

Arthur PAGE and Herbert PAGE

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| Born <i>Arthur</i> | 31st March 1879 |
| Killed in Action or Died | 20th July 1916, age 37 |
| Buried | Grave XXX. G. 10., Delville Wood Cemetery, Longueval, Somme, France |
| Unit | 2 nd Battalion Suffolk Regiment |
| Rank | Sergeant, Service Number 3/7620 |
| Awards | 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal |

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|---------------------------------|---|
| Born <i>Herbert</i> | 12th February 1883 |
| Killed in Action or Died | 2nd March 1916, age 29 |
| Commemorated | Panel 21, Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, Ieper, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium |
| Unit | 4th Battalion Suffolk Regiment |
| Rank | Drummer, Service Number 3/9432 |
| Awards | 1914 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal |

Farm worker Henry aka Harry Page (1851, Great Shelford, Cambridgeshire) and his wife Alice Wiseman (1853 Ely), raised a large family in Ely. They both died before the commencement of the War, Alice in March 1912 and Harry in October 1913, so never knew that two of their sons would soon fight and die with the local Suffolk Regiment. The Page children were: Henry (1874); William (1875); Emma (1878); **Arthur** (1879); John (1881); **Herbert** (1883); Robert (1884); Susannah (1886); Sarah (1888-89); Thomas (1890); Charles (1893); Sarah (1895); and Ellen (1899).

Harry had been a stone dresser and when living in Shelford may well have worked on the Cambridge colleges; it is possible that he originally came to Ely to work on the cathedral. He married Alice (who was already pregnant at the time) and stayed in Ely. In the 1881 Census the family was living in Annesdale in Ely; by 1891 they were in Broad Street and Harry is shown simply as a "labourer". The work on the cathedral had been completed and Harry had to find less skilled work if he was to support his growing family. The children attended Sunday School in the local chapel where Herbert became a friend of Alfred Layton with whom he later fought in the Suffolks, and who, like him, did not survive the War.

On the night of the 1901 Census Alice was shown working as a charwoman to support the seven children still at home, while the oldest sons in the house, John and Herbert, were working as a farm worker and errand boy respectively. Harry's absence was due to the fact that he was in prison—on 29th March, 1901 the Cambridge Independent Press had reported that he was sent to prison for six months, with hard labour, for cruelty and neglect of his children. Harry does not appear to have been allowed back in the family home thereafter, as he took up lodgings in the Queen's Head public house on Waterside. Alice later moved in with Arthur and his family on Back Hill.

Herbert and his friend Albert Wilden appeared before the Ely Petty Sessions in March 1903, when the pair were caught trespassing on Herbert Cross' land on 25th February while searching for conies (i.e. hunting rabbits). The magistrates did not want to convict the young men and were willing to let them go if they paid costs of 9s 6d; "no money was forthcoming" but they were nevertheless given a fortnight to find it.

Arthur joined the local militia when he was about eighteen and served with them for approximately nineteen years. He married Sophia Chapman Cross (1882 Ely) early in 1901 and lived just around the corner from his parents' home on Ely's Back Hill. The couple's children were Arthur, Thomas

Harry (1901), Violet Eleanor (1904), Beatrice Sophia (1905—born while the family were in Peterborough), Florence May (1907), Percy (1909) and Phyllis (1913). During the time in Peterborough Arthur was working as a porter with Great Eastern Railways and the family lived at 7 Goodyers Yard, Narrow Street, Peterborough. When they returned to Ely Arthur continued to work as a labourer for GER, but by the time of the 1911 Census he had left the railways and was working as a bakery labourer for the Co-operative Society. In the 1911 Census it appears that the Pages struggled to look after all their children and three year old Florence was living elsewhere on Back Hill with Sophia Stebbins; this may have been a temporary arrangement while there was a baby in the house and Sophia was pregnant again with Dorothy Louisa (1911).

