

## Albert Ernest GAGE and Sydney Charles GAGE

*Brothers Albert and Sydney Gage are commemorated together at Ely, Prickwillow and Little Thetford.*

<b>Born</b> <i>Albert Ernest</i>	1885
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	16th October 1917, age 32
<b>Buried</b>	Grave II. A. 26., Trois Arbres Cemetery, Steenwerck, Nord, France
<b>Unit</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Battery, 45th Brigade, Royal Field Artillery
<b>Rank</b>	Sergeant, Service Number 34809
<b>Awards</b>	1914 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

<b>Born</b> <i>Sydney Charles</i>	1896
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	1st July 1916, age 20
<b>Buried</b>	Grave I. BB. 3., Serre Road Cemetery No. 1, Pas de Calais, Franc
<b>Unit</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> Battalion, Suffolk Regiment attached to the Machine Gun Company
<b>Rank</b>	Private, Service Number 17515
<b>Awards</b>	British War Medal and Victory Medal

Farm labourer Herbert George Gage (1861 Old Newton, Suffolk) and his wife Sarah Ann (nee Cooper 1863, Dunham, Suffolk) had eight sons, namely William (1882 Mildenhall), **Albert** (1883 Barton Mills, Suffolk), Walter (1887 Barton Mills), Harry (1889 Hockwold, Norfolk), George (1891 Mildenhall), **Sydney** (1896 Mildenhall), Bertie (1900 Mildenhall) and Victor (1904 Mildenhall), they also had two daughters, Gertrude (1894 Mildenhall) and (Jessie) Edith (1902 Mildenhall).

In the 1891 and 1901 Censuses the family can be found living in West Street Mildenhall. By 1901 Herbert and his sons William and Albert were working as miller's carters, while Walter had a similar but somewhat dirtier job as a coal carter.

By the 1911 Census the family had moved to Burnt Fen near Prickwillow; the children still living with Herbert and Sarah at this stage were George, Sydney, Bertie, Victor and Edith. Herbert had returned to farm work as both he and George were horsekeepers while Sydney was an ordinary farm worker. Albert was by this time many miles from Ely, as he had enlisted in the Army and was a gunner with the 9th Ammunition Column of the Royal Field Artillery in India, acting as a cook orderly. He served eight years in India in total.

At the outbreak of the Great War Albert's unit was sent to France. The 45th Brigade, Royal Field Artillery served with the 8th Division and was at Neuve Chapelle in March 1915, at Aubers Ridge and Festubert in May 1915. Albert wrote home telling his parents how war was "hell on earth". He had already been wounded twice by this stage and said that the sights he had seen in hospital were "terrible".

His battery went on to fight at Loos in September 1915, (and Albert was wounded for a third time). They served in the opening phases of the Battle of the Somme in 1916 and at Arras from April -May 1917. Albert's 1st Field Battery was made up of 198 personnel and had six guns which were either 18 pounder field guns or 4.5 inch howitzers. In October 1917 the Battery was in the region of Poelcappelle where the ground along the main ridges had been severely damaged by shelling and rapidly deteriorated in the rains, which turned the ground into a swamp. Dreadful ground conditions

had a bad effect on the British Batteries, who needed to move large amounts of artillery and ammunition to support the next attacks of the Third Battle of Ypres, aka Passchendaele. Albert was killed in action at this time and buried in the graveyard of the 2nd Australian Casualty Clearing Station at Steenwerck. By the time he died he had seen over sixteen years of service and been wounded four times.



Albert's younger brother Sydney joined one of the battalions formed by the Isle of Ely Territorial Association at the outbreak of the War and was finally mobilised for the Front on 9th January 1916. He was attached to the Suffolks' Machine Gun Company. Unlike Albert, he survived just seven months at the Front. He died on the first day of the Somme— he was injured when he was sent to look for an officer and, although he reached the Casualty Clearing Station, Sydney died of wounds. He was originally buried in one of the small in situ Somme battlefields, then later reburied at Serre Road in the Spring of 1917.

