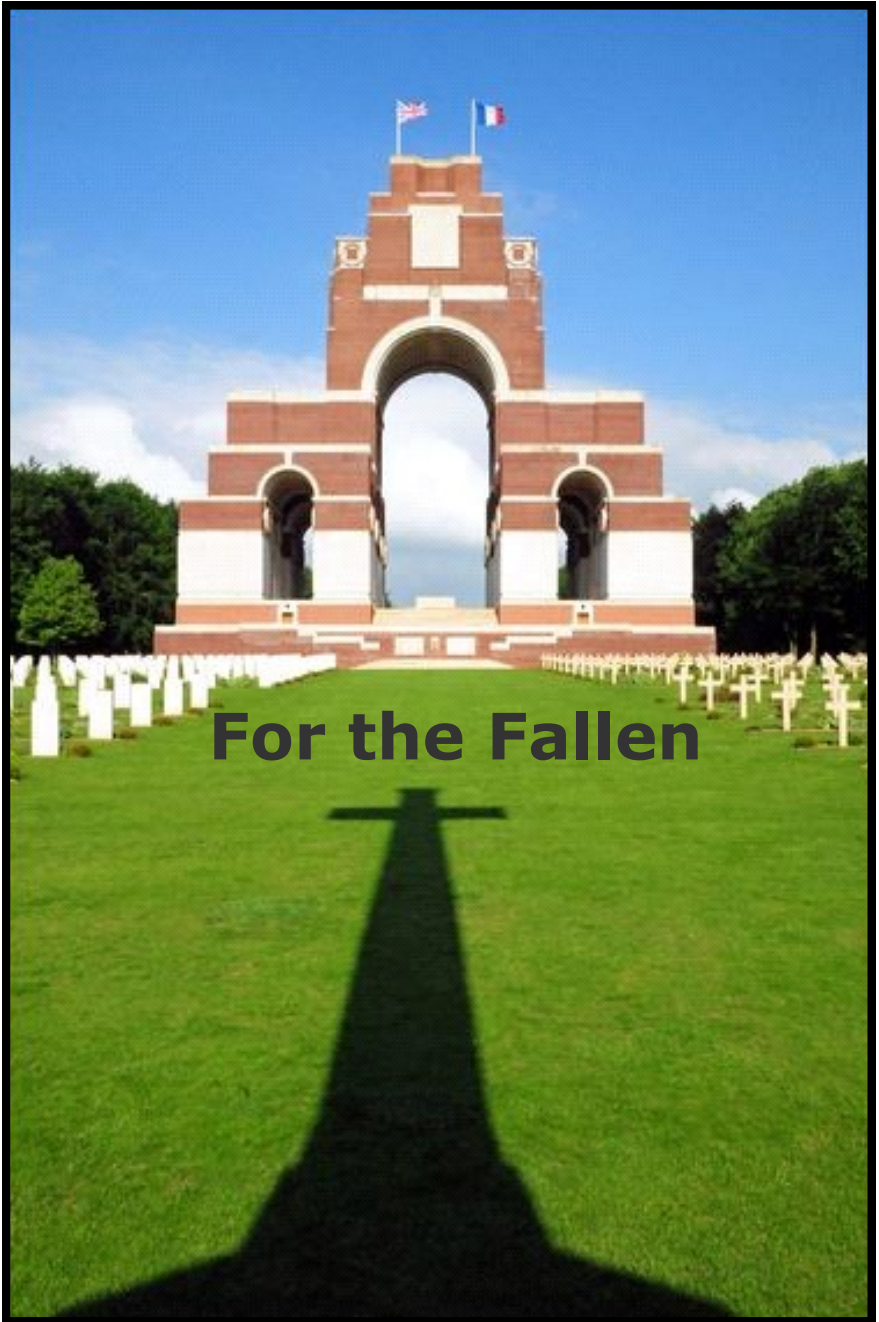


Worton & Marston



The Great War
1914 - 1918

*Written and compiled by
Robin Shercliff and Wendy Ellis*



For the Fallen

Acknowledgment

We gratefully acknowledge the most generous grants from both Worton and Marston Parish Councils together with funding from Wiltshire Council (Devizes Area Board) which, collectively, have enabled us to produce this booklet to an appropriately high standard.

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Monday, 4th August 2014*

An Account

of the men from

Worton & Marston

who lost their lives in

The Great War

1914 - 1918

The First Shots

War on Germany was declared in London at 11.17 pm on the 4th August 1914.

The first British Empire shots fired in both world wars came from the Point Nepean gun batteries in Melbourne Australia. In World War 1, around noon on the 5th August an unidentified German merchant ship tried to slip out of the harbour, was challenged and refused to respond. One shot was fired across her bow and she surrendered and was impounded. A similar event occurred at the start of WW2.

The opening British shot in the northern hemisphere was fired on the 5th August by the Destroyer HMS Lance to sink the German minelayer Konigin Louise in the North Sea off the Dutch coast.

The first British encounter on the Western Front began on the 22nd August near Casteau in Belgium with a sabre wielding cavalry attack by the 1st Troop 4th Dragoon Guards against German lances, in which at least three enemy soldiers with sword wounds were captured. It was later in this skirmish that the first shot was fired - by Drummer Thomas of that unit. This was 24 hours before the start of the retreat from Mons.

(nb 12.00 am local time in Melbourne is 02.00 am in England)

Preface

August 4th 2014 will herald the one hundredth anniversary of the start of World War 1, the Great War and the War to end all Wars. There will no doubt be several opportunities for reflection on many aspects of the events when, between 1914 and 1918, the world was divided and the titans clashed on the battlefields of Europe and Asia and on the waters of the North Sea and Atlantic Ocean.

Each year in November a few village residents gather at our World War II Memorial, hear the names of the fallen recited, reflect briefly on their sacrifice, and resolve to remember them before turning away to more immediate concerns.

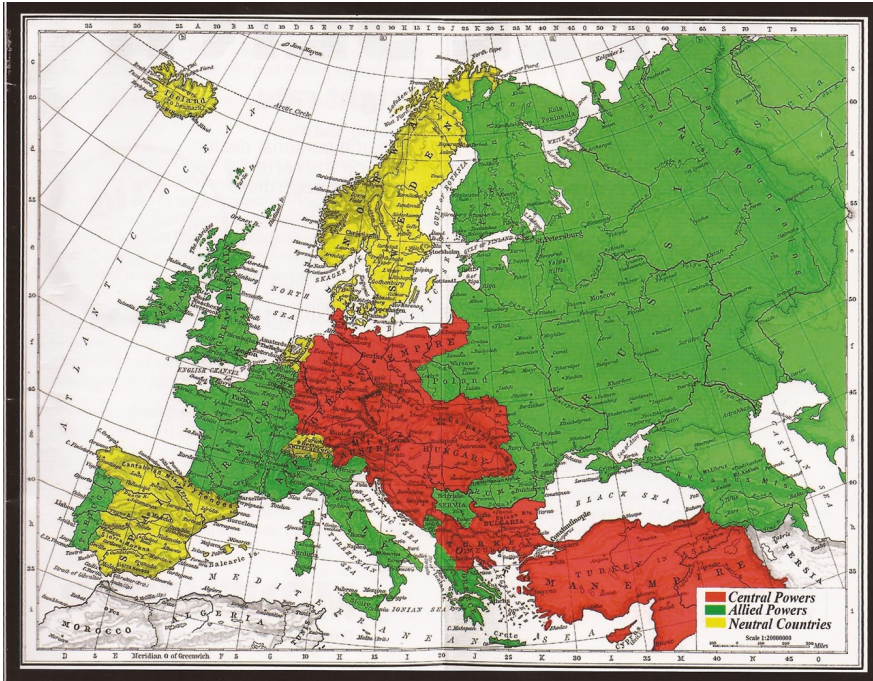
However, as the one hundredth anniversary approaches, a mood seems to have taken root in our country which seeks to raise awareness of those who never returned to their land, and to find out more about them and the families who bore their loss, by which means our short act of remembrance might henceforth mean a little more to those who still continue this national tradition.

It was to that end that we the undersigned, awakened by this national mood, resolved to search in as many records as we could reasonably find so as to give to everyone in Worton and Marston, by means of this short booklet, a little more understanding and perhaps an appreciation we have hitherto been lacking.

Wendy Smith

Adrian Smith

4th August 2014



Europe in 1914

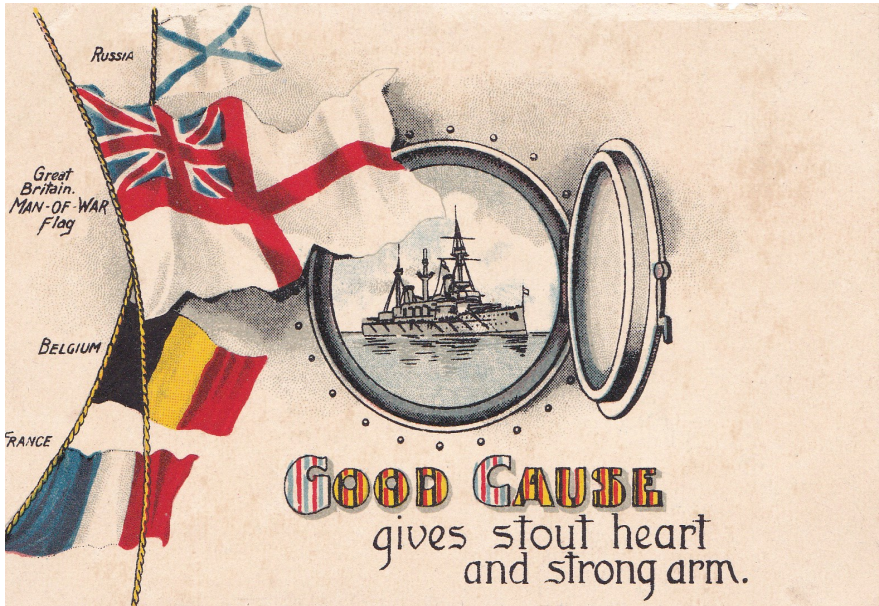
Prologue

Since 1815 the balance of power in Europe had been maintained by a series of treaties. In 1888 Wilhelm II was crowned *German Emperor and King of Prussia* and moved from a policy of maintaining the status quo to a more aggressive position. He did not renew a treaty with Russia, he aligned Germany with the declining Austro-Hungarian Empire, and he started to build a Navy to rival that of Britain. These actions greatly concerned Germany's neighbours, who quickly forged new treaties and alliances in the event of war.

On the 28th June 1914 Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, was assassinated by a member of the Bosnian-Serb nationalist group *Young Bosnia* who wanted pan-Serbian independence. Franz Joseph, the Austro-Hungarian Emperor (with the backing of Germany) responded aggressively, presenting Serbia with an intentionally unacceptable ultimatum so as to provoke them into war.

Serbia agreed to only eight of the ten terms and so on the 28th July 1914 the Austro-Hungarian Empire declared war on Serbia, producing a cascade effect across Europe. Russia, bound by treaty to Serbia, declared war on Austro-Hungary; Germany declared war on Russia; and France declared war on Germany. Putting into effect the long arranged Schlieffen Plan, Germany's army crossed into neutral Belgium in order to reach Paris, forcing Britain to declare war on Germany (because in the 1839 Treaty of London, Britain agreed to defend Belgium in the event of invasion).

By the 4th August 1914 Britain and much of Europe were pulled into a war which would last 1,566 days, cost 8,528,831 lives and 28,938,073 casualties or missing on both sides.



The Flags of the Allies
Postcard, one of a series sold in 1914

Worton and Marston's Casualties

Precise figures for United Kingdom casualties in the Great War have proved remarkably elusive. For our purposes we have taken those from

The Layman Companion to the First World War by Colin Nicholson

rounded to the nearest thousand. The simple figures show:

In 1916 the population of Worton was about 296 and Marston about 115.

