

## Arnold PEACOCK

<b>Born</b>	18th January 1895
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	13th July 1917, age 22
<b>Buried</b>	Grave III. D. 278., Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension, Nord, France
<b>Unit</b>	Essex Royal Horse Artillery attached to the 298 <sup>th</sup> Brigade., Royal Field Artillery
<b>Rank</b>	Sergeant, Service Number 622231
<b>Awards</b>	British War Medal and Victory Medal

**Arnold Peacock** (1895 Littleport) was the son of Walter William Peacock (1854 Littleport) and his wife Alice (nee Taylor, 1861 Camberwell, Surrey). The Peacocks lived for a time in London where their first two sons were born, these were Bernard (1886 Lewisham) and Norman (1891 Greenwich). For a period Walter managed a plant nursery in Greenwich. The family then came to Walter's home village of Littleport, where they lived in Hemp Field House, Victoria Street and Walter farmed. Their third son, Arnold was then born in Littleport in 1895. Another five children born to Walter and Alice did not survive.

In 1911 Arnold had an apprenticeship with an firm which made and sold agricultural implements in Chelmsford. He was boarding in the home of a newly married couple called Alfred and Dora Morris at 2 Park Avenue, Chelmsford, Essex. His parents, meanwhile, had given up the farm and Walter was working as a commission agent for a farm produce company. They had moved into Ely and were living in Lindum Common Road, West End (later Prickwillow Road).

Arnold continued to live and work in Chelmsford and so it was here he enlisted at the outbreak of the War in the Essex Royal Horse Artillery Transport Corps, which had originally been stationed in Ely. His unit would have been responsible for the movement and use of lightweight mobile guns such as howitzers. Arnold was attached to the Royal Field Artillery when he was killed. On 13th July 1917 Arnold's unit was about six miles to the south of Ypres; here three drivers from the brigade were killed and Sergeant Peacock was wounded while attempting to rescue one of his wounded comrades. Alongside Arnold in the same rescue bid was Gunner James Clarke from Ely who was killed outright (the injured soldier they were rescuing also perished). News of the double tragedy reached Ely in a letter to the Sykes family from another Ely soldier. Arnold was transported along the lines as far as the town of Bailleul which was an important railhead, air depot and hospital centre, with the 2nd, 3rd, 8th, 11th, 53rd, 1st Canadian and 1st Australian Casualty Clearing Stations quartered in it for considerable periods. Originally the family was told that Arnold's wounds were only slight, but he died of his wounds at a clearing station. His officer called Arnold "about the best sergeant in the battery".

The inscription on Arnold's grave reads "Faithful unto Death". He is commemorated on the Ely Market Place Memorial and the Holy Trinity Memorial.

## Percy Eaton PLEDGER

<b>Born</b>	1893
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	12th July 1916, age 23
<b>Commemorated</b>	Pier and Face 8 C 9 A and 16 A. Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France
<b>Unit</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> Battalion Royal Fusiliers (London Regiment)
<b>Rank</b>	Private, Service Number STK/496
<b>Awards</b>	1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

Arthur Pledger (1856 Ely) owned a successful drapers and outfitters haberdashery business in Ely's High Street. He and his wife Louisa Hall (1853 Ely) had a large family consisting of: Arthur (1884); Frederic (1885); Dorothy (1888); George (1890); Mary (1891); **Percy** (1893) and Florence (1895). Arthur was a respected member of the Ely community and was on Holy Trinity Church's Vestry Committee as well as a lay reader, and also provided clothing for Ely Union Workhouse.

The eldest son of the family, Arthur, died at the age of thirteen in 1898. The Pledgers' sons, including Percy, attended the King's School in Ely.

In the 1901 Census Frederic Pledger was assisting his father in the family business. Percy was also intending to work in the drapery business, but he did not stay in Ely. In 1911 Percy was working as a draper's assistant in Huntingdon and was one of four lodgers living in the Ingrams' home, a large house at 86 High Street, Huntingdon. From Huntingdon he moved on to London where he worked in the drapery firm of Messers Owtram and Co. in Friday Street.



