



GAYTON
and the
GREAT
WAR

Credits

This record of Gayton's role in the Great War has been compiled by

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and originates from the exhibition 'Gayton and the Great War' presented in St. Mary's Church Gayton 2014 -2018.

The authors wish to thank *Daniel Jeffery* for his work in presenting this material on the Gayton website.

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Introduction

In 2013 national events were being planned to commemorate the centenary of the outbreak of World War I. A great deal of archived material was made accessible via the media to the general public, some of it for the first time. The aim was to raise awareness of the significance of the Great War Centenary Project and to encourage communities, families and individuals to do their own research by visiting local and national records offices, museums and libraries. People were also encouraged to trace their own family history through letters, citations and any memorabilia that had been kept from the time. The project was designed to increase our understanding of what it would have been like to live through the Great War and the impact it had on communities. The Heritage Lottery Fund publicised that grants were available to support projects under the title - Outcomes from the First World War 'Then and Now'.

Gayton Church Heritage Trust applied for a grant for our project – 'Gayton and the Great War' and were fortunate to be awarded £4,200 from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The war memorial was our starting point and, as it is not in a prominent place in the village we wished to draw attention to its existence. The memorial plaque is in the parish church on the wall left of the chancel steps. It is an elegant plaque of Hopton Wood stone, erected in 1920 to commemorate 15 men connected with Gayton, who died serving their country in the Great War.

Researching the names has thrown some light on what Gayton was like a century ago and it turns out that it was not altogether the static, farming community one might have imagined in a rural Northamptonshire village. Hopefully this booklet will raise an interest in those living here now to want to know more about Gayton's past and provoke thought on how the community might evolve in future.



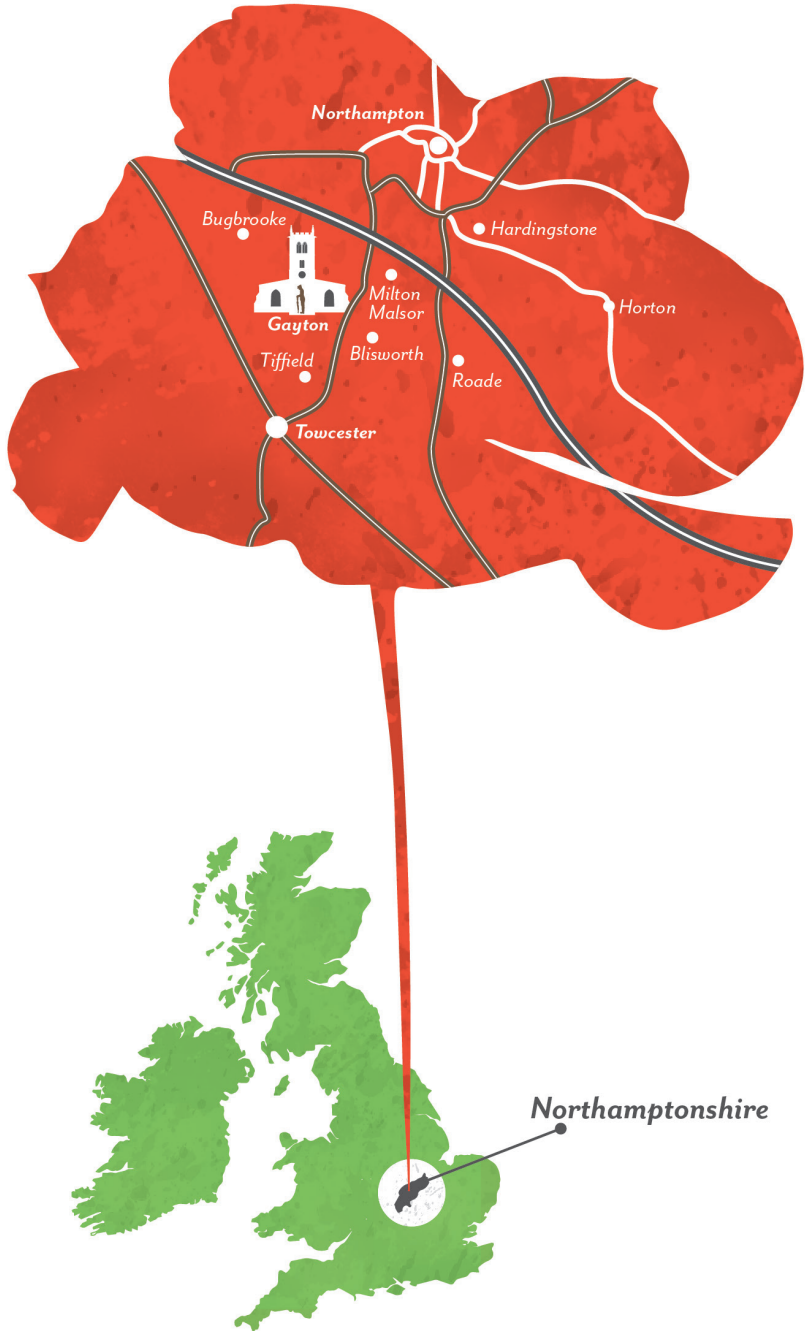
ABOVE War memorial in Gayton St Mary church

“The war memorial was our starting point and, as it is not in a prominent place in the village we wished to draw attention to its existence.”

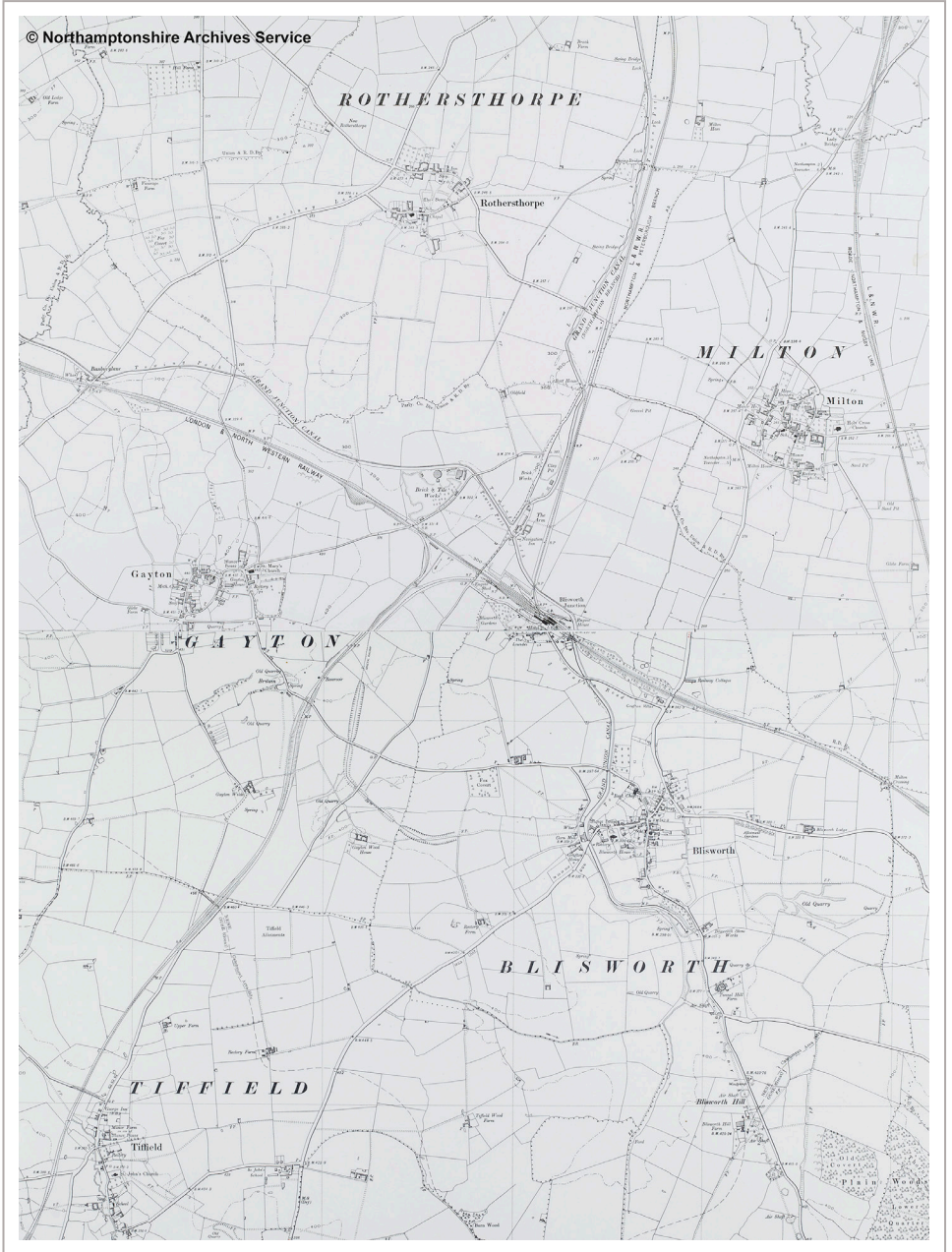


Supported by Heritage Lottery grant 2014.

Map of Northampton and Gayton



Gayton C1900



A Snap Shot Of Gayton Village Before 1914

Gayton is a village in the south-west of Northamptonshire and sits between Northampton and Towster. Its elevated position gives views of the surrounding countryside and the town of Northampton. Its northern slope is made up of oolite clay which was extracted and used to manufacture bricks. On the eastern side is a seam of ironstone stretching from Corby to Gayton.

Industry

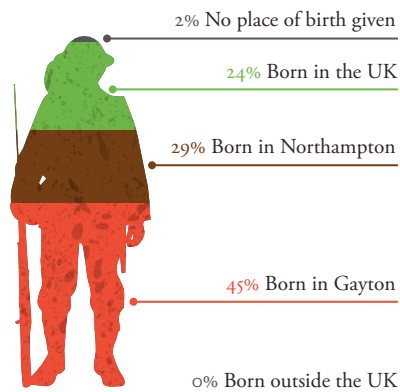
The iron ore in the seam between Gayton and Blisworth was initially extracted by hand. It was loaded into horse drawn trucks pulled along a narrow gauge railway before joining a standard gauge tramway that ran in the valley between Gayton and Blisworth. This tramway joined the London North Western Railway (*LNWR*) at Blisworth Station which is now closed. The success of these two industries was dependent for distribution on their proximity to railway and canal links at Blisworth. In the late 1800's extraction of clay and iron ore were a source of local employment. However the iron ore quarries became inactive and were left standing for some years until 1900 when extraction began once more to supply raw materials for the arms race in anticipation of WWI and continued until 1921.

