



## **Bradenstoke Fallen Heroes**

**“...To the memory of Bradenstoke men who fought and fell. And to remind future generations of the sacrifice they made.”**

The following is the stories of the soldiers who perished from this parish in WW1. To truly remember we must reflect on their importance to their families, friends and community as well our nation's freedom. I have done my utmost to be as accurate as possible and must thank Stevie Palmer, Sid Skull and Stella Bessant as well as others for their research and continuing efforts to save our village history. I hope in the future we can also remember all those that went to war any contributions to further our knowledge would be greatly appreciated.

**Name: Hurbert William Corke**

**DoB: 1/11/1893 Bradenstoke**

**DoD:19/04/1916 Pas De Calais, Nord Pas de Calais, France Age 22**

Eldest Son of: Rev. Hurbert A Corke and Louisa Corke nee Clegg. Brother to Dorothy and Eric Lived in Bradenstoke Vicarage till 1903/5 as his father was the vicar for St Mary's from 1892. 1903-1908 studied at the new Christ's Hospital, West Horsham, Sussex which had only relocated the year before from London. The family moved to Holy Apostles Vicarage, Cheltenham in 1908 where Hurbert attended Cheltenham Grammar till 1912. Hurbert then moved to London to study at Faraday House Electrical Engineering College, he distinguished himself in the entrance exam and was awarded a special prize. In his second year he attended a year in industry at the Atlas Works of Fielding and Platt, Ltd in Gloucester. Hurbert delayed entering his third year to enlist at the beginning of the war.

**Name: Frank Edwards**

**DoB: 1888 Bradenstoke**

**DoD: 8/07/1916 Somme, France and Flanders Age 27**

Son of Henry Edwards and Emily Edwards nee Pike. One of seven brothers and one sister. Husband to Sylvia Jane Gingell married in 1908 Christian Malford. Father to Lily Maria, born 1909, and Frances Sylvia Somme born 22/12/1916 5 months after her father's death, she bore the name of the battle he perished in until her own death in 1988. Frank was born in Bradenstoke his parents lived at the Abbey, he worked as a farm labourer and would marry Sylvia in 1908 in Christian Malford. And would move to live in his wife's native village on Friday Street.

**Name: Charles William Farmer**

**DoB: July 1879 Cardiff, Glamorgan, Wales**

**DoD:15/06/1918 Italy age 38**

Son of Rev Seymour Farmer from West Lavington, Wiltshire and Bessie Sander from Taunton, Somerset. Husband to Mabel Annie Wiltshire and father to Hilary Bessie born 1914. Charles was born in Cardiff, his family moved all over the south west of England and Wales as his father being a Baptist Minister. Charles for a time lived in Canada. His wife Mabel would sail from Avonmouth to Montreal a journey that took 7 days, to marry Charles just 5 days after her arrival. Mabel's father William ran the village shop in Bradenstoke and after her husband's posting she would return to Bradenstoke to live and run the post office. Before WW1 Charles had spent 2 years in the Voluntary Battalion 3rd Welsh and would rejoin the military in 1915 when he was living in 275 Bellingham Road, Catford. At this time his occupation was a clerk. His inclusion on the memorial appears to be connected to his wife's link to the village rather than his own.

**Name: Henry George Ferris**

**DoB: 1890 Bradenstoke**

**DoD: 23/10/1916 age 26**

Son of Mary Ann Nichols nee Ferris Henry grew up with his grandparents Ann and Charles Ferris. His mother had Henry at the age of 20 an unmarried mother she worked as a servant and would leave Henry to be raised with her parents while she moved to Melksham to work as a housekeeper. Henry was commonly called Jim possibly because his uncle was also called Henry George but referred to as Harry 'the man'. Henry grew up surrounded by family in the village and by 1911 would be the baker in Bradenstoke. In 1912 Henry's mother would marry a widower Robert Nichols and settle in Neath, Glamorganshire. Henry's cousin remembers 'Jim' as a man that would have gone far. He would get crates of bike parts sent up from Bristol, assemble them and sell them at the edge of the village square. Henry rode an old Douglas motorbike with sidecar and also chauffeured the Lady of Draycott House in her Daimler car.

**Name: Frank Harper**

**DoB: March 1892 Lyneham**

**DoD: 7/04/1917 Mesopotamia age 25**

Son of Timothy and Elizabeth Harper nee Bessant. Brother to eight siblings including twins Mary and Martha, Frank grew up at The Banks between Bradenstoke and Lyneham. His father and two elder brothers worked for the railway as plate layers. Another brother William was a baker and Frank worked as a merchant's carter for the timber industry.

**Name: William Highnam**

**DoB: 12/09/1884 Brinkworth**

**DoD:22/07/1917 Flanders Age 32**

Son of Richard and Mary Highnam nee Austin William grew up in a farming family one of 14 children and after school would work on his father's farm. His father Richard appears to have moved to Bradenstoke about 1880 previously living at Bowd Farm in Gloucestershire 5 miles north of Bath. Between 1901 and 1902 William worked as a boiler washer at Swindon Station leaving the job 03/02/1902. By 1911 his father had passed away being 20 years his mother's senior and William was unmarried working as a draper's assistant. He was commonly known by the name Willie.