In October 1913 the Pages figured in the local newspaper when Arthur and Sophia's daughter Florrie was knocked down and run over by a butcher's cart in Broad Street. She sustained a serious fracture in one leg and the other was badly cut, requiring sixteen stitches. The newspaper article gives the additional information that by this date Arthur was a builder's labourer and the family home was "a Back-lane cottage". Florence was to die young, aged just seventeen, in August 1924.

Herbert married Eliza Woodbine in 1908 and in 1911 they were living in Harlocks Lane in Ely with their two young sons Herbert (1908) and Charles (1910). Herbert was still working in the local farms. They later had more children: Harry (1912), Alice (1914) and St Aloy Souvenir Felixstowe (1916). (St Aloy was a posthumous child and was named after the battle at St Eloi in which her father was killed. It is possible that her other names were a reference to where her father had been recuperating from his wounds and where she herself was conceived.)

In the 1911 Census Herbert and Arthur's mother Alice was in hospital in Addenbrookes in Cambridge with stomach cancer. She was sent home to Back Hill, but the prognosis was not good and she died a year later. Her husband Harry, meanwhile, was in the Ely Workhouse, where he remained until his death following a stroke in 1913. It is perhaps a telling sign that none of Harry's large family were ever prepared to share their homes with him.

Herbert had joined the local Militia, the 4th Suffolks, in July 1900 as a "boy", and claimed at the time to be a month short of his 15th birthday although he was actually 18. As Herbert was just four feet eight and half inches tall he may have thought he could capitalise on this and be treated as a boy instead of a full soldier. His description says that his hair was brown, his eyes were grey, and he had a mole above his right buttock. He spent some time posted with the Suffolks at Dover in Kent with the 3rd Battalion. When Herbert officially (the Army thought) reached the age of 21 in 1907 he re-enlisted with the Suffolks (of course he was actually 24 at this time!). His description shows that he had acquired a tattoo on each forearm. He transferred and served in the Special Reserve in 1909, after his time in the militia expired, until January 1914. (Herbert's militia service record describes him as 5 feet 4 1/8 inches tall, with brown hair, grey eyes and tattoos on his forearms.) Herbert's record with the reservists is not entirely clean as it is peppered with fines for drunk and disorderly conduct (when on duty, when marching, and round about town), for being absent without leave and for missing roll call! His record for drunkenness seems surprising after he had originally registered as a Wesleyan Methodist and would therefore have been teetotal! On 5th February 1909 the *Cambridge Independent Press* reported that Herbert had been found guilty of *drunkenness at Ely on 1st February*. He is reported to have told the bench *'if you please, can't I go to Cambridge? That will do me a bit of good and teach me a lesson. Then I will try and be better.'* He was sent to prison for seven days.

During this period Herbert was a member of the City of Ely Band and played the side drum. The band played on the Market Square on Summer Sunday afternoons.

Herbert volunteered to return to the army at the outbreak of the War; and went straight to France in August 1914, in fact he borrowed one of the City of Ely Band's drums and played the reservists down to Ely railway station (he left the drum at the railway station—and two years later there were still letters in the newspaper asking who had picked it up and where it had gone!). His impressions of the Great War are encapsulated in a letter he wrote back to William McFall in Ely—a letter written from hospital, as Herbert had been injured soon after arrival in Belgium: *"I have been here about 18 days, being accidentally wounded three weeks this Wednesday while up in a loft at the back of the firing line....whatever they see move they fire at, and no mistake, they are good shots. The worst of it is they fire on our brave stretcher bearers.....i have been with the 1st battalion of the Suffolks—all my*

brothers are with the 2nd Suffolks—and we have got about 450 left out of the 1,100 who went out. We were at Ypres, and I never knew I was going to see such awful sights. It was a beautiful city, but is now ruined. Every place is shelled, and all around there were some of the finest buildings I have seen in my life.”