Albert left effects of £34 0s 9d to Rosetta May Gage in his will. Rosetta (1895 Barton Mills) was Albert's cousin, perhaps we should assume from this legacy that she was also his sweetheart. Sydney's effects were sent to his mother Sarah, and amounted to £5 19s 8d with a further £6 10s in 1919.

Albert and Sydney's father Herbert died in August 1919 in the infirmary at Ely Workhouse, and within the next few years their mother Sarah moved to Little Thetford, which explains the presence of her sons' names on the Little Thetford memorial. It also seems likely that Sarah was confused by the paperwork relating to her sons' gravestones in France, as the Commonwealth War Graves Record shows Sydney's record with Albert's age.

*Of course other Gage brothers also fought in the Great War; in 1917 Corporal Harry Gage was gazetted as receiving the Medaille Militaire, which was awarded by the President of the French Republic, for distinguished service rendered during the course of the campaign.*

## Francis Walter GATHERCOLE and George Mansfield GATHERCOLE

*The Gathercoles lost two of their sons within four months of each other in 1916.*

<b>Born</b> <i>Francis Walter</i>	1891
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	30th December 1916, age 25
<b>Buried</b>	Grave F 1301, Ely Cemetery
<b>Unit</b>	9 <sup>th</sup> Battalion, Suffolk Regiment
<b>Rank</b>	Private, Service Number 28508
<b>Awards</b>	British War Medal and Victory Medal

<b>Born</b> <i>George Mansfield</i>	1889
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	31st August 1916, age 27
<b>Buried</b>	Grave III. F. 36, Puchevillers British Cemetery, Somme, France
<b>Unit</b>	17 <sup>th</sup> Battalion Middlesex Regiment
<b>Rank</b>	Private, Service Number G/24421
<b>Awards</b>	British War Medal and Victory Medal

George Gathercole (1863 Feltwell, Norfolk) and his wife Alice (nee Peters, 1864 Ely) were originally from the local area but spent some time in London in the 1890s before returning home. Their children were: James (1887 Feltwell, Norfolk); **George** (1889 Feltwell, Norfolk); **Francis** (1891 Plaistow, London); Mary Ann (1895 Plaistow, London); William (1897 Plaistow, London); John (1899, Ely); and Walter (1902, Mildenhall—probably Burnt Fen).

George was an agricultural labourer, and in the 1891 Census the family of four lived at the evocatively named "Mud Island" in Feltwell where George junior was born. In the 1901 Census, after the time in Plaistow, the family returned to Cambridgeshire where they lived at Burnt Fen, and James and George junior joined their father in farm work. Later, in 1911, the family can be found at Shepherd Drove near Littleport with Francis, William, John and Walter still living with their parents and the two oldest young men being engaged in farm work like their father. George junior was also still an agricultural labourer, but he was living at Decoy Farm, Sedge Fen, Brandon, Suffolk with his new wife Hannah (nee Mackender 1891 Lakenheath) whom he had married a few months earlier. George and Hannah had four children together: Francis (1911); George (1913); Alice (1914); and Arthur (1916). The family moved to Queen Adelaide in 1913.

Francis married Emma Rolph in the Summer of 1915 and their children were Francis (1916) and Clara.

George junior joined up on 8th April 1916 at Bury St Edmunds in the 17th Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment. This battalion was commonly known as the "Footballers Battalion" as the core of the battalion was a group of professional footballers. After a period home on leave in June, George reached the Front and fought on the Somme. He was badly injured soon after he and his Battalion had been involved in the attacks on Delville Wood, although they had since moved on to La Signy Farm. He was evacuated to the base of the 3rd and 44th Casualty Clearing Stations at Puchevillers where he died of his wounds.

