

A RECORD OF THOSE ECKINGTON SERVICEMEN WHO SERVED AND THOSE WHO DIED IN THE FIRST AND SECOND WORLD WARS



ECKINGTON 1914

Full fifty sturdy lads I send,
To meet the foes of my fair land;
And some shall lie by muddy field,
And some by desert sand.

For them my flowering tree is dead;
My simple hymn on Sunday morn;
No more the gleaming scythe shall go
A-singing through the corn.

Poem written by
Second Lieutenant Leonard Parish
Gloucestershire Regiment

Taken from "Dusk of Avon" published 1921
(See page 49)

ECKINGTON'S ROLL OF HONOUR

Each November, the names of those Eckington men who lost their lives in the two World Wars are read out, as part of the Remembrance Service Ceremony. It is a moment for reflection – for amongst those that died were fathers who would never see their children grow up, husbands who would never enjoy a full marriage and youths who had their adult lives before them. The promise of so much to come, but the harsh realities of war dealt each one a cruel blow. For example, it is hard to imagine how Francis and George Aldington felt when they lost two sons and a third was taken a prisoner of war.

But to most of us these are just names on a memorial, so this booklet has been produced in order to illustrate that these were young men brought up in the village, working on the land and no doubt expecting to raise a family in a peaceful world, when the call to duty arrived, and tragically life ran out all too soon.

Some of the basic information has been taken from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Web Site, the other main sources referred to are those of Eckington School Register, Ancestry Family History website, Military Records and the Parish Registers.

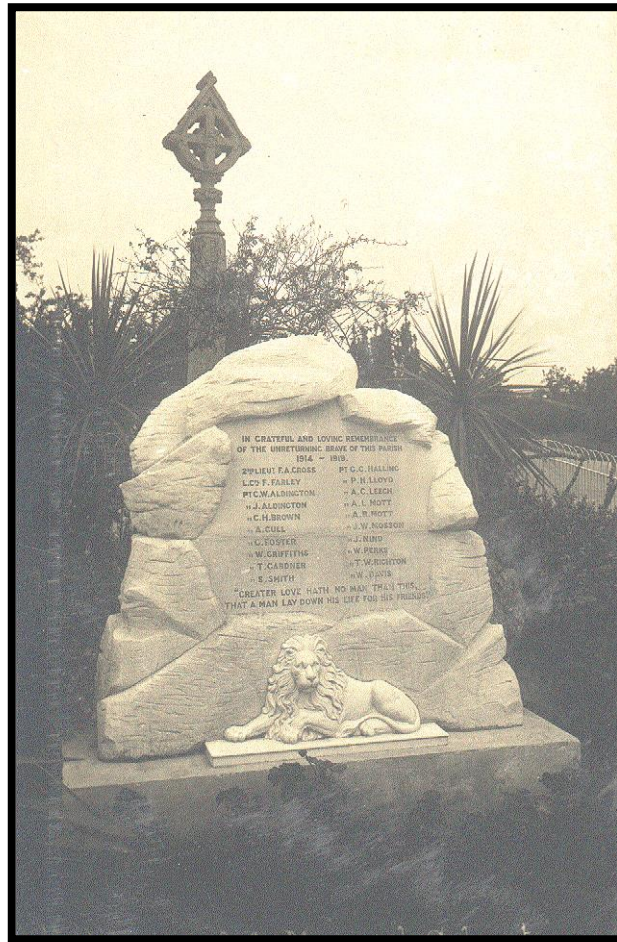
There are three memorials in Eckington commemorating those who lost their lives in both wars, the most prominent of which is the War Memorial next to the Cross in the main village street.

The other two memorials are to be found in the parish church and the village school.



Canon Ismay unveiling the War Memorial on April 18th 1920

The War Memorial



The stone memorial erected next to the village cross was unveiled on the 18th April 1920 by the vicar of Eckington, Canon Ismay. The stone memorial was erected on what had been an untidy looking grass triangle where the village cross stands. It was a gathering point for villagers who would often sit on the base of the cross and idly chat.

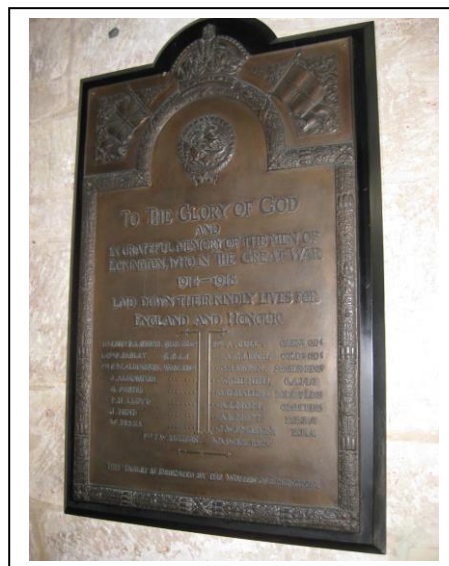
At the same time as the war memorial was being installed, iron railings were installed around the perimeter of the triangle and tropical shrubs were planted within. The area was then officially named "The Eckington Botanical Gardens".

At the foot of the stone monument is a cast iron lion. No doubt this design was mass-produced for there is an identical one above a doorway at Bells Castle in Kemerton, which can be observed from the road. The ongoing maintenance of the memorial and garden was then handed over to the Parish Council.

Following the Second World War, in November 1947, five more names needed to be added to the memorial and subscriptions were invited from parishioners in order to raise the necessary funds for this to be done. The names were inscribed by John Bulford, then a resident of Eckington, who was employed by E.T.Taylor of Tewkesbury.

Eckington Parish Church War Memorial

In the church, on the northern wall of the bell tower, is a copper tablet dedicated by the women of Eckington to the memory of those who died in the First World War. It must have been manufactured soon after the end of the war as three names (F.T.Gardner, S.J.Smith and A.E.Tyler) are missing due to the fact they died after the tablet had been installed, as a result of injuries received during the war. One other name (W.L.Davis) was also missed off, although he died during the war in March 1918.



Eckington C of E First School War Memorial



A wooden memorial plaque has been erected in the school hall and was refurbished in 2009. It must have been made between the two world wars as three names from the second world war appear to have been added. It states "Former scholars" but seven of those listed are not recorded in the school register. Also A.E.Tyler's name is missing and the initials of two others are incorrect.

The Eckington Memorial Hall

The village hall in Eckington stands today as a memorial to those men who died in the First World War. It took some ten years of hard endeavour for the hall to come to fruition finally opening on the 22nd December 1928.

Efforts to build a fitting memorial began when members of Eckington's "Old Comrades Association", several of whom had just returned from the war, decided to raise funds for such an enterprise. Many fund raising efforts were held and donations were invited, but after five years only £270 had been collected. At this point the "Old Comrades" conceded that they needed outside assistance, and so a joint committee was formed by the addition of some members of the parish.

The project now gained momentum. Rev. Fletcher donated some Glebe land on the site where the "Tin Tabernacle" * stood and by early 1926 funds were standing at £513. Rev. Fletcher also offered to contribute £200 if the parish could match it within three months. The challenge was taken up and the target was met, the final £50 being raised by a village pageant.

Mr G. Summers of Birlingham won the contract to build the new hall at a price of £1020. In order to keep the costs down it had been decided to utilise the "Tin Tabernacle" by putting rollers underneath it, turning it ninety degrees and moving it to the rear of the new hall. This remained there until recent times when it was demolished to make way for the new kitchen.

* The Tin Tabernacle was the meeting place for members of the Eckington Institute, formed by the amalgamation of the Working Mens Club and the Temperance Society. The building was also used for other village events so in effect was a small village hall.

Eckington Roll of Honour

WORLD WAR I

Name	Rank	Number	Regiment	Died	Age
Aldington , Charles William	Private	8651	Worcestershire Regiment	12-Mar-15	20
Aldington , John	Private	17435	Worcestershire Regiment	16-Apr-18	20
Brown , Charles Hubert	Private	290133	Sussex Regiment	26-Mar-18	27
Cross , Frank Alan	2nd Lieut.	PS/2534	Gloucestershire Regiment	25-Feb-17	21
Cull , Albert	Private	21215	Grenadier Guards	25-Sep-16	36
Davis , Wilfred Laight	Private	242158	Worcestershire Regiment	21-Aug-17	22
Farley , Freeman	LanceCpl.	13063	Kings Shropshire Light Infantry	14-Jul-16	26
Foster George William	Private	42003	Worcestershire Regiment	29-Apr-18	19
Gardner , Frederick Thomas	Private	205727	Tank Corps	11-May-19	26
Griffiths , William	Private	401788	Canadian Army Medical Corps	06-Sep-16	26
Halling , Gilbert George	Private	B30230	Dorset Regiment	09-Apr-18	19
Leech , Albert George	Private	13141	Coldstream Guards	03-Oct-16	23
Lloyd , Percy Harry	LanceCpl.	17421	Worcestershire Regiment	18-Oct-17	24
Mosson , James William Fred'k	Gunner	43064	Royal Field Artillery	13-Jul-16	24
Mott , Albert Leonard	Private	16349	Gloucestershire Regiment	05-Aug-17	26
Mott , Arthur Reginald	Private	44999	Kings Royal Rifle Corps	09-May-18	19
Nind , Jesse Thomas	Private	27761	Worcestershire Regiment	11-Oct-18	33
Perks , William Thomas	Private	46920	Worcestershire Regiment	17-Apr-18	36
Righton , Thomas Willett	Private	266366	Royal Warwickshire Regiment	22-Dec-17	21
Smith , Sydney James	LanceCpl.	17844	Worcestershire Regiment	08-May-19	29
Tyler , Albert Edward	Gunner	64824	Royal Garrison Artillery	15-May-20	25

WORLD WAR II

Name	Rank	Number	Regiment	Died	Age
Batley , Anthony Roger T.	Lt.Commander		Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve	24-May-41	40
Cull , William James	Gunner	1596172	Royal Artillery	28-Oct-43	30
Bellamy , Gerald Walter	LanceCpl.	5248096	Worcestershire Regiment	21.Dec.44	32
Mitchell , Douglas	Private	5252660	Worcestershire Regiment	28-May-40	20
Swinbourne , Herbert John	Gunner	1492097	Royal Artillery	18-Apr-44	25

Profiles of the Servicemen who lost their lives in the First World War

Charles William ALDINGTON
Private 8651
1st Battalion Worcestershire Regiment

Born: 11th April 1894
Baptised: 9th September 1894
Died: Friday 12th March 1915 (Age 20)

Commemorated:
Le Touret Memorial, Pas de Calais, France (Panel 17 and 18)
Eckington War Memorial
Eckington Holy Trinity Church
Eckington School
Worcester Cathedral Book of Remembrance

Medals: British War Medal and Victory Medal

Attended Eckington School: 11th April 1897 – 5th February 1906

Charles was born in Eckington, his parents being George (a stockman) and Francis Mary Aldington. He was the third eldest out of five boys and four girls in the family, and they lived in New Road. Charles began school on his third birthday, and suffered from a variety of ailments during his time there. He is recorded as having had Chicken Pox, Bronchitis, and Mumps as well as the regular common cold. On leaving school he became a farm labourer and was living with his parents in New Road.

It is likely that he enlisted into the Worcestershire Regiment at the outbreak of war, as his personal army number is a low one. He landed in France on the 5th November 1914 and had fought in Flanders prior to his death in France early in 1915. Charles' Battalion was involved in the Battle of Neuve Chapelle and he was killed on the 12 March 1915 thus becoming the first Eckington fatality of the war.

Situation 12th March 1915 - counter-charge of the 1st Battalion of the Worcestershire Regiment

After a chilly and miserable night the first daylight of March 12th filtered down through a thin white mist. Before the dawn the enemy's artillery had heavily shelled the ground around the British trenches; now they increased their range.

In their isolated position the 1st Worcestershire held firm. One counter-attack after another was beaten off. At last, about 10 a.m., it became clear that the position of the Battalion, far in advance of the remainder of the Brigade, encircled by enemy on three sides and shelled by both artilleries, was no longer tenable. Reluctantly Colonel Wodehouse gave orders for the Battalion to fall back to the former line.

The ground across which the retirement had to be made was open and level, and on both flanks the enemy were strongly posted. The three companies fell back in good order by alternate platoons, each unit doing its best to cover by fire the movement of the others; but under the

crossfire of the enemy's machine-guns the platoons withered away. Officers and men fell fast. The Commanding Officer, the Adjutant, and the last surviving Company Commander went down, and it was a mere remnant of the three stubborn companies which, still in good order and grimly firing, reached the trenches which they had held at dawn.

Save for that gain of ground and for the proud memory of that bayonet fight there was but little profit visible to the regimental officers and men from the battle of Neuve Chapelle. The losses had been terribly severe. The 1st Worcestershire had lost over 370 of all ranks, including 19 officers. The Commanding Officer, Lieut.-Colonel E. C. F. Wodehouse, D.S.O. and the Adjutant, Lieutenant J. S. Veasey, a brilliant young officer, were among the dead. The Battalion had gone into action on the 10th March 1915, with a strength of 26 officers and 870 rank and file. On the morning of March 13th the whole Battalion could muster no more than 7 officers and 450 men."