Herbert was later wounded in the foot at the First Battle of Ypres the following October, and sent back to England to recuperate, during which time he unsurprisingly joined his Battalion's band as a drummer. There is a family story that the night before he was sent back to France Herbert did the rounds of the pubs in Waterside with his drumsticks, and beat a tattoo on the tables as a way of saying goodbye to his friends! It was a last goodbye, as about three months after his return to the Front he was killed by a German shell when performing his role as a bomb thrower, on 2nd March 1916 at St. Eloi. According to a letter sent home by a fellow soldier, he was not killed instantly but died on his way to hospital. Although he was buried at St Eloi, his body was not relocated after the hostilities and so he is commemorated on the Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing.

Meanwhile Arthur reached France with the 2nd Battalion of the Suffolks on 26th January 1915 as a sergeant. He and his battalion spent most of his early time at the Front building trenches on the Ypres Salient, although they were one of the battalions which came under the first sustained gas attack by the Germans on British troops. During the first half of 1915 Arthur was a “mess mate” of Private Herbert John Negus of Ely, as he was the one who informed Herbert's parents of their son's accident and how the parcel the Negus family had sent had been distributed amongst his fellows.

At the start of 1916 the 2nd Battalion moved south to St Eloi, where Arthur would have arrived just a few days after Herbert had been killed there fighting with the 4th Suffolks, although Arthur possibly did not know that at the time. In June 1916 they moved to St Omer for training in open warfare as Arthur and his fellow troops were soon to face the horrors of the Battle of the Somme. The Suffolks first task in this prolonged engagement was to retake Delville Wood which had been overrun by the Germans. The casualties in the 2nd Battalion were heavy and the two leading companies were almost wiped out, and among those killed in the attack was Arthur Page. He was buried in the Delville Wood Cemetery.

There is a family story that when Arthur's pregnant widow Sophia opened the letter telling her of her husband's death, she immediately lost her hearing with the shock of the news, and was deaf for the rest of her life. Poor Sophia also lost her brother Herbert Chapman Cross the following year. This would have been a terrible time for the families of the Waterside area as many of them were related to the Page and Cross families.

Arthur and Herbert Page are commemorated together on both the Ely Market Place Memorial and the Holy Trinity Memorial.



Arthur Page



Herbert Page in his 1914 City of Ely Band

Lancelot PALMER

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|---------------------------------|---|
| Born <i>Edgar</i> | 12th December 1894 |
| Killed in Action or Died | 15th September 1916, age 21 |
| Buried | Grave IX. C. 7., Caterpillar Valley Cemetery, Longueval, Somme, France |
| Unit | 15th Battalion London Regiment (Prince of Wales' Own Civil Service Rifles) |
| Rank | Private, Service Number 5477 |
| Awards | <i>British War Medal and Victory Medal</i> |

Lancelot Palmer (1894 Prickwillow) was the oldest son of Jonas Palmer (1869 Prickwillow) and Emily Jane Taylor (1870 Ely). He had one sister called Bernice (1897 Ely) and younger brothers Arnold Rex (1902 Prickwillow) and Cyril (1906 Prickwillow). The Palmers farmed in Padnal Drove, Prickwillow.

In the 1901 Census the Palmers had the local assistant elementary school teacher Isabel Bawcutt (1876 Banbury, Oxfordshire) lodging with them.

Lancelot attended Prickwillow School and then won a bursary to March Grammar School, travelling the twenty-five miles from 20th October 1907 to 30th July 1912. At March he won another bursary in August 1911 and then moved to Ely Boys School as a student teacher in August 1912. The headmaster of the school later spoke highly of his teaching capabilities, and others remarked on his *"modest demeanour and remarkable courtesy to everyone"*. From Ely Lancelot went on to train as a teacher at Borough Road Training College in Isleworth, West London from 1913 to 1915 and lived in Peckham Rye. He passed, with credit, the advanced courses in English, History, Maths, French, and Latin, as well as passing music.

Lancelot obtained a teaching post in London with the London County Council in Deptford, but instead went to war. Like many of the London teachers who enlisted, Lancelot joined the Civil Service Rifles at Somerset House. He reached France in June 1916, just as preparations were being made for the Battle of the Somme. Lancelot survived for approximately three months at the Front and was then killed in action on the opening day of the Battle of Flers-Courcelette when his battalion attacked High Wood.

