

**PHILLIP THOMPSON.**

**FLITWICK**

**A STORY OF  
TWO WORLD  
WARS.**

**FLITWICK DEAD FROM TWO WORLD  
WARS THEIR LIVES AND FAMILIES  
INTRODUCTION:**

With the onset of the year 2014 we are all thinking of our forebears who made the ultimate sacrifice in two world wars in order to defeat tyranny and ensure we are able to live free and happy lives. This book is not just a commemoration of those who died but hopefully much more. It is easy to write a list of names and not too hard to establish regiments and where people died. What is much more interesting is understanding them and the lives and families left behind. My research is aimed at finding out where these brave people were born and where they lived, what they did and who their families were. I am also concerned that as the generations move on, our Remembrance Sundays have meaning for those living in the future. I have also in part included items of interest about some of those who survived the wars. By its nature it is difficult to guarantee totally the accuracy of research as it is based on that which has been published in the past. If you find any errors please let me know for the benefit of future researchers. I have many memories of Remembrance Sundays in Flitwick when I was a boy; we used to parade from the shops in Brookes Road and up The Avenue to the memorial where the whole service was held, "come rain or shine," and "never mind the cold". Parades today go from the corner of Station Road by the Royal British Legion HQ, along to the memorial for a shorter service and then on to the Village Hall for a much warmer service. The numbers attending have grown over the years as the town has expanded. I should like to dedicate this book to the dead of recent wars and also to the families they left behind who continued to suffer for the rest of their lives. I should also like to dedicate this book to the many volunteers in the Flitwick and District Branch of the Royal British Legion who try to give of their lives to help those who need assistance.

**EXHORTATION:**

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!**

**WHEN YOU GO HOME, TELL THEM OF US**

**AND SAY, THAT FOR YOUR TOMORROW WE GAVE OUR TODAY.**

# POEM: BY ROSANNA BILLINGTON OF FLITWICK ( AGED 13YRS - JUNE 2013) WHY DO POPPIES FALL?

Why do poppies fall? In the Albert Hall,  
Tumbling down to a carpet red,  
Covering everywhere you tread.

Many years have passed ,  
Men and boys left our shores,  
They went to fight and save,  
All of them so young and brave.

No easy Eurostar trip!  
Laden down with bags and kit,  
Distant land, families missed,  
Still thinking of the loved ones they kissed.

No holiday fun, only mud and trenches,  
The gas, the rats, the stench,  
Bullets flying, bayonets fixed,  
Blood, sweat and tears mixed.

Living in underground tunnels- trying to keep  
spirits high,  
Not knowing if it is day or night,  
The command comes to leave and fight,  
They rise to find the enemy in sight.

Coats and weapons weigh them down,  
In the thick dark mud so many drown,  
Bodies buried where they fell,  
Oh the bad news they have to tell.

White headstones in smart rows,  
Where some of them are, nobody knows,  
The graveyards are tended with love and care,  
Visitors- so many- can only stand and stare,

Some have no final resting place,  
Families will always remember that face,  
Bright and clean - a name etched on a wall,  
That is why the poppies fall.

## FLITWICK AT THE TURN OF THE 20TH CENTURY – C.1900

Flitwick is a community which can trace its roots right back to entries in the Domesday Book where it is described as “a hamlet on the River Flitt” and had a Motte and Bailey Castle built by a Norman Lord – William Lovet who had displaced the Saxon Lord, Alwin. In 1901 Flitwick had a population of 1029 , by 1911 this had grown to 1424 and by 1931 to 1731 people. This growth continued, particularly during the 1970’s and to current times, Flitwick becoming a town with a population of over 13,000 today and still growing and developing. Various sources exist which tell of the village of Flitwick c.1900. Henry Jellis’s book, “Boyhood Memories of Flitwick” (published in 1985) records the story of his family childhood in Flitwick around 1890. Flitwick was a place of “Ends”, Denel End, Church End with Hornes End, East End with Water End. By this time the railways had come to Flitwick and some new development around the centre near the railway appeared in the early 1900’s. As a boy I lived in a property in the top half of The Avenue, which at that time was a gated Avenue with trees down both sides. Most of the properties in the top half of The Avenue date from around 1900 -1905. The station was built by the Midland Railway in 1870 when the line was extended to St. Pancras. Originally there were platforms for two lines, later the line was quadrupled and a goods yard was added where the car park is now. Up until the coming of the railways, the village centre was around Church End with Hornes End. The Parish Church along with Flitwick Manor was here, along with two public houses, a blacksmith and the Church School. Ordinary people’s houses were poor, most were no more than two rooms downstairs and two upstairs.

Cottages were made of lath, plaster and thatch with low ceilings, with a few made from tile and brick. The floors were usually of brick with open fires for heating and cooking. Most of these cottages had gardens and residents often grew some of their own produce. Church End had properties which dated back to Tudor times and the 16th Century. At this time most of the men worked in agriculture or industries associated with it. The coming of the railways was starting to offer other opportunities, particularly in the more industrialised towns of Luton and Bedford. Earlier in the 19th century many women worked from home in the straw plaiting and hat making industries. By the turn of the century this work was gradually moving to the factories of Luton. Now the younger women of the area would travel by train to these factories for their work. The major landowners of Flitwick were the Dukes of Bedford and the Brooks family at Flitwick Manor. The Manor, as already mentioned, was built on a small estate adjacent to the Parish Church (and still exists today as Menzies Flitwick Manor Hotel). The Manor was built around 1816 by John Thomas Brooks and at the turn of the century was occupied by his son Major John Hatfield Brooks (b 1824 – High Sheriff of Bedfordshire 1880, also a JP and Deputy Lord Lieutenant). By 1934 the Manor had been sold to the Lyall family who continued to own it and the surrounding land well into the 20th Century.

## WORLD WAR ONE: 1914 - 1918

“The War to end all Wars!” The First World War was marked by a huge loss of life and wholesale devastation. It also marked the end of society as it had been known, with the breaking down of the class system, the emancipation of women and a change in their role in society, which by post WWI had changed irrevocably. The mud-filled trenches and the lives of a lost generation are commemorated annually by the Poppy day appeal of the Royal British Legion and sadly war is still a part of our lives to this day. The world war I generation and the next in World War 2, are commemorated by the white gravestones of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission or are lost in fields as far flung as Flanders, Singapore, the Far East and Gallipoli. This book is an opportunity to reflect on the lives before the wars of those who did not return and its effect on those they left behind. This research is aimed at creating a memorial of the effects of wars, not carved in the stones of a village or town memorial, but in the hearts and minds of those who survived.

## HOW IT ALL BEGAN:

World War I was the first truly industrialised war, waged in a manner not previously experienced. It also encompassed the men and women of the Empires created by the main protagonists, thus making a war that was truly global. At the outbreak of war more than 85% of the world was controlled by these Empires. A thirst for more and more power by the world's leading nations, particularly in the last decades of the 19th Century, led to multiple treaties and alliances which may in themselves have appeared harmless, but actually led to a mass conflagration not previously seen. It was like a deck of cards tumbling into a conflict over which the parties concerned had little interest.

On 28th June 1914 the heir to the Austro-Hungarian Empire and his wife were assassinated by a Bosnian-Serb Gavrilo Princip. Austria declared war on Serbia, with German support, the Russians were allied to Serbia and the Russians were also allied to the French. Britain entered the war on 4th August 1914 as the Germans had occupied neutral Belgium. On this basis a world wide war of unknown proportions had developed. Soon this moved into the stalemate of trench warfare which was largely to remain until 1918. This period also saw the downfall of the autocratic monarchy in Russia, the Bolshevik revolution and the end of the German monarchy. By the end of WWI more than 600,000 British troops had lost their lives. The armistice of 1918, the reparations and removal of territory from Germany would lead to the start of World War 2 and the rising, after the economic crash of the early 1930's, of the extremist Fascist regimes that led to the next major war.

# WORLD WAR ONE: 1914 - 1918

## FLITWICK TOWN WAR MEMORIAL INSCRIPTIONS:WORLD WAR ONE 1914-1918

SURNAME	NAMES	RANK	AGE	SERVICE NUMBER
<a href="#">Abbott</a>	Arthur Charles	Cpl	Age 34	412547
<a href="#">Briggs</a>	Cyril Edward	Pte	Age 27	G/4037
<a href="#">Briggs</a>	Eric William	Cpl	Age 24	61700
<a href="#">Cranfield</a>	George William	Pte	Age 28	20373
<a href="#">Cunningham</a>	Charles Wilfred	L/Cpl	Age 21	522349
<a href="#">Dix</a>	William	Pte	Age 23	3956
<a href="#">Dillingham</a>	John	Cpl	Age 26	4937
<a href="#">Dillingham</a>	Richard	Pte	Age 35	42041
<a href="#">Gillett</a>	Arthur	Pte	Age 32	19477
<a href="#">Gulliver</a>	William	Pte	Age 28	7951
<a href="#">Holder</a>	Sidney Silas	R.N.D.	Age 28	R/3913
<a href="#">Line</a>	Joseph E	Pte	Age 27	9423
<a href="#">Line</a>	Charles	Pte	Age 19	32996
<a href="#">Martin</a>	William	Sgt	Age 27	8484
<a href="#">Mitchell</a>	Augustus James	Abl Sea	Age 23	J/ 3087
<a href="#">Norris</a>	Arthur Frederick Owen	Sgt	Age 24	25675
<a href="#">Palmer</a>	Frank Haddow	Pte	Age 22	20310
<a href="#">Peddar</a>	Charles Edward	L Corporal?	Age 20	41776
<a href="#">Peddar</a>	William	Pte	Age 26	22970
<a href="#">Sharp</a>	Frederick James	Pioneer	Age 28	137948
<a href="#">Shotbolt</a>	Reginald	Boy 1st Cl	Age 17	J/43452
<a href="#">Shouler</a>	Edward James Battams	Lieut	Age 29	Officer
<a href="#">Smith</a>	Herbert Victor	Pte	Age 17	17938
<a href="#">Stringer</a>	Sidney John	Pte	Age 21	3/6861
<a href="#">Virgin</a>	Frederick James	Pte	Age 30	3/7818
<a href="#">Weston</a>	Henry George	Cpl	Age 21	26121
<a href="#">Whittington (M.M.)</a>	William	Cpl	Age 22	43528
<a href="#">Woodcraft</a>	Albert T	Cpl	Age 21	2928
<a href="#">Wood</a>	John Thomas	Pte	Age 19	44306

# THE TOWN WAR MEMORIAL, FLITWICK DEDICATED 1ST JANUARY 1922



The next list is taken from the Roll of those who served in World War One who had origins in Flitwick. It was produced by the Diocese of St Albans in conjunction with the Parish Church and is held in the Records Office in Bedford. Similar lists were produced during each year of the War. They cannot be considered as exclusive or necessarily totally accurate, but they do give a wider picture of the number of people who served their country at that time. The family names are also of great interest. There are quite a number of men recorded for Flitwick serving in the Canadian Contingent and this seems a little odd.

# FLITWICK PARISH ROLL OF HONOUR OF THOSE WHO SERVED IN WORLD WAR I

RANK	INITIALS	SURNAME	SERVICE / REGIMENT	ON MEMORIAL
Corporal	A C	Abbott	Canadian Contingent	X
Lieutenant	H E	Abbott	RE	
Gunner	F	Aitchison	Tank Corps	
Sergt	R O	Ashby	City of London Yeomanry	
Private	George	Askew	ASC	
Private	C	Askew	2nd Bedfordshire Reg	
Sergt	A	Ayleen	RAMC	
Gunner	B W	Barker	RGA	
Private	G	Barnes	East Kent (Bufs) Reg	
2nd Aircraftsman	AA	Bartam	RAF	
Sergt	T	Bason	Bedfordshire Reg	
Private	H	Beal	M C C	
Gunner	S	Beal	RGA	
Corporal	W G	Beale	4th Bedfordshire Reg	
Sergt	H	Beale	RE (Road Section)	
2nd Lieutenant	F G	Bell	Labour Corps	
P O 1st Class	A J	Billington	Royal Navy	
Stoker	R F	Billington	Royal Navy	
Sergt	E	Bird	Army -R E	
L/Corp	F C	Bird	Royal Engineers	
Sergt	S J	Bird	Sherwood Foresters	
Private	H	Bird		
Ambulance Driver	W	Blundell		
Private	E John	Bolt	A S C M.T.	
Sergt	D W	Bolt	3rd Bedfordshire Reg	
Captain	H A	Briggs	Army - Lab Dept.	
Private	Cyril E	Briggs	9th Battn E Kent Reg.	X
Corporal	Eric W	Briggs	R G A	X
Private	F	Brinkler	3rd Norfolk Reg	
Private	F G	Bunker	Royal Engineers	
Trooper	R J	Burgoyne	M.T.	

RANK	INITIALS	SURNAME	SERVICE / REGIMENT	ON MEMORIAL
Shoeing Smith	R A	Carr	Indian Cavalry	H
Sergt	S	Chapman	Bedfordshire Reg	
Lieutenant	D P	Claridge	Army-6th Battn RI Irish . India	
L/Corp	C P	Clifford	Royal Engineers	
Private	E	Cook	Canadian Contingent	
Gunner	Joseph	Cousins	R M A	
Sapper	G	Cousins	RE (Railway)	
Private	R F	Cox	53rd Beds.	
Private	G W	Cranfield	2nd Bedfordshire Reg	X
Private	C	Crisp QO	Royal West Surrey Reg	
L /Corporal	C W	Cunning- ham	RE	X
Trooper	F	Daniels	Westminster Dragoons	
Gunner	H S	Deacon	RHA	
Private	Richard	Dillingham	7th Linconshire Reg	X
Corporal	John	Dillingham	RAF	X
Private	Harry	Dillingham	RGA	
Private	James	Dillingham	National Reserve	
L/Corp	George	Dix	City of London Yeo- manry	
Private	W	Dix	1st 5th Beds.	X
Private	H W	Dix	6th Bedfordshire Reg	
Private	H	Dix	Grenadier Guards	
Private	V	Dix	RAF	
Private	A V	Dix MM	2nd Bedfordshire Reg	
L/Corp	W	Feazey	MGC	
Sergt	J	Fisher	19th Middlesex Reg	
Corporal	George	Fitzgibbons	?	
Private	T	Fitzgibbons	1st Dragoon Guards	
Sergt	W H	Foster	Army - 1/5 Beds Ter.	
Lieutenant	C B	Foster	RAF	
Private	G	Fowler	Bedfordshire Reg	
Sapper	F W	French	RE	
Sapper	H	French	RE	