Charles Aldington's death was recorded in The Worcester Journal of 10th April 1915

[Francis Mary Aldington was born in Huntley, Gloucestershire C1870; George Aldington b. 1872 at Great Comberton and was a cowman by trade.

The Aldington children were Sidney b. Westbury, Glos (1890), Alice b. Eckington (1892), Charles b. Eckington (1894), Amy b. Eckington (1896), John b. Eckington (1898), Frederick George b. Eckington (1901), Henry b. Eckington (1904), Ellen "Nelly" b. Eckington (1906) and Rosetta Mary b. Eckington (1910)]

See also Page 44

John ALDINGTON
Private 17435
2nd Battalion Worcestershire Regiment

Born: 24th September 1897
Baptised: 14th February 1898
Died: Tuesday 16th April 1918 (Age 20)

Commemorated:
Ploegsteert Memorial, Comines-Warneton, Hainaut, Belgium (Panel 5)
Eckington War Memorial
Eckington Holy Trinity Church
Eckington School
Worcester Cathedral Book of Remembrance

Medals: 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

Attended Eckington School: 24th September 1900 – 1910

John (brother of Charles above) also began his education at the village school on his third birthday. Although actually baptised as John, he was called "Jack", a normal occurrence in those days. When he was aged four, he was off school for five months but no reason is given as to why. On the 24th April 1903, Jack and William Brown were involved in an accident at school and both ended up with a broken arm.

Jack, like Charles, also fought in France and Flanders and has no known grave. His regiment fought alongside French troops on the French /Belgium border when the frontier was of little interest. He is recorded as having entered France on the 23rd March 1915, at which time he was still only 17 years of age. It is thought that he was killed during the defence of "Hill 70".

[Francis Mary Aldington was born in Huntley, Gloucestershire C1870; George Aldington b. 1872 at Great Comberton and was a cowman by trade.

The Aldington children were Sidney b. Westbury, Glos (1890), Alice b. Eckington (1892), Charles b. Eckington (1894), Amy b. Eckington (1896), John b. Eckington (1898), Frederick George b. Eckington (1901), Henry b. Eckington (1904), Ellen "Nelly" b. Eckington (1906) and Rosetta Mary b. Eckington (1910)]

See also Page 44

Charles Hubert BROWN
Private 290133
11th Battalion Royal Sussex Regiment

Born: 18th October 1890 in Tewkesbury
Died: Tuesday 26th March 1918 (Age 27)

Commemorated:
Dernancourt Communal Cemetery Extension, Somme, France
(Grave VII AA 3)
Eckington War Memorial
Eckington Holy Trinity Church
Eckington School
Kew Gardens, London

Medals: British War Medal and Victory Medal
(In 1997 Charles Brown's two medals were sold at auction at Glendinings in London)

Attended Eckington School: 20th March 1896 – 25th April 1904

Charles was the son of Elizabeth Alice and Hubert George Brown of Jarvis Street, Eckington.

Sometime after 1892 the Browne family moved from Tewkesbury to Eckington. Hubert set up business as the village wheelwright in Drakes Bridge Road, opposite to Wilton Cottage. On the 11th of September 1906, when Charles was 15 years of age, a fire broke out at their home and was raised to the ground. The fire was caused by a spark from a passing steam engine and in turn sparks from that fire spread over the road and set alight to the thatch on Wilton Cottage.

So an enforced move ensued, and the family went to live in Jarvis Street, at the property now known as "The Old Cottage" and which had an orchard where "Orchard Brae" now stands.



"The Old Cottage" in 1980 - note the daffodils on the left hand side

In 1907 Charles was employed by "Count Weitzberg" of Woollas Hall# where, according to the reference he was given when he left, he had been a journeyman* in the gardens. Two years later, through

“reductions in establishment” he was released from his job and was then employed by Captain Moses Salter of Court Close, Eckington as a gardener, where he stayed for over four years. In the 1911 census Charles was recorded as being a domestic gardener.

In April 1914 he applied for a job at Kew Gardens in London and was accepted. He took up his post on the 28th September that year, tending to plants in the Palm House and the Tropical Pits as well as having responsibility for Begonias. Whilst there, he successfully took exams on General Botany, Physics and Chemistry, Economic Botany and Soils and Manures. On Charles’ staff records at Kew there is a small note in pencil saying that he wished to have a day off to go and find out about joining the army. This leave was presumably granted because he went to Kingston-upon-Thames and enlisted. He left his job on the 28th October 1916 and joined the Royal Sussex Regiment.



Temple of Arethusa at Kew Gardens with Roll of Honour that includes Charles Hubert Brown’s name

Harvey Brown used to tell the story of his brother Charles planting daffodil bulbs in the orchard before he went off to war, saying to his mother that he would be back to see them flower the following spring.

Charles must have been seriously injured in battle at the Somme and taken to a Casualty Clearing Station where he later died. So, sadly, he never did see the daffodils in bloom. However, the orchard continued to have a show of daffodils each year until the site was developed in the early 1980’s.

[Hubert George Browne was born in 1865 in Ripple; Elizabeth Alice Browne was born in Southwick, Tewkesbury in 1865.

Their children were: Charles Hubert (1890), William E (1892) both of whom were born in Tewkesbury. Alfred H. (1894), Archibald R (1896), Harvey (1898), Daniel (1900), Nellie (1903), Phyllis (1907) and Bessie (1910) were all born in Eckington.]

I can find no information on Count Weitzman

*Officially, a journeyman was a fully qualified tradesman who had served an apprenticeship, but there is no evidence to suggest Charles had in fact been an apprentice.

Frank Alan CROSS
2nd Lieutenant PS/2534
7th Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment (Formerly 21st Battalion Royal Fusiliers)

Born: 1895 (Jul-Sep) in Loughborough.
Died: Sunday 25th February 1917 (Age 21)

Commemorated:
Basra Memorial, Iraq (Formerly Mesopotamia) (Panel 17)
Eckington War Memorial
Eckington Holy Trinity Church
Eckington School
Worcester Cathedral, Roll of Honour Book

Medals: 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

Born in Loughborough in 1895, son of Augusta and Ambrose Wootton Cross (a municipal engineer) of "Nafford House", Eckington. He had a twin sister, Florence. His father, Ambrose, later served on Eckington Parish Council from 1925 to 1927. In 1901 and 1911 the Cross family were in Kings Norton, Birmingham. Exactly when the family moved to Eckington we do not know, but it was presumably between 1911 and 1914.

Frank was one of the first in Eckington to have a motorcycle. He registered a 1912 Rover 3.5 HP on the 22nd July 1914, its number was AB 3172. It was transferred to a Mr Brooks in Rochdale in January 1916.

Frank enlisted in August 1914, proceeded to France on the 14th November 1915 and was gazetted in 1916. Frank was in the 7th Battalion of the Gloucestershire Regiment which was formed at Bristol in August 1914 as part of K1 and attached to 39th Brigade in 13th (Western) Division. On 19 June 1915 the 7th Battalion sailed from Avonmouth and landed on Gallipoli the following month. In January 1916 the Division were evacuated from Gallipoli and moved to Egypt. It is believed that Frank was killed during an attack on Turkish trenches near the River Tigris.

[Ambrose Wootton Cross b. 1856 at Loughborough and was a Municipal Engineer. Augusta Cross b. 1865 at Pontefract; Arthur L.R. b.1885; William A. b.1886; Frank b. July-Sep.1896 in Loughborough; Florence b.1896 (Twins). Ambrose Wootton Cross and Augusta are both buried in Eckington Cemetery but only Ambrose has a gravestone. Ambrose Wootton Cross died on the 30th November 1936 and was buried on 4th Dec 1936 aged 80; Augusta Cross was buried on the 22nd Dec 1927 aged 63. Frank's brother – William Ambrose Cross, died in a military hospital and was buried in Eckington Cemetery on 19th Jan. 1927, aged 40]

The BASRA MEMORIAL was, until 1997, located on the main quay of the naval dockyard at Maqil, on the west bank of the Shatt-al-Arab, about 8 kilometres north of Basra. Because of the sensitivity of the site, the Memorial was moved by Presidential Decree. The move, carried out by the authorities in Iraq, involved a considerable amount of manpower, transport costs and sheer engineering on their part, and the Memorial has been re-erected in its entirety. The Basra Memorial is now located 32 kilometres along the road to Nasiriyah, in the middle of what was a major battleground during the first Gulf War. The Panel Numbers quoted at the end of each entry relate to the panels dedicated to the Regiment served with. The Basra Memorial commemorates more than 40,500 members of the Commonwealth forces who died in the operations in Mesopotamia from the Autumn of 1914 to the end of August 1921 and whose graves are not known.

See also Page 46

Albert CULL
Private 21215
4th Battalion Grenadier Guards

Born: 2nd July 1880
Baptised: 10th April 1881
Died: Monday 25th September 1916 (Age 36)

Commemorated:
Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France (Pier and Face 8 D)
Eckington War Memorial
Eckington Holy Trinity Church
Eckington School
Worcester Cathedral, Roll of Honour Book

Medals: 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

Attended Eckington School: 15th June 1885 – 1st April 1992

Albert was the son of Charles and Rose Annie Cull of Barrcroft Cottage, Pass Street. In the Census records of 1891, Albert, at 10 years of age, was shown as being the eldest of six children, all of whom eventually attended the village school. Charles, the father, must have died somewhere between May 1888 and January 1890. This left Rose having to bring up six children with no wage earner to provide for them. It seems, therefore, that it fell to Albert to take up some form of employment and provide for the family. In the school records of that period, it states that on the 1st April 1892 that Albert had "Gone to work", which means that he was only eleven years of age.

At the time of the 1901 census, Albert, then aged 20, was still living at home and was earning a wage by labouring. At the same time, his mother was trying to bring in extra income to the household by carrying out gardening work.

In 1907, on the 26th June, Albert married Elizabeth Osbourne at Eckington Parish Church. They lived in Upper End, Eckington and they had two sons, Charles and William (who was killed in the Second World War), and a daughter, Constance.

Albert is recorded as having entered France on the 15th August 1915.

[Rose Annie Cull was born in Chacely, Gloucestershire in C1860 and was buried at Eckington Cemetery on the 24th Oct.1946 aged 85. Charles Cull was baptised on 29th July 1855 at Eckington and was buried on 13th October 1889 aged 34. Charles and Rose had six children: Albert (1880), Edith (1882), Alfred (1884), Kate (1887), Sydney (1888), Ellen (1890). Albert married Elizabeth and produced Constance who was born on the 5th January 1908 and whom eventually married Oliver James Attwood of Bredons Norton in 1934. They also produced William and Charles (or "Charley", as he was known in the village) who was born in 1910 and maintained the village war memorial in the 1970's]

The Grenadier Guards fought at Tel-el-Kebir and in the Boer War, proving the worth of discipline and esprit de corps in the era of khaki, machine guns and open order as they had done under the old dispensation of muskets and scarlet and gold. In the first Great War of 1914-18, they fought in nearly all the principle battles of the Western front. Before the final victory was won and Britain's new Armies broke the German Imperial Army, 12,000 casualties had been suffered by the Regiment.

Wilfred Laight DAVIS
Private 6598 and 242158
2nd/8th Battalion Worcestershire Regiment

Born: Oct/Dec 1894

Died: Sunday 24th March 1918 (Age 23)

Commemorated:

Pozières Memorial, Somme, France (Panel 41)

Eckington War Memorial

Eckington School

Worcester Cathedral Book of Remembrance

Medals: British War Medal and Victory Medal

Wilfred was the son of Elizabeth and William Davis who were married on 9th July 1894 at Eckington. In his Army service records it states he was born in Broughton (presumably Drakes Broughton as his parents later lived in neighbouring Wadborough). The census informs us that in 1901 the Davis family were residents of Wadborough and William's trade was that of a fruit grower. By 1911 Wilfred, aged 16, was living in Eckington with his mother and father in Tewkesbury Road.

Wilfred enlisted into the army in November 1915 and fought in France and Flanders. He was one of 14,000 soldiers that perished as a result of the Allied Fifth Army being driven back across the former battlefields of the Somme in March and April 1918. Wilfred, like so many of his comrades, has no known grave. When his will was published he left £72 11s 4d to his father.

Wilfred was recorded in the Eckington Parish Magazine of November 1917 as being a serviceman and having a home in Eckington, but for some reason his name does not appear on the Memorial in the Church

[Parents -William Davis b. 1859 Grafton Flyford; Elizabeth Davis b.1862 Flyford Flavell;]

Freeman FARLEY
Lance Corporal 13063
7th Battalion King's Shropshire Light Infantry

Born: 6th September 1889
Died: Friday 14th July 1916 (Age 26)

Commemorated:
Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France (Pier and Face 12A and 12D)
Eckington War Memorial
Eckington Holy Trinity Church
Eckington School
St Mary's Church, St.Fagans, Cardiff

Medals: 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

Attended Eckington School: 11th March 1895 – 10th October 1902

Freeman Farley is recorded as being at Eckington School but his parents are not named in the school admissions book. His uncle, George Davis, was named as his Guardian and he lived at Lower End in Eckington. In the 1901 Census, Freeman (who would have been 11 years old) was recorded as living with George and Harriet Davies (nee Farley). Both Freeman and his sister, Ada, were admitted to Eckington School on the same day, she being 5½ years older. They both attended Defford School prior to Eckington.

