

SAWBRIDGEWORTH HISTORY.

SAWBRIDGEWORTH, HIGH WYCH, AND THE GREAT WAR. THE FALLEN.

A TRIBUTE TO THOSE WHO DIED.

The following is an attempt to provide a short history of all those servicemen from Sawbridgeworth and High Wych who died for their country during the Great War.

The War Memorial in the churchyard of Great St. Mary's lists 70 names of the fallen. However, 72 servicemen are remembered at the annual Remembrance Day service, and the website 'Herts at War' lists a much higher figure of 120 names.

Similarly, with High Wych, there are 33 names on the Memorial Plaque, but 34 names on the 'Herts at War' website.

The discrepancies may be due to a number of factors. Some servicemen were named on more than one Memorial. Others were mistakenly named on another local Memorial such as Gilston or Hunsdon. Some names do not seem to relate to local people at all and were named here because their parents or other relatives/friends lived here. This is NOT important! What is important, is that everybody is named somewhere so that they are not forgotten. Therefore, to ensure that everybody receives at least a mention, I have used the 'Herts at War' listings with additions, giving a total of 145 named servicemen.

As is common usage, I have given names in alphabetical order.

Unless stated otherwise, the fallen are all named on the Sawbridgeworth War Memorial.



Sawbridgeworth War Memorial in 2017



High Wych Memorial Plaque



High Wych Memorial Cross

Private Gordon Sydney Archer 4974.

Gordon Archer was born in 1898 at Bulbourne, the younger brother of Stanley and Percy Archer named below and lived with his parents in Hoestock Road. He served with the 1st Battalion The Queen's (Royal West Surrey) Regiment. This was a regular Battalion which went to France in August 1914. However, by November of that year, there were only 32 survivors from the original Battalion strength of 998. Replacements were hurriedly sent across to France. Firstly, from the Territorials, then from 'Kitchener' volunteers.

Gordon Archer must have lied about his age, for he was one of those 'Kitchener' volunteers.

On the 13 February 1916, his Battalion was moved up into the trenches near Beuvry in Northern France. This was a quiet sector. The Battalion diary has little to report except night patrols on the 14th, 15th and 16th. There was however, one casualty killed on each of these nights. Since nobody is recorded as killed on the 17 February 1916, the date given for Gordon Archer's death, it must be assumed that he died on that night patrol of the 16th and it was recorded the next day.

Gordon Archer is buried in Cambrin Military Cemetery, France. He was aged 17.

Private Percy Archer 493200.

Percy Archer is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials, nor is he named on the 'Herts at War' website.

Brother of Gordon and Stanley Archer, and step-brother to Arnold and Percy Wadsworth (also named), Percy was born at Bulborne in March 1897. In 1911 he was living at Hoestock Road.

In 1916, Percy joined the Army. It unclear whether he volunteered or was conscripted, but he was to serve in the 13th Battalion London Regiment which was known as a 'volunteer' unit.

From 3-4 May 1917 as part of the 56th Division, Percy's Battalion was involved in the Third Battle of the Scarpe, a part of the Second Battle of Arras. Percy's Battalion attacked from Monchy towards a German fortification called the Wotanstellung. It was here that Percy was mortally wounded. He was to die later at a casualty clearing station and was buried nearby.

Percy Archer died 13 May 1917. He is buried at Duisans British Cemetery, Arras. He was aged 20. It is unknown why Percy is not named on the local War Memorials, he definitely should be.

Officer Cadet Stanley John Archer RAF 331065.

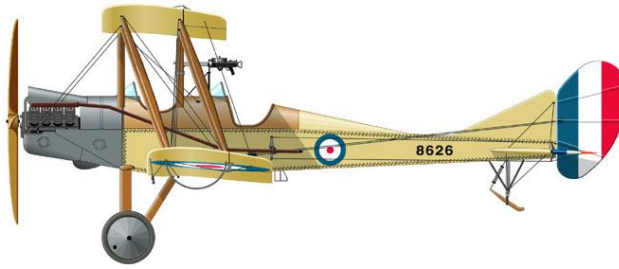
The son of a tailor, Stanley Archer was born 1897 at Bulbourne in Hertfordshire. In 1901 he was living with his parents in Brook Road, Sawbridgeworth, but had moved to Hoestock Road by 1911. In mid-1916, he married Alice Peacock in Huntingdon.

On 20 April 1914, Stanley Archer joined the Territorials. Following the outbreak of war, he was called to the colours and was to serve throughout the Great War with numerous different Regiments. On the 14 September 1918, Stanley transferred into the newly formed (1 April 1918) Royal Air Force as an Officer Cadet. Unfortunately, Stanley became ill soon afterwards, and died on 7 November 1918 of pneumonia (Spanish flu?) at Shorecliffe Military Hospital, almost at the end of the war. He was aged 21.

Stanley Archer is buried in Priory Road Cemetery, Huntingdon.



Tombstone of Stanley Archer



A BE 2c of the Royal Air Force

Private Thomas William John Baldock 20830.

Thomas Baldock is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials, nor is he named on the 'Herts at War' website.

Thomas was born at High Wych in late 1886, probably at the Hand and Crown public house. He was definitely living there in the census return of 1891 where his father George was recorded as the publican there. Later, Thomas' family moved away and from 1901 onwards was recorded as living in Potter Street, Harlow.

Thomas was a 'Kitchener' volunteer, enlisting in 1914 at Warley near Brentwood. He was to serve in the 1st Battalion East Surrey Regiment. This was a 'regular' unit to which Thomas would have been posted as a replacement. They had the nickname of the 'Young Buffs'.

On 25 September 1916 as a part of the wider Somme offensive, Thomas' unit was involved in the Battle of Morval. The 1st East Surrey began their advance at 1235, and by 1800 had consolidated a position on a spur of land East and North of the village. The attack was a relative success, but one of the casualties was Thomas. He was killed in action and has no known grave.

Thomas Baldock is named on the Thiepval Memorial and the Latton Memorial Cross, Harlow. He was aged 29.

Private Edward Banks 202698.

Edward Banks is not named on the Sawbridgeworth War Memorial.

Born 1879 at Birchanger, Edward Banks was a gamekeeper living at Tharbies Lodge near Allen's Green. In 1904 he married Annie Parker, and they had one daughter. Upon joining up, his family moved to 90 London Road. Because of his age and marital status, Edward Banks must have volunteered. He served in the 2nd Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment. This was a regular Battalion to which he would have been posted as a replacement.

On the 26 July 1917, the Battalion was in line at Zillebeke near Ypres. There was no battle that day, but as a party of 17 were making their way to the rear, they were struck by a random German shell which killed 11 and wounded 6. Sadly, Edward Banks was one of those killed. He has no grave, as there was nothing left to bury. He was aged 38.

Edward Banks is named on the High Wych War Memorial Plaque and on the Menin Gate at Ypres.



British troops at Zillebeke, 1917

Private Leonard Reynolds Bard 24459.

Leonard Bard is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials.

Born in 1896 at Saffron Walden, Leonard Bard lived at 40 Knight Street. He was one of those who volunteered in 1914 and joined the 11th Battalion Essex Regiment. This was a 'Kitchener' Service Battalion, formed in September 1914. They landed in France at Boulogne on 30 August 1915.

On the 26 September 1916, the 3rd phase of the Battle of the Somme started. Leonard Bard was involved in the attack at Morval, part of the Battle of Thiepval Ridge, itself part of the wider Somme offensive. It was here that Leonard Bard lost his life. He was aged 20.

Leonard Bard has no known grave but is named on the Thiepval Memorial.



Recruiting poster from 1914

2nd Lieutenant Arthur Leonard (Lennard) Barrett.

Arthur Barrett was born in Bexley, Kent, in 1893. The family later moved to The Drive in Sawbridgeworth. He was an 'Importer of Foreign Meat'. His father was a 'Hop Merchant'. From November 1914 until 1916, a unit of the Leicestershire Regiment was stationed in the town. They must have made an impression, because Arthur joined this regiment when the call came for volunteers.

Arthur was commissioned into the regular Battalions of the Leicestershire Regiment, but was attached to the 8th Battalion. This was a 'Kitchener' Service Battalion. They landed in France on 29 July 1915.

In 1916, the Battalion was involved in fighting during the Somme offensive.

In 1917, the Battalion took part in the Battle for Polygon Wood which raged from 26 September until 3 October. This was part of the wider Passchendaele (3rd Ypres) offensive. There were officially 1,215 British killed during this battle. One of those killed was Arthur Barrett on the 1 October 1917. He was aged 24. He has no known grave.

Arthur Barrett is also named on both the Bishop's Stortford War Memorial and the Tyne Cot Memorial.



Soldiers of the Leicestershire Regiment outside the 'King William IV' in Sawbridgeworth, 1914

2nd Lieutenant Frederick Alan Barrett.

Younger brother of Arthur Barrett, Frederick was also born in Bexley, in 1894.

Like his brother, Frederick Barrett was a volunteer. The records are somewhat contradictory, but Frederick Barrett (or much more likely, someone with the same name) may have served initially in France as a Corporal with the 19th Battalion Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment). However, he was later (27 January 1915) definitely commissioned into the 2nd Battalion Leicestershire Regiment, but was attached to the 9th Battalion Cheshire Regiment. This was a 'Kitchener' Service Battalion.

In 1915, the 9th Battalion Cheshire Regiment was at Gallipoli, and Frederick Barrett must have been with them.

On 12 February 1916, the Battalion arrived at Basra in Mesopotamia (Iraq) as a part of the Tigris Corps. They were fighting the Ottoman Turkish army there in an attempt to relieve the British forces besieged at Kut al Amara. Despite numerous clashes, including the Battle of Wadi, the Tigris Corps could not break through and Kut al Amara surrendered at the end of April 1916. It was during this campaign that Frederick Barrett, on 22 April 1916, died. He is buried in Basra Military Cemetery in Iraq. He was aged 23.

Private Leonard Bass 36243.

Leonard Bass is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials.

Born in 1897, in the 1911 census Leonard Bass was a 'Gardener' and lived at Hatfield Broad Oak, later moving to Sheering Mill Lane. In January 1916 he was conscripted into the Army, serving with the 6th Battalion Royal Berkshire Regiment. This was a 'Kitchener' Service Battalion, and at the beginning of 1917 was a part of the 18th Division, taking part in 'Operations on the Ancre'. These 'Operations' were basically an extension of the 1916 Somme offensive, and were carried out in atrocious conditions. On the 7 February 1917, the 18th Division was involved in an attack South of Grandcourt to capture a feature called 'Folly Trench'. Leonard's death is recorded on the 8 February

1917. However, there was no major action by his unit that day. He actually died of wounds received on the 7 February, where he was wounded in the left leg, which then had to be amputated. Leonard Bass is buried in Contay British Cemetery, France. He is named on the Sheering War Memorial Cross. He was aged 19.



Leonard Bass

2nd Lieutenant Errol George Montague Beart.

Errol Beart was born in Hong Kong in 1890. In 1911, he was working in the Steel manufacturing industry and lived in Sheffield.

In 1916 Errol Beart was commissioned into the Royal Army Service Corps. He was however, attached to the Royal Garrison Artillery, and served with the 228th Siege Battery. This unit, equipped with 9.2inch howitzers, arrived in France 14 January 1917 and immediately moved to the Ypres area.

As an Artillery unit, it would be thought that this was a reasonably 'safe' position. However, the Germans in mid-July started using Mustard Gas for the first time. Between 0100 and 0430 hours during the night of the 28-29 July, Errol Beart's battery was bombarded with this gas. His recorded death on 31 July was probably due to the effects of this gas attack. He was aged 27.

I can find no connection to High Wych or Sawbridgeworth.

Errol Beart is buried at Voormezele Cemetery near Ypres.



Survivors of a German gas attack

Private William Frederick Bennett 36243.

William Bennett is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials.

This name was an alias used by William Frederick Murphy.

Born in Edmonton Middlesex in 1900, William used an alias to enlist underage (he was just 14 years old) in 1914. He served with the 6th Battalion Royal Berkshire Regiment. This was a 'Kitchener' Service Battalion.

On 26 July 1915, this unit landed at Boulogne in France. It was to serve in both the Somme and Passchendaele offensives, being disbanded on the 12 February 1918. Records are unclear, but William was probably transferred then to the 5th Battalion of the Royal Berkshire Regiment. At the end of 1918, whilst involved in the final advance in Artois, William Bennett (Murphy) was wounded. He died back in England on the 9 November 1918, just two days from the end of the war. He was still aged only 18. William Bennett (Murphy) is buried in Edmonton Cemetery, Middlesex. I can find no connection to High Wych or Sawbridgeworth.



Young recruits, some of doubtful age

Private Albert Henry Bird 9307.

Albert Bird is not named on either the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials. He is named on the 'Herts at War' website under Bishop's Stortford but is not named on that Memorial. He is however, named on the Great Hallingbury Memorial.

Born in February 1890 at Start Hill, Great Hallingbury, Albert Bird was the son of William Bird, a 'Railway Labourer' and his wife Lizzy.

In the 1911 census, Albert was a servant to a serving Army officer at Aldershot. He enlisted himself sometime after this, 1911-12, and was thus a professional soldier. Albert was to serve with the 1st Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment. At the start of the Great War, Albert's Battalion was based in Mullingar, Ireland. They arrived in France via Le Havre on the SS Oronsa on 15 August 1914. After taking part in the early battles in France, the Battalion was sent to Ypres in Belgium, and took part in the First Battle of Ypres. The battalion diary records serious losses between 7 and 9 November 1914, and it would appear likely that Albert was mortally wounded at this time. His date of death is given as 31 December 1914, but he died of either of wounds or illness at the site of a major field hospital near Boulogne (Wimereax).

Albert Bird is buried at Wimereax Communal Cemetery, France. He was aged 24.



Albert Henry Bird

Private Henry George Bird 78212.

Born at Spellbrook in May 1890, Henry Bird was a 'Domestic Gardener'. In early 1914 he married Florence Cracknell and they had two children together. They lived in Spellbrook Lane.

In November 1915 he volunteered and was initially allocated to the King's Royal Rifle Corps.

However, Henry never actually served with them, because he was almost immediately transferred to the Royal Army Medical Corps. Henry Bird was to serve with the 15th Field Ambulance. Henry Bird's death date is given as the 23 September 1916. This was the opening day of the Battle of Thiepval Ridge, a part of the Somme offensive. It is probable that this was where Henry was killed. He was aged 26.

Henry Bird is buried at Peronne Road Cemetery, Maricourt, Somme, France.

Major Henry Griffith Boone DSO.

Henry Boone is not named on the Sawbridgeworth War Memorial.

A professional soldier, the son of a Lieutenant Colonel, Henry Boone was born in Madras, India on 16 November 1880. He was educated at Wellington College and the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, before being commissioned into the Royal Garrison Artillery as a 2nd Lieutenant. His commission being Gazetted on 6 January 1900.

Henry Boone served in India between 1900-6 with a mountain battery and was a part of the Tibet expeditionary force of 1903-4.

In 1907, Henry served for a time in China and could speak excellent Mandarin.

On 7 June 1911, Henry married Margaret Edlmann at Chislehurst in Kent. They would have 2 sons. With the coming of war, Henry Boone transferred to the Royal Field Artillery and was in France in 1914, being wounded in September that year, and being invalided home. He returned to France in September 1915 but was again invalided home in October 1916.

On 5 September 1917, Henry Boone was struck by a shell splinter when serving with the 94th (Howitzer) Battery near Ypres. He died of his wounds the next day, 6 September 1917 at a field hospital at Proven.

Henry Boone is buried at Mendinghem Military Cemetery, Belgium. He is named on the High Wych Memorial Plaque, the Farnham Memorial Cross, the Hale Memorial Cross, the Chislehurst War Memorial and the Wellington College WW1 Roll of Honour. He was aged 36.

Henry Boone was awarded the DSO in June 1916 and was twice mentioned in dispatches.

The only connection with High Wych is that the vicar at that time, Rev. Horace Rackham was a friend of the family.

Private Cyril Brace 28010.

Born in May 1888, Cyril Brace lived at 10 Station Road (Barkers Lane) before moving to 12 Sayesbury Road. In the 1911 census he was a 'Jobbing Gardener', but by 1914 he was working at the Lawrence joinery works. In 1916, Cyril Brace was conscripted and joined the 1st Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment. This was a Regular battalion, Cyril Brace being a replacement soldier. After only three months of training, Cyril joined his unit on the Somme. On 4 September 1916 during the Somme offensive, this Battalion attacked and captured the Northern end of Falfemont Farm. It was during this attack that Cyril Brace was killed in action. He was one of 306 casualties from his Battalion that day and has no known grave. He was aged 28.

Cyril Brace is also named on the Thiepval Memorial.



Cyril Brace

Lance Corporal Ernest Frederick Brace 10/20986.

Born in Sawbridgeworth in 1892, Ernest Brace was a 'Maltster's Labourer' living at 50 Cambridge Road. Pre-war, Ernest was a Territorial soldier. He is a 'Kitchener' volunteer and served initially with the 2nd and 6th Battalions Bedfordshire Regiment. He arrived in France in October 1916, where he was apparently wounded, before being transferred to the 2nd Battalion the Border Regiment. This was a regular unit and on 19 February was moved into the trenches North of Fricourt, near Meault in the area of the Somme. On the night of 22 February 1917, there was a small German raid on this trench, preceded by a heavy artillery bombardment. Although the German raid was unsuccessful, twelve British soldiers were killed by the shelling. One of these was Ernest Brace. He was aged 23. Ernest Brace is buried at Norfolk Cemetery, Becorder-Becourt in France. He is named on the Roll of Honour of the Congregational Church Sawbridgeworth. He is also named (because his parents had moved to 438 Newmarket Road, Cambridge) on the Cambridge Guildhall Memorial.



