

## Ernest Leonard

<b>Born</b>	1897
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	6th April 1916, age 19
<b>Commemorated</b>	Grave I.C.21, Rue David Military Cemetery, Fleurbaix, Pas de Calais
<b>Unit</b>	11th Battalion Suffolk Regiment
<b>Rank</b>	Private, Service Number 15944
<b>Awards</b>	British War Medal and Victory Medal



For some reason nineteen year old **Ernest Leonard** does not appear on the Prickwillow war memorial, although he appears in the Ely Standard as a soldier from Prickwillow. However, he was born in Soham Fen, and he is named on the Soham memorial.

Ernest was from a family of farm labourers. In the 1911 census he is found with his family at Black Wing Drove, Fodder Fen, Soham. The family were all born in Soham or on the Fen and consisted of father George (1868), mother Sarah (nee Smith 1868), Alfred (1889), George (1890), Henry (1893), Sarah Malinda (1895), John (1899), Ellis (1902), Rebecca (1908) and Arthur (1910). Two other farm workers were boarding with the family at this time. In 1911 Ernest was already a farm labourer like his father and brothers.

Late in 1915 Ernest married Alice Maud M Bloxam (1895 Cherry Hinton) before he enlisted at Ely and went to war. It was not many weeks before Alice heard from his company commander: "your husband met his death last night about ten o'clock. He was working with others deepening a trench and trying to make it safer, when a bullet entered his chest. He became unconscious almost at once and died very soon afterwards. Nothing could be done to save his life. We have lost a good soldier..."

## George Battley LING

<b>Born</b>	4th January 1891
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	10th May 1915, age 23
<b>Commemorated</b>	Panel 51 and 53., Menin Gate, Ypres, West Vlaanderen, Belgium
<b>Unit</b>	4th Battalion, King's Royal Rifle Corps
<b>Rank</b>	Rifleman, Service Number Y/211
<b>Awards</b>	1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

This soldier does not appear on an Ely war memorial, but the Cambridge Independent Press of 21st May 1915 carries this article:

*"Private **G.B. Ling** of the King's Royal Rifles, has died of wounds. He was formerly employed in the shop of Messers Peck, ironmongers, High Street, Ely, and frequently played in the City Football Team. Pte. Ling, who has a brother in the Suffolk Yeomanry, was wounded on two previous occasions."*

**George Battley Ling** had actually been born in Tapakuna, Auckland, New Zealand, early in 1891, when his parents William Page Ling (1850 Ipswich, Suffolk) and Christina Morrison (1866 Alloa, Scotland) were settled there for several years. The Lings had been farmers in New Zealand for a time, but at the time of their marriage in Mt Roskill, Auckland, in 1889 William was an engineer.

George's brother William Morrison Ling, who was one year older, had also been born in Mount Edan, New Zealand, as had a younger brother, Frederick, born in 1892. The boys' twin siblings Henrietta and John were born in March 1896, also in Mount Edan, but lived only a few weeks, their death then, disastrously, being followed by that of the father of the family, William, on 21st June 1896 in Sydney, Australia.

Christina Ling brought her surviving sons back to England and so when the Lings appeared on the 1901 Census they were living at 6 Neale Street, Ipswich. Ipswich had been William Ling's family's original home. In this census Christina is shown as a widow living on her own means, and this included being able to afford a servant to look after the house for herself and the boys.

By 1911 all three Ling sons had left home and Christina was left alone at Floral Villas, Hutland Road, Ipswich with just a sixteen year old servant, Daisy Renel. (Christina died in Ipswich in 1925, the year after William decided to return to New Zealand.) George attended Ipswich Municipal School, and then served a four year apprenticeship at the iron foundry of Messers Portway and Sons in Halstead, Essex—these were the famous makers of "tortoise stoves".

In the years immediately before the War George had left Essex and was working at Pecks in Ely as an assistant ironmonger and boarding with the Fenns at 5 Chapel Street (although when he volunteered he gave his address as his mother's home of 252 Spring Road in Ipswich). He was a member of Ely Constitutional Club (at least 47 members of the Ely Constitutional Club were in the forces by January 1917 and, of these, Cecil Keenlyside, George Ling, Corporal Charles Aveling (of March) and Thomas Yarrow laid down their lives).

George Ling was one of the early volunteers, enlisting on 29th August 1914 in Marylebone and reaching France on 13th December. His papers describe him as 5 feet 5 1/4 inches tall with a fresh complexion, fair hair and blue eyes. George was killed in action at the Battle of Festubert six months later. His family was sent his few personal possessions which consisted of four personal letters, Kitchener's letter, his medical card and a token.

George Battley Ling is remembered on the war memorial at Christchurch Park, Ipswich.

## W. NEWTON

<b>Born</b>	
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	age
<b>Buried at or Commemorated</b>	
<b>Unit</b>	Irish Fusilliers
<b>Rank</b>	Service Number
<b>Awards</b>	British War Medal and Victory Medal

**W. Newton** appears in Ely only on the Choristers' Memorial in Ely Cathedral—he was a chorister from 1884 to 1888.

The newspaper record concerning the erection of the Choristers' Memorial in Ely Cathedral states that W. Newton fought and died with the Irish Fusiliers. The details of his service have yet to be confirmed. There is no death of an Irish Fusilier called Newton on the Commonwealth War Graves record.