The Baptism records for Defford do not refer to Freeman at all but from the 1911 census we know that he was born at Dunstall which is part of Earls Croome, the neighbouring parish to Defford. Ada Matilda Farley was baptised on 24th January 1886 and her parents are named as William (a labourer) and Susan Matilda Farley. On the same day, Ada's sister, Alice May Farley, was also baptised.

By 1911 Freeman was a stableman and was still living at his uncle's house at The Greens in Eckington. Three years later, at the outbreak of war, he travelled to Cardiff and signed up for the Shropshire Light Infantry. He would then have carried out his training before travelling to France on the 28th September 1915 and entering into battle.

The following is an account written by Ray Westlake who has written several books on the two world wars and in particular War Memorials.

"Both Private Reginald H. Edmunds and Lance-Corporal Freeman Farley served with the 7th King's Shropshire Light Infantry and were killed on the same day - 14 July, 1916. The Battalion had been in France since 28 September, 1915. Spending time in trenches around Ypres before travelling south to the Somme on 1 July, 1916. It would be two weeks, however, before the men entered the line. Marching forward by night in easy stages and via Nizernes, Fienvillers, Flesselles, Cardonette and Corbie. The ruins of Carnoy, six miles east of Albert, were reached on 7 July, and here the Battalion bivouacked while the ground over which it was to attack was carefully reconnoitred.

The Battle of Bazentine Ridge commenced on 14 July and all through the previous night the 7th KSLI crouched in No Man's Land awaiting the dawn. At 3.20 am the British guns opened up. Pounding the German line running through Bazentin-le-Grand. But with many shells falling short, several casualties would occur among the assaulting battalions as they lay patiently awaiting zero hour. At zero, 3.30 am, the men rushed forward. The enemy's trenches could not be seen, and before long strong uncut wire would be encountered about six hundred yards from the German front line. "Not a man of the first wave", notes the Battalion's records, "succeeded in getting through this wire, of which there were two rows, each ten to twenty yards deep. The succeeding waves of the attack closed on the first and the enemy had an easy target."

What remained of the attacking force reluctantly fell back. But only to regroup. At 11 am another and more successful attempt was made. The Shropshires this time managing to cut their way through the wire and into the German line. Here the enemy were cleared and until relieved, the survivors of the Battalion, just six officers and one hundred and thirty-five other ranks, held their gains against no less than five counter attacks. Casualties among the 7th KSLI had amounted to four hundred and seventy-three killed, wounded or missing. Among the latter, Reginald Edmunds and Freeman Farley have no known graves. Their names being among those recorded on the Thiepval Memorial."

Ray Westlake wrote this account because he was recording the names on a War Memorial in St. Fagans, Cardiff. Private Edmunds and Lance-Corporal Farley's names both appear on this Memorial so hence his account. The most likely explanation for Freemans name being on the St.Fagans memorial is that we know he actually enlisted into the army at Cardiff. There was only one Freeman Farley killed in the first world war so the Freeman Farley in Cardiff has to be the same has to be the Freeman Farley from Eckington. It is likely that Freeman Farley and Reginald Edmunds signed up for the Shropshire Light Infantry on the same day, as their numbers are 13063 and 13678 respectively. They were certainly sent to France on the same day and of course, some nine months later, they sadly died in battle on the same day.

[William Farley married Susan Matilda Simonds on 1st February 1882 at Defford Parish Church. Both were aged 20. Ada Farley was born on the 12th March 1883, and in 1901 she was a servant to Mathew Hollins a Goldsmith in Handsworth. William's father was Jonas Farley who was born in Defford around 1824/7. William's sister Harriet was born in 1857 at Defford and married George Davis of Eckington.]

There is a bronze wall plaque in the nave of Eckington Church

"To the memory of Harriet Davis – faithful caretaker of this church 1906 -1939"

George William FOSTER
Private 42003
3rd Battalion Worcestershire Regiment

Born: circa 1899
Died: 29th April 1918

Commemorated:
Cologne Southern Cemetery VIII. G.5.
Eckington War Memorial
Eckington Holy Trinity Church
Eckington School

Medals: British War Medal and Victory Medal

There is no information on a G.Foster of Eckington in the War Graves Commission records. There were three Foster children at the village school in 1911 but the boy was named Jack and he was born in 1905, so apart from the wrong name, he would have been too young to go to war anyway. The Foster family at that time lived in Comberton, so it does not seem likely that George came from this particular Foster family.

Nevertheless, records show that there was a Private George William Foster of the 3rd Battalion of the Worcestershire Regiment. He is in fact the only one listed by the War Graves Commission that meets all the known criteria, ie: Foster G; Rank of Private and from the Worcestershire Regiment. However, this particular George was born in Hull and was aged 19 when he was killed in action in northern France, somewhere between *La Clytte* and *Kemmel* during the *Battle of Lys* on the 29th April 1918.

The only evidence discovered so far that confirms that G.Foster was an Eckington resident is found in an Eckington Parish Magazine of November 1917 where he is listed as being a serving soldier and his home being in Eckington.

Frederick Thomas GARDNER
Private 13156 Worcestershire Reg.
Private 19588 Machine Gun Corps
Private 205727 Tank Corps

Baptised: 4th December 1892
Died: Sunday 11th May 1919 (Age 26)
Buried: 15th May 1919

Commemorated:
Eckington Cemetery (Grave G2 14)
Eckington War Memorial
Eckington School



Medals: 1914 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

One of nine children born to William (Agricultural labourer) and Amy Gardner of Upper End. According to school records, the Gardner family moved from Eckington to Great Comberton in October 1895. Frederick was probably not quite three years old at that time and had therefore not started school. The 1911 census states that Frederick was born in Eckington so certainly the Gardners were in Eckington in 1893.

However, the Gardner family had certainly returned to Eckington by 1911 as they are recorded in the census as living in Upper End. They were still there in 1914 when Frederick signed up for the Army as he gave his parents address as Upper End, Eckington.

The Evesham Journal of September 19th 1914 lists several Eckington servicemen, amongst them are T.Gardner and G.Gardner (his brother George), both being in the Line Regiment. Frederick's records show that his role was changed a further twice, each time receiving a different number. His army service records show that he landed in France on the 5th November 1914.

Frederick was seriously wounded on 8th June 1914 and was initially taken to the Scottish General Hospital in Glasgow and was then transferred to the Special Military Surgical Hospital in Northfield, Birmingham, when he died. Frederick was buried in Eckington Cemetery four days later on the 19th May 1919. His name does not appear on the memorial in Eckington Church, possibly because he died after the end of the war by which time the memorial had already been manufactured and put in place near the bell tower.

The following appeared in the Berrows Worcester Journal on 14th July 1917.

"This week in our Pictorial Supplement we give the photographs of ex-Private William Gardner (of Eckington) and his three soldier sons. The father was born in 1855. He enlisted in the 1st East Kent Regiment (The Buffs). He fought in the Zulu War in 1879 and holds the medal for that campaign. He left the army in 1882 and was in the first-class Army Reserve for 11 years, and in the second-class for four years. Sergt. Ernest Gardner is aged 32 and joined Kitchener's Army in January 1915, and was made full Sergeant six months after. He is now in France with

the Machine Gun Corps. Pte. G. Gardner is 29 and enlisted in the Worcestershire Regiment in August, 1910. He came from Egypt in 1914 and is now in France. Gunner Frederick Thomas Gardner is 25, and joined the Worcestershire Regiment in August 1912, and was re-called from Egypt in 1914. He joined the Tank Section in January of this year. He was wounded in the foot, arm and back on June 8, and is now in the Scottish General Hospital, Glasgow. Like their father, all the sons have seen much hard fighting."

[William Gardner was baptised on 31st July 1859, John and Ellen Gardner were his parents. William was buried at Eckington Cemetery 23 Nov 1929 aged 74. Amy was born in Eckington in 1864. William and Amy were married on the 18th February 1883 at Eckington Parish Church. The Gardner children were Ellen, known as Nelly (1883), Ernest (1885), Beatrice (1897), Henry George (1889), Elsie (1891), all of whom attended Eckington School. Then followed Frederick Thomas (1892), Aleathea (1895), Gladys M (1897) and Edith A (1900)] Walter (1903) and Florence (1905)

William GRIFFITHS
Private 401788
2nd Field Amb. Battalion; Canadian Army Medical Corps

Born: 23rd August 1890

Died: Wednesday 6th September 1916 (Age 26)

Commemorated:

Vimy Memorial, Pas de Calais, France

Eckington War Memorial

Eckington Holy Trinity Church

Eckington School

Worcester Cathedral, Roll of Honour Book

Worcester Royal Grammar School Memorial

Huron University College, London, Ontario, Canada

University of Western Ontario (2008)

Attended Eckington School: 13th December 1897 – 19th January 1904

William was the eldest son of William and Laura Griffiths, who moved from Strensham to Jarvis Street in December 1897. The three eldest brothers all attended the school at Strensham prior to moving to Jarvis Street, Eckington. In March 1900 William was recorded in the school log book as being away from school with mumps, as well as having other odd days off to get over the occasional cold. Not only did the Griffiths boys all attend the village school but it seems they were all members of the church choir too. Unusually for schoolchildren in Eckington at that time, in 1904 William (followed later by his three brothers) went on to Worcester Royal Grammar School rather than going to work as his contemporaries did. William, however, was only there for a year, 1905-6. He does not appear on the 1911 census, which suggests that he had left home by this time. William emigrated to Canada and graduated in the Arts from Huron University College (London, Ontario) in 1916. He enlisted in London, Ontario on 11th September 1915, occupation given as student, height 5ft 10ins, dark grey eyes brown hair and a dark complexion and was assigned to the Canadian Army Medical Corps. He sailed from Halifax on the S.S.Lapland on the first of April 1916. Five months later he was killed in action near Albert on the Somme. Apart from appearing on the Huron University Memorial Plaque his name also appears on the Vimy Memorial in France, along with 11,000 other Canadians who were posted as "missing, presumed dead" in France.

William Griffiths Snr. was born in London in C1864; he was buried in Eckington Cemetery on 6th Feb 1946, aged 83. Laura (nee Woods) his wife was born in Holt, Norfolk in 1867 and was buried in Eckington Cemetery on 2nd July 1940. The Griffiths children were William (b 1891 in Chester), Frederick G. (b 1893 in Strensham), Arthur H. (b 1895 in Hoole, Chester), Herbert (b 1897 in Twinning), Oswald Walter (b 1907 in Eckington) and Lionel Edward (b 1912) Oswald, or Golly as he was better known in the village, was a market gardener, played cricket for Eckington and was church organist for over thirty years. For the latter part of his life he lived in a cottage (now demolished) adjacent to what is now the Caravan Park near the Bridge] Herbert became a Nursery Gardener after he left the Grammar School and served in the war, whilst his brother Arthur became a booking clerk for Great Western Railway.

Gilbert George HALLING
Private 30230
2nd/4th Battalion Dorsetshire Regiment

Born: 8th August 1898
Baptised: 14th June 1903
Died: Tuesday 9th April 1918 (Age 19)

Commemorated:
Ramleh War Cemetery, Israel (Grave T 62)
Eckington War Memorial
Eckington Holy Trinity Church
Eckington School
Worcester Cathedral, Roll of Honour Book

Medals: British War Medal and Victory Medal

Attended Eckington School: 20th November 1901 – 14th August 1911

Gilbert ("Bertie" as he was commonly called) was the son of George and Kezia. In the census taken in May 1891, George, a general labourer, was aged 38 and lodging at a house in Boon Street. On the 8th December that same year, he and Kezia Jones were married at Eckington Church and they lived in one of the small cottages at The Green. This was Kezia's second marriage and because she brought five children from her first marriage with her (she had actually had eight), there were eventually ten people living in the cottage. George and Kezia had five children following their marriage – Edward (who only lived for ten days), one unknown, Leonard, Mabel and Bertie. The latter three subsequently attended the village school. George, by 1901, had changed his occupation from labourer to being a market gardener. In the 1911 census the Hallings were living in Lower End and Bertie was still at school.

We do know that Bertie enlisted in Worcester, but it seems strange that he was assigned to the Dorsetshire Regiment, rather than the more obvious Worcestershire Regiment. What we do know is that he sailed for Egypt on 13 November 1917 and died at Berukin, Palestine, fighting against the Turks, probably at Three Bushes Hill.

[George Halling was born in Deerhurst near Tewkesbury and was buried in Eckington Cemetery on 13th Jan. 1927 aged 73. Kezia (nee Jeynes) was born in Eckington and was buried in Eckington Cemetery on 9th April 1928, aged 74. Kezia had eight children by her first marriage and five by her second. Leonard was born in 1894 and died in Feb.1914 aged 19. Mabel was born 4th Nov. 1896 and died 3 Aug. 1982]

Photo: L to R: Kezia, Bert and Mabel
Photograph courtesy of Lt Col (rtd) Susan Payne



Albert George LEECH
Private 13141
Coldstream Guards

Born: circa November 1892 – Broadwell, Ox.
Died: Tuesday 3rd October 1916 (Age 23)
Buried: 7th October 1916

Commemorated:
Eckington Cemetery (Grave E26)
Eckington War Memorial
Eckington Holy Trinity Church
Eckington School



Medals: 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

Son of Albert George and Bessie Leech who also had another son, Frederick, but he died in infancy. Albert "senior" was recorded as being a soldier in 1895. The Leech family must have moved to Eckington sometime after the 1901 census, they were certainly here in 1911. There are no records of any member of the Leech family having attended the village school

The Evesham Journal of September 19th 1914, records A. Leach of Eckington as serving in the Guards which is strange because he did not officially enlist until the 12th October 1914 in London, his previous occupation being that of a ships fireman. It was recorded that he was the son of Mrs Bessie P. Leech of Eckington, which is strange, as his father was alive at that time. So where was his father, had he also enlisted? He did not die until September 1929 and was buried in the village cemetery.