Who Lived in Gayton

The 1911 census recorded the population of Gayton to be 357 people, 174 males and 183 females. Some of the tradesmen listed as living in the village were a butcher, a brewer and baker, a carpenter/undertaker, a farrier, a post-mistress and a carrier who delivered goods twice a week via Tiffield. Employment locally was agricultural labouring, domestic work, open caste mining, the brick works, the LNWR and SMJ railway and the Canal. These local

industries were beginning to slow down and despite the iron ore extraction re-starting to provide raw materials for the war effort jobs were hard to find and pay was low with the result that prior to WWI men had started to leave the village in search of work.

1911 Census Gayton



The census returns show a surprising amount of mobility in the Gayton population as men moved around villages seeking employment. The George family were one example of this. Arthur George lived with his wife and growing family in Tiffield. The family moved to Gayton sometime after 1894 and lived in a three roomed cottage in Kiln Yard. By 1911 the family had moved back to Tiffield. Some men took more extreme measures to make a better life for themselves. Fred and Tom Wakelin and Charles and John Ward responded to the Canadian Government's drive to attract prospective settlers to farm on the Prairies. Advertisements were placed in national and local newspapers including the Northamptonshire Independent. Those who were interested in a new life in Ontario could apply to the Emigration Office at 28, The Drapery in Northampton. In 1913 and 14 there were 750,000 immigrants to Canada of which 39% were British.

[Click to see the advert from the Northamptonshire Independent about travelling abroad.](#)

The Buildings

Significant buildings in the village were the 14th Century Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin and adjoining Rectory, a Wesleyan Chapel, the 16th Century Manor House, Gayton House and a 17th century farm house known as the Weir, on the corner of High Street and Baker Street along with a number of other farm houses. The principal landowners were the Lord of the Manor Sir Henry James Hawley who owned the Manor House but was not in residence and Arthur Eykyn who owned Gayton House situated across the road from the church on Blisworth Road (*now St Mary's Court*). The chapel and a concentration of small dwellings were in courtyards leading off the High Street. There had been eight alehouses in the village in the 1800's. The Eykyn Arms is the only one which remains today. In 1914 The Queen Victoria former public house was also a village shop. Despite the fact that new houses have been built replacing some of the older dwellings off the High Street and Deans Row the population of the village at the 2011 census was 544 so only just under 200 more than in 1911.

The Village School

The primary school and the Parish Church in the form of Gayton Alms Charity provided support and comfort to the community from an income of £340 a year earned by Investments in Ironstone Mining and rent from land belonging to the charity. A national programme to improve child education began at the turn of the century with the result that in 1902 a newly built school on the Bugbrooke Road opened for 100 children to replace the much smaller building in Deans Row, now a private house.

The Head Teacher recorded in the school log that the children responded well to their new surroundings and that the more varied timetable and new equipment

improved their concentration, but added rather poignantly that the infants "under kindly treatment show good progress". The school log, archived in the Northampton Records Office, gives an insight into the achievements, such as scholarships, that a few of the more able children attained.

Problems With Attendance

There were however many problems which disrupted the school day such as severe winters when heavy snowfall made it difficult to arrive on time resulting in the school being opened only in the afternoon. A shortage of coal in the winter of 1917 resulted in a three week closure. Epidemics of childhood diseases such as measles, mumps and scarlet fever caused more disruption through low attendance and school closures to contain the spread of illness.

There were happier reasons for absenteeism, although just as disruptive, such as returning late back after the summer break because the children were needed to help with the harvest and potato lifting. However, despite the difficulties in the early years of moving to the new school building standards improved following a National educational initiative and regular visits from the School Inspectors. There is no mention of the outbreak of War in the school log but it obvious from subsequent entries that it became difficult to sustain standards due to staff shortages which meant 14 year old students were helping with younger classes. There was one long-term absence, then another member of staff left and yet another ceased her duties at Christmas until only one teacher remained. Ada Hill, the Head Teacher, was left to cope single handed with 45 children helped by the Reverend Dr Edward King and Mrs King, his wife.

[Click to read more about Rev E.G. King and his time as Rector of Gayton.](#)

Important dates relating to the First World War, especially the Western Front.

1914

- 28th June** | Archduke Franz Ferdinand is assassinated.
28th July | Austria—Hungary declares war on Serbia.
1st August | Germany declares war on Russia.
3rd August | Germany declares war on France.
4th August | Britain declares war on Germany.
23rd–25th August | Battle of Mons/Battle of Le Cateau.
6th–12th September | Battle of the Marne.
September–November | Trenches dug by both sides.
19th October–17th November | First Battle of Ypres.
25th December | Peace along certain sections of the Western Front.

1916

- 25th January** | An Act of Parliament makes all single men between 18 and 41 eligible for conscription (*Military Service Act*).
21st February–31st August | Battle of Verdun.
31st May | Battle of Jutland (*naval battle*).
5th June | Ernest Richard East died aged 24.
1st July–18th November | Battle of the Somme.
14th June | Harry George died aged 24.
16th September | Horace Smith Pancoust died aged 29.
30th September | Cyril Henry Marshall King died aged 23.

1915

- 19th January** | First air raid on Britain (*Great Yarmouth*).
24th January | Battle of Dogger Bank (*naval battle*).
22nd April–25th May | Second battle of Ypres (*first use of poison gas*).
22nd April | John Ward died aged 21.
25th April | British and Allied troops land at Gallipoli.
15th June | Frederick Bert Wakelin died aged 21.
15th June | Tom Wakelin died aged 25.
25th–28th September | Battle of Loos.
September | Alfred Charles Digby severely gassed at the Battle of Loos.

1917

- 1st March** | Jeffery Chester died aged 19.
12th March | Start of the Russian Revolution.
6th April | The USA declares war on Germany.
9th April–15th May | Battle of Arras.
13th April | Albert Kingston Died Aged 19.
28th April | George Percy Cockerill died aged 20.
28th April | Thomas William George died aged 31.
11th May | James William Heel died aged 20.
14th July | Percy Cowley died aged 24.
31st July–10th November | Third Battle of Ypres (*Passchendaele*).
December | Peace agreed between Russians and Germany.
20th November–7th December | Battle of Cambrai.

1918

- 3rd March** | Russia signs peace treaty with Germany.
March/April/May | German army successes along the Western Front.
1st April | The Royal Air Force is created.
18th July–5th August | Second Battle of Marne. German army starts to collapse.
8th August | Britain and her allies launch a series of attacks along the Western Front.
7th September | Charles Alfred Digby died aged 26.
20th October | Edward Westcott King died aged 36.
11th November | The Armistice is signed and the war officially ends.

GAYTON *and the* GREAT WAR

The Fallen





Commemorated in perpetuity by the
Commonwealth War Graves Commission

In Memory of Private John Ward

6974, 1st Bn., Canadian Infantry who died on 22nd April 1915 age 21

Son of Mrs. A. J. Ward, of 51, Park Rd., St. James End, Northampton, England

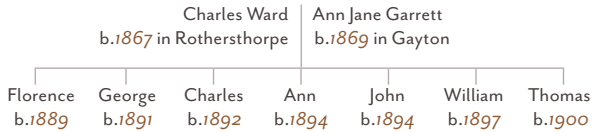
Remembered with Honour Ypres (*Menin Gate*) Memorial



Private John Ward 6974, 1st Bn., Canadian Infantry



Family Tree



John was born on 15th December 1894 the son of Charles and Ann Ward. Charles and Ann lived in Gayton when they were first married, then moved to Long Lawford in Warwickshire where Charles worked as a general labourer possibly at a quarry. When Charles died the family moved back to Gayton. In 1911 John was living with his mother and his brothers and working as a labourer. By 1914 Ann Ward (*John's mother*) was living at 51 Park Road, St James' End.

In 1912 John's brother Charles emigrated to Canada with Tom Wakelin to make a better life for himself and his family. John joined them in 1913 sailing out of Southampton on the SS Ausonia on 11th September. Fred Wakelin followed in May 1914. Fred, Tom, John and Charles had consecutive service numbers as they enlisted for the Canadian Infantry on the same day.

John and his brother Charles were stretcher bearers in the 1st Battalion Canadian Infantry. Their brother George served in the 5th Battalion Northamptonshire Regiment.

Stretcher bearers played a crucial role on the battlefield. Advancing troops were not allowed to stop and care for wounded soldiers. If injured, a soldier had to treat his own wounds as best he could using

the emergency field dressings issued to all soldiers. Then the wounded soldier would wait for assistance to get him back to his Regimental First Aid Post and then on to the Casualty Clearing Station for treatment or surgery. Stretcher bearers worked in terrible conditions, seeing at first hand the horror of the battle and it's aftermath. Sometimes it was days before an injured soldier could be rescued.

John Ward was killed on 22nd April 1915 during the battle of Ypres aged 21. He is remembered on the Ypres (*Menin Gate*) Memorial.

The Menin Gate is one of four memorials to soldiers who died in the area known as the Ypres Salient in Belgian Flanders. It is situated on the eastern side of the town of Ypres. The site of the Menin Gate was chosen because of the hundreds of thousands of men who passed through it on their way to the battlefields. It commemorates casualties from the forces of Australia, Canada, India, South Africa and United Kingdom who died in the Salient before 1917. The memorial now bears the names of more than 54,000 officers and men whose graves are not known. The memorial, designed by Sir Reginald Blomfield with sculpture by Sir William Reid-Dick, was unveiled by Lord Plumer on 24th July 1927.



