

## William RAY

<b>Born</b>	1887
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	29th May 1916, age 29
<b>Buried</b>	Grave II. B. 31., Berks Cemetery Extension, Ploegsteert, Comines-Warneton, Hainaut, Belgium
<b>Unit</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Battalion Royal Fusiliers
<b>Rank</b>	Private, Service Number 10988
<b>Awards</b>	1914 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

Private **William Ray** who appears on the Ely Market Place Memorial and the Holy Trinity Memorial was a Londoner who rarely visited Ely, but his mother Mary Butty (1853) was born in Ely and returned to the City when she was widowed, and so asked for her son's name to be included on the Ely memorials.

Mary had married John Charles Ray (1851 St Pancras, London) in London and the records show that together they had 17 children, 5 of whom died in infancy. The Rays moved lodgings fairly frequently and the older children appear to have left the home as soon as they could find employment and other lodgings. At no point do the census records show the whole family together:

In the 1881 Census the Rays are at 10 Pleasant Road, Walworth. In the household with John and Mary, are four children, these are Alice (1875 Blackfriars), Frances (1878 Blackfriars), Thomas (1879 Southwark) and Annie (1880 Walworth). John was working as a packer in a factory.

By the 1891 Census the family was at 26 North Street, Newington, London. John does not appear on this record and could have been working elsewhere. In the house with Mary, are Annie, Amy (1884 Hackney), "Willie" himself (1887 Walworth) and Alfred (1889 Walworth). Mary was then working as a monthly nurse,

In 1901 Census the family can be found at 4 Earlsmead Road, Willesden. John is shown by his middle name as "Thomas Ray", and appears to be working as a shoemaker, while Mary was working at home as a laundress. This time the children in the household are shown as: Anne who is in service; John junior (1881 Walworth) who was a warehouse porter; Amy who was assisting her mother with the laundry work; William; Alfred; Nancy (1891 Walworth); Grace (1892 Paddington); Ethel (1895 Paddington); and Frederick (1897 Paddington).

John died in 1906 and Mary decided to move back to Ely, taking some of her younger children with her. In the 1911 Census she is shown living in West Fen Road and working again as a monthly nurse. The children who have come to Ely with her are her sons Alfred and Fred, now a farm worker and shepherd boy respectively, and her daughter Ethel who appears to have a hip condition. To help make ends meet, there was also a lodger from Scotland living with the family, this is James Anderson (1851) who was also a farm worker. William would have been about twenty when his mother moved away, and he decided to stay on in London, as did most of the rest of the family. In 1911 he was working as a labourer and lodging at 177 Whitechapel Road, Hounslow, in what was called "The Victoria Home". The "Victoria Homes", of which there were several, were large scale model "doss houses" or "poor men's hotels" with hundreds of dormitory sleeping cubicles, a general cooking kitchen and social areas. Living in a Victoria Home would actually have been a good preparation for army life!

William enlisted in the 1st Battalion of the London Regiment—the Royal Fusiliers—at Hounslow. This must have been before the outbreak of hostilities, as the 1st Battalion was a Regular Army Regiment based at Kinsale in Ireland, and William and his fellow soldiers reached France early in the conflict, on 7th September 1914.

William fought chiefly with the 1st Battalion, although he was attached to the 8th Battalion for a period. It is possible that at the times in the two years at the Front when he was given leave William

would visit his mother in Ely. The 1st Battalion was in action at Hooge in 1915. In 1916 they suffered in the German gas attack at Wulverghem and then moved to The Somme. William was killed in action before the major battles of the Somme began, somewhere near Ploegsteert Wood, most of the casualties in this cemetery fell in minor engagements or day to day trench warfare.

Mary was sent her son's effects, which amounted to £1 9s and a further £10 in 1919. The message she requested for his gravestone was "Sleep on Dear Son in Your Soldier's Grave R.I.P."