It is possible that the soldier was the Walter Newton who was born in Littleport in the winter of 1875, who appears to be the only W. Newton of the right age in the area to be a chorister 1884-88. He was the second son of James (1843 Oxloode) and Sarah (1844 Littleport) Newton and had brothers John (1873), James (1883) and Percy (1886), and an older sister Susan (1871); the family lived in Station Road, Littleport. The Newtons were a labouring family, and unfortunately what may have been their son Walter's term as a chorister does not coincide with a census to allow a confirmation of this identification. The 1891 Census shows Walter as an errand boy for the Post Office; later, by 1901, he was living with his married brother John in West Ham and the two brothers were railway ticket collectors for Great Eastern Railways. Walter has not been located in the 1911 Census and so may have joined the forces by this stage. However, if he was indeed a war casualty one would expect Walter to appear on the Littleport memorial—he does not.

A slightly older W. Newton who lived in Broad Street, Ely, was Walter Edward Simpson Newton (1871 Huntingdon) whose father Walter was a brewer's traveller. This Walter did indeed join the army and fought in the Boer War. However, there is no indication that Walter fought in the Great War, and he died in the 1930s after a long life of service with the Post Office at Garboldisham in Suffolk.

Was W. Newton perhaps a pupil at Ely's King School? We know that at least one former pupil was omitted from the school's memorial plaque—could there have been another?

*If anyone can help with the identification of this casualty do get in touch through the website contacts page.*

### Theodore “Theo” PALMER

<b>Born</b>	1st September 1891
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	17th January 1918, age 27
<b>Buried</b>	Grave 526, Swaffham Prior Cemetery, Cambridgeshire
<b>Unit</b>	4th/1st Battalion, Cambridgeshire Regiment
<b>Rank</b>	Private, Service Number 2646
<b>Awards</b>	British War Medal and Victory Medal

**Theodore Palmer** was born late in September 1891 at Prickwillow, and was the son of Thomas Palmer and Sarah Ann (nee Hamey) . Thomas was a farmer who had been born in Prickwillow and Sarah Ann was from nearby Chippenham. Theo's older siblings, all born in Prickwillow, were: George (1880); Florence (1882); Edith (1885); and Adeline aka Adelaide aka “Addie” (1889).

In 1901 the family (consisting then of the parents and two youngest children) was at Hengrave in Suffolk where Thomas was a farm foreman. However, a few weeks after the Census the Palmers moved to Stapleford in Hertfordshire, where Addie and Theo were enrolled at the village school on 25th May, only to be withdrawn on 30th September, when the family must have moved on again.

By the 1911 Census Thomas Palmer no longer described himself as a “ farmer” or “foreman” but as a “farm labourer”. The family was back living at Riverside, Prickwillow and George was employed as a yardman on a farm, while Addie was a horsekeeper. Nineteen year old Theo was looking for a different career path at this stage, and was working as a grocer’s assistant.

Theo was a local Territorial and enlisted with others of his battalion on 7th September 1914. He was discharged on 22nd June 1916 due to sickness and being no longer fit for service—being granted Silver War Badge 93766. The report of his later death in January 1918 simply states “he became weaker and weaker until death claimed him”. By the time of his death his family had moved to Rose Cottage, Bondgate, Swaffham Prior, and so it was in this village that Theo was buried. As a discharged soldier he was buried with full military honours and given an official CWGC gravestone.

Theo is remembered on the memorial in St Mary’s Church, Swaffham Prior.

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## Sidney PATE

<b>Born</b>	30th September 1893
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	21st April 1915, age 21
<b>Commemorated</b>	Panel 24 - 26 - 28 - 30, Menin Gate, Ypres
<b>Unit</b>	F Company, 14th Battalion Canadian Infantry
<b>Rank</b>	Private, Service Number 26238
<b>Awards</b>	1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

Sidney Pate was the son of George Pate (1856 Little Downham) and Emily Hard (1859 Prickwillow), who lived at 70, St. Mary's Street, Ely, but was one of several men with Ely links who fought with the Canadians.

Sidney was born in Witcham where his father George farmed at College Farm and the family lived in the farm house. (The farm's name came from the fact that George had bought it from Clare College, Cambridge.) Sidney's siblings were also born in Witcham and were Charlie (1884), Harry (1885), Olive (1886), Thomas (1888), Alice (1891) and Allen (1893).

The 1911 Census shows most of the Pate children still living on the farm at Witcham, but although his brothers were working with their father, Sidney had become a clerk with Great Eastern Railways at Ely.

At some point between 1911 and 1915 George and Emily moved into Ely while their sons took over the running of the farm, and Sidney himself emigrated to Canada.

Sidney enlisted with the 14th Battalion of the Canadian Infantry; this was The Royal Montreal Regiment" which shows Sidney had gone to that area of Quebec. The battalion was formed in September 1914 and first spent time in camp training in England on Salisbury Plain. They reached France on 15th February 1915. Sidney was to survive for just over two months at the front.

