ambulance through the help of Captain A Summerville of Burnham".*

*\*[Extract from 'Somerset Remembers' website].*

Among the young auxiliary nurses from East Brent parish who trained and volunteered to work at the Hart House Hospital in Burnham were:

Kathleen BOARD from North Yeo Farm Whitehouse Lane Edingworth.

Kate and Lillian GILLING of Laurel Farm, Edingworth.

Edith HUETT of Manor House Farm, Edingworth.

Annie HUTSON of Chestnut Farm East Brent.

Ellen RICE of St Martins. East Brent

Annie SANDFORD of 'Riverside' Rooksbridge.

Other ladies in the village who were unable to commit to full time volunteering, set up Red Cross volunteer working or sewing parties which met regularly to help prepare bandages and other medical supplies for the hospitals and casualty stations. Also making items of clothing, knitting gloves, hats and socks etc to send to the troops on the front. While others worked from home in their spare moments.

One of these volunteer working parties was set up at the Knoll Inn by the local school teacher's wife Mrs SEARLE and Mrs WICKHAM wife of the Rev. WICKHAM and farmers daughter Edith HUTSON of Chestnut Farm, East Brent.

Others known to have helped there were:

Nellie BOARD of North Yeo Farm

Elsie DIBBLE of East Brent

Nellie HARSE of Church Cottage, East Brent.

Mrs Elizabeth HILL of East Brent.

Mrs Sarah HUTSON of East Brent.

Mrs Dorothy 'Jennie' SAY of Beech Lawns Farm Rooksbridge.

The group of ladies would meet weekly in the big room of the Knoll Inn with donated material, sewing machine and knitting needles etc. There they would make up parcels of items of clothing, cigarettes, food and other things to be sent to the front and occasionally they were rewarded with certificates from the Red Cross and St Johns signed by princess Alice.

Elsie DIBBLE, Nellie HARSE , Elizabeth HILL and Jennie SAY were each awarded personal certificates and brooches for completing over 4 years regular volunteer work throughout the war.

Also, a number of volunteers from neighbouring villages are listed. Such as:

Mary COUNSELL and Arthur LEADER (Night porter) of Tarnock. Irene and Winifred FROST, Mabel HARDEN, Gladys HARRIS Maud REDDING and Dennis DAVIES a (night porter) from Brent Knoll.

*These Red Cross records of VAD nurses etc are far from complete.*

*In the search of information about women parishioners East Brent, I have not been able to find any official records or family information about any females who actually served in the Armed forces, Women's Land Army, or in munitions or did war work overseas. i.e. overseas nursing etc?*

***Did any of your female relatives or friends engage in any kind of paid or voluntary work during WW1 to help the war effort?***

## Womens Land Army



'The men must take the swords, and we must take the ploughs.'

A voluntary Womens Land Army was set up in 1917 It was disbanded in 1919 but re-established during World War Two.

Although I can find no records or reference it is most likely that some farmers had to take on young ladies from the newly formed Womens Land Army to replace those sons and workers

who had been conscripted into the military. These young ladies in their slacks and short skirts would have caused quite a stir and consternation in the village during the prim and proper Edwardian times!

In 1917 there was a W.L.A. training base or hostel at Webbington. But I can find no records of any of the ladies who attended there or worked on farms in the local area?

If you have any knowledge of local Land Army women in WW1 we would really like to know and record their story.

Please contact me at [jonrig@rooksbridge.org.uk](mailto:jonrig@rooksbridge.org.uk).





## IN FLANDERS FIELDS



IN FLANDERS FIELDS THE POPPIES BLOW  
BETWEEN THE CROSSES, ROW ON ROW,  
THAT MARK OUR PLACE; AND IN THE SKY  
THE LARKS, STILL BRAVELY SING AND FLY  
SCARCE HEARD AMID THE GUNS BELOW.

WE ARE THE DEAD. SHORT DAYS AGO  
WE LIVED, FELT DAWN, SAW SUNSET GLOW,  
LOVED AND WERE LOVED, AND NOW WE LIE  
IN FLANDERS FIELDS.