Albert (junior) entered France with the 1st Battalion of the Coldstream Guards on the 27th April 1915, having been in England since he signed on. He became ill fairly quickly with pulmonary tuberculosis, due to exposure. After medical inspections he was sent back to England on the 19th July 1915 and was declared "*no longer fit for War Service*". He was formally discharged on the 6th November 1915. His military records make reference to him being at the sanatorium at Knightwick, Worcester but unfortunately he did not recover and he died a year later. He is buried in Eckington Cemetery and is one of four that have war graves there. A photo of Albert appeared in the Berrows Worcester Journal on 28 October 1916.

[Frederick Charles Leech was baptised 13 March 1895 and buried 15th June 1895. Albert George Leech was buried on the 24th Sep. 1929, aged 62. His gravestone is in Eckington Cemetery; Bessie Pamela Leech (nee Webb) was buried on the 13th Nov 1953 – note that both were entered into the Parish Council burial records as Leach with an "a". There is also a Charles and Emma Leech (Albert George Leech's grandfather and grandmother) buried in adjacent plots to the other members of the Leech family]

Note: Cannot find Albert George (jnr) in the 1911 census.

Percy Harry LLOYD
Lance Corporal 17421
2nd Battalion Worcestershire Regiment

Born: 20th May 1893
Baptised: 19th September 1893
Died: Thursday 18th October 1917 (Age 24)

Commemorated:
Bethleem Farm West Cemetery, Messines, Mesen, West Vlaanderen,
Belgium (Grave E 1)
Eckington War Memorial
Eckington Holy Trinity Church
Eckington School
Worcester Cathedral Book of Remembrance

Medals: British War Medal and Victory Medal

Attended Eckington School: 15th June 1896 – 31st March 1908

Son of William and Esther Lloyd, Headmaster and Headmistress of Eckington School. They lived at "The School House", where over a twenty year period, Mrs Lloyd gave birth to four boys and six girls, as well as continuing to teach. Mr Lloyd and his wife were at the village school from 1885 to 1922, 37 years, thus making Mr Lloyd the longest serving headmaster in the 145 year history of the school.

Percy, inevitably, attended the village school, along with all his brothers and sisters. He was a wood carver by trade and he married Dora, whether before or during the war is not known, and they lived at 93 Rowheath Road, King's Norton, Birmingham.

When the time came, Percy enlisted into the Worcestershire Regiment and fought in both France and Flanders before being killed. He is buried in a small cemetery in Belgium, along with some 150 other casualties of the First World War.

Percy's brothers, Gilbert and Cecil also served in the war but survived.

[William Lloyd was born in 1859 in Garthbeibio, Montgomery; Esther was born in 1862 in Kentish Town, London. Their children were, Ethel, born in Paddington (1886), William, born in Eckington, (1887), Gilbert (1888), Mabel (1889), Annie (1891), Percy Harry (1894), Cecil (1896), Winnifred (1898), Gwendoline Mary (1901), Ellaline Blodwyn (1906) and Blodwyn (1907)]

James William Frederick MOSSON
Gunner 43064
5th "C" Reserve Bde., Royal Field Artillery

Born: 7th September 1891 in St.Andrews, Singapore
Died: Thursday 13th July 1916

Commemorated:
Bristol (Arnos Vale) Cemetery, Gloucestershire
Eckington War Memorial
Eckington Holy Trinity Church
Eckington School
Worcester Cathedral, Roll of Honour Book

Medals: 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

No record of James Mosson can be found in Eckington although his parents, George and Martha Ann, lived there from 1908 to 1914, maybe a little longer. The family lived in "Artillery Cottage" in Boon Street but in which specific house is unknown as there is no such house name now. James was born in Singapore because his father, a Company Sergeant Major in the Royal Artillery, was posted there in 1891- 93. We do not know where James went to school although he certainly did not attend Eckington School. At the time of the 1911 census he was a gunner in the 51st Company of the Royal Garrison Artillery stationed in India.

James' service records show that he enlisted into the army at Camp Mallak, Menoor in India but we do not know the circumstances behind this. James is recorded as having entered Egypt on the 3rd April 1915, and we know he was wounded and returned to England where he died. Following his father's second retirement from the Army in April 1916 it is assumed that the family moved from Eckington to Bristol, which would explain why James came to be buried in a cemetery in Bristol in July 1916.

[Recorded in the Evesham Journal Roll of Service 1914 -15 is Mosson, G.F. Sergt.Major RFA of Eckington who had served in South Africa. In 1911 he was living in Boon Street and was an Army Pensioner]

James' Parents: George Frederick Mosson b 6 May 1862 in Wick Rissington, Stow-on-the-Wold; Martha Ann (Sayers) Mosson, b. 1868 in Woolwich, Kent, married George on 22 Jan 1888 at Dover; Children - Florence b. 7 Dec 1888, James b. 7 Sep 1891 in Singapore; George Henry b. 16 Nov. 1894 at Dover; Susan b. 13 Mar. 1897 at Pembroke Dock; Cecil Redvers Kitchener b. 20 Feb. 1900 at Spike Island, Cork; Muriel b. 6 Oct. 1903 at Sheerness.

Note: See the long and interesting military career of George Frederick Mosson, his father, on pages 62 and 63.

Albert Leonard MOTT ("Bertie")
Private 16349
8th Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment
Also Tr/8/16976 and 35th T.R.Battalion

Born: 31st July 1891

Baptised: 20th September 1891

Died: Sunday 5th August 1917 (Age 26)

Buried in Bristol (Arnos Vale) Cemetery; Screen Wall 5.658

Commemorated:

Somer Farm Cemetery No.1, Wyschaete, Heuvelland, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. (Grave B 26)

Eckington War Memorial

Eckington Holy Trinity Church

Eckington School

Medals: 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

Attended Eckington School: 18th March 1895 – 29th August 1904

Son of Amos (a drayman) and Caroline Mott of Church Street, Eckington. Amos was born in Cherington, Warwickshire whilst Caroline originated from Overbury. Following their marriage they lived in Strensham, later moving to Eckington. Albert was brother to Fred Mott, who for many years in the 1950's and 60's was the village lengthsman. The Mott family lived in a timber framed cottage in Church Street (now called "The Cottage"), Fred Mott spending his whole life there.

As was common in large families, when one child went down with an illness, it was likely that the rest would also be affected. This was the case with the Mott children in 1896 when Lillian was sent home from school with a skin disease. Shortly afterwards all four Mott children were off school, in fact they were off for seven weeks because the school Committee had insisted they should not return until their skin had cleared up.

In 1911 Bertie was working as a gardener at a Stables in Cirencester whilst his parents were still living in Church Street, Eckington.

Albert duly signed up for the Army, enlisting in Bristol, and was sent to France on the 18th July 1915 and was killed in action in August 1917. He is buried in a small cemetery in Belgium with around 100 other casualties.

Albert was brother to Arthur (see following page).

Brothers Walter and Edgar also served in the war but survived.

[Amos Mott was born in 1860 at Cherington, Warwickshire and was buried on 27.11.1933 in Eckington Cemetery. Caroline was born in 1860 and was buried in Eckington Cemetery on 6.5.1942 Walter Ernest, born in Strensham (1885) ; Edgar (1887), when aged 14, was a telegraph boy in the village; Lillian (1888); Bertie (1891); Franklyn Probyn was 7 months old when he died in December 1895; Arthur Reginald (1899); Daisy Annie (1901); Frederick John (1905)]

Arthur Reginald MOTT
Tr8/16976
35th T.R.Battalion
Private 31504 Dorset Rifles
Private 44999 1st Battalion King's Royal Rifle Corps

Born: 12th January 1899
Baptised: 2nd December 1900 at Eckington
Died: Thursday 9th May 1918 (Age 19)

Commemorated:
Arras Memorial, Pas De Calais, France (Bay 7)
Eckington War Memorial
Eckington Holy Trinity Church
Eckington School
Worcester Cathedral, Roll of Honour Book

Medals: British War Medal and Victory Medal

Attended Eckington School: 5th August 1902 – 28th June 1912

Arthur was the son of Amos and Caroline Moss and brother to Albert above. His age when he died is given as twenty one by the War Graves Commission, but his age has now been established as only nineteen. It is highly probable, therefore, that Arthur lied about his age when he enlisted. He was transferred at some stage from the Dorset rifles to the Kings Royal Rifle Corps.

[Amos Mott was born in 1860 at Cherington, Warwickshire and was buried on 27.11.1933 in Eckington Cemetery. Caroline was born in 1860 and was buried in Eckington Cemetery on 6.5.1942
Walter Ernest, born in Strensham (1885); Edgar (1887), when aged 14, was a telegraph boy in the village; Lillian (1888); Bertie (1891); Franklyn Probyn was 7 months old when he died in December 1895; Arthur Reginald (1899); Daisy Annie (1901); Frederick John (1905)]

Jesse Thomas NIND
Private 27761
1st/7th Battalion Worcestershire Regiment

Born: 1885

Died: Friday 11th October 1918 (Age 33)

Commemorated:

Barenthal Military Cemetery, Italy (Plot 2 Row B Grave II)

Eckington War Memorial

Eckington Holy Trinity Church

Eckington School

Ashchurch War Memorial

Worcester Cathedral Book of Remembrance

Medals: British War Medal and Victory Medal

There seems to be no record of any members of the Nind family in the Parish Registers, School Records, Census records or the cemetery records for Eckington. Jesse was born in Oxenton, Gloucestershire in 1885 and by 1911 he was a farm labourer lodging at The Villa in Kinsham. He later married, as we know he was the husband of Mrs A.J. Nind, and that they lived at Myrtle Cottage in Jarvis Street. If they did have children it is reasonable to expect them to appear in the school records, but they do not.

Jesse enlisted into the Army at Worcester. It would appear that Jesse was killed in the last act of the Italian Campaign when his battalion were involved in the Battle of the Vittoria Veneto on the Asiago Plateau in northern Italy. It seems that he was one of three fatal casualties incurred by the Battalion in a night raid. He was buried in a small cemetery with over 100 other casualties. Apparently, the cemetery near Asiago, is rarely accessible from November to May, due to deep snow falls.

Curiously, Jesse's name appears on the War Memorials in both Eckington and Ashchurch.

[The War Memorial in Ashchurch stands on the southside of the A46, between the Village Hall and the School]

William Thomas PERKS
Private 46920
2nd Battalion Worcestershire Regiment

Born: 19th December 1881
Baptised: 12th February 1882
Died: Wednesday 17th April 1918 (Age 36)

Commemorated:
Klein-Vierstraat British Cemetery, Kemmel, Heuvelland, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. (Grave VI A 24)
Eckington War Memorial
Eckington Holy Trinity Church
Eckington School
Worcester Cathedral Book of Remembrance

Attended Eckington School: 2nd April 1889 – 24th May 1895

Medals: British War Medal and Victory Medal

William was one of six children born to Charles and Ann Perks. He married Delilah Wood of Defford and they lived along Tewkesbury Road, opposite the Hollands Road junction. His trade was that of a bricklayer and on the 16th November 1912 he qualified to become a member of the Operative Society of Bricklayers – Cheltenham Branch.

William and Delilah raised six children, one being Ralph Perks who later built up the building company, Perks Bros. in the village.

Thanks to William, the words to Eckington's Christmas Carol "*How grand and how bright*" were recorded for posterity in 1907. He said at the time that his father had sung it since **he** was a boy (ie: the 1850's).

William fought in both France and Flanders and was wounded in action near the village of Kemmel and the adjoining hill, Mont Kemmel. He was then hospitalised in Belgium but did not recover from his injuries and died on the 17th April 1918.

There is a photo of William in the Berrows Worcester Journal of 25 May 1918.

[Charles Perks was baptised on 15th March 1846.

Ann Perks was born in Kemerton.

Their children were: Alice Elizabeth (1870 – died in infancy), Emma Elizabeth (1872), Rosa Ann (1875), Alice Mary (1878), William Thomas (1881), and Amy (1885)

Delilah Flora Perks (nee Wood) was born in Defford about 1872. She died on 5th March 1956

William and Delilah had six children: Sam (?), Lily Olive (1905),

Frederick Ralph (1903), Alice Joy (1909), Charles Henry (1910) and Edith Jane (1914)]

Photograph courtesy of Mrs Mary Bickmore



Thomas Willett RIGHTON
Private 266366
2nd/7th Battalion of Royal Warwickshire Regiment

Born: 17th July 1896

Baptised: 1st September 1896

Died: 22 December 1917

Buried: Fins New British Cemetery, Sorel-Le-Grand, France. Grave III D.4

Commemorated:

Eckington War Memorial

Eckington Holy Trinity Church

Eckington School

Medals: British War Medal and Victory Medal

Attended Eckington School: 25th September 1899 –

Son of Edward (a farmer from Wick) and Maria Righton, who were married at Eckington Church on the 31st October 1893. Maria was a daughter of Henry Day, a horse dealer in Jarvis Street and she is buried in Eckington cemetery.

