

## Decorated

Several of the Ely men who died in World War One were decorated for their service, with **Victor Pamment** and **Alfred Wayman** receiving **Distinguished Conduct Medals** and **Arthur Bidwell, Albert Covill, George Jugg, Ernest Royal, Abraham Smith** and **James Thompson** receiving **Military Medals**. (*Their stories can be found on their individual pages under "The Fallen" on this website.*) The DCM was awarded to "other ranks" (i.e. men who were not commissioned officers) for gallantry in the field. The Military Medal was inaugurated in March 1916 for bravery in battle by "other ranks" and was their equivalent of the Military Cross which was only awarded to officers. Over 115,000 MMs were awarded during World War One. The DCM was regarded as a higher award (Level 2) than the MM (Level 3).

The local newspapers recorded details of Ely men who received awards as follows:



The name of Archers & Archer Solicitors was well known in Ely, and during the Great War it was Major **Goodwyn Luddington Archer** (born 1878 Ely) of the local Territorials who became second in command of the 1/1st battalion of the Cambridgeshire Regiment and then their commanding officer from 24<sup>th</sup> April 1915 to 30<sup>th</sup> May 1916. He had actually been a Territorial officer since 1898 when he was commissioned Second Lieutenant of the 3rd Cambridgeshire (Volunteer Battalion) Suffolk Regiment. In 1903 he had become Captain in charge of the Ely Company and by 1916 he was in command of a line unit. He was wounded in May 1916 and returned to England to recover. He did not return to the Front but was placed in the Territorial Force Reserve and was also commanding officer of the 4/1st battalion. At the same time he continued his work for Archer & Archer. He was officially **mentioned to the secretary of state for war** for

valuable war service in 1917. He finally rose to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. On return to Ely, in 1918, he became the chairman of the local Comrades of the Great War Society.

Goodwyn (like his father Harold) served as Clerk and Joint Clerk of the Burnt Fen District Internal Drainage Board for 53 years. Both before and after the War he was a chief officer with the Ely fire brigade, and manager of the Ely Public Rooms. He died in 1962.

*Goodwyn had married Phyllis Mary Eteson early in 1915, but she refused to move from London to Ely and, with his absence at the Front, the couple swiftly drifted apart. They divorced in December 1917.*

In July of 1915 Sergeant **Bertram Benton** of New Barns Road, Ely, received the **DCM** for bravery in action. Bertram fought with the Royal Engineers and was a younger brother of George Henry Benton (who was killed in action in 1918) and of Frederick (below). Bertram was born in 1883. He was originally a bricklayer by trade, but enlisted with the Royal Engineers before the War, served in South Africa and Egypt, and was billeted in Cairo at the outbreak of the War. He married Eva Lugg in London in 1915, continued working as a bricklayer, and died in London in 1957. This was the first of Ely's DCMs.

Sergeant **R Frederick Benton** of the Royal Engineers was awarded the **MM** in February 1918. Brother of George Henry Benton (who was killed in action in 1918 and of Bertram (above)).

In August 1917 Second Lieutenant **(Hugh) Wilbert Blakeney** of the Royal Engineers was awarded the **Military Cross**. Hugh was the son of the headmaster of the King's School in Ely. The citation read: "For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty in establishing forward communications during an attack under exceptionally difficult circumstances. Although units were mixed up, and the ground was unknown, he worked for four days unceasingly, under continual shell fire and for a considerable part of the time without sleep or food, until he had overcome all the difficulties and rendered invaluable services towards the success of his brigade." Wilbert was wounded in this operation but remained on duty throughout. The Ely Standard proudly proclaimed that this was the first MC for an Ely officer.

Sergeant **Ernest Cauham** of the Royal Engineers received the **MM** and later the Belgian **Croix de Guerre** in 1918.



Regimental Sergeant Major **Malcolm Slaughter Chase** of the Suffolk Regiment was awarded the **Croix de Guerre** in April of 1917 for his role on the Sturma Front the preceding October.

