“True love, by life no less than death, is tried. Live thou for England—we for England died.”
DEDICATION

This is dedicated to the men of Norton who served in the armed forces of this country in what came to be known as The Great War, 1914-1918. In particular it has been compiled ‘in memoriam’ of those men who were never to return to their homes and families giving the ultimate sacrifice of their lives.

We should not allow ourselves to forget the deeds and sacrifices offered so freely by our countrymen during this time. They were just ordinary people who willingly put their own lives at risk for their country and families, mostly ignorant of the wider implications of the War and the horrors that lay ahead of them.

This year, August 2014, marks 100 years since the War commenced and perhaps a seemly time for us all to be reminded of its ramifications. In August 2009 the last remaining British veteran of the trenches died breaking that personal connection with this time. It is important that future generations never forget the conflict itself and in particular those who gave their lives.

INTRODUCTION

In 1901 the population of Norton was approximately 378. Of these 63 were men and boys aged between 16 and 40. It is unlikely that these statistics would have changed much by 1914. A ‘Roll Of Honour’ discovered amongst church papers lists 90 men who enlisted into the army, navy and the fledgling air force ‘to do their bit’. The War Memorial in the churchyard at St Mary’s, Norton, records that 15 of these were not to return home.

This account is based upon a number of sources, primarily the War Memorial itself and the ‘Roll Of Honour’ referred to earlier. I have also searched for men with a Norton connection who gave their lives in The Great War but are not remembered on the War Memorial.

All British soldiers who served in the 1914-18 Great War had a personal file that recorded all details of their military service. Unfortunately more than half of these files were destroyed in a German air-raid on London in the Second World War on the night of 7th/8th September 1940. This makes the positive identification of several soldiers extremely difficult and it has not proved possible in the case of all remembered on the Norton War Memorial.

“They shall not grow 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”. [Laurence Binyon].
THE OUTBREAK OF WAR

On 28th June 1914, Gavrilo Princip assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria and his wife in the Bosnian city of Sarajevo. Through a convoluted series of acts it was this single incident that ultimately led to that fateful day of 4th August 1914 when it was announced that Britain had declared war upon Germany.

At the time Britain had only a small regular army that was ill equipped for what was to come but by some three weeks later approximately 150,000 men that comprised the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) had left these shores for the continent and were in position for the commencement of hostilities. A brief war was predicted and ‘it will be over by Christmas’ was an often heard expression.

Nobody at this point in time could have foreseen the four years of stalemate and slaughter that was to follow, predominantly in the muddy trenches of France and Belgium. Whilst this became the main focus of hostilities other theatres of war opened up. Often referred to as ‘side-shows’ this is not how they would have felt to the men who were unfortunate enough to have been fighting there.

In the early days of the war it was reported that many men saw this as an opportunity for a great adventure and thousands flocked to recruitment centres to enlist. Even later, when reports of conditions being endured by the troops reached home along with ever increasing casualty lists, the recruiting stations remained busy.
Harold was born at Norton in approximately 1895 and was the son of Francis Herbert, wheelwright and carpenter of Norton, and Eliza-Ann Stubbs. The family later moved to 23 Barton Street, Tewkesbury where they were still living when Harold enlisted at Cheltenham. He served as Private, No 16816, in the 2nd Grenadier Guards and died of wounds received in action in France on 4th November 1914.

This photograph was published in the Cheltenham Chronicle and Gloucestershire Graphic of 20th March 1915.

On the 5th November 1914, Mr F Stubbs of Barton Street, Tewkesbury, received official notification that his son Harold had been wounded in action on the 2nd November 1914. By the time that this notification had been received, however, Harold had already died, on the 4th November, of the wounds that he had received in action.

The following extract from the War Diary of the 2nd Battalion, Grenadier Guards, provides a brief insight into the action in which Pvte Stubbs was most likely mortally wounded.

“30 October 1914. … Irish Guards, 2nd Battalion Grenadier Guards and Oxfords moved 4 miles to right to relieve Cavalry near KLEIN ZILLEBEKE. Dug trenches till after midnight south of KLEIN ZILLEBEKE. 2 Killed, 5 Wounded, 4 Missing.
31 October 1914. Heavily shelled all day with Heavy High Shells and also attacked by infantry. Well dug in. Shelling terrific. No supplies all day till after midnight. One SAA Cart, horses and driver blown to pieces. Lieut Rose wounded, 4 NCOs and men killed, 32 Wounded, 4 Missing. 1st Line transport moved back to KRUIS KALSIJDE HALTE
1 November 1914. Relieved from trenches near KLEIN ZILLEBEKE by French troops at 3am, went back about 2 miles and bivouacked for 2 or 3 hours, ordered to march to support 2nd Brigade which was hard pressed and had line broken. Sent to clear wood of KLEIN ZILLEBEKE and to restore line, cleared wood and entrenched at Southern edge close up to enemy. No food till very late. Very tired and short of sleep. 10 Killed, 29 Wounded, 8 Missing.
2 November 1914. Germans attacked over trenches in morning but were driven off with heavy losses, Machine Gun causing them great damage. Intermittent attacks and shelling all day. Sharp attacks at dusk on No 4 Coys trenches which were driven off with heavy loss, but Germans got within 25 yards of our trenches. 4 Killed, 12 Wounded, 1 Missing.
3 November 1914. Still in trenches at KLEIN ZILLEBEKE. Some shelling and continued sniping at trenches.

4 November 1914. Same position. Very heavy shelling most of the day. No real infantry attack, but enemy entrenching about 300 yards away. Very wet. 1st Line transport shelled and moved back through Ypres to farm near DICKEBUSCH. 4 Killed, 26 Wounded.”

Harold is buried at Grave IIIB32 in the Boulogne Eastern Cemetery.

Paul Thomas Bevan

Paul Thomas Bevan (known as Thomas), was born at May Hill in approximately 1881. He was the son of Albert and Mary Bevan and the brother of Francis Albert Bevan and George Vinson Bevan who are also remembered at Norton. Having lived at Huntley and Churcham, at the outbreak of war his parents were living at Wainlode Hill, Norton. Thomas married
Fanny in 1908 and in 1911 was living with wife and children, Francis Thomas and Phillis, at 5 Dainty Street, Tredworth, Gloucester, employed as a carter. At the time of his enlistment they were living at 39 Albany Street, Gloucester. Thomas served as Private, No 5520, in the 1st Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment, and was killed in action on 21 December 1914, aged 30 years.

This photograph was published in the Cheltenham Chronicle and Gloucestershire Graphic of 20 February 1915.

Thomas is remembered on Panel 17 at Le Touret Cemetery, France. The Cemetery can be found on the south side of the Bethune-Armentieres main road. From Bethune follow the signs for Armentieres until you are on the D171. Continue on this road through Essars and Le Touret village. Approximately 1 kilometre after Le Touret village and about 5 kilometres before you reach the intersection with the D947, Estaires to La Basse road, the cemetery lies on the right hand side of the road.

Located at the east end of the cemetery is Le Touret Memorial, which commemorates over 13,000 servicemen who fell in this area before 25 September 1915 and who have no known
grave. The cemetery was begun by the Indian Corps (and in particular by the 2nd Leicesters) in November 1914 and it was used continuously by Field Ambulances and fighting units until March 1918. It passed into German hands in April 1918 and after its recapture a few further burials were made in Plot IV in September and October. The grave of one officer of the London Regiment was brought in in 1925 from a position on the Estaires-La Basse road near ‘Port Arthur’ and the 264 Portuguese graves of March 1917 and April 1919 were removed to Richebourg-L’Aouve Portuguese National Cemetery after the Armistice. There are now over 900, 1914-18 war casualties commemorated in this site. The graves of three men of the King’s Liverpool Regiment which were destroyed by shell fire are now represented by special headstones. The cemetery covers an area of 7.036 square metres and is enclosed by a low brick wall.

Le Touret Memorial, Richebourg L’Aouve, Pas de Calais, France

The Le Touret Memorial commemorates over 13,400 British soldiers who were killed in this sector of the Western Front from the beginning of October 1914 to the eve of the Battle of Loos in late September 1915 and who have no known grave. The Memorial takes the form of a loggia surrounding an open rectangular court. The names of those commemorated are listed on panels set into the walls of the court and the gallery, arranged by regiment, rank and alphabetically by surname within the rank. The memorial was designed by John Reginald Truelove, who had served as an officer with the London Regiment during the war, and unveiled by the British ambassador to France, Lord Tyrrell, on 22 March 1930. Almost all of the men commemorated on the Memorial served with regular or territorial regiments from across the United Kingdom and were killed in actions that took place along a section of the front line that stretched from Estaires in the north to Grenay in the south. This part of the Western Front was the scene of some of the heaviest fighting of the first year of the war, including the battles of La Bassée (10 October – 2 November 1914), Neuve Chapelle (10 – 12 March 1915), Aubers Ridge (9 – 10 May 1915), and Festubert (15 – 25 May 1915). Soldiers serving with Indian and Canadian units who were killed in this sector in 1914 and ’15 whose remains were never identified are commemorated on the Neuve Chapelle and Vimy memorials, while those who fell during the northern pincer attack at the Battle of Aubers Ridge are commemorated on the Ploegsteert Memorial.

Paul Thomas Bevan is also remembered on the headstone of his daughter Fanny Whiting, who died in 1963, at St Nicholas, Ashchurch.
1915

GEORGE EAGLES

George was born in approximately 1896 and was the son of Elias Eagles and Emeline (Emily) nee Anderson who had married at Tewkesbury Abbey in 1890. In 1901 the Eagles family were living at No 2 Church Cottages, Deerhurst, and in 1911 George was employed as a news boy. I understand that later a Mr Eagles, employed as a bricklayer, lived at Mount Pleasant, Marlpit Lane. This could well have been George’s father and would explain his presence on the Norton War Memorial.