On the day of Sidney's death the battalion was in the trenches at St Julien. The trenches themselves were in a bad condition, but there was little activity, as over four days the force had "only" seven killed and fifteen wounded. One of the dead must have been Sidney.

Sidney is commemorated on the memorial in Witcham and, in Canada, on page 32 of the Memorial Book of the First World War in the Peace Tower in Toronto.

## George PAYNE

<b>Born</b>	1899
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	15th September 1918, age 19
<b>Buried</b>	Grave I. B.7, Lagnicourt Hedge Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France
<b>Unit</b>	1st Battalion, Welsh Guards
<b>Rank</b>	Private, Service Number 3679
<b>Awards</b>	British War Medal and Victory Medal



George Payne appears in the Ely Standard as an Ely soldier although he does not appear on the city's war memorial. He was born at Little Ouse Bank, lived at Brandon Bank, and then Prickwillow, and enlisted at nearby Newmarket.

George came from a large family of labourers. His parents were George Payne (1876) and Hannah Jones Barber (1875) and his siblings were: Susan (1886); William (1888); Mary Annie (1890); John (1892); Ruth (1895); Mabel (1897); Sidney (1900); Elliot (1903); Elsie (1905); Ivy May (1909). The family moved around the Fens and in 1901 and 1911 were to be found at Brandon Bank, working on the farms.

George volunteered in September of 1914 and ended up serving with the Welsh Guards. In the last few months of the War and was killed near Bapaume along with five other members of his regiment when a shell landed amongst them as they were moving up to the front line.

George senior was sent his son's effects amounting to £3 11s 6d.

### Frederick “Fred” PEACOCK

<b>Born</b>	1893
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	1st August 1917, age 24
<b>Buried at</b>	Grave IV. A. 46, Boulogne Eastern Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France
<b>Unit</b>	8th Battalion Suffolk Regiment
<b>Rank</b>	Private, Service Number 16660
<b>Awards</b>	British War Medal and Victory Medal

**Fred Peacock** was born in Stuntney into a large family of farm workers. His father William (1861) was a Soham man, but his mother Rachel (1863 nee Watson) was originally from West Ham in London. In the 1901 Census the family was living on Nornea Farm at Stuntney and along with Fred there were his siblings: Eunice (1883); Eliza (1885); George (1888); William (1889); John (1898); and Gladys (1900), all born at Stuntney.

By 1911 the Peacocks had moved to the Shade in Soham, where not only William was a farmworker, but Fred and his brothers William, George and John were also working on the farm with their father.

Early in 1914 Fred married Jane Reeve and they lived at Mill Corner, and then Water Side, Soham. The couple had two daughters: Gladys in the Spring of 1914 and Jeanie who was born in 1917 around the time of her father's death and whom he probably never saw.

Fred's father William died late in 1914.

When he was called up Fred enlisted at Newmarket and was placed with the 11th Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment, although he was later moved into the 8th Battalion. He was probably fighting in the Battle of the Scarpe at Arras in May 1917, but was then wounded during the three day Battle of Pilckem Ridge at Ypres and later died of his wounds in hospital at Boulogne.

Jane was sent Fred's effects of £3 19s 6d and a settlement of £12 10s in 1919. She asked for Fred's grave to bear the message "Rest in Peace" and placed his name on the Soham Memorial.

*Fred's brother John was also to die in war, but in his case it was World War Two when he perished at sea on 17th June 1940 on the SS Lancastria.*

## Albert Julian PELL

<b>Born</b>	19th November 1863
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	28th August 1916 age 52
<b>Buried at</b>	Ashes interred Wilburton Church
<b>Unit</b>	4th Battalion Suffolk Regiment attached Divisional Staff
<b>Rank</b>	Major
<b>Awards</b>	Did not serve abroad

In October 1917 a memorial brass was placed in the south aisle of Ely Cathedral to commemorate the life and work of Albert Julian Pell of Wilburton Manor who had died on active service. A few days later his ashes were interred in a niche in the church at Wilburton. He is commemorated on the war memorial at Wilburton with his brother, but because of the memorial in the cathedral he is also included here.

Albert Julian Pell was the eldest son of the Reverend Henry St John Beauchamp Pell (1824 London) and Caroline Maria Tyndall (1833 Stonehouse, Devon). Albert's father was rector of Ickenham (near Uxbridge) in Middlesex, where Albert was born in 1863. Albert had two younger siblings: Beauchamp Tyndall (1866 Bloomsbury) and Margaret Louisa Julia (1868 Ickenham).

Albert was educated first at Twyford School and then went on to Winchester College (1877-1882)



where he was a school prefect in his final year. From Winchester he matriculated at Merton College, Oxford, in 1882, taking his degree in 1887 with Honours in Jurisprudence, and in 1890 was called to the bar by Lincoln's Inn.

At the same time Albert joined the militia, the Suffolk Regiment, as a Second Lieutenant in 1883, he was made Captain in 1890 and then promoted to Honorary Major in 1898.