TAKE UP OUR QUARREL WITH THE FOE:  
TO YOU FROM FAILING HANDS WE THROW  
THE TORCH; BE YOURS TO HOLD IT HIGH.  
IF YE BREAK FAITH WITH US WHO DIE  
WE SHALL NOT SLEEP, THOUGH POPPIES GROW  
IN FLANDERS FIELDS.

~~~~~

Written by John McCrae, May 1915

A Canadian Doctor in the trenches.

(Dr. John McCrae died of pneumonia on the western front in 1918)

## **Introduction to individual summaries.**

*In an effort to record the names and preserve the memory of those who died and also of those who returned but have largely been forgotten, the following summaries are based on available records, family mementoes and what we know of the service and lives of the hundred or so men of East Brent known to have served.*

As with communities all over Britain, from 1914 and the duration of the war, many young men from families in our East Brent parish -- sometimes as many as three or four sons from a single family -- volunteered or signed up to do their patriotic duty, in this war that was promoted as the “War to end war” And which was reckoned to be all over by Christmas!

Sadly, it was not to be. And those who gave their lives over the next 4 years are remembered and commemorated on war memorials in almost every village and community around the world.

When compared to the deaths in WW2. The carnage of WW1 and its effect on small communities such as ours can only be appreciated when we compare the number of names killed in WW1 with those of WW2 that are inscribed on our unique (recently refurbished 2014) East Brent War Memorial.

Well over One hundred and twenty young men -- and maybe young women? – born or with strong family connections within our parish of East Brent are known to have served during the conflict. Of these we know at least twenty five died during active service. The names of seventeen of these are commemorated on our village war memorial.

Over 20% of that generation of young men lost from our parish, who in their prime, died while doing their patriotic duty!

Thankfully, many returned, but had to carry the burden of the horrors and injuries that they had endured for the rest of their lives and adjust to living in a changed world.

Regrettably, we know very little of the lives and service of many of those involved and survived. They are all gone now and....“They rarely spoke about it”!

Many of these stories have been contributed by family members, without which this project would not have been possible, and to who I am truly grateful.

There are no doubt more names to add and more information out there to find.

*(The WW1 service records of the "O.R." Other Ranks, were not felt important enough to be moved out of London during WW2 and were left in a warehouse in docklands. Many of the records were either burnt or damaged by water during the 1940's London Blitz. Only 40% of the WW1 service records survive).*

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## PART ONE

**THE MEN RECORDED BELOW, MADE THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE AND ARE REMEMBERED ON THE EAST BRENT WAR MEMORIAL.**

**LET US NOT FORGET THEM  
AND PASS ON WHAT WE KNOW OF THEM TO OUR CHILDREN  
AND GRANDCHILDREN.**

### **COMER George Inman**

7/830 Trooper. Canterbury Mounted Rifles, N.Z.E.F

Date of Death: 28/08/1915

Born at Mark in 1884 George Inman COMER was the Son of farmer Benjamin and Mary COMER of Poolbridge, Mark.

While not born in East Brent he was christened at St Mary's East Brent and it is probable that until the family moved to New Zealand he spent much of his early life in East Brent with his uncle Robert COMER who was a surveyor and drainage rate collector living in 'Bachelors Hall' Rooksbridge.



By 1905 along with his parents, he had migrated to Waiapu, East Cape New Zealand.

When he enrolled into the New Zealand Expeditionary Force in 1914 he was a sheep farmer in Opotiki and was living in The Bay Of Plenty New Zealand.

The **Canterbury Mounted Rifles Regiment** was a mounted infantry regiment from New Zealand, raised for service during the First World War. and formed part of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force.

They served in The Gallipoli, Sinai and Palestine Campaigns. George Inman Comer was among more than 40 men of the Canterbury Mounted



who were killed or went missing presumed dead at Gallipoli during the unsuccessful battle for Hill 60 on 28th August 1915.

At the end of the battle for Hill 60 on the 29th of August, of the 16 officers and 280 other ranks of the Canterbury Rifles, only 1 officer and 39 other ranks remained.

HILL 60 (NEW ZEALAND) MEMORIAL Dardanelles, Canakkale, Turkey

"TROOPER G. I. **COMER**. Trooper **George I. Comer**, of Opotiki, reported missing, is a son of Mrs- **Comer**, of Waitomo. He was a farmer by occupation, and took a keen interest in athletics and all kinds of sport. He was a member of the Opotiki Racing Club and of the Waikato Hunt Club". *New Zealand Herald 13/11/1915*

### **CREES Bertram Frank**

13986 Sapper. Royal Engineers 17th Field Coy.

Posthumously Awarded the 1914 Mons Star, British and Victory medals. Enrolled at Taunton in August 1914.

***Bert CREES was the first East Brent casualty of WW1 .  
"Missing presumed dead" on 30th April 1915.***

Born 1886 at Dulverton. Bertram "Frank" CREES was son of East Brent constable Frederick CREES and Emily. In 1901 15 year old Bertram was working in a carpenters shop in East Brent.

He married Winifred PICKFORD at Clutton , Temple Cloud, Bristol. in 1913.

Date of Death: 30/04/1915 Age: 30 Commemorated on the Menin Gate Memorial.

He was a reservist re-called in August 1914 and was sent to the front in the early stages of the war with the BEF and was at the Battle of Mons. At the time of his call up he was a police constable in Glamorgan.

In an article in the Shepton Mallet Journal of 21st May 1915, It tells that after the Battle of Mons he was invalided home for several weeks before returning to the front. Just before he was killed his mother, still living in East Brent, had a premonition of his death and wrote to his commanding officer asking if he could have a few days leave.

Her letter arrived on the day he was killed. In reply his mother received the following letter conveying the sad news of his death but showing the high regard felt for Bert CREES.

*"Dear Madam, -- I received your letter on the day of your sons death. I need not say that you have my most heartfelt sympathy at your great loss, and also that of the officers and men of this Company, with whom you son was most deservedly popular. I feel that nothing I could say can diminish your grief, but your son died as I am sure you would have wished, if it had to be, in the service of his King and Country. He died a soldiers death, doing his duty, being killed instantaneously by a shell and not suffering at all. Your son had always done his duty well and I shall regret his loss constantly. With renewed sympathy, believe me,*

*Your Truly C.W. Surgis. Major."*

His widow Winifred remarried to a John PARTINGTON on 03 Jan 1920 at Bolton-Le-Moors, Lancashire, England

The 17<sup>th</sup> Field Co. R.E. Joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of Ypres. In March 1915. And was stationed at Potijze, just east of Ypres. Bertram Crees died just a month later.

An entry in the 17th Field Co War Diary 30th April records.....

*"Casualty 13986 Spr CREES B F Killed. (by shell in billets)"* also on that day the diary records. *"Note. From the 22nd April until the end of the month, north of Ypres the German attack on the French having started on the evening of the 22nd, the huts and dugouts occupied by the company at Potijze were continuously under heavy shell fire."*

The Second Battle of Ypres began in April 1915 when the Germans released poison gas into the Allied lines north of Ypres. This was the first time gas had been used by either side and the violence of the attack forced an Allied withdrawal.



The Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing is one of four British and Commonwealth memorials to the missing in the battlefield area of the Ypres Salient in Belgian Flanders.

This memorial bears the names of **54,389** officers and men from United Kingdom and Commonwealth Forces who fell "Missing presumed

dead" in the Ypres Salient before 16<sup>th</sup> August 1917 and have no known grave.

### **DERRICK John Leslie**

Rank: Captain. Yorkshire Regiment. 6th Bn. (Green Howards).

Born 1890 Son of the Rev. J. G. and Edith DERRICK, of 2, Royal Crescent, Cheltenham.

By 1911 His mother was a widow and John was a student at Oxford studying History.

John Leslie's father the Rev J G DERRICK was born in Weston Super Mare and a keen photographer. While not an incumbent of our parish church, he spent much of his time with his family in East Brent in what we believe was his second home now known as St Martins in Burton Row, from where he travelled about taking photographs of the area. Many of his original photographic plates are now held at the Somerset Records Office.

John enlisted in September 1914 as a private 4745 in Public Schools University Bn. Royal Fusiliers in 1914 and was soon promoted to 2nd Lt. Dec., 1914.

Survived the defeat in Gallipoli 1915, served in Egypt Jan.-July, 1916, when he was transferred to the 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Yorkshire Reg. Served in France and Flanders July, 1916-Aug. 1917. Where he was killed during the 3rd battle of Ypres, or "Passchendaele"

Date of Death: 27/08/1917 Age: 27

The 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Yorkshire Reg. took part in the ill fated Gallipoli landings between 3 July and 6<sup>th</sup> of August 1915 Only a few survivors were evacuated.



Memorial: TYNE COT  
MEMORIAL FRANCE

There are 11,956 British and Commonwealth servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated in Tyne Cot Cemetery, 8,369 of these are unidentified.

**DERRICK, JOHN LESLIE**, Capt., 7th (Service) Batta. The East Yorkshire



**John Leslie Derrick.**

Regt., only s. of the late John George Derrick, Chaplain to Cheltenham Union, by his wife, Edith (2, Royal Crescent, Cheltenham), dau. of H. Rée, of 11, Lansdown Crescent, Cheltenham; *b.* Cheltenham, 4 Sept. 1890; educ. Cheltenham Grammar School, and Pembroke College, Oxford, where he held the Townsend Scholarship, and took Honours in Mathematical Moderations and History Finals; was for some time Assistant Master at Coatham Grammar School, Redcar; volunteered 4 Sept. 1914, as a Private in the Old Public School and University Batta. Royal Fusiliers; was gazetted 2nd Lieut. Dec. 1914; served with the Egyptian Expeditionary Force in Egypt from Jan. 1916, until July of the same year, when he was transferred to another battalion of his regiment, and served with the Expeditionary Force in France and Flanders; was promoted Capt. July, 1917, and was killed in action at Langemarck, near Ypres, 27 Aug. following. His Commanding Officer wrote:

“ He joined my battalion over 18 months ago, and during that time always showed himself to be as fine an officer as any Commanding Officer could wish to have. In action he was exceptionally cool. He would go and be followed anywhere by his men, who had implicit confidence in him. I can assure you that this battalion has suffered a very great loss, and both officers and men greatly feel his death.” *Unm.*

### **DINWIDDY Leonard Arthur. (Harry)**

11631 Private. 3rd Batt. Coldstream Guards.

Awarded the D.C.M.

Posthumously awarded 1915 Star, British and Victory medals

Born 1895 in Thornbury Glos.

Son of Thomas and Annie DINWIDDY

His father was a mason/chimney sweep born in East Brent in 1868.

By 1901 the family moved to Taunton while "Harry" was still a child.

In early 1914 he was a railway porter.

When he enrolled as a regular soldier at Exeter, his family were living at Crowcombe, Nr Taunton where they were living at the time of his death on 8th Oct 1915. age 20. He is commemorated on a headstone in Crowcombe churchyard.

He entered France on 22 Dec 1914.





On the 8th October 1915 the 3rd Battalion Coldstream Guards were at Vermelles Northern France. They were under heavy attack from the Germans.

*From the War Diary of the 3rd Batt Oct 8th 1916. "The trenches under heavy attack from 12.15pm to 3.15pm by 3 German Battalions. Attack successfully repulsed. 23 killed, 1 officer and 65 other ranks wounded."*

**He was awarded the DCM. Distinguished Conduct Medal in June 1915**

11631 Private. L.A. Dinwiddy,  
3rd Bn., C. Gds. (LG 3 June 1915).  
For conspicuous gallantry on  
25th and 26th April, 1915, at  
Givenchy, in assisting to rescue  
Officers and men from a deep mine  
full of poison gas. The courage  
and devotion to duty displayed  
were very pronounced, the risk  
of death through asphyxiation  
being very great.

At the outbreak of the First World War, Coldstream guards were among the first British regiments to arrive in France after Britain declared war on Germany. In the following battles, they suffered heavy losses, in two cases losing all their officers. At the first Battle of Ypres the 1st battalion was virtually annihilated – by 1 November down to 150 men and the Lt Quartermaster. They fought in Mons, Loos, Somme, Ginchy and in the 3rd Battle of Ypres. They also formed the 4th (Pioneer) Battalion, which was disbanded after the war, in 1919.

Leonard (Harry) DINWIDDY is commemorated on the Loos memorial Nr Arras N France.

The Loos Memorial commemorates over 20,000 officers and men who have no known grave, who fell in the area from the River Lys to the old southern boundary of the First Army, east and west of Grenay.

## **DURSTON John**

442054 Private. Canadian Infantry (British Columbia Regiment) 7th Btn  
Posthumously awarded 1915 Star, British and Victory medals.



His brother Frederick also served in WW1.

Born 1883 Son of farm worker Charles and Lydia DURSTON, of Hawkers Cottages, Bristol Rd., Rooksbridge, Somerset. In 1901 John was working as a farm worker at Pilton for Evan CATLEY, who had moved from Tarnock Farm just outside Rooksbridge, to Pilton, to take over the family farm there.

In June 1904 he emigrated to Canada. Where he worked as a lumberjack in British Columbia.

In May 1915 he enrolled in the 54th Batt. Canadian Expeditionary Force. Giving his next of kin as his widowed mother Lydia DURSTON living in Rooksbridge.

His unit sailed for England on 22 Nov 1915. On 6th Sep 1916 his Canadian company relieved the Australian troops who had sustained huge losses during fierce fighting at Moquet Farm on the Somme.

On the 8th of Sept 1916 during the battle of the Somme, he received a serious gunshot wound in the abdomen. The bullet was removed at the front line Casualty Clearing Station. and he was then transferred back England where he spent 6 months in the military hospital at York. And later convalescing at the Canadian Red Cross hospital at Bushey Park, Hastings. From where on the 28th March 1917 he returned to his Regiment in France.



He was "Killed in Action" just three months later on the 22 June 1917 during the battles for Lens, Vimy Ridge while attacking the Hindenburg Line.

Arras Road Cemetery was begun by the 2nd Canadian Infantry Brigade soon after the 9th April, 1917, and until the Armistice it contained only the graves (now at the back of the cemetery) of 71 officers and men of the 7th Canadian Infantry Battalion (British Columbia Regiment) who fell in April, May and June, 1917.

### **EMERY Edward**

9408 Sergeant Dorsetshire Regiment 2nd Bn.

Enlisted at Taunton 1896.

Awarded 1915 star, British and Victory medals.

(Posthumously)

Date of Death: 17/09/1916 Age: 36



Born in 1880 One of 15 children of farm worker George and Hannah EMERY of Gills Lane, Rooksbridge. Two of his brothers Alfred and George also served in WW1 while a third older brother Frederick had served in the Boer war.

Sgt. Edward EMERY died as a prisoner of war at Aleppo in Mesopotamia while attached to the Indian Expeditionary Force D.

He is buried in: POW Commonwealth War Dead Cemetery: BAGHDAD (NORTH GATE) WAR CEMETERY

Edward was a career soldier first enlisting in 1896 at the age of 16 into the Somerset Light Infantry for 12 years.

He re-enlisted 1908 into the Dorset Regiment for a further 9 years with the view to complete 21 years service. The 2nd Battalion Dorsets was in Poona, India, when war broke out and was shipped in Nov 1914 to Mesopotamia to join with the Indian forces of the Indian Expeditionary force in an attempt to protect the vital oil supplies.

*1915-16 The Turks pursued the retreating 6th (Poona) Division to Kut, and soon surrounded and cut it off. The garrison surrendered on 29 April 1916. It was an enormous blow to British prestige and a morale-booster for the Turkish Army.*

*From Dec 1915 - APRIL 1916 Edward was trapped along with the 8000 strong British-Indian garrison in the Siege of Kut and later taken prisoner by the Turks. They were forced marched over 1000 Kms to imprisonment to Aleppo. Where he died of dysentery. While captive they suffered appalling conditions. With no medical facilities. Many dying of disease and malnutrition. (The Hindu Indian captives were treated even more harshly) Of the 350 British men of the battalion captured, only 70 survived their captivity.*



In 1908 while serving in Poona, he married Florence Mabel Hastings, of 6, South Petty Staff Lines, Poona, India. (Daughter of his commanding Officer). They had three children. It is believed Florence and the children returned to England soon after his death.

During his service he wrote several letters to his parents at home. This appears to be the last letter the family received.

28 Oct 1915

"My dear mother.

"I am afraid it is some time ago since I last wrote to you. I have received a letter from Alice sometime ago, and was sorry to hear that you were not very well, and I do hope that you are getting on alright now. Charles wrote and gave me all the home news a few weeks ago. He seems to be getting on well with his dairy work. Florrie also sent me a letter she got from Edie and we are very pleased to hear she is married and getting on comfortably. Florrie said she was going to write to you, Have you received a letter from her lately? Both herself and the children are doing well in India with the exception of Teddy who has had sore eyes, which I hope to hear are alright now. I had a letter from Jesse a few days ago, he seems to be doing well.

I am getting on alright out here. The weather is very pleasant now, but we have had a very hot summer under trying conditions. Still I am looking

confidently forward to the finish of all this business and shall be glad when it is all over.

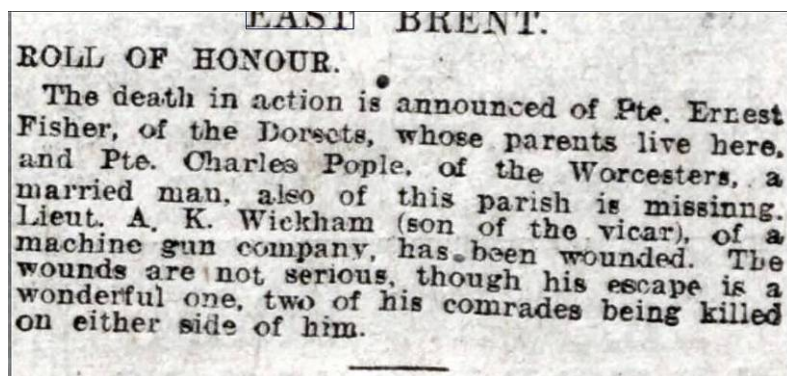
Well dear mother I will now close hoping that you are better and that Father, Alice and Gladys and all at home are doing well. "

With love to you all.  
Your affectionate son Ted x"

**FISHER Ernest.**

19156 Pte 5th Batt. Dorset Reg.  
Formerly Pte. 1039 N' Somerset Yeomanry.

Awarded British and Victory medals posthumously.



Born 1894 in East Brent. Son of Shoemaker James and Mary FISHER. In 1901, 7 year old Ernest was living with his parents four sisters and older brother next door to the Blacksmith forge in Brent Street.

In 1911, 17 year old Ernest was living and working for Evan BOLEY farmer at Batch Farm Lymphsham.

As a former member of the Yeomanry, forerunner of the Territorials he was probably on reserve.

(His medal record gives his address during his WW1 service as North Yeo, Edingworth. East Brent.

Killed in Action at Messines Flanders 13th May 1917. age 23.

Buried in Vaulx Hill Cemetery France

The 5th Battalion Dorsets fought at Gallipoli, Egypt and Palestine, and on the Western Front. In July 1916 the 5th were sent to France. Although the Somme offensive had begun on 1st July, the Battalion first went into the line in the quieter sector south of Arras. In September, the Battalion moved south, to just below Thiepval at Mouquet Farm but this was their

bloody introduction to the Somme. The farm was partly held by the Germans, huge numbers of whom occupied a vast dugout below it. In this and in the attack that followed, two thirds of the 5th were killed or wounded. In the freezing winter of 1916/17 they again lost heavily. And again in an attack near Beaucourt. in May 1917

***From the War Diary 5th Batt. Dorset Regiment. 13th May 1917***

*"Weather fine, at about 1-30pm until about 3.00pm 210 shells fell central and on the sunken road where C Company were. 4 men were killed and 9 wounded.*

*19374, Pte Dix, 19156 Pte Fisher, 19258 Pte Lewis, 13439 Pte Roberts - Killed.*

*25675 Pte Willis, 13834 Pte Redfern, 19029 Pte Florence, 19373 Pte Holland, 19045 Pte Pope, 19616 Pte Barlow, 10247 Pte James, 10405 Pte Howe, 19125 Pte Shepherd. - Wounded.*

*Otherwise: Situation Quiet".*

**GAMLEN William Henry**

266522 Private Gloucestershire  
Regiment 1st/6th Bn.  
Posthumously awarded the  
British and Victory medals.

GAMLEN, Pte. William H., 266522. 1st/6th Bn.  
Gloucestershire Regt. 23rd July, 1916. Age 19.  
Son of William and S. A. Gamlen, of Chapel  
Farm, East Brent, Highbridge, Somerset.

Date of Death: 23/07/1916 Age: 19. One of four East Brent soldiers known to be killed during the Battle of the Somme.

Son of farmer William and S. A. GAMLEN, of Chapel Farm, East Brent, Highbridge, Somerset.

1st/6th Batt. Took part in the Battle at Somme, taking heavy casualties on 22nd-23rd July 1916 at La Boisselle.

The Somme offensive was supposedly to be a diversion to draw the enemy away from the French in the southern part of the front.

On 1 July 1916, in support of a French attack to the south, thirteen divisions of Commonwealth forces launched an offensive on a section from north of Albert.



Despite a preliminary bombardment lasting seven days, the German defences were barely touched and the attack met unexpectedly fierce resistance. Losses were catastrophic, the initial attack was a failure and the battle dragged on until November!

Commemorated at the THIEPVAL MEMORIAL

### **GRANT Alfred**

620300, Gunner 2/1st (Somerset), Royal Horse Artillery

"B" Bty. 223rd Bde., Royal Field Artillery  
The 2/1st served in France from 1917 to 1918.

Posthumously awarded the British and Victory medals.

Alfred was a farm worker born Rooksbridge 1892.  
Son of herdsman George and Susan GRANT.  
he married Martha Mabel MOON in 1915,



Died age 25 on 3rd  
October 1917 Flanders.

Remembered with Honour  
at ABBEVILLE  
COMMUNAL  
CEMETERY

His younger brother William John had also died at Paschendaele just a few days earlier.

At the time of his death "B" Battery was a Howitzer Battery involved in the terrible battle at Passchendaele just north east of Ypres. (Below)

He enlisted at Taunton into the Somerset Div of the Royal Field Artillery. He fought at Flanders and died in France. At the time of his death his wife Martha was living in Manchester.

He would probably have known Ralph POPHAM (Below).

Who was also a casualty of WW1.

From their service numbers they seem to have enlisted almost at the same time in either late September or early October 1915 and both were posted to 2/1st Somerset RHA at Woodbury Camp. Then, after a spell at Larkhill from early 1916 they left Southampton for Havre on 02-07-16.

**David Porter, Norma and Melanie Body. Rooksbridge.**

### **HAM Frederick C**

1735 Private Monmouthshire Regiment 1st Unit 2nd Bn.

Awarded 1914 Star, British and Victory medals posthumously.

Born Edithmead 1890. Son of Hannah HAM and unknown father, Frederick appears to have been raised by his maternal grandparents Isaac and Elizabeth Ham at Mudgley Wall, Rooksbridge.

By 1911 Frederick appears to have moved to the mining area of S. Wales. While working there he joined a Territorial Unit which was called to service at the outbreak of the war.

**Frederick was one of the nearly 20,000 British men killed on the very first day of the Somme offensive.**

Entered France Nov 1914. Date of Death: 01/07/1916 (Somme)  
On the first day of the battle of the Somme the 2nd Monmouths were on the section at Mailly Woods about 9 miles north of Albert. Totally unprepared for the carnage to come!

Cemetery: AUCHONVILLERS MILITARY CEMETERY



*The 2nd Monmouth's Battalion was one of only a small number of Territorial Battalions to have been granted the 1914 Star. They were mobilised for active service on August 4<sup>th</sup> 1914 and remained on active service in Germany with the Army of Occupation until May 1919. In November 1914, the Battalion entered the trenches near the Belgium Town of Ypres. Large numbers of the soldiers had served underground and it was not long before the Battalion became well known for its efficiency in trench building and tunneling and placing mines under the enemy trenches!*

*The DCM was granted to their Territorial Unit. Their honours list is probably as large as any Territorial Battalion.*

### **HAM Sydney William**

971 Sapper Royal Engineers 2nd (Wessex) Field Coy.

Posthumously awarded 1915 Star, British and Victory medals

Born 1897 Son of butcher Jeffery and Emily HAM, of East Brent.

Brother of Geoffrey Archer HAM. who also served.



He died on 2nd Oct 1915 Aged 18 (Somme)

He appears to have given a false age when he volunteered, as 19 was the minimum age for men to be sent to the front!

Cemetery: HANGARD COMMUNAL CEMETERY EXTENSION (Somme)

**Photo courtesy of Sara Kew.**

Assigned to the 2nd (Wessex) Field Company Royal Engineers who served with 27th Division, The 27th Division was formed at at Magdalen Hill Camp near Winchester in November-December 1914 mainly from regular army units who had arrived back in England from garrisons of the

Empire. The Division proceeded to France on the 20th to 23rd of December 1914 as a much-needed reinforcement. The Division concentrated in the area between Aire and Arques. In 1915 they saw action at St Eloi and in The Second Battle of Ypres.

On the day of his death 2nd Oct 1915 his unit were at Fontaine-Le-Cappy north of the Somme in Northern France, constructing tunnels under enemy lines. A number of men were lost or trapped when the enemy blew up one of these tunnels and could not be rescued because of the use of gas.

### **HARRISON Albert**

5655 Private Gloucestershire Regiment  
2nd Bn.

Date of Death: 09/05/1915 Age: 35  
Posthumously awarded 1915 Star, British  
and Victory medals.



Albert was a labourer born 1880 son of James HARRISON, of 35, Gloucester Rd., Trowbridge, Wilts.; Married Hannah STARK, of East Brent, Highbridge, Somerset. 1911  
(*Hannah's father Olinthus STARK was killed by a train at Brent Knoll Station in 1910*)

In August 1914 : 2nd Battalion Gloucester's were in Tientsin, China. They returned to England, landing at Southampton on 8 November 1914. when it came under command of 81st Brigade in 27th Division at Winchester. Landed at Le Havre 18 December 1914.

At the beginning of 1915 the two regular battalions of the Gloucestershire Regiment were present on the Western Front. 2nd Battalion was to be involved the Second battle of Ypres, the German offensive which saw the first use of gas. The Gloucester's were fortunate in not coming under gas attack during this battle, and the Canadian Army made a name for itself in stopping the first German assault, but the later fighting involving the Gloucester's was fierce nevertheless. On 9th May 1915 the day Albert HARRISON died was a black day for the 2nd Gloucester's. They were in the thick of the battle for Sanctuary Wood Nr Chateau. Albert was among the 145 casualties his unit killed or missing on that day.

## Cemetery: YPRES (MENIN GATE) MEMORIAL

The Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing is one of four British and Commonwealth memorials to the missing in the battlefield area of the Ypres Salient in Belgian Flanders. The memorial bears the names of **54,389** officers and men from United Kingdom and Commonwealth Forces (except New Zealand and Newfoundland) who fell in the Ypres Salient before 16<sup>th</sup> August 1917 and who have no known grave.



### **POPHAM Frederick**

20593 Private Somerset Light Infantry

7th Service Btn

Posthumously awarded. British and Victory medals

Date of Death: 01/10/1916 Age: 23 (Somme)

He was killed during the final days of the 1916 Battle of the Somme

Cemetery: THIEPVAL MEMORIAL



Born 1893 Frederick was a farm labourer, son of Rooksbridge farm worker Frank and Ellen POPHAM, of Bristol Rd Rooksbridge.

Brother of Henry POPHAM who also served.