George served as Corporal, No PLY/16006, in the ‘Plymouth’ Battalion, Royal Naval Division, Royal Marine Light Infantry. He would have landed at Y Beach, Gallipoli, along with the rest of his Battalion on 25th April and was killed in action on Tuesday 13 July 1915. With no body being recovered there was no known burial and he is remembered on Panel 2-7 of the Helles Memorial, Turkey.

The Helles Memorial stands on the tip of the Gallipoli Peninsula and takes the form of an obelisk over 30 metres high that can be seen by ships passing through the Dardanelles. It bears over 20000 names and is both the memorial to the Gallipoli campaign and to men who fell in that campaign and whose graves are unknown or who were lost or buried at sea in Gallipoli waters.

JAMES EDWARD GROVES

James was born at Shurdington in approximately 1896 and was the third son of James and Catherine Groves. In 1901 the family were farming at Brick House Farm, Up Hatherley, Cheltenham, but they had moved to Norton before the outbreak of war. At the time of James’ enlistment, at Gloucester, he was living at Church Farm, Priors Norton, and at the time of his death his parents were living at Ivy House Farm, also Priors Norton. He served as Private, No 15656, in the 10th Worcestershire Regiment.
This photograph was published in the Cheltenham Chronicle & Gloucestershire Graphic 11 December 1915.

Pvte James Groves grave at Le Touret

Jim was killed in action, whilst sniping, on 22 November 1915, aged 20 years. His brother Edgar was with him when he was killed and continued to serve in France throughout the war. He is buried in Grave IIIB28 at Le Touret Military Cemetery, France.

The Cemetery can be found on the south side of the Bethune-Armentieres main road. From Bethune follow the signs for Armentieres until you are on the D171. Continue on this road through Essars and Le Touret village. Approximately 1 kilometre after Le Touret village and about 5 kilometres before you reach the intersection with the D947, Estaires to La Basse road, the cemetery lies on the right hand side of the road. As well as the burials, over 13000 names are listed on the memorial of men who fell in this area before 25 September 1915 and who have no known grave. The cemetery was begun by the Indian Corps (and in particular by the 2nd Leicesters) in November 1914 and it was used continuously by Field Ambulances and fighting units until March 1918. It passed into German hands in April 1918 and after its recapture a few further burials were made in Plot IV in September and October.
HOWARD (BOB) ARCHER

Howard, known as Bob, was born at Taynton in approximately 1894 and was the third son of William and Mary Annie Archer. In 1901 the family were farming at Taynton Court but they appear to have moved to Norton Court Farm shortly afterwards. In 1911 the family were at Norton Court Farm where Bob was employed as a grocer’s apprentice. Bob joined the army on the outbreak of war in 1914 and served as Private, No 13918, in the 8th (Service) Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment. He died as a result of wounds received on 13 July 1916 aged 22. He is buried at Grave VG7, Abbeville Communal Cemetery, The Somme, France.

The town of Abbeville is on the main road from Paris to Boulogne about 80km south of Boulogne. On reaching Abbeville from Boulogne on the N1, at the roundabout take the right turn immediately before the Boulogne Road direction. A Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) sign is on the site. Enter the Cemetery by the left hand side main gate and follow the CWGC signs within the Cemetery. For much of the First World War, Abbeville was headquarters of the commonwealth lines of communication and No 3 BRCS, No 5 and No 2 Stationary Hospitals were stationed there variously from October 1914 to January 1920. The communal cemetery was used for burials from November 1914 to September 1916, the earliest being made among the French military graves. The extension was begun in September 1916. Bob is also remembered on his parents’ headstone in the churchyard at St Mary’s, Norton; “In loving memory of William Archer of Norton Court Farm who died March 19th 1911 aged 64 years. Watch and pray for ye know not when the time is. Also of Mary Annie wife of the above who died May 10th 1926 aged 63 years. Also in proud and loving memory of Howard (Bob) 8th Gloster Regt third son of the above who died on active service July 13th 1916 aged 22 years and is buried in Abbeville cemetery France.”
SIDNEY JAMES ARCHER

This person’s name appears to be spelt incorrectly on the memorial and all other sources suggest that he should have an ‘I’ and not a ‘Y’ in the forename.

Sidney was born at Twyning in approximately 1886 and was the third son of Edwin and Henrietta Matilda Archer. In 1891 the family were farming at Brockeridge, Twyning, and moved to Norton Green Farm shortly afterwards. Sidney emigrated to Australia in approximately 1910 along with his brother William Harold. They settled in Forbes, New South Wales, where they farmed. William died in 1913 and was buried at Forbes but is also remembered on his parents headstone in the churchyard at St Mary’s, Norton;

“This is to the memory of Henrietta Matilda the beloved wife of Edwin Archer of this Parish yeoman born Dec 12th 1850 died July 10th 1907. Also of the above Edwin Archer died Decr 28th 1914 aged 64 years. In the midst of life we are in death of whom may we seek for succour but of the O Lord. We know not what shall be on the morrow. Also of William Harold their youngest son died at Forbes NSW Sept 5th 1913 aged 27 years.”

When war broke out in Europe Sidney must have thought back to his home and the Gloucester Journal of 17th June 1916 carried the following report;

“OLD NORTON BOYS PATRIOTISM A fine example of colonial patriotism is that of Mr S J Archer, son of the late Mr Edwin Archer of Norton. For a number of years he has been farming in the Forbes District, New South Wales, where he had made himself extremely popular. In April last he decided to sell his farm and go to the war and his friends and neighbours foregathered in large numbers to give him a send off. There was a musical programme, a dance and a banquet and during an interval Mr Archer was presented with a beautiful wristlet watch suitably inscribed and a gold ring. The speaker at the banquet referred to the recipients many good and admirable qualities – as a cricketer, a comrade and farmer, and all wished him a safe return. In responding Mr Archer said it was his intention to return to Forbes when the war was over”.

On 29th March 1916 he applied to enlist in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) at Bathurst Recruiting Office. His medical that day reported that he was 30 years, 11 months, old, 5ft 9ins tall and weighed 10 stone 8lbs. We do not have a photo of Sidney but his Australian service record also tells us that he had a dark complexion, grey eyes, brown hair and a 38½ inch chest.

His application was accepted by the Recruiting Officer on 8th April 1916. His attestation papers record that he was born in the parish of Twyning, near Tewkesbury, and that his next of kin was another brother, Herbert Edwin Archer of Green Farm, Norton.

As Private No 2368 he became part of the 5th Reinforcement of the 45th Battalion AIF that embarked from Sydney aboard ship No A68, HMAT Anchises, on 24th August 1916. Arriving at Devonport, England, on 11th October he was posted to No 12 T Battalion Camp at Codford. Whilst at Codford he went Absent Without Leave between midnight 20th October and 6pm 24th October for which offence he was ordered to forfeit 4 days pay—perhaps he took the opportunity to visit Norton one last time?

On 21st December he proceeded overseas to France from Folkestone aboard SS Princess Clementine. He was allotted the letter ‘A’ as a suffix to his service number, according to his records, ‘on account of a duplication of numbers’. He was taken onto the strength of 4th ADBD at Etaples on 22nd December and on 1st January of 45th Battalion ‘in the field’. His first month or so must have been particularly hard as on 24th February he was admitted to hospital feeling unwell and was diagnosed as suffering from exhaustion. He was admitted to 15th Field Ambulance on 25th February and transferred to No 5 DRS on the same day. He was discharged to rejoin his unit, 45th Battalion, until 3rd March 1917.

Pvte Archer was reported killed in action whilst engaging the enemy at Messines Ridge, during the third battle of Ypres, on 7th June 1917. The Gloucester Journal of 21st July reported his death ‘whilst serving with the Australian Forces in France’. Pvte Archer has no known grave but is remembered on the Menin Gate, Ypres, Belgium.
An excerpt from Field-Marshall Lord Plumer's speech at the unveiling of the memorial, 24th July, 1927:

“..... One of the most tragic features of the Great War was the number of casualties reported as 'Missing, believed killed'. To their relatives there must have been added to their grief a tinge of bitterness and a feeling that everything possible had not been done to recover their loved ones' bodies and give them reverent burial... when peace came and the last ray of hope had been extinguished the void seemed deeper and the outlook more forlorn for those who had no grave to visit, no place where they could lay tokens of loving remembrance. ... It was resolved that here at Ypres, where so many of the 'Missing' are known to have fallen, there should be erected a memorial worthy of them which should give expression to the nation's gratitude for their sacrifice and its sympathy with those who mourned them. A memorial has been erected which, in its simple grandeur, fulfils this object, and now it can be said of each one in whose honour we are assembled here today: 'He is not missing; he is here'.”

Ypres (now Ieper) is a town in the Province of West Flanders. The memorial is situated at the eastern side of the town on the road to Menin and Courtrai. Each night at 8pm the traffic is stopped at the Menin Gate while members of the local Fire Brigade sound the Last Post in the roadway under the memorial’s arches. The Menin Gate is one of four memorials to the missing in Belgian Flanders which cover the area known as the Ypres Salient.

The Ypres Salient. Broadly speaking, the Salient stretched from Langemarck in the north to the northern edge in Ploegsteert Wood in the south but it varied in area and shape throughout the war. The Salient was formed during the First Battle of Ypres in October and November 1914 when a small British Expeditionary Force succeeded in securing the town before the onset of winter, pushing the German forces back to the Passchendaele Ridge. The Second Battle of Ypres began in April 1915 when the Germans released poison gas into the Allied lines north of Ypres. This was the first time gas had been used by either side and the violence of the attack forced an Allied withdrawal and a shortening of the line of defence. There was
little more significant activity on this front until 1917 when, in the Third Battle of Ypres, an offensive was mounted by Commonwealth forces to divert German attention from a weakened French front further south. The initial attempt in June to dislodge the Germans from the Messines Ridge was a complete success, but the main assault north-eastwards which began at the end of July quickly became a dogged struggle against determined opposition and the rapidly deteriorating weather. The campaign finally came to a close in November with the capture of Passchendaele. The German offensive of March 1918 met with some initial success but was eventually checked and repulsed in a combined effort by the Allies in September. The battles of the Ypres Salient claimed many lives on both sides and it quickly became clear that the commemoration of members of the Commonwealth forces with no known grave would have to be divided between several different sites. The site of the Menin Gate was chosen because of the hundreds of thousands of men who passed through it on their way to the battlefields. It commemorates those of all Commonwealth nations, except New Zealand, who died in the Salient. In the case of United Kingdom, casualties before 16 August 1917 (with some exceptions).

