

## Albert ILETT

<b>Born</b>	10th March 1893
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	22nd March 1918, age 25
<b>Commemorated</b>	Bay 4, Arras Memorial, Pas de Calais, France.
<b>Unit</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> Battalion, Suffolk Regiment
<b>Rank</b>	Private, Service Number 23751
<b>Awards</b>	British War Medal and Victory Medal

**Albert Ilett** was born in Ely in 1893. He first appears in the 1901 Census living in a house on the eastern side of Bull Lane (now Lisle Lane) with his widowed mother Jane Ann (nee Chappell, 1851, Great Wilbraham, Cambridgeshire), who was working as a needlewoman to support the family. In the same house were his siblings Clara (1887 Ely), a domestic servant, and Alfred (1891, Ely). In fact Jane Ilett had been widowed twice. Her first husband, Thomas Martin had been a maltster and he ran the public house known as the Coach and Horses in Ely's Broad Street. After Thomas Martin's death in 1882 (which occurred within a few weeks of the birth of their youngest child) Jane went on to marry Thomas Arthur Ilett (1847, Ely) in 1885. Thomas was also a maltster and may have worked in the Rose and Crown at Bottisham, which is where he can be found lodging in the 1891 Census. Albert's father Thomas Ilett died in late March 1898, soon after Albert's fifth birthday.

From his mother's first marriage Albert had five Martin half-siblings: Charles (1874 Great Wilbraham); George (1875 Mepal) Thomas (1878 Great Wilbraham); Phoebe (1880 Mepal); and Annie (1882 Mepal).

Albert first attended the Infants School in Broad Street and was then one of the top scholars selected that year for a free place at Needhams School on Broad Street where he was admitted on 17th May 1900. The school was probably not at all pleased when their pupil appeared in the Cambridge Independent Press of 25th April 1905 in an article headed "Mischievous Lads":

*"A number of Ely lads were brought up on a charge of committing wilful damage to a glass window, the property of Mrs Eliza Scott, doing damage to the amount of 10s, on the 16th April. The defendants were John Graves, Back Hill; Albert Newman, Willow Walk; Albert Ilett, Bull Lane; George Plumb, Waterside; and George Moden, Bull Lane, - Ilett and Moden pleaded guilty, and the others denied the offence.— After deliberation, the Chairman said that each boy would receive three strokes of the birch, - The Clerk said that the magistrates could not do that.—Mr Bidwell: More's the pity. I hope their parents will do it. - Eventually the magistrates ordered them to pay 2s each towards the damage, and asked the parents to administer the punishment to their children."*

Although Albert does not appear before the bench again on any charge, his older brother Alfred did in 1907, when he was fined 5s with 4s 9d costs for using obscene language in the public highway at Great Wilbraham "to the annoyance of persons passing along the highway". The news at least suggests that the Iletts kept up links with family and friends in Great Wilbraham.

Albert left Needhams on 2nd May 1906 to work on the land. In the 1911 Census Albert is shown as a live in farm servant on Clay-Way Farm Queen Adelaide, boarding with family of the farmer James Barker. Back in Bull Lane his mother was now working as a charwoman, while Clara had married a hawker called Matthew Brinkley (1887 Swaffham, Norfolk) and the couple and their young daughter Olive (1909 Ely) were living in the family home. When the War came both Matthew Brinkley and Albert fought and died with the Suffolk Regiment, and their names appear together on the Ely Market Place Memorial. The links with the Brinkleys were further strengthened when Albert's brother Alfred married Sarah Brinkley in 1915.

Albert fought with the 11th Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment. This was a Territorial Battalion and the troops did not reach France until January 1916. The battalion was involved in operations on the Ancre and in harrying the German retreat to the Hindenburg line. On 21st March 1918, the Germans then launched what was intended to be their final decisive offensive against the Allies, attacking the

British Armies on the Somme in overwhelming strength. The 11th Battalion of the Suffolks was then holding the forward zone of defences in the area northwest of Saint Quentin, and on the day Albert was killed in action they were defending Henin Hill. However, they and other regiments in their Division lost many men in the following chaotic forced withdrawal back over the Somme River crossings during the next ten days. Although the retreat was ultimately successful, in that the line was stabilised and the German advance foiled, many thousands of soldiers were lost in the retreat and their bodies never recovered. Albert's battalion held their place in the line on Henin Hill for a day, but were ordered to pull back at the end of the day when the regiments on either side of them were broken. By the end of that day Albert and 57 other Suffolks were missing, deemed killed in action, and they are now commemorated together on the Arras Memorial to the Missing.

