LEST WE FORGET

The stories of the men from Wickwar and Rangeworthy who made the ultimate sacrifice in the First World War

Researched and compiled by Arthur Threlfall Searson
The Soldier

If I should die, think only this of me:
That there’s some corner of a foreign field
That is forever England. There shall be
In that rich dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England’s, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

Rupert Brooke. Died of sepsis on 23rd April 1915

Rupert Brooke’s small corner of a foreign field is on the Greek island of Skyros.

For the Fallen

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

Laurence Binyon
CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

This document seeks to tell the stories of those men who died in the First World War on the War, named on the Memorials of Wickwar and Rangeworthy. The project began with the display of memorabilia at Holy Trinity Church, Wickwar, at the beginning of the centenary commemoration in 2014. Susannah Russell had put together brief accounts of each of those named and it seemed like a relatively simple task to take those accounts forward, to expand them slightly. Ah, the blissful naivety of the innocent volunteer! The presumption was that the memorial at Wickwar named all those from the surrounding area. After all, in the early 20th century Wickwar covered Rangeworthy and Bagstone, as is borne out by the census returns that I have found. Having worked basically through those named in a first pass, and returning to fill out the stories, I was casually informed that there was a memorial in Holy Trinity, Rangeworthy and, lo and behold, it contained names that were not on the Wickwar Memorial. Not only that, but there is a memorial to members of the Methodist congregation that existed at that time, which was moved to Holy Trinity, Rangeworthy when the old Methodist Chapel was sold. The work expanded to take in those additional names. Finally, having just about completed the major groundwork, the Memorial in Wickwar Parish Hall leaps out. Thankfully, that did not reveal additional names; rather, it served to help clarify some of the early conclusions, which were troublesome without supporting evidence, although there are some questions that it does not answer.

The research starts with the name on the memorials, which in Wickwar is only the family name and initials. The starting point for identifying the men more accurately has been to search the census documents, which often produce more than one candidate, and then to try to relate those names to casualty reports and records of those who died held by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC). Unfortunately, it has not been possible to do that in all cases and it appeared that some names should not be on the memorial, for reasons that you will discover as you read on. As this document has developed that number has gradually been whittled down and presently there is just one name that gives cause for concern. In others, it appears that names are missing from the CWGC record.

The material contained within this document is a mixture of factual material provided by known living relatives of those who died, family lore that may have an element of “glamour” added and information gleaned from sources such as the CWGC, Ancestry, Forces War Records and Fold3, which have revealed census sheets and other documents. Of particular value have been some of the family trees available publicly on Ancestry.

In order to paint a broader picture of these men I have delved a little into their past and explored the stories of some of their relations. This has been helped by using some of the details and items provided by living relations, some of whom I have “met” while researching online, for which I am most grateful. I have particularly tried to pick out those relations who also served in WW1 or had other relevant military service. This has been helped by reference to service records, although these are often damaged and extremely difficult to read. It is sad that I have been able, for the most part, only to find service records of some of those who survived. The records of most of those who died seem to have been lost, probably in bombing raids on London during WW2.

Some of the findings may make uncomfortable reading. As discussed, in one case, it would appear that a name should not be on the memorial because it appears that the person did not die in the war, or as a result of injury or illness directly attributable to war service. Others indicate sad elements of family life such as tragedies of premature death and even apparent abandonment.
Where possible I have referred to the War Diaries of the units, but I have not been able to find them all. Many I have found in Ancestry, but they are sometimes “buried” in a mix of units that often contain more than 400,000 records, each containing 500 or more pages. In a few cases I have been able to source the diaries from the National Archives. Enlisted men are rarely identified by name, but it is often possible to relate actions and their deaths. An exception is when an officer is killed and we have two whose names appear in the war diaries. Some of the diaries make uncomfortable reading, as the events that they describe are not very pretty. They also vary in quality and therefore their legibility. Some are neatly typewritten while others are hastily handwritten, sometimes on scraps of paper from notebooks. However, they should be taken for what they are, attempts to provide contemporaneous records of events under often very pressured conditions.

The diaries I have been able to find are reproduced in the Regimental War Diaries Appendix, with the names of the men that they refer to. Generally, only those months in which our men died are reproduced. In some instances, Operational Orders and After-Action reports have been found and included if related to our soldier. Where the diary has not been found I have tried to source an account of the unit from the web.

This is a work in progress and will be added to or amended as further information becomes available.

WICKWAR BOUNDARY

It is interesting to note that the boundary of Wickwar in the early 1900s was greater than we know it today and included villages such as Rangeworthy, Cromhall and Bagstone. As discussed above, during the work on the names on the Wickwar Memorial I became aware that in spite of Rangeworthy men being named on the Wickwar Memorial, there are two Memorials at Rangeworthy with additional names, identifying members of Holy Trinity Church and the Ebenezer Chapel (Methodist), so the work has expanded to include those names. Hence, there are three parts to the stories of the men; one for Wickwar followed by those named at Rangeworthy. Interestingly, there are two Commonwealth War Graves in Cromhall (St Andrew) Churchyard of men who do not feature on the Wickwar and Rangeworthy Memorials, but I have not explored those.

KITCHENER’S NEW ARMY

At the outbreak of war, the British Regular Army strength was 250,000 compared to the German Army’s 3.4 million. With all Territorial and Reserve units, together with those who had previously served, Britain could muster no more than about 750,000, so Lord Kitchener, the War Minister, set out on a campaign to raise a “New Army”. As the prospect of war had loomed from late 1913 the government had been developing a strategy for a recruitment campaign. This commenced on 5th August 1914, the day after war was declared, with full page newspaper advertisements using the slogan, “Your King and Country Need You”. A similar poster used the phrase, “Your Country Needs You”. This led to the appearance of the now almost infamous recruiting poster, which has spawned many caricatures. The design took its inspiration from the earlier campaign but used the image of “KITCHENER WANTS YOU”. 

“KITCHENER WANTS YOU”.

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power and authority that Kitchener exuded to personalise it as a direct call.

Many of the units that formed this New Army were raised locally by wealthy local dignitaries and fund-raising. The units formed were often affiliated to county regiments but were not initially adopted formally by the Ministry of Defence. Recruiting men was one thing – the rush to join the cause and defeat the enemy saw a tidal wave of men volunteering. There then came the problem of managing and training the recruits. The Regular Army could not possibly provide the number of officers required in the time. At this point a phalanx of volunteers from public schools stepped forward.

Many public schools supported Officer Training Corps (OTC) units which boys were often required to be members of. They were trained in military skills and were mostly eager to serve King and Country. They were seen as prime material for instant commissioning, due to the military “experience”. They could not all join the Regular Army but the New Army units were only too keen to welcome them with local commissions, that were temporary for the period of the war only. They were often known as “temporary officers”. Due to the numbers available, not all were needed initially, so many joined as private soldiers, but were often selected for commission later, to replace those who had fallen. The life expectancy of a junior officer in WW1 was six weeks.

THE MEMORIALS

At the outset this was a task to document those on the Wickwar Memorial, in blissful ignorance that there were other memorials in the area that was then covered under Wickwar. Hence, the work has expanded to try to accommodate all those who died, but the work is made more difficult because the “owners” of one of the memorials no longer exist in the area.

WICKWAR

Holy Trinity Church

The Memorial stone (left) is situated on the right-hand wall of the porch at Holy Trinity Church, Wickwar. It was dedicated on Sunday 10th April, 1921.

A report in the Bristol edition of the Western Daily Press dated Monday, April 11, 1921, describes the dedication of the memorial.
WICKWAR MEMORIAL TABLET

CANON CORNWALL AND THE UNWORTHY

There was a large assembly at Wickwar parish church yesterday afternoon when the tablet placed in the porch in memory of the men from the parish who gave their lives in the great war was dedicated by the Rev. Canon Cornwall (Rural Dean of Thornbury).


The Rev. T. A. Garnett (Rector) conducted the service, which was deeply impressive in character. Following the playing of the Dead March from “Saul”, the bell was tolled 26 times, this being the number of names on the Roll of Honour. After the dedication had been performed by Canon Cornwall, the “Last Post” was sounded by Bugler F. Bennett, of Kingswood. The hymns sung were “Before Jehovah’s Awful Throne”, “For all the Saints”, “Ten thousand times ten thousand”, and the National Anthem.

Speaking upon the text, “Of whom the world was not worthy”, Canon Cornwall said he questioned very much whether the people of to-day were worthy of the great sacrifice made by those gallant men who had laid down their lives in the war. Reading the newspapers to-day one found nothing but signs of warring and jarring, based on selfish interests. The fault, he supposed, was largely to be found in the fact that those left at home during the war had failed in their duty to those who were to return. He wondered where the spirit of self-sacrifice and comradeship which was so apparent during the war had gone. Let all, he urged, strive their utmost to bring Christian charity to bear, and so help make England worthier of all those gallant men had done.

Muffled peals were rung on the church bells prior to the service.

*Note that in the report the “R” in R Croker and R Eacott was mistaken for a “P”.*
There is a memorial (above) on the wall of the Village Hall. This lists some of those who served and survived in the centre, with a “List of Fallen” on either side. It is interesting to note that these lists omit some names contained on the church memorial stone, although the names appear on the centre panel of those who served. This is significant, as you will see as we explore each of those named. Three men who died after the war of illness contracted during service are listed on the centre panel and we will identify these men in due course. The list on the church memorial is the one used.

**RANGEWORTHY**

**Holy Trinity Church**

The memorial in Holy Trinity Church Rangeworthy is a window in the church. It is known as the Bethlehem Window and is described by the Imperial War Museum (IWM)\(^1\) as a “Three light stained-glass window with figures in each light. Figure of the risen Lord is depicted in the centre light, flanked by St George and St Michael in the left-hand and right-hand lights. St Edward the Confessor, St Denys of France, St Arilda and Joan of Arc are also depicted in the lights. Coats of Arms depicted in the lower part of the lights.” It lists the men who died and bears the inscription “Pray for these men who fell in the Great War 1914-1918.”

Two of the names also appear on the Wickwar Memorial

There is another stained-glass memorial in the church, to 2/Lt Joseph Laurence Hull. This memorial is shown and described in the section about Joseph Hull.

\(^1\) Imperial War Museum Record [www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/46216](http://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/46216)
The Imperial War Museum records that two memorials were erected at Rangeworthy Methodist Church, Ebenezer Chapel. Both were “plain rectangular white marble with inscription in black lettering”.

One contains a list of 28 men who served and survived; the other lists 8 men who died. The IWM web site notes that the Methodist Church was closed and sold as a private residence. The memorials were relocated to Holy Trinity Church in 2000, where they are mounted on the wall. An additional inscription describing their move was added at the time.

The memorial to those who died contains names of men who may not have been residents of Rangeworthy and it has been extremely difficult identifying some of them.

**ROLL OF HONOUR – BRISTOL TIMES AND MIRROR**

On 26th February, 1916, the Bristol Times and Mirror published a full-page report listing those from Wickwar who had enlisted into the services. Some of those names were marked as “killed”, “missing” or “wounded”. There were also photographs of some of the men and although the resolution is poor, they are included in our narrative.

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2 Imperial War Museum record [www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/46224](http://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/46224) and [www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/46225](http://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/46225).
NAMEs

Whilst it has been possible eventually to identify all of those named on the Memorials, it is clear that the names are not always accurate. Where this appears to be the case it is made clear in the text. In others the name that appears is the commonly used name of the person, whereas they enlisted with their “correct”, given name. This has meant some persistent detective work, which has sometimes
produced some very satisfying results. Each record will be titled with the name as it appears on the Memorial. It is also apparent that Christian names and family names changed over time.

**DATES AND AGES**

It would appear that birth dates (and therefore ages) were rather flexible, as demonstrated in differences between successive censuses. They often changed by a year or more. As birth years are often deduced from the ages given on the census, they can be out by a year.

**ADDRESSES**

Identifying precisely where residents lived from census information is difficult, as properties are generally identified by the street in which they lie, such as “High Street” or “The Butty” (sic). Others are identified by name, such as Hart House, which no longer appears to exist. Mary Isaac’s *Wickwar Through the Ages* has been helpful in identifying some properties.

**RELATIONSHIPS**

From the names on the memorial there are some easily spotted relationships; the Hitchings and Lovells stand out. But as I have delved deeper other less obvious family connections have emerged which have added interest to the findings. I have also tried to link the men to living relations, with mixed success.
FIRST WORLD WAR MEDALS

1914 Star

This bronze medal award was authorized by King George V in April 1917 for those who had served in France or Belgium between 5th August 1914 to midnight on 22nd November 1914 inclusive. The award was open to officers and men of the British and Indian Expeditionary Forces, doctors and nurses as well as Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Royal Navy Reserve and Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve who served ashore with the Royal Naval Division in France or Belgium.

This medal was affectionately (or disrespectfully!) known as “Pip”

1914-15 Star

Also known as 'Pip', this bronze medal was authorized in 1918. It is very similar to the 1914 Star but it was issued to a much wider range of recipients. Broadly speaking it was awarded to all who served in any theatre of war against Germany between 5th August 1914 and 31st December 1915, except those eligible for the 1914 Star.

Like the 1914 Star, the 1914-15 Star was not awarded alone. The recipient had to have received the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. The reverse is plain with the recipient's service number, rank, name and unit impressed on it.

The British War Medal

The silver or bronze medal was awarded to officers and men of the British and Imperial Forces who either entered a theatre of war or entered service overseas between 5th August 1914 and 11th November 1918 inclusive. This was later extended to services in Russia, Siberia and some other areas in 1919 and 1920.

Approximately 6.5 million British War Medals were issued.

This medal was known as “Squeak”

The Victory Medal

It was decided that each of the allies should each issue their own bronze victory medal with a similar design, similar equivalent wording and identical ribbon.

The British medal was designed by W. McMillan. The front depicts a winged classical figure representing victory.

Approximately 5.7 million victory medals were issued. Interestingly, eligibility for this medal was more restrictive and not everyone who received the British War Medal ('Squeak') also received the Victory Medal ('Wilfred'). However, in general, all recipients of 'Wilfred' also received 'Squeak' and all recipients of 'Pip' also received
both 'Squeak' and 'Wilfred'.

**The Silver War Badge**

The Silver War Badge was issued on 12\textsuperscript{th} September 1916.

The 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. After April 1918 the eligibility was amended to include civilians serving with the Royal Army Medical Corps, female nurses, staff and aid workers.

The recipient also received a certificate. The badge was made of Sterling silver and was to be worn on the right breast of civilian clothing. It could not be worn on a military uniform.

The SWB was not simply an honour; it also served a practical purpose. At the time, men of military age who were not obviously in the service were sometimes accosted or insulted by civilians presenting them with white feathers — a symbol of cowardice — for shirking their patriotic duty. The badge served as an outward symbol that the wearer’s duty to country had been honourably fulfilled.

A roll of some 1,150,000 recipients of the Silver War Badge is held at the National Archives, in Kew.

There were also a Territorial Service Medal and a Mercantile Marine War Medal, but these do not apply to any of our soldiers.

**The “Widow’s Penny”**

A Memorial Plaque and Scroll were instituted in 1919 by the Government to be presented to the next of kin of those who died in the war. It depicts Britannia facing right with a large lion standing in front of her. Beneath, a smaller lion is seen tearing an eagle to pieces. These represent Britain and Germany, respectively. Two dolphins represent sea power.

The plaques were cast with the soldier’s name and around the edge are the words “He died for Freedom and Honour”. Each plaque was accompanied by a parchment scroll showing the soldier’s name and unit and a letter from His Majesty, The King. Some 600 were issued to the Next of kin of women who died as a direct result of their involvement in the Great War. These were appropriately inscribed, “She died for freedom and honour”.

There is no record of recipients of the Memorial Plaque, and we have seen only one (pictured), presented to the next of kin of Henry Joseph Wilcox. However, the next of kin of all those who died will have received the Memorial plaque and Scroll.
The War Gratuity

The War Gratuity was introduced in December 1918 as a payment to those men who had served during WWI for more than six months in home service, or for any period overseas. In most cases it was paid in lieu of a Service Gratuity, which was paid to those men who had served on regular engagements. Most of those who enlisted for service in WWI did so on short service engagements. If a man had already received a service gratuity it would affect the amount of War Gratuity paid.

The War Gratuity could hardly be described as generous. Payments ranged from £3 to £16. 10s. and were not paid until 1919. The average was £6. 12s. Today, the value of the 1919 pound is about £49.15, so the money would not go very far.
CHAPTER 2 – WICKWAR ROLL OF HONOUR

W J Beasant

Wilfred John Beasant was born in 1893, the son of James Beasant and Alice Woodruff. The spelling of the name changed over time and his military records will show him as BESANT, but it is undoubtedly the same person.

James was the son of Charles and Ellen Hall: according to the 1881 census Charles was born in Yate in 1831 and Ellen in Wiltshire in 1836. Charles and Ellen were married in Yate Parish Church on 27th November 1853. (In the 1861 census there is a record of a Charles and Ellen BESSANT living at Pincotts Lane with three children; Sarah aged 7; Charles, five; and Louisa, 2. The ages of the couple are the same as those of the Charles and Ellen Beasant living at Pincotts Lane in 1881, but this appears to be coincidence as nothing else matches. This Charles Beasant is declared to be born in Wickwar.

The 1881 census records the family living at Pincotts Lane, there being seven children: Emma, 17; James, 13; Ruth, 11; Ellen, 9; Alice, 6; John, 4; and Fred, 2. At the age of 13 James was working as a farm labourer. In 1891 only James, Ellen, and Fred were at home, but they were joined by Charles’ and Ellen’s granddaughter, Elizabeth aged 3 months. James (name spelt Besant!) married Mary Ann Elizabeth Blakeney on 4th November 1889 at St Mary’s Church, Yate. Mary died in the last quarter of 1890 at the age of 22 and was buried on 11 December. I have been unable to find a precise date for the birth of Elizabeth, but a Birth Index records one Elizabeth Besant, registered in the first quarter of 1891. Circumstantially it would seem that Mary may have died in childbirth. The 1891 census was taken on 5th April, so declaration of Elizabeth’s age as 3 months is quite a close fit, given the accuracy of many of the age declarations. Elizabeth married Charles Howell, a butcher, on 9th February, 1914.

By 1901 Charles had died and Ellen was living alone at No 5 Pincotts lane with her granddaughter, Elizabeth, as she was in 1911. James, a Brewer’s Labourer, had re-married in 1892, Alice Woodruff, and in 1901 they were living at No 3 Old Workhouse Cottages (now 2 Frith Lane Cottages) with their four children: Wilfred, age 7; Fred, 6; Annie, 4; and Gladys Kate, 3. Why did Elizabeth live with her Grandmother and not with her father and his new wife? James and Alice had another girl, May, in 1906.

Wilfred was born in about June 1893 and was baptised at Wickwar on 16th July. In 1911 the family had moved to The Chestnuts on Sodbury Road. James was a Grocer’s Vanman and Wilfred, age 17, was working as a Farm Labourer. James died in 1955.

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3 According to Mary Isaac’s “Wickwar Through the Ages”, these houses were first named The Barton Houses, then The Poor Houses, The Parish House Farm and then The Old Workhouse, before being re-named as 1 – 3 Frith Lane. It seems that the property may have been formed as five dwellings.
Wilfrid enlisted in the 2nd Battalion (Bn), Grenadier Guards, and was assigned the regimental number 16295, indicating that he joined between 25th January 1913 and 2nd January, 1914, so he joined up before the outbreak of war. He is variously described as “Pte” and “Gdsmn”.

Wilfred John Besant is shown on the CWGC record as living at “Cromhall Charfield, Native of Wickwar, Glos”. Did the family move to Cromhall from Wickwar after the 1911 census, but before Wilfred died? James and Alice Beasant are recorded as living at Cromhall Common in the 1939 Register. Amusingly, Alice’s occupation is listed as “Unpaid Domestic Duties”! James is a retired carter.

In early August 1914, 2nd Bn was stationed at Chelsea as part of the 4th (Guards) Brigade of the 2nd Division. The first entry in the Battalion War Diary is on 12th August 1914, recording that the battalion marched from Chelsea to Nine Elms, travelling by train to Southampton and boarding the “Cawdor Castle” along with 4th (Guards) Brigade Headquarters staff and 3rd Battalion, Coldstream Guards. They sailed at about 8pm, arriving at Le Havre the following day at 2.30pm. The next few days were a litany of marching, inoculations, resting until, on 23rd, they came under artillery fire, but there were no casualties. On 25th August they arrived at Landrecies and came under attack that evening, suffering their first casualties – one officer killed and six Other Ranks wounded. They left Landrecies the following day and marched the next few days until they reached Soucy on 31st August. Wilfred will have been part of this as he is recorded as embarking on 13th August 1914, with the battalion.

The Battalion War Diary records for 1st September 1914, “Marched from Soucy 4am fighting rearguard action. Battalion hotly engaged at Vllers Cotterets (sic), lost, 4 Officers missing (Lieut & Adjt J. MacDougall, Lieut Hon F Needham, Lieut Hon J. N Manners and 2/Lieut G. E. Cecil) with losses amongst N.C.Os & men as follows:- 2 wounded, 122 missing.” They continued marching until, on 14th September the battalion crossed the River Aisne and took a position near a farm at La Cour de Soupir. In a heavy engagement the battalion lost 19 killed, 73 wounded and 77 missing. They remained in Soupir, losing 29 killed and 45 wounded on 16th, 2 men killed and 5 wounded on 19th and four wounded on 20th. The only casualties reported from 2nd until 14th were 19 wounded on 8th.

Wilfred is buried in the Guards Grave, Villers-Cotterêts. There are conflicting dates of his death recorded; the CWGC records it as 11th September, 1914, whereas Ancestry and his medal record show that he died on 20th September. There is also a record of Wilfred’s death in De Ruvigny’s Roll of Honour, which records him KIA (killed in action) on 1st September.

From the War Diary accounts, it seems unlikely that 11th is correct as the diary entry simply notes, and the date was mis-reported, it seems unlikely that he died at Soupir. Thus, it is most likely that he was one of those missing on 1st. Forty-five members of the Grenadier Guards are buried at Villers-Cotterêts, including 2nd Lieutenant G E Cecil, who was reported as missing on 1st September and is recorded as dying on that day. All those Grenadier Guards are recorded as dying from 1st to 20th September, with Wilfred on 11th. Of the 44 Other Ranks buried at Villers-Cotterêts, seven died on 1st September. Perhaps the others, including Wilfred, were found wounded and evacuated to a hospital, but succumbed to their injuries.

He was posthumously awarded the 1914 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. His headstone is inscribed “GOD GRANT TO HIM ETERNAL REST”. W Beasant is also listed on the Wickwar Village Hall Memorial and is commemorated on his parent’s headstone in
Wickwar. Wilfred’s name also appears in Du Rivigny’s Roll of Honour.

It is possible that Wilfred is related to Janet Gingell, but it has not been possible to find the link (see Charles Hancock’s account).
Finding H J Chappell has been a mammoth task. The name does not appear in the CWGC record and there are many medal records for the name that do not indicate anything more than number, rank, name and regiment. The Village Hall Memorial lists eight Chappells as having served but survived, including H J Chappell. Some are listed also in the Bristol Times and Mirror, along with their regiment, where known. They are:

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*This could be J H T

There is a record of H J Chappell who lived in Wickwar. He was Henry Joseph Chappell, the second son of James and Sarah Chappell, born in Luckington, Wiltshire, in 1867 (baptised 13th October 1867 at Sherston Magna, Wiltshire), which would have made him 47 in 1914 and not liable to serve, although he could have been accepted as a volunteer, as there was no conscription until 1916. In 1871 the name is spelt “Chapple”, but it is undoubtedly the same family.

Henry’s family moved to Wickwar between 1871 and 1881, when they were living in Sodbury Road. Henry Joseph married Mary Jane Townsend on 29th December, 1888, and they were living in the Butty (sic) in 1891 and the Buthay in 1901. In 1911 they were simply declared as living in Wickwar.

They had 11 children, two of whom died in childhood: Mabel Malvina Mary, 1890; Reginald John, 1891; Edith May, 1893 – 1893; Elizabeth Maud, 1894; Hilda, 1896; James Worthy, 1899; Violet Rose, 1901; Jessica Townsend, 1903; William Jack, 1905; Mervyn, 1908 – 1908; and Henry Athelstan, 1912. Edith died at or shortly after birth and Mervyn died aged about two months. I am grateful to Barbara Gadenne’s Neale Family Tree on Ancestry for much of the family information.

Reginald was a police constable in Liverpool and enlisted in the Coldstream Guards on 10th December 1915. James Worthy joined the Royal Army Service Corps.

I can find no service record for Henry Joseph Chappell. There are many medal roll index cards for “Henry J” and “Henry”, but these do not indicate where they come from and with no other information it is impossible to work them backwards. There is no Commonwealth War Graves Commission entry for Henry Joseph, Henry J, or H J. There are three entries for H Chappell and one for Henry Chappell but one is from Manchester and the others do not indicate where they come from. With nothing further to go on it is not possible to eliminate or confirm them.
There is a burial record for Henry Joseph Chappell in Wickwar on 17th May 1920, aged 53 years, although I am unable to identify a grave. This would fit with the Henry Joseph Chappell born in Luckington in 1867. Armed with this information I discovered his death index record and used this to obtain a copy of his death certificate from the General Records Office. This provided the information that he was an “Army Pensioner Late Royal Engineers”.

He died on 12th May 1920 of an abscess of the lung, which he had for 2 years 6 months, and haemoptysis (coughing of blood from the respiratory tract). I then searched for Henry J Chappell in the Royal Engineers and came up with three candidates but could not identify which (if any) he might have been. With an illness that had originated in 1917 I looked to see if any of the three had been awarded the Silver War Medal. 160778 Pioneer Chappell H. J. of the Railway Troops Depot had. He enlisted on 10th April 1916 and was discharged on 25th July 1917 because of “Sickness”. The record confirms that he served overseas, so it would seem that he contracted his illness while on active service. “Philpottrix”, who manages the Neal Family Tree says that he “died of gas received during WW1”. Could the lung abscess and the haemoptysis have been caused by gas?

This would seem to confirm his right to be named on the memorial. As he served overseas and appears to have contracted an illness due to war service he should be commemorated by the CWGC, but, like Charles Gulwell, is not. The Henry Joseph Chappell I have found is the brother of Sarah Chappell, John Derham’s wife; thus their son, John William Derham (Durham), is Henry Joseph Chappell’s nephew.

**Post script**

Since writing the above Maureen Dove, Henry James Chappell’s great grand-daughter, has visited Wickwar. She kindly provided me with the portrait of Henry, his wife, Mary, and their youngest child, Henry Athelstan (right). It is from this picture that I extracted the picture of Henry at the head of this tale. It is likely that this photograph was taken shortly after he completed his training in 1916, before he deployed to France. Maureen commented on how glum Mary and Henry junior looked; was this due to the thought of Henry James’ imminent departure to war?

Henry’s and Mary’s daughter, Hilda, married Clarence Procter. They had two daughters, one of whom was Hilary; Hilary married Robert Hacking and they had a daughter, Maureen, who married John Dove.

I also discovered that Violet May married an American serviceman, Oliver T Noram, in 1943 and returned with him to America, living in...
Minnesota.

Elizabeth Maud is pictured in the uniform of the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) (left). It is likely that she was in the Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps, seconded to the RFC.

Known to her family as Maud, she is seated on the right of the photograph.

Maureen also provided a photograph of Mary Jane Townsend standing outside their house in the Buthay (below). This would appear to be what is now 22 The Buthay, in Woos Cottages.
R Croker

Reginald Clifford Croker was the younger brother of Walter Ernest Croker, the youngest of eight children of Henry Croker and Elizabeth Sansum (Sansam). In 1881 Henry, a General Labourer, and Elizabeth lived at 64 York Street, ss Philip & Jacob, Barton Regis, Bristol. In the 1891 census the family name is shown as Croker. They had two sons; Henry (Harry) born in 1879 and Frederick (Fred), 1880; Henry senior’s mother Sarah, who was widowed, was living with them. There is also mention of Annie Croker, born 1877, but there is no 1881 census and she does not appear in the 1891 census. However, there is an 1891 census record showing one Annie Crocker (sic) as “niece” living with William Charles Bennet and his wife, Annie, at 10 York St, St Philip & Jacob, Bristol. Also living there was William’s mother-in-law, Sarah Crocker. In 1901 Annie was a “boarder” with William and Annie, still at York Street. In 1891 Henry and Elizabeth lived in Freeland Buildings, Eastville and had added Beatrice (1883), William (1885), Mabel (1887) and Walter Ernest (1890) to the family. Elizabeth’s sister, Annie Sansum, was also living with them. Henry was a Gas Stoker, as he was in 1901 by which time they had moved to 40 Redding Road, Stapleton and Reginald Clifford had arrived (1897). By 1911 the family had moved to Wickwar, living at Bagstone, Cromhall, but only Walter and Reginald were living at home, apart, that is, from two granddaughters, Gladys (7) and Ivy (6) Brown, presumably Beatrice’s daughters. Henry was now working as a general labourer at a quarry. Walter was a carpenter at Wickwar Brewery and Reggie was still at school. Henry died in late 1912 in Bristol. Both Reginald and Walter joined up at the outset of the war.

