

Arthur Cecil CROSS and George Harry CROSS

George and Emma Cross of Council Cottages, 9 New Barns Road, Ely, lost two of their teenage sons.

Born Arthur	17th October 1900
Killed in Action or Died	21st September 1918, age 18
Buried	Grave II. B. 2., Meath Cemetery, Villiers-Guislain, Nord, France
Unit	1 st Battalion The Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment)
Rank	Private, Service Number G/69048
Awards	British War Medal and Victory Medal

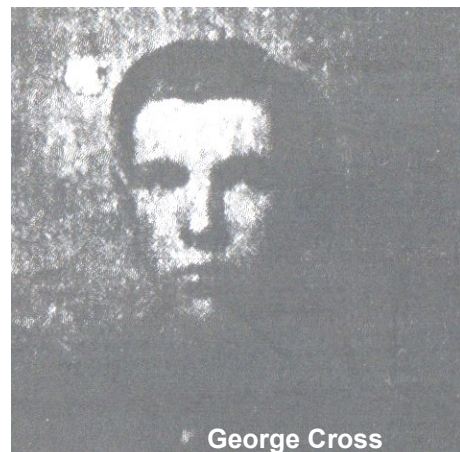
Born George	1897
Killed in Action or Died	11th May 1915 age 18
Commemorated	Panel 50 & 52, Menin Gate Memorial, Ieper, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium
Unit	1 st Battalion Cambridgeshire Regiment
Rank	Private, Service Number 1633
Awards	1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

George Cross was a general labourer born in Prickwillow in 1856, his wife Emma (nee Grindling 1860) came originally from Mildenhall. They had three sons and four daughters, all born in Prickwillow: Ada (1886); Nellie (1892); Matilda (1893); Daisy (1894); **George** (1897); **Arthur** (1899); and Ernest (1902). Emma had also had an illegitimate son, John Grindling, in 1878. Arthur was actually registered at birth as Cecil Arthur, but preferred to use the names the other way round, while George had been registered as George Hills Cross, but used George Harry. The children were baptised at the local Primitive Methodist Chapel.

In 1901 the family, including John Grindling, was living at Old Bank, Prickwillow. At this point George was working for the Commissioners as a labourer, given his location this probably meant the Burnt Fen and Middle Fen Commissioners who were responsible for drainage in the area. The only other person in the household who was bringing in income was John, who was a farm labourer.

The 1911 Census shows that the family had moved to Springhead Lane in Ely and the four eldest children in the household were in work with Matilda being a factory hand at the Jam Factory, Daisy a housemaid and George junior a farm worker. At this point Arthur was still at school. John Grindling, was still living with the family, which means that the four roomed house must have felt very full—although at least by this stage the two eldest girls had moved out, as Ada had married James Foreman (1884 Mildenhall) in 1905 and Nellie had also married.

George was one of the keen young men, still teenagers, who enlisted in Ely at the outbreak of War, indeed it is quite possible he exaggerated his age when he signed up, as the Army thought he was nineteen when he died, whereas records and the article quoted below suggest he was in fact still eighteen. (Soldiers were not supposed to be sent abroad until they were nineteen, but George was clearly eighteen when he first went to the Front.) His battalion spent several months in



George Cross

training at various camps around East Anglia, and were finally mobilised for the Front in February 1915. The Cambridgeshires were particularly renowned for their fierce fighting in the Battle of St Eloi Craters a couple of months after their arrival, which George survived, only to be killed shortly afterwards, the second of the Ely Territorials to die. The local press carried this short article on 21st June 1915: *"Private Cross, son of Mr and Mrs G.P. Cross, Springhead Lane, has died of wounds at the front. He belonged to No. 15 Platoon, 1st Cambs Regt, having joined some 18 months ago. He was 18 years of age. Pte. Day, son of Mr. and Mrs. Day, of the Common, Ely, who was a great friend of the deceased and in the same company has written to his mother: "I am sorry to say we shall not see George Cross any more, for he has died from wounds. He did not live long.""* Private John Day himself did not survive the War, and his name can also be seen on the Ely Market Place Memorial. Letters from George's commander tell that George was on lookout duty in the trenches and had stood up to get a clearer view and was instantly shot through the head. His close friend Alfred Jakes of Ely had been shot in exactly the same way a week earlier, but survived. George was buried at the back of the trench with others who had fallen that day. The fact that George's name is commemorated on the Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing suggests his burial place was lost or his body was later unidentifiable.