Francis fought with the Suffolks and reached France after his brother George, in August 1916. He was seriously injured by shrapnel on the Somme (in the Sandpit area on the south eastern edge of Ginchy) within a few weeks of his arrival, on 12th September 1916. He also had a bullet lodged in his right shoulder. It must have been hoped that Francis would survive his wounds, as he was

transported back to England for treatment, but it was not to be, as the newspaper article below shows.

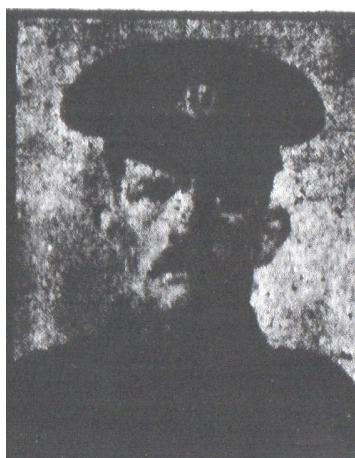
The Cambridge Independent Press of 5th January 1917 carried the account of Francis' funeral: *"The funeral of Pte F. W Gathercole of the Suffolks, who died from wounds received in action, took place at Ely on Wednesday. The deceased was 25 years of age. He was the son of Mr and Mrs George Gathercole, Springhead Lane, Ely, and residing nearby are his grief-stricken widow and two young children. Pte. Gathercole joined up under the Derby Scheme in April 1916, went out to France in the following August, and was wounded in the Battle of the Somme on September 12th with shrapnel, whilst a rifle bullet entered his right shoulder. He was invalided to the 2nd Eastern Hospital, Brighton, where a number of operations were performed on the gallant fellow in an endeavour to save his life. Unfortunately septic poisoning set in, and although everything possible was done for him, he passed away on December 30th in the presence of his wife, who had been with him for some ten weeks.....It may be remembered that a brother—Private G.M. Gathercole, Middlesex Regiment, was killed in action on August 31st 1916, leaving a widow and four little children; and there are three more brothers serving their King and country—Pte. Jas. Wm. Gathercole RGA (in France), Pte. Wm. Gathercole, Norfolk Regiment (in Egypt) and Pte. John Gathercole (now in training in England).*

*The procession was an imposing one...being headed by a whole detachment....procession from Springhead Lane to the cemetery....there was a very large attendance of the general public...three volleys were fired over the grave and the Last Post was sounded.."*

Late in 1917 Francis' widow Emma married Matthew Bidwell, and in late 1918 George's widow Hannah married George Whitehand. George Gathercole was commemorated under Queen Adelaide in the County Memorial in Ely Cathedral, the Holy Trinity Memorial and the Ely Market Place Memorial. Francis Gathercole is commemorated on the Ely Market Place Memorial and buried in Ely Cemetery. The two brothers are also remembered on the village memorial at Ten Mile Bank in West Norfolk—an indication the family must have also lived and worked in that area. George was also listed on the Roll of Honour in St Etheldreda's Church in Queen Adelaide—this church is now a private dwelling.

Emma received £4 1s 1d and a further £3 as Francis' effects, while Hannah received £1 19s 9d then £3 for George.

*Francis and George's siblings also served, with Mary Ann being a member of the Women's Land Army at Prickwillow. John went to France while he was still eighteen and was listed missing in March of 1918—fortunately he survived as a Prisoner of War. James was with the Royal Garrison Artillery in France and William with the Norfolk Regiment in Egypt.*



George Gathercole



Francis Gathercole

## Jim Pate GENT

<b>Born</b>	1896
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	3rd May 1917, age 21
<b>Commemorated</b>	Bay 9, Arras Memorial, Pas de Calais, France
<b>Unit</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> Battalion Rifle Brigade
<b>Rank</b>	Sergeant, Service Number S/13839
<b>Awards</b>	British War Medal and Victory Medal



**Jim Pate Gent** (he was indeed registered as “Jim” not “James” at his birth) was born in 1896 in Clavering, Essex, to Barford Gent (1862 Feltwell, Norfolk) and his wife Hannah (nee Hart, 1872 Ely). He was the second son of the family, with older siblings Eliza (1886 Nordith, Norfolk), Elizabeth (1892 Soham Cambridgeshire) and John (1894 Clavering, Essex) and younger siblings Thomas (1898 Little Thetford, Cambridgeshire), Lilian aka Elily (1900 Little Thetford), Ernest (1901 Little Thetford), Robert (1910 Little Thetford) and William (1912 Ely).