Albert married Catherine Marion Greene on 17th June 1897. His wife was a descendant of the Plantagenets through the Warwick-Percy line. The couple had two daughters: Angela Lilian Adelaide (1899) and Barbara Katherine (1903).

Albert's mother died in 1902 and his father in 1907.

After the death of his uncle Claude Pell in 1901 Albert and his family lived with his uncle Albert Pell the elder at Wilburton Manor, where Albert acted as steward, and then inherited the manor on his uncle's death in 1907. In the 1901 census Albert describes himself as a farmer—the manor included about 1,000 acres in Wilburton and in two fields in Grunty Fen.



Albert held a significant number of senior posts on Isle of Ely and county organisations he:

- Was on the Isle of Ely County Council from 1892 and Vice-Chairman from 1913
- Was a Justice of the Peace and Chairman of the Quarter Sessions of the Isle of Ely
- From 1893 was a Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire
- On the Isle of Ely Education Committee, chairing the Elementary Sub-committee
- Chairman of the Ely Board of Guardians (the workhouse)
- Vice-Chairman of the Isle of Ely Territorial Association from its formation
- A lay member of the Diocesan Synod
- For 13 years Chairman of the General Committee of Addenbrooke's Hospital

The newspaper recorded: "His life was one of untiring devotion to public duty in this county."

In 1913 several newspaper records of county meetings indicate that Albert was seriously ill and unable to attend as usual. Nevertheless, by the outbreak of war he was sufficiently recovered to be gazetted honorary captain in the Suffolk Regiment in September 1914. He then qualified as a musketry instructor and was gazetted to the General Staff as a Brigade Major, Northern Area, Western Command.

Meanwhile came the unhappy news that Albert's brother Beauchamp, a Lieutenant-Colonel in the Queen's Royal West Surrey Regiment, had been badly wounded at Gheluvelt, in the First Battle for Ypres, on 31st October 1914. Pinned down by heavy shellfire it was impossible to move him, and he was subsequently captured by the Germans who took him to the Field Hospital at Werwick, Belgium, where he was operated on but died a few days later on 14th November 1914.

Albert himself continued to serve in the north of England. He died suddenly of a cerebral haemorrhage while going on duty at Tattenhall near Chester. His ashes were brought back to Wilburton. His estate was valued at £9427 3d. He was succeeded as lord of the manor by his nephew Beauchamp Stewart Pell.

### (Everard) Marsden PORTER

*M Porter appears in Ely only on the memorial in St Mary's Church and has been impossible to identify with total confidence. The most likely local candidate to be this man is Everard Marsden Porter (normally known as Marsden) who appears on the Haddenham Village Memorial.*

<b>Born</b>	11th September 1893
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	6th August 1918, age 24
<b>Buried</b>	Grave XI.C.14, Suda Bay War Cemetery, Chania, Crete, Greece.
<b>Unit</b>	Royal Air Force, (formerly Royal Naval Air Service),
<b>Rank</b>	Lieutenant
<b>Awards</b>	1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

**Everard Marsden Porter's** parents were Everard Lavender Porter (1867 Haddenham) and Sarah Elizabeth Marsden (1867 Birmingham). His siblings, all born in Haddenham, were: Dorothy (1895); Winifred (1897); Minnie (1899); Cicely (1900); Kathleen (1904); Joseph (1906); and Phyllis (1908). Marsden was also born in Haddenham, but gave his birthplace as Ely on his Naval records.

In the 1901 Census "Everard M" is shown staying with his Porter grandmother Mary and his aunts and uncle in the main family home, "the Manor" on Station Road, Haddenham. The rest of his immediate family was living in Haddenham High Street at the family's butcher shop. Everard senior described himself as both a farmer and a butcher. Marsden attended Soham Grammar School and then Cambridge County School.

By the 1911 Census Marsden's family were all living at the Manor in Station Road where they were farming and growing fruit, and Marsden was shown as assisting on the farm. However, he was in fact studying engineering by the outbreak of the Great War,

Marsden had a varied War career, as he volunteered at the outbreak of the War for the Huntingdon Cyclist Corps (on home defence), then transferred into the Royal Navy where he was part of their Armoured Car Section serving at Gallipoli. He served with the Royal Naval Air Service (Service Number F3117 ) from 16th January 1915 to 15th February 1916, first on Pembroke III and then, from April 1915, on President II. He received flight training and joined HMS Ark Royal as a Flight Sub-Lieutenant in October 1917 to fly Short Type 184 and Sopwith Baby aircraft around the Dardanelles. By late 1917 he was flying seaplanes in anti-submarine patrols over the southern Aegean Sea. He then became a Lieutenant in the newly created Royal Air Force and was based on Crete at the Suda Bay Seaplane Base.