Back in Ely in 1911 both George and Frederic were assisting their father in the drapery business. Arthur's workforce, consisting of a dressmaker, a milliner and her apprentice, a cashier and two shop assistants all boarded in the Pledgers' home "Cathedral View". In September 1913 the Pledgers' shop was at the centre of a local scandal when an unmarried shop assistant gave birth on the premises and then killed her newborn son.

Percy volunteered in London a fortnight after War was declared, and reached France on 31st July 1915 with the Royal Fusiliers. His battalion was known as the "Stockbrokers Battalion" as it had recruited from young professionals, especially those who worked on the London Stock Exchange. Later in the war the local Ely newspaper wrote of the Pledgers' proud war record, as both of Arthur Pledger's sons and all the male shop assistants had volunteered for the Front. Only one of them did not come back....

Percy died on the Somme. When the battle opened his battalion had been in the trenches at Berles au Bois and under shellfire. Over the next few days they marched to Mondicourt and, after resting, were embarked in motor lorries late on 5th July to be transported to the area of

Albert. Nearly the whole battalion was then given accommodation in a barn which had been made up with a series of sleeping “shelves” and which had very poor sanitary arrangements. The countryside around this area was already littered with British and German dead. On 9th July the battalion was again under shellfire—one of the shells taking out their bomb dump of 50,000 hand grenades. At this point the men were busy digging day and night, in an attempt to reinforce badly damaged trenches and to bury the dead bodies found along the La Boisselle Road. Although still in support, rather than the front line, the battalion lost 11 men killed, 3 missing and 86 wounded over 10th and 11th July, all as a result of the heavy shelling. On 12th July, when the battalion was busy extending its trenches the casualties were lighter—1 man killed and 3 men wounded, but the dead soldier was Percy Pledger.

Percy was trained up as a bomber, and his Lieutenant wrote of his last minutes: *“he was one of my best bombers and a fine soldier. We were standing by with a few picked bombers to do an attack when a piece of German shell hit him, death being instantaneous. We buried him after dark and marked his grave.”*

Percy left an estate of £105; his father was also sent his effects by the army which consisted of £5 6s 4d and a further £8 10s in 1919.

By the time the war memorials were created Arthur and Louisa had retired from their business and were living at “Koumala”, 50, New Barn’s Road, Ely. They arranged for Percy to be commemorated on the Market Place Memorial, the Holy Trinity Memorial and the King’s School Memorial.

**Percy’s “Death Penny”** - the “Death Penny was a memorial bronze plaque given to the next-of-kin of the soldiers who did not survive the War. It is about five inches in diameter and contains the man’s name but not his rank, as there should be no distinction made between the sacrifices of those who died.







The Pledgers -Taken in the garden of Cathedral House in Ely. Back row: Frederic Hugh Pledger, Mary Iva Pledger, George Eric Pledger, Dorothy May Louise Pledger. Middle row: Louisa Pledger (nee Hall) Arthur Deer Pledger, Anna Elizabeth Pledger (nee Holman). Front Row: Percy Eaton Pledger, Barbara Anna Pledger, Florence Elizabeth Pledger.



Rare photographs of Percy Eaton Pledger at the Front

*With thanks to Richard Pledger for sharing his family photographs.*

## Maurice Bertram PLUMB

<b>Born</b>	1895
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	17th December 1917, age 22
<b>Buried</b>	Grave M. 91., Jerusalem War Cemetery, Israel
<b>Unit</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> /4 <sup>th</sup> Battalion Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment)
<b>Rank</b>	Private, Service Number 13474
<b>Awards</b>	British War Medal and Victory Medal



**Maurice Plumb** (1895 Ely) was the middle child of the family of Edward Plumb (1866 West Wrating, Cambridgeshire) and his wife Elizabeth Knowles (1869 Ely). His siblings were also all born in Ely: Edward (1888); Alfred (1890); Albert George (1893); Ernest (1897); Lily (1899); and Arthur (1907).