Albert is commemorated on the Holy Trinity Memorial as well as the Ely Market Place Memorial.

## Charles JONES

With a common surname such as Jones it is difficult to identify this soldier with confidence. Several Jones families lived in Ely and the surrounding villages before the War, but none include a Charles Jones of a suitable age to qualify to be this soldier.

### What we know:

The soldier "C Jones" on the Ely Market Place Memorial is confirmed as being *Charles* Jones on the 1921 list of men of Ely to be remembered on the county memorial in Ely Cathedral.

The only mention of a C Jones in the Ely Standard during the War is of reservist "C.H. Jones" who is listed at Ely as being called back to the Army in August 1914. This is **Charles Henry Jones** who was then aged 40 years and 9 months (born 1874 in Ely). He had previously served with the York and Lancaster Regiment but at the beginning of the War was currently working as a plate armourer furnace man and living at 3 Maris Street, Openshaw, Manchester. He was single. Charles took the oath at Ely on 31st August 1914 and was placed in the Special Reserve of the 3rd Battalion York and Lancs service number 3/3789. He did not serve abroad, and after 201 days on home service he was discharged as no longer fit for war service on 19th March 1915 because of his osteo-arthritis (his illness was not a result of war service and he had been suffering from before his re-enlistment). **There is no record of his death at this time.**

Charles Henry Jones only appears in the 1911 Census for Ely where he is lodging with the Sindell family in Barton Road and working as a bricklayer's labourer; surprisingly the census describes his birthplace as London. While this explains why Charles' birth does not appear in the Ely registration district, and why he does not appear on any other census as living in Ely, this hampers the search for this soldier significantly.

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### A dubious Identification

Casualty Charles Jones was listed as serving with the Suffolk Regiment. This information, if correct, means it seems he would have to be Private C Jones (Service Number 51145) of the 9th Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment who died of wounds on 25th November 1917 and is buried at Rocquigny-Equancourt Road British Cemetery at Manancourt on the Somme. Grave IV. A. 7. ***This is the only C Jones of the Suffolks listed on the Commonwealth War Graves website.***

The Charles Jones above left a widow called Rose, born in Pemberton, Lancashire and lived in Walkenden. He was formerly No. 17872, in the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment and had been transferred into the Suffolk Regiment. *He does not seem an obvious candidate to be Ely's Charles Jones.*

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***If you know who Charles Jones really is, do please get in touch using the contacts page of this website.***

## George Henry JUGG

<b>Born</b>	1897
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	24th September 1916, age 18
<b>Commemorated</b>	Pier and Face 16B, Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France
<b>Unit</b>	D Company, 1 <sup>st</sup> Battalion Cambridgeshire Regiment,
<b>Rank</b>	Private, Service Number 325286
<b>Awards</b>	Military Medal, 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

**George Henry Jugg** was born in late 1897 in Chettisham near Ely, the second son of Henry Jugg (1851, Stuntney) and his wife Mary Rudd (1865 Docking, Norfolk). His siblings were: Walter (1892 Ely); Percy (1896 Chettisham); Gertrude (1899 Chettisham); Alfred (1901 Chettisham); Beatrice (1904 Chettisham); Sidney (1906 Ely); Violet (1908 Ely); and Frederick (1909 Ely). Henry was a farm worker and in the 1911 Census the family was living in tied accommodation on Orwell Pit Farm, Downham Road, Ely where Henry was a horsekeeper; Percy and George himself were also farm workers, probably on the same farm, while Walter is described as a market gardener. In 1911 George's nephew Ernest Jugg (1905 Ely) was living with the family. George's father Henry died in June 1911. The family then moved to New Barns Road. In Ely.