## Ernest REED

<b>Born</b>	1879
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	20th September 1917, age 38
<b>Buried</b>	Grave II. H. 10., Perth Cemetery (China Wall), Zillebeke, Ieper, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium
<b>Unit</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Battalion Hertfordshire Regiment
<b>Rank</b>	Private, Service Number 267408
<b>Awards</b>	British War Medal and Victory Medal

**Ernest Reed** (1879) was born in Woodville, Derbyshire, and was one of the seven sons and one daughter of Walter Reed (1843 Ashley Woulds, Leicestershire) and Mary Jane Marlow (1843 Ashley Woulds, Leicestershire). The other Reed children were: George (1863 Littleworth, Leicestershire); Alice (1864 Woodville); Walter (1867 Woodville); Allen (1870-1872 Woodville); Thomas (1874 Boulthorpe Lane, Leicestershire); Harold (1878 Woodville); and James (1880 Woodville).

In 1881 the Reeds were living in Woodville Road, Ashley Woulds, —the village straddles the county boundaries of Derbyshire and Leicestershire, so records vary as to which county the Reed family belong to, or even what their actual birthplace is! Ernest's father Walter was a coal merchant.

Ernest's older brother Walter obtained employment as a commercial traveller based in London and Ernest joined him living in the capital and at the age of twelve became a junior clerk. In the 1891 Census the brothers can be found living in Miss Susan Shepton's lodging house in Elliott Road, Chiswick. The next census shows that Ernest was in fact a coal merchant's clerk, so it is possible that the brothers were working for their father, or an associate of their father.

The 1901 Census brings less good news of Ernest, as he appears as an inmate of Wandsworth Prison.

On 6th October 1909 Ernest married Minnie Eliza Edwards (1872 Tring, Hertfordshire) at the Presbyterian Church in Watford and they settled at first at 29 Denmark Street, Watford. Ernest was then working as a house agent. By the outbreak of war the couple had moved to Ely and were living at "Ivy Dene", Field Side, Broad Street, and Ernest was again working as a clerk. The couple had probably come to Ely as Ernest's sister Alice, now Mrs Simon Callan, was already living in Broad Street.

Ernest enlisted in November 1915. On his attestation papers he incorrectly gives his age as forty ( he may have been exaggerating his age for some time as his wife was five years older than himself). His height was 5 feet 10 inches.

Ernest served first with the Army of Reserve then was on Home Service with the Hertfordshire Regiment from 1st May to 23rd November 1916; he was finally sent to France on 24th November and joined up with his unit in the field on 7th December. Just over a month before he began his Home Service, in late March 1916, Ernest's wife Minnie had died, leaving him with a young daughter, Margaret. He made his sister Alice Margaret's guardian, and she drew the wife's "separation allowance" of 5s a week to help keep the child.

Ernest was soon back in England, as he was in hospital at Christchurch in Hampshire from 30th March to 2nd May 1917 with hepatitis. On 11th June 1917 Ernest was posted to the 5th Reserve Battalion of the Hertfordshire Regiment on Home Service, and was not sent back to the 1st Battalion in the Field until 23rd August 1917. Less than a month later he was killed in action. on the opening day of the Battle of the Menin Road Ridge when his battalion was in the line at Image Crescent.

Ernest's effects were divided amongst his siblings George, Walter, William, Alice and James who each received 7 shillings. Had she lived, Minnie would have received a pension of 7s a week and Alice requested this for Margaret's upkeep.

Ernest was commemorated on the Ely Market Place Memorial and the Memorial in St Mary's Church

## John William RICE

<b>Born</b>	1882
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	19th August 1917, age 35
<b>Buried</b>	Grave II. K. 5., Noeux-Les-Mines Communal Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France
<b>Unit</b>	'C' Special Company, Royal Engineers
<b>Rank</b>	Pioneer, Service Number 192767
<b>Awards</b>	1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

The Cambridge Independent Press of 21st September 1917 reads:

*"Mrs Rice, late of Prickwillow, and now of Histon, has received the sad news of the loss of her son, Pioneer J. Rice who was killed in action on the Western Front. Pioneer Rice was in the Royal Engineers, and was formerly a driver in the Royal Field Artillery. He had been in France for two years and five months, and during that time had performed many gallant deeds. His last visit to his mother was in February of this year, and the last letter his mother received from him was written on the day previous to his being killed. A letter from Pioneer Rice's officer to his mother states "Pioneer Rice was killed in action on the morning of August 19th. He was returning from the trenches with a comrade, and was in the open about a mile from the front line, when he was struck by a fragment from a chance shell and killed instantly. He was buried in the afternoon in the cemetery of a village some miles behind the lines, where the grave can be kept in order. The whole section attended the burial service as a mark of respect to him. He had been with me as officer ever since he joined the company, and I had cause to regard him as one of the steadiest, most reliable and courageous of the section. I trust that the knowledge that he died a soldier's death, honourably and fearlessly, doing his duty, may to some degree lessen the pain of your sad bereavement."*