(by 1921 these had reduced to 282 and 108 respectively)

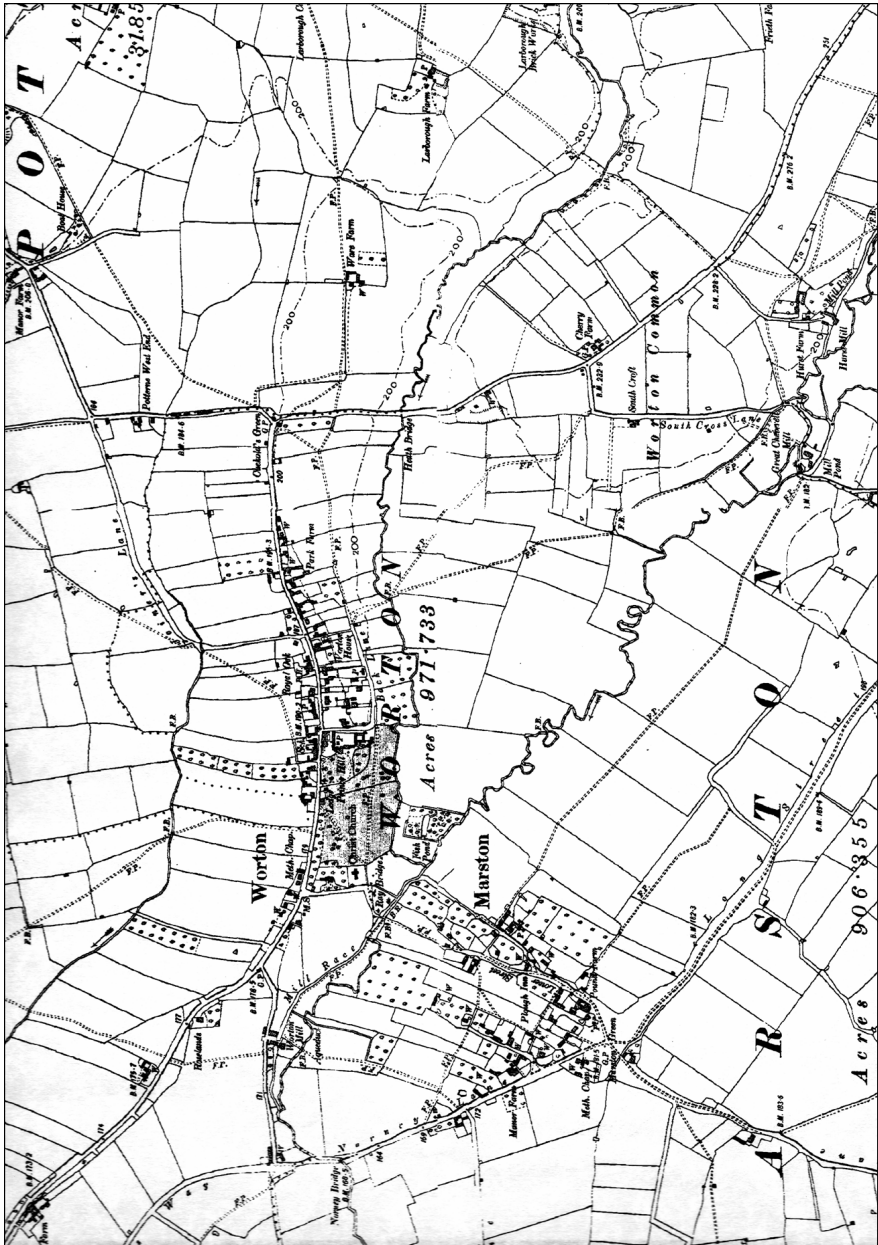
Around 1914-1918 that of Great Britain was 45,400,000.

There were 703,000 military deaths from the United Kingdom.

Thus we might have expected our share of those casualties to be:

$$\frac{(296 + 115)}{45,400,000} \times 703,000 = 6.3$$

At first sight therefore, with just three names on the village war memorial, we might justifiably congratulate ourselves on getting off relatively lightly. But as we have discovered, that is by no means the end of the matter.



WORTON and MARSTON in the early 20th Century

Introduction

In the reportedly idyllic summer of 1914 Worton and Marston were two small, albeit closely linked, rural settlements almost entirely devoted to farming and to supporting those who worked the land. Occupations listed in contemporary directories embraced:

Worton

The Vicar
Three School Mistresses
12 Farmers and 51 Agricultural Labourers
Cattle Dealer
Market Gardeners
Miller
Blacksmith
Wheelwright, Shopkeeper Post Office and Telegraph
Shoemaker and Rat Catcher
Mole Catcher
Overseer and Haulier
Carpenter
Builder and labourers
Brickmaker
Motor Mechanic
Draper
Grocer and confectioner
Baker
Two Publicans

Marston

13 Farmers and 25 agricultural Labourers
Two Market Gardeners
Two Overseers plus an overseer and publican
Coachman
Road Contractor
Roadman
Two Mental Nurses
Commercial Traveller

In 1901 the second of the large scale (1:2500) surveys was un-



WORTON HIGH STREET in about 1900. The cottages on the right form Prospect Terrace and the house to the left of centre is Yew Tree House.



WORTON HIGH STREET AND POST OFFICE in about 1930



At the edge of Worton on the road to Seend a very large dwelling is nearing completion. On this very site 100 years ago stood Agra Farm. Comparison of the two gives a clear indication of progress in our villages.

dertaken by the Ordnance Survey. A smaller scale edition at 6" to the mile was published, from which the extract on *page 12* is taken.

It was once said of Worton: "There are no, nor were there any, famous families; no large estate; no earth shattering events have happened here. Worton is a village of the ordinary: ordinary people doing ordinary things, leaving only slight marks of their passing."

The Mill in Worton was still functioning as a traditional parish mill; there were shops in both Worton and Marston; we had the Anglican church serving both villages, and each had its own Methodist chapel, that in Worton recently having been converted into a private dwelling.

We also had three pubs:

in Worton—both owned by Ushers Brewery of Trowbridge— the **Rose and Crown** and the **Royal Oak**, now Oakley House – a private dwelling,

and in Marston **The Plough** at the fork in Plough Lane – now also a private dwelling.

Neither village had electricity, running water (this did not arrive until 1937) or mains drainage (which came even later).

The villages were self-contained and very rural with hardly any motorised traffic, and certainly no aeroplanes. The church and chapels would have provided a social life of sorts, and some transport was privately available to Bath on Saturdays and Devizes on Thursdays.

There were no pensions or sick pay, so families had of necessity to look after their own, or if not then the parish did.

In the summer of 1913 only one tenth of households were owner occupiers and with no running water there were no baths, except in a tin one by the fire with shared water. And of course there was no NHS; the nearest doctor was in Bratton. Even more difficult for us to comprehend, women did not have a vote until 1918.

The School

A village school was first funded by a Sarah Bolter, who used



SCHOOLBOYS AT WORTON SCHOOL in 1910 learning some rural skills



WORTON SCHOOL 1906

two cottages to educate local children. Then in 1896, with a bequest from the Reverend George Edmondstone of Potterne, it was expanded and improved by local builder James Holloway.

Before the Great War there were 26 children from Worton and eight from Marston at the school. The Head Teacher lived with her Assistant in the School House.

His Majesty's Inspector in February 1914 wrote:

"The main room is overcrowded and the desks are so arranged that the children cannot easily be reached by the teacher. The cloakroom accommodation is inadequate and unsatisfactory, and there is no exit from the playground or cloakroom for the elder boys except through the school room."

However, a 1921 report was much more positive and read:

"At every visit of inspection paid since 1912 there have been the same marked features in this school - the energetic, carefully planned work of the Head Teacher and her Assistant, the excellent order and pleasing tone of the children, and their acquisition of desirable habits such as steady application to their tasks."

That school was on the north side of the High Street and served until 1963 when it too was converted into a private dwelling, along with the school mistress's house next door. The new enlarged school on the south side of the High Street was opened in 1965.

The Road to War

Thunder clouds had been slowly building over Europe in 1913 and they would certainly not have gone unnoticed here in Worton and Marston. Nevertheless, mass recruiting into the Army was still a relatively long way off. When the storm erupted in August 1914 it was met by the existing Royal Navy and British Army. Not for another year and a half did conscription, in one form or another, eventually take off the young men of our villages to the unimaginable horror which was to steal their adolescence.

Nevertheless, there was one family immediately affected at the outbreak of war, but it is for the second part of our story we must wait to discover their fate.



SAID TO BE THE WORTON VILLAGE SCHOOL TEACHER at her cottage in the High Street, West End Worton in about 1900.



THE PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHAPEL on The Green, Marston following a reopening ceremony after some improvements in July 1914. The chapel underwent more repairs and the congregation posed for another photograph like this seventy five years on.

Meanwhile, Worton and Marston, small as they were compared to the major towns within the county, as with other villages stood proud in their duty for the cause. Being in an agricultural area they put their shoulders to the wheel in the vital primary business of feeding the nation. They also served as a halfway point for troops of all nationalities making their way between the Bristol Channel ports and the training grounds on Salisbury Plain.

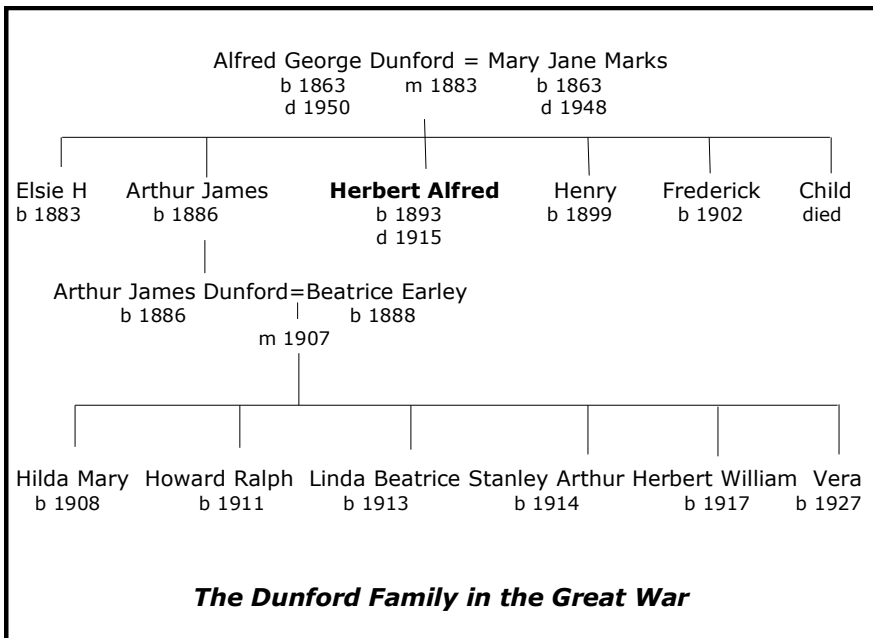
Some 150 or thereabouts Canadian Soldiers of the 1st Heavy Battery of Montreal were billeted in the villages soon after the beginning of the war; one – Gilbert Bradford – even married a local girl, Elsie Goodall, in Christ Church in 1917. This force remained in Worton and Marston for six weeks before transferring to Avonmouth for onward shipping to St. Nazaire in France.

In the meantime let us now turn to the families of the three men whose names are recorded on the church's war memorial.

Sideways Cottage



The Dunford Family Home in 1911



Chapter One

Herbert Alfred Dunford

The Dunford Family in 1914

In 1901 the given address of the Dunford family was 'In the Village' and we have discovered this to have been next to 'The Ivy' on the south side of the High Street, that is to say what is now *Sideways Cottage, 51 High Street*. In 1911 the house had three rooms, not counting a (probably non-existent) bathroom.

The head of the family was Alfred Dunford, a cowman born in Potterne in the last quarter of 1863. In 1883, at the age of 19, he married Mary Jane Marks from Bulkington, also 19. They went on to raise a family of 6 children, though one of them died in infancy.

Elsie	b 1883	Worton
Arthur James	b 1886	Potterne
Herbert Alfred	b Q3 1893	Worton
Henry	b 1899	Worton
Frederick	b 1902	Worton

In 1901 their only daughter Elsie, at the age of 17 acted as a general servant (domestic) in the family home. Arthur James, at 14, was a cattle milker, and of course Herbert Alfred at 7 and Henry at 2 were also in the family, making six in the small three room house.

In April 1911 Elsie was still the general servant at home (now aged 27) but she married William Phillips a few weeks later. Herbert (17) was a general farm labourer, and Henry (11) was only at school part time.

Arthur James, continuing as an agricultural labourer, married Beatrice Earley in 1907 at the age of 21. According to the Christ Church Baptism Book, still in use in the church today, they went on to have six children, namely:

16 Dec 1908	Hilda Mary
6 Aug 1911 (baptism)	Howard Ralph
21 Mar 1913	Linda Beatrice

Army Records from the First World War

In September 1940, as the result of a fire caused by an incendiary bomb at the War Office Record Store in Arnside Street London, approximately two thirds of the 6.5 million soldiers' documents for the First World War were destroyed by fire. Those records which survived were mostly charred or water damaged and unfit for consultation. They became known as the Burnt Documents.

All the surviving service and pension records were subsequently microfilmed by The National Archives, where both collections are now held, as part of a major conservation project to capture as much information as possible from these fragile documents. Even so, no records of the men addressed in this booklet have survived.

15 Jun 1914
9 Oct 1917
Last Quarter 1927

Stanley Arthur
Herbert William
Vera E

and we believe they all moved to Marston during the course of the Great War. But at some stage later they returned to Worton to live in No 29 on the High Street (one of a number of houses built after the Great War on land hitherto part of Park Farm) .

Henry and Frederick Dunford would have been too young to be caught up in the war, but their older brother Herbert Alfred most certainly wasn't.

Herbert Alfred Dunford at War

Private Herbert Dunford (18580) volunteered for the Army and was enlisted at Cardiff into the Welch Regiment. This Regiment raised 36 Battalions and was awarded 71 Battle Honours and 3 Victoria Crosses, losing 8,360 men during the course of the war.

He was 21 when he arrived in France on the 18th May 1915 whereupon he was sent to his regiment's 2nd Battalion. This battalion was part of the 3rd Brigade in the 1st Division and, having mobilised for war in early August 1914, moved from its base at Bordon in Hampshire to land at Le Havre, there to begin operations on the Western Front.