Maurice's father was for a time a general labourer, and the family lived first in a cottage in Nutholt Lane (1891 Census). Later Edward obtained employment as a railway porter with Great Eastern Railways and the family moved nearer to the railway station, becoming part of the community of railway workers living on Waterside (1901 Census). Eventually Edward rose to the rank of railway foreman and the family moved into 2 Annesdale Terrace.

The 1911 Census shows that the two oldest Plumb sons had left home and that George was working as an ostler while Maurice himself was working as a printer's assistant. The census return also shows that the family spelt Maurice's name as "Morris" - this was probably an indication of how they pronounced it too. A year after the census was taken four year old Arthur died in May 1912.

Maurice was employed for a period at the Jam Factory.

As "Morris Bertram Plumb" Maurice enlisted at Newmarket and attested into the Royal West Kent Regiment on 4th April 1916. He was at this point employed as a painter in civilian life, and his service papers describe him as 5 feet 4 inches tall. He joined the regiment's 9th Battalion. He was on the Western Front only from 31st August to 16th October 1916 and was the rest of time invalided home with shrapnel wounds to the right thigh and hip which were caused by a bursting shell—he had actually been asleep in his trench at the time he was hit. Maurice wrote home after this and his letter appeared in part in the Cambridge Independent Press: *"Pte. Plumb mentioned that he met R.W. Payne, formerly in the Capital and Counties Bank at Ely, who used to keep goal for the Wanderers. He said: 'I happened to be coming down after being hit, and saw him with a stretcher case. He knew me by the way I spoke.' He also wrote concerning his wound: 'I was lying down in a little recess cut in the trench when a big shell came and woke me up, and that is how I got it. Two chaps about two yards off me were killed, and one wounded.'"*

Upon his recovery Maurice was posted to the 3rd Battalion in May of 1917 and sent to Shoreham on Sea, although a month later he was back in hospital at Chatham for four days to be treated for gonorrhoea and then sent on to Barnwell Hospital near Cambridge for a further 49 days. He finally returned to duty on 26th July 1917 and volunteered to join the Egyptian Expeditionary Force. One month later, on 26th August 1917, the battalion was heading for Alexandria in Egypt. Here, on 7th October 1917, Maurice was transferred into the 2nd/4th Battalion of the Royal West Kents, which was then deployed in Palestine.

By 21st November Maurice and the Egyptian Expeditionary Force were about two miles west of Jerusalem, but the holy city was deliberately spared bombardment and direct attack by the Allies

Very severe fighting followed, lasting until the evening of 8th December, when all the city's defences were finally captured. Turkish forces left Jerusalem throughout that night and in the morning of 9th December, the Turkish governor surrendered the city. Jerusalem was occupied that day and on 11th December, General Allenby formally entered the city. Maurice survived the conflict in Jerusalem and then he and his battalion pushed on along the eastern road where further severe fighting took place, and it was here that Maurice was killed in action while carrying a message.

In May 1918 the Plumbs received a small packet which contained Maurice's personal possessions, which consisted of two discs, a notebook, a pair of folding scissors, a small French garrison belt, cards and photos.

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

## Herbert POPE

<b>Born</b>	1885
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	3rd September 1916, age 30
<b>Commemorated</b>	Pier and Face 9 A 9 B and 10 B., Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France
<b>Unit</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment
<b>Rank</b>	Private, Service Number 30270
<b>Awards</b>	British War Medal and Victory Medal

John Pope (1847 Little Thetford) and Mary Ann Green (1848 Ely) had seven children, the first of whom, Rebecca, was born in Haddenham in 1867, and the rest in Ely. The other children were: John (1868); Frederick (1871); Florence (1879); **Herbert** (1885); and James (1888).