Ernest Frederick Brace

Private George Fearn Brace 5017.

George Brace is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials.

Born in August 1878 at Amwell, George Brace married Eva Reynolds in 1903 and was living at Newport near Saffron Walden. They had three children. Since 25 February 1898, George had been working as a Postman. His hobby was Bell Ringing in the local Church.

George Brace served with the 1/4th Battalion Suffolk Regiment. This was a Territorial unit to which he belonged prior to the outbreak of war. In November 1914, they landed at Le Havre in France. The Battalion's first action was at Mons. After this they fought at numerous engagements including the Somme.

Although some lists show him as 'Killed in Action', the actual records show that having survived over two years of fighting, on 20 January 1917, George Brace sadly died from Pleurisy and Pneumonia. During the Great War, the British Army was to suffer over 32,000 fatalities through sickness. He was aged 40.

George Brace is buried in Abbeville Communal Cemetery, Somme, France.

George Brace's connection to Sawbridgeworth came through family members who lived in the town.

George is named on the Essex Association of Change Ringers Memorial in Chelmsford Cathedral.

Private Harry Brace 238080.

Harry Brace was born 1 February 1899 in Sawbridgeworth. He lived with his parents in 'Taylors Yard' Knight Street before moving with them to 112 Cambridge Road, then on to 50 Cambridge Road.

In 1917, Harry Brace was conscripted into the Army, and served initially with the 6th Battalion Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Regiment before being transferred to the 6th Battalion Leicestershire Regiment. On 21 – 22 August 1918, this unit was engaged in the crossing of the River Ancre under heavy machine gun fire. It is probable that Harry Brace was mortally wounded in this action. His death date is given as 9 September 1918, but the records show that he died of wounds received previously.

Harry Brace is buried in Varennes Military Cemetery, Somme, France. He is named on the Roll of Honour of the Congregational Church Sawbridgeworth. He was aged 19.



Harry Brace

Private Henry Brace 7920.

Henry Brace is not named on the Sawbridgeworth War Memorial.

Henry was born in 1887 at Allan's Green and in the 1911 census he is recorded as a 'Nursery Gardener' lodging at Stonards Lane. However, Henry's service number shows him to have been a 'Regular' professional soldier. He must therefore have enlisted sometime before 1914.

Henry served with the 1st Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment. This was a regular Battalion and in March 1915 was stationed in the Ypres salient in Belgium. Although there was no major offensive here at this time, this was not a 'quiet' sector, and numerous small actions took place. The Battalion diary records a major trench raid on 11 March 1915. This was the date given for the death of Henry Brace and it is likely this is where he died. It was a confused action, with the British having to

withdraw quickly. Henry Brace has no known grave. He is named on the Menin Gate and High Wych Memorial Plaque. He was aged 27.

Private Frederick Thomas Brown 25454.

Frederick Brown is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials.

Born in Harlow in May 1891, Frederick Brown moved with his parents John and Eliza firstly to Walton Road Hoddesdon, and later to 43 Queens Road in Waltham Cross.

Frederick Brown served with the 6th Battalion Northamptonshire Regiment. This was a 'Kitchener' Service Battalion. Frederick Brown was a volunteer, he enlisted at Cheshunt.

On 17 February 1917, the 6th Battalion assaulted a feature called 'Boom Ravine' near Miraumont as part of the wider 'Operations on the Ancre', an extension of the old Somme offensive. It was during this attack that Frederick Brown was killed.

Frederick Brown is buried at Regina Trench Cemetery, Grandcourt, France. He was aged 25.

Private William Burls S/314155.

William Burls is not named on the Sawbridgeworth War Memorial.

Born in 1893 at Latton, Harlow, William was a 'Baker'. In the 1911 census he was living in Chingford whilst his parents lived in Redricks Lane.

William was conscripted in 1917, presumably after a year's deferment. Because of his background, he served with the 37th Field Bakery, Royal Army Service Corps in Britain.

In February 1918, this unit was based in Colchester, Essex. William Burls' death at Colchester Hospital is recorded as 3 February 1918. The reason is unknown, but it must be accident or illness, with the former the most likely.

William Burls is buried at St. Mary-at-Latton Church, Harlow. He is named on both the High Wych Memorial Plaque and the Latton Memorial Cross. He was aged 24.

Private William Burrell 4/6836.

Born in January 1891 at Beldams Lane, Great Hallingbury, William Burrell later moved with his parents to Spellbrook Lane in Sawbridgeworth. In the 1911 census, He is noted as an unemployed 'Farm Labourer'. In April 1914, William married Annie Peternoster at Sawbridgeworth.

William Burrell was a Territorial soldier and upon the outbreak of the Great War, was immediately called for service. He served with the 4th Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment. Following a period in England, the Battalion arrived in Le Havre, France on 25 August 1916 on the troopship SS Inventor, and the Battalion's first action was November that year.

On 29 April 1917, the Battalion launched a dawn attack as part of the 'Arleux Phase' of the first day of the Battle of Arras. The regimental diary notes that the Battalion suffered heavy German shelling at this time. It was here that William Burrell was killed. He was aged 26.

William Burrell is also named on the Arras Memorial at Faubourg-D-Amiens Cemetery.

Private Joseph Cakebread MM 29832.

Joseph Cakebread is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials.

Born in 1884 in Hoddesdon, Joseph Cakebread was a 'Gamekeeper' working and lodging at Great Pennys Farm near High Wych. In 1911 at Ware, he married Lily Neal.

Given his age and marital status, it is likely that Joseph Cakebread volunteered. He served in the 2nd Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment. In November 1918, the unit was in action near Preux en Bois as part of the Battle of the Sambre. It was here that Joseph was killed on 4 November 1918. He had

previously been awarded the Military Medal for valour. He is buried at Montay-Neuvilly Road Cemetery, Montay. He was aged 34.

Joseph Cakebread is named on the Gilston War Memorial.



War Memorial at Gilston

Private Ernest Charles Camp GS/68860.

Born in June 1898, Ernest Camp lived with his parents at 60 Station Road (Barkers Lane). In 1916 he was conscripted into the Army and was initially assigned to the West Kent Yeomanry. These troops were in Egypt defending the Suez Canal until 1918. It is thus very unlikely that Ernest Camp ever actually joined them, as he is transferred to the 24th Battalion Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment) for service in France. This was a 'Pals' Battalion, also known as the 2nd Sportsmen. Ernest Camp arrived in France to join them on 4 October 1917.

Between 21 – 23 March 1918, Ernest's Battalion was engaged in the Battle of St. Quentin, defending against the German 'Michael' offensive and took heavy casualties. The date of Ernest Camp's death is given as 26 March 1918. Although he is listed as 'killed in action', (unless it was a random shell hit), this is unlikely as his unit was not engaged that day. It is much more likely, that Ernest died from wounds received in the earlier actions. He was aged 19.

Ernest Camp is buried at Auchonvillers Military Cemetery, Somme, France.

Gunner Henry Camp 205988.

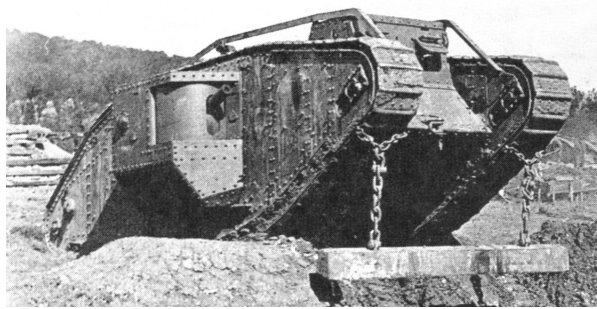
Henry Camp is not named on the Sawbridgeworth War Memorial.

Born at Little Amwell in May 1888, Henry Camp was a policeman. After working at Bishop's Stortford, he became the local policeman for High Wych.

Being in a reserved occupation, Henry would not have been conscripted. However, in February 1917 Henry volunteered and joined the Royal Horse Artillery. He served with the 15th Brigade, a part of the 29th Division.

In November 1917, this Division was giving artillery support during the Battle of Cambrai. This was the first massed tank attack, and a prelude to future warfare. It was here that on 30 November 1917 that Henry Camp was killed in action, presumably through shellfire. He has no known grave.

Henry Camp is named on the Cambrai Memorial and the High Wych Memorial Plaque.
He was aged 29.



Tank mark IV as used at Cambrai

Sergeant George Albert Canning 7607.

George Canning is not named on the Sawbridgeworth War Memorial.

Born in March 1882, the son of Moses and Emma Canning of Allen's Green, George Canning was a professional soldier. In the 1911 census, he was a Corporal serving in India.

Upon the outbreak of the Great War, George was brought back to England where he served with the 1st Essex Regiment. In 1915, this unit was despatched to the Eastern Mediterranean to take part in the Gallipoli campaign. On 25 April 1915 at 0930, the 1st Essex landed at Y Beach (actually a cliff, which led to the soldiers commenting, 'Why *Beach*?') at Cape Helles. Unlike the other landings that day which were bloody with huge casualties, the Y Beach landings were virtually unopposed. However, instead of advancing, the commander chose to consolidate at the beachhead and wasted a valuable opportunity for a major victory.

There was still some opposition though, and the 1st Essex lost 18 killed that day, one of whom was George Canning. He has no known grave. He was aged 33.

George Canning is named on the Helles Memorial in Turkey and on the High Wych War Memorial Plaque.



'Y' Beach in 1915, unloading horses

Private Joseph Benjamin Cannon 232627.

Joseph Cannon is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials.

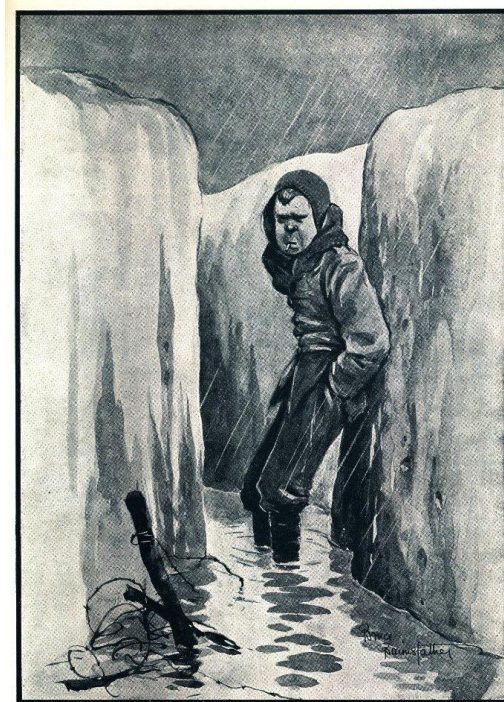
Joseph Cannon was born in February 1885 to parents Charles and Louisa who lived in Clay Lane (West Road). By 1911, the family had moved to Bow, East London. Joseph was still living with his parents and he was a 'Cigar Sorter and Packer'.

Conscripted in 1916, by 1917, Joseph Cannon was serving with the 2nd Battalion Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment) on the Western Front.

On 9 October, Joseph's unit took part in the attack at the Battle of Poelcapelle and took many casualties. This was a part of the wider Passchendaele offensive. The rainfall at this time was up to an inch per day, and conditions were atrocious, with many wounded being left for up to a week in the open, untreated.

Joseph Cannon's date of death is given as 26 October 1917. However, his unit was not in action that day. It is quite possible that he was struck by a random shell, but the fact that he actually has a known grave from that shambles, indicates that he died of wounds received on the 9 October. He was aged 32.

Joseph Cannon is buried in the Poelcapelle British Cemetery, Belgium.



The Communication Trench

PROBLEM—Whether to walk along the top and risk it, or do another mile of this

A Bairnsfather cartoon from the time

Private Edward Patrick Chapman 42887.

Edward was born and lived at Rudyard Place, Deptford in January-March 1894. In the 1911 census he was still living there and he is recorded as being a 'Van Guard' on the railway.

For some reason, Edward Chapman is supposedly named as enlisting in 'Sawbridgeworth' (probably Bishop's Stortford or Hertford). There were a number of people with this surname living at High Wych. They may have been relatives which would explain his inclusion on the Sawbridgeworth War Memorial.

After initially serving with the Middlesex Regiment, Edward Chapman was transferred to the 36th Battalion Machine Gun Corps. In 1918, this unit was serving in the Pozieres area in the region of the Somme. On 21 March 1918, the Germans launched their last major offensive of the Great War, operation 'Michael'. It was on this opening day of the offensive that Edward Chapman was killed defending Pozieres. He has no known grave. He was aged 24.

As stated, there is no obvious connection to Sawbridgeworth or High Wych.

Edward Chapman is also named on the Pozieres Memorial.

Private Ernest Charles Chappell L/7824.

Ernest Chappell is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials.

Born in 1882 at Chichester in Sussex, Ernest's parents lived there at 34 Cavendish Street.

Ernest Chappell was a professional soldier, having enlisted in 1904 and served with the Royal Sussex Regiment.

On the 12 August 1914, the 7th Battalion Royal Sussex Regiment was formed as a 'Kitchener' Service Battalion. In order to give some experience to the unit, Ernest was one of those 'Old Sweats' transferred into the Battalion from the regulars.

After a period in England, on 1 June 1915 the Battalion arrived at Boulogne in France, and from September that year onwards was involved in numerous actions.

On 25 July 1917, the Battalion was again in action at Monchy-le-Preux and suffered casualties of 30 killed, 63 wounded. One of the wounded was Ernest Chappell. He died from his wounds two days later on the 27 July 1917. He was aged 36.

Ernest Chappell is buried at St. Sever Cemetery Extension, Rouen, France.

The only connection I can find to Sawbridgeworth appears to be relatives who lived in Clay Lane (West Road). Surprisingly, Ernest Chappell is not named on the Chichester War Memorial.

Engineer Lieutenant Bernard Child RN.

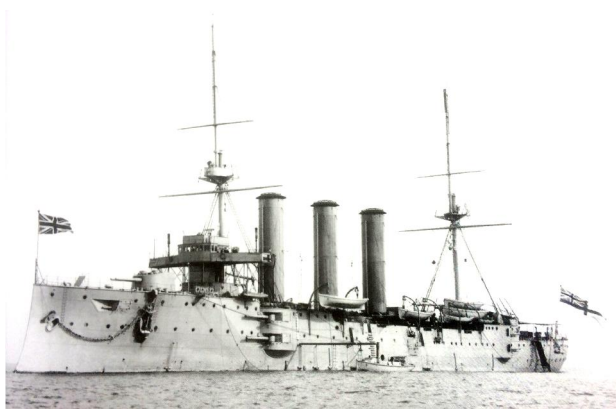
Born in Tottenham in 1886, Bernard's early childhood was spent living at Herne Bay in Kent, before moving to Newport near Saffron Waldon.

Bernard Child was a professional serviceman. He joined the Royal Navy as a commissioned officer on 4 August 1905. In 1911, Bernard was serving on the 'Dreadnought' Battleship HMS Neptune, however, at the outbreak of war he was transferred to the obsolete Armoured Cruiser HMS Monmouth. This ship was crewed mainly by Reservists and Coastguard volunteers, it thus appears that Bernard's transfer was an attempt to give some experience to the crew.

Along with some other obsolete ships with scratch crews, HMS Monmouth was sent to join the British 4th Cruiser Squadron under Rear Admiral Sir Christopher Cradock KCVO, CB, hunting for the German East Asia Squadron under Admiral von Spee, which consisted of 5 modern Cruisers.

Although brave and a solid commander, Admiral Cradock was not the most capable. Furthermore, he was given contradictory and confusing orders from the Admiralty in London. Also, the German Squadron was vastly superior in both men and materiel. On 1 November 1914, the British found the Germans, but instead of withdrawing, engaged them at the what would become the Battle of Coronel. The outcome was never in doubt. The British lost two Cruisers in this battle, one of which was HMS Monmouth which went down with all hands at 2118 hours on the 1 November 1914 after refusing German calls to surrender. Bernard Child was one of 735 men who were lost from this ship that day. It was the first defeat suffered by the Royal Navy for over 100 years. This defeat was to be avenged on the 8 December that year, when the Admiralty finally sent a superior fleet in the form of 2 Battlecruisers to the area, resulting in the Battle of the Falklands and the destruction of the German ships.

Bernard Child was aged 28. He is also named on the Plymouth Naval Memorial on The Hoe. Bernard's will gave his address as Orchard House, 100 London Road, which was where his family had moved to in 1911.



HMS Monmouth in a pre-war photograph

2nd Lieutenant David Leslie Child.

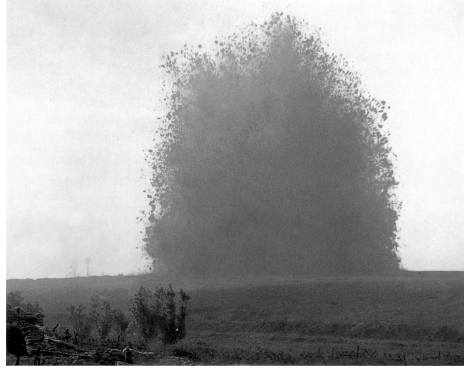
Younger brother of Bernard Child.

Born in 1888 at Tottenham, David's childhood was spent living at Newport near Saffron Waldon. The family moved in 1911 to 100 London Road in Sawbridgeworth. Before the war, David Child was an 'Articled Clerk to a Solicitor'.