The 1901 Census shows that Barford Gent was a farmworker (a horseman on a farm), and the family was then living in Brick House, Front Street, Little Thetford. Just before the 1911 Census they moved into Bruham Cottage, Cambridge Road, Ely. John, Jim and Thomas were then all farmworkers, like their father.

Jim enlisted in the Rifle Brigade when he was nineteen, in 1915. He fought at the Battle of Fliers-Courcelette in 1916, was promoted to Sergeant, and was then killed just north of

Cherisy and Triangle Wood in action in the Third Battle of the Scarpe. He was part of “A” Company, which was in the first wave of the attack, and, after initial success, the British were driven back in some disarray by heavy machine gun fire. He is commemorated as “missing” on the Arras Memorial; although he was originally buried in a marked grave this was “lost” during later bombardments of the area.

Jim’s effects amounted to £10 13s 10d. An army visitor delivered his personal effects to his mother Hannah just two weeks after Jim’s death—was this perhaps one of his Ely friends?

Jim was commemorated on both the Little Thetford and Ely Market Place Memorials as well as in St Mary’s Church in Ely. After his death his parents moved out of Ely to Blackwing Drove, Prickwillow.

## Bertie Julius GENTRY

<b>Born</b>	1876
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	2nd August 1918, age 43
<b>Buried</b>	Grave D. 91., Ely Cemetery
<b>Unit</b>	26 <sup>th</sup> Training Reserve Battalion, Suffolk Regiment
<b>Rank</b>	Regimental Quarter Master Sergeant. Service Number TR9/5016
<b>Awards</b>	<i>Did not serve abroad</i>

**Bertie Julius Gentry** was probably one of the most widely known of the casualties who are commemorated on the Ely Market Place Memorial. With his “splendid tenor voice” he was a leading figure in the musical life of Ely both before the War and until he was attested in 1916. Tragically he died of meningitis before he could recommence his musical career after the War.

Bertie Julius Gentry was born in Thaxted in Essex in 1877 to George Gentry (1849 Bocking, Essex) and Emily (nee Green, 1847 Bocking Essex). He was the middle child of the family, with siblings Herbert (1868 Bocking), Charles (1871 Thaxted, Essex), Inez (1872 Thaxted), Basil (1874 Thaxted), Lily (1880 Saffron Walden, Essex), Topsy (1881 Cambridge), Albert (1883 Cambridge), and Ernest (1886 Cambridge). His father George was a carpenter and joiner and Emily a dressmaker.

In 1881 the family lived in Kingston Street in Cambridge, and in 1891 in Sturton Street, Cambridge. In 1891 Bertie’s older siblings were all in work with Herbert being a butler, Charles a confectioner and Basil a shop assistant, while Inez was obliged to stay at home as a mother’s help looking after the younger children. Bertie himself was also working, as he had embarked upon his singing career as a boy chorister at St John’s College.

Bertie married Laura Evelyn Newstead (1878 Banningham, Norfolk) in Cambridge late in 1899. The couple set up home in Lynfield Terrace, Ely, as Bertie had gained a lay clerk’s position at the Cathedral, combined with a secretary’s role. As Bertie embarked on his career at Ely he began to use “Bertram” as his professional name.