Commemorated in perpetuity by the
Commonwealth War Graves Commission

In Memory of Sergeant Frederick Bert Wakelin DCM

6972, 1st Bn., Canadian Infantry who died on 15th June 1915 age 25

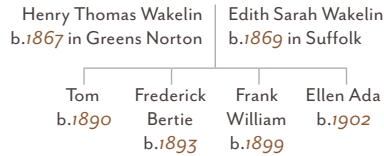
Son of Henry Thomas and Edith Sarah Wakelin, of Gayton, Blisworth,
Northants, England. His brother Tom Wakelin also fell.

Remembered with Honour Vimy Memorial





Family Tree



Fred was born in Gayton on 23rd September 1893, the second son of Henry and Edith Wakelin. He lived with his family at Gayton Wilds. His father was a waggoner and Fred was a farm labourer. Fred's brother Tom emigrated to Canada in 1912 and Fred followed him in May 1914 sailing from Southampton to Quebec on the SS Alaunia. At the outbreak of war both brothers enlisted in the Candian Overseas Expeditionary Force and returned to England for training. The battalion set off from Quebec for England on board the SS Laurentic arriving in England



on 14 October 1914 with 45 officers and 1121 men. The battalion became part of the 1st Canadian Division where it saw action at Ypres and along the Western Front.

Fred was awarded the DCM for conspicuous gallantry at Pilkhem Ridge on

23rd April 1915 in the second battle of Ypres. He took his platoon up into the firing line after all the senior NCOs had been killed or wounded under heavy shell and rifle fire. After the battle Fred wrote to his parents describing how the German army had used gas

“with a vengeance”, and on one occasion he was blinded for three hours. Shortly afterwards, on 15th June 1915, Fred died in battle aged 22. A memorial service, led by the Reverend King, was held in Gayton Church on 4th July 1915. The Volunteer Corps and the Scouts were in attendance. Great sympathy was expressed for Henry and Edith Wakelin

especially as their eldest son Tom was reported missing in action. Later, in the same year Henry and Edith were informed that Tom died on the same day as his brother. The two brothers are remembered on the Vimy Memorial, near Arras.

[Click to see Fred's medals including his DCM.](#)



Commemorated in perpetuity by the
Commonwealth War Graves Commission

In Memory of Lance Sergeant Tom Wakelin

6973, 1st Bn., Canadian Infantry who died on 15th June 1915 age 28

Son of Henry Thomas and Edith Sarah Wakelin, of Gayton, Blisworth, Northants,
England. His brother Frederick Bert Wakelin DCM also fell.

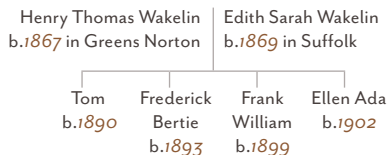
Remembered with Honour Vimy Memorial



Lance Sergeant Tom Wakelin 6973, 1st Bn., Canadian Infantry



Family Tree



Tom was born in Duncote, near Greens Norton, on the 17th June 1890, the eldest son of Henry and Edith Wakelin. Sometime later the family moved to Gayton Wilds where Tom worked as a horse keeper at the iron stone works. Tom and his friend Charles Ward emigrated to Canada on 15th March in 1913, sailing on the SS Teutonic from Liverpool to Halifax. They hoped to better themselves and to send money home to their families. Charles's brother John followed in 1913 and Tom's brother Fred joined them in 1914.

At start of WWI the four young men enlisted for the Canadian Overseas Expeditionary Force and returned home to England for training. They became part of the 1st Canadian Division which fought at Ypres.

Tom died on 15th June 1915 in the battle of Ypres, two days before his 25th birthday. His brother Fred died on the same day. News of Fred's death reached the family first. Tom was initially reported wounded and his family did not hear of his death

[Click to see a photograph of Tom Wakelin in Gayton Football Team C1911 and Tom's medals](#)

until later in the year. The brothers are remembered on the Vimy Memorial.

The memorial overlooks the Douai Plain from the highest point of Vimy Ridge, about eight kilometres northeast of Arras.

On the opening day of the Battle of



Arras, 9 April 1917, the four divisions of the Canadian Corps, fighting side by side for the first time, scored a huge tactical victory in the capture of the 60 metre high Vimy Ridge. After the war, the highest point of the ridge was chosen as the site of the great memorial to all Canadians who served their country in battle during the First World War. The memorial was

designed by W.S. Allward. It was unveiled by King Edward VIII on 26 July 1936.

On the 29th May 1915 from
Fred to his mother—

"They say that Tom nearly got recommended too (for DCM) but the Officer who noticed him was too busy to take his name."



Commemorated in perpetuity by the
Commonwealth War Graves Commission

In Memory of Stoker 1st Class Ernest Richard East

SS/113679, H.M.S. "Hampshire", Royal Navy who died on 5th June 1916 age 24

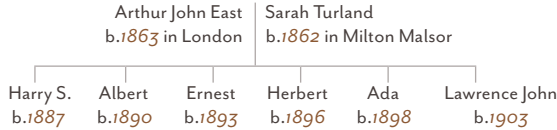
Son of Arthur John and Sarah East, of 42, Henley St., Far Cotton. Northampton

Remembered with Honour Portsmouth Naval Memorial





Family Tree



Ernest was born in Stoke Goldington in 1893, the third child of Arthur and Sarah East. In 1901 Ernest was living with his family in Little Street, Milton Malsor (*also known as Middleton Malzor*). Arthur was a foreman at a brewery. By 1911 the family had moved to 44 Henley Street, Far Cotton. Ernest worked as a horsekeeper's assistant for the Midland Railway. After the death of his father in 1916, Ernest's mother Sarah was living in Banbury Lane, Gayton.

Ernest and three of his brothers, Harry, Albert and Herbert served in the Royal Navy in the First World War. Harry joined up first in 1903, followed by Albert in 1911 and Herbert and Ernest in 1913.

Ernest served on HMS Victory II. In 1914 he joined HMS Hampshire as a Stoker whose job was to move coal from the ship's coal bunkers to the firebox. This was hot and very heavy work. The air would be full of

coal dust, the furnaces would be roaring, the temperatures very high and the ship would be rolling and pitching. Ernest was promoted to Stoker 1st Class in recognition of his proficiency in firearms drill and field craft.

HMS Hampshire was present at was the

Battle of Jutland (31st May – 1st June 1916). Several days later the ship was sailing to Russia carrying the Secretary of State for War, Field Marshal Lord Kitchener. It is believed that on the 5th June 1916 the ship struck a mine laid by the German Navy. HMS Hampshire sank with heavy loss of life including those of Ernest's (*and Lord Kitchener's*).

Ernest's body was not recovered.

Ernest was the awarded the British War Medal, Victory Medal and the Star Medal and is remembered on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial and the Jutland Memorial (June 2016). Ernest's three brothers Harry, Albert and Herbert survived the war.

[Click to read the newspaper article about the four East brothers.](#)





Commemorated in perpetuity by the
Commonwealth War Graves Commission

In Memory of Private Harry George

13168, 6th Bn., Northamptonshire Regiment who died on 14th July 1916

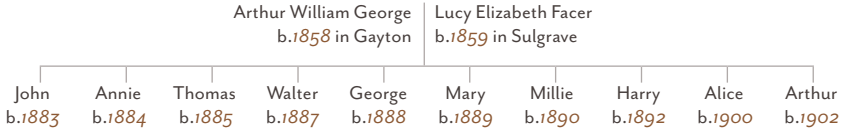
Remembered with Honour Thiepval Memorial



Private Harry George 13168, 6th Bn., Northamptonshire Regiment



Family Tree



Harry was born in 1892, the eighth of ten known surviving children of Arthur and Lucy George. Arthur became a beer house keeper and coal dealer in Tiffield after being injured aged 23, working in an ironstone quarry. The whole family moved to back to Gayton sometime between 1894 and 1900 and lived in Kiln Yard. However by 1911 the family had moved yet again, this time to The Folly in Tiffield where Harry and his father worked as farm labourers.

Harry joined the 6th (Service) Battalion formed in Northampton in September 1914. This battalion was part of Kitchener's Army and was attached to the 18th (Eastern) Division. On July 26th 1915 this division landed in France.

Harry was killed in action on 14th July 1916 in the Battle of the Somme and is remembered at the Thiepval Memorial.

He was awarded the British War Medal, the Victory Medal and the 15 Star Medal.

On the 1st July every year a major ceremony is held at the Thiepval Memorial to remember the missing of the Somme.

It bears the names of more than 72,000 officers and men of the United Kingdom and South African forces who died in the Somme sector before 20th March 1918 and have no known grave. Over 90% of those commemorated died between July and November

1916. The memorial also serves as an Anglo-French Battle Memorial in recognition of the joint nature of the 1916 offensive and a small cemetery containing equal numbers of Commonwealth and French graves lies at the foot of the memorial.

The memorial, designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, was built between 1928 and 1932 and unveiled by the Prince of Wales, in the presence of the President of France, on 1st August 1932.

Harry was born in Tiffield where his father worked as a beer house keeper. The George public house is named after the family.



ABOVE 1914-15
Star medal



Commemorated in perpetuity by the
Commonwealth War Graves Commission

In Memory of Lance Corporal Horace Smith Pancoust

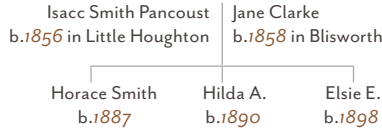
16099, 2nd Bn., Coldstream Guards who died on 16th September 1916

Remembered with Honour Thiepval Memorial





Family Tree



Horace was born in 1887, the eldest child of Issac and Jane Pancoust. Issac was a labourer and Jane was a greengrocer's assistant living at 117 Bridge Street in Northampton in 1901. In the 1911 census Horace was recorded as a boarder at 58, Walnut Tree Avenue, Cambridge working as a 'meal salesman'. Horace married Emma Louise Tew in Hardingstone in 1913. They had two children, Eunice Mary born in 1914 and Gwendoline Elsie born in 1915. Horace managed a meat shop in Coventry before enlisting in the Coldstream Guards in May 1915. He went to out to France with his regiment on 1st June 1916.