John Pope was a farm worker and the family home was Cow Lane on the edge of Ely (now West Fen Road).

By the 1901 Census John and Mary Ann had just Herbert and James Albert, out of all of their children, left at home in 17 Hills Lane. At fifteen, Herbert was an apprentice to a printer and compositor. A decade later the 1911 Census shows just "Albert" living with his parents in Hills Lane and that John had become a hackney carter. Herbert himself had moved to St Ives in Cambridgeshire where he described his role as "steryo compositor—lithography". He was boarding with the Bowds on Bramley Farm. He had also joined his professional union—the London Society of Compositors.

Herbert's father John Pope died early in February 1915.

Herbert enlisted at Huntingdon in Huntingdonshire 2/1st Cyclist Battalion (Service Number 1567). This was Territorial Force which patrolled on bicycles principally along the English coast; Herbert's battalion guarded the Lincolnshire coast. After almost two years of training and coastal patrols the Cyclist Battalions began to be sent abroad to the Front in July 1916, at which point they were rebadged to other regiments and Herbert was placed in the Royal Warwickshire Regiment. He survived about two months at the Front, being killed in action in the Battle of Guillemont as his battalion attacked Wedge Wood.

The Army sent Mary Ann her son's "final effects" which amounted to £2 7s on his death and a final £3 in 1919. She herself died in July 1920.

Herbert was remembered on the Ely Market Place Memorial, the Memorial in St Mary's Church, the St Ives War Memorial, and on the Roll of Honour of the London Society of Compositors.



## Samuel William POWELL

<b>Born</b>	1895
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	24th August 1917, age 22
<b>Commemorated</b>	Panel 115 to 119 and 162A and 163A , Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium,
<b>Unit</b>	8th Battalion, The Kings Royal Rifle Corps
<b>Rank</b>	Rifleman, Service Number R/38070
<b>Awards</b>	British War Medal and Victory Medal



**Samuel William Powell** was born in Prickwillow in 1895. He was the eldest child of William Powell (1872 Mildenhall) and Tabitha Ann Dorling (1874 Prickwillow). He had a younger sister Lilian (1897 Burnt Fen) and younger brother Bert (1901 Littleport).

In the 1901 Census the family of four were living in Mildenhall Road, Littleport and William was working as a yardman on a farm. By 1911 the family had moved to Mildenhall Road, Burnt Fen and three other farm workers were boarding with them. Samuel was also destined to be a farmworker.

Samuel's father William died at Branch Bank in January 1916, at the age of just forty-three. At about the same time conscription was introduced and Samuel was summoned to fight. Samuel's battalion was swept up in the Battle of Passchendaele; he survived the Battle of Langemark, but, as the British line was then established beyond the village of Langemark, the troops were particularly vulnerable to attack as they were overlooked by the Germans. Operations to capture Nonne Bosschen, Glencorse Wood and Inverness Copse around the Menin Road took place on 22nd–24th August, which failed with many losses on both sides. Samuel was one of those lost, and he is now remembered on the Tyne Cot Memorial to the Missing, along with the 1370 others who were "missing" by the conclusion of those three days.

Tabitha was sent her son's effects which amounted to £8 5s 11d with a further £13 in 1919.

Samuel is remembered on the Ely Market Place Memorial and the Prickwillow Memorial.



## Albert “Alfred” Edgar PRICE

<b>Born</b>	1896
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	14th July 1916, age 20
<b>Commemorated</b>	Pier and Face 5 D., Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France
<b>Unit</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> Battalion The Buffs (East Kent Regiment)
<b>Rank</b>	Private, Service Number G/2914
<b>Awards</b>	1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

The Alfred Price of Ely who fought and died with the Buffs is at first an elusive figure in the national records. He was registered at birth as **Albert Edgar Price** and appears under this name in the census records, but then registered when he enlisted as “**Alfred Price**”.