On 6th September 1918 the Cambridge Independent Press carried an article detailing Marsden's life and unfortunate death:

*"We deeply regret to record the fact that Lieut. E. Marsden Porter, R.A.F., eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. Everard L. Porter, of the Manor, Haddenham, was drowned while scouting in the Aegean Sea. The young officer, who was in his 25th year, was educated at Soham Grammar School and Cambridge County School, and being of an engineering turn of mind, devoted his studies in that direction until the outbreak of the war, when he joined the Huntingdon Cyclist Corps*

*in September 1914. In the following December transferred into the Royal Naval Armoured Car Section. with which he was drafted for active service in the East August 1915, and was at Gallipoli onwards until the evacuation. Afterwards he went to Egypt, and on returning to England and the disbandment of the Armoured Car Section, he obtained a commission in the Royal Naval Air Service, and obtained his pilot's certificate in September. 1916. In November 1917 he was drafted again to the East Mediterranean and attached one of H.M. ships, upon which he was dispatched thither only a fortnight before he met with the unfortunate accident which resulted in the loss of a young life full of promise for the future, evidenced the following extracts from a letter dated August 8th, received from Commanding Officer confirming the sad news of his death:-*

*"I regret exceedingly having to cause further anguish, but I feel that you and your son's relatives and friends must be anxiously awaiting details of the circumstances attending on the occurrence which unfortunately ended a life abounding in promise of fame and honour in the service of his King and country. "Lieut. Porter had only joined this station from Base Headquarters a fortnight ago. but in few days had made himself beloved by every one of his messmates by his never-failing optimism and cheerfulness. He was engaged in scout duty in connection with suppression of the submarine menace and was flying of. seaplane on which he was singularly skilful. On the morning of the 6th he left at dawn in the most peaceful calm weather: in fact, such conditions as to necessitate extra caution in landing, as the water, being mirror-like, is most deceiving, and most difficult to locate the surface. On returning to make the landing his machine was seen to fly at maximum speed straight into the water, and eye-witnesses say there was doubt at all that the pilot was confident that he was still a fair height from the water. The machine was completely wrecked, and sank instantly. When the wreck was brought ashore the pilot was found entangled among wires and other fabric, and resuscitation was begun at once. After 35 minutes work. Dr. Loutitt, R.N.V.R.. declared life extinct.*

*"The obsequies were held the same day, he being accorded an Air Force funeral, with full honours. There was large attendance of military and naval officers, well as diplomatic representatives of England, France. Italy, and Russia. The local garrison kindly loaned their hand and a large escort. There were several lovely wreaths"*

In his will Marsden left his effects of £235 4s 4d to his father.

The "In Memoriam" notice in the Cambridge Independent Press suggests Marsden's young lady (fiancée?) was Miss Phyllis Hitch. Phyllis was the daughter of local law clerk John Hitch and her family lived in Egremont Street, Ely. This may explain the appearance of M Porter on the St Mary's memorial—the church in which the couple would have married.

## Thomas RICH

<b>Born</b>	1888
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	20th July 1916. age 28
<b>Buried at or Commemorated</b>	Pier and Face 1 C and 2 A. Thiepval Memorial Somme, France.
<b>Unit</b>	2nd Battalion, Suffolk Regiment
<b>Rank</b>	Private , Service Number 20244
<b>Awards</b>	British War Medal and Victory Medal

**Thomas Rich** was another son of a soldier who was born in Ely when his father, Colour Sergeant Rich, was stationed there as an officer in the Militia. His mother, (Mary) Elizabeth Denton (1869, Ely), was a local girl who married her soldier James William Cookman Rich (1859, Gillingham, Kent) in 1886. Thomas was their eldest child (1888 Ely), and a further three children were born in Ely—Alice (1892), James (1894) and George (1895). The family then moved to Cambridge where Harry was born in 1897, and then to Linton where Ida was born in 1898 and William in 1901.

In 1901 Elizabeth and the children were living in Mill Lane, Linton, but James was absent as he was in barracks at Little Warley, Essex.

Thomas had two more brothers: John who was born in Linton in 1902 and then Frederick who was born in 1903 in Newport Pagnell in Buckinghamshire. The family had moved to 7 Abbey Terrace, Newport Pagnell when James retired from the army and started drawing his army pension, supplementing this with working as a night watchman in a motor carriage works. Thomas found work in the town as a brewer's labourer.

As a reservist, Thomas' father James was called up for the Army of Reserve in 1914; he was reinstated as a colour sergeant and was on home service throughout the war. Thomas enlisted at Wolverton in Buckinghamshire, and as he too was placed in the Suffolk Regiment, his father's regiment, he may well have met up with men he had known from his childhood in Ely.

The Buckinghamshire Advertiser and Free Press of 12th February 1916 reported that Thomas was in No. 2 General Hospital in Boulogne suffering from a gunshot wound in the hand. He obviously recovered sufficiently to return to the Front where he was killed in action later that year on the Somme, probably on the Bazentin Ridge.

Thomas' effects, sent to his father, amounted to £6 8d, with a further £4 in 1920.

Thomas' grandmother, Ann Denton, still lived in Ely with her adopted daughter Ethel Haynes after the Richs moved away. However, Thomas' father's address on demobilisation in 1919 was West Fen Road in Ely, which shows that Elizabeth had moved back home to Ely during the war, perhaps both to look after her mother and to be nearer her husband. The Richs then permanently resettled in Ely, and asked to include Thomas' name on the memorial of the local church.

Thomas is remembered on the main Newport Pagnell Memorial as well as the memorial in St Mary's Church in Ely.