Pvte Archer’s name can be found on Panel 139 of the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

He was posthumously awarded the 1914/15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal. A Memorial Plaque and Memorial Scroll were also sent to London on 30th August 1922 to be given to his next of kin.

**FRANCIS ALBERT BEVAN**

Francis Albert Bevan was born at May Hill in approximately 1890. He was the son of Albert and Mary Bevan and the brother of Paul Thomas Bevan and George Vinson Bevan who are also remembered at Norton. Having lived at Huntley and Churcham, by 1911 his parents were living at Wainlode Hill, Norton. Francis Albert enlisted at Gloucester whilst still residing at Norton employed as a stable man. He served as Private, No 15784, in the 10th Battalion Worcestershire Regiment and was killed in action in the France and Flanders Theatre on Thursday, 20 September 1917, aged 27 years. He is commemorated on Panels 75-77 of the Tyne Cot Memorial, Zonnebeke, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium.
The Tyne Cot Memorial to the Missing forms the north-eastern boundary of Tyne Cot Cemetery, which is located 9km north east of Ypres(Ieper) town centre on the Tyne Cotstraat, a road leading from the Zonnebekeseweg (N332).

"Tyne Cot" or "Tyne Cottage" was the name given by the Northumberland Fusiliers to a barn which stood near to the level crossing on the Passchendaele-Broodseinde road. This barn was the centre of six German blockhouses and was captured by the 2nd Australian Division on 4th October 1917, during the advance on Passchendaele. One of these blockhouses was unusually large and was used as an advanced dressing station after its capture. From 6th October until the end of March 1918, 343 graves had been made on two sides of it, by the 50th (Northumbrian) and 33rd Divisions, as well as two Canadian units. The cemetery fell into German hands in April 1918, before being recaptured along with the village of Passchendaele, by the Belgian army on 28th September.
OLIVER JOSEPH RIDLER

Oliver was born at Hartpury, Gloucester, and was one of seven children of Joseph Ridler and Amelia (nee Goode). In 1901 the family were living at Blackwells End Green, and in 1911 at Upper Butter End, both Hartpury. In 1911 Oliver was employed as a farm labourer. According to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Oliver’s parents were “Joseph Ridler and Amelia Bailey (his wife) of Norton Green”. I believe that Joseph Ridler had married Amelia Goode at Hartpury in 1887 and that they were Oliver’s parents. Joseph died in September 1911 and Amelia, using her maiden name, remarried William Bailey of Norton at Gloucester Register Office in 1917, hence the confusion over names. This would also explain why someone from Hartpury is remembered on the Norton Memorial.

At the time of his enlistment Oliver was living at No 9 Norton Green. Enlisted at Gloucester as Private, No 33505, in the 8th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment. He died on 4 October 1917 aged 29 years and was buried at Plot LIX, Row F, Grave 17, at the Tyne Cot Cemetery, Belgium.

Tyne Cot Cemetery, Zonnebeke, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium

Tyne Cot Cemetery, Zonnebeke, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium, is located 9 kilometres north east of Ypres (Leper) town centre, on the Tyne Cotstraat, a road leading from Zonnebeekseweg (N332).

1918

PERCY MARSTON SIMMONS

This person’s name appears to be spelt incorrectly on the memorial and should not have a ‘D’ in the surname.

Percy was born at Norton in 1882 and was the son of Alfred and Ann Simmons who had been the innkeepers of The Kings Head Inn. He attended Sir Thomas Rich’s School, Gloucester, where he is remembered on their War Memorial as well. By 1901 he was boarding at 48 Oxford Street, Gloucester, and in 1911 was boarding with his brother William and his family at 21 London Road, Gloucester, in both years he was employed as upholsterer. Percy originally joined up as a Private in the 5th Gloucesters and the following report appeared in the Gloucester Journal of 19 June 1915:
“WOUNDED FIFTH GLOUCESTERS  Writing to his parents in Gloucester from a base hospital in France, Private Percy Simmons, 1/5th Gloucesters, states he has been wounded in the head. It is hoped the injuries are not serious. Pvte Simmons is well known in local football and cricket circles having played for Gloucester and the Old Boys FCs and the Nondescripts CC. He was employed in Matthews cabinet works when he enlisted and was formerly with Mr R James, Northgate Street. His parents formerly resided at Coombe Hill”.

Photograph was published in the Cheltenham Chronicle & Gloucestershire Graphic 9 November 1918.
He later served with the 4th Battalion (Territorial), The Duke of Edinburgh’s (Wiltshire Regiment). Percy was wounded on three occasions and had returned to France in September 1918 after having been granted a commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the 2nd Battalion, Wiltshire Regiment. Percy married Violet Madeline in 1917 and at the time of his death she was living at ‘Hazeldene’, 37 Lysons Avenue, Gloucester. Percy died on 20 October 1918 aged 36 years and was buried at Grave 1B16, at St Aubert British Cemetery, France.
St Aubert is a village in the Department Nord, approximately 13 kilometres east of Cambrai. From Cambrai follow the D942 road towards Solesmes. About 12 kilometres from Cambrai and just after Avensnes les Aubert, turn left onto the D297 towards St Aubert. After approximately 2 kilometres turn left onto the D97 road towards Avesnes les Aubert. The British Cemetery is about 800 metres down this road on the right. The cemetery was begun by the 24th Division on 12 October 1918 just after the capture of the village. Other units continued to use it until 23 October by which time it contained 33 graves of the 3rd Rifle Brigade and 24 others, most of the current Plot 1. After the Armistice further graves were brought in from small cemeteries in the area and from the battlefields of Cambrai (November-December 1917), and Cambrai and the Selle (October 1918). The cemetery now contains 435 burials and commemorations of the First World War. 41 of the burials are unidentified but there is a special memorial to one casualty believed to be buried among them. Other special memorials commemorate three casualties known to have been buried in Avesnes-le-Sec Communal Cemetery, St Aubert Communal Cemetery German Extension and Paillencourt German Cemetery, whose graves could not be found.

Percy is also remembered on the headstone of his parents at St Mary’s Churchyard:

“In loving memory of Alfred Thomas Simmons who died Novr 25th 1917 aged 73 years. Also of Ann wife of the above who died Novr 4th 1936 aged 96 years. Peace perfect peace. And of Percy Marston their son who fell in action Octr 20th 1918 aged 36 years”.

WILLIAM JOSEPH LAWRENCE

William was born at Stourport, Worcestershire, and was the son of William and Margaret Annie Lawrence, later of Norton Mill. He enlisted at Gloucester, served as Private, No 30616, in the 14th Battalion, Worcestershire Regiment and died as a result of wounds received on Tuesday 29 October 1918, aged 27 years. He is buried in Grave No VIII.N.IIA at Mont Huon Military Cemetery, Le Treport, France. Le Treport is a small seaport 25km north east of Dieppe. The Cemetery is 1.5km south of the town. Go towards the centre of Le Treport and then follow the Littoral/Dieppe sign. The Cemetery stands on the D940.
During the First World War, Le Treport was an important hospital centre and by July 1916
the town contained three general hospitals (the 3rd, 16th and 2nd Canadian), No 3
Convalescent Depot and Lady Murray’s BRCS Hospital. The 7th Canadian, 47th and 16th
USA General Hospitals arrived later, but all of the hospitals had closed by March 1919. As
the original military cemetery at Le Treport filled it became necessary to use the new site at
Mont Huon. There are now 2,128 Commonwealth burials of the First World War in the
cemetery and seven from the Second World War. The cemetery also contains more than 200
German war graves.
He is also remembered along with his mother at St Mary’s, Norton, churchyard:
GEORGE VINSON BEVAN

George Vinson Bevan was born at May Hill in approximately 1890. He was the son of Albert and Mary Bevan and the brother of Francis Albert Bevan and Paul Thomas Bevan who are also remembered at Norton. In 1901 he was living with his parents at Gloucester Road, Churham, and was employed as a groom, an occupation that would appear to have influenced his wartime service. Having previously lived at Huntley, at the outbreak of War his parents were living at Wainlode Hill, Norton. George served as Sergeant, No SE 27243, in the Army Veterinary Corps and was killed on Thursday, 7 November 1918, just four days short of the cessation in hostilities.

The Veterinary Officers with field units and formations were allotted to Cavalry regiments, Artillery brigades, Infantry brigades, the Divisional Ammunition Column and Divisional Trains, and were assisted by the farriers of the unit or formation. It was their duty to render first aid in all cases of sickness and injury and to supervise the care of animals. Should they consider that any animal was not properly cared for, or that its condition was such as to need treatment, they would call the attention of the Commander to the fact and take such steps as may be necessary.

At the time of his death he was attached to the 74th Brigade, Royal Field Artillery, presumably caring for the horses that still pulled the gun carriages. He was awarded the Military Medal at some time during the conflict although details of the award have not been identified.

The Military Medal. Founded in March 1916, the Military Medal is awarded to non-commissioned officers and men of the army “for individual and associated acts of bravery brought to notice by the recommendation of the Commander-in-Chief in the field”. Although primarily intended for NCOs and men, it can be awarded to Warrant Officers (1st and 2nd Class) and to RAF personnel for gallant service on the ground.