The Coldstream Guards was founded in Coldstream, Scotland in 1650 by General George Monck. At the outbreak of the First World War, the Coldstream Guards were among the first British regiments to arrive in France after Britain declared war

on Germany. They suffered heavy losses, in two battles they lost all their officers. At the first Battle of Ypres the 1st battalion was virtually annihilated – by the 1st November 1914 their numbers were down to just 150 men and one Lt Quartermaster. The

Coldstream Guards fought in Mons, Loos, Somme, Ginchy and in the 3rd Battle of Ypres.

Horace died on 16th September 1916 in the Battle of the Somme. He was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal and is remembered on the Thiepval Memorial. At the time of his death his wife and two children were living in Gayton.

[Click to read the obituary of Horace Smith Pancoust published in the Northampton Independent 4th November 1916.](#)



Commemorated in perpetuity by the
Commonwealth War Graves Commission

In Memory of Second Lieutenant Cyril Henry Marshall King

60th Sqdn., Royal Flying Corps who died on 30th September 1916 Age 23

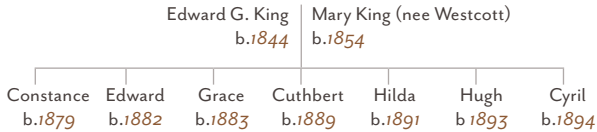
Son of the Rev. E. G. King, D.D., of Gayton Rectory, Northamptonshire

Remembered with Honour Aubigny Communal Cemetery Extension





Family Tree



Cyril was born in 1894 the youngest child of the Reverend Edward King and his wife Mary. The family lived at the Rectory in Gayton where Cyril's father was Rector.

Cyril was educated at Sherbourne and Aldenham Schools and Birmingham University where he took his BSc and won the Bowden Scholarship for Special Research in Engineering. At the outbreak of war he joined the Universities and Public Schools Corps after and later received a commission in the Royal Garrison Artillery (*RGA*). He went to France in October 1915 and after a few months joined the Royal Flying Corps (*RFC*) as an observer.

Cyril returned to England to train as a pilot. He went back to France with his 'Wings' in May 1916 to join the Scout Squadron.

The RFC was deployed over the battlefields performing aerial reconnaissance and bombing missions. The RGA was often supported by the RFC who had devised a system where pilots could use wireless [Click here to read about Edgar Mobbs](#)

telegraphy to help the artillery hit specific targets. The RFC aircraft carried a wireless set and a map and after identifying the position of an enemy target the pilot was

able to transmit messages in morse code to a RFC land station attached to heavy artillery units, such as the Royal Garrison Artillery Siege Batteries.

At the time of his death on 30th September 1916 Cyril was flying a Neuport Scout. He was awarded the British War medal and the Victory Medal by the RFC and the 15 Star by

the RGA and is remembered at the Aubigny Communal Cemetery Extension. Aubigny (*Aubigny-en-Artois*) is a village approximately 15 kms north-west of Arras.

One of Cyril's brothers, Edward, was killed on 20th October 1918 serving in the Royal Artillery. Another brother, Hugh, served as a Captain in the 7th Northamptonshire Regiment (*MOBBS OWN*) and survived the war.

[Click here to read the obituary of Cyril King published in the Northampton Independent 14th October 1916.](#)





Commemorated in perpetuity by the
Commonwealth War Graves Commission

In Memory of Gunner Jeffery Chester

115156, 189th Bde., Royal Field Artillery who died on 1st March 1917 age 19

Son of Mr. F. A. Chester, of Gayton, Blisworth, Northants

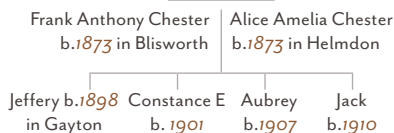
Remembered with Honour Dickebusch New Military Cemetery



Gunner Jeffery Chester 115156, 189th Bde., Royal Field Artillery



Family Tree



Jeffery was born in 1898 in Gayton, the eldest son of Frank and Alice Chester. The family lived at the Crown and Squirrel (*now the Eykeyn Arms*) in Gayton, from where Frank ran his butcher's business. In 1906 the family moved to Old Manor Farm where Frank continued to run his business, using one of the buildings as a butchers shop. In 1901 Frank employed an assistant, Arthur Kingston, but when his sons were older they helped their father. They were often seen travelling around the neighbouring villages with a horse and cart selling meat.

Jeffery joined the Royal Field Artillery (*RFA*) which provided support for the

British Army. The RFA was responsible for the medium calibre guns and howitzers deployed close to the front line. During the First World War a whole new form of artillery, trench mortar, was developed to meet the unusual conditions of war on the Western Front. The RFA provided the manpower for the heavier mortars while the lighter weapons were manned by the infantry.

Jeffery was killed on active service on 1st March 1917 in the final stages of the Battle of the Somme. He is remembered at the Dickebusch New Military Cemetery in Ypres in Belgium. Jeffery was awarded the British War medal and the Victory Medal.



ABOVE Frank Anthony Chester with his butchers cart



Commemorated in perpetuity by the
Commonwealth War Graves Commission

In Memory of Private A Kingston

23415, 7th Bn., Northamptonshire Regiment who died on 13th April 1917 age 23

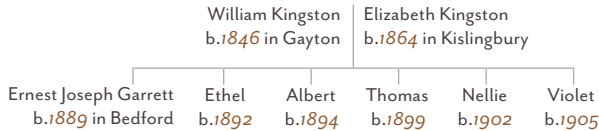
Son of Mr. and Mrs. W. Kingston, of Milton, Northants

Remembered with Honour Fosse No.10 Communal Cemetery Extension, Sains-En-Gohelle





Family Tree



Albert was born in Gayton in 1894, son of William and Elizabeth Kingston. The family lived in Towcester Road, Gayton, where his father was a brickyard labourer. Albert worked as a farm labourer.

Albert died on 13th April 1917 aged 23 in the Battle of Arras. He was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal and is remembered at Fosse No.10 Communal Cemetery Extension in the old mining village of Sains-En-Gohelle, 20km north of Arras.

The Extension is on the South side of the Communal Cemetery. It was begun in April, 1916 and used continuously (*chiefly by Field Ambulances*) until October 1918.

In between the battles there were many 'quiet' days in the trenches. Days of inactivity would be spent relaxing, writing letters, mending equipment or even sleeping. Getting rid of the lice that

plagued most men was a necessary pastime, but usually a battle lost! Music played on the harmonica or the comb and toilet paper (*the hard stuff!*) was a familiar sound.

Communication between home and soldiers posted to the Western Front were surprisingly speedy.

Letters would take about 2-3 days to be delivered. They were however censored.

Families sent small comforts of cakes, warm clothing, money and cigarettes to their loved ones at the Front.

Keeping in Touch

Extract from a letter written by Fred Wakelin to his mother, 7th March 1915-

"The parcel came in just right at 2 o'clock in the morning the last night in the trench and I might mention that we have plenty of tobacco but cigarettes and anything else will be welcomed with delight."



Commemorated in perpetuity by the
Commonwealth War Graves Commission

In Memory of Private George Percy Cockerill

29217, 13th Bn., Essex Regiment who died on 28th April 1917 age 20

Son of Mr. and Mrs. W. T. Cockerill, of Gayton, Blisworth, Northants

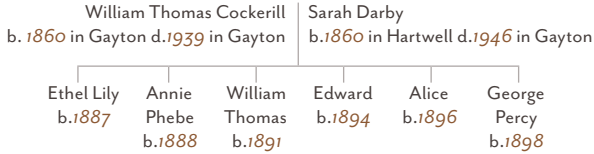
Remembered with Honour Arras Memorial



Private George Percy Cockerill 29217, 13th Bn., Essex Regiment



Family Tree



George was born in 1898, the son of William and Sarah Cockerill. William was a cowman on a farm. The family lived in Kiln Cottages in Gayton, where George worked as a domestic gardener.

During World War 1 George served with the 13th Battalion, Essex Regiment. This regiment provided 30 infantry battalions to the British Army. The 13th Battalion (*West Ham*) was raised by the Mayor and Borough of West Ham and served in Le Cateau, Ypres, Loos, Somme, Cambrai, Gallipoli and Gaza.

George died on 28th April 1917 at the battle of Arras and is remembered on the Arras Memorial. He was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. George died on the same day as Thomas William George, also from Gayton serving in the 13th Bn., Essex Regiment.

The Arras Memorial commemorates almost 35,000 servicemen from the United Kingdom, South Africa and New Zealand who died in the Arras sector between the spring of 1916 and August 1918. The memorial was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens.

Family Connections

The George and Cockerill Families were linked by marriage. Ethel Lily Cockerill married John George on 5th August 1907 at Mary's Church, Gayton.

1914
14 Marriage solemnized in Church in the Parish of Gayton in the County of Northampton

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time.
276	Nov. 17 1914	Thomas William George Dungham Lane, Gayton	28 25	single single	Robber Gardener	Robber Gayton

Married in the Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of England

This Marriage was solemnized between us Thomas William George in the Presence of us William Thomas Cockerill

1914 in the Parish of Gayton in the County of Northampton

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Residence.	Rank or Profession.
15	Nov. 17 1914	John George Gayton	35 31	single single	Robber Gardener	Gayton Gayton	Thomas William George William Thomas Cockerill	Robber Gardener

Married in the Parish of Gayton according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of England by us John George

This Marriage was solemnized between us John George in the Presence of us William Thomas Cockerill



Commemorated in perpetuity by the
Commonwealth War Graves Commission

In Memory of Private Thomas William George

29198, 13th Bn., Essex Regiment who died on 28th April 1917

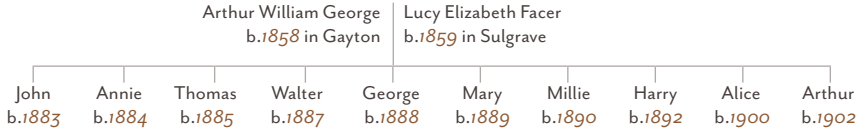
Remembered with Honour Arras Memorial



Private Thomas William George 29198, 13th Bn., Essex Regiment



Family Tree



Thomas was born in 1885, the second son of Arthur and Lucy George. The family lived in a cottage in Kiln Yard, Gayton, having moved from Tiffield around 1894. It was a large family of 6 boys and 4 girls, Thomas worked as a general ironstone labourer. On 17th November 1914 Thomas married Bridget Maria Cowley at St. Mary's Church, Gayton.