RANK	INITIALS	SURNAME	SERVICE / REGIMENT	ON MEMORIAL
Trooper	Harold R	Gailer	City of London Yeo- manry	
Driver	F C	Gailer	RE	
Private	A	Gillett	8th Bedfordshire Reg	X
Sapper	H W G	Goddard	RE	
Driver	A	Goddard	RE	
L/Corp	G C	Goddard	M G C	
Private	H	Goddard	11th Sherwood Fo- resters	
Private	J	Goddard	Lincolnshire Reg	
Captain	Ralph M	Goodman	ASC M.T.	
Corporal	A F W	Graham	R M A - Res.	
Sergt	A	Groom	RE	
3rd Air Mech	R	Groom	RAF	
Private	S	Groom MM	8th Bedfordshire Reg	
Sapper	H	Gulliver	E A RE	
Private	E	Gulliver	4th Bedfordshire Reg	
Private	W	Gulliver	Bedfordshire Reg	X
Sergt	W	Harris	Canadian Contingent	
L/Corp	F G	Harris	MGC	
Sergt	H J	Hart	3rd Bedfordshire Reg	
Seaman	T A	Hawtin	RNVR (WT)	
Seaman	S S	Holder	Royal Navy Division	X
Major	J	Hope	Army - Scottish Bor- derers, 7th Battln.	
Sergt	A E	Hopkins	RFA	
Sergt	G S	James	Canadian Contingent	
Private	W F	Jellis	9th Bedfordshire Reg	
Sergt	V	Jellis	Bedfordshire Reg	
L/Corp	G	Jellis	19th Middlesex Reg	
Corporal	E	Jellis	20th Manchester Reg	
Corporal	W G	King	ASC	
Bombardier	F	Knight	RGA	
Sergt	A	Knutall	Labour Battalion	

RANK	INITIALS	SURNAME	SERVICE / REGIMENT	ON MEMORIAL
Corporal	S	Pateman	RE	
Private	G W	Peddar	Bedfordshire Reg	
Driver	G F	Peddar	RE	
Private	W	Peddar	4th Bedfordshire Reg	X
L/Corp	C E	Peddar	1st Staffordshire Reg	X
1st Class Air Mech.	P G	Pepper	RAF	
Captain	W R B	Prideaux	Army- Labour Battalion	
Driver	E	Putman	RFA	
	J	Ransome	RNTC	Corporal
Private	P E	Roe	1st Hants Reg	
Private	W	Rome	Pioneer battl.	
Sapper	FJ	Sharp	RE	X
Staff Sgt.	F D	Sharratt	RGA	
Machine Gunner	W W	Short		
Private	Wallace	Shotbolt	4th Hussars	
Boy	R	Shotbolt	Royal Navy	X
Seaman	A	Shotbolt	1st Bedfordshire Reg	
Driver	C P	Shotbolt	RFA	
Lieutenant	E J B	Shouler	Royal Navy	X
2nd Lieutenant	A J	Shouler	2nd Northants Reg	
Pioneer	C E	Shrives	RE	
Private	J	Simpson	Pioneer battl.	
Private	H	Smith	4th Bedfordshire Reg	X
L/Corp	E	Smith	20th Manchester Reg	
Seaman	E A	Smith	RN	
Private	A	Smith	MGC	
Private	I	Stanbridge		
Bugler	E	Stevens	RMA	
Private	W	Stringer	2nd Bedfordshire Reg	
Private	W C	Stringer	4th Bedfordshire Reg	
Private	H	Stringer	8th Bedfordshire Reg	
Private	S J	Stringer	2nd Bedfordshire Reg	X
Private	W T	Stringer		
Driver	G	Stringer	RFA	

RANK	INITIALS	SURNAME	SERVICE / REGIMENT	ON MEMORIAL
Private	A	Stringer		
Private	J	Stringer	RGA	
Private	H W	Stringer	Middlesex Reg	
Private	H	Stringer	Durham Light Infantry	
Private	C	Stringer	2nd Bedfordshire Reg	
C S M	A	Stringer DCM	Army - 2nd Battn Beds Reg	
1st A.M.	T V	Sturman	RAF	
Flag Sergt	G	Sturman	RAF	
Air Mechanic	W	Summer- field	RAF	
L/Corp	C H	Swain	Royal Engineers	
Private	A	Thompson	H.S.	
Private	W	Thompson	Royal Sussex Reg	
Private	E	Vincent	3rd Suffolk Reg	
Private	T	Virgin	9th Bedfordshire Reg	
Private	F	Virgin	Special Reserve	X
2nd Lieutenant	D	Wagstaff	RFA	
Private	A H	Ward	1st Suffolk Reg	
Driver	P W	Washington	RE	
Sgt. Major	John	Webb	Army - RFA	
Private	D	Webb	4th Bedfordshire Reg	
Sergt	A	Webb	A S C	Sapper
Corporal	H	Weston	20th Manchester Reg	X
Sapper	E A	Wheeler	RE	
Corporal	W	Whittington MM	3rd Bedfordshire Reg	X
Aircraftsman	A	Wilcoks	RAF	
Bombardier	J	Williams	R F A	
Private	J T	Wood	Bedfordshire Reg	X
Captain	Edwin W	Wood M.C.	Rifle Brigade	
Corporal	G H	Woodcraft	Terr.	
Corporal	Albert	Woodcraft	Terr.	X
Sapper	W W	Woodcraft	RE	
Private	S J	Stringer	2nd Bedfordshire Reg	X
Private	W T	Stringer		
Driver	G	Stringer	RFA	



FLITWICK TOWN WAR MEMORIAL INSCRIPTIONS:  
WORLD WAR ONE 1914-1918

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<a href="#">Abbott</a>	Arthur Charles	Cpl	Age 34	412547
<a href="#">Briggs</a>	Cyril Edward	Pte	Age 27	G/4037
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<a href="#">Cunningham</a>	Charles Wilfred	L/Cpl	Age 21	522349
<a href="#">Dix</a>	William	Pte	Age 23	3956
<a href="#">Dillingham</a>	John	Cpl	Age 26	4937
<a href="#">Dillingham</a>	Richard	Pte	Age 35	42041
<a href="#">Gillett</a>	Arthur	Pte	Age 32	19477
<a href="#">Gulliver</a>	William	Pte	Age 28	7951
<a href="#">Holder</a>	Sidney Silas	R.N.D.	Age 28	R/3913
<a href="#">Line</a>	Joseph E	Pte	Age 27	9423
<a href="#">Line</a>	Charles	Pte	Age 19	32996
Martin	William	Sgt	Age 27	8484
Mitchell	Augustus James	Abl Sea	Age 23	J/ 3087
Norris	Arthur Frederick Owen	Sgt	Age 24	25675
Palmer	Frank Haddow	Pte	Age 22	20310
Peddar	Charles Edward	L Corporal?	Age 20	41776
Peddar	William	Pte	Age 26	22970
Sharp	Frederick James	Pioneer	Age 28	137948
Shotbolt	Reginald	Boy 1st Cl	Age 17	J/43452
Shouler	Edward James Battams	Lieut	Age 29	Officer
Smith	Herbert Victor	Pte	Age 17	17938
Stringer	Sidney John	Pte	Age 21	3/6861
Virgin	Frederick James	Pte	Age 30	3/7818
Weston	Henry George	Cpl	Age 21	26121
Whittington (M.M.)	William	Cpl	Age 22	43528
Woodcraft	Albert T	Cpl	Age 21	2928
Wood	John Thomas	Pte	Age 19	44306

A. J. MITCHELL  
HMS CRESSY:

A. J. Mitchell was an able seaman on board hms cressy which was sunk on 22nd september 1914; it was sunk along with hms aboukir and hms hogue by the german submarine u9, commanded by otto weddigen. They were sunk whilst trying to pick up survivors from hms aboukir, whilst off the dutch coast (location 52.1n 03.41e).There were 562 casualties, including able seaman a. J. Mitchell whose body was never recovered. The name of able seaman mitchell is recorded on the chatham naval memorial panel no: 2.

HMS Cressy was a Cressy Class Reserve Fleet Cruiser. She was built at Fairfield Shipbuilding & Engineering Co Ltd, Govan, in October 1898. When built she was 12,000 tons , 472 feet long, 69.5 ft beam, capable of 21 knots when 1st built - but by 1914 she was only able to travel at 12 knots maximum speed. She was manned by 700 officers and men from the Royal Naval Reserve. 19 HMS Cressy was launched in December 1899, and after finishing her trials was passed into the fleet reserve at Portsmouth on the 24th of May 1901. She was commissioned by Captain H. M. T. Tudor for service on the China Station on 28 May 1901, but her departure was delayed for several months when her steering gear broke down shortly after leaving the base and she had to return. She eventually left home waters in early October 1901, arriving at Colombo on the 7th of November, Singapore on the 16th of November and Hong Kong later in November. Shortly after the outbreak of the First World War, in August 1914, Cressy and her sister ships Bacchante, Euryalus, Hogue and Aboukir were assigned to the 7th Cruiser Squadron, patrolling the “Broad Fourteens” of the North Sea, in support of a force of destroyers and submarines based at Harwich which blocked the eastern end of the English Channel from German warships attempting to attack the supply route between England and France. Leading up to the battle the Bacchante class of ships had been placed in the Reserve Fleet. No money was to be spent repairing them, but they were to be used until they were completely worn out. In 1914, the best speed they could manage was 15 knots. Each ship had over 700 officers and men from the

Royal Navy reserves, many being middle-aged family men from local towns and villages. Each ship also carried nine cadets from the Royal Navy College at Dartmouth, most of whom were under 15.

The original plan was to support the destroyers of Reginald Tyrwhitt’s Harwich Force, but frequent bad weather caused the plan to change and the cruisers became the front line as they could handle the rough seas. ten weeks of daily patrols, their old engines could no longer even maintain 15 knots and speed dropped to 12 knots, and often as low as 9. Because they never sighted periscopes, they no longer zigzagged. On the 17th of September, in rough seas, the destroyers were sent back to Harwich. On the 20th September Rear-Admiral Arthur Christian returned to port with HMS Euryalus to take on coal, reducing the patrol to three ships, Cressy, Aboukir and Hogue. 20 With Christian unable to transfer his flag, command devolved to Captain John Drummond of the Aboukir.

The three ships continued to patrol as the weather improved until sunrise on the 22nd of September. At 6:20 AM on that day, HMS Aboukir was torpedoed by SM U-9 and sank in 35 minutes. Thinking she had struck a mine and was sinking fast, the order was given to abandon ship. Hogue and Cressy approached to pick up survivors, throwing anything that would float into the water to which survivors could cling to. At 6:55am, Hogue was struck by two torpedoes. U-9 dived and remained submerged. At 7:20am , Cressy sighted a torpedo track and the order was given “full speed ahead both” but it was too late. Cressy was hit forward on the starboard side and lurched high enough out of the water that a second torpedo passed under her stern.

At 7:30am, a third torpedo hit Cressy on the port beam, rupturing tanks in the boiler room and scalding the men. Cressy rolled to her starboard side, paused, then went bottom up with her starboard propeller out of the water. She remained in this position for 20 minutes, then sank at 7:55am. Cressy’s boats had been sent to pick up survivors from the other two ships, and returned already loaded with men. As many as five men clung to a single life vest, and a dozen men to a single plank. Dutch fishing trawlers were in the area, but remained at a distance until 8:30am when the steamship Flora from Rotterdam arrived and rescued 286 men. The survivors were almost all naked, and so exhausted

they had to be hauled aboard with tackle. The steamer Titan rescued another 147 men and later eight of Tyrwhitt's Harwich force of destroyers arrived. A total of 837 men were rescued, but 1,397 men were lost. As a result of the losses, the Admiralty ordered all capital ships to remove themselves from danger in the future and leave rescue attempts to smaller ships. Zigzagging at 13 knots was made mandatory for all large warships in submarine waters.

On the 15th of October the protected cruiser HMS Hawke was lost to the same submarine U-9 off Aberdeen, when she was steaming at 13 knots and not zigzagging. Only then did the Admiralty finally remove the old armoured cruisers from patrol duties. Lord Charles Beresford never again referred to submarines as "playthings" or "toys".



## MITCHELL , AUGUSTUS JAMES: FAMILY HISTORY

Augustus James Mitchell was an Able Seaman , service number J 3087 (Ch) , serving in the Royal Navy, based at Chatham in Kent. As recorded vividly in the above narrative , he died in the North Sea on the 22nd of September 1914 in the earliest days of the 1st World War. His death is recorded on the Chatham Naval Memorial as well as the Flitwick War Memorial. He is recorded as "lost at sea".

At the outbreak of war he was aged 23 years of age and was single with no children. His date of birth was the 15th July 1891 and he was born in Luton. By the outbreak of war his family lived in Ampthill Road Flitwick. They later moved to Steppingley.

His parents: Joseph Mitchell (b: 1862) and Kate Mitchell (b: 1861 nee Smart). They sired 6 children, 3 of whom died. His grand parents were James Mitchell (c: 1825 -1898) and Sarah Mitchell (c: 1833 - ? nee Rudkin) .According to the census taken in the year 1911 A. J. Mitchell was already serving in the Royal Navy aged 19 years. His father was recorded from 1901 onwards as a "Coffee Shop Manager" and his Mother as "Cook at the Coffee Shop" and daughter Ada as "Assistant at their Coffee Shop". In 1914 Probate Joseph Mitchell was listed as a "Restaurant Proprietor". In 1901 there were 2 sisters Ada (b: 1882) and Bertha (b: 1890) and a cousin (Fanny Higgs b:1887) the sisters, living in the family home. At this time the family were living in London in Shepherds Bush at 77 Askew Rd. In 1911 the family still lived at 77 Askew Rd Shepherds Bush. Ada married Charles Collins (also listed as from 77 Askew Rd Shepherds Bush) on 7th January 1902 at a church in Aldershot. They subsequently had two children, Ada Bertha in 1903 and Charles John in 1905. By 1911 Bertha was married to John Henry Gresty and had 2 children

## ABBOTT , ARTHUR CHARLES: FAMILY HISTORY

Arthur Charles Abbott was the son of Flitwick residents , John and Sarah Abbott. Arthur was one of six children, who lived in Denel End Flitwick and was born in Bedfordshire on 22nd May 1882. In 1901 he was listed as an apprentice carpenter and his father John, as a baker. His is an unusual story although we do not know much about his life. Arthur Abbott was a married man and before the war lived in Picton, Ontario in Canada. He was a farmer and was married to Edith A. Abbott . Their marriage took place in the Leighton Buzzard District and Edith's maiden name was Edith Annie Griffin. They were married in the April—June quarter of 1909 and they emigrated to Canada on 7th of May 1910 on “Canada”, a ship in the White Star Line, travelling from Liverpool to Quebec in Canada. We do not know if he had any children. Edith later re-married to a man called Shepherd. Arthur Abbott was a Corporal in the Canadian Army in the 13th Battalion of the Quebec Regiment at the time of his death. His service number was 412547 and he was killed at one of the Battles of the Somme in France on the 4th of September 1916. Arthur Abbott is buried at Serre Road Cemetery, Somme and his burial reference is VIK14. The Probate of his will did not take place until 14th October 1930 in London and his estate was valued at £150 and everything was left to his wife Edith.

## CYRIL EDWARD BRIGGS & ERIC WILLIAM BRIGGS: FAMILY HISTORY

This is one of a number of family tragedies. The Briggs family lost two of their sons to this war and both are listed underneath one another on the war memorial in Flitwick.