George Vinson Bevan is buried at Villers Pol Communal North Cemetery Extension, France. Villers Pol is a village and commune in the Department Nord, between Valenciennes and Le Quesnoy. The Cemetery Extension is signposted on the north side of the Communal Cemetery about 50m away from the D73.
The Communal Cemetery Extension was made in November 1918 by the 24th Guards and 2nd Divisions and one grave was brought in after the Armistice from a field between Sepmerries and Villers-Pol. There are now 119, 1914-18 war casualties commemorated in this site. Of these, 2 are unidentified. There are 74 German burials here, 39 being unidentified. The Extension covers an area of 1,183 square metres and is enclosed by a brick curb.

ARMISTICE

The Log Books of Norton CofE School record an entry that the whole country had been waiting for, for four long years on 11th November 1918;

“Armistice signed. Hostilities cease. Children sent home twenty minutes earlier.”

I expect for many of the children, especially the younger ones, those twenty minutes were more significant than the Armistice whilst others would have been thinking about fathers, brothers, etc who would shortly be coming home. Although hostilities had ceased not every soldier was released immediately and some were not to return home for another year or more. For others still, injuries received during the fighting and ongoing duties would still mean that they would never return.

HENRY JOSEPH SLATTER

Henry Joseph (Harry) was born at Norton in 1900 and was the son of Charles Slatter, a cowman of The Old Lane, Cold Elm, and Ellen nee Griffiths. He served as Private, No TR/8/30654, in the 51st Garrison Battalion, Hampshire Regiment, and died shortly after the war on 22 November 1918, aged 18 years. He is buried to the north of the Church at St Mary’s where he has a military headstone.
RONALD GEORGE URQUHART ARBUTHNOT

Ronald was born in approximately 1892 in London and was the son of Col George Arbuthnot RHA JP and wife Caroline Emma Nepean Aitchison, who were tenants of the Norton Court Estate in the 1890s and early 1900s. In 1901 he was a scholar boarder at Summerfields School, St Giles, Oxfordshire, and by 1911 had returned to Norton to live with his parents at Norton Court. Ronald served as an officer in the Royal Flying Corps early in the war before joining the 16th (The Queens) Lancers. He died shortly after the War on 3rd December 1918. The Times newspaper of 9th December 1918 carried the following obituary;

"Lieutenant Ronald G U Arbuthnot, 16th Lancers, attached RAF, was the youngest son of the late Colonel George Arbuthnot, RHA, of Norton Court, Gloucester, formerly MP for Hereford, and of Mrs Arbuthnot, of the Cedar House, Hillingdon, Middlesex. He was educated at Summerfields and Eton, and was a keen cross-country rider. At the outbreak of the war he enlisted in the 19th Hussars, receiving a regular commission in the 16th Lancers in September 1914. Later he volunteered for the Cavalry Machine Gun Corps, with which unit he was seriously wounded at Bourlon Wood, after three years’ service overseas. On returning to England, he became attached to the Royal Air Force, and was killed while flying in London Colney, Hertfordshire, on December 3".

Although remembered on the War Memorial at Norton he was actually buried in the south-west corner of Shenley St Botolphs Churchyard, Hertfordshire, presumably somewhere near to his fatal crash.

His memorial at St Botolphs, pictured above, used to have scrolling side wings along each side. It reads; ‘‘Ronald George Urquhart Arbuthnot Lieut 16th Lancers attached RAF fought through the Great War. Born Oct 8th 1891. Killed flying Dec 3rd 1918”.

I believe that he is also remembered on the 16th Queens Lancers memorial at Canterbury Cathedral.
ALFRED HALL

In 1884, a son Alfred was born to Henry and Mary Hall of Bromstead, Staffordshire. In 1891 the family were living at Homers Cottage, Gnosall, where Henry was employed as an agricultural labourer and there were four children; William H (1882), Alfred (1884), Mary (1886) and Sarah A (1891) all born at Moreton, Staffs. By 1901 Alfred had moved away from his parents’ home and has been found learning his trade, living at The Keepers House, Tortworth, near Thornbury, employed as gamekeeper’s assistant in the household of Gabriel Launchbury, the head gamekeeper. In 1910 he married Ada Elizabeth Pead at Boddington and in 1911 they were living at Norton Hill with Alfred employed as gamekeeper to Capt Walker and the Norton Court Estate. Ada was born at The Leigh in 1890, daughter of John and Elizabeth Pead, a general labourer originally from Shropshire. By 1911 the Pead family had moved to Barrow, Boddington, where father Henry was now employed as a butcher and daughter Ada was at school.

On 9th August 1916, Alfred enlisted into the Royal Marine Light Infantry, 1st Royal Marine Battalion, as Pvte, No PLY/1543/S. On 1st February 1917 he was drafted for the British Expeditionary Force with 2nd Royal Marine Battalion. On 3rd February 1917 he arrived at the Base Depot, Calais, France, where he remained until 18th February 1917 when he was taken to 30th General Hospital suffering from bronchitis. He was invalided back to UK on 27th March 1917.

Having recovered he was again drafted to the British Expeditionary Force on 19th March 1918 and joined up with 2nd Royal Marine Battalion. He was transferred to 1st Royal Marine Battalion on 28th April 1918 and remained with them until 19th May 1918 when he received a gunshot wound to his right leg. On 25th May 1918 he was once again invalided back to UK and was discharged from the service due to his injury from the Royal Naval Hospital, Plymouth, on 15th April 1919. He was awarded Silver War Badge No RN34141.

The Silver War Badge was issued to personnel who had been honourably discharged due to wounds or sickness during World War I. The badge was sometimes known as the Discharge Badge, Wound Badge or Services Rendered Badge. It had been the practice of some women to present white feathers to apparently able-bodied young men who were not wearing the King’s uniform. The sterling silver badge was to be worn on the right breast while in civilian dress, it was forbidden to wear on a military uniform.

Alfred would appear to have returned to Norton but suffered as a result of his injury. He died, aged 38 years, in May 1922 at The Gamekeepers Lodge, and was buried at St Mary’s, Norton, where he has a memorial in the churchyard. His death in 1922, albeit as a result of a wartime injury, appears to preclude his inclusion amongst First World War casualty records maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and this has made him a difficult man to identify. I hope we have done his memory proud by rectifying that here.

PEACE
Some six months after the Armistice the village first gave thought to some kind of memorial to those who had died. At the Easter Vestry Meeting of the St Mary’s Churchwardens on 28th April 1919 we find recorded:

“The erection of a Memorial for the fallen in the War was discussed and it was decided to call a meeting of Parishioners to consider the matter”.

A few days after the first anniversary of the Armistice, on 15th November 1919, the villagers of Norton organized a dinner at the Red Lion Inn, Wainlode. Not only to celebrate the safe return to the village of loved ones but no doubt to mourn those who had not been so fortunate.

This invitation was sent to Sgt Frederick George Mullens, No 11497, who had served with the 7th (Service) Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment throughout the War. Fred saw service at Gallipoli and in Egypt, Mesopotamia, Persia and Russia.

**REMEMBRANCE**
A village War Memorial had been discussed in 1919 and two years later the sword of sacrifice upon a stone cross was revealed. A plaque, now on the wall inside the church tower, records the occasion:

“This tablet records the unveiling by Major A Lloyd-Baker on August 4th 1921 of the Stone Cross adjacent to the Tower in the Churchyard as a memorial to the Norton Men who perished in the War 1914-1918”.

It includes the vicar, Rev H M Ward, and the Churchwardens, H E Archer and G N Walker. In the years that followed 11:00am on 11th November, the date and time that the Armistice was agreed, had become a national focus of remembrance. To ensure that this continued it had also become a feature of the school calendar as recorded in the Log Books; 11th November 1926, “Mrs Congdon & the vicar visited the school at 10:50am. The vicar told the children why they were keeping the 2 minutes silence at 11 o’clock. After the silence the vicar spoke to the children for half an hour and the little service ended by all singing ‘Jesus, lover of my soul’.”

The War had had an obvious impact upon the international community as well and this was reflected by a note entered into the Log Books on 11th November 1929. “Armistice Day. The vicar visited the school this morning and addressed the scholars on Armistice Day and all it meant. The vicar also read the pamphlet on the League of Nations sent by the County Education Committee.” 11th November 1931 sees the final reference to Armistice Day in the school Log Books although by then it was already being called Remembrance Day; “An address was given this morning by the Headmaster on Remembrance Day. Hymns and national songs were sung and the two minutes silence kept”.

It is not only memories that fade with the passing years and by the early 1980s the names carved into the plinth beneath the stone cross were barely decipherable. To finance this an increase in rates, a donation from the Royal British Legion and a grant from Tewkesbury Borough Council along with a sponsored walk from Gloucester War Memorial to Tewkesbury War Memorial and a sponsored skittles evening at The Swan Inn, Coombe Hill, and the funds were raised. The memorial was rebuilt in 1983 and the names engraved upon bronze plaques with the following bronze plaque affixed to the front of the base.
“This stone was erected by the parishioners of Norton to the glorious memory of the men of this parish who gave their lives for their country in the Great War 1914-1918. They died that we might live. Grant them O Lord eternal rest”.

The Gloucester Citizen of 11th July 1983 carried the following report: “Village War Memorial Restored. Villagers, friends and members of the British Legion gathered round Norton war memorial at its rededication following restoration. The ceremony followed a
service in the packed Norton church, attended by many of the people who helped raise more than £600 for the repair work. Canon Mervyn Hughes, who conducted the rededication service, said ‘the church was packed to overflowing. We needed extra seating’. The British Legion took part in the service and 14 standards were paraded up the aisle. Canon Patrick Eynon preached and Col Tony Holloway, president of The Leigh and District British Legion, read the lesson. Canon Hughes rededicated the memorial. The chairman of the local parish council and regional chairman of the British Legion also took part. Canon Hughes said restoration work was carried out in Tewkesbury after joint fundraising efforts by the parish council, British Legion, Norton Church and the Mothers Union”.

UNIDENTIFIED SOLDIER

It has not proved possible to positively identify the following soldier who is remembered on the churchyard memorial. I have recorded the most likely possibility I could find.