## Francis aka Frank SELLARS

<b>Born</b>	1896
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	11th September 1916,
<b>Commemorated</b>	Pier and Face 9 A 9 B and 10 B Thiepval Memorial
<b>Unit</b>	Hunts Cyclist Battalion attached to Hampshire Regiment or Royal Warwickshire Regiment
<b>Rank</b>	Lance Corporal, Service Number 30228
<b>Awards</b>	British War Medal and Victory Medal

**Frank Sellars** had worked in Curry's Cycle Store of Ely's Fore Hill before the War, for four years as a store manager, The Ely Standard reports that *"he was very popular with the many customers who frequented that establishment, his courtesy and affability making him an extremely useful employee."*

Frank enlisted at the outbreak of the War and reached the Front in mid-1916. He served abroad for only six weeks and was killed instantaneously on his second time in the trenches. Before he went into the line he had written a postcard to Mr Atkins, the local manager for Curry's, saying that he was well and would write shortly.

The Ely Standard article stated that, unsurprisingly, Frank had enlisted at Huntingdon and at first been on Home Service with the Hunts Cyclist Battalion guarding the East Anglian coastline but was thereafter attached to the Hampshire Regiment. The available records show he in fact served with the Warwickshire Regiment and was rightly "Francis" Sellars and the son of William (a farm worker) and Elizabeth Sellars, of Vine St., Billingborough, Lincolnshire. Surprisingly this information demonstrates that Frank had actually become the manager of Ely's cycle store at the age of sixteen!



Although Frank Sellars does not appear on the War Memorial in Ely's Market Square, he is listed under the City of Ely casualties on the county memorial in St George's Chapel, Ely Cathedral. He is also named on the memorial in St Andrews Church, Billingborough.

## **(Alfred) Victor SHELTON or Vernon Cecil SHELTON?**

The Memorial in St Peters Church, Broad Street, Ely, records the deaths of members of a catechism class who fell in the Great War, one of whom is listed as **Victor Shelton**—problematically (Alfred) Victor Shelton appears to have died in 1956 in Surrey! The memorial is meant to record the death of Victor's older brother Vernon, who died in 1916; the memorial was created several years after the War, long after the Sheltons had moved back to Norfolk from Ely, so exactly how the St Peters congregation had placed the wrong information on the memorial can now only be guessed at.

Vernon Shelton was originally from Norwich and was born in 1895. He (or, rather, his brother) figures on the St Peters Memorial because his father, who was a passenger guard for Great Eastern Railways, was for a period based at Ely and the family then lived on Back Hill. Vernon's parents were Alfred Walter Shelton (1860 Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire) and Edith Alice Sayer (1865 Marlingford, Norfolk). The children of the family were all born while Alfred was working on the railways and based at Norwich: Cecil (1885); Eveline (1888); Hector (1890); Ruby (1893); Vernon (1895); Victor (1900); Violet (1901); and Edith Ivy (1902).

In the 1911 Census Vernon was living in Ely with his parents and his siblings Ruby, Hector, Victor and Ivy, and was apprenticed to a local draper. The family had lost Violet.

Vernon became a member of the choir at St Peter's Church in Broad Street and for the latter part of his time in Ely headed the choir, carrying the processional cross in church processions..

In 1913 Vernon's brother Hector emigrated to Canada to farm. The rest of the family also moved away from Ely, with Victor and Vernon going to live and work in Norwich, while Alfred and Edith went to live at 58 Nelson Road North, Great Yarmouth, and eventually ended up in Lowestoft in Suffolk.

Victor became an assistant chemist in Norwich and joined the RAF in August of 1918, serving for the last few weeks of the War until he was transferred into the RAF Reserve in February 1919.

Vernon became a clerk in the Civil Service and lived at 45 Clarence Road, Norwich. On 10th May 1916 he died of kidney disease which brought on heart failure. His end seems to have been expected, as Alfred had arrived from Great Yarmouth to be at his son's bedside. Vernon had not enlisted before his death, so technically should not be remembered on a War Memorial.

Back in Ely the St Peter's congregation heard the news of Vernon's death and a notice was placed in the parish magazine, with the correct name; however, by the time the memorial was carved Harold Archer, who paid for the memorial, had misremembered the name.

## Harry Clarke SMITH

<b>Born</b>	1863
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	12th February 1916, age 53
<b>Commemorated</b>	Tower Hill Memorial, London
<b>Unit</b>	SS Leicester, Mercantile Marine
<b>Rank</b>	Fireman, Official Number 99176
<b>Awards</b>	British War Medal and Victory Medal

**Harry Clarke Smith** was born early in 1863 in Ely to William Smith and Rhoda Clarke. For a long period Harry lived with his married sister Zaida (1858 Ely) and her husband John Crickmore (1856 Lowestoft) and their family. In 1881 he and his young brother Alfred (1875, Lambeth) are with Zaida and John at 92 Albert Street, Grimsby, with John working as a fisherman and Harry as a general labourer. In 1891 they are together at 226 Henenge Street, Grimsby and Harry is a labourer in one of the shipyards. In 1901 the Crickmores are living further along the road at 218, and although Harry was not included on the census form, he had probably signed up on a fishing boat and was living with them when not at sea. In 1911 Harry was shown living with his sister Zaida, and two of their adult children at their home at 282 Heneage Road, Grimsby. John was working as a coal hawker and Harry himself was a fireman on a fishery vessel.