This family moved around and in 1891, according to the census, lived in Warkworth, near Alnwick. By 1901 they were living closer to Flitwick at Little Staughton in Bedfordshire, and in 1911 they were at the School House, Colmworth in Bedfordshire. Their parents were Alfred Edward ( born in Darwin, Lancs) and Sarah Briggs (born in Irthlingborough Northants). Alfred, their father was a school master and their mother was an assistant teacher. They also had another brother , Hubert (born 1890). At the outbreak of war they were living at “May Villa, Ampthill Road, Flitwick”. Before the outbreak of war Cyril was a motor body maker in Luton and his brother Eric was an apprentice draper. Both brothers were born in Warkworth , Northumberland, Cyril in 1889 and Eric in 1893. Strangely these brothers enlisted in Cheltenham. At the time of his death Cyril was a Private in the Buffs—The East Kent Regiment; 8th Battalion. His service number was G/4037 and he died on the Western front on the 14th of February 1916 and was buried at Lissenthoeke Military Cemetery in Belgium reference IID 45. Eric was a Corporal in the Royal Garrison Artillery, 102 Siege Battalion, his service number was 61700. Eric Briggs died in France on the 28th of December 1917 and was buried at the Honnechy British Cemetery reference IID 19. Their brother Hubert was in the Royal Engineers ( Service no 174010) and survived the war. In the spring of 1915 at the height of the war Hubert married Sarah Gadd in Flitwick .

Their father, Alfred, died aged 84 years in June 1934

and left a will valued at

the princely sum of £1531 2s 9d which was left to his wife Sarah.



The War Memorial Plaque in the Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul, Flitwick.

## GEORGE WILLIAM CRANFIELD: FAMILY HISTORY

Like Corporal Arthur Abbott, George Cranfield was another of the many victims of the Battle of the Somme in September 1916. George is the first of the members of our local Regiment — The Bedfordshire Regiment , 8th Battalion, No 3 Company—to die . George was the son of John and Emma Cranfield who lived at 61 Ampthill Road, Flitwick. George Cranfield was born at the end of 1888 at Papworth St Agnes in Cambridgeshire. George had two sisters and a brother , Beatrice Ellan born 1884, Hugh born 1891 and Mary born 1897, the latter dying before the war started in late 1911. At the outbreak of war George was listed as a gardener. George's father John had died in 1907 whilst the family were living at Chesterton near Cambridge. He was a farmer and was only 52 years old. When he died he left £612 in his will to his wife Emma . The will was administered by Emma, his widow and John's brother , Thomas, who was also a local farmer. George was killed on the 2nd of September 1916 on the Somme; he was a Private, his service number was 20373 and he is recorded on the Theipval Memorial on the Somme in France. His reference is Pier—Face 2C. George did his initial training in the Army at Ampthill Park and is listed on that memorial as well. George's brother Hugh fought in World War I with the Royal Fusiliers but he was invalided out of the Army due to medical factors and was sent to work for Mr Crawley at Canterbury Villas as a gardener. Hugh died in June 1973 whilst still living in Flitwick. George's mother Emma died at 61 Ampthill Road Flitwick on 21st April 1949 and her will was administered by her daughter Beatrice Ellan Cranfield and valued at £201 0s 3d.

## CHARLES WILFRED CUNNINGHAM: FAMILY HISTORY

Charles Cunningham came from a Military family and was born at a place called Rookee in India whilst his father was on Military Service there. He was the son of Charles and Elizabeth Cunningham. He was born around 1896 and had a brother Aubrey Leonard Cunningham who was also born in India in 1903. By 1911 the father had retired from the Army aged 51 years and had settled in the Ridgeway , Flitwick. Charles (Snr) worked as a carpenter and also had his Army pension and his son Charles was a plumber and glazier's apprentice. Their family home in the Ridgeway had 5 rooms, which for the time was quite substantial. The family connections are broadly with Bedfordshire; Charles (Snr) was born in Dartford Kent but Elizabeth came from Blunham in Bedfordshire. Charles (Snr) was a Sergeant in the Royal Engineers and later the Bengal Sappers and Miners. Aubrey Cunningham was too young to serve in the 1st World War and later married Hilda E Aspen in early 1929. Their father, Charles (Snr), died whilst still living at the Ridgeway in December 1939 aged 79 years; his wife Elizabeth died 10 years later in March 1949, still living in Flitwick. Charles Wilfred Cunningham became a Lance Corporal in the Royal Engineers ( his father's Regiment ) 486th Field Battalion and fought in the Palestine theatre of the war. He died on 27th March 1917 and was buried at Jerusalem and is commemorated on the British memorial in the city. Recently the wills made on the way up to battle fronts have been released for public view. Charles Cunningham made such a will in January 1916 and this was used to settle his estate at the end of the war.



## WILLIAM DIX: FAMILY HISTORY

The Bedfordshire Regiment fought on a variety of fronts in the 1st World War including the Western Front in France and Belgium and also the infamous campaign in Gallipoli, Southern Turkey. The aim of this campaign was to open a further front in the war, thereby stretching the resources of enemy. William Dix was a Private in the Bedfordshire Regiment 5th Battalion and came from a large Flitwick family, many members of which still live in the area today. His parents were John and Sarah Dix and they lived at no 2 Maulden Road

Flitwick. William's family included three brothers — Sydney (b:1885) , Horace (b: 1895) and Victor (b 1897) and two sisters - Minnie (b: 1879) and Florence (b: 1889). William was born in Flitwick in 1892 ; there were also other brothers who had not survived to adulthood — George (b: 1881) Earnest (b: 1883) and Charles (b: 1887). Deaths of young children were common at this time. William lost his life on the 4th of September 1915 and is buried at the 7th Field Ambulance Cemetery in Gallipoli (SP MEM A60). William Dix also left a battle front will in August 1915 leaving his effects to his father. William's family continued their lives in the local area — his father John Dix died on 31st March 1934 and was by then living at "Ashcroft" Station Rd, Flitwick. John left an estate valued at £327; the estate was left between Minnie Rudkin (his daughter - married to Herbert Rudkin) and Sydney Dix , a flour mill employee. Sydney Dix died in 1951 living at 47 Station Road Flitwick, leaving his effects to Aubrey and Gilbert Dix — presumably his sons.

## JOHN & RICHARD DILLINGHAM: FAMILY HISTORY

John and Richard Dillingham lived in the East End of Flitwick and were neighbours of William Dix and their names are recorded on the War Memorial underneath his name. Before the war John was a carpenter ; other members of his family, including Richard, were recorded as plumbers and house painters and another brother Harry, was recorded as a gardener. John was the first casualty to be buried in Flitwick in the Churchyard. His epitaph reads as follows: "In loving memory of Corporal John Dillingham, RFC, the dearly beloved son of Cecil and Mary Ann Dillingham, who was killed at Dover on the 1st of August 1916 aged 26 years. In the midst of life we are in death." He was killed when struck by the propeller of a Martinsyde biplane. John (known in his family as Jack) was born on 4th January 1890 in Flitwick. Before the war he was Captain of the Flitwick Football Club. He never married. John (b:1890), had four brothers — James (b: 1879), Richard (b: 1881) , Frank (b: 1893) and Harry (b: 1895) . Richard, the second son was born Derby. The family at one time lived at the Fir tree Inn; his parents are both recorded as being born in Flitwick. Their father, Cecil is recorded as a plumber employing other people. John was born in Flitwick. Richard was recorded as married to Georgina Christina Baker on the 3rd August 1912. After their marriage they lived at 25 Kings Road, Flitwick. Georgina was known as Chris (from her second name).

Both Richard and John were in the Royal Flying Corps (the forerunner of the Royal Air Force). Richard joined the RFC in the balloon section. As he was a plumber he knew about pipes and gas so he was tasked with helping to put the gas in the balloons, which were the spy planes of the day. In 1917 the balloon section was discontinued as aeroplanes were



Richard Dillingham and Family—Embarkation for War.

taking over this role. Richard and some other RFC servicemen were transferred to the Lincolnshire Regiment (7th Battalion). At the time of his death Richard was still serving with the Lincolnshire Regiment and his name is recorded in the memorial book in Lincoln Cathedral . 29

He was killed in Belgium on the 25th of November 1917 and his death is recorded on the Tyne Cot Memorial in Belgium, panel 35/37. Richard's service number was 42041 and he was a Private —his earlier RFC service no was 35374. It is an irony that Richard's brother James, who had remained at home to work the land, who was the eldest son and was 35 years old when war broke out, had written to Richard in 1916 suggesting Richard return home to work the land with him as by then Richard was over 35 years. Before the war Richard was a racing cyclist and a plumber by trade in the family business - Dillingham Bros. Richard was born on the 29th May 1881, he had a son called Bennie, who died on 3rd March 1918 in the diphtheria epidemic at Bedford Hospital and is also buried at Flitwick. John was in the 49th Squadron of the RFC. He was a Corporal and his service number was 4937. The manner of his death was rather unusual as described on his epitaph on the previous page . John , as others did, left an informal will dated the 23rd of June 1916, just a short time before his death. At this time his parents were living at a house called "The Close, 41 Station Road , Flitwick". At one time his family ran the "Fir Tree Inn" at Church End Flitwick

## John Dillingham

Their older brother James in 1911 was living at Church End Flitwick and was married with a daughter. His wife was Elizabeth Norwood of Flitton. They were married in the 3rd quarter of 1907 and their daughter Mary Elizabeth was born in 1910. Before the war James was listed as a milk vendor and shopkeeper. He was a Private in the war with a service number 29467 and seems to have survived the war.



The Family grave at Flitwick Church yard which commemorates John Dillingham.

## MARTINSYDE G100—ELEPHANT DAY BOMBER AND HEAVY FIGHTER.

The Martinsyde G100 Elephant was in service with the Royal Flying Corps and the Australian Flying Corps. It first flew in 1915 and was introduced into service in 1916. It gained the name "Elephant" because of its relatively large size and its lack of manoeuvrability. It was a single-seater, two bomb bay, bi-plane and was designed by A. A. Fletcher of the Martinsyde Company powered initially by a 120hp Beardmore engine and after 1915 by an Austro-Daimler engine of the same power level. It was armed by a single drum fed Lewis gun mounted above the centre.





## ARTHUR GILLETT: FAMILY HISTORY

Arthur Gillett was an older man when war came. He was already 30 years old, and had a family. He was married to Jessie Louisa (nee Mann) and they were married in the 1st quarter of 1905. Arthur was born in the last quarter of 1884 at Houghton Conquest in Bedfordshire and his parents were Samuel and Mary Gillett. Arthur's and Jessie's children were Charles (b: 1905), Leslie (b: 1907) and Norman (b: 1910). Before the war Arthur was a bricklayer by trade. The family lived in Chapel Road, Flitwick. Going back in time, Arthur had two brothers and a sister — William (b: 1880), Alfred (b: 1882) and Ada (b: 1888). By 1891 the family were listed at a property in Flitwick Road, Ampthill and remained there for at least the next ten years. By 1901 Arthur was listed as an apprentice bricklayer. His father was a shepherd on one of the local farms. Arthur Gillett was a Private in the Bedfordshire Regiment 7th Battalion and his service number was 19477. He was killed on the Somme on the 26th of September 1916 and his death is recorded on the Thiepval Memorial on the Somme in France (Pier 2C).

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Arthur Gillett is numbered amongst those who were trained at Ampthill Park. He arrived at the Ampthill Training Depot on the 2nd of February 1915 aged 30yrs and 4 months. He was posted to no 3 Company of the Bedfordshire Regiment. On the 1st March 1915 he was appointed to the rank of Lance Corporal (unpaid) but on 19th May 1915 he asked to return to being a Private. His demise is unusual— he was reported by a Battalion officer on the 2nd October as having been wounded on the 26th of September 1916, but on 15th November 1915 this was changed to wounded and missing. 34

## WILLIAM GULLIVER: FAMILY HISTORY.

William Gulliver was born in Flitwick in 1886 and before the war in 1911 the census shows him living at 20 Farrer Street in Kempston. He was married but no trace of any children is apparent. William's wife was Mary Emmeline (nee Clarke). She was known as Lina and was born in Elstow Hardwick in September 1886. William & Lina were married in the first quarter of 1911. Lina died in June 1943 and by that time was living in Brixworth, Northants. The Flitwick connection comes from William's mother— Mary Jane (nee Dix— a well known Flitwick name) who was born in Flitwick in 1864. William's father was Joseph Edward Gulliver, who was born in Salford in Bedfordshire in 1863. Joseph was an agricultural labourer. In the 1891 census the Gulliver family was living in Arthur Street in Ampthill. William had a number of brothers and sisters — Mary (b: 1883), Albert (b: 1885), James (b: 1888) Ernest (b: 1890), Horace (b: 1897), Minnie (b: 1893) and Lily (b: 1895). By 1901 the family had moved to Water End Flitwick and Mary was no longer living at home (aged 18 years). William's occupation before the war was as a blacksmith striker and, as already mentioned, he and his wife, along with his younger brother Horace, were living in Kempston. William's war saw him as a Private in A Company, the 1st Battalion, the Bedfordshire Regiment. William was a very early

## THE NELSON BATTALION OF THE ROYAL NAVY BADGE:

### WELSH RIDGE DECEMBER 1917:

At the declaration of the war on 4 August 1914, there was a surplus of some 20-30,000 men of the reserves of the Royal Navy who would not find jobs on any ship of war. It was recognised that this was sufficient to form two Naval Brigades and a Brigade of Marines for operations on land. The Royal Marine Brigade was formed at once and was moved to Oostende on 27 August 1914, although it returned four days later. On the 20th of September it arrived at Dunkirk with orders to assist in the defence of Antwerp. The two other Brigades moved to Dunkirk for the same purpose on 5 October 1914. In the haste to organise and move the units to Belgium, 80% went to war without even basic equipment such as packs, mess tins or water bottles. No khaki uniform was issued. The two Naval Brigades were armed with ancient charger-loading rifles just three days before embarking. The Division was originally titled the "Royal Naval Division", and was formed in England in September 1914. At this stage, it had no artillery, field ambulances or other ancillary units. Late in 1917 there was an action of Welsh Ridge on the 30th of December 1917, subsequent to the Cambrai operations. During that Sunday a counter attack was made at dawn that day by German troops dressed in white camouflage suits to the north of the village of La Vacqueire which almost resulted in the loss of 'Welsh Ridge', a recently captured position to the south of Cambrai. Every effort was made to effect surprise, the enemy even going so far as to dress the leading wave in white to match the snow. Nevertheless, the measure of success which the attack met with was due rather to a stroke of singular misfortune than to any display of cunning by the enemy. Under cover of a barrage, the leading waves effected a foothold in the front line of the 190th Brigade and at the junction of the Hood and 7TH Royal Fusiliers and of the Drake and Howe Battalions. The right flank battalion, and most of the Hood and Drake Battalions, stood fast. Elsewhere on the right and in the centre, the enemy penetrated only to the front line. Having lost the majority of their positions on the crest of Welsh Ridge, the Royal Naval Division set about recapturing the ridge during the afternoon of the thirtieth. The attack, carried out by the Anson Battalion along with elements of Clarkson's Drake Battalion, had been a 'brilliant success. 'A' Company of the Anson reoccupied the vital position on Welsh Ridge with the loss of only three men. To Commander Buckle and to the officers and men of this company belongs most of the credit for what Sir Douglas Haig in his dispatch described as an 'admirably executed counter attack...which regained all the essential parts of our former positions'. Sixty three officers and 1,355 other ranks of the R.N.D. were killed, wounded, or reported missing as a result of the assault and ensuing two days of bitter fighting at Welsh Ridge.