Reginald Clifford Croker enlisted in the 11th (Service) Battalion, the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, 10140 Private Reginald C Croker, possibly at their formation in September 1914. Again, little definitive can be found about his military career. There is a very comprehensive war diary for the battalion. There is a record of seven men being injured on 6th November 1915 at Hannescamps by splinters from “minenwerfen” (mortar shell) but casualties are not named. It is recorded elsewhere that Reginald “died of wounds” on 7th November. Could it be from this action? And why is he commemorated as having no known grave? Perhaps there was a hasty burial and the grave subsequently became obscured. Or perhaps he is one of the 19 unidentified soldiers buried at Hannescamps New Military Cemetery. He is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial (below).

In the Roll of Honour in the Bristol Times and Mirror dated Saturday 26th February 1916 Reginald Croker is listed as missing, but he is officially recorded as dying on 7th November 1915.

11th (Service) Battalion, Royal Warwickshire Regiment was formed in Oct 1914. It formed in Warwick as part of the Third New Army and then moved to Salisbury Plain and joined the Army Troops of the 24th Division. In April 1915 it joined the 112th Brigade of the 37th Division. On 30th July 1915 the battalion was based at Windmill Camp, Ludgershall when it mobilised for war. The battalion’s advance party proceeded at 1.30am “to HAVRE via SOUTHAMPTON”. At 3.35pm and 4.05am the main body, comprising Headquarters and A, B, C and D Companies, travelled by train to Folkstone, where they boarded the SS Onward, leaving at 9.30pm, arriving in Boulogne at 11pm. After an overnight stop the battalion joined a train on 1st August, which had arrived from Le Havre carrying the advance party, and travelled to Audruicq. They detrained there and marched in stages over the next five days to
Hazebrouck where they stayed until 24th August with no significant events. After several moves the battalion returned to Hannescamps on 15th September where they remained until 21st October, a largely uneventful time. They proceeded to St Amand where, on 25th October they took part in a ceremonial parade at Acheux, along with 1st Bn Warwickshire Regt(?), Seaforth Highlanders, Argyile & Sutherland Highlanders, Royal Dublin Fusiliers and 4th Oxford & Buckinghamshire Regiment. The parade was inspected by His Majesty the King and the President of the French Republic. On 28th October the battalion marched to Bienvillers and returned to Hannescamps on 3rd November. By this time the troops must have been quite dizzy! Reginald Croker would have seen and been party to all this happening.

The battalion was now under siege, with German patrols and grenade and minenwerfen (short range mortar) attacks. The War Diary for 7th November 1915: “Sergt Gilbert and 11 grenadiers went out to ambush a German patrol. They left LYCEUM sap [trench] at 3.30 AM. At dawn the mist lifted very rapidly and it would appear that Sgt Gilbert did not consider it advisable to return to the trenches in daylight. At 9PM Sgt Gilbert’s party not having returned Sgt HOLLOYOAK and Pte Jones (A Coy) went out in search of them. At 10PM they returned not having found any trace of the party and it is feared that they must have been captured.” The diary the following day says, “No further news of Sgt Gilbert’s patrol.”

Reginald Croker is recorded as dying on this day and he may have been one of the party of twelve that went out and did not return. A report in the Cheltenham Chronicle and Gloucester Graphic dated Saturday, Feb 5th, 1916 states:

“The little town of Wickwar, which has been badly hit by the war, is much concerned at the news that Pte. R. C. Croker, who formerly held a responsible position at Messrs. Arnold, Perrett, and Co. has been missing for some time. He belonged to the 11th Batt. Warwickshire Regt. And was serving in France. He went out with a patrol of 12 men, who never returned, and are expected to have been captured or cut up by the enemy. Pte. Croker was a general favourite at Wickwar, and that he is alive and well is the earnest wish of all.”

There is also a report in the Cheltenham Chronicle and Gloucester Graphic dated Saturday, Feb 5th, 1916:

Much concern is felt in Wickwar as to the fate of three soldiers belonging to the town who have been reported missing for some time past. Their names are Pte. Lewis Townsend (Royal Irish Pioneers), Pte. George Cullimore (10th Gloucesters) and Pte. R. C. Croker (11th Warwicks). Nothing has been heard of Pte. Townsend since September, and Ptes. Cullimore and Croker have been officially reported as missing since September and November respectively. THE CHIEL.

Reginald was posthumously awarded the 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and the Victory Medal. His record shows that he qualified for the 1914-15 Star on 31st July 1915, which ties in with the battalion’s mobilisation date above. He is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial. He is also commemorated on the Village Hall Memorial.

A record of Soldier’s Effects shows he had pay credit of £4.0s.4d which was divided between his mother, Elizabeth, and brothers William and Frederick. A War Gratuity of £3 was paid to his mother.
The Great-Great Niece of Reginald and his brother Walter is Sandra Symons, neé Nelmes. Her father, Ronald John Nelmes was married to Hazel Mary Fifield. Ronald’s father was the son of William Frank Nelmes and Annie M Brooks. Annie was the daughter of John Symes Brooks and Annie Kate Croker: Annie was the sister of William and Reginald Croker. I am grateful to Sandra for information.

W E Croker

Walter Ernest Croker, born 1890, was the elder brother of Reginald Clifford Croker (see R C Croker for family information).

As in so many cases, there is a paucity of information after the 1911 census, when Walter was living at home. Walter’s Record of Soldier’s Effects names Isabella Wilson Croker as his widow, but I can find no record of that marriage. It also shows that she subsequently married someone called Ross before April 1920.

It is also unclear precisely when he enlisted in the Royal Field Artillery, or where he served, but records show that he was 10804 Gunner Walter E Croker and served with A Battery, 190 Brigade, Royal Field Artillery.

190th Bde RFA was raised at Wimbledon in late 1915, with the aim of recruiting more than 700 men from the local district, and was known as the Wimbledon Brigade, or Wimbledon’s Own. It was the very last voluntary unit to be raised for “Lord Kitchener’s Army”. Recruiting commenced on 6th September 1915, and recruits had to report to local recruiting offices, such as the Assembly Hall and the Town Hall.

How did Walter come to join a local unit so far from his home town?

Although I can find no further detail, Ancestry shows Walter as being a member of the Royal Horse Artillery and Royal Field Artillery. Perhaps he joined the RHA and later transferred to the RFA. This would explain why his regimental number differs from the early recruits to 190th Bde, which were L/4xxxx (L for Local). Certainly, when he died he was serving with A Battery, 190th Bde RFA.

CXC (190) Brigade Royal Field Artillery trained initially on Wimbledon Common, but in November 1915 they moved to Waterloo Barracks, Aldershot. The brigade served as Divisional artillery with 41st division and embarked for France on 6th May 1916, on the transport ship “Anglo-Canadian”. Their first real action was on the Somme during September and October in the Flers area – Battles of Flers-Courcelette and Transloy Ridges. Re-organisation in November 1916 saw many men transferred in to increase the establishment; perhaps this was when Walter joined them? In 1917 they took part in the battles of Messines, Pilkem Ridge and Menin Road, before being sent to Italy in December 1917. They took the front line near the River Piave, near Treviso, before being ordered back to France in February 1918. They then fought at the Battle of St Quentin, Bapaume and Arras before moving to Flanders for the Battle of the Lys, taking part in the Final Advance in Flanders at Courtrai and Oosteghem. At the Armistice, 41st was selected to join the Army of Occupation and took over the left section of the Cologne bridgehead on 12th January 1919. Demobilisation began in March and the Division was renamed the London Division.

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Having joined the RHA/RFA as a Gunner (Private), Walter rose rapidly through the ranks, achieving the equivalent rank to modern day Staff Sergeant. He is recorded as being a “shoeing smith” and an armourer. It is likely that it would have been his job to maintain the horses that pulled the field guns in good condition, as well as maintaining the guns. Shoeing Smith is still a recognised trade in the army; they shod horses and knew the Blacksmith’s trade.

Walter is listed as dying in action in Belgium or France on 28th March 1918. The War Diary is silent on casualties on 28th March, noting only that “Bde HQ in Essarts heavily shelled – 3 huts hit – decided to move back to Hannescamps...” Walter is buried at Gommecourt Wood New Cemetery.

The Battle of St Quentin began on March 21st 1918 and was the initial response to the German Spring offensive, Operation Michael, the aim of which was to break through the Allied lines, driving them back north west into the sea at the Channel ports. The Chief of the German General Staff, General Ludendorff, change the plan two days later, driving due west with the aim of separating the French and British armies.

The map shows the progress made by the German forces, progressively driving back the allied line. By 28th March the focus of the German attack turned to Arras. By this time the German Army had advanced some 40 miles, but now the allied line held more firmly and the German advance was largely repulsed. It is likely that this is when Walter Croker died, although no precise details are available. Gommecourt Wood New Cemetery is just a few miles from the battlefield.

A record of Soldier’s Effects shows that at the time of his death, Walter had a pay credit of £10.3s, which was paid to his widow, Isabella Wilson Croker, on 18 October 1918. He was subsequently credited with a War Gratuity of £16.10s on 13th September 1919, which was paid to his widow on 20th April 1920, but she was now named as Isabella W Ross.

Walter was posthumously awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. He is also commemorated on the Wickwar Village Hall Memorial.

A transcript of a letter from one S/s R Deakins, written to Walter’s mother after his death is produced at Chapter 6.
G Cullimore

George Cullimore was born in Iron Acton in 1894, the ninth of 12 children of Anthony William Cullimore and Emily Denning. His grandparents were William and Mary Ann Cullimore. In 1861 William was an agricultural labourer and they lived at Earthcott Villas with their children: Charles, 11; Anthony, George’s father, 9; Elizabeth, 5; Celia, 3; and George, less than 1 month. In 1871 they were registered at Earthcott Green, but Elizabeth was no longer living at home. Anthony was born in Stinchcombe and Emily in Wickwar.

Anthony married Emily Denning on 28 February 1874 in Bristol and by 1881 he was an agricultural labourer, living at High Street, Iron Acton with Emily and three children: William G, 6; Elizabeth; 4; and Edward, 2. In 1891 the family was recorded as living at No 12 Grange Villa, Iron Acton. Anthony was now a “Gardener, Domestic”. The family had increased to include: Sarah, 8; Charles, 6; Emily, 5; and Reginald, 1. There is no mention of Elizabeth and Edward; what happened to them? Fortunately, nothing untoward, it would appear.

There is an 1891 census record of a twelve-year-old Edward Cullimore, born in Iron Acton, living with his uncle in Great Marsden, Colne, Lancashire, working as a cotton spinner. It appears that he married Minnie Maria Mundy in Dursley in December 1905 and lived at The Close, Old Town, Wotton-under-Edge, with four children aged 4 years to 2 months.

It seems that by 1891 Elizabeth was living with her grandparents, William and Mary, in Tockington and her “occupation” is “Monitor in Infant School”! In 1901 she was a servant in Redcliffe, Bristol. She married Joseph Townsend, of Yate, on 27th July 1909, at St Leonard’s Church, Tortworth.

In 1901 the family was at Seton Lane, Iron Acton. It had expanded to include George, 8; Harold, 6; William, 5; and Daisy, 3. Anthony was a “Labourer on Railway”. The family lived in Iron Acton until 1904, when they moved to Bagstone, presumably after Anthony’s death, aged about 50, in March that year. He was buried at Wickwar on 22nd March 1904. In 1911 Emily was living in Cowship Lane, Cromhall, with three sons, Reginald, 20, George, 17, and William, 14. There were also two grandchildren; George G Cullimore, 7 and Edith Gulwell, 4. Sarah Cullimore (George’s sister) married Charles Gulwell (see later account for Charles Gulwell) and had a child, Edith. Reginald married Edith Maud Hancock, a widow, on 15th November 1919, in Wickwar Parish Church. As Edith Maud Fowler she married, first, Charles James Hancock, at Wickwar on 6th May 1915, but Charles was killed in action on 4th November 1918 (see Charles Hancock report).

George was a general labourer in 1911. At some time, he joined the 10th (Service) Battalion, The Gloucestershire Regiment, as a private with service number 11636. He probably answered the call when the regiment was formed. His regimental number differs by only 12 from that of Alfred Lovell (11648), who also joined the 10th Bn The Gloucesters; perhaps they enlisted together?

10th Bn, Gloucestershire Regiment was raised at Bristol in September 1914 as part of Kitchener’s Third New Army and was attached to 26th Division. They moved to Salisbury Plain for training and by November 1914 had moved to billets in Cheltenham. They returned to Salisbury Plain in April 1915 to complete their training. They proceeded to France on 8th August, 1915 and joined 1st Brigade, 1st Division on 17th. George’s medal record states that he “disembarked” on 9th August 1915. They first saw action in the Battle of Loos.
The Battle of Loos began on 25th September, 1915 and lasted until 15th October. It was the biggest assault of 1915 and the first in which British troops used poisonous chlorine gas and it was the first mass attack by the New Army units, of which 10th Gloucesters was one. According to the Regimental War Diary (see Appendix), the unit strength was 30 officers and 985 Other Ranks. On the morning of 25th September 10th Bn “was ordered to deliver an assault on the first line system of German defences, which included three lines of entrenchments with the primary objective Hulluch and Puits”. The sketch map, left, shows the position of the British Front Line and the German Front line and 2nd line. The distance between Hulluch and Loos is about 2.5 miles. The attack started at 6.30am, “with the accompaniment of gas and smoke”. This was the first time that British troops had used gas and the “wind was not quite favourable with the result that from the start several men were affected”. The effect of the wind on the smoke also disoriented the troops and the line of their attack “deflected” to the right. In spite of heavy resistance, the battalion “pushed home with the utmost resolution over the second German line into the third, and up the flanking communications trenches to eastwards.” The diary records that, “The officers fell as the position of their bodies showed, leading their men and 16 out of 21 officers were lost. The bodies of our dead indicated how they died with faces to the enemy.” The battalion’s losses were colossal, the war diary recording, “During night, under heavy rain, unit was reformed, some 60 survivors assembling, increased by third day to 130.” It was probably in this first attack that George Cullimore lost his life as he is recorded as dying on 25th September 1915.

Many of the dead were buried in graves in makeshift cemeteries and later transferred to the British War Cemetery that was established at Loos-en-Gohelle.

10th Bn went on to join the Battle of the Somme in 1916, followed by action during the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line and the Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele)

George Cullimore is buried in Dud Corner Cemetery, Loos-en-Gohelle. The Roll of Honour in the Bristol Times and Mirror dated Saturday 26th February 1916 shows him as “missing”. He was posthumously awarded the 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal. His Record of Soldiers’ Effects show that he had a credit of £1. 8s.8d. which was paid to his mother, Emily. Emily was also awarded a War Gratuity of £3.10. He is also listed on the Wickwar Village Hall Memorial.

George was also mentioned in the report in the Cheltenham Chronicle and Gloucester Graphic dated Saturday, Feb 5th, 1916:

Much concern is felt in Wickwar as to the fate of three soldiers belonging to the town who have been reported missing for some time past. Their names are Pte. Lewis Townsend (Royal Irish Pioneers), Pte George Cullimore (10th Gloucesters) and Pte. R. C. Croker (11th Warwicks). Nothing has been heard of Pte. Townsend since September, and Ptes. Cullimore and Croker have been officially reported as missing since September and November respectively. THE CHIEL.
H G Dando

Herbert George Dando was born in 1891, the eldest son of James Dando and Louisa Griffin. The family lived at 10 Balaclava Road in the parish of St. Mary’s, Fishponds, Bristol. James was born in Iron Acton in 1856, a coal miner. Louisa’s parents, George and Louisa Griffin, were from Rangeworthy, where they maintained ties. Louisa was baptised on 6th August 1865 at Rangeworthy. Herbert was baptised on 27th September 1891 at Rangeworthy. Herbert had nine siblings: Lillian, born 1887; Gertrude, 1890; Ethel, 1894; Mabel, 1898; Lionel, 1899; Harold, 1901; Audrey, 1903; Eunice, 1905; and Linda, 1914. In the 1901 census Louisa is shown as Head of Household but married. An entry for James is started, but then crossed out. Living with Louisa in Rangeworthy are Ethel, Lionel, Harold, Audrey, Eunice and Louisa’s 76 year-old mother, also called Louisa. The census shows that of her ten children, one had died.

In 1901, Lillian, aged 13, was not living at home and I can find no other census record for her. In 1911 she is visiting a family in London and is declared to be a clerk in a builder’s office. She married John Cartmell on 9th Nov 1912.

In 1911 it appears that Herbert George Dando was lodging with William and Lenora Gowen in Eastville, Bristol, and working as a shop labourer. In March 1916 Herbert married Gertrude Mary Babb, the daughter of Richard and Hester (Esther) Babb of Bristol, and on 16th August of that year their daughter, Vera Iris May, was born. Gertrude died in August 1976 in Somerset at the age of 94 and Vera in 2005, aged 89. Herbert’s niece, Hilda, the daughter of his brother, Harold, lives in Yate and provided valuable information about Herbert and his family. Apart from a single page of an enlistment record, I can find no information about Herbert’s enlistment into the army. Interestingly, this page shows his next of kin as his father, Mr J Dando, of Vine Cottage, Timsbury, Bath, so it might be a red herring look alike. It is clear that at some point he enlisted in the Queen’s (Royal West Surrey) Regiment, with service number G/22538 in the rank of Private. In all other papers, his next of kin is shown to be his wife, Gertrude, resident at 11 St Lawrence Avenue, St Mark’s, Bristol.

His Record of Soldiers Effects show that Herbert served in 1st Bn (2nd Foot). War records indicate that this battalion was involved in an attack on the Hindenburg Line on 23rd April 1917. This attack failed and the battalion suffered 26 killed, 101
wounded and 308 missing, of all ranks. Herbert is recorded as having died on that day and is commemorated on the Arras memorial, so must have been one of those killed or missing.

An extract from the Unit’s War Diary for 22nd – 24th April 1917 is shown, above. The original War Diary for April 1917, along with routine orders, operational orders and operation report are in Part 7.

Herbert was posthumously awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. His outstanding pay of £2.14s.8d and War Gratuity of £4.10s were paid to his widow, Gertrude. He is commemorated on the Wickwar Village Hall Memorial and on the Rangeworthy Memorial.

The record from Soldiers Died in the Great War states that he was previously 21880 in the Somerset Light Infantry, but it has not been possible to explore this.

Herbert’s niece, Hilda G Snell (nee Dando), who kindly provided the photograph and information about him, lives in Yate. Interestingly, in the photo he is displaying the cap badge of the Somerset Light Infantry.

In a sad coincidence, Herbert Dando died on the same day and in the same battle as John Derham.
J Derham

John William Derham was born in 1895, the son of John Derham and Sarah Chappell. I can find little of John Derham in census forms. However, I can find a burial record for a John Derham who was buried in Wickwar on 10th November 1899, aged 34. This would mean he was born in 1865. It also means that John William was four years old when his father died. This could fit with the census information that we do have, showing that in 1901 Sarah Derham was a widow, living at 6 Sodbury Road, Wickwar. Born in 1877 in Luckington, Wiltshire, the daughter of James and Sarah Chappell, Sarah was twelve years younger than her husband John. By 1881 the Chappell family had moved to Wickwar, living at Sodbury Road.

Sarah married John Derham in the first quarter of 1894 but by 1901 she was a widow, suggesting that the burial record above is for her husband. Living with Sarah in 1901 were sons John William, age 6, Frederick James, 4 and daughter May Elizabeth, 2. Also living at the house were her parents, described as “lodgers”, and their grandchildren of James and Sarah, William F, age 16, and Elizabeth M, 7, described as “lodger” and “visitor” respectively. I have been unable to determine which of Sarah’s elder siblings these were the children of. Sarah’s brother was Henry Joseph Chappell (see earlier account); thus, he was John William Durham’s uncle.

Sarah married Frances Thomas Morley, a quarryman of Wickwar, on 7th April 1906 at Chipping Sodbury Register Office. Frances had previously had a colourful military career, having served in the Royal Field Artillery from 10th April 1890 to 1st February 1905, serving in India. He rose to the rank of Sgt Farrier, but was subsequently reduced to the ranks following a court martial, having “committed crime”.

He joined up again at the outbreak of WW1, serving with the BEF. It was Frances who John refers to as “father” in letters home to his mother, when he was serving in WW1. Frances survived the war and died in 1944, aged 74. Frances Morley is listed on the Roll of Honour in the Bristol Times and Mirror dated Saturday 26th February 1916 as being a member of the Army Service Corps.

Sarah and Frances had three children: William Thomas, born 1907; Albert Francis, 1911 and James Henry, 1913. Sadly, James died on 14th July 1913.

While I have been able to find a comparative treasure trove of detail about John Derham’s step-father, there is little about John. He enlisted as 11338 Pte John Durham in the 8th (Service) Battalion, Somerset Light Infantry in Ferndale, Glamorgan. From the badge on his left sleeve he was a regimental signaller, so would have been responsible for his troop’s communications. This is supported by letters he sent from Plymouth, where he
was attending a “course of signalling”. His letter from the front was from “Signaller Headquarters”. All of the military documentation records his (and his parents’) name as Durham. Indeed, in letters home he uses the name “Durham”.

8th (S) Bn Somerset Light Infantry was initially part of 63rd Bde, 21st Division, but transferred with the brigade to 37th Division on 9th July 1916. The battalion’s War Diary records that on 15th April 1917, “The battalion moved off 9-15a.m. arriving in billets MONTENESCOURT staying one night, from here the battalion moved up to ARRAS and then into action on 20th.

“April 20th to 28th Battalion in Action. (See operations)

Total. Casualties. Officers 18. Other Ranks. 296.”

This total is then broken down: Officers killed – 4; Officers wounded – 14; Other ranks killed – 17; Other ranks wounded – 80; Other ranks missing – 99. All the casualties occurred on 23rd or 28th April.

John died on 23rd April 1917, the same day that Herbert Dando died, and is also commemorated on the Arras Memorial. His commanding Officer, Lt Col John Willoughby Scott, died on the same day and is buried at Cabaret-Rouge British Cemetery, Souchez. John was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. His record of Soldier’s Effects show that his mother was paid £2.5s.4d. credit owed and £12 War Gratuity. He is also named on the Wickwar Village Hall Memorial.

The letters home are quite revealing of his state of mind. A Post Card addressed to Mrs S Morley at Hill House Cottage says, “Dear Mother, Just a few lines to let you know that I have got back alright hope you are the same. Dear Mother I think we are shifting from here on Friday but....” There the card ends. It was presumably sent on return to Plymouth, following a period of home leave. He also mentions Will Selwood, who was another Wickwar casualty, who was due to be drafted.

There is also a letter to his brother, Fred, who was also serving in WW1. I cannot tell what unit Fred served in from his uniform. However, Marion Vettori confirms that this is John’s younger brother and he also served in 8th Bn Somerset Regiment. He appears to be wearing the ribbon of either the 1914 Star or the 1914-15 Star, which was not instituted until December 1918, so Fred had clearly survived the war. Coincidentally, on the same medal roll as John William Durham appears a 19869 Pte Frederick Durham of the 8th Bn Somerset Light Infantry, who later transferred to the 1st Bn. He was discharged to the reserve on 15th Jan 1919. Frederick died in December 1964 in Bristol. Their mother, Sarah died in June 1965.

Marion Vettori (néé Morley) is the granddaughter of Frances and Sarah Morley, and the half great niece of John. I am grateful to her for providing the photographs of her relations and for additional information of her family and others.

Copies and transcripts of the letters are contained in Chapter 6.
R Eacott

Ronald James Eacott was born in the first quarter of 1895, the son of James George Eacott and Georgina Foote. He was baptised in Rangeworthy on 26th May that year and the baptism record clearly shows that he was living at Earthcott, the son of a farmer.

James was born in Alveston in 1860, where he lived with his parents, Philip Eacott, a farmer of 75 acres, and Emma, at Earthcott Green, Alveston. He was baptised on 13th April 1862. By 1881 Philip Eacott had died and Emma had taken over running of the farm. In 1891 they are registered as farming at Bagstone Farm, Wickwar. James married Georgina in the third quarter of 1894. I can find no census record for him for 1901. He died in February, 1906 and was buried at Rangeworthy on 3rd March.

Georgina was born in Chiselborough, Somerset in 1869 and was living with her parents, Henry and Elizabeth Foote at Pebditch Cottage, Chiselborough. She had a sister, Helena, born in London in 1866. In 1881 the family was still living at Pebditch Cottage, but Helena was not living at home. In 1891 Elizabeth is widowed and living with a daughter “E.L.F”, an infant mistress, at Winterbourne. E.L.F is the age that Helena would have been. At the same time Georgina was living at Gainer House, Rangeworthy Road, Rangeworthy, and is also described as an infant mistress. Georgina died in 1896 and was buried on 10th February at St Peter’s, Frampton Cotterell.

In 1901 Ronald was living with his grandmother, Elizabeth Foote, a widow age 63, and her daughter Emma Eleanor, age 35, who was a teacher. It would appear that “Helena” has turned into “Emma Eleanor” over the years! They were living at Frampton Common, Frampton Cotterell. It would seem that Elizabeth has given up farming. There is no indication what had happened to Ronald’s father. In 1911 the three were living at Bristol Road, Frampton Cotterell and Ronald was “working in a gentleman’s garden”. The 1911 census shows that Elizabeth had two children, one of whom was still living (Emma) and one who had died (Georgina). Emma married Charles Roach on 22 August 1911 at St Peter’s, Frampton Cotterell. Emma was named as Ronald’s next of kin.

Ronald James Eacott joined the 9th (Service) Battalion, The Leicestershire Regiment on 12th September, 1914 at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, on a three-year engagement. He was assigned the regimental number 15059. He was 19 yrs 6 mths and a railway porter. He served with the regiment in the UK until 28th July 1915 and arrived in France on 29th July, remaining there until his death, a total of 2 years and 5 days on the front. His total service was 3 years 20 days. He was just 5ft 5in tall and weighed but 8st 10lbs, with blue eyes and dark brown hair.

9th Bn Leicestershire Regt was part of 110th Infantry Brigade, the “Leicester” Brigade, along with 6th, 7th and 8th Bns. The brigade was part of 37th Infantry Division. The battalions all formed in August/September 1914.

In July 1915 110th Brigade formed up at Ludgershall. On 28th July all Bde HQ and Bn transport was moved by rail to Southampton, where it was shipped to Le Havre. Personnel travelled to Folkstone on 29th and crossed overnight to Boulogne on the St Seiriol, arriving at about 2.15am. On 30th Bn HQ moved to St Omer and the battalions to Watten by rail. On 9th July 1916 110th Brigade transferred to 21st Division and saw action at the Somme. In 1917 they took part in the German retreat to the
Hindenburg Line, the Arras offensive, the Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele) and the operation at Cambrai.

The Leicestershire Regiment’s website notes, “In a key battle at Polygon Wood near Ypres in October 1917, Lieutenant Colonel Philip Bent was awarded a posthumous VC when in command of 9th Battalion.” The Battle of Polygon Wood took place from 26th September to 3rd October 1917, a key element of the Third Battle of Ypres. It was during this battle, on 1st October, that L/Cpl Ronald Eacott died, along with his Commanding Officer. At the end of the October entry the War Diary summarises the battalion’s casualties for that month:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Officers</th>
<th>OR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Killed</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wounded</td>
<td>7*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 50
- 213
- 38
- 301

On 6th January 1917 Ronald had reported sick and was diagnosed with tonsillitis and admitted to a field hospital. He was discharged back to his unit on about 26th January. He was promoted to Lance Corporal (L/Cpl) (unpaid) on 6th June 1917, granted leave from 22nd August to 1st September and on 14th September was made substantive (paid) L/Cpl. There is then a virtually unreadable entry that appears to be on 5th October 1917 stating that he had been killed in action.

A further document dated 12th February 1918 instructed that Ronald’s personal property and medals should be sent to Mrs Elizabeth Foote c/o Mrs C Roach, East View, Bagstone, Wickwar, Gloucestershire.