In 1914, David volunteered for service and was commissioned into the 2nd Battalion Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment) 3 February 1915. After training, he arrived in France in April 1916 to join his unit on the Somme front as a replacement.

On 1 July 1916, David's unit was positioned opposite the German held Hawthorn Ridge Redoubt near Beaumont Hamel. This was to be the first day of the Battle of the Somme. At 0720, a huge mine was exploded beneath the German redoubt, forming a large crater. The official report for this action shows that at 0725, David's Battalion began to advance towards this crater, but under intense machine gun fire, only a few actually reached it, and none reached the German wire. By 1350, even those at the crater were forced to withdraw due to 'trench mortar fire'. The official divisional casualties from this unsuccessful assault were 5,267 killed or wounded, of whom 209 were officers. David was one of those officers wounded. His wounds must have been severe as he is not evacuated back to England. He was to die of his wounds on 11 September 1916. He was aged 28.

David Child is buried at Bronfay Farm Military Cemetery, France.



The 'Hawthorn Ridge' mine exploding



A working party inside the Hawthorn Ridge crater

Private Joseph Clarke G/6796.

Joseph Clark was born in February 1890. He lived all his early years in Sawbridgeworth and in 1911 was living at 19 Sheering Mill Road (Lane) and was a 'Builder's General Labourer'. However, by 1914, he was working at the Lawrence Joinery and lived at 10 Springhall Road.

In 1914, Joseph volunteered for service and joined the 12th Battalion Middlesex Regiment. This was a 'Kitchener' Service Battalion. After training in Essex and Salisbury Plain, the Battalion landed at Le Havre in France on the 25 July 1915. After serving in 'quiet' areas, in 1916 the Battalion was moved to the Somme. On 13 July 1916, the 12th Middlesex was heavily involved in the confused and chaotic fighting for Trones Wood. Although largely destroyed by artillery, the remains of this Wood were still a major impediment to both sides in the battle, and many soldiers simply 'disappeared' in the tangled debris. One of those was Joseph Clarke. He has no known grave. He was aged 26. Joseph Clarke is also named on the Thiepval Memorial.



Joseph Clarke

Private Charles Henry Clements 353339.

In baptismal records, he is known as Henry Charles Clements and was born 11 March 1899 at 'Rook End' High Wych, Sawbridgeworth and was baptised at Great St. Mary's on 7 May that year. Charles Clements later lived at Sayesfield in High Wych.

Presumably, Charles must have lied about his age when he enlisted in Hertford. He served initially in England with the Hertfordshire Regiment (number 5115) before being transferred to the 16th Battalion Royal Scots. This Battalion had taken heavy losses at Contalmaison during the Somme offensive of 1916 and Charles would have been one of the replacements.

The Battalion was disbanded in France in August 1918. Charles must then have been placed with either the 11th or 12th Battalion, as it was these two that went on to see service in Germany in 1919. Strictly speaking, Charles Clements should not be named in this history. He was a part of the Allied occupying force after the Armistice, and died in Cologne, Germany on 3-4 January 1919. He presumably died through accident or illness. He was aged 18.

Charles Clements is buried at Amersfoort General Cemetery, Utrecht, Netherlands.

Private William Henry Clements 97519.

Born in 1897, William Clements was the son of a 'Domestic Groom' and lived at 4 Church Street. In 1916, William was conscripted to serve in the Army. This though was deferred until 29 January 1917, when William joined the 1st Reserve Battalion Hertfordshire Regiment. His initial training took place at Halton Park near Aylesbury. This is now RAF Halton, and it still has the training trenches (very much refurbished) which would have been used by William.

After this training, William Clements was transferred to the 3rd Battalion Machine Gun Corps. He landed at Boulogne in France on 20 May 1917 and was posted to the 153rd Company near Ypres. On 29 June 1917, William Clements died of his wounds. This was before the Passchendaele offensive, the only major action before then being the attack and capture of Messines Ridge 7-14 June. Presumably it was here that William Clements was wounded, although that is unclear. He may have just been unlucky, and part of the daily attrition. He was aged 19.

William Clements is buried at Vlamertinghe New Military Cemetery, Ypres, Belgium.

Private David George Crombie-Rodgers 36443.

David Crombie-Rodgers is not named on the Sawbridgeworth War Memorial.

Note. Some sources spell the surname as 'Crowbie-Rodgers', and the name is also misspelt on the High Wych Memorial Plaque.

Born at Camberwell in Surrey, David was the son of an agent for 'milling staffs and stones', and himself worked as a 'Clerk' in the mill trade.

In the 1901 census, David was living at Low Hill, Roydon with his Scottish grandfather. The whereabouts of the rest of his family is obscure, although his younger brother Hector was born at Roydon in 1905. It is possible some of his family lived abroad for a time. In 1914, they were apparently living in the High Wych area.

At the outbreak of war, David volunteered, and after initial service with the Hertfordshire Regiment, he was transferred to the 6th Battalion Royal Berkshire Regiment. This Battalion was holding trenches at the front near Thiepval 27 September-5 October 1916 during the Somme offensive. There were no major assaults, but the Battalion took 201 casualties in this time due to heavy shelling and raids. The date given for David Crombie-Rodgers' death is 5 October 1916. This was the day on which the Battalion withdrew from the front, and in the diary, there are no casualties noted. It is therefore much more likely that David was missing from an earlier date and was reported as dead upon the withdrawal.

David Crombie-Rodgers has no known grave. He is named on the Thiepval Memorial and the High Wych Memorial Plaque. He was aged 23.



David George Crombie-Rodgers

Private Thomas John Horton Crouchman 267019.

Thomas Crouchman, usually known by his middle name of 'John', was born in April 1889 and lived at 38 Knight Street. Like his father, Thomas was a 'Boot Maker and Repairer'. In July 1916, he married Evelyn Reynolds at Great St. Mary's Church.

In 1916, Thomas Crouchman was conscripted into the 1st Battalion Hertfordshire Regiment and was to serve in Flanders.

The 31 July 1917 marked the first day of the Third Battle of Ypres, better known as Passchendaele. On this day, the 1st Battalion attacked and advanced over the Steenbeek (stream) towards the German line at Langemarck. However, the German wire was uncut, and the Battalion took heavy casualties through machine gun fire. They were forced to withdraw back to their start lines. All the officers, and 459 other ranks became casualties that day (roughly 75%), and the Battalion could take no more part in the battle. There is now a memorial to the Hertfordshire Regiment at St. Julien nearby to where they died.

Thomas Crouchman was one of those killed. He was aged 28.

Thomas has no known grave. He is named on the Menin Gate at Ypres and on the Roll of Honour of the Congregational Church Sawbridgeworth.



Thomas John Horton Crouchman

Private Charley(Charles) Dedman 7948.

Charley Dedman is not named on the Sawbridgeworth War Memorial.

Born in November 1886, Charley Dedman lived at Hand Terrace, High Wych, and was a 'Farm Labourer'.

In 1914, Charley volunteered to serve and was assigned to the 13th Battalion London Regiment. (Note that the Herts at War website incorrectly suggests that he was conscripted). This Battalion, in 1914 was based nearby at Abbots Langley, and was known to be a 'volunteer' Battalion. The 13th Battalion soon embarked for France, and Charley joined them there on 26 June 1916.

On 9 September 1916, Charley's Battalion was involved in the Battle of Ginchy, a part of the much larger Somme offensive. His Battalion attacked the village of Ginchy, near Guillemont, behind a 'creeping barrage' in the afternoon at 1645 hours. Although the attack was successful, it came at a cost. Heavy casualties were taken from German shrapnel and machine gun fire. Charley Dedman was one of those killed. He was aged 29.

Charley Dedman is buried at Guillemont Road Cemetery, Guillemont, France. He is named on the High Wych War Memorial Plaque.

Private Albert Henry Fish TF/203432.

Albert Fish is not named on the Sawbridgeworth War Memorial.

Elder brother of Frank Fish, Albert was born in 1886 and lived in Cambridge Road. In the 1911 census, Albert is recorded as a 'Bricklayers Labourer'.

Albert's service number shows that he was conscripted in January 1916. He served in the 11th Battalion Middlesex Regiment. In May 1917, this Battalion was attacking German positions as part of the Second Battle of Arras. It was here on 3 May 1917 that Albert Fish was killed. He has no known grave.

Albert Fish is named on the Arras Memorial and the High Wych Memorial Plaque. He was aged 31.

Private Benjamin Fish 54858.

Benjamin Fish is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials.

Benjamin Fish was born in Sawbridgeworth in March 1879 and was baptised at Great St. Mary's that September. He was raised at Hatfield Broad Oak and in 1909 married Ellen Gertrude Fewell at Epping. They were to have one daughter.

Benjamin and his family lived at 1 Causeway Cottages, High Street, Epping. Since 2 February 1906 he worked as a Postman.

Because of his age and marital status, Benjamin must have volunteered. He enlisted at Epping, probably in late 1916.

A little surprisingly, Benjamin was assigned to the 16th Battalion Welsh Regiment. This was because that unit had taken massive casualties on the Somme and needed replacements.

In July 1917, Benjamin's unit was at Ypres and they took part as a reserve battalion in the assault on Pilckem Ridge on the 31 July 1917.

On the 27 August 1917, the Battalion was again used in an assault. This time the objective was a German breastwork trench astride the Langemarck-Poelcapelle Road. The weather conditions were atrocious, with torrential rain and driving wind. The Divisional History notes that men were literally up to their necks in freezing water. It was a quagmire. Soldiers who fell into shell holes could only escape with the aid of their colleagues whilst under fire. Amazingly, some of the attackers made it to the German line but could not hold it. That day, the 16th Welsh lost 71 killed and 135 wounded from a strength of 400, (over 50%). One of those killed was Benjamin Fish. He was aged 37.

Benjamin Fish has no known grave. He is named on the Tyne Cot Memorial and the Epping War Memorial.



Stretcher bearers up to their knees in mud at Pilckem Ridge

Private Charles Thomas Fish 36314.

Charles Fish is not named on the Sawbridgeworth War Memorial.

Born in January 1888 and living at Friars Cottage, Friars Lane, High Wych, Charles Fish was an 'Agricultural Worker'.

In November 1915, Charles volunteered and enlisted initially with the 1/2nd Battalion Hertfordshire Regiment with the service number 5788. However, In June 1916, he was sent to France and transferred to the Royal Berkshire Regiment (1st or 2nd Battalion, records are unclear), and served in the area of the Somme.

Charles was unlucky. On 3 November 1916 a shell exploded 3 yards from him. Although he survived the explosion, it brought down a quantity of timber onto him, which caused massive spinal injuries, and were ultimately to prove fatal. Charles was shipped back to England and was treated at Exeter and Brompton (London) Hospitals. Sadly, they could do nothing to help, and Charles was sent home to die.

On 20 January 1917, just after his birthday, Charles Fish died from his wounds. He was aged 29.

Charles Fish was buried at St. James' Church, High Wych with full military honours, and is named on the High Wych Memorial Plaque.



Charles Thomas Fish

Private Frank Ernest Fish 265210.

Frank Fish was born in January 1894 and was a 'Bakers Labourer' working for HA and D Taylor maltsters. He was single and lived at 36 Cambridge Road. He was the elder brother of Henry Alfred Fish and younger brother of Albert Henry Fish who are also named on the Sawbridgeworth War Memorial.

In June 1912, Frank became a Territorial soldier, and upon the outbreak of war was called to the colours. He served with the 1st Battalion Hertfordshire Regiment and took part in both the First Battle of Ypres in 1914, and the Somme offensive of 1916. He was wounded twice and had to spend time at home recuperating.

The 31 July 1917 saw the first day of what would be called the Passchendaele offensive, or Third Ypres. On that day, the Battalion attacked near St. Julien, crossing the Steenbeek towards Langemarck. Tragically, the German wire was uncut, and the Battalion after taking heavy casualties (about 75%) had to withdraw. Frank Fish was one of those who died that day. His next of kin received the usual letter saying he 'died instantly', but of course the letter was just in hope. Frank was not the only soldier from Sawbridgeworth to die here on this day. Thomas Crouchman who has already been named, William Pettitt and Ernest Reed died with him. They may well have been friends. There is now a memorial to the Hertfordshire Regiment at St. Julien.

Frank Fish is buried at New Irish Farm Cemetery, Belgium. He was aged 23.



Frank Ernest Fish

Corporal Frederick Fish GS/2404.

Elder brother of Leonard Fish, Frederick was born in April 1890 at Cottage 5 Rook End, High Wych, Sawbridgeworth. He lived his childhood in both Ware and Bishop's Stortford, and in 1911 he was recorded as being a 'Maltsters Labourer'. However, in 1914 just prior to the war, he was working at Sawbridgeworth as a 'Nursery Gardener' and lived in Springhall Road.

Frederick was a 'Kitchener' volunteer serving from September 1914 onwards.

At some time, Frederick was transferred to the 7th Battalion Queens Own (Royal West Kent) Regiment. This was probably in April 1915 when they were stationed nearby at Colchester.

On 27 July 1915, the Battalion landed at Le Havre in France.

In June 1916, Frederick was back in England. Possibly he was wounded. Much less likely was that he was on leave. Nonetheless, Frederick used the time to marry Ellen Edwards at Ware. Unfortunately, this was to be a very short marriage. Frederick was immediately sent back to his unit in France where it took part in the Battle of Albert from 1-13 July 1916. This was a part of the Somme offensive.

On 13 July 1916 Frederick Fish was reported as 'missing'. Given the confusion at that time, he may have been 'missing' for some days. Sometime later, his remains were eventually recovered, and identified from his personal effects. He had been married for just one month. His official date of death is given as 13 July 1916. He was aged 27.

Frederick Fish is buried at Serre Road Cemetery Number 2, France.



Frederick Fish

Private Harold Edward Fish G/30809.

Harold Fish was born in 1899 and lived at 4 Barkers Lane (Station Road). It is probable that Harold was conscripted in 1916, and he enlisted at Hertford.

After initial service with the 10th Battalion Royal West Surrey Regiment (29420), Harold was later transferred to the 10th Battalion Queens Own (Royal West Kent) Regiment. This transfer must have taken place in early 1918 when the 10th West Kents returned to France from a period in Italy. The date of Harold's death is given as 23 August 1918 and it was recorded that he 'died of wounds'. The Battalion diary shows no major action immediately prior to this date, but there was some fighting on 17 and 18 August. Unless Harold was a part of the daily attrition, it must be then that he was mortally wounded.

Harold Fish is buried at Esquelbecq Military Cemetery, France. He was aged 19.

Private Henry (Harry) Alfred Fish G/15664.

Some records give the service number G/15564. I have used the service number as given by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Younger brother of Frank Fish, Henry Fish was born in September 1896 and lived at 36 Cambridge Road. He was in domestic service as a 'House Boy'.

Henry appears to have been a 'Kitchener' volunteer. After enlisting into the 1st Battalion Hertfordshire Regiment, he was transferred to the 13th Battalion Royal Sussex Regiment and was a Signaller. This was a 'Service' Battalion arriving at Le Havre in France on 6 March 1916.

After numerous postings to 'quiet' sectors, the Battalion went into action 20-25 September 1917 in the Battle of the Menin Road Ridge, part of the Passchendaele offensive. The conditions were atrocious with many casualties, one of whom was Henry Fish. He died on 24 September 1917 and has no known grave. He was aged 21.

Henry Fish is also named on the Tyne Cot Memorial.



Henry (Harry) Alfred Fish

Stoker 1st Class Leonard Fish RN K/17956.

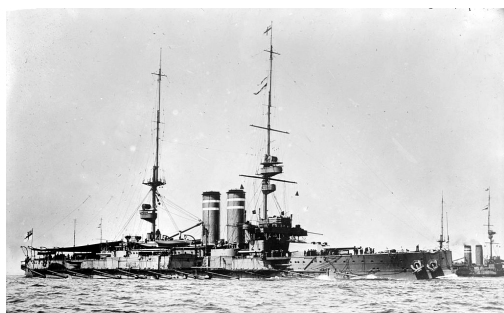
Younger brother of Frederick Fish, Leonard was born in November 1893 at Ware, where he spent his childhood before moving to Bishop's Stortford.

Leonard was a 'Tanners Labourer' before enlisting with the Royal Navy on 25 February 1913. He was thus a professional serviceman.



Leonard Fish

On 6 January 1916, Leonard was serving on the pre-dreadnought battleship HMS King Edward VII. At 0712, this ship departed Scapa Flow for a refit at Belfast. However, at 1047 she struck a mine laid by the German SMS Mowe. Efforts to tow her to safety failed and the crew were ordered to abandon ship. All but one of her crew were saved, including Leonard.



HMS King Edward VII

On 31 May-1 June 1916, Leonard took part in the largest naval battle of all time, the Battle of Jutland. He was serving then on HMS Royal Oak, a 'Dreadnought' battleship, one of 151 Royal Navy warships involved. (The Royal Oak was later to be famously sunk at anchor in WW2 by a U Boat). On 3 September 1917, Leonard was ashore at Chatham Naval Dockyard where he was awaiting a new posting. Along with 900 other ratings, he was sleeping in the drill hall because of a lack of accommodation in the main dormitories. On this night the Germans launched an air raid using five Gotha G V bombers. It was the first night raid of this type, and there was no blackout in place. Although one bomber turned back, the rest dropped 46 bombs on Gillingham and Chatham. At 2312, two of these bombs struck the crowded drill hall. The exact time is known, because the drill hall tower clock stopped. These bombs caused 136 fatal casualties (including those who died later) amongst the sleeping seamen. Many being killed by falling glass shards from the roof which decapitated and cut people to pieces. One of the fatalities was Leonard Fish. Leonard Fish is buried in Gillingham (Woodlands) Cemetery, Kent. He was aged 23. Leonard's connection to High Wych and Sawbridgeworth was through his family.