SYDNEY SILAS HOLDER RN:  
 FAMILY HISTORY

Sydney Silas Holder was an Able Seaman in the Royal Navy and was a member of the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve. His service number was R/ 3913. He was a member of the Nelson Battalion , Royal Naval Division. In effect he was a soldier on land with the Royal Navy . In the past two pages some of the history of the Royal Navy battalions is told including the battle in which Sydney Holder died. Sydney died on the 31st December 1917 and is buried at the Flesquiers Hill British Cemetery at Cambrai in France. His burial reference is 5C 14. Sydney was married and before the war was a railway porter with the LMS Railway. Sidney married Clara Beatrice (b: 1889) ( nee Wilson) at St Albans in 1910. They lived in Windmill Road in a two room house. After Sydney's death the family moved to a property at 9 Chapel Road, Flitwick. Sydney and Clara had a son, Sidney Roy Holder , born in Flitwick in 1911. Sydney had also made a conventional will and left all of his effects to his wife Clara. Sydney was born in 1889 in Barnet and his father , Samuel Holder (b: 1856) was a railway signalman also working on the LMS Railway. His mother's name was Eliza (b: 1856). Sydney Silas Holder had two brothers - Frederick (b: 1886), James (b: 1888) and a sister - Dora E Holder ( b: 1906). Samuel, his father , was born in Frampton Coterell in Gloucestershire and his mother , Eliza, was born in Harpenden. As an interesting footnote, Sydney Silas's Son, Sidney Roy Holder, emigrated to the USA on the 16th of November 1950 aged 39 with his wife, Doris aged 39 years and his son Richard aged 5 years. They travelled on the Cunard White Star ship Queen Elizabeth to New York. S R Holder eventually was naturalised as an American citizen and he died aged 77 years old on 11/07/1988 in Novato California. He was a retired painter and decorator. He was survived by his wife, son Richard and daughter Sheila ( later - Walsh). He was also survived by two sisters Nellie Plum and Joan Ruggles who remained in England. Sidney Roy Holder's wife lived until Jun 6th 1999 by which time she had outlived her children Richard and Sheila. ( NB: Sidney is also spelt as Sydney in some records and it is difficult to differentiate which is correct).

JOSEPH E LINE:  
 FAMILY HISTORY

Joseph was a professional soldier. In 1911 when the census was conducted he was stationed with the 2nd Battalion of the Bedfordshire Regiment in Bermuda. Joseph was a Private with the service number 9423. Joseph Line was born in the 3rd quarter of 1887 in Flitwick. Joseph's parents were Daniel and Eliza Line and in 1891 were all living in Gravel Pit Road in the East End of Flitwick. His father Daniel was a tinker and grinder and was self – employed ( working on his own account). Daniel was born in 1849, as was his wife Eliza. Eliza's maiden name was Gulliver-Kinder and she was born in Bedfordshire. Joseph had an older brother Ebenezer, who was born in 1881 and worked as a chimney sweep. This was a large family and Joseph had 7 brothers and sisters in total - Mary (b: 1872) , Elizabeth (b: 1873), Willie (b:1876), Rose (b: 1879), Arthur (b: 1884) and Ruth (b: 1900) . By the time of the 1911 census the family's situation had changed Joseph's brother Arthur seems to have died in 1902 in the Three Counties Asylum in Arlesey, Bedfordshire and his sister Elizabeth had married in 1903 and left to set up her own home. His mother Eliza had died in 1908 and In 1911 Joseph's father Daniel was now listed as a chimney sweep and lived at home on his own with his 11 year old daughter Ruth. Daniel lived until 1921 when he too passed away. I cannot find a war record for Joseph's brother Ebenezer who was married in 1909 to Caroline Cox. Ebenezer eventually died in the Flitwick area in 1948. As already mentioned, Joseph was by 1914 in the army and stationed far away in Bermuda aged 24 years old. There is no record of Joseph ever marrying. Joseph Line died at home in Flitwick from his wounds on the 14th of November 1914 and was buried at Flitwick Parish Church, an early casualty of World War One.

CHARLES WILLIAM LINE:  
 LIMITED FAMILY HISTORY

Charles Line is listed as having been born in Flitwick in the 3rd quarter of 1898. His parents were Albert and Kate Line. His father was a market gardener working for himself, living in Water End. Charles was one of six children. His siblings were Ethel (b : 1894), Maud (b: 1896), Amelia (b: 1901), Emily (b: 1903) and John (b: 1905). He was a member of the Bedfordshire Regiment, 7th Battalion and his service number was 32996. His service number is confused and this may be because of the January 1916 Military Service Act where men were called up in batches and he may also have gone into one of the Training Reserve Units. Charles enlisted in the Regiment in Ampthill , but does not appear on the Ampthill Park Memorial, indicating he was not trained there. His death is recorded at the Menin Gate at Ypres in Belgium. He died on the 15th August 1917 and is recorded on panel 31 / 33. The Bedfordshire Regimental Museum cannot cast much light on Charles either. They believe he may have lied about his age on enlistment. His death is recorded in the "Bedfordshire Times and Independent "as killed by shell fire in heavily fortified positions north of the Menin Road". The newspaper says he had served for 3 years, but this does not tie up with military records as he did not have a 1915 Star.

Table with 10 columns: Surname, Forename, Date of Birth, Date of Death, Place of Birth, Place of Death, Service Number, Regiment, Battalion, Remarks. The table lists various soldiers, including Charles Line, with their service details.





## WILLIAM MARTIN: FAMILY HISTORY

William Martin was a local man born and brought up in Water End, Flitwick. His parents were James and Sarah Martin (nee Stilgoe). Both of his parents were dead by the time World War One broke out, his father in 1901 and his mother in 1903. William was born in the second quarter of 1888. His grandparents, also from Flitwick, were Thomas Martin and Tamar Jellis ( a good old Flitwick family name). William had a brother - Thomas (b: 1892 d: 1910) and two sisters - Kate (b: 1890) and Mary (b: 1896). Before the war in 1901, when the census was done, the family had an Uncle (also named William) living with them. Their uncle was listed as blind from childhood. William's father James was listed as a carpenter. By 1911 William was already in the army, in the 2nd Battalion of the Bedfordshire Regiment and his service number was 8484 . He was stationed in Bermuda and held the rank of corporal. By the time of his death on 11th March 1915 he was an Acting Sergeant. William died in France and was buried at Flitwick Parish Church. William's sister Kate ( who by then was married to Harold Welch and was living at Park Street in Ampthill) applied for his medals in 1919 on behalf of the remaining family. William appears never to have married and after his parent's death made the army his life.

## EDWARD JAMES BATTAMS SHOULER: LIEUTENANT ROYAL NAVY

Edward James Battams Shouler was the son of John Brown Shouler and Isobel Mary Shouler of Flitwick. He was a native of Melton Mowbray. He was killed at the age of 29 years after his ship HMS Viking was mined and damaged in the Dover straits on 29th January 1916. He was amongst 10 who were killed in this incident. HMS Viking survived and served out the war—she was the only 6 funnelled destroyer in service in World War One.

HMS VIKING - c: 1916 - [Viking, launched in 1909, Viking , was a Tribal Class ocean going destroyer and was armed with one 6-inch gun, two 4-inch guns and two torpedo tubes. It was the only six funnelled ship in the British Navy].



## HMS GIBRALTAR:

Launched 1892, Edgar Class Battle Cruiser. In WWI part of the 10th Cruiser Squadron from 1914 until early 1915. Then disarmed and converted to a depot ship for the Northern Patrol at Swanswick Minns in the Shetlands until the end of World War I

## WILLIAM MARTIN: FAMILY HISTORY

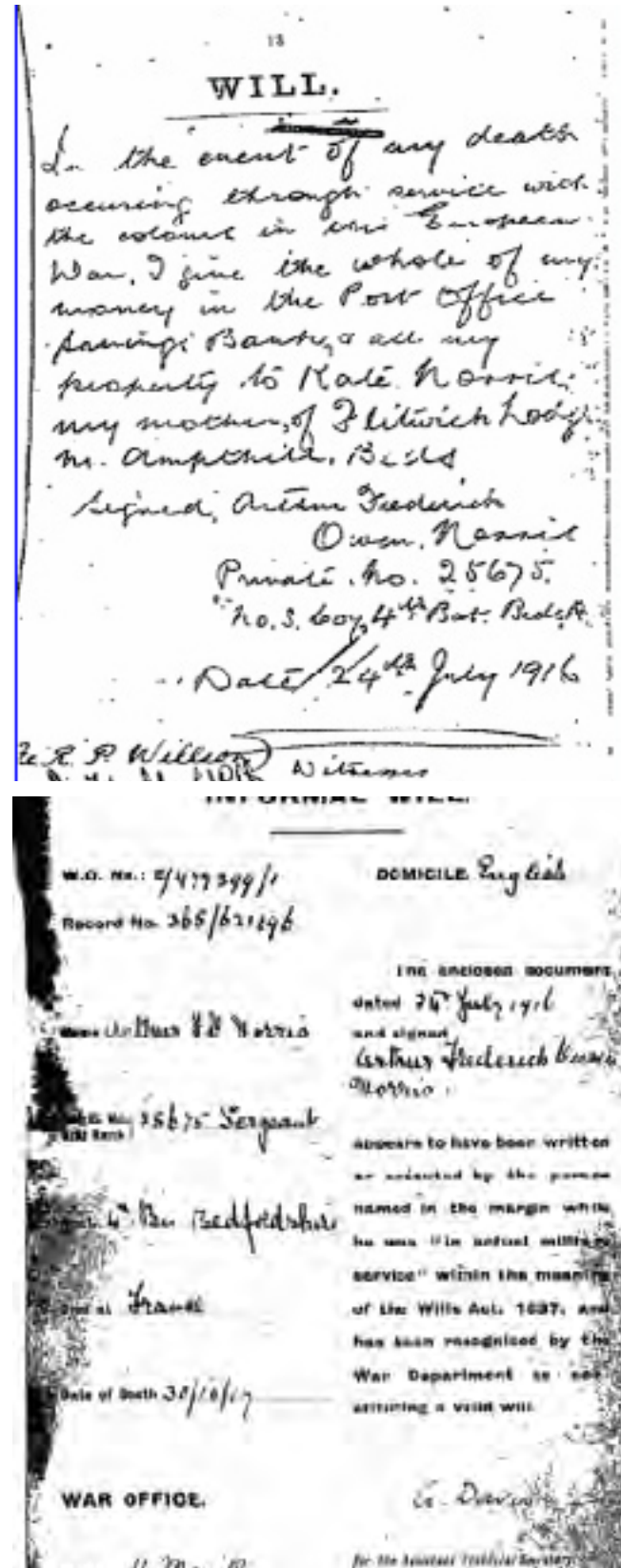
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## ARTHUR FREDERICK NORRIS: FAMILY HISTORY

Arthur Norris, amongst others, has family still living in the local community today. I have been pleased both to give and receive information from them to assist with this book. Arthur Norris was born on the 24th of June 1893 in Haynes in Bedfordshire. His father was an estate gamekeeper ( a good traditional rural trade). His parents were David and Kate Norris (nee Tuffnail ) and they were married locally in July 1892. Kate was born in Wilstead in 1870 and only died in 1965 whilst living in Ampthill and David lived from 1864 until 1947 , both parents seeing out the two World Wars. Arthur's parents had a total of seven children, two of whom did not survive childhood. Before the start of the 1st World War Arthur was a railway porter on the Midland Railway. In 1911 he was living away from the family as a boarder in Station Road Lower Stondon. Arthur's father David was, by 1901, an estate gamekeeper to the Duke of Bedford living at New Lodge ( now known as Flitwick Lodge) in Church Road beyond Priestley Farm on the right hand side as you go out of Flitwick towards Woburn. By the time of David's death in 1947 aged 83 years old, the family was living at 43 Eversholt Road Steppingley. Arthur was in the 4th Battalion of the Bedfordshire Regiment, his servicenumber was 25675 and he held the rank of Sergeant. He died on the 30th of October 1917 and his death is recorded on the Tyne Cot Memorial in Belgium , panel 48-50. He was killed in the mud of the 2nd Battle of Passchendaele. Arthur Norris is recorded in a number of members' and public family trees on Ancestry.co.uk and they all give great insight into his wider family and his life. Arthur Norris was trained at the Bedfordshire Training Depot in Ampthill

## ARTHUR FREDERICK NORRIS: FAMILY HISTORY - CONTINUED

Great Park. He was posted to No 3 Company and later, on completion of his training, moved to the 4th Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment. Arthur suffered an attack of the mumps in August 1916 and was admitted to hospital in St Omer. He also had a trip to hospital in April 1917 with gunshot wounds to his left leg. Arthur Norris left a battlefield will and by kind permission of his living relatives we are able to publish this here : Arthur's brothers and sisters lived long lives in this area, Constance Winifred was born in 1899 and died in 1961, Henry Francis was born in 1897 and died in 1983, Harold Stanley was born in 1901 and died in 1972 and Victor Alfred had the shortest life and was born in 1908, dying in 1948. Here below with thanks to his family we have A F Norris's pictures. The first of these pictures was taken on 6th January 1915 before joining the Army, the second was taken on the 5th October 1917 ( he died on 30th October 1917— a few days after this picture). Sergeant Norris is also recorded on the Midland Railway Company Memorial at Derby and in their book of remembrance. He is listed as a porter based at Elstree Station as his last position before the war.



## ARTHUR FREDERICK HADDOW PALMER: FAMILY HISTORY

Frederick Hadow Palmer was the son of Thomas and Lillie Palmer; his mother's maiden name was Hadow and this is reflected in his Christian names. He was born in the 2nd quarter of 1896 at Hatfield in Hertfordshire. At the time of his death he was not married and had no children. At the outbreak of war Frederick was only 18 years of age and in his prime. Frederick was the youngest of three brothers who were Edward (b: 1893) and Charles Joseph (b: 1894), both born in Hatfield. Their father Thomas worked as an ostler and groom, living at Chapman's Yard in Hatfield in 1901. By this time Frederick's mother was dead and he ( at the age of 5 years old) was living with his aunt and uncle, William and Sarah Hall, in Henlow. William was a stationmaster with the Midland Railway. By the time of the 1911 census the Hall family and Frederick were living at the stationmaster's house in Flitwick. Also living with them was another cousin, Laura Bussens, aged 18 years and born in Nottingham, who was listed as a school teacher, working at the local County School in Dunstable Road, Flitwick. Frederick enlisted and was trained at the Ampthill Depot when he was 19yrs and 11 months. He was amongst the last batch of recruits posted from this depot. His service number was 20310 and his enlistment date was 23/04/1916. He was posted as Private to no 3 Company. Frederick Palmer lost his life in France on the western front on the 28th of March 1918 in the Germans' spring offensive, probably their last big push before the armistice in 1918. Frederick also left a soldier's will. Interestingly he left everything to his adoptive parents, the Halls. After 1901 his father and brother seem to have become distant to Frederick.