Thomas's health was noted as being "weak" when beginning school, to the extent that he did not attend at all during his supposed first winter there. The following September he was again absent, this time with whooping cough. When the 1901 census was taken, Thomas was recorded as staying with his grandfather, Henry Day, whereas the rest of his family were all at another property in Jarvis Street. In the 1911 census he was aged 14, still at school and living back with his family, his father being a market gardener.

Thomas enlisted into the Army at Stratford-upon-Avon. The War Graves Commission have recorded Thomas as Thomas Righton Willits which confuses matters.

[Edward Righton was born in 1865 at Quinton in Gloucestershire: Maria was born in Eckington on the 9th June 1862, she was at the new school when it opened in 1869 and left in March 1874 to go into service: She was buried in Eckington cemetery on 2.11.1927.

They had seven children; Edward Robert (1894), Harry D (1895), Thomas Willett (1896), Arthur (1898), Mary (1900), Lucy Bernice (1902) and Leslie Alfred (1903).

Mary Righton was married to Arthur Bridgewater on 19.12.1925 at Eckington. Her father was then described as a seed merchant]

Note: His brother Arthur Frederick, a farmer, joined the 3/1st Worcestershire Yeomanry on 11 November 1915, his number was 325903. He served in Alexandria in Egypt and received the British War Medal and Victory Medal and was demobilised on 6th April 1919.

**Sydney James SMITH
Lance Corporal 17844
Worcestershire Regiment**

Born: 17th August 1889
Baptised: 27 October 1889
Died: Thursday 8th May 1919 (Age 29)
Buried: 12th May 1919

Commemorated:
Eckington Cemetery (Grave E3 28)
Eckington War Memorial
Eckington School
Worcester Cathedral Book of Remembrance



Medals: 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal

Attended Eckington School: 6th February 1893 – 29th April 1902

Son of Fanny and William Frederick Smith of Vicarage Cottages, School Lane. William, a farm labourer, was born in Crophorne in 1862 and was buried in Eckington Cemetery 6th August 1941. Fanny Nicholls was born in Eckington in 1864 and was buried on the 29 December 1939. The family lived in Cotheridge Lane and in keeping with the trend for large families, Sydney had five brothers and three sisters, all of whom attended the village school.

Sydney entered France on the 18th March 1915 and at some point must have received injuries in battle. He was supposedly recuperating in Leeds when he died, some months after the war had ended. His sister Hilda was still at school when Sydney died because it is recorded that she was not there on the 12th May 1919 as she was "attending her brother's funeral".

As the memorial in the church had been commissioned before Sydney's death, his name does not appear on it.

[William and Fanny were married in 1886 and had nine children; William (1886) Frederick (1887), Ellen (1888), Sydney (1889), Charles A. (1892), Edward (1894), May (1895), Frank E. (1900), and Hilda Alice (1906).

Hilda Alice Smith was married to Robert Williams of Jarvis Street on 20.10.1923 at Eckington]

Albert Edward TYLER
Gunner 64824
71st Heavy Bty. Royal Garrison Artillery

Born: 16th February 1895 in Himbleton
Died: Saturday 15th May 1920 (Age 25)
Buried: 20th May 1920

Commemorated:
Eckington Cemetery (Grave D28)
Eckington War Memorial

Medals: British War Medal and Victory Medal



Attended Eckington School: 18th October 1897 – 25th February 1908

Albert was the son of Caleb (a market gardener) and Annie, whom in later life were living at Vicarage Cottages in Eckington. Prior to Caleb and Annie's arrival in Eckington around 1895, the family had lived in Salegreen and Saleway, Albert having been born in the latter village. They had four children with them when they moved into Bunn Street. Herbert, Frederick, Annie and Albert, all of whom, except Herbert, became pupils at the village school. Another child, Frank, was born in 1899, but he died at the age of seven and is not recorded in the school register.

We know from school records that when Albert was seven he caught measles and on another occasion he was marked as being present on a particular day when in fact he wasn't, so the register had to be amended accordingly.

In 1911, the census return records both Herbert and Albert living at home and both being farm labourers.

Albert is the least commemorated of all those who died in the war, mainly because he died so long after the war had ceased. Until recently, the only memorial to him was his own gravestone in Eckington Cemetery but his name has now been added to the War Memorial.

[Caleb was born on Sale Green, Worcestershire in 1854. He was buried in Eckington Cemetery on 3rd Dec. 1916. Annie was born in Eckington in 1860.

Their children were: Herbert (1885) Frederick (1886), Annie (1890), Albert (1895) and Frank (1899) Frederick was mentioned in the Evesham Journal of 19th September 1914 as serving in the Line Regiment]

**Profiles of the Servicemen
who lost their lives in the
Second World War**

Anthony Roger Townend BATLEY
Lieut-Commander
H.M.S.Hood; Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve

Born: 29 March 1901

Died: Saturday 24th May 1941 (Age 40)

Commemorated:

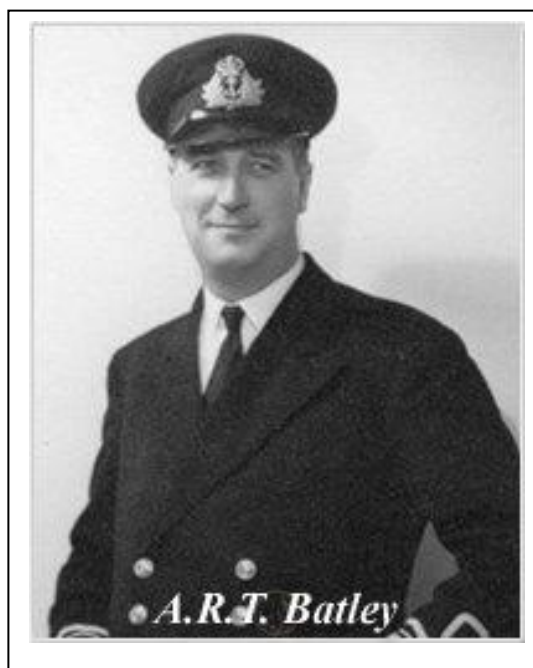
Portsmouth Naval Memorial, Hampshire (Panel 60 Col.2)

Eckington War Memorial

Hood Chapel, Church of St John the Baptist, Boldre, Hampshire

War Memorial at Lancing College, West Sussex.

The reason for Lieut-Commander Batley's name appearing on the War Memorial is unclear. He did not marry and it is thought that when not on active service, he may have lodged with two of his sisters (neither of whom were married) at "Willow Pond" in Pass Street. However, when his will was published (see below) his address was given as Elmley Castle. Roger had four sisters, Margaret and Mary were married before the outbreak of the second world war, so it must have been Barbara and Florence that he was lodging with in Eckington. It was certainly Barbara he lodged with in Elmley Castle.



In the 1901 Census, the Batley family were living in Queens Road, Kingston-upon-Thames. Roger was 1 month old at that time having been born on the 29th March. It does not say what Sidney Batley did for a living at that time, but he must have been well off as there was a governess, cook, housemaid and a nurse all residing at the house. Ten years later the Batley family were lodging in Christchurch, Hampshire, Roger's father being a managing director of an engineering company.

Roger was educated at Lancing College between 1915 and 1919. He joined the Royal Naval Volunteer as a Lieutenant and was promoted to Lieutenant-Commander in November 1919.

It is recorded that Lieut. Commander Anthony Batley joined "H.M.S.Hood" at 10.15 on Wednesday 26 March 1941. On 22nd May 1941 HMS Hood left Scapa Flow along with her sister battlecruiser Prince of Wales and a number of destroyers. Their mission was to intercept the German battleship Bismarck and the heavy cruiser Prinz Eugen before they could enter the Atlantic waters and attack Allied shipping. The two ships were sighted in the Denmark Strait between Greenland and Iceland. At 05.52 on the morning of 24th May 1941 the British ships opened fire on

the Bismarck and Prinz Eugen. The German ships returned fire and within less than 10 minutes the battle was over. HMS Hood was hit by a number of shells, one of which triggered a massive explosion and led to the ship sinking in less than 4 minutes. Of her crew of 1,418, only 3 survived

Some of Rogers last letters to his sister Mary are to be found on The HMS Association website on www.hmshood.com

This is an extract from the final letter he wrote to Mary, seven days before the HMS Hood went down.

19 May 1941

"Thank you for your splendid long letter of the 12th received on Saturday morning.

Yesterday being Sunday I went to the early Service in the Chapel and after lunch took my rod ashore and managed to get a nice 2lb. sea trout. I also found an old fisherman who had just opened his lobster pots. I bought all he had - 50 - for the mess - big & small - @ 2/- each. As half of them were of the size you'd pay 6/- to 7/6 in local Fisheries it wasn't too bad.

Last night I dined with the new Admiral. I like him. We had gulls eggs - soup - lobster & pheasant.

Life on a big ship is rather like life in a city. We have on board cobblers, & tailors & barbers, and a laundry, bakery, cinema, chapel, dental surgery, sickbay with a good Theatre, and a host of technical shops.

I expect we'll be off again very soon so it will probably be three weeks after this arrives before you see my writing again. Much love to you & God watch over you and yours."

WILL OF LT-COMMANDER A. R. T. BATLEY
Lt-Commander Anthony Roger Townend Batley, R.N.V.R., of Elmley Castle, near Fernhore, who died in May last—H.M.S. Hood—left estate of the gross value of £11,373 10s., with net personalty £11,200 10s. 6d. Probate is granted to his sister, Miss Barbara M. Batley, of the same address, his brother-in-law, Harry J. Wenban, of 19 Carlton-road, Harrogate, Yorks, and Harold E. Thackray, of Permanent House, Leeds, solicitor. He left £300 to his friend, Hannah M. Watts, £200 each to his spinster sisters, £100 to his cousin, John Batley, and his wife, some small legacies and the residue of the property to his sisters, his spinster sisters to receive a whole share each and the married one half a share.

Extract from Worcester
Journal 20th December 1941

[Sidney Townend Batley b.1862 at York; Margaret Batley (nee Dale) , his wife, b.1876 at Colchester; They married 28 July 1896 at St John's Wood Church, Paddington. Their children

were: Margaret Francis Batley b.1898 at Kingston-upon-Thames; Anthony Roger Townend Batley b 1901 at Kingston-upon-Thames; Mary Christopher Batley b.1906 Kinston-upon-Thames; Barbara Metcalf Batley b.1907 Harrogate, Yorkshire; Florence Batley b. 1909 Harrogate, Yorkshire]

A letter from the Treasurer of the Eckington Parochial Church Council, dated 27th May 1950, can be found within war records held at Worcestershire Archives requesting that A.R.T. Batley, Lt. Commander, Royal Navy be added to the county roll of honour.

Gerald Walter BELLAMY
Lance Corporal 5248096
2nd Battalion, Worcestershire Regiment

Born: circa 1912

Died: 21st December 1944 (Age 32)

Commemorated:

Rangoon Memorial, Myanmar, Burma (Face 12)

Eckington War Memorial

Worcester Cathedral Book of Remembrance

George Bellamy was born at 20 Carden Street, Worcester on the 26 June 1912, and in December 1939 (serving as a soldier at Norton Barracks) he and Myrtle Harris (now Myrtle Gill) of Manor Road, Eckington became married at Pershore.

In December 1944, George was serving with the 2nd Battalion of the Worcestershire Regiment in Burma, making their way from Banmauk to Nankan, heading towards Mandalay, when he was struck down by illness and died from 'cerebral malaria'. There are conflicting reports of the date of his death as the Book of Remembrance at Worcester Cathedral states 12 December whereas the War Graves Commission gives 21 December 1944. Perhaps one or the other transposed the figure 1 and 2 in error.

Myrtle did not learn of George Bellamy's death until April the following year. This of course left Myrtle as a war widow, the only one in Eckington during the Second World War. For this she received a war widows pension of £1 a week, but only until she remarried. Apparently, the village postmistress, Miss Gladys Firkins, left Myrtle in no doubt that she thoroughly disapproved of such an Army Allowance each time she collected it.

George's parents were Albert James Bellamy (1881-1928) and Alice Beatrice Bellamy (1884-1915); He had three brothers Albert James (1904-1957), William Charles (1907-) and Edwin Frederick (1910-1988) plus a sister Ellen May (1905-1991)

A letter from the Treasurer of the Eckington Parochial Church Council, dated 27th May 1950, can be found within war records held at Worcestershire Archives requesting that Private J.W. Bellamy be added to the county roll of honour.

William James CULL "Bill"
Gunner 1596172
253 Bty.,81 H.A.A. Regt., Royal Artillery

Born: 3rd January 1914

Died: Thursday 28th October 1943 (Age 29)

Commemorated:

Athens Memorial, Greece (Face 2)

Eckington War Memorial

Eckington School Memorial

Attended Eckington School: 19th February 1917 – 14th April 1927

Bill was the son of Albert and Elizabeth Cull of Barrcroft Cottage, Pass Street, who married on the 26th June 1907 at Eckington. He had a brother Charles and a sister Constance about whom more is written under 'Albert Cull' who was killed in the First World War. Bill is recorded as having attended the village school.