Harry's sister Zaida died early in 1914. In 1914 Harry was a fireman on SS Leicester, owned by the Great Central Railway, which was requisitioned by the government as a store carrier. The ship was on passage from Portsmouth to Cromarty with general cargo when she was sunk by a mine two and a half miles S.E. by E. off Folkestone Pier. A minefield had been laid in that location by the German submarine UC 6 (Matthias Graf von Schmettow). The master and six hands were saved by trawlers and landed at Dover; the ship had a crew of twenty-four, of whom seventeen were lost, including Harry Smith.

Harry's last address was 139 Columbia Road, Grimsby and he is commemorated in the Fisherman's and Seaman's Memorial Chapel, Central Hall, Grimsby as well as on the Seamen's Memorial on Tower Hill, London.

## John Ellis TAYLOR

<b>Born</b>	13th January 1895
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	21st August 1915, Age 20
<b>Commemorated</b>	Panel 54 to 60 and 163A , Helles Memorial, Turkey
<b>Unit</b>	Royal Buckinghamshire Hussars
<b>Rank</b>	Lance Corporal, Service Number 1111
<b>Awards</b>	British War Medal and Victory Medal

**John Ellis Taylor** is commemorated on the memorial at Stuntney (where he was born) and at Soham (where he lived), he is also remembered on the King's School memorial in Ely where he was a "day boy" from 1906 to 1910.

The Marquis de Ruvigny's Roll of Honour (Volume 1, Part 2, Page 291) tells us - "**TAYLOR, John Ellis** - Lance Corporal, # 1111, Buckinghamshire Yeomanry ( Royal Bucks Hussars ) (T.F.) Eldest son of Ellis Staples Taylor of Eye Hill House, Soham, Cambridgeshire, by his wife Annie Cole, dau of Cole Ambrose of Stuntney Hall, Ely; Born Eye Hill House aforesaid, 13th Jan 1895, educated Kings School, Ely; volunteered after the outbreak of war, and enlisted 31st Aug 1914, went to Egypt with his Regiment in April 1915; left for the Dardenelles 13th Aug and was reported missing on 21st Aug, after the charge of the Yeomanry at Burnt Hill, under Lord Longford. Major W.E. St John wrote that the spot was a very inferno, a sort of No Mans Land, shelled by enemy and friend alike, adding "He (Taylor) was just one of the best. I knew him too well to doubt that he died anyway but as a gentleman and in just the way he would like to die." Later in Dec 1915, one of his comrades wrote through the Red Cross Society to say that he saw him instantly killed whilst charging up the hill. He was a very good shot and was full marksman in the Regiment."



John was born into a wealthy farming family. His father Ellis was a farmer and land agent and his maternal grandfather Cole Ambrose was the largest farming landowner in the district. He was the oldest son of the family, with older sisters Mary (1891) and Dorothy (1893), and younger brothers Owen (1896) and Cole (1899). The 1901 Census shows that the household at Eye Hill included a governess for the children and three live-in servants. The 1911 Census tells us that John was destined to take over the family farm at Eye Hill, as he is described under the heading of "personal occupation" as "learning farming".

John enlisted at Churn soon after the outbreak of the War and reached Egypt with his regiment on 21st April 1915. The importance of his family in the county meant that his loss later that year, two days after he arrived at Gallipoli, received good coverage in the Cambridgeshire Times, which told the story in two phases:

12th September 1915:

"Much regret has been occasioned by the news that has been received by Mr and Mrs Ellis Taylor of Eye Hill Farm Soham, concerning their eldest son Corpl. John E. Taylor, who is officially reported missing. Corpl. Taylor, who belonged to the Royal Bucks. Hussars, enlisted almost at the outbreak of war, and having been through a considerable amount of training, he left this country about six months ago for Egypt. In a letter home to his parents he commented on the rough passage and the exciting encounter the transport had with an enemy vessel during the voyage. He subsequently contracted blood poisoning in the hand and was granted a short leave, during which time he visited an uncle at Cairo.

"He eventually landed with others of his regiment in the Dardanelles, and from the news obtained from various sources it does not appear that he had been in action many days before he was cut off



from his company and reported missing. The news concerning the young soldier, who was only 20 years of age, has been received with mingled feelings of regret and sympathy for his family. Corpl. Taylor, whose photograph we publish herewith, has a brother, Lieut. Owen Taylor, who, it is pleasing to record, has obtained a commission out of the ranks, and is now, after successfully passing an examination, assisting in the work of instruction and drilling."