## CHARLES EDWARD AND WILLIAM PEDDAR: TWO LIVES FROM ONE FAMILY!

Charles Peddar was the younger of the two brothers to die in the Great War. His older brother William was killed first on 29/04/1917 at Arras near the Pas de Calais in France and Charles the next year on 15/06/1918 in Italy. The parents of the two brothers were Harry and Mary Ann Peddar ( Mary seems to have died between 1901 and 1904 - Harry remarried Eliza in 1904) . At the time of the war the family lived in East End Flitwick. Charles was born in the last quarter of 1898 and at the time of the war was not married. He enlisted at Luton but later found himself in the South Staffordshire Regiment, his service number was 41776 and he was a Private. He was buried at Boscon Cemetery in Italy ( ref: I A 6). William Peddar was born in 1891 in Westoning and married Laura Matilda Beale in 1914. It is not known if they had any children. Laura was born in East End Flitwick in 1893. Before her marriage Laura was a domestic servant and Laura's father (also William) was a roadman working for the County Council. William, as so many others did, made a soldier's will leaving all that he had to his young wife Laura. Before the war started William was a farm labourer. William was a Private soldier in the 4th Battalion the Bedfordshire Regiment. He, like so many others started his military career at the Ampthill Training Depot arriving for training on 1st November 1915 aged 24 years and six months. William's service number was 22970 and his life is commemorated on the Arras memorial in the Pas de Calais on bay 5. This as in so many cases, is a story of young lives and potential cut off before they really got started. Charles and William had two other brothers - the eldest Harry (b: 1889) and George (b: 1895)

## FREDERICK JAMES SHARP: FAMILY HISTORY

Frederick Sharp was born in Bedford in 1888. His parents were Charles (b: 1864 at Maulden and d: 1931) and Elizabeth (nee Joy) ( b: 1865 d: 1898). At the time of his death Frederick was not married and had no children. Frederick's parents married at Ampthill in the autumn quarter of 1886 . His father Charles remarried Phoebe Elliot in September 1899 at Bedford. In 1891 the family was living at 86 Queens Street, St Peters, Bedford. Charles was a bricklayer and later listed as a builder. By 1911 the family was living in Windmill Road Flitwick. By this time Frederick had 4 brothers and sisters Florence May (b: 1891 by 1st Marriage) Winifred G Sharp (b:1900), Walter H C Sharp (b: 1901) and Colin B Sharp ( b: 1911). At the time of the 1911 census Frederick was no longer living at home, but lived with his aunt and uncle in Wandsworth in London and was working as a clerk to an estate agent. Frederick enlisted in the Army at Reading and was posted as a Pioneer to the Corps of Royal Engineers with the 237th Field Company. He died on the 19/02/1916 at home of war wounds and is buried at the Flitwick Parish graveyard.





## REGINALD SHOTBOLT: FAMILY FILE

Reginald Shotbolt was born in the 3rd quarter of 1899 in Maulden. His parents were Edward and Julia Shotbolt. Edward was born c: 1865 and his wife Julia Robinson was born c: 1868 and they married in 1888. They had a total of ten children, three of whom died in childhood. By 1911 they were living in Windmill Road, Flitwick. Edward was a bricklayer and general labourer. In 1901 the family was living in Knoll Lane Maulden. From the age of 14 his mother Julia had been working as a servant to the Joy family in this area. Reginald's siblings included— Sara (b: 1888), Charlie (b: 1889), Arthur (b: 1894), Nathan (b: 1898), Willis (b: 1898) and Hilbert Frederick (b: 1905). Reginald's father died in 1923 aged 58 yrs. Reginald was a boy 1st Class in the Royal Navy and served on HMS Gibraltar. He died on 13th March 1916 and is buried at the Voe Old Churchyard in Shetland.



## HMS GIBRALTAR:

Launched 1892, Edgar Class Battle Cruiser. In WWI part of the 10th Cruiser Squadron from 1914 until early 1915. Then disarmed and converted to a depot ship for the Northern Patrol at Swanswick Minns in the Shetlands until the end of World War I



## EDWARD JAMES BATTAMS SHOULER - LIEUTENANT ROYAL NAVY.

Edward James Battams Shouler was the son of John Brown Shouler and Isobel Mary Shouler of Flitwick. He was a native of Melton Mowbray. He was killed at the age of 29 years after his ship HMS Viking was mined and damaged in the Dover straits on 29th January 1916. He was amongst 10 who were killed in this incident. HMS Viking survived and served out the war—she was the only 6 funnelled destroyer in service in World War One.

HMS VIKING - c: 1916 - [Viking, launched in 1909, Viking, was a Tribal Class ocean going destroyer and was armed with one 6-inch gun, two 4-inch guns and two torpedo tubes. It was the only six funnelled ship in the British Navy].

Edward was born in Melton Mowbray in Lincolnshire in the last quarter of 1885. His parents were John Brown Shouler, who was born in Wavenden around 1844 and his wife Isabel Mary Shouler, ( nee Hill ) born in Ross on Wye, Herefordshire in 1859. Edward's parents married in Melton Mowbray on 30/04/1879. Edward's father John was an auctioneer in Melton Mowbray as his father had been before him. Edward had three brothers and sisters - Alfred John (b: 1884), Isabel Margaret (b: 1886) and William Russell (b: 1890). Edward's father John died in 1910 whilst living in Flitwick. His widow Isabel and three of the children were recorded living in Maulden Road Flitwick in 1911. Isabel was listed as of her own means. She died and was buried at Flitwick in January 1940. Alfred was a senior clerk in a Bank and William was listed as a Mercantile Marine Officers apprentice. By this time Edward was already in the Royal Navy and based at the Royal Naval Barracks and Officer's Quarters, Edinburgh Road, Portsmouth. By 1911 he was a Sub-Lieutenant. Alfred fought in the war with the Northants Regiment and left the Army as a Captain. In 1922 he was recorded as a bank manager with Barclays Bank.

# THE MINING OF HMS VIKING 16TH JANUARY 1916.

HMS Viking, served as part of the 6th Destroyer Flotilla and was operating in the English Channel on the morning of 29th January 1916 when she entered an area near the Colbart Light Vessel. This was a dangerous area containing a German minefield. For some reason the ship's charts didn't mention the minefields and at 11.15am HMS Viking struck a submerged mine moored on the seabed. Whilst attempts by the crew to examine the ship and make it safe were taking place a number of small explosions caused by burning oil occurred, possibly caused by shells and other explosives on the upper deck firing. Finally there was a massive explosion near the after magazine and guncotton store. Heavy damage was suffered, and in these explosions nine of the officers and crew lost their lives. (A tenth victim died later while undergoing treatment at Deal Infirmary). Two of the bodies, Sub Lt Tennyson and that of the Captain's Steward, Burgess, were recovered from the wreckage on the Sunday. On the next day three more bodies were found and removed. Ordinary Seaman Stephen Bloodworth was identified but the other two, Leading Stoker Miller and Able Seaman Charles Crockford, were unrecognisable and their identities were decided according to where the bodies were found.

HMS Viking was taken in tow by HMS Zulu using two lengths of hawser as it was felt that there was an imminent danger to any vessel attempting a conventional tow. The surviving crew was transferred to HMS Ure. P.24 was on the scene at noon, carrying Vice Admiral, Dover and accompanied by HMS Swift. The double-length hawser parted when HMS Viking moved sharply to port and towing attempts were halted until the Dover tug "Lady Brassey" arrived and took HMS Viking in tow, with HMS Tartar towing off the port quarter to counteract the swing of the vessel caused by the stern part of the ship being heavily damaged. The ships reached the safety of Dover at

7pm, HMS Viking was placed in the harbour's floating dock for assessment of her damage. A Court of Inquiry was held on board HMS Arrogant on February 1st 1916.

# CASUALTIES OF HMS VIKING

## JAN 29TH 1916.

ANDERSON, James. Chief Artificer Engineer.BLOODWORTH, Stephen J. Ord Seaman. SS 6214 (Portsmouth rating )  
BURGESS, Henry J.  
Officers Steward 2nd class. L 1158 (Po)  
CROCKFORD, Charles T. AB. J 624. (Po)  
EGGLESTONE, John. Ord Seaman. J 40596 (Po)  
MILLER, Albert T. Leading Stoker. 312123 (Po)

### OFFICERS.

SHOULER, Edward J B. Lieutenant.  
TENNYSON, HON, Harold C. Acting Sub/Lt.  
WILLIAMS, Thomas C H. Commander. All died 29th January 1916.  
STOWE, Edgar. Petty Officer. 182402 Died 30th Jan 1916.

## HERBERT SMITH: FAMILY FILE

Herbert Victor Smith was born in Luton to Arthur Smith and his wife Rebecca (formerly Swales - Pedder ) Arthur lived from 1868— 1935 but his wife Rebecca lived from 1868 to 1910 dying at the age of 42 years of age. Herbert's father , Arthur was born on the Isle of Grain in Kent but his mother Rebecca was from Westoning, giving the local connection. The family was quite large and Herbert had six brothers and sisters ( although one only lived for 2 years). Annie Winifred Mary (1894—1919), John William (1896—1939), Eric Arthur (1899—1943), Edith Florence (1899—1977), Henry Pedder (1906—1907) and Henrietta Rebecca (1908—1988). In the section of this book relating to World War II you will find reference to one of these brother—Eric Arthur Smith who also died in his country's service. Herbert was born on the 19th of June 1898 and died in Loos on the Western Front on the 25th of September 1915. He again left a soldier's will and it is marked as him initially missing, presumed killed in action on that date.

He is listed on the Loos Memorial in the Pas-de-Calais ( Panel 41) . He was a Private in the 2nd Battalion the Bedfordshire Regiment. Herbert Smith's service number was 17938 and he trained at the Ampthill Park depot arriving there on 16th November 1914. At the time of his arrival he was listed as single, aged 19 years. He is mentioned as having died whilst taking a gun trench at Cite St Elie during the battle of Loos. Herbert's family were quite well to do—his father Arthur was listed in the 1911 census as the owner of a hat manufacturing company and they had a servant— housekeeper. At this time they were living in Chapel Road Flitwick. By the time Herbert wrote his soldier's will they had moved house to “Burleigh” The Avenue Flitwick. It is also notable that Herbert's sister died aged 26 years in 1919—I have no evidence but many people died around this time from the flu epidemic. However she died it was yet another sadness for this family to bear.

## SIDNEY JOHN STRINGER: FAMILY FILE

Sidney John Stringer was born in Pulloxhill on the 15th of June 1893. His parents were Alfred and Margaret Elizabeth Stringer (nee Abbott). His father Alfred lived from 1860—1934 and his mother from 1860—1952. This was a large family, living in Water End, Flitwick at the time of the 1911 census. Alfred, his father, was listed as a general labourer. His brothers and sisters were :- Minnie (b: 1884) , Laura (b: 1887) , Alfred (b: 1890) serving in the Army aged 21 years in the Bedfordshire Regiment, William (b: 1892—not listed in 1911 census), Horace (b: 1892), Thomas (b: 1897), Herbert ( b: 1899) , Lily Mary (b: 1900) and Tyrill Arthur (b: 1904). In 1911 all of the older boys were no longer at school and are listed as labourers. Sidney John Stringer was a Private in D Company of the 2nd Battalion of the Bedfordshire Regiment , service number 3/6861. He was killed in action on Saturday 31st October 1914 - an early casualty of the war. By this time he was 21 years old. His death is recorded at Ypres on the Menin Gate Memorial panel 31 to 33.

## FEATURE STORY: A HERO WHO SURVIVED BUT AT WHAT COST?

### Sgt Alfred Stringer DCM.

Alfred Stringer was the brother of Sidney Stringer who died at Ypres. He was a survivor of the 1st World War and his story is told through the eyes of his grandson, Mr Les Stringer. "I was born and raised in Sunderland so I never had the opportunity to talk to my grandfather. To my mother he was a foul-mouthed, drunken brute. Whenever I misbehaved there was always the threat "Behave yourself or I will send you down to your grandad Stringer". I lived in fear of this threat. Then in 1956 (when I was 11 years old) my grandmother died and my mother took me to Romford, Essex (where they were living) for the funeral. Everything my mother said about him was true. When we met he was drunk and smelly and the house was filthy. I would have nothing to do with him and ran out of the house. I was looked after by the next door neighbours until my mother cleaned up the house. I had no further contact with my grandfather and he died in 1963.

I found out about his death from an advertisement placed in the Sunderland Echo by the solicitor handling his estate. I was entitled to £300 plus his medals. The money was very useful but I am ashamed to say the medals and the man meant nothing to me. My grandfather died in hospital at Hornchurch, Romford and right to the end he apparently terrorised the nurses with his drunken, foul-mouthed behaviour. He was given a pauper's burial and I believe only one member of the family was present. It is only since I have matured that I have thought about just what had turned my grandfather from a war hero into someone who was despised and shunned by his family. It grieves me to think that had I been more mature I may have been in a position to help him rather than fear him. Just who was Alfred Stringer? He was born at Pulloxhill in 1889 and had 13 siblings/half siblings. In about 1890 the family moved to Flitwick, living at 53, Water End. School records show that he attended school in Flitwick from the age of 7 until he was 10 years old. As was common at that time he left school to work on the land. As a young man of 24 he went to war. In October 1914 his brother,



Sidney was killed in action at Ypres. Then in August 1915 my grandfather was awarded the DCM for gallant conduct. In September 1915, again for gallant conduct, he was awarded the Clasp to go with the medal. After the end of the war he moved to St Albans, where he married and my father was born. He was employed initially as a Sheet Metal Worker and then became a Landscape Gardener.

What effect the events of the 1914-18 war had on him can only be surmised. I believe that they had a devastating effect which clearly affected the rest of his life. But fate had still another blow in store for him. In December 1944 my father, his only child, was killed in action in Belgium. Perhaps this was the last straw. Those soldiers who were killed in action are, quite rightly, remembered for the great sacrifice they made. But what of people like my grandfather who returned home to a life of a living hell? Today they would be receiving treatment for Post Traumatic Stress. But in 1919 they were just pushed to one side and forgotten about. To paraphrase William Shakespeare's Julius Caesar. Mark Anthony's speech over Caesar's body. "The evil that men do lives after them; The good is oft interred with their bones". I believe that this was the unfortunate fate of my grandfather. One of my biggest regrets is that I did not look for the reason for his behaviour until it was too late. Although I can now do nothing about helping the man I hope that I can do something to aid his memory and that of the thousands of soldiers who found themselves in a similar position. Our son, who now lives in Canada, proudly displays the First World War medals of his greatgrandfather in his home alongside the Second World War medals of his grandfather. He believes that it is more important to remember what they did for their country rather than what their country did to them."

### HERBERT STRINGER: BROTHER OF SIDNEY AND ALBERT

Herbert Stringer ( b: 1899) was noted in the Bedfordshire Times on the 4th May 1917 as the fifth son of the same family to join H M forces during World War I. Alfred and Margaret Elizabeth Stringer (nee Abbott), who lived at 5 Water Lane lost one son at Ypres and all of the other four suffered wounds and the consequences of war. Herbert was a Private in the Suffolk Regiment and he survived the war.