By the time Private Dunford joined, his battalion had already been engaged in the Battle of Mons and the subsequent retreat, the Battle of the Marne, the Battle of the Aisne, and the First Battle of Ypres, together with the winter operations of 1914-15.

Dunford was to serve in France for less than four months but nevertheless saw action in the Battle of Aubers and the Battle of Loos, north of Vimy and Arras in Flanders.

By this time the British strength on the Western Front was slowly growing, although precious troops, equipment and munitions were being consumed in the Gallipoli theatre and elsewhere. Compared with our small-scale efforts of spring 1915, the September attack at Loos by six divisions was a mighty offensive indeed - so much so that it was referred to at the time as 'The Big Push'. However, the British Army on the Western Front was not yet ready for a major offensive and was being committed by an Ally to a battle not of its choosing and

Commonwealth War Graves at Loos



The Loos memorial was designed by Sir Herbert Baker with sculpture by Charles Wheeler. It was unveiled by Sir Nevil Maccready on the 4th August 1930.

The two panel numbers referred to opposite relate to the panels dedicated to the Welch Regiment.

Dud Corner Cemetery stands almost on the site of a German strong point, the Lens Road Redoubt, captured by the 15th (Scottish) Division on the first day of the battle of Loos. The name 'Dud Corner' is believed to be due to the large number of unexploded enemy shells found in the area after the Armistice.

The Loos Memorial commemorates over 20,000 officers and men with no known grave who fell in the area from the River Lys to the old southern boundary of the First Army, east and west of Grenay. On either side of the cemetery is a wall 15 feet high, to which are fixed tablets on which are carved the names of those commemorated. At the back are four small circular courts, open to the sky, in which the lines of tablets are continued, and between these courts are three semicircular walls or apses, two of which carry tablets, while on the centre apse is erected the Cross of Sacrifice.

on unsuitable ground.

The opening of the battle on the 25th September 1915 was noteworthy for the first use of poison gas by the British Army, and despite heavy casualties there was considerable success on this first day in breaking into the deep enemy positions near Loos and Hulluch.

On day two of the battle the advance of the 2nd Welch and others came under severe fire, including point-blank artillery, not to mention British shellfire falling among them in this murderous area too. By about 1.00pm only a thin line reached the virtually undamaged German wire. All attempts to cut the wire failed with heavy casualties, and the remaining men took cover in long grass. At a shouted order to retire, men withdrew - many being hit by machine-gun fire as they did so. Those who did not retire were killed or captured.

It was here that Private Dunford lost his life (along with 310 other men from his Battalion) though all that we know is that he was reported missing presumed dead on that Sunday the 26th September 1915. He has no known grave.

Private Dunford was awarded the 1914-15 Star campaign medal of the British Empire for his service. As he was a recipient of this medal he was also to receive the British War Medal and the Victory Medal, all awarded posthumously.

The medals were automatically awarded in the event of death on active service, and would have been sent to the family after the war. Full details of these three principal World War 1 medals are on the back cover.

Commemoration

As well as being commemorated at Worton, Private Dunford's name is inscribed on Panel 77/78 of the Loos Memorial.

According to the family records he was born in the 3rd quarter of 1893 so was only just 22 when he was killed, rather than 23 as recorded by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

And After?

We have little information about the family after the war: but one piece is that Herbert's mother, Mary Jane Dunford, having lost



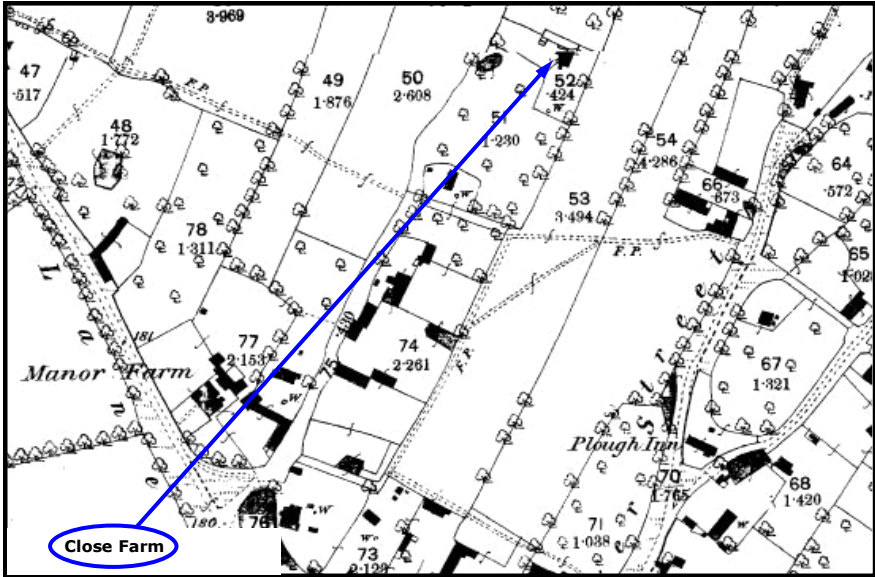
The Commonwealth War Memorial at Loos

two of her children, lived 'til she was 85 and died in 1948.

Her eldest child Elsie - last referred to in 1911 married to William Phillips - lived in Sandlease Cottage but had no children.

Arthur James (the eldest son and Herbert Dunford's older brother) married Beatrice Earley in 1907 as we have seen and they had five children born before and during the war. The fourth, Stanley Arthur, married Dorothy Bowden in 1935, and one of this couple's children, Grenville Dunford, lives in Devizes today. He was largely brought up by his grandfather in Worton in a cottage, now pulled down, that once stood at the entrance to Sandlease.

Arthur James died on the 30th August 1963 aged 77; he is buried in the Christ Church churchyard with his wife Beatrice who died four months later on the 5th January 1964 aged 75.



Marston in 1914



Close Farm Close Lane Marston



Edwin John Burbidge (left) and his elder sister Mabel Ellen Burbidge

Chapter Two

Edwin John Burbidge

The Burbidge Family in 1914

A glance in today's telephone directory shows the Burbidge name to be widely spread in this part of Wiltshire and in the mid 19th century one branch of the family migrated to our villages from the Bulkington/Keevil area.

Edwin John Burbidge (senior) was born in Worton on the 18th January 1867 and, at 24 years old, he married the 21 year old Ellen Jane Earley, born in Marston on the 31st January 1870.

Edwin John was a farm labourer and we think Ellen Jane in the 1890s might have been in service in or near Swindon because they were married in the Highworth District in the third quarter of 1891. They went on to raise a (relatively small for the time) family of a girl and two boys.

Their first child, Mabel Ellen, was born while they were still in the Highworth district on the 31st January 1892 (sharing her birthday with her mother), after which the young family settled back in Worton. Their first son, also named Edwin John (Eddie), was born in Worton on the 7th August 1898 and baptised here in Christ Church two months later on the 2nd October of that year.

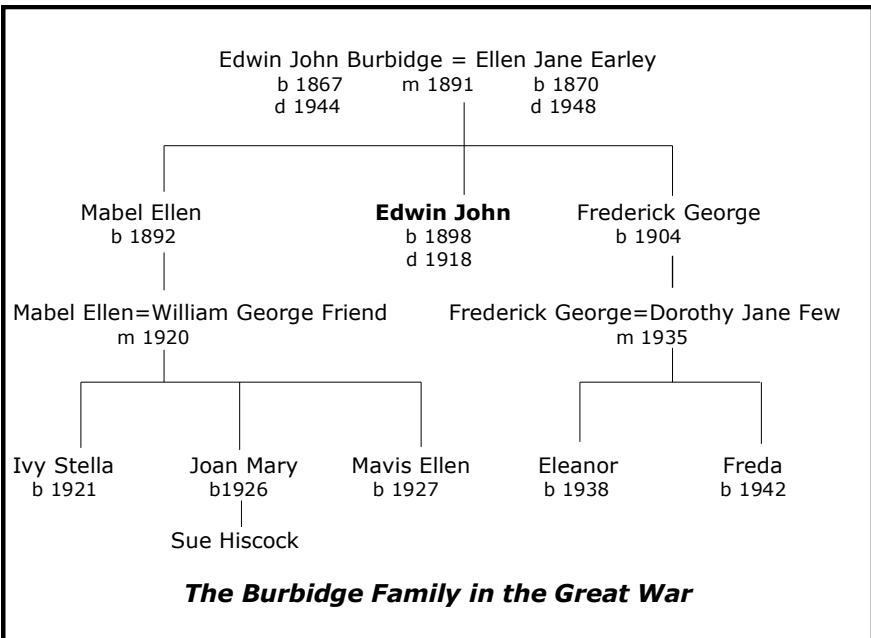
The 1901 census shows the growing family living in *Mount Pleasant* in the house next to *Mill Balls* before the end of the Parish at the Bulkington Brook. These two dwellings are now called *Mill Stream* and *Mill Stream House* respectively. The Burbidge family remained there definitely until 1905.

Four years were to pass before their second son, Frederick George, was born here in Worton on the 15th April 1904. This would almost certainly have been in their home at *Mount Pleasant*.

In the subsequent years Edwin John Burbidge (senior) seemingly prospered because they moved to *Close Farm* in Close Lane, Marston, a substantial seven roomed house. By 1911 he was styled



***THE OLD TIMBER AND THATCHED FARMHOUSE at Close farm, Marston
burned down in 1956 and was subsequently demolished.***



'farmer, working on own account' at Close Farm.

Their daughter Mabel Ellen had by then already gone into service, for in May 1908, at 16 years old, she held a position at Warleigh Manor near Bath. By 1911 she had moved to *Wingfield House* near Trowbridge. Here in a 34 room house lived Sir Vincent Pember Cailard, a Company Director, with his wife and daughter. Eleven servants supported them (and their visiting niece) one of whom was Mabel Ellen, the 19 year old scullery maid.

Later, for the first six months of 1914 Mabel Ellen moved to *Little Bognor House* in Fittleworth, Sussex, which is where she met (and later married) William George Friend.

In 1911 Edwin John (senior) and Ellen Jane's two sons were in the local school. Edwin John the younger was 12 and Frederick George seven.

Edwin John Burbidge at War

It is likely Mr Burbidge was conscripted into the army, initially enlisting at Devizes where he joined the Training Reserve before being sent to the 1st Battalion Prince Albert's (Somerset Light Infantry). He became a private soldier with Service Number 28150 (and later TR7/6570).

The Somerset Light Infantry consisted of 17 Battalions, of which the 9th (Reserve) Battalion, on the 1st September 1916, became the 45th Training Reserve Battalion at Swanage. Edwin Burbidge had just turned 18 at the time.

The Regiment was awarded 60 Battle Honours and one Victoria Cross, losing 4,760 men during the course of the Great War.

The 1st Battalion was part of the 11th Brigade in the 4th Division. By late 1916 it had participated in the Battles of Le Cateau, The Marne, The Aisne, Messines, the Second Battle of Ypres and the Battle of Albert.

With Edwin Burbidge in the ranks the Battalion then went on to fight the Battle of Le Transloy in 1916; the First Battle of the Scarpe, the Third Battle of the Scarpe, the Battle of Polygon Wood, the Battle of Broodseinde, the Battle of Poelcapelle and the First Battle of Passchendaele in 1917. 1918 saw them in action in the First Battle of



Edwin John Burbidge in Uniform

Arras, the Battle of Hazebrouck, and the Battle of Bethune.

It was here in Bethune in Flanders that on Monday the 15th April 1918 the 1st Somersets were in the line at Riez du Vinage north of Bethune. It is likely that Edwin John was a member of the 1st Somerset's Light Company which took part in an attack on the German positions at the Bois de Pacaut at 5.40pm. As the Light Company attacked they were met by hostile rifle and machine gun fire, and the remnants of the British attackers were forced to fall back. Edwin Burbidge was not among them.

Commemoration

Edwin was 19 years old at the time of his death and has no known grave. But as well as in Christ Church Worton, he is remembered on the same memorial at Loos (Panel 38/39 in his case) as Herbert Alfred Dunford.

As with most service personnel in World War One, Edwin John Burbidge was posthumously awarded the Victory Medal and the British War Medal.

And After?

Father, Edwin John (senior), continued to farm until his death on the 4th October 1944, although *Close Farm* famously burned down in 1956 when pigs in the sty knocked over a paraffin heating lamp. As a result he and his wife moved to *Orchard View Cottage*, also in Close Lane in Marston. Edwin John was buried in the Christ Church churchyard at the age of 77.

His wife, Ellen Jane, ran a village shop of sorts in *Close Farm* and when the house burned down she continued to do so from *Orchard View Cottage* (which is still there in Close Lane). After her husband died she went to live for the last three years of her life with her son at *Manor Farm* in Potterne. Ellen Jane died on the 7th January 1948, a few days short of her 78th birthday. She too is buried, with her husband, in the Christ Church churchyard, with their tombstone also bearing the memory of their son 'Eddie' killed in action.