In the 1911 Census the Price family was living in West Fen Road, Ely. The father of the family was John Price (1851 St Mary Cray, Dartford) and his wife was Emily (nee Maylott, 1871 Peckham, London). John is shown as a fruit preserver at the Ely Jam Factory and his three oldest children Emily (1891 Swanley, Kent), Lily (1894 Borough, London) and Albert (1896 Borough, London) are all factory hands at the Jam Factory. The other children in the family were Maud (1897 Walworth, London), Ivy (1901 Dockhead, London), Winifred (1903 Dockhead, London), Arthur (1905 Dockhead, London), Horace (1908 Bermondsey, London) and Iris (1909 Bermondsey, London). The oldest son of the family, John (1890 Swanley, Kent), was then at sea.

When the family was in London John had been working as a fruit preserver in a jam factory and must have transferred between factories, perhaps being “headhunted” for the Ely factory. In the only other census in which Albert appears (1901) the family were living in Wolseley Model Dwelling, 94, Bermondsey, St Olave Southwark, London, which may have been his birthplace.

In April 1914 a last Price baby was born, a boy who lived for just 20 hours. The family was then living at 15 Broad Street., Ely.

For about three years Albert worked for Samuel Cross at High Flyer Farm, New Barns as a milkman and so was well know around Ely. At the outbreak of the War he went with his friend Alfred Pegram to enlist in the Buffs on 7th September 1914, and they were then sent to join their regiment at Canterbury. His military record shows him as Alfred Price born at Ely, perhaps the result of a genuine mistake on either Albert's, or the recruiter's, part. (Had the records of the two friends been confused in the crush of enlistment?) Perhaps he had preferred to use the name Alfred all along!

The “two Alfreds” reached France on 28th July 1915 where they would have formed part of the reinforcements for their battalion, which had sustained significant casualties in the Battle of Loos. Their battalion was on the Somme and part of the Battle of Albert, the Battle of Pozieres and the Battle of Le Transloy. Almost a year after their arrival at the Front Allbert was killed. The local newspaper shared the details with its readers:

*“In our last issue we stated that Pte. A. Price, The Buffs (East Kent Regt), son of Mr and Mrs Price, Broad-street, Ely, had been wounded, and that his parents had not heard anything from him for seven weeks. To relieve their suspense Miss Cross, daughter of Mr. S. Cross, High Flyer Farm, New Barns, where Pte. Price was employed for three years, wrote to the Officer Commanding his company, and received the following reply: "Private Price was wounded on the night of July 13-14,*



*in the battle of Trones Wood. He was taken back to the clearing station by the stretcher bearers, where he died the next day, and his grave is at Bonfary Farm, Carnoy. Pte. Price was as good a soldier as ever I had in my company, and men like him we can ill afford to lose, but he dies the death that a soldier is always ready to die, and I trust that it will be some comfort to his parents to know that he laid down his life when wanted for his King and homeland.*

*"Mrs. Price has now received a letter from Pte. A. Pegram, who is in the same company, and whose mother resides in Bohemond-Street, Ely, informing her that her son had died of wounds, "a German bullet entering his body". Alfred Pegram was wounded at the same time his friend was killed.*

*"Much sympathy is felt for the parents in their bereavement. Although the gallant private passed away on July 14th no official notification of his death has yet been received from the War Office.*

*"When the late Lord Kitchener called for men, Pte. Price enlisted along with his chum, Pte. A. Pegram"*

Albert's parents had spent five weeks believing he had been wounded and trying to discover which hospital he was in.

On 16th October 1916 John Price was sent a letter of condolence by his employers at the Ely Fruit Preserving Company:

*".....It is a risk which all our boys had to take who went to do their duty in the hour of our country's need....I sincerely trust that yourself and your good wife may both be led to feel that your sacrifice, and that of your brave boy, will not be altogether in vain, and that the future of our country's history may be brighter in consequence of the losses and the suffering which we are now enduring."*

Although Albert's grave was known at the time, and he received a proper burial, it was not identifiable after the War and so he is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing.