## FREDERICK VIRGIN: FAMILY FILE

The Virgin family resided in Church End Flitwick at the time of the 1911 census. Frederick's father was a railway platelayer on the Midland Railway. His father was John Virgin who was born c:1857 in Greenfield and his mother was called Naomi (nee Pedder) who was born in January 1857 in Flitwick. Frederick's parents were married on the 9th March 1877. This was a large family, although the mortality rate was high. Frederick's brothers and sisters were: William John (b: 1877), Thomas (b: 1879), John (b: 1882), Albert (b: 1884), George (b: 1888—d: 1891), Lily Maud (b: 1891—d: 1891), Rose Amelia (b: 1892—d: 1946), George (b: 1893—d: 1938) and Ruth (b: 1898—d: 1898). Frederick was born at Flitwick in March 1886. His eldest brother William also followed in the family work tradition as a platelayer for the GNR and lived in Ivel Road Sandy with his large family (10 children—one of whom died) and was married to Mary Ann Hare. One of William's sons—George, died in France right near the end of the war on 25th August 1918. His brother Thomas was also in the Bedfordshire Regiment and survived the war. Thomas was married to Kate Pedder and had children—Violet, James, Olive and Charlie. The family lived in Chapel Road at the time of the war. Frederick was a Private in the Bedfordshire Regiment 2nd Battalion. His service number was 3/7818 and he was killed on the 11th of July 1916 at Trones Wood in France. His death is recorded both on the Thiepval Memorial on the Somme Face 2C and also on a family grave in Flitwick Churchyard.

## HENRY GEORGE WESTON: FAMILY FILE

Henry George Weston was the only child of Henry Weston (b: 1865 d: Mar 1954) from Flitton and his wife Emily Line of Flitwick (b: 1868 d: Dec 1935). Henry and Emily were married at Flitwick on 24th September 1894. Henry George was born the next year in the 3rd quarter of 1895. The 1901 census shows the family living in Water End Flitwick. By 1911 Henry (Senior) was working as a railway labourer and Henry George was working at the age of 15 years as a farm labourer. Henry was enlisted initially in the Bedfordshire Regiment service no 25898 and later transferred to the 9th Battalion of the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment, service no 26121. It is not clear why he was in this particular Regiment, although men were often moved if their company was badly hit and reduced in number and another company needed re-enforcing. Henry became a Lance Corporal and was killed in action at Guillemonte on the 26th August 1916 at the age of 21 years. Henry is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial on the Somme in France Pier 11 face A. The loss of their



## WILLIAM WHITTINGTON MM: FAMILY FILE

William Whittington was the son of James and Charlotte Whittington. The family lived in Church End Flitwick. In the 1911 census William was listed as a domestic gardener and his father was an under gardener (presumably at a big house locally). William was born in the 3rd quarter of 1894 and had three siblings—Charlotte (b: 1889), Horace James (b: 1902) and Rose Violet Lilian (b: 1907). There was also a child who died in infancy. The family lived next door to their Grandfather, Samuel Whittington. Samuel died in the early part of 1912. In 1871 Samuel lived at "The Warren" near Priestley Farm. William's mother, Charlotte, was a straw hat sewer working from home. William was initially a member of the Bedfordshire Regiment, service no: 25587 but was transferred to the Suffolk Regiment, service no: 43528. William was a Corporal and he lost his life dying of his wounds on the 30th of April 1917 aged just 22 years old. His death is recorded at the Aubigny Communal Cemetery in the Pas de Calais in France.

## ALBERT T WOODCRAFT: FAMILY FILE

Albert Thomas Woodcraft was the son of Walter and Agnes Matilda Woodcraft. Walter was born c: 1863 and died in 1955 in the local area. By trade Walter was a bricklayer. Agnes (sometimes called Alice) was born c: April 1869 and died before WWI in April 1901. Her maiden name was Hayward and she was born in Winchelsea . Walter remarried to Jane Oliver (b: 7/10/1864 d: Dec 1922). Albert had a number of siblings :- Walter Wilfred (b: Jul 1890 d: Sept 1965 at Biggleswade). George Hayward (b: 1892 d: 5/9/1958 at 31 Station Rd Ampthill), Lilian Annie (b: 29 Oct 1896 d: Sept 1991 at Ampthill), Mabel Matilda (b: 9 Oct 1895 d: Mar 1976 at Biggleswade, and a step sister— Elsie Sophia (b: 24/9/1902 d: Jul 1988 at Ampthill). Albert was born in the second quarter of 1894 at Flitwick. At the age of 17 yrs in 1911 he was listed as working in the straw hat trade. The family at this time were living in The Ridgeway in Flitwick. Albert was a Private in the 5th Battalion, the Bedfordshire Regiment during the war with a service no: 2928. He died in the Gallipoli campaign on 17th August 1915. Albert was buried at the Hellas Memorial Cemetary Part X and his name is recorded on panels 54 and 218. This campaign, against Turkish troops, was one of the greatest military disasters of World War One. The aim was to open another front against the enemy and it was assumed the Turks would be a relatively easy foe to defeat. This was completely wrong and the sites chosen for landings were impossible. Many British and Commonwealth troops— particularly from Australia and New Zealand lost their lives here. Albert's brothers , Walter and George also fought in WWI but both survived. Walter was in the Royal Engineers ( service no: 522730) and after the war he lived in Ampthill Road Flitwick. George initially was in the Bedfordshire Regiment (service no: 2889) and later the Royal Defence Corps ( service no 91374). George married Dorothy Elliot in September 1917. The rest of his siblings lived long lives largely in the Bedfordshire area.

## JOHN THOMAS WOOD: FAMILY FILE

John Thomas Wood was not a local lad and his family came from the outskirts of the London in the Essex area. John's father was John Wood born in Plumstead in 1871 and was a carpenter and joiner by trade. John's mother was Alice Emma, her maiden name was Witcombe and she was born in 1873 in Whitechapel. In the 1901 census her family actually lived next door to the Wood family in West Ham. John Thomas Wood was born in West Ham in the Plumstead area in the third quarter of 1899. John had an older brother Edwin (b: 1896 in Woolwich) and a sister Lucy Lillian (b: September 1897 in West Ham). By 1911 for some reason the family is to be found in Windmill Road Flitwick. John Thomas Wood's war time career found him initially in the 81st (Grad) Battalion of the Bedfordshire Regiment (service no: 44444) and then quickly afterward in the Essex Regiment, 11th Battalion, with a service number 44306. John was a Private. John lost his life on the Western Front on the 29th of September 1918, right near the end of the war and at the age of only 19 years. John, like many others, left a soldier's will leaving his effects to his mother at home in Flitwick. John is recorded as buried at the Heath Cemetery, Harbonnieres, on the Somme in France having died of his wounds.

## WORLD WAR ONE DEAD SERVICEMEN NOT ON OUR WAR MEMORIAL:

Lists of casualties and war dead were not perfect—different groups of people used different criteria. During my research I discovered a ledger compiled by the Diocese of St Albans through the churches in each Parish. In Flitwick I was surprised to find 32 war dead instead of the 29 recorded on the memorial. There is nothing sinister about this, often people had ties with more than one place meaning they could be commemorated in the town or village of their birth or where their parents lived, sometimes they had moved on and perhaps married so left family behind in a new area: The three men not recorded are as follows:

### P E ROE: PERCY EDWARD ROE, PRIVATE

The Hertfordshire Regiment. Service number 203850. Died the 25th September 1917. Age at death 21 years. He was the son of James and Annie Roe of 27 Cambridge Street, Luton born in the 2nd quarter of 1896 in Luton and was married to Maud Mary Bunker of Church End, Flitwick—just a few months before he died, in the second quarter of 1917. Maud went on to re-marry in late 1923 to William G Brightman. Percy's death is recorded on the Tyne Cot Memorial—Panel 153. Percy Roe is also recorded on the Borough of Luton Memorial and Roll of honour. He is listed at his parents' address. Maud was from a well known Flitwick family so the connection is quite strong in this instance. Percy Roe's death was recorded in the Flitwick Column of the Bedfordshire Times saying "A shell burst in the trench where they were and Private Roe and four others were killed. He was well liked by his colleagues and had only recently been transferred from the Bedfordshire Regiment." Maud went on to live locally until the age of 77 years dying in 1974.

### W H Foster: - William H Foster.

A Sergeant in the 1st/5th Bedfordshire Regiment, his service number was 2958. He served in the Gallipoli campaign and died on the 17th August 1915. His death is recorded on the Helles Memorial in the Balkans ( Panel 54 and 218). William has some connections to Flitwick and is on the Diocese Roll, however he is recorded on military records as having lived in Luton before the war and he also enlisted in the town. I cannot trace him on any of the Luton memorials. His link with Flitwick does not seem to be able to be fully established, although the Parish Magazine mentions a Foster family, which may or may not be related to him. His picture is in a book called "The story of the first Fifth Bedfords" by Edmund Rimmer. In the same book the T Bason is also mentioned.



### T Bason: - Thomas Bason,

Thomas is recorded in the roll for the diocese as a Sergeant , however the only T Bason recorded in the records of the Bedfordshire Regiment is a Private . Private Thomas Bason ( b; 1897), service no 20333 was a member of the 4th Battalion and died on the 10th of February 1917. He is buried at the Ancre British Cemetery Beaumont Hamel , Somme, France on the Western front. Thomas was born in Tempsford, but enlisted at Ampthill . He is listed as killed in action. At the age of 18 years in 1915 he married Lucy Evelyn Ward who also is listed as coming from Tempsford. His death is also reported in the Flitwick column of the Bedfordshire Times. This report mentions him leaving a widow and a child living in Flitwick. He and Lucy had a daughter—Annie Bason in the last quarter of 1916 whilst living in Flitwick. Thomas is listed on the roll of honour for Tempsford.

## FRANK RONALD BUNKER: FAMILY FILE – SURVIVED!

As we are all aware not everybody who went off to war failed to return, so in order to celebrate this I have sought the story of people from Flitwick who went to war and came back to live their lives in the post war period. By kind permission of Jennie Frost and the Bunker family I am recording here the life of her father Frank Ronald Bunker. Before World War II Frank lived at 84 Dunstable Road Flitwick (approximately where my own house is now). Frank was born in September 1918. He enlisted into the Royal Artillery on 18th October 1939 soon after the outbreak of World War II. Because he was a brickyard worker on the 15th August 1940 he was transferred to Class “W” Royal Army Reserve for employment in a civil trade. He was then required to work at Stewartby brickworks. On 1st April 1942 he was recalled to the Army to 22nd Anti-Tank for training. On 10th September 1942 he was posted to the 72nd Anti-Tank Regiment. For the next 16 months he served in England and during the following 17 months he served in Africa, leaving the North African theatre for Italy, where he served for a further 14 months. As troops and the war moved forward he found himself based in Austria for 4 months and then back to Italy for the next 10 months. Whilst in Italy for the first time he fought in the battle of Monte Cassino between January and May 1944. Because of his time spent working in the UK at the start of the war he was not demobbed until 31st July 1946.<sup>71</sup> For his service to his country he was awarded the Africa Star, the Defence War Medal, the Italy Star and the 1939 -45 Star, a brave man, as were so many people who lived through this period. On the notification of impending release it stated that his Military conduct was exemplary and the testimonial said “This Gunner, during the whole period of his war service, has proved himself to be a very efficient, diligent and trustworthy worker. His personal appearance and conduct have always been of the highest order”.



## WORLD ONE TWO MEDALS: 1914- 1918

The 1914-15 Star : Established in December 1918. Also known as 'Pip'.

This bronze medal was authorized in 1918. It is very similar to the 1914 Star but it was issued to a much wider range of recipients. Broadly speaking it was awarded to all who served in any theatre of war against Germany between 5th August 1914 and 31st December 1915, except those eligible for the 1914 Star. Similarly, those who received the Africa General Service Medal or the Sudan 1910 Medal were not eligible for the award. Like the 1914 Star, the 1914-15 Star was not awarded alone. The recipient had to have received the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. The reverse is plain with the recipient's service number, rank, name and unit impressed on it. An estimated 2.4 million of these medals were issued.



The British War Medal, 1914-18 .  
Established on 26th July 1919. Also known as

'Squeak'.

The silver or bronze medal was awarded to officers and men of the British and Imperial Forces who either entered a theatre of war or entered service overseas between 5th August 1914 and 11th November 1918 inclusive. This was later extended to services in Russia, Siberia and some other areas in 1919 and 1920. Approximately 6.5 million British War Medals were issued. Approximately 6.4 million of these were the silver versions of this medal. Around 110,000 of a bronze version were issued mainly to Chinese, Maltese and Indian Labour Corps. The front (obverse) of the medal depicts the head of George V. The recipient's service number, rank, name and unit was impressed on the rim.







The Allied Victory Medal. Also known as 'Wilfred'

It was decided that each of the allies should each issue their own bronze victory medal with a similar design, similar equivalent wording and identical ribbon. The British medal was designed by W. McMillan. The front depicts a winged classical figure representing victory. Approximately 5.7 million victory medals were issued. Interestingly, eligibility for this medal was more restrictive and not everyone who received the British War Medal ('Squeak') also received the Victory Medal ('Wilfred'). However, in general, all recipients of 'Wilfred' also received 'Squeak' and all recipients of 'Pip' also received both 'Squeak' and 'Wilfred'. The recipient's service number, rank, name and unit were impressed on the rim.



The Territorial Force War Medal, 1914-1919. Instituted on 26th April 1920.

Only members of the Territorial Force and Territorial Force Nursing Service were eligible for this medal. They had to have been a member of the Territorial Force on or before the 30th of September 1914 and to have served in an operational theatre of war outside the United Kingdom between 5th August 1914 and 11th November 1918. An individual who was eligible to receive the 1914 Star or 1914/15 Star could not receive the Territorial War Medal. The obverse (front) of the medal shows an effigy of King George V with the words GEORGIVS BRITT OMN:REX ET IND: IMP: The reverse of the medal has the words TERRITORIAL WAR MEDAL around the rim, with a laurel wreath and the words inside the wreath FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICE OVERSEAS 1914-1919.

# WORLD WAR TWO: 1939 - 1945

# BATTLE OF MONTE CASSINO

The Battle of Monte Cassino (also known as the Battle for Rome and the Battle for Cassino) was a costly series of four battles. At the beginning of 1944, the western half of the Gustav Line was being anchored by Germans holding the Rapido, Liri and Garigliano valleys and certain surrounding peaks and ridges, but not the historic abbey of Monte Cassino, founded in AD 524 by St. Benedict, although they manned defensive positions set into the steep slopes below the abbey walls. On the 15th of February the monastery, high on a peak overlooking the town of Cassino, was destroyed by American B-17, B-25, and B-26 bombers. The bombing was based on the fear that the abbey was being used as a lookout post for the Axis defenders (this position evolved over time to admit that Axis military was not garrisoned there). Two days after the bombing, German paratroopers poured into the ruins to defend it. From 17 January to 18 May, the Gustav defences were assaulted four times by Allied troops. These operations resulted in casualties of over 54,000 Allied and 20,000 German soldiers.