Lancelot is remembered on the Ely Market Place Memorial, the Prickwillow Memorial, the March Grammar School Old Boys War Memorial (now Neale– Wade Community College), Borough Road College Roll of Honour, and the London County Council Memorial Book Record of War Service.



Edgar Thomas PAMMENT and Victor Frederick PAMMENT

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|---------------------------------|--|
| Born <i>Edgar</i> | 20th December 1892 |
| Killed in Action or Died | 9th February 1916, age 23 |
| Buried | Grave E. 9. 1., Haslar Royal Naval Cemetery, Hampshire |
| Unit | HMS "Victory", Royal Naval Auxiliary Sick Berth Reserve |
| Rank | Sick Berth Attendant , Service Number M/4344 |
| Awards | <i>Did not serve abroad during War</i> |

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Born <i>Victor</i> | 26th February 1895 |
| Killed in Action or Died | 9th April 1917, age 22 |
| Buried | Grave I. A. 16., Bailleul Road East Cemetery, St. Laurent-Blangy, Pas de Calais, France |
| Unit | 11 th Battalion Suffolk Regiment |
| Rank | Lance Corporal, Service Number 16620 |
| Awards | Distinguished Conduct Medal, British War Medal and Victory Medal |

Frederick Thomas Pamment (1867 Cherry Hinton, Cambridge) worked as an engine driver for Great Eastern Railways, and so he and his wife Sophia (nee Keeble, 1864 Elmsett, Suffolk) moved their family several times. They ended up living at "Cherryvale," on Back Hill, Ely, and this is why two of their sons are commemorated on the Ely Market Place Memorial and Holy Trinity Memorial, although only Victor lived for any time in Ely.

The Pamment children were: Ernest (1889-1897); Albert (1890 Bury St Edmunds); **Edgar Thomas** (1892 Bury St Edmunds); **Victor Frederick** (1895 Bury St Edmunds); Florence (1897 Cambridge); and Leslie (1905 Cambridge).

When Edgar and Victor were born the Pamments lived at 5 Tayfen Terrace, Bury St Edmunds, and their father was a fireman with GER. In 1901 the Pamments were living at 10 Ingram Street, Huntingdon, but by 1905 they were at 25 Madras Road Romsey where Edgar and Victor were admitted to the local Junior and Middle School in September 1905.

In 1911 the family was at 16 Warrington Street, Newmarket. Victor was still living with his parents in 1911 and was a porter at a greengrocer's shop. Edgar was many miles away in Portsmouth, as he had joined the Royal Navy and was then an Ordinary Seaman 3rd Class.

Edgar entered the navy as a boy servant in December 1909 and served on the "Excellent" as a boy servant and then as an Ordinary Seaman. On 11th February 1911 he transferred to the "Skirmisher", leaving the ship on 28th March 1912 to become a Sick Berth Attendant at HMS "Victory" which was the shore base at Portsmouth. Here he served in the famous Royal Haslar Hospital.

The Cambridge Independent Press of 3rd March 1916 tells us the story of Edgar's war service: *"The death has occurred at the Royal Naval Hospital, Gosport, of Mr E.T. Pamment, R.N., son of Mr and Mrs Pamment of Back Hill, Ely, who had been sick berth attendant at that institution for the past four years, and who, on the day of his death, received orders for service in the Persian Gulf. He had qualified for the rank of 2nd Class Petty Officer, having passed the necessary examination. Only twenty-three years of age, the deceased had gained the respect and esteem of all the members of the staff of the hospital and his loss will be sadly felt. He was taken seriously ill, and was dead in 30*

hours. The funeral took place at Gosport, the gun-carriage on which the coffin was placed being drawn by 24 bluejackets. About one hundred members of the hospital staff and the same number of Jack Tars followed the remains to their last resting place. There were many beautiful floral tributes. Mr and Mrs Pamment have two other sons serving their country, Pte A.E Pamment, 2nd Leicesters (who has been twice wounded) and Pte V. F. Pamment, 11th Suffolks, now in the trenches." Another account stated that Edgar had been seized with violent pains and had undergone an operation before he died. "He showed considerable skill in his work, and his future career was full of promise."