John William Rice was born in Prickwillow in 1882 to farm labourer James Rice (1861 Prickwillow) and Cinderella, aka Nellie, Willingham (1860 Prickwillow). John's younger siblings were: Elizabeth (1886 Prickwillow); Frances (1889 Prickwillow); Arthur (1892 Prickwillow); Rosetta (1894 Prickwillow); Florrie (1897 Queen Adelaide); and Ernest (1900 Queen Adelaide). James and Cinderella married in 1886 when their second child was on the way.

In 1891 the Rice family were at Shippea Hill. In 1901 they were living in tied accommodation on Clayway Farm on Third Drove outside Ely. James was a horsekeeper on the farm, and John was a yardman. In the 1911 Census the family was living on Littleport Road, Chettisham; John and Arthur were then general farm labourers, like their father, and Frances and Rosetta were working in a local shirt making factory. The family again moved together, this time to Pipers Hill, Ely Road, Littleport, which is where John was living, and working as a farm horseman, when he attested into the Royal Field Artillery on 23rd January 1915 (service number 88155). As the newspaper article shows, the parents, at least, then moved on to Impington Farm in Histon.



John reached his artillery unit in May of 1915. He served with the Royal Field Artillery as a driver and came home just after Christmas on seven days furlough, when his Prickwillow friends described him in the paper as "very cheerful, had plenty of money and weighed a stone heavier than when he went out. (His unit) had a jolly Christmas billeted in an abandoned farmhouse and had turkey, fowls, roast beef and plum pudding, mince pies and cake."

John was transferred to the Royal Engineers in July of 1916 and posted to their Special Brigade on 18th July 1916. The "Special Brigade" were actually specialists in the use of four inch mortars which could be used for firing smoke and poison gas, or be used as incendiary devices.

John's death took place near Bethune; as the newspaper article shows, he was just one of the thousands struck down by chance shellfire.

John's effects amounting to £12 5s 5d were sent to his mother, with a further £11 10s in 1919. she asked for his gravestone to bear the simple message "Rest in Peace".

John is remembered on the Ely Market Place Memorial.

## Percy RICHARDS

<b>Born</b>	1895
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	16th September 1916, age 21
<b>Commemorated</b>	Pier and Face 1 C and 2 A. Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France.
<b>Unit</b>	9 <sup>th</sup> Battalion Suffolk Regiment
<b>Rank</b>	Private, Service Number 3/8807
<b>Awards</b>	1914 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

**Percy Richards** (1895 Ely) was the only son of Joseph Richards (1832 Frome, Somerset) and Zillah Webb (1856 Prickwillow). His parents had married when Joseph left the army and the family lived on Joseph's army pension. Percy had four older sisters: Edith (1886 Brompton, Kent), Lillian Zillah (1888 Ely), Adelaide Rose (1890 Ely), and Gertrude (1893 Ely). The Richards had started their married life in the Medway area, but after a few years came to live near Zillah's family, and in the 1901 Census can be found in Babylon, Ely.

There was more than twenty years difference in age between Joseph and his wife Zillah, and when he died in July 1904 at the age of seventy-two, his son Percy was just nine years old. The family moved across the river to Waterside, and in the 1911 Census it is just the widowed Zillah, Gertrude (now a domestic servant), and Percy who are living together—Percy was working as a draper's errand boy. Percy's other sisters had all found live-in jobs in service nearby; Lillian was a parlourmaid in the Emerys' home in Silver Street, Edith was in service with the Aylings in Broad Street, and Adelaide was a cook in Dr Beckett's household ("St Audreys").