Bertram immersed himself in Ely musical life and his name appears frequently in the local newspaper as a member of the Ely Music Society and the Ely Trinity Amateur Operatic Society. He formed the Ely Cathedral Quartette Party (aka “The Glee Singers”) with fellow lay clerks Fred Richardson, Alfred Haigh, and H. Francis Wyckes and they often performed solos, duets and quartets at local functions to great acclaim. We even know that one of Bertram’s particularly popular “party pieces” was “The Death of Nelson”. His name appears in accounts of functions as varied as a social evening at Burnet Fen School, where he sang with Frederick Carpenter, the headmaster of Prickwillow School, and organising major classical music concerts or operatic events. His female singing partner was usually Miss Pattie Legge L.R.A.M with whom he sang the Miserere scene from Il Travatore at the 1913 Masonic Banquet.

Bertram was also a keen member of the Ely Tennis Club and in 1913 was elected as the Club’s assistant secretary.

In June 1906 Bertram appeared in the newspaper for a rather different reason to normal, as he was a witness in a speeding case where a car driver who had run over several chickens was taken to court. His evidence gives a small insight into Ely life: “*Herbert (sic.) Gentry..living on Lynn road, stated he was walking towards his house at 4.45.p.m. (after Evensong) when..he saw a motor car coming towards Ely at terrific speed, roughly approaching 40 miles an hour. There were not many people on the road. ....Defence Counsel: “Have you any means of gaining knowledge of speed?” Bertram: “I have ridden in a motor car.” Counsel: “Not at that speed.” Bertram: “No and I don’t want to.”.....*

With the outbreak of the War Bertram, who was then thirty-eight, signed up with Ely’s Volunteer Training Corps or home militia. In July 1915 the VTC became Volunteer Regiments of the Army. In

a newspaper from 31st December 1915 Bertram appears in list of those VTC members who did well in his corp's monthly shooting competition.

Meanwhile Bertram continued encouraging Ely's musical life: in March 1915 he starred with Ely Musical Society in Bach's Passion According to St Matthew in Ely Cathedral *"the largest musical venture that had been undertaken since the outbreak of the War."* Later, in June 1915: *"In the expectation that the troops billeted at Ely will shortly be leaving, a farewell concert was given in the Public Room on Thursday.....the concert was arranged by Mr H. W. Bragg and Mr B.J. Gentry, the latter being responsible for the programme, which was an excellent one."* While in October we learn of his involvement in performances of "The Pirates of Penance" , including special free performances for the Suffolk Yeomanry, Essex Artillery, Belgian Refugees and the Boy Scouts.

Bertram was examined on 29th November 1915 as part of the call up of the special reserves. His medical record describes him as 5 feet 5 3/4 inches tall and in good physical condition although with several decaying teeth. He had his own initials tattooed on his upper left arm—B. E.J.G. Bertram also formally attested under the Derby Scheme, joining many other local men queuing at the recruiting sergeant's (Mr H Hovell) office early in December. He would then have been placed in a group with other volunteers of a similar age and awaited the arrival of his papers. Bertram was sent to Harwich on 21st June 1916. When later examined, in February 1917, his record was stamped "not likely to be fit". This proved to be the case as the newspaper later recorded he "had one or two serious illnesses since his enlistment". Although attempting to enlist in the 10th Suffolks (Service Number 34243) he was placed in the Army Reserves.

In September 1916 the Reserve Battalion became the 26th Training Reserve Battalion and was for a period at Harwich. Sergeant Gentry was here promoted to Acting Quartermaster Sergeant on 26th January 1918. As Bertram was no longer employed at the cathedral, the Gentrys moved from their home in Downham Road, Ely, to Sturton Street in Cambridge.