The former Drill Hall at Chatham. Now part of Greenwich University

Driver Horace Allan Furlong T4/090593.

Horace Furlong is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials.

Elder brother of Roland Furlong, Horace was born in July 1882, and lived at 11 Barkers Lane (Station Road) Sawbridgeworth. In the 1901 census he was described as a 'Journeyman Baker'.

Later in life, Horace left the town, and in 1910 he married his Dutch wife Aaltje in Islington and lived with her in Clerkenwell. They had one daughter named Antonia. In 1911 he was a 'Bakers Van Man'. Clearly, he could drive a motor vehicle, which would explain his later Army service.

Records are unclear, but given his age and marital status, Horace must have been a volunteer. He enlisted at Putney. Because he could drive, he was assigned to the Royal Army Service Corps operating in the rear of the lines.

In 1917, Horace was stationed at Army Service Corps HT Depot Salonika, on the Salonika Front in Greece fighting the Bulgarians. This was a 'sideshow' and was an attempt to aid Britain's ally Serbia, with tens times more casualties being taken from Dysentery and Malaria than actual fighting. The letters HT in the depot designation indicate it was a Horse Transport depot. This actually meant due to the terrain, that they were operating mules.

On 2 June 1917 the SS Cameronian, whilst sailing between Alexandria and Salonika and carrying amongst other things, a cargo of mules, was torpedoed and sunk by the German submarine UC 34. Also on board was Horace Furlong. He died at sea and was one of 63 lives lost, his body not being recovered.

Horace Furlong is named on the Chatby Memorial, Alexandria, Egypt. He was aged 34.



Mule transport on the Salonika front

Private Roland Furlong G/10660.

Roland Furlong is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials.

Younger brother of Horace Furlong, Roland was born in February 1891 and also lived at 11 Barkers Lane (Station Road). In the 1911 census, he is still in Sawbridgeworth and is described as a 'Journeyman Butcher'.

Roland is yet another 'Kitchener' volunteer, enlisting in 1914. He served with the 7th Battalion The Queens (Royal West Surrey) Regiment.

On the 28-29 September 1916, the Battalion attacked the Schwaben Redoubt as part of the Somme offensive. The Regimental diary shows casualties of 384 killed and wounded for this operation.

After this, the Battalion was taken out of line and apart from 2 casualties on 1 October through a random shell, there were no other casualties noted until 26 October. Roland's death date is given as 4 October 1916. He must therefore have died of wounds received earlier, presumably in the Schwaben Redoubt attack.

Roland Furlong is buried at Mill Road Cemetery, Thiepval, France, and is named on the Roll of Honour of the Congregational Church, Sawbridgeworth. He was aged 25.



Roland Furlong

Private Alfred William Gardner 10139.

Alfred William Gardner is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials.

In baptismal records, the name is given as William Alfred Gardner.

Alfred Gardner was born in September 1891 at Gilston. In the 1901 census, the family had moved to Cambridge Road, Sawbridgeworth, but had moved on again by 1911.

Alfred was a professional soldier, having joined the Army before 1911. He served in the 2nd Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment.

Alfred's Battalion landed at Zeebrugge in Belgium in September 1914 and immediately raced to the front, meeting the oncoming German Army near Ypres. There followed the First Battle of Ypres, which was a confusing combat, but the result was that the German Army had been stopped from advancing further. It was here that Alfred lost his life on 8 November 1914. He was aged 23.

Alfred Gardner is buried at Harlebeke New British Cemetery, Belgium.

Although not named on the local War Memorials, Alfred is named on St. Mary's Church War Memorial, Ware, and on the Ware Town War Memorial.

Gunner Herbert Gayler 338362.

Herbert Gayler is not named on the Sawbridgeworth War Memorial.

Herbert Gayler was born in 1884 at Fullers End, Elsenham. He was the son of a Farmer and in the 1901 census the family had moved to High Wych. In the 1911 census he is recorded as a 'Cowman' working at Bakers Farm.

Herbert was married. In August 1910, he married Fanny Bull at St. James Church, High Wych.

Because of his marital status, it is likely that Herbert volunteered. He served with the 142nd (Durham) Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery and operated obsolescent 6inch howitzers. They arrived in France 21 March 1916 and were used mainly for counter battery fire. This was quite dangerous, because of course the Germans would be firing back at you!

Whilst operating near Arras, Herbert's death was recorded on 16 August 1917. The reason for his death is not known, but it is likely that it was German shelling.

Herbert Gayler is buried at Tilloy British Cemetery, Tilloy-les-Mofflaines, France, and is named on the High Wych Memorial Plaque. He was aged 32.



6inch Howitzers

Lance Corporal Henry Robert Giffin 200934.

Born in January 1896, Henry Giffin lived at Tednambury, but was baptized at Great St. Mary's in Sawbridgeworth.

In the census of 1911, Henry was recorded as a 'Printer's Assistant' and was living in Barnet.

At the outbreak of war, Henry volunteered for service and was initially assigned to the 10th Battalion Queens Own (Royal West Kent Regiment). However, in February 1915, the 1/7th Battalion Middlesex Regiment were quartered in Barnet, and Henry was transferred to this unit, arriving at Le Havre in France on 13 March 1915.

On 21 November 1917, Henry's unit was involved in the capture of a feature called 'Tadpole Copse'. This was a part of the Passchendaele offensive. It seems likely that Henry was mortally wounded in this action.

Henry was evacuated back to England, and on 26 November 1917 died at Clitheroe in Lancashire.

His parents then had the body returned to Sawbridgeworth.

Henry Giffin is buried in Great St. Mary's churchyard. He was aged 21.



Tombstone of Henry Giffin

Leading Stoker Herbert Foster Gilbey RN K/8983.

Born in Bishop's Stortford 1886, Herbert Gilbey was already serving in the Royal Navy at the start of the Great War having enlisted in 1905. In 1911, he was based at Plymouth.



Herbert Foster Gilbey

During the war, Herbert served on HMS Derwent. This was a destroyer, and was involved in protecting cross-channel convoys, to and from France. Whilst on leave early in 1916, Herbert Gilbey married Mary Chappell at Bishop's Stortford. She lived at 82 Cambridge Road in Sawbridgeworth. Sadly, this was to be a short marriage. On 2 May 1917 HMS Derwent struck a mine laid by the German submarine UC 26 just outside the harbour at Le Havre and was sunk. Herbert Gilbey being one of those who died that day. He was aged 31. Herbert Gilbey is also named on the Bishop's Stortford Memorial and the Chatham Naval Memorial.



HMS Derwent in a pre-war photograph

Sergeant Frederick John Gregory 17636.

Frederick Gregory is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials.

Born in November 1888, Frederick Gregory lived in Bell Street. His parents later moving to Sheering Mill Road (Lane).

Frederick was a professional soldier, enlisting into the Army before 1911. He served in the 59th Field Company of the Royal Engineers. Pre-war, this unit was based in Ireland.

Following the outbreak of the Great War, Frederick's unit left Dublin and arrived at Le Havre in France on 18 August 1914. They were a part of the 'Old Contemptibles', with Frederick's first action being the construction of defences at the opening Battle of Mons.

The 59th Field Company were a part of the 5th Division, and apart from a short period in Italy, served the entire war on the Western Front.

Frederick's date of death is given as 21 August 1918. This was the time of the '100 Days' offensive, which pushed back the Germans following the Battle of Amiens. However, Frederick's unit would only have served in a supporting role. Furthermore, although it is still possible, he is not listed as 'killed in action'. This implies that Frederick died of accident or illness, with the former being most likely.

Frederick Gregory is buried at Adanac Military Cemetery, Miraumont, France. He was aged 29.

Lance Corporal Thomas Matthew Grieve 14849.

Matthew Grieve is not named on the Sawbridgeworth War Memorial.

Born in 1897, Thomas was the son of a Scots Bailiff. He lived at Actons Farm in High Wych, his parents later moving to Oaks Farm, Little Hallingbury. His surname was sometimes spelt 'Greive'.

Matthew was a 'Kitchener' Volunteer and served with the 7th Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment. This was a Service Battalion, arriving in France in July 1915.

The date of death given for Thomas is 21 January 1916. At this time, the Battalion was in trenches near Meaulte. However, the Battalion diary notes this to have been a 'very quiet day' with no casualties. The entry for the preceding day 20 January actually uses the words 'abnormally quiet', again with no casualties. It has been noted by some commentators, that mining work was progressing in the area, and that there were casualties there. However, because the mining units were specialist troops, it is unlikely that could have been a cause of Thomas' death. There is though, a mention of an NCO casualty killed from a German trench mortar on the 22 January. It seems then that Thomas was killed on the 22 January 1916 and it was incorrectly notated later.

Thomas Grieve is buried at Meaulte Military Cemetery, France. He was aged 29.

Thomas Grieve is named on the High Wych War Memorial Plaque.

Lance Corporal George Thorold Harris 203182.

George Harris was born in Sheffield in 1883. Before the war he was a teacher living in Manchester. George Harris served with the 1/4th (Hallamshire) Battalion, York and Lancaster Regiment. This was a Territorial unit, activated at the start of the war.

On the 4 April 1915, the unit landed at Boulogne in France. Its first action was a German gas attack at Aubers Ridge. It was later involved in major attacks during the Somme offensive in 1916 and in Flanders in 1917.

Although George Harris survived these, he was killed (actually 'Reported Missing') on the 13 April 1918 defending Neuve Eglise during the Battle of Bailleul, a part of the 'Battles of the Lys', which opposed the German 'Michael' offensive. George has no known grave. He was aged 35.

George lodged in Sawbridgeworth in 1901 and a number of people living locally had the same surname. I can find no other local connection.

George Harris is also named on the Tyne Cot Memorial.



Tyne Cot

Private Gilbert Thorold Harris 11503.

Younger brother of George Harris, Gilbert was born in 1895 in Nottingham. He was a 'Porter' on the railways.

Gilbert enlisted on 4 September 1914 and served in the 6th Battalion Lincolnshire Regiment. This was a 'Kitchener' Service Battalion. After training in England, this Battalion was sent to fight against the Ottoman Turks in the Gallipoli campaign. On 6 August, Gilbert's Battalion landed at 'B' Beach at Sulva Bay. This was a night landing, and without the proper training, the result was chaos. Poor leadership from the most senior officers only made things worse.

Gilbert survived the initial landings, but on 13 August he received a gunshot wound to his abdomen. Despite being evacuated to a hospital in Egypt, Gilbert died of his wounds on 17 August 1915 at Number 15 General Hospital, Alexandria. He was aged 20.

Gilbert Harris is buried in Alexandria (Chatby) Military and War Memorial Cemetery, Egypt.

Gilbert lodged in Sawbridgeworth in 1901 and a number of people living locally had the same surname. I can find no other local connection.

Sapper James William Heath 183719.

James Heath is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials.

Born in 1884 in Bishop's Stortford, James apparently lived for a time in Sawbridgeworth, (although I can find no evidence of this). In 1911, he was living in Fulham and was described as a 'Jobbing Gardener'.

In 1914, James married Gertrude Kate Hardy (from Little Hadham) at Bishop's Stortford.

James was probably conscripted into the Army in 1916. He served with the 80th Field Company, Royal Engineers. This was a part of the 18th Division operating in a supporting role, and in July 1917 was in Flanders preparing for the coming Passchendaele offensive.

James' death date is given as 23 July 1917. However, his unit was not at the front at this time. His cause of death is therefore unknown. He was aged 33.

James Heath is buried at Mendinghem Military Cemetery, (close to the site of a major field hospital indicating that he died of wounds or illness), Belgium.

Private Frederick George Herrieven 43205.

Frederick Herrieven is not named on the Sawbridgeworth War Memorial.

Of Dutch ancestry, Frederick was born in 1893 at Blofield, Woodbastwick, Norfolk. In the 1911 census, he was living in Fulham and was described as an 'Errand Boy'.

In 1914, Frederick volunteered and enlisted at Stratford in London. He was initially assigned to the 7th Battalion London Regiment, before being transferred to the 2nd Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

Frederick Herrieven's date of death is given as 7 August 1917. This was during the Passchendaele offensive, although Frederick's unit was not officially engaged that day. It seems likely then, that Frederick died from general daily attrition. The conditions at the time were akin to a quagmire and soldier's bodies could easily disappear into the mud.

It was reported that Frederick Herrieven was living in Sawbridgeworth when he enlisted, however, I can find no evidence of this. I can find no other connection to Sawbridgeworth.

Frederick Herrieven is named on the Menin Gate, Ypres, and on the High Wych Memorial Plaque. He has no known grave. He was aged 23.



The Menin Gate at Ypres

Private Alfred Sidney Holden 36341.

Note. In some records the surname is given as 'Halden' and the middle name is given as 'Sydney'. Alfred was born 7 April 1889 and was baptised 16 June that year at Thorley. Alfred was illegitimate and originally had his mother's surname of Turner. In the 1891 census, Alfred with his mother and sister were residing in the Bishop's Stortford workhouse. However, in 1895 his mother married William Holden at Harlow and in the 1911 census the family were living at 4 Bell Yard in Bell Street. Alfred was a 'Gardener' and worked at Rivers Nursery. He was also a Territorial soldier, and upon the outbreak of war in 1914, was mobilised into the Hertfordshire Regiment.

Alfred was to serve in England until June 1916, when he was transferred to the 6th Battalion Royal Berkshire Regiment as a replacement and was sent to France. He fought in the Battle of the Somme.

In February 1917, Alfred's unit was involved in what has become known as 'Actions on the Ancre'. This was an extension of the old Somme offensive. Alfred Holden's death date is given as 17 February 1917. On this day, his Battalion was in action attacking Miraumont. It was here that Alfred was killed. He has no known grave.

Alfred Holden is also named on the Thiepval Memorial. He was aged 27.



Alfred Sidney Holden

Private Ernest John Holden 18747.

Ernest Holden is not named on the Sawbridgeworth War Memorial.

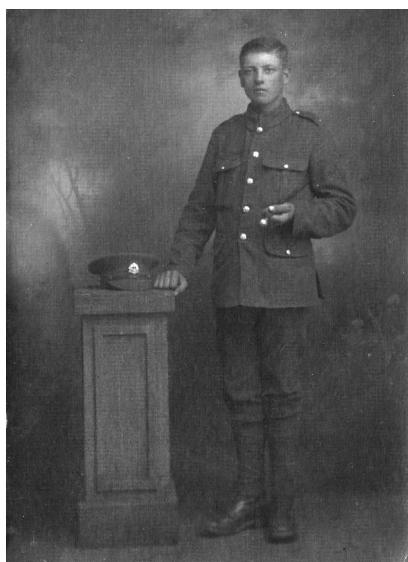
Also known as 'Johnny', Ernest Holden was born at Hand Lane, High Wych in 1897.

In 1914, Ernest enlisted as a 'Kitchener' volunteer into the 2nd Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment.

In 1916, Ernest's Battalion was a part of the 30th Division and on 1 July 1916 was in action on the first day of the Somme offensive. This day the British took nearly 60,000 casualties, however, unlike most of the assault, Ernest's division was fairly successful as it used different assault tactics. The 2nd Bedfordshire's were in support for the first wave and achieved many gains. The casualties were still heavy though and the Battalion diary records that most of these were through enemy shellfire. Ernest was one of these casualties, being killed in action.

Ernest had a girlfriend, 'Frankie' Nottage. She was one of three sisters who lived at the 'Hand and Crown', and all were to become nurses in France.

Ernest Holden is buried at Cerisy-Gailly Military Cemetery, France and is named on the High Wych Memorial. He was aged 19.



Ernest John Holden

Private Arthur Henry Edward Holgate 105571.

This name was an alias used by Arnold Wadsworth. He also sometimes used the alias Robert Halliday.

Arnold was born in Halifax, Yorkshire in 1899. On the death of his father, his mother married Albert Archer of Hoestock Road. Arnold was thus a step-brother of Gordon, Percy and Stanley Archer who were all mentioned earlier in this work.

On the outbreak of war, Arthur/Arnold enlisted underaged with the 1/1st Hertfordshire Yeomanry. This was a cavalry regiment, and apart from a short period at Gallipoli in 1915, served during the Great War in Egypt/Palestine (Israel), in defence of the Suez Canal.

Strictly speaking, although he is named on the Sawbridgeworth War Memorial, Arthur/Arnold should not be a part of this history.

Arthur Holgate (Arnold Wadsworth) died, still in Egypt after the war had ended, on 24 December 1918 of illness. He was aged 20.

Arthur Holgate is buried at Kantara War Memorial Cemetery, Egypt. He is named on the Roll of Honour of the Congregational Church Sawbridgeworth.



Arthur Henry Edward Holgate/Arnold Wadsworth

Captain Richard Arthur Hornby.

Born in 1877 at Camberwell in South London, Richard was a Stockbroker. In the 1911 census he is single and living in Sydenham, South London.

At the outbreak of war, Richard immediately volunteered for service in the Army. He was commissioned as an officer on 24 November 1914 with the 15th Battalion Middlesex Regiment. This being promulgated in the London Gazette of 8 December 1914.

In 1915, Richard was transferred to the newly formed 21st Battalion Middlesex Regiment. This Battalion was sent to France in June 1916 and was in action at the Battle of the Ancre in November 1916. This was the final major attack of the Somme offensive.