Percy enlisted in the Army before the War and reached France with the 2nd Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment on 22nd October 1914. He became one of the thousands who died on the Somme, and is listed amongst the "Missing". It was almost another six months before his family were officially informed that he was not missing, but killed in action.

Percy is remembered on the Ely Market Place Memorial and the Memorial in St Mary's Church.

## George Henry “Alfred” ROLFE

<b>Born</b>	1889
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	5th February 1916, age 27
<b>Buried</b>	Grave I. B. 25., Bur Spoilbank Cemetery, Ypres, Belgium
<b>Unit</b>	2nd Battalion, Suffolk Regiment
<b>Rank</b>	Private, Service Number 12823
<b>Awards</b>	1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

**George Henry Rolfe** was born on Burnt Fen early in 1889 to sixteen year old Annie Rolfe (1872 Lakenheath—probably Burnt Fen) . Later that year Annie married Riley Gipp who appears to have been George’s real father; two years later; in the 1901 Census George appears as George Henry Gipp, son of Riley Gipp (1870 Mildenhall).

In the 1891 Census the Gipps were living on Palmer’s Farm, Prickwillow, where Riley was a farm worker. By 1901 they were at “Aldershot” (the name of the farm on which they were living and working) near Lakenheath. This census gives the younger Gipp children as: Maude (1891 Burnt Fen), Arthur (1893 Burnt Fen), Claude (1896 Burnt Fen), and William (1900 Littleport). This time Riley’s name is shown as “Ranuel”. George had left school and started farm work. In this and the following census the children’s birthplaces should probably be understood to be on the Fens on the Cambridgeshire / Suffolk border, rather than the named towns.

In the 1911 Census the Gipps, still including George, can be found at 4 Redmere Terrace, Burnt Fen, near Littleport. George’s father’s full name is given on this census as “Raniel Ishmale Gipp”. George’s siblings are shown as Arthur, William, Bertha (1902 Mildenhall), Elsie (1905 Mildenhall), and Reggie (1911 Littleport). George’s brother Claude had died in 1910. George and Arthur were farm workers like their father. Their sister Maude had gone into service on Tower Farm, Little Downham.

George’s father Raniel aka Riley died late in 1911. In 1913 George’s widowed mother Annie married a local widower and fellow farm worker, William James Halls (1867 Burnt Fen).

At the outbreak of the War George enlisted in Ely with the 2nd Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment and reached the Front on 27th July 1915. The battalion was engaged in the Actions of Hooge, and the Second Attack on Bellewaarde. George was killed in action in 1916 at ‘The Bluff’ near Zillebeke, Ypres. The 2nd Suffolks were then in the Palingbeek area by the canal, having just relieved the 10th Royal Welsh Fusiliers in the trenches. George was the only casualty on that day (rarely, for an “Other Rank”, he is named in the war diary) which suggests the most likely cause of death as sniper fire.

On his gravestone George’s surname is spelt “Rolph” as this was the variant spelling of his real surname under which he had enlisted. (When a service was held at the growing market place war memorial in 1917 we see another variant of George’s name listed on the service sheet— G.H. Ralphe.)

George’s mother Mrs Anne Halls was sent his effects of £5 4s 8d and a further £6 in 1919. On the register of effects his death date is shown as 5th December 1916, but this is probably a clerical error with a “12” being substituted for a “2”.

George is commemorated on the Ely Market Place Memorial under the surname Rolfe, which was the name under which his birth was registered, but not the name he answered to for most of his life. George’s brother Arthur Gipp named a son (born 1919) “George Henry” after his own lost older brother.

Interestingly, when the family inserted an “In Memoriam” notice for George in the Ely Standard of



1921 the form they used was “ROLPH In loving memory of our dear son Private Alfred Gipp...” which tells us that, despite all the versions of his name in formal documentation, to his family he was actually Alfred and known by the family name! He is remembered under his name of Alfred Gipp on the Kenny Hill Memorial and was also under this name on the Mildenhall Memorial, although here his name was one of twenty removed from the monument to make room for the casualties of World War Two. It must be unusual for a man to be on different monuments under different names—perhaps the family wanted to use the name he was known by where it would be seen by those who remembered him best, but were told, or decided, they must use his official name for the Ely Memorial. George / Alfred is not the only man on the Ely Memorial who is recorded under an official name instead of the name in common usage.