GEORGE HUGHES

The only George Hughes that I have been able to identify at Norton during this period was George David Hughes, the son of William Hughes and Eliza nee Cummings. In 1891 the family lived at Marlpit Lane, Norton, where William was employed as a bricklayers labourer and George was 7 months old. The family were still at Norton in 1911 at which time George was employed as a labourer on a farm. Unfortunately, it has not proved possible to positively identify George’s military service or therefore his death.

A Private, No 17428, G Hughes, of the 8th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment, was reported wounded in the Gloucester Journal of 27 November 1915.

ADDITIONAL SOLDIERS

Research has identified a further eight men with Norton connections who are not remembered on the village War Memorial but who were killed during the Great War; John Reginald Cooling, Gilbert Charles Davis, Frederick Melville Draper, Arthur Frederick Freeman, Ernest James, Samuel Ernest Leach, Cecil Wyatt Mason and Eustace Joseph Nash. September 1915 proved to be a particularly bad month with three of these men being killed in action, most likely the same action, on consecutive days.

JOHN REGINALD COOLING

John was born at Norton in 1889 and was the son of Phillip and Hannah Cooling who in 1891 were living near Court Farm. In 1891 his name was given as Reginald but by 1901, when the family lived at a cottage ‘near Norton Mill’, he had become John again. He enlisted at Cirencester as Private, No 243, in the 1st Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment. He died on Sunday 26th September 1915, aged 25 years, and is remembered on Panels 60-64 of the Loos Memorial, Pas de Calais, France.

GILBERT CHARLES DAVIS

Although not remembered on the Norton memorial Gilbert can be found on the War memorial inside the church at St Catherine’s, The Leigh.

Gilbert was born at Norton in 1890 and was the son of Thomas Davis of Corse, and Emma Miranda, nee Hill, of Stinchcombe, who had married at Hartpury in 1874. In the early 1880s
the family remained at Hartpury moving to Norton in the late 1880s. Their time here must have been brief as in 1891 the family were living at The Stalls, Taynton, with father Thomas employed as a farm servant. By 1901 the family had moved again and were living at The Bowlings, The Leigh. By 1911 father Thomas had died and Gilbert was living with his widowed mother at The Wharf Cottage, Coombe Hill, employed as a carpenter and wheelwright.

Gilbert enlisted at Cheltenham at which time he was still residing at Coombe Hill. Formerly No 23379, Gloucestershire Regiment, he died on 1st May 1918 in France & Flanders theatre whilst serving as Private, No 39458, in the 8th Battalion Princess Charlotte Of Wales (Royal Berkshire Regiment).

![Gilbert Davis and his fiancé, Alice Vernall](image)

Alice Elizabeth Vernall married Gilbert’s elder brother, Henry James Davis, at St Lawrence, Sandhurst, in 1929.
Gilbert is buried at Grave British B1 at the Ribemont Communal Cemetery Extension, Aisne.
Ribemont in the Department of the Aisne (there is also a Ribemont in the Department of the Somme), is a village 14 kilometres South-East of St. Quentin, adjacent to the Canal de Sambre. The Communal Cemetery was extended by the Germans, but the German graves, 320 in number, have been removed. There are now over 30, 1914-18 war casualties commemorated in this site, beyond the French Military plot, on the North-East side of the cemetery. Of these, a small number are unidentified and a special memorial is erected to a soldier believed to be buried among them.

**FREDERICK MELVILLE DRAPER**

Although not remembered on the Norton memorial Melville can be found on the War memorial inside the church at St Catherine’s, The Leigh. Frederick Melville Draper was born at Upton St Leonards in 1892 and was the son of Charles Frederick Draper of Sherborne and Selina Ann, nee Shillam, of Naunton, who had married at Headington, Oxon, in 1889. In 1901 the family were living at Ballinstone, Upton St Leonards, where father Charles was employed as a stone mason. By 1911 the family, now with eight children, had moved to Norton where they were living at Norton Villa with father Charles now giving his occupation as banker and mason and son Frederick was a student and pupil teacher. The family’s time at Norton appears to have been brief before they moved to Wellcroft, The Leigh. At the outbreak of the First World War Melville, as he was known, was employed as assistant master at Bredon School. He enlisted as Private, No 240857 in the 1st/5th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment and was killed in action on 5th April 1917. He was originally buried at Lempire British Cemetery and reburied after the war. Lempire is a small village situated in the far, north-western, corner of the Department of the Aisne, 17 kilometres north-west of St Quentin. Lempire contained at one time a German prison camp; it was taken by British troops in April, 1917, and again (by the 18th Division) in September, 1918. There are now over 10, 1914-18 war casualties commemorated in this site. The seven R.F.A. graves made outside it at the end of September, 1918, have been removed to Unicorn Cemetery, Vend'huile. Melville is now buried at grave reference IF27, Unicorn Cemetery, Vendhuile, Aisne, France. Vendhuile is a village about 19 kilometres north of St Quentin and...
24 kilometres south-east of Peronne. Unicorn Cemetery is about 3 kilometres south-west of Vendhuile on the west side of the road to the villages of Lempire and Ronssoy.

Melville is also remembered on the family grave at Coombe Hill Methodist Chapel.

Vend'huile was very nearly reached in the Battle of Cambrai 1917. It was taken by the 27th and 30th American Divisions at the end of September 1918, and cleared by the 12th and 18th Divisions on 30 September. After the fight, men of the 18th Division were buried by the 50th (Northumbrian) Division in Plot I, Row A, of Unicorn Cemetery (the name is taken from the Divisional mark of the 50th Division).

The rest of the cemetery was formed after the Armistice when graves were brought in from isolated sites and small cemeteries of 1917 and 1918 in the surrounding battlefields. The
The following article appeared in a local newspaper but its source has not been identified; it was loaned along with the photograph of Melville by Mrs Hazel Green, his niece.

Private M Draper, Gloucester Regiment, (son of Mr Charles Draper, Wellcroft, Leigh village, near Cheltenham, and formerly of Tuffley, Gloucester) was killed in action on April 5th during an attack on a village which in the end proved successful. In a letter to Mr Draper, Lieut Stanley says: “Your son was killed almost instantaneously. He was in charge of my Lewis gun section, and was one of the best men in the platoon. Chiefly owing to the efforts and gallantry of the ‘old men’ like him the attack was successful and several prisoners and a machine gun or two were captured. I shall miss him very much as I used to talk over with him experiences at Ypres where we had seen fighting. His section will miss their commander very much.” Captain Conder (himself since wounded) also wrote expressing his deepest sympathy with Mr Draper in his loss, adding: “The conduct of your son throughout the proceedings was a fine example to the men under him, and his handling of his Lewis gun against one of the enemy’s machine guns greatly helped towards the lessening of our own casualties and the success of the operations.”

Pte Draper gained a scholarship to Sir T Rich’s while at Whaddon School and later another scholarship to the Crypt School for five years. He entered the teaching profession, and at the outbreak of war was assistant master at Bredon School, near Tewkesbury. He joined up in September 1914. Deceased was 25 years of age.

ARTHUR FREDERICK FREEMAN

Arthur was born at Norton in approximately 1892, son of George and Elizabeth Freeman of Norton Green. He enlisted in Cheltenham as Private, No 13635, in the 10th (Service) Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment.

At the time of his enlistment his next of kin was his mother, who was living at ‘Daisyville’, Pirton Lane, Churchdown

Arthur was killed in action in France on 25 September 1915 and is remembered on Panels 60-64 of the Loos Memorial, Pas de Calais, France.
ERNEST JAMES

Ernest was apparently born at Norton but his parents have not been identified. He enlisted at Tewkesbury as Guardsman, No 15932, in the 4th Battalion Grenadier Guards. Ernest was killed in action in France on Monday 27th September 1915, aged 23 years. He is remembered on Panels 5-7 of the Loos Memorial, Pas de Calais, France.

Arthur Frederick Freeman, John Reginald Cooling and Ernest James are all remembered on the Loos Memorial. Loos-en-Gohelle is a village about 5km north west of Lens. The Loos Memorial forms the side and back of Dud Corner Cemetery where over 1700 officers and men are buried, the great majority of whom fell in the battle of Loos. Dud Corner Cemetery stands almost on the site of a German strong point, the Lens Road Redoubt, captured by the 15th (Scottish) Division on the first day of the battle. The name ‘Dud Corner’ is believed to be due to the large number of unexploded enemy shells found in the neighbourhood after the Armistice. The Loos Memorial commemorates over 20,000 officers and men who have no known grave, who fell in the area from the River Lys to the old southern boundary of the First Army, east and west of Grenay. On either side of the cemetery is a wall 15ft high to which are fixed tablets on which are carved the names of those commemorated. At the back are four small circular courts, open to the sky, in which the lines of tablets are continued, and between these courts are three semicircular walls or apses, two of which carry tablets, while on the centre apse is erected the Cross of Sacrifice.
William Leach married Mary Ellen Williford, a servant girl of Norton, on 21 November 1869 at Norton. One of their children was Samuel Ernest Leach. Samuel was born late in 1871 at the time the family were away from Norton and living in the Kingsholm area of Gloucester although later Census’ give his place of birth as Norton. The family were back at Norton and living at The Green by 1881. By 1891 the family had left Norton again and were living at No 26 Worrell Street in Gloucester, in the district of the city that was known as Clapham, roughly located between Kingsholm Road and Alvin Street. The majority of this area was demolished in the 1960s to make way for the flats that still stand there and the street plan has changed dramatically with Worrell Street disappearing altogether. By 1891, however, Samuel had left home and it is here that his military records enable us to continue this story.