As for young Edwin John (Eddie)'s siblings: his elder sister, Mabel Ellen's chosen one, William George Friend, served throughout the war in the Hampshire Regiment. His parents were superintendents of the Ian Hamilton Soldiers Home (also known as the Wesleyan Soldiers



HE whom this scroll commemorates
was numbered among those who,
at the call of King and Country, left all
that was dear to them, endured hardness,
faced danger, and finally passed out of
the sight of men by the path of duty
and self-sacrifice, giving up their own
lives that others might live in freedom.
Let those who come after see to it
that his name be not forgotten.

28150, PRIVATE EDWIN JOHN BURBIDGE

1st Battalion, Prince Albert's (Somerset Light Infantry)
Killed in action, France & Flanders, 15/4/1918
Born: Marston, Wilts, Enlisted: Devizes, Wilts

Memorial Scroll for Edwin John Burbidge 1918

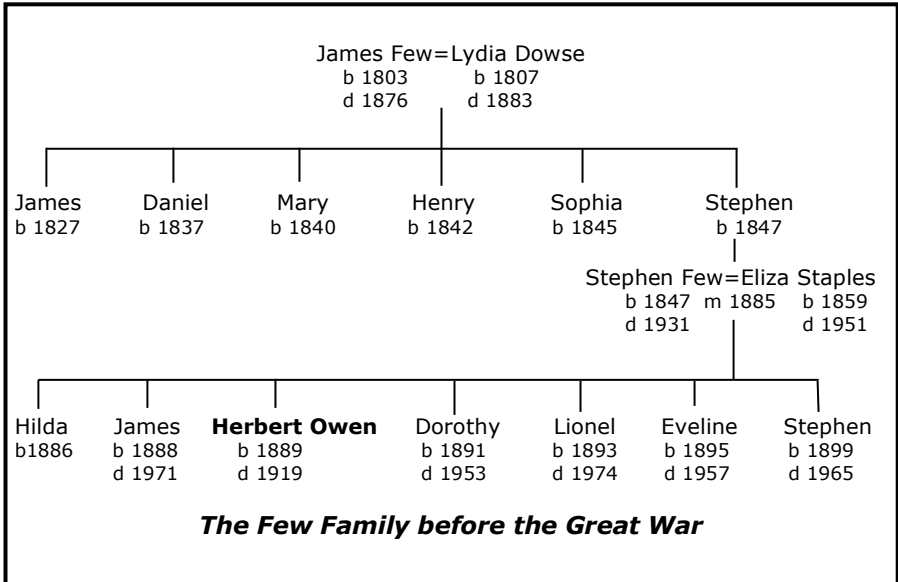
Home) at Tidworth to where they had moved from Dover. After the war they relocated to Yorkshire, as did both William George and Mabel Ellen Burbidge. The couple were married at Hessle, Hull on the 22nd May 1920.

The couple remained in Hull for 22 years bringing up their three daughters: Ivy Stella who was born on the 23rd February 1921; Joan Mary on the 31st July 1926; and Mavis Ellen on the 16th September 1927. Then in 1942/43, perhaps seeking wartime safety, they returned south to lodge with Mabel's brother Frederick George and his young family in Manor Farm Potterne. Their middle daughter, Joan Mary, herself has a daughter still living in Potterne.

Edwin John's younger brother, Frederick George, married Dorothy Jane Few on the 21st September 1935 (not to be confused with the Dorothy Few mentioned later on *page 43* who married Arthur Goss in 1914). This Dorothy Jane Few was the daughter of Aaron Few from West End Farm in Marston. They farmed Manor Farm in Potterne where they brought up two daughters: Eleanor born on the 13th November 1938; and Freda on the 28th April 1942.

Frederick George died on the 28th July 1966 aged 62, whereupon Manor Farm was sold. Though he lived for much of his working life in Potterne, Frederick is buried in the Christ Church churchyard close to his parents. The grave is to this day tended by one of his grand daughters. His wife Dorothy Jane moved to *Highlands*, still in Potterne, when the farm was sold where she lived on until reaching the age of 77. She died on the 13th March 1979 and is buried with her husband in the Christ Church churchyard.

Manor Farm



Chapter Three

Herbert Owen Few

The Few Family in 1914

Members of the Few family have lived in Worton since at least the early 19th Century, but the branch here in focus came to our village in the 1850s from Urchfont, where one James Few and his wife Lydia (née Dowse) farmed 91 acres and employed two labourers.

The family, amounting to four boys and two girls, was already complete when they moved here to take a larger farm of 172 acres, employing four men and three boys.

Stephen Few was the youngest of these six children of James (b Market Lavington) and Lydia (b Bulkington). Stephen himself was born in Urchfont in 1847 and subsequently, at 38 years old, married Eliza Staples in 1885.

Eliza, born in 1860, was the eldest of the five children of George Staples, a Potterne farm labourer, and his wife Ann. Stephen and Eliza Few then together raised a total of seven children though tragically the eldest, Hilda (b 1886), died whilst still just a young girl. Hilda was followed by James (b 1888); Herbert Owen (b 1889), Dorothy (b 1891), Lionel (b 1893), Eveline (b 1895) and Stephen (b 1899). Also living with the family at that time was father Stephen's older bachelor brother Henry, also a farmer.

At the start of the Great War the family lived and farmed in what is now *Manor Farm House* with the children ranging in age between 15 and 26. Stephen was by then a parish councillor.

Of their two remaining girls; Dorothy, by the age of 20 had taken a position as a domestic assistant with a Somerset farmer, his wife and their three little children in Kewstoke, near Weston-Super-Mare.

Stephen and Eliza's youngest daughter Eveline worked on their farm as a dairy maid until after the war when, in 1925, she married Albert H Butler; she was then 30.

Military Service Tribunals

Men who were due to be called up for military service were able to appeal against their conscription; they or their employers could appeal to a local Military Service Tribunal in their town or district on the grounds of work of national importance, business or domestic hardship, medical unfitness, or conscientious objection. A very large number of men appealed: by the end of June 1916, 748,587 men had appealed to tribunals. Over the same period around 770,000 men joined the army. Most men were given some kind of exemption, usually temporary (between a few weeks and six months) or conditional on their situation at work or home remaining serious enough to warrant their retention at home.

In October 1916, 1,120,000 men, nationally, held tribunal exemption or had cases pending. By May 1917 this had fallen to 780,000 exempt and 110,000 pending. At this point there were also 1,800,000 men with exemptions granted by the government (for example, those working in war industries); so combined, these exemptions covered more men than were serving overseas with the British Army. Some men gained exemption on condition they joined the Volunteer Training Corps for part-time training and home defence duties: by February 1918, 101,000 men had been directed to this Corps.

Only around 2% of those appealing were Conscientious Objectors. Around 7,000 men were granted non-combatant duties, while a further 3,000 ended up in special work camps. 6,000 were imprisoned. Some 42 were sent to France, potentially to face the threat of a firing squad. This threat was more real to the 35 who were formally sentenced to death, but immediately reprieved with ten years penal servitude instead.

There was at the time, of course, a pressing need to feed the nation; in 1914 father Stephen was 67 and his brother Henry 70. It was necessary for the sons to keep things going and we think the sons James and Stephen probably did just that, releasing Herbert and Lionel to go off to Kitchener's army.

Nevertheless, in 1916 the 26 year old Herbert Owen applied to a Military Exemption Tribunal to remain at home. He was noted as a single, self employed farmer of 40 acres (one arable). At the tribunal he claimed his father and brother were unfit to work. The tribunal asked what his brother was doing. Their conclusion was 'Mischief' and his application was dismissed.

Herbert Owen Few at War

It is likely Herbert was either conscripted into the army or he joined under the Derby Scheme (*page 72*), initially enrolling in the Durham Light Infantry as a private soldier with Number 64448.

The Durham Light Infantry was awarded 67 Battle Honours, six Victoria Crosses and lost 12,530 men during the course of the war, by the end of which the regiment had raised a total of 42 various battalions together with regimental labour units.

By 1916 the pressure for an ever-increasing supply of labour led to the reclassification of men medically graded as unfit for active service in the front line, and these men were drafted into infantry labour battalions. By mid 1916, 12 infantry labour battalions and eight non-combatant companies had been formed.

The next development occurred in 1917 when the British Army's Labour Corps was formed and manned by men who were either ex-front line wounded or ill soldiers, or men who on enlistment were found to be unfit for front line service because of ill health or because they were too old.

It was to this Corps, specifically the 3rd Company Labour Corps, to which Private Few was transferred with a new Service Number of 19971. The Corps itself grew to some 389,900 men by the Armistice (more than 10% of the total size of the Army). Of this total, around 175,000 were working in the United Kingdom and the rest in the theatres of war, and Labour Corps units were often deployed for work within range of the enemy's guns, sometimes for lengthy periods. Generally, their duties would have been anything from helping in

The Special Military Surgical Hospital Headington

In the 19th Century a Mrs Hannah Wingfield gave £1500 in memory of her husband for a convalescent home for the patients of the Radcliffe Infirmary because the original site no longer provided the fresh air deemed necessary for recovering patients. Thus in 1872 the Wingfield Convalescent Home was built in Headington, Oxford.

In 1914 it was converted into a twenty-bed military hospital, and two wooden huts were constructed in its grounds to house wounded soldiers.



In 1918 the Commandant of the hospital, Miss KJD Feilden, paid for additional buildings to enable the site to become the 100-bed Wingfield Hospital. The work of one Gathorne Girdlestone led to its development as a specialist orthopaedic hospital, and in 1931 (after a gift of £70,000 from the then Sir William Morris) it was renamed the Wingfield-Morris Orthopaedic Hospital. The name was updated in 1950 to the 'Nuffield Orthopaedic Hospital'.

The old convalescent home was only demolished in 2007.

stores to taking equipment up to the front, repairing roads and such like, and helping at rest areas by manning theatres and cinemas; in fact anything that was needed of them they would have done.

In the crises of March and April 1918 on the Western Front, Labour Corps units were used as emergency infantry.

The Corps always suffered from its treatment as something of a second class organisation, and the men who died are commemorated under their original regiment, with Labour Corps being secondary. We found that researching men of the Corps was made extra difficult by this, further compounded by the fact that few records remain of the daily activities and locations of Corps units.

We do know however that Private Few was injured in the war, and on repatriation was treated in the Special Military Surgical Hospital at Headington in Oxford. One account has it that he died there on Monday the 11th August 1919 and that his body was then returned to his parents. Another says he was returned home earlier to be nursed by the family until he died of his wounds. The Registrar's record seems to settle the matter as he was certified as dying in Headington. In any event he was buried in the Christ Church churchyard (Row 19 Plot 11). He was 30 years old give or take a week or two.

Private Few was awarded the Victory Medal and the British War Medal indicating that he and his unit must have been engaged in the fighting, most likely on the Western Front.

Before moving on to the post war years it should here be mentioned that Herbert Owen was not the only one of the four boys to serve. His next younger brother, Lionel, also joined up. We cannot be certain of much detail but we think it most likely he served as a driver in the Royal Field Artillery with a Service Number of 133132, entering in 1916 at the age of 23. As we shall see, he of course survived the war.

And After?

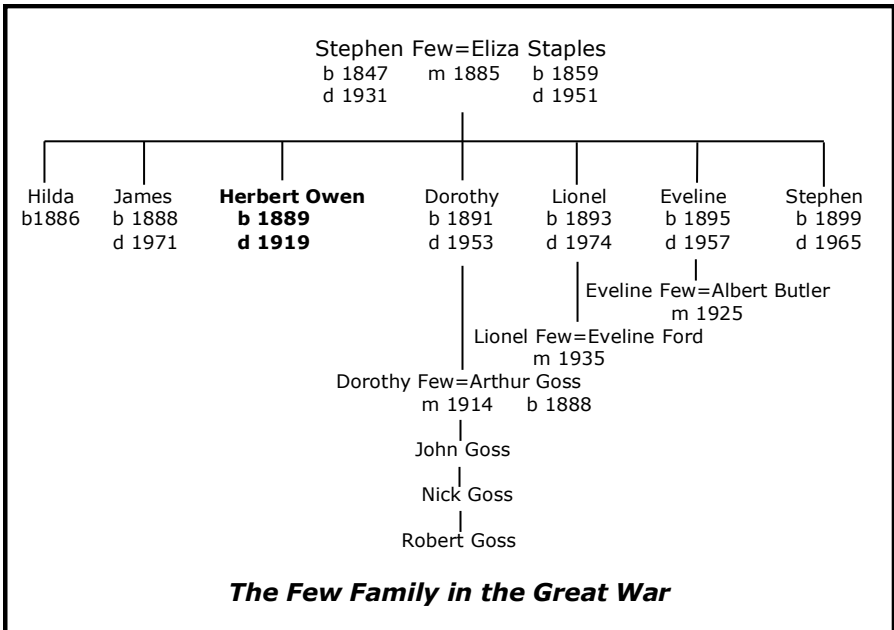
When Herbert died in 1919 his father Stephen Few was 72 and no doubt thinking of easing up on the running of Manor Farm. Herbert's eldest and youngest brothers James (31) and Stephen (20), both of whom remained bachelors, continued to work the farm at least until the mid 1960s.