At the beginning of 1918, the Battalion was involved in the Battle of St. Quentin, 21-23 March, and the First Battle of Bapaume, 24-25 March, and took so many casualties that it had to be withdrawn from the line.

Richard Hornby's date of death is given as 9 April 1918. This is confusing as his unit was not in action at that time. Furthermore, Richard has no known grave, so he cannot have died from wounds received earlier. His final fate is thus a mystery. Possibly he was 'missing' from the earlier actions and reported killed at the later date.

Richard Hornby is also named on the Ploegsteert Memorial. He was aged 40.

I can find no connection to either Sawbridgeworth or High Wych.

Private George Edwin Howe 36352.

George Howe is not named on the Sawbridgeworth War Memorial.

George was born at Chandlers Lane, High Wych in 1896. In the 1911 census he was living at Actons Farm and was a 'Farm Labourer'.

George's service number indicates that he was conscripted in January 1916. After initial training with 1/2nd Hertfordshire Regiment (5737), George was assigned to the 6th Battalion Royal Berkshire Regiment. In February 1917, this Battalion was in line during 'Operations on the Ancre', basically an extension of the old Somme offensive.

The date of George's death was 17 February 1917. The Battalion diary shows that there was no major action that day which implies that George's death was due to the general daily attrition, a part of trench life at the front.

George Howe is buried at Regina Trench Cemetery, Grandcourt, France, and is named on the High Wych Memorial. He was aged 20.

Private David Cornelius Hutchin 465879.

Born at Spellbrook in February 1887, from the age of 14 David Hutchin was a 'Hay Binder's Labourer'. In 1910 he married Annie Elizabeth Kelly at Sawbridgeworth.

It is unclear, but it seems that David volunteered for service sometime in 1915. His wartime service indicates that he was not physically fully fit enough for front line duties.

At first, David was assigned to the Royal Field Artillery (3rd Home Counties Brigade), and he was a Gunner with the service number 157854. This was a reserve unit operating coastal guns based in Kent.

David is later in 1917 transferred to the 553rd Agricultural Company, Labour Corps. The Labour Corps was formed in 1917 and was composed mainly of servicemen who were unfit for active service. From the end of 1917, up to at least April 1918, this particular unit was based in Ireland in the Dublin area.

Strictly speaking David Hutchin should not be part of this history as he died after the end of the war on 23 November 1918. His cause of death is unknown.

David is buried in Great St. Mary's churchyard. His tombstone is interesting in that it only mentions his Artillery service. At that time, Labour Corps service was not seen by many as 'real' and his relatives presumably did not wish to promote it. However, there is a saying that *'They also serve who only stand and wait'*. David's service may not have been heroic, but it was necessary, and somebody had to do it. He therefore has every right to stand with the others.

Contrary to what it states on his tombstone, he was aged 31.



Tombstone of David Cornelius Hutchin

Private Edward John Ingram 21108.

Edward Ingram is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials.

Edward was born at High Wych Lane, High Wych in 1886.

In the 1901 census, Edward was living at Watton-at-Stone and was an 'Agricultural Labourer'.

Edward's early war service is obscure, although he must have been a volunteer. He apparently enlisted at Hertford.

Edward Ingram must have been very short, (under 5'3"), because in 1916 he was serving in the 12th Battalion Suffolk Regiment. This was a 'Bantam' battalion formed in 1915. They arrived at Le Havre in France on 6 June 1916 and went into the line near Loos.

On 28 June 1916 Edward was killed in action whilst in the trenches at the front. There was no major action by his Battalion that day, implying that Edward died through daily attrition. He was aged 29. Edward Ingram is buried at Loos British Cemetery, France. He does not appear on the High Wych Memorial Plaque, nor on any local memorial that I can find.

Private Ernest Frank Ingram 5545.

Ernest Ingram is not named on the Sawbridgeworth War Memorial.

Ernest was born in February 1888 at Hoskin's Farm, High Wych. He was a professional soldier and enlisted with the 3rd Battalion Coldstream Guards in 1904 when he was only 16 years old. The Battalion were in Egypt from 1907-1911, and upon their return, Ernest married Olive Kempthorne at High Wych in November 1912.

With the outbreak of war, the Battalion left Chelsea Barracks and arrived at Le Havre in France on 13 August 1914. They were involved in the opening battles, and on 16 September 1914 were in action in the First Battle of the Aisne. This battle saw the beginning of trench warfare. It was here that Ernest Ingram was killed, and unusually for this time, he has no known grave. He was aged 28. Ernest Ingram is named on the La Ferte-sous-Jouarre Memorial, France, and on the High Wych Memorial Plaque.

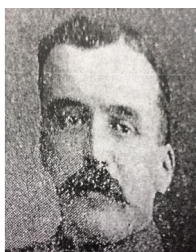
Private William Jackson 266073.

Born in July 1885 at High Wych, William later lived at 34 Station Road (Barkers Lane). His family appear to have moved after he enlisted to 'Brooklands' in Sayesbury Road. He was a 'Domestic Jobbing Gardener' and worked for John Barnard at Alston Oak House near Harlow.

In 1914, William volunteered for the Army and served with the 1/1st Battalion Hertfordshire Regiment, arriving at the front in Spring 1915.

In October 1915, William must have come home on leave, as he married Louise Chapman from Much Hadham at this time.

From 8-24 July 1916, the Battalion was in trenches near Festubert. The Battalion diary reports a number of casualties for this period, but only 1 person missing. This was from the night of 19 July when a trench raid on the German line took place. This person must have been William Jackson. He was officially reported missing on 23 July 1916, and later presumed to have died that day. William Jackson has no known grave. He is named on the Thiepval Memorial. Surprisingly, he is not named on the High Wych Memorial Plaque. He was aged 30.



William Jackson

Private William Jay 38706.

William Jay is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials.

Born at Spellbrook in June 1882, William moved with his family to Cheshunt. In the 1911 census he was a 'Nurseryman'.

William was a 'Kitchener' volunteer and enlisted at Hertford in 1914. He was to serve with the 8th Battalion Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment).

In September 1918, this Battalion was operating near Cambrai supporting the Canadians there. The 'Herts at War' website states that William Jay was 'killed in action' on 26 September 1918.

However, this is extremely unlikely. He is buried at Aix-Noulette. This was the site of a major casualty clearing station many miles to the rear and implies that William actually died of wounds received earlier.

William Jay is buried at Aix-Noulette Communal Cemetery Extension, France. He was aged 36.

William Jay is also named on the Cheshunt War Memorial (W Jay).

Private Samuel Jenkins 16723.

Samuel Jenkins is not named on the Sawbridgeworth War Memorial.

Samuel was born at Brook Lane, Sawbridgeworth in March 1886, and was baptised at Great St. Mary's in June that year. However, by 1901, the family had moved to High Wych and Samuel was

working as a 'Cattle & Milkman on Farm'. In the 1911 census he was a 'Nursery Labourer'.

Samuel was a 'Kitchener' volunteer and enlisted at Stratford in London in 1914.

He served with the 1st Battalion Essex Regiment. This Battalion was at Gallipoli, then Egypt, before arriving in France via Marseilles in March 1916, in time to take part in the Somme offensive.

In November 1917, the 1st Essex were taking part in the Battle of Cambrai, the first major use of the Tank in warfare and a harbinger of things to come. On 30 November 1917, Samuel Jenkins was reported as killed in action. He has no known grave.

It is a surprise that Samuel Jenkins is not on the Sawbridgeworth Memorial. He is however, named on the Cambrai Memorial in France and the High Wych Memorial plaque. He was aged 31.

Private William James Kelly 16528.

William was born at Spellbrook in September 1887 and was baptised at Sawbridgeworth in November that year. In the 1911 census, he was a 'Horse Keeper for a Hay Dealer'.

With the outbreak of war, William became a 'Kitchener' volunteer and enlisted at Bishop's Stortford. After training, he was assigned to the 2nd Battalion Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. This was a regular battalion which took heavy losses in the initial fighting of 1914. William was therefore a replacement.

At the beginning of 1916, the Battalion was moved into trenches near Vimy Ridge, and relieved French soldiers there. Although the Battalion was not involved in a major offensive at this time, there were still daily casualties through general attrition. William Kelly died of his wounds on 9 March 1916, almost certainly through this daily attrition. He was aged 28.

William Kelly is buried in Lillers Communal Cemetery, France.

Private Alfred James Law 43175.

Alfred was born at Berden in Essex in 1886. The family later moved to Sawbridgeworth and lived at 72 Station Road. In the 1911 census, Alfred was a 'Sewage Works Labourer'.

Alfred was a 'Kitchener' volunteer, enlisting in 1914. After initial service with the Hertfordshire Regiment, he was transferred to the 11th Battalion Essex Regiment.

Alfred's date of death is given as 21 March 1918. This was the first day of the German 'Michael' offensive, an attempt to win the war before the American soldiers arrived in force. Alfred's Battalion were stationed in the St. Quentin area, and this part of the action is actually known as the Battle of St. Quentin.

Alfred Law was killed in action and is buried at Vaulx Hill Cemetery, France. He was aged 32.

Private Arthur Leslie Lawrence 42371.

Arthur Lawrence is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials.

Arthur Lawrence was born 3rd August 1898 at The Square, Sawbridgeworth. He was the son of Fred and his wife Edith. Fred was a 'Butcher, Slaughterer and Shopkeeper'. The family must have been quite wealthy, as Arthur was sent to private boarding school for his education, attending King Edward's School, Witley, Surrey, where he was remembered for his paintings of flowers.

In 1910 Arthur's father died and in 1914 Arthur was living at Rugeley in Staffordshire with his mother who came from there and was working as a Gardener. At the outbreak of war, aged just 17, Arthur volunteered for the Army, enlisting at Stafford. After initial service with the North Staffordshire Regiment, Arthur was transferred to the 1st Battalion Lincolnshire Regiment.

In autumn 1917, Arthur's Battalion was in the area of Ypres, fighting in the Passchendaele offensive. The 4 October 1917 saw the Battle of Broodseinde. This took place in heavy rain, but was a relative success, as the British used new 'Bite and Hold' tactics. Casualties were still high though, one of whom was Arthur Lawrence. He was killed in action and has no known grave. He was aged just 19.

Arthur Lawrence is named on the Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium, and in the Rolls of Honour of King Edward's School, Witley.

Private Lee Lewis DCM 71080.

Lee Lewis is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials, nor on the Eastwick War Memorial.

Note. The 'Herts at War' website gives a different service number and also gives different units served in. I have taken the following from his actual service record available at the National Archives, Kew.

Born in 1896 at Hill Gates, Eastwick, Lee later moved to 14 The Avenue, Burnt Mill and was an 'Apprentice Marine Engineer'.

Lee Lewis was a 'Kitchener' volunteer, enlisting on 5 September 1914 at Hertford, aged 19. He initially served with the 7th Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment with the number 14861 and was given a 'Mention in Dispatches' for his role in a trench raid of 27 April 1916. Prior to this though, from 2-14 March 1916, he was for some reason in hospital.

On 2 December 1916, Lee Lewis was transferred to the 54th Company, Machine Gun Corps, a 'heavy section', part of the 18th Battalion, operating the Vickers machine gun. He was lucky to have a spell of home leave from 28 June-8 July 1917 but was soon back in action.

On 10 August 1917 during an attack on the Gheluvelt Plateau, (part of the Passchendaele offensive), Lee Lewis suffered a shell wound to his abdomen. He died of his wounds 2 days later on 12 August 1917. For his 'Conspicuous Gallantry' that day, Lee Lewis was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal. This being promulgated on 26 January 1918.

Lee Lewis is buried at Brandhoek New Military Cemetery, Belgium. He was aged 21. He is named on the Netteswell/Burnt Mill memorial.

Private Frederick Linsell 19387.

Frederick Linsell is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials, nor is he named on the Sheering Memorial or the 'Herts at War' website.

Frederick Linsell was born in Sheering in late summer 1874. However, in the 1881 census return he was living in London Road Sawbridgeworth with his uncle William Pavitt where he attended school with his elder sister, (probably Fawbert and Barnard).

In the 1891 census, Frederick was living back in Sheering where was a 'Baker'.

In 1909, Frederick married Amelia Grace Pegrum at Hendon in North London. She was born in 1881 at Tooting and in 1901 was a 'Governess' living in Nursery Road, Bishop's Stortford. They were to have a daughter Olive Amy who was born in 1913. By this time Frederick was living with his new family at 'Ye Oldecot' Threshers Bush, Harlow where he was a 'Carman'.

Frederick was a 'Kitchener' volunteer enlisting into the 2nd Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment in 1914 at Saffron Walden.

The 25 September 1915 marked the opening day of the Battle of Loos. Fredericks Battalion was heavily involved in the opening attack and advanced to the left of the Hulluch Road. To begin with casualties were very light, but once past the German front line and advancing towards a feature called 'Gun Trench' severe losses were taken and the attack was unsuccessful with 2-300 casualties from Frederick's Battalion. One of those casualties was Frederick himself, who has no known grave. Frederick Linsell is named on the Loos Memorial and the Old Harlow Memorial Cross. He was aged 40.

Private Charles Hugh Pearson Lipscomb 707211.

Some sources give the surname as 'Lipscombe'.

Charles Lipscomb was born in January 1881 and was the son of the vicar of Great St. Mary's Church. He was a 'Bankers Clerk'. In March 1908, Charles emigrated to British Columbia in Canada, sailing on the SS Manitoba. His great hobby was cricket. Charles lived at Cowichan BC and was a member of the Cowichan Cricket Club in Canada.

On 7 July 1916, Charles volunteered to serve in the Canadian Army (there was no conscription at that time in Canada). He enlisted into the 2nd Battalion Canadian Mounted Rifles.

Charles' date of death is 18 April 1917. Between 9-12 April, his unit was closely involved in the attack on Vimy Ridge and suffered heavy casualties. It is probable that Charles was mortally wounded in this action as he died in a field hospital near the Channel ports awaiting evacuation to England. He was aged 36.

Charles Lipscomb is buried at Wimereux Communal Cemetery between Boulogne and Calais in France.

Charles' next of kin was Alice Margaret Lipscomb who lived at 2297 Brighton Avenue, Victoria, BC. At least one source has claimed that she was Charles' wife, however, closer inspection shows that he was unmarried and she was his aunt.

Being born in the town, Charles Lipscomb is named on the Sawbridgeworth War Memorial. He is also named on the High Wych War Memorial Plaque.



A ward at a hospital at Wimereux, France

Corporal George Harker Mallison 23612.

George Mallison is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials.

Note. Some sources spell the surname as 'Malleeson'.

Born in October 1891 in Toxteth Park, Lancashire, George was a professional soldier enlisting before 1911.

At the start of the Great War, George was serving at Ranikhet in India with the 2nd Battalion Leicestershire Regiment. They were sent forthwith to France, arriving at Marseilles 12 October 1914 and took part in 1915 in the battle of Neuve Chapelle.

On 23 November 1915, the Battalion arrived in Mesopotamia (Iraq) via Egypt to fight Ottoman Turkey, being transferred again to Palestine (Israel) on 21 January 1918. After taking part in the Battle of Megiddo 19-25 September 1918, the Battalion ended the war in Syria.

Strictly speaking, George Mallison is another who should not be part of this history. He died on 13 November 1918, after the Armistice of Mudros and the end of the war. The cause of George's death is unknown, but it is likely to be illness.

George Mallison is buried at Beirut War Cemetery, Lebanon. He was aged 27.

I can find no connection either to Sawbridgeworth or the local area. The 'Herts at War' website states that George's parents lived at 6 Westway Sawbridgeworth. Unfortunately, there is no such address locally, and they were definitely not living at 6 West Road in 1911. Possibly George's parents were living at Westway in Chelmsford.

Private Ernest Mascall 25964.

Ernest Mascall is not named on the Sawbridgeworth War Memorial.

Ernest was born at High Wych in November 1893 and in the 1911 census he was recorded as a 'Nursery Gardener' living with his uncle and aunt.

In January 1916, Ernest was conscripted into the 4th Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment. This unit arrived in France on 25 July 1916.

During Spring 1917, Ernest's Battalion was involved in the major attack at Arras. Confusingly, the date given for Georges death is 21 April 1917. On this day, the Battalion diary records that they were in a support line (and had been since 16 April) with no casualties. However, on 15 April, the Battalion took 60 casualties performing a 'Reconnaissance of Gavrelle'. It must be therefore, that Ernest was mortally wounded then, and died at the later date of those wounds.

Ernest Mascall is buried at Bailleul Road East Cemetery, St. Laurent-Blangy, France. He is named on the High Wych Memorial Plaque. He was aged 24.

Private George Mascall 634969.

George was born at Hand Terrace, High Wych, in 1893, but by 1911 the family had moved to 53 West Road, Sawbridgeworth.

In the 1911 census, George was recorded as a 'Gardener'.

George was conscripted into the Army in January 1916. He served first with the 1st Battalion Hertfordshire Regiment with the service number 266235, before being transferred after 1917 to the 15th Company Labour Corps. This Corps was comprised of those soldiers deemed unfit and not able for front line service, and often returning wounded would be assigned there. It is a reasonable assumption therefore, that George Mascall was wounded in a previous action, quite probably that of 31 July 1917, when the Battalion took approximately 75% casualties on the first day of the Passchendaele offensive.

George served in Britain for the remainder of the war and died 15 February 1919. The reason for his death is unknown, but it may well have been due to an old wound.

Strictly speaking, George should not be a part of this history as he died after the end of the war.