Arthur was conscripted and went to Cambridge to enlist in the Royal West Surrey Regiment in November 1917. He went out to France in the Spring of 1918, but he did not survive for more than a few months either. He met his death in the aftermath of the Battle of Ephey as the British were starting to push back the Hindenberg Line with an assault on the positions in the Tregelle Valley which was met with heavy machine gun fire. Back in Ely his grieving family must have been relieved when the War came to an end before the last brother, Ernest, was of an age to enlist.

Arthur's effects amounted to £5 14s 9d with a further £3 in 1919 and were given to his mother.

Both brothers were commemorated on the Holy Trinity Memorial and the Ely Market Place Memorial.

Francis James CROSS

Born	1897
Killed in Action or Died	13th June 1916, age 18
Buried	Grave A. 18. 49. St. Sever Cemetery, Rouen, Seine-Maritime, France
Unit	11 th Battalion Suffolk Regiment
Rank	Private, Service Number 15949
Awards	British War Medal and Victory Medal

Fredrick Cross (1868 Prickwillow) and his wife Rachel (nee Biggs, 1869 Littleport) lived in Prickwillow Road, Prickwillow with a growing family of children; **Francis James Cross** (1897 Prickwillow) was their second son. Their other children were: Esther (1892); John (1893); Ethel (1894); Kezia Rebecca (1896); Keziah Mary (1901); and Fred (1903). Fred, like most of the working population of Prickwillow, was a labourer. Sadly Fred and Rachel lost three of their children in childhood, including Keziah Rebecca and two babies.

Francis was normally know as Frank.

By the 1911 Census Fred and Rachel had moved to Short Drove and Fred was working as a baker. The family left at home were John, Frank, Rebecca, Mary and Fred junior. Both John and Frank had found work on the local farms. Also in the household was their one year old grandson Leslie Leonard who had been born in Soham; he was the son of Esther and her husband Alfred Leonard (1889 Soham) who lived on Soham Fen.

Frank was one of the teenagers who enlisted with enthusiasm at the outbreak of the War in the local Suffolk Regiment; the 11th Battalion of the Regiment was known as the "Cambridgeshire Battalion" and was a "Pals" Battalion - Frank may well have signed up with his friends. The Battalion spent time training nearby at Cambridge, then Ripon, followed by Warminster, until it finally mobilised for War, reaching Boulogne on 9th January 1916. The first significant battle in which Frank's unit took part was the Battle of Albert, but by this time Frank was already dead. He had been both seriously injured and gassed. In the trenches around Becourt Wood. His right leg had to be amputated, but he died of wounds and the effects of the gas in one of the military hospitals at Rouen.



Frank is remembered on both the Ely Market Place Memorial and the Prickwillow Memorial. On his grave his mother chose the message "O Lord Abide With Me".

George Albert CROSS

Born	1891
Killed in Action or Died	7th May 1917, age 26
Buried	Grave VI. L. 4, Vlamertinghe Military Cemetery, Ieper, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium
Unit	"B" Battery., 298 th Brigade., Royal Horse Artillery
Rank	Gunner, Service Number 622319
Awards	British War Medal and Victory Medal

George Albert Cross (1891) came from a Queen Adelaide family and was the youngest of the five children of farm labourer William Cross (1847 Queen Adelaide) and his wife Mary (nee Hood 1855 Mildenhall). George's older siblings were: Leckannah aka Leehannah (1875); Kate (1878); Susan (1880); William (1883); Bertha (1886); and Edward (1888). George's mother Mary died in 1893 when he was just two years old.

In the 1901 Census the family home was in Padnal Back Drove, Adelaide Bridge, Susan was acting as housekeeper for the family and William junior had joined his father on the farms. Also in the household was William's granddaughter Ada Martin (1897 Oxloode, Cambridgeshire). The two oldest daughters had left home to marry and Leckannah was now Mrs James Day and Kate Mrs Martin. Unhappily Kate was to die just two years later, aged thirty.

In 1905 William married a second time and his wife Ada Fitch of Ely was thirty-six years his junior. He began a second family with Ada: Walter (1906); Jonathan (1909); Florence (1913); Sarah (1916). William died in 1919 and his last, posthumous, son was called George, after the George that had been lost.