Before the War George was already a member of the Cambridgeshire Territorial Regiment (H Company, Service Number 1643) having enlisted in January 1914 when he was only just sixteen years old. He instantly volunteered for service abroad at the outbreak of the War and, aged just seventeen, he reached France with D Company of the 1st Battalion of the Cambridgeshires on 14th February 1915—this was despite the fact that he was technically too young to be sent abroad. George and his fellow soldiers were then involved in months of raiding trenches and the capture of Hill 60.



On 28th July 1916 George was named in the Cambridge Independent Press' list of soldiers who had recently been wounded; this occurred on 1st July 1916 and happened either when he was patrolling in No Man's Land or when the trenches were under heavy shellfire. The wound kept George away from the Front for about a fortnight and he was then back in action.

On the night of 18th/ 19th July George participated in the raid on the Red Dragon Crater near Givenchy for which he was awarded the Military Medal. The Red Dragon Crater had been created when German tunnellers exploded a large mine under part of the line held by the Royal Welsh Regiment on 22nd June 1916 (hence the name of the crater) this was the largest mine explosion on the Western Front in 1916. The Germans then consolidated their hold on the crater with a series of dugouts and linked it to their own trench lines. George was part of a small raiding party which aimed to drive the Germans out of the crater and, under heavy fire themselves, they succeeded in bombing the dugouts, killing most of the defenders and then withdrawing safely taking two prisoners with them. They were unable to capture the trenches as the protective barbed wire was still intact, despite heavy shelling by the British. Lieutenant Casson, was awarded the Military Cross and Lieutenant Looker the D.S.O for this action, while George and several other men received the Military Medal for their part in the raid. One of the officers on the raid later described it as "the finest action I have ever seen".

On 6th October 1916 the local newspaper contained the news that George was missing in action; it later emerged that he had been killed in action on 24th September during a raid near Hamel on the

Somme, although this was not finally confirmed until March of 1917 when his mother received a letter from the Red Cross:

*“Dear Madam, I deeply regret that confirmation of the bad news of December 28th has reached us in a report from Lance Corporal H. Webster. Cambs. Regiment, who writes that G.H.Jugg and himself went out in a raid near — during September. Close to the German trenches they were discovered and bombs thrown at them. Webster saw Jugg fall, and has no doubt that he was killed by the explosion of a bomb. He describes Jugg as about 5ft 8in, clean shaven, rather fair, and very strong looking. He had won the Military Medal in a previous raid in July, - Yours faithfully, the Earl of Lucan.”*

The raid had been a reconnaissance to identify the troops opposite the Cambridgeshires' position prior to the attack on the Schwaben Redoubt. The raiding party was forced to withdraw under heavy machine gun fire with one officer and three men wounded and one man missing—the missing man was George Jugg.

Mary was finally sent George's effects of £5 11s 10d on 28th June 1917.

George was remembered on the Holy Trinity Memorial as well as in Ely's Market Place.

## Cecil Alexander Headlam KEENLYSIDE

<b>Born</b>	23rd October 1881
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	20th July 1915, age 33
<b>Buried</b>	Grave IX. C. 11, Cite Bonjean Military Cemetery, Armentieres, Nord, France
<b>Unit</b>	1st Battalion, Cambridgeshire Regiment
<b>Rank</b>	Captain
<b>Awards</b>	1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

**Cecil Alexander Headlam Keenlyside** was the youngest of the three sons of Francis Headlam Keenlyside (1838 Stockton on Tees, Durham) and Mary Anne Hales (1847 Ramsgate, Kent). His older brothers were Rupert Hales Headlam (1876 Surbiton) and Guy Francis Headlam (1880). Cecil also had an older sister, Sibella Headlam (1875 Surbiton) and younger sister Millicent Mary Headlam (1883 Kingston upon Thames). Francis Headlam Keenlyside was a barrister-at-law and at the time of Cecil's birth in 1881 the family lived at Vernon House, Maple Road, Kingston-upon-Thames. Francis died in 1895, when Cecil was fourteen.