There is scant information on how he died or where. The inscription on the Athens Memorial states the following.

"1935 – 1945 within this cemetery stand monuments bearing the names of the soldiers of the British Commonwealth and Empire who gave their lives in the struggle for the defence of Greece, the Dodecanese and Yugoslavia, but to whom the fortune of war denied a known and honoured grave "



Charlie Cull (Bill's brother) tending to the War Memorial in 1979. The names of both his father and brother are inscribed on the memorial.

A letter from the Treasurer of the Church Council, dated 27th May 1950, can be found within war records held at Worcestershire Archives requesting that Gunner W.J. Cull be added to the county roll of honour.

Douglas MITCHELL
Private 5252660
8th Battalion, Worcestershire Regiment

Born: 4th July 1919
Died: Tuesday 28th May 1940 (Age 20)

Commemorated:
Dunkirk Memorial, Nord, France (Column 58)
Eckington War Memorial
Eckington School Memorial
Worcester Cathedral Book of Remembrance

**Private D. Mitchell, of
Eckington**

Douglas Mitchell, aged 21, of the Worcesters, youngest son of Mrs. Mitchell, of Bunn-street, Eckington, and the late Mr. R. Mitchell, is reported missing. Douglas, who was last seen by an Eckington colleague on the beaches at Dunkirk received his military training at Pershore. His late father was a well-known market gardener at Eckington, and the licensee of the Golden Cross Inn. Before enlisting he was employed on the plantations of Mr. C. W. Tidmarsh, of Holmfield, Eckington.

Attended Eckington School: 28th April 1924 – 18th December 1931

Son of Frank and Margaret Mary Mitchell of Eckington, who lived in Church Street in 1913, Upper End in 1920 and New Road in 1924. They later moved into the middle of three timber framed cottages in Boon Street. Douglas attended Eckington School along with his brothers and sisters. He went to Bredon Hancocks School in 1931 with the first group of children transferred from Eckington School following the introduction of Secondary Education.

Douglas was serving with the 8th Battalion of the Worcs. Regiment who on the 28th May 1940 were around the Chateau at Wormhoudt. The instruction to withdraw to Dunkirk had not at that time been issued, there was just a general retreat taking place. According to the record *"Everyone was in high spirits and the very serious situation elsewhere was fortunately hardly realised"*. That evening there was a tremendous thunderstorm, and in the dark and ensuing fog, the Battalion withdrew from the area at 21.00 hours. There is no mention of any action, but the fact is that Douglas is recorded as having died that day. The following evening at 18.00 hours the order came through to head for Bray Dunes to the north-east of Dunkirk.



[Frank was born on the 12th May 1879 at Eckington and attended Eckington School
Frank and Margaret had four children; Ernest (1908), Eric (1914), Gladys (1916) and Douglas (1919)]
Photograph courtesy of Mrs P. Hyden

A letter from the Treasurer of the Church Council, dated 27th May 1950, can be found within war records held at Worcestershire Archives requesting that Private D.Mitchell be added to the county roll of honour.

Herbert John SWINBOURNE
Gunner 1492097
69 Anti-Tank Regiment, Royal Artillery

Born: 6th June 1918

Died: Tuesday 18th April 1944 (Age 25)

Commemorated:

Taukkyan War Cemetery, Myanmar (Burma) (Grave 13 C 4)

Eckington War Memorial

Eckington School Memorial

Attended Eckington School: 11th June 1923 – 18th December 1931

Herbert was the son of Mabel and George Rowland Swinbourne who lived in Boon Street in the property now called "The Little House". All his brothers and sisters are recorded as having attended the village school. Herbert was in the first batch of children that were transferred to Bredon Hancocks School in 1931, when Secondary Education was introduced. He later became married to Muriel and lived at Drakes Broughton.

[Children of Mabel and George; Fred (1901), Marian (1910), George (1913), Bertie (1918), Herbert (1918) and Joseph (1921) who married Merle (nee Hicks)]

Photograph courtesy of Mrs M. Swinbourne

TAUKKYAN WAR CEMETERY is the largest of the three war cemeteries in Burma (now Myanmar). It was begun in 1951 for the reception of graves from four battlefield cemeteries at Akyab, Mandalay, Meiktila and Sahmaw which were difficult to access and could not be maintained. The last was an original 'Chindit' cemetery containing many of those who died in the battle for Myitkyina.



ECKINGTON SOLDIER WOUNDED

Private Jack Gilson

Mrs. H. Gilson, who, with her eldest son, carries on the business of her late husband at the village smithy, Eckington, has just returned from another visit to a London Military Hospital, and the hopeful news she brings back of the condition of her young soldier son will be gladly heard by his many friends in that district.

Some two months ago, Pte. Jack Gilson, of the Worcestershire Regiment, was brought back from France in a critical condition, his chief injuries

being head wounds, a broken collar bone and a crushed hand and arm.

He was driving a car which was hit by a German bomb. His officer was instantly killed and the car was shattered.

He is the youngest son of the late Mr. William Gilson, blacksmith, of Eckington, and a well-known sportsman. Before joining the forces he was gardener at the Rectory, for the Rev. E. D. Annand.



Other First World War Servicemen with an Eckington Connection

Sidney ALDINGTON Prisoner of War
Sapper Private 144930
Royal Engineers

Born: 22nd March 1890

Attended Eckington School: 26th February 1904 – 29th April 1902

Sidney, brother to Charles and John Aldington who both died in the war, enlisted into the Royal Engineers on the 30th November 1915. He had moved away from Eckington to become a miner and was living at 14 Waunfawr Terrace, Cross Keys near Newport when he signed up. Because of his mining background he was assigned to tunnelling duties at two shillings and two pence per day with 180th Tunnelling Company. By mid-December he was abroad. There is a note on his records that there was a "remuster" at some point and that on the 20th May 1916 he returned to the front. On the 30th November 1917 he was recorded as missing and later that same day it was confirmed that he was a Prisoner of War. He remained as such until the end of the war and returned to Dover on the 5th December 1918 and then to New Road, Eckington. Sidney was listed as an Absent Voter – see page 57. His records show that he was now a Class "Z" Army Reserve following his demobilization. What happened to Sidney after his return is unknown although it is likely that he moved away again as upon his death he was not buried at Eckington Cemetery.

[Francis Mary Aldington was born in Huntley, Gloucestershire C1871; George Aldington b. 1872 at Great Comberton.

The Aldington children were Sidney b. Westbury, Glos (1890), Alice b. Eckington (1892), Charles b. Eckington (1894), Amy b. Eckington (1896), John b. Eckington (1898), Frederick George b. Eckington (1901), Henry b. Eckington (1903), Ellen "Nelly" b. Eckington (1906) and Rose Ettie Mary b. Eckington (1910)]

Walter BAYLIS
Private M2/202828
Royal Army Service Corps. Mechanical Transport

Born: 14th September 1878

Died: 1951

Born in Chesterton, Warwickshire he married Frances in April 1906 in Smethwick and they lived at Church Gate, Eckington, where he was a brewer by trade, although his service records state that he was a chauffeur at the time of his enlistment. Walter joined the army on the 11th December 1915 at the age of 38. He was posted to the MTS in August 1916. He served in Mesopotamia from 23rd November 1916 till 5th May 1919. Whilst there, he suffered an injury on 22nd September 1917 but recovered sufficiently to remain with his Company out in Mesopotamia. He was demobilised on 7th August 1919. Both Frances and Walter died in 1951 and are buried in Eckington Cemetery, but there is no headstone.

Charles Albert BELL
Lance Corporal 11181
6th Battalion Border Regiment

Born: 1881

Died: 10 August 1915

Commemorated: Defford War Memorial

Charles was born in Abertillery, Monmouthshire in 1881 and was married to Kate, also from Abertillery. By 1911 they had had four children and were living in West Bromwich where Charles was a Registration Clerk at a Labour Exchange. His military records show that he was a resident of Eckington and this is borne out by an Eckington Parish Magazine of 1917 where he is listed as a serviceman whose home was in Eckington. However, his name does not appear on the War Memorial in Eckington, but on the Defford Memorial.

He died of wounds received at sea, possibly whilst his battalion were being transported to Suvla Bay on the Gallipoli Peninsular. The Commander of the operation was dismissed for one of the most incompetent feats of generalship in the First World War.

Archibald Robert BROWN
Lt.Cpl 15975
3rd Battalion of Gloucestershire Regiment

Born: 1st January 1896

Died: 1969

Born on the 1st January 1896, brother to Charles Hubert Brown (see page 11), he attended Eckington School in 1899 for only 3 months but no reason given for this. He was a butcher by trade and enlisted on the 17th November 1914 at Bristol. He was posted to France from 20th September 1915 till the 10th November 1915. He then joined the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force. He was promoted to Lance Corporal on the 7th June 1917 and was demobilised on the 10th June 1919. Archibald died in 1969 but is not buried in Eckington.

William Ambrose CROSS
Lieutenant (no number discovered)
1st Entrucking Battalion Mechanical Engineer
1st Worcestershire Regiment
2nd Worcestershire Regiment

Born: 19 March 1886 at Loughborough, Leicestershire

Died: 1927

Educated at Loughborough Grammar School, Moseley and King Edward's School, Birmingham. Carried out a three year apprenticeship at Heenan & Froude of Worcester and qualified as an engineer in 1907.

Brother to Frank Cross, William survived the war but is recorded as being in a military hospital in Brighton when he died in 1927. He is buried in Eckington Cemetery.

George William CULL
Private 28736
Gloucestershire Regiment

Born: 3 January 1885 in Eckington

Baptised: 22 March 1885

Died: 1961

George was born and baptised in Eckington, the son of William and Louise Cull. In 1911 he and his wife Blanche were living in Well Alley, Tewkesbury, having married on the 26th June 1910. They had two children before George joined the Army, William, who was born on the 10th August 1910 and Alfred on the 9th August 1914. At that time George was a gardener in a nursery, but when he enlisted into the army he was recorded as being a maltster.

He is recorded as enlisting on 11 Dec 1915 although he appears on the Roll of Honour of December 1914 printed in the Tewkesbury Register and was recorded as being in the Army Service Corps. He joined the Gloucestershire Regiment on 2 June 1916. He sailed from Devonport on September 1st and landed in Salonica on September 11th, two days later he was assigned to the 9th Glos. where he served as an infantryman. On the 29 December he was wounded in action (thigh injury) but remained in Salonica to recover and eventually he resumed duties. In February 1918 he contracted Malaria but it was not until 14th October that he was admitted to hospital at the Southern Command Malaria Centre. A month later he returned to England and was admitted to the Military Convalescent Hospital at Crown Hill, Devon. George was eventually discharged on the 23rd September 1919.

Sidney CULL
Sapper 332824
Royal Engineers

Born: 1st February 1888 in Eckington
Died: 1965

Brother to Albert Cull (see page 14) originally living in Pass Street but later in Jarvis Street. He attended Eckington School from 20th January 1891 until the 17th April 1899 at which point he is recorded as having gone to work (an agricultural labourer) when he was aged 11. He enlisted into the Army on the 5th September 1914 in Nottingham and was recorded as being a platelayer working for Midland Railway. (Note: The railway line through Eckington was owned by Midland Railway)

He was posted to France, leaving Southampton on the 17th May 1916 on the SS Copenhagen arriving in Le Havre the following day. Unfortunately, by December he was suffering with Trench Foot and Trench Fever. He was sent to hospital in Boulogne and then on 13th February 1917 he sailed on the "Cambria" back to England where he was transferred to Queen Mary's Military Hospital in Whalley, Lancashire.

At the end of May he was sufficiently recovered to join the 3rd Northumberland Fusiliers for a period of two months. However, treatment continued and he ended up on Inland Waterways to finish his military career. Sidney was demobilised on 22nd February 1919.

Charles Harry DEE D.C.M.
Corporal 235134
Royal Warwickshire Regiment

Born: 1883 in Eckington
Died: 1968

The Dee family lived at Battons Wood, on the slopes of Bredon Hill near to Woollas Hall where they farmed for a living. Charles's mother, Helen, died in 1908, leaving her husband James to look after the family.

Charles enlisted into the army on 11 September 1914 at the age of 30 and was assigned to the Royal Warwickshire Regiment. The records show that whilst on field duty in Cambrai, France, on the 24 October 1918, his section was on the attack on Vendegies-sur-Ecaillon and was being held up by enemy wire and machine gun fire. Charles went forward, single handed, and cut the wire and rallied his section. As a result of his action he was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal for gallantry in the field in the face of the enemy. The DCM is regarded as second only to the Victoria Cross.

Later that same momentous day it seems he slipped in a stream, fell and dislocated his left shoulder. He was admitted into hospital where

he stayed until he was transferred back to England on November 2nd. Although he received various forms of treatment, his shoulder was permanently damaged and he was discharged in February the following year with a year's pension of six shillings a week to follow.