A particularly poignant document is a form completed on 23rd August 1919 that lists Ronald’s surviving relatives. It notes that he has no surviving wife, children or parents or other “full blood” relatives. It does list some “half-blood” relatives: brothers and sisters. They were: Alfred Lionel Eacott, aged 18, who was a Private serving with the Hampshire Regiment in Catterick, Yorkshire; William Neale Eacott, aged 14; James George Eacott, aged 12; Margaret Miriam(?), age 17; and Lorna Emma, age 15. All were living at Rangeworthy. It then lists under “Grandparents”, Elizabeth Foote (grandmother), age 88. Under “Uncles and Aunts by blood” it reads,

“Emma Eleanor Roach (Aunt) Who brought up deceased Soldier from Infancy & who was to her as a Son until his death.”

Her address is given as East View, Bagstone, Wickwar, Gloucestershire.

Ronald Eacott is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial, as is his Commanding Officer, and also on the Wickwar Village Hall Memorial. He was awarded the 1914/15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. He is also commemorated on the Rangeworthy Memorial.
C Gulwell

It is virtually impossible to find any verifiable history of Charles Gulwell prior to his joining the army. There are census records of 1881, 1891 and 1901 for a Charles GOWELL, the son of George and Ann GOWELL, but they are probably two different people. The 1881 census records a child born in about 1872, as does 1891, but the 1901 Census Charles was born in about 1877. From his service record we can deduce that Charles Gulwell was born in 1877 (he was 38 when he attested in April 1915). We also know that our Charles Gulwell married Sarah Jane Cullimore (George Cullimore’s sister) on 10th June, 1905 at Wickwar. Sarah was born in about 1883, the daughter of Anthony Cullimore and Emily Denning. Anthony and Emily were married at Holy Trinity, Bristol on 26th February 1874. As we can find no census record for Charles we have to rely on his service papers to tell us that he and Sarah had two children: Edith Mary, born 28th March 1906; and Grace Annie, born 17th April 1913. Edith was baptised on 20th May 1906; at the time the family was living at Pincotts Lane. I can find no 1911 census record for Charles, but I can find one for Emily Cullimore, Sarah’s mother. Living with her at Cowship Lane, Cromhall were three sons, grandson George Cullimore (age 7) and Edith Gulwell (age 4). Where were Charles and Sarah Jane? They were clearly still together as they had another child, Grace Annie, in 1913?

His military records also tell us that Sarah Jane died before Charles joined the army and Edith is named as his next of kin. There is a record of a Sarah J Gulwell dying in September 1913, registered in Keynsham, but with no other information it is impossible to confirm this was Charles’ wife. Edith married Charles Henry George Wheeler at Winterbourne Down on 2nd August 1930. She died in June 1969, in the Sodbury District. I can find no trace of Grace, other than on Charles’ military records.

Charles Gulwell joined the Gloucestershire Regiment at Wotton-under-Edge on 6th April 1915 as a Private with regimental number 20029. He was 38 years old. His Attestation Papers show that he was now a widower and his next of kin was his daughter Edith, living at the High Street, Wickwar. She was just 9 years old and her sister Grace just 2, but we do not know who was caring for them. Perhaps some of the other Gulwells that we have encountered were related and took care of Edith and Grace. Emily Cullimore died in 1941 and was buried at Wickwar on 18th September, aged 86.

Charles Gulwell never saw active service. He was stationed at Gravesend, Kent and was undertaking training at Shornmead Musketry Camp from 26th June to 7th July 1915. Later he was “employed on harvesting work on Denton’s Farm, Gravesend, during the following periods 30-8-15 to 13-9-15 & 27-10-15 to 10-11-15”. He was admitted to hospital on 4th December 1915 and was diagnosed with Pulmonary Tuberculosis and recommended for discharge by a Medical Board on 22nd December 1915. He was discharged from the army on 14th January 1916. He was admitted to Cranham Lodge Sanatorium, Stroud, on 9th February 1917 – it is not clear what he did in the meantime. While at Stroud, on 4th March 1917, he applied for the Silver War Badge, which was awarded on 20 March.

It was initially determined that his illness was not the result of military service. Charles appealed this and the decision was reversed.

Charles died on 7th March 1919 at the age of 46. It is not clear where he died, but his death was registered in Chipping Sodbury area. He is recorded as being buried at Wickwar on 12th March 1919. Given that he died from a medical condition that arose from his military service, it is strange that there is no Commonwealth War Graves Commission record, as there is for Leslie Lambert (see later account). Perhaps it is because he does not have a War Grave, unlike Alfred William Powell.
Charles is not listed on the Roll of Honour in the Bristol Times and Mirror dated Saturday 26th February 1916. C Gulwell is listed on the Village Hall Memorial in the panel of those who served but survived.

Perhaps the most famous occupant of Cranham Lodge was George Orwell, real name Eric Blair. He was admitted in 1949, gravely ill with consumption. Despite his illness he completed and had published his novel, 1984. He wrote of Cranham, “I live in a so-called chalet, one of a row of continuous wooden huts with glass doors, each chalet measuring about 15 feet by 12 feet. There are hot water pipes, a washing basin, a chest of drawers and wardrobe, besides the usual bed tables etc. Outside is a glass-roofed veranda. Everything is brought by hand – none of those abominable rattling trolleys, which one is never out of the sound of in a hospital. Not much noise of radios either – all of the patients have headphones.” Whilst some of the features described by Orwell are likely to be those of Charles’ experience others will have been somewhat different. Thanks to the Stroud News and Journal for the foregoing item.
Charles James Hancock’s parents were Oliver Hancock and Sarah Jane Blakeney. Oliver was born at Bourton on the Hill on 6th January 1867 and baptised 14th July 1867 at Bourton on the Hill and died on 21st March 1935 at Wickwar (Wogan family tree). Sarah was born in Hawkesbury Upton in 1872 and in 1881 was living at Wickwar Road, Yate. Sarah died on 20th August 1956 (Wogan family tree).

Oliver was recruited into the Gloucester Regiment (Service No. 1224) on 18th August 1885 at Bristol, for a term of 12 years - for the first seven years in Army Service, and for the remaining five years in the 1st Class of the Army Reserve. At the time of joining he was 19 years 8 months old and a labourer/carter. He had brown hair, grey eyes, a fresh complexion and was 5 feet 6 inches tall. After six months in England he joined the 2nd Battalion Gloucester Regiment of Foot in East India and remained there for a further 6 years. His record shows that he was in the following stations: Ahmednagar, Satara, Poona, Ahmedabad, Deesa, Mt. Ubu, Nasirabad, Tarnagash and Nasirabad, and that he returned to England aboard HMS Euphrates on 11th January 1893.

Oliver was discharged to the Army Reserve on 14th February 1893.

The Appleton family tree (Ancestry) gives the following account of Oliver’s military career:

Detailed accounts of Oliver and Charles can be found at [http://www.zen174630.zen.co.uk/hancock4.htm](http://www.zen174630.zen.co.uk/hancock4.htm) and [www.zen174630.zen.co.uk/hancock5.htm](http://www.zen174630.zen.co.uk/hancock5.htm) respectively.

Oliver and Sarah married on 26th April 1893 at Wickwar, just three months after his return to England. Oliver was a brewery labourer; he died in 1935 and was buried on 25th March. In 1901 the family lived at Hill House Cottage, Yate and in 1911 at Gravesend, Wickwar.

Charles was born on 31st March 1894 in Yate; in 1911 he was a domestic groom. He had five siblings: Sarah Ann, 1897; Albert Oliver, 1899; Bessie Emma, 1900; James William, 1908; and Jane Elizabeth, 1910. James died on 11th June 1977 and Jane in August 1995 (Wogan family tree).

Charles married Edith Maud Fowler on May 6th 1915. Edith was born in Pucklechurch on 5th September 1894 and in 1911 was working as a domestic servant to Robert Llewellyn-Mathews, a bachelor farmer, at Falfield Green Farm. They had a child, Eli Albert James, on 20th August 1916. Following Charles’ death in 1918, Edith married Reginald James Cullimore (George Cullimore’s elder brother) on 15th November 1919. They had two children: Eric W, born 31st July 1921; and Lilian M, 31st July 1923. Reginald died on 7th August 1956 and Eric in June 1964. Edith died on 24th October 1977 in Eastbourne. I am grateful to the Horne Family Tree on Ancestry for information about Edith and the Appleton Family Tree for Charles’ date of birth and the photographs of Charles and Edith.
Eli married Betty Joan Miller in Eastbourne on 19th September 1945. They had a daughter, Janet, born in September 1952. Eli died on 6th August 1972 at Eastbourne. Betty died on 6th September 1976 (thanks to the Horne family tree for this information). There is a record of a marriage in about December 1975 in Eastbourne between Janet Hancock and Gary E Baldy.

I can find no military history for Charles. He enlisted as Pte 52097 in the Gloucestershire Regiment. According to a report in the Dursley Gazette (see below) he enlisted in about June or July 1918 and trained with the 4th Gloucesters in Northumberlad, having been rejected five times previously because of knee trouble. He joined the 1/5th Battalion, presumably on their return to France from Italy. The battalion was formed in August 1914 at Gloucester as part of the Gloucester and Worcester Brigade of the South Midland Division. It moved to Chelemsford via the Isle of Wight and Swindon before landing at Boulogne on 29th March 1915, when the formation became the 144th Brigade of the 48th Division. The battalion saw action in many battles of the Western Front before being transferred to Italy in November 1917, to reinforce the troops there. On 11th September, 1918 the battalion left the 48th Division and returned to France, joining the 75th Brigade of the 25th Division, which had reformed in France that month. The division then saw action in the final push across Picardy, in what is known as the 100 Day Offensive, from 8th August to 11th November. It ended in victory, but there were heavy losses on the way. The final battle, which took place on 4th November 1918, was the Battle of the Sambre near Landrecies, which involved a crossing of the Sambre-Oise canal – a formidable obstacle. The canal was six feet deep and 60-70 feet wide. The War Diary of 1st/5th Gloucesters for 4th November (see Appendix) notes that 75th Bde launched an attack on Landrecies at 0615 hours. 1st/5th Gloucesters were on the right, 1st/8th Warwicks on the left and 1st/6th Worcesters in reserve. For the Gloucesters, A Company manned the right front, C Company the left, while D Company were “moppers up” and B Company were in reserve. The objective was to reach the bank of the Sambre Canal, bridging and crossing it if possible. The attack started in thick mist which caused confusion initially, with the canal being reached and some of B Company crossing it. The Worcesters then came through and crossed, followed by the Gloucesters. As they progressed they captured about 350 prisoners, three Anti-Tank Guns, one Field Gun, one Motor Ambulance, one Horse Ambulance and numerous Machine Guns. During this the battalion suffered the loss of two officers and twelve Other Ranks. Four officers and 49 Other Ranks were wounded. One of those who died on that day was Pte Charles James Hancock. He is buried at the Landrecies British Cemetery, along with all his dead comrades. He died exactly one week before the Armistice was announced.

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**WICKWAR SOLDIER KILLED IN ACTION**

On November 4th only a week before the signing of the armistice Pte. Charles James Hancock, of Wickwar, was killed in action in France, where he had served just one month. The official news arrived on Tuesday, another communication stating that he and his officer fell together.

Private Hancock joined the Colours only five months ago, previous to which he had been five times rejected, owing to knee trouble. He trained with the 4th Gloucesters in Northumberlad. In civilian life he was employed by Mr. Chamberlayne, of Hill House Farm, Yate. He was only 24 and leaves a widow and a child. For these, and for the parents Mr. and Mrs. Oliver Hancock the deepest sympathy is felt.

Dursley Gazette 7th December 1918:

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Dursley Gazette 7th December 1918:

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Another who died on the same day, in the same action was the war poet, Wilfred Owen, a Lieutenant in the Manchester Regiment. Owen’s mother heard of his death by telegram on Armistice Day as the church bells in Shrewsbury were ringing out in celebration.

Charles was awarded posthumously the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. His Soldier’s Effects record shows that his widow, Edith, was awarded £6.14s on 7th March 1919, which included £5 War Gratuity.

Janet Gingell is Charles Hancock’s 1st Cousin 1x removed. Her mother was Elsie Hannah Blaken, who had married Robert John Mills. Elsie’s father, Janet’s grandfather was Frank William Bleaken whose sister, Sarah Jane Bleakney (I hope you are keeping up with the name variations!), married Oliver Hancock and had a son, Charles Hancock.

Until Janet and I sat down to research the connection, she did not know precisely how she was related to Charles Hancock; it was just family folklore. Janet thinks that she is also related to William James Beasant, but does not know how. It could be through Mary Ann Elizabeth Blakeney, but I have not been able to find the link.
C W Hitchings

Charles William Hitchings was the son of Arthur Hitchings and Malinda Amelia Jane Mudon. Arthur was the son of Henry James Hitchings and Emily Cotterell, who married in June 1867 at Tetbury. In 1871 they were living at Trull Cottages, Rodmarton. By 1881 they had moved to Wickwar and were living at Westend Lane. In 1891 they were living at Bell Entry, off the High Street, Wickwar. In Rodmarton Henry was an agricultural labourer, but in 1881 was now a general labourer and in 1891, a brewer’s labourer. Henry and Emily had ten children: Arthur, 1868; Henry James, 1870; Margaret Ann, 1872; Emily Jane, 1875; Charles, 1876; Elizabeth, 1878; Frederick Augustus, 1881; Rose, 1886; Joseph Ernest, 1888; and George William, 1890 (see account below). In 1901 Henry and Emily and some of their children were living at 58 High Street and Henry was employed as a Brewer’s Drayman. Henry died in 1910 and was buried at Wickwar on 29th December that year, age 65. Henry James had a very interesting military career, including a brief period in the First World War.

Arthur had married Malinda in Bristol on 30th August 1891. Malinda was born in 1862 in Chew Stoke, Somerset. Charles was born in about January 1897. He was the nephew of George William Hitchings (see below). In 1911 the family was living at The Buthay and Charles was a grocer’s apprentice. He had four siblings: Gladys Maud Mary Mardson, 1892; Alice, 1896; Victor James, 1901; and Edith Malinda, 1902. One family tree suggests that he had two other brothers: Arthur, born in 1895 and died in 1897; and Thomas, who was born and died in 1898. Charles’ father, Arthur died in about June 1944.

In 1911, Gladys was a servant to Frederick William Peacock, a man of “private means”, and his wife Augusta Rose, in Derby. She died in 1919, a single woman, when she was living at Box, near Bath, and was buried at Wickwar on 6th September 1919. Victor served in the Merchant Navy during WWI. He married Gladys Drayton in August 1928, settling in Canada, where in April 1928 they had twin sons, Victor and Arthur. Gladys died in 1937 and Victor married Doris Deborah Thomas in December 1946. Edith never married and is recorded as dying in December 1980 in Gloucester.

When he enlisted we do not know, but Charles joined the 12th (Service) Battalion (Bristol)\(^5\), The Gloucestershire Regt. He was 22600 Pte Charles William Hitchings. I can find no record of his service other than the record of his death at Flanders on 8th May 1917, at the age of 20, his medal record, which shows that he was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. As there is no record of him being awarded one of the “Pips” he did not deploy with the battalion in 1915, so was presumably not one of the initial influx of volunteers when the battalion was formed.

The 12th (Service) Battalion (Bristol), The Gloucestershire Regiment, known as “Bristol’s Own”, formed at Bristol on 30th August 1914, raised by a local Citizen’s Recruiting Committee, independent of the

\(^5\) Note: The Bristol Times and Mirror report gives C W Hitchings’ regiment as 15th Gloucesters. I can find only one C W Hitchings, so the report must be inaccurate.
War Office. It was not officially adopted by the War Office until 23rd June 1915. Following work up training they deployed to France on 21st November that year, travelling by train from Wylye, Wiltshire, to Folkestone and then crossing to Boulogne. The battalion transferred to 95th Brigade, 5th Division on 26th December. Having seen action in a number of battles through 1916, in March 1917 the battalion moved in preparation for the Battle of Arras, which took place from 9th April to 16th May. The War Diary for 8th May, the day that Charles died, is fairly bland in its detail, with a simple summary that there 288 Other Ranks killed, wounded or missing. However, the report sent to 95 Brigade Headquarters by the Commanding Officer makes harrowing reading. It was very critical of the lack of support given to the battalion, particularly from the Artillery and paints a gory picture of the pressures felt by the troops. It was not one of the most glorious days of WW1. Transcripts of both the diary and report are contained at the Appendix.

Charles is commemorated on the Arras Memorial. He was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. He is also named on the Wickwar Village Hall Memorial

His record of Soldier’s Effects show that he had £1.16s.7d which was paid to his father. A War Gratuity of £8.10s was also paid.
George William Hitchings was born on 3rd May 1889, the youngest of the 10 children of Henry and Emily. At that time the family was living at Bell Entry, but later moved to High Street, where they lived at the time of the 1901 census. In 1911, he was living with his sister, Margaret, in Back Lane. In April that year he emigrated to Canada on the ship, the Royal George, landing at Quebec City. The ship’s manifest also shows one Emily Hitchings, the same age as George’s sister. They both declared that they were destined for Toronto, Emily as a cook and George as a warehouseman.

George next appears in Calgary on 2nd November, 1915, when he enlists in the Canadian Infantry, as part of the Canadian Expeditionary Force to come to Europe to fight in the First World War. His trade was declared as “lineman”. At that time, he declared his next of kin to be his sister, Emily, with an address at New Inn, Worle, Somerset, so at some point she returned back to England. There is a record of an Emily Hitchings crossing from Canada to the United States, but I have been unable to research this further.

His attestation papers describe him as 5ft5 ½in tall, with fair hair and complexion and blue eyes weighing 169 pounds (12st 1lb). His religion was noted as Presbyterian. He was assigned the Regimental Number 447814 as a Private in the 56th Battalion, the Calgary Regiment, of the Canadian Infantry.

He sailed for England from Halifax, Nova Scotia, on 1st April 1916 aboard the SS Baltic as part of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. On that day he also assigned 15CAD per month of his pay to Emily – a payment that was to last only seven months. On 8th April he went down with measles and was hospitalised. He arrived in Liverpool on 9th April and was transferred to Fazakerley hospital on the 10th, staying there until 26th.

On 9th June 1916, George made out a simple Military Will stating, “In the event of my death I give the whole of my property and effects to my sister Emily Jane Hitchings The New Inn Worle Somersetshire.” According to the records she subsequently moved to Philips Arms Hotel, Montacute, Somerset.

On 12th May members of 56th Bn were transferred to 50th Bn. The Battalion War Diary commences on 10th August 1916, and notes that the battalion was at Bramshott Camp, Hampshire, from where they deployed to France, boarding two trains bound for Southampton. At about 5pm they embarked on HMT La Marguerite and HMT Courtfield to Le Havre. They arrived at about 7.30 am on 11th and then marched to a rest camp about four miles east and a little south. All of the accounts I have seen use the name HAVRE, but the Canadian account mis-names it HARVE!

50th Bn formed part of the 10th Brigade, 4th Canadian Division. They were ordered to Ancre Heights in October 2016, part of the Battle of the Somme. It was the first Canadian involvement in the Battle of the Somme. Pte George William Hitchings was posted “Missing, presumed dead” in the trenches near Courcelette, on 10th October 1916, during the Battle of Ancre Heights, a phase of the Battle of the Somme. The War Diary for 10th October notes simply “Two O.R.s killed & seven O.R.s wounded.”

George is commemorated on the Canadian National Memorial at Vimy and on the Wickwar Village Hall Memorial.
He is also commemorated on the headstone of his parents in Wickwar. The inscription is shown on the right.

He is not recorded as being buried at Courcelette British Cemetery, although 399 members of the Canadian Forces are. The Canada War Graves Register states that at the time the battalion was in trenches near Courcelette and that the exact location of his grave could not be determined, but that it was “Just outside Courcelette Dressing Station, Somme”. Perhaps that is where he lies to this day.

He did not qualify for the 1914-15 Star but was posthumously awarded the Victory Medal and the British War Medal, which were sent to his sister, Emily. A Memorial Plaque and Scroll (P&S) were sent to his brother, Arthur (Charles William Hitchings father), at The Butlar (sic), Wickwar. George was the uncle of Charles William Hitchings (see above).

Arthur was registered as living at 1 The Buthay in the 1901 and 1911 censuses, with his wife, Melinda, and four children.

I am grateful to gravestonephotos.com for helping me to find George’s memorial in Wickwar.
William (V Snr) died in 1859 and was buried at Wickwar on 14th February.

According to Marion Vettori, the Hobbs “were a big family in Wickwar”. They certainly had a longstanding association with Churchwood Farm. In 1841 William (V Snr) and Esther Hobbs lived at Westend, Wickwar. According to the Clutterbuck-Murphy family tree they had ten children: Ann (1813), William (Snr) (1814), Henrietta Perry (1817), twins George and John (1818-18), Ann (1820), John George (1820), Elizabeth (1825), Mary (1825), and Henrietta (1828). Ages are confusing as John George is declared to be 21 and Ann and Henrietta are both 20 and Elizabeth and Mary were both 15. In 1851 John George was declared as 31 and Ann and Henrietta as 37 and 30 respectively.

It is clear that George and John both died within a month of their birth. From study of the census returns I conclude that the entries for Ann and Henrietta are duplicates: although it is impossible to determine which is the correct birth date for Ann, the date for Henrietta Perry is supported by the memorial stone in Holy Trinity Church, Wickwar (see below); this also gives the date of her death as 1870, so it is unlikely that they would have named a second girl “Henrietta” in 1828. In 1861 Ann and Henrietta are registered as living with their widowed mother at the High Street, Wickwar, aged 40 and 33 respectively. In 1841 they were both aged 20!

William (V Snr) died in 1859 and was buried at Wickwar on 14th February. The record shows that he was living at Westend House. In 1861 John George is declared as head of the household at Churchwood Farm, with his wife, Hannah Barber, whom he married in 1854, and five children: William Barber, aged five; Esther Minett, four; John George, two; Ruth Hannah, one; and an unnamed infant, one month, subsequently named Thomas H. John George is shown as farming 63 acres at Churchwood Farm. They went on to have four more children: Mary, 1863; Eunice Ann, 1865; Laura, 1867; and Fitzhardinge, 1871. In 1871 John was described as a “Yeoman Farmer of 104 Acres”. In 1881 Churchwood Farm was being run by his son, William Barber, described as “Superintendent of Quarries and Farmer”, who was living there with his sister, Laura. Clearly, the transition from farm to quarry had commenced although in 1891 he was described simply as “Farmer”. By now John George was living at the Railway Hotel, Wickwar, as Hotel Keeper, with his wife, Hannah, and son Fitzhardinge. John died in 1902.

William Barber Hobbs married Rosa Ann Hobbs Clutterbuck in about September 1884. Rosa was the daughter of Thomas Clutterbuck and Elizabeth Hobbs — Elizabeth was the sister of William’s father, John George, so William and Rosa were first cousins. In 1891 they were living at Churchwood Farm and had three children: Dora Elizabeth, aged three; William E, two; and Rupert J, one. There is a record of a daughter, Lena, born in 1885, but she died the following year. The 1901 census declares Will and Rosa Ann Hobbs Clutterbuck
Rupert along with newcomers Ronald Henry (1891), and May Aline (1897). Dora appears as Doris! In 1901 the family was still at Churchwood Farm, having added Ronald Henry, 1891; and May Aline, 1897 to their number, although Dora had left home. In 1911 William and Rosa were living at High Street, Wickwar, although William was still described as a farmer (employer). Only William and May were living at home. The 1911 census shows also that Rosa and William had six children of whom one had died. William Barber Hobbs died in 1924 and Rosa in 1959.

Will Elton Hobbs died on 9th December 1918 and was buried at Wickwar on 12th December. His death certificate states that he died of acute nephritis and oedema of the lung. He was declared to be a farm hand and there is no mention of military service, as there is with Henry Chappell. Although the records I have called upon use variants of his first name, they are undoubtedly for the same person. The variants found are: William E (1891 census), Will (1901 census), Will Elton (1911 census, birth index, baptism record and burial record) and Will E (death index).

The Roll of Honour in the Bristol Times and Mirror dated Saturday 26th February 1916 records an E Hobbs, Royal Field Artillery, although I can find no record of him. The memorial in Wickwar Village Hall lists a W E Hobbs among those who served, but not among the dead.

The CWGC has a record for 166503 Gunner W E Hobbs of the 263rd Brigade, Royal Field Artillery, who died in Palestine on 16th October 1918 and is buried in the Gaza War Cemetery, but neither age nor next of kin details are included. Marion Vettori confirms that this is not the person we seek.

Will would have been 26 at the outbreak of war, so did he join up, but we have no record? The family trees that I have found do not make any mention of Will having war service. Did he, like Charles Gulwell and Leslie Lambert, contract an illness in service from which he later died? Or did he enlist but was subsequently rejected because of underlying illness that was not caused by his service? Whatever happened there is no evidence to support his inclusion on the memorial.

We do know that his brother, Ronald, served in WW1. As seems to be the case so often, there is a treasure trove of service documents about him. They reveal that he was a clerk at Arnold Perrett & Co Ltd, Brewers and Wine and Spirit Merchants. He enlisted on 15th November 1915 but was given special dispensation due to his employer’s needs and did not report for duty until 18th March 1916. He was initially assigned regimental number 132955, but later became 840781 Gnr R H Hobbs. On reporting for duty, he was posted to No 7 (TF) Artillery Training School. He was deployed to France on 21st May 1916 and served there until 17th May 1918. On 12th July 1917 he was charged with being in an estaminet (bar or café selling alcohol) out of
hours; he was sentenced to 7 days FP (Field Punishment) No2. This involved being put into fetters and handcuffs and the soldier was also subject to hard labour and loss of pay. Despite this he was promoted to Bombardier (corporal) on 11th September 1917.

On 14th May 1918 Ronald reported sick and on 16th was admitted to 5 General Hospital suffering from seborrheoa, a chronic skin disease. This would explain his return from the field on 18th May. On 18th June he was posted to A/45 Reserve Brigade RFA and continued to serve until 30th September 1919. Marion Vettori thought that he had suffered from a gas attack. Perhaps this outbreak of skin disease was caused by gas.

Ronald was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Brother Rupert John also enlisted, attesting on 11th December 1915 into the 5th Battalion, The Worcestershire Regiment as 67146 Pte Rupert John Hobbs. He was immediately posted to the Reserve, to continue his work as a Farm Bailiff at Rookery Farm, Congresbury. He changed his address to Broad Street, Congresbury on 8th September 1919. He was mobilised and posted to 5th Battalion on 30th June 1918; he was then posted to 2nd Bn on 16th May 1919. He also transgressed, by “overstaying his pass” from 23.30 hrs on 3rd October 1918 until 2300 hrs on 4th! He was confined to barracks for two days. He was demobbed on 31st March 1920. It is not possible to determine from the records what the purpose was of his call up, but it is clear that he did not serve on the front in WW1.

Wickwar graveyard has a memorial stone to William Barber Hobbs, Rosa Ann Hobbs and children Lena, Will Elton, Dora Elizabeth, Ronald Henry and May Aline. In the church is a further memorial, to William and Esther Hobbs and two of their children, William and Henrietta Perry. Also added, clearly at a later date, are William Barber and Rosa Ann Hobbs.

Will Elton Hobbs’ burial is recorded on the same page of the register as Charles Gulwell and Alfred William Powell.
L A Lambert

Leslie Albert Lambert was born at Tewkesbury in 1899, the son of William A Lambert of Newtown, Bristol and Gertrude Powell of Wickwar. Although born in Tewkesbury, Leslie was baptised at Wickwar on 23rd July 1899. In 1901 they were living in the High Street, Wickwar and William was a brewer’s clerk. In 1911 the family is recorded as living at Albert House, Wickwar and had increased with the birth of Greta Madeline in 1909. William was now described as “Secretary of Brewery Co.” When he enlisted, Leslie was working as clerk in the Costing department of a munitions factory in Quedgley, Gloucester.

Leslie Albert Lambert joined the 14th Company, Grenadiers Guards as 33285, Pte, on 17th March 1917 at the age of 17 years 10 months. His next of kin was given as Mr W A Lambert, Albert House, Wickwar, Bristol. His record shows that his reckonable service commenced on 23rd April 1918 and as “Service Home 22.4.18 to 26.11.18 – 219 days”. It would appear that, like Charles Gulwell, he did not deploy before 22nd April – the date that he was first diagnosed with illness – as his record states that he was in England when first diagnosed. His medal roll index card for the Silver War Badge shows that he was in the Grenadier Guards Reserve Battalion.

He was diagnosed with pleurisy on 22nd April 1917; he was ill for about three months, but then made a “good recovery”. He then developed Spanish Flu on 1st July 1918, followed by bronchopneumonia. He was treated for the bronchopneumonia at the Military Hospital, Guards Depot, Caterham, Surrey from 12th July to 31st August. Ten days later he developed tuberculosis for which he was treated at Bermondsey Military Hospital, Lewisham from 10th September to 26th November 1918, when he was discharged as “No longer physically fit for War Service”.