Cecil was educated at Charterhouse School, and in the 1891 Census, aged just eight years old, he can be found as a junior boarder at their boarding house of Hillside in Godalming, Surrey. Cecil was a boarder at Charterhouse, in Saunderites House, between Oration Quarter (autumn term) 1895 and Cricket Quarter (summer) 1900. He was in the 1<sup>st</sup> XI Cricket team in 1899 and 1900 and was a House Monitor (prefect) for his final three quarters. He was also well known as a player of racquet ball. Cecil went to Trinity College, Oxford after leaving Charterhouse, and achieved an MA. He served in the South African War (Boer War) with the Oxford University Volunteers in 1902

Following Francis' death the family moved to St Georges Avenue, Weybridge, where they can be found in the 1901 Census with a live-in cook, sewing maid, parlour maid and housemaid. Mary Anne is shown as living on her own means and Sibella, Rupert and Cecil are with her and apparently not working (in fact Cecil must have been a student at this time).

Cecil was Superintendent of Lands, Kelantan, Malaysia between 1907 and 1910. Kelantan was one of the unfederated Malay Straits and Cecil was one of only a small handful of Europeans who worked there in administrative posts.



Cecil married Gladys Mary Milne (1886 Walton-on-Thames, Surrey) at Weybridge on 14th September 1910. Their children were Francis Hugh (7th July 1911 Ely) and Phoebe Lavender (28th August 1914 Ely). Cecil was next employed under a government contract as the manager of the hemp factory in Mile End Road, Prickwillow, and he and Gladys first lived at nearby Shippea Hill with two live in servants. They later moved to Orchard Cottage in Lynn Road, Ely, which they had built in an old-fashioned cottage style.

Cecil had been on the Charterhouse cricket team (1899-1900) and in 1913 he played cricket for both the Ely and Cambridgeshire teams, In 1913 he represented Cambridgeshire in the Minor Counties Championship. He was generally considered to be the best all-rounder in the Ely Cricket XI. He was also elected vice-captain of the Prickwillow cricket team in 1913. After the War, when Ely Cricket Club was starting up once again it was recorded that the club had "always occupied a high position in county sporting circles....the death in action of Mr C.A.H.

Keenlyside, one of the best all-round cricketers in the county and one who was always a tower of strength to the city club, was a blow to all local cricketers..."

Cecil also turned out occasionally for Ely City football team, and was a member of Ely Golf Club.

Cecil was an active member of the National Service League, a pressure group which supported military conscription for national service in the decade preceding the War. Detailed letters from him appear in the Ely Standard on this theme in 1913. After the War commenced he was a compelling speaker at recruitment meetings around the area.



Cecil was also a vice-president of the local Conservative Club at the time he departed for the Front and had been a great campaigner for the party at election times. (At least 47 members of the Ely Conservative Club were in the forces by January 1917 and, of these, Cecil Keenlyside, George Ling, and Thomas Yarrow laid down their lives.)

On 24th February 1913 Cecil obtained a commission with the Cambridgeshire Territorial Regiment as a Second Lieutenant. He was promoted to Lieutenant on 26th August 1914 and then to Captain on 16th September. He went to France with his regiment on 14th February 1915 and he and Major Archer had the opportunity of a visit home in May when the Cambridgeshires were out of the trenches. Meanwhile Gladys too was "doing her bit" in the role of Secretary of the Ely District Nursing Association.

Cecil was killed in action at Bois Grenier near Armentieres on 20th July 1915 when he was struck in the throat by a splinter from a shell, fell unconscious, and expired within a quarter of an hour. He was picked up when he fell by a local man who knew him well—Harold Burns of Stuntney—and who was able to tell Cecil's

story when he next went home. Cecil's Colonel wrote to Gladys: *"You ought to be told that his death is the most grievous blow that has yet befallen the Battn, That he was at all times an inspiration and help to us all and his loss is irreparable."* The name of Captain Keenlyside was well known in Ely as he was the one who wrote to the bereaved families on the deaths of their sons. He was buried by five Ely Territorials. The details of his death were shared with his wife:

*"...this afternoon at 6 p.m., he and Bates started off from the billets to visit the trenches which are a mile or more from us, and on the way in concealed places are many of our batteries which are shelled occasionally by the enemy. A few shells had been fired in the neighbourhood, and just as they were on the road half-way to the trenches, a shell burst 20 yards from them, and a splinter hit Cecil in the throat severing the artery. Bates supported him into a farmhouse, and a doctor was with him within seven minutes, and all to no purpose. He passed away painlessly and unconscious from the moment he was hit. The body will be buried in a proper cemetery here.... He was a company commander I relied on more than anyone, and he had controlled and created his company since mobilisation so well..."* That company would have included many Ely volunteers.