Albert left his effects to his mother Emily; they amounted to £10 6s 2d and a further £8 10s in 1919.

So should we call this man Alfred or Albert? In the list which was put forward for checking for the city's war memorial he is listed as "Alfred Edgar Price" - but we do not know if his family corrected this or not, and as initials are used on the memorial, not full names, we cannot tell. However, the final piece of telling evidence is that when the memorial was dedicated in May of 1922 the Price family placed a wreath on the shrine which bore the name "**Albert Price**".

Albert aka Alfred was commemorated on the Ely Market Place Memorial and the Holy Trinity Memorial. *His story has also been used by the National Army Museum as reference material for one of their online educational programmes, including the photograph below ( NAM. 2001-07-344-2) in which he is second from the left.*



## Albert Benjamin PRIOR

<b>Born</b>	1897
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	26th September 1917, age 20
<b>Commemorated</b>	Panel 148., Tyne Cot Memorial, West-Vlaanderen , Belgium
<b>Unit</b>	1st Battalion Cambridgeshire Regiment
<b>Rank</b>	Private, Service Number 325184
<b>Awards</b>	1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

The soldier listed as A Prior on the Ely Market Place Memorial is shown as Albert E Pryor on the St Peter's Memorial, but was actually **Albert Benjamin Prior**—it was his father who was Albert *Edward* Prior (1874 Old Kent Road, London). Albert's mother was Clara Bavester (1872 Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire). Albert senior worked as a journeyman house painter.

The Priors moved around the country and their first two children Albert (1897) and his sister Alice (1901) were born in 9 Ashworth Street, Stacksteads, Bacup, Haslingden in Lancashire. They then moved back to stay with Clara's parents Benjamin and Mary Bavester, and the next two children, Hilda (1904) and David (1906) were born in Burnt Fen. Finally the Priors moved into Ely itself, where Herbert was born in 1908.

In the 1911 Census the family was living on Waterside in Ely, although they later moved to Bull Lane (now Lisle Lane). Albert junior had by this time left school and was a farm worker.

The family joined the congregation of St Peter's Church in Broad Street, Ely, where Albert was a member of Harold Archer's confirmation class, and consequently was later named on the memorial that the catechist sponsored.

Albert was one of the many young farm labourers who volunteered soon after war was proclaimed. He enlisted at Ely with the 1st Battalion of the Cambridgeshire Regiment, originally with the service number 1448. At this point he appears to have told the army that he was born in Ely, but it is perhaps more likely that a hard pressed recruiting officer made a simple mistake (or Albert simply answered a question "yes"). After training Albert reached France with his battalion on 14th February 1915. From 1914 to 1917 the battalion saw action at St Eloi, The Second Battle of Ypres, an attack near Richebourg l'Avoue, the fighting on the Ancre, the Battle of Thiepval Ridge, the Battle of the Ancre heights, the Battle of the Ancre, the Battle of Pilkem Ridge, the Battle of Langemarck, and the Battle of the Menin Road Ridge. On the day of Albert's death the Cambridgeshires were attacking at Tower Hamlets Ridge, an area of flat ground pitted with shell holes which was still being shelled. When they advanced at 5.50 a.m. the German machine guns took a heavy toll and Albert was just one of the 54 soldiers of the Cambridgeshire Regiment who fell on that day and who are now commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial to the Missing, although he is probably buried in the cemetery itself as 70% of the bodies there are unidentified. Ely men James Fitch and Frank Lambert fell in the same attack. Sergeant J H Gibbons wrote to Albert's parents: *"the old Ely boys have done well and your son was one of the best"*.

Albert's father was sent his effects, which amounted to £4 7s 5d and a further £14 in 1919. During the War Albert senior had been attached to the Training Reserve of the Middlesex Regiment at Aldershot.