George Mascall is buried at St. James' Church, High Wych. His tombstone is interesting in that it only mentions his infantry service and number. At that time, Labour Corps service was not seen by many as 'real' and it was normal to just mention the preceding regimental service on headstones.

However, George's service may well have been just as heroic as any other soldier's, it was also necessary, and somebody had to do it. He therefore has every right to stand with the others.

Surprisingly, despite being both born and buried there, George Mascall is not named on the High Wych Memorial Plaque. He was aged 25.

Trooper Alfred Edmund Matthews 106074.

Alfred was born in 1882 at Saffron Walden. He later lived with his widowed mother Alice at 'Brooklands', Sayesbury Road. In the 1911 census he was an 'Assistant Superintendent' with the Police at Bishop's Stortford. Prior to this he may have been a travelling salesman for Edgar Carruthers of Bishop's Stortford, a Drapery Store.

In December 1915, just before the imposition of conscription, Alfred volunteered for the 1/1st Hertfordshire Yeomanry. This was a cavalry regiment and was split into squadrons for overseas service. Alfred served in 'D' Squadron, and in 1917 was sent to Mesopotamia (Iraq). Unfortunately, the climate did not agree with Alfred, and he died of illness (probably Dysentery) 24 July 1917.

Alfred Matthews is buried at Amara War Cemetery, Iraq. He was aged 36.



Alfred Matthews

Lance Corporal Ernest Matthews 142167.

Younger brother of Alfred and elder brother of Leonard, Ernest was born in 1890 at New Sampford, Essex. In 1911, he, like his brothers, was living with his widowed mother at 'Brooklands' in Sayesbury Road and was recorded as a 'Carman' employed by Colonel Francis Charrington at Pishiobury House.

In March 1915, Ernest volunteered and served firstly with the Bedfordshire Regiment before being transferred in March 1918 to the 30th Battalion Machine Gun Corps. This unit was a part of the 30th Division and was involved in confused fighting during the 'Battles of the Lys' throughout April 1918. The 30th Battalion MGC took heavy losses at this time. Ernest's date of death is given as 10 May 1918, but his unit was not engaged then. It is much more likely that Ernest (who has no known grave) was missing from the end of April, and his death was not officially recorded until later. Ernest Matthews is also named on the Tyne Cot Memorial. He was aged 28.



Ernest Matthews

Trooper Leonard Matthews 106060.

Younger brother of both Alfred and Ernest Matthews, Leonard was born at Matching Green in 1893. Like his elder brother, Leonard also lived with his widowed mother at 'Brooklands' in Sayesbury Road. In the 1911 census he was recorded as an 'Insurance Agent'.

In September 1915, just before he enlisted, Leonard married Florence Maud Grimshaw at West Ham, London.



Leonard Matthews

Leonard volunteered and enlisted on the same day as his brother Alfred, and they served in the same unit, 'D' Squadron 1/1st Hertfordshire Yeomanry.

In 1917, Leonard was also in Mesopotamia (Iraq), and was to suffer the same fate as his brother. On 5 July 1917, Leonard died of Dysentery.

Leonard Matthews is buried at Baghdad (North Gate) War Cemetery, Iraq. He was aged 24.



1/1st Hertfordshire Yeomanry

Sergeant Herbert Sidney Monk MM 282189.

Although born in Epping in 1887, Herbert Monk was baptised in October that year at Sheering. The family lived in Springhall (Vantorts) Road in Sawbridgeworth.

Herbert Monk was a professional soldier, enlisting prior to 1911, at Shaftesbury Street, London N1. Herbert's early war service is unknown, but he did not arrive in France until 24 January 1917. This implies that he served at home in the training of new recruits.

In 1917, Herbert was with the 2/4th Battalion Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment), and he was involved in an action of 12-15 May 1917 for which, on 27 May 1917, he was recommended for the Military Medal.

Rather sadly, on 16 June 1917, Herbert Monk was killed in action. His unit was not in a major action that day but was merely involved in local attacks for tactical advantage. He did not know that his award of the Military Medal for his courage would not be gazetted until after his death on 18 July 1917.

Herbert Monk has no known grave. As well as the Sawbridgeworth Memorial, Herbert Monk is also named on the Arras Memorial, France. He was aged 29.

In April 1995, Herbert's medals came up for auction. They were sold for a mere £150.



Herbert Sidney Monk MM

Sergeant Percival Cornelius Morris 36402.

Known locally as just 'Percy', Percival was born at Much Hadham in May 1897. In the 1901 census he was living with his uncle, Arthur Wybrew who was the landlord of the 'Queens Head' at Allan's Green. In the 1911 census he was with his family at High Wych and was recorded as a 'Nursery Gardener'.

In 1914, Percival became a 'Kitchener' volunteer and enlisted with the Hertfordshire Regiment with the number 5826. However, he was later transferred to the 6th Battalion Royal Berkshire Regiment, and fought in the Somme offensive of 1916.

It was at Passchendaele that Percival was to be killed. On 31 July 1917 (the first day), his Battalion attacked towards Pilckem Ridge. The conditions were appalling with nearly an inch of rain falling that day. Some units took 70% casualties, and the official figures show 31,850 casualties in the first 4 days of fighting, for a gain of just 3,000 yards.

Percival Morris has no known grave. He is also named on the Menin Gate and the High Wych Memorial Plaque. He was aged 20.



The New Submarine Danger

"They'll be torpedoin' us if we stick 'ere much longer, Bill"

A Bairnsfather cartoon from the time

Private Thomas Morris G/2116.

Thomas Morris is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials.

Thomas was born at Sawbridgeworth in April 1893, but by 1901 had moved to Oakhurst Road, Edmonton. In the 1911 census, he was recorded as a 'Restaurant Waiter'.

Thomas was a 'Kitchener' volunteer, enlisting with the 12th Battalion Middlesex Regiment at Mill Hill. They arrived in France via Le Havre on 26 July 1915.

In July 1916 the Battalion was in action in the Somme offensive. On the date of Thomas' death, the Battalion took part in a 4 Division attack on Bazentin Ridge. Unlike some of the Somme battles, this was a relative (though costly) success. One of the casualties was Thomas Morris. He was killed in action 14 July 1916. He has no known grave.

Thomas Morris is named on the Thiepval Memorial. He was aged 23.



British troops attacking during the 'Somme' offensive

William Frederick Murphy

William Frederick Murphy is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials. William Frederick Murphy joined underaged, and he served throughout the Great War using an alias.

See William Frederick Bennett for details.

Gunner Albert Charles Negus 10006.

Albert Negus is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials, nor is he named on the 'Herts at War' website.

Albert Negus was born in the summer of 1895 at Arksden (Arkesden) near Saffron Walden.

In the census return for 1901, Albert's family was living at Trimms Green, High Wych, where his father was a 'Cowman on Farm'. However, by 1911, the family were living at High House Cottages, Harlow and Albert was recorded as a 'Gardener Domestic'.

Albert Negus was a 'Kitchener' volunteer and enlisted at Hertford into the Royal Field Artillery. However, he was attached to the 7th (Bengal) Mountain Battery of the Royal Garrison Artillery. This unit left Bombay/Mumbai in April 1915 and was despatched to Cairo in Egypt via Alexandria. It would appear that Albert was sent to join them from England and arrived in Egypt 8 October 1915. The records are a little vague, but it then appears that when the 7th were later sent on to France via Marseilles, that Albert transferred to the 8th Mountain Battery. He thus remained in the Middle East throughout the Great War.

Sadly, Albert Negus died from malaria 21 October 1918. He is buried at the Beirut British War Cemetery, Lebanon and is named on the Old Harlow Memorial Cross. He was aged 23.

Driver Nathaniel Halford Newman 25954.

Nathaniel Newman is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials.

Nathaniel was born in 1883 at Dagenham, Essex. In the 1911 census, he had moved to West Ham and was a 'Stationary Engine Man'.

Prior to this, in 1904 Nathan married Lillie Jane Tedder at Strood in Kent. Lillie Tedder was born at West Road, Sawbridgeworth in 1877, but by 1891 had moved away from the town and was living at Manuden.

Nathaniel volunteered in 1915, and served with the Royal Field Artillery, 173rd Brigade. His date of death is given as 23 May 1918. His cause of death is unknown, but because where he is buried was the site of a field hospital (92nd Field Ambulance), he is likely to have died of wounds.

Nathaniel Newman is buried at Foreste Communal Cemetery, France. He was aged 35.

Nathaniel's only link to Sawbridgeworth was through his wife who was born there.

Private Frank Osborne 979.

Note. Some records misspell the surname as Osborn.

Elder brother of Percy Osborne, Frank was born in 1892 and lived at Roydon. In the 1911 census he was recorded as a 'Domestic Gardener'. His service number though implies that Frank was a professional soldier, enlisting before the Great War.

Frank served with the 2nd Battalion East Surrey Regiment. This was a 'Regular' Battalion. In May 1915 this Battalion was stationed in Belgium and took part in the Second Battle of Ypres. This was a major German attack, and the first on the Western Front to use poison gas. Furthermore, the British were not equipped with gas masks at that time. Frank Osborne was killed in action 24 May 1915. It is quite possible that he died from the effects of gas. He was aged 23.

Frank Osborne is buried at New Irish Farm Cemetery, Ypres, Belgium. His link to Sawbridgeworth appears to be through the Congregational Church. He is also named on the Roydon War Memorial.



Germans using gas at the Second Battle of Ypres

Lance Corporal Percy J Osborne TF/208500.

Percy Osborne is not named on the Sawbridgeworth War Memorial.

Note. Some records and the 'Herts at War' website misspell the surname as Osborn.

Younger brother of Frank Osborne, Percy was born in 1899 and lived at Roydon. In 1915 he volunteered and enlisted at Hertford. Percy lied when joining and added three years to his age.

Initially Percy served with the 1/2nd Battalion Hertfordshire Regiment, a reserve unit, before being posted to the 20th Battalion Middlesex Regiment.

In September 1918, as part of the Hundred Days offensive, Percy's Battalion was engaging retreating German troops when he was mortally wounded. Despite being evacuated to the rear, Percy died of his wounds at a field hospital near St. Omer 11 September 1918. He was aged 19. Percy Osborne is buried at Longuenesse (St. Omer) Souvenir Cemetery, France. He is named on the Roydon War Memorial. His link to Sawbridgeworth appears to be through the Congregational Church where he is named on its Roll of Honour.



Percy Osbourne

Private William Charles Page 1317.

William Page is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials, nor is he named on the 'Herts at War' website.

William Page was born at High Wych in 1895. He was the son of a worker on the railway (another William).

The 1901 census shows William still living at High Wych, however, by 1911 the family had moved to Old Road in Harlow and William was recorded as a 'Bricklayer's Labourer'.

In 1914 with the coming of war, William was to serve with the 4th Battalion Essex Regiment. This was a Territorial unit and William's service number confirms that he was indeed a Territorial soldier pre-war.

On the 6 August 1915, the British landed at Sulva Bay as part of the Gallipoli campaign. It was a disaster, mainly due to the incompetence of the British Generals. Further reinforcements were landed over the following week in an attempt to remedy an already lost situation. One of those soldiers landed was William Page. His unit landed on 12 August and William was soon mortally wounded. William survived long enough to be placed on a ship to be taken to hospital in Alexandria, Egypt, but on 31 August 1915 William died of his wounds and was buried at sea.

William Page has no known grave but is named on the Helles Memorial Turkey and the Old Harlow Memorial Cross. He was aged 20.

Sergeant Ernest George Parrish 8167.

Ernest Parrish is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials.

Ernest was born in 1886 at Bennington's Cottages, Taverners Green, Hatfield Broad Oak where he lived with his family until he enlisted. In the 1901 census, he was recorded as an 'Agricultural Labourer'.

In 1910, Ernest enlisted at Bishop's Stortford into the Army and served with the 1st Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment. He was thus a professional soldier.

Pre-war, Ernest served in Ireland, being based at Mullingar. However, in 1912, he married Rosamond Marjorie Seddon who lived at 45 Priory View, Everton, Lancashire. After the outbreak of war, Ernest's Battalion was one of the first into action. They arrived in France 16 August 1914 and fought at Mons and First Ypres. In 1916, the Battalion was part of the Somme offensive. From 3-6 September 1916 they were occupying 'Silesia' trenches at Billon Farm as part of the Divisional Reserve. Although not on the front line, the Battalion still took 89 fatal casualties here from shellfire, one of whom was Ernest Parrish. He died 4 September 1916 and has no known grave. Ernest Parrish is named on the Thiepval Memorial. He was aged 29. I can find no connection to Sawbridgeworth or High Wych.

Corporal Frederick Arthur Paveley 6797.

Frederick Paveley is not named on the Sawbridgeworth War Memorial.

Note. Some records give the surname as Pavely. I have used the spelling given by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

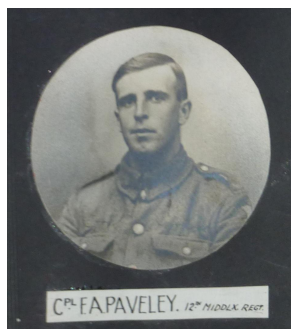
Elder brother of Herbert Charles Paveley, Frederick was born in December 1892 and lived at Hand Terrace in High Wych. He was a 'Machinist' and worked at the local Lawrence Joinery Works.

Frederick was a keen sportsman and was captain of Sawbridgeworth Football Club.

Frederick was a 'Kitchener' volunteer. He was initially assigned to a Hussar Regiment but was later transferred to the 12th Battalion Middlesex Regiment, arriving in France on 27 July 1915.

In 1916, the Battalion took part in the Somme offensive. On 26 October 1916 they attacked Thiepval and sustained heavy casualties, one of whom was Frederick Paveley. He suffered severe wounds to his legs and died of those wounds the next day, 27 October 1916. He was aged 23.

Frederick Paveley is buried at Contay British Cemetery, France. He is named on the High Wych Memorial Plaque (Pavely) and is named on the Roll of Honour of the Congregational Church Sawbridgeworth.



Frederick Arthur Paveley

Lance Corporal Herbert Charles Paveley 79280.

Herbert Paveley is not named on the Sawbridgeworth War Memorial.

As per Frederick Paveley, I have used the Commonwealth War Graves Commission surname spelling.

Records show Herbert Paveley as a Private, but there is an extant photograph of him as a Lance Corporal, hence my use of that rank.

Younger brother of Frederick, Herbert Paveley was born in 1900 and lived at Hand Terrace, Hand Lane, High Wych. He was the son of a 'Nursery Gardener'. It appears that his mother died giving

birth to him (or very shortly afterwards). Prior to enlistment, Herbert worked as a 'Clerk' at J.E Taylor & Co. Ltd.

In 1916, Herbert was conscripted into the Army, and after initial training was assigned to the 11th Battalion Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment). In August 1918, this Battalion was involved in the Second Battle of Bapaume, part of the Hundred Days offensive which smashed the German army. During this battle, Herbert Paveley was mortally wounded. He survived long enough to be transported to a hospital near Le Havre, where he awaited evacuation to Britain, but on 1 September Herbert Paveley died of his wounds. He was aged 18.

Herbert Paveley is buried at Sainte Marie Cemetery, Le Havre and is named on the High Wych Memorial Plaque (Paveley) and the Roll of Honour of the Congregational Church Sawbridgeworth.



Herbert Charles Paveley

Private Herbert Michael Paveley G/31778.

As per Frederick Paveley, I have used the Commonwealth War Graves Commission surname spelling.

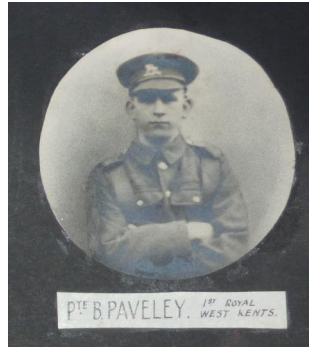
This name was an alias used by Thomas Benjamin Paveley.

Thomas Benjamin, usually known as just Benjamin, was born in 1902 in Ware and was the cousin of Herbert Charles Paveley and Frederick Arthur Paveley named earlier. I will refer to him henceforth as Benjamin/Herbert. He enlisted at Hertford in 1916 when underage. He initially served in the Royal West Surrey Regiment before being transferred to the 1st Battalion Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment).

In September 1918, the German army was in retreat in what has become known as the 'Hundred Days' offensive. As part of this, on 27 September 1918, the Battle of the Canal du Nord took place. It was here, almost at the war's end, that Benjamin/Herbert was killed in action. He was still only 16 years old.

Herbert Michael Paveley (Thomas Benjamin) is buried at Gouzeuacourt New British Cemetery, France.

Thomas Benjamin Paveley is named on the Sawbridgeworth War Memorial (albeit under his alias and misspelt), because he was (like his cousins) a member of the Congregational Church there and is named on its Roll of Honour.



Thomas Benjamin (Herbert Michael) Paveley

Thomas Benjamin Paveley.

Not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials.

Thomas Paveley joined underaged and served in the Great War using an alias.

See Herbert Michael Paveley for details.

Private Henry George Pavitt 201253.

Henry Pavitt is not named on the Sawbridgeworth War Memorial.

Note. Some records give the service number 35819. I have used that given by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Also note. The 'additional information' on the 'Herts at War' website is highly inaccurate.

Henry was born in 1890 at Matching near Old Harlow. By 1901, the family had moved to Old Road, Harlow and in 1911, Henry was a 'House Painter'.

In January 1916, Henry was conscripted into the 4th Battalion Essex Regiment, and after training was sent to Egypt in defence of the Suez Canal.