George Caldwell DEE
Private 21664 and 127800
8th Batt. Seaforth Highlanders
Royal Army Service Corps

Born: Sept. 1879

George was born in Kinlet, Shropshire in 1879, but in less than twelve months the family were living at Woollas Hill, Eckington, where his father, James Dee, was now the owner of a 550 acre farm. George did not attend Eckington School, but by the time he was 21 he was working in Bristol as a "Clerk Stationeer". In 1911 he was living in Birlingham with his brother William who was farming there, although Georges' profession was that of a Commercial Salesman. However, George was thinking that his future lay in Canada, so on the 9th March 1912 he sailed on the "SS Teutonic" from Liverpool to Halifax in Canada and eventually settled in Vancouver.

In 1915 he returned to England on the SS Baltic which arrived in Liverpool on the 5th November, to do his patriotic duty. The fact that he did not enlist into the Army immediately indicates he came of his own free wil,l not because he was called up. He came back to stay at his fathers farm at Woollas Hill but did not enlist until March 1916, arriving at Woolwich on the 14th March. On the 19th January 1917 he was assigned to the 41st Training Reserve Battalion where he was a driver.

George was posted to France, sailing from Folkestone to Boulogne on the 17th April. On the 7th July 1917 he became the victim of "Shell Shock" and was hospitalised for a few weeks. He was in hospital again during September 1918, the records merely stating that he was sick, but following that he was transferred to the Labour Corps, where he continued as a driver.

He was probably demobilised in April 1919 as in May he was corresponding with the Repatriation Transportation Branch, seeking passage back to Canada and informing them that he was getting married shortly, so his new wife would need a ticket also. He married Frances Emilie Evans by private licence on the 17th June 1919 at Deans Court, Doctors Common, London.

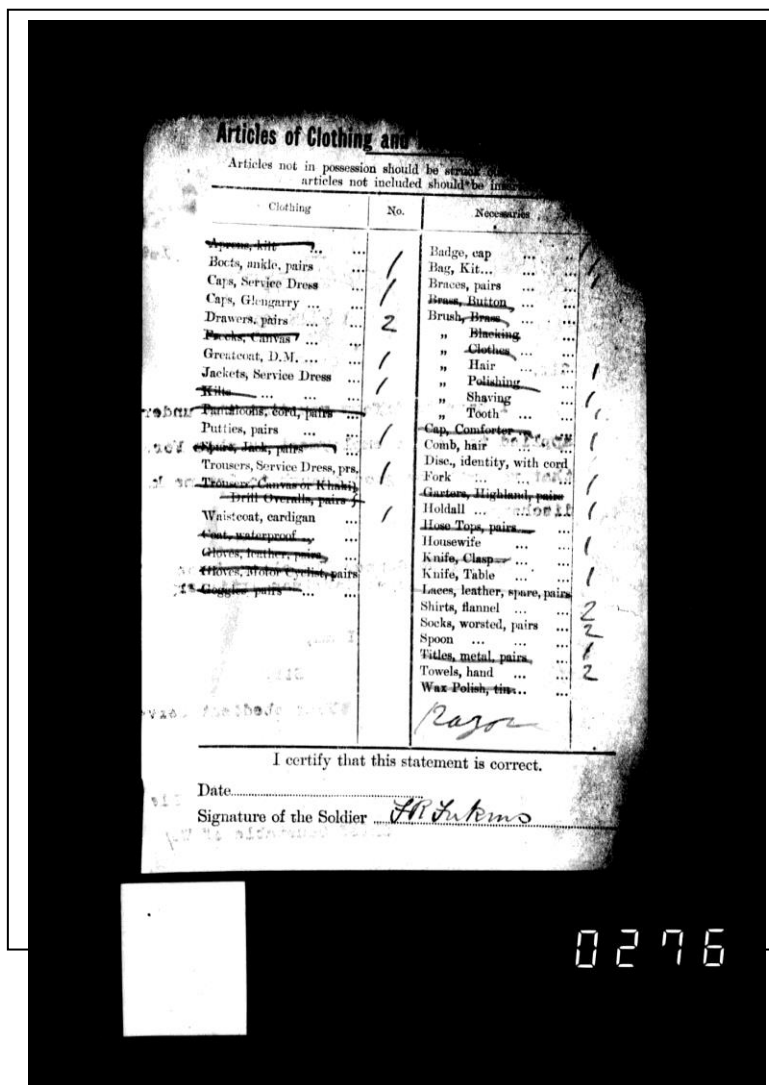
Frederick Reece FIRKINS
Gunner 121256
Royal Garrison Artillery

Born: 20 February 1896
Died: 1965

Son of Frederick and Mary Firkins who lived at The Post Office, Eckington. He attended Eckington School but apart from his start date of 27 February 1899 there is no more information on him. His father died in June 1910 aged 41, leaving Mary to care for seven children whilst running the Post Office/Grocery Store. Frederick, who was a baker by profession, enlisted in the Army Reserves on December 15th 1915 and was mobilised on the 5th October 1916. By the 23rd November he was in Queenstown, County Cork, Ireland. At some point he must have been posted to France because in March 1918 he suffered a gunshot wound to a leg and was sent to hospital in Amiens and then transferred to Willesden K.A.P. Hospital. Frederick recovered and resumed active service, qualifying as a Signaller in October 1918 by passing tests (98%) on map reading, electrical instrumentation and signal training.

He was demobilised on the 9th October 1919 and applied to join the Worcestershire Constabulary.

List of equipment issued to Frederick Firkins



0276

Jack Brownlow FRISBY
Private 43783
Royal Engineers

Born: 1889 in Lyddington, Rutland
Died: 1972

Born in Lyddington, Rutland in 1889, to Brownlow and Mary Frisby. In 1891 the family were living at Avon Bank Cottage in Wick near Pershore, ten years later they had moved to Hollow Coombe, Hollands Road, Eckington. Brownlow was a gardener and Jack now had three sisters. Jack does not seem to be recorded in the 1911 census but Mary and two daughters were living in Upper End, Brownlow having died in 1902.

There do not appear to be any surviving service records apart from the award of the Victory and British Medals. Following the war he married Kate Constance Blake in 1924 in Kent, and died near Thornbury, Gloucestershire in 1972.

James GRIFFIN
Gunner 91240
Royal Garrison Artillery

Born: 1884 at Cold Aston, Glos.

James was born in Cold Aston and probably remained in that area until he became married to Rebecca Alice Harding on the 3rd October 1910 at Great Rissington. The 1911 census finds that the couple were living in Aschurch where James was a cowman. They also had a son named James. However, when James enlisted into the army in December 1915, his home address was given as Boon Street, Eckington and he was now a basketmaker. The records also show that they now had a daughter called Florence but no son, so presumably he had died. Initially James was in the Army Reserves but was mobilised on the 31st May 1916. He was posted to Malta in November 1916 where he remained for 8 months before joining the BEF (British Expeditionary Forces), where he served is not recorded. In June 1918 he was gassed and returned to England.

More bad news was to follow as his daughter, Florence, died in October of Influenza and Pneumonia. James was discharged on the 7th December 1918 with a pension of 13s 9d per week for 52 weeks, at which point it would be reviewed.

James received his British War and Victory medals in March 1923.

Cecil Robert LLOYD
L.Cpl.325866
Worcestershire Yeomanry; Corps of Hussars

Born: 16th June 1895
Died: 1965

Brother to Percy Lloyd (see Page 25) and son of William, Headmaster of Eckington School and his wife Esther. Cecil only attended the village school from the 9th January 1899 to the 31st January 1900. He was described as a "delicate" child.

Cecil became a costing clerk and worked for Fisher Humphries & Co. of Pershore. He enlisted at Birmingham on the 5th November 1915 and initially remained in England, gaining the rank of Corporal in June 1916. He was then posted to Egypt and sailed from Southampton on the 11th December 1916, reaching Alexandria on the 26th December. On the 5th November 1917, whilst still in Egypt, he received a gunshot wound to the second finger on his left hand which required hospital treatment, but it did heal up over time. Cecil also went on to serve in Spain and Palestine eventually returning home on the SS Magdalena from Port Said on the 18th March 1919. He was demobilised on the 4th May 1919.

Cecil's death was registered in Worcester in 1967 but he was not buried in Eckington.

Alfred George MOSSON
Private 378236
Royal Warwickshire Regiment

Born: 1894
Died: 1962

Alfred was born in Kilmore, Berkeley, Gloucestershire in 1894, his parents being Alfred and Emma Mosson. In 1899 the family moved to Eckington and lived in Station Road. There probably lived in one of the terraced houses on the west side of the railway as Alfred senior was a railway signaller. Alfred Junior started school in Eckington in 1898 and was staying with his uncle at that time. He progressed well through school and left in May 1907 to go to work.

In 1911 Alfred was a hotel waiter at the Queens Hotel in Birmingham and three years later, on the 15th September 1914, he was enlisting into the Royal Warwickshire Regiment.

Alfred was hospitalised in December 1915 at Sutton Veney near Warminster. Why he was there is not recorded but following his release

from hospital he received 14 days sick leave. By 1916 he had been promoted to the rank of Corporal and the following year he was posted firstly to the 92nd Training Reserve Battalion and then to the 93rd TR Battalion. On the 10th October 1917 he was posted to the Labour Corps and was attached to the British Expeditionary Force. For whatever reason on that same day Alfred requested that he revert to being a Private. He was eventually demobilised on the 15th March 1918 and returned to Eckington where he died in 1953.

Leonard PARISH
2/Lt 7987
Gloucestershire Regiment

Born: 2 May 1889

Medals: The British Medal, Victory Medal and the Star 1915.

Born in Binton, Warwickshire, the son of John and Catherine Parish. John Parish was born in Eckington and several years later the family did return to Eckington, probably after John's death in 1897 as Leonard was at Eckington School from February 1897 till 18th October the same year. It states in the school register that Leonard left to go to Birmingham, whereas his mother and the rest of the family are recorded as still being in the village in 1901 and 1911. The family home was called "The Cottage" but is nowadays known as "Parishes" in Pass Street, Eckington.

Leonard and his brother John were living with their aunt in Edgbaston in 1901 but it is not known where he was in 1911. His profession was that of an actor/stage manager and it may be that at the time of the 1911 census he may have been on tour. From correspondence in the Records Office it is clear that he did tour a great deal and in 1913 he went on a tour of Canada and the United States with the Stratford-on-Avon Players performing many of Shakespeare's plays. He was back in England when war broke out and he signed up with the Gloucestershire Regiment. He was posted to France on the 14 November 1915. In 1917 he was with the Gloucestershire Regiment Mesopotamian Expedition Forces. In one letter home to his mother he describes the conditions he was experiencing, including that there were hundreds of dead soldiers



lying around, presumably mainly Turks. He said that as they were currently drawn back from the front line for a rest and that they were camped by a river, he could get a daily bath. He also reported that his bugle was somewhat knocked about now and made reference to the fact that he had a servant.

He must have returned to England after the war and continued with his acting career, as there is a membership card for the Actors Association dated March 1921 in the Records Office. He also published a book of his poems in 1921 entitled "Dusk of Avon" in which he writes about Eckington and the surrounding area as well as some he wrote whilst serving in Mesopotamia.

However, Leonard thought that perhaps better opportunities lay in Australia and duly sailed from Liverpool on the 22nd January 1922 on the White Star Line ship "Ceramic". He married May at a fairly high profile wedding in Sydney in 1928, They settled down at 130 Turton Street, Sunnybanks, Brisbane and subsequently raised three daughters. The Brisbane Courier-Mail on the 9th November 1946 has an advertisement inviting tenders for showing pictures at Sunnybank Hall once a week with replies having to be sent to Leonard as Hon. Secretary of the Sunnybank District Municipal Library. In 1954 he founded the "Sunnybank Repertory Company". It is not known when he died.



His sisters, Dorothy and Mabel, both spinsters, remained in the Eckington until their deaths in 1986 and 1979 respectively. Dorothy, better known perhaps as Dolly, was 100 years old when she died.

Sources: Worcester Records Office Ref: 705:1039 BA9452

Albert Edward PINCHIN
Corporal 2807
1st/5th Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment

Born: 23rd August 1892
Died: 4th October 1917 (Age 25)

Commemorated: Tyne Cot Memorial
Pinvin War Memorial

Albert Pinchin is not commemorated on the War Memorial in Eckington although he had lived in the village since 1900, went to school from May 1900 until September 1905. Albert was living with his family in Lower End when he enlisted into the Army. The reason his name does not appear on the memorial is presumably because his mother moved to Pinvin following the death of Albert's father, Richard Pinchin, in October 1914.

Sydney PINCHIN
Private 203963
1st/7th Battalion Worcestershire Regiment

Born: 8th April 1896
Died: 9th October 1917 (Age 21)

Commemorated: Tyne Cot Memorial
Pinvin War Memorial

Younger brother of Albert, he also attended Eckington School but only for a short time in 1900/01. The school register records "Delicate" against his name as the reason for not attending school.

The Pinchin family had moved around over the years, presumably for Richard Pinchin to find farming work as he was a carter. They must have been in Bricklehampton when Albert was born and in 1891 they were at Croome with the children attending school at Stoulton. In 1900 they moved to Eckington and when Richard died in October 1914, Elizabeth his wife, moved to Pinvin. It is difficult to imagine Elizabeth's feelings after not only losing her husband but then two of her sons within five days of each other.