Albert is remembered on the Ely Market Place Memorial and in St Peter's Church.

## Alfred Elgood PUNCHARD and Edmund Elgood PUNCHARD

*The rector of St Mary's Church in Ely and his wife lost both of their sons.*

<b>Born</b> <i>Alfred</i>	22nd January 1886
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	29th March 1917,     age 29
<b>Commemorated</b>	Panel 34, Basra Memorial, Iraq
<b>Unit</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Battalion North Staffordshire Regiment (Prince of Wales') attached to 7th Battalion
<b>Rank</b>	Major
<b>Awards</b>	1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal Mentioned in Despatches

<b>Born</b> <i>Edmund</i>	21st October 1890
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	31st October 1914,     age 24
<b>Commemorated</b>	Panel 31 and 33, Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, Ieper, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium
<b>Unit</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment
<b>Rank</b>	Lieutenant
<b>Awards</b>	1914 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal, Mentioned in Despatches

Canon Elgood George Punchard (1844 Framlingham, Suffolk) was rector of St Mary's Church in Ely from 1902 until 1915. He and his wife Catherine Mary Johnson (1850 Windsor, Berkshire) had the tragedy of losing five of their eight children in infancy and then losing both of their surviving sons in the Great War. The Punchard children were: Rose (1879 Shalbourne, Buckinghamshire); John (1881-1881 Leighton Buzzard); George (1882-1884 Leighton Buzzard); Nicholas (1883-1883 Luton); Mary (1884-1884, Luton); **Alfred Elgood** (1886 Luton); **Edmund Elgood** (1890 Luton); and Roger (1894-1894 Luton).

Alfred and Edmund were both born in the vicarage in Dunstable Road, Luton, when their father was vicar of Christ Church. Reverend Elgood Punchard was an Oxford graduate and the author of several books. He was a Bachelor of Arts, a Master of Arts, a Bachelor of Divinity and a Doctor of Divinity. In 1896 he had actually been elected as the Bishop of Antigua but declined the bishopric. In 1902 Elgood Punchard was appointed to the benefice of St Mary's Ely, and the family moved into the vicarage (which is now better known as Cromwell's House and the Tourist Information Centre). Here, in 1905, Rose Punchard married Reverend Stanley Addleshaw who had been a curate at Little Downham, but had just become the vicar of Gorefield. On arrival in Ely, Edmund was enrolled at the King's School.

Alfred and Edmund were both educated at Hailebury in Hertfordshire (Alfred 1899-1904, Edmund 1902-08) and then went on to the Royal Military College at Sandhurst with the intention of following a career in the army.

Alfred was gazetted as a Second Lieutenant with the 2nd Battalion of the North Staffordshire Regiment on 7th November 1906 and joined his battalion at Mooltan in India on 15th January 1907. Promotions followed: Lieutenant 1st April 1909, Adjutant 1st January 1910 and Captain 24th March 1915. On 3rd September 1915 Alfred was slightly wounded when shot in the face in action on the North West Frontier "when 10,000 Mohmunds (sic,) crossed the border". He was fortunate, as the

Colonel of the Regiment and several officers fell in this action.

Alfred clearly spent some time at home in Ely on leave during the time he was stationed in India, as he frequently turned out for the City of Ely's cricket team, and in 1913 he is recorded as playing alongside Cecil Keenlyside who is also commemorated on the Ely War Memorial. He also played for the City of Ely Football Team in at least one match.

In October of 1916 Alfred volunteered to serve in Mesopotamia and was attached to the 7th Battalion. He was killed in action five months later to the north of Baghdad. His Colonel wrote: *"He fell most gallantly going into an attack on the enemy's trenches on the Mael Plain, north of Baghdad. He had been my Adjutant since he came out, and I cannot express the help he has been to me in everything; his cheerfulness under all conditions kept us all going."* Alfred was promoted to be Acting Major and second-in-command of the 7th Battalion on 10th February 1917, although he was not officially gazetted to this rank until 7th August, over four months after his death.