The 7<sup>th</sup> Batt. S.L.I. was established in September 1914 as part of Kitchener's Second New Army, K2. Early days were chaotic, the new volunteers having very few trained officers and NCOs to command them, no organised billets or equipment. The units of the Division first assembled in the Aldershot area.

Artillery was particularly hard to come by; 12 old guns arrived from India in February 1915! When the Division moved to Witley, Godalming and Guildford, the artillery had to go by train as there was insufficient harness for the horses. Another move was made, to Salisbury Plain, in April 1915.

The Division was inspected by King George V at Knighton Down on 24 June 1915, by which time all equipment had arrived and the Division was judged ready for war.

The brigade was assigned to the 20th (Light) Division. And saw service in the trenches of the Western Front with the 20th Division throughout the war.

On 26 July 1915 the Division was sent to the Saint-Omer area, all units having crossed to France during the preceding few days. The Division served on the Western Front for the remainder of the war, taking part in many of the significant actions:

*Harry Patch of Wells, later to become the last surviving combat veteran of the trenches, also served with the 7th (Service) Battalion attached to the 61st Brigade in 1917 when he was just 19 years old at the Battle of Paschendaele (also known as the Third Battle of Ypres) where he was wounded by shrapnel in September. He survived both world wars and lived until 2009 when he died, at the age of 111.*

### **POPHAM Ralph**

620298 Gunner Royal Field Artillery "B" Bty.  
223rd Brigade.

Posthumously awarded British and Victory medals.

Born 1897 son of road worker Thomas and Eliza POPHAM of "Acacia Farm" Rooksbridge. Brother of Ernest POPHAM who also served in WW1

It is thought he was married to an Ella POPHAM who later married Wilfred LEE. of Rooksbridge.

Enlisted at Taunton.

Date of Death:

04/01/1918

Probably died of

wounds received during the last days of the battle of Paschendaele?

He would probably have known Alfred GRANT?



POPHAM, Gnr. R., 620298. " B " Bty. 223rd  
Bde. Royal Field Artillery. 4th Jan., 1918. IX.  
B. 10.

From their service numbers Ralph POPHAM and Alfred GRANT seem to have enlisted/volunteered almost at the same time in either late September or early October 1915 and were first posted to 2/1st Somerset RHA at Woodbury Camp. Then, after a spell at Larkhill from early 1916 they left Southampton for Havre on 2 July 1916. (*David Porter*)

The third battle of Ypres or Passchendaele which began in August 1917 cost half a million lives in its three months. The Germans lost approximately 250,000 to 400,000 men and the allies lost 300,000 Britons, and 36,500 Australian. 90,000 British or Australian bodies were never identified, 42,000 were never recovered, they were blown to pieces or were submerged in deadly mud. Many of the drowned were exhausted or wounded men who fainted or fell from the boards placed for crossing the seas of mud and could not escape the mass, sinking to their deaths as they struggled to survive.



Much of the time the commanding



Generals were well behind the lines unaware of the conditions that the men were fighting in. One General who did visit the front had tears in his eyes when he asked, "Did we send men to fight in this"? Passchendaele certainly sums up the extraordinary bravery of soldiers who attempted the obviously impossible, but by superhuman efforts succeeded in fulfilling its objectives.

Tyne Cot Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery and Memorial to the Missing.

## **POPLE Charles**

40544 Private Enlisted into the Gloucester Reg. at Weston super mare.  
Transferred to 4<sup>th</sup> Batt. Worcester Regiment.  
Posthumously awarded British and Victory medals

Born 1886 Youngest son of farm worker Henry and Hannah POPLÉ of Turnpike Road Rooksbridge.

Charles was a farm worker, one of 10 surviving children of Henry who was by 1911 a widower.

In 1901 aged 15 he was a farm worker for Arthur GIBBS at Green Farm, Biddisham Lane.

He died on 23rd April 1917 Age: 31 Probably during the battle for Monchy Le Preux, Nr. Arras.

No known grave. Commemorated on the Arras Memorial.

## **The ARRAS MEMORIAL**

commemorates almost 35,000 servicemen from the United Kingdom, South Africa and New Zealand who died in the Arras sector between the spring of 1916 and 7 August 1918, the eve of the Advance to Victory, and have no known grave. The most conspicuous events of this period were the Arras offensive of April-May 1917, and the German attack in the spring of 1918. (CWGC)



(During his short leave in England before embarking to France in March 1916 he married Martha NUTTYCOMBE of Badgworth. He did not return to see his daughter Doris who was born in October 1916).

The 4th Battalion of the Worcestershire Regiment marching to the trenches near Acheux, 28th June 1916. (Image; the Imperial War museum).



At the outbreak of war in August 1914 the 4th Battalion Worcester's were in Meiktila in Burma. The Battalion returned to England, landing at Avonmouth on 1st February 1915. Sailed again from Avonmouth on 21st March 1915 for Gallipoli, going via Egypt. Landing at

Cape Helles on 25 April 1915.

January 1916 : evacuated from Gallipoli back to Egypt. After a very short stay in England landed at Marseilles for service in France. 20 March 1916

The French handed over Arras to Commonwealth forces in the spring of 1916 and the system of tunnels on which the town was built were used and developed in preparation for the major offensive planned for April 1917. In April the 4th Batt Worcesters were in the line at Ronville on the outskirts of Arras.

*Extracts from the 4th Batt Worcs war diary 22-23 April 1917:  
Trenches S. of Monchy Le Preux.*

"On the 19th the Battalion came under heavy artillery fire. 1 officer killed 3 wounded and 20 ordinary ranks killed or wounded. On 21st Lt ROUND was killed and 22 O.R. killed or wounded. 22nd Apr. "A quiet but busy day as preparations had to be made for attack on the following day. Lt MORTON wounded. **23rd Apr.** By 4am the Batt was formed up in the 'jumping off' trench. Batt H.Q. was established in the shaft of a dugout in sunken road. At 4-45am the barrage started. Although it was supposed to fall 200yds in front of our trench, a great many shells dropped in close

proximity both in front and in rear of our trench. 2/Lt ACTON was killed.

The German barrage opened a very few minutes after our own and was directed chiefly on our front line and its main approaches. 4-45 am the Batt advanced under the barrage taking 'Pick' and 'Shrapnel' trenches in its stride. 1 Machine gun and about 80 prisoners were taken. On arrival at the first objective (BLUE LINE) Companies were very disorganised owing to the high percentage of losses among Officers and NCO's. Consolidation of the position was commenced but was hampered by extensive sniping from the enemy. About 10-00am the Germans made a counter attack which was beaten off mainly by rifle and Lewis Gun fire. But some of the post occupied by 2 Coy. were rounded up. Intense shelling and sniping continued throughout the day. At 4-00pm another heavy counter attack was launched by the Germans. Part of 2 Company was forced back at the copse but the remainder of the line was held and heavy casualties were inflicted on the enemy. At 5-00pm a third attack was attempted by the enemy but our SOS was answered by our artillery in about 30 seconds. Shortage of flares and ammunition was now felt and under extreme conditions the line was reorganised. 2-00AM 24-4-17 Rations were brought up to FOSSE'S Farm. 2 limbers and 10 horses were lost by shell fire. Casualties in the above operations were; Killed 2Lt WEATHERHEAD, 2Lt BIRD, 2LT BRUNSKILL, Lt WILLS. Missing: 2Lt PITT, 2Lt BATEMAN, Wounded and Missing; 2Lt NICHOLSON, 2Lt HOLLAND. Wounded; Capt. PERKINS, 2 Lt GAMLEN, Lt CROOME-JOHNSON. Other Ranks: Killed 34, Missing 53, Wounded 325. On relief the remainder of the Battalion marched down the CAMBRAI ROAD to RONVILLE where they were given tea and rum."

The following wire was received from the C.In C. referring to the fighting on the 23rd.

'The fierce fighting yesterday has carried us another step forward. I congratulate you and all under you on the result of it and on the severe punishment you have inflicted on the enemy.'

L Kerans. Lt. Col. 4/ Worc. Regt.



## **PUDDY John**

17373 Private Somerset Light Infantry 1st Bn.

Posthumously awarded 1915 Star, British and Victory medals.

Born at Mark 1895 Son of farm worker Samuel and Emily Jane PUDDY, of Yardwall, Mark, Highbridge, Somerset. On enlistment he was a farm labourer working for William Salvidge at Brent House.

He Entered France on 13 July 1915 and was 'Killed in action' 08 Aug 1916 Age: 20. One of four young men from East Brent to die at the battle of the Somme. And is buried at the Essex Farm Cemetery Flanders.

His older brother James from Mark, survived service in WW1 and died in 1920 believed from the effects of his war service.



Photo courtesy of Hadi Hassan.

Quote from the war Diary of 1st Battalion Somerset Light infantry for **8th August 1916**

*"A hot day + very quiet. Battn was relieved by 1st R. Brigade. In the middle of the relief about 10-30pm a gas attack was made with very dense and powerful gas accompanied by heavy shelling. This was not followed up by an Infantry attack. 3 casualties from shellfire. Casualties from gas 8 Officers and 120 Other Ranks"*

July to November 1916 saw the Battle of the Somme. On 1 July 1916 at 7.30 am fourteen British Divisions, which included the 1st battalion S.L.I. began the attack.

### **EAST BRENT.**

News has reached East Brent that Private John Puddy (Somerset Light Infantry), who before enlistment was employed by Mr. W. Salvidge, of East Brent, has been killed in action. On the receipt of the news a muffled peal was rung on the bells as a tribute of respect and affection.

On the first day of the Battle of the Somme nearly 19000 allied soldiers died, among them was Frederick HAM of Rooksbridge (above) as were 26 officers and 478 men of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion S.L.I. killed, missing or wounded.

## ESSEX FARM CEMETERY

Essex Farm was the location of an Advanced Dressing Station (ADS) during the Great War, and now is the site of a CWGC Cemetery, as well as the remains of several bunkers some of which were used by the ADS. The site is located just north of Ypres,

There are 1,200 servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated in this cemetery. 103 of the burials are unidentified but special memorials commemorate 19 casualties known or believed to be buried among them. It was in Essex Farm Dressing station that Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae of the Canadian Army Medical Corps wrote the poem 'In Flanders Fields' in May 1915.



### **STUDLEY Gerald "William" Henry**

Australian Imperial Force  
368 Lance Corporal. 11th Light Trench Mortar  
Battery. 44th Infantry.



Volunteered into the A.I.F.  
21st March 1916 age 33.

He died of wounds 29th January 1917 France aged 34. Posthumously awarded British and Victory Medals.

Buried Trois Arbres Cemetery, Steenwerck, Nr Ypres, Flanders.

William H STUDLEY was born in 1883 at Weare, the son of farm worker Mark and Ann STUDLEY.

In 1891 the family were working at 'Honey Hall Farm, Congesbury. By 1911 William was a cowman working at Manor Farm Shipham.

At the time of his death his parents were living in **East Brent**.

In Nov 1911 he had emigrated to Australia leaving London on 18/11/1911 aboard the 'Armada' arriving in Fremantle W.A. on 1/1/1912 where he became a farmer/farmworker?.

On his enlistment paper at Perth in March 1916 he was a "Farmer" working in Shackleton, Western Australia. He gave his next of kin as Mark STUDLEY, living at East Brent.

He also stated that he had previously served for three years with the 3rd Welsh Militia? *The 3rd Welsh Militia served in the 2nd Boer War 1899-1902.*

On 6th June 1916 after a period of training in Australia, The all-volunteer 44th Battalion 11th Infantry Brigade (AIF), sailed on the *Suevic* to England disembarking at Plymouth 21st July. They underwent a further period of training on Salisbury Plain, where on the 10th November, William was promoted to L/Corporal before crossing the English Channel from Southampton to France on 23rd November 1916, where they joined the other four infantry divisions of the Australian Imperial Force.

The following month, the battalion entered the front line trenches of the Western Front in Belgium for the first time on 29 December 1916

During the bitter fighting Nr Ypres N. France, on 25th January 1917 William sustained serious wounds from which he died on the 29th January 1917.

During his short leave in England before embarking for France, William spent some time back in Shipham, where he married Laura Matilda BICKNELL daughter of the local policeman at Shipham on 27 Sep 1916. William never got to see his son Arnold who was born in July 1917!

In April 1917 his widow Laura was still living in Shipham when she received her husband's effects.

These consisted of: 2 identity discs, letters, notebook, knife, metal wristwatch, ring, wallet, photos, belt, purse and 4 coins!

She later received an army pension of 40/- per fortnight plus 20/- for her son Arnold, which expired on his 16th birthday in 1933! Laura never remarried and lived at "Chestnuts" in Shipham until she died aged 76 in July 1962.

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## THESE CASUALTIES FROM EAST BRENT ARE NOT COMMEMORATED ON EAST BRENT MEMORIAL

*The men recorded below who became casualties, were found to have been born in East Brent or had family here. They or their families had moved away from the village before their army service and are commemorated memorials in the towns or villages where they or their next of kin were living at the time of their deaths.*

### **BABB William Edward**

137133 Private 3<sup>rd</sup> Batt. (Infantry) Machine Gun Corps.

Formerly 516899 London Regiment.

Posthumously awarded British and Victory medals.

Enlisted at Taunton. **No other record found**

Born 1899 East Brent

Son of William Henry and Sarah Ann BABB,

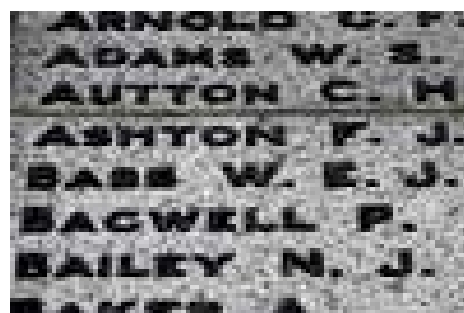
At the age of two his family had moved to All Saints Road, WSM. Where in 1911 aged 11 he was living with his two younger sisters and two brothers and his father was a chauffeur.

At the time of his death in 1918 his parents had moved to 6, Cyril St., Taunton, Somerset.

He died Flanders 02/09/1918 Age:19

Possibly during the Second Battle of Bapaume, 31 August - 3 September 1918

He is commemorated on the War memorial at



## St Marys church Taunton

On the 2nd Sep 1918 the 8th Batt M.G.C. Were at Lagnicourt which had been lost the previous March. After a desperate battle it was retaken on 3rd Sep 1918.

The battle cost the 8th Battalion 57 casualties including "2nd Lt H SHEPPARD, Capt. H HEMSON, Lt. T.W. WELLS and 54 'Other Ranks'."

William BABB is commemorated on the VIS-EN-ARTOIS Memorial Nr Arras N France.

This Memorial bears the names of over 9,000 men who fell in the 3 month period from 8 August 1918 to the date of the Armistice in the Advance to Victory in Picardy and Artois, between the Somme and Loos, and who have no known grave.

The Machine Gun Corps was also known as the 'Suicide Squad'! Due to the high casualty rate inflicted by modern machine guns, captured machine gun crews on both sides were quite often summarily shot!

### **BLOOD Frederick**

83231 Private Sherwood Foresters (Notts and Derby Reg)

476346 Private transferred to the 101st Co Labour Corps.

Posthumously awarded British and Victory Medals.

Born 1880 Son of John and Mary BLOOD, of Ashbourne Derbyshire.

In 1908 he married Margaret Mary WOOD, daughter of John and Ellen WOOD nee Banwell of Turnpike Road Rooksbridge. A daughter Lillian May was born in 1910 in Ashbourne.

Margaret's father John WOOD was a butter and Cheese maker and for a short while was a manager at the Cheddar Valley Dairy in Rooksbridge.

Soon after their marriage in 1908 Frederick and Margaret moved to Frederick's home town of Ashourne in Derbyshire where he became a butcher.

Margaret died in 1951 at Ashbourne Derbyshire.

Aged 35 in 1915 Frederick had registered originally into the Sherwood Foresters (Notts and Derby Reg). He was later transferred to the 101st Labour Corps.

He died 'Of Wounds' in France on 20th May 1918 (His family believe of gas)? and is buried in BAGNEUX BRITISH CEMETERY, GEZAINCOURT France.

His younger brother William also died in France in 1917.

### **BODY Frank**

216220 Gunner 296th Brigade. Royal Field Artillery  
Posthumously awarded the Victory and British Medals.

Born 1894 In East Brent.

Son of farmer George and Elizabeth BODY

Also, brother of Tom BODY, who served in the Devonshire Regiment.

By 1911 the family had moved from East Brent and were farming at Nut Tree Farm, Barton, Winscombe, Somerset. He died just 2 weeks before the Armistice on 26th Oct 1918 Nr Cambrai. Age: 25

He is commemorated on the Winscombe War Memorial Buried  
RAMILLIES BRITISH CEMETERY. France.

Possibly died from wounds sustained during the final Battle of Cambrai a few day earlier?

With the Germans in retreat, the battle of Cambrai and St. Quentin, 27 September 9 October 1918, was part of the main British all out attack on the Hindenburg line. It saw three British and one French army, force the Germans out of their last strong defensive line.



Artillery troops resting during the October 1918 advance on Cambrai.

## COMER Wilfred.

117061 Gunner 261 Seige Battery Royal Garrison Artillery

Born 1893 In Axbridge Workhouse illegitimate son of Eliza Field nee COMER of Rooksbridge.

Soon after his birth, his mother Eliza COMER left and married Francis FIELD in 1894 and moved to Colerne Nr Bath.

Born out of wedlock, he was brought up in Rooksbridge by his Grandparents William and Matilda COMER. In 1901 age 8 he was living in Tarnock with his grandparents. His Grandfather William who was born in East Brent had died in 1903. *(Can find no record of Wilfred or his grandmother Matilda after 1901 assume his Grandmother had died before his enlistment in 1915).* In October 1917 his personal possessions were sent to his mother's sister Bessie STONE nee COMER living in Berrow Road Burnham on sea.? Who was named as his next of kin!

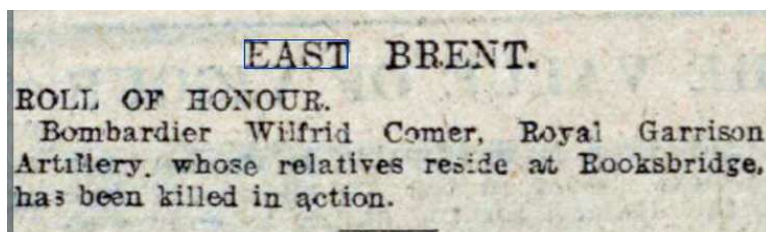
When he enlisted in 1915 he gave his occupation as a cowman at Tarnock. Because he was in agriculture he was first enrolled into the Army Reserve 8th Dec 1915 where he did his training.

Mobilised Sep 1916.

Posted to France Oct 1916.

Killed in Action 21st May 1917. At the 2nd Battle of the Aisne.

Buried in the Tilloy British Cemetery Nr Arras France.



He is commemorated on the Memorial Plaque in the church of St Congar in Badgworth. (Rev. Judith Jeffery)

*His grandparents home just outside Rooksbridge at Tarnock was within the parish of Badgworth.*

On the 16th April 1917 the 2nd Battle of the Aisne was launched under the French commander in Chief Robert NEVILLE It was a disaster for the French Army and the British troops who took part. A hugely costly attack, involving 1.2 million troops and 7,000 guns, it achieved little in the way of territorial gain - certainly not the 48 hour breakthrough envisaged - and also brought to an end the career of its instigator, the French

Commander-in-Chief Robert NEVILLE, and sparked widespread mutiny in the French army. (From Long Long Trail Website).

**DIBBLE George Henry.**

47910 Pte. 10th Batt. W. Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales Own)  
Posthumously awarded Victory and  
British medals.

Born 1897 son of Dairy farmer Edward and Anne DIBBLE of East Brent. In 1891 the family had moved to "Upper Farm" Brean where George was born and in 1911 was living there with his 4 older sisters and 2 brothers.



Died 11th April 1917 age 20.

Buried and commemorated at ETAPLES MILITARY CEMETERY.  
France

There is a memorial stone for George in the churchyard at St Bridgets.  
Brean.

At the Time of his death the 10th Battalion were involved in heavy fighting near Arras in France. Like many others he was probably sent to Etaples Military hospital where he died of his wounds.

During the First World War the coastal town of Etaples away from the front line became a vast Allied military camp and then a giant 'hospital city'. Many medical facilities were established by the Australians, New Zealanders and British. Wounded soldiers were often sent to Etaples to recover or en route for Britain.

Run by Officers with little experience of the front, discipline and conditions were atrocious, even leading to a mutiny there in 1917 led by New Zealand and Australian





soldiers after an Australian Private was Court Marshalled and shot by firing squad for abusing a British NCO!

Even here was not immune to attack. The hospital was attacked by German bombers several times.

### **GRANT William John**

28199 Pte Royal Lancs Reg. 7th Battn.

Posthumously awarded British and Victory medals

Originally conscripted on the 24th July 1916 into the Devonshire Reg.

Born 1898 Son of George and Susan (nee Sandiford) GRANT. of Rooksbridge.

Brother of Alfred GRANT who also died in France Dec. 1917.

And of Joseph GRANT

At the time of his death the family were living at East Huntspill. Posted to the Reserves in 1915 while given leave to help his widowed mother on the family farm. Recalled for service Feb 1917.

Recalled to the BEF and disembarked at Le Havre arrived at Rouen 29th July 1917. Where he was transferred into the Royal Lancs Reg. in Aug 1917.

Killed a month later in action during the horror of the fighting a Paschendaele on 23 Sep 1917. aged 19.

**Photo Melanie and Norma Body**

He is commemorated on the War memorial at East Huntspill (**Jenny Binning**)



### DUHALLOW A.D.S. CEMETERY

Duhallow Advanced Dressing Station, was a medical post 1.6 kilometres north of Ypres. The cemetery was begun in July 1917 and in October and November 1918, it was used by the 11th, 36th and 44th Casualty Clearing stations.

## **PETHERAM Thomas**

Sapper 209035 Royal Engineers. 206th Field Co.  
Posthumously awarded British and Victory medals  
Died at Somme of 'War Wounds' 29th Sept 1918.

Born East Brent 1882 son of Walter and Laura PETHERAM of Turnpike Road East Brent.

He Married Leah CAVILL? of East Huntspill in 1905. In 1911 the family was living at New Road East Huntspill

They had two children Dorothy born 1905 and Roland born 1911.

In 1911 Thomas was a general labourer at the Highbridge Locomotive Works.

During the last few weeks of the war, his Company were present at the fierce battle St Quentin Canal. And this is where he was probably mortally wounded, see below.

### ***From War Diary of 206th Field Comp RE for 29th Sep 1918.***

"8-30am. Section proceeded to join 14th Infantry Brigade. Company moved forward with bridging equipment to erect bridge over St QUENTIN CANAL.

**7 wounded** 12 casualties to animals".

Roisel on the St Quentin Canal was occupied by British troops in April 1917, until the 22nd March 1918. It was retaken in the following September.

"The **Battle of St Quentin Canal** was an important battle of World War I that began on 29 September 1918 and involved British, Australian and American forces in the spearhead attack and as a single combined force against the German *Siegfried* or the Hindenburg Line. Under the command of Australian general Sir John Monash, the assault achieved all its objectives, resulting in the first full breach of the Hindenburg Line, in the face of heavy German resistance and, along with other attacks of the Great Offensive along the length of the line, convinced the German high command that there was little hope of an ultimate German victory".  
'Wikipedia'

**TURNER Arthur**

14805 Private Gloucestershire Regiment.

Enlisted at Bristol.

Son of the Rev. Thomas Henley TURNER and Lucinda J. M. TURNER,  
of 14, The College, Bromley, Kent.

Born in East Brent in 1892 while his father Thomas was curate at St  
Marys. East Brent).

by 1901 eight year old Arthur and his parents were living at Chelwood  
Rectory where Arthur Turner's father became church rector at Chelwood  
near Pensford

Died 09/09/1915 of Typhoid Fever at home at Chelwood.

Arthur having been born at East Brent is buried at Chelwood

*(Although he died at home as a result of his war service and his grave at  
Chelwood is registered with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission,  
however his name does not appear on any war memorial in that area)?*

*(Chelwood is listed as a "Thankful Village" One of the few which escaped  
without casualties on the battlefield).*

## THE ARMISTICE

11<sup>th</sup> November 1918

“The Eleventh hour of the Eleventh day of the Eleventh month.”

“At 10-59 we were being shelled.

11-00 Silence...? The first time in 4 years.”

*(Quote from a front line soldier).*

The first British soldier to be killed at Mons in WW1 was a 17 year old Londoner John PARR on 21st August 1914. He had enrolled two years earlier under aged into the Middlesex Regiment at just 15 years old. The last British soldier to die, George Edwin Ellison of the 5th Royal Irish Lancers, was killed at around 9:30 am on the day of the ceasefire on 11th Nov 1918, while scouting on the outskirts of Mons, Belgium. The final soldier to die was a Canadian, Private George Lawrence Price. He was killed by a sniper just two minutes before the armistice was sounded again at Mons. Uncannily right back where the war for the BEF had started a long 4 years before.

The war cost over 16,000,000 dead of which around 10,000,000 were military and the rest civilians. The final "Butchers Bill" of the "War to end wars" was the worst in recorded history up until that time! And what for? After four years of bloodshed the frontiers were virtually all back where they had started. Three monarchies, the German, Russian and Austria-Hungary had been ousted and the aftermath would lead to revolution across Europe and of the Bolsheviks and communism in Russia.

A little over ten years later would see the rise of Hitler's socialist Nazi party and Twenty years after the 'Armistice' Hitler would take the world into another World War that would result in almost the same outcome except this time the "Butchers Bill" would be even more horrendous!

## The Forgotten Soldiers.

After 4 long weary years, much of it spent alternating in either boredom or sheer terror, our surviving soldiers returned home. With money left from the East Brent War Memorial fund a welcome home party was arranged for 116 men known to have survived.

Wives and Mothers were reunited with husbands and sons they thought they might never see again. Many of the men had to get to know children that they had barely or never seen before.

It would be a time of joy or sadness and above all, great change for many. Many of our ex-servicemen appear to have returned and integrated back into village life and in most cases their stories have been forgotten!

In many places they returned home not to a Hero's welcome, but to a completely different country and way of life to the one they left. Many of the jobs promised on their return had disappeared as many businesses had closed down due to the affects of wartime shortages.

The Women's Rights movement had gained strength and many of the women who had stepped in to do the absent men's work, resented having to stand down again after proving themselves and also getting used to earning a regular wage.

Many of the returning ex-soldiers were suffering the affects of over four years of hardships and traumatic experiences. Also, many would have to live the rest of their lives with the affects of wounds, gas and sometimes shell shock. In many cases making them unemployable. This must have had a huge impact on some of these sometimes very young men, and their families which would affect them throughout their later years. At that time there was no Welfare State help to fall back on.

In rural areas such as ours, most of the unskilled men would probably have returned to farm work or maybe had to move away looking for employment in the town or cities or to the mining areas of South Wales etc?

Let us not forget also, the wives, mothers or families of these young men, fearful that they might never see their loved ones again, who had to adapt and sacrifice so much while their men folk were away and again on their