Father died in 1931 aged 84, and his widow Eliza, who had car-



A story passed down in the village has it that the Holly bush behind Herbert's grave in the churchyard sprang from the berries carried on a Christmas spray placed there each year by the Few family. This spray they brought from the tree in their garden at Manor Farm, which also, we understand, used to provide many villagers with their Christmas Holly.

Herbert Owen (and his brother Lionel) Few's Grave in Worton Churchyard



The Few Family in the Great War

ried the loss of two of her children, herself lived to the ripe old age of 91, dying in 1951.

Of their remaining children; Stephen died in 1965 (aged just 66) but his eldest brother James went on 'till 1971 (aged 83). James and Stephen, having spent their lives together working *Manor Farm* are buried together in the Christ Church churchyard.

Lionel Few farmed Watt's Farm (now known as *Willowbrook Farm*) on the north side of the High Street. In 1935 he married Eveline Nancy Ford the school teacher. She was then 40 and there were no children. They retired to *The Fairway* in Devizes where Lionel died on the 8th March 1974 aged 81 and interestingly is buried in his brother Herbert's grave in the Christ Church churchyard. Soon after his death his wife Nancy moved back to her family roots in Surrey.

Of the two surviving daughters: Eveline, having stayed working in the dairy of *Manor Farm*, married Albert H Butler in 1925 at the age of 30, and she died in 1957.

Dorothy, last seen on *page 37* above in 1911 working on a farm in Somerset, married Arthur William Goss soon after the outbreak of war in 1914.

Before that however, Arthur Goss had left school at the age of 12 to drive the baker's horse and cart on a delivery round as a teenager until, at 17, he began a blacksmith's apprenticeship with Frank Hunt in what is now the *Old Forge Garage*. When Frank retired, Arthur Goss bought the business for £105.

Soon the tenancy of *The Rose and Crown* became available, which Arthur took on together with its 30 acres of agricultural land. Importantly that gave Arthur use of what is now the skittle alley as his forge. Even more importantly, it was in *The Rose and Crown* that Dorothy (our late Herbert Owen Few's sister) gave birth to John Goss.

Having moved to *Sandleaze Farm* in 1937, Dorothy Goss died in 1953 aged 62, and Arthur Goss in 1965 aged 77. They are buried together in the Christ Church churchyard.

Their son, John, is not only still living and farming in the village, but likewise his son, Nick, and his grandson, Robert, too. And it is Robert Goss who for the last year or so has written the monthly farming column in **The Bridge**.

Worton Peace Celebrations

For the Peace Celebrations, 250 folk were catered for and provision was made for:

*65 lbs ham
60 lbs fresh and salt meat
4 lbs tea
21 lbs sugar
7 lbs butter
12½ gallons bread
5 gallons milk
75 lbs cake
Salad*

Cost: near £20.

Peace

Today we take for granted the almost instantaneous receipt of news of the world's great events. But it was interesting to learn that, back then, the European Powers' offer of an armistice at 11.00am on the 11th November 1918 certainly reached here in Worton and Marston in time for the Schoolmistress to grant her children a half day holiday on that very day for them to celebrate. Even so, the euphoria was not to last because only seven days later the Spanish 'flu arrived and the school was closed for three weeks while the disease ran its course.

As for the wider village celebrations, these were not to come for a further nine months. A small committee, three of whom were men returned from the war (viz: George Pike, Lot Ellis and Fred Hale) arranged Peace Celebrations for Saturday the 23rd August 1919, to be held in *Home Field* if dry and the *Library Hall* if wet.

Thus it was that, happily on a very fine day, a carnival started at 4.00pm with a parade moving off at 4.30. Folk met at the top of the village and the parade was led by the Market Lavington Prize Band, who were engaged for the sum of £5-10s (band to provide own refreshments after tea). Inhabitants had been invited to decorate their houses to the best of their ability and, for the event itself, residents of both villages were admitted free of charge to the field; outsiders were charged 8d each and 2/- for a meat tea (no intoxicating drinks were to be sold).

Games such as tug of war were held in the field and everything about the day (which was blessed with '*Queen Victoria weather*') went without a hitch.

Subsequently, at a meeting on the 19th September, it was resolved to spend surplus funds on a framed, hand painted, illuminated address for the 27 sailors and soldiers from the villages who served in the war.

It was also resolved that the committee would write to the families of the fallen soldiers. However, only two letters were sent: to the Dunford family and to the Few family (Herbert Few having died just 12 days before the celebratory carnival). We haven't been able to discover why the family of Edwin John Burbidge, killed some 16 months earlier, was not included in that gesture.

**World War 1 Memorial
Christ Church Worton
Nave, North Wall**



<i>H A Dunford</i>	<i>Welch Regiment</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>1915</i>
<i>E J Burbidge</i>	<i>Somerset Light Infantry</i>	<i>Killed</i>	<i>1918</i>
<i>H O Few</i>	<i>Durham Light Infantry</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>1919</i>

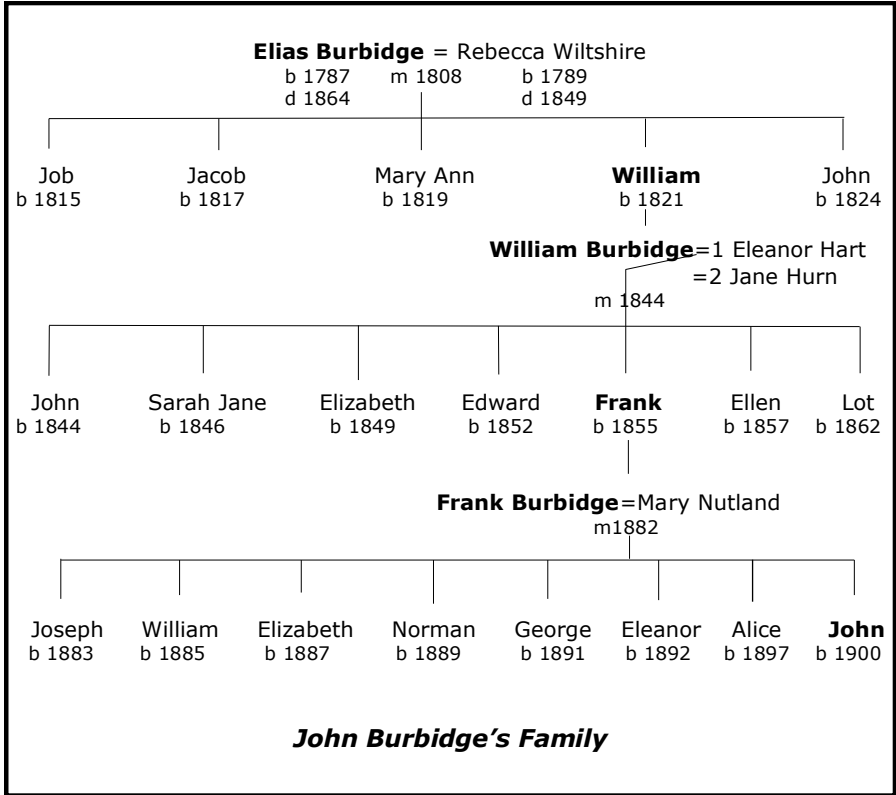
The Plaque

We were particularly interested in bringing to light discussions and policy decisions taken in the villages leading to the positioning of a commemorative plaque in the nave of Christ Church. Unfortunately, many parish and parochial records for the years immediately after the Great War have not survived. From those that have, we have only been able to discover – from Kelly's directory – that a memorial was to be presented by Brigadier General E H Stevenson CMG DSO JP in memory of three men of the parish who fell in the Great War. This was confirmed on the 23rd September 1920 in documents accompanying the submission for an ecclesiastical faculty for the plaque, the design of which was to be a brass tablet mounted on an oak base. General Stevenson was living in *Littlecourt* (name later changed to *Prince Hill*) at the time.

It is certainly interesting to note that in the year following the aforementioned two letters of condolence, a third name came to be included on the memorial.

Before we began work on this little booklet we assumed that here our story would end. But, having seen what amounts to just the few scraps of evidence set down immediately above, we came to wonder if there might just be still more sons of Worton and Marston who may have made the ultimate sacrifice?

The answer we now think is: **yes there were.**



Chapter Four

Our research into archives, 19th century census returns, and what other material we were able to unearth, led us to another three war casualties in addition to those just set out. The first is from another branch of the Burbidge family. This should not really surprise us for all the 19th century census returns show several branches of that family here in Worton (though not in Marston) let alone those in other nearby villages as well.

John Burbidge

John Burbidge was killed in battle in Flanders in 1918. Though, as we have discovered, he was a Worton man he does not feature on the village war memorial. So, we here present a digest of his family history and an account of his own short life together with the circumstances of his death, with a view to recommending whether or not this omission deserves to be addressed.

The Burbidge family in Worton

The antecedents in Worton of this John Burbidge go back to well before the French Revolution. One Elias Burbidge was born here in 1787 and went on to marry, in 1808, a Keevil girl named Rebecca Wiltshire (b 1789). They were to become our man John Burbidge's great grand parents.

The outline family tree opposite shows that John's grandfather was the fourth of five children (all christened in St Mary's Potterne) all of whom, including mother – even well into her fifties - were recorded as agricultural labourers here in Worton. Grandfather William married Eleanor Hart from Easterton in 1844

William and Eleanor had seven children, all of whom were christened in the newly built Christ Church Worton. Also living with them in Worton were Caroline, the widow of William's eldest brother Job (d 1850) and Caroline's son Elias. Caroline was also a farm labourer. Indeed all the sons grew up to become agricultural labourers in Worton; not only that but some of the daughters too. Sarah Jane had a

Worton Church



Christ Church was built in the middle of the 19th century at a cost of £1,582 and set to serve residents of Marston as well as Worton. It was built in 1841 in the Gothic style out of Bath Ashlar stone, Welsh slate and stone ridge tiles. The single bell was cast by a man called Mears in 1888. The architect for the church was Thomas Henry Wyatt, who went on to design the Liverpool Exchange and Kensington Barracks, and it was built by Brian B Jones from Bradford-on-Avon.

The leading man behind the building of the church was Charles Snell Kensington, who was the owner of Littlecourt at the time (now Prince Hill) and who donated land for the church to the west of his house. He was not actually in permanent residence in Worton but took a great interest in the parish. He is buried in the churchyard.

Christ Church was consecrated in October 1841 by Philip Nicholas Shuttleworth, Bishop of Chichester.

daughter born in Paddington in 1869 and they were both looked after in the family, but with mother working her keep on the land.

In the early 1870s Grandmother Eleanor Burbidge seemingly died, for in 1876 William married a second wife – the former Jane Hurn – who was then in her late 50s.

The fifth child, Frank Burbidge, an agricultural labourer by the age of 14, went on to marry Mary Nutland from Littleton Panel, and this couple were our man John's parents.

Mary was born in 1858, went into service in Market Lavington at the age of 13, and was later one of 15 servants at a Hall in Cheshire. She was 24 when she married Frank Burbidge in St Peter's Church Little Cheverell and they had eight children, all born in Worton.

Soon after their marriage we think Frank and Mary Burbidge and their growing family lived on the High Street next door to Alfred Dunford (*page 21*) in what is now *Orchard Cottage, 53 High Street*, but, later in the 1890s, they all moved to *The Old Turnpike House* at Cuckold's Green.

Frank was to spend his entire life as an agricultural labourer. By the year 1900 his eldest son Joseph had become a railway engine cleaner and moved to Bridgwater. William started as a carpenter and builder's labourer in his teens but later he too worked on the land; as did his younger brother Norman. The youngsters would still have been at school.

However, shortly after the turn of the century disaster struck the family, possibly hitting John the youngest child the very hardest of all. On the 26th February 1904 father, Frank Burbidge, died of laryngitis and collapse of a lung. He was only in his late 40s.

Even though the newly widowed Mary had two working sons living at home she was evidently finding it a struggle to cope with the other children still with her. George was only 13 and presumably not yet pulling much weight. Then there was Eleanor (11), Alice (7) and young John (4).

Thus it was that on the 3rd September 1904 Mary approached the vicar – the Reverend Albert Isherwood – who lived in *Cambria House* on the High Street, asking if he could place two of her children in the Muller Children's Home in Bristol. The first in was Eleanor when



The Muller Children's Home Bristol

The Muller Orphanage in Bristol was built by George Muller (Müller or Mueller) who, through his work as a minister, saw the numbers of orphans needing care. Said to have been atonement for a dissolute youth, and relying on donations to cover all the costs, he miraculously raised enough to buy land, build the orphanage and take in orphans. The home opened in 1845.

Despite relying on the generosity of others, the orphanage was not small and actually took the form of several large buildings in Ashley Down; in just a few years he was looking after 2000 children.

It seems he was a humble man and, despite his great achievement, he preferred the orphanage to be called 'The New Orphan House' rather than take his name. When he died in 1898, he died a poor man. His work carried on into the 1950s when such large institutions were phased out in favour of smaller facilities.



she was taken to Bristol on the 4th November of that year by her mother and her aunt, Miss Lillie Nutland. She grew up there until the 23rd February 1910 when, at the age of 17, she was found a position in service.