As well as being remembered at Ely, Edgar is commemorated on the memorial in Newmarket.

Victor joined the local "Pals" Battalion, the 11th Suffolks, at the outbreak of the War along with many other Ely men. The battalion reached France in January of 1916. Victor received the Distinguished Conduct Medal for his role on the opening day of the Battle of the Somme, 1st July 1916. The citation is dated 22nd September 1916 and reads: "*For conspicuous gallantry as a member of a machine gun team. When the gun commander had been wounded, and the second in command killed, he picked up the gun and spare parts and, unaided carried them forward, continuing to fire the gun.*"

After being injured and hospitalised "he was attached to company headquarters and was in charge of the four company guns". Victor fought on with the Suffolks, and was killed by a sniper after he and Captain Tempest had passed several German defence lines on the opening Day of the Battle of the Scarpe, an attack on the German defences near Arras. The British made huge gains on the first day of the battle and then stalemate followed, but the gains resulted in a large number of casualties, including Victor.

The eldest Pamment soldier, Albert, survived the War, despite being twice wounded and gassed. He ended the War on Home Service due to his injuries. He had spent seven years in the Army with the Leicesters and also two years in the Navy.

Victor's parents asked for the words "Until the Daybreak And Shadows Flee Away—To Memory Ever Dear" to be placed on his gravestone, although, perhaps surprisingly, there is no similar message on Edgar's grave. In 1918 they marked the anniversary of Victor's death in the "In Memoriam" column of the local newspaper with the words:

"Softly the stars at night are shining
Over my soldier son's grave,

But our hearts are with you dearest
Though in a foreign land you are laid."

It is a sentiment that many Ely parents would echo.



Edgar Thomas Pamment



Victor Pamment

Arthur Claud PASK

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Born | 1886 |
| Killed in Action or Died | 3rd March 1916, age 29 |
| Buried | Grave IV. D. 46A., Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Poperinge, Belgium |
| Unit | 2 nd Battalion Suffolk Regiment |
| Rank | Private, Service Number 20078 |
| Awards | 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal |

Arthur Claud Pask was the second of the four sons of Charles Pask (1860 Depden, Suffolk and Georgiana Kemp (1861 Chedburgh, Suffolk). The first three boys were born in Rede in Suffolk, these were Herbert George (1885), Arthur Claud himself (1887) and Charles Walter aka Walter (1888). The youngest of the brothers, Ben Allan (1890) ,was born after the family moved back into Chedburgh.

Charles was a farm worker and Georgiana was a tailoress. In 1891 the family were living in a cottage on Bury Road, Chedburgh. By 1901 they were all living by the Green in Depden, Suffolk, and the three oldest boys were all working on local farms like their father.

In the 1911 Census the Pask parents were back in Rede, living in Kiln Lane, and all their young men had left home. Herbert was a horseman on a farm and living at Castle Cottages, Denham, Suffolk; he had married Margaret Argent (1889 Chedburgh) and they had started a family. Walter had joined the Army and was serving with the 1st Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment in Egypt.

Arthur must have moved to the Ely area to find work on the local farms, as he had met and married Susan Murfitt (1891 Littleport) in 1910 and their son George was born that same year. Arthur was working as a blacksmith and the Pasks were boarding with Susan's family in Prickwillow. The couple had several more children, these were Walter Claud (1911), Cecil (1912) and Albert (1915). Susan also appears to have had another son, Leslie, in 1921.

Arthur enlisted in the 2nd Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment and reached France on 7th December 1915. He survived only three months in the winter conditions on the Front and was severely wounded in one of the attacks on the Ypres Salient. He passed away at the casualty clearing station at Poperinge.