Bertram never went abroad, yet the Cambridge Independent Press of 9th August 1918 shared the sad news of Bertram's wartime death and funeral:

*"We regret to record the death of Q.M.S. Gentry which occurred on Friday at the 1st Eastern General Hospital in Cambridge. The deceased, who was 41 years of age, joined the Suffolks about two years ago, being afterwards attached to the Bedfordshire Regiment (B Company 52nd Bedford Regiment). He was taken ill at a camp in Norfolk, and the news that he had passed away, reaching Ely last weekend, came as a painful surprise to his many friends. His body was brought to the city on Saturday. The possessor of a fine tenor voice, Mr Gentry was appointed a lay clerk of Ely Cathedral some 19 years ago, having previously been in the choir of St John's College, Cambridge. He was a member of the cathedral quartette party, appearing at numberless concerts in the city and district, some of which in aid of charitable purposes he helped to organise. He was a member of the Ely Constitutional Club, and the flag was placed at half-mast on the occasion of his death. The Dean of Ely, preaching at the Cathedral on Sunday evening, made a passing reference to the sad event. The funeral took place on Wednesday morning, the first part of the service being held in Ely Cathedral, where he had for so many years taken part in the daily services." The procession included the Bishop and the Dean, a detachment from the Bedfordshire Regiment, from the Ely Volunteers and a large congregation which included many of the well-known people of the City of Ely, including the Inspector of Police."*

Bertram actually died close to home when in the General Hospital at Cambridge, as Laura had moved to 99 Hills Road, Cambridge, and she was present at his death. He had been admitted to the hospital on 28th July 1918 with myelitis (inflammation of the spinal cord) which had resulted in the loss of the use of his legs. His hospital record shows that he had a bout of influenza just two weeks previously which had triggered the condition.

Following Bertram's death Laura married Frank Sadler in 1921 and moved to 16 Riverside, Cambridge. She received £5 1s 6d as Bertie's effects, with a final £12 10s in 1919.



*Bertram Gentry (right) in a rather different uniform—appearing in Ely Trinity Amateur Operatic Society's "HMS Pinafore"*



## Alfred GIDDENS

<b>Born</b>	1867
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	6th April 1918, age 50
<b>Buried</b>	St Andrews Churchyard, Sutton, Cambridgeshire
<b>Unit</b>	Royal Defence Corps
<b>Rank</b>	Lance Corporal, Service Number 24808
<b>Awards</b>	<i>Did not serve abroad</i>

**Alfred Giddens** was the eldest son of Samuel Giddens (1841 Sutton, Cambridgeshire) and Mary Ann (nee Knight 1841 Rushden, Northamptonshire). Alfred was born in Sutton in 1867, and his younger siblings were also born in the village: Ernest (1869); Minnie (1871); Arthur (1873); Laura (1875); and Ellen (1878). Alfred was baptised in St Andrews Church in Sutton on 28th July 1867.

The 1871 Census sees the Giddens family living in the Ship Inn in Sutton High Street where Samuel was both the publican and a butcher. In 1881 they were still living in the High Street and this time Samuel was recorded only as a butcher; it is not clear whether the family had moved home, or simply closed down the pub. Ten years further on and in the 1891 Census some of the family had moved to 1 Archway Cottage, Pound Lane, Sutton and this is where Samuel and Mary Ann continued to live until their deaths in 1918 and 1920 respectively.

Alfred is difficult to locate in either the 1891 or 1901 Censuses and this, coupled with a fact that he was in the National Reserve in 1914, indicates that he had an army career, although in this case no service record has been located. However, it is known that eventually Alfred became a bootmaker, working for Messers Blakeman and Son of Forehill, where he was "highly respected by all who knew him".

In 1906 Alfred married Ruth Norman (1875 Ely); the family lived at 42 Cambridge Road, Ely where their children Laura (1907), Samuel (1908), Doris (1912) and William (1914) were born. Ruth also had an illegitimate son, Percy Aubrey Norman (1898 Ely) who lived with the couple, and whom Alfred regarded as his own son. Ruth herself had been a bootfitter, so this suggests how the couple met, and her parents also lived nearby in Cambridge Road. Alfred ran his own bootmaking business out of Cambridge Road.