# FLITWICK TOWN WAR MEMORIAL INSCRIPTIONS: WORLD WAR TWO 1939-1945

SURNAME	NAMES	RANK	AGE	SERVICE NUMBER	DATE OF DEATH
<a href="#">Bagnall</a>	MAURICE WILLIAMS	GUNNER	21	948369	29/04/1940
<a href="#">BOTTOMS</a>	WILLIAM GEORGE HERBERT	DRIVER	38	T/7960178	29/04/1940
<a href="#">CAVES</a>	BERNARD JAMES	PRIVATE	23	5950645	30/01/1943
<a href="#">CLAYTON</a>	ALBERT EDWARDS	PRIVATE	23	5952046	28/02/1942
<a href="#">COUSIONS</a>	JAMES EDWARDS	PRIVATE	25	5952618	11/08/1945
<a href="#">IZZARD</a>	CECIL WILLIAMS	PRIVATE	25	59549582	12/09/1944
<a href="#">IZZARD</a>	JOHN HENRY	ABLE SEAMEN	UNKOWN	P/JX327941	27/08/1943
<a href="#">LATHAM</a>	WILLIAM	LANCE CORPORAL	42	11425640	20/04/1945
<a href="#">LLOYD</a>	RONALD J	UNKOWN	UNKOWN	Unknown	Unknown
<a href="#">MITCHELL</a>	ALBERT HENRY	GUNNER	22	11414233	23/04/1943
<a href="#">SMITH</a>	ERIC ARTHUR	LEAD TELEGRAPHIST	40	Unkown	30/11/1943
<a href="#">STRINGER</a>	MAURICE ARTHUR	PRIVATE	22	5951184	24/04/1941
<a href="#">SUMMERFIELD</a>	SAMUEK KENNETH	AIRCRAFTSMAN	31	Unknown	07/09/1944

MAURICE WILLIAM  
BAGNALL:  
FAMILY FILE

Maurice William Bagnall was a Gunner in the Royal Artillery. His service number was 948369. Maurice was born in the final quarter of 1918 in the Flitwick area and was aged 21 years at the time of his death on 29th April 1940. At the time of his death his family was living at 34 High Street , Flitwick. Maurice was the son of Charles Birch Bagnall and Lizzie (nee Whitworth). After Maurice's death probate was granted to his father Charles , who was listed as a Journeyman Baker. Maurice's effects came to the sum of £203 15s 9d. Maurice is buried in Flitwick Parish Churchyard. Maurice had a brother, Eric Charles Whitworth Bagnall. Eric was born in the third quarter of 1914 and married Constance M. Summerfield in the last quarter of 1937.

I have not been able to find a war record for Eric who was a carpenter by trade. When Charles, their father died on 7th January 1952 his effects totalling £450 2s 4d were left to Eric. I have traced Maurice's parents back to the early part of the 20th Century. In the 1911 census Charles was the manager of the Co-op store in Sharnbrook. At that time he was married to Hannah Bagnall (nee Talbot) . Hannah died in the second quarter of 1912 in Bedfordshire. Charles was born the 2nd quarter of 1869 in Burton upon Trent. Hannah was born in 1874 in Exhall, Warwickshire. The couple were married in late 1901. Charles re-married to Lizzie Whitworth at Bedford in 1913. Lizzie was the mother of Maurice and Eric. I do not know if they had any other children.



WILLIAM GEORGE HERBERT  
BOTTOMS:  
FAMILY FILE

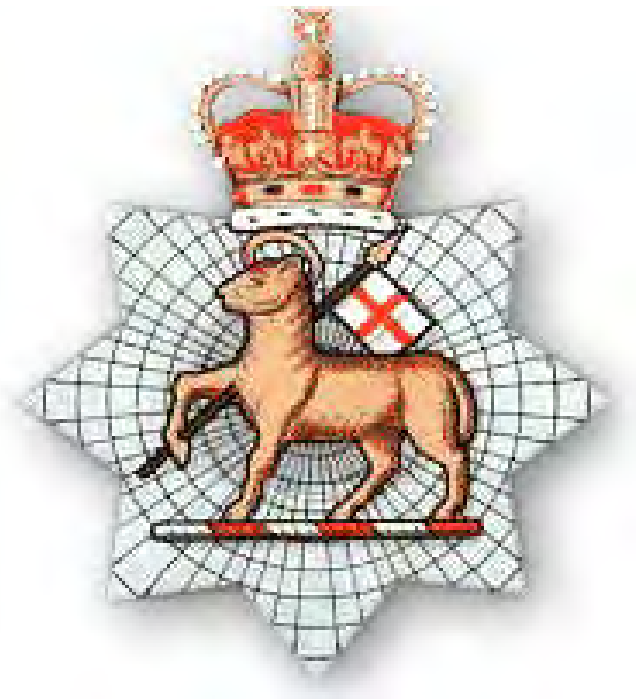
William was a driver with the Royal Army Service Corp. His service number was T/7960178. William was born in 1907 in Lambeth in London. William's parents were Herbert and Mary Jane Bottoms (nee Giddings). Herbert and Mary weremarried in the 3rd quarter of 1906 in Lambeth. By 1911 most of the family were living at the Road Houses in Silsoe. William's father , Herbert was however living in Police Barracks in London as a Police Constable in Lambeth. Herbert was born in about 1889. William had two siblings, Edith (b: 1908) and Norman (b: 1911). William Bottoms married in the 2nd quarter of 1937 in the Ampthill registration district to Elsie W. Beal from Flitwick. William died around 29th September 1945, at first shown as missing presumed dead. His death is recorded at Brookwood Military Cemetery in Woking Surrey—Panel 16, Column 2. He is also recorded on the gravestone below. As a driver in the RASC William Bottoms would have been involved in the Supply of goods often in or near the front line and providing transport for troops.





## BERNARD JAMES CAVES: FAMILY FILE

Bernard Caves was born in the last quarter of 1919 in the Ampthill area of Bedfordshire. Bernard's mother's maiden name was Bunker. His parents were Frederick and Sarah Caves, who married in the area in 1909. In the 1911 census the family was living in Hornes End Flitwick. Bernard's father was a farm labourer and they had another son called Frederick who was born in 1910. Bernard's father was born in 1888 and named Frederick Charles Caves and was the son of George and Elizabeth Caves. George was a railway labourer living in "The Row" in Flitwick. His mother, Sarah, was the daughter of Frederick and Betsy Bunker (nee—Fossey) and the family lived at Water End Flitwick. Bernard was a member of a Territorial Battalion of the Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment), later known as the Queen's Royal Regiment (West Surrey) his service number was 5950645 and he was a Private. Bernard fought in the North Africa campaign and was killed on the 30th of January 1943, aged 23 years of age.



## JOHN CHARLTON: FAMILY FILE

John Charlton's connection to Flitwick seems to have been through his wife and her family. John was born in County Durham around 1918. John's parents were Thomas and Sarah Charlton. John married Doris E Legate in Flitwick just before the start of World War II between July and September 1939. Doris was born in the first quarter of 1920, both of her parents being from the Bedfordshire area. Her father and mother were Arthur Frank and Annie Margaret Legate (nee Askern). John was a Sergeant in the 1/7th Battalion of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment. His service number was 5952044. John died on or around the 30th of July 1944 near Caen in France soon after the Normandy Landings and the subsequent breakout from the beachhead. John's body was never found and identified, therefore he is recorded as missing presumed dead. At the time of his death he was 26 years of age. John Charlton's death is recorded on the Bayeux Memorial in Calvados, France on panel 12—column 3. Sadly John and Doris would have had very little married life together as the war so cruelly interrupted their lives.



## ALBERT EDWARD CLAYTON: FAMILY FILE

Albert Clayton was born in the Biggleswade area of Bedfordshire in the third quarter of 1918, around the time of the end of World War One. Albert's mother's maiden name was Hobbs. Albert appears to have married Florence K Woodruff in the second quarter of 1941 in Warwickshire. She was born in the Burton on Trent area in 1919. At the time of Albert's death his wife was living at 25 Maulden Road Flitwick. Probate was granted to his widow, Florence, with effects of £210 15s 10d in September 1942. Albert Clayton was a Private initially in the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment and subsequently in the 8th Battalion of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, and his service number was 5952046. Albert was 23 years of age at the time of his death. He is buried at the Malbork Cemetery (Pol 2) in Poland. Private Clayton was captured by the Germans in the Pas de Calais area around 1940. It is likely he would have been a part of "The Long March" from the Dunkirk area to the "Prisoner of War" camps in Poland. Because of where he is buried he would have been imprisoned at "Stalag 20B" which was on the outskirts of a town called Marienburg (now called—Malbork) in the Willenburg area. Marienburg - Stalag XXB near Danzig : This POW camp was originally a hutted and tented camp with a double boundary fence and watchtowers. From 1940 British, Poles and Serbs were held here. Later in 1940 an administration block and a small hospital were also built, mainly using prisoner labour to build them. By 1941 they had also added a theatre. The POW's held in this camp were used as labour on nearby farms, factories, sawmills in the railway goods yards and to cut ice on the River Vistula.

## JAMES EDWARD COUSINS: FAMILY FILE

James Edward Cousins was born in late 1918 and was the son of James Cousins and Emma ( or Emmie nee Brinklow ) Cousins. James's parents were married locally in the 3rd quarter of 1918. The Brinklows were a Westoning family and the Cousins came from Flitwick. It is assumed that James's Father died as his Mother married again to Archibald Victor Dix in the 3rd quarter of 1937. James Edward Cousins served as a Private in the 5th Battalion, the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment. His service number was 5952618 and he served in Malaya in the Far East. James died near the end of the war on the 11th August 1945. His death is commemorated at the Djakarta War Cemetery (Indo 2) in Indonesia reference 2B 5. He is listed as around 25 years of age, but I calculate he was actually 26 yrs old. Probate for his estate was granted to his Mother, Mrs E Dix, and the family address was 12 The Thinnings , Flitwick. His effects were £404 9s 8d which were granted to his Mother , indicating that he was not married.

# THE IZZARD FAMILY:

The next two brave men recorded on the war memorial were brothers , CecilVWilliam and John Henry ( known as Jackie) Izzard. They left behind a brotherVknown to local people as Sonny Izzard and I have been lucky enough to interviewVhim about his brothers and the family they left behind.VThe Izzard family lived at 55 Windmill Road in Flitwick. Cecil, John and Sonny’sVparents were Frederick William Izzard and Annie Lily Izzard (nee Law). They wereVmarried at Luton in the last quarter of 1919.V90VFrederick worked at the Marston Valley Brick Company as a brick burner. Fredericksadly died in early 1939, before the war started , so never knew of theVfamily’s sad loss.VThis was a large family with brothers and sisters— Alec, John, Cecil, Robert,VReginald (Sonny), Desmond, Gillian and Anne. Their mother Annie worked at the munitions factory at Kempston Hardwick during the war making 500lb bombs.

# CECIL WILLIAM IZZARD:

Cecil was born in the last quarter on 1922 . He went off to war at the young age of 18 years old in 1940 but had been involved in the Territorial Army at Ampthill before the war started along with other men recorded on the memorial— Messrs. Bottoms and Bagnall were with him. Before the war the Izzard brothers and sisters went to school at the infant School at 69 Station Road ( where my offices are now located (Author’s note)). After school they would visit their Grandmother who lived in Station Road (Mrs Peddar) and itwas from her that Reginald got the name “Sonny” andit has stuck right to this day. They then went to the old school “Flitwick County Primary” at the bottom of Dunstable Road, now the Youth Association building. The headmaster at that time was Mr Strickland. 9I Cecil Izzard was a Private in the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment . His service number was 5949582. In this photo he is shown with a Lance Corporal’s

stripe and this was probably a field promotion. Cecil was captured at the fall of Singapore and fell into the hands of the Japanese as a POW. He died at sea on the 12th of September 1944. Cecil is recorded on the Singapore Memorial at Kranji on column 63. Cecil and other POW’s were being transported on a Japanese ship, the SS Kachidoki Maru. This ship formed part of a convoy heading for Formosa. Over 2,218 British and Australian prisoners of war, many of whom had survived the horrors of the construction of the notorious Death Railway in Burma, were put aboard two ships at Singapore. They formed part of a 12 ship convoy, made up of three transport ships, 2 tankers, 4 escorting Japanese destroyers and other cargo ships. The convoy was attacked by three US Submarines—USS Sealion, theGrowler and the Pampanito. The Kachidoki Maru and the Rakuyo Maru were both torpedoed and sunk 300 miles west of Luzon and a total of 1144 of the POW’s lost their lives. 1174 peoplesurvived the sinking’s and were either picked up by the Americans or by the Japanese to continue as POW’s. Cecil Izzard was amongst those who lost their lives inthis incident. Probate for his personal effects was granted to his mother—Annie Lily Venables ( widow) in the sum of £210 10s 10d in May 1945 at Birmingham.§



## JOHN HENRY (JACKIE) IZZARD:

John Henry or Jackie Izzard was born around the end of 1924 and served in the Royal Navy during the 2nd World War. He was an Able Seaman and served aboard HMS Egret. Jackie's service number was P/ JX 327941. On 27 August 1943 the 40th Support Group of the Royal Navy patrolling in the Bay of Biscay was relieved by the 1st Support Group, consisting of Egret together with the sloop Pelican and the frigates Jed, Rother, Spey and Evenlode. The group was attacked by a squadron of 18 Dornier Do 217 carrying Henschel glider bombs. One of the two covering destroyers HMCS Athabaskan was heavily damaged by a bomb and Egret was sunk with the loss of 194 of her crew including Jackie Izzard. Four of the Izzard sons served in WW2— Alec, Jackie and Robert in the Royal Navy and Cecil in the Army - two returned.



## WILLIAM LATHAM: FAMILY FILE

William Latham was born in Walton le Dale near Preston on 20th of January 1903 to William Henry Latham (b: 1866) and Sarah Jane Latham (b: 1862—nee Rimmer). Williams' father was a Dairy Farmer. William had a number of siblings— Maria (b: 1890) Thomas (b: 1893) John (b: 1896) Maggie (b: 1897) Hilda (b: 1899) Alice (b: 1901) and Norman (b: Sept 1905 d: May 1987) who married Annie Lloyd.<sup>93</sup> William married Bertha Coupe, also from Walton le Dale, in the 1st quarter of 1922. They had three daughters, Megan (b: 1923) Marjorie (b: 1924) Maureen (b: 1930) all in the Preston area and a son, Michael, born in the Thame area near Oxford December 1938. When William and the family first came south he worked as a salesman for a corn merchant, Percy Bush of Thame. Later the family came to live at 72 Amptill Road Flitwick and William's work moved to the Amptill firm L W Vass, which at that time, was also a corn merchant. Michael still lives in Flitwick and I am indebted for his help in providing background into his family and these pictures. One of Michael's sisters is still alive living in the north of England. William was a Lance Corporal in the Corps of Military Police and his service number was 11425640. In his Army pay book he is described as 5ft 7 3/4" with blue eyes and he enlisted on 14/05/1942. William lost his life in the service of his country on the 20th April 1945 in Germany. He was 42 years old at the time of his death which is recorded at the Becklingen Cemetery ref: 8D2. He left effects in probate to his widow Bertha in the sum of £421 14s 11d. Bertha, his wife, went on to live until she was 93, dying in Flitwick in late 1997.