Arthur's widow Susan was sent his "effects" of £1 18s 4d and a further £3 in 1919. It was not sufficient, as by the time that the Commonwealth War Graves Commission was arranging for the formal reburial of her husband in Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery Susan and her children were in Tower House, Ely,—the Workhouse.

Arthur Claud Pask is remembered on the Ely Market Place Memorial and the Prickwillow Memorial. Herbert remembered his brother by calling his son, born in 1919, Arthur Claud Pask.

Arthur's brother Walter survived the entire length of the War fighting with his regiment, the 1st Suffolks, only to die of illness on 10th December 1918 in a hospital in Sangatte, Calais.

James PATE

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|---------------------------------|---|
| Born | 1886 |
| Killed in Action or Died | 18th June 1917, age 31 |
| Commemorated | Bay 4, Arras Memorial, Pas de Calais, France |
| Unit | 2 nd Battalion Suffolk Regiment |
| Rank | Private, Service Number 3/7826 |
| Awards | 1914 Star, War Medal and Victory Medal |

James Pate's father Thomas Pate was born in Ely in 1843 but James himself was born in Kent in 1886—in different records his birthplace is given as Maidstone and Faversham. It is difficult to locate this family of Pates in national records, but from the scanty evidence available it appears that Thomas married Annie Ashe (1835) in north Kent in 1882 and that James was their only child. Thomas brought the family back to Ely, where Annie died in 1893.

In 1901 James was living with his paternal aunt, Mary Ann Hart, in Cambridge Road and working on a farm.

In the 1911 Census James and his widowed father can be found living in Cambridge Road, Ely, and they are both shown as farm workers.

James served in the Ely Militia and so he was called up at the outbreak of war as a reservist; his record shows that he reached France on 30th August 1914. In the three years he was at the Front he came home on leave just twice.

James' battalion was involved in actions such as the St Eloi Craters, the Battle of Albert, the Battle of Bazentin, the Battle of Delville Wood, the Battle of the Ancre., the First, Second and Third Battles of the Scarpe, and the Battle of Arleux. In the June 1917 Arras Offensive the battalion had taken Hook Trench on Infantry Hill, near Monchy-le-Meux, and James appears to have been killed in the German counterattack. He is commemorated on the Arras Memorial to the Missing.

Thomas was sent his son's effects of £26 16s 3d and a further £16 10s in 1919, but he actually died in December of 1919, soon after receiving the second payment.

James is commemorated on the Ely Market Place Memorial and the Memorial in St Mary's Church.

John Leslie PATE

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Born | 1896 |
| Killed in Action or Died | 2nd March 1916, age 19 |
| Buried | Grave IV. B. 41., Brewery Orchard Cemetery, Nord, France |
| Unit | 11 th Battalion Suffolk Regiment |
| Rank | Private, Service Number 16560 |
| Awards | British War Medal and Victory Medal |

John Leslie Pate in later life was normally known by his middle name of Leslie. He was born in 1896 in Ely; his father was Thomas Pate (1872 Ely), who was a platelayer for Great Eastern Railways, and his mother Charlotte Porter (1871 Southery, Norfolk). Leslie had three brothers who were George Thomas (1893), Reginald (1901) and Stanley (1904). There had been two more children in the family who had both died young: Robert (1895-98) and May (1910 lived a few months). The family worshipped at Ely Methodist Church.

In the 1901 and 1911 Censuses the Pates can be found at West Fen Road, Ely. In the later census George was working as a "butcher improver" while Leslie himself had begun work as a newspaper delivery boy, although he was soon to become a baker's roundsman for Ely Co-operative Stores. The family was to move to railway housing at the Junction at Queen Adelaide, which is where they were still living at the time of Leslie's death.

Seventeen year old Leslie was among the first of the young men of Ely to volunteer for the 11th Suffolks, which was a local newly formed territorial battalion. He reached France on 9th January 1916 and survived about two months.