In his “Statement by a Soldier Concerning His Own Case” he writes:

“I was in excellent health until 1st July last when I went sick with Spanish Influenza. The depot was very full up & the hospital only held about 150. I continued reporting sick but could not get into hospital until the 12th. During this time I could eat nothing without vomiting directly afterwards, & had very bad diarrhoea, being unable to sleep at night with it. I was not allowed to keep down on my bed [.......] I was losing much weight & feeling very weak. I was admitted to hospital with bronchitis & pneumonia.”

He was awarded a pension of £1.7s.6d. After he was discharged he lived at 6 Manor Road, Fishponds, Bristol. He was awarded the Silver War Badge on 28th February 1919, but I can find no record of war medals, although presumably he should, like Charles Gulwell, have been awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. Leslie Albert Lambert died on 20th April 1919 and is buried at Ridgeway Park Cemetery, Bristol. His grave is listed in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission records. He is also listed on the Wickwar Village Hall memorial only as serving, but not among those who died. It seems clear that he died of the illness he contracted whilst preparing for service at the front.

His mother, Gertrude, died on 19 May 1948 in Cheltenham, and is also buried at Ridgeway Park Cemetery.

14th Company Grenadier Guards was the Regiment’s training unit. As such it did not play an active role in the war, training Grenadier Guardsmen who were then posted to one of the regiment’s battalions.
Alfred Charles Lane was born on 31st August 1898 in Eastville, Bristol, the son of Marling Lane and Esther Amelia Haines. There is a wealth of information available on Ancestry about Alfred’s ancestors and siblings, but there is also a great deal of mystery. It would be a fascinating research project to knit it all together, but that is beyond the scope of this task. I will explore only those facts that I feel are pertinent to our story, with some family details kindly provided by Alfred’s great nephew, Stewart Warrington.

Alfred’s father, Marling, was born in 1870, a native of Wickwar, and his mother, Amelia, in 1868 in Churcham, Gloucestershire. Marling’s parents, Alfred’s grandparents, lived at Southend Cottage, Wickwar (previously known as “Woodbine Cottage). They married at Churcham Parish Church on 16th March 1891, although the 1891 censuses show that Marling was boarding with his brother-in-law, John Bruce (who married Marling’s sister, Amelia) and Esther was living with her parents, as a “visitor”. Both are registered as being married. Marling and Esther had four children: Owen, 1891; Gordon, 1893; Annie, 1895 and Alfred, 1898. Esther died in 1898 at Barton Regis; an account on Ancestry by Leonard Groom, Marling’s grandson, says that she died in childbirth (presumably while having Alfred). It also says that Marling was left to bring up three children alone, which supports what we find in the 1911 census, below.

Marling had moved to Leicester, where he met and married Hannah Bonsor in 1901. Also, in 1901 Alfred was living with his grandparents, Charles and Hannah Lane, at 83 High Street, Wickwar, along with Charles’ and Hannah’s daughter, Elizabeth; son, Charles; and granddaughter, Lucy Bruce, aged 11 (daughter of John and Amelia?).

Hannah died on 9th February 1908 and in 1911 Alfred was living with grandfather Charles and Elizabeth, and Elizabeth’s elder sister, Selina. It appears that they had now moved to Southend Cottage, although the census simply says “High Street”. Aged 15, Alfred Charles Lane was a tailor’s apprentice. In 1911 Alfred’s father, Marling, was living at Leicester with his second wife, Hannah, three children from his marriage with Esther; Owen, Gordon and Annie, and a daughter from his marriage with Hannah, Rosa, (Catherine Rosa) born in 1902. They also had two lodgers. Why was Alfred not living with them? It seems that Marling had fallen out with his family as he appears to have had no contact with them since he moved away before 1891. None of his family members signed the marriage register, both the signatures being of his new wife’s family. Stewart tells me that Charles left Southend Cottage to Marling’s siblings, Selina, Elizabeth and Charles and to Alfred Charles.
Charles Snr died 2nd May 1915. Probate of Charles’ estate, amounting to £586.8s.1d. was granted to John Morton JP and Henry Hinchcomb, retired farmers. Presumably this was over and above the property. Alfred Charles Lane joined the 16th King’s Royal Rifle Corps with the regimental number R17509. His medal record shows that he was an acting corporal; he later transferred as an acting corporal to the 1st Battalion, The Rifle Brigade with number B203403. According to his great nephew, Stewart Warrington, “Acting Corporal Alfred Charles Lane was a wartime enlistee who originally joined the King’s Royal Rifle Corps. After training and service at home with them he was posted to France in late 1917 where he joined the 1st Battalion Rifle Brigade, part of 4th Division. He served with them at Ypres and Arras, then fought in the Battle of the Lys in April 1918.”

Stewart writes, “On June 13th the Battalion became right battalion in the right brigade sector near La Pannerie. The next night (14th) the three right posts of ‘A’ Company went forward to conform with minor operation carried out by the 3rd Division on the right. In the early hours of the 15th No 5749 Sergeant R. Cooke, and four others on their own initiative carried out a small daylight raid, capturing twenty prisoners and killing over twenty enemy; they were only stopped by machine gun fire which mortally wounded one of the party. Sgt Cooke showed further coolness in getting the wounded man back into our lines. Alfred was killed in action on 15th June 1918, along with five other members of 1st Bn, The Rifle Brigade, when they were holding positions north of Hate Farm at Pacaut Wood.” He is buried in Le Vertannoy British Cemetery, Hinges, in the Département de Pas-de-Calais, France. His headstone is pictured above, a photograph taken by his great nephew. Alfred Charles Lane is also commemorated on the gravestone of his grandparents, right, at Wickwar and on the Wickwar Village Hall Memorial.

Alfred’s Record of Soldier’s Effects show that he had a credit of £6.6s.1d. and a War Gratuity of £12.10s., which divided equally between his co-legatees, his aunts Selina and Elizabeth Lane.

I am grateful to his great nephew (Marling’s great grandson), Stewart Warrington, for the headstone photographs.
G Lovell

George and Alfred were brothers, two of 11 children of George, a stone mason, and Elizabeth Lovell. The children were: George Daniel, born 1878; John W, 1879; Thomas Henry, 1882; William R, 1884; Alfred Howard, 1886; Ada Annie V, 1888; and Dorothy Frances, 1890; Rebecca Jane, 1892; Elizabeth Hester, 1895; John, 1897; and Clara May, 1899. In 1881 the family was registered simply at the High Street, Wickwar. In 1891 their address was School Cottages and 1901 saw the family living at High Street again. By 1911 the family had moved to North Street, just Alfred, Rebecca, John and Clara living at home, but they had been joined by a three-year-old grandson, Francis Wilfred Lovell. The 1911 census records that one of the 11 children had died. As he does not appear on the 1891 it is possible that this was John. There is a story that when he was ten he was watching some boys twisting the wires of a telegraph pole around a cricket bat. They ran off and the bat flew off and hit John on the side of his neck. At some time, a daughter (unidentified) died of meningitis. Dorothy died in December 1918, Ada in December 1932, William in June 1951 and Clara in February 1999. Clara’s story is told in Mary Isaac’s “Wickwar Through the Ages”, published in 1999.

All five sons served in the armed forces. Thomas Henry served in the Gloucesters and rose to the rank of Warrant Officer Class 2, holding the appointment of Company Sergeant Major. He fought in the Boer War and was also posted to India. It is said that Clara did not see him for 12 years and was nervous about his return because one of her brothers had told her he would turn into a black man. Presumably he returned with a sun tan! According to a report in the Cheltenham Chronicle and Gloucester Graphic of 19th December, 1914, William was serving in the Royal Engineers and John on board HMS Foresight. The report reads:

“Here is a local record of which any family might be proud. Mr. and Mrs. George Lovell, of Wickwar have as many as five sons serving their country, either on land or sea. Two (George and Alfred) are members of the new army, Thomas, called up with the reserve, is a sergeant in the 8th Gloucesters, William is serving with the Royal Engineers, and the youngest, John, is on board H.M.S. Foresight.”

Clearly, the nation was still in a state of optimistic euphoria.

With George Lovell there is some confusion over his second name. In early censuses he is simply shown as George D. In his banns and marriage record he is George David, but in the 1911 census he is George Daniel. On son Donald's baptism record he is David, but on Kathleen's he is Daniel! In his Record of Soldier’s Effects, he reverts to David, but he is Daniel on his CWGC memorial certificate.

George Daniel Lovell was born in 1878. In 1891 he was a part time errand boy and in 1901 he was a brewery labourer. He married Lily Hook on 25th March 1902 at Wickwar. Lily was baptised on 7th April 1878, the daughter of Isaac and Mary Ann Hook, of the High Street, Wickwar. In 1901 their address was shown as the High Street. Her father had died and she was living with her widowed mother.

George and Lily had two children: Donald Victor, born 1903, was baptised 7th June 1903; and Kathleen Winifred, born 1907, was baptised 19th January 1908. Donald married Ethel F L Harding. He died in 1980, Kathleen died in 1972 and Lily in 1956.

George enlisted in the 1st Battalion, The Gloucestershire Regiment as 16201 Pte George David Lovell. He embarked to France on 9th August 1915, with 10th Battalion, so qualifying for the 1914-15 Star. In
the middle of April 1918, 1st Battalion moved to Festubert to relieve the Liverpool Scottish Regiment in the Battle of Bethune, a phase of the Battle of the Lys – part of the German Spring Offensive.

The battalion War Diary records that on 17th April five Other Ranks were killed and four wounded, one of them accidentally. They also captured a German Sergeant Major who provided “valuable information…..concerning an intended attack on following day.” The German attack commenced at 4am on 18th April and the war diary provides a detailed account of the action (see Appendix). Although they came under a heavy barrage and suffered some casualties, the German force was routed and suffered heavy losses. The battalion’s casualty toll that night was: three officers killed (all 2nd Lieutenants); three officers wounded; 15 Other Ranks killed; 87 ORs wounded; 22 ORs missing.

The battalion was relieved on the night of 18th/19th by the 2nd Welch Regiment. The battalion moved on 19th April to Gorre, a small hamlet less than two miles west of Festubert. Although detail of the action there is not recorded, on 19th the battalion suffered one OR killed, nine wounded and one missing. On 20th two ORs were killed and six wounded.

One of those killed on 20th April 1918 was probably Pte George Daniel Lovell. He is buried at the Gorre British and Indian Cemetery in the Pas-de-Calais region of France. Like his brother’s, his headstone is inscribed “ONLY GOODNIGHT UNTIL WE MEET”, requested by his widow, Lily. He is also commemorated on the Wickwar Village Hall Memorial. In addition to the 1914-15 Star, George was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

His Record of Soldier’s Effects show that he had a credit of £13.6s.7d. and was granted a War Gratuity of £15.10s., both paid to his widow, Lily.
A H Lovell

Alfred Howard Lovell, the brother of George Daniel Lovell (see above for family details), was born in about August 1886. He was baptised on 12th September 1886 at Wickwar. In 1901 Alfred, now 15, was a farm labourer. In 1911 he was working as a brewery cask washer.

In 1912, age 27, Alfred was a labourer when he married Margaret Ellen Walker, a 22-year-old spinster from Kingswood, Gloucestershire, on 24th December at Wickwar. They had two children: Olive M, born in late 1913; and Hilda M, born early 1915.

Alfred enlisted as 11648, Pte Alfred Howard Lovell, in the 10th (Service) Battalion, The Gloucestershire Regiment in the early days of the war, before the birth of his second daughter. He embarked for France on 9th August 1915, so would have served with Henry Wilcox, and may have fought at the Battle of Loos, in which Henry died. It is not possible to be certain because at some point he was evacuated from the battlefield and hospitalised at No 7 General Hospital at St Omer (known as Malassises Hospital), where he died of pneumonia on 2nd May 1916. He is buried at Longuenesse (St. Omer) Souvenir Cemetery and his headstone is engraved “ONLY GOODNIGHT UNTIL WE MEET”, at the request of his widow. It is said that he had only one lung and should not have been allowed to serve. Given the conditions in the trenches it is not surprising that he contracted pneumonia.

Alfred was awarded the 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory medal. His Soldier’s Effects were a credit of £1.19s.8d. and a War Gratuity of £7, which were paid to his widow, Margaret.

A report in the Cheltenham Chronicle and Gloucestershire Graphic dated Saturday, May 13th reads:

“Another local man, Private A. H. Lovell, of the Gloucesters, has made the great sacrifice, his death taking place in a military hospital in France. The deceased soldier, who was 30 years of age, is one of the five soldier sons of Mr. and Mrs. George Lovell, of High Street, Wickwar. He was one of Wickwar’s new soldiers, and in civil life was employed at Messrs. Arnold, Perrett and Co.’s Brewery. He was a young man of fine physique, and will be well remembered by football enthusiasts in Mid-Gloucestershire as being for many seasons one of the mainstays of the Wickwar A.F.C. He partnered Harry Marsh as full-back, in which capacity these stalwarts were the terrors of opposing forwards, and were largely responsible for their team’s many successes. Much sympathy is felt for his widow, who is left with two young children.”

Confusingly, there is a military record for an Albert Lovell, of Wickwar, who enlisted in the Gloucestershire Regiment on 2nd September 1914, with regimental number 12164. This suggests that he signed up about the same time as Alfred Lovell. Albert was posted to the 3rd Battalion on 15th September. He was admitted to Woolwich Hospital on 30th November suffering from an “Old Sprained Back”, and discharged on 7th December. He was discharged from the army on 14th December as “being not likely to become an efficient soldier” due to “Old Sprained Back, due to a fall on a girder”. He complained of “inability to stand upright”. His name is not listed on any of the memorials I have found.
A Pick

We have yet another confused identity. The only record for A Pick in the CWGC records is for Albert Pick from Melton Mowbray. There are records of people called Alfred Pick in Wickwar. The 1911 census records a family headed by Alfred Pick, a 55-year-old widower, living at Bagstone, so would not have been called up. He had four children living at home: Ellen, aged 28; John, 25; Harold, 18; and Alfred, 16. John Pick did serve and die in WW1.

Alfred William Pick was a farmer in Bagstone, and in 1891 lived at Bagstone Cottage with his wife, Sylvia Marsh, and their children: Ellen, aged 8; John, aged 5; and Richard, 2. Also living with them was Alfred’s father, John Pick, a 78 year-old widower. In 1901 they are recorded as living at 14 Bagstone Road. Ellen is now recorded as Mabel E. and they have been joined by two more sons: Alfred, age 6; and Harrold, 3. John Pick Senior is still living with them, but Richard is not.

The 1911 census records that of his five children one had died. Richard died in about June 1891 and was buried at Wickwar on 19th June, aged 1 year 10 months. This means that he must have been born about August 1889. He was baptised on 20th October 1889, at Wickwar.

Sylvia died on 2nd April 1902, so in 1911 Alfred was living with Ellen, John, Alfred and Harrold. Alfred senior died on 28th September 1945.

At the outbreak of war local territorial forces were raised, funded locally, later adopted by the War Office. On 31st August 1914 the War Office had issued instructions for all units of the Territorial Force to form a reserve unit. The men who had agreed to serve overseas were separated from the rest. Those left as ‘home service only’ were formed into ‘second line’ units, which would be this reserve. They were joined by many new recruits from September 1914 onward.

The 2/4th (City of Bristol) Bn Territorial Force formed in Bristol in September 1914 as a home service ("second line") unit, along with the 2/6th Bn. In January 1915 it came under command of the 2nd Gloucester and Worcester Brigade, 2nd South Midland Division, at Northampton. John joined the 2/4th Bn, The Gloucestershire Regiment, 5734, Pte John Pick. His service number indicates that he joined up about April 1916. Regimental numbers were re-assigned in 1917 and he was allocated the number 202054. It would seem that he had volunteered for “home service” only.

The ‘first line’ 48th (South Midland) Division went to France in March 1915.

The units of the ‘second line’, the 2nd (South Midland) Division, remained at home for some time. Along with other ‘second line’ Divisions it suffered greatly from lack of equipment of all sorts, and training was inevitably affected.
In early January 1915 the units moved and concentrated in the Northampton area. Drafts began to leave for the ‘first line’ units, and their places were taken by new recruits. In April 1915 the Division moved to Chelmsford and soon afterward the number 61 was issued and the full title became 61st (2nd South Midland Division). The units were inspected by Lord Kitchener on 6 August 1915.

In February and early March 1916, the division moved to Salisbury Plain, where it was inspected by King George V on 5th May. The Division was warned in May that it would go on overseas service and entrainment began on the 21st. By 28th May the Division, less the Ammunition Column (which was still at Le Havre), had concentrated in the area of Merville – Gonnehem – Busnes – Thiennes. The Division then remained in France and Flanders and took part in the following engagements.

The first major action in which the Division was engaged turned out to be an unmitigated disaster. An attack was made on 19 July 1916 at Fromelles, a subsidiary action to the much larger battle taking place further south on the Somme. The Division suffered very heavy casualties for no significant gain and no enemy reserves were diverted from the Somme. Such was the damage to the Division and its reputation that it was not used again other than for holding trench lines until 1917.

1917 saw the Division take part in a number of engagements. They were involved first in the Operations on the Ancre, followed by the German Retreat to the Hindenburg Line. The 61st was one of the Divisions employed in the cautious pursuit of the enemy, when the Germans carried out a deep withdrawal from the area of the Somme to formidable pre-prepared positions that the British called the Hindenburg Line, in March 1917. On 17 March, it captured Chaulnes and Bapaume. The Division was then involved in the 3rd Battle of Ypres, or Passchendaele, starting with the Battle of Langemarck, 16th 18th August 1917). In late August and early September, the Division was involved in the efforts to push the line forward at positions around Schuler Farm and Aisne Farm near Kerselaar. On 27th August the 61st (2nd South Midland) Division attack was stopped about 100 yds (91 m) short of Schuler Farm. After losing about a third of the men and half of their officers, the survivors fell back to the start line.

Pte John Pick died on 27th August, 1917, probably in this failed attack. The battalion War Diary records that four officers and 47 men died and a further 33 men were missing. John’s body has never been found and identified and he is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial. He is also named on the Wickwar Village Hall Memorial as J Pick. He was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. His Record of Soldier’s Effects show that his pay credit of £6.7s.7d. and War Gratuity of £6 were paid to his father, Alfred.
A W Powell

Alfred William Powell was the son of Alban Powell and Jane Underhill, one of six children. Alfred was born in 1878 and in 1881 and 1891 the family lived in Back Lane and in 1901 and 1911 at Hill View, Sodbury Road, Wickwar, although Alfred does not appear on the 1901 census. Alfred had five siblings, although one does not appear on any census: Joseph A, born 1880; Frederick J, 1886; Reginald Edward James, 1889; and Dora, 1892. The 1911 census indicates that of six children two had died. It would seem that one of those two was born and died between two successive censuses. In 1911 Alfred was described as a house painter, as was his brother Reginald.

Alfred married Gwendoline Annie White of Wickwar in 1912. There is no record of them having any children. In 1919 she was living at 31 Brigstocke Road, St Paul’s Bristol. According to warslastgoodbyes.co/blog/wickwar-southgloucestershire, Alfred was secretary to the Flower Show Committee and leader of Wickwar String Band.

Alfred joined the Royal Engineers as 263179 Sapper Powell and served with the 644th North Midlands Field Company. Without further information it is not possible to determine where Alfred served, other than that he served in the front line. It is clear that he was evacuated from the front line due to illness to serve at the depot in Slough. Alfred died of influenza at Fort Pitt Garrison Hospital, Rochester, Kent on 9th February 1919. He was buried at Wickwar on 15th February and has a CWGC headstone. He was 42 years old. His widow had the headstone inscribed, “FOR EVER WITH THE LORD”. She is also commemorated on his headstone, having been buried there on 21st September, 1964, aged 84. On the death of Alfred, Gwendoline had returned to Wickwar to help her sister, Emma, run a boot and shoe repair business and stationers and newsagents located at 73 High Street.

The CWGC records Alfred’s burial at Wickwar New Burial Ground, which “adjoins Holy Trinity Churchyard, and belongs to the Parish Council”. The CWGC Graves Registration Report Form “Certifies that a plan of this Burial Ground is held by the Burial Authority.”

Alfred was awarded the British War Medal and Victory Medal. His Record of Soldier’s Effects show that his outstanding pay of £11.15s.5d. and War Gratuity of £10.10s. were paid to his widow Gwendoline. Alfred is listed in the centre panel of the Wickwar Village Hall Memorial, along with Henry Chappell, Charles Gulwell and Leslie Lambert, who also died of illness sustained in service.

Fort Pitt was built as a fort between 1805 and 1819 on high ground between Chatham and Rochester, Kent, but existed as a fort only until 1828, when it became a hospital for invalided soldiers. The first Army Medical School was established there in 1860, following encouragement from Florence Nightingale.
W Selwood

William Henry Selwood was born in Hawkesbury in 1887 to Henry Hayward Selwood and Sarah Jane Roberts, of Wickwar. Henry and Sarah married at Wickwar on 29th October 1881. William was baptised at Hawkesbury on 28th August, 1887. Henry died on 24th February 1890 and was buried at Wickwar on 27th February. In 1891 Sarah, now a widow, was living at Wickwar High Street. Sarah was registered as being an independent laundress. With her were her three children: Reginald G, born 1882; Lizzie, 1885; and William H, 1887. There were also twins, Rufus James and Reuben Charles, born in the first quarter of 1883 and baptised on 1st July. Tragically, both the twins died young. Reuben was buried on 3rd October 1884 and Rufus on 19th March 1885, both at Hawkesbury. It seems likely that the family moved to Wickwar after Henry’s death, as all the children were born in Hawkesbury. In 1901 Sarah and her three children were still living together at Wickwar High Street. The census shows they were living at 53, but it is unclear whether this is the house number, or simply a sequence number. All three children were working: Reginald was a brewer’s clerk, Lizzie a domestic servant and William (aged 13!) a grocer’s errand boy. In 1911 Sarah was living alone, still at the High Street and still working as a laundress from home. Sarah died on 24th December 1935, when she was resident at 64 Shakespeare Avenue, Horfield, Bristol, and was buried with her husband at Wickwar on 28th December.

William joined the Gloucestershire Regiment as a private on 9th June 1905 with the regimental number 8143, but in 1911 he is registered as lodging at 8 Baptist Square, Blaenllechau, Glamorgan. He was working as a colliery haulier (below ground). At some point early in the war William joined the 1st Bn, The Somerset Light Infantry as 10860 Pte Selwood. He deployed to France on 4th January 1915 and died on 2nd May. The Roll of Honour in the Bristol Times and Mirror dated Saturday 26th February 1916 lists William as “killed”.

The 1st Bn, The Somerset Light Infantry was based in Colchester at the outbreak of WWI, part of 11th Bde, 4th Division. The Bn deployed to France with the British Expeditionary Force on 22nd August 1914 and William joined them on 4th January 1915. The battalion saw action at Le Cateau, the Battle of the Marne, the Battle of the Aisne and the Battle of Messines in 1914, before taking part in the 2nd Battle of Ypres in 1915. This battle was fought from 22nd April to 25th May, comprising six engagements. The second, the Battle of St Julien, took place from 24th April to 5th May, so it is likely that William died during this engagement, on 2nd May.

How he died we do not know, but it was during the 2nd Battle of Ypres that the Germans first used chlorine gas “successfully”. The War Diary for 2nd May confirms that “asphyxiating” gas was used and that A Coy casualties were about 35 and that other companies lost about 15 NCOs and men. One of these casualties must have been William Selwood. The 1st Bn, The Somerset Light Infantry lost a total of 1315 man during the war.
William Henry Selwood is commemorated on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial. He was awarded the 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal. William’s death is also commemorated on his parents’ gravestone (above) in Wickwar and on the Village Hall Memorial.

R Stinchcombe

Reginald Charles Stinchcombe was born in 1896 to Robert Ernest Albert Stinchcombe of Hawkesbury and Elizabeth Ann Poole of Wickwar, the third of five children. He was baptised on 12th April 1896 at Wickwar.

Robert Stinchcombe was born at Hawkesbury in 1866 and baptised on 2nd December. In 1871 he was living with his parents on Hawkesbury Common, but in 1881, aged 15, he was living and working at Poplar Farm, Wickwar, as a farm servant. Elizabeth was born in Wickwar in 1867 and baptised on 10th November; she lived with her parents Thomas Hickerton Poole and Celia Ball at The Common, Wickwar. In 1881, aged 12, she was living in the Wickwar High Street household of Stephen Robinson, a grocer and draper, and his wife Fanny; she was nursemaid to their two children. Robert and Elizabeth married at Wickwar on 30th March 1889. Elizabeth died at Axbridge, Somerset in 1933 and was buried at Wickwar on 28th June. It would appear that Robert may have moved to Dursley after Elizabeth’s death, as he disappears from the Wickwar electoral roll, but Robert Ernest Stinchcombe appears, living at Uley Road, Dursley in 1935-37. Robert died at the City General Hospital, Gloucester on 30th May 1942. At the time of his death he was living at 62 Falfield Road, Tuffley. Probate of £390 was granted to his sons, Gilbert, a railway goods foreman and Thomas, a builder. Reginald’s family can be traced back to Thomas Stinchcomb of Tortworth (1465-1554).

Reginald’s siblings were: Amy Celia, born 1889; Ernest Thomas Henry (Thomas in the 1911 census), 1892; Gilbert Hickerton, 1899; and Lionel, 1902. In 1891 Robert, Elizabeth and Amy were living at Sodbury Road; Robert was a farm labourer. They were still living at Sodbury Road in 1901. In 1911 Reginald was a grocer’s errand boy.

Reginald joined 1st/4th (City of Bristol) Bn The Gloucestershire Regiment as a private soldier; although we do not know when, his regimental number, 5393TF, suggests that he joined in early March 1916. Confusingly, his medal record also shows him having number 201840. 1/4 Bn formed in Bristol in August 1914 as part of the Gloucester and Worcester Brigade, the South Midlands Division. They mobilised for war and landed in Boulogne on 3rd March 1915, where the formation became the 144th Brigade of the 48th Division. They moved on to Cassel on 22nd March. There is no record of their being engaged in fighting until 1st July 1916, when they joined the Battle of the Somme, firstly in the Battle of Albert, then Bazentin Ridge, Ovillers and Pozieres Ridge. By November 1916 they had moved on to the Battles of the Ancre and Ancre Heights. It is possible that Reginald took part in many of these battles. There is no record of further engagement until 14th March 1917, when the division was at Peronne, during the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line. At the beginning of February 1917 the battalion moved from Cerisy Camp to Camp 56 – Cappy. The War Diary describes the weather as good. At 4.30pm on 2nd February the battalion moved into the trenches to relieve 1st Battalion, 135th French
Regiment, the relief being completed at 10pm. It was a quiet night and the weather was good. The follow day was also quiet with good weather. The Battalion War Diary describes the enemy being “very active all day” on 4th February. There was a “heavy bombardment” which lasted from 5.30pm to 7pm, during which battalions on the right and left of the Gloucesters were “raided”. There is no record of casualties in the diary, but Reginald died, on 4th February 1917. He is buried at Assevillers New British Cemetery and his headstone is inscribed “THY WILL BE DONE”. Assevillers New British Cemetery was made after the Armistice by the concentration of graves from the battlefields of the Somme and from other burial grounds. One of these was P.C. PLANTATION CEMETERY, a French Military Cemetery in the large Orchard 914 metres East of Cappy, where one United Kingdom soldier was buried in February, 1917. As 1st/4th Bn were at Cappy when he died, might this have been Reginald Stinchcombe? Reginald is also commemorated on a stone that rests against a headstone for Thomas Hickerton Poole and his wife Celia, his maternal grandparents, and on the Wickwar Village Hall Memorial.

Reginald was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. His record of Soldier’s Effects show that he had no pay credit but was granted a War Gratuity of £3 that was paid to his father, Robert.

In a strange twist, it would appear that Robert’s sister, Lydia Ann Elizabeth, married Elizabeth’s brother, Thomas William Poole! Thomas Poole also served in WWI, but came back and died in 1951, aged 82.
H Tanner

Herbert Ernest Percival Tanner was born on 1\textsuperscript{st} January 1891, the third of ten children of George Tanner and Annie Cuff. His siblings were: Isaac, born 1886; Amy Blanche, 1888; Harriett Annie, 1893; Edith Mary, 1896; George, 1898; Baden-Powell, 1900; Louisa Florence Elizabeth, 1903; Elsie Julia, 1905; and Mary, 1908. In 1891 they were living in Back Lane and in 1901 the family lived at The Old Workhouse, Sodbury Road, Wickwar; Herbert was not living at home, but I can find no trace of where he was.