## ROLAND J LLOYD:

Sadly, in spite of much research I have not been able to find any records regarding Roland J Lloyd at present. There is no record on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission website, nor on Ancestry .co.uk or Forces War Records. My personal research with relatives of War dead and those who survived has also drawn a blank. “A Plea—if anyone knows anything that will help, please let me know”

## ALBERT HENRY MITCHELL: FAMILY FILE

Albert Henry Mitchell was the son of Ernest Mitchell and Mabel Matilda Mitchell (nee : Woodcraft). Ernest and Mabel were married in the Flitwick area in the third quarter of 1919 and Albert Henry was born to them around 1921. Albert Henry was 22 years of age when he died. He was a gunner in the Royal Artillery in the 49th Light Anti Aircraft Regiment and his service number was 11414233. He is buried at the Medjez-el-bab war cemetery in Tunisia. Albert died on the 23rd of April 1943. There are no records of him marrying. Albert's family were largely local— his mother was born in Ampthill , but the family came to live in the Ridgeway in Flitwick. Her parents were Walter Woodcraft and Agnes Matilda Hayward (Sadly she died when Mabel was only 5 years old). Walter worked as a bricklayer. He married again to Jane Oliver in 1901. His brother, Ernest Mitchell who was born in Harlestone, Northamptonshire was a farm worker. His family moved to Woburn when he was young, living at 36 Leighton Street, Woburn.

## ERIC ARTHUR SMITH: FAMILY FILE

Eric Arthur Smith was born on the 23rd of January 1903, the son of Arthur and Rebecca Smith ( nee : Swales Pedder) . In 1901 the family lived in Church End, Flitwick. Arthur Smith was not a local man as he was born in 1869 in the Isle of Grain, in Kent. His wife Rebecca was born in Westoning in 1868. 95 Arthur Smith was the Manager of a Hat Factory in Luton. By 1911 the family lived in Chapel Road Flitwick. His wife Rebecca had died in June 1910. Eric had brothers and sisters— Annie (b:1894 d: 1919), John William (b: 1896 d:

1939) , Herbert (b: 1898 d: 1915), Edith (b: 1899 d: 1977), Henry Peddar Smith (b: 1906 d:1907), and Henrietta (b: 1908 d: 1988 m: Frank Hinson). Eric's father died in 1935 In the section of this book relating to World War I you will find reference to one of these brothers— Herbert Smith who also died in his country's service. Eric Smith served in the Royal Navy as a Telegraphist , his service number was P/J 93246. At some stage in his career he served aboard HMS Hood which was the last Battlecruiser built for the Royal Navy, commissioned in 1920 at 47430 tons. HMS Hood was sunk in a famous encounter with the German Battleship Bismarck on the 24th May 1941. Eric Smith does not appear to have been on board at this time. Only three crew members survived and 1418 men were killed in the sinking. Eric Smith was a regular serviceman and served in the Navy before the start of World War 2. He was awarded the Royal Navy Service and Good Conduct Medal in 1936 and a further Medal in 1943 for similar good conduct. Eric Smith lost his life on the 30th November 1943 and is buried in Flitwick Churchyard. At the time of his death he was 40 years old. There is no trace of a record of Eric getting married.



## MAURICE ARTHUR STRINGER: FAMILY FILE

Maurice Stringer was the son of Annie Stringer ( b: 1891 d: 1961) (known as Nance) and John Canwell ( b: 1890 d: 1941) . Maurice had four siblings— Leslie William Stringer ( 1912—2000) who married Doris M Bird, Wilfred John ( 1916—1992) who married Gladys Barclay, Kenneth Stringer (1923—2002) who married first Margaret Garner and second Doreen Canwell (5/3/1929—?). Annie and John married in the 3rd quarter of 1927. This was a Flitwick family in every way. In the 1911 census Annie was living at Water End Flitwick as a domestic servant , Annie's parents were James and Priscilla Stringer. John Canwell died in December 1941. He had also known war as he fought in World War One and had a pension from his service. At the end of World War one he was living at Cemetery Lane, Flitton. His service number was 27929 and he fought in the Bedfordshire Regiment 3rd Battalion and was discharged due to be unfit for service on 30th May 1916. He lived in Flitton with his mother , Annie Stanley, before marrying Annie . Maurice was a Private in the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment 1st Battalion. His service number was 5951184. He died on the 24th April 1941 in the Middle East theatre of war. His death is recorded on the Athens Memorial Part 2 , Lac Zuh Face 5. Maurice was 22 years of age when he died.

## SAMUEL KENNETH SUMMERFIELD:

Samuel Summerfield was the son of Charles and Alice Summerfield of Maulden. He was married to Doris May Webb( b: 22/2/1914 d: Oct 2005). Samuel was in the RAF Volunteer Reserve and was an Aircraftsman, his service number was 1219208. He was buried at St Mary's Church in Maulden. Samuel was born in the 1st quarter of 1913 and was married to Doris Webb in the final quarter of 1937. Samuel had 6 siblings— Cecil Charles ( 1903– 1903), Arthur Charles (1904- ?), Victor (1906—1974), Horace (1910– 1998), Eva (1902—?), and Stanley (1909—1947). At the time of the 1911 Census the family were living in “The Brache” in Maulden. Samuel's parents were Charles Edward Summerfield (b: 1876 ) who was an agricultural worker and Alice Stanbridge (b: 1873 d: 1965). They were married at Maulden on the 16th April 1900. Samuel and Doris had a daughter— Jean B Summerfield in the 3rd quarter of 1939 just before the outbreak of war. Jean married Barry G Bass in the local area in 1960. Jean still lives in Flitwick to this day. Samuel died on the 7th September 1944. Doris Summerfield lived to the age of 91 years young and died whilst living in Steppingley in 2005. 98 In the same way as in World War I, some people who had links with Flitwick are not recorded on the World War 2 part of the memorial. In this particular case there is a war veteran who is recorded in the churchyard but is not listed on the memorial. His name is Wilfred Puttick who was a Sergeant Pilot who served in the RAF Volunteer Reserve in No 10 Squadron. No 10 Squadron was part of Bomber command and flew Whitley Bombers at the time of Wilfred's death. Wilfred was the son of John and Mabel Puttick, who by the end of the war were living in Ewell in Surrey. Wilfred Puttick was killed in action on the 26th July 1941 aged 27 years of age (Born c:1914) . He is remembered on the grave of his grandmother , Esther Gray who died on the 11th June 1918 aged 71 years. Wilfred's service number is 929723 and he is recorded (image by Helen Butler ) on the roll of honour in Westoning. He is buried in Koersel Communal Cemetery in Beringen, Limburg, Belgium—Grave no 5. His parents at one time seemed to have lived in Westoning and he had two brothers—Jack and Gordon and a sister Margery.



# WORLD TWO TWO MEDALS: 1939 - 1945

## 1939-45 STAR

This star was awarded for service in the Second World War between 3rd September 1939 and 2nd September 1945. Recipients were awarded this star if their service period was terminated by their death or disability due to service. The award of a gallantry medal also produced the award of this medal, regardless of the recipient's length of service. To qualify for this award Royal Navy personnel had to complete 6 months service afloat in active operational areas. Army personnel had to complete 6 months service in an operational command. Airborne troops qualified if they had participated in any airborne operations and had completed 2 months service in a fully operational unit. RAF personnel had to participate in operations against the enemy providing that 2 months service had been completed in an operational unit. Nonaircrew personnel had to complete 6 months service in an area of operational army command. Merchant Navy qualified if they completed 6 months service, and at least 1 voyage was made through an operational area. Members of fighter aircraft crews who took part in the Battle of Britain (10th July to 31st October 1940) were awarded the "Battle of Britain" bar to this medal.



## ATLANTIC STAR

This star was awarded to commemorate the Battle of the Atlantic within the period 3rd September 1939 to 8th May 1945. The 1939-45 Star must have been earned by 6, or 2 for aircrew, months service before commencing qualifying service for the Atlantic Star. The recipient was awarded this star if their service period was terminated by their death or disability due to service. The award of a gallantry medal also produced the award of this medal regardless of their service duration. Royal Navy and Merchant Navy personnel, together with Army and RAF personnel serving with either Naval service, had to complete 6 months service in the Atlantic, home waters, North Russia Convoys or South Atlantic waters west of longitude 20 degrees East. RAF members of air crews had to complete 2 months service in active operations within the specified area, providing that service for the 1939-45 Star had been completed.



## AIR CREW EUROPE STAR

This medal was awarded for operational flying from the UK over Europe, between the period 3rd September 1939 to 5th June 1944 (outbreak of war until the start of the D-Day Normandy Invasion). The recipient was awarded this star if their service period was terminated by their death or disability due to service. Also the award of a gallantry medal also produced the award of this medal, regardless of their service duration. RAF air crew had to complete 2 months service for this medal. However, this 2 months had to come after the service which entitled the person to the 1939-45 Star. Army personnel qualified for this star if they served on air crew duties for 4 months, and that 2 months of this minimum 4 month period had been operational flying over Europe, with at least one operational sortie.



## AFRICA STAR

This medal was awarded for 1 or more days service in North Africa between 10th June 1940 and 12th May 1943 (inclusive). Royal and Merchant Navy qualified through service in the Mediterranean between these two dates. Also service in the campaigns in Abyssinia, Somaliland and Eritrea between 10th June 1940 and 27th September 1941 would qualify. Merchant Navy would also qualify with service in operations off the Moroccan coast between 8th November 1942 and 12th May 1943. Army personnel had to enter North Africa on the establishment of an operational unit. Service in Abyssinia, Sudan, Somaliland and Eritrea also qualified. Service in West Africa did not qualify for this medal. RAF personnel had to land in, or have flown over, any of the areas previously mentioned. There were 3 clasps for this medal: 8th Army, 1st Army and North Africa 1942-43. Only one bar could be worn on the medal. If a recipient was entitled to more than one clasp, he or she wore the first clasp gained.



## PACIFIC STAR

This medal was awarded for service in the Pacific theatre of operations in the period 8th December 1941 to 2nd September 1945, both dates inclusive. Royal and Merchant Navy service in the Pacific Ocean, South China Sea and the Indian Ocean east of a line running approximately south of Singapore qualified for this medal, providing that the 6 months service for the 1939-45 had already been earned. The restriction of previously earning the 1939-45 star did not apply for those whose service started in the Pacific region after 2nd March 1945. Naval personnel ashore had the same qualification requirements as the Army. Army personnel had to serve in those territories which had been subjected to enemy or allied invasions. Service in Burma was excluded as this area had its own star: The Burma Star. Service in China and Malaya between 8th December 1941 and 15th February 1942 was included. The Army had no prior time qualification. RAF crews had to complete at least 1 operational sortie over the appropriate sea or land area.



BURMA STAR

This medal was awarded for service in the Burma Campaign between 11th December 1941 and 2nd September 1945 (inclusive). Royal and Merchant Navy personnel qualified through service in an area restricted to the Bay of Bengal, and enclosed by a line running from the southern-most point of Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) for a distance of 300 miles south, then to a point 300 miles west of the southern-most point of Sumatra, and continuing east to the western side of the Sunda Strait, including the Malacca Straits. The 6 months service for the 1939-45 had to be earned, before service could count towards the Burma Star. This restriction did not apply for those personnel who entered qualifying service within the last 6 months, providing they did not enter another operational command. Army personnel qualified through service in any part of Burma between 11th December 1941 and 2nd September 1945. Service in the provinces of Bengal and Assam in the period 1st May 1942 to 2nd September 1945 also qualified. Service in China and Malaya between 16th February 1942 and 2nd September 1945 was also counted. RAF aircrew had to make one operational sortie. RAF ground crew had the same restrictions as the Army. If a serviceman qualified for both the "Burma" and "Pacific" Stars, they would be awarded the first gained star, with a clasp (or rosette on ribbon-alone) for the other earned Star.



Italy Star

This medal was awarded for operational service in Sicily or Italy during the period 11th June 1943th to 8 May 1945. Royal and Merchant Navy service in the Mediterraneanand the Aegean Sea and operations in and around the Dodecanese, Corsica, Greece, Sardinia and Yugoslavia after 11 June 1943 would qualify. The 6 months service for the 1939-45 had to be earned, before service could count towards the Italy Star. This restriction did not apply for those personnel who entered qualifying service within the last 6 months, providing they did not enter another operational command. Naval shore-based personnel were covered by the Army qualification requirements. Army personnel had no prior time qualification. The applicable operational area for Army personnel was Aegean, Dodecanese, Corsica, Greece, Sardinia, Yugoslavia and Elba between 11 June 1943 and 8 May 1945. Service in Sicily after 17 August 1943, Sardinia after 19 September 1943 and Corsica after 4 October 1943 did not qualify. RAF personnel had no prior time qualification. Qualification involved participation in aircrew service within the Mediterranean theatre, including sorties from the Mediterranean area over Europe. Entry into Austrian Territory during the last few days of the Second World War qualified for this star. There were no clasps awarded with the "Italy" Star.



France and Germany Star

This medal was awarded for service in France, Belgium, Holland or Germany in the period 6th June 1944 to 8th May 1945.Royal and Merchant Navy qualification had no prior time qualification. The qualifying service area was in the direct support of land operations in France, Belgium, Holland and Germany, in the North sea south of a line from the Firth of Forth to Kristiansand in the English Channel or the Bay of Biscay east of longitude 6 degrees W. Service off the coast of South France qualified for the Italy Star. Shore based Naval personnel were subject to the same qualification as the Army. Army personnel had to take part in any operation on land in France, Belgium, Holland or Germany between 6 June 1944 and 8 May 1945.RAF aircrew had to have taken part in an operation sortie over Europe between 6 June 1944 and 8 May 1945. RAF aircrew who flew operations over Europe, starting from Mediterranean bases, did not qualify for the France & Germany star but the Italy Star.



DEFENCE MEDAL

This medal's qualification requirements are numerous and varied. I have summarised them into the following points.

□ Service in the Forces in non-operational areas subjected to air attack or closely threatened, providing such service lasting at least three years.

□ Non-operational service in the Forces overseas or outside the country of residence, providing that this service lasted for at least one year. If the territory was threatened by the enemy, or subjected to air raids, the duration requirement was reduced to six months.

□ Civil defence in military operational areas providing these civil defence activities were not eligible for campaign stars.

□ Members of any of the civilian services entitled to wear chevrons for their war service were eligible for this medal.

Members of the Home Guard resident in the UK, who had completed at least three

years service.

WAR MEDAL

This medal was awarded to all full-time personnel of the Armed Forces. Operational

and non-operational service of at least 28 days counted. The Merchant Navy requirement stated that the 28 days minimum should be served at sea. The recipient was awarded this medal if their service period was terminated by their death or disability due to service or capture as a prisoner-of-war and their service qualified them for one of the stars. Also if the recipient had received one of the stars for a service period of less than 28 days, they were also awarded the War Medal. The UK War Medals were made from cupro-nickel, whilst the Canadian War Medals were made from silver. Those War Medals issued to UK personnel were not officially named. However, those issued to Australian and South African personnel were officially named



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