Alfred was called up from the Reserve to join the Cambridgeshire Regiment at the outbreak of the War (Service Number 23306) and because of his age was on Home Service. The Royal Defence Corps was formed in 1917 out of the home service battalions; the role of the regiment was to provide troops for security and guard duties inside the United Kingdom including guarding important locations such as ports, factories, bridges, or prisoner of war camps. Alfred was stationed at Maidstone in Kent with the Corps, where he later died of bronchial pneumonia at the Howard de Walden V.A.D Hospital (the newspaper recorded "he had not enjoyed good health of late"). His body was brought back to his birthplace of Sutton for burial, and, although he did not have a full military funeral, his coffin was draped in the Union Jack on its journey.

Alfred left effects £345 3s 6d to his widow. He is commemorated on both the Ely Market Place Memorial and on the Memorial in St Mary's Church.

*Alfred's stepson, Percy Norman, served in the Cambridgeshires.*

## John Thomas GRANFIELD

*This soldier is incorrectly listed as Cranfield on the Ely Market Place Memorial.*

<b>Born</b>	30th July 1876
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	9th July 1917, age 40
<b>Buried</b>	Grave F. 133A. Lyness Royal Navy Cemetery, Island of Hoy, Orkneys
<b>Unit</b>	HMS Vanguard
<b>Rank</b>	Chief Stoker, Service Number 283620(CH)
<b>Awards</b>	British War Medal and Victory Medal

**John Thomas Granfield** is one of only two sailors commemorated on the Ely Market Place Memorial; he was a casualty of the infamous sinking of HMS Vanguard when she was at her moorings at Scapa Flow in the Orkneys. HMS Vanguard sank when unstable cordite she was carrying exploded and blew up the ship's main magazine. A newspaper account stated: *"a colossal numbing explosion extinguished the flame, and Vanguard was lost to sight in a black cloud of smoke, and bits of her began to rain down on the Fleet. A complete 12 inch gun turret, weighing over 400 tons, landed on Flotta over a mile away from the ship, and burning debris set fire to the moorland"*. 95 of the ship's officers and men were ashore at the time, but 806 men were still aboard, of whom only two survived the inferno and the ship's rapid sinking.

John was born in Little Downham in 1876 and was the middle of three sons of William Granfield (1845 Little Downham) and Ann (nee Casburn, 1845 Little Downham) His brothers were James William (1874 Little Downham) and Charles Henry (1879 Little Downham). There was also in the family an older sister, Emma (1868 Little Downham), and an older but short-lived James William (1870 –72).

There are several variant spellings of John and his family's surname in the different public records such as Grandfield, Grantfield, Cranfield and Cranefield; Grandfield is the name under which John's birth was registered and also the name on his grave.

John's father William died just before the 1881 Census was taken, so in the 1881 Census the widowed Ann, her father-in-law and the three boys are shown living at Coys Cottage, Downham Road, Ely. William Granfield (1816 Little Downham) was still working on the farms to help support his grandchildren. Ann died in 1889 at the age of forty-seven, which left John an orphan at the young age of thirteen. By the 1891 Census fifteen year old John can be found as a farm servant (i.e. an unmarried farm worker who lived in the farmer's house) at the Normans' farm, Tyegore, Little Downham.

Clearly going to sea was a more attractive option to John than working as a farm labourer, and he embarked on a career with the Royal Navy in October 1896, rising to chief stoker. In the 1911 Census he can be seen in this role aboard HMS Triumph, serving with the Mediterranean Fleet. He still regarded Ely as his home, and when ashore he stayed with his aunt, Susan Casburn, in Newnham Street Ely.

John was serving with HMS Vanguard when the War broke out and this continued to be his posting. He had no chance of surviving the sinking of his ship, but at least his body was one of those recovered from the sea, and he was buried with another of the Vanguard's chief stokers, A.H. Tidmarsh, on Hoy. He was just a few months short of twenty-one years of service.