Alice seemingly stayed at home with mother, but her younger brother John, he too was sent to the Muller Home on the 12th October 1906. Mother wanted them both to go in 1904 but in the event had to wait for two years until space was available for them to take him in.

The home would not take sick children, and John's medical examination in March 1906 showed that the poor little six year old bore extensive scars on both legs as a result of being scalded in the right groin at the age of four, about when his father died.

Mary his mother was still living at the *Old Turnpike House* in 1911 but in the years immediately following she moved up to Willesden, we think to her mother, where she too went into service. She told the Home she wished in due course to find a situation for John near to her.

John spoke well of his treatment in the Home and did not want to leave. Nevertheless, he was discharged as soon as he reached the age of 14 (the custom being to place boys from the Home into apprenticeships on their 14th birthday) and arrived at Paddington on the 29th January 1914. Extraordinary as it may seem to us 100 years later, he apparently went straight into the army, enlisting at Bristol, still just 14 years old (though we were of course not then at war).

John Burbidge at War

On the outbreak of war in August 1914 John volunteered for operational service. He arrived in Zeebrugge on the 11th November 1914, (still only 14 years old), joining the Duke of Edinburgh's (Wiltshire Regiment) there.

The Wiltshires raised 10 Battalions, gained 60 Battle Honours, 1 Victoria Cross and lost 5,200 men during the course of the war. With a service number of 9091, John Burbidge was in the 2nd Battalion, a battalion which had been brought home from Gibraltar at the outbreak of war to become part of the 21st Brigade in the 7th Division.

On the day he joined, the entry in the Battalion War Diary reads:

Conscription in the Great War

At the beginning of August 1914, Parliament called for an extra 100,000 soldiers. The recruiting boom began in the last week of that month when news of the British retreat following the Battle of Mons reached Britain. By the end of September over 750,000 men had enlisted and by January 1915, a million. The reasons for enlistment were probably due to enthusiasm, a war spirit, and maybe unemployment. Some employers forced men to join up, while occasionally Poor Law Guardians would also refuse to pay support for fit military-aged men.

One early peculiarity was the formation of Pals Battalions: groups of men from the same factory, football team, bank or similar, joining and fighting together. Lord Kitchener gave official approval for the measure almost instantly and the response was impressive. Manchester raised fifteen specific Pals Battalions, but one drawback was that a whole town could lose so many of its military-aged menfolk in a single day.

In 1915 the available number of men of military age was 5.5 million, with around 500,000 more reaching the age each year. By late September 2.25 million men had been enlisted and 1.5 million were in reserved occupations.

With insufficient numbers of bachelors attesting for the Derby Scheme (see page 72) to be workable, and the French Army in dire need of relief, a Military Service Bill was introduced in January 1916, providing for the conscription of single men aged 18–41; in May conscription was extended to married men. The government pledged not to send teenagers to serve in the front line. Conscription, however, had little impact on enlistment. The number continued to decline towards 40,000 a month as essential men were needed for war work and many others were in poor health.

Requirements were progressively reduced. From 1.28 million enlisting in 1915, the number fell to 1.19 million for 1916 and to around 820,000 for 1917. The healthy manpower was simply not there - in 1917/18 only 36% of men examined were suitable for full military duties; 40% were either totally unfit or were classified as unable to undergo physical exertion. In 1918, the British Army was actually smaller than in 1917 (3.84 million to 3.9 million) and almost half the infantry were 19 or younger.

Privates Goddard, Townsend and Fear tried by Court Martial for deserting and sentenced to 2 years imprisonment with hard labour, 18 months of which was remitted later. Battalion marched from BAILLEUL at 8 am with orders to again re-inforce the 4th Division but order was cancelled and, after having marched 7 kilometres, the Battalion returned to billets.

Whilst serving with the Battalion in 1914 he fought on the Western Front in the First Battle of Ypres. Their action was at Reutel, and for many in the battalion it was both their first and last. 18 officers and 450 men were captured, 7 officers and 76 men were killed and 229 were wounded, after being assaulted by two complete German regiments.

In March 1915 they took part in a major assault at Neuve-Chapelle, and in those five days they again suffered terribly by taking another 400 casualties. Two months later, in the battle of Festubert they suffered a further 158 casualties for just one mile of ground taken. This was followed by many months of trench warfare before the battle of Loos in September (another 400 casualties).

At the end of 1915 John Burbidge's Brigade transferred to the 30th Division and then engaged in the Battles of Albert and the Transloy Ridges in 1916, at one point being called upon to bayonet their way through the remains of the enemy defenders (240 casualties in this action).

The following year they took part in the pursuit of the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line, (coming out of that offensive weaker by 16 officers and 363 other ranks) the First Battle of the Scarpe, the Second Battle of the Scarpe and the Battle of Pilkem Ridge, all at Ypres.

Alas! in 1918 John's luck ran out. After the Battle of St Quentin and the actions at the Somme Crossings, he was caught up in the bitter fighting during the Battle of Pozières. There was an attack in the early morning of Thursday the 28th March when the 2nd Wiltshires were in action near Roye during a German offensive in which they were outflanked, completely surrounded, and lost 22 officers and 600 other ranks.

Immediately afterwards Private Burbidge was posted missing, later reported to be wounded, but later still reported as killed in action on that day. He was 18 years old.

The Pozières War Memorial



The Pozières cemetery and memorial were designed by W.H. Cowlshaw, with sculpture by Laurence A. Turner. The memorial was unveiled by Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien on the 4th August 1930.

Pozières is a village six kilometres north-east of the town of Albert and the Memorial and British Cemetery are a little to the south-west of the village.

This Memorial relates to the period of crisis in March and April 1918 when the Allied Fifth Army was driven back by overwhelming numbers across the former Somme battlefields, and the months that followed before the Advance to Victory, which began on the 8th August 1918.

The Memorial commemorates 14,656 casualties of the United Kingdom and 300 of the South African Forces who have no known grave and who died on the Somme from the 21st March to the 7th August 1918.

There are now 2,758 Commonwealth servicemen buried or commemorated in this cemetery. 1,380 of the burials are unidentified but there are special memorials to 23 casualties known or believed to be buried among them. There is also one German soldier buried there.

The entry in the Battalion War Diary for the day merely states:

In the early morning a counter attack was made by the party under 2/Lts PAYNE and JEANS. Capt WB GARDNER, MC, was killed about this time. Shortly afterwards the Division was relieved by the French, and the details joined the transport at ROUVREL, forming part of a Brigade Composite Battalion under Major RAPSON.

In due course Private Burbidge was posthumously awarded the 1914 Star, the Victory Medal and the British War Medal. He has no known grave but does appear on the Pozières Memorial Panel 64 as **J Burbridge**. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission and other listings also incorrectly spell his name as *Burbridge* but his medal card gives his name correctly as Burbidge.

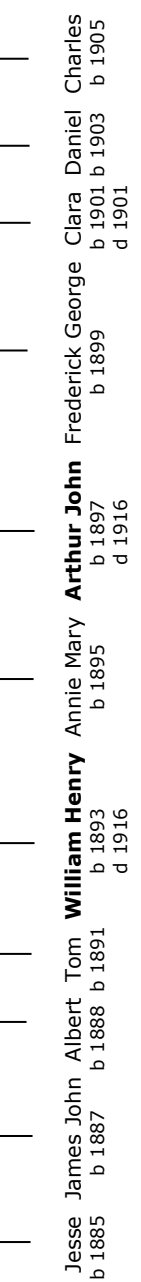
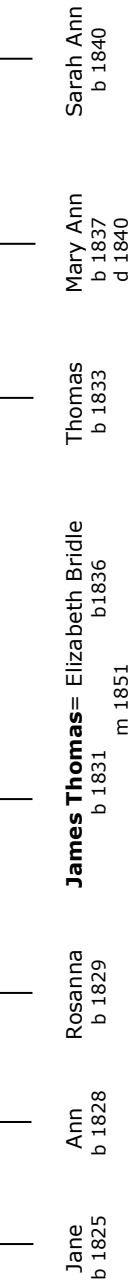
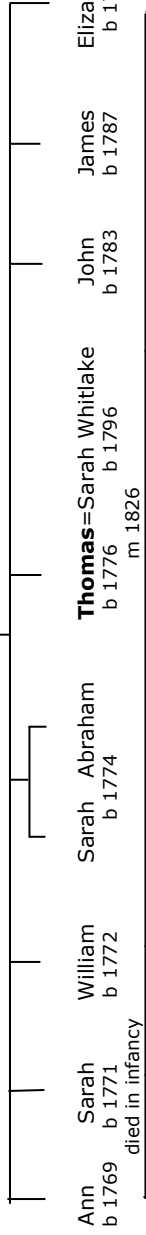
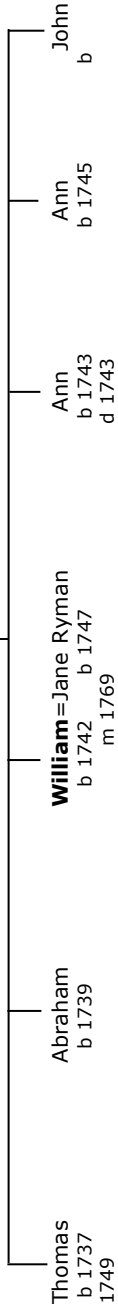
We know of nowhere else he may have been commemorated. This may well have been because, quite correctly, his record gives his birth town as Devizes and his resided town as Bristol, Gloucestershire. We return to this aspect of commemoration after setting out two more former Worton men.

And After?

As for his family, we know that in 1911 John's widowed mother, Mary, had not yet left *The Old Turnpike House* where she was living with her farm labouring sons William and Norman and her teenage daughter Alice. Also in Worton at that time the widow Mary's two single brothers-in-law John (66) and Lot (49) were living in Back Lane with their sister Sarah Jane (64), herself also widowed by then. There was indeed another branch of the Burbidge family living next door to them in Back Lane.

But it seems most likely that after the war the remaining Burbidges of this particular branch of the family had all migrated away from Worton.

Thomas Fielden = Joan Bull
 b c1705 b c1705
 m 1733



The Fielding Family before the Great War

Chapter Five

The Fielding Brothers

William Henry Fielding

William Henry Fielding died in Turkey in 1916 as a prisoner of war. He was a Worton man but, like John Burbidge in the last chapter, he does not feature on our village war memorial.

Arthur John Fielding

William (Henry)'s next younger brother (Arthur) John died of his wounds in Mesopotamia, also in 1916. He too does not feature on our village war memorial. Poignantly, John died in what amounted to a concerted attempt to save his brother's formation from capitulating to the Turks, leading to the latter's subsequent death in captivity.

So, we add here some of our extensive research into this branch of the Fielding family, their lives, and the circumstances of the two brothers' deaths, our intention again being to try to conclude as to whether or not these omissions deserve to be rectified.

The Fielding Family

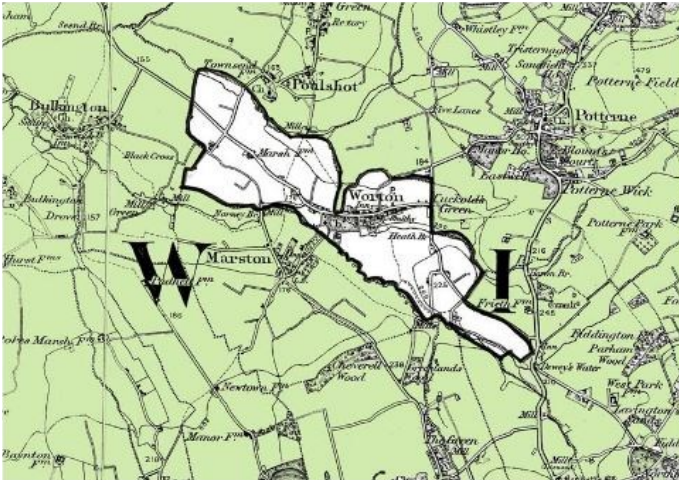
The Fieldings in our locality – first Potterne and then Worton - go back a very long way. We are certain this branch of the family continuously lived and worked here from before the 1689 Glorious Revolution when King William III ascended the throne of England.

A reconstructed family tree opposite shows their great great grandfather, *Thomas Fielden*, known to have been born in Potterne in 1705, two years before the Union of England and Scotland.

Of Thomas Fielden's six children, the third, William Fielding, married Jane Rayman from Stert and this couple were to become our subjects' great great grand parents.

Thomas Fielding, William and Jane's sixth child (of nine) and our subjects' great grandfather, married in 1826 and lived in Potterne

Royal Consent to the Creation of the Parish of Worton & Marston



While we dwell on the 325 plus years of the Fielding family here, it may be worthwhile pausing for a moment to remind ourselves that until the mid 19th Century Worton and Marston were both tythings, and thus an integral part, of the parish of Potterne.

We read on page 50 of the building of Christ Church in 1841, which at that time was a chapel of ease, seating 261 souls.