return, sometimes having to learn to live with someone who was probably a different person to the one they knew before they went to war!

## **Shell Shock**

The nerve disorder 'Shell Shock' or what we now know as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) was a huge problem among men constantly under fire and seeing their comrades blown apart beside them. At first it was unrecognised and thought to be the effects of concussion from shell blast etc. The military and government assumed claiming 'Shell Shock' to be an attempt by some men to get away from the front line. In order to keep up morale of the troops. Government ministers and Military Generals tended to dismiss the problem and hide the numbers of mental trauma cases sent to hospitals. Government figures estimated that less than 10% of casualties were diagnosed with nervous disorders due to conditions of war. The Medical Officers and doctors at the front knew this was grossly incorrect.

Towards the end of the war, much to the disgust of the M.O.'s on the front, medical records of many of the men they had diagnosed with a nervous disorder were lost or ignored when men were transferred to other regiments or battalions etc. Sometimes no matter how well a man had fought, the only indication that a man was released due to Shell Shock or mental problems was sometimes the code '392 iii' written into his record, or the words "Not being likely to become an efficient soldier". In many cases of Shell Shock, because a discharged man's medical records had gone missing and he had no visible physical wounds, he was not even granted a war pension on his release. Which could have devastating effects on the man and his family. As in the case of Tom BODY of East Brent who despite having served bravely on the Western Front from 1916 until the war ended, after his release he developed classic symptoms of war trauma, spent the remainder of his life in Wells Asylum until he died in 1954 aged 59.

Also in some cases a man released early from service due to 'Nerves' could forfeit his service medals.

Over 300 men were 'Shot at Dawn' for alleged 'Cowardice' when the real cause for many was Shell Shock or (PTSD)!

*It is very likely that other men from East Brent other than Tom BODY may have suffered mentally from the trauma of war but because no official war records are available it is impossible to say?*

## PART TWO THE SURVIVORS

**Recorded below is what is known of the lives of some of the men from East Brent who survived the horrors of World War One, only to return home to a much changed world.**

They are all dead now.

**We owe them. We must not forget them!**

*The following is an effort to record the names and preserve the memory and stories of some of those who returned but have largely been forgotten. The following summaries are based on available records, family mementoes and what we know of the service and lives of the hundred or so men of East Brent known to have served and survived.*

*This list is far from complete as there are no available records or memories surviving for some of those who took part.*

### **ADAMS Frederick John**

188808 129 Sqd RAF.

Frederick ADAMS was born in April 1901 the son of John and Anna ADAMS of Lake House Lane, East Brent.

Frederick's twin Ella died at birth and his mother Anna, nee

LEATHERBY died just days after the birth aged 20! She was the daughter of John LEATHERBY who in 1901 was a butcher also living in Lake House Lane 'South Common' East Brent.

Frederick's father John remarried in 1905 to an Eliza? from Mark. and a daughter Mabel was born in 1908. They were living at South Common Lake House Lane East Brent in 1911.



In 1911 10 year old Frederick was living with his uncle and aunt Joseph and Sarah CLIST who were his guardians at Pople's Bow Nr Highbridge.

Frederick enlisted as an RAF Air Mechanic in May 1918 when the RAF had been formed out of the earlier Royal Flying Corps and Royal Navy Air Service.

On enlistment aged 17 and 2 mths he gave his next of kin as his aunt and guardian Mrs Sara CLIST of Worston Lane, Highbridge. And his occupation as a coppersmith.

He joined 129 Squadron. *129 squadron was initially formed during the later months of the First World War, but never became operational before the Armistice. It was to be a day bomber unit based at RAF Duxford.*

He appears to have been released in May 1919 and put on 'Reserve'.

Believed to have married a Bernice CHURCHES at Axbridge

By 1939 John was an aircraft coppersmith in Bristol where he lived in Ashley Down with his wife Bernice and 9 year old daughter Daphne. He died in Highbridge 1954.

### **AMESBURY Edward Albert.**

145957 Pte Gloucester Reg

Later 5083 Sgt 9th Manchester Reg.

Awarded the 1915 Star, British and Victory medals.

He was awarded the DCM for Gallantry and devotion to duty during the battle for Cateau towards the end of the war.

Born East Brent 1879 Son of Albert and Emma AMESBURY. In 1871 his parents were Innkeepers at the Dolphin Inn at Uphill. His father died in 1880 aged 39.

By 1881 his widowed mother Emma and her children were living at Bleadon.

In 1891 he was living with his brother Maurice and sister Ann at Bleadon and his mother, who was Postmistress there.

By 1901 the family had moved to Chorlton Lancs. where he was a Bricklayer/Scaffolder living at home in Moss Side, Manchester with his Widowed mother Emma and the family.



In 1911 he was living at Chorlton Lancs. with his wife Mary Ann who he married in 1904 and three children Ethel 6, Edwin 3 and George 1. Edward is believed to have died at Chorlton Lancs in 1924. In 1939 Edward's widow Mary Ann and youngest unmarried son George were living in Euston Ave. Manchester.

It appears... that before the outbreak of war he had been in the Territorials and on reserve with the Gloucesters. But now living Nr. Manchester, he was recalled to the 9th Battalion Manchester regiment. on 15th Sept 1914. He was almost immediately promoted to Corporal. By mid 1915 he was a Sergeant.

*The 9th Battalion Manchesters were one of the first Territorial units to serve in a theatre of war. They were mostly men from the 'Ashton Terriers' who volunteered as a unit and took part in some of the fiercest and costliest battles of the war.*

He was first assigned to the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force in Egypt where the 9th were tasked with guarding the Suez Canal etc. On 5th May 1915 the 9th Batt. embarked for the Gallipoli and the Dardanelles where they landed under heavy fire on 9th May.

The Gallipoli campaign was a complete disaster for British and especially so for the large contingent of the Anzac armies of Australia and New Zealand. Poor command, preparation and lack of arms and supplies etc led to huge casualties. Disease, sickness claimed many more casualties. The 9th Battalion numbers were dwindling fast.

On the 26th December, orders were received to leave the Peninsula, and on the 28th the 9th Battalion were evacuated and bound for Egypt again. On the 14th March 1917 the 9th were transferred to France under the command of the 42nd Division. where from July to November they were involved in the battles of Ypres and Paschendaele

From July 1918 the remnants of the 9th Battalion Manchesters were heavily engaged in the final German retreat after their failed Spring Offensive where Edward won the DCM medal.



5083 Sjt. E. AMESBURY 9th Bn. (Manchester)  
 For gallantry and devotion to duty.  
 During the operations from 8th October to  
 11th November 1918, he had command of a  
 platoon, which he led in action. At Le  
 Cateau on 18th October, when taking over  
 the Red Line, he consolidated his position  
 under heavy machine-gun and artillery  
 fire. (11.3.20)

After his WW1 service with the Gloucester and 9th Manchester Regiments, he did not return straight away to England.

He took a bounty and re-enlisted at Dunkirk at the age of 39 as a sergeant for a further two years 1919-21. assigned to the Manchester Regiment.

His 1919-21 service record shows him as married and home address as 35 Henry St. Chorlton-on-Medlock. Manchester.

*(Chorlton-on-Medlock, a former working-class district in central Manchester, cleared during the post WW2 national practice of 'slum clearance' from 1957 to 1975).*

### **BANWELL Alfred.**

M2/052581 Pte RASC

Awarded 1915 Star, British and Victory medals.

Born in East Brent in September 1897 Alfred was the youngest son of Carpenter/Cheesemaker George and Hannah BANWELL of Edingworth.

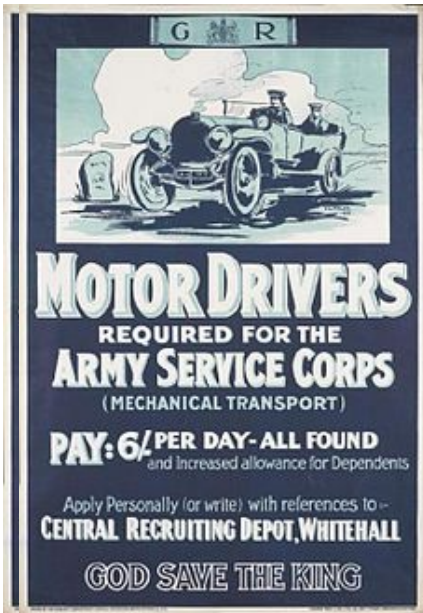
By 1911 the family had moved to Congesbury where 14 year old Alfred was a house servant.

After his war service Alfred met and married a Frances COFFIN at Wandsworth London in 1924.

Alfred and Frances lived in Wandsworth until he died in March 1985 aged 87. Frances died in 1968 aged 75.



By 1915 Alfred had learned to drive motor vehicles and volunteered into the Motorised transport section of the Royal Army Service Corps. This



mainly consisted of supplying the front line troops with Ammunition and other supplies by lorries.

He served in Egypt from April 1915. Defending the Suez Canal from the Turkish Ottoman forces. Until his Demobilisation in 1919.

An early recruitment poster. The pay and allowances offered would be very tempting at a time when a farm workers wage was less than £1-00 a week!

## **BANWELL Frank Edward**

2nd Lieutenant 4th East Kent Regiment (Buffs)

Born 1896 Son of Commercial Traveler Edward BANWELL and Marion. of Rooksbridge. Soon after his parents married in 1894 they moved to Ramsgate where Frank Edward was born.

Volunteered September 1914 Placed on Reserve.

Entered the Artist Rifles Officers Training corps March 1916. On 27th December 1916 he was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the East Kent regiment.

In August 1918 he appears to have transferred from the 4th (Buffs) East Kent Regiment into the RAF for training from which he was demobbed in January 1919.?

While on leave before entering the RAF he married a Gertrude WARNER at Whitstable Kent in August 1918. They would have two sons.

by 1923 he was a school master in Sittingbourne Kent and in 1927 he was Headmaster at Cuddington School Aylesbury. Bucks.

Soon after he took the Headmastership at Aylesbury he had an affair with a young schoolmistress there and he and his wife separated. She was finally granted a divorce in 1944 after she found him living with a woman in Ruislip.

### **2/4th Battalion East Kent regiment.**

Formed at Canterbury in September 1914 as a Second Line battalion. Attached to 2/Kent Brigade, 2/Home Counties Division. Remained in England throughout the war.

It is unknown if he served in a theatre of war? No medal records found?

### **BENNIE. James "Jim"**

No M.B./2953 Chief Motor Mechanic Royal Navy Reserve  
1918. Called for service from July 1918 until 'End of Hostilities'  
Demobbed Feb 1919.

Awarded the British and Victory medals. So must have served a short time overseas?

No service records available

Born Renfrew Scotland Jan 1894 Son of forester Robert and Margaret  
BENNIE

In Sep. 1919 he married Margaret GLEESON at Bristol.

In 1939 he was proprietor of Rooksbridge Garage.

After his retirement he lived at 'Hillcroft' Burton Row East Brent.

He died in Dec.1978. His wife Margaret died in 1965.

### **BISHOP Ernest Walter**

57794 Lead Driver. Royal Horse  
Artillery.

Awarded 1915 Star, British and  
Victory medals.

Born 4<sup>th</sup> April 1894, East Brent  
son of Walter and Annie  
BISHOP

In 1911 He was a general  
labourer along with his father  
boarding with the family of a  
builder Richard Tucker at Fremlington Devon.



He served in the military as a lead driver in the Royal Horse Artillery.  
Between 1914 and 1918 in Egypt, Africa and Italy.

He was awarded the British and Victory medals and star. After training he appears to have been posted first to the Egypt theatre of war? (No service records found)

"In 1939 he was living at 'Glengarry' Brent Knoll with his wife Edith and 11 year son Reginald.

"After the war he worked for the Drainage board. Ernie "Did Ditches and things" He was hard working and well respected. He worked as an Agricultural contractor for local farmers and the River board. A devout Methodist, both he and his father Walter were organists at East Brent Chapel. It is also thought that his father Walter was once lay preacher there.

Ernest at one time was responsible for climbing the Knoll and raising the flag. And when called upon would volunteer along with others to- 'Clean-up' after the 'Horse-racing' at Brent Knoll!

Ernie being quite religious had a beautiful organ at his home and his grandchildren hated going to visit on a Sunday. Ernie would hold a 'Service' which the kids found boring!



Photo: Marlyn Truckle-Whatley

He was quite a character and a man of many talents. He was keen on West Country History and Natural History and was a self taught artist. "

This painting of 'Nut Tree Farm' by Ernest Bishop which is thought to be the last thatched cottage in East Brent was donated to the parish by Marlyn Truckle-Whatley (Granddaughter of Ernest Bishop )

"He tended his large garden etc. and was keenly interested in West Country history and the local flora and fauna.

Died Dec 1970. East Brent (heart attack outside post office)

Ernest BISHOP and his wife Edith, never owned a car. They were well known for cycling everywhere. Even to Scotland for a holiday with a tent on the back of the bike!

Edith had a bad accident on her bike in the 50's and so they were unable to cycle long distances after that. However they still rode locally, to the local Post office etc. to draw their pensions.

In 1970 while on one of their regular visits to East Brent Post Office, that while Edith was inside, and Ernest waited outside with the bikes, that Ernest had a massive heart attack and was dead before Edith could get outside! A sad end to such a well liked and talented man. "

(Marlyn Truckle-Watley. Grand-daughter)

### **BODY Thomas**

27618 Pte. Devon Regiment.

Awarded British, Victory medals.

Born in 1895 Son of farmer George and Elizabeth BODY of Brent Street, East Brent, brother of Frank BODY, who served in the Royal Field Artillery. And died in France in late 1918.

In 1914 the family took over the farm of Elizabeth's father at Nut Tree Farm, Barton, Winscombe, Somerset

He was conscripted from the Army Reserve in May 1916. Originally into the Royal Field Artillery but quickly transferred to the Devonshire Regiment.

After infantry training he landed in France on 12 Sept 1916

The Devonshires served continuously in France from August 1914 until November 1918 and were in the thick of all the major battles throughout the war they and earned 26 battle honours. The war had cost the Battalion more than 1,150 killed and three times that number wounded.

At the battle of Arras in April 1917 Thomas was wounded in the right arm "Severe flesh wound" He spent a little over two months in military hospital in Edmonton, London before being sent back to France at the end of June 1917.

His Pension records show that in February 1921 he was admitted to the Mendip Asylum at Wells. Suffering from "Melancholia". On admission he appeared "Dazed, stupid, inactive, incapable of voluntary effort, memory poor, no interest in surroundings, shows no emotion when questioned about his experiences, makes no complaint".

*He appears to have suffered classic 'Shell Shock' symptoms? Which was unofficially common among men who had experienced the horrors of the Somme and Paschendaele etc.*

However, his military Pension record says that his condition "Is not due to his wartime service"?

He remained in the Wells Asylum until his death in 1954 aged 59.

**BURGE William Clement** (Also recorded as W C BIRCH)

R/4/410543 Blacksmith. Army Service Corps 'Remount Squadron'  
Awarded British 'Victory' and 'War' medals

Born Rooksbridge 1876 Son of farm worker John and Mary Ann (nee Norey) BURGE

In 1901 he was a blacksmith.

Married Bertha Carter from Shepton Mallett in 1903.

By 1911 he was a 'Roadman' living in Rooksbridge.

After his WW1 service he returned to East Brent where in 1939 he was a blacksmith at the 'Forge' in East Brent. At the outbreak of WW2 he was a special constable. He died age 86 in 1962.

Enlisted at Webbington 1915. Aged 39. As a "Specially enlisted Shoeing Smith"

Served in France 1916-19

Received 7 days Field Punishment No 1 and forfeited one days pay on 22/1/1917 for being absent from his post overnight.

Discharged from RASC. Woolwich on 15<sup>th</sup> April 1919. With a 30% Disablement. Received weekly pension of 8/3d

**The ASC Remounts Service was responsible for providing the horses and mules to all other army units.**

At the onset of World War 1, the British Army's remount service was put under a massive strain to



supply enough horses because at the time, they only had about 25,000 horses with 6,000 held in reserve in barns and stables across the country, so they had to look further afield and buy mules from America. One of the ports these terrified animals arrived at, was Avonmouth as it's one of the first ports to reach from across the Atlantic and had become an important military depot from which troops and equipment were despatched to the Western Front.

When war broke out, the King Edward Dock at Avonmouth had just been built and provided a rail link to other parts of the country. There was a lot of farmland surrounding the area and a huge depot was established at Shirehampton which stabled and supplied horses and mules to the Front between 1914 and 1918.

Another of these farms where the newly arrived mules and horses - who were sent by train to recover from the long sea journey - was Bratton Farm just outside Minehead. Where the mules were herded down the town's main high street from the railway station towards the farm which had been taken over by the Army where they were vetted and shod etc, before they were put back on trains and dispatched across the Channel to the Frontline from where so many would never return.



### **CHAMPENEY Arthur R**

34783 Pte. 11th Worcester Regiment.

Awarded British and Victory medals.

Arthur was born in East Brent in 1885 Son of gardener Joseph and Harriet CHAMPENEY.

In 1891 along with his three older sisters the family lived in Brent Street, East Brent.

In Dec 1905 he married Elizabeth HUTCHINGS from Berrow. At the time of his enrolment into the Army Reserve in November 1915 he was living at Berrow.



In June 1916 when he was mobilised he was living in London House, Berrow with his wife and three children. Edith 1904, Gladys 1908 and Leonard 1914.

He served with the 11th Worcesters mainly in Macedonia and Bulgaria.

On his demob in Aug 1919 he had been serving in Russia.

After his war service he was farm worker still living in London House Berrow in 1939. he died in 1962.

### **CHANCELLOR Charles Barnes**

21608 Corporal 14th Gloucestershire Regiment

Awarded British and Victory Medals.

and 1915 Star.

Born in East Brent in 1896 Son of grocer Harold and Lily  
CHANCELLOR of Church House, Church St, East Brent.

By 1911 the family were living in Bourneville Rd, Weston super mare, where his parents ran a Grocers shop

Enrolled at Weston Super Mare  
June 1915 age 19.

Gave his profession as "Cyclist Fitter"



### **Men of the 14th Gloucesters Bantams Regiment**

At just 5'2" he was assigned to the 14th Gloucester Regiment. known as the 'Bantams'

The 14th (West of England) Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment was raised at Bristol on the 22nd of April 1915 as a Bantam Battalion, with troops who were under the normal regulation minimum height of 5 feet 3 inches.

The 14th was ordered to Egypt in late 1915, but the order was soon cancelled and they proceeded to France, landing at Le Havre on 30 January 1916, the division was concentrated east of St Omer. They were

in action during the Battles of the Somme at Bazentin Ridge and other places.

He was wounded in early March 1916 and was sent home to Reading Military Hospital for 6 weeks before returning to his unit in France. In May 1917 Charles suffered with Malaria leaving him with a "20% Disablement"

In March 1918 he was sent home to England when he appears to have suffered with severe Headaches and Vertigo etc. He returned to France Oct 1918.

On his discharge in March 1919 he was 'Acting Sergeant'

He married Lillian GOULSTONE b: 1876 in 1921

They had three sons. Douglas b: 1921, Lionel and Max b: 1928.

In 1931 he had a Fruit Shop in Bourneville Road.

In 1939 he was a part time telephonist living with his family in Bourneville Road, Weston super mare.

He died in 1974. in the Sedgemoor district.?

### **CLEAL John.**

Private 2479 3rd Somerset Light Infantry.

John was born in East Brent in 1874, son of Railway worker David and Elizabeth CLEAL. As a railway worker the family moved home quite often.

By 1881 the family had moved to 'Withy Road' Huntspill and by 1901 the family had moved to Cardiff.

When he first enrolled into the army in February 1889 he gave his birthplace as East Brent and age as 18 years. His parents were living at Huntspill.

From 1891-97 he served for 5 years with S.L.I. in India. While on 'Reserve' in 1899 he worked for a few months as a railway porter at Cardiff.

From 1899- 1902 he was recalled for service in the Boer War, taking part in the "Relief of Ladysmith", battles at Jugela Hieghts, Cape Colony, Orange Free State and Transvaal etc. For which he was awarded the Kings South Africa Medal and clasp.

He was promoted to Corporal in Feb 1899 and to Sergeant in June 1902. After the Boer War he served for five years in India from Nov 1902 until Nov 1907

While on reserve he was a postman in Cardiff between 1912 -14.

At the outbreak of WW1 he re-enlisted as a private 17499 into the Welsh Regiment at Penarth on 23 Nov 1914. his stated age 43! he was transferred to the Royal Defence Corps. As he did not serve in a theatre of war during WW1 he dos not appear to have been awarded any WW1 medals?

*The **Royal Defence Corps** was a corps of the British Army formed in March 1916 It was formed by converting the (Home Service) Garrison battalions of line infantry regiments. Garrison battalions were composed of soldiers either too old or medically unfit for active front-line service; the Home Service status indicated they were unable to be transferred overseas. Eighteen battalions were converted in this way.*

*The role of the regiment was to provide troops for security and guard duties inside the United Kingdom; guarding important locations such as ports or bridges. It also provided independent companies for guarding prisoner-of-war camps. The regiment was never intended to be employed on overseas service.(Wikipedia)*

He eventually left the Army in June 1919 after literally 30 years service.

In 1939 he was living in Penybont S Wales. With his wife Rebecca who he married in 1922.

In 1944 at the age of 70 he was receiving an army pension of £78-3s-0d per annum. From his pension record he appears to have died sometime after March 1951

### **COLES Ashley Thomas**

2346 Rifleman. 12<sup>th</sup> Rifle Brigade.

Born East Brent 29 March 1894, son of William and Mary Ann COLES of Bristol Road, East Brent.

**Photo: David Loveridge.**



Brother of George COLES

In 1911 was working as a labourer on the farm of Henry Puddy, Brent St, Victoria House, Brent Knoll

Married Ellen PLEECE, 21 June 1919, Cardiff

In 1939 he was a brick and tile maker living in Highbridge Road Burnham on sea. with his wife Helen and her 60 year old widowed father Walter PLEECE.

Ashley died 2 June 1964, Weston super Mare Hospital.

*Listed as wounded on 8th Oct 1917? No other service records found?*

*(His son Ashley COLES Jnr served on the cruiser Black Prince for the duration of WW2 and became a well known photographer in Burnham on Sea and later had a signwriting business in Bedminster Bristol)*

#### Rifle Brigade 12th Btn

Formed at Winchester in September 1914 as part of K2 (Kitcheners volunteer 2nd Army) and came under command of 60th Brigade in 20th (Light) Division. On 22 July 1915 : 12 Batt. landed at Boulogne.

Extract from The Wartime Memories Project website

12th (Service) Battalion, Rifle Brigade went to France on the 22nd of July 1915, landing at Boulogne, In 1916 they were in action at the 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,

## **COLES George**

13963 Pte. 10<sup>th</sup> Devonshire Regiment.

Awarded the 1915 Star, British and Victory medals

Born 1890 son of William and Mary Ann COLES, East Brent. Brother of Ashley COLES. (above)

In 1911 George was living with his parents and sister Annie at Edingworth and working as a farm labourer (JJ)

In 1939 he was a general labourer (Roadways) living with his wife Agnes at Lake House Cottage, East Brent.



Volunteering in 1915 he entered France in Sep 1915.

Later that year the 10th were sent to Salonika. Later taking on the Turks in Bulgaria. Seeing service there throughout the war and remaining on 'Z' reserve until 1919.

In the Great War, a total of 25 battalions of the Devonshires were raised, they fought on the Western Front, in France, Italy, Macedonia, Egypt, Palestine, and Mesopotamia.

These infantry battalions were some of the first to 'Go over the top' with great loses!

(No service records available)  
Loveridge.

Photo: David

## **COLES Richard**

39024 Royal Warwickshire Reg.

47310 Rifle Brigade.

Awarded British and Victory Medal.

(No service records available)

Believed to be a brother of Ashley and George Coles?

The Cap Badge appears to be that of the Rifle Brigade?

No service records found.



Photo: David Loveridge

Another family photo shows him working for Colthurst and Symonds. Brick and Tile makers at Highbridge.

### **COMER Frank**

17154 Gunner Royal Garrison Artillery  
Awarded British and Victory Medals.  
Also awarded the “Long service with Good Conduct” medal

Born 1877 eldest son of Joseph and Emma COMER of Church House, Church St, East Brent.

Brother of George COMER (below)

He married Charlotte Lucinda Robinson at S. Shoebury. 5 Sep 1908.

His son Frederick Charles COMER was born 29 June 1913.



A Regular soldier, he served a total of 22 and a half years in the army. First enlisting in 1893 aged 16 when he was placed in the militia 'Reserve' until 1896. In 1896 he was posted into the Royal Artillery. until demobbed in 1919.

He was posted to Nova Scotia in 1897 for 4 years. And then to Jamaica and St Helena from 1902 – 05. He then appears to have served in UK until outbreak of WW1, when he was sent to France in 1914. He was wounded and had a short period back in the UK in Military hospital at Liverpool in 1916. He was then posted back to France until he was demobbed in 1919. His medical record shows he suffered several bouts of illness etc. Such as Scabies while in Nova Scotia. Malaria in Jamaica. In 1916 he was treated for Arthritis.

His Character throughout was recorded as “Very Good”

### **COMER Frederick**

Served for a very short while in the Cambridgeshire Regiment later transferred ASC and in April promoted to Capt. 26<sup>th</sup> ASC Training Res. Battalion.

Awarded British and Victory medals.

*With the introduction of conscription in 1916, recruits would be posted to these Training battalions for basic training, before they were posted to an active service unit.*



**No service records found**

Born 1887, East Brent.

Son of local Riverboard surveyor and rate collector Robert and Rose COMER who were living at 'Smithfield' South Common East Brent in 1891.

In 1901 he was a boarder at Sexey's School at Blackford. His parents lived at 'Bachelors Hall' in Rooksbridge.

In 1911 census he also was a River board surveyor and rate collector.

1918 Married Aline Robinson. of St Albans, Herts.

The wedding has taken place at St. Albans, Herts, of Captain Frederick Comer, A.S.C. (late of the Cambridgeshire Regiment), son of the late Mr and Mrs Robert Comer, of East Brent, and Miss Aline Robinson, elder daughter of the Rev. Fredk. and Mrs Robinson, of Wick Wood, St. Albans.

**Western Daily Press 18/07/1918**



Later married a Millicent ?. In 1939 they were living in 'Vine Cottage' East Brent where he was a haulage contractor. with their children James, Dorothy and Sam. Frederick died 11 Dec 1961, East Brent.

*(His son Ernest "Sam" COMER was killed in Korea in 1952)*

## **COMER George Anthony**

117484 Driver. 648th Co. A.S.C.

Awarded British and Victory medals.

Born c1895, East Brent

Youngest son of Joseph and Emma COMER of Church House, Church St, East Brent.