Every report about Cecil shows he was popular both as a man and as an officer, using phrases such as: "affability and cheery disposition".. "a thorough gentleman devoid of ostentation". The regimental history states: "He was an outstanding company commander. "D" Company were inconsolable for several days."

Cecil left effects of £5175 18s 8d.

Cecil's widow Gladys returned to Weybridge almost immediately after her husband's death, where she later married Laurence Watkins in 1921 and went with him to India. She asked for the inscription on Cecil's grave to be "It is the Spirit that quickeneth—the flesh profiteth nothing".

Cecil's brother Captain Guy Keenlyside of the Royal West Kent Regiment died of wounds on 29th October 1914 following the Battle of Neuve Chapelle. Both Cecil and Guy are commemorated on the Weybridge War Memorial. Cecil is commemorated in Malaysia on the memorial at Kota Bharu, as well as on the Ely Market Place Memorial and in St Mary's Church.

## Joseph KIRBY

<b>Born</b>	1886
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	28th April 1917, age 31
<b>Commemorated</b>	Bay 4, Arras Memorial, Pas de Calais, France
<b>Unit</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> Battalion Suffolk Regiment
<b>Rank</b>	Private, Service Number 15881
<b>Awards</b>	British War Medal and Victory Medal

**Joseph Kirby** was born in Bedwell Hay Cottages, Occupation Road, Ely, in 1886. His father Joseph (1854, Sutton) was a farm labourer, and his mother was Sarah Moden (1852 Ely). Joseph's siblings were George (1878 Sutton), Frederick (1880, Ely) Ernest (1882 Ely), Annie (1884 Ely), John (1890 Ely) Tom Moden (1892 Little Thetford), and Sarah Elizabeth (1894 Little Thetford). Joseph also had an older half sister Ada Mary Moden (1872, Sutton).

Joseph first appears in the 1891 Census when the family was still at Bedwell Hay Cottages on Bedwell Hey Farm, south of Ely. His oldest brothers, George and Ernest, had already left school and become farm labourers like their father.

The birthplaces of Joseph and his brothers and sisters show how the Kirbys moved around the local area seeking employment on the farms and tied accommodation. In the 1901 Census they can be found on Kirby's Farm, Hilgay Fen, Norfolk. Despite the farm bearing their surname, it is clear that this family of Kirbys were not farmers themselves as they are all employed workers, with Joseph senior being a horsekeeper, Joseph himself who was a teamster on the farm, and John was a farm labourer. At this point the household had shrunk significantly in size as the only children still living with their parents were Annie, Joseph, John, Tom and Sarah.

Joseph Kirby senior died in 1905.

In the 1911 Census some of the family were still together and living in accommodation on Langwood Farm in Chatteris. With widowed Sarah were Joseph and Tom, who were both horsekeepers, and her grandson Charles Albert Day (1896 Chettisham) who was also a farm labourer. Charles was a son of Sarah's eldest daughter Ada.

On 6th November 1914 a recruitment party from the Suffolk Regiment arrived at Ely Fair with a bugle band which attracted the attention of many of the local farm workers. Joseph joined up with his friends and was placed, with many other local soldiers, in the new 11th Battalion of the local Suffolk Regiment which reached France in 1916. His battalion fought in the Battles of the Ancre, Pozieres Ridge and in the Battles of the Scarpe. In April 1917 Joseph met his death during the Battle of the Scarpe when the Battalion was engaged in an attack on the Roeux Chemical Works. The Suffolks suffered heavy casualties in this engagement from German machine gun fire and following the attack Joseph was one of many missing. Joseph died during a huge fortnight long bombardment of the Front near Arras—his name is recorded along with 34764 others on the Arras Memorial, most of whom perished during this period and were left without a marked grave.