The Cambridge Independent Press of 10th March 1916 recorded Leslie's death:
"News has been received of the death of Pte. Leslie Pate, son of Mr and Mrs T. Pate of Adelaide Bridge. The deceased, who was 19 years of age, was a faithful employee of the Ely Co-operative Society, and many will remember him going on his rounds with the baker's cart. He worked for the Co-operative Stores for about three years, and left to join Kithchener's Army. He was afterwards attached to the machine gun section of the 11th (Camps.) Suffolks, and had been at the Front for some considerable time. It is believed that he was killed by a German sniper."

Leslie was taken to the cellar of the brewery in the village of Bois-Grenier which was set up as a dressing station, and it was here he was pronounced dead and buried.

Leslie's effects came to £3 1d and a further £5 in 1919; the money was sent to his father Thomas.



Thomas asked for the inscription in his son's grave to read "Greater Love Hath No Man Than This That He Lay Down His Life For His Friends".

Leslie is commemorated on the Ely Market Place Memorial, the Holy Trinity Memorial and the Memorial Plaque in Ely Methodist Church. He was also listed on the Roll of Honour in St Etheldreda's Church in Queen Adelaide—this church is now a private dwelling.

Leslie's original grave marker



Russell Albert PEACHEY

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Born | 1894 |
| Killed in Action or Died | 7th April 1917, age 23 |
| Buried | Grave AA. 46., Dickebusch New Military Cemetery, Ieper, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium |
| Unit | 12 th Battalion East Surrey Regiment |
| Rank | Private, Service Number G/10999 |
| Awards | British War Medal and Victory Medal |

The Peachey's were one of the several families that moved around the farms on the Cambridgeshire / Suffolk border following work, and so the birthplaces of family members include Kenny Hill and around Prickwillow. The father of the family, Edward John Peachey (who sometimes calls himself Edward and sometimes John on the records), was himself from Burnt Fen (1857), as was his wife Sophia Curtis (1859). Their family consisted of Edward Isaac (1893 Prickwillow), **Russell Albert** (1894 Kenny Hill), Sarah Rachel (1895 Kenny Hill), Hilda May (1898 Prickwillow), and Florence (1899 Prickwillow). Also forming part of the family were Sophia's children Foreman Curtis (1884 Burnt Fen) and Sophia Curtis (1886 Burnt Fen).

In the 1901 Census the family was living in Station Road, Prickwillow and Russell's father ("John" in this record) was working as the driver of a stationary threshing engine. Foreman was working as a teamster on a local farm. In 1911 they were in Mile End Road, Prickwillow; the two Curtis children and Russell had moved out, but the others were still with their parents and Edward was a farm worker, while Sarah and Hilda were undertaking field work. Sixteen year old Russell had found work as a groom, and was boarding with the Pilbrow family in the village of Gedding Felsham near Bury St Edmunds. The Pilbrows were in their seventies and their sons were more than twice Russell's age.

Russell moved back to Prickwillow and in the Summer of 1913 married Millie Cox (1895); a few months later their daughter Mildred was born. He found employment at the Prickwillow Post Office cum butcher and baker shop run by the Edwards family.

Following the introduction of conscription and call-up of his group the Edwards went to the Ely Urban Tribunal in April 1916 to get Russell exempted from service; they needed his support as their own sons and the rest of their workers had already gone to the Front. The application for exemption was refused.

Russell attested at Bury St Edmunds. He served first with the 3rd Battalion then the 12th Battalion of the East Surrey Regiment. His battalion played a part in the Battle of Flanders-Courcelette and the Battle of the Transloy Ridges. He was killed just outside Ypres, when a shell burst near to him and was reported to have died instantaneously "with a smile on his face". He was buried in the grave yard of the field ambulance station at Dickebusch. The nonconformist chaplain, R Dobson, wrote to Millie "I had learned to love him much...and as long as I am here I will keep his grave in repair for the love I had for him".