Thomas served in the 13th Battalion of the Essex Regiment. This regiment fought at the Battle of Arras where Thomas died on 28th April 1917. Thomas is remembered on the Arras Memorial and was awarded the Victory Medal and the British War Medal. He died on the same day as Percy George Cockerill who was in the same Regiment. Thomas's brother Harry had previously been killed in the battle of the Somme in July 1916.

History of The Commonwealth War Graves Commission

The CWGC owes its existence to the vision and determination of Sir Fabian Ware.

Neither a soldier nor a politician, Ware was nevertheless well placed to respond to the public's reaction to the enormous losses in the war. At 45 he was too old to fight but he became the commander of a mobile unit of the British Red Cross. Saddened by the sheer number of casualties, he felt driven to find a way to ensure the final resting places of the dead would not be lost forever. His vision chimed with the times. Under his dynamic leadership, his unit began recording and caring for all the graves they could find. By 1915, their work was given official recognition by the War Office

and incorporated into the British Army as the Graves Registration Commission. The Commission's work began in earnest after the Armistice. Once land for cemeteries and memorials had been guaranteed, the enormous task of recording the details of the dead began. By 1918, some 587,000 graves had been identified and a further 559,000 casualties were registered as having no known grave. The Commission set the highest standards for all its work. Three of the most eminent architects of the day - Sir Edwin Lutyens, Sir Herbert Baker and Sir Reginald Blomfield - were chosen to begin the work of designing and constructing the cemeteries and memorials. Rudyard Kipling advised on the inscriptions for the monuments.



Commemorated in perpetuity by the
Commonwealth War Graves Commission

In Memory of Rifleman James Heel

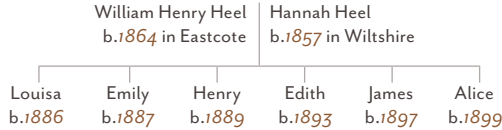
474119, 1st/12th Bn., London Regiment (*The Rangers*) who died on 11th May 1917

Remembered with Honour Arras Memorial





Family Tree



James was born in 1897 the son of William and Hannah Heel. William was a waggoner on a farm. The Heel family lived in Reeve’s Cottages, Gayton. There were 10 children altogether, 2 of whom died young. In May 1913 William died suddenly

of heart failure. James and his brother Harry were left to look after their widowed mother.

60% of the 6.5 million World War 1 military records stored at the War Office were destroyed by fire during a bombing raid on London in 1940. However James’s military records survived. These show that he

enlisted on 27th November 1915 with the 3rd Battalion Northamptonshire Regiment. He was 18 years and 2 months old and was an ironstone worker. On 25th June 1916 the Northamptonshire Regiment joined the Expeditionary Force in France, however James was soon transferred to the London Regiment on 10th July 1916. It was common for men to be transferred from one regiment

to another to replace those killed or wounded in action. James himself was wounded on the 24th September 1916 and was treated for wounds to his lower jaw. The following month he returned to duty with his unit.

The 1/12th Battalion, London Regiment

(*The Rangers*) was a territorial unit serving with 3rd London Brigade, 1st London Division. On Christmas Day 1914 they were sent to France, landing at Le Havre. In 1915 they fought in the second battle of Ypres and in 1916 at the Somme, taking part in the diversionary

attack at Gommecourt on the 1st of July.

James died on 11th May 1917, his belongings - letters, photos, wallet, religious books and cigarette case were returned to his mother. He was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal and is remembered on the Arras Memorial.

[Click to see a photograph of the hospital where James Heel stayed.](#)

A letter from Mrs Heel to the War Office dated August 22nd 1917

‘Sir, I am writing thanking you very much for the articles mentioned on form which were received quite safe today, but he had two watches in his possession his sisters wristlet one of his own which we should like if it were possible to have them. Thanking you kindly for what you have sent Yours Truly A Heel’



Commemorated in perpetuity by the
Commonwealth War Graves Commission

In Memory of Private P J V Cowley

33166, 8th Bn., Leicestershire Regiment who died on 14th July 1917

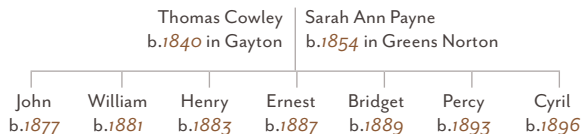
Son of Mrs. A. J. Ward, of 51, Park Rd., St. James End, Northampton, England.

Remembered with Honour Croisilles British Cemetery





Family Tree



Percy was born in 1893 the fifth son of Thomas and Sarah Cowley. The family lived in Brittain Cottages, Gayton where Thomas was an agricultural labourer. Percy worked as an ironstone worker and became a shepherd.

Percy enlisted at the end of 1915. However his employer, William George applied to the Military Service Tribunal for a postponement of Percy's draft on the grounds that he would be 'short handed' on the farm. The tribunal turned down this application. William George appealed against this decision but once again the tribunal turned down the application. One of the reasons given for the decision was that William George already had 6 men and 4 youths in his employment. The tribunal was of the opinion that "under the circumstances William George had sufficient men" and did not require Percy. Neither William George nor Percy attended this hearing. William was too ill to attend and Percy did not attend because he was uncomfortable and felt that he might be

seen by some in his village as a "shirker".

Percy served in the Leicestershire Regiment in the 8th Battalion. This Regiment is often referred to as the 'Tigers' because of their regimental badge which features a 'Royal Bengal Tiger'. The 6th, 7th 8th and 9th Battalions served together in the 110 Brigade, 21st Division. They arrived in France in July 1916 and remained on the Western Front for the duration of the war. Between 1914 and 1918, 3017 soldiers from these battalions were killed.

Percy died on the 14th July 1917 and is remembered at the Croisilles British Cemetery. He was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

The Croisilles British Cemetery was established between April 1917 and March 1918. It was enlarged after the Armistice, when soldier's remains were brought in from neighbouring battlefields and from smaller burial grounds. The cemetery now contains 1,171 Commonwealth burials and commemorations of the First World War.

[Click to read about conscription and the appeals process.](#)



Commemorated in perpetuity by the
Commonwealth War Graves Commission

In Memory of Private A C Digby

3/9/143, Depot, Northamptonshire Regiment who died on 7th September 1918 age 26

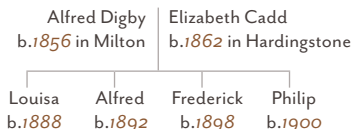
Husband of Martha Louisa Lily Davis (*formerly Digby*), of The Cottages, Courteenhall, Northants

Remembered with Honour Gayton (St. Mary) Churchyard





Family Tree



Alfred was born in 1892 the eldest son of Alfred and Elizabeth Digby. Alfred senior was a thatcher and hedge cutter living with his family in High Street, Milton Malzor (also known as Middleton Malzor).

Alfred junior married Martha Cadd and became a professional soldier in the 1st Northamptonshire Regiment living in the barracks of the Northampton Regiment in Leicester Road. He became part of the British Expeditionary Force which was mobilized immediately after war was declared on the 4th August 1914. Alfred went to France in October 1914 and took part in the first battle of Ypres, the battle of Nouvelle Chapelle and other engagements including

the battle of Loos where he was severely gassed in September 1915. He was sent home and admitted to hospital in Leicester for treatment. Eventually Alfred was invalided from the Army on 2nd April 1918. He was awarded the Mons 14 Star Medal, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

The Northamptonshire Regiment was an infantry regiment of the British Army from 1881 to 1960. It is now part of The Royal Anglian Regiment. During the First World War the regiment was expanded to 13 battalions which served on the Western Front, the Gallipoli campaign, and in Egypt and Palestine.

Alfred died on 7th September 1918 and was buried in Gayton churchyard on 11th September 1918 leaving his wife Martha and three children; Reginald born in 1912, Wallace born in 1913 and William born in 1915. Sadly William only survived for two years, dying in 1917. Four years after Alfred's death Martha remarried. She became the wife of Alfred Davis in St Mary's Church, Gayton on the 14th June 1922. They made their home in Courteenhall.

New Weapons

The Second Battle of Ypres began in April 1915. The Germans introduced two new weapons in 1915 hoping to break the trench deadlock. The first was poison gas, used for the first time on the Western Front in April 1915. The violence of the attack forced an Allied withdrawal and a shortening of the line of defence. The second weapon was known as 'liquid fire' first used in July 1915. These flame throwers were crewed by former firemen. These weapons were soon copied by the British and the French. Neither helped to break the deadlock.

167 Marriage solemnized at the Church of _____ in the Parish of _____ of _____

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.
206	June 14 1922	Alfred Davis Martha Louisa Lily Digby	37 28	Widower Widow	Labourer Housewife

Married in the _____ Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of _____

This Marriage was solemnized between us, Alfred Davis and Martha Louisa Lily Digby In the Presence of us, _____ _____



Commemorated in perpetuity by the
Commonwealth War Graves Commission

In Memory of Second Lieutenant Edward Westcott King

“B” Bty. 79th Bde., Royal Field Artillery who died on 20th October 1918 age 36

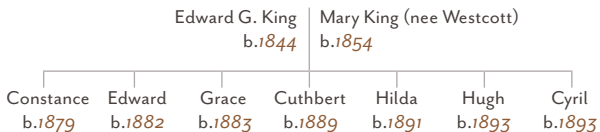
Son of the late Rev. E. G. King, D.D., and Mrs. King (*nee Westcott*), of Gayton,
Northants; husband of Edith Mary King (*nee Boulton*), of Westwood, Guernsey

Remembered with Honour Awoingt British Cemetery





Family Tree



Edward was born in 1882, the eldest son of Reverend Edward and Mary King. As a child Edward junior lived at Gayton Rectory and was educated at Mr Goodchild’s School in Cambridge and later at Sherbourne School where he played rugby and cricket and represented his school at boxing. His Uncle, Reverend Frederick Brooke Westcott, was Headmaster of Sherbourne School from 1892 -1909. Edward went on to study medicine at St. Thomas’s hospital but left his studies at the outbreak of the South African War and although under age joined the Dorsetshire Yeomanry. A year later he received a commission in the Westmorland and Cumberland Yeomanry. At the end of the war Edward returned to England before embarking for Ceylon and then on to the Federated Malay States at Kuala Lumpur, where he served as a volunteer in the MSVK and received a commission.