As the younger brother Edmund was four years "behind" Alfred in everything. He left Sandhurst in 1910 and was gazetted as Second Lieutenant in the Bedfordshire Regiment on the 5th October 1910. and promoted to Lieutenant on 11th June 1912. He served with his battalion in Bermuda (1910-11) and in South Africa (1912-14), being Brigade Signaller at Pretoria (1913-14).

However, it was Edmund who was the first of the two brothers to fight in the Great War, as his regiment was one of the first to be mobilised to fight in Belgium in an attempt to stem the German advance. They arrived at Zeebrugge on 8th October 1914 and spent several days marching around the countryside until finally ordered to entrench at Halte on the Menin-Ypres road on 15th October. A skirmish with Uhlans at Gheluvelt took place on 16th October, and the Battle of Ypres began on 17th October. The battalion came under heavy fire at Gheluvelt on 19th October, and was then sent into the trenches at Gheluvelt and around Baecleare. They continued under heavy fire for three days in the trenches without being relieved until 24th October. Back in the trenches again on 27th October they were once more under heavy shell fire. They fought with the Germans on the Menin-Gheluvelt road and in the adjoining woods on the 30th October. The British trenches were again under heavy shell fire on 31st October, and when the bombardment was over the troops were ordered to take the ridge from the Germans by advancing up the hill, over a turnip field, and along by the wood of Zandvorde. The ridge was won, but Edmund was killed in this attack as he led his platoon forward. Only 300 soldiers and one officer survived this action. They buried Lieutenant Edmund Punchard at Kruiseck, near Gheluvelt. He was mentioned in despatches by Field Marshall Sir John French for distinguished service in the field. (Despatch of 14th January 1915- see London Gazette 18th February) Although Edmund's resting place was known, it was later lost, and so his name can now be found on the Menin Gate.

After Edmund's death Canon Punchard sent a detailed letter of his son's experiences to Alfred Hayward, of the Sugar Loaf Hotel, 13 King Street, Luton, which was then printed in the Luton News of 1st April 1915.

Edmund and Alfred's father Canon Elgood Punchard retired in September 1915 but he and Catherine continued to live in Ely, in Setry House. The Punchard's son-in-law, the Reverend Stanley Addleshaw, succeeded Elgood as the next incumbent of St May's Ely. The bereaved father died on 2nd March 1917, just over three weeks before Alfred was killed in action in Iraq. His widow later moved to Wisbech. The Punchards were active in many charitable activities during the War, including Catherine's role as Commandant of the Voluntary Aid Detachment which assisted at the military hospital based in Silver Street.

While she was still grieving the death of her husband and sons, Catherine Punchard was again in the news in the October of 1917 when a maid in her house, whose pregnancy had gone undetected, was delivered of a baby girl who was then found drowned in a bath. The ultimate verdict of the inquest jury was that this was "death by misadventure", but the incident was described as an "Ely sensation" in the Cambridge Independent Press.

In 1919 Catherine received her sons' effects from the Army; these amounted to £40 for Edmund and just over £400 for Alfred. She died in hospital in Wisbech in December 1925.



Alfred and Edmund are commemorated on the Ely Market Place Memorial, the Memorial in St Mary's Church and on an additional family memorial plaque in the church. They are on Hailebury School's Roll of Honour, and Edmund is also listed on the King's School Memorial in Ely. Both brothers were also listed in "De Ruvigny's Roll of Honour 1914-1919", which was the main source for these short biographies.



2nd lieutenant Alfred PUNCHARD



Alfred PUNCHARD and fellow officers in India – Alfred standing fifth from left



Edmund PUNCHARD



Edmund and Alfred's father  
Canon Elgood PUNCHARD  
Vicar of Ely