It seems the mid 19th Century was a time of population expansion, not only in the towns and cities, but also in rural settlements. In Potterne's case Parliament deemed it expedient to break from it a large chunk of land (that shown in the map extract above) to form a new ecclesiastical parish of Worton and Marston, with the chapel of ease in effect now raised to the status of a parish church with all its attendant powers of matrimony, baptisms, churchings and burials.

This plan, having been approved by the Bishop of Salisbury, received Royal assent on the 15th June 1852.

It was not however until 1894 after a further transfer of land from Potterne, that Worton became a separate civil parish.

Wick/Little Inn. They raised a family of seven, although one daughter died at the age of three. Their number four, James Thomas Fielding, married a 15 year old Potterne girl, Elizabeth Bridle.

The Fieldings seemingly all worked the land in some form or another. For example, James Thomas was an agricultural labourer, while his elder sister Rosanna was a dairy maid with Moses Hibbard on his farm at Wick Compton before she married. Father likewise was a labourer until, at 65, he became an annuitant pensioner.

Introduction of registration, and the national census in 1841, has enabled us to discover rather more about the family than hitherto. Grandfather James Thomas clearly thrived as an agricultural labourer because by the time he was 48 or so he had moved with his family to Marston, where he farmed 13 acres. This was in the late 1870s.

And by then they had been blessed with ten children. Their firstborn (in London), James William, was a cowman who lived with his parents even after he married. Next, Tom, also a cowman was followed by Stephen, a plough boy by the age of 14; John a plough boy by the age of 12; Jesse, an agricultural labourer; and Francis ditto. We should perhaps just mark here for later their ninth child, Frederick, who subsequently married Rose Few in 1893, both of whom were in due course buried in the Christ Church churchyard.

By 1891 the grand parents had moved to Bulkington with their youngest son and three grand children all still at home. Grandfather James Thomas died in 1900 and is buried on the south side of our church. His widow Elizabeth, able to live thereafter on her own means, moved to a house 'by *Church Lane*', living there with her son Jesse and his wife. A few years later, Elizabeth herself died and she too is buried in the Worton churchyard with her husband.

Their aforementioned second son, Thomas Fielding the cowman, was to become the father of our William and John Fielding. Thomas also grew up with the land, moving with his parents first to Park Road Wick Common and then to their farm in Marston. In 1884 he married the 19 year old Annie Dyke from Studley, daughter of a shepherd. In the twenty years between 1885 and 1905 she was to bear eleven children, all bar the first one born here in Worton.

By the 1891 census Thomas had risen from his teenage position as a cowman to become a market gardener, and they then lived in *12 Hill House*, a four roomed dwelling on Mount Pleasant in Worton.

Le Marchant Barracks



By 1878 the Le Marchant Barracks had been built alongside the main Devizes to Beckhampton road. They were named after Sir John Gaspard Le Marchant who commanded the 99th Regiment of Foot in 1839. This combined with the 62nd Foot in 1881 to form the Wiltshire Regiment. On completion of the Le Marchant Barracks, St. James's became the garrison church of the Wiltshire Regiment. There is an excellent museum in Salisbury "The Wardrobe" which gives much information on both the Wiltshire and Berkshire Regiments.

When built the barracks accommodated 250 soldiers and was a self contained community with married quarters, a hospital and its own cricket ground.

On the outbreak of war in 1914 the barracks became a hive of activity. In the first few months 5000 soldiers were processed and over 3000 reservists called up. Most went to the 1st and 2nd Battalions on the Western Front after they suffered serious casualties.

Thomas seemingly was not the only one of his siblings to rise and flourish. Two of his younger brothers, Jesse the labourer and Frederick, were both later registered as 'Worton Farmers'.

William Henry Fielding

Thomas and Annie's fifth son, William Henry, was born and christened in Worton in the third quarter of 1893, and as far as we know grew up here and was educated in the village school. By 1910, in his mid teens he had already joined the Army.

Arthur John Fielding

Arthur John, Thomas and Annie's seventh child, was born in late 1897 and christened in Christ Church with his next younger brother, Frederick George, on the 5th November 1899. He grew up assisting his parents in their Market Garden on Worton Common until he too enlisted in the Army.

The Fielding Sons at War

William Henry Fielding

William joined the Wiltshire Special Reserve (*see page 66*) to become a member of the army gym staff at Le Marchant Barracks in Devizes. In April 1910, aged 17, he enlisted at Devizes as a private soldier with the Dorsetshire Regiment (Service Number 9128) and in September 1912 was sent with the 2nd Battalion to India.

The Dorsetshire Regiment raised 12 battalions and received 57 battle honours, losing 4,060 men during the Great War.

At the outbreak of hostilities the 2nd Dorsets were stationed in Poona as part of the 16th Brigade of the Poona Division, deploying from there to the Persian Gulf on the 6th November where they landed at Fao.

In 1916 the Turks pursued the then retreating 6th (Poona) Division to Kut, and soon surrounded and cut them off. Nevertheless, British forces in Mesopotamia were by then growing: the arrival of the experienced 3rd (Lahore), 7th (Meerut) and 13th (Western) Divisions bringing a significant increase in strength. These formations were ordered to advance north along the Tigris to relieve Kut. They ran into



Baghdad

In 1914 Baghdad was the headquarters of the Turkish Army in Mesopotamia. It was the ultimate objective of the Indian Expeditionary Force 'D' (of which the 2nd Dorsets were part) and the goal of the British and Commonwealth force which was besieged and captured at Kut in 1916. The city finally fell to the British in March 1917 but the position was not fully consolidated until the end of the following April. Nevertheless, it had by that time become the Expeditionary Force's advanced base, with two stationary hospitals and three casualty clearing stations.

The North Gate Cemetery in Baghdad was begun in April 1917 and has been greatly enlarged since the end of the First World War by graves brought in from other burial grounds in Baghdad and northern Iraq, and from battlefields and cemeteries in Anatolia where Commonwealth prisoners of war were buried by the Turks.

This explains how William Henry Fielding who died in Turkey came to be buried in Bagdad.

strong and stoutly defended lines and suffered some hard knocks; although they got close to Kut, the garrison there was surrendered on the 29th April 1916. This was an enormous blow to British prestige and certainly a morale-booster for the Turkish Army.

Like Gallipoli, conditions in Mesopotamia defy description. Extremes of temperature (120^o F was common), arid desert and regular flooding, flies, mosquitoes and other vermin all led to appalling levels of sickness and death through disease. Under these terrible conditions, units fell short of officers and men, and all too often their reinforcements were half-trained and ill-equipped. Medical arrangements were quite shocking, with wounded men spending up to two weeks on boats before reaching any kind of hospital. These factors, plus of course the unexpectedly determined Turkish resistance, contributed to their high casualty rates.

On that fateful day of the 29th April 1916 over 12,000 British and Commonwealth troops surrendered and were marched north to Turkey, with little food or water and a great deal of brutality meted out by their captors. Among these 12,000, there were 350 men of the 2nd Dorsets captured at Kut al Amara by the Turkish Army, only 70 of whom survived their captivity.

The last official news heard of Private William Fielding was in September 1917 to the effect he was a prisoner of war interned at Bagheche. However on the 21st October 1918, just before the start of the armistice bringing an end to the fighting, it was officially reported by the Red Crescent Society that William had died of chronic enteritis on Friday the 20th October 1916 while a prisoner of war in Adana, Turkey. He was 23 years old and was posthumously awarded the Victory Medal, the British War Medal, and the 1915 Star.

Commemoration

William Henry is buried in the Baghdad (North Gate) Cemetery, grave XXI.C.27. With regard to his commemoration, this War Cemetery is located in what is now a very sensitive area in the Waziriah area of the Al-Russafa district of Baghdad, and whilst the current climate of political instability persists it is not possible for the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to maintain its cemeteries and memorials in Iraq. Alternative arrangements for commemoration have been made and a two volume Roll of Honour listing all casualties buried and commemorated in Iraq is available to view at the Commission's Head Office in Maidenhead.

The Wiltshire Special Reserve

Following the Haldane army reforms in 1908 the 3rd Militia Battalion of the Wiltshires was transferred to a Special Reserve. At the same time the two Wiltshire Volunteer Battalions amalgamated to become the 4th Battalion the Wiltshire Regiment.

It would have been into this former 3rd Militia Battalion that both William and John Fielding initially enlisted.

During the war this 3rd Battalion trained drafts for overseas service and carried out home defence duties.

As for local commemoration, the Commission records his parents' address as *4 Crown Place Potterne*, even though we know father died just before the war began. Assuming this to be correct it probably refers to just his mother's situation at some time after his death was first reported – in 1918 by the Red Crescent.

Notwithstanding this, not only is there no mention of William on the Potterne war memorial, but equally there is no mention of him in Potterne's list of war dead, or even in their list of men who went to war. It does seem possible therefore that William's lack of commemoration arose simply from the fact that each village may have thought (as far as such matters were deeply considered at all) that the other was taking the matter up. We return to this aspect after narrating his brother's fate.

Arthur John Fielding

John Fielding has been described as "an 18 year old under age soldier, the eldest son of John and Annie Fielding, who worked with his father as a market gardener." If he had joined the colours in late 1914/early 1915 he would indeed still have been only 17.

But with regard to "son of John" we note his uncle John Fielding's wife was also called Annie, but we are satisfied that we cannot be looking at this John Fielding's son (named John Edward) because the latter was definitely not under age; by 1911 he was anyway living in Winterslow; and moreover he lived to marry Hilda Sainsbury in 1932. From this we conclude that the report of Arthur John Fielding's father being named John was incorrect. It should have been Tom.

As for being described as the oldest son, this - another mistake - possibly arose from a cursory glance at the 1911 census. By then all five of John's older brothers had left home and so John was just the oldest one still living and working at home with his father at his market garden on Worton Common. This we think possibly explains both these administrative errors.

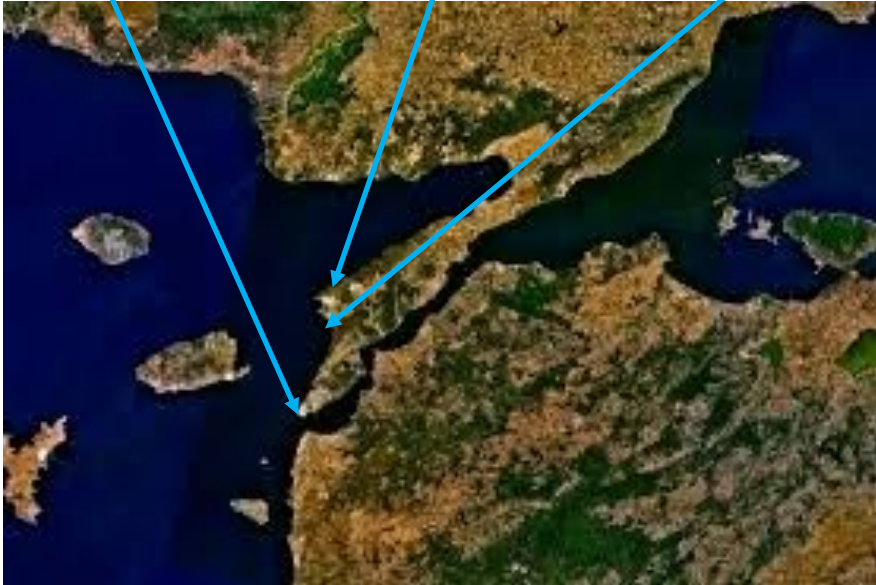
When he enlisted at Devizes John became first, like his brother before him, a member of the Wiltshire Special Reserve before subsequently volunteering for overseas service. He was sent to the 5th (Service) Battalion of the Duke of Edinburgh's (Wiltshire Regiment) with Service Number 3/9917.

The 5th (Service) Battalion was formed in Devizes in August

Helles

Lala Baba

ANZAC



The Gallipoli Peninsular



Gallipoli Landings

1914 as part of the First New Army, and then moved to Tidworth to become part of the 40th Brigade in the 13th Division. By the time John Fielding joined it at Lala Baba, Gallipoli on the 22nd November 1915 the battalion had already landed, first at Helles, and then a few days later at Anzac Beach. On the 6th August they took part in a night attack to capture a ridge of hills to assist the British landing at Suvla bay, and the following day they took part in the attack at Sari Bair. This was a successful attack, but the response was fast and very violent. They were hit by a Turkish Division led by Mustapha Kemal and the Battalion was overrun, with half of them never being seen again. The Battalion was then reorganised and returned to trench warfare, with the main enemy being dysentery and jaundice.

On the day after Private Fielding arrived, the Battalion War Diary notes:

Fire trenches. Weather continued cold. Four braziers issued for use in fire trench. Pte GRANT 'D' Coy killed by snipers while fetching water from 'A' well. Fire had been kept up on new Turkish trench the night before and no wire is yet placed in front, but loopholes have been made.

They were evacuated from Gallipoli to Egypt in January 1916 due to severe casualties from combat, disease and harsh weather. There, in Port Said, they were reinforced with 750 new men. After a rest period they were deployed in February 1916 to Mesopotamia (modern day Iraq) by way of Kuwait, and engaged in various actions against the Turkish Army.