When the First World War was declared Edward wanted to return to England but was first refused permission. However permission was eventually granted and he returned to England in August 1917 to train as an officer cadet at Weedon,

Northamptonshire in the Joint Royal Horse Artillery and Royal Field Artillery. Edward went to the front in April 1918. He was seriously wounded on 19th October 1918 and died of his wounds the following day. He left a widow, Edith and two young daughters. Edward was awarded the British

War Medal and the Victory Medal and is remembered at the Awoingt British Cemetery. Edward’s brother Cyril died on 30th September 1916 serving in the Royal Flying Corps. Their brother Hugh, was a Captain in the 7th Northamptonshire Regiment and survived the war.

Awoingt British Cemetery was begun after the village was captured by the allies in the latter half of October 1918 and was in use until the middle of December of the same year. By 28th October 1918, several Casualty Clearing Stations were established in the neighbourhood, and the majority of the burials were of soldiers who died at these stations. After the Armistice the bodies of 16 soldiers, originally buried in the surrounding countryside were reburied at Awoingt. The cemetery contains 653 Commonwealth burials and commemorations of the First World War.

Edward King obituary can be read on the following page (published in the Northampton Independent 2nd November 1918)

SEC.-LIEUT. E. W. KING..



Great sympathy will be felt with the aged Rector of Gayton, the Rev. Dr. E. G. King, in the severe loss he has sustained by the death in action of his eldest son, Sec.-Lieut. Edward Westcott King, of the R.F.A., who died of wounds on October 2nd. This gallant young officer, who was a grandson of the late Bishop Westcott, of Durham, after whom he was named, was born in 1880, educated at Mr. Goodchild's School, at Cambridge, and at

Sheerness, where he played "Rugby" and cricket, and represented his school in the public schools' boxing. He went to St. Thomas's Hospital to study medicine, but on the outbreak of the South African war he at once joined the Dorsetshire Yeomanry, though under military age, and went to South Africa. A year later he received a commission in the Westmorland and Cumberland Yeomanry. After peace was declared he returned to England and went to Ceylon to plant tea, and, from thence to the Federated Malay States, where he obtained an important post as manager of rubber estates at Kuala Lumpur. While there he served as a Volunteer in the M.S.V.K.,

Private Bert Malyon 8141, "C". 1st Bn., Suffolk Regiment



Bert's parents Jane and George Malyon lived in Suffolk. George was an agricultural Labourer. They had 10 children, Edith was the eldest born in 1869, Bert was the youngest, born in 1891.

Edith married Henry Wakelin and lived in Gayton. When Edith and Bert's mother died, Bert came live with the Wakelin family and attended Gayton School. When he left the school he went back to Suffolk and in 1911 was at the Barrosa Barracks in Aldershot with the Suffolk Regiment.

At the outbreak of the war the 1st Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment was stationed at Khartoum.



In January 1915 they were sent to the Western Front where they engaged in various actions including the Second Battle of Ypres and the Battle of Loos. The Battalion suffered over 400 casualties at the Battle of Ypres including Bert who died of his wounds on 12th March 1915. He is remembered at the Lille Southern Cemetery.

A letter was written to the Wakelin family by a nurse who looked after Bert in hospital after he had been injured in battle. It suggests that he may have been cared for at a German Field Hospital and was a prisoner of war. Sadly Bert died before the letter reached the Wakelin family.

[Click to see a photograph of Bert in uniform and a copy of the original letter.](#)

Here is a transcript of the letter dated 25th March 1915:

Bert Malyon is nursed at the military hospital of Lille by French doctors and nurses and is amongst french and English. He has been seriously wounded at the leg but is already a lot better and will be quite all right soon. He will certainly never be taken to Germany but as soon as he will be all right will be exchanged through Holland. I left him on the 28th February. I was his nurse at the hospital. The envelope was addressed to Bert Malyon, Caytonoje, Bliswater, Northampton.

GAYTON *and the* GREAT WAR

Remembrance



British War Medals 1914-18

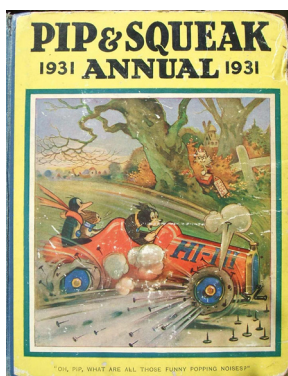
The three most common campaign medals awarded in World War I were affectionately named Pip, Squeak and Wilfred.

These medals, the 1914 Star, or the 1914-5 Star (*Pip*), the British War Medal (*Squeak*) and the Victory Medal (*Wilfred*), were awarded to those who fought with the British Expeditionary Force in 1914 and 1915.

The medals were issued in the 1920's and this coincided with a popular comic strip published in the Daily Mirror in which the three main characters were, Pip the

dog, Squeak the penguin and Wilfred the rabbit. The comic strip was written by Bertram J. Lamb and was illustrated by Austin Bowen Payne. For some reason the names of the characters became associated with the campaign medals.

The two most commonly awarded medals between 1915 and 1918 were the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. When worn together they are sometimes known as 'Mutt and Jeff'.



1914-15

War medal

Victory medal



The Memorial Plaque (*The Death Penny*)

The UK Government issued these plaques to the families of all the British and Empire Soldiers and Seamen who died in World War 1. In all 1,350,00 were issued.

Many were thrown away as they were seen as an insult, as being likened to a penny 'was all his death was worth'.

The plaque bears the name of the dead soldier but not his rank as it was considered that in death all were equal, having made the same sacrifice.

This example was given in memory of Private Frederick George Hirons of the Middlesex Regiment.

He was killed in battle on 15th April 1918 aged 39 years. Frederick is buried at the Ypres Reservoir Cemetery.

Frederick was married to Ellen and they had four children, three girls and one boy. Their eldest daughter was called Freda. Later, after the war, Ellen married Frederick's brother Herbert. They had one son together. They lived in Newham all their lives until Ellen went into a care home where she lived until she was 99 years old.



GAYTON *and the* GREAT WAR

How Gayton Supported The War Effort



During World War I volunteers raised funds for a variety of causes. The most popular causes were “comforts” such as clothing, books and food. Other causes included medical services, support for disabled servicemen, organisations for relieving distress at home, post-war remembrance and celebration, aid for refugees and countries overseas, and assistance to prisoners of war. Funds were raised by holding concerts, jumble sales, door to door collections and penny flag days. For most of the population of the country, fundraising became part of daily life.

After the declaration of war on 4th August 1914 the women of Gayton met on the 13th August and promised to make shirts and socks for the soldiers. By April 1915 the women were making shirts for the men of the 7th Battalion Northamptonshire Regiment who were ‘badly in need of them’. In November 1915 there was an appeal for donations towards the cost of materials to make pillowcases and other articles made by the Red Cross. In early 1916 a large parcel of work was sent to the Red Cross from Gayton, Tiffield and Blisworth.

Children in the village were also involved in supporting the troupes. In September 1914 the Gayton Girl’s Friendly Society started making ‘woollies’ for the soldiers. As Christmas 1914 drew near the Girls of the Sunday School gave up their Christmas present money and used it to make up

parcels for the 2nd Northamptonshire ‘A’ Company. The Boy Scouts made plum puddings and sent these along with cigarettes to the men of Gayton at the front. Many of the recipients of these gifts wrote ‘thank you’ letters to the children. On Empire day 1915 the children of Gayton presented a ‘Pageant of the Empire’. A collection was taken for comforts for the soldiers. In June of the same year, under the guidance of Mrs

Ratledge the Boy Scouts prepared a ‘Patriotic Display’ in aid of the Red Cross Society. Again the children were thanked, receiving three postcards from men at the front. House-to-house ‘Penny’ collections were frequently used to raise money for the North-

amptonshire Red Cross Society.

Villagers in Gayton responded to an appeal made by the Lady Mayoress for the collection of sandbags. Within three months 374 bags had been collected.

Following the death of Lord Kitchener in June 1916 there were collections in Gayton for the Kitchener Memorial Home - a holiday home for disabled soldiers and sailors. Maybe interest had been aroused by the loss of Gayton man, Ernest East, who was serving on HMS Hampshire, when it was sunk after hitting a German mine whilst carrying Lord Kitchener to Russia. Mrs. Chester organized a flag day which, with the help of A. Chester, Ada Hillyer, Olive Payne, and Nellie Wakelin, raised £12 0s 3d.

The first official flag day of the Great War was organised by Mrs Agnes Morrison. In total she raised over £25,000,000 for worthy causes during the war.

The Scout Association was formed by Lord Robert Baden Powell in 1908. By 1910 scouting had almost 108,000 participants of which 100,000 were young people. In November 1911 a Scout Patrol was formed in Gayton by Sidney Taylor who lived in the Dower House. Seven months later a second patrol was formed. This patrol was led by John Hillyer with Geoffrey Chester as his second in command.

At the outbreak of WWI Baden Powell, who was a soldier, did not want the Scouts to become a cadet force and take on military duties but was keen for them to "do their bit".

Scouts in Gayton were very involved in the war effort. In September 1914 the Scouts were working for their Ambulance Badge meeting at the Rectory in a room set aside for them. In the same month Gayton and Blisworth Scouts were sent to guard the railway line from Blisworth station to Banbury Lane. Cyril King was in the charge of the camp and the

boys were praised for the way in which they carried out their duties. In October of 1914 four Scouts acted as bearers at the funeral service of Joseph Pierre Spenders (*aged 3*). Joseph was a member of a Belgian refugee family of ten housed in a cottage in Gayton.