Brother of Frank and Lot COMER.

An apprentice motor engineer.

In February 1914 he enrolled in the Royal Flying Corps as an aircraft mechanic. In June 1915 he was "Discharged for Misconduct" from the RFC.

He re-enlisted into the Army Service Corps at Grove Park WSM 26 Aug 1915 age 20.

Joined the Expeditionary Force in France May 1916

Suffered a bout of Influenza Aug 1916.

Dec 1916 received 8 days Field punishment for Refusing to obey an order by an NCO. (See below)

In 1917 he was a lorry driver. His commanding officer noted. "Inclined to be lazy, lacks energy"!

Was invalided back to UK for 2 months with Jaundice. Aug 1917

Oct 1917 Transhipped to Dar-es-Salaam arrived Nov 1917 to serve with the East Africa Force.

Hospitalised for 3 mths with Malaria. Mar- Jun 1918.

30 Oct 1918 'Forfeited 3 days pay for "Non Compliance to an order given by a Senior Officer"!

Nov 1918 He suffered a further bout of Malaria While in Mozambique.

Eventually being transported to hospital in Port Amelia.

On 15 Dec 1918 he embarked Port Amelia for transfer to England.

**On Christmas Day 1918 he went 'Absent Without Leave' from 9am and until 11-15am on the 8<sup>th</sup> of Jan 1919. "338.25 hours"**

For which he was given 7 Days Detention.

His Date of Discharge is unknown?

George A COMER appears to have been quite a strong willed character, having been discharged from the RFC for Misconduct and also being sentenced to 'Field Punishment' while at the front!

JJ



### **Field Punishment.**

*This was given in serious cases such as..*

*Striking or Disobeying a direct order from a Superior Officer.*

*It consisted of the convicted man being placed in fetters and handcuffs or similar restraints and attached to a fixed object, such as a gun wheel or post, for up to two hours per day.*

*During the early part of World War I, the punishment was often applied with the arms stretched out and the legs tied together, giving rise to the nickname "crucifixion". This was applied for up to three days out of four, up to 21 days total. It was usually applied in*

*field punishment camps set up for this purpose a few miles behind the front line, but when the unit was on the move it would be carried out by the unit itself.*

*It has been alleged that this punishment was sometimes applied unlawfully within range of enemy fire.*

*During World War I Field Punishment Number One was issued by the British Army on 60210 occasions.*

*(Wikipedia)*



### **COMER John Leonard.**

78981 Pte. Devonshire Regt.

168781 Pte. R.A.M.C.

Born 1900 son of Ernest and Elizabeth COMER of "Brent Cottage" Bristol Road, East Brent. His father was a saddler/ implement agent in East Brent. By 1911 the family had moved and were living at Peverall Nr. Plymouth where his father was now listed as an Insurance Inspector.

When he enlisted into the Devonshire Regt. aged 18 in July 1918 he was a Chemists apprentice.

Originally based at Plymouth he was soon posted for a short while to Randalstown training base in Ireland. By the time he had finished his training the Armistice had been signed.

On 6th April 1919 he embarked at Dover for Dunkirk. In July 1919 he transferred to the Royal Army Medical Corps, serving in a Field Ambulance unit with the Rhine army of occupation.



After his military service, sailing from Southampton to Halifax Nova Scotia on SS. Arabic on 2nd April 1927 he emigrated to Winnipeg. Manitoba. Canada. **Where he died on 1st May 1964.**

*John's early training as a Chemist's apprentice no doubt helped him in his Field Ambulance duties*

The **Occupation of the Rhineland** took place following the armistice that brought the fighting of World War I to a close on 11 November 1918. The terms of the armistice included the immediate evacuation of German troops from Belgium, France, and Luxembourg as well as Alsace-Lorraine within 15 days.

The occupying armies consisted of American, Belgian, British and French forces. The British Army entered German territory on 3 December 1918. The British Army of the Rhine was established as the occupying force in March 1919. Based at Cologne. French forces continued to occupy German territory in the Rhineland till the end of 1930, (Wikipedia)

## COOK Ernest

184230 Gunner 2/75 Mountain Gun Battery. Royal Field Artillery. (Signaller)

Awarded British and Victory medals.

Son of labourer Samuel COOK and Sarah. Ernest was born Charlynch in 1885.

In 1901 he was a gardener boarding at Bridgwater.

He married Sophia Treslove Cranfield at Burnham in 1909

1911 census shows, Ernest, 27 living in East Brent with his wife Sophie, 26 and daughter Marjorie, 1. He was working as a gardener at East Brent vicarage.

They had six children. 4 daughters and a son. Violetta, Mavis, Iris, Raymond and Eryll? or Linda born 1917 while he was on active duty and Aubrey born 1920.

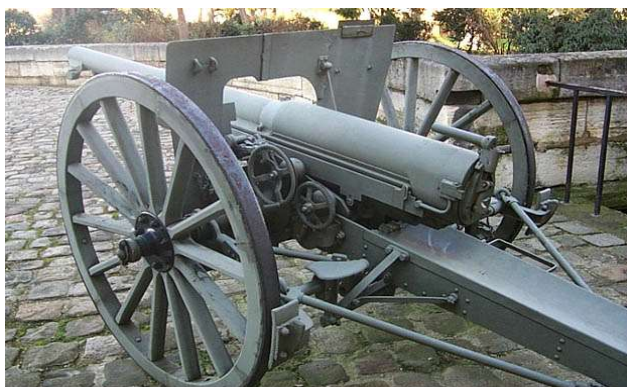
He enlisted as a gunner Dec. 1916 signing his Attestation papers as Ernest COOKE Giving his age as 31 and occupation as Groom/Gardener.

June 1917 he was posted to the Egyptian Expeditionary Force. Via Alexandria.

By Sept 1918 He had been re-designated as a signaller serving in Palestine.

He embarked for home from Port Said on 7/9/1918

He appears to have finally been de-mobbed in Mar 1919 With an exemplary record. *“Honest reliable and trustworthy and proved of excellent service during the advance in Palestine and Syria”*



*The 2.75" Mountain Gun was designed to be dismantled and carried by mules in mountainous areas.*

After his war service Ernest returned to the "Cottage" in Church Street East Brent where in 1939 register he was recorded incapacitated but working with his son Raymond as a gardener.

He is believed to have died in 1942? at East Brent. And his wife Sophia in 1973.

**COOK George (Henry)**

41440 L/Cpl Hampshire Regiment.

388926 L/Corp. 497<sup>th</sup> Royal Engineers.

Awarded British and Victory medals.

**No other info or service records found**

Born 1887 at Rooksbridge he was the son of farm worker George and Mary COOK

In 1901 the family were living in Lake House Lane East Brent and George was an apprentice carpenter.

In 1911 he was a farm labourer living at Splott Farm, Mark, with his wife Ellen who he married in 1909 and 1 year old son George.

By 1939 Henry was a stockman on a farm Nr Cheltenham.

*The 497th Royal Engineers were attached to the 3rd Battalion Kent Regiment and saw service at Gallipoli, Egypt and many of the battles on the Western Front.*

**COOPER Arthur George.**

3/7742 Warrant Officer  
Regimental Quartermaster  
Sergeant.

6th Batt Somerset Light  
Infantry. awarded DCM,  
Victory, British and 15  
Star medals.

3/7742 RQMS A.G. COOPER (Highbridge)

For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. During the quartermaster's absence he performed his duties most capably. He has served four years with the battalion. Formerly as Platoon Serjeant and Company Serjeant-Major he rendered sterling service in the line and in battle. (21.10.18)

Born in Shepton Mallet in 1884. Son of Solicitors clerk Arthur James and Emma COOPER.

Arthur enrolled into the Army Schoolmasters Corps in 1904. 1907-1909 he saw service as an officer training military school teacher in India with The Kings Liverpool Regt and the Royal Garrison Artillery. While serving in Nowgong in India he purchased his discharge in 1909 for £25. While in India in 1908 he married his wife Annie who came from Leamington Spa and a son Francis was born in 1909. In 1910 he had left the army and the family had returned to England and were living in Cubbington Nr. Leamington Spa. where he was an assistant teacher. Teaching Handicrafts, Woodwork and Metalwork etc.

**Moving from Leamington Spa he became the Head Master at East Brent C.E. school from 1912 - 1914, from where he volunteered for his WW1 service.**

In 1914 he was enrolled into the Somerset Light Infantry where he became a Sergeant promoted to Warrant Officer 2nd Class. He entered France in May 1915 where in 1918 he earned his Distinguished Conduct Medal.

He was demobbed into the Army Reserve in July 1919.

In 1939 he was a Woodwork teacher at Southam Warwickshire with he wife Annie who was an elementary school teacher and son Francis who was an undergraduate at Birmingham University.

Arthur died in Birmingham aged 74 in 1958. His wife Annie died on Christmas Day 1949 at Leamington.

### **The Corps of Army Schoolmasters:**

*By the mid-nineteenth Century there was still a number of recruits to the army who could not read and write and only one in a hundred was thought to be able to claim 'a superior degree of education'. Individual regiments had made haphazard attempts to hire instructors or conduct courses. Much education was left to the discretion of the units NCOs. The Corps of Army Schoolmasters was created to solve these inconsistencies in 1845. However, there was some resistance from some senior officers who believed that education might be bad for education in that it might encourage soldiers to feel confident to question their superiors!*

*The corps was initially staffed by Warrant Officers and senior NCOs who could call upon civilian teachers from if it was thought necessary. The Council for Military Education took over responsibility for Army schools and libraries which meant that in addition to teaching the soldiers, they*

*might also be called upon to teach the children of serving soldiers. In 1920 became the Army Education Corps.*

*Extracted from: <http://www.britishempire.co.uk>*

### **COX Harry Dennis**

24115 Pte. Wilts Regiment.

93693 Pte Labour Corps.

Awarded British and Victory medals.

Born East Brent 1890 son of farm worker Thomas and Louisa COX.

By 1901 the family had moved to Horsecastle Farm at Yatton and in 1911 Harry was a farmworker at Kenn Nr Yatton.

After he was demobbed he married a Gertrude HOLLEY born 1891 in Kenn, and who died WSM in 1968. They had a son Reginald born Sep 1920

In 1939 he was a wood machinist living in Yew Tree Cottage, Kenn.

He died in 1958 at Yeovil.

He enlisted at Taunton in Nov 1915. and was posted to France on 7th May 1916.

He was transferred to the Labour Corps serving with the BEF in 1917. and served in France until the end of the war. He was demobbed in Sep 1919.



1916 the Wilts Reg took part in defence of Vimy Ridge, also The Battles of Albert, Bazentin, Pozieres, and the Battle of the Ancre Heights. And in 1917 The Battles of Messines, and Pilkem.

*Men of the Wiltshire Regiment during WW1*

## **CROSS William**

019114 Pte. A.S.C. Mech. Transport.

Awarded 1915 Star, British and Victory medals

First served in France Dec. 1914

Demobilised into 'Z' Reserve April 1919.

Listed as: from East Brent. in the 'Absent Voters List' of 1918. (In 1939 there is a William J CROSS born 1887 a cowman, living at 'Rookery Cottage' Vole Road with wife Winifred Born 1895.? And son William J Born 1922?

**No other info or service records found**

## **CURRY Reginald.**

QMS 235 "B" Squadron, North Somerset Yeomanry.

Awarded 1914 Mons Star and Clasp, British and Victory medals.

*North Somerset Yeomanry was a Territorial unit formed in 1908. "B" Squadron was based in Weston Super Mare.*

Reg CURRY was born in 1888 the only son of William and Mary CURRY.

His father was the landlord of the Wellington Arms at Rooksbridge. Reg looked after a small herd of cows for his father.

In February 1910 he signed on for 6 years as a Private in the North Somerset Yeomanry. He did his preliminary training at Bath and Frome etc, and served at Home until the outbreak of war. On Aug 5th 1914 the day after war was declared his company was embodied into the B.E.F. and posted to France where as a trained soldier he was quickly promoted to Sergeant during the initial battle of Mons. By October 1915 he had been promoted to Quartermaster Sergeant and went through two of the battles of Ypres and also fought at Loos.

On 3rd March 1916 he was discharged as 'Time Served'.

Believing that his military service had ended he took on a farm with 17 milking cows and also took over the 24 acres and 9 cows of his father who was by now 71 years old.

Under the new Conscription act of 1916 he was recalled for service. In Feb 1917 he appealed against the decision of the local Axbridge Tribunal, who refused him exemption. They considered that his father could make arrangements to cover his farm duties so that he could resume his military duties. He took his appeal to the Bath Tribunal, who allowed it due to his age , his previous service and his health was now classed as B1. (B1. Only fit for garrison duties overseas and not front line).

In 1917 he married Charlotte GAMLEN daughter of William and Sarah GAMLEN of Chapel Farm East Brent.

in 1923 he was farming at Cedar Tree Farm Badgeworth. By 1939 he was a farmer living with his wife and four children at "The Oaks" Hewish. Where he died aged 72 in 1960.

### **DAUNTON Charles W.**

17157 Duke of Cornwall Light Infantry

WW1 No. 647 RSM R.A.S.C.

Awarded 1915 Star, British and Victory medals.



Charles W DAUNTON was born in Axbridge Workhouse 1871. He married an Ada ANSELL at York in 1898. He was father of Charles DAUNTON (below) of Bellcombe East Brent and Elsie DAUNTON of The Bungalow Bristol Rd Rooksbridge.

He enrolled as soldier No. 1777 at Devonport in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bat. Duke of Cornwall Light Infantry in 1888 age 17. 1890 Transferred to the Army Service Corps as a driver. Aug 1890 he received good conduct pay and promoted to Lance Corporal.

In Oct 1891 he was awaiting trial for “Disobeying a lawful command and striking a Superior officer”! He forfeited his Good Conduct pay and was demoted back to driver. Between 1893 and 1898 he regained and lost his Lance corporal status several times!

He served most of his time in the UK apart from 3 years in South Africa during the Boer war 1899-1902. He was awarded The Kings South Africa Medal and clasps for service in Cape Colony, Orange Free State, Johannesburg, Diamond Hill and Belfast.



While in S Africa in May 1899 he was promoted to Corporal and in Sep 1899 he had become a Sergeant. While in Capetown in 1900 he appears to have signed on for a further 9 years to complete 21 years service.

In Feb 1903 He was promoted to Company Sergeant Major.

**He completed his 21 years service in June 1909.**

At the outbreak of WW1 at the age of 44 he signed up again or was recalled as a driver in the Army Service Corps. He was almost immediately promoted to C.S.M. (Possibly as an instructor due to his long service and experience)? By 1915 he was with the Expeditionary force in France and later in Italy where he earned the British War and Victory medals and the 1914-15 Star.

He was demobilised at Woolwich Dockyard on 15 Feb 1919.

He died age 74 in 1945 at the home of his daughter Elsie at Rooksbridge.

His occupation at that time was General Labourer and Army pensioner.

In 1944 just before he died he was in receipt of a pension of £102-17s-5d. per year.

### **DAUNTON Charles Jnr**

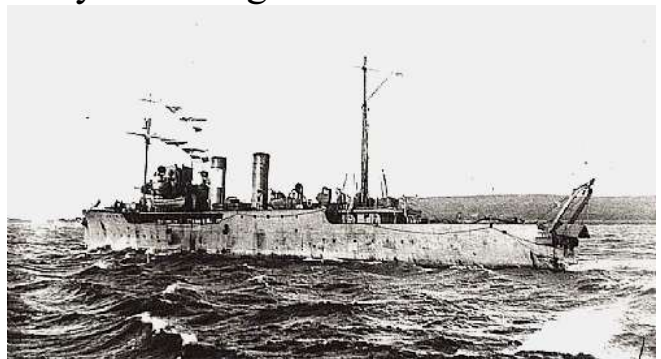
J/17157 Signaller Royal Navy.

Born Folkstone Kent in 1896 Son of Charles William DAUNTON (above) and Ada ANSELL. who in 1911 were living in Rooksbridge.

In 1911 he was a farm servant living at White House Farm N Yeo working for Harry ISGAR.

Aged 16 he enrolled in the navy In April 1912 as a Signaller and did his early training in at Davenport on the wooden training ship HMS 'Impregnable'. and the shore based boys training establishments HMS 'Ganges' and 'Vivid'.

From July 1913 to Aug 1916 he served as a signaller on the cruiser HMS 'Suffolk' hunting German raiders in the Atlantic. While aboard he appears to have served "7 Days Cells"?



During WW1 he also served on HMS 'Victorious'.

And from Sep 1917 to March 1919 on the minesweeper HMS 'Marigold' right.

He left the navy and was transferred to the Royal Navy Reserve in June 1921.

He married Beatrice HOUSE in 1923 in East Brent and they had four children. The family lived at "Bellcombe" Brent Street until he died in 1981.

Until he retired, he worked for a number of years as a foreman for South Western Electricity Co.

### **DAVIS George Herbert**

391 Wessex Div Royal Engineers

No medal record found.

Born East Brent Circa 1892 Son of Edward and Mary DAVIS.

By 1901 the family had moved to Drove Rd Weston super mare.

When he enrolled in the Royal Engineers in 1909 the family were living at 34 Exeter Rd. WSM and was a 17 year old apprentice house painter.

In 1939 he was a house decorator living in Lonsdale Road Weston Super Mare with his wife Amelia. He died in Weston in 1954.

He signed up as a regular soldier in 1909 for four years. His record shows him as being discharged in June 1913.

It is believed he was recalled or re-enlisted to serve in WW1?

No service record found.

### **DINWIDDY George**

12266 Gunner 77th Brigade Royal Field Artillery.

Awarded British and Victory medals.

The 77th Howitzer Brigade went to France in 1916 and saw action at the Somme.

Born in East Brent 1880 Son of John and Mary DINWIDDY of Harts Row Bristol Road. East Brent.

On enrollment as a 34 year old volunteer in Aug 1914 at Merthyr S Wales, he was a coal miner in Aberfan.

In August 1917 he married widow Edith BALDWIN at Wandsworth in London.

After demob in 1919 he lived at various addresses in Wandsworth until at least 1946.

### **DUDLEY William**

201980 Pte. 1/4<sup>th</sup> Som. Light. Infantry.

Awarded British and Victory medals

Believed to be the son of Emily DUDLEY of Mark? Born 1893?

He married Matilda PALMER in 1914. just before being posted to India and gave his home address as: Rooksbridge.

In 1939 William was living with his wife Matilda at Churchill Green and was caretaker at Churchill Methodist School.

**1/4th Battalion** August 1914 : Part of South-Western Brigade, Wessex Division. 9 October 1914 : sailed from Southampton, landing at Bombay 9 November 1914.

23 February 1916 : landed at Basra in 37th Indian Brigade, 3rd Indian Division. Remained in Mesopotamia throughout the war.

Was placed in 'Z' Reserve on demob in May 1919.

**No other service records found**

### **DUNSTON Walter**

59910 Pte. 1/5<sup>th</sup> R. Welsh Fusiliers

Awarded British and Victory Medals

Born East Brent 18 Feb 1893. Son of John & Martha DUNSTON

Walter 18 and his brother Reginald 28 appear in Welsh 1911 census at Ogmoor Vale Glamorgan. as Colliery workers. living at the home of Thomas Morgan.

In 1939 Walter was lodging with Bill and Martha BRADDICK at Farm Cottage Bristol Road, Rooksbridge and worked for many years at the Cheddar Valley Dairy in Rooksbridge.

Died 1974, Weston super Mare district.



1/5th Welsh Reg. sailed from Devonport on 19 July 1915 for Gallipoli, going via Imbros and disembarking Suvla Bay on 9 August 1915. December 1915 ; evacuated from Gallipoli and moved to Egypt.

**No other service records found**

**DURSTON Frederick**

158588 Sgt. Att. 52<sup>nd</sup> Queens Holt?

**No medal record found.**

**Possibly attached to a Canadian Regiment?**

Born 1887 in Rooksbridge, 1911 census shows Frederick Durston, 24. Farm labourer living with his parents Charles and Lydia (nee Millard) DURSTON at 'Hawkers Cottage' Bristol Road Rooksbridge.

In 1913 he married Anna WALL and they had a son Charles born 1920.

He later lived with his daughter in the cottages that were on the site of the old Parish 'Poor House' which were demolished and replaced by the Council Houses at what is now 'Watersmeet Close' in Rooksbridge.

It is said that he always suffered ill health after was discharged without a pension when he was wounded in the head and no longer able to serve.

In the 1939 register he is recorded as "Invalid" living with his wife and son Charles at No 1 Council Houses, Rooksbridge. Member of the local British Legion.

**No service records found**

By 1911 his brother John DURSTON had emigrated to Canada where he served as a private in Canadian Infantry, 7th Batt'n (British Columbia Reg) was a casualty in France in 1917. and is commemorated on the East Brent war memorial. **Helen Batt**

**DURSTON Walter W**

15335 L/Cpl Army Veterinary Corps

436336 L/Cpl Agricultural Coy, Labour Corps

**No Medal Record Found**

Born 1875 Son of William and Ellen DURSTON of Lympsham.



When conscripted aged 41 in March 1916 he was living at Poplar Cottage, Edingworth. with his wife Elizabeth nee BANWELL who he married in 1899 and their eight young children.

On his discharge in Feb 1919 the family address was 3 Manor Villas, Bleadon. Where in 1939 he was working on a dairy farm.

### **DYER Fred**

14723 Pte. Somerset Light Infantry

375252 L/Cpl. Labour Corps

Awarded 1915 Star, British and Victory medals.

Born East Brent 1886. Son of builder George and Jane DYER of Turnpike Road East Brent. Married Lucy 1909. Their 3 children were. Ernest, Betty and Lily.

C 1911 he was a labourer for the Rural District Council. They were living at Yarrow Lane Mark. Som.

Enrolled Weston S Mare Sep 1914.

later transferred to Devonshire Reg. 449 Co'y Labour Corps.

Went to France Sep 1915. Was wounded in the Back and Hip on 26th Sep 1915 and returned to hospital in England.

Returned to France June 1916. In Sept 1916 while fighting at 'Vimy Ridge' he was returned and hospitalised at Plymouth for 6 weeks suffering with Nephritis, (Blood in urine) attributed to "Exposure".

He was discharged from service in Mar 1919 with 100% Disablement pension of £3-9s-6d. P/week. His pension ended with his death from tuberculosis aged 36 in May 1921.

In 1939 his widow Lucy lived in the council houses at Mark where she died in 1965 aged 77.

### **EMERY Alfred.?**

British Merchant Navy,

Born East Brent 1874. From: First World War Merchant Navy Medal

Cards 1914-1925 ?

Parents unknown?

No other records found.

### **EMERY Alfred**

2nd Lieutenant Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry.  
Awarded British and Victory medals.



Entered France July 1918.

When awarded his British and Victory medals in Jan 1925 Gave his forwarding address as: 1, Rue de la Bouche. Ypres. Belgium.?

Born East Brent 1875 son of John and Fanny EMERY of Turnpike Road. 1901 believed to be landlord of Knoll Inn. East Brent.?

In 1911 census he is a Commercial traveller.

He married Elizabeth Wright from Loxton. in 1895

They had three children Winifred 1895, Joy 1898, Ina 1903.

He died 23rd April 1933.

### **EMERY Alfred**

21510 Pte Devonshire Regiment

29396 Pte Royal Berkshire Regiment

Born Rooksbridge 1890.

Son of George and Hannah EMERY of Rooksbridge.

1910 Alfred James EMERY, 20, married Nellie BINNING of Badgworth

On enlistment in 1916 he was a farm labourer. residing at Ashton House, Ashton near Wedmore, Somerset

With wife – Nellie, and sons Alfred and Ernest and daughter Ruth, 9 months.



Brother of Edward EMERY who died as a prisoner of war in 1816.

His brother George EMERY also served.

Registered Dec 1915 originally on 'Reserve with the Devonshire Reg.

Attached to the Royal Lancs 3rd Battalion April 1916

Transferred to the Royal Berkshire Regt on mobilisation July 1916

Appears to have been discharged at Catterick Aug 1916 as:

'Medically Unfit' "Not likely to become an efficient soldier"?

**EMERY Ernest John**

285045 Pte. 30<sup>th</sup> Gloucester  
Regiment  
Awarded British and Victory  
medals.

Born in East Brent in 1873. Son of  
John and Fanny EMERY Of  
'Brent Wood' East Brent. He  
married to Agnes FOSTER in  
1896 and they had 7 children.



In 1901 he appears to have been an Inn Keeper in College Street,  
Burnham on Sea

In 1939 he was a retired 'Cooper' living at 'Brentwood' East Brent.

He was wounded in France and convalesced in Ashcombe House  
Emergency Hospital. WSM.

He later returned to farming at Jarvis Lane East Brent. With his sons  
Ernest and Reginald.

His other son, Louis “Dick” EMERY, seen here centre, served as a Lance  
Corporal in WW2 as a paratrooper landing behind enemy lines on D-Day.  
(see [Weston Mercury Sept 1944](#))

Photo: Ernest, Agnes and son Louis. Courtesy of Sara Kew.  
No Service records found.

**EMERY George Durston**

148719 Gunner. Royal Field  
Artillery  
Awarded British and Victory  
medal.

No service records found

Born 1892 at Rooksbridge.



One of three serving sons of George and Hannah EMERY of Rooksbridge. The family lived in the tiny 'Mission House' next to the Chapel of the Good Shepherd in Gills Lane Rooksbridge.

Brother of Alfred EMERY (above) and Edward EMERY who died as a prisoner of war in 1816. The 1911 census gives his name as George Durston EMERY. He is boarding at the Brent Knoll Inn and working as a barman.

During WW2 he worked for his brother Charles at the Cheddar Valley Dairy in Rooksbridge.

After his first wife Beatrice died in 1943 He married Florence CROOK landlady of the Wellington Arms at Rooksbridge.

He died on 26 October 1957 at Burnham on Sea hospital. At the time of his death his address was The Wellington Arms, Rooksbridge. which his son George and daughter-in-law Dorcas later took over as Landlord.

### **FIELD Stanley**

J43389 Royal Navy

Born 14 Aug 1899 in East Brent

Son of William and Hannah FIELD.

In 1911 the family were living in Church Street East Brent

Sometime after his service he migrated to Queensland Australia where he died in 1934.

He first signed on as a boy rating in Aug 1915 at the age of 16.

training at HMS 'Impregnable' at Devonport. He appears to have served as a Boy grade 1 in the Mediterranean aboard HMS 'Lord Nelson' (above) between June 1916 and Sep 1917.

In 1917 he signed on again as an Ordinary Seaman for 12 years.





He served on the 'Satyr' and saw action as convoy escort and patrol duty in the North Sea and Atlantic, on 17 July 1917, she shot down a Zeppelin and later that year sank an armed German trawler. She was sold for breaking up in 1926. *Satyr* was an R class destroyer, launched in 1916.

In Jan 1920 he appears to have transferred to the Royal Australian Navy, while serving aboard the destroyers 'Swordsman', 'Anzac' and 'Tasmania' etc. These Royal Navy ships were gifted by the Australian Royal Navy after the war.

He served with these ships until Jan 1925 when he was demobbed at Sydney Australia After which he settled in Australia.

### **FISHER Frederick Charles**

21200 Gunner 8th S. Batt. Royal Artillery.

Awarded 1914 Star, British and Victory medals.

Born 10 Feb 1884 at East Brent.

Son of shoe maker James and Mary Jane FISHER. of Brent St, East Brent. In 1939 he was a transport worker at the docks and living in Barry, S. Wales with his wife Eva and 26 yr old married daughter Doris GREENWOOD.

Enlisted as a gunner in Royal Garrison Artillery in 1904

He served for 2.5 years in Gibraltar from 1905-07

Next 7 years were served in England.

He was posted with the British Expeditionary Force to France from Oct 1914-19. Frederick would have served in the early battles at the outbreak of WW1

After the armistice he was on reserve and in 1919 he was working as a labourer for the Abergavenny Water Works.

He then re-enlisted and took a one year bounty joining the Royal Fusiliers. In Feb 1920 He embarked for Calais.

By the following June he was at Poperinghe in Belgium where he spent the next two months before returning to the UK. Finally being demobbed in 1920 at Brecon. Where he gives his permanent address as c/o Mr G Morgan, Cross Keys, Abergavenny.

During early service and his time in Gibraltar Frederick appears to have had several instances of disobeying orders, being drunk and absent from Roll Call etc.!

For example: 19 Feb 1906. 1 “Urinating his bedding”, 2. “Breaking out of Barracks while a prisoner and returning at 10-40pm” 3. “Being deficient in personal clothing. Fined 5/-. 14 days loss of pay and confined to Barracks for 14 days. Similar offences and sentences happened a number of times which indicates Frederick may have had a drink problem?

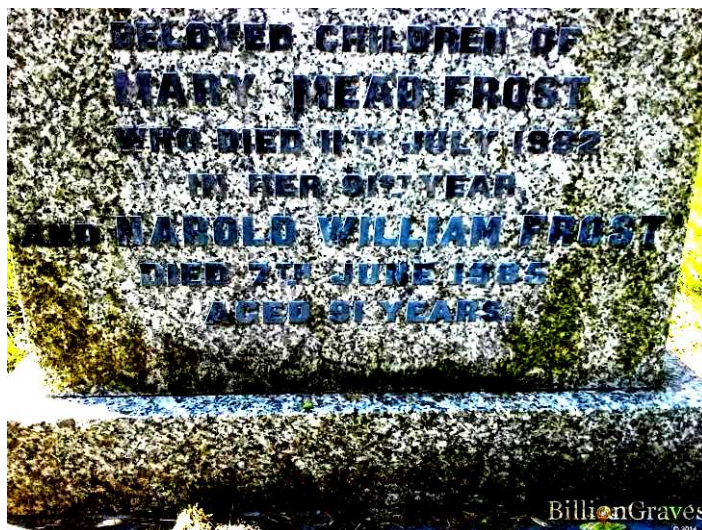
In 1916 While serving in France he was treated for deafness brought on by shell shock. He committed more offences such as drunkenness and absent from Roll Call etc. For which he received 7 days “Field Punishment No2” Frederick appears to have signed up as a regular career soldier. However, he may have been affected the trauma’s of war?

### **FROST Harold William**

13479 Pte. Irish Guards

668634 Labour Corps.

Born 1894 son of farmer Henry and Kate FROST of North Yeo Farm Edingworth. He was placed on the reserve of the Irish Guards in Dec 1915 and was later mobilised in June 1918. After his father's appeal for his exemption as a farmers son, was refused.