In April 1916 the 5th Wiltshires were part of the force which attempted to relieve Kut-al-Amara (*map page 64*). They attacked the Turkish trenches, first at Hannah, then at Sanna-I-Yat, but all efforts to relieve the besieged troops at Kut failed and the garrison (including John's brother William) was forced to surrender.

Private John Fielding was wounded in that battle and taken to one of the military hospitals in Amara. He died of his wounds on Sunday the 18th June 1916.

He was 18 years old and was, like his brother, posthumously awarded the Victory Medal, the British War Medal and the 1915 Star.



***The Commonwealth War Graves Commission
Roll of Honour
of those
Commemorated on Memorials in Iraq***

Commemoration

John Fielding is buried in the Amara War Cemetery, grave number XIV.C.33. With regard to his commemoration, Amara is a town on the left bank of the River Tigris some 520 kilometres from the sea. The war cemetery is a little east of the town between the left bank of the river and the Chahaila Canal. As with his brother's grave in Baghdad the Amara War Cemetery is located in what is now a sensitive area of Iraq and likewise it is not possible at present for the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to manage or maintain it. Therefore John Fielding, as with his brother William, is for the time being listed in the Roll of Honour on display at the Commission's Head Office in Maidenhead.

As far as any local commemoration is concerned we have unearthed a conundrum.

On the Urchfont Memorial there is a plaque bearing separately: John Fielding 1916, and Arthur Fielding 1916. These two we now know are one and the same man. Looking at the Diocese of Salisbury Memorial Book for Urchfont there is listed therein: JA Fielding and WH Fielding. We have found no connection between our two casualties and Urchfont and deduce that a probable diocesan clerical error in or around 1922 led to these names (with subsequent further clerical errors) being inscribed on the Urchfont Memorial.

As well as their grand parents being buried in our churchyard, there is one further tie of the family to Worton, namely the aforementioned Frederick Fielding (*page 61*). Frederick was William and John's uncle, married to the former Rose Few. She died on the 4th June 1937 aged 68 and is buried in the plot next to William and John's grandfather and grandmother. Frederick himself died a few years later, on the 12th March 1944 aged 75, and he lies buried with his wife Rose in the same grave in the Christ Church churchyard.

In summary, we have now come to be certain that this branch of the Fielding family lived and worked in Worton from at least 1880 until William and John's deaths in the Middle East. Both young men were born and brought up in Worton until each joined the Army in Devises and were sent to serve abroad, never to return. But neither is commemorated in our village.

It does therefore seem to us that at the very least William and his brother John are now strong candidates for consideration with

The Derby Scheme

The Derby Scheme was a voluntary recruitment policy in Britain, created in 1915 by Edward Stanley, the 17th Earl of Derby. The concept behind the Derby Scheme was that men who voluntarily registered their name would be called upon for service only when necessary. Married men had an added incentive in that they were advised they would be called up only once the supply of single men was exhausted.

The scheme was also referred to as the "Group System" as men were classified in groups according to their year of birth and marital status and were to be called up with their group when it was required.

The scheme proved unsuccessful and was abandoned in December 1915, in spite of the fact that the execution of Nurse Edith Cavell by the Germans on the 12th October 1915 was used in recruitment rallies by Lord Derby. It was superseded by the Military Service Act 1916 which introduced conscription.

215,000 men enlisted while the scheme was operational, and another 2,185,000 attested for later enlistment. However, 38% of single men and 54% of married men who were not in 'starred' occupations failed to come forward.

regard to some form of local commemoration.

The Family Left Behind

In the years leading up to the war the immediate Fielding family amounted to mother, father, nine sons and a daughter. A second daughter (Clara) had survived for only three days.

The eldest son (Jesse) a farm labourer in Worton, married in 1903; and he was followed by the next (James John), a domestic groom marrying in 1908. Albert married in 1911. Next came Tom who had moved out of the family home but waited 'till 1920 to marry. Of the remaining six, William Henry as we have seen was serving in the Army at Le Marchant Barracks; Arthur John was working in his father's market garden; Annie Mary, at 16, was a maid of all work in Trowbridge; and the three youngest boys (Frederick, Daniel and Charles) were all at school in Worton.

In the next year or two we believe father retired and he and his wife went to live at *4 Crown Place Potterne*. He, Tom Fielding, was in his late 50s, though Annie was ten years younger. If it was indeed retirement, he was sadly not to enjoy much of it for he died at the age of 59 at the beginning of 1914 before the war began.

And After?

Mother of course was to suffer the loss of two of her sons as we have seen. But she did live through the war to see her number four son, Tom, marry Dorothy Trimnel in 1920, and her daughter Annie marry Ernest Bailey in early 1921. Then she too died later that year at the age of 56.

Of the other brothers and sister, all we know for certain is that James John died locally in 1967 at the age of 80; Albert died a year later, also aged 80 and also locally; Daniel died in 1971 aged 68; and Charles died in Swindon in 1977 aged 72.

Further out in the family, William and John's uncle Frederick (b 1868) farmed at *Cherry Orchard* on the road south from Worton, where successive generations right down to the present (Frederick's grand daughter Maureen and her husband, Andrew Huggins) have continued to farm.

**WORTON MAN IN THE NORTH SEA BATTLE:
"A PAYMENT ON ACCOUNT"**

Chief Stoker Ernest Burbidge, son of Mr and Mrs Enos Burbidge of Worton was in one of the ships (H.M.S. Ambuscade) engaged in the North Sea. In a letter to his parents he says:-

"I am thankful to say I am quite well; no doubt you have seen all the news in the papers about the North Sea battle. I am thankful to say we came through it safe, although we had rather a thrilling time of it for a few hours. But thank God we got away from them after doing our little bit. It was something awful but a grand sight seeing the devils getting a drubbing they won't forget for a long time.

There is one thing, we have paid a little on account for their murderous raids on the English coast, but not half of what they would have got if they had not run for home. Anyway, they got enough to go on with. I don't think they will be in a hurry to meet the boys of the bulldog breed again. I cannot give you much of a description of the fight; it was a sight I shall never forget, or anyone else who saw it; it was an inferno while it lasted, the sight was beyond description, it was as if the end of the world had come."

(HMS Ambuscade was a 935 ton 30 kt Destroyer mounting three 4" guns and two torpedo tubes.)

This letter by a Worton sailor was published in the Gazette & Herald on the 22nd June 1916. It is particularly interesting to note how well it was written, with the benefit of little more than a primary education in Worton School. Chief Stoker Burbidge was born in Worton on Christmas Eve 1889.

Epilogue

Commemoration

If there were to be a subtitle to this small booklet it would be *Remembrance* rather than *Commemoration*. Nevertheless, in our work to illuminate the life and times of our villages a century ago, and particularly how our Great War soldiers came to meet their deaths, we began to understand that more of our village sons died than any of us were hitherto aware of.

It is though, not for the authors to conclude either that a further memorial is necessary or that new names should be added to the existing one. These are matters for our parish and parochial councils.

Nevertheless these are the simple facts, derived from the evidence now come to light, which perhaps we should not overlook. That is to say:

John Burbidge from *The Old Turnpike House* was not tracked back through the orphanage to his home village. His name is indeed on the Pozières Memorial in Picardy, France but nowhere locally.

The Fielding brothers – William and John – also from Worton, are recorded in a book held by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, but except for a possible, though erroneous, mention of John Fielding at Urchfont (with which he had no apparent connection) neither brother is recorded locally.

Remembrance

Speaking the day after the Great War ended the then Bishop of Salisbury said:

"(The memorials) should promote a real understanding of those who fought for their country and who died for their country so that all could remember and reflect. Future generations will lead lives crowded with happenings and they need to be warned, lest they forget. Lest they forget."

For the Fallen

*They went with songs to the battle, they were young.
Straight of limb, true of eyes, steady and aglow.
They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted,
They fell with their faces to the foe.
They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.*

*At the going down of the sun and in the morning,
We will remember them.*

*They mingle not with their laughing comrades again;
They sit no more at familiar tables of home;
They have no lot in our labour of the day-time;
They sleep beyond England's foam.*

Laurence Binyon
November 1914

Turning back to *page 7* for a moment it is perhaps worth our while to dwell briefly on the concept of remembrance. Each year, on the second Sunday in November, the nation collectively undertakes an Act of Remembrance. Here in Worton and Marston we gather by the war memorial, hear names recited, resolve to remember them:

'.....at the going down of the sun and in the morning.....'

and stand in silence to do just that.

But those who fell in the Great War do not come into view until entering the church, and it is probably inevitable that our minds will by then have soon wandered back onto more familiar (and maybe more comfortable) ground as we unite in fellowship for the short walk from the memorial to the church. Perhaps a glance towards the First World War Memorial plaque on entering the church? Perhaps not. In effect, it is more than likely that in truth our personal act of remembrance has already come to an end for another year.

But now that just part of our villages' contribution to the Great War is a little better and possibly more widely known, it is our hope that those who each November participate in the nation's collective Act of Remembrance might, as a result, be better prepared and thus more able to seek a deeper understanding of just what it is that we stand to remember.

The Last Shots of the War

Ironically, the final shots of the war took place just yards from the very spot where the 4th Dragoon Guards fought the opening engagement.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission records that the last British soldier killed in World War 1 was Private George Edwin Ellison of the 5th Royal Irish Lancers. He was killed at Mons (where he had also fought in 1914) at 9.30 am, just 90 minutes before the ceasefire on the 11th November 1918.

Officially, the last Commonwealth soldier to be killed in World War One was Private George Lawrence Price of the Canadian Infantry (2nd Canadian Division) who was killed at Mons at 10.58 am, two minutes before the ceasefire.

But the very last allied death was that of an American soldier, Private Henry Gunter, who was killed at 10.59 am. Officially, Gunter was the last man to die in World War One. His unit had been ordered to advance and take a German machine gun post. It is said that even the Germans – who knew that they were literally minutes away from a ceasefire – tried to stop the Americans attacking. But when it became obvious that this had failed, they fired on their attackers and Gunter was killed.

As for the Germans, it may well be the case that the last casualty of World War 1 was a junior German officer named Tomas who approached some Americans to tell them that the war was over and that they could have the house he and his men were just vacating. However, no one had told the Americans the war had finished because of a communications breakdown, and Tomas was shot as he approached them after 11.00 am.

The Last Words

We said at first we would try to give to everyone in Worton and Marston, by means of this short pamphlet, a little more knowledge, and so understanding, of just what happened 100 years ago to those of our men who went to war but never returned, and thus perhaps we may all thereby gain an appreciation we have hitherto lacked.

And finally, one might first just glance back to the rough calculation on *page 11* and note that, having first congratulated ourselves on getting off relatively lightly by 1918, we now see that the loss and suffering here in Worton and Marston actually matches almost exactly the dreadful experience of the nation as a whole.

Post Script

Just as this booklet was heading to print it came to light that in Grave H.92 of the Hadra War Memorial Cemetery in Alexandria there lies ***Shoehing Smith Corporal Henry Francis Harris***. Mr Harris was the eldest of five children of the Worton Shoemaker in the last quarter of the 19th Century, one Thomas Harris who lived between *The Rose and Crown* and *Oak Cottage* (pictured on page 18).

In the 1890s Henry Harris moved from the family home in Worton to board in Avebury where he learned his craft as a blacksmith. There, in 1911, he married Sarah Jane Farley and went to live with her in Bray Street, Avebury.

Corporal Harris died in Egypt on the 14th January 1919 and although, as an émigré, he would not be a candidate for the Worton Memorial, we may nevertheless remember him as another son of our villages who gave his life in the Great War. His brother William John Harris, who died in 1943, is buried in the Christ Church churchyard.

This booklet has been freely given to every household in Worton and Marston. To enable our hope with regard to remembrance to take root year on year it would be most helpful if, on moving away, it were to be left behind for the benefit of the next occupants.

Great War Medals

The most frequent combinations are trios and pairs. Trios are made up of one or other of the 1914 or 1914-15 Stars (they could not be awarded together), the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. These three medals were irreverently referred to as "Pip, Squeak and Wilfred". Pairs are generally for servicemen who joined the war after 1915, and consist of the British War Medal and the Victory Medal, colloquially known as the Mutt and Jeff pair. Occasionally just one medal was issued, the British War Medal.

Pip



1914/15 Star

Squeak



Pip

Wilfred



The 1914 Star was awarded to officers and men of the British forces who served in France or Belgium between the 5th August and midnight on the 22nd/23rd November 1914. The 1914-15 Star was awarded to officers and men of British and Imperial forces who served in any theatre of the War between the 5th August 1914 and the 31st December 1915.

British War Medal Squeak

Officers and men of the Army were required to have either entered an active theatre of war, or left the United Kingdom for service overseas, between the 5th August 1914 and the 11th November 1918, and completed 28 days mobilised service. The medal was automatically awarded in the event of death on active service before the completion of this period.

Victory Medal Wilfred

This medal was awarded to all those who received the 1914 Star or the 1914-15 Star, and to most of those who were awarded the British War Medal. It was never awarded singly.