Malcolm's was born in 1884, his family lived at Bernards House in Chiefs Lane, Ely. He was first employed as a solicitor's clerk at Messers W J Evans & Son, but left to enlist with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the Scots Guards with whom he served for twelve years, rising to the rank of drill-corporal. When this regiment was disbanded he joined the 1<sup>st</sup> Suffolk Regiment as a private and was in Malta, Alexandria, Cairo and Khartoum and by 1911 had reached the rank of Sergeant and was stationed in Egypt. He was in England on leave when the War broke out as he had come home to marry Christina Steven-Taylor. He then served at the regimental headquarters in Bury St Edmunds until he first went to France in May of 1915. He was soon afterwards severely wounded in the head and shoulders and did not re-join the regiment until March

1916 in Felixstowe. After France the regiment went on to Salonica where Malcolm was mentioned in despatches in November 1916. He was promoted Major and then to the rank of Acting Lieutenant Colonel. Malcolm's father, Charles Chase (died 1896), had been a Sergeant Major in the Ely Militia. The family lived in Bury St Edmunds where Malcolm's role appeared to be to find employment for soldiers as they left the army. He died in 1948.

**Percy Cornwell** (born 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1898) was the son of Inspector Arthur Cornwell of the Isle of Ely Police Force and the younger brother of Arthur who died in 1917. Percy served as a Private in the Cambridgeshire Regiment and early in January 1917 he was awarded the **DCM** for carrying an important message under extremely heavy fire on 13th November 1916 at St Pierre Divion (mentioned London Gazette 26th January 1917.) The Ely Standard recorded: He was "*carrying urgent messages from headquarters to the firing line during a heavy artillery fire while the Germans were concentrating on one spot. Shells dropped first one side, then the other, but, after a hard struggle, the gallant soldier accomplished his errand from which he never expected to return.*" Percy was nominated for his award along with his Ely colleague Alfred Wayman who did not survive the War.

Percy was listed as wounded for the third time in April 1918.

Percy was born in 1899 and married Caroline Watson in 1922 at Ely. He followed his father

into the police after the war and served in Northampton, where he finally died in 1972.

**Walter Covill** of the Royal Engineers was the younger brother of Albert Covill (see casualty list) and, like his brother, received the **MM**. In Walter's case the medal was for "attending to barbed wire under heavy fire". As soon as the War was over Walter married Hannah Richardson (1889 Witchford). They moved to Lincolnshire where Walter worked as a railway signalman. He died during the Second World War, in 1941.



Private **Walter Warner Day** (born 1891) was awarded the **MM** in September 1917. He was originally from Prickwillow but had emigrated and was fighting with the 48th Australian Infantry Battalion (Service Number 2652). His headmaster wrote of him and Sergeant Gooch (see below) "both being old scholars of mine, and knowing them so well, I was not surprised at their gallantry". Walter was the son of Edward Day who farmed at Swaisdale Farm. He enlisted at Belmont in Western Australia in May 1916 and was first part of a unit guarding the Suez Canal until the Australians

moved on to France. Given the date of the gazetting of his MM it seems likely that Walter was awarded this for his part in the Battle of Pozieres. Walter was able to take advantage of his closeness to home and returned to Prickwillow at least in February 1918, when he was described by his friends as "in the pink".

After the War, Walter returned to Australia on 28<sup>th</sup> March 1919 with his unit, and married Vera Whiteman at Swan, New South Wales in 1923. **The Perth suburb of Dayton was named after Walter** who became a pioneer of both the cattle and wine-growing industries in what was originally the City of Swan. Walter lived to the age of 99 and died on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1990.



In the closing days of the War Private **Robert Day** of the Suffolk Regiment was award an **MM**. Robert's family lived on the Common, Prickwillow Road. Robert was born in 1897 to William Day and Ada Moden and was one of a large family of farm labourers. He had joined the Army before the outbreak of the War when still seventeen. He married Annie May Carman in Ely in 1922 and raised four children. Robert continued to work as a general labourer and

died in 1947.



Twenty-two year old Lance Corporal **Walter Edwards** of the Suffolk Regiment received the DCM in August 1918 "for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty". He lived in Lynn Road but was originally from Stuntney where his father was the vicar's gardener.