John left effects of £524 8s 3d. He was recorded on the Holy Trinity Memorial as well as the Ely Market Place Memorial,

## Herbert Victor GRAY and William John GRAY

<b>Born</b> <i>Herbert Victor</i>	1st August 1897
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	15th September 1918, age 21
<b>Buried</b>	Grave IV. D. 29, Aire Communal Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France.
<b>Unit</b>	11th Battalion, Suffolk Regiment
<b>Rank</b>	Private, Service Number 20997
<b>Awards</b>	British War Medal and Victory Medal

<b>Born</b> <i>William John</i>	22nd October 1894
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	16th August 1917, age 22
<b>Commemorated</b>	Panel 98 to 99, Tyne Cot Memorial, Zonnebeke, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium
<b>Unit</b>	1st Battalion, Essex Regiment
<b>Rank</b>	Lance Corporal, Service Number 31550
<b>Awards</b>	British War Medal and Victory Medal

**William** and **Herbert Gray** were the two youngest sons of James Gray (1857 Fulbourn, Cambridgeshire) and his wife Sophia Elizabeth (nee Farrington 1860 Sawston, Cambridgeshire). The family lived in Sawston for many years, where all the children were born: James William Farrington (1879); Celia (1882); Relley Mary (1884-85); Morelley aka Miralda (1886); Agnes (1888-89); Joseph (1890-91); Clotilda (1893); William (1894); Herbert (1897). James was a farm labourer, although he later became a labourer at the brewery, and his wife Sophia was a rag cutter at the local mill. The family lived in Sawston High Street for almost twenty years.

Sophia died in June 1901. Her widower, James, married Emma in 1903 and they continued to live in Sawston until at least 1907, but by the 1911 Census they were living in a tent in Loves Lane, on Reach Road, Burwell; James then gave his occupation as casual labourer. In 1911 fourteen year old William and his sister Clotilda were living with their aunt and uncle John and Miralda Webb and their children. The Webbs were travelling hawkers who happened to be in the Linton area on census night. Herbert meanwhile was living with his sister Miralda and her husband John Sargent and their two children in Baldock, Hertfordshire; he at least had a more settled existence, as his brother-in-law was employed as a horsekeeper on a local farm, and Herbert was able to finish his schooling. The only other surviving Gray brother, James, had moved away to Spittlegate in Lincolnshire.

William settled in Ely and, given his background, it is probable he found work as a labourer. It appears that Herbert also spent some time here, reunited with his brother, although by the time he enlisted in the War he was with the Sargents in East End Cottages, Goldington, Bedfordshire, and working as a farm labourer.

Herbert enlisted in the Suffolks on 28th July 1915 at Bedford and reached France on 3rd June 1916. For two years he fought on the Somme, the Scarpe, and at Passchendaele until he was badly wounded in the Battle of Lys and taken to the 54th Casualty Clearing Station at Aires, 13 kilometres behind the lines, where he died of his wounds in the chest, back and head, compounded by bronchitis.

William, meanwhile, enlisted with the Essex Regiment at Ely. His battalion served first at Gallipoli, but it is probable that William was one of the recruits who joined them when they moved to France in March 1916. He was killed in action on the Ypres Salient in the Third Battle of Ypres

(Passchendaele) which was an offensive 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. William died on the day the British made an attack along a nine mile front across the Ypres-Menin Road, and after they advanced they were driven back by the Germans from the ground won earlier in the day; many soldiers bodies must have been left on the battlefield after the British were pushed back, and William was just one of 2,381 men listed as missing on the Tyne Cot Memorial.

The brothers are also commemorated together on the memorial in their home town of Sawston, Cambridgeshire, and Herbert is named on the memorial at Goldington, Bedfordshire, where his sister Miralda (his nominated next of kin) lived.