George Tanner was a tailor; in the 1911 census he was described as “Tailor As Breeches-Hand” and was back at home with the family in the Old Workhouse. In another village connection Elsie married James Hancock, the brother of Charles Hancock, in December 1929.

Herbert enlisted in the Royal Marines Light Infantry on 11\textsuperscript{th} November 1914. His service number is given as PO/346(S). He was a member of the Portsmouth Battalion, Royal Naval Division. These units were not ship based, but supported land operations, known technically as “littoral”; the overlapping area of coastal waters and coastal land. Away from the western front, a war front was developing in Turkey, with the involvement of the Ottoman Empire on the side of Germany. Turkey formally declared their support on 31\textsuperscript{st} October 1914. Russia declared war on Turkey on 2\textsuperscript{nd} November and Britain and France followed on 5\textsuperscript{th} November. This led to what is known as the Gallipoli Campaign, or the Dardanelles. In March 1915 the Allies attempted to open up the Dardanelles straits using Naval power, but ships’ losses due to mines and repulsion by land-based artillery led to the sea assault being called off. Planning for a seaborne assault began. This led to some of the worst carnage of the war, involving heavy losses both of British forces, but also devastating losses for Australian and New Zealand troops.

The Royal Naval Division arrived on the island of Skyros on 17\textsuperscript{th} April 1915 and began rehearsing for an assault. This started at 0400hrs on 25\textsuperscript{th} April at Anzac Cove and Cape Helles. The Royal Naval Division, commanded by Major General Archibald Paris, landed on 30\textsuperscript{th} April. Pte Herbert Tanner died on 8\textsuperscript{th} May 1915. The record of his death states that cause of death was “1”, interpreted:

\textit{Cause of Death 1 –}
\textit{Killed in action;}
\textit{Died of wounds or disease following wounds;}
\textit{Missing after action and subsequently presumed killed in action;}
\textit{Killed, died of injuries or exposure, died of disease following wounds or exposure, drowned, missing and subsequently presumed killed or drowned following loss of ship in action by mine or torpedo.}

Herbert Ernest Percival Tanner is commemorated on the Helles Memorial, which stands on the southern tip of the Gallipoli Peninsula, overlooking the entrance to the Dardanelles. I am unable to find any record of medals, but he would have qualified. His mother, Annie, is named as his next of kin and is noted as living at Firth (sic) Road, Wickwar. The Roll of Honour in the Bristol Times and Mirror dated Saturday 26\textsuperscript{th} February 1916 shows one H Taner (sic) as having died. He is also named on the Wickwar Village Hall Memorial.
N Nathaniel George Toms was born about October 1892 in Wickwar and was baptised on 13th November. His parents were William Toms of Stoke Rivers, Devon, and Sarah Jane Wensley of Dulverton, Somerset. William was a Blacksmith, as was his father before him. William and Sarah Jane married on 6th May 1882 at Dulverton. According to the 1911 census Nathaniel had eight siblings, two of whom had died: William Nathaniel, 1883 – 1887; Sydney, born 1884; Annie, 1887; Percy, 1889; Lilly, 1890; Alick, 1895, Denys Lionel, 1898 – 1898; Edith Winifred, 1904; and one I have been unable to identify as he/she does not appear on any census. By 1884 William and Sarah had moved to Wickwar, when Sidney was born. In 1891 the family was living at the High Street, Wickwar and in 1901 William and Sarah were living at No 3 Gravesend Cottages with Percy, Lily, Nathaniel and Alick. By 1911 William and Sarah were back on the High Street at Hart House (probably No 22), with Sidney, Percy, Nathaniel, Alick and Edith. Alick went on to be a policeman.

Nathaniel married Emma Louisa Griffin, born 1892 in Yate, on 8th May 1915 at Woolcot Park, St Saviour, Gloucester. After Nathaniel’s death Emma re-married, Wilfrid A Hill, in December 1920 at Bristol.

Nathaniel joined 3rd Bn, Grenadier Guards as 17881 Gdsmn Toms. He was later promoted L/Cpl. He arrived in France with the Bn on 26th July 1915, given as the qualifying date for the 1914-15 Star. He died 6th October 1915 in Flanders and was posthumously awarded the 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal. His 1914-15 Star is pictured left, with the reverse showing his details, right. The medal roll for his 1914-15 Star indicates that he was serving in the Guards Machine Gun Regiment. He is commemorated on the Loos Memorial. Nathaniel is not included on the Roll of Honour in the Bristol Times and Mirror dated Saturday 26th February 1916, but he is listed on the Wickwar Village Hall Memorial.

Nathaniel had a credit of £2.4s and a War Gratuity of £4, which were paid to his widow, Emma.

The War Diary of the 3rd Bn Grenadier Guards commences on 26th July 1915 recording that the Bn paraded at Chelsea Barracks at 4 a.m. when the Commanding Officer, Col H Streetfield, read out messages from H.M. The King and H.R.H. The Duke of Connaught, Regimental Colonel. It goes on to note that the battalion had a full war establishment, but with only 24 officers. It is clear that Nathaniel Toms would have been part of that parade.

The battalion then travelled by rail from Waterloo to Southampton, where they boarded the Clyde Steamboat, “Queen Alexandra”, which was escorted by a destroyer to Le Havre where they disembarked at 7 a.m. on 27th and then marched to No 1 Camp at St Adresse. At 12.30 p.m. on 28th they paraded at the camp and then marched to Gare du Marchandises, Le Havre, where they boarded a train which left at 5.45p.m and travelled via Rouen, Abbeville, Boulogne Calais and St. Omer to Wizernes, where the battalion de-trained at 3.30p.m. on 29th July and marched to billets at Esquerdes.

The whole of August was taken up with training at Esquerdes, with some interesting diversions:

1st August Lt HRH The Prince of Wales, Grenadier Guards, visited the officers of the battalion.

8th August The battalion paraded for Divine Service in a meadow.
18th August The Brigade, comprising 3rd Bn, 1st Bn Grenadiers and 2nd Bn Scots Guards. Took part in a Review on the Aviation Ground at St. Omer. The Brigade was visited and inspected by the French and British Ministers of War – Monsieur Millerand and Lord Kitchener. They were accompanied by Field Marshall Sir John French and his staff.

On 19th August it was noted that 3rd Bn was to be part of 2nd Brigade, along with 1st Scots, 1st Coldstream and 2nd Irish. On 22nd August the Bn strength was 25 officers and 996 Other Ranks (OR), which was 8 over establishment.

On 26th August a Regimental Dinner was arranged for the four service battalions of the Guards Regiment, to take place in the refectory of a large convent at Wisques, which was being used as the army’s machine gun school. 98 officers attended, including Maj. Gen Lord Cavan, the Guards Division commander, and “a few guests”.

The diary for September is missing, but it is clear that by the end of the month they were on the front line. The entry for 1st October says, “Came out of the Trenches and arrived at VERTIGNEUL at 6.am. after a very tiring tour of duty.” October 1st was spent resting at Vertigneul.

3 October Moved forward again to so-called billets in the ruined village of VERMELLES. Terrific noise from our own guns with occasional bursts of Shelling from the enemy. We were in reserve to the 2nd Gds Brigade.

4 October (night) Took over from K.OLiv Regt (King’s Own Liverpool Regiment). Very wet dark night. Took 10 hours to get into our places. Very complicated plan of ½ finished Trenches: in some places within 30 yards of enemy: and our left is a long finger actually resting on the Hohenzollern redoubt: dug day and night – but difficult to make the position even reasonably secure.

5 October 1915 In front line trenches left resting on Hohenzollern

6 October “ “

7 October “ “

8 October In the afternoon were heavily attacked all along the line. The enemy Bombers rushed our left flank and came bombing down our line. They surprised and surrounded our own Bombers killing most of them including Anson. A machine gun commanded by Lt R WILLIAMS from the B? was also killed and 3 successive machine gun sergeants.

The two companies who occupied the finger Nos 2 and 3 were ordered to retire down to Communication Trench and make way for Bombs and Bombers who were turned up from the Support Companies.

The Bombers of the 3rd Bn: Coldstream Guards who were on our right in the advanced line managed to stop the rush and our bombers coming back by various communication Trenches assisted in clearing the enemy out and the Trench was re-occupied.

After line attack was over (It was repulsed along the whole of the line with great loss to the enemy) two Companies of the 1/Scots were sent to relieve our 2 forward companies.

On 9th October the battalion was relieved at 7pm and returned to Vermelles. Further engagements were part of the Battle of the Hohenzollern Redoubt – a disastrous episode that resulted in failure and many thousands of dead. This last extract illustrates how awful were the conditions in the trenches
that Nathaniel Toms must have endured. Whilst the diary does not give detail of any enemy action on 6\textsuperscript{th} October, they would inevitably be subjected to sniper fire and it is possible that Nathaniel died at the hands of a sniper during a “quiet time” in the trenches.

Sadly, Nathaniel’s cousin, 6144 LCpl Robert Toms of the 6\textsuperscript{th} Inniskilling Dragoons, had died just a couple of months earlier, on 12\textsuperscript{th} December 1915. Robert was the son of John Toms, William’s brother. He is buried at Terlincthun British Cemetery, Wimille, Pas-de-Calais, France.

Nathaniel’s brother, Alick, was serving with Cirencester Police when he enlisted into the Territorial Force on 6\textsuperscript{th} May 1915, joining the Royal Gloucestershire Hussars Yeomanry (a Reserve Regiment of Cavalry) as 2934 Pte Alec Toms. His name varied between Alick and Alec.

I am grateful to Steve, who runs a private Toms family tree for providing additional family information, and also to June Turnbull’s “TOMS TREE”, particularly for providing the detail about William Nathaniel and Denys Lionel.
L H Townsend

Lewis Herbert Townsend was born on 28th July 1894 in Hawkesbury, the second of three children of Alfred Lewis Townsend, a gardener, and Annie Elizabeth Teagle, who were living in 1901 on the High Street, Wickwar, near to the New Inn (now The Buthay). Lewis’s name is a bit of an enigma, as he was registered at birth as Lewis Hubert Townsend, but the 1901 census records him as Louis and the 1911 census as Lewis. All his subsequent records show him as Lewis Hubert Townsend. At the 1911 census his mother, Annie, was living as a housekeeper to Henry and Elizabeth Oliver, of Borovere, Wotton-under-Edge; she is shown as being married. There is no clue why she was not living at home in Wickwar.

In 1901 Lewis (Louis) was recorded as being at school. According to “First World War Heroes of Wotton-under-Edge”, by Bill Griffiths, he attended The Endowed School in Wickwar followed by Katherine Lady Berkeley’s which he entered on 22nd September 1908, leaving on 26th July, 1910. At age 16, in 1901, he was working as a Clerk in a Brewery Office, presumably in Wickwar. The family was living at the High Street, Wickwar. Lewis married Ethel Harriett Harding, one of five daughters of Reginald and Esther (or Hester) Harding in the spring of 1915 at Dursley.

Lewis joined the 5th Battalion, Royal Irish Rangers (5 RIR), possibly soon after they arrived in England in May 1915, and was assigned the Regimental Number 1031. However, in the official record of those who died in WW1 it is noted that he was “Formerly 11828 Somerset Light Infantry”, although I have been unable to trace this comment any further. At the commencement of the war the 5th R.I.R. belonged to the 25th Brigade of the 10th (Irish) Division; this Division was the first Irish Division that ever existed in the British Army. The Division crossed to England in May 1915, training in the Basingstoke area. The 5th R.I.R. served as the Divisional Pioneer Battalion and was known as 5th (Pioneer) Battalion, Royal Irish Regiment. In July 1915 they sailed for the Mediterranean, heading for the Gallipoli Peninsula. On 16th July the Division arrived at the Mediterranean island of Mudros. At 8 a.m. on 7th August the Division landed at Suvla on the Peninsula.

The 5th R.I.R. was trained as an infantry unit but also received instruction in engineering work, especially in road making. The majority of its men were miners or construction workers, its function was to do the odd jobs of the Division. On the Gallipoli Peninsula, however, those duties soon fell into abeyance, since it was called on to fill up the gaps in the line. The Irish Division were given the task of clearing Kiretch Teke Sirt Ridge, just north of Suvla Bay. After a week on the bare Kiretch Teke the men were suffering terribly from the heat and the acute shortage of water. Robert Rhodes James in his book Gallipoli includes an eye-witness account of the conditions “..... the drawn faces and haggard look told of the dreadful week into which more privation and suffering had been compressed than fell to the lot of most men in a lifetime. Their faces were begrimed with smoke and sweat. The clay of the trenches showed on their hands and through the unshaven beard and close-cropped head.” Although the attack was conducted with great resolution, little real progress was made and casualties amounted to nearly 2,000. L/Cpl Lewis Townsend survived this...
battle, but unfortunately wasn’t to live for much longer, dying just a month later, on 20th September 1915. It is not clear how Lewis died. Both Commonwealth War Graves Commission Registers and the publication Soldiers Died in the Great War just have the word ‘died’. Did he die in battle or as the result of wounds or could he have died from an illness? In fact, a friend of Lewis – Pte. Frank Ashley, writing home, mentioned that whilst serving on the Gallipoli Peninsula, Lewis had been taken to hospital suffering from dysentery. It is also unclear when Lewis’s family were told of his death. As late as 4th March 1916, the Gazette stated that he was ‘still listed missing’. A report from the Cheltenham Chronicle and Gloucester Graphic, dated Saturday 5th February 2016 is reproduced, above.

Lewis is commemorated in several places. In Gallipoli his name can be found on the Helles Memorial. As well as being commemorated on the Roll of Honour plaque in Wickwar Parish Church and the Wickwar Village Hall Memorial Lewis’s name also appears on Wotton’s War Memorial. Lewis’s name appears in four other places: on the Roll of Honour in Katharine Lady Berkeley’s School; on the memorial tablet in Sinwell Chapel, Wotton-under-Edge; on the Roll of Honour boards in Wotton-under-Edge Town Hall, where Lewis’s regiment is given mistakenly as the Royal Irish Rifles; and in Ireland’s Memorial Record. He is also noted as “missing” in the Roll of Honour in the Bristol Times and Mirror dated Saturday 26th February 1916.

I am grateful to Bill Griffiths for allowing me to use the material in his book.
G Webb

George Webb was born in 1890, the youngest son of Henry Thomas Webb and Amelia Parker. His older siblings were: Edward, born 1885; and Sidney, 1888. Henry Thomas Webb was born in Tresham in about April 1858; he was baptised on 30th May. Amelia Parker was born in Wotton-under-Edge in about 1860. Henry and Amelia married in about July 1883 in Dursley. Throughout his time in Wickwar Henry was a Brewery Drayman. The family is recorded as living on the High Street, possibly next door to The New Inn (now The Buthay). Henry died on 6th March 1915 and was buried at Wickwar on 15th. Amelia died on 21st November 1926 and is buried with Henry.

In 1911 George is recorded as a brewery employee, working for Arnold Perrett, as was his brother, Sidney.

George joined the 9th Battalion, The Worcestershire Regiment as 30643 Pte G Webb. The battalion’s Roll of Honour shows that he died from his wounds on 28th January 1917 in Mesopotamia. He is buried at the Amara War Cemetery in Iraq.

The record also shows that he is commemorated in Britain. After much searching, the website gravestonephotos.com led me back to Wickwar, where George is commemorated on a stone at his parents’ grave (right). He is also commemorated on the Wickwar Village Hall Memorial. I am unable to find George’s medal record.

The Battalion War Diary for January 1917 is contained at the Appendix, but it is extremely difficult to read. It is accompanied by an account of the battalion’s activities gleaned from the Worcestershire Regiment’s web site: (http://www.worcestershireregiment.com/bat_9_1917.php).
Henry Joseph Wilcox, known as “Joe”, was born in Wickwar in 1896, the third son of (William) Joseph Wilcox and Helen Pedrick. Baptised on 29th March 1896, he had ten siblings: Francis (Frank), born 1888; Elsie J, 1889; Albert, 1892; Ethel M, 1895; Minnie, 1899; John R (Jack), 1901; Ellen, 1903; Florence, 1905; Alfred, 1907; Frederick, 1909; and Bessie M, 1912. In 1891 Joseph, an agricultural labourer, and Ellen, with Francis and Elsie, were living at Sodbury Road, Wickwar. By 1901 the family was living at West End Lane Cottage and Joseph is now described as a “Cattleman on a Farm”. Elsie, who would be 12 years old, was not registered as living at home. In 1911 the family address is shown simply as “West End” – perhaps the same place as in 1901. Father Joseph is again described as a farm labourer and Joseph Junior (Henry Joseph) is a Clerk at a Brewery.

Joe’s nephew, Geoff, says of his grandfather (Joe’s father) he “was also a Joseph and prior to working on a farm was a regular soldier (red coat and pill box hat) and fought in the second Afghanistan War in Victorian Times.”

Joe joined the 10th (Service) Battalion, the Gloucestershire Regiment as 17776 Pte Henry Joseph Wilcox. The portrait that appeared in the Bristol Times and Mirror (above right) was clearly taken from the family portrait (below right).

Joe’s service number indicates that it would be about March 1915 when he enlisted. He would then have undergone training before being deployed to France on 21st October 1915, to join the battalion. 10th Bn The Gloucestershire Regiment, was part of 1st Infantry Brigade, 1st Division. The Regimental War Diary for 21st October 1915 records that the battalion was at LILLERS: “Draft of 23 O Ranks (consisting of 19 of our own men rejoined after recovery from wounds and four new men) arrived.” Joe would have been one of the “four new men”. On 24th October “Battalion resting and training”. On 28th October “208 picked N.C.O. & men of the Battalion inspected H.M. The King at a point near LABUSSIÈRE”. On that day the battalion moved to HOUCHIN. The battalion had left behind 85 men who had been in contact with a case of diphtheria. On 31st October the Battalion was ordered back to LILLERS, occupying the billets they had left a few days earlier. The next two weeks were spent resting and re-equipping, training in such skills as “Bombing” and “Trench Pioneering”. On 14th they moved to PHILOSOPHE, spending two days resting before returning to the trenches at LOOS.
The full War Diary is produced in the Appendix, but the entry for 17th – 19th November 1915 states, “Battalion in trenches at LOOS with headquarters at FORT TOSH. Uneventful. Two men killed one a signaller and one an orderly.” 17776 Pte Henry Joseph Wilcox died on 19th November, 1915, so must have been one of these two soldiers. Joe’s nephew, Geoff recounts that his mother told him that Joe was a runner who carried messages back and forth between the various units. Joe has no known grave and is commemorated on the Loos Memorial. He was awarded 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal. Also, the family has the only example we have seen of the “Widow’s Penny”. His Record of Soldier’s Effects show that his mother, Ellen, was his “sole legatee” and received his pay credit of £2.3s.2d. and War Gratuity of £3. He is listed as “killed” in the Roll of Honour in the Bristol Times and Mirror dated Saturday 26th February 1916 and is named on the Wickwar Village Hall Memorial. He is also commemorated on his parents’ grave at Wickwar.

An anecdote related by Joe’s nephew, Geoff, recounts that his mother (Joe’s sister) “was walking with my grandmother down Frith Lane on their return to West End, and out of nowhere a black dog appeared just behind them and proceeded to pad away in front of them, only to literally disappear after a few yards. When they arrived home the Minister was awaiting for them at the gate bearing the news of Joe’s death in Belgium.”
CHAPTER 3 - RANGEWORTHY ROLL OF HONOUR

Holy Trinity Memorial

William George Bedggood

William George Bedggood was born about March 1895 to Henry Bedggood and Helena Alice Rathbone, who married on 4th April 1882. Henry was born in Wickwar in 1858 and later moved to Rangeworthy; Helena was born in Iron Acton in about 1855 and was baptised in Rangeworthy on 11th June 1855. William was baptised at Rangeworthy on 31st March 1895. He had six siblings: Thomas Henry, 1883 – 1964; Ernest Rathbone, 1885 – 1956; Alice Maud, 1887 – 1964; Laurence, 1889 - ; John, 1894 - ; Arthur James, 1897 – 1962.

In 1901 the family was living in New Road, Rangeworthy; Henry was a Grocer working on his “own account”. The family name was spelled “Bedgood” in the 1901 census; in 1911 it was spelled “Bedggood”! In 1911 Ernest Rathbone and George (presumably William George) were boarding with the Mogridge family at 63 Upper Cheltenham Place, Bristol, as Grocer’s Assistant and Grocer’s Apprentice, respectively. Henry is also recorded as being a Churchwarden. He died about 6th July 1915 and was buried at Rangeworthy on 10th July. Helena died on 28th March 1917.

William enlisted in as 18326 Gnr Bedggood in A Bty, 52nd (LII) Brigade, Royal Field Artillery. LII Brigade, Royal Field Artillery originally comprised 166, 167 and 168 batteries and the Brigade Ammunition Column, which were reorganised in February 1815 into four four-gun batteries; A, B, C and D. The Brigade served under the 9th (Scottish) Division, which was formed in August 1914 as part of Kitchener’s New Army. The division deployed to France between 9th and 12th May 1915 and went into action in the Battle of Loos. In 1916 they were engaged at the Battle of the Somme and left the division on 8th January 1917 to become an Army Field Artillery Brigade. I am unable to more closely identify the unit in which William Bedggood was serving when he died. His CWGC record identifies him as being a member of 52nd Brigade.

William deployed to France on 9th July 1915 and died on 22nd April 1918, by which time he had risen to the rank of Sergeant. Given the date of his death it is possible that he was fighting in the Battle of the Lys. He is buried at La Targette British Cemetery, Neuville-St Vaast. He was awarded the 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal.

William had made a will in which he left his effects, £199. 11s., to his brother Thomas Henry.
Harold Bodman

Harold Bodman was born in 1890 at Codrington, the son of William and Hannah Bodman then living at Dodrington Ash Cottage, Wapley and Dodrington. He was baptised on 23rd February. A year later he had a sister, Elsie E. and they were still living at Dodrington. By 1911 they had moved to Rangeworthy, but Elsie was not living at home. By 1916 they were living at Sunbeam Cottage, Iron Acton.

Harold enlisted as 58450 Gunner Harold Bodman in the Royal Field Artillery (RFA) on 31st December 1914 in Bristol. His address was given as Rangeworthy, Yate and his occupation, Farm Labourer.

Harold’s Military Record shows that he reported for duty at Hilsea on 1st January 1915. He served in the UK until 17th September 1915, when he was posted to the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force in Gallipoli, with A Battery, 69th Brigade, RFA. He was then posted to Alexandria on 15th December 1915, arriving on 22nd. On 15th February 1916 he transferred to Basra, Iraq, arriving on 7th March. On 18th July he was admitted to hospital and died of “Enteris” on 4th August in Sheikh Sand.

At some point an enquiry as to Harold’s whereabouts was submitted by Godfrey C Chester, Master at Rangeworthy Court, followed up by a request from his father. This latter evoked a response that he was still serving, attached to 69th Brigade I.E.F. (Iraq Expeditionary Force?) This was dated 19/7/16. The next entry notes that he “Died from Disease” on 4th August 1916. This had been notified by telegram from 3 Echelon in Basra.

Harold is buried in Basra War Cemetery. He was awarded posthumously the 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal. These were sent to his father in Rangeworthy.
Frank Curtis

Frank Curtis was born Francis James Curtis in about 1899, the son of George Curtis and Sarah Poole. In 1901 they were living at Bagstone Road, Wickwar (sic). By 1911 they had moved to New Road, Rangeworthy and in 1917 George was recorded as living at Prospect Cottage, Iron Acton. Frank had six siblings: Sarah, 1888; Edith Emily, 1890; Joseph, 1892; George, 1893; Kate, 1896; and Alma May, 1902.

Frank joined the 1st Battalion, The Wiltshire Regiment, known as the Duke of Edinburgh’s Regiment, as 37510 Pte Francis James Curtis. The record shows that Frank died of wounds on 21st September 1918, but as we have no record of him being evacuated for treatment it is impossible to determine which action he died in. In September 1918 the battalion was part of 110th Brigade, 21st Division in an area just east of Bapaume. During that month they were involved in several engagements as they moved east, during which they suffered losses of both officers and men, with many wounded. It is likely that he was evacuated to one of the field hospitals at Rouen, which would explain the fact that he is buried at St Sever Cemetery Extension at Rouen. His headstone is inscribed “REMEMBERED BY ALL AT HOME”.

Frank was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. His Record of Soldiers’ Effects show that total credits of £17. 0s.3d. including £6. 10s. War Gratuity was paid to his sister, Kate, as sole legatee.

Herbert Dando

Herbert Dando is included on the Wickwar Memorial and his account is contained in that section.

Ronald Eacott

Ronald Eacott is included on the Wickwar Memorial and his account is contained in that section.
Joseph Hull

Joseph Laurence Hull was the son of Joseph Hull and Lucy Ethel Gifford of Gifford Cottage, Rangeworthy. The Hull Family Tree, maintained by the current occupant, Robert Holland, tells me that the house is now called Stonecroft. He was born at Northfield, Worcestershire, in 1896 and was an Art Student.

In 1891 the family lived at 4 Albert Terrace, in the parish of St Peter the Great, Worcester. In 1901 they had moved to 84 Bristol Road, Northfield. Joseph was the fifth of seven children. His siblings were: Gordon Burnett Gifford, born 1885; Herbert Cranley, 1886; Lucy Helen Gifford, 1890; Robert Gifford, 1892; Mary Kathleen, 1898; and Marjorie Gifford, 1902. I have not managed to work out why some of the children took their mother’s maiden name.

Father Joseph was a coal contractor traveller, born in Iron Acton in 1860; he died at Rangeworthy on 11th September 1948. His mother Lucy was born in Camberwell, London, in 1858; she died in Rangeworthy on 29th April 1943. The family was still living at Northfield in 1911. The census from that year shows that Joseph and Lucy had seven children one of whom had died. This was Robert Gifford who died 1896, so did not appear in a census return.

Both his brothers had attended private school, with Herbert on record as being in the OTC, so it is likely that Joseph did, too. He enlisted as a private in the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, service number 15/410, and was later commissioned as a 2/Lt in 13th Bn, The Worcestershire Regiment. His appointment as a Temporary 2nd Lt (from 4th October 1915) appeared in the London Gazette dated 9th October. He deployed to France on 9th September 1916 on posting to 4th Bn, the Worcesters. At that time the battalion was in Flanders, at Ypres. They remained there until 8th October, when they entrained to move to the Somme.

Having been engaged in a number of engagements with the enemy, the most significant attack took place on 18th October. The following is taken from the Worcestershire Regiment’s web site.

At 3.40 a.m. on October 18th the British artillery opened a devastating fire. All along the line the British battalions, soaked to the skin but still eager, clambered out of their trenches and advanced through mud and rain against the enemy.

On the front of the 4th Worcestershire, the attack on the uncaptured portion of "Hilt Trench" was made by 'X' Company, three platoons attacking from the gunpits and one platoon from the end of the portion of the trench already captured. That attack, though gallantly made, failed at first-before unbroken wire, but Captain D'A. G. St. C. Roberts at once reorganised his company and again attacked. Eventually 'X' Company were successful, and the enemy were driven out of the remainder of "Hilt Trench." The attack of the 35th Brigade against "Bayonet Trench" had failed: but 'X' Company established a block at their end of "Bayonet Trench" and held it stubbornly against all counter-attacks. Captain D'A. Roberts was awarded the M.C. for this action.

Meanwhile the other three companies of the 4th Worcestershire, with the 2nd Hampshire on their right, had pushed forward, following the creeping barrage from "Hilt Trench" to "Grease Trench." As the barrage lifted off the trench the attacking platoons charged in and made short work of the defenders. Then parties previously detailed (one of those parties was led by Sergt. [Acting C.S.M.] C. Hackett, who pushed on with great courage and captured several prisoners. He was awarded the D.C.M. and subsequently was selected for a commission) advanced, headed by Captain T. F. V. Matthews to the sunken road behind the trench. As had been expected, the sunken road was found to be full of enemy dugouts, which were swiftly bombed into surrender and demolished:

\[\text{6} \quad 13\text{th Bn joined with 12\text{th Bn to become a Training Regiment, providing soldiers to whichever units required them. They never deployed.}\]
after which Captain Matthews and his men returned with their prisoners, to "Grease Trench." At the western end of "Grease Trench" a German strongpoint at the Five Cross Roads resisted successfully, but with that exception the whole of the trench, had been captured by the Worcestershire and Hampshire. More than two hundred prisoners had been taken. Captain Matthews was awarded the M.C. for his actions.

Further to the right the left flank of the 71st Brigade had been successful in securing a portion of "Mild Trench" and in linking up with the Hampshire. On the remainder of the front of that Brigade-no success had been gained.