Major **Walter James Fenn** of the Royal Garrison Artillery earned the **DCM** on 21<sup>st</sup> June 1916 when, as a Battery Quarter Master Sergeant, although he himself was wounded, he took over command from his severely wounded superior and carried on under heavy fire. He was also mentioned in despatches for his action. In March 1918 the Ely Standard recorded that he had also been awarded the Belgian **Chevalier-de-Londres-de-la-Cauronne** and the **Croix-de-Guerre**; "perhaps no other Ely soldier can lay claim to a better record than his".

Walter was born in 1889 and died in 1947. He had been brought up by his grandparents in West Fen, Ely and had joined the Royal Garrison Artillery in 1909 (In the 1911 Census he was at Woolwich as a gym instructor). Walter had been at the Front from the early days of the War and was with the heavy

batteries that fought in every one of the large engagements, including Ypres. Walter was a Methodist and is commemorated on the Roll of Honour in Ely's Methodist Church which lists all those of the congregation who fought in the Great War. In 1916 he married Ethel Emery of Gosport in London. After the war he ran a tobacconist shop in Ely and lived in Lynn Road. He also served as a special constable.

Private **Montague Cyril "Monty" Fielding** of the Royal Army Medical Corps' 28<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance received the **MM** for voluntary work at Longueval on 18<sup>th</sup> August 1916. "Private



Fielding voluntarily went through the severe artillery fire right to the village, with two sacks of dressings which he completely used up on cases which he picked up and carried to positions of safety and under cover which he dressed, and they managed to make their way back to the rear. The general cheeriness of this man has often been commented on. He is a real tonic to anyone with whom he is working under stress." "He also showed an utter disregard of personal danger when attending the wounded under heavy shellfire" a few weeks earlier on the Somme. Monty lived in Waterside with his uncle Mr Frederick Brownsell, for whom he also worked for four years in the grocery and drapery business. At the time he joined up at the

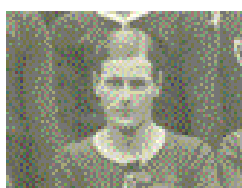
outbreak of the War he was working as a footman for Lady Coulfield at Froxfield Hall, Petersfield (Hampshire), but still regarded Ely as his home. Monty was originally from Booton in Norfolk. In February 1917 Monty transferred into the Royal Flying Corps, at which point his commanding officer Captain Rutherford wrote to Monty's family: "...his work has always been most satisfactory. ....He is a general favourite in the Ambulance. Both officers and men regret that he is leaving us, and wish him well in the branch of the service he has entered." Monty survived the War and returned to live in Waterside, and took over his uncle's grocery business. He married Gertrude. He died in 1956.



Lieutenant **John Sharman-Franey**, a regular in the Royal Field Artillery, was **mentioned in despatches** late in 1915 (Ely Standard 14/1/1916). He had been overseas since 15<sup>th</sup> January 1915. He was listed as an Ely success because his grandfather, the Reverend John Franey, had been vicar at St Mary's, and still lived

at the Grange in Ely, although John himself was born in Chelsea (1893). In June 1918 John (then a Captain) was gazetted with a **Military Cross** for his service in Salonika as part of the King's 1918 Birthday Honours. John continued to serve with the RFA and died in England during the Second World War (16<sup>th</sup> February 1940).

Sergeant **Harry Gooch** (born 18<sup>th</sup> March 1892) of the Suffolk Regiment, was originally a farm labourer. He was awarded the **MM** in September 1917. His headmaster wrote of him and Private Walter Day (see above) "both being old scholars of mine, and knowing them so well, I was not surprised at their gallantry". By the end of the War Harry was sporting four "wound stripes" on his uniform. *See below for the account of the presentation of the medal.* After the war Harry married Nellie and became a motor driver; the couple lived in Bull Lane (now Lisle Lane) in Ely. Harry died in 1971.



Second Lieutenant **Oswald Hart** of Lynfield Terrace, Ely, was awarded the **Military Cross** for distinguished service. The citation reads: "For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. When a gap was known to exist in the line this officer went out with a patrol to find its extent. He obtained the necessary information in two hours, and sufficient men were sent up to fill the gap before dawn. The next night he again took out a patrol to obtain some S.O.S. Rockets, which were urgently required. On every occasion he showed courage and initiative." Oswald first joined the Inns of Court OTC in January of 1917 and then served with the South Wales Borderers. Before the War he had worked in Barclays Bank in Ely's High Street and was well known locally as a cricketer "being a steady and reliable bat", as well as captaining the Ely City Football Club, playing at full back. He was treasurer for Stuntney Church where he also ran a Sunday School class and organised summer games for the school children. Oswald was born in 1890 in Barrington, Cambridgeshire where his father Henry was the manager of the local cement factory. Oswald rose to be manager of Barclays Bank in Bletchley, Buckinghamshire, in World War Two he and his wife Jean retired to Bow Brickhills, where Oswald died in 1952.