Samuel enlisted into the Medical Staff Corps of the 3rd Gloucestershire Regiment at Bristol on 23 April 1890 aged 18 years and five months. His attestation papers record that he was a little over 5ft 3ins tall, weighed 128lbs, was of fresh complexion with grey eyes and brown hair. He was posted to Woolwich, London, where he qualified as a ‘cold shoer’ in 1894, presumably working with the regiment’s horses. He also married in 1896, to Catherine Eleanour Collins and they lived at 64 Alice Street, Tidal Basin, Canning Town, where they were to have 7 children over the coming years. Samuel ended his active army service in 1896 being transferred to the reserve. In October 1899, however, he was recalled ‘under special army order’ and on 9 November 1899 was dispatched to South Africa to fight in the Boer War. He returned home in September 1900 and was discharged again in June 1902 with the entitlement to wear the South African Medal. Samuel continued to serve in Section D of the 1st Class Army Reserve until he was finally discharged upon termination of his engagement at Woolwich Dockyard on 19 March 1907. Samuel must have thought that his time in uniform was over but the First World War was just around the corner.

Little is known of Samuel’s service in World War I but at his age I would have thought he must have volunteered for service rather than have been conscripted. He served as No T1/SR/83, Driver S E Leach, in the Army Service Corps attached to the 10th Cavalry Mobile Veterinary Section and found himself in the Lebanon in 1918. Lebanon was taken from the
Turks in 1918 and Beirut was occupied by the 7th (Meerut) Division on 8 October 1918 and the 15th and 32nd Combined Clearing Hospitals were sent to the town; it is possible that Samuel was with one of these. The cause is not known but Samuel was unfortunately to die on 16 October 1918 and is now remembered ‘with honour’ at the Beirut War Cemetery.

Beirut War Cemetery, Lebanese Republic

CECIL WYATT MASON

Cecil was born at St Andrews, Fife, Scotland, in approximately 1889 and was the son of David and Eliza (nee Stubbs). Eliza had grown up at Norton but by the time of Cecil’s birth she had married and they were living in Scotland employed as the keepers of the Golf Hotel at St Andrews. Cecil served as a 2nd Lieutenant in the 11th Battalion, Royal Scots (Lothian) Regiment. He was killed in action on 8th April 1917, aged 28 years, and is buried at Plot 1, Row E, Grave 11, St Nicholas’ British Cemetery, Arras, France. St Catherine and St Nicholas are villages and districts in the Department of the Pas-de-Calais and adjoining the city of Arras on the north side. St Catherine lying to the west and St

Nicholas to the east of the N37 road to La Targette and Souchez. St Nicholas British Cemetery is on the Rue d’Enfer which joins the road to Roclincourt. Cecil is remembered on the 16th Queens Lancers memorial at Canterbury Cathedral and also on his mothers headstone at St Mary’s, Norton;

“In loving memory of Eliza Stubbs widow of David Mason entered into rest March 29th 1930 aged 74 years. Also her son Cecil, 2nd Lieut 11th Royal Scots killed in action April 8th 1917 aged 28 years and lies at St Nicholas cemetery Arras France”.
EUSTACE JOSEPH NASH

Eustace was born at Norton in 1891, son of William and Eliza Nash of the Blacksmiths Cottage, Cold Elm. He enlisted at Bristol as Gunner, No. 47443, in the Royal Horse Artillery and Royal Field Artillery. At the time of his death he was a Corporal serving with ‘Z’ 74th Trench Mortar Battery, Royal Field Artillery. He died in Egypt on 31st December 1917 and is remembered on Panel F162 at the Alexandria (Hadra) War Memorial Cemetery, Egypt.

Hadra is a district on the eastern side of Alexandria and is south of the main carriageway to Aboukir, known as Al Horaya, near the University of Alexandria. The cemetery is on the road Sharia Manara. In March 1915 the base of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force was transferred to Alexandria from Mudros and the city became a camp and hospital centre for Commonwealth and French troops. Among the medical units established there were the 17th, 19th, 21st, 78th and 87th General Hospitals and No 5 Indian Hospital. After the Gallipoli campaign of 1915, Alexandria remained an important hospital centre during later operations in Egypt and Palestine and the port was much used by hospital ships and troop transports.
bringing reinforcements and carrying the sick and wounded out of the theatres of war. This
cemetery was begun in April 1916 when it was realised that the cemetery at Chatby would
not be large enough. Most of the burials were made from the Alexandria hospitals but a
number of graves of December 1917 were due to the loss of the troop transports “Aragon”
and “Osmanieh” which were sunk by torpedo and mine as they entered the port. The
cemetery continued in use until December 1919 but later some graves were brought in from
the western desert, Maadia and Rosetta.

Eustace may have been a patient at one of the hospitals in Alexandria but considering his date
of death it is more likely that he was aboard the liner “Osmanieh”. The “Osmanieh” was
built at the Swan, Hunter and Wigham Richardson Yard, Newcastle, and was launched on 9th
May 1906. She was taken over for service as a fleet auxiliary or ‘fleet messenger’ during
WW1. On Monday, 31st December, 1917, she was carrying troops and medical staff to
Alexandria when she was struck by a mine laid by submarine UC34 under the command of
Oberleutnant zue See Horst Obermuller at the entrance to the harbour. She sank very quickly
taking with her Lt Cdr D R Mason, two other officers, 21 of its crew, one military officer,
166 other ranks and 8 nurses.

Eustace is also remembered on the memorial inside the church at St Giles, Bredon, where his
family were living at the time of his death.

A framed scroll was discovered at St Mary’s, Norton, also recording the names of those men
who appear on the War Memorial. There are two names recorded, however, Frank
Watkinson and Charles Noel Ridley, that do not appear on the memorial. Each of these
soldiers have had an ‘x’ placed next to their names but the reason for this is not clear.
Perhaps they were incorrectly associated with the village at the time of the War with the
mistake being later rectified. There are three F Watkinsons recorded on the CWGC Debt Of
Honour Register as having been killed during the First World War but none of them can be
positively identified as having any connection with Norton. In the case of Charles Noel
Ridley, however, having a more uncommon name, a possibility has been identified but again
there is no apparent connection to Norton.

CHARLES NOEL RIDLEY

Charles was born at Park End, Northumberland, and was the husband of Daphne. He served
as Captain in the Northumberland Hussars and was killed on Thursday, 7th October 1915,
aged 30 years. He was buried at Grave II.A.52 at Longuenesse (St Omer) Souvenir
Cemetery, Pas de Calais.

St Omer is a large town 45km south east of Calais. Longuenesse is a commune on the
southern outskirts of St Omer. The cemetery is approximately 3km from St Omer besides the
Wizernes (Abbeville) road (the D928), at its junction with the Rue des Bruyeres. There is a
large car park to the rear of the cemetery.

St Omer was the General Headquarters of the British Expeditionary Force from October 1914
to March 1916. Lord Roberts died there in November 1914. The town was a considerable
hospital centre with the 4th, 10th, 7th Canadian, 9th Canadian and New Zealand Stationary
Hospitals, the 7th, 58th (Scottish) and 59th (Northern) General Hospitals, and the 17th, 18th
and 1st and 2nd Australian Casualty Clearing Stations all stationed there at some time during
the war.

St Mary’s, Norton, also has a nominal roll that claims to record all villagers who served in the
armed forces during the Great War. An asterix besides a name appears to indicate those who
were killed.

It is interesting to note that both Frank Watkinson and Charles Ridley appear on this list as
well, as does another Ridley; Arthur. This suggests that the men did have Norton
connections of some kind. Charles Ridley’s name is annotated with an asterix whilst Frank
Watkinson’s is not. This list also highlights two more possible casualties with village
connections that have not been discussed so far; Cyril Edge and Frederick Eagles.
The Commonwealth War Graves Commission Debt of Honour Register does not include a Frederick Eagles amongst the First World War fatalities but it does include a Cyril Edge.

**CYRIL EDGE**

Cyril’s parents and village connection have not been identified for certain. I have recently discovered that the vicar of Norton during the War, Rev Cherrington, was married to a Beatrice Edge and it may be assumed that Cyril was a relative of hers. He served as Private, No 12317, in the 7th Battalion Wiltshire Regiment and died between 16-18 October 1918. He was buried at Grave III.F.9 at the Highland Cemetery, Le Cateau. Le Cateau is a small town about 19km south-east of Cambrai. Highland Cemetery is about 1km south of the town on the D12 road to Wassigny.

After the battle of Le Cateau (26th August 1914), the town remained in German hands until the middle of October 1918. The original cemetery (Plot III) was made by the 50th (Northumbrian) Division after the fighting of 17th October; the name Highland Cemetery is suggestive at once of the comparatively high ground on which it stands and of the 32 graves of the 13th (Scottish Horse) Battalion, Black Watch, found in this plot. The cemetery was greatly enlarged after the Armistice when graves of October and November 1918 were brought in from isolated positions on all sides of Le Cateau.

**NORTON SOLDIERS WHO SURVIVED THE GREAT WAR**

As mentioned above, St Mary’s, Norton, also has a nominal roll that claims to record all villagers who served in the armed forces during the Great War. The list is in no apparent order;


I have not researched all of these persons at this time but include a few notes regarding certain individuals where I have information to hand. I also include notes for others with Norton connections who do not appear on the list.

**JOHN BERNARD ARBUTHNOT**

John Bernard (Jack) and Archibald Arbuthnot were brothers of Ronald George Urquhart Arbuthnot who is named on the War Memorial and sons of Capt George Arbuthnot and wife Caroline Emma Nepean Aitchison, former tenants of Norton Court.
John Bernard Arbuthnot was born on 17 May 1875. He served in the Scots Guards reaching the rank of Major. In 1900 and 1901 he fought in the Second Boer War and later in the First World War where he was mentioned in despatches. He was invested as a Member of the Royal Victorian Order in 1902 and was later Aide-de-Camp to the Governor of Hong Kong. He was also a merchant banker. Whilst in Hong Kong, on 8 June 1903, he married Olive Blake, daughter of Sir Henry Arthur Blake and wife Edith Bernal Osborne, and they had six children; Irene Joan Grace, David George, Terence John, Bernard Kieran Charles, Richard Henry Myles and Patricia Evangeline Anne.