Due to ill health he was transferred to the Labour Corps of the 626th Agricultural Co at Taunton in November 1918.

Not having served abroad in a theatre of war he was not awarded any service medals.

He married a Mary DURSTON of Bleadon in 1918.

In 1939 he was running the family farm at North Yeo with his wife and daughter Ruth, who later served in the Women's Land Army during WW2.

He died in 1985 aged 91 and is buried in St Marys churchyard East Brent.

### **FRY George**

218058 Royal Navy.

George FRY was a labourer born in East Brent in December 1887. Son of farm labourer Edwin and Fanny FRY of White house lane, Edingworth  
He Joined the Royal Navy as a junior rating in 1901 for 12 years. Progressed through the ranks to Able Seaman. He was in the reserve until May 1914 when he was re-mobilised and served throughout the war until being demobbed in Feb 1919.

**Can find no records of him or his family after his demobilisation**

### **GILLHAM Ernest**

609 Gunner 1<sup>st</sup> Somerset Royal Horse Artillery  
620299. Territorial Force Re-numbered in 1917.  
Awarded British and Victory medals.

**No service records found**

Born c 1892 Wedmore. Son of farm worker George and Eliza GILLHAM who moved to Rooksbridge in 1897.

1911-16 he was a farm worker living in Rooksbridge.

In 1939 he was a Grave digger living in Cardiff with wife Florence who he married at Taunton in 1920.

Died 24 May 1963, Whitchurch, Cardiff

*Ernest's low early service number indicates that he was possibly part of the West Somerset Yeomanry or local Territorial unit. 1st. S.R.H.A. was originally a Territorial Unit raised from the old volunteer Somerset Yeomanry which was intended for Home Defence. Until 1916 members were not obliged to serve overseas but could agree to do so. The 1st S.R.H.A. served in the middle East from 1916.*

### **GRANT Joseph**

77346\* Driver. Royal. Engineers.

Awarded British and Victory medals.

Entered the war in France May 1916.

**No service records found**

Born 1895 at Huntspill . Son of George and Susan (nee SANDIFORD)  
GRANT,  
1911 he was boarding with Joseph and  
Emma Sandiford at Rooksbridge.

Brother of Alfred GRANT who died in  
France Dec. 1917.

And also William J Grant 28199 Pte Royal  
Lancs Reg. *Clifford J GRANT 77345 also  
Driver Royal engineers. Was possibly a  
cousin?*

Joe married Nellie HAM in 1919. They had  
daughters Kathy and Mary.

Died 7 October 1957 at The Rosary,



Rooksbridge, East Brent.

Joe was a member of the East Brent and  
District branch of the British Legion. And  
Mr John Emery the branch standard bearer  
attended his funeral.

He was also a keen skittles player and part of  
the Wellington Wanderers skittle team.

After his military service, It is believed he  
completed nearly 50 years working at the  
Cheddar Valley Rooksbridge Dairy.

**(Melanie Body)**



### **GROVES James Sturgess**

M2/167584 Pte. Mech. Army Service Corps.

Listed home address: from Rooksbridge in the 'Absent Voters List' of  
1918.

*A James Sturgess GROVES was born in Kingston-upon-Thames in 1886?*

*A James S GROVES married a Sarah PHILLIPS of Rooksbridge in 1917?*

*A James S GROVES died in Weston super mare Reg. Dist in 1939?*

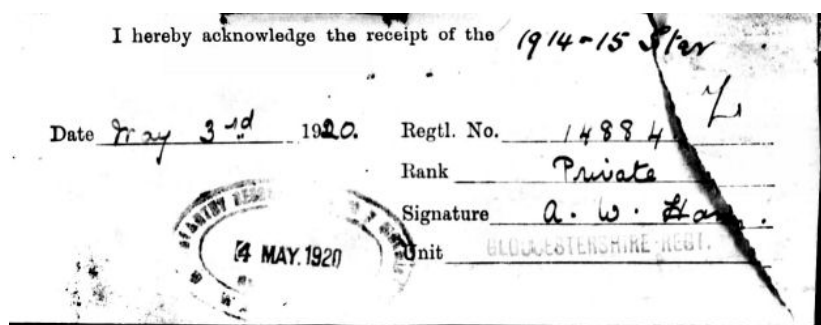
**No medal or service records found**

### **HAM Albert William**

14884 Pte 8th Batt

Gloucesters.

Awarded 14-15 Star and  
British and Victory  
medals.



Born 1895 at Loxton Som.

Son of William HAM and Sarah HIGGS who farmed for a short while at Mill Batch Farm East Brent before moving to Bow Farm Loxton to take on the farm from Sarah's parents when her father retired.

At 15 in 1911 he was working on his fathers farm at Loxton with his two sisters Florence and Maud and with his older brother George Benjamin. (below) who later joined the Somerset Light Infantry.

One of the early volunteers he enrolled on 15th Sep 1914 serving in England until early November 1915. He was then posted to France with the BEF where he remained until his demob in Jan 1919.

The 8th Battalion were involved in many of the major battles on the Western Front. : 1915 Loos, 1916 The Somme, 1917 Messines, Passchendaele and Ypres etc. and in late 1918 the took part in the final advance into Picardy.

### **HAM Arthur George**

1663 Sgt. Prince Of Wales. Co. 1<sup>st</sup> Welsh Guards.

Awarded 1915 Star, British and Victory medals.

Awarded the D.C.M.

Born in Rooksbridge 1894 Eldest son of farm worker George and Mary HAM. living in Factory Lane Rooksbridge, and brother of Roland HAM who also served. (Below)

On leaving school he worked for Farmer William BROOKS at Rooksbridge.

After his war service he is believed to have married Ida STEVENS at Axbridge in 1922.

In 1939 He was a Dairy Farmer living with his wife Ida and 5 year old son John at Horton, Nr Sodbury, Glos.

He entered France Nov 1915. And was awarded the DCM and Military medals for gallantry while in the trenches. The 1st Battalion Welsh Guards spent the duration of the war on the Western Front. As front line troops they were involved in the ongoing battles of Ypres and the Somme etc.

### No other service record found



1663 Cpl. A.G. Ham, W. Gds.  
(Highbridge) (LG 28 Mar. 1918).  
For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty in an attack. He rushed his Lewis gun forward under heavy fire and engaged some enemy machine guns which were giving trouble. On reaching the enemy's trench he got a captured machine gun into action against the enemy and was of the greatest assistance in organising machine gun teams and getting the guns into action. His cheerfulness and courage were a splendid example to all.

### HAM Francis William

13488 Pte Irish Guards.

Born 1895 son of farmer Frederick and Martha HAM of Yew Tree Farm East Brent and worked on his fathers farm.

He first registered at Weston super Mare in Dec 1915 as a Special Reserve recruit where he was assigned on reserve to the Irish Guards. In June 1918 he was called for service when every available man was needed to repel the final 'Spring Offensive' by the enemy.

His father had applied for exemption of military service on grounds that his eldest son was needed on the farm. And the fact that he already had three sons serving, Walter, Jesse and Sidney. His application was denied. Francis did not serve overseas and no medals were awarded. In March 1918 he married Alice May DIBBLE. In 1939 Francis and Alice were farming at Sand Point Farm Sand Bay Nr. Weston super Mare. He died in Feb 1960 and is buried in St Marys Churchyard East Brent.  
*At one time he was Head of the East Brent Bellringers.*

## **HAM Geoffrey Archer**

Capt. 8<sup>th</sup> Som. Light Infantry  
Awarded British and Victory medals.

Born 11 June 1889

Parents Jeffrey and Emily HAM nee BINNING



Served in France 1916-18. He or his family applied for the '1915 Star' medal but was unsuccessful because he did not actually enter the theatre of war in France until 4th Jan 1916!

On his medal application in 1919 gives his address as Victoria House, Brent Knoll.

He was discharged early as Physically unfit so was eligible for the Silver War Badge.

*The badge was awarded to all of those military personnel who had served at home or overseas during the war, and who had been honorably discharged from the army under King's Regulations. Meaning the soldier had been released on account of being wounded or permanently physically unfit but had served his country.*

"After serving in France, he returned to England, He married Fanny Grace HARRIS in Bristol in 1926. I don't know what profession he was in, but before the war, in the 1911 census, he was an assistant clerk in the civil service working in London. In 1939 he was a civil servant and until his death he was living at 16a, Hanbury Road, Clifton, Bristol. He died 6 May 1956, in Bristol, age 66". (Sara Kew)

His brother Sidney also fought in WWI, but was killed in action in France 1915, age 18.

## HAM George Benjamin Higgs

20592 6th Somerset Light Infantry.  
Awarded British and Victory medals.



### No service record found

Born 1893 at Loxton Som.

Son of William HAM and Sarah HIGGS who farmed for a short while at Mill Batch Farm East Brent before moving to Bow Farm Loxton to take on the farm from Sarah's parents when her father retired.

Eldest son of 11 children. His younger brother Albert (above) was one of the early volunteers, joining the Gloucesters in Sept 1914.

At sometime after his service in WW1 the family moved to a farm near the old East Brent Post Office?

George Benjamin married Kate BODY in 1924.

In 1931 he began farming at Elms Farm, Rooksbridge.

He died in 1968.

His son Michael and grandson David still farm at Elms Farm.

His grandson Christopher HAM is a Lieutenant-Colonel in the Royal Veterinary Corps.

George enrolled Dec 1915. He was posted to the 6th Battalion S.L.I. who were serving in France. On 25th Mar 1918 while serving with "B" Company he was taken prisoner during the Battle at St Quentin after being wounded in the arm and suffering a head injury causing him to lose an eye. He was held at Limburg POW camp on the border of Netherland and Germany.

H A M

[ P S N A 45379

HAM G. *an. 1410*

Pte 20592. Somerset L. I. "B" Coy, 5 Plat. Missing since March 1918.

Rép: Mrs Ham, (mother) Bow Farm, Loxton, ~~Axb~~bridge, Somerset.

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*Négatif envoyé 27.5.18*

*PA 15052, 5.6.18 Ham Georg*

*20592 6th Somerset L.I. "B" Coy*

*Born 20.4.93 Axbag, Somerset*

*Captured 25.3.18 St. Quentin, Wynnyk*

*head wounded fr. front at Limburg*

*Communiqué famille*

*9.7.18*

*P. F. 30732-2-8-18. Idem trans. from*

*Limburg to Giessen.*

*gml*



He was later transferred to POW camp at Giesson in Germany.

He was finally released and discharged from service on 29th April 1919.

*Throughout the war the 6th Battalion was under control of the 14th (Light) Division which was an infantry division, one of the Kitchener's Army divisions raised from volunteers by Lord Kitchener during the First World War. All of its infantry regiments were originally of the fast marching rifle or light infantry regiments, hence the title "Light".*

*The 6th went to France in May 1915 and served on the Western Front throughout the war. They took part in The Action of Hooge, in which the Division became the first to be attacked by flamethrowers, and The Second Attack on Bellewaarde. In 1916 they fought at Delville Wood and Flers-Courcelette in the Battles of the Somme. On 1 July 1916 at 7.30 am fourteen British Divisions, including the 1st battalion, began the attack. After a week long bombardment, the German lines were hardly damaged, and thousands of infantry were mown down by machine gun fire. On July 1st the first day of the Battle of the Somme 26 officers and 478 men of the 1<sup>st</sup> battalion S.L.I. were killed, missing or wounded, The 6th, 7th and 8th battalions also became embroiled in the Battles of the Somme during the summer. This went down as one of the most disastrous battles in military history. The first day of the Battle, July 1 1916, was also the bloodiest,*

*Of Britain's first-day casualties, a staggering 19,240 died.*

*In 1917 They were involved when the Germans retreated to the Hindenburg Line, also the Arras Offensive and the Third Battle of Ypres.*

***In 1918 they suffered heavily in The Battle of St Quentin Where George HAM was taken prisoner. Also taken prisoner was Albert TAYLOR Pte. MGC. (below)***

*Due to the heavy casualties the Division was withdrawn to the rear and on the 14th of April 1918 they returned to France on the 1st of August 1918, landing at Boulogne, as part of 49th Brigade 16th (Irish) Division and joined Second Army. They were in action in the Final Advance in Flanders.*

### **HAM Jesse Wilfred**

4553 Pte 2/6<sup>th</sup> Gloucester's

Awarded British and Victory medals.

Son of Frederick John and Martha HAM

Brother of Sydney Robert HAM

Born 1898 He married Dorothy Ellen  
WATKINS in 1924.

At the outbreak of war Jesse HAM was in the  
Territorial Reserve. After his war service he  
returned to be a dairy farmer at 'The Laurels'  
East Brent where he died 3 June 1965 .



*2/6th Battalion Gloucester's was formed from a Territorial unit at St  
Michael's Hill, Bristol in September 1914 as a home service ("second  
line") unit.*

*But in January 1915 : came under command of 2nd Gloucester &  
Worcester Brigade, 2nd South Midland Division, at Northampton.  
Landed in France on 24 May 1916.*

*August 1915 : formation became 183rd Brigade, 61st (2nd South  
Midland) Division.*

*20 February 1918 : disbanded in France*

**No Service records found**

### **HAM Roland**

86184 Gunner. Royal Artillery.

T329854 Dvr. A.S.C.

Awarded 1915 Star, British and Victory medals.

Born Rooksbridge 1896.

Parents George and Mary HAM. His wife was Dorothy Rose  
SANDFORD. Who he married in 1926.

Drafted 'For Duration of the War' age 19 on 1 Feb 1915 and posted to the  
British Expeditionary Force (France) Oct 1915 with the Indian Cavalry  
Div. In 1916 he was with the 'N' Battery of Royal Horse Artillery.

July 1916. "Slightly Wounded, remained on duty"

Dec 1917. Granted Good Conduct Badge.

Aug 1918. Given 7 days Confined to Barracks for "Ill treating an army horse."

Demobilised. Jun 1919.

After the war he lived at Riverside, Gills Lane Rooksbridge from where he ran his cattle haulage business. Where he died in 1971.

*The good conduct badge was an inverted chevron, worn on the lower left sleeve. It was awarded for a number of years good service. One chevron was for at least a couple of years trouble free service. Or as some soldiers regarded it... for 'undetected crime'!*



### **HAM Sydney Robert**

175130 Royal Air Force

British and Victory medals.

Born 1899. Parents Frederick and Martha HAM of Yew Tree Farm East Brent

Brother of Jesse HAM (Above)

In 1922 he married Dorothy SAY daughter of Henry and Sarah SAY of "Elm Tree Farm" Factory Lane Rooksbridge. now "Beech Lawns" He farmed at 'Elm Tree' Farm until his death in 1946. Dorothy was a Red Cross volunteer throughout the war. Their daughter Freda taught music and was organist at St Marys Church.

At the age of 18 he enlisted as a trainee pilot in May 1918 into the then Royal Air Force, newly formed from the Army Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Naval Air Service.

He appears to have had a very short career as a pilot. Qualifying in Sept. 1918 as a commissioned pilot? Finally being discharged in Sep 1019.

## **HAM Walter Jeffrey**

41874 Pte. 12th and 13th Bn. Middlesex Reg.

4946 12th Lancers.

32462 Pte. 14th Bn. Royal Warwickshire Regiment.

Awarded British and Victory medals.



Born East Brent 1897 son of Frederick John HAM and Martha DAY of Yew Tree Farm East Brent.

His wife. Dorothy Florence (Molly) and they had a daughter Sheila Audrey (JJ)

He was brother of Jesse and Sydney HAM (above).

In 1939, he was living with his wife at 'The Woodbines' in East Brent where he ran a farm egg collection and wholesale farm produce business in East Brent, and paid the local children for blackberries which he sold to Robertsons Jam factory in Bristol. During the 2nd World war he was a Special Constable.

Died East Brent 1971

Originally enrolled WSM into 12th Middlesex Reg.

Transferred to 12th Lancers Dec 1915

Compulsory Transferred to the Warwickshire Reg. in Dublin and promoted to L/Cpl.

Posted France with BEF Jan 1916.

Was wounded by 'Shell Gas Attack' May 1918.

Spent 9 months in hospital suffering the affects of gas before being discharged in Feb 1919.

*On his enrolment he stated that he had previously served 3 months in the Navy. Having signed on for 12 years in the Navy in 1913 his father purchased his release from the navy for £10 in April 1915. However he was soon recalled into the army.*

**14th Battalion, Royal Warwickshire Regiment** (*Birmingham Pals*) was raised in Birmingham in September 1914 and took part in many of the major battles on the Western Front. They landed at Boulogne France. on the 21st of November 1915. On the 28th December 1915 they transferred to 13th Brigade, 5th Division and In March 1916 5th Division took over a

*section of front line between St Laurent Blangy and the southern edge of Vimy Ridge, near Arras. They saw action at The Somme and were in action at, High Wood, The Battle of Guillemont, The Battle of Flers-Courcelette, The Battle of Morval and The Battle of Le Transloy. From October 1916 until March 1917 they remained in Festubert and until March when they moved in preparation for the Battles of Arras. On 7 September 1917 the 5th Division moved out of the line for a period of rest before, being sent to Flanders where they were in action during the Third Battle of Ypres. 5th Division was sent to Italy and took up positions in the line along the River Piave in late January 1918. They were recalled to France to assist with resisting the German advance in late March 1918 and were in action during the Battles of the Lys. On the 14th of August 1918 the 5th Division was withdrawn for two weeks rest. Then moved to The Somme where they were more or less in continuous action over the old battlegrounds until late October 1918. They saw action in the Battles of the Hindenburg Line and the Final Advance in Picardy.*

**HAM William Arthur/Henry?**

Somerset Light Infantry

Born 1876 Weare

Married Martha Ann CHURCHES

Worked on a farm at Stone Allerton.

Had seven children.

Died 1935(*Note: This soldier is from Allerton*)? *At the time of his service he did not live in East Brent but some of his children later settled here.*



**HATCH Ernest Edward**

T362649 Pte, Royal Army Service Corps.

Awarded British and Victory medals.

Enlisted March 1916

Discharged Feb 1919.

No Service records found.

Born 1887 his parents were harness maker Henry HATCH and Matilda.

In 1911 Ernest was also a harness maker along side his father.

1918 Absent voters list, gives address as 'Prospect House' East Brent.

He married an Elsie DURSTON on 1936.

In 1939 he was a harness maker living with his wife Elsie in Stoddens Road Burnham on sea, where he died in 1972.

### **HATCHER Percy**

44695 Pte. Royal Berkshire Reg.

Awarded British and Victory medals.

One of 10 children of George HATCHER (Butcher in Brent Knoll) Percy James HATCHER was born on 12 October 1898 in Brent Knoll. Som..

Married Alice EMERY of Rooksbridge in 1924.

During WW2 he was a local Air Raid Warden.

They lived most of their married life in Brent Knoll

Percy died on 17 June 1978 at the age of 79 in Burnham on sea (Hospital). About 1924 he was a Butcher. Between 1934 and 1963 he was a dairy worker in Cheddar Valley Dairy. Factory Lane. Rooksbridge. SOM

#### **No WWI records found**

Last but one in a family of ten brothers and sisters. On leaving school Percy helped for a couple of years in the pork butchery business of his late father. However, being very fond of horses, he left the district to go to Cromhall, a village in Gloucestershire, and for a period of three years looked after the hunters belonging to a family there. His father had by that time retired from the butchery and, the brother who had been running it having been called up to join the Army, Percy returned home to manage the business. Besides doing the buying, the slaughtering and the selling in the shop, he drove a horse-and-trap to deliver to customers in the surrounding countryside. It was not long, though before he himself was conscripted into the Army, and in October 1916 Was enrolled in the Royal Berkshire Regiment.

After a short period of training he was posted to France and took part in the fierce engagements that followed in that country and in Belgium. In June 1918, during the fighting near Albert, he was wounded in the groin by a hand grenade and had to spend eight months in hospital in England



until February 1919, when he was demobilised, Percy then ran the butchery business for seven years in partnership with his brother. He then took a variety of jobs around his district until, in March 1934, he joined the Cheddar Valley Dairy Co to work in the Cheese room.

Besides this work, he helped in various departments as occasion required, and then divided his time between milk reception and relief boiler man. In 1954 Percy was given charge of the Boiler house and its two Cornish boilers,

Mr. and Mrs. Hatcher (she was a sister of the late Manager of the Creamery, Mr. Charlie Emery) had three children, all married: a son, who lives in Canada, and two daughters: and each of them has two children. Percy was an active committee member of the Brent Knoll branch of the British Legion. He used to play a lot of skittles, with considerable success; and he and Mrs. Hatcher did much ballroom dancing.

*M Fear WSM*

### **HILL Bert**

110705 Cdt. R.A.F. corps

No medal or service records found.

Born 1899 Son of dairyman and Cheesemaker Thomas and Elizabeth HILL Believed to be of 'Southview Farm' East Brent? Brother of George and Harold HILL. After his WW1 service may have become an Estate Agent in Exeter?

The Absent voters list of 1918 lists Bert HILL as a cadet in the RAF.

RAF was founded on 1 April 1918 when Bert was 19 years old? His RAF service record shows him as an Honorary Flight Lt when he left the service 19 April 1919.?

### **HOBBS Reginald**

7547 Pte/ Acting Corporal. 1<sup>st</sup> Som. Light Infantry

Awarded 1915 Star, British and Victory medals

Born in Lympsham in 1879 eldest son of Mason/Builder James and Clara HOBBS. In 1901 he was a mason living with his parents in Boat Lane Lympsham. In 1902 He married Eliza FRY who was born in East Brent in 1880. and they had a son William in 1904. And in 1911 he was a bricklayer living with his wife Eliza and son William in Burton Row East

Brent. By 1939 he was a bricklayer living in George Street, Weston Super Mare. He died in Weston 1959?

In March 1898 he enlisted at Taunton into 1st Batt. the Coldstream Guards. He appears to have suffered an injury to his hand which made him unfit for service and was discharged in January 1899.

However he was either recalled from reserve or re-entered in service in August of 1914 at the declaration of WW1 as an Acting/Corporal In the Somerset Light Infantry entering France in Dec 1914 where he served until his release in May 1919. No other WWI records found.

### **HOOPER William**

29381 Gunner 23rd Brig. Royal Field Artillery

Awarded 1914 Mons star, British and Victory medals.

Born in 1882 second son of farm worker Levi and Hannah HOOPER of Compton Bishop. where lived with his seven brothers and sisters. In 1901 he was a farm worker at 'Court farm' Loxton for Henry DIBBLE. William married Louisa LEE daughter of William LEE of Rooksbridge in February 1906.

William and Hannah had two children Edith 1909 and Francis 1910 when the family were living in Pewsey Wiltshire.

He volunteered into the Royal Field Artillery from Dec 1902 and continued until demobbed on reserve in dev 1906. He was granted a 'Good Conduct Badge' in 1904 and promoted to Bombardier. Re mobilised on the day war was declared on 4th August 1914 into 23rd Brigade of the R.F.A. with the original BEF and took part in the defence of Mons in Belgium and served on the western front throughout the war until demobbed in March 1920. Serving a total of just over 17 years with the colours.

His older brother Frank HOOPER served in the 16th Lancers during the Boer war and WW1. Frank married and became sub-postmaster in Loxton.



### **HUETT Percy Immanuel**

86339 Dvr/Gunner Royal Field Artillery  
1040240 Royal Artillery

Registered into the reserve in Feb 1915. Served in France from 1915 throughout the war.  
Awarded 1914-15 Star and Victory and British medals.

**No service records found**



Born 1893 Son of Charles and Alice HUETT

He was a Dairy man living in Smithfield Farm East Brent.

After his war service, he married Mary Louisa SLADE in 1921

They had four children. Albert, Robert, Alma and Ethel.

He died 1963 at Burnham Hospital at the age of 70

He was a Sidesman at St Marys Church for many years and a founder member and Vice-president of the East Brent British Legion. At his funeral the members of the British Legion formed a Guard of Honour and were the bearers of his coffin.

**(Melanie Body)**

### **HUETT Walter Randolph**

231536 Pt.2/1 Dorset Yeomanry

534284 Pte. 449 Agr. Co. Labour Corps?.

No medal records. Served in England and Ireland.

Born 1886. Son of farmer Thomas and Rose HUETT of Manor House Farm, Edingworth. Som. (A keen horseman who rode to hounds). Conscripted at the age of 30 at Taunton April 1917, into the Dorset Yeomanry Cavalry unit Att. Somerset Light Infantry.

He went AWOL over 1918 New Year for a day. For which he was sentenced to 3 days confined to Barracks and forfeited a days pay!

He was transferred to the 449 Agricultural Company Labour Corps and in March 1918 which was based at Taunton.

*During the German final 'Spring Offensive' in 1918 in order to release younger men for overseas duty Agricultural companies were sometimes formed from older conscripts or soldiers no longer fit enough for front line combat duties*



Demobilised Feb 1919.

He was living in 'York House Farm' Edingworth when he died In 1925 as the result of a motorcycle accident at East Brent crossroads.

Western Daily Press **April 16, 1925**

## **JEFFERIES George**

27548 Pte. 1/6 N. Staffs

Born c1883, Abington Berkshire. Son of farm worker John JEFFERIES, who was born c 1857 at Allerton, George and his older sister Rose were born in Berkshire where his father was working as a cowman.



1901 Census George was working for farmer Walter DUCKETT, as a farm labourer at Church Farm, East Brent. Also working there was his sister Rose Jefferies, servant, 20, single. Also born Abington.

The 1891 census shows George and Rose living in Catcott Burtle, with their mother Eliza Jane (born Mark) and stepfather Thomas CLARKE. In 1921 George had moved to Bridgend S. Wales where he married an Emily SMITH and they had five children.

He died in Cardiff in 1950.

**No personal medal or service records found. The Absent Voters 1918 list gives George's address as Edingworth?**



*1/5th and 1/6th N. Staffs battalions arrived in France in February 1915. Among the first Territorial Force units to go to France, these two battalions took part in the 1915 Battle of Loos and at Gommecourt on the northern flank of the Battle of the Somme.*

*The 1/6th with the 137th Brigade took part in the storming of the St Quentin Canal. It was a company of the 1/6th Battalion, led by acting Captain A. H. Charlton, that seized the Riqueval Bridge over the St Quentin Canal on 29 September before the Germans could fire the explosive charges, an action for which Charlton was decorated with the Distinguished Service Order. (Wikipedia)*

### **LANG Frank**

Served 1894 – 1906 Gunner Royal Artillery  
 WW1 508317 Sgt 502nd Wessex Div. Royal Engineers.  
 Awarded British and Victory medals.

Enlisted Jan 1894. Occupation on enlistment – Gardener.

He served in the Boer War.

He appears to have re-enlisted or been recalled in 1916 for the duration of WW1 as a Sgt. In the Wessex Royal Engineers.

Later transferred No 20077 Somerset Light Infantry.

Finally being discharged 1 Feb 1919.

(No other record of his WW1 service found)?

The Absent Voters list of 1918 gives his address as Manor Farm Edingworth?

Born East Brent 1876. son of John and Elizabeth LANG. East Brent.

He married a Ruth RAWDING in 1905 and they had three children John, Thomas and Dorothy.

In 1911 the family were living in Weston super mare.

In 1939 he was a House Painter living in No2 'Poplar Cottage' East Brent.

A career soldier he served. Malta Feb 1895 – Oct 96. Gibraltar Nov 1896 – Jan 1900  
Boer war S. Africa Jan 1900 – July 1900.  
China July 1900 – Dec 1902

Earned 1900 China medal.



S Africa Medal & Clasp  
(Cape Colony)



In 1916 after he appears to have been in the Territorial's when aged 40 He Re-enlisted or was conscripted for the duration into the Wessex Royal Engineers as a Sergeant. (No doubt as a signals instructor due to his earlier military experience).

He appears to have committed some misdemeanour's during his earlier service in China! Forfeiting his Gunners pay a couple of times in July 1900.

On 8<sup>th</sup> Dec 1900 he was Tried and imprisoned for 2 months. (Charge unknown)?

He was demobbed 1st Jan 1919

The 502nd Wessex Engineers fought with the 57th (2nd West Lancashire) Division

*1917*