[Richard (1849 at Lower Guiting); Elizabeth (1851 at Easington); Sarah (1877, Alderton); Kate (1885); John (1887); Gertrude (1891, Croome D'Abiot); Albert (1892, Bricklehampton); Sydney (1896, Bricklehampton). Elizabeth's address in Pinvin was given as 6 The Council Houses]

John William Wadley
Private 13151
9th Battalion Sherwood Foresters

Born: 1894

Died: 21st September 1916

Buried: St.Pierre Cemetery, Amiens, France. Grave No. IV C.9

Commemorated: Defford War Memorial

Worcester Cathedral Roll of Honour Book

John was born in Defford in 1894, son of William and Louisa Bell. He enlisted into the army at Mansfield and died of wounds received on the Western Front. He was recorded as a resident of Eckington, confirmed by the Eckington Parish Magazine of 1917 where he is listed as a serviceman whose home was in Eckington. He is however recorded on the Defford War Memorial, not the Eckington Memorial.

Appendices

First World War Medals (Pages 57 – 58)

List of known Eckington Servicemen in First World War (Page 59)

Eckington Servicemen on Absent Voters List 1919 (Page 60)

List of known Eckington Servicemen and Women in the Second
World War (Page 61)

George Frederick Mosson – Father to James William Frederick
Mosson (Pages 62 – 63)

World War One Medals

In general those who served in the first world war would have received two medals; The British War Medal and the Victory Medal. Many servicemen also received either The 1914 Star or The 1914-15 Star. So the maximum number of medals a serviceman would have been awarded was three, unless of course there were awards for gallantry.

The British War Medal

This medal was instituted by King George V in 1919 to mark the end of the First World War and record the service given. The medal was made from silver and approximately 6,500,000 were awarded to all forces of the British Empire, anyone who had served in uniform or had been employed in an authorised service.



The Victory Medal

This medal was instituted in 1919 to commemorate the victory of the Allies over the Central Powers. Each of the Allies issued their own Victory Medal but all would have a picture of Victory on the obverse side. The medal was made from yellow bronze and some 5,725,000 British Victory medals were issued.



The 1914 Star

The 1914 Star was issued to the British Expeditionary Force and their immediate reinforcements, who crossed into Belgium from France. It was instituted in 1917 and awarded to those in France or Belgium between 5th August and the 22nd November 1914. All recipients of this bronze medal also received the British War Medal and The Victory Medal. A total of 378,000 1914 Stars were awarded.



The 1914 – 15 Star

This bronze medal was instituted in 1918 and was awarded to those who saw service between 5th August 1914 and 31st December 1915. Those personnel that had received the 1914 Star were not eligible for this medal. Approximately 2,366,000 of these medals were issued.



When a serviceman wore his three medals they would have been in the order of - 1914 Star / 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal - when viewed from the front. These particular medals were given the affectionate name of "Pip, Squeak and Wilfred" after a popular comic strip published in the Daily Mail of that time. In a similar vein, if only the British War Medal and Victory Medal were on display together they were referred to as "Mutt and Jeff".

Service medals were issued automatically to other ranks but officers or their next of kin had to apply for them. Medals were impressed with the name of the recipient and usually included some or all of the following; service number, rank, first name or initial, surname and military unit. The inscription was either on the rim of the medal or in the case of a star on the reverse.

Known First World War Servicemen from the Parish of Eckington At November 1917

C.Aldington

J.Aldington

S.Aldington

W.Baylis

C.Bell

Alf Brown

Arch Brown

C.Brown

H.Brown

W.Brown

W.Browne

H.Browne

S.Browne

H.Cholmondley

H.Cole

W.Cook

A.Cull

S.Cull

W.Davis

C.Deer

G.Deer

F.Farley

A.Firkins

F.Firkins

G.Foster

F.Freeman

P.Freeman

E.Gardner

G.Gardner

T.Gardner

J.Griffin

M.Griffin

H.Griffiths

W.Griffiths

A.Hagley

G.Halling

B.Hepworth

A.Hussell

C.Ismay

J.Jeanes

Wm. Jones

W.Jones

A.Leach

A.Leach

C.Lewin

C.Lloyd

G.Lloyd

P.Lloyd

L.Loxley

J.Mason

J.Meredith

A.Mosson

J.Mosson

S.Mosson

A.Mott

A.Mott

E.Mott

W.Mott

W.Mulliss

H.Newbould

J.Nind

C.Osborne

G.Osborne

W.Osborne

L.Parish

W.Perks

W.Ricketts

F.Righton

T.Righton

E.Roberts

G.Roberts

J.Roff

S.Smith

W.Snipe

W.Stait

R.Swinburn

F.Tovey

A.Tyler

F.Vernon

J.Vernon

T.Vernon

A.Welch

R.Wadley

W.Wadley

Note: Those servicemen whose names are shown in bold, were either "Killed in Action" or died as a result of wounds received in battle.

ECKINGTON SERVICEMEN LISTED AS ABSENT VOTERS IN 1919

Name	Rank	Regiment	No.
ALDINGTON, Sydney	Spr.	Royal Engineers	144930
BAYLISS, Walter		M.T.,A.S.O.	M2/202828
	Col.Sgt-		
BROWN, Alfred Henry	Maj.	9th Glosters	12639
BROWN, Archibald Robert	L-Cpl.	9th Glosters	15975
BROWN, Harvey		Royal Naval Division	328
BROWN, William Ernest	Pte	2nd Royal Irish Rifles	47626
BURY, Thomas			
CHOLMONDELEY, Hugh Grenville	Lieut.	Kings Royal Rifles	
COLE, Herbert			64857
CULL, Sidney		18th Warks. Com	332824
CURLER, Thomas Walker		4th Worcesters	25100
DEE, George Caldwell		8th Seaforth Highlanders	21664
DEE, Sydney		Labour Corps.	
FIRKINS, Arthur James		693, Ag.Co.Lab C	440351
FIRKINS, Frederick Reece		R.G.A. Siege Artillery	121256
FREEMAN, Frank Harold		Garrison Artillery	34374
GARDNER, Ernest William	Sgt.	M.G.C.	10079
GARDNER, Frederick Thomas		Tank Corps.	19588
GRIFFIN, James		R.G.A.	91240
GRIFFIN, John McClean	Major	R.F.A.	
HICKS, George			
HINETT, Arthur Albert Ernest		Royal Engineer	28947
JONES, Frank James	Pte.	5th Worcesters	63412
JONES, William		9th Worcesters	36733
LLOYD, Cecil Robert	L.Cpl.	I/I Wor. Y.	325866
MASON, John Clarke		HMS Garland	40810
MOSSON, Alfred		Birmingham Bn.	378236
MOSSON, Stanley		London Regiment	83283
MOTT, Edgar George		A.S.C.	57799
MOTT, Walter Amos	Pte.	R.A.M.C.	3812
OSBOURNE, Charles		2/6 Royal Sussex	22023
OSBOURNE, William		Ag.Company	312713
PARISH, Leonard	Lieut.	Glos.Regt.	
ROBERTS, George		Lab.Co. 13th Sec.	95722
SNIPE, Alfred		2nd. Wilts. Regt.	39859
SNIPE, Walter		25 Gen.Hospital R. Army Corps.	50738
STAIT, William	Cpl.	Coldstream Guards	21825
STANTON, Harvey		14 Res. Bat. R.F.A.	272860
SWINBOURNE, Ralph	Gnr.	171 Siege Bat., R.A.	42952
VERNON, Frederick		Royal Garrison Art.	64870
WADLEY, Edgar Thomas		A.S.C.	T.3/086791
WADLEY, Roland		South Lancs. At. Field Ambulance	10114
WELCH, Archibald George		Berks. Rgt.	95823

Servicemen and Women from Eckington in the Second World War

David Annand RAF

Mary Annand WAF

Rupert Annand ARMY

Gerald Walter Bellamy ARMY

Fred Berwick RAF

Ray Berwick RAF

Robin Bond ARMY

Alf Brown ARMY

Charlie Cull ARMY

William James Cull ARMY

George Daley NAVY

Jean Davis WRENS

Joe Fishburne RAF

Hubert Gardner ARMY

Lewis Gardner ARMY

Jack Gilson ARMY

Frank Gould RAF

Dick Griffiths ARMY

Bert Hickmott ARMY

Jack Hickmott ARMY

Ron Hickmott ARMY

Bern Hardwick RAF

Gerry Hardwick ARMY

Arch Hughes NAVY

Jack Hussell ARMY

Dick Key ARMY

Bob Key ARMY

W. Lewis RAF

Jack Lloyd ARMY

Max Lloyd ARMY

Denis Loxley ARMY

Douglas Mitchell ARMY

Ted Marshall ARMY

Marjorie Marshall ATS

Fred Mott ARMY

Charles Perks ARMY

Dennis Quarrell RAF

Jack Quarrell NAVY

Les Roberts ARMY

Eric Shale NAVY

Bert Sheppard ARMY

Sid Sheppard ARMY

Albert Skeyes ARMY

Godfrey Snipe ARMY

Walter Snipe ARMY

Percy Solway ARMY

Lewis Smith RAF

Pat Smith RAF

Fred Steptoe ARMY

George Steptoe ARMY

Herbert John Swinbourne ARMY

Joe Swinbourne RAF

Peter Swinbourne ARMY

Roly Swinbourne ARMY

Bill Swinbourne RAF

Bob White RAF

Norman Wilkes ARMY

Bob Williams RAF

Rene Williams ATS

Albert Wood ARMY

Notes: (1) The above list is not regarded as comprehensive. It was taken from "Recollections of Eckington, Worcestershire in World War II" by Harold Checketts and Nils Wilkes

(2) Those servicemen whose names are shown in bold, were either "Killed in Action" or died as a result of wounds received in battle.

George Frederick Mosson
Father to James William Frederick Mosson

An extraordinary military career

- 1862 6th May - Born in Wick Rissington, near Stow on the Wold
1871 Census – cannot find him as yet
Mother, Hannah (widow) and brothers Henry (7) and Alfred (4) are in workhouse at Maugersbury to south-west of Stow
1876 – 80 was a seaman from the age of 14. Had anchor tattoo on his left arm.
1880 6th Nov – enlisted in London into the Royal Artillery, age 18½
Signed up for 12 years
1880 10th Nov – Joined Royal Artillery at Devonport. No. 26333
1881 Census – in Royal Artillery
1882 1st April – Reg.No. 26333
1884 7th August – Promoted to Bombadier (equivalent of Corporal)
1885 – Promoted to Corporal
1888 22nd January – married Martha Ann Sayers at Dover
1888 7th December – Dtr. Florence Beatrice Catherina Mosson born at Spike Island, Cork
1889 1st July – Promoted to Sergeant
1890 16th Dec – set sail on HMS Himalaya for Singapore
1891 28 Jan – Singapore
1891 7th September – **Son James Frederick Mosson born in Singapore**
1892 17 Aug – Promoted to Company Sergeant Major
1893 Oct – still in Singapore
1894 1st January – Back in England
1894 16th November – Son George Henry Arthur Mosson born in Dover, Kent
1897 13th March – Dtr. Susan Mary Francis born at Pembroke Dock
1897 18th November – Sailed on SS Sparta to St.Lucia
1897 28th Nov – St. Lucia, probably at the Garrison Naval Station
1898 13 April – left St Lucia
1900 20th February – Son Cecil Redvers Mosson born at Spike Island, Cork
1900 3rd Feb – South Africa (was mentioned in dispatches by Lord Roberts on 4th Sep. 1901 for work during S.A.War)
1901 13th Sept – left South Africa. Queens South Africa Medal with 4 clasps
1902 31st July – given a war gratuity for serving in South Africa
1903 6th October – Daughter - Muriel Fredrica Mosson - born at Sheerness (She died on 2nd Feb.1904)

- 1908 25 Jan – Discharged from service. Silver Medal for Long Service & Good Conduct
- 1908 Elected to Eckington Parish Council
- 1911 Census – Army Pensioner living at “*Artillery Cottage*”, Bunn Street with Martha Ann, his wife, and Cecil his son aged 11.
- 1914 Ended his Parish Council duties
- 1914 26th September – Signed up for one years service at Worcester at the age of 52.
- 1914 28th September – Co. Sgt. Major 37629 at Fort Rowner, Gosport
- He was subsequently posted to the following, probably as a training officer.
- 67th Brigade
 - 277 Battery
 - 84th Battallion
 - 5B Res.Battallion
 - 89th Brigade R.F.A. Ammunition Column
 - 28th Reserve Battery R.F.A.
 - 169th Brigade
 - CCA Battery 164th Battery Howitzer Brigade RFA
- 1915 His address was Boon Street, Eckington.
- 1915 Listed in Evesham Journal, Roll of Service 1914-15 “Mosson, G.F. Sergt.Major RFA of Eckington”
- 1916 4th April – Discharged from service
- 1916 13th July – **His son James William Frederick Mosson died in Bristol of war wounds**
- 1916 9th Oct – Living at 24 Granby Hill, Clifton, Bristol.
- 1919 1st April – Pension award of 74½ pence per day (6s 2½d)
- 1936 Jul/Aug/Sep - Martha, his wife, died in Bristol
- 1938 Jul/Aug/Sept - George died in Bristol
- 1972 Jan/Feb/Mar - Cecil Redvers Mosson died in Bristol

Information mainly compiled from his service records which are to be found on Ancestry>Medical Records>Pension Records>M>Mo>Mos>8460 to 8491