As a journalist on the Daily Express in 1917 he founded and was author to its By the Way column, writing it pseudonymously as ‘Beachcomber’, before he was promoted to deputy editor until 1919. He died on 16 September 1950.

FRANCIS ARTHUR CHAMBERLAYNE

The Chamberlayne family appear to have arrived at Norton in approximately 1887, in 1889 were definitely at Yew Tree Farm and in 1891 Frederick John Chamberlayne of Moreton Valance, wife Louisa Emma (nee Cook) of Boddington, and children John William, Francis Arthur and Charles Frederick, all of whom were born at Norton, were in residence. Frederick Chamberlayne may still have been resident at Yew Tree Farm in 1897 but in 1898 gave his address as 135 Southgate Street, Gloucester. He appears to have been back at Yew Tree Farm by 1899 but was not in the village again in 1901 when the family were living at 71 Southgate Street, Gloucester, where Frederick was employed as a farmer and butcher and the family had extended by three children; Gilbert H, Maurice E and Eleanor. It is likely that Frederick owned Yew Tree Farm throughout this period but at times lived elsewhere. Francis Arthur Chamberlayne married Annie Elizabeth Lane and they had at least two children; Nancy Joyce (1912 – 2009) and Francis John (1915 – 2000). The next we know of Francis Arthur was on 1st August 1916 when he attested into the Canadian Expeditionary Force as No 339138 at Vancouver. At this time his date of birth was given as 28 April 1888, his occupation was recorded as an electrical operator and his next of kin was recorded as his wife Mrs Annie Elizabeth Chamberlayne of Coghlan, British Columbia. His attestation document records that he had previously served for 4 years with the Gloucestershire Yeomanry. His medical examination at Vancouver in June 1916 reported that he was 5ft 8ins tall, had a 38 inch chest, fair complexion, blue hair and brown eyes. It also records that he had a mole on the left side of his abdomen, a scar on his right eyebrow and a scar on the right side of his scalp.

It would appear that he did not remain in Canada as in 1938 he travelled from Liverpool to New York and then back to England again shortly afterwards. Annie Elizabeth died in 1966 and Francis Arthur in 1977.

REV HERBERT LUCIAN ORLANDO CHERRINGTON

Rev Herbert Lucian Orlando Cherrington, who had graduated from London University, took over from Rev McLean as vicar of Norton in November 1911. The following is recorded in the Churchwarden’s Accounts from a meeting of 10th April 1917 :- “The vicar having offered his services for his country and the date fixed for him to leave the parish on the following morning, the following resolution was carried unanimously with acclamation. That this meeting desires to place on record its deep sense of appreciation of the action of our Vicar (the Rev HLO Cherrington) in following what appears to him to be the path of duty in the terrible time through which we are passing and that we all wish him every success, God speed, and a safe return.”

Rev Cherrington returned to Norton after the war remaining until 1920. Cecil Cherrington recorded on the list would almost certainly have been a relative of the vicar.
THE FREEMAN FAMILY

As well as the Arthur Frederick Freeman recorded earlier who was killed during the War there were at least three further members of this family who served in the army at this time. In January 1812, a John Freeman was baptised at Bleddington in the Cotswolds, son of William Freeman, a labourer, and his wife Elizabeth. A few years later, on Christmas day 1815, his brother Joseph was also baptised at Bleddington. It is not known when the family came to Norton, but, there were her by 1838. John and Joseph both married and by 1841 we find them living with their families at Priors Norton as were their parents.

The 1851 census is a little more descriptive and we have William and Elizabeth living at High House, Priors Norton, where Elizabeth gives her place of birth as Norton, so that may have been what brought the family here in the first place. They also have a son, Benjamin, born at Norton in 1825, so maybe the family had been here a while. John Freeman was married to Jane, of Wootton Under Edge, and was living at Worlds End, Priors Norton. They appear to have remained at Norton throughout their lives with John employed as an agricultural labourer and they were to have at least ten children amongst whom was George Edwin, born in 1857.

Joseph Freeman married Elizabeth of Norton and in 1851 they were living at Church Hill, Priors Norton. They too appear to have remained at Norton throughout their lives with Joseph employed as an agricultural labourer and they were to have at least eight children amongst whom was James, born in 1850.

George Edwin Freeman married Elizabeth Young at Norton in 1883 and in 1901 they were living at The Green, Norton, with George employed as a general labourer, and with four children including Arthur Frederick (1892) and Leonard John (1896).

James Freeman married Ellen Hughes at Norton in 1870 and by 1871 the couple were living at Twigworth with James employed as a bricklayer. By 1881 they had returned to live at Cold Elm, Norton, and in 1891 they were living at Dunsworth Farm. They were to have at least ten children including George Ernest (1883) and Sidney T (1889) and by 1901 the family had moved again to the New Inn, Longford, where father James and son George were employed as bricklayers.

THE GROVES BROTHERS

Since I began researching Norton for the History Society’s monthly publication The Journal, I have been in quite regular contact with several descendants of the Groves boys included on the list of soldiers.

I met Mrs Riddick, the sister of Pvt James Edward Groves recorded on the memorial approximately 14 years ago at which time she was aged 97 years, and living with her daughter, Averil, in Dursley. The Groves family lived at Church Farm and later Ivy House.
Farm at Norton. Mrs Riddick remembers that at the outbreak of war one villager went around stirring up the emotions of the young men and encouraging them to enlist but when the time came did not enlist himself. As can be imagined this did not make him too popular in the village and when news of deaths started to come back to the village feelings got worse. The Groves boys wanted to join the Glosters but because there were too many volunteers they were enlisted into the Worcestershire Regiment. Jim Groves’ younger brother Edgar was serving alongside him at the time he was killed and was later captured and held prisoner, working down the mines in Westphalia, Germany. The Cheltenham Chronicle & Gloucestershire Graphic of 8 June 1918 recorded the following alongside a photo; “Pte Edgar H Groves, Worcs Regt. Officially reported missing since April 10, after nearly three years’ service abroad. Second son of Mr & Mrs J E Groves, Ivy House Farm, Norton, near Gloucester. His parents have since heard from him in Germany”.

Their eldest brother Bert also served, in the Hussars. Their father became seriously ill requiring a long spell in hospital as a consequence of which he became unable to keep the farm at Norton causing the family to leave in the early 1920s.

**WILLIAM CALEB HOPKINS**

Caleb Hopkins and Bertha (nee Wardle) lived near to Ivy House Farm at Church Hill, Priors Norton. Their son William Caleb (Billy) Hopkins served as a signals sergeant in the 5th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment, in France. Billy married Mary Eliza Margueritte (Madge) Mullens at Norton in 1927 at which time he was living in Linden Road, Gloucester, and they left the village moving to Twickenham later. Madge died in 2008 shortly after her 100th birthday. Fred and William Mullens were Madge’s brothers and children of James Mullens and Fanny (nee Stubbs).

**SAMUEL HUGHES**

The Gloucester Journal records that an S J Hughes of Norton enlisted into the 5th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment (Depot Company), in November 1915; I assume this to be the
Samuel Hughes recorded on the above list. Sam married Linda and they lived the remainder of their lives at West House, Norton, taking an active part in village life.

Sam and Linda Hughes outside their home at West House, possibly on their wedding day and in later life as people are more likely to remember them.

HORACE RALPH EDGAR JAMES

Horace was born in 1898 and was the son of Ralph James and Laura (nee Simmons) who were innkeepers at The Red Lion Inn, Wainlode, at the time of his birth. Not too much is known about Horace’s military service except that he joined the Royal Navy and appears to have spent much of the war serving aboard HMS Valiant. He kept up correspondence with Mary Esther Cook of Court Farm, Norton, throughout the War. A postcard dated August 1918 indicates that he was posted with HMS Exmouth at Devonport. After the War Horace and Mary were married at St Mary’s, Norton, in 1924 at which time Horace was employed as a fitter and was living at Skewen, South Wales.
WILLIAM HERBERT LONGNEY

Born in approximately 1879 at Newent, son of William and Susannah (nee Price). By 1901 the family had moved to Norton and were living near The Green, probably in the cottage where the family were to remain for many years, Park Cottage. William Jnr was employed as a bricklayer’s labourer. William married Edith Ann Trigg in April 1903 at St Mary’s, Norton, and over the coming years they were to have six children; Thomas William (1904), William Albert (1906), Walter Jabez (1907), Susannah Edith (1908), Florence Mary (1911) and ? Frederick (1913).

When war broke out William was employed at Norton as a bricklayer. On 30 August 1916 he enlisted into the 13th Devonshire Regiment as Private No 44014 for the ‘duration of the war’. He doesn’t appear to have seen any active service overseas and on 26 October 1918 he was posted to a Labour Centre from No 599 Agricultural Company, Horsfield Barracks, Bristol. On 3 November 1918 he was transferred to the 38th Battalion, Dorset Regiment, as Private No 44867, and was posted to Weymouth. On 6th March 1919 he proceeded to Dispersal Centre, Chiseldon, and on 17th March was transferred to the Class Z Army Reserve on demobilisation.

A E LYNE

The Gloucester Journal of March 1918 also refers to another Norton connection :-
“Mrs Lyne, 33 Barton Street, Gloucester, has received official intimation that her husband, Sgt A E Lyne, Reserve MLI, has arrived in Holland from Germany for internment. Sgt Lyne who in civil life was chauffeur to Capt. G N Walker was taken prisoner at Antwerp nearly 3½ years ago”

FREDERICK GEORGE MULLENS

Fred was born at Norton in 1896 and was the son of James Mullens and Fanny (nee Stubbs). At the time of his birth his parents were living at The Gardens where his father was employed as gardener at Norton Court.
Fred enlisted at Gloucester as No 11497 in the 7th (Service) Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment. He trained as a signaller at Blackdown Camp, Aldershot, before setting sail with the Regiment for the Middle East. He saw action at Gallipoli, Egypt, Mesopotamia and Persia. He was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal and was discharged as a sergeant whilst serving on policing duties at the Black Sea, Russia, on 20 May 1919.