The 57th Division received a warning order on 5 January 1917 that it would soon depart for France. The units crossed the Channel 7-22 February and assembled at Merris on 23 February 1917. Three days later it took over the right sector of II Anzac Corps, north of Le Tilleloy. The Division then remained in France and Flanders and took part in the following engagements:

The Second Battle of Passchendaele (26 October – 7 November 1917)

1918 The Battles of the Lys (9-29 April)

The Battle of the Scarpe (26 – 30 August)

The Battle of the Drocourt-Queant Line (2-3 September)

The Battle of the Canal du Nord (27 September – 1 October)

The Battle of the Cambrai (8 – 9 October) in which the Division assisted in the capture of Cambrai

The occupation of Lille (17 October)

The general final advance in Artois (15 October – 1 November)\*

The Division was withdrawn for rest on 1 November and was in the eastern suburbs of Lille at the Armistice. ( <http://www.longlongtrail.co.uk>

### **LEE Albert**

202744 Pte. 1/4<sup>th</sup> Glosters

Awarded British and Victory medals

Born East Brent 1892 His mother was Mary A LEE brother of William (below)

1901 census shows an Albert H Lee, aged 9, living at Edingworth with his mother Mary A LEE, widow, aged 50. and sisters Elizabeth and Beatrice (JJ)

By 1911 he is a farm worker for a Mr Brock at Oldmixon.

The Absent Voters list of 1918 gives his address as Edingworth.

It is believed after the war Albert married an Annie MILTON from Edmonton Middlesex in 1921 and had a son.

He died in Bridport Dorset in Nov. 1964.

No record of his WW1 service found

### **LEE William Clement**

150474 Cpl. 13<sup>th</sup> Machine .Gun. Sec. 5<sup>th</sup> Canadian. Infantry. Bat.

William was born at Shapwick c: 1896, son of agricultural labourer Job and Mary Ann LEE who in the 1901 census was a widow living at Bristol Road, East Brent.

He is living with Henry and Kate FROST in 1911 at North Yeo Edingworth. assisting on the dairy farm. aged 15

Sometime between 1911 and 1915 he migrated to Manitoba, Canada. He volunteered into the 79th Overseas Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force on 10th Nov 1915.

He gave his age as 23 yrs and his next of kin as Mrs Mary BURDGE. Grandmother East Brent.

The Absent Voters list of 1918 gives his address as Edingworth.

After the war he appears to have gone back to Brandon Manitoba Canada where he married a Jennie CLAY c: 1921? They had three daughters Lola Jean 1922-2005, Margery Mae 1925-91 Louella Doreen 1913- 2009.

William LEE died 31 Mar 1948 . aged 52.

*The 5th Battalion Canadian Forces were credited with the important victory and capture of Vimy Ridge in April 1917. Which had been under German control since October 1914. The corps suffered 10,602 casualties: 3,598 killed and 7,004 wounded.*

### **NUTTYCOMBE Herbert Willerby "Bill"**

19083 Pte: Somerset Light Infantry.

Later after suffering bronchitis he transferred to the Labour Corps. 346010.

Awarded 15 Star, British and Victory medals

Enlisted May 1915

Served in France from Dec 1915 until discharged Jan 1919

No other record of his WW1 service found



Son of Fred and Lavinia NUTTYCOMBE of Burton Row. East Brent.

The brother of Thomas NUTTYCOMBE below who also served.

On discharge, He became a master builder.

Married Eva May Phillips from Spaxton in Sep. 1920. They had 5 children; Gordon, Peggy, Kathlene, Pamela and Betty. Now Betty GRIFFIN.

In 1939 he was a builder living with the family at 12 Manor Close. East Brent.

Bill died 1956.

(Jenny Binning and Betty Griffin)

### **NUTTYCOMBE Thomas.**

1371 and 165530 Pte North Somerset Yeomanry

Awarded 1915 Star, British and Victory medals.

His 1371 Number was his Territorial service number later renumbered 165530 when his N Somerset Yeomanry Territorial unit was embodied into the Somerset Light Infantry

Served in France from Feb 1915.

No other record of his WW1 service found

Born at Allerton in 1892. son of Fred and Lavinia NUTTYCOMBE who by 1911 had moved to Burton Row. East Brent.

Older brother of Herbert NUTTYCOMBE above.

Married Bertha PETHERHAM at Badgworth 1916. Bertha died in 1960.

In 1939 he was a 'Horseman' on a farm. Living in 'The Cottage' East Brent. Throughout WW2 he was an Auxiliary Fireman.

Believed to have died in 1963,

*Their son Ernest "Joe" served in WW2 and married a German lady Helena HAAS. Their son Terence was born in East Brent in 1949.*

(Jenny Binning)

### **PETERS John Edward**

205180 Warrant Officer Class 2 Lieutenant. 1st Som. Light Infantry.

Awarded British and Victory medals.

Served in France from December 1917

No other service record found.

Born c 1888 in Battleborough Lane Brent Knoll

Only son of Jeffrey and Louisa PETERS nee BAWDEN

1911 the family was living at Burton Row Farm, East Brent.

He married Ester HAM in 1922.

In 1924 John was a carpenter in East Brent.

In 1939 the family were living in 'Sycamore House' in Lympsham.

John died in 1972.

## **POOLE Leonard**

240642 Pte 2/5th Battalion Somerset Light Infantry.

Awarded the British War Medal.

(No other service records found).

He is known to have served in Burma.



*(2/5th Battalion Somerset Light Infantry Formed from a territorial unit at Taunton in September 1914 as a Second Line battalion. Became part of 135th Brigade, 2nd Wessex Division.*

*12 December 1914 : landed in India. The Division was broken up on arrival. Became divisional troops to Burma Division, then in January 1916 joined part of Rangoon Brigade in same Division.*

Born in Westford, Nr, Wellington Som. in 1899.

Son of Joseph and Emma POOLE

The youngest of thirteen, He ran away from home when he knew two of his older brothers had gone abroad to war and walked over 7 miles to Taunton where he enlisted into the Somerset Light Infantry clearly under age. He must have convinced the enlistment officers that he was or nearly 19 years old, for he was quickly posted overseas with the British Indian force to Rangoon in Burma.

Men who served out their time in Burma in the Rangoon Brigade were awarded the Victory medal and British War medal but were not awarded the 1914-15 star Europe medal.

"After his return from service he was restless and determined to find one of his brothers in the USA. It was difficult to get into the USA at the time. So he first went to Canada. He travelled one day into USA on the pretext of going to see a Boxing match. He then stayed in the USA where he found an older brother living in Detroit. He worked for a while for General Motors.

He eventually returned to England and back to his roots at Rockwell



Green Nr Wellington. Where he worked at Fox Bros. weavers, where he met his future wife Cecily MIDDLETON who was the daughter of a foreman weaver at Whitney's Oxford who came to Fox Bros.

They married at Wellington in July 1929. They started married life at Glastonbury as a salesman for Singer Sewing machines while his wife ran the shop selling machines and Haberdashery etc.

They moved to East Brent in 1934 living in a cottage opposite the War Memorial near James Stores. Leonard worked for some years for James Stores until he had to do what was considered 'War Work' during WW2. at BAC working on aircraft.

Eventually, the cottage where they lived was condemned due to lack of running water and toilet etc. And they moved with their five year old and 3 month old daughter Rita into No 5 Manor Close, in October 1937 Where Rita still lives happily today" (Rita THOMAS. nee POOLE). Leonard died in East Brent in 1970.

### **POPHAM Charles**

24325 Royal Wiltshire Yeomanry.

Born in East Brent son of Frank POPHAM in 1880. When he enrolled Charles was a carter living in Bridgwater. He married Elizabeth WEST in Glastonbury in Dec 1917. Where they lived after his demob in 1919.

Transferred to the Royal Berkshire Reg. Corporal 94818 in May 1916.

He was a reserve soldier and stated at his attestation that he had served with the Guards for three years, when he enrolled in Feb 1916.

He was severely reprimanded for "Neglect of duty likely to prejudice military discipline while in charge of a section" for "Gambling with Private soldiers"!

### **POPHAM Ernest John**

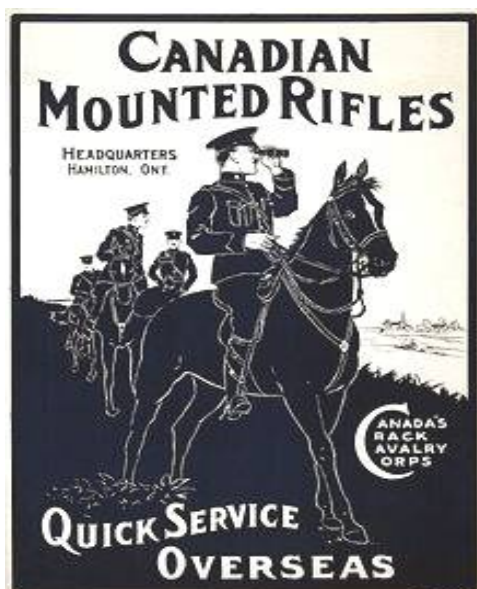
116090 Trooper. 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian. Mounted Bat.

(Prior to emigrating to Canada Ernest had served 4 years in the local Territorials). No UK medal or service record found.  
Enrolled at Vancouver Canada 29 March 1915.  
Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force.

Born Acacia Farm Rooksbridge Sep. 1885 Son of Thomas and Eliza POPHAM  
He migrated to British Columbia Canada in 1913 where he became a lumberjack.

In Dec. 1915 while on Home leave in England before being sent to France with the Canadian E.F. he married Beatrice BAKER of Rooksbridge daughter of local tailor/drapers Arthur BAKER who lived with his wife and family at Beaconsfield House in Rooksbridge. After his war service he and his wife Beatrice and his three sons remained at Beaconsfield House where he died in 1966. For many years until into his 80's he worked at the Cheddar Valley Dairy in Rooksbridge.

Ernie POPHAM stoking the boilers  
at the Cheddar Valley Dairy



*1st Canadian Mounted Rifles C.O.E.F. was originally a cavalry battalion first formed in March 1915 which saw fierce action in many of the major battles in France and Flanders. It was soon realised that mounted cavalry tactics were of little use in trench warfare and the Battalion was changed into more of a mounted Infantry roll. The Canadian forces were at...  
1916 The Somme and Mount Sorel  
1917 Ancre Heights, Hill 17, Ypres, Vimy Ridge, Arras, Messines Ridge and Passchendaele.  
1918 Cambrai, Canal du Nord and Hindenburg Line etc.*

### **POPHAM Henry**

14384 Pte. 1<sup>st</sup> Royal Irish Rifles Regiment

142724 L/Cpl R.A.M.C.

Awarded 1914-15 Star, British and Victory medals

Born 1888, East Brent son of Frank and Ellen POPHAM of Rooksbridge.  
Brother of Frederick POPHAM who died during the Battle of the Somme in 1916.

From 1911 - 14 he was a footman at Dillington Park, Ilminster.

Enlisted August 1914 at Bristol.

Entered France June 1915.

For most of the war he appears to be with the 1st Battalion Royal Irish Regiment who in Nov 1915 were transferred to Salonika. Where they stayed until August 1917

*In November 1915 a combined Franco-British force of two large brigades was landed at Salonika (today called Thessalonika) at the request of the Greek Prime Minister. The objective was to help the Serbs in their fight against Bulgarian aggression. But the expedition arrived too late, the Serbs having been beaten before they landed. <http://www.1914-1918.net>*

Promoted to Lance-corporal in 1915.

Granted 10 days leave in Sep 1917 while suffering with Malaria.

In March 1918 he transferred as a private to the Royal Army Medical Corps. *Probably due to his ill health/fitness?*

Was discharged Aug 1918 with 20% Disablement due to Malaria.

With pension of 5/6d a week rising to 8 shillings in 1920.

When discharged he gave his address as Dunsmore, Nr Rugby?

*(He may have married a Hilda WILKINS in 1920 ? (Axbridge Reg. Dist).*

### **POPHAM Roland George**

382586 Ftr. 267. Brigade. Royal Garrison Artillery (East Riding Territorial force).

230931 Gunner. Royal Garrison Artillery (Regular force from Dec 1919)

Awarded British and Victory medals.

Born Acacia farm. Rooksbridge 1888      Son of Thomas and Eliza  
POPHAM

Brother of Ernest POPHAM

Died Lancashire Sept 1963

(Between 1905 and 1908 Roland signed on at Bristol underage for the Marines and was based at Plymouth. In 1908 he was court marshalled for theft and sentenced to 6 month in prison with 'Hard Labour and discharged from the Marine Infantry.

*1911 census he may have been serving in 2nd Batt Prince Albert Somerset Light Infantry based in Malta)?*

In 1919 Roland appears to have taken the bounty to re-enlist for a further two years.

No other WW1 service records found

### **POPLE John**

29087 Pte. 184th Royal Berkshire Reg.

later transferred to 110253 Labour Corps

Awarded British and Victory medals.

**No army record found**

Born 1884, Rooksbridge

Son of Henry and Hannah POPPLE of Turnpike Road.

The Sixth of seven children, three of his older siblings were handicapped.

In 1901 he was in Bristol working as a 'Butcher's Boy' for James and Sarah BOLEY who were originally from Rooksbridge but had set up a Butchers Shop in Clifton area of Bristol.

*The 184th consisted of those men in the Territorial Force who had not volunteered for overseas service when asked at the outbreak of war. It originally acted as a reserve to the 145th Brigade, sending drafts of officers and men as battle-casualty replacements and participated in home defence duties. It was assigned to the 61st (2nd South Midland) Division and, from May 1916 onwards, served on the Western Front in the trenches.*

### **PUDDY Francis Stanley**

Private 1255 Wessex Veterinary Hospital

Private 551557 Labour Corps

Born at Burton Row Farm East Brent in 1889  
Son of farmer Francis and Susanne PUDDY.  
His father had died in 1915 and at the time of  
his enrolment he was helping his brother to  
run the farm at Burton Row.

He married a Winifred FROST in 1930 and in  
1939 Francis and Winifred along with his  
widowed mother Susanne PUDDY was a  
Dairy Farmer at 'Wickwood Farm' Brent Knoll.

He died in 1959 at his home at Wickwood. His wife Winifred died in 1976  
at Ham Green Hospital

They had two daughters Mollie and Frances.

Francis and Susanne were active members of the British Legion and the  
Methodist church at Brent Knoll.



Before the war he was a territorial soldier No. TT 0511

He was called for General Service Dec 1915 and placed on reserve.

His appeal as a farmer to the Axbridge Board was rejected and he was  
drafted to the 1/1st Wessex Division Veterinary Hospital in May 1916.

In Dec 1916 he was transferred to the Regular Army Veterinary Corps.

He was then transferred to the Labour Corps where he served until his  
release in Feb 1919.

There are no records for any overseas service or medal record.

### **ROPER William Reginald**

16650 Pte. 12th (Service Batt. Gloucester Regt.

70460 Pte. Machine gun Corps.

Awarded British, Victory and 15 Star.

Born 1896 Son of Thomas and Ellen ROPER of East Brent.

By 1901 the family were running a Laundry in Worle. Where in 1911  
William was an Errand Boy.

On enlistment at Weston in December 1914 he gave his occupation as a "Poultry Keeper"

Initially enrolling Dec 1914 aged 18, into the 12th Service Div. Gloucestershire Regt. he entered France in Nov 1915.

In March 1916 the 12th Division took over a section of front line between St Laurent Blangy and the southern edge of Vimy Ridge, near Arras. They moved south in July to reinforce The Somme and were in action at, High Wood, The Battle of Guillemont, The Battle of Flers-Courcelette, The Battle of Morval and The Battle of Le Transloy.

In Nov 1916 he was transferred to the 95th Machine Gun Corps. Part of the 5th Div.

He saw action in Flanders and the battles of Vimy Ridge, Passchendale, and Ypres.

5th Division was one of five British formations selected to be moved to Italy taking up positions in late January 1918 in an effort to re-enforce Italian resistance to enemy attack after a recent disaster at Caporetto. Many diaries at this time, by men who had witnessed slaughter in the floods of Passchendale talk of the move and Italy as being "like another world". Unfortunately this pleasant period was not to last, and the Division was quickly recalled to France, where the enemy had made an attack in overwhelming strength on 21 March during its final 'Spring Offensive'

He was finally demobbed in April 1919 when he was "Taken off the Strength of the B.E.F. Rhine Army".

He married an Elsie Knight believed to be from Axbridge in 1924.

In 1939 he was a Labourer living in Kewstoke Road Worle with his wife and 13 year old son Reginald. Reginald died in 1942 aged just 15.

In 1941 William ROPER was a bus conductor in Weston super mare.

He died in Weston Super Mare in 1957 aged 61.

### **SANDIFORD Herbert**

H/35143 Tpr. 7<sup>th</sup> Hussars

Awarded British and Victory medals.

Still serving in Jan 1920.

**No service records found**

Born Rooksbridge. 1892 Son of wheelwright/carpenter Walter and Emily SANDIFORD of Turnpike Road.

Married Martha NEADS of Yatton in 1910  
They had three sons, Maurice, Dennis and Joseph  
SANDIFORD

In 1939 Herbert 'George' was a gardener living in  
'Spar Cottage' Rooksbridge.

He died 1948.?

**Photo Melanie Body.**



In 1917 his regiment sailed to Basra to fight against the Turks as part of 11th Indian Cavalry Brigade. They moved to Baghdad from where the first attack was launched in March 1918 against a division of the enemy in the Battle of Khan Baghdadi. The 7th Brigade had the role of cutting off the enemy retreat, first destroying the baggage column, then routing the enemy division in fifteen minutes. Another offensive was mounted by the British and they again encircled the enemy at Battle of Sharqat. On 30 October, as they were preparing to attack again, news came through that Turkey had surrendered but the 7th were to remain as an occupying force until May 1919.

### **SLOCOMBE Henry**

SE/10893 Pte. Army Veterinary Corps

Awarded 1915 Star, British and Victory medals.

*This Corps was responsible for the medical care of animals used by the army; mainly horses, mules and pigeons.*

*As an older and possibly a member of the Territorial's the SE/ 'Special Enlistment' attached to his service number indicates that he was placed into the A.V.C. due to his experience with horses on the farm?*

*Entered France Sep 1915. Can find no indication of the Regiment he would have been attached to as an A.V.C. man. **No other records found***

Born at Blakeway, Nr Wedmore 1875 Henry a farm labourer married Emily WEAR of Heath House, Wedmore in 1894

Henry and Emily had six daughters including one who died in infancy and three sons two of which also died young. The six children all attended East Brent School.

In 1901 the family was living in Dutch Road, Mark and the family settled in Rooksbridge in 1903.

In the 'Absent voter list' of 1918 while serving he gave his home address as Rooksbridge.

Henry died in Dec 1935. at Rooksbridge. And is buried at St Marys East Brent.

His wife Emily also died at East Brent in 1965 aged 90.

### **SMITH Charles Samuel**

S/306987 Pte. 60<sup>th</sup> Rld. Sup Det. R. A. S. C.

Awarded British and Victory medals.

Also awarded a Good Conduct medal on demob.

Born in 1888.

While serving he gave his Next of kin and home address as Evelina Kate SMITH of Brixton House, Rooksbridge. He married Evelina MILLER in June 1914.

On registration at Weston super mare in Dec 1915 he was married and a butcher living in Cambridge Place, Weston super Mare.

He was placed on 'Reserve' and mobilised in March 1917 when he was sent to France as a butcher with 60th Supply Det. R.A.S.C.

Finally released on 'Reserve' status in Nov 1919. At which time he gave his home address as 'Lane End Farm' Uplyme, Devon.

*In 1939 he may have been a farm worker living in Crediton Devon with his wife and 24 year old son who was also a butcher?*

**No other records found**

### **TAYLOR Albert Edward**

99524 Pte. 41st Mach. Gun Corps

Awarded British and Victory medals.

Born in Isle Abbotts. Som. in 1893. Youngest son of East Brent Blacksmith Thomas and Jessie TAYLOR.

He was a farm labourer.

*1918 Absent Voters lists his home address as New Road Cottage East Brent?*

*On his German POW record he gives a wife's name as Mary?*



POW. During the German Spring Offensive at the Battle of St Quentin 21-23 March 1918 in which the Germans forced the allies to retreat, he was wounded and taken prisoner along with thousands of others on the first day of the battle on 21st Mar 1918 and was sent to the POW camp at Cassel in central Germany.

Being in the Machine Gun Corps he was extremely lucky to survive capture by the fact that: due to the deaths that could be inflicted by the machine gun, most captured machine gun crews on both sides were shown little mercy and often unofficially shot by their captors!

*(During the same retreat, George HAM of Rooksbridge (above) was also taken prisoner on the 25th March).*

Albert's older brother Frederick still living in Isle Abbots served with the Dragoons in the Boer war and was also recalled to serve in the B.E.F. with the Royal Tank Corps at the outbreak of WW1 in August 1914, winning the 1914 Mons Star and British and Victory medals.

### **THOMAS Maurice Phippen**

86186 Driver Royal Field Artillery.

192878. Q. Royal.Engineers.

Awarded 15 Star, British and Victory medals.

Son Of John and Pamela THOMAS. of Pear Tree Farm Rooksbridge. Born 1898. Brother of Reginald THOMAS (below).

He was a farm labourer.

He married Ellen ABLETT in 1929. And in 1939 they lived in 'Wellfield House' Vole Road East Brent with daughter Kathleen.

In 1939 he was working at the Dairy in Rooksbridge, as was his wife Ellen "Nellie" THOMAS who was in charge of the cream and butter making at the Cheddar Valley Dairy and lived with her daughter 'Kay' and son in law in Mendip road Rooksbridge. Kay also spent her working life in the office at the Cheddar Valley Dairy. She later married Peter TILLEY of Tarnock Garage.

Maurice died 21 Jan 1949.

Enrolled Feb 1915 age 17 into the Royal Field Artillery. (He gave his year of birth as 1896)!

Posted to France for the duration of the war.

Later transferred to Royal Engineers.  
Was released into the Territorial Reserve Feb. 1919

### **THOMAS Reginald**

216550 Dvr. 1<sup>st</sup> Som. Royal Horse Artillery  
Awarded British and victory medals  
**No army service record found**

Born 1892 East Brent.

Son of John and Pamela THOMAS.

Of Pear Tree Farm, Rooksbridge.

Brother of Maurice.

He married Winifred BAITHE of Weston super mare in 1915

In 1939 he was a Greengrocer living in Bristol with his wife Winifred and daughter Doris and son Kenneth.

He appears to have died in Bristol in 1995 at the age of 103?

### **VINCENT Ivor Arthur**

51754 Cpl. C. Sqdn. Machine Gun Corps

Awarded the 1914 Mons Star with clasp and rose, British and Victory medals

### **Clasp to the 1914 Star**

*A bar clasp inscribed "5 Aug. to 22 Nov. 1914" was given to all those who qualified for the 1914 Star and who served under fire. Since the same ribbon is used with the 1914-15 Star, holders of the 1914 Star were permitted to wear a small silver rosette on their ribbon when the medal is worn.*



Born 1894 son of Boot maker Walter and Elizabeth VINCENT of East Brent. Younger brother of Victor (Below). He enlisted into the Somerset Light Infantry in Nov 1910 claiming to be 18 years and 6 mths. He was discharged in Feb 1911 for having made a "Mis-statement as to his age".

At the outbreak of war he enrolled into the Cavalry of the 5<sup>th</sup> Dragoon Guards Sept 1914. Gave his occupation as an Electrical engineer.

In his short military career he also served with the 12th Lancers and the Machine Gun Corps

He was posted on 6th Oct 1914 to The Expeditionary Force in France. Where he took part in the battle of Mons.

He suffered serious eyesight problems and was discharged in June 1915 as 'Unfit for war service'. Possibly the affects of gas suffered at the 2nd battle of Ypres. When German troops first used Chlorine gas against the allies. He died Dec 1951 aged 57, his death was registered at Weston super Mare district.

### **VINCENT Victor Percival**

138506 Gunner. Royal Garrison Artillery.  
Awarded Victory and British War medals.

Born Feb 1890 He was a farm labourer son of boot maker Walter and Elizabeth VINCENT of East Brent, brother of Ivor Arthur VINCENT (above). and sisters Lavinia and Miranda. In 1911 he married dressmaker Minnie FRY of Rooksbridge. And they had a daughter Winifred born 1913.

By 1939 Ivor was a farmer living at Kingsway Tarnock. He died in 1943. aged 53. His wife Minnie died in 1970 aged 82.

At his attestation at Weston in Dec 1915 he gave his occupation as a 'Cowman' he was assigned to the Reserve. He was mobilised into the RGA in April 1917. Where he served in France for the duration of the war. He survived the horror of Passchendaele and was released in 1919 when he returned to take on a farm at Tarnock.

### **WARD George Vernon**

266518 Pte. 1/6<sup>th</sup> Gloucester Reg. (Bristol Batt. Territorial Force)  
Awarded British and Victory medals.

The Battalion landed at Boulogne March 1915 later served in Italy from November 1917.

Born Bristol in 1896 son of Helena and Dixon WARD who in 1911 were living at Locking Hutton.

His father was a railway foundry foreman and his mother was born in Cape Town and was Headmistress of Hutton School. The family moved to East Brent and his father Dixon WARD became a member of the East Brent War Memorial Committee set up in 1919 to arrange for the erection

of the East Brent memorial. The family were living in East Brent at 'Anvil House'.

George married a Gladys K FOX at Axbridge. in December 1925.

C: 1939 he was a dairyman in East Brent

George died in Dec. 1970 at WSM.

**No army service record found**

### **WARD Harry**

20946 Pte. Res. 4<sup>th</sup> Devons

41245 Pte 1/28 London Artist Rifles.

Awarded the British and Victory medals.

Born 10 August 1899. Son of Albert and Mary WARD.

Bristol Rd Rooksbridge. Brother of William. (below).

In 1901 the family were living in Bristol Road, East Brent.

He married Florence TINKNELL in 1923 and they had two sons Albert 1927-64 and Walter 1930-82. and two daughters Ruth 1924-2014 and Brenda 1944.

From 1933 the family were living in Biddisham, where he was a farmworker. He was a member of East Brent British Legion and a Special Constable. (Brenda PUDDY nee WARD)

Florence died in 1964 in WSM and Harry died Sept 1973 at Bristol and is buried at St Johns church in Biddisham.



Having registered into the Devonshire regiment in 1915 as a farm worker on reserve, he was eventually mobilised and transferred to the Artists Rifle Brigade in September 1917.

Demobilised into the 'Z' Army Reserve on 4th March 1919.



### **Dog Tag of Harry WARD**

Each man was issued with an 'Identity Tag' (Dog Tag) which he wore around his neck at all times. It is a very personal item to many families. This red fibre disc is sometimes the only memento that was actually there in battle and is the only link with the person that wore it every day.

Sadly there are thousands of blood stained dog tags that are all that was found of the man and returned to his family.

### **WARD William**

8938 L.Cpl. Territorial Res.

5664457 Cpl. 2<sup>nd</sup> Som. Light Infantry

Awarded British and Victory medal.

Also the South Persia General Service Medal and clasp in Nov 1923.



Born 1892 Godney, son of Albert and Mary WARD.

living on Bristol Road, Rooksbridge in 1911

Brother of Harry WARD (above).

From the outbreak of war on 3 August 1914 the 2nd battalion was posted on garrison duty in India and it was based here for the duration of the war.

The 2nd battalion saw action in the Middle East.

At the end of the war he appears to have served a further two years until 1920 in Southern Persia (Iraq) with the Somerset Light Infantry. For which he was awarded the General Service Medal and Clasp.

In Nov.1923 he was serving with the 2nd SLI at Akbar barracks, Agra, India.

After his war service he is believed to have migrated to Canada. (Brenda PUDDY nee WARD)

### **WATKINS William John**

Q/A.M. 8843 "Pegasus"

729733 Royal Naval Air Service.

Awarded British and Victory medals

Born 30 Jan 1898 in Weston Super Mare. Son of George and Mary WATKINS landlord of the Knoll Inn c1914-27

At 19 years old he enlisted 'For the duration' into the R.N.A.S. in May 1917 as an aircraft mechanic. Based aboard HMS 'Pegasus' Transferring to the RAF in April 1918 when the RNAS and RFC amalgamated into the RAF.

He was released into 'Z' Reserve in March 1919.

He married Vera Kate LUFF in 1925.

He died 27 Feb 1966, East Brent.

After his war service he started a wholesale Wine and Tobacco business and in 1939 was living at 'Westover', East Brent, with his wife Vera. During WW2 he was an ARP warden.

***HMS Pegasus** was an aircraft carrier/seaplane carrier bought by the Royal Navy in 1917 during the First World War. She was laid down in 1914 by John Brown & Company of Clydebank, The ship was converted to operate a mix of wheeled aircraft from her forward flying-off deck and floatplanes that were lowered into the water. Pegasus spent the last year of the war supporting the Grand Fleet in the North Sea, but saw no combat. She spent most of 1919 and 1920 supporting British intervention against the Bolsheviks in North Russia and the Black Sea. The ship remained with the Mediterranean Fleet until 1924, but was placed in reserve in 1925 after a brief deployment to Singapore. Pegasus was sold for scrap in 1931. (Wikipedia).*

### **WICKHAM Archdale Kenneth**

Lieutenant London Reg. Machine Gun Corps