Company Sergeant Major **H J Jones** (3/8688) of Cambridge Road, Ely, was a young reservist who went abroad early in 1915 with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the Suffolks as a corporal. He was rapidly promoted and was awarded an **MM** when he was a sergeant (21<sup>st</sup> October 1916). On 14th August 1917 he was awarded a bar to his MM for his work in removing wounded from the battlefield and was promoted to Company Quartermaster. Finally he was awarded a **DCM** on 5<sup>th</sup> December 1918. The DCM citation reads: "When his company commander became a casualty, during an attack, and the company was checked, he led it forward to the objective and reorganised it there. Later, when compelled to retire, through an attack from the rear and flanks, he withdrew to a sunken road, and collecting what men he could, held on for three hours. He showed conspicuous gallantry and coolness throughout." The local newspaper recorded that he was wounded five times in his career, the last time in the closing days of the War in the action in which he received his DCM. "H.J." was actually **Joseph Henry Jones** who was born in Sandwich, Kent, early in 1897 and whose family had moved to Ely in the early 1900s. He was working at one

of the local hotels before the War. Early in 1920 Company Sergeant Major Jones (as he now was) married Lily Saunders at Spalding. During the War Lily had been a Quarter Mistress with the Motor Transport Division of the Royal Army Service Corps. The couple had daughters Gwendoline (1921), Doreen (1923), Olive (1933).

The Cambridge Daily News of 19<sup>th</sup> September 1918 recorded: "Amongst those who have been discharged from the Army is ex-Gunner **G. Layton** R.F.A., who has been honoured with a **Meritorious Service Medal** and also the **Decoration Militaire** (Belgium). The ex-gunner was one of the "Old Contemptibles", having fought at Mons, and he will doubtless receive the Mons Star in due course. He was made limber gunner on the first day of British fighting, taking the place of the man who was killed, and he held that position until he got shot on October 2<sup>nd</sup> 1917, his wounds consisting of a fractured head, loss of left eye, and a fractured jaw, leaving a disfigurement. Ex-gunner Layton, who took part in a large number of engagements, was decorated at Cambridge by General Travers. He is the son of Mr and Mrs J Layton of Potters Lane, Ely." George himself said: "I was made limber gunner on the first day of the war taking the place of a man who was killed and I held that position until I got hit". **George Layton** was born 17<sup>th</sup> January 1886 to John and Keziah and was an agricultural labourer like his father. He married Annie Cross in 1920. After the war he went back to working on the farms and lived in Annesdale.

On 16<sup>th</sup> January 1917 the London Gazette reported that Lance Corporal **Walter Lupson** of Ely B Company in the Cambridgeshire Regiment had received the **MM** – his was one of several



medals won during the regiment's action at the Schwaben Redoubt. Walter was an employee of Great Eastern Railways and even played in defence for Ely GER United's football team. Walter (born 15<sup>th</sup> May 1897 in Prickwillow) was a member of a family of local labourers and was brought up by his grandparents in Lynn Road, Ely, following the death of his father in 1899. He was a Methodist and is commemorated on the Roll of Honour In Ely's Methodist Church which lists all those of the congregation who fought in the Great War. Walter married Josephine Dines in Kings Lynn in 1924 and

they had three children. He joined the police and by 1939 was a sergeant, serving in Kings Lynn. He died in the town in 1961.

Late in 1917 Lance Corporal **Leslie Metcalfe** of the Royal Engineers received the **MM** for bravery in the field. Leslie had originally fought with the Suffolk Regiment.