The Scout groups made plum puddings at Christmas and sent these, along with cigarettes, to soldiers from Gayton. Fred Wakelin wrote in a letter to his mother that he and Tom had "received a pudding from Gayton Scouts and if they made it, it did them credit as it was good"

Mrs Ratledge trained a group of scouts to perform a Patriotic Display in aid of the Red Cross. This raised the princely sum of £2 11s 4d. Waste

paper collections were also organised by scouts, raising money for the Prisoners Fund.

Some scouts did go on to fight in the war including Cyril King who joined the Royal Flying Corp and J Draycott who was taken prisoner only a few weeks after departing for France.

Extracts from the Rural Deanary Magazine

'This month we have had John Jones on leave for a month before going to sea; and Ted Cockerill has come on leave from France. Tom Ratledge, we regret is a prisoner.'

'We regret to say Our Old Scout J. Draycott is now a prisoner, after only a few weeks in France.'

'One scout is going to the East Coast.' (29th January 1916)



The National Egg Collection was launched in November 1914. Eggs were sent to hospitals overseas where wounded soldiers were recuperating. There were 2,000 egg collection points run by volunteers. The eggs were packed in sawdust or special boxes and sent to the front, eggs broken en-route were redistributed to hospitals in the UK. The eggs were transported by rail, free of charge. A central collection point was established in London in Harrods warehouse, again free of charge. To start with, the target was half a million eggs every week.

In April 1915 Gayton had made a 'generous response' to the appeal for eggs and by July a total of 1392 eggs had been collected in the village. However by November 1915 Gayton was struggling to collect 8 dozen eggs a week, many of the donations from individuals were one or two per week, which was all that could be spared.

The national target was one million eggs per week but as the war continued food was in short supply especially after the poor harvest in 1916 and the blockade of merchant ships in 1917.

On 1st February 1917 voluntary rationing was introduced. Food for the chickens was scarce and it became more difficult to maintain the volume of eggs produced. Garden waste was suggested by the War Office as an alternative source of food for hens but was not really a substitute for corn. The War Office brought in competitive schemes to encourage people to donate eggs. Children were particularly encouraged to get involved through a campaign of posters and postcards, many of them responding by collecting eggs door to door.



Belgium Refugees

Following Germany's invasion of Belgium in August 1914 thousands of refugees fled their homes. The UK became home to 250,000 Belgian refugees, the largest single influx in the country's history. The refugees started to arrive in August and this continued for months. They landed mainly at south and east coast ports such as Margate, Dover, Tilbury, Harwich, Grimsby and Hull. On 14th October 1914, 16,000 refugees arrived at the port of Folkstone. Some of the refugees lived in purpose-built villages, others were integrated into local communities.

In Gayton a cottage was prepared and furnished ready for a Belgian Family and in November 1914 Mr. and Mrs. Spenders and their eight children arrived in the village. Sadly, the family had only been in the village a week when one of the children, Joseph, aged three years, died. Joseph was buried in the churchyard following a church service. Four Gayton Scouts acted as bearers and Rothersthorpe Scouts sent a cross of flowers.



ABOVE *Gayton church*

The Pals

At the outbreak of the First World War Britain was the only country involved who did not conscript men into their army. However it quickly became clear that the numbers of men in the professional army would not be enough to support an on-going conflict on several fronts. Lord Kitchener began a recruitment campaign to encourage men to enlist in the armed forces. It became clear that more men could be encouraged to join up if their friends and work colleagues did so too. Men who knew each other already were more likely to work well together as a team and would encourage and support each other under difficult circumstances. So successful was this idea that by the end of September 1914 over 50 towns had formed 'Pals Battalions'.

One of the most well known of these was the Accrington Pals, a group of around 700 men from the Lancashire Town. On the first day of the Battle of the Somme on 1st July 1916, 235 men from the Accrington Pals Battalion were killed and 350 were wounded.

Tom and Fred Wakelin and John and Charles Ward from Gayton, enlisted together on the 22nd September 1914 in the Canadian Expeditionary Force. Their regimental numbers are consecutive. Letters sent home by the Wakelin brothers mention both John and Charles who were stretcher-bearers. The families were very close although Mrs. Ward had moved to Northampton. Sadly three of these firm friends were killed in the early part of 1915. [Click to read letters from Fred and Tom Wakelin mentioning their friends.](#)



ABOVE (from left to right:) Jack Ward, Fred Wakelin, Tom Wakelin, George Ward, Charles Ward

The Pals

Extract from a letter written by Tom Wakelin mentioning the Ward brothers.

'Dear Pap and Ada,

Just a line hoping you are both well. Fred and I are well at present and hope to keep so. We saw the account of Phil Kirby in the Mercury, also the account of Jack being killed and Charlie wounded. Also several other Canadians we know. It was an awful struggle and I think it wonderful we came out of it as we did. The news we are getting at present is all good."



ABOVE The Gayton football team in 1911. Tom Wakelin is in the middle row on the far right.



ABOVE Tom Wakelin's War Medals



ABOVE Photo of Tom Wakelin

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During the first two years of the war three million men volunteered. Heavy losses at the Western Front meant the introduction of Conscription. The Military Service Act of January 1916 declared that single men between the ages of 18 and 41 were liable to be called-up for military service unless they were widowed with children or ministers of religion. Conscription started on 2nd March 1916 and was extended to married men on 25 May 1916. Towards the end of the war the age limit had reached 51.

When conscription was brought in, a national registration scheme identified about two million men of military age who had not signed up. Some 2,000 Military Service Tribunals were set up across the country to deal with men who wished to apply for a Certificate of Exemption.

Initially in November 1915 the Government asked Rural District Councils (*RDC*) to set up Recruiting Committees to check why individuals were not signed up for military service. In response to this request the Towcester Recruiting Committee (*TRC*), whose members were Messers Stopes, Shepperd, Montgomery, Groom and Able, was set up.

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With the introduction of conscription in 1916 the *RDC* were instructed to set up a tribunal to hear the appeals of men who wished to apply for a exemption from conscription. This tribunal was made up of the *TRC* members. Individuals could appeal or their employers could do so on their behalf. The *RDC* received payment from the War Office to carry out the work of the tribunal.

The *RDC* was asked to maintain a register of men eligible to be conscripted, and under the "Defense of the Realm" Act to appoint either the Police or registration authority to be responsible for checking who was living at any named property

and whether they were registered. The powers included raiding properties if necessary.

Most of those who went to tribunal were for economic or work reasons. Men could be exempt if they were in work seen as essential to the war effort such as specialist manufacturing, mining or farming. They could also be exempt because of economic reasons, such as having a large family to support.

The most famous category of exemption was Conscientious Objection due to political, humanitarian or religious beliefs.

Northamptonshire
County Archives hold
three records of appeals
by Gayton residents
Percy Cowley, Christian
East and Mr Gammage



LEFT Photograph of Private Bert Malyon in uniform

BELOW Copy of the original letter

[Click here to go back to page 43](#)

25/3/15
Alliens
Hop. mil tenif n° 4
68 rue Delplan

Bert Malyon is nursed at the military hospital of Lille by french doctor & nurses and is amongst french and english. He has been seriously wounded at the leg but is already a lot better and will be quite all right soon. He will certainly never be taken to germany but as soon as he will be all right will be exchanged through

Holland. I left him on the 28th. of February - I was his nurse at the hospital

Yours sincerely
Morton

Your the envelope was addressed

Bert Malyon
Gay tonage
Blis water
Northampton.

GAYTON *and the* GREAT WAR

'The Returned'



The Returned

When the Gayton Church Heritage Trust successfully bid for a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund they used some of the money to mount an exhibition in St Mary's church. This took place from 2nd- 9th November 2014. Much of this document is based on the information collected for the exhibition. The aim had been to research further into the lives of those men from Gayton who had died and are remembered on the Memorial in the church.

This research illuminated the way of life before the war, and what an impact the loss of the fifteen men had been in the small rural community of Gayton. What was a surprise was the large number of Gayton men who served and returned either injured or who survived to the end of the conflict, not returning home until 1919.

There are twenty-nine men on the Absentee Voters List of the Daventry Parliamentary Division Autumn Register of 1918. Some of them, Cyril and William Cowley, Richard, John George, and Hugh Basil King were brothers of the 'fallen', poignantly illustrating what sacrifices were made by families during the four years of war.

The Exhibition attracted many visitors including family members of the Gayton Men. Some had already begun their own research on their family history and shared this generously. Some visitors had no connection to Gayton but had stories to share about their families involvement and life during WWI.