## Ernest Abner ROYAL

<b>Born</b>	1885
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	1st July 1916, age 31
<b>Commemorated</b>	Pier and Face 6 B and 6 C., Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France
<b>Unit</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> Battalion East Surrey Regiment
<b>Rank</b>	Lance Corporal, Service Number G/5301
<b>Awards</b>	Military Medal, 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal.

**Ernest Royal** was born in Brandon, Suffolk, in 1885, but spent his early life in Ely where his father John Royal (1850 Brandon) was one of the local milkmen. Ernest's mother was Lilian Jane Mason (1851 Holborn Hill, London). Ernest's siblings who were also born in Brandon were: Lydia (1874); Joshua (1876); John (1878); Miriam (1880); and Priscilla (1887). Ernest himself was registered at birth as "Abner Ernest Royal" but the family always used his second name.

At the time of the 1891 Census the family was living in Lynn Road, Ely, and Joshua and John were doing farm work while Lydia was a laundress. The Royals stayed in the Ely area for some years, as the youngest child of the family, Grace, was born in Soham (possibly in the Fens) in 1893. However, in the next census, in 1901, John and Lilian with Miriam, Ernest and Grace can be found living in a cottage on Earham Road, Norwich; John was a yardman on a farm and Ernest was working as a general labourer, while Miriam was a housemaid.

Lilian died in 1903 and John married Mary Ann Sexton (1856 Stow Beden) in 1907. In the 1911 Census the family, now consisting just of John, Mary Ann and Ernest, was still in Earham Road and Ernest and John were working together as cowmen on the farm.

Several of the Royals had married and even remained in the Ely area, and this will be the reason that Ernest is commemorated on the Ely Market Place Memorial and the Holy Trinity Memorial as he would certainly have returned to the area to visit them. He also appears to have been working on a farm in Cambridgeshire in 1914, as he enlisted in Wisbech. His sister Lydia had married Thomas Gale of Ely in 1896, although by 1911 the Gales were living in Bury St Edmunds. Joshua had married Rose Nicholas of Ely in 1901 and they were in Wood Green, London, where Joshua was working for the railways. John was also working for Great Eastern Railways, but he and his wife Esther (nee Cross) had remained in Ely and were living in Waterside.

Ernest mobilised with the East Surrey Regiment and reached France on 27th July 1915. He was killed in action at Montauban in the Battle of Albert, the opening battle of the Somme. He was a posthumous recipient of the Military Medal for bravery in the field, which was officially awarded on 28th July 1917. This had been for his actions on reconnaissance duty in late March and early April where he had been spying out German positions and activity.

Ernest's effects were sent to his father John and amounted to £4 8s 4d with a further £8 in 1919.

## George Frederick ROYAL

<b>Born</b>	1898
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	20th November 1918, age 20
<b>Buried</b>	Grave S. III. II. 8., St. Sever Cemetery Extension, Rouen, Seine-Maritime, France
<b>Unit</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Battalion Suffolk Regiment
<b>Rank</b>	Private, Service Number 41402
<b>Awards</b>	British War Medal and Victory Medal



**George Frederick Royal** was the son of John Julian Royal (1877 Weeting, Norfolk) and Esther (nee Cross, 1877 Ely). He was born in Ely, as were his siblings Albert (1900), and Dorothy (1901). John Royal was a labourer in one of the Ely breweries and in 1901 the Royals lived in Broad Street, Ely. They then moved for a period to Newport in Essex where Daisy was born in 1902 and John in 1905. Thereafter they returned to Ely, where Arthur was born in 1906. A last baby, Benjamin, was born in November 1910 but lived only three days.

In the 1911 Census George can be found living with his widowed grandmother Rebecca Cross (1847 Prickwillow) on Waterside, Ely. Rebecca was working as a charwoman and also had a seventy– five year old widower, William Boarcock, lodging with her. George was still at school at this stage. The rest of the family were also living together in Waterside and John was employed as a railway porter by Great Eastern

Railways. As there were seven other members of the Royal family living in a four-roomed house, it is not surprising that George was “living out” with another member of the family.

George found employment as a “milk boy” for Mr S E Covill.