In 1917, with the Ottoman Turks in retreat, Henry's Battalion moved to assault Gaza. It was in the Third Battle of Gaza that Henry Pavitt was mortally wounded. Although evacuated back to hospital at Alexandria, Henry Pavitt died of his wounds 25 November 1917. He was aged 27.

Henry Pavitt is buried at Ramleh War Cemetery, Egypt. He is named on the High Wych Memorial Plaque. Presumably people at High Wych knew him.

Sergeant Joseph Arthur Paynter 32354.

Joseph was born in Chelmsford in 1874. He married his wife Louisa in 1904 and had two boys. In 1911 the family were living at 'The Laurels' in Sayesbury Road. Joseph was an 'Assurance Agent'. In 1914, upon the outbreak of war, Joseph volunteered for service. He was initially assigned to the Hertfordshire Regiment, but was later in 1916, transferred to the 41st Protection Company of the Royal Defence Corps.

The Royal Defence Corps was formed in March 1916 and was composed of servicemen who were too old or infirm for front line duties and were solely used on the Home Front. The 41st Company were involved in guarding lines of communication.

On 30 October 1918, Joseph Paynter died. The cause of his death is unknown, but logically must have been accident or illness.

Joseph Paynter is buried in Great St. Mary's churchyard. He was aged 44.

Private William Perrin ES/9191.

Although born in Sawbridgeworth in 1888, William's family moved first to Shropshire, before returning to live at Excelsior Road in Kingston Upon Thames.

William was a professional soldier, enlisting into the 2nd Battalion East Surrey Regiment at Kingston Upon Thames in 1907.

At the beginning of the war, this unit was stationed in India at Chaubattia. They finally arrived at Le Havre in France on 19 January 1915.

William's date of death is 23 April 1915. This was the second day of the Second Battle of Ypres, in which William's battalion participated. He was killed in action and has no known grave.

William Perrin is also named on the Menin Gate. He was aged 26.

Rifleman Herbert William Perry S/10584.

Herbert Perry is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials.

Herbert was born at New Street, Sawbridgeworth in June 1885 and was baptised in August that year.

In 1901 he was a 'Maltster's Office Boy', but by 1911 he was a 'House Painter'.

Somewhat confusingly, Herbert was recorded as 'Married' in the 1911 census. However, he was not living with his 'wife', nor is there any other record that I can find of this marriage.

Herbert volunteered and enlisted in 1914. He was to serve in the Great War in the 1st Battalion Rifle Brigade and saw action at both the Somme and Ypres regions.

In Spring 1918, the Germans launched an offensive in an attempt to end the war before the Americans could arrive in force. It was during the confused fighting at this time that Herbert Perry died near Arras. His date of death is given as 4 April 1918. He has no known grave.

Herbert Perry is named on the Arras Memorial. He was aged 32.



Interior of the Arras Memorial

Private William Pettitt 265948.

William Pettitt is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials.

Note. William's enlistment papers state that he lived in Sheering Mill Road (Lane).

William was born in 1896 at Chadiston in Suffolk. However, sometime before 1901 the family had moved to the village of Sheering where his father was a 'Maltster's Labourer' and lived at Malling Lane. In the 1911 census, William was recorded as a 'Farm Labourer'.

William was conscripted in 1916 and after training served with the 1st Battalion Hertfordshire Regiment. His date of death is given as 31 July 1917. This was the first day of the Third Battle of

Ypres, better known as Passchendaele. On this day, the 1st Battalion attacked and advanced over the Steenbeek (stream) towards the German line at Langemarck. However, the German wire was uncut, and the Battalion took heavy casualties through machine gun fire. They were forced to withdraw back to their start lines. All the officers, and 459 other ranks became casualties that day (roughly 75%), and the Battalion could take no more part in the battle. There is now a memorial to the Hertfordshire Regiment at St. Julien nearby to where they died.

William was not the only local soldier to die here. At least three other residents of Sawbridgeworth were killed with him. Possibly they were friends.

William Pettitt has no known grave. He is named on the Menin Gate and Sheering Memorials. He was aged 20.



The Memorial Cross at Sheering

Lance Sergeant Leonard Cornelius Prior 10666.

Leonard Prior lived at 5 Springhall Road. He was born in 1890 and was an 'Engineer's Assistant'. He was also the Great-Grandson of John Prior who owned the 'King of Prussia' Inn from 1796 until 1829.

In 1914, he volunteered and joined the 6th Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment, enlisting at Hertford. This was a 'Kitchener' Service Battalion, raised in August 1914. Following Home training, on the 30 July 1915, the Battalion landed at Le Havre in France. After serving on quiet sectors at Ypres and Loos, in 1916, the Battalion was moved to the area of the Somme in preparation for the coming offensive. The Battalion went into action on St. Swithun's day, 15 July 1916. On this day, the Battalion assaulted Pozieres as part of the Battle of Bazentin Ridge, itself part of the Somme offensive. Tragically, the Battalion lost 330 men that day (approximately 50% casualties). One of those who died on 15 July 1916 was Leonard Prior. He was aged 26.

As well as the Sawbridgeworth Memorial, Leonard Prior is also named on the Thiepval Memorial in France.



Communication Trench at Bazentin Ridge

2nd Lieutenant Douglas William Prout.

Douglas Prout is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials.

Douglas was born in Sawbridgeworth in 1891 at 'Roselands' Knight Street. The family then moved to Ealing, and Douglas was privately educated at St. Paul's School in Richmond. After initially becoming a Bank Clerk, Douglas worked at a solicitor's office in London, and was a member of the Inns of Court Officer Training Corps, based at Chancery Lane. This was a pre-war Territorial unit for potential officers. In 1914, this unit set up a semi-permanent training camp at Berkhamsted, and there is a memorial to them at Berkhamsted Golf Course.

In 1914, Douglas Prout was first commissioned into the 6th Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment, before being transferred to the 8th Battalion Royal Berkshire Regiment. This Battalion arrived in France at Le Havre 8 August 1915 and was assigned to the 1st Division of the Army.

Douglas Prout's date of death is given as 3 September 1916, and he was 'killed in action'. At this time, his unit was involved in the Battle of Pozieres, a part of the Somme offensive. He has no known grave. He was aged 25.

Douglas Prout is named on the Thiepval Memorial, France.

Private Frank Puncher 36429.

Frank Puncher, who lived at 19 West Road, was born in June 1887 and was a 'Coal Carter' working for Thomas Burton at the mill. He volunteered in November 1914 and joined the 6th Battalion, Royal Berkshire Regiment. This was a 'Kitchener' Service Battalion, formed in September 1914. After Home training, on 26 July 1915, the Battalion landed at Le Havre in France.

It was not to be until the Battle of the Somme in 1916, that the Battalion would go into action. On 26-30 September 1916, the Battalion was involved in the attack on the Schwaben Redoubt and the capture of Regina Trench, both a part of the Battle of Thiepval Ridge, itself a part of the much larger Somme offensive. Whilst it is possible that Frank Puncher was mortally wounded in one of these actions, he has no known grave. His date of death is given as 30 October 1916. However, the Regimental diary for that day records a 'quiet day' and 'slight shelling'. There are no casualties noted. Although a contemporary newspaper report stated that Frank was killed by a shell on 30 October, the implications are that Frank Puncher was actually missing from the earlier actions, and his death was recorded at the later date. (The same newspaper report also gave erroneous information on Frank's enlistment date!). He was aged 29.

As well as the Sawbridgeworth Memorial, Frank Puncher is also named on the Thiepval Memorial in France and on the Roll of Honour of the Congregational Church Sawbridgeworth.



Frank Puncher

Corporal Gabriel Samson Puncher 2124909.

Gabriel was born in August 1887 and was the cousin of Frank Puncher named previously. His childhood was spent with his parents in Knight Street. In the 1901 census, Gabriel was living in Chiswick, and was a 'Horse Boy'.

In 1910, Gabriel emigrated to Canada aboard the RMS Virginian, staying first in Quebec, then in 1911 at Nipissing Ontario, staying with his brother Leonard.

Upon the outbreak of war, Gabriel volunteered for service (there was no conscription in Canada). He was assigned to the 13th Light Railway Operating Company of the Canadian Railway Troops. This was very much a supporting role, taking supplies to the front via a narrow-gauge railway system. This should therefore have been a 'safe' posting. However, on 21 March 1918, the Germans launched a massive offensive called 'operation Michael'. This was an attempt to defeat the allies before American troops arrived in numbers. The Germans advanced quickly and in depth, taking many rear units by surprise. Although the offensive was to ultimately prove a costly failure for the Germans, Gabriel Puncher was one of its casualties.

Gabriel Puncher died 28 March 1918. He is buried at Barlin Communal Cemetery Extension, France. He was aged 30. He is named on the Roll of Honour of the Congregational Church Sawbridgeworth. Note. The 'Herts at War' website incorrectly states that he was married and living at Eastbourne.



Gabriel Samson Puncher

Private Henry John Frederick Randall 510010.

Henry Randall is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials.

Henry was born at Lambeth, South London, in 1888 and was baptised at Kennington in September that year.

Sometime after 1901, Henry moved to Sawbridgeworth, and in the 1911 census was recorded as a 'Farmer' living at Chalk's Farm.

On 4 August 1914, the very day that Britain declared war on Germany, Henry volunteered for the Army, and served with the 1/1st Battalion Hertfordshire Yeomanry. This was a cavalry unit and went on to fight against the ottoman Turks. Later, sometime after January 1917, Henry was transferred to the Labour Corps. This is interesting as the Labour Corps was composed largely of troops who were deemed unfit for front line service, and often returning wounded would be assigned. This implies that Henry was himself wounded at some time. It is not possible to know where this occurred, but the 1/1st Hertfordshire Yeomanry were involved in combat at Gallipoli, Palestine (Israel) and Mesopotamia (Iraq).

Strictly speaking, Henry should not be a part of this history as he died after the war had ended.

Henry Randall died 23 November 1918 from pneumonia, probably linked to an earlier wound. He is buried at St. Mary's Church, Old Harlow and is named on Old Harlow Cross Memorial. He was aged 30.

Henry's tombstone is unusual as it gives his Labour Corps service. Because at that time this was not considered 'real', it was normal to only give the preceding regimental service.

Rifleman Edward George Rattee 3178.

Edward Rattee was born in 1878 at North Witchford, near March in Cambridgeshire and lived there at Creek Road.

Edward was (sort of) a professional serviceman. In the 1901 census, he is recorded as being an 'Ordinary Seaman' with the Royal Navy and was on leave with his brother in Stowmarket. He seems to have been based at Pembroke Naval Dock in South Wales.

At some point after 1911, Edward left the Navy, but remained in South Wales.

By 1914, his family had moved to the Sawbridgeworth area. Therefore, when war broke out and Edward surprisingly volunteered for the Army (as opposed to the Navy) at Newport, Gwent, he gave his home address as Sawbridgeworth.

Edward Rattee served with the 1st Battalion Monmouthshire Regiment, arriving in France in February 1915. This unit took heavy casualties at the Second Battle of Ypres in April-May 1915, and in September that year, was re-organised as a Pioneer Battalion.

On 13 October 1915, the Battalion again took heavy casualties assaulting the Hohenzollern Redoubt during the Battle of Loos. It was here that Edward Rattee was mortally wounded. He died of his wounds on 23 October 1915. He was aged 37.

Edward Rattee is buried at Le Treport Military Cemetery, France.

Although named on the Sawbridgeworth War Memorial, it is unlikely that Edward Rattee ever came to the town. Edward Rattee is also named on the 1st Battalion Monmouthshire Regiment Memorial at St. Woolos Cathedral, Newport, Gwent.

Rifleman Albert Rawlinson 14663.

Albert was born in 1878 at Steeple Bumpstead near Saffron Walden. In 1898, Albert married Elizabeth Green at Walthamstow and in the 1901 census he was working as a 'Dock Labourer' and lived in Stafford Road. Rather confusingly, in the 1911 census, Albert has disappeared. However, his

wife and 5 children are still in Stafford Road. We cannot know, but possibly Albert was working on a ship away from home.

Albert's service number indicates he volunteered in 1914. He was to serve in the 9th Battalion Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment), arriving in France via Boulogne 1 June 1915.

In July 1916, Albert's Battalion was involved in the Somme offensive. On the 7 July 1916, the date of Albert's death, the Battalion attacked towards Ovillers, but took heavy casualties at a feature called 'Mash Valley'. It was here that Albert was killed. He has no known grave but is named on the Thiepval Memorial. He was aged 37.

I can find no connection to Sawbridgeworth except a relative who lived at 103 London Road.

Private Albert Sorrell Reed 36441.

Albert was born in January 1882 and was baptised in May that year. He lived at 2 Clay Lane (West Road) with his family. In the 1901 and 1911 census returns he is recorded as a Builder's or Bricklayer's Labourer.

In November 1914, Albert volunteered at Hertford and joined the Army, initially training with the Hertfordshire Regiment (with the number 5771), before being assigned to the 5th Battalion Royal Berkshire Regiment. This Battalion arrived in France on 31 May 1915 via Boulogne, and went on to see action at Loos, Somme and Amiens.

In September 1918, Albert's Battalion was involved in the final advance in Artois. The date given for Albert's death is 27 September 1918 and it is likely that he died of wounds received from an action of the previous day. At 0300 on the 26 September near Nurlu in France, the Battalion attacked two features called 'Dados Trench' and 'The Loop'. This attack was unsuccessful, with some casualties, one of whom must have been Albert.

Albert Reed is buried at Villers Hill British Cemetery, Villers-Guislain, France. He was aged 36.

Private Charles John Reed 3353.

Cousin of Albert Reed, Charles was born in June 1891 and was baptised in August that year. He lived at 46 Bull (Cambridge) Road. Like his cousin Albert, the 1911 census recorded him as a 'Builder's Labourer'.

In 1914, Charles volunteered and served with the 1st Battalion Hertfordshire Regiment.

Charles' date of death is given as 28 June 1916 and he is buried at Great St. Mary's churchyard in Sawbridgeworth. This indicates that he must have been mortally wounded in France and been evacuated back to Britain where he died. The Battalion diary for April to June notes that they were either training or in quiet sectors at this time near Bethune. There were however, small numbers of casualties noted for April and May. Presumably Charles Reed was one of them.

He was aged 25.



Tombstone of Charles John Reed

Private Edward Thomas Reed 3351.

The elder brother of Charles, Edward was born in March 1885 and was baptised in May that year. Like his brother, Edward initially lived with his family at 46 Bull (Cambridge) Road. In June 1908, Edward married Sarah Anne Cowell and moved to 70 Bull (Cambridge) Road. They had two sons, Edward (born 1910) and Ernest (born 1913).

On 1 October 1914, Edward volunteered for the Army on the same day as his younger brother and joined the 1st Battalion Hertfordshire Regiment. Sadly though, on 1 January 1915, after just three months in the Army, Edward was discharged through ill health. Edward had Tuberculosis, and at that time this was fatal. Even sadder, is that being discharged so early meant that his service did not officially count towards a medal.

Edward Reed presumably would have been buried at Great St. Mary's churchyard, but without a military tombstone, and unfortunately his grave record has now been lost. He died in July-September 1915 aged 30.

Private Ernest George Reed 266927.

Elder brother of both Edward and Charles, Ernest was born in September 1882 and was baptised in November that year. He also lived with his parents at 46 Bull (Cambridge) Road, and in the 1911 census, he was recorded as a 'Farm Labourer'.

Ernest's service number indicates that he was conscripted in January 1916, and he was to serve with the 1st Battalion Hertfordshire Regiment. In July 1917, this Battalion was in the vicinity of Ypres preparing for the Passchendaele offensive.

Ernest's date of death is given as 31 July 1917. This was the first day of the Third Battle of Ypres, better known as Passchendaele. On this day, the 1st Battalion Hertfordshire Regiment attacked and advanced over the Steenbeek (stream) towards the German line at Langemarck. However, the German wire was uncut, and the Battalion took heavy casualties through machine gun fire. They were forced to withdraw back to their start lines. All the officers, and 459 other ranks became casualties that day (roughly 75%), and the Battalion could take no more part in the battle. Ernest was not the only soldier from Sawbridgeworth to die here that day. At least three others died with him, possibly they were friends. There is now a memorial to the Hertfordshire Regiment at St. Julien nearby to where they died.

Ernest has no known grave. He is also named on the Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres. He was aged 34.

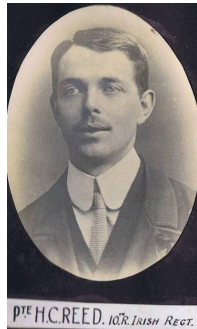
Rifleman Herbert Cecil Reed 41334.

Herbert was born at 19 London Road in December 1890 and was baptised in January the next year. In the 1911 census, Herbert was still living with his parents in London Road, and was recorded as a 'House Painter'.

Herbert was a 'Kitchener' volunteer, enlisting in 1914 at Warley in Essex. He was to initially serve with the Essex Regiment (number 32201) before being transferred to the 10th Battalion Royal Irish Rifles in 1916. This was because the Irish had taken heavy casualties in the Somme offensive and badly needed replacements.

Herbert's date of death is given as 14 June 1917. This was the closing phase of the Battle of Messines. At Messines on 7 June 1917, the British exploded 19 mines under the German line. At 0310 that morning, nearly a million pounds of high explosive were detonated, the shock wave being felt in London. With overwhelming artillery support the British easily gained their objectives with minimal loss. However, there then followed a week of attrition after which the British losses for the battle rose to a total of 28,000 men killed, wounded or missing, one of whom was Herbert.