17th November 1915:

"In our issue of Sept. 17th we announced the sad news which had been received by Mr and Mrs Ellis S. Taylor, of Eye Hill House Soham, that their eldest son, was officially reported as missing. The parents naturally continued to hope that the worst had not befallen him, but that hope has now been dispelled by information of his death which has now been received from a comrade of deceased who personally saw him fall in the fight on Hill 70 in Gallipoli. In an interview with this soldier, who has been home in Balham on sick furlough, the parents of Corpl. Taylor learned that death occurred during the memorable attack on Hill 70 in Gallipoli. The charge, he says, was made at dusk, ..... the regiment leaping to their feet, charging right up the hill. They were met by terrible fire, but nothing seemed to stop them in their dash for the summit. During the attack many of their leaders were lost, and many brave soldiers fell.

"The late Corpl. Taylor who belonged to the Royal Bucks. Hussars, landed in Gallipoli on Aug 19th and from the accounts recently received he was killed two days later. The sad news has occasioned great regret in the locality, where the deceased was extremely well known and held in high regard. His death is regarded as that of a true patriot. His letters home have always been full of expressions of loyalty to his King and country, and the following extract in particular taken from a letter written from Egypt, just prior to his leaving for the front may be quoted: "Whatever happens, you may be sure that I shall do my duty".

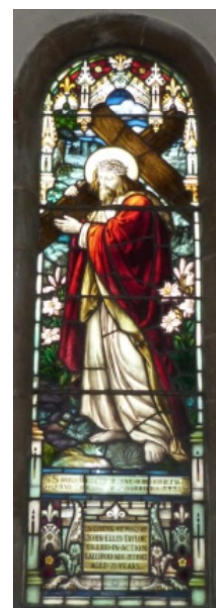
"In a communication received by the bereaved parents from Major St John, reference is made to the deceased soldier. The writer says: " It is hopeless my attempting to make your loss any easier. He was just one of the best. I knew him too well to doubt that he died any way but as a gentleman and in just the way that he would like to die. The spot where he died was a very inferno - a sort of no man's land, shelled by friend and enemy alike"

"Corpl. Taylor was in his 21st year. He was the grandson of Mr Cole Ambrose, of Stuntney Hall. His brother, Second - Lieutenant, Owen Taylor, left Soham on Sunday under orders to proceed to Egypt."

John died with thirty-two other members of his regiment—the bodies of only three of them were recovered, and this did not include John.

A year after his death Ellis was sent his son's effects which amounted to £4 5s 10d, and a further £3 in 1919.

There is a memorial window to John in Stuntney Church and he is included in the "Book of Stuntney Heroes" formerly held in the church, but now in the Cambridgeshire Collection.



### John William TAYLOR

<b>Born</b>	1898
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	27th October 1918, Age 20
<b>Buried</b>	Grave C 10 Preseau Communal Cemetery Extension. Nord, France
<b>Unit</b>	2nd Battalion, Lancashire Fusiliers
<b>Rank</b>	Private, Service Number 275056
<b>Awards</b>	British War Medal and Victory Medal

**John William Taylor** was born in Walpole St Peter, Norfolk, in the Spring of 1898. He was the only son of farm worker (Harris) William Taylor (1876 Nordelph or Upwell, Norfolk) and his wife Alice Laura Shipp (1880 Walpole St Peter, Norfolk). By 1911 this family was living in Witchford Road, Ely, and John was at school in Ely, while his father was engaged in farm work. The Taylors remained in Ely and their address at the time of John's death was the Stud Farm, Witchford Road, Ely; probably John was a farm worker like his father.

John enlisted in Norwich and fought first with the Cambridgeshire Regiment (Service Number 329893) before being transferred into the Lancashire Fusiliers. He was killed in action a fortnight before the Armistice.

## Edward Charles VALE

<b>Born</b>	1890
<b>Killed in Action or Died</b>	9th October 1917, Age 27
<b>Buried</b>	St Thomas' Churchyard, Chevithorne, Devon
<b>Unit</b>	Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry
<b>Rank</b>	Private, Service Number 22006
<b>Awards</b>	1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

On 12th November 1917 the local newspaper reported the death of Private **Edward Charles Vale** of Ely. Edward had died in the VAD Hospital at Tiverton in Devon of injuries sustained earlier in the War.

Edward was born at a cottage in Ely Junction into a Great Eastern Railways family. His father William (1858 West Wrating, Cambridgeshire) was a railway signaller and the family had earlier lived at West Dereham where Edward's older siblings had been born (Albert 1884, Maud 1887, Clara 1889). His mother was Ellen Day (1857) of Linton.

By the 1901 Census the Vales had moved on from Ely and were living in Station Road, Great Shelford. Eldest son Albert had become a railway porter with GER and two more children had been born there: May (1895) and Lillie (1900). One more boy was to be born into the family, Edward's younger brother Hubert (1902).

In the 1911 Census most of the family were still together, living at 12 Granta Terrace, Stapleford. Edward had not followed his father and brother on to the railways as he had become an assistant gardener.

Edward enlisted in the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers (No. 3650) with whom he reached France on 8th June 1915. He was later transferred to the 2nd Battalion of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, then to the 6th Battalion, and finally the 1/4th. He appears to have been seriously wounded in one of the battles of Third Ypres and brought back to England where he succumbed to his injuries.

Edward is the only World War One casualty buried in the small village churchyard at Chevithorne, three miles outside of Tiverton.