When George was conscripted in January 1917 he was placed in the Hertfordshire Regiment but then moved into the Bedfordshire Regiment, with whom he went out to France in the last week of August. After reaching the Front he served for a short period with the Cambridgeshires. A month later he was wounded in the left shoulder on 26th September and hospitalised in Lincoln. On his return to the Front he was placed in the 2nd Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment. In June 1918 George was wounded a second time, this time in the left hand.

George had the huge misfortune of surviving what was left of the War but dying in hospital at Rouen just over a week after the Armistice. The Cambridge Daily News of 29th November 1918 explained: *“Mr and Mrs Royal, Waterside, Ely, have been officially informed that their son, Pte. G.F. Royal, Suffolk Regiment, who had been ill with scarlet fever and bronchial pneumonia, passed away on November 20th. The news came as a great blow to the parents, after knowing that their son had seen the finish of the fighting, he had been previously wounded twice, having been in France six months. Pte. Royal was 20 years of age, and when called up was milk boy for Mr. Covill,”*

George’s father was sent his effects of £14 2s 1d.

John Royal and the family later moved into GER accommodation at Peterborough Crossing, Queen Adelaide. Here their youngest daughter Evelyn was born in 1919.

George is remembered on the Ely Market Place Memorial. His grave in Rouen bears the simple message “Gone But Not Forgotten”.

## Harold Thomas ROYSTON

<b>Born</b>	1898
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	1st August 1916, age 18
<b>Buried</b>	Grave B. 859., Ely Cemetery
<b>Unit</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> Battalion, Suffolk Regiment
<b>Rank</b>	Private, Service Number 15980
<b>Awards</b>	British War Medal and Victory Medal

The Cambridge Independent Press of 28th July read:

*"Pte H. T. Royston, Suffolks, son of Mr and Mrs Marshall, Silver Street, has been seriously wounded. His injuries consist of two broken legs, a fractured back, and a bullet wound in his body."*

Harold did not survive his injuries; he was brought back to England and died in the military hospital at Edmonton. He was returned to his home, and buried in Ely Cemetery.

**Harold** was the eldest son of John Thomas Royston (1866 Ely) and Rose Hannah Dunham (1872 Manea). When the 1901 Census was taken three year old Harold was in hospital in Cambridge. His parents and his younger brother Herbert (1901 Ely) were then living in Parade Lane, Ely. John was working as a "vermin destroyer". The family later moved to Cambridge Road.

While in Ely the family attended the Countess of Huntingdon Church where Harold was a member of the Sunday School. The family kept a framed copy of the Ten Commandments which had been given to Harold by his Sunday School teacher, Mr Bearcock.

Harold's brother Herbert died in October 1904 and this was followed by the death of his father John in August 1905; just a few months later his mother Rose married Samuel Marshall (1876 Fridaybridge, Cambridgeshire). Samuel was a farm worker, and the family live on Burnt Fen where their son Fred Marshall was born in 1909. In the 1911 Census they had moved again and were living in a three roomed cottage on Gedney Marsh near Holbeach, Lincolnshire; there was also a new baby in the house, one month old Constance. Harold was listed on the census return with his stepfather's surname of Marshall.

As the newspaper account shows, the Marshalls had moved back to Ely and were living in Silver Street. When soldiers and a bugle band came to Ely Fair on a recruiting drive in November 1914 for the new 11th Suffolk Regiment Harold enlisted with his friends. Harold enlisted under his original surname of Royston.

The 11th Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment reached France in January 1916 and was part of the Battle of Albert, the Battle of Bazentin Ridge, and the Battle of Pozieres Ridge. It was probably in this last battle that Harold received the horrific wounds which cost him his life; he had both legs broken, his back was fractured and he had also been shot.

Rose was sent Harold's effects which consisted of £4 12s 10d with a further £8 in 1919.