Born in September 1897 in Yeovil SOM. The son of Rev. Archdale Palmer "Archie" WICKHAM vicar of East Brent between 1911-35. and his 2nd wife Harriet Elizabeth Amy STRONG.

He served in France as Lieutenant between 1916 and 1920 with the Machine gun Corps. London Regiment He was awarded WW1 British and Victory service medals.



He was wounded in April 1918. ([Western Daily Press 09/04/18](#))

After his service, He became an Architectural Historian and wrote books articles for several magazines. As an architectural historian He was the author of 'The Churches of Somerset', 'The Villages of England' 1932. And 'The Italian Renaissance' 1935.

I have his cuttings, one of which is from The Geographical Magazine, November 1940 (pages 406-417) entitled 'The Jacobean Country Church: I. The Seventeenth Century Atmosphere'. (James Wickham. Son)

This article starts with a very personal introduction:

"1917, during the later stages of the battle of Arras, I was sharing a shell-hole with a lance-corporal for whom I had a great regard, and who was killed at my side a few weeks later. Existence was uncomfortable and we discussed preferable occupations, as many soldiers must be doing again. My friend, who had come to the war from Leeds University, said he wished he was back in his laboratory. I said that I should like to be on a bicycle, exploring country churches, a habit I had acquired while at school at Winchester...' He goes on to say that his wish was granted. While his friends was not.

"Given that our father died when we were both young, the few things we know are really second hand via stories from our mother. For example, we were always told that he got a head wound while doling out the rum ration and the bullet passed through his tin helmet. It's a nice story, but probably not entirely accurate". (*James Wickham. Son*)

"I don't think my mother- who died in 2000 aged 91 ever recovered from his death. He was the love of her life. He introduced her to a love of history, particularly architectural history that opened up a whole new world for her. Their backgrounds were very different, she was a glamorous divorcee with three children and a troubled past and he was the son of a country vicar - Archdale Palmer Wickham. When they married the provost of Eton forbade my father from receiving communion (my father was a devout Christian) because in marrying my mother, a divorcee, he considered my father to have committed adultery and told him he should resign as Housemaster, the Headmaster fortunately supported my father and he kept his house. We left Eton when he died.

Personally although I barely remember my father I have always been very proud that he fought in the First World War. Amongst my contemporaries – I was born in 1947 – it is their grandfathers not fathers who fought in this war but my father was 50 when I was born so was a young man in 1914." (*Joceline Wickham. Daughter*)

1924–1951 he was a housemaster and teacher of modern languages and history in Eton College. He was also interested in rare books, manuscripts and pictures. He founded the college Archaeological Society in 1943.

Archdale Kenneth died of lung cancer on 20 June 1951 at the age of 53 in Eton. Surrey.

Spouse: Raymonde Ghislane CRAWLEY.

Raymonde Ghislane CRAWLEY and Archdale Kenneth WICKHAM were married on 23 December 1943. Children were: James John Rufus WICKHAM, Jocelyn WICKHAM. (*Jane Jones*)

**PREB. WICKHAM'S SONS.**  
 Edmund Hugh Whalley Wickham, son of the Vicar of East Brent (Preb. A. P. Wickham), who had been a prisoner in German East Africa since August, 1914, was released on March 14th, and has now obtained a commission in the King's African Rifles, in British East Africa. Preb. Wickham has received no news of another son, R. T. Wickham, since April 5th, when he was still a prisoner.

Bath Chronicle  
 18th Aug 1917

**WICKHAM Edward 'Edmund' Hugh**  
 Kings African Rifles

SOMERSET LADY AND GENTLEMAN PRISONERS OF WAR.  
 The Rev. P. W. Brancker, vicar of Brent Knoll, is greatly distressed to hear that his daughter Nora has been made a prisoner by the Germans. Twelve months ago Miss Brancker married the son of Preb. A. P. Wickham, vicar of East Brent, whose business lies in the rubber country in German Africa, and it is understood that the Germans have made both husband and wife prisoners, and sequestered all their property, even including their handsome and highly-treasured wedding gifts. Much sympathy is felt for the Rev. P. W. Brancker and Preb. Wickham in their anxiety.

Born in Suffolk in 1886. The son of Rev. Archdale Palmer "Archie" WICKHAM Vicar of East Brent and his first wife Emily Edwina nee BALDWIN. Brother of Reginald WICKHAM below. In 1901 he was a

pupil/boarder at Marlborough College.

In 1913 he became engaged to Evelyn daughter of the Rev. P. WHITFIELD-BRANKER of Brent Knoll and they married at Brent Knoll in April 1914.

At the outbreak of war Edward his wife and his brother Reginald were working in the rubber industry in German East Africa and taken prisoner by the Germans. And all their possessions taken from them.

*From List of British POWs interned in German East Africa (January 1916)*

|      |                       |                      |
|------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 121. | .Withe, C. Joseph     | Priest               |
| 122. | .Wickham, Edmund      | Planter              |
| 123. | .Wickham, Evelyn Mary | -                    |
| 124. | .Wickham, Reginald    | Planter              |
| 125. | Williams, G.G.R.      | 2nd Lt. Loy.N.Lancs. |



After their release in 1917 both brothers were commissioned as officers into Kings African Rifles

He is believed to have died in Kenya in 1926?

"Edward Hugh Whalley WICKHAM, eldest son of Archdale Palmer Wickham, Vicar of Martock 1889 - 1911, and Emily Helena MacPherson Wickham, born 10 Nov 1885, at Rickinghall, Suffolk who was killed while elephant hunting in the Aberdare Mountains, Kenya Colony, 19th. September 1926". *Monument inscription at Martock Church.*

### **WICKHAM Reginald Trelawney**

Probationer Flight. Officer R.F. corps

**No medal or service record found**

Born 1889 son of Rev. Archdale Palmer "Archie" WICKHAM Vicar of East Brent and his first wife Emily Edwina nee BALDWIN.

At the outbreak of war both Reginald and his brother Edward were serving in East Africa, and taken prisoner by the Germans.

After the war he appears to have settled in Uganda. The family visited East Brent from Uganda in 1925.

Reginald died Uganda 21 Sept 1938 (Jane Jones)

1918 "Reginald Trelawney WICKHAM, RAF, second son of the Rev A P WICKHAM and the late Mrs Emily Helena Macpherson WICKHAM, was married on July 6<sup>th</sup> at St Marys Church, Harrow on the Hill, to Mary Olive, younger daughter of the late Rev William VASSALL and Mrs VASSALL of Aisholt, Somerset"

Reginald Trelawney WICKHAM Cadet granted temporary commission as 2nd Lieutenant 18 Nov 1918

### **WILKINS Archibald Edgar.**

131716 Gunner 337 Brigade, Royal Field Artillery, (Territorial Force)

Awarded British and Victory medals.

Born in 1888 in Cardiff "Archie" was one of 11 children of house painter George WILKINS and wife Jane from Bath.

He married Edith EMERY daughter of George and Hannah EMERY of Rooksbridge in Dec 1914. Edith had three brothers and a brother in law serving in WW1.



Archie and Edith lived in Alfred Street Cardiff. Archie was a house painter and died in Cardiff in 1928 aged 40. Edith died in Cardiff in 1965.

When 28 year old Archie registered into the Army Reserve in Dec 1915 he was a married House Painter Living with his wife Edith in Cardiff. During his service Edith moved back to stay with her parents in Gills Lane Rooksbridge. After Archie was demobbed they had a son Norman born in 1920.

In 1917 the 337 Brigade were in Mesopotamia modern day Iraq and were involved in the capture of Tikrit from the Turks.

### **WILSON Henry James**

140548 449 Pte. Agr. Co. Labour Corps

Henry was born in Axbridge in 1887 son of an Amos KITLEY and Mary WILSON.

He married Ada NUTTYCOMBE in July 1912. And they lived in Mudgley Wall Lane Rooksbridge.

C. 1925 he was a quarryman at Cheddar.

In the Absent voters list of 1918 his address is given as Mudgley Rooksbridge.

449 Agricultural Co. was based in Taunton.

*For some of the older conscripts or those unable to pass the A1 medical fitness required for front line duty. Agricultural Companies were set up attached to the Labour Corps. to take men with previous farming experience to help on farms on the home front to produce much needed food and forage for both home and overseas.*

**No medal or army record found**

## **WOODWARD Henry Phipps John**

Pte. 33895 Royal Tank Corps I Dec 1919 he was released into 'Z' class Army Reserve. No medal records found.



Henry WOODWARD was born 1898 in East Brent the second son of Frank and Mary WOODWARD of 'Church Farm' His father was a farmer and General dealer and also local representative for the Axbridge and Highbridge Farmers Union. Henry was educated to elementary level in East Brent and initially worked with his father and older brother Charles on the farm. but later became a produce agent and farmer in East Brent. His father Frank Woodward was active in the appeal for more leniency for farmers sons in the Conscription Act of 1916.

However, Henry was conscripted into the Royal Tank Corps May 1916 aged 18.

His fathers appeal to the Axbridge Appeal Board was turned down and he was told that his "Daughter should give up teaching and learn milking"!

After his war service, Henry migrated to Australia in 1922 and was a farm produce agent and company director. North Sydney N.S.W. He sat in parliament as a member of the Labour Party but joined the Liberal Party after leaving office.

He died in 1966 at Wolstonecraft, NSW.

**Henry Phipps John Woodward** (4 April 1898 – 3 April 1966) became an Australian politician and a member of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly for a single term between 1944 and 1947. He was a member of the Australian Labor Party. (Jane Jones NZ)



I am sure that the above information is far from complete and there is probably more to add. I am also aware that due to the many sources of reference from which the above stories and information were compiled, that it is extremely likely that there are some inaccuracies.

Please send any Errors and Omissions to me:  
John Rigarlsford at [jonrig@rooksbridge.org.uk](mailto:jonrig@rooksbridge.org.uk)



## **A brief guide to the medals awarded to servicemen of WW1**

At the end of the war, almost every individual who entered into active service overseas in the First World War was eligible to at least one, two or three campaign medals according to their service. The medals are useful in tracing the mans service as they are usually inscribed with his name, Service No. rank and regiment.

The set of three medals, or at least the British War Medal and the Victory Medal are the most likely medals to be found among family heirlooms.

The medals aaffectionately known by those who received all three as.....

### **Pip, Squeak and Wilfred!**



**WW1 Medals awarded to 19083 Pte. H W Nuttycombe Somerset Light Infantry.  
East Brent  
Courtesy of Betty Griffin**

Pip, Squeak and Wilfred are the nicknames given to the three WW1 campaign medals — The 1914 Star or 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal respectively.

This collection of three medals were primarily awarded to the Old Contemptibles the original British Expeditionary Force (B.E.F.) and those who served abroad for the whole duration of the war.

Normally all three medals are worn together and in the same order from left to right when viewed from the front.

Conscripted men who served from 1916-18 were awarded the British and Victory medal irreverently known as 'Mutt and Jeff' after newspaper cartoon characters of the day, as were 'Pip, Squeak and Wilfred'



### **The British War Medal, 1914-1920**

This is the most commonly issued medal.

All men who served overseas in the main theatres of war qualified for this medal, as did those who did service in, for example, India



### **The Victory Medal, 1914-19**

This medal was awarded to all those who entered a theatre of war. It follows that every recipient of the Victory Medal also qualified for the British War Medal



### **The 1914-15 Star**

The 1914-15 star medal was awarded to men who served as volunteers before Conscription in 1916.

A Star similar to the 1914 Star (see below) was issued to all personnel, with certain exceptions, who served in a theatre of war before 31 December 1914

See Below:

## 1914 Star

Also known as the (**Mons Star**).

The 1914 Star was issued to officers and men of British forces who served in France or Belgium between 5 August and midnight 22/23 November 1914.

The day after Britain's declaration of war against Germany and the end of the First Battle of Ypres.

The majority of recipients were officers and men of the pre-war British army, the **British Expeditionary Force** (the *Old Contemptibles*), who landed in France soon after the declaration of War and who took part in the Retreat from Mons (hence the nickname 'Mons Star') After suffering heavy losses.



Recipients of this medal also received the British War Medal and Victory Medal. Note: Men who served in Egypt and elsewhere at this time do not qualify for this medal. Also that men who crossed to France after 23 November do not qualify for this medal, but were awarded the 1914-15 Star.

### Clasp

Often referred to as a Battle Clasp. Was awarded to those who had operated in battle within range of enemy mobile artillery during the early period. The clasp was inscribed with the name of the battle and dates that the recipient was part of that battle.

When the ribbon bar was worn alone, recipients of the clasp to the medal wore a small silver **rosette** on the **ribbon bar**.

## General Service Medal (1918)

The **General Service Medal (1918 GSM)** was introduced to recognise service in minor Army and Air Force operations for which no separate medal was intended



## Military Medal (MM)

Awarded to men of British and other Commonwealth countries, below commissioned rank, for bravery in battle on land.



## Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM)



Award for an extremely high level of bravery. 2nd only to the Victoria Cross  
It was also awarded to other ranks of the British Army and also to non-commissioned men of Commonwealth forces.

Equivalent of the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) awarded for bravery to commissioned officers.

**At least five men from East Brent Parish are known to have been awarded a D.C.M.**

## Long Service and Good Conduct Medal



This award was to recognise 18 years service in the regular army.



## Silver War Badge

The Silver War badge was originally issued to officers and men who were discharged or retired from the military forces as a result of sickness or injury caused by their war service. It also helped to stop certain young suffragette ladies handing a white feather signifying cowardice to men out of uniform!



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## LISTING OF MEN OF THE PARISH OF EAST BRENT KNOWN TO HAVE SERVED IN WORLD WAR ONE.

The following men gave either East Brent, Rooksbridge or Edingworth as their PLACE OF BIRTH or family ADDRESS during service in WW1

**Entries in RED are war casualties commemorated on the East Brent War Memorial**

**Entries in GREEN are war casualties NOT commemorated on the East Brent War Memorial**

**Entries in Blue are casualties with East Brent connections but commemorated in other villages**

### References

- The Absent Voters list of 1918
- Commonwealth War Graves website
- Ancestry website
- Genes Reunited website
- Find My Past website.



Surname`	First name	Military No.	Rank	Regiment	Notes
ADAMS	Frederick J	188808		RAF	
Amesbury	Edward A	145957 5083	Pte Sgt	Gloucester Reg. Manchester Reg	Re-enlisted 1919
BABB Casualty Born East Brent	William	137133	Private	Machine gun Corps	Died Flanders 1918. <a href="#">Commemorated on Taunton War Memorial</a> (Family had moved to Taunton)
BANWELL	Alfred.	M2/052581	Private	RASC	
BANWELL	Frank E		2nd Lieutenant	East Kent Regiment.	Transferred to the RAF Aug 1918
BENNIE.	James	M.B./2953		Royal Navy Reserve	
BISHOP	Ernest W	57794	Driver	Royal Horse Artillery.	
BLOOD Casualty Married Margaret WOOD of Rooksbridge.	Frederick	83231	Private	Sherwood Foresters	Died Nr Somme 20 May 1918 Buried Bagneux Cemetery, Gezaincourt
BODY Casualty Born East Brent	Frank	216220	Gunner	Royal Field Artillery	Died France 26 Oct 1918. <a href="#">Commemorated on Winscombe War Memorial</a> (Family had moved to Winscombe)
BODY	Tom	27618	Private	Devonshire Regt	
BURGE	William C	9554	Blacksmith	Army Service Corps 'Remount Service'	Also recorded as W. BIRCH
CHAMPENEY	Arthur R	34783	Private	11th Worcester Regiment	
CHANCELLOR	Charles B	21608	Cpl.	Gloucester	
CLEAL	John	17499	Cpl.	Welsh Regiment.	
COLES	Ashley T	2346	Rifleman	12 <sup>th</sup> Rifle Brigade	No service records found
COLES	George	13963	Private.	10 <sup>th</sup> Devonshire Regiment	No service records found
COLES	Richard	47310	Private	Rifle Brigade	No service records found
COMER	Frank	17154	Gunner	Royal.Garrison.Artilleary	
COMER	Frederick		Captain	Training Res. Battalion	No service records found
COMER Casualty	George Inman	7/830	Trooper	Canterbury Mounted Rifles, N.Z.E.F	Died 1915 Emigrated to New Zealand before enlisting.
COMER	George A	117184	Driver.	Army Service Corps	

COMER	John L	17536	Private	Devonshire 4th Res Batn	
COMER Casualty	Wilfred	117061	Gunner	Royal Garrison Artillery.	Died 21 May 1917 Arras France. Widowed mother living in Rooksbridge).
COOK	Ernest	184230	Gunner/signaller	2/75 Mtn. Royal Field Artillery	
COOK	Henry	388926	L/Corp	497 <sup>th</sup> Royal Engineers	No service records found
COOPER	Arthur George	3/7742	W.O. RQMS Sergeant	6th Batt Somerset Light Infantry.	
COX	Harry Dennis	24115 93693	Pte. Pte.	Wilts Reg. RASC .	
CREES Casualty	Bertram F	13986	Sapper	Royal Engineers 17th Field Coy	Died 1915 Ypres
CROSS	William	019114	Private	A.S.C. Mech. Transport	No service records found
CURRY	Reginald	235	Corporal	North Somerset Yeomanry	
DAUNTON	Charles W	17157	Sergeant Major	ARMY Service Corps	Previously served in Boer War.
DAUNTON	Charles		Signaller	Royal Navy	Son of Charles W DAUNTON
DAVIS	George H	391?	Sapper	Wessex Div Royal Engineers	No medal record.
DERRICK Casualty	John L	?	Captain	Yorkshire Regiment. 6th Bn	Died 1917 Flanders.
DIBBLE	George Henry.	47910	Pte.	10th Batt. W. Yorkshire Regiment	Died 1917 France. Family had moved to Brean
DINWIDDY Casualty	Leonard A (Harry)	11631	L/Corporal	Coldstream Guards	Died 1915 Loos N France
DINWIDDY	George	12266	Gunner	77th Brig. R.F.Artillery	
DUDLEY	William	201980	Private	Somerset Light Infantry	No service records found
DUNSTON	Walter	59910	Private	1/5 <sup>th</sup> Royal Welsh Fusiliers	No service records found
DURSTON	Frederick	158588	Sergeant	52 <sup>nd</sup> Queens Holt?	No medal record found. Possibly attached to a Canadian Regiment?
DURSTON Casualty	John	442054	Private	Canadian Infantry (British Columbia Regiment) 7th Bn	Died 1917 Arras Enrolled in Canada
DURSTON	Walter W	15335	L/Cpl	Army Veterinary Corps	No service records
DYER	Frederick	14723 375252	Pte L/Cpl	Somerset Light Infantry Labour Corps	

EMERY	Alfred	29396	Pte	Devonshire Reg.	
EMERY	Alfred	?	2 <sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant	1 <sup>st</sup> G. Northumberland Fusiliers	
EMERY Casualty	Edward	9408	Sergeant	Dorsetshire Regiment 2nd Bn	Died 1916 POW Baghdad
EMERY	Ernest J	285045	Private	30 <sup>th</sup> Gloucester Regiment	No service records found
EMERY	George	148719	Gunner	Royal Field Artillery	
FIELD	Stanley	J43389	Served on Destroyer 'Satyr'	Royal Navy	No service records found
FISHER Casualty	Ernest	19156	Private	5th Dorset Regiment	No Service records or family details found
FISHER	Frederick C	21260	Gunner	142 Durham Heavy Bty of the Royal Artillery	
FROST	Harold W	668634	Pte	Labour Corps	
FRY	George	218058	Able Seaman	Royal Navy	
GAMLEN Casualty	William H	266522	Private	Gloucestershire Regiment 1st/6th Bn.	Died 1916. Somme
GILLHAM	Ernest	609	Gunner	1 <sup>st</sup> S. Royal Horse Artillery	No service records found
GRANT Casualty	Alfred	620300	Gunner	1 <sup>st</sup> /2 <sup>nd</sup> Somerset Royal Horse Artillery Later. "B" Bty. 223 <sup>rd</sup> Brigade Royal Field Artillery	Died 1917. Somme Abbeville. Possibly in hospital there?
GRANT	Joseph	77346	Driver	B.D. Royal. Engineers	No service records found
GRANT Casualty	William J	28199	Private	Royal Lancs Reg	Brother of Joseph. Commemorated at East Huntspill
GROVES	James	M2/167584	Private. Mech	Army Service Corps	No service records found
HAM	Albert W	14884	Pte.	Gloucester Reg.	
HAM	Arthur G	1663	Sergeant	Prince Of Wales. Co. 1 <sup>st</sup> Welsh Guards	Awarded DSM. No service records found
HAM	Geoffrey A		Captain	. 8 <sup>th</sup> Som. Light Infantry	
HAM	Francis W	13488	Pte.	Irish Guards	
HAM Casualty	Frederick C	1735	Private	Monmouthshire Regiment Unit 2nd Bn	Died 1916 Somme
HAM	George B	20592	Private	6th Somerset Light Infantry	No service records found. POW.
HAM	Jesse W	4553	Private	2/6 <sup>th</sup> Glosters	No service records found
HAM	Roland	86184 T329854	Gunner Driver	Royal Artillery. Army Service Corps	
HAM	Sydney R	8451		Royal Fusiliers	No service records found

HAM Casualty	Sydney W	971	Sapper	Royal Engineers 2nd (Wessex) Field Coy	Died 1915 Somme
HAM	Walter J	32426 J.23778	Private Boy	Royal Warwickshire Navy	Signed Navy 5 March - Apr 1913
HAM	William A/H			Somerset Light Infantry	Born Stone Allerton
HARRISON Casualty	Albert	5655	Private	Gloucestershire Regiment 2nd Bn	Died 1915 Ypres.
HATCH	Ernest E	T362649	Private	Res. Army Service Corps	No service records found
HATCHER	Percy	44695 26391	Private	Royal Berkshire Reg Royal Warwickshire Reg.	No service records found
HILL	Bert	110705	Cadet	R.A.F. corps	No medal or service records found.
HOBBS	Reginald	7547	Private	1 <sup>st</sup> Som. Light Infantry	No service records found
HOOPER	William	29381	Gunner	23rd Brig. R.F.A	
HUETT	Percy	86339	Gunner	Royal Field Artillery	No service records found
HUETT	Walter R	354284	Private	449 Agr. Co. Light Cavalry?.	
JEFFRIES	George	27548	Private	1/6 N. Staffs	
LANG	Frank	508316	Sergeant	502 <sup>nd</sup> Wessex R.E	Previously served in Boer war as Gunner in Royal Artillery.
LEE	Albert	202744	Private	1/4 <sup>th</sup> Glosters	No service records found
LEE	William	150474	Cpl.	13 <sup>th</sup> Machine .Gun. Sec. 5 <sup>th</sup> Canadian. Infantry. Bat	No service records found
NUTTYCOMBE	Herbert W	19083	Private	Somerset Light Infantry	No service records found
NUTTYCOMBE	Thomas	165530	Private	N. Somerset Yeomanry.	
PETERS	John E	205180	Cadet	7 <sup>th</sup> Som. Light Infantry	No service records found
PETHERAM Casualty	Thomas	209035	Sapper	Royal Engineers	Died 29 Sep 1918 Somme
POOLE	Leonard	240642	Private	Somerset Light Infantry	No service records found
POPHAM	Ernest J	116090	Trooper	1 <sup>st</sup> Canadian. Mounted Bat Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force	Enrolled Vancouver Canada 1915.
POPHAM Casualty	Frederick	20593	Private	Somerset Light Infantry 7th Bttn.	Died 1916 Somme
POPHAM	Henry	14384 142724	Private L/Cpl	1 <sup>st</sup> Royal Irish Rifles Reg. R.A.M.C.	
POPHAM Casualty	Ralph	620298	Gunner	Royal Field Artillery "B" Bty. 223rd Brigade	Died 1918 Somme
POPHAM	Roland G	382586	Fitter	267. Brigade. Royal Garrison Artillery	No service records found

POPLE Casualty	Charles	40544	Private	Worcester Regiment	Died 1917 Flanders
POPLE	John	110253	Private	184 <sup>th</sup> Royal Berks. Labour Corps	No service records found
PUDDY	Francis	551557	Private	Labour Corps	
PUDDY Casualty	John	17373	Private	Somerset Light Infantry 1st Bn	Died 1916 Ypres
ROPER	William R	16650 70460	Private Private	Gloucesters Machine gun Corps	
SANDIFORD	Herbert	H/35143	Trooper	7 <sup>th</sup> Hussars	No service records found
SLOCOMBE	Henry	10893	Private	Army Veterinary Corps	No service records found
SMITH	Charles S	S/306987	Private	. 60 <sup>th</sup> Railroad. Sup Det. R. A. S. C	No service records found
STUDLEY Casualty	William H	368	L/Cpl	Australian Imperial Force	Died 1917 Ypres France
TAYLOR	Albert E	99524	Private	Mach. Gun Corps	No service records found
THOMAS	Maurice P	86186 192878	Driver	Royal Field Artillery Royal Engineers	
THOMAS	Reginald	216550	Driver	1 <sup>st</sup> Som. Royal Horse Artillery.	No service records found
TURNER  Not recorded on East Brent Memorial	Arthur	14805	Private	Gloucestershire Regiment.	Died 1915 of Typhoid at home at Chelwood Nr Pensford
VINCENT	Ivor A	51754	Corporal	Machine Gun Corps	
VINCENT	Victor P	138506.	Gunner.	Royal Garrison Artillery	
WARD	George	266518	Private	1/6 <sup>th</sup> Glosters	No service records found
WARD	Harry	20946	Private	Res. 4 <sup>th</sup> Devons	No service records found
WARD	William	8938	L/Corporal	2 <sup>nd</sup> Som. Light Infantry	
WATKINS	William J	8898	Q/AM ?	Royal Navy "Pegasus" ?	No service records found
WICKHAM	Archdale	?	Lieutenant	. Machine Gun Corps	
WICKHAM	Edmund			Kings African Rifles	
WICKHAM	Reginald		Probationer Flight. Officer	Royal Flying Corps	
WILKINS	Archibald Edgar.	131716	Gunner	337 Brigade, Royal Field Artillery	
WILSON	Henry J	140548	Private	Agr. Co. Labour Corps	No service records found
WOODWARD	Henry P J	33895	Private	Inns of Court. Officer. Training. Corps	

## Acknowledgements.

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Alan Davies (School)  
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**Websites.**

CWGC. War Graves Commission

Ancestry, FindMyPast and GenesReunited etc.

The Long Long Trail website.

Wikipedia.

Imperial War Museum.

Some Memorials of War in the County of Somerset

And many others!

And the dozens of WW1 books I have referred too!

If I have forgotten anyone please give me a reminder!

**Without your help this project would not be possible.**

Was your grandfather, great Uncle or any of your family members ever involved in the Great War, the so called 'War to end Wars'?

Did your grandmother, aunt or any other female relative serve as nurses or do other war work at home or abroad?

Do you have any stories, photos, medals, service records or memorabilia etc?

Especially anything relating to their lives during and after the war.

If you know or can tell anything at all about the lives of any of these brave men and women of our East Brent parish and what became of them and their families after the war ended, we would love to put it on record.

Do please get in touch with any additional information, corrections or omissions etc.

John Rigarlsford . 2014-18

[jonrig@rooksbridge.org.uk](mailto:jonrig@rooksbridge.org.uk)



**On A sunny August Bank Holiday Monday in 1914 some of the families and children of East Brent were on a day out at the seaside in Burnham or Weston. While some of the men would be toiling out in the fields haymaking, others would be preparing for the annual 'Harvest Home' and their womenfolk were preparing the 'Harvest Home' banners and plum puddings etc.**

**After a relatively long period of peace in Europe little did the people of East Brent and indeed the rest of the World' realise that by going to the aid of France and Belgium and 'Declaring war on Germany' it would result in the most devastating conflict known to history at the time. The bells of St Marys would become silent and life for many in the village would change forever.**

**ON TUESDAY AUGUST 4TH 1914....**

**BRITAIN DID JUST THAT.....!**

**..... In the war that ensued for more than 4 years, we know that at least 120 brave young men of our small East Brent parish performed their patriotic duty and more than 20 would give their lives serving in the Great War to protect our freedom and independence.**

The intention here is to create a record and pay tribute to that generation of brave and selfless East Brent men and their families and learn something of their lives before and after the war.

Any profits from this publication will go to the

**SSAFA.**

UK Charity providing welfare & support for those serving in the armed forces, veterans and armed forces and families. SSAFA support the Army, RAF and Navy.