In the autumn of 1910 George married Eliza Brown (1892 Mildenhall) and they set up their own home in Queen Adelaide. George was then working as a horseman on a farm. They had two sons called George (1911) and Arthur (1913). At the time of their marriage George and Eliza were just nineteen and eighteen respectively, and it may be that they married young because George felt there was no longer room for him in his father's new household. The couple lived first in Queen Adelaide, but later moved into Annesdale in Ely.

George joined the Essex Royal Horse Artillery in 1915, just before the unit left their billets in Ely. The RHA was armed with light, mobile, horse drawn guns and had the task of supporting the cavalry or the Royal Field Artillery (in fact the cavalry was dismounted for most of the War). A battery consisted of six 13-pounder field guns, five officers, two hundred men and, at full strength, two hundred and twenty eight horses. George's Battery arrived in France on 4th April 1917 which means that George survived for just seven weeks in Flanders before he was seriously wounded and died almost instantly while being taken to a field ambulance station near Ypres. He had been killed in what his officer described as a "serious accident" when the battery was under heavy bombardment—perhaps this accident was one of the British guns or shell stores exploding.

George was commemorated on both the Holy Trinity Memorial and Market Place Memorial in Ely and on the Prickwillow War Memorial. The inscription Eliza asked to have carved on his gravestone was "Tho' death divides fond memories cling".

George was the uncle of John William Day who also died in the War and appears on the Ely Market Place and Prickwillow Memorials.



Herbert Chapman CROSS

Born	21st November 1890
Killed in Action or Died	18th October 1917, age 27
Buried	Grave VIII. G. 4., Gaza War Cemetery, Israel
Unit	1 st /5 th Battalion Suffolk Regiment
Rank	Private, Service Number 13683
Awards	1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

Herbert Chapman Cross was born late in 1890 in Potters Lane, Ely, to Thomas Chapman Cross (1849 Ely) and his wife Sarah Ann (nee Carter, 1859 Prickwillow); Thomas and Sarah had been next door neighbours when their families lived on Waterside and later on Broad Street. Herbert's father Thomas was a stoker cum labourer at the local Gas Works, and the Gas Works was immediately behind their terraced home in Potters Lane. Herbert was the fifth child of the family and his older sisters and brothers were Sophia (1882), Alice (1883), Tom (1886) and James (1888). He also had younger sisters and a brother: Annie (1893); Sarah (1895); John (1898); and Violet (1901). Sophia and Alice were born in Broad Street but all the rest of the children were born in Potters Lane and every child (with the exception apparently of Tom and James) was given their father's middle name of "Chapman" as one of their own middle names; Chapman had been Thomas' mother's maiden name.

Herbert appears to have been one of the first children to be baptised in St Peter's Church in Broad Street, Ely, which had opened at Christmas 1889.

In the 1901 Census the oldest girls had left home as Sophia had married local baker's labourer Arthur Page in January and was living round the corner on Bull Lane (now Lisle Lane), while Alice was a live-in servant at Ely College. Herbert's oldest brother, Tom, was working on a local farm. Herbert was also a farm labourer by the time of the next census in 1911, younger sister Annie was working at the Jam Factory and Sarah, unusually, was an "errand girl". Herbert's brother James was shown on this census as unable to work with the commentary that he was of "feeble mind" and was having to be supported by the family. On 2nd May 1898 Herbert himself had been enrolled at Needhams Secondary School. Almost exactly six years later, on 27th May 1904, he left the school to enlist in the militia.

At the outbreak of war Herbert signed up as a Private in the 1st/5th Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment, part of the 54th (East Anglian) Division of the British Army. The 54th fought at the failed assault on Suvla Bay in Gallipoli in 1915, and, after sustaining heavy casualties, were then transferred to Cairo and the defence of the Suez Canal throughout 1916, which must have been a welcome respite from the main conflict. In 1917 they took part in the long-running Battle of Gaza which was an almost year long attempt to capture a strongly entrenched Ottoman Turkish Garrison. As a result, Herbert was wounded on 9th April 1917 in Palestine, and later died of wounds on 18th June, in the region of Gaza.