Harold was the first casualty of the War to be buried in Ely Cemetery. Families drew their house blinds along the route from Silver Street to the cemetery. The burial was attended by members of the Volunteer Training Corps, wounded soldiers from the hospital and any Ely men home on leave. The stretcher bearers of the VC carried the coffin under the command of Sergeant Lown. Floral tributes included one from the Bishop and Mrs Chase (an event so remarkable in itself that this was the sub-heading of the newspaper article on the funeral). However, the ceremony did not include the usual military honours, such as firing a volley over the grave or sounding the Last Post, and this caused comment in the Letters Pages of the Ely Standard. (Later burials at the cemetery *did* include these ceremonials.)

Harold was commemorated on the Ely Market Place Memorial and also the Memorial in St Mary's Church. By the time these memorials were created his mother and stepfather had moved to Station Road, Great Wilbraham.

## Frederick RUMBELOW

<b>Born</b>	18th April 1887
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	3rd May 1917, age 27
<b>Commemorated</b>	Bay 7., Arras Memorial, Pas de Calais, France
<b>Unit</b>	12 <sup>th</sup> Battalion Middlesex Regiment
<b>Rank</b>	Private, Service Number G/29787
<b>Awards</b>	British War Medal and Victory Medal

**Frederick Rumbelow** was born in Clayway Drove, Queen Adelaide, which was the family home of the Rumbelows for over forty years. His father was John Rumbelow (1848 West Row, Mildenhall, Suffolk) who worked for Great Eastern Railways as a labourer and platelayer for all his working life. His mother was Sarah Oakey (1854, Nornea, Ely). The Rumbelows were a large family, as the census records show:

1891 Census—the household was made up of John and Sarah and their children Tom (1874), Arthur (1876), Edward (1878), Alice (1881), Harry (1883), Eliza (1885), Frederick (1887), and Annie (1889). Frederick's older brothers Tom, Arthur and Edward were all farm workers. Two older sisters Emma (1871) and Mary (1872), who were both born in Chettisham, had already moved out of home.

1901 Census -John and Sarah had five children at home, these were Edward who was a railway platelayer, Henry who was a railway porter, Frederick who had found employment as a farm worker, Anne and their youngest son Sidney (1894).

By the 1911 Census John and Sarah had Henry and Frederick left at home. Also in the house were Frederick's widowed sister Alice, now Mrs Scott, and her two sons who had been born in Enfield, London—Arthur (1904) and Cecil (1900). John was still working on the railways, and Frederick and Henry were still farm workers, while Alice was contributing to the family income as a charwoman.

On 7th October 1911 Frederick married Hilda Mason (1889 Manea) at Manea and they set up home at 43, New Barns Rd., Ely, (later 4 New Barns Road) Their daughter Grace was born in 1912 , followed by their sons John (1913) and Frederick (1916). After his marriage Frederick worked as a maltster and the family lived in the Council Cottages.

Frederick's father John died on 27th December 1915 when he was hit by a train. The detailed newspaper report makes for gruesome reading: *"An Ely platelayer named John Rumbelow was cut to pieces near the Ely Junction North Signal Box. He was working in the line with other platelayers and it appears that, owing to the gale which was blowing, they did not hear the train approaching.... he had been a platelayer for 41 years...he had lost the sight in his right eye..he ruptured himself when lifting a rail some twenty years ago... verdict accidental death."*



When Frederick was called up in May of 1916 he served with the Middlesex Regiment on the Somme and as part of the Arras Offensive. About ten weeks after he arrived in France, Frederick went missing in action on the first day of the Third Battle of the Scarpe in May 1917, but it was not until March of 1918 that Hilda was finally notified that he was presumed dead. When he went missing the letter sent to Hilda read: *"We attacked in the early hours of May 3rd and on holding a roll call after a very severe battle no trace could be found of your husband....a good soldier, cool in action, always willing to lend a hand in a tight corner."* This was the early morning attack on Cherisy where the battalion was driven back in some disarray by heavy machine gun fire. They were fighting alongside the 7th Buffs, and Ely man William Lee died in the same action as Frederick as a result.

Frederick left his wife £219 12s 1d in his will. The "effects" forwarded to her from the Army amounted to 6s 10d with a further £6 in 1919.

Frederick's mother Sarah died in April 1919 and his son John Rumbelow died in October 1919, aged five.

Frederick Rumbelow is remembered on the Ely Market Place Memorial and the Holy Trinity Memorial. He is also named on his father's gravestone in Ely Cemetery.