**Arthur William Moden** (born 9<sup>th</sup> October 1892) went to the Front with the Cambridgeshire Regiment in February 1915, but earned his MM in August 1918 after his transfer to the East Lancashire Regiment. Arthur was wounded in the left arm in 1917. He had been back at the Front for three months when he was in action on the night of 24<sup>th</sup> / 25<sup>th</sup> August 1918 and won his MM. He wrote to his parents that he had taken over the leadership of his platoon when his officer was badly wounded and had captured a number of prisoners and a machine gun, before leading the platoon further forward and holding the new position. As well as his decoration

Arthur was promoted to Lance Sergeant on 2<sup>nd</sup> September. While he was serving, Arthur's younger brother Johnny was killed in action (20<sup>th</sup> June 1916).

After the War Arthur worked in telecommunications. In 1939 he was living in Bury St

Edmunds with his wife Hannah Challis whom he had married during the War (Spring 1916). He lived to the age of 86, dying in 1979.



the field.

Sergeant **George Alfred Newby's** parents ran the "Round of Beef" public house on Ely's Forehill, but before the War George himself worked as an "oxygen duty line welder" in Acton. Back in Ely, however, he was well known as a footballer, and helped Ely City Football Club to a cup victory. George was 31 when he was awarded the **MM** late in 1916. He had been at the Front since early 1915 and this included ten weeks in hospital when shot in the hand by a sniper in September 1915. After the War George was also awarded the Meritorious Service Medal (**MSM**) in the King's Birthday Honours of June 1919. During WW1 the MSM was awarded for acts of gallantry in

In 1915 Colour Sergeant **Leonard Oakey** (born 11<sup>th</sup> March 1875 in Ely) of the Royal Marines Light Infantry (Royal Navy) was awarded the French **Medaille Militaire** for services at Gallipoli. This was for outstanding bravery in the battles of Krithia and the heights of Achi Baba in June of 1915, during which he was wounded and hospitalised back to England. Leonard had been a military pensioner of the RMLI at the outbreak of the War, having originally enlisted as a boy of fifteen. In 1914 he was working at an explosive works at Cliffe-at-Hoo in Kent and was married to Mary Ann (nee Barker) with five young children. Leonard was recalled to the RMLI and was in some of the earliest fighting in Belgium when he was in charge of the machine guns in the Motor Car Section which covered the evacuation of Antwerp. He was then sent with the machine guns of the Chatham Battalion of the RMLI to fight with the Anzacs at Gallipoli. By the time of his award he had already been injured four times. Leonard survived the War and was last employed at the Royal Navy Armaments Depot at Lodge Hill in Kent. He died in Kent in 1946.

In March 1918 Lance Corporal **Frederick Charles Philipps** of Clarkson, Ontario, who was fighting with the Canadian Forces, was awarded the **MM**. With the assistance of just one other man, he had used his machine gun to hold a trench until reinforcements arrived. Frederick was another Prickwillow born soldier (born 1890), and his parents Harry and Sarah still lived in the village. Frederick arranged for the medal ribbon to be sent to his parents rather than presented to himself. He had come over with the Canadian forces a year earlier.

In November 1917 Private **J Ray** of the London Regiment was awarded the **MM**.



After the War **George Skeels MM** never explained to his family exactly what he did to receive his award; he always joked he got it for "drinking more beer than anyone else"! It was actually earned when he was a company runner (serving with the Cambridgeshire Regiment and then the Suffolks) and he received his MM as a result of the action at St Pierre Divion with D Company of the Cambridgeshires. He was hospitalised in 1917 with a wounded shoulder (see letters page 1917). George William Skeels was born in Ely in 1895 into a farm labourer's family living in St John's Street, West End. When he himself left school he became a draper's errand boy. He was a Methodist and is



commemorated on the Roll of Honour in Ely's Methodist Church which lists all those of the congregation who fought in the Great War. After the War he married Doris Drury in 1921 and worked for the railways, rising to foreman checker by 1939. He died in Scunthorpe, Lincolnshire, in 1984.