Herbert's death had a terrible effect on his mother Sarah who died just three months after she had heard the news about her son. At this time many of the residents of Waterside would have been related to the Cross or Page families and the death of Herbert coupled with the loss of Sophia's husband Arthur Page on the Somme would have been felt deeply in the area.

Herbert's father Thomas was given his effects of £6 11s 8d with a final £14 in 1919.



Arthur CRUNKHORN

Born	1883
Killed in Action or Died	18th June 1917 age 34
Commemorated	Bay 4, Arras Memorial, Pas de Calais, France
Unit	2 nd Battalion Suffolk Regiment
Rank	Private, Service Number 17899
Awards	1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

Arthur Crunkhorn was born in Frampton in Lincolnshire in 1883 and was the son of Mark Crunkhorn (1853 Kirton Lincolnshire) and Harriet (nee Thorlby, 1855 Wigtoft, Lincolnshire). He was part of a large family of seven boys and just one girl, his siblings being: George (1878 Kirton); Henry (1882 Frampton, Lincolnshire); Lily (1885 Frampton); Walter (1889 Sutterton, Lincolnshire); James (1891 Sutterton); Fred (1896 Sutterton); and Ernest (1900 Sutterton). Mark Crunkhorn was a farm labourer and his sons moved into the same line of work.

In 1901 the Crunkhorns were living in Blows Lane, Sutterton, Lincolnshire and Arthur was attending the local school.

In the 1911 Census Arthur was a horseman on a farm and boarding with the farm's foreman Thomas Clarke and his family at Creasey Plot, Swineshead, Lincolnshire. Here in 1905 he married Mary Jane Redshaw (1883 Hubberts Bridge, Lincolnshire).

Arthur and Mary Jane moved between farms in Lincolnshire then south into Cambridgeshire and their route can be traced through the birthplaces of their children: George Arthur (1905 Brothertoft, Lincolnshire); Rose Ellen (1907 Sutterton, Lincolnshire); Leslie (1908 Sutterton, Lincolnshire); Mark Edward (1909 Prickwillow); Ernest (1911 Prickwillow); Harold (1913 Prickwillow); another girl, name not registered (1914 Prickwillow); and Harriet (1917 Prickwillow). Harriet was a posthumous child.

In 1909 the Crunkhorns moved to Prickwillow and in the 1911 Census were living on accommodation at Great Shell Farm in Prickwillow where Arthur was working. One of the other farm workers, George Brown, was boarding with them, and as he was the same age as Arthur and also from Lincolnshire he may have been a friend of some years standing.



Arthur enlisted in the local Suffolk Regiment at Ely and was initially with the 1st Battalion before being moved across to the 2nd Battalion. He arrived in France on 1st June 1915 with the Suffolks. In 1915 his battalion fought in the Second Battle of Ypres (when the Suffolks suffered over 400 casualties) and the Battle of Loos. Arthur must have been transferred into the 2nd Battalion before his original unit was sent out to Greece, and would have fought with the 2nd Battalion on the Somme. In 1917 the Suffolks were engaged in the Battles of Battles of the Scarpe and the Battle of Arleux.

The Suffolks had secured Hook Trench on Infantry Hill (near Moncy—le;Preux) where they were naturally then subjected to a heavy barrage from the German artillery. Arthur's Lieutenant wrote that Arthur died during a heavy bombardment of the trenches when a shell fell in his part of the trench, killing not only Arthur, but also his Company Commander and several others. Death was instantaneous and the men were buried near where they fell. (Note: the letter states Arthur's death took place on the afternoon of 16th June, although

CWGC records it as 18th June 1917.) The Lieutenant said Arthur "was a good soldier....(who) met his death standing at his post during the bombardment."

Arthur was killed in action on the Front in the Arras Sector, and he is commemorated on the Arras Memorial to the Missing, despite the fact his place of burial was originally known and marked.

After Arthur's death Mary Jane remarried, perhaps because she was anxious to find someone to help her support her children; she appears on the record relating to her husband's memorial as Mrs Mary Jane Duggan of Great Shell Farm.

Arthur is remembered on both the Ely Market Place Memorial and the Prickwillow Memorial.

Arthur's younger brother Fred also perished in the Great War , being killed in action on 3rd January 1917 fighting with the Coldstream Guards on the Somme. Both Arthur and Frederick are remembered on the War Memorial in St Mary's Church, Sutterton, Lincolnshire, the family home.