**Name: John Hunt**

**DoB: January 1896, Lyneham, Wiltshire**

**DoD: 16/06/1915 Ypres, Belgium Age 19**

Son of 'Henry' George Hunt and Emily Hunt nee Telling. John had two elder brothers and two elder sisters and one younger brother. One of his siblings would not survive till adulthood and his mother passed away when he was 4 years old. John grew up at Lilybrook and his father who was a general farm labourer. John attended the local school by the time he was 13 he would

also work as farm labourer alongside his younger brother Stanley. John was 18 years old when the war broke out and would be fighting on the western front a year later. There isn't a lot to reflect on John's life as he would only be 19 years old at the time of his death.

**Name: Thomas George King**

**DoB: 1877**

**DoD: 9/04/1917 Age 40.**

**Name: Frederick Charles King**

**DoB: October 1884**

**DoD: 28/09/1915 Age 30**

The King brothers were sons of Henry and Elizabeth King nee May. They had three other brothers. Thomas was the second from eldest and Frederick the youngest. They were born and raised in Bradenstoke sons of a railway worker they attended the local school. Thomas was often referred to as George in the records. In 1891 Thomas was working as an agricultural labourer and his brother Frederick was still attending school in Bradenstoke. In 1901 Frederick had started working as a carter while Thomas was still an agricultural worker. Frederick had moved to Swindon by 1911 living with his brother Herbert's family he worked as a frame builder for GWR in wagon and carriage construction. Thomas was still living with his parents and one brother in 1911 but had also moved on to working on the railway. By the outbreak of the war the brother's parents had both passed away Eliza in 1908 and Henry in 1912 neither brother had married leaving their siblings as their next of kin. Their brother Herbert would also join the military and returned home at the end of the war.

**Name: William James Mason**

**DoB: January 1894, Bradenstoke, Wiltshire**

**DoD: 9/02/1918 Age 24**

Son of Walter and Emma Mason nee Bullock. Brother to two sisters and five brothers and another child that died in infancy. William was born and raised in Bradenstoke, attending the local school and was a chorister at St Mary's. Later he worked as a telegraph messenger for the General Post Office in 1911 and would become a porter at Salford Station G.W.R.. William was also a member of the Ancient Order of Foresters. His father and brothers worked for the railway too. William would later William was unmarried his father was his next of kin. William was the only soldier memorialised in Bradenstoke church that is buried there as he died of his wounds on home soil. William had been injured in a gas attack near Ypres on October 13th, 1917 a month later on the 28th November he was brought back to England and was cared for at Lord Derby War Hospital at Winwick Hall in Warrington, Lancashire. He would only live for a further 2 months until he succumbed to his injuries and died on the 9th February 1918. He was buried with a full military funeral on Thursday 14th February 1918 his distinctive headstone marks the place in St Mary's graveyard Bradenstoke. In 1939 Williams father Walter lived alone at 109 Bradenstoke a retired signalman.

**Name: Sidney William Skull**

**DoB: 28/09/1897 Bradenstoke**

**DoD: 9/04/1918 Egypt Age 20**

Son of Elijah and Mary Skull nee Minchin. One of 7 children the 6 surviving were 3 girls and 3 boys. Sid's elder brother John Herbert would also join the army during the war and survived to return home to his family becoming a grocer. Sid was born and brought up in Bradenstoke, his father worked for the railway. He contracted tuberculosis as a child and was isolated in a hut at the top of the garden. He survived the disease and after leaving school he worked for Mr. Hosier at Bittlesea Farm. And by the time of his 18th birthday he was the village postman. Sid volunteered for the army not long after he turned 18. Both Sid and his brother would send letters home, documenting their journeys and lamenting the news of their fellow villagers' deaths. A transcript of these put together by Sidney's nephew Sid Skull are available in St Mary's Church.

**Name: Walter Ewart Watson**

**DoB: April 1898 Bradenstoke**

**DoD: 17/02/1917 Belgium Aged 18**

Son of Frederick and Ada Watson nee Hatter. One of five siblings his younger sister Nellie would marry the younger brother of Sid Skull, Frederick. Walter was born and raised in Bradenstoke in 1911 still only 12 years old he was attending the local school. His father was working as a Railway shunter and his elder brother William was an errand boy for the local grocer William Wiltshire father in law to Charles Farmer. Walter was the youngest of the fallen soldiers of Bradenstoke losing his life just before his 19th birthday.

**Name: James Egbert Wilkins**

**DoB: January 1886**

**DoD: 18/04/1916 Mesopotamia Age 30**

Son of Benjamin and Sarah Jane Wilkins nee Hobbs James was one of 10 children. James father, Benjamin was a labourer on a farm at Christian Malford in 1911 with James also working in the same trade. James was born in Bradenstoke like his father, but the family moved all over the local area. Moving from Bradenstoke to Dauntsey when James was 3 years old he was visiting his grandparents in Acton Turville in the 1891 census. By 1901 family had moved on to Sutton Benger where His father was a cattle man and James did general labour on a farm James is documented as being 18 years old when he was actually only just 15. By 1911 still unmarried James lived with his parents in Kellaways working on farms still. James' father passed away in 1912 leaving his mother as his next of kin.

**Bradenstoke Bugle, November 2018**