Corporal **Harry Gordon Teverson** (born 1894 West Ham) was the son of Walter and Clara Teverson, of Cambridge Road, Ely, although he had previously lived in March, attended March Grammar School and then worked locally as a surveyor's clerk. He was another of the Soldiers in D Company of the Cambridgeshire Regiment who received an **MM** for the action at the Schwaben Redoubt (by this time he had been 21 months in France "without a scratch"). In June of 1917 he was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant into the Suffolk Regiment. When serving with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion he received the **Military Cross with two bars** for actions on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1918 and 27<sup>th</sup> September 1918. The citation for the first bar read: "This officer led two platoons in operation with conspicuous gallantry and skill, clearing a sunken road and capturing about 170 prisoners and many machine-guns. Later he was foremost in an advance, moving about freely under heavy machine gun fire, totally regardless of personal danger, and himself killing and capturing several of the enemy.." The citation for the second bar reads: "For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to dash in leading his company in an attack on Flesquires... he pushed through (the attacking battalion, cleared the village) and established himself east of it...he was then wounded, but reorganised his company...he set a very fine example to all ranks under heavy machine gun fire and artillery fire." After the War Harry married Hilda Cross at Ely's Methodist Church in 1924 and they farmed at Church Farm near Downham Market. He died in Downham Market in 1970. *It is most unusual for a soldier to receive both the Military Medal and the Military Cross, as the first was for "other ranks" and the second for officers.*

In 1919 the Cambridge Independent Press carried a list of the final **MMs** of the War, including Lance Corporal Tuck of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Cambridgeshire Regiment for bravery in the field. This was **Thomas George Tuck**, another young farm worker, who was born in 1897 to James Tuck and Harriet Shinn and earned his MM in the final two months of the War. He had also received a card from the Major in command of the 39<sup>th</sup> Division placing on record his appreciation of the private's conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty in the action of 26<sup>th</sup> April 1918. Thomas returned to Ely to live with his parents in Downham Road and was still with his family, unmarried, in 1939. He worked as a gardener.



**Christopher Vale** of first the Cambridgeshire and then the Norfolk Regiments received the **MM**. His detailed story can be found at <http://www.cambridgeshireregiment1914-18.co.uk/vale.html> Christopher was the son of an Ely brewery foreman, and at the time he enlisted was a police constable with Great Eastern Railways. He was awarded the MM for the attack on St Pierre Divion by the Cambridgeshires, after which he was selected for officer training and returned to the Front as a Second Lieutenant with the Norfolk Regiment. He was severely wounded several times, including, in May 1915, being hit by a sandbag which was dislodged from the top of his trench by shell fire and resulted in his being hospitalised with a rupture which required an operation. In his last action he was

left seriously concussed, suffering from gas and from shellshock. He was never again fully fit as a result of the War, but was able to return to his work with the GER Police and finally died suddenly in 1935.





Driver **Ernest Wilden** of the Army Service Corps was from West Fen Road and was born 1<sup>st</sup> December 1894. He was a regular soldier and had enlisted, aged eighteen, in 1912, which meant he was one of the first to proceed to the Front. The Ely Standard of 5<sup>th</sup> May 1916 records that he had been wounded on more than one occasion and twice gassed and was then in hospital with a crushed finger. It also records that the Major General of the 4<sup>th</sup> Division had written to him: **“Your Commanding Officer and Brigade Commander have informed me that you have distinguished yourself by your conduct in the field. I have read their report with much pleasure.”** Ernest went on to serve with the London Regiment and then the Royal Irish Rifles. After the war he married Frances and they went to live and work on Dunstan Hall Farm on Stuntney Causeway.



Sergeant **Tom Wilkin** of the Royal Field Artillery was awarded the **MM** in April 1917. “He was the layer of a gun in the trenches which blew in a German saphead at the range of 60 yards, and by his coolness largely contributed to the success of the operations.” Tom was the older brother of Edward Wilkin who had been killed in action a year earlier. The Wilkins were a farming family and lived in a railway carriage in Quanea Drove.

**William Wilkin** also earned an **MM** for bravery in action, which was granted in September 1918. He was the younger brother of Tom and Edward and had reached the age of enlistment in May 1917 and served with The King’s Royal Rifle Corps. Like his brothers, he was working on the family farm until this point. He had been wounded in the right leg in October 1917 which resulted in his final discharge to pension as 40% disabled, although this did not take place until 1919. Unhappily, William did not live up to his MM; his work record was poor after the War, as he was dismissed from two jobs as a farm labourer for his poor time keeping. By March 1922 he was married to Jessie (Harper) with a daughter (Edith) and out of work. He stole two hens and two eggs for his starving family and was brought before Ely Magistrates court – the magistrates had little sympathy for him, blaming him for his family’s difficult situation. Later the 1939 Register shows William still living in Annesdale and working as a coal hawker; he and Jessie had four children, but Edith is described as an epileptic.