Joseph's name appears on the war memorial at Ten Mile Bank, Norfolk, the nearest village to Kirby's Farm, as well as on the Ely Memorial.



## Harry Catchpole KNOWLES

<b>Born</b>	1899
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	18th April 1918 age 19
<b>Commemorated</b>	Panel 154 to 159 and 163A , Tyne Cot Memorial, Zonnebeke, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium
<b>Unit</b>	25 <sup>th</sup> Company., Machine Gun Corps
<b>Rank</b>	Private, Service Number 131481
<b>Awards</b>	British War Medal and Victory Medal

**Harry Catchpole Knowles** (who was registered as Henry at birth) was born in Ely in 1899 and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission records that he was the son of Mary Ann Knowles.

In the 1901 Census, in which Harry appears as a two year old, he is not with his family but a “visitor” in the home of William (1863 Ely) and Mary Ann Norman (nee Constable, 1871 Stretham) and their five children, the youngest of whom was the same age as Harry. So where was Harry’s mother Mary Ann Knowles (1879 Ely)? Late in 1900 she had married Mary Ann Norman’s younger brother Amos Constable (1879 Stretham), a general labourer, and was living in Breham Cottages, Cambridge Road, Ely, leaving her illegitimate son to be brought up by her sister-in-law. With Amos Mary Ann went on to have another son, James Constable, in 1902, and then died at the young age of twenty-five in August 1904. It could also be worth noting that there is a young man named Harry Catchpole (1880 Ely) resident in Ely at this time and of the right age to be Harry Catchpole Knowles’ natural father .....



In the 1911 Census Harry next appears as an “adopted boy” in the home of Robert Preston Cook (1861 Middlesex, London) and his wife Elizabeth Ann (nee Earith, 1865 Ely) on Back Hill, Ely. Robert was a roadman, and the couple had their own son John Thomas Cook (1896 Brixton, London) at home; John was an apprentice house painter. Robert’s mother Elizabeth (1826 Wangford, Norfolk) also lived with the family, as had her husband Robert Preston Cook senior until his death in September 1910. Technically formal adoption of a child like Harry was not possible in law until 1926, but Harry’s designation as “adopted child” on the census shows that he now had a permanent new family, including grandparents.

In 1915 a recruiting party and bugle band from the newly formed 3rd Battalion of the Cambridgeshire Regiment was in Ely on 24th and 25th April. The band marched through the principal streets of the city and Major Griffiths addressed a large crowd from the steps of the Public Rooms. This was followed by a “smoking concert” in the Public Rooms. At least twenty-two Ely men enlisted as a result of the recruitment drive, but many of these were teenagers, some as young as fifteen, carried up in the excitement of the occasion. One of the names on the recruiters’ list is Harry, who would have been just sixteen, and certainly not eligible for service abroad. The newspaper record does not show what happened to all these young, but ineligible, recruits in 1915, however, Harry’s own service records shows that in fact he technically joined up at Newmarket on 23rd March 1917 when he was eighteen.

Harry reached France on 28th March 1918. While he was in training his adopted brother, John Cook, had been killed in France in July of 1917.

Harry’s Company of the Machine Gun Corps was attached to the 8th Division and just three weeks after his arrival he was engaged in one of the final battles on the Somme. He was killed in action on a day of heavy attacks by the Germans on the Allied Front from Givenchy to the Lys river. When the

Battalion pulled back to Abeelee Harry was one of many soldiers who were missing. "Aunt" Elizabeth finally received confirmation of his death over a year later.

Harry is commemorated with other missing on the Tyne Cot Memorial, and, with his adopted brother, on the Ely Market Place and Holy Trinity Memorials.

Harry's effects of £5 16s 6d were left to his "aunt" - his adopted mother Elizabeth Ann Cook. The Cooks lived in Ely until their deaths in the 1940s, having lost both their son and their adopted son.