The attack was over before it was really light. The Worcestershire platoons made such cover as was possible and held their gains throughout the day under a very heavy bombardment. Twice the enemy were seen forming up for a counter-attack, but each time they were stopped dead by rapid fire. The rain beat down steadily, and the condition of the trenches grew hourly worse and worse; men sank to their hips in the mud, and only with great difficulty could they be lugged out. Night fell and it became possible to reckon losses: about 140 in all, including 13 officers. 3 officers (2/Lieut. C. G. Durant, 2/Lieut. G. C. Scott and Capt. F. P. Daw) and 16 other ranks killed. 9 officers (Captains L. A. W. Knight, Lieut. H. L. Grogan, Lieut. A. Ramsden, 2/Lieuts. D. S. Milward, R. E. Wilson, D. N. Monks, J. L. Hull, H. F. C. Colman, H. F. C. Donnell) and 80 other ranks wounded. 1 officer (2/Lieut. J. Overbury) and 30 other ranks missing.

The night of October 18th/19th was a most anxious one. The position of the Battalion, with its left flank in the air, was very dangerous. But no German counter-attack developed and the position gained was safely held.

The account above names Joseph Laurence Hull as one of the injured officers, although it does not mention his death. He had possibly been evacuated to a First Aid Post or Field Hospital following his injury, where he died the following day, 19th October, aged 20, from his wounds. The battalion war diary (see Appendix) is silent on the matter. He is buried at Dartmoor Cemetery, Becordel-Bécourt and his headstone is inscribed “HE GAVE HIS LIFE FOR HIS COUNTRY AND HIS KINDRED”.

Joseph is commemorated in a window in Rangeworthy Parish Church. It comprises a three-light stained-glass window with figures depicted in each light and an inscription at the base which reads, “Dedicated in memory of Joseph Laurence Hull 2Lt Worcestershire Regt who fell in action at Guesecourt France Oct’ 18 1916 aged 20yrs”. He is also commemorated on the Blackwell Memorial in St Catherine’s Church, Blackwell, Worcestershire.

Joseph was posthumously awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.
Joseph had served on the front for just 5 weeks and six days before he succumbed to his wounds. The average life expectancy of junior officers in World War 1 was six weeks.

Joseph’s Record of Soldiers’ Effects show a credit of £73. 15s. 11d, including a War Gratuity of £5. 10s. He had made a will, in which his address was given as Highfield, Blackwell, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire. In it he left £493. 4s. 11d to Joseph Hull, Inspector to the Ministry of Munitions. As his parents’ address is given as Gifford Cottage, they must have moved there after the 1911 census but before he was killed in 1916.

Herbert Cranley Hull served in the Royal Flying Corps, later to become the Royal Air Force, from 1917 to 1921. He was gazetted as a private directly from OTC on 11th May 1917, to be a 2/Lt, rising to the rank of Captain.

Gordon Burnett Gifford Hull was an eminent engineer and in WW1 served in the Royal Engineers. He was awarded the 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal. He was also Mentioned in Dispatches while serving on the Archangel Force, Northern Russia immediately after the war and was appointed an Officer in the Military Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE) for this work. He was also awarded the medal of St Stanislaus. He then served in WWII attaining the rank of Temp Brigadier and being appointed Commander Royal Engineers. He was Liaison Officer on the Mulberry Project for the invasion of Europe and on the first assault bridges over the Rhine. He was promoted to Commander (CBE) in 1943.

I am grateful to the Lickey Hills Local History Society for the photograph of the Blackwell Memorial and the picture of St Catherine’s Church.
George Marklove

George Charles Marklove was born in 1890, the third son of Frederick and Elizabeth Strange, who were married on 15th February 1882. In 1891 the family was living at Clayfield Cottage, Yate. George had thirteen siblings: Annie Louisa, 1884; Joseph, Uriah 1886; Herbert Fred, 1888; Emily Jane, 1890; Florence Elizabeth, 1893; Lucy Lydia, 1894, Bence Daniel, 1897; Rosina Bessie, 1898; Edith Mary, 1900; Nellie, 1902; Laura E, 1905; and Gwendoline Ethel, 1907. The 1911 census shows that of the fourteen children Fred and Elizabeth had, two had died. It would appear that one was born and died between censuses, as only thirteen are recorded.

George married Mary Annie Powell (sister of Henry Elias Powell – see below) on 27th December 1909 at Rangeworthy. Both were living in New Road, Rangeworthy.

In 1911 George and Mary and their five-month-old son Frederick Henry, were living with Rufus Alfred Powell, Mary’s brother, at 63 Bryn Awel Terrace, Ynyshir, Wales, where George was working as a colliery worker (below ground). Frederick Henry was baptised at Rangeworthy on 26th December 1910.

George enlisted at Caerphilly early in the war into the 1st Battalion, The Welsh Guards, as a Guardsman with regimental number 651. He deployed to France on 17th August 1915. The battalion paraded at Wellington Barracks in London and left Waterloo in three parties in the morning bound for Southampton. The battalion sailed on two ships, the SS Palm Branch and the SS St Petersburg, at 6pm. George will have been on the St Petersburg with the main body of the battalion. Having arrived in France they gradually progressed by train to St Omer, arriving there on 20th and met by Major General Lord Cavan. They were informed that they would form part of 3rd Guards Brigade, along with 1st & 4th Battalions, The Grenadier Guards and 2nd Battalion, The Scots Guards, moving on to Arques for an intensive period of training. They left Arques on 22nd September and marched over five days to Vermelles. On 27th September the brigade was ordered to march to Loos and join an attack on “Hill 70” east of Loos. The Battalion War Diary gives a very detailed account of events that day, from the moment that they came under a barrage of artillery and machine gun fire. When they arrived in Loos the town had been heavily shelled with gas. Through the battles on that day casualties were six officers and twelve men killed, five officers and 99 men wounded and sixty men missing. One of these men will have been George, who was officially pronounced “assumed dead”.

George Charles Marklove’s body was never recovered and he is commemorated on the Loos Memorial (left).

He was posthumously awarded the 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and the Victory Medal. His
Record of Soldier’s Effects records that he died “On or since” 27.9.15. “Death presumed”. His effects of £3.11s.3d, including War Gratuity of £3, were paid to his widow, Mary.

Following George’s death Mary married John Strange, a farm labourer from Yate, on 31st May 1919.
Henry E Powell

Henry Elias Powell was the son of Noah and Rhoda Powell of New Road, Rangeworthy. Noah was born in Cromhall in 1860 and Rhoda in West Kington, Wiltshire in 1865. Henry was the fourth of five children. His siblings were: Rufus A, 1885; Mary Anne, 1888; Eliza Amelia, 1890; and Phoebe (Bessy), 1898. Henry was born in Rangeworthy on 17\textsuperscript{th} February, 1894 and baptised on 13\textsuperscript{th} May, Whit Sunday.

Noah was buried at Rangeworthy on 17\textsuperscript{th} March 1938.

He enlisted in the 8\textsuperscript{th} Battalion, Somerset Light Infantry as 20459, Pte Henry E Powell, but was later promoted to Lance Corporal. I can find no service record other than his Medal Roll which records that he was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

On 29\textsuperscript{th} July 1917 8\textsuperscript{th} Battalion, Somerset Light Infantry left their camp near Lindenhoeck to move into trenches at Lumm Farm, relieving 13\textsuperscript{th} Battalion, The Royal Fusiliers, in anticipation of an attack to be made on 31\textsuperscript{st} July. At 0350 hrs on 31\textsuperscript{st} July the first phase commenced on Rifle Farm by 8\textsuperscript{th} Bn, Lincolnshire Regt and 4\textsuperscript{th} Bn Middlesex Regt, which they took. During this time the enemy “put down a moderate barrage” on the 8th SLI front line and support trenches. The second phase involved 8\textsuperscript{th} SLI and commenced at 0750. Action continued through the day, with “Pigeon reports” updating the position. One received at 1740 reported that one of the platoons had suffered many casualties and that it was not possible at that time to bring in the wounded. At 8p.m. it was reported that the enemy was massing for a counter attack, but this was repelled by the guns of the Heavy Artillery. After dark the battalion was relieved by 13\textsuperscript{th} Bn Royal Fusiliers, without incident. It was during this battle on 31\textsuperscript{st} July 1917 that Henry Powell died: he is commemorated on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial.

As recorded above, Mary Anne had married George Marklove and after his death married John Strange on 31\textsuperscript{st} May 1919. Another sister, Eliza Amelia married John’s brother, Charles, a private in the Gloucestershire Regiment, on 5\textsuperscript{th} July 1919!
Roger Vernon

Roger Vernon was the son of the then Vicar of Rangeworthy, Rev Frederick Wentworth Vernon and Edith Serena Hill Boothby. At the time of his marriage Frederick was a widower, but I can find no record of his previous marriage. Edith was the third of three daughters of the Vicar of Hawkesbury, Rev William H Boothby.

Roger was born in Falmouth, Cornwall, on 27th October, 1893. I had been able to find little about his life other than his story in Du Rivigny’s, reproduced below, and that on the Ancestry Vernon Family Tree, maintained by Peter Stubbs, to whom I am most grateful. Roger had three siblings: Millicent Eleanor, 1887; Evelyn, 1889; and Peter, 1895. Evelyn and Peter were baptised at Rangeworthy and Millicent at Hawkesbury. I can find no baptism record for Roger and remain puzzled why he was born in Falmouth. Du Rivigny’s states that he is the 3rd son, presumably ignoring the fact that there was also a daughter! He attended St Lawrence College in Ramsgate, Kent, in 1911, where he was a member of the OTC, holding the rank of Sergeant.

In 1913 he went to Malaya as a rubber planter, returning to England in January 1915, when he was commissioned as a 2nd Lt in the 8th Battalion, The Somerset Light Infantry. He went to France with the BEF in September 1915 and died on 14th May 1916.

In May 1916 8th Battalion, Somerset Light Infantry were based at La Neuville near Fricourt. The regimental war diary records, “On the night of the 13th – 14th May the Batt. Was detailed to attempt a cutting out expedition. Capt Jolivet was in charge of the party which consisted of 70 officers, N.C.O’s and men. 2nd Lt Withers was in charge of a small advance party whose duty was to lay an explosive charge in the barbed wire in front of the German trenches. After some delay the charge was fired and the whole party rushed forward. The outer wire had been destroyed, but at the bottom of the German parapet there was some uncut wire and also some knife rests. 2nd Lt Vernon and the leading men tried to force their way through the wire but were unsuccessful. Our bombers were now throwing bombs, and, as the enemy began to retaliate the order was given to retire. The casualties were 2nd Lt Vernon and one N.C.O. killed and Capt Jolivet wounded.

Capt Jolivet had got caught up in the barbed wire and so was a minute or two behind the party in getting back. 2nd Lt Vernon was seen back on our parapet by several of the party, and it is very probable that when he heard a report that Capt Jolivet had not returned, he went out to look for him, as he was killed close to the German wire, but some little distance off the original line of advance.”

Capt A E Jolivet of 8th Bn, Somerset Light Infantry is recorded as serving in France from 9th September 1915 until 15th May 1915. He is also recorded as being issued the Silver War Badge. It would appear that he was evacuated and discharged because of the wounds that he received on the night that Roger Vernon died while mistakenly trying to rescue him. A moving epitaph to Roger Vernon is contained in Du Rivigny’s, below.

Capt Roger Vernon is buried at Cabaret-Rouge British Cemetery, Souchez. He was awarded the 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal, which were sent to his mother who was then living at Weatheroak, Alvechurch, Birmingham with his brother. His Register of Soldier’s Effects note that he had total credits of £66. 18s. 8d. , but no War Gratuity, which was left to his mother as executor. Mysteriously, it also notes that he was “Presumed dead” on 14th May 1916. Probate for Roger gives his address as “Clyde”, Clevedon, Somerset. He left £488. 4s. 7d. It is stated that this was left to his “widow”, Edith Serena Hill Vernon, but Du Rivigny’s suggests that this was his mother.
VERNON, ROGER, 2nd Lieut., 8th (Service) Battn. Prince Albert’s (Somerset Light Infantry), 3rd s. of the late Rev. Frederick Wentworth Vernon, of Rangeworthy, co. Gloucester, by his wife, Edith Serena Hill (Clyde Road, Clevedon), dau. of William Henry Boothby; b. Falmouth, co. Cornwall, 27 Oct. 1893; educ. Etonhurst, Weston-super-Mare; St. Lawrence College, Ramsgate, where he was a member of the O.T.C., attaining the rank of Sergt., before leaving school; went to the Malay States in 1913, and settled there as a Rubber Planter; volunteered for foreign service, and returned to England in Jan. 1915; received a commission, and was gazetted 2nd Lieut. 8th Battn. The Somerset Light Infantry the following March; served with the Expeditionary Force in France and Flanders from 5 Oct. of the same year, and was killed in action near Fricourt 14 May, 1916. His Commanding Officer wrote: “He was engaged in an attack on the German trenches, in which he was taking a leading part. He had with the utmost gallantry tried to force his way through some uncut wire, which was found to be impossible, and the party had to retire. He was seen back at our trenches, but most unfortunately a rumour spread that another officer had not come in; this officer did, in fact, come in a few minutes later. I am convinced, however, that he heard this rumour, and at once went back alone and unknown to anyone to rescue him. No act could possibly have been more gallant, and I cannot speak too highly of the courage shown by such a deed. Lieut. R. Vernon was most popular with all ranks, and a great favourite with his men; always cheerful and full of spirits, he set a fine example to everyone at all times,” and a Captain in the regiment: “He had done invaluable work for us, especially at Armentières, where he earned the D.S.O. time and time again. Fortunately his Major was invalided home and his Colonel was killed, and this prevented him getting this much coveted honour. Roger was to me a very staunch friend, and he was loved by his men for his devotion to duty and extraordinary pluck in holding the craters at Armentières.” A brother officer also wrote: “Roger was one of my greatest friends, and many a time have we faced great danger together; but

I always felt satisfied and happy when he was by my side. Roger’s personality and dogged pluck won for him the love of everyone in the battalion, and I can assure you we have lost one of our greatest and best men.” He was very keen at all games, etc.; unm.

Rev Frederick Wentworth Vernon died on 19th/20th May 1906 and is buried at St Andrew Churchyard, Clevedon, along with his wife, Edith, who died on 22nd November 1927.
Philip Whatley

Philip Alfred Whatley was born in about 1896 in Brislington, Somerset, the son of Francis George Whatley and Elizabeth Charlotte Brewer. In the 1901 census they were living at Gotley(?) Cottage, Brislington and had declared as Frank and Bessie, with five children: Frederick William, 1887; Henry Thomas, 1889; Dora Emily, 1891; Francis George, 1893; and Philip Alfred, 1896. Dora died in 1906.

In 1911 the family was living at The Post Office, Horton, Chipping Sodbury. Francis was a domestic gardener, born in Shepton Mallet, Somerset, and Elizabeth was the sub-postmistress, born in Blandford, Dorset. Philip was 15 and working as an under gardener.

By 1917 Francis and Elizabeth had moved to East View, Rangeworthy.

Philip enlisted as a private in the 1st/4th Bn, the Gloucesters with regimental number 6228TF, later transferring to 2nd/5th Bn with number 202216. On 1st April 1917 2/5 Bn The Gloucesters were based in the village of Caulaincourt, carrying out “work on roads and craters”. The following day they moved into Bihecourt, which A Company had captured earlier in the day. They worked on preparing a line of resistance over the next three days and on 6th received orders for an attack, which commenced at midnight. The regimental War Diary records, “Artillery open bombardment on enemy wire & trench. 12.40AM attack launched. Wire found intact. Lt Pakeman rallied his men and made 3 efforts to get through. Though himself wounded, he led his men up to the wire & cut a certain amount himself. Sgt Davis of “C” Co also distinguished himself, cutting a gap large enough for 5 men to get through. All of whom were killed. Battn relieved at 4AM by 2/4 BERKS and moved to VERMAND. Capt RF WORTHINGTON, Lt PAKEMAN, 2nd Lts. L C BROOKS, A.G. NALDRETT, A.J.G. ASHTON, F.W. KING, R.W. BOWEN wounded. 15 OR killed, 27 OR wounded, 6 OR evacuated. Capt INNES promoted to MAJ.”

Philip Whatley died on 7th April 1917 in this action and is buried at Vadencourt British Cemetery, Maissemy, France, less than one mile away. He was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. His Record of Soldier’s Effects shows that his father, Francis, received his credit of £5.1s.11d and a War Gratuity of £3.

He is also listed on the Rangeworthy Methodist Memorial.
Rangeworthy Methodist Memorial

Gerald Barnfield

Gerald Harvey Barnfield was born in Rangeworthy on 19th December 1897 and baptised on 2nd February 1898. His parents were William and Sarah Jane Barnfield, who, in 1901 were living at New Road, Rangeworthy. At that time, they had two other children: Florence, age 2 and Victor, 2 months. William was born in Earthcott in about 1874 and Sarah in Rangeworthy, about the same year.

By 1911 the family had moved to Lowden, Chippenham. The family had increased to include Ronald, born about 1905, in Rangeworthy.

Gerald enlisted as 32282 Pte Gerald Harvey Barnfield with the 6th Battalion, the Wiltshire Regiment, transferring later to the 1st Battalion, the Duke of Edinburgh's (Wiltshire) Regiment.

July 1917 saw the battalion at Delette. The first day of the month began with a church parade in the morning and the first round of the divisional football tournament in the afternoon, when the battalion beat the 2nd South Lancashire Regiment 1-0. The month continued with training and on the 4th the battalion was allocated the baths at Coyeques. The football tournament continued on 4th, with the battalion beating 76th Field Ambulance 2-1 and 75th Brigade Headquarters (no score recorded).

Over 6th-9th the battalion moved to Ypres and relieved 10th Cheshire Regiment “in the ramparts near the station. During the period 10th – 14th the battalion experienced attack by a gas which was “surprisingly new and named ‘Mustard Gas’. This gas destroyed the sense of smell and its presence was very difficult to detect, but for its symptom, continuous sneezing.”

On the night of 22nd the battalion was relieved by 2nd North Yorkshire Regiment and “marched back to DOMINION CAMP.” They then rested but “the party at PIONEER CAMP had to do one more night’s work on the night of 23rd/24th in the forward area and sustained many casualties. On 23rd killed, 1, wounded, 8 other ranks. Missing believed killed, 1 subsequently found to have been killed.”

Gerald Barnfield died on 23rd July 1917 and is commemorated on the Menin Gate at Ypres. He was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. His Record of Soldier’s Effect shows that he had a credit of £1.10s.3d and a War Gratuity of £3 which were paid to his father.
Percy Bezer

William Percy Bezer was born at Iron Acton on 31st July 1887 and baptised on 11th October, the son of James and Louisa Bezer. In 1891 the family was living at Clay Lane, Iron Acton, and William Percy was known as “Bertie”. In 1901 the family was living at Iron Acton and there were five boys: Edward G, 1884; Thomas, 1886; Percy W(!), 1887; Sebert, 1890; and John, 1894. Percy was a groom at Lily Put Court Stables, Chipping Sodbury in 1911. On 25th January 1915 he married Harriet Elizabeth Walker at St Peter’s, Wapley.

Percy joined the 7th Battalion, The Queen’s (Royal West Surrey Regiment) as G/22855 Pte William Percy Bezer.

The regimental war diary contains a very detailed account of events on 26th April, 1918. From the beginning of April, the battalion was in the Amiens area and withdrawn from the line on 5th to billets in Boves, moving again on 9th to Boutillerie on the eastern edge of Amiens. They moved again on 12th to Rencourt where they engaged in administrative tasks and training until 23rd. 24th April saw them move to St Fuscien. At 3pm on 25th April a message was received transferring the battalion to the command of 53rd Brigade, 58th Division, and ordering the commanding officer and four company commanders to report to 53rd Brigade Headquarters for a briefing by General Higginson.

As part of 53rd Brigade the 7th Queen’s were to attack the Bois de Hangard (Hangard Wood) in conjunction with the French Moroccan Division. The War Diary for that day is contained in Appendix. Battalion losses were 2 Officers and 10 Others Ranks killed, with 86 wounded and 42 missing. Two were classed “W&M” (I do not know what that means) and four died of their wounds.

Percy died on 26th April 1918 and is buried at Hangard Wood British Cemetery. Confusingly, his number is given as both G/22855 and 40740 in the CWGC records. His Record of Soldier’s Effects notes that his death is assumed and records a credit of £10.15s.2d including a War Gratuity of £9 paid to his widow, Harriet E. He was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.
Charles Green

Charles Green was the son of John and Sarah Green of Mangotsfield, Downend, Bristol. He was born in about 1875 and in 1881 the family lived at Moorend Cottage, Mangotsfield. Charles had seven siblings. In 1901 John was a widower living at Pendennis Street with his daughter, Elizabeth. I can find no record for Charles.

Charles joined the 19th Royal Hussars - known fully as 19th (Queen Alexandra’s Own Royal) Hussars - as 30182 Pte Green and later transferred to the 5th Reserve Regiment of Cavalry with number 13698. He would have initially been attached to the 14th Reserve Regiment of Cavalry, which trained men for, among others, 19th Hussars. I can find no record of military service other than his CWGC entry, showing that he died of pneumonia on 24th December 1916 and is buried in Mangotsfield Cemetery, Downend. His headstone is pictured, right, which states that he was a reservist with the Corps of Dragoons, late of the 5th Reserve Regiment of Cavalry. His next of kin is shown as Mrs C Green of 116 North Street, Downend. This would indicate that he married, but I can find no confirmed record. There is a record of a Charles Green marrying Lily Fussell at Barton Regis in September 1897 (2a 239), but I cannot confirm that this is our Charles Green.

With the outbreak of the First World War, the 19th Royal Hussars was split up, with squadrons attached to the 4th, 5th and 6th Infantry Divisions as divisional cavalry squadrons. All three divisions moved to France with the British Expeditionary Force, and saw action in the Battle of Le Cateau in August 1914, the Retreat from Mons later that month, the Battle of the Marne in September 1914, the Battle of the Aisne later that month and the Battle of Armentières in October 1914.

The regiment was brought together again in April 1915, and attached to the 9th Cavalry Brigade in the 1st Cavalry Division, with whom it served for the remainder of the war. It saw action at the Second Battle of Ypres in spring 1915, gaining battle honours for the Battle of St Julien in April 1915 and the Battle of Frezenberg in May 1915. The regiment went on to fight at the Battle of Flers–Courcelette in September 1916, part of the Battle of the Somme. It also served at the Battle of Cambrai in November 1917, at the Battle of Amiens in August 1918 and at the Pursuit to Mons in autumn 1918.

It is possible that he served with his regiment at the Battle of Cambrai and contracted pneumonia during or following this campaign and was evacuated to hospital in England. He would then have been transferred to a UK based unit, the 5th Reserve Regiment of Cavalry, a training unit, for administrative purposes. Fourteen other WW1 victims are buried at Mangotsfield.

Charles appears to have no association with Rangeworthy other than through the Methodist Chapel.
William Jones

William Thomas Jones was the son of Reuben and Selina Ann Jones, born in 1898 at Rangeworthy and baptised on 24th April. Reuben was a farm labourer. In 1901 the family was living at Rangeworthy Road. In the 1911 census they are simply shown as living in Rangeworthy. William had three siblings: Ernest, 1896; Norah, 1905; and Reginald, 1907. Fourteen-year-old William does not appear at home in the 1911 census.

The only military record I can find is his CWGC entry, which shows that he was 31117 Pte W T Jones in the 8th (Service) Battalion, The Gloucestershire Regiment, son of Mrs Selina Ann Jones of Chaingate Lane, Iron Acton. He died on 9th July 1917 and is commemorated on the Menin Gate Memorial at Ypres. I can find no medal record for him.

The Battalion War Diary is very light on detail. They started the month in Corps reserve, before relieving the 8th Bn Somerset Light Infantry in Ridge Defences. On 2nd July the diary records the awarding of the Military Medal to eight men. The battalion stayed in the same position until 7th, providing working parties daily, relieving the 10th Bn The Worcestershire Regiment in the line at Oosttaverne. They spent 8th July strengthening and improving the trenches. For 9th July the diary records, “battalion attacked enemy position E of OOSTTAVERNE. Objective gained and posts established. 7 prisoners taken. 2Lt A. H. Bloomfield, 2Lt E. Vich(?) Killed.” There is no mention of Other Rank casualties. Thus, it is not possible to precisely account for William Jones’ death.
Gilbert Reed

Gilbert Reed was the son of Robert and Mary Jane Reed of Chaingate Lane, Iron Acton, born about 1893. He enlisted as 33338 Private Gilbert Reed in the 7th Battalion, The Norfolk Regiment, at Buxton, Derby. He died of wounds on 3rd December 1917. It is unclear when he sustained his injuries; the war diary for December is incomplete, but there are reports for the first five days and no casualties were reported. There had been a very heavy attack on the battalion on 30th November, during which significant casualties were incurred: 27 men were killed, 89 wounded and 204 missing. Perhaps it was on this day that Gilbert sustained the wounds from which he later died. He is buried at Rocquigny-Equancourt Road British Cemetery, Equancourt. He was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Gilbert Reed is listed also on the Memorial at St James the Less Church, Iron Acton (pictured below), along with Silas Rummins (see below). The presumption is that they were “resident” in Iron Acton, but attended the Methodist Chapel in Rangeworthy.
Silas Rummins

Silas Rummins was a mystery who has slowly unravelled. There is a census record from 1891 of a one-month-old Silas Rummins, a twin son of George Rummins and Eliza Skuse. George Rummins was born in Iron Acton in about 1852; Eliza Skuse was born in Tytherington in about 1854. They married on 18th May 1874 at St James the Less, Iron Acton. In 1881 they were living at Acton Lane, Iron Acton, with three children: Alice, 1877; Caroline, 1879; and Elizabeth, 1881. The 1891 census shows the family still living at Acton Lane and records five more children: James, 1885; Frederick, 1887; Sidney, 1888; and twins Thomas and Silas, 1891. Sadly, George is recorded as a widower. It transpires that Eliza died during, or shortly after, giving birth to Thomas and Silas. Her death is recorded in Chipping Sodbury in the first quarter of 1891. Silas’s Canadian military record (see below) gives his date of birth as 15th February 1891. Caroline does not appear in the 1891 census.

The censuses for 1901 and 1911 record a George Rummins Jnr, born 1853, living with his wife, Mary (of Tytherington), at Chaingate Lane, Iron Acton. There are no children listed. It would appear that George re-married to Mary Elizabeth Chappell in the last quarter of 1897. They had no children. Mary had previously been married to Daniel Chappell, of Pinkney, Wiltshire; he was buried at St James the Less, Iron Acton on 7th October 1893.

The 1901 census for the Union Workhouse in Yate lists two of its occupants as nine-year-olds Silas and Thomas Rummings, born in Iron Acton. I am informed by Bev Harmon (néé Rummins) that these were Silas and Thomas of our story. Silas was a Barnados’ Home Child and was sent to Canada in 1905 on the SS Dominion. I have been able to confirm this from the passenger list which has a long list of children under the heading “Dr Barnado’s Party, although Silas is listed as being 11. Silas was one of 433 children being “transported” to Canada. They left Liverpool on 3rd August, 1905, arriving in Montreal on 12th, but I can find nothing more about him. He allegedly absconded in 1907 saying that he was “going home or to America”. It would seem that he stayed in Canada, reportedly joining the Canadian Black Watch under the name George Jones. Bev also said that he gave his sister, Elizabeth Brown, as his next of kin. There is only one Silas Rummins listed in the CWGC record. He is listed as 412768 Pte Silas Rummins of the 13th Bn Canadian Infantry (Quebec Regiment), who died on 8th October 1916 at the age of 25. This age matches the Silas Rummins of our 1891 census. The record also states that he served as George Jones and was the brother of Mrs E Brown, of 7, Wellington Terrace, Clifton, Bristol. This must be the Elizabeth mentioned above, who seemed to disappear after the 1881 census. Bev tells me that Silas enlisted at Lindsay in Ontario, Canada and I have subsequently found his attestation into the Canadian Expeditionary Force on 16th April 1915, as 12768 Pte George Jones, in which he names his next of kin as “Sister Bessie Brown”. Interestingly, he signed his attestation forms on 19th February, but it was not until 16th April that the Commander of the 39th Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force

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could declare, “I am satisfied with the correctness of this Attestation.” How Silas managed to persuade the authorities that he was George Jones is unclear.

The CWGC Grave registration forms only add to the mystery. Two list 13545 G Jones of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, killed in action on 1st, 2nd or 3rd July 1916, but the record is also annotated as “alive”. I can only presume that these have been incorrectly attached to the record. However, one document gives his initials as “P. O.”, so it is still unclear what the facts are. He is buried at Ovillers Military Cemetery.

Silas is also listed on the memorial in St James the Less Church, Iron Acton. To be listed at Rangeworthy I presume that the family attended the Methodist Chapel there.