**Cecil Evelyn Kendall Wordingham** 12020 of the 7<sup>th</sup> Suffolks -Signal Section. Cecil was born 9<sup>th</sup> June 1890 at Norwich but lived in St Mary’s Street, Ely and was a local furniture dealer. He was one of the Ely Territorials who joined up 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1914 and reached France in

February 1915. He was promoted to corporal in November 1916 and to sergeant the following May. Cecil was awarded the **DCM** "For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. He has rendered good and meritorious service, and has set a fine example in carrying out whatever task has been allotted to him under circumstances of extreme danger and difficulty." The DCM was gazetted on 17<sup>th</sup> April 1918 by which time Cecil was imprisoned in Camp Munster II, having been captured at Gonnellieu on 30<sup>th</sup> November 1917. He was repatriated in January 1919 and married Gladys Fox in Ely in 1922.

## **And on the Home Front...**

One "local" woman whose name was **officially brought to the attention of the Secretary of State for War** was **Miss Lucy Frederica Anson** of the British Red Cross Society who was the Matron of the Theological College Hospital for wounded soldiers (the "Blue Boys"). She was awarded the **Royal Red Cross (Second Class)** in August 1919.

In August 1919 **Mrs F Harlock** was also **officially brought to the attention of the Secretary of State for War** for "valuable services rendered in connection with the establishment and maintenance of societies, organisations and institutions for the benefit of the military forces". This was for the work of the Ely War Hospitals Supply Department.

Mrs **Lelia Arthur Luddington** (wife of H T Luddinon) was awarded an **MBE** in the March 1920 Honours List. At the commencement of the War she had been living in Littleport and moved to Saffron Walden, but continued to journey to Ely for her various roles. She was Chairman of the War Pensions Committee, founder of the Isle of Ely Prisoners of War Fund, Chairman of the Women's Agricultural Committee and a benefactor to members of the Women's Land Army.

Mrs **Catherine Punchard** received an inscribed certificate from the War Office which was to be put in the Theological College: "During the Great War 1914-1919, this building was established and maintained as a hospital for British sick and wounded. The Army Council in the name of the nation thank those who rendered to it this valuable and patriotic assistance, in the hour of its emergency, and desire also to express deep appreciation of the whole-hearted devotion which the staff of this hospital gave to patients who were under their care. The country is glad of the devotion and self-sacrifice of the British men and women, which will remember with pride and gratitude their long and inestimable services."

## **A Special Occasion**

*It was rare for local families to see their menfolk presented with their awards, but on 30<sup>th</sup> June 1918 a special occasion occurred at Prickwillow and was reported for the local newspaper by their "Prickwillow Correspondent" who also happened to have once been the soldier's headmaster:*

"In the Prickwillow School playground on Sunday, **Sergt. Harry Gooch** was publicly decorated with the Military Medal by Lieut. Colonel Archer, who has seen considerable service on the Western Front. Major F. Roberson, Capt E. Dingle, and Lieut. Smith, of the local Volunteers, were also in attendance, as was the Prickwillow (No.4 Platoon).

"Lieut. Colonel Archer, in addressing the large congregation assembled, stated that he knew of three places usually connected with these functions. One was in some small village situated about two miles distant from the firing line, another was at some vast military camp, while a third was at Buckingham Palace, so that the people of Prickwillow ought to

feel proud of having the opportunity of witnessing a similar honour being bestowed on one of their own brave lads in their own native village.

“The Colonel then described how Sergt. Gooch, who had been four times wounded, won his decoration. With the aid of a Lewis gun he enabled his men to reach a place of safety in the face of a strong German counter-attack, before making for cover himself.

“Lieut. Colonel Archer then presented to Sergt. Gooch and pinned on his breast the decoration he had so gallantly won, at the same time complimenting him on his gallantry and shaking him warmly by the hand, while the Sergeant, in all modesty, wore a large, beaming and real “Tommy” smile, which was worth going a long way to see.”