With the arrival of World War II, Fred enlisted again as Sergeant, No D/40751, in the 8th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment, on 18 March 1940 and served as a radio/signals instructor. He was finally discharged on 10 February 1945.

The above photograph was taken in India in 1917 whilst on R&R leave from Mesopotamia. Fred married Margaret Emily (Peggy) Parker in 1921 and they lived all of their married lives at Yew Tree Cottage, Norton.

**WILLIAM HENRY NORTON MULLENS**

Born at Norton in 1898, the son of James Mullens and Fanny Stubbs and was known as Harry and later Bill. Lived in Norton until the late 1920s when he married Winifred Eleanor in Trowbridge. Became Manager of Lloyds Bank in Trowbridge and later in Gloucester. Lived in Painswick where he remained until his death in 1985.

**GEORGE WILLIAM NEWSTEAD**

George William Newstead was born in December 1879 at Wickmere, Norfolk. He married Kate Louise Green at Zion Chapel, Tisbury, Wilts, in April 1904, and over the coming years they had three children whose places of birth tells the story of their frequent movements; Cecil Francis George(1904) at Fonthill Gifford, Salisbury, Dorothy Kathleen(1910) at Hall Court, Botley, Hants, and Edith Mary(1915) at which time the family had arrived in Norton and were living at The Lodge, Norton Court, where father George was employed as the butler.
On 31st August 1916 George enlisted into the 4th Royal Berkshire Regiment as Private No 7029 for the ‘duration of the war’. From his army records it would appear that he had previously been rejected for service and on 13th September 1916 he underwent a medical examination at Gloucester. He was 5ft 4ins tall, weighed 154 lbs, had a 42 inch chest and was diagnosed as being flatfooted but ‘not sufficient to cause rejection’. On 28 October 1916 he transferred to the Oxford and Bucks Regiment and on 3rd March 1917 transferred again to the Machine Gun Corps as Private No 87277. On 6th May 1917 he embarked at Folkestone bound for Boulogne, on 7th May reported to the Machine Gun Corps Base Depot at Camiers, France, and on 1st June he joined No 50 Company in the field. On 1st February 1918 he was appointed Unpaid Lance Corporal and on 1st March was granted leave to go to the UK through Boulogne and upon his return to France he was appointed Paid Lance Corporal on 12th April. On 19th January 1919 he travelled to Chiseldon via Le Havre aboard SS Charles for demobilisation and was struck off the strength of the Expeditionary Force. On 18th February 1919 he was transferred to the Army Reserve Class Z.

WILLIAM PRESTON

William Preston was most likely related to the Preston family of Norton Mill although when he married Dorothy Wheeler at Norton in 1915 he was recorded as a soldier of Chelmsford; perhaps this is just where he was stationed at that time. Indeed I have seen a postcard sent to Pvt Percy Marston Simmons dated September 1914 addressed to 5th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment, c/o Alma House, Chelmsford, which suggests that William Preston may have been serving in the same Battalion.

WALTER ROGERS

Walter Rogers was born in September 1882 at Llanelli. He married Emily Creefe at Llanelli in 1914 and by the following year they had arrived at Norton and were living at High House, near the church, where Walter was employed a motor mechanic and driver for JR Pope, Milliners, Westgate Street, Gloucester. On 31st May 1915 he attested into the Royal Army Service Corps (Motorised Transport) as Private No M2/102141. He attended an initial medical examination at which time he was 5ft 7ins tall, had a 39ins chest, brown eyes and a tattoo on his right arm. On 5th April 1916 he embarked at Southampton aboard SS Queen Alexandra to Rouen, to the 8th GHQ Ammunition Park, 341 Company. He was posted to 207 GHQ Ammunition Park on 10th January 1917 and to 51st Auxiliary Bus MT Company on 28 January 1917. Further postings to No 15 Auxiliary Bus Company on 27 February 1917 and to 51st Auxiliary Bus Company on 16 October 1917 where he appears to have remained until 20th November 1918. He had a period of furlough between 21st November and 5th December 1918 before returning to France until 3rd February. He remained in the RASC(MT) until 12th March 1919. In September 1916 he invested £3 2s of his wages in War Savings Certificates through the pay office of 8th Ammunition Park RASC(MT). Walter also had disciplinary problems during his service. Whilst at Abingdon on 28th June 1915 he was found guilty of “making a wilfully false statement to a military officer by wish in respect of prolongation of furlough (Confirmed by Police letter)”. He was sentenced to 7 days No 2 Field Punishment, which briefly was hard labour in excess of his normal duties. On 25th September 1915, whilst still at Abingdon, he was charged with being absent from 08:55 parade and was sentenced to 7 days imprisonment. He appears to have cleaned up his act after this and on 31st May 1917 he was awarded a Good Conduct Badge. On 17 December 1917, however, perhaps his worst offence of all, occurring whilst in the field, was the disobedience of camp orders by “failing to have a lighted lamp under the bonnet of his lorry”. He was fined 5 day’s pay. He appears to have suffered with influenza throughout his service in France and reported to hospital in Rouen on two occasions for treatment whilst he was with 3rd Water Tank Column and it was this that ended his time there. On 4th March 1919 he was invalided to England.
aboard Hospital Ship Panama. His influenza occurred again after the war when, on 19th February 1919, he was admitted to hospital on Dudley Road, Birmingham. At this time he stated that he hadn’t had any such problems prior to his enlistment.

**STUBBS**

There are many Stubbs recorded on the above list. Edward would have been Enoch Edward, son of Enoch Edward and Eliza (nee Hamblett) of Twigworth. Edward was living at Smithfield Cottage, Norton, in March 1915 when he enlisted into the Grenadier Guards. Charles and Percy Stubbs were two of his brothers. Herbert William Stubbs was the son of Francis Herbert and Eliza Ann (nee Hancock) and the brother of Harold Stubbs, remembered on the Memorial. The Gloucester Journal of April 1918 recorded the following :

“CAPT STUBBS SERIOUSLY WOUNDED. Mrs Stubbs, wife of Capt Stubbs, RFA, of Newton, Aschurch, nr Tewkesbury, has been informed that her husband was in hospital having undergone an operation for a shrapnel wound in the thigh from which he was slowly recovering. Capt Stubbs has had about twelve years service. At the outbreak of war he was in the police force at Newcastle. He rejoined his regiment in 1914 and has been in France the whole time. Early in the war he was mentioned in dispatches and quickly gained promotion in the ranks until he attained his present position. He is the second son of Mr and Mrs Stubbs, now of Strensham, formerly of Norton, near Gloucester, who have previously lost one of their sons during the war”.

**GEORGE NORTON WALKER**

The George Walker on the list is assumed to be George Norton Walker for so many years of Norton Court. The Gloucester Citizen of 27th December 1956 carried the following report;

“One of Gloucestershire’s best known landowners and business directors, Captain George Norton Walker, died at his home, Courtfield, Charlton Kings, on Christmas Eve, aged 85. Captain Walker, who moved to Charlton Kings from Norton Court, near Gloucester, four years ago, was a director of Price Walker and Company, the well-known firm of timber importers of Gloucester, for 60 years. He was chairman of directors for about 50 years and when he retired from that office a few years ago he remained on the board. Another important county undertaking with which Captain Walker was associated was the Gloucester and Sharpness Dock Company of which he was a director until it was nationalized. As a young man Capt Walker became an officer in the 1st Gloucestershire Royal Engineer Volunteers and in the First World War he served with the 4th/5th Gloucesters and then in Bermuda with the East Yorkshire Regiment. Captain Walker inherited from his father the extensive Norton Court estate which had been bought by his grandfather nearly 100 years ago and he largely devoted himself to the pursuits and affairs of the countryside. He was very keen on shooting and fishing and took a great interest in forestry maintaining the woodlands at Norton.

He was churchwarden at Norton for about 30 years and for many years served on the Diocesan Board of Finance. Since moving to Charlton Kings he was a regular churchgoer there, last attending service only a fortnight ago. Captain Walker’s first wife died in 1906 and he is survived by his second wife. The only son by the first marriage is Major C S Norton Walker”.

**WILKINS**

I understand that a Mr Wilkins, of 3 Cold Elm Cottages, Norton, served during the Boer War and went on to serve in the First World War as well. He died during the Second World War, ironically after surviving as an active participant in two wars, as a result of injuries received in an accident with an American military vehicle in Norton.
CAN YOU HELP?

This account does not claim to be a comprehensive record of all men with Norton association who lost their lives during the Great War. Whilst every endeavour has been made to ensure positive identification of such individuals this has not always proved possible and no doubt there are others who may have been overlooked altogether.

We would like you to help us rectify this. If you have any information concerning any individual with Norton and First World War connections please contact us.

Anything, however seemingly insignificant, would be welcomed and this also applies to information concerning anyone who fought and survived the war.

Steve Maidment  
15 The Triangle  
Longlevens  
Gloucester  
GL2 0NE  
Tel: 01452 532866  
e-mail: maidment_steve@hotmail.com

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This would not have been possible without contributions and assistance from the following organisations and individuals and I take this opportunity to offer my thanks.

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Jim Higginbottom. War Diary extract for 4th Bn, Grenadier Guards

Peter Buttle. Photograph and transcript of Lt Arbuthnot’s grave at Shenley St Bottolphs

Gloucester Citizen and Journal. Miscellaneous references

Cheltenham Chronicle and Gloucestershire Graphic. Photographs of casualties

Mercantile Marine website. Details of HMT Osmanieh
“If I should die, think only this of me;
That there’s some corner of a foreign field
That is forever England.
There shall be In that rich earth a richer dust concealed
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made
aware Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam
A body of England’s breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.
And think, this heart, all evil shed away, pulse
in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness, In hearts at peace, under an
English heaven”.

[Rupert Brooke, ‘The Soldier’]