From what I can gather the regiment was known by various titles: 13th Bn Canadian Infantry (Quebec Regiment); 13th Bn Canadian Expeditionary Force; The Black Watch; and the Royal Highland Regiment (The Royal Highlanders of Canada).

At the beginning of October 1916 13th Canadian Infantry Battalion were in Warloy and moved up to Albert on 5th, in order to engage in operations. The day’s diary entry for 7th is shown below.

The battalion formed part of the 3rd Canadian Infantry Brigade and was tasked along with 16th Battalion to take part in an offensive on 7th October with 1st and 9th Canadian Infantry Brigades, in support of the 3rd Corps, which the entry above summarises. The war diary gives a comprehensive list of casualties during the month, but there is no report of the action itself. Only one man is reported Killed in Action – Pte J Stephen. Others listed on that day are sick and wounded. On 8th October one officer and 8 Other Ranks were killed, three officers and 129 Other Ranks wounded and 10 officers and 151 Other Ranks missing. Perhaps Silas Rummins (alias George Jones) was numbered among these dead. The full War Diary for the beginning of October is in the Regimental War Diaries Appendix.
William Waite

William Charles Waite was born on 21st May 1886 to Francis Mills Waite and Elizabeth Bezer. Francis and Elizabeth were born in Iron Acton in 1867 and 1866 respectively; they were married in 1881 in the Holborn district of London. In the 1881 census they were living at 7 Scrutton Street, Moorfields, London. By 1891 they were in Iron Acton, in Clay Lane, then Acton Lane and by 1911 to Sunnyside, North Road, Yate. They had seven children: Florence E, 1884; William Charles, 1887; Montague Edward, 1888; Beatrice R, 1891; Reginald Arthur, 1894; Ernest Samuel, 1895; and Lillie Elizabeth, 1897. William married Elizabeth Fletcher at the Hope Chapel in Iron Acton on 15th March 1913. They had one child, Ivy Muriel Marjorie, born on 30th March 1914. It is likely that they had set up home in Yate, at “The Avenue”. It is unclear when Francis and Elizabeth moved to Rangeworthy as the 1918 Electoral Register shows that they were still living at North Road and the 1919 Register shows them living at Chaingate Lane, but the 1922 Register shows they were living at Rangeworthy.

William is the exception to the rule, in that military records of William Charles Waite do exist, although in a rather poor state. The incompleteness of the records leads to some confusion over his movements. He attested as a private in the General Service on 25th November 1915 at Aldershot. His address was given as 319 Ladypool Road, Sparkbrook, Birmingham. He was then transferred to the reserve until he was mobilized on 15th June 1916 and posted to the Royal Engineers on 21st June. He was granted Engineer’s pay on 7th October. He transferred to the 93rd Training Reserve Battalion on 29th November until 25th December when he transferred to the Gloucestershire Regiment and deployed on “foreign” service (France). On 25th December 1916 he was posted to the 1st Battalion, The Gloucestershire Regiment. He served in France from 25th December 1916 until 19th November 1917. During this time, he was charged with “Losing by neglect one towel”, the punishment for which was to “Pay for deficiency”! He was wounded and repatriated to a UK hospital on 20th November 1917 and discharged on 8th December. He was granted home leave from 9th to 18th December 1917, when his leave address was given as Oak Cottage, Newhouse Road, Yate. His unit was given as the 1st Gloster Regt and his regimental number 32266. He went back to France with the 2nd Battalion, South Lancashire Regiment, with regimental number 32855, on 29th March 1918; the War Diary records that “A reinforcement of 15 Officers and 434 other ranks joined today.” He died two weeks later, on 14th April, of wounds received. It is difficult to say precisely when he was wounded. There were reports of men being wounded on 4th and 5th April, but there was no significant battle. The best clue that we have is a report on 17th April of casualties incurred from 10th to 18th April:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Killed Officers</th>
<th>Wounded Officers</th>
<th>Missing Officers</th>
<th>Total Officers</th>
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<td>10th</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>11th</td>
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<td>17th</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>18th</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Killed: 18 Officers
Wounded: 16 Officers
Missing: 16 Officers

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William Charles Waite died in the 62nd Casualty Clearing Station (CCS) which at that time was located at Bandringhem⁷, Popperinge, Belgium, and is buried at Haringhe (Bandaghem) Military Cemetery, which was used to bury those who died in 62nd and 63rd CCS and other field hospitals. His headstone is inscribed “THY WILL BE DONE”, and his next of kin is shown as Mrs E Waite, The Avenue, Yate, Glos. The CWGC record also notes him as the son of Mr and Mrs Frank Waite of Rangeworthy, Yate. His record of Soldier’s Effects show that Elizabeth received £3.7s.10d credit of pay and a War Gratitude of £8.10s. William was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Philip Whatley

Philip Whatley is included on the Rangeworthy Parish Church Memorial.

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⁷ It is likely that this should be Bandaghem, which would be a name given by the troops for groups of Casualty Clearing Stations, with a soldier’s sense of humour, as it would be pronounced “bandage ‘em”. The name is given to the War Cemetery. Other examples are Mendinghem and Dozinghem.
CHAPTER 4 - OTHER MEMORIALS

There are memorials to other victims of WW1 whose association to the villages was indirect, so they were not included on the official memorials.

WICKWAR

There are two memorials in Wickwar to men who had family associations with the village but did not live here. One is a brass plaque on the wall beneath the hymn board, the other on the grave of his grandfather. The first is Anthony Arnold and the other is Godfrey Haward, related to the Arnolds.

Anthony (Tony) Roland Arnold was born on 29th September 1896, the fifth child of Maurice Arnold and Ethel Edith Nicholls. Maurice was born in Wickwar on 31st December 1863 and baptised one month later on 31st January 1864, one of five children. His Great Grandfather, Thomas Arnold, was the founder of Arnolds’ Brewery. He and Edith married in October 1885 in Westminster, London. He was a brewer and in May 1903 they sailed for South Africa with their five children – Anthony was six years old.

Tony joined the 2nd Regiment, South African Infantry (SAI) as a private with regimental number 6145. He died on 8th July 1916, aged 19, and is buried in Peronne Road Cemetery, Maricourt, France.

The 2nd SAI was part of the South African Infantry Brigade, which comprised four regiments:

- 1st South African Infantry Regiment (Cape of Good Hope Regiment)
- 2nd South African Infantry Regiment (Natal and Orange Free State Regiment)
- 3rd South African Infantry Regiment (Transvaal and Rhodesia Regiment)
- 4th South African Regiment (South African Scottish Regiment)

The 2nd SAI Headquarters, A and C Companies had relieved elements of 16th Royal Scots and 6th Kings Own Scottish Borders of 27th Infantry Brigade in Bernafay Wood on 8th July 1916. The 2nd SAI incurred “approximately 37 casualties” on that day and more than 200 during their occupation of Bernafay Wood; twelve men from the SAI have been identified by the CWGC as dying on 8th July, the majority of
whom are commemorated at Thiepval. The action at Bernafay Wood is coupled with a major action at Delville Wood, just a couple of miles away.

The story of Tony’s death is one of a brave and selfless man. He was also highly regarded in his regiment. Lieutenant Errol Tatham wrote of him “He was a good boy and doing well in the regiment. He was one of the Headquarter Orderlies and was thought much of by the Colonel (sic) and Adjutant and everyone. I believe he showed up very well under severe shell fire that was going on the other day and was killed leading a wounded man down to the dressing station.”

The tale of his action is contained in a letter from the man he assisted, Sgt Robert Easton, to his family, written on 12th August 1916. “As I was with your son when he breathed his last I feel I must write and tell you how gallantly he gave his all for his country and a comrade. I advised Col. Tanner at the earliest opportunity of the circumstances and he advises me that he has written you. I was wounded rather badly at about 3p.m. on July 8th and at about 5 p.m. I was helping to drag myself to the dressing station 3 miles distance and had got half way when I met your son who was waiting to direct the Colonel to Bernafay Wood. He came up to at once and said, ‘Sergt, you can’t go on like that let me help you,’ he took my left arm and helped me along chatting and cheering me up the whole time. After about 25 yards he said to me, “You are not leaning enough on me it’s quite alright I can easily take your weight” and about five minutes afterwards a shell burst right overhead your brave boy falling first killed instantaneously, I falling beside him with four fresh wounds. I crawled to him but nothing could be done he had gone to rest and his face bore a contented smile......thank you from the bottom of my heart. Your son died a hero’s death and I hope justice can be done him....”

Copies of transcripts of testimonial letters are at Chapter 7.

I can find no medal record for Tony. I am grateful to “CaroliPerki” for the information from her Ancestry Arnold Family Tree.

Godfrey Haward

Godfrey Haward is commemorated in Wickwar with a plaque on the headstone of his grandfather, Albert Haward. Albert Haward was born on 10th March 1837 at St Martin in the Fields, London, where he was also baptised on 27th July that year. He married Mary Brooker on 16th June 1864 at All Souls, Langham Place, London. His sister, Clara Ellen Haward, had married John Arnold, of Wickwar, at St Martin in the Fields on 22 May 1855.

Albert and Mary had two children: Stanley, born 1865; and Ethel Bertha, 1866. John and Clara Arnold had ten children, the third of whom was John Hubert Arnold; John Hubert and Ethel Bertha (1st cousins) married on 29th May 1894 at Christ Church, Holborn. Thus, the connection with Wickwar was established through Albert’s sister and daughter marrying into the Arnold family. The Arnold’s were the well-known brewing “dynasty” of Wickwar, in 1891 living at Hill House, Wickwar. His marriage certificate shows that in 1894 John Hubert was living at Rock House.

Stanley Haward married Ethel Jessie Maude Horton at St George’s, Bloomsbury, London in 1885. They had two children: Dorothy Mary, 1888; and Godfrey, 1895. Ethel Bertha Arnold was Dorothy’s and Godfrey’s aunt.
Ethel Bertha died on 10th February 1903, aged just 36, and was buried in Wickwar on 14th. Stanley died on 19th July 1911 at Laas in Austria, while climbing in the Alps. At some point Albert moved to Wickwar as he is recorded as dying at “The Cliff”, Wickwar on 3rd June 1916 and is buried in the Arnold plot in the churchyard. Probate records show that he left his estate to John Hubert Arnold as his own son had pre-deceased him. Albert’s sister, Louisa Kate Haward died at a nursing home in Bristol on 20th October 1907, having lived at Lisle Cottage, North Nibley, and was buried at Wickwar on 23rd October: she left her estate to Algernon Henry and Graham Halsey Arnold.

Godfrey Haward was born on 25th May 1895 at Christ Church, Holborn, London. In 1901 Stanley and Ethel lived at 40 Goldhurst Terrace, Hampstead, London, but the children are not recorded. It appears that Godfrey was living as a “visitor” with a solicitor, Charles Smith, at Landview House, Marden Ash, High Ongar, Essex. I can find no record of Dorothy Mary in 1901, but in 1911 they are both recorded living with their parents at 66 Rutland Park Mansions, Willesden Green. I can find no military record for Godfrey other than his grave registration and medal roll index. These tell me that he enlisted as a private in the Royal Fusiliers and was later commissioned as a Lieutenant in 99th Company of the Machine Gun Corps. He deployed to France on 5th August 1916 and died on 15th November that same year. He is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial and was posthumously awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. A plaque on his Grandfather’s grave also commemorates him, although the date given is a day earlier than the official records.

The 99th Company of the Machine Gun Corps was raised in Grantham, Cambridgeshire, and joined 99th Brigade, 2nd Division in France on 28th April, 1916. They were engaged in the Battle of the Somme, fighting in the following phases: the Battle of Delville Wood, July 1916; the Attack of Waterlot Farm, Guillemont, August 1916; and the Battle of the Ancre from 13th – 16th November, 1916, in which Godfrey died.
RANGEWORTHY

Joseph Bennett

Joseph William Bennett was born in Bristol in about 1880, the son of John and Charlotte Bennett. In 1891 the family was living in a “Cottage” on Yate Common. There were six children: George, 1874; Joseph, 1880; Mary, 1881; John, 1887; Henry, 1888; and Thomas, 1890. A seventh child, Florence, was born in 1893.

Between 1891 and 1893 the family moved to Rangeworthy and was registered in 1901 living at Rangeworthy Road. Florence was born in Rangeworthy and John died on 27th June 1893 and was buried at Rangeworthy on 2nd July 1893. That must have been a year tinged with both joy and sadness. By 1911 the family was living at Lower Common, Wickwar (possibly Yate, as the register of Charlotte’s burial says she was resident at Yate Common). Charlotte died on 15th August 1923 and was buried with her husband on 18th August. In a sad irony her son, Henry John Bennett was buried on 8th December the same year, aged 35. The entry in the register appears directly below his mother’s.

165306 Gunner Joseph William Bennett served with 277th Siege Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery. I am unable to trace war diaries of the battery.

He died on 25th November 1917 in the Bapaume area and is buried in the Red Cross Corner Cemetery, Beugny, Pas de Calais, France. Joseph is commemorated on his parents’ gravestone. His Record of Soldier’s Effects show he had a credit of 13s.5d and a War Gratuity of £3 which were paid to his mother. Sadly, I can find no medal record for Joseph.
CHAPTER 5 - WAR CEMETERIES AND MEMORIALS

There follows a description of each of the Cemeteries or Memorials where our men are buried or commemorated. The information is largely a direct copy of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission descriptions of the sites. Below the title of each location are the names of the men buried or commemorated there.

Amara War Cemetery, Iraq

George Webb, Harold Bodman

Amara War Cemetery contains 4621 First World War graves, of which 925 contain unidentified soldiers. You see will from the photograph that there are no headstones. These were removed in 1933 because the salts in the soil were causing them to decay. In their place a screen wall was erected, engraved with the names of those buried there and the plot where they are buried.

The Arras Memorial

Charles William Hitchings, Herbert George Dando, John William Durham

The memorial was unveiled on 31 July 1932 by Lord Trenchard, who served as the commander of the Royal Flying Corps in France from 1915 to 1917. The ceremony had been scheduled for 15 May but was postponed as a mark of respect due to the sudden death of French President Paul Doumer.

The 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. Canadian and Australian servicemen killed in these operations are commemorated by memorials at Vimy and Villers-Bretonneux. A separate memorial remembers those killed in the Battle of Cambrai in 1917.
The adjacent Arras Flying Services Memorial commemorates almost 1,000 airmen of the Royal Naval Air Service, the Royal Flying Corps, and the Royal Air Force, either by attachment from other arms of the forces of the Commonwealth or by original enlistment, who were killed on the whole Western Front and who have no known grave.

The French handed over Arras to Commonwealth forces in the spring of 1916 and the system of tunnels upon which the town is built were used and developed in preparation for the major offensive planned for April 1917.

During the Second World War, Arras was occupied by British forces headquarters until the town was evacuated on 23 May 1940. Arras then remained in German hands until retaken by Commonwealth and Free French forces on 1 September 1944.

**Assevillers New British Cemetery**

*Reginald Stinchcombe*

Assevillers was taken by the French in the autumn of 1916, evacuated by the Fifth Army on the 26th March, 1918, and retaken by the 5th Australian Division on the 28th August, 1918. A number of cemeteries were made by the French troops at Assevillers, and in one ("E"), at the West end of the village, 13 soldiers from the United Kingdom were buried by Field Ambulances in February and March, 1917; they are now reburied in Fouquescourt British Cemetery.

Assevillers New British Cemetery was made after the Armistice by the concentration of graves from the battlefields of the Somme and from other burial grounds, including:-

**BARLEUX GERMAN CEMETERY**, about 365 metres North-East of Barleux, in which ten Australian soldiers were buried by their comrades in August and September, 1918.

**BOUCHAVESNES (or PERONNE ROAD) GERMAN CEMETERY**, between Marrieres Wood and Bouchavesnes, in which seven South African soldiers and three from the United Kingdom were buried by the enemy in March, 1918. It was at Marrieres Wood that the South African Brigade was annihilated on the 24th March, 1918.

**ESTREES-DENIECOURT GERMAN CEMETERY**, between Estrees and Fay, where two Australian soldiers were buried by the enemy.

**FOUCAUCOURT FRENCH MILITARY CEMETERY**, at the South-West corner of the village, where four soldiers from the United Kingdom were buried in 1915 and 1917.

**HIGHWAY CEMETERY, CAPPY**, a French Military Cemetery midway between Cappy and Herbécourt, where six men of the R.H.A. and one Australian soldier were buried in August and September, 1918.

**HYENCOURT-LE-GRAND GERMAN CEMETERY**, made by the 61st Infantry Regiment on the Chaunies-Marchelepot road, where two R.A.F. officers were buried in May, 1918.

**KIBOKO WOOD CEMETERY, BIACHES**, by a small copse between Biaches and Flaucourt, where 30 United Kingdom soldiers were buried by the 40th Division in February and March, 1917. All but one belonged...
to the Royal Warwicks, and twenty of these to the 1st/6th Battalion. MISERY CHATEAU GERMAN CEMETERY, where 16 soldiers from the United Kingdom were buried by a German Field Hospital in March, 1918. P.C. HEDEVAUX FRENCH MILITARY CEMETERY, 548 metres South of Belloy-en-Santerre, where ten soldiers from the United Kingdom were buried by their comrades in February and March, 1917. (P.C. means Poste de Commandement.) PLANTATION CEMETERY, a French Military Cemetery in the large Orchard 914 metres East of Cappy, where one United Kingdom soldier was buried in February, 1917, and four Australian in August and September, 1918. VAUVILLERS COMMUNAL CEMETERY, in which four soldiers from the United Kingdom who fell in March, 1918, were reburied. VERMANDOVILLERS FRENCH MILITARY CEMETERY, at the West end of the village, where two United Kingdom soldiers were buried in March, 1917, by their comrades. There are over 800, 1914-18 war casualties commemorated in this site. Of these, two-fifths are unidentified and special memorials are erected to 25 soldiers and one airman from the United Kingdom, known or believed to be buried among them. Other special memorials record the names of nine soldiers and two airmen from the United Kingdom, buried in other cemeteries, whose graves were destroyed by shell fire. The cemetery covers an area of 2,655 square metres and is enclosed by a stone rubble wall.

Dartmoor Cemetery, Becordel-becourt

Joseph Laurence Hull

Dartmoor Cemetery was begun (as Becordel-Becourt Military Cemetery) in August 1915 and was used by the battalions holding that part of the line; its name was changed in May 1916 at the request of the 8th and 9th Battalions of the Devonshire Regiment. In September 1916, the XV Corps Main Dressing Station was established in the neighbourhood, but throughout 1917, the cemetery was scarcely used. It passed into German hands on 26 March 1918, but was retaken on 24 August by the 12th Division. There are five burials of August 1918, in Plot II, Row E. In adjoining graves in Plot I, Row A, are buried a father and son, who served in the same artillery battery, and were killed in action on the same day. Dartmoor Cemetery contains 768 Commonwealth burials of the First World War. The cemetery was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens.

Dud Corner Cemetery, Loos-en-Gohelle

George Cullimore

The name “Dud Corner” is believed to derive from the large number of unexploded shells that were discovered after the armistice. The only burials here during hostilities were those of four Officers of the 9th Black Watch and one Private of the 8th Royal Dublin Fusiliers, close to Plot III, Row B; the remainder of the
graves were brought in later from isolated positions near Loos and to the North, and from certain small cemeteries, including:- TOSH CEMETERY, LOOS, was on the North side of the village, close to the communication trench called Tosh Alley. It contained the graves of 171 soldiers from the United Kingdom (118 of whom were Irish) and five from Canada. It was used from October 1915 to September 1917. CRUCIFIX CEMETERY, LOOS, was a little West of Tosh Cemetery. It was used from September 1915 to May 1916, and it contained the graves of 53 soldiers from the United Kingdom. LE RUTOIRE BRITISH CEMETERY, VERMELLES, was close to Le Rutoire Farm, which is on Loos Plain, near the village of Vermelles. It was used in 1915, and contained the graves of 82 soldiers from the United Kingdom and six French soldiers. There are now nearly 2,000, 1914-18 war casualties commemorated in this site. Of these, over half are unidentified and special headstones have been erected to 15 soldiers from the United Kingdom who are believed to be buried among them. The great majority of the dead buried here fell in the Battle of Loos 1915; but some were killed in succeeding years. Originally, the regimental memorials for the following units were brought into the cemetery:- 10th Scottish Rifles and the 17th London Regiment, dating from the Battle of Loos, and those of the Royal Montreal Regiment and the Royal Highlanders of Canada, dating from the Battle of Hill 70 in August 1917. These memorials were later removed. Special memorials are erected in this Cemetery to twelve soldiers of the 2nd Welch Regiment, killed in action on the 12th October 1915, and originally buried in Crucifix Cemetery, Loos, whose graves could not be found on concentration. The cemetery now covers an area of 5,550 square metres, and is bounded by a low rubble wall except on the road side, where the War Stone is raised on a grass terrace and flanked by buildings.

The Guards’ Grave at Villers-Cotterêts Forest

*Wilfred John Besant*

The Forêt de Retz was the scene of a rear-guard action fought by the 4th (Guards) Brigade on 1 September 1914. In the aftermath of the fighting, many of the dead Guardsmen were buried by the people of Villers-Cotterêts. The cemetery was formed by the Irish Guards when the British forces regained this territory two months later and contains 98 Commonwealth burials of the First World War, 20 of which are unidentified.

**The 4th (Guards) Brigade and the Rear-guard Action at Villers-Cotterêts**

In the aftermath of the Allied defeat at Battle of Mons on August 23 1914, the British and French forces began a long, hard retreat south west toward Paris. On the evening of 31 August, the officers and men of the 4th (Guards) Brigade halted just north of the great forest around Villers-Cotterêts. They had been marching in hot weather for over a week with little sleep and many of them had been involved in fighting at Landrecies and elsewhere. A large detachment of German troops was expected to attack from the north early the following morning and shortly after midnight the entire brigade was ordered to form a rearguard to cover the retreat of the Second Division. The 2nd Battalion of the Grenadier Guards and the 3rd Coldstream Guards entrenched between Soucy and Mont-Gobert, while units of the Coldstream and Irish Guards formed a second line further south along the northern edge of the forest.
When the German attack began at about 10 a.m., the Guardsmen in the forward positions came under heavy rifle and artillery fire and were forced to retire and join their comrades in the forest. The dense undergrowth, along with a heavy morning mist, slowed the German advance through the forest, but also caused much confusion and made it difficult for British officers to communicate with each other and direct their men. By mid-morning all units of the Grenadier, Coldstream, and Irish Guards were engaged in close-quarter fighting among the trees. In some parts of the forest, the opposing forces were no more than seventy yards apart and during the course of the morning two platoons of the Grenadiers were cut off from the rest of the Brigade and overrun by the attackers. The clearing at Rond de la Reine was the scene of some of the heaviest fighting as the Guardsmen fought their way back to the village of Villers-Cotterêts under sustained machine-gun fire. The commanding officer of the Irish Guards, Colonel George Morris, was killed early in the action, while Brigadier-General Scott-Kerr, who was in overall command, was badly wounded as the Brigade retired from Ronde de la Reine. The loss of these two very senior officers added to the general confusion, but the Brigade continued to gradually retire through the forest in good order.

Fighting continued until well into the afternoon, but by 6 p.m., with support from units of the Royal Berkshire Regiment and the 5th Infantry Brigade, the surviving Guardsmen finally left the forest and rejoined the general retreat. The Brigade had successfully covered the Second Division but had suffered heavy losses with over 300 officers and men killed.

Gommecourt Wood New Cemetery

Walter Croker

Foncquevillers was in British hands in 1915 and 1916. On 1 July 1916, Gommecourt Wood was attacked by the 46th (North Midland) Division, and the Southern part of the village by the 56th (London) Division. The attack met with temporary success, but could not be sustained; and Gommecourt remained a salient in the German line until 27 February 1917, when it was evacuated. It was never retaken by the Germans; at the end of their offensive of March 1918, it was just within the British lines. Gommecourt was later "adopted" by the County Borough of Wolverhampton. Gommecourt Wood New Cemetery was made, after the Armistice, when graves were brought in from the battlefields of July 1916, March 1917, and March, April and August 1918, and from certain smaller burial grounds, including:- BASTION CEMETERY, FONCQUEVILLERS, in the old German line North of the Wood, where 55 men (nearly all unidentified) of the 46th Division were buried. BRETENCOURT FRENCH MILITARY CEMETERY, on the West side of the bridge between Bretencourt and Blamont Mill, in the commune of RIVIERE. Here were buried 233 French soldiers and 38 from the United Kingdom; three men of the Indian Labour Corps; and one German prisoner. GOMMECOURT CHATEAU CEMETERY, at the North-East corner of the Chateau park, begun by the Germans. Here were buried 55 soldiers from New Zealand, who fell in July and August, 1918, and 14 from the United Kingdom.
GORMECOURT WOOD CEMETERY No.1, or THE SAP CEMETERY, FONCQUEVILLERS, between the old front lines, in which were buried 111 men of the 46th Division, almost all unidentified. GORMECOURT WOOD CEMETERY No.4, or LITTLE Z CEMETERY (from a strong point on the old German front line), FONCQUEVILLERS, which contained the graves of 22 men of the 46th Division and one other. GORMECOURT WOOD CEMETERY No.5, on the North-West side of the Wood, contained the graves of 27 men of the 46th Division. GORMECOURT WOOD CEMETERY No.6, close to No.5, contained the graves of 40 men, almost all of the 46th Division. GORMECOURT WOOD CEMETERY No.8, FONCQUEVILLERS, between the old front lines, contained the graves of 46 men of the 46th Division. POINT 75 BRITISH CEMETERY, FONCQUEVILLERS, on the old German front line, contained the graves of 35 men of the 46th Division. There are now nearly 750, 1914-18 war casualties commemorated in this site. Of these, nearly two-thirds are unidentified and special memorials are erected to ten soldiers from the United Kingdom, known or believed to be buried among them. The cemetery covers an area of 2,690 square metres and is enclosed by a rubble wall.

**Gorre British and Indian Cemetery**

*George Daniel Lovell*

The chateau at Gorre was occupied early in the war by troops serving with the British Expeditionary Force and the Indian Corps, and the cemeteries, located in the south-east corner of original the chateau grounds, were begun in the autumn of 1914. The Indian section of the cemetery was closed in October 1915, shortly before the Indian infantry divisions left France for redeployment to the Middle East. Many of those who now lie in plots V and VI of the British section of the cemetery were killed during the Battle of Estaires in April 1918. There are now over 930 Commonwealth servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated here. The cemetery, which was designed by Charles Holden, also contains nine war graves of other nationalities, most of them German. Gorre Chateau during the First World War For much of the war, the chateau stood approximately four kilometres behind a section of the British front-line that ran northward along the Aubers Ridge from Givenchy-lès-la-Bassée to Festubert. From the end of the Battle of Festubert in May 1915 until the spring of 1918, this was considered a relatively ‘quiet’ sector. The village of Gorre was occasionally bombarded by German artillery during this period, but the chateau remained intact and its rooms were used as an officer’s mess and headquarters for British units stationed in the area. The grounds of the chateau were also the site of several artillery emplacements, a rifle range and an improvised parade ground and football pitch. Throughout 1916 and ’17 British troops could be seen drilling in the fields next to the chateau or unloading supplies from barges on the La Bassée Canal, which runs just south of the village. The British section of the cemetery was used by infantry and artillery units stationed in the area until April 1918, when the relative quiet of the sector was shattered by the German Spring Offensive and Gorre became a support post close behind the front line during the Battle of Estaire. This battle was one of two massive German assaults on the Commonwealth positions from Ypres to Festubert that became known as the Battle of the Lys. When
the battle erupted on 9 April, the 55th (West Lancashire) Division occupied the front-line trenches running north from Givenchy to Richebourg L’Avoué. The Allied positions to their left, around the village of Le Touret, were held by Portuguese units. After a preliminary artillery bombardment that began on the evening of 7 April the German Sixth Army, spearheaded by storm troops, attacked in force early on the morning of the 9th. Heavy mist enabled the attackers to get very close to the Allied lines before they were observed and Portuguese units suffered heavy casualties and began to retire. Further south, the various formations of the 55th Division were hard pressed from the outset and the front line trenches around Givenchy were the scene of fierce fighting between British and German troops. The divisional brigade holding the northern section of the British line was forced to pull back, but well-organised counter-attacks and determined defence elsewhere enabled the 55th Division to hold its ground for the rest of the battle and prevent a major German breakthrough. Fighting continued in the trenches east of Gorre until 17 April when the German forces finally broke off the attack. In just over a week of fighting almost 3,000 officers and men of the Division had been killed, wounded, or taken prisoner, but the territory over which they had fought remained in Allied hands. (updated - August 2012)

Hangard Wood

Parcy Bezer

At the end of March 1918, Hangard was at the junction of the French and Commonwealth forces defending Amiens. Between 4 and 25 April, the village and Hangard Wood were the scene of incessant fighting, in which the line was held and the 18th Division were particularly heavily engaged. In July 1918, the site of the cemetery was in German hands, but it was cleared by the Canadian Corps early on 8 August 1918, and the Corps Burial Officer began this cemetery later in the month. A number of graves of April 1918, as well of those of August, were brought in, and after the Armistice other graves of April 1918, were concentrated from Villers-Bretonneux, and of October 1916, from other parts of the Somme battlefield. The cemetery now contains 141 Commonwealth burials of the First World War, 38 of which are unidentified. There are also 14 French burials in the cemetery.