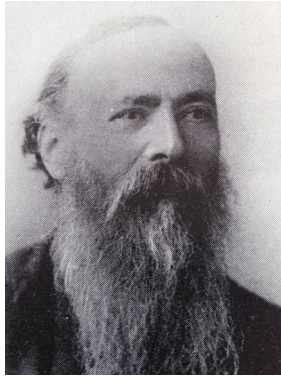
ABOVE *Harry Hillyer of the 2nd Lifeguards, who was one of the Gayton men returned from the war.*

The Returned

Forenames	Surname	Number	Rank	Regiment	Address	Job
<i>William Henry</i>	<i>Cowley</i>	40593	Private	7th South Welsh Borderers	The Old Wilds	Milk man
<i>James Alfred</i>	<i>Griffin</i>	150572	Private	735th Labour Co. Surrey Regiment	-	-
<i>George Hillyer</i>	<i>Wickham</i>	1923	Private	Northants Yeomanry	-	-
<i>Howard Alfred</i>	<i>Bennett</i>	-	Captain	2nd Lancashire Royal Garrison Artillery	-	-
<i>Frank</i>	<i>Clarke</i>	51360	Private	Imperial Camel Corps, Household Cavalry	-	-
<i>Cyril Sidney</i>	<i>Cowley</i>	158430	-	2nd Bedfordshire Regiment	Britains Cottages	Farm Labourer
<i>Edward</i>	<i>Cockerill</i>	14335	-	Army Service Corps	Kiln Cottage	Ironstone worker
<i>Herbert William</i>	<i>East</i>	20841	Stoker	HMS Sandhurst	Banbury Lane	-
<i>Harry Sidney</i>	<i>East</i>	P225275	Senior Petty Officer	HMS Victory II Crystal Palace	Banbury Lane	-
<i>William Albert</i>	<i>East</i>	K10463	Senior Petty Officer	HMS Renown	Banbury Lane	-
<i>William</i>	<i>Green</i>	22890	Private	6th Northamptonshire Regiment	Ivy Cottage	-
<i>William Joseph</i>	<i>Gardener</i>	218478	Sapper	260th Railway Company Royal Engineers	-	-
<i>Richard Thomas</i>	<i>George</i>	-	Lieutenant	Northants Yeomanry	Farm House	Land Agent Northamptonshire County Council
<i>John Christopher</i>	<i>George</i>	-	Lieutenant	Northants Yeomanry	Farm House	Farmer
<i>Earnest William</i>	<i>Hancock</i>	95521	-	Royal Army Medical Corps	Cheyne Walk	-
<i>John</i>	<i>Hillyer</i>	23485	Private	1st Northamptonshire Regiment	Cheyne Walk	Blacksmith
<i>Harry</i>	<i>Hillyer</i>	3099	-	2nd Lifeguards	-	Farm Labourer
<i>Hugh Basil</i>	<i>King</i>		Captain	7th Northamptonshire Regiment (<i>MOBS</i>)	Rectory	-
<i>John Harrold</i>	<i>Kingston</i>	218504S	Sapper	260th Railway Co. Royal Engineers	Glebe Farm	Farmer
<i>Lesley Enoch</i>	<i>Morgan</i>	31101	Private	Grenadier Guards	Gayton House	Gardener
<i>William</i>	<i>Newcomb</i>	133260	Private	Machine Gun Corps	Old Field	Shepherd
<i>James</i>	<i>Puxley</i>	120703	Sapper	Royal Engineers	Post Office	Taylor
<i>Tom Charlie</i>	<i>Payne</i>	157356	-	Royal Engineers	Red Lion Inn	Farmer and Publican
<i>Thomas Joseph</i>	<i>Ratledge</i>	15921	-	6th Northamptonshire Regiment	Victoria Cottage	Bricklayer
<i>Harry</i>	<i>Ratledge</i>	106005	Private	1st Hertfordshire Yeomanry	Victoria Cottage	Gardener
<i>Horace</i>	<i>Rook</i>	31069	Private	Royal Inniskellin Fusiliers	Chapel Yard	-
<i>Charles</i>	<i>Simpson</i>	71186	Sergeant	140th Royal Garrison Artillery	Post Office Row	-
<i>Richard John</i>	<i>Tomalin</i>	177598	Private	436th Agricultural, 329th (<i>Home Service</i>) Works Company	-	Farm Labourer
<i>Frederick</i>	<i>Wright</i>	43123	Private	3rd Royal Berkshires	Red Lion Cottage	-

The Reverend Dr. Edward George King DD

Edward King was the Rector of St Mary's Church from 1889 to 1920. He was appointed to this position by Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge the patrons of Gayton church. Edward was a scholar of Greek and Hebrew religious works. His wife, Mary Westcott, came from a very distinguished clerical family. Her father was the Bishop of Durham, and five of her brothers were appointed to positions in the Church of England. Edward and Mary had ten children, six of whom survived to adulthood.



ABOVE Reverend Dr Edward King

During World War One the church was a focus of support and stability in the village. The Rector, his wife and family took a lead in the village, helping to organise fund raising and supporting the war effort. Special services were held such as that in September 1914 for the Soldiers and Sailors and in later years for the bereaved families of Gayton men killed during the conflict. Church collections were sent to the Red Cross, The Prisoners Relief Fund, and charities dealing with injured soldiers returned from the front. In 1915 a party of wounded soldiers were entertained to tea at the Rectory – “they were most jolly and enjoyed bowls and croquet”.

Three of Edward and Mary's sons served in the war; Edward, the eldest was in the Royal Field Artillery and died in 1918, Cyril the youngest was in the Royal Flying Corps and died in 1916. Hugh was a Captain in the 7th Northamptonshire Regiment and survived the war.

It was Reverend King who announced [Click here to back to page 9](#)

the proposal “to place a tablet in the church in memory of the Gayton Men who gave their lives in the great war”. Sadly Reverend King did not live to see the completion of the memorial dying suddenly on the 8th February 1920 aged 76 years. It fell to the newly appointed Reverend William Stokes to dedicate the Memorial tablet in September 1920. At the Vestry meeting in April 1920 Mr. Major Lucas (*Churchwarden*) spoke about “the great loss their church had sustained in the deaths of their esteemed Rector

and their old Sexton John Blunt”. John Blunt died two weeks after Reverend King having worked with him for thirty years. Mr. Major Lucas continued, “in Dr. King they had a thorough gentleman, a conscientious straight forward man of business and a great preacher. Anything he thought would be beneficial to the village always had his whole-hearted support.”



ABOVE Reverend King's children

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ABOVE Advert from Northamptonshire Independent about traveling abroad

[Click to go back to page 8](#)

Edgar Roberts Mobbs DSO 1882-1917

Edgar Mobbs was born in Northampton on 29th June 1882. He was educated at Bedford Modern School where he played rugby union football. Edgar was captain of the England Rugby Team and Northampton Rugby Football Club (*the Saints*).

When war broke out in 1914 Edgar was considered too old to join the army, however, he raised his own 'sportsman's' company for the Northamptonshire Regiment. This was made up of 250 sportsmen known as the 'Mobbs Own'. Edgar rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel commanding his own battalion.

Edgar was killed in action at the Third Battle of Ypres on 31 July 1917 attacking an enemy machine gun post.

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He was awarded the Distinguished Service Order and is commemorated on the Menin Gate Memorial.

Since 1921 Edgar Mobbs has been remembered by the annual Mobbs Memorial Match. Originally this was a Rugby Union Match between East Midlands RFU and the Barbarians played at Franklin Gardens, the home of Northampton Saints. However, since

2011, the match has been played between the Army Rugby Union and Bedford or Northampton Saints alternately. This game helps to raise money for youth rugby in the area.

Mobbs is remembered by the town at the Mobbs memorial. This was originally located in Northampton market square but is now sited in the memorial garden in Abington Square. Also, a road close to Franklin's Gardens is named 'Edgar Mobbs Way'.



Links



ABOVE Photo of Frederick Bert Wakelin



ABOVE Picture painted and decorated by Fredericks sister Ellen



ABOVE Frederick Bert Wakelin War Medals

[Click to go back to page 15](#)

Stokers All.

FOUR BROTHERS IN THE NAVY.



Leading Stoker Harry East. Stoker Herb. East.

Mr. and Mrs. East, of 42, Henley Street, Far Cotton, have no fewer than four sons serving with the Navy, and all are engaged in feeding the fiery furnaces in the bowels of their respective ships. Harry East, the eldest, is leading stoker on H.M.S. Glory, Herbert is on the Venerable, Albert on the Glasgow, and Richard on the Hampshire. Mr. East has one other son, and he has expressed his intention of also joining the Navy as soon as he is old enough. The Easts possess a record of service of which they are naturally proud, for few families have given help so readily to any arm of the service.



Stoker Albert East. Stoker Richard East.

ABOVE Newspaper article about the four east brothers'

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PTE. H. S. PANCOUST.



Sympathy will be expressed among a large circle of friends with Mr. and Mrs. I. S. Pancoust, of 47, Roe Road, whose only son, Pte. Horace Smith Pancoust, of the Coldstream Guards was killed in action on September 15th. Twenty-nine years of age, the deceased soldier joined the Coldstreams 18 months ago when managing a meat shop at Coventry. He went to France on June 1st this year. His wife and two children live at Gayton.

ABOVE Obituary of Horace Smith Pancoust, published in the Northampton Independent 4th November 1916

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SEC.-LIEUT. C. H. M. KING.



The deepest sympathy will be extended to the Rev. E. G. King, D.D., Rector of Gayton, in the great loss he has sustained by the death of his youngest son, Sec. Lieut. Cyril Henry Marshall King, who was killed in action while flying in France on September 30th. Aged 23, the deceased was educated at Sherburne and Aldenham Schools, and Birmingham University, where he took his B.Sc. and won the

Bowden Scholarship for special research in engineering. On the outbreak of war he joined the Universities and Public Schools Corps, afterwards receiving a commission in the R.G.A. He went to France in October, 1915, and a few months later was attached to the R.F.C. as observer. In June last he returned to England to train as a pilot, and went back to France with his "wings" in August, when he joined a scout squadron. At the time of his death he was flying a Nieuport scout. His brother, Capt. Hugh B. King, is in the Northamptonshire Regiment and has just returned home on short leave from the front. He arrived home just after his family had received the sad tidings of his brother's death.

ABOVE Obituary of Cyril Henry Marshall King published in the Northampton Independent 14th October 1916

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This is a photograph of patients and nurses at Hayle Place, Maidstone. Lent by Lord Romney, Hayle Place was used as a Voluntary Aid Detachment Hospital. It offered rest and treatment for convalescing soldiers during WWI. James Heel spent two weeks here from 10th May 1916 to 26 May 1916 before returning to the front.

Voluntary Aid Detachment (*VAD*) nurses were trained by the Red Cross or St John's Ambulance Brigade since they had not been nurses in peacetime.

Most were women, though when VAD started in 1914 men could join as well. They were all volunteers, so they did not get paid. Thousands of women became VAD nurses, some went to France, helping in hospitals close to the battlefields. VAD nurses cared for wounded and sick soldiers in Army hospitals and 'rest stations', where exhausted soldiers had a few days to recover, and in convalescent homes, where they could stay until they were as well as possible.



[*Click to go back to page 35*](#)

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