Herbert Reed is buried at Dranoutre Military Cemetery, Belgium. He is named on the Roll of Honour of the Congregational Church Sawbridgeworth. He was aged 27.



Herbert Cecil Reed



Remains of a German trench after the explosion of one of the Messines mines

Private Edmund George Revell 2119.

Note. The 'Herts at War' website information is almost totally incorrect. Also note that some records misspell the surname as Revel.

Edmund was born at his grandparent's home at 5 Bell Yard, Bell Street. The illegitimate son of Jane Revell, who was only 16 at the time, Edmund was born in 1895 and was baptised in June that year. He was the nephew of William Revell. Edmund's mother married a William Brace in Sawbridgeworth in 1902, but unfortunately seems to disappear from the records after that. Edmund's service number indicates that in 1914 he was already a Territorial soldier with the Hertfordshire Regiment, and he was mobilized in August that year. The Battalion Landed in France via Le Havre on the SS City of Chester, on 6 November 1914.

Edmund's date of death is given as 4 September 1916. At this time, the Battalion was in reserve for an attack North of the Ancre. Although not directly in the line of fire, the Battalion was heavily shelled from 2330 on the 3 September until dawn 4 September. It was here that Edmund was killed. Edmund Revell is buried at Knightsbridge Cemetery, Mesnil-Martinsart, France. He was aged 21.

Lance Corporal William John Revell 8611.

Note. The 'Herts at War' website is spurious and gives information for a completely different soldier.

William was born at 5 Bell Yard, Bell Street in 1889, and was baptised in August that year. He was the uncle of Edmund Revell named previously.

William was a professional soldier, enlisting with the 1st Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment in 1910. At the start of the Great War, William's Battalion was stationed at Mullingar in Ireland. They were quickly transported to France, arriving at Le Havre on board the SS Oronsa 16 August 1914.

The Battalion was rapidly involved in all the opening battles, Mons, Le Cateau, and First Marne. In mid-September, the Battalion took part in the First Battle of the Aisne. Between 13-15 September the Battalion diary noted 75 casualties wounded. One of these was William who was mortally wounded there.

William survived long enough to be evacuated back to Britain for treatment in hospital in London. However, on 4 November 1914, William Revell died of his wounds. He was aged 25.

William Revell is buried at Hammersmith Old Cemetery, London.

Private Walter Edward Revill 266554.

Walter Revill is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth war Memorials.

Born at Hatfield Broad Oak in early 1893. In the 1911 census Walter Revill lived and worked in this village as a 'Farm Labourer'. He married Sarah Ann Biscoe there in early 1916. She also lived at Hatfield Broad Oak. It seems that Walter Revill was conscripted in 1916, so the marriage would have taken place just before he departed.

Walter was assigned to the 1st Battalion Hertfordshire Regiment. From 8-24 July 1916, this unit was in the trenches near Festubert. There was no major action, but during this time the Battalion lost 12 killed through general attrition. One of those killed, on 23 July 1916, was Walter Revill. He was aged 23.

Walter Revill is buried at Caterpillar Valley Cemetery, Longueval, France. He is named on the Hatfield Heath War Memorial.

Walter Revill's connection to Sawbridgeworth is tenuous. It was through his wife Sarah, who had an Aunt, Martha Biscoe, who lived at 6 Station Road.

Note. The 'Herts at War' website states that he lived at 37 West Road. This was not the case in 1911 and given his marriage to Sarah at Hatfield Broad Oak in 1916, this is highly unlikely.

Rifleman Frederick Sydney Reynolds 50232.

Note. The 'Herts at War' website incorrectly states that Frederick lived in Station Road.

Frederick was born at 28 Bull (Cambridge) Road in 1900. Later he moved with his parents to 1 New Street.



Frederick Sydney Reynolds

The records are unclear, but Frederick must have voluntarily enlisted at Hertford underage, possibly as early as 1914, which of course would make him only 14 years old!

After initial service with the King's Royal Rifle Corps, Frederick was transferred to the 6th Battalion London Regiment (City of London Rifles).

Between the 8 and 11 August 1918, Frederick's Battalion was in action at the Battle of Amiens. This was the first truly 'modern' battle, where the British used combined arms tactics which the Germans would later utilise in WW2 (called Blitzkrieg). It was an overwhelming success, and even General Ludendorff described it as 'The Black Day of the German Army'. From that time on, the German Army was effectively defeated.

Sadly, success still came at a cost. During this battle, Frederick was mortally wounded. He died at a Canadian field hospital on 15 August 1918.

Frederick Reynolds is buried at Mont Huon Military Cemetery, Le Treport, France. He was aged 18.



German prisoners captured at Amiens marching to a POW camp

Lance Corporal Kenneth Roberts 270584.

Kenneth was born in 1894 at Colehill near Wimborne Minster in Dorset. He was baptised in July of that year.

The records are sparse, but Kenneth volunteered for service and joined the Buffs (East Kent Regiment). He went on to serve in both Mesopotamia (Iraq) and Palestine (Israel).

Kenneth's date of death is given as 31 October 1917. This was the date of the Battle of Beersheeba, a part of the Third Battle of Gaza. On that day, the British attacked the Ottoman Turkish Yildirim

Army Group. The attack included a very successful cavalry charge, one of the last in history, and resulted in a major defeat for the Turks. However, one of the casualties was Kenneth Roberts who was killed.

Kenneth Roberts is buried at Beersheeba War Cemetery, Gaza, Palestine/Israel. He was aged 24. Kenneth's connection to Sawbridgeworth is tenuous. It is highly unlikely that he ever came to the town, but he had an uncle and aunt who lived at Wimborne House in Hoestock Road, now the site of Wimborne Gardens.



1/5th Buffs (East Kent Regiment) crossing the Jebel Hamrin 1917

Captain David Leslie Russell.

David Russell is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials.

Elder brother of Lawrence, David Russell was born at Hertford Road, Amwell in 1891, the son of a college Headmaster.

In the 1911 census, David was recorded as a 'Student' at a military college at Guildford. He was therefore a professional serviceman.

During the Great War, David was to serve with the 8th Battalion London Regiment (Post Office Rifles).

David's Battalion arrived in France on 8 March 1915. In May that year it was to be in action for the first time at the Battle of Festubert. This was to be a battle of attrition, with Festubert finally being captured on 25 May. However, 2 days prior to this, on 23 May 1915, David was killed in action.

David Russell is buried at Bethune Town Cemetery. He was aged 24.

I can find no connection to either Sawbridgeworth or High Wych.

Lieutenant Lawrence Edward Russell.

Lawrence Russell is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials.

Younger brother of David, Lawrence Russell was born at Hertford Road, Amwell in 1892.

In the 1911 census, Lawrence was already recorded as an Officer Cadet at Sandhurst. He was thus a professional serviceman. During the Great War, Lawrence was to serve with the 2nd Battalion Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment).

Prior to the start of the war, the Battalion was stationed at Dublin in Ireland and landed in France via Le Havre on 16 August 1914. Tragically, this was to prove a very short war for Lawrence. He was killed at the opening battle at Mons only 8 days later.

Lawrence Russell was killed 24 August 1914. He is buried at Hautrage Military Cemetery, Belgium.

He was aged 22.

I can find no connection to either Sawbridgeworth or High Wych.

Corporal Alfred Saban 266898.

Note. The 'Herts at War' website also gives the Service Number 266878. I have used the Service Number given by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Note also that the same website states that Alfred served in the '1st Company' of his Battalion. This information must be spurious as Companies were designated by letter, not number, (e.g. 'A' Company).

Alfred Saban was born in 1896 and was baptised in December that year. He lived at 1 Sheering Mill Road (Lane) and was a 'Grocer's Errand Boy'. He was a cousin of Edward Vick who is also named in this history.

In 1916, Alfred was conscripted into the 1st Battalion Hertfordshire Regiment and rose to the rank of Corporal.

Between 9-15 August 1918, the Battalion were in trenches near Bucquoy. There was no major action at this time, but Alfred Saban was to be mortally wounded here, one of many from the constant daily attrition.

Alfred Saban died of his wounds 16 August 1918. He is buried at Bagneux British Cemetery, Gezaincourt, France. He was aged 21.

Rifleman Ernest William Salmon 4036.

Ernest Salmon was born at Widdington in 1893, and in the 1911 census, he was living at Rowney Bury Lodge which his father had as a tied cottage in his job as a 'Domestic Gardener'. Ernest himself was recorded as a 'Grocer's Assistant' in the same census.

Ernest was a 'Kitchener' volunteer, enlisting in 1914, and he served in the 1/21st Battalion London Regiment (First Surrey Rifles).

In late Summer 1916, Ernest's Battalion took part in the Somme offensive. The date of Ernest's death is given as 15 September 1916. In the morning of that day, at 0630, the Battalion moved to the front at Mametz Wood and awaited the attack signal to assault the German held High Wood. At 1530, the signal was given, and the Battalion attacked a feature called 'Starfish Redoubt'. Sadly, although the German line was taken, the casualties for the Battalion were terrible. Of 669 Officers and men who attacked, only 62 were left. The attack left 607 soldiers killed or wounded. One of the dead was Ernest Salmon.

Ernest Salmon has no known grave. He is also named on the Thiepval Memorial. He was aged 23.

Private William Salmon 7705.

William was born at 46 Barkers Lane (Station Road) in 1879. In the 1911 census he was still living there and was recorded as a 'Labourer, Carting'.

His service number shows that William was a professional soldier, enlisting before 1914. He served in the 1st Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment.

Prior to the Great War, William's Battalion was based at Mullingar in Ireland. They arrived at Le Havre in France aboard the SS Oronsa on 16 August 1914 and went to the front, eventually finding itself fighting near Ypres.

On the 9 November 1914, there was only skirmishing, but the Battalion still lost 17 killed and 7 wounded. One of the killed was William, and unusually for the time, he has no known grave.

William Salmon is also named on the Le Touret Memorial, France. He was aged 35.

Lance Corporal Alfred William Eaton Sapsford 14033.

Alfred Sapsford is not named on the Sawbridgeworth War Memorial.

Alfred Sapsford was born in 1890 at Great Hallingbury. Later the family moved to 'Sweet Briars Cottages' in High Wych. Alfred preferred to be called by his middle name of William (or just Will). Alfred (Will) was a professional soldier. He enlisted into the 2nd Battalion Grenadier Guards in 1908 and became a Lance Corporal just before he was killed.

Immediately prior to the Great War, the Battalion was based at Chelsea Barracks in London. Indeed, in a fortuitous meeting just before they departed for France, Alfred (Will) was to 'bump into' his younger brother Arthur in the Strand, London. This was the last time any of his family would see Alfred (Will) alive.

The Battalion arrived at Le Havre in France on 15 August 1914 and were in action throughout the rest of the year, Alfred (Will) receiving a mention in despatches. In October, they were involved in the First Battle of Ypres. It was here that Alfred (Will) was killed on 27 October 1914. Alfred William Sapsford has no known grave. He is named on the Menin Gate Memorial but is incorrectly given the rank of Private. He is also named on the High Wych Memorial Plaque. He was aged 24.



2nd Battalion Grenadier Guards marching past Buckingham Palace before going to France

Private Henry Shead 7894.

Henry was born in 1886 at Bells Hill in Bishop's Stortford. However, in the 1911 census, he was living at Baker's Farm, High Wych, as was recorded as a 'Cowman on Farm'.

His service number shows that Henry was a professional soldier, enlisting before 1914. He served in the 1st Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment.

Prior to the Great War, Henry's Battalion was based at Mullingar in Ireland. They arrived at Le Havre in France aboard the SS Oronsa on 16 August 1914 and went to the front.

In September, the Battalion was in action at the First Battle of the Marne. This was a turning point of the war when Paris was saved. On the 10 September 1914, the date given for Henry's death, the Battalion diary does not note any casualties, but in confused skirmishing on the day before, the Battalion lost 10 killed. It is probable therefore, that Henry was killed on the 9 September, and his death was wrongly notated later. Unusually for the time, Henry has no known grave.

Henry is also named on the La Ferte-sous-Jouarre Memorial, France. He was aged 28.



French troops at the First Battle of the Marne

Private Alfred William Skingle 266640.

Alfred Skingle is not named on the Sawbridgeworth War Memorial.

Alfred was born at Hatfield Broad Oak in 1892. However, by 1901 the family lived at Sheering and later moved to High Wych where Alfred attended school. In the 1911 census, the family lived at Mabletts, High Wych and Alfred was recorded as a 'Shepherd on Farm'.

In May 1915, Alfred volunteered at Hertford and served in the 1st Battalion Hertfordshire Regiment. His date of death is given as 2 September 1917. Alfred's Battalion was not in action that day. Indeed, after taking approximately 75% casualties in an attack on 31 July (the first day of the Passchendaele offensive), the Battalion had been largely in reserve, with only 1 soldier killed on 19 August. In that tragic action of 31 July 1917, the Battalion suffered 281 wounded. It would seem therefore that Alfred Skingle died of wounds received from that day.

Alfred Skingle is buried at Voormezele Enclosures (No. 1) Cemetery, Ypres. He is also named on the High Wych Memorial Plaque. He was aged 25.

There is now a memorial to the Hertfordshire Regiment at nearby St. Julien.



Voormezele Enclosures (No. 1) Cemetery, Ypres, Belgium

(Private/Corporal?) Harry Arthur Marriott Smith (28039/7534?).

Harry was born at Church Street in Hertford in 1895. In the 1911 census he was living at 20 Oak Street, Ware, with his widowed mother and was recorded as an 'Unemployed Clerk'.

In the Spring of 1914, Henry married Elizabeth Lilian Emma Dedman (who was 3-4 months pregnant) at Hertford. She was born in Sawbridgeworth. In 1901 she was living with her grandparents at 74 Bull (Cambridge) Road, and in 1911, she was a domestic servant at Ware. The couple moved to Sawbridgeworth in June 1914 and were to have 2 children who were born in October 1914 and March 1916 respectively.

Harry Smith's war record is debateable. The 'Herts at War' website gives the following information. Corporal, 1/6th Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers, Number 7534 (a 'Regular' number indicating enlistment 1912-13). Died 1 October 1916, Buried Dernancourt Communal Cemetery Extension, France.

However, my own researches show that Harry Smith was not a 'Kitchener' volunteer, and that he was definitely in Sawbridgeworth in late 1915, living I believe in Cambridge Road. That means that he would have been conscripted in January 1916, and indeed, because of his wife's pregnancy, may even have received a 6 months deferment. If that is the case, then it is extremely unlikely that he would have been in action before 1917. Also, it is extremely unlikely that he would have served with a Northern Battalion, and definitely not with a 'Regular' service number. Furthermore, it would have been impossible for him to have reached the rank of Corporal in such a short time as he would have been aged just 21 when he died.

My own research indicates he was a Private, Service Number 28039, conscripted 1916, served 12th Battalion Middlesex Regiment, died 17 February 1917, buried Regina Trench Cemetery, Grandcourt, France. Aged 22. Unfortunately, though, I cannot definitely prove this.

The problem is that the name Harry Smith (H Smith) in the records is so common. The person named by the 'Herts at War' website definitely existed. Whether that person was from Sawbridgeworth is highly doubtful but must remain an unanswered question.

Private Alfred Spells 252694.

Alfred was born at Grays Inn Road, North London, in 1883, however, the next year, in 1884, the family moved to Sawbridgeworth. From 1884 until about 1898, Alfred's father Edward was the publican at the 'Good Intent' in Barkers Lane (Station Road).

After this, the family moved to 9 Wharton Street in Clerkenwell. Alfred was recorded in the 1911 census as a 'Printer's Engineer' working in Fleet Street.

In January 1916, Alfred was in receipt of a conscription notice, but successfully appealed for a six months deferment (he was in a semi-reserved occupation). He used this time to marry in July 1916 Nathalie Clark at Fulham. It was at Fulham that Alfred finally enlisted. He and his wife were living at 24 Pursar's Cross Road, Fulham.

The records are vague, but Alfred appears to have served in the 23rd Battalion Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment). This unit was also known by its 'Pals' name as the '1st Sportsmen'.

Alfred's death date is given as 5 March 1917. Because where he is buried was near the site of a field hospital some miles to the rear, it is most likely that Alfred died of wounds received near Arras.

Note. The 'Herts at War' website gives a totally spurious date of death.

Alfred Spells is buried at Warlincourt Halte British Cemetery, Saulty, France. The people of Sawbridgeworth must have remembered him fondly from his time at the 'Good Intent'.

He was aged 34.

Private Arthur Springham DM/179044.

Arthur Springham is not named on the Sawbridgeworth War Memorial.

Arthur was born at 6 Johnson's Cottages, High Wych in July 1878 and was baptised in August that year.

The 1901 census showed Arthur living at Eleanor Road, Cheshunt with his elder brother Albert. In 1902, Arthur married Alice Wright from Widdington at St. James' church, High Wych, and in 1911 they were living at Lindfield, Sussex where Arthur was a 'Domestic Gardener'.

Arthur enlisted at Brighton, and given his age, marital status and subsequent service, must have been a volunteer in 1915.

Arthur served in the Royal Army Service Corps with the 773rd MT Company, also known as the 33rd Motor Ambulance Convoy. This unit was sent to Mesopotamia (Iraq) in 1916 and was used to transport wounded soldiers.

Arthur died on 4 November 1917. Given that he served in a support unit, his death was probably due to illness/disease. Arthur Springham is buried at Baghdad (North Gate) War Cemetery, Iraq and is named on the High Wych Memorial Plaque and the Gilston memorial. He was aged 39.

Driver Louis Charles Stone 5234.

Louis Stone is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials.

Note. Many records