Haringhe (Bandaghem)

William Charles Waite

Bandaghem, like Dozinghem and Mendinghem, were the popular names given by the troops to groups of casualty clearing stations posted to this area during the First World War. The cemetery site was chosen in July 1917 for the 62nd and 63rd Casualty Clearing Stations and burials from these and other hospitals (notably the 36th Casualty Clearing Station in 1918)
continued until October 1918. The cemetery contains 772 Commonwealth burials of the First World War. There is a separate plot of 39 German war graves, but four plots (X, XI, XII and XIII) of French graves were removed to other burial grounds after the war. There are also five Second World War burials in the cemetery, three of which are unidentified. The cemetery was designed by Sir Reginald Blomfield.

**Helles Memorial**

*Herbert Tanner, Louis Townsend*

The eight-month campaign in Gallipoli was fought by Commonwealth and French forces in an attempt to force Turkey out of the war, to relieve the deadlock of the Western Front in France and Belgium, and to open a supply route to Russia through the Dardanelles and the Black Sea. The Allies landed on the peninsula on 25-26 April 1915; the 29th Division at Cape Helles in the south and the Australian and New Zealand Corps north of Gaba Tepe on the west coast, an area soon known as ANZAC. On 6 August, further landings were made at Suvla, just north of Anzac, and the climax of the campaign came in early August when simultaneous assaults were launched on all three fronts. However, the difficult terrain and stiff Turkish resistance soon led to the stalemate of trench warfare. From the end of August, no further serious action was fought and the lines remained unchanged. The peninsula was successfully evacuated in December and early January 1916. The Helles Memorial serves the dual function of Commonwealth battle memorial for the whole Gallipoli campaign and place of commemoration for many of those Commonwealth servicemen who died there and have no known grave. The United Kingdom and Indian forces named on the memorial died in operations throughout the peninsula, the Australians at Helles. There are also panels for those who died or were buried at sea in Gallipoli waters. Over 20,000 names are commemorated on this memorial. There are four other Memorials to the Missing at Gallipoli. The Lone Pine, Hill 60, and Chunuk Bair Memorials commemorate Australian and New Zealanders at Anzac. The Twelve Tree Copse Memorial commemorates the New Zealanders at Helles. Naval casualties of the United Kingdom lost or buried at sea are recorded on their respective Memorials at Portsmouth, Plymouth and Chatham, in the United Kingdom.

**La Targette British Cemetery, Neuville St Vaast**

*William George Bedggood*

La Targette British Cemetery, formerly known as Aux-Rietz Military Cemetery, was begun at the end of April 1917 and used by field ambulances and fighting units until September 1918. Nearly a third of the graves have an artillery connection; in March-April 1917, the artillery of the 2nd Canadian
and 5th Divisions, and certain heavy artillery units, had their headquarters in a deep cave at Aux-Rietz. Sixteen graves were brought into the cemetery from the immediate neighbourhood after the Armistice and a further 26 sets of First World War remains were added during the Second World War. The cemetery contains 638 First World War burials, 41 of them unidentified. There are also three Second World War burials, two of which are unidentified. The cemetery was designed by Sir Reginald Blomfield.

**Landrecies British Cemetery**

*Charles Hancock*

Landrecies was the scene of rear-guard fighting on 25 August 1914, after the Battle of Mons, and from that date it remained in German hands until it was captured by the 25th Division on 4 November 1918. Landrecies British Cemetery was made by the 25th Division in November 1918 and all burials date from the period October 1918 to January 1919. Landrecies British Cemetery contains 165 Commonwealth burials of the First World War, 14 of which are unidentified.

**Le Vertannoy British Cemetery**

*Alfred Charles Lane*

The cemetery was begun in April 1918, during the Battles of the Lys, and was used by field ambulances, burial officers and fighting units until the following September.

Le Vertannoy British Cemetery contains 141 First World War burials, two of them unidentified. The cemetery was designed by W C Von Berg.

**Longuenesse (St Omer) Souvenir Cemetery**

*Alfred Howard Lovell*
St. Omer was the General Headquarters of the British Expeditionary Force from October 1914 to March 1916. Lord Roberts died there in November 1914. The town was a considerable hospital centre with the 4th, 10th, 7th Canadian, 9th Canadian and New Zealand Stationary Hospitals, the 7th, 58th (Scottish) and 59th (Northern) General Hospitals, and the 17th, 18th and 1st and 2nd Australian Casualty Clearing Stations all stationed there at some time during the war. St. Omer suffered air raids in November 1917 and May 1918, with serious loss of life. The cemetery takes its names from the triangular cemetery of the St. Omer garrison, properly called the Souvenir Cemetery (Cimetière du Souvenir Français) which is located next to the War Cemetery. The Commonwealth section of the cemetery contains 2,874 Commonwealth burials of the First World War (6 unidentified), with special memorials commemorating 23 men of the Chinese Labour Corps whose graves could not be exactly located. Second World War burials number 403, (93 unidentified). Within the Commonwealth section there are also 34 non-war burials and 239 war graves of other nationalities. The cemetery was designed by Sir Herbert Baker.

**Loos Memorial**

*Nathaniel Toms, Henry Joseph Wilcox, George Charles Marklove*

The Loos Memorial is located at Dud Corner Cemetery and 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, from the first day of the Battle of Loos to the end of the war. On either side of the cemetery is a wall 15 feet high, to which are fixed tablets on which are carved the names of those commemorated. At the back are four small circular courts, open to the sky, in which the lines of tablets are continued, and between these courts are three semicircular walls or apses, two of which carry tablets, while on the centre apse is erected the Cross of Sacrifice. The memorial was designed by Sir Herbert Baker with sculpture by Charles Wheeler. It was unveiled by Sir Nevil Macready on 4 August 1930.
Mangotsfield (Downend) Churchyard

**Charles Green**

Mangotsfield Cemetery contains the graves of 15 First World War dead. It is likely that they all were evacuated from the Western Front and died of wounds or illness in a British hospital.

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Ovillers Military Cemetery

**Silas Rummins**

On 1 July 1916, the first day of the Battle of the Somme, the 8th Division attacked Ovillers and the 34th Division La Boisselle. The villages were not captured, but ground was won between them and to the south of La Boisselle. On 4 July, the 19th (Western) Division cleared La Boisselle and on 7 July the 12th (Eastern) and 25th Divisions gained part of Ovillers, the village being cleared by the 48th (South Midland) Division on 17 July. The two villages were lost during the German advance in March 1918, but they were retaken on the following 24 August by the 38th (Welsh) Division. Ovillers Military Cemetery was begun before the capture of Ovillers, as a battle cemetery behind a dressing station. It was used until March 1917, by which time it contained 143 graves, about half the present Plot I. The cemetery was increased after the Armistice when Commonwealth and French graves where brought in, mainly from the battlefields of Pozieres, Ovillers, La Boisselle and Contalmaison, and from the following two cemeteries:- MASH VALLEY CEMETERY, OVIllERS-LA BOISSELLE, was about 200 metres North of Ovillers Military Cemetery. It was named from one of two valleys (Mash and Sausage) which run from South-West to North-East on either side of La Boisselle. It contained the graves of 76 soldiers from the United Kingdom who fell in July-September 1916. RED DRAGON CEMETERY, OVIllERS-LA BOISSELLE, was midway between Ovillers and La Boisselle. It was made by the 16th and 17th Royal Welch Fusiliers, and named from their badge. It contained the graves of 25 soldiers who fell in August 1918, all of whom belonged to the 38th (Welsh) Division, and all but three to the Royal Welch Fusiliers. There are now 3,440 Commonwealth servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated in the cemetery. 2,480 of the burials are unidentified but there are special memorials to 24 casualties.
believed to be buried among them. Other special memorials record the names of 35 casualties, buried in Mash Valley Cemetery, whose graves were destroyed in later fighting. The cemetery also contains 120 French war graves. The cemetery was designed by Sir Herbert Baker.

**Peronne Road Cemetery, Maricourt**

*Anthony Ro;land Arno;d*

Maricourt was, at the beginning of the Battles of the Somme 1916, the point of junction of the British and French forces, and within a very short distance of the front line; it was lost in the German advance of March 1918, and recaptured at the end of the following August. The Cemetery, originally known as Maricourt Military Cemetery No.3, was begun by fighting units and Field Ambulances in the Battles of the Somme 1916, and used until August 1917; a few graves were added later in the War, and at the Armistice it consisted of 175 graves which now form almost the whole of Plot I. It was completed after the Armistice by the concentration of graves from the battlefields in the immediate neighbourhood and from certain smaller burial grounds, including:-

- AUTHUILE COMMUNAL CEMETERY EXTENSION, which was on the South side of the Communal Cemetery. It contained the graves of 108 French soldiers and those of 23 from the United Kingdom who fell in 1915 and early 1916.
- BRIQUETERIE EAST CEMETERY, MONTAUBAN, on the East side of the brick-works between Maricourt and Montauban, containing the graves of 46 soldiers from the United Kingdom who fell in the latter half of 1916.
- CARNOY COMMUNAL CEMETERY EXTENSION, in which 36 French soldiers and one from the United Kingdom were buried in March 1918.
- CASEMENT TRENCH CEMETERY, MARICOURT, on the West side of the road to the Briqueterie, in which 163 soldiers from the United Kingdom and one from South Africa were buried in 1916-1918.
- FARGNY MILL FRENCH MILITARY CEMETERY, CURLU, on the North bank of the Somme, in which six soldiers from the United Kingdom and two from Australia were buried in 1916-1918.
- LA COTE MILITARY CEMETERY, MARICOURT, a little way West of Peronne Road Cemetery, containing the graves of 38 soldiers from the United Kingdom and one from Australia who fell in 1916-1917.
- MARICOURT FRENCH MILITARY CEMETERY, on the South side of the village, containing the graves of two soldiers from the United Kingdom who fell in December 1916.
- MONTAUBAN ROAD FRENCH MILITARY CEMETERY, MARICOURT, in which six men of the 1st/8th King's Liverpools were buried in August 1916.
- TALUS BOISE BRITISH CEMETERY, CARNOY, between Carnoy and Maricourt, at the South end of a long copse. It was used in the latter half of 1916 and (chiefly by the 5th Royal Berks) in August 1918, and it contained the graves of 175 soldiers from the United Kingdom and five from South Africa. There are now 1348, 1914-18 war casualties commemorated in this site. Of these, 366 are unidentified and special memorials are erected to 26 soldiers from the United Kingdom known or believed to be buried among them. Other special memorials record the names of three soldiers from the United Kingdom, buried in other cemeteries, whose graves could not be found. The cemetery covers an area of 3,787 square metres and is enclosed on three sides by a low red brick wall.
Red Cross Corner Cemetery, Beugny

*Joseph William Bennett*

Plot I of the cemetery (except Row K) was made between April 1917 and March 1918 by field ambulances and fighting units. When the cemetery fell into German hands in March 1918, they added the 25 Commonwealth burials that make up Row K (all from 21 March 1918) and began another cemetery alongside (Beugny Military Cemetery No.3). Commonwealth forces retook the cemetery in September 1918 and added Plot II to the original burials. The German graves were removed after the Armistice, and the Commonwealth burials among them were transferred partly to Delsaux Farm Cemetery and partly to Favreuil British Cemetery. Red Cross Corner Cemetery now contains 219 Commonwealth burials and commemorations of the First World War. 12 of the burials are unidentified and one casualty whose grave was destroyed by shell fire in 1918 is commemorated by a special memorial. The cemetery was designed by W H Cowlishaw.

Rocquigny-Equancourt Road British Cemetery, Manancourt

*Gilbert Reed*

Etricourt was occupied by Commonwealth troops at the beginning of April 1917 during the German withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line. It was lost on the 23 March 1918 when the Germans advanced, but regained at the beginning of September. The cemetery was begun in 1917 and used until March 1918, mainly by the 21st and 48th Casualty Clearing Stations posted at Ytres, and to a small extent by the Germans, who knew it as "Etricourt Old English Cemetery". Burials were resumed by Commonwealth troops in September 1918 and the 3rd Canadian and 18th Casualty Clearing Stations buried in it in October and November 1918. The cemetery contains 1,838 Commonwealth burials and commemorations of the First World War. 21 of the burials are unidentified and nine Commonwealth graves made by the Germans which cannot now be found are represented by special memorials. The cemetery also contains 198 German war burials and the graves of ten French civilians. The cemetery was designed by Sir Reginald Blomfield.

Thiepval Memorial

*Reginald Croker, Godfrey Haward*
The Thiepval Memorial commemorates 72394 British and Commonwealth troops who died in the Somme sector prior to 20th March 1918 and who have no known grave. The monument is situated on high ground overlooking the River Somme. At over 45 metres high it dominates the landscape for miles around. It is the largest Commonwealth memorial to the missing in the world.

The monument was designed by Sir Edward Lutyens and building commenced in 1928. The foundations are 30 feet deep. During its construction wartime tunnels and unexploded ordnance were discovered.

The monument was unveiled on 1st August 1932 by Prince Edward, The Prince of Wales. Each year on 1st July a ceremony is held at the monument to mark the first day of the Battle of the Somme, one of the bloodiest battles of WWI.

Behind the monument is a joint British-French cemetery, with the graves of 300 soldiers of each nationality.

**Tyne Cot Memorial**

*Ronald Eacott, John Pick*

Tyne Cot or Tyne Cottage was a barn named by the Northumberland Fusiliers which stood near the level crossing on the road from Passchendaele to Broodseinde. Around it were a number of blockhouses or ‘pillboxes'.

The barn, which had become the centre of five or six German blockhouses, or pillboxes, was captured by the 3rd Australian Division on 4 October 1917 in the advance on Passchendaele.

The Tyne Cot Memorial is one of four memorials to the missing in Belgian Flanders which cover the area known as the Ypres Salient. Broadly speaking, the Salient stretched from Langemarck in the north to the northern edge in Ploegsteert Wood in the south, but it varied in area and shape throughout the war.

The Salient was formed during the First Battle of Ypres in October and November 1914, when a small British Expeditionary Force succeeded in securing the town before the onset of winter, pushing the German forces back to the Passchendaele Ridge. 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 and a shortening of the line of defence.

There was little more significant activity on this front until 1917, when in the Third Battle of Ypres an offensive was mounted by Commonwealth forces to divert German attention from a weakened French front further south. The initial attempt in June to dislodge the Germans from the Messines Ridge was a complete success, but the main assault north-eastward, which began at the end of July, quickly became a dogged struggle against determined opposition and the rapidly deteriorating weather. The campaign finally came to a close in November with the capture of Passchendaele.

The German offensive of March 1918 met with some initial success, but was eventually checked and repulsed in a combined effort by the Allies in September.

The battles of the Ypres Salient claimed many lives on both sides and it quickly became clear that the commemoration of members of the Commonwealth forces with no known grave would have to be divided between several different sites.

The site of the Menin Gate was chosen because of the hundreds of thousands of men who passed through it on their way to the battlefields. It commemorates those of all Commonwealth nations, except New Zealand, who died in the Salient, in the case of United Kingdom casualties before 16 August 1917 (with some exceptions). Those United Kingdom and New Zealand servicemen who died after that date are named on the memorial at Tyne Cot, a site which marks the furthest point reached by Commonwealth forces in Belgium until nearly the end of the war. Other New Zealand casualties are commemorated on memorials at Buttes New British Cemetery and Messines Ridge British Cemetery.

The Tyne Cot Memorial now bears the names of almost 35,000 officers and men whose graves are not known.

Incorporated within the Tyne Cot Memorial is the New Zealand Memorial commemorating the names of nearly 1,200 men who gave their lives in the Battle of Broodseinde and the Third Battle of Ypres in October 1917.

The memorial was unveiled by Sir Gilbert Dyett, the Australian soldier and veterans' rights activist, on 20 June 1927.

**Vadencourt British Cemetery, Maissemy**

*Philip Alfred Whatley*

Maissemy passed into British hands in 1917. It was captured by the enemy on the 21st March 1918, in spite of a strong resistance by the 24th Division and the 2/4th Royal Berks, and retaken by the 1st Division on the following 15th September. At the beginning of October, the IX Corps Main Dressing Station was at Vadencourt (now Vadancourt). Vadencourt British Cemetery (called at first Vadencourt New British Cemetery) was begun in August 1917, by fighting units, and used until March 1918. In October and November 1918, it was used by the 5th, 47th and 61st Casualty Clearing

Stations (at Bihecourt, on the road to Vermand) as well as by Field Ambulances. These original graves are in Plots I-III. After the Armistice these plots were enlarged, and Plots IV and V made, by the concentration of graves from the surrounding battlefields and from a few small burial grounds. These scattered graves were mainly of April 1917, and March, April, September and October 1918, and
many of them represented casualties of the 59th (North Midland) Division. At the same time four French, 31 American and 28 German Graves, all of October 1918, were removed to other cemeteries. The cemeteries from which graves were removed to Vadencourt British Cemetery included these two:-

VADENCOURT CHATEAU CEMETERY, a little further West, contained nine soldiers from the United Kingdom and six from Canada were buried in April-August 1917. VENDELLES CHURCHYARD EXTENSION, made by the 59th Division in April 1917, which contained the graves of 36 soldiers from the United Kingdom. There are now over 750, 1914-18 war casualties commemorated in this site. Of these, over 200 are unidentified. Five Indian Cavalry soldiers, whose bodies were cremated, are named on special memorials. The Cemetery covers an area of 2,953 square metres and is enclosed by rubble wall.

Vimy Memorial

George William Hitchings

The Battle of Vimy Ridge was fought from 9 to 12 April 1917. Many consider it a turning point in Canadian history, where the four Canadian divisions fought together.

The Battle of Arras began on Easter Monday, 9 April 1917, and saw the four divisions of the Canadian Corps, fighting side by side for the first time. They scored a huge tactical victory in the capture of the 60-metre-high Vimy Ridge. After the war, the highest point of the ridge was chosen as the site of the great memorial to all Canadians who served their country in battle during the First World War, and particularly to the 54,000 who gave their lives in France and Belgium.

It also bears the names of 11,000 Canadian servicemen who died in France - many of them in the fight for Vimy Ridge - who have no known grave.

France granted Canada 107 hectares of land at Vimy, and sculptor Walter Seymour Allward was chosen to design the memorial. Work began in 1925 and was completed 11 years later.

The memorial was unveiled by King Edward VIII on 26 July 1936. More than 100,000 people attended the ceremony, including 6,000 Canadian veterans.

On 9 April 2017, a day of ceremonies was held at the memorial to mark the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, French President François Hollande, Prince Charles and his sons Prince William and Prince Harry paid tribute to the fallen soldiers. Some
25,000 Canadians were also present. Wreaths were laid by Mr Trudeau, President Hollande and Prince Charles. Mr Trudeau said: “Canada was born here.”

**Wickwar New Burial Ground**

*Albert Powell*

There is one WW1 Commonwealth War Grave in Wickwar, lying to the left as one approaches the church from the Stank.

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**Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial**

*William Selwood, Henry Powell, Gerald Barnfield, William Thomas Jones*

From October 1914 to October 1918, five major offensives occurred at Ypres (now Ieper) in Belgium. By the time the last shells fell in Ypres in October 1918, nearly 200,000 Commonwealth servicemen had been killed.

The Menin Gate is one of four memorials to the missing in Belgian Flanders which cover the area known as the Ypres Salient. Broadly speaking, the Salient stretched from Langemarck in the north to the northern edge in Ploegsteert Wood in the south, but it varied in area and shape throughout the war.

The Salient was formed during the First Battle of Ypres in October and November 1914, when a small British Expeditionary Force succeeded in securing the town before the onset of winter, pushing the German forces back to the Passchendaele Ridge. 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 and a shortening of the line of defence. There was little more significant activity on this front until 1917, when in the Third Battle of Ypres an offensive was mounted by Commonwealth forces to divert German attention from a weakened French front further south. The initial attempt in June to dislodge the Germans from the Messines Ridge was a complete success, but the main assault north-eastward, which began at the end of July, quickly became a dogged struggle against determined opposition and the rapidly deteriorating weather. The campaign finally came to a close in November with the capture of Passchendaele.

The German offensive of March 1918 met with some initial success, but was eventually checked and repulsed in a combined effort by the Allies in September. Having seen some of the heaviest fighting in the First World War, Ypres was in ruins. The Town Major of Ypres Henry Beckles Willson described it as ‘holy ground’ and felt the area should not be rebuilt but remain a memorial. However, this was not to be and the town was rebuilt.

The battles of the Ypres Salient claimed many lives on both sides and it quickly became clear that the commemoration of members of the Commonwealth forces with no known grave would have to be divided between several different sites. The site of the Menin Gate was chosen because of the hundreds of thousands of men who passed through it on their way to the battlefields. It commemorates casualties from the forces of Australia, Canada, India, South Africa and United Kingdom who died in the Salient. In the case of United Kingdom casualties, only those prior 16 August 1917 (with some exceptions). United Kingdom and New Zealand servicemen who died after that date are named on the memorial at Tyne Cot, a site which marks the furthest point reached by Commonwealth forces in Belgium until nearly the end of the war. New Zealand casualties that died prior to 16 August 1917 are commemorated on memorials at Buttes New British Cemetery and Messines Ridge British Cemetery.

Building of the memorial began in 1923 and on 24 July 1927, it was unveiled by Field Marshal Lord Plumer. Veterans, relatives of those commemorated and local people attended. Dignitaries included King Albert I of Belgium and Marshal Ferdinand Foch, Commander of French forces during the war.

The ceremony was also broadcast on the wireless in Britain. Soon after its completion the memorial became a place of pilgrimage for veterans, relatives and visitors to the battlefields.

During the Second World War, the memorial incurred considerable damage including shrapnel holes on almost all its elevations. The memorial was restored between 1945 and 1948 under the supervision of Reginald Blomfield’s son, Austin Blomfield. Some of the damage can still be seen today as honourable battle scars.

Every evening since 1928, at 8pm buglers sound the Last Post. The ceremony has become part of the daily life of Ieper and traffic is stopped from passing through the memorial. Only during the German occupation of the Second World War was the ceremony interrupted. At that time, it was held at Brookwood Military Cemetery in Surrey, England.

The idea of performing the Last Post was first conceived by the Belgian Pierre Vandenbraambussche, Superintendent of the Ieper Police. The Last Post Committee (now Association) was formed in 1928 of local volunteers and has remained ever since.
CHAPTER 6 - LETTERS HOME

John William Derham

These first letters are from Pte John William Derham to his mother and brother, Fred. They are verbatim transcripts and have not been edited in any way. The letterheads have been copied from the originals.

This first letter is sent from a mobilisation point in Plymouth, where John was undertaking a signaller’s course prior to mobilisation.

Dear Mother, just a line in answer to your kind letter hoping that it will find you quite well as it leaves me alright up to the present. We have shifted again we are in a fort now. Dear Mother Will Selwood is for the next draft which I expect will go away this week. I am not going as I have got to go through a course of signalling. I volantered to go but they would not let me because I was learning this job. If I do not get sent back from this it will be another six months now close from your ever before I do go. I volantered having to go but they did not let me go so I shall not volunteer no more. I shall wait now till they have go their own mind to send me. Dear Mother I had a letter from Fred this week and he is alright. We do not know whether there is any furlough Christmas or no yet. Give my best love to all the children and if I had not been on this job I should soon have been sent to the front but never mind perhaps it is all for the best that I am stopping here. Dear Mother I do not think I have any more to say this time so I now close from your ever loving son John x x x x x x x x x

For May x x x x x

Willie x x x x x

Bert x x x x x

And the Baby x x x x x

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This letter is to John’s brother, Fred, who was also serving. It clearly demonstrates his frustration at being held back from going to the front in order to complete his signaller’s course.

Dear Brother

Just a line hoping that you are alright as it leaves me about the same as usual. Dear Brother they have put me on a class of Signalling or else I should have been for the next draft. If I can get off it I shall be. Will Selwood is for it and I shall try to go. Dear Brother we have not heard anything about a furlough yet but I shall try and get one. We are getting plenty of rain here. They keep shifting us about we are in a Fort now. They sent a big draft away from here last week and there is another going before long. We are doing alright now we are getting plenty of good food and I hope you are getting the same. Dear Brother I do not think I have any more to say this time so I now close from your loving brother John x x x x x x x x x x x

Write back soon

An undated letter to his mother with no address was clearly sent from Plymouth.
Dear Mother,

Just a line in answer to your kind letter hoping that it will find you quite well as it leaves me about the same as usual. I heard from Fred this morning and he was alright up till the 9th of August, I am just writing a letter to him. Dear Mother I don’t know what sort of weather you are getting but we are getting it wet nearly every day. They’re just beginning to worry about the harvest round here. Dear Mother It is just come out in order’s that we have all got to have a free pass. They are starting this week those that is going tis side of Bristol is getting 5 day’s but those that are going to Wales and a long distance is getting 6 days. So when I come up I shall try and get the 6 days. I expect I shall be able to work that alright. Dear Mother I don’t know yet when I shall be coming but everybody have got to have 4 days clear at home, it is a Southern Command order. Dear Mother I have not heard anything about going out yet but what I can see of it they will want us all before this is finished. The Officers told us this morning that they was using more signallers out there now so we might touch out before long and we might still stop here for a long time yet. I shall have some more photos took so I shall be able to send you some more when I have them done. Dear Mother I was very glad to hear that May was getting on alright and I should think that she would be alright at Mrs Gordon’s if she take’s care of herself. I should have liked to have been home along with George Vizard there wouldn’t have been half something going on. Don’t forget to remember me to him and tell I wish him the best of luck. Dear Mother I don’t think I have anymore to say this time so I now close from your ever loving Son John xxxxxxxx

xxxxxxxx

For May xxxxxxxxx

Willie xxxxxxxxx

And Bert xxxxxxxxx

This letter from John to his mother is from the front line and describes some of the horror of trench warfare.
It is addressed from:

No 11338, Pte J W Durham, Signaller Headquarters, 8th Somerset L Infantry, British Expeditionary Force and dated 31/12/15.

Dear Mother,

Just a few lines in answer to your kind letter which I was pleased to receive and glad to hear that you and all the children are all quite well as it leaves me about the same as usual Dear Mother. I spent my Christmas in the trenches, we went in on Christmas eve and we were in for 4 days well we are back out again for another 4 and I expect to be in again then for another few days. Dear Mother I and my mate we were up to our neck in mud and water for the whole of the Christmas and we had to stop like that until we came out. Dear Mother, I have a chance to tell you where I am now I am at a place called Armentieres and I tell you it is a very warm shop to be in before I came here I was at a place called Ypres where Father have been and I tell you it is awful the fighting that was going on round that part. Dear Mother this Battalion have started to have leave from the Front and I am giving this letter to a chum to post it in London but you can see how we are situated by this letter. Dear Mother we made an attack on the German trenches on the 16th of December and we took some prisoners besides what we left behind in there own trenches well you can guess what we done with them well Dear Mother it was like been in Hell with the top off for a couple of hours and I ...

Further pages of the letter are missing.

Walter Ernest Croker

The following letter was written to Mrs E Croker, the mother of Walter Croker, following his death in 1918. I presume that the title “S/s” is shorthand for Shoeing Smith, the same rank that Walter held.

Saturday

27/4/18 S/s R Deakins

Dear Mrs Croker

Just a few lines to say I received your letter quite safe I am very sorry for you as it must upset all of you as it did me as me & Walter were like brothers instead of a chum but I was not with him when he was killed & he was not able to say any think as death was Instantaneously a piece of shell caught him in the head. I saw him before he went up into the line but he did not say anythink then he was quite cheerful. The date he was killed on was 28.3.18.

Walter did tell me about his father also is brother god knows how you all must miss them this is a terrible war.

I think this is all I am able to tell you trusting this letter will find you well

Yours very sincerely

111
CHAPTER 7 - TESTIMONIALS

Roland Arnold

These prints contain the extracts that are transcribed in the text, describing Anthony Roland Arnold’s act of courage that lead to him dying at Bernafay Wood in the early days of the Battle of the Somme.