Russell's effects amounted to £2 9s 2d, with a further £3 in 1919, which were sent to Millie. Millie later married John King in the winter of 1920, and they set up home at 1 Hills Lane, Ely.

Russell is commemorated on the Prickwillow Memorial and the Ely Market Place Memorial.

Russell was a first cousin of Sydney Peachey who was to be killed in action a week later and is also remembered on the Ely memorial.

Sydney Alfred PEACHEY

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Born | 1891 |
| Killed in Action or Died | 17th April 1917, age 26 |
| Buried | Grave VII. A. 16. , Faubourg d 'Amiens Cemetery, Arras, Pas de Calais, France |
| Unit | 33 rd Division. Ammunition Column, Royal Field Artillery |
| Rank | Gunner / Driver, Service Number 970282 |
| Awards | 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal |

Sydney Alfred Peachey was the eldest child of Alfred Peachey (1867 Icklingham, Suffolk) and his wife Amelia Sophia Dorling aka "Millie" (1871 Suffolk). Sydney was born at Barton Mills, Suffolk, in 1891. The younger children in the family were: Rosetta (1894 Barton Mills); Gerald (1896 Barton Mills); Sylvia (1900 Worlington, Suffolk); Lizzie May (1904 Cavenham, Suffolk); and Ivy (1911 Ely).

In 1901 Alfred was farming at Grove Farm, Worlington, near Mildenhall.

In the 1911 Census the Peachey's were living in Three Blackbirds Yard, off Broad Street, Ely. Alfred was working as a carter for the county council and Sydney had been working as a kitchen porter at the local Temperance Hotel (although as his employment is described as "formerly" it is possible he had just lost his job...). Sydney's brother Gerald had left school and become an errand boy at the local brewery, while Rosetta was in service. Considering Sydney had been employed by a Temperance Hotel, it is interesting that he then went to work in London where he was employed as a barman!



On 12th August 1914 Sydney enlisted with the 8th London (Howitzer) Brigade of the Royal Field Artillery (Territorial Army) at Plumstead. His service record describes him as 5 feet 4 inches tall. At that time he was living at 135 Rucklinge Avenue, Harlesden, and was again unemployed. He was at first service number 388. He reached France on 21st May 1915.

In October 1915 Sydney's sister Rosetta died in the Isolation Hospital in Ely.

In France Gunner Peachey was moved onto duties as a driver in an ammunition column. Divisional Ammunition Columns were created out of Brigade Ammunition Columns in May 1916, so the transfer may have taken place about this time. Their role was to transport ammunition and other supplies from the Divisional dumps to the Battery positions in the Front Line. The rank of driver in this case means a driver of horse drawn transport.

Sydney was gassed and as a result had thirty days in Bagthorpe Military Hospital in Nottingham between 25th May—23rd June 1916 with lachrymose cystitis followed by another twenty-seven days in Nottingham's Eye Infirmary. He was only out of hospital for a few days before he was admitted to the Eastern General Hospital on 15th August for another fifteen days as he was still having problems with his left eye. He had several eye operations.

Soldiers in the ammunition columns were not intended to be fighting troops, but obviously keeping the troops fully supplied was a dangerous job. They also had to collect the valuable empty brass cartridge cases plus any unused ammunition from where they had fallen after an Artillery unit had moved on. When conflict was underway they could suddenly be called on to supply any unit that was in the thick of the action, and could even be called upon to fight and replace casualties in the units they were supplying if there was a pressing need. Sydney was killed by a shell while driving his horses with a load of ammunition to the forward batteries—he was actually more than a mile from the front line at the time.

Sydney's effects amounted to £3 15s 3d which were sent to his mother. A further £12 10s was sent to the family in 1919, but by this time Millie had died in the last days of 1917 at the then family home in the Cutter Yard.

Sydney is remembered on the Ely Market Place Memorial and the Holy Trinity Memorial.

Sydney was a first cousin of Russell Peachey who had been killed in action the previous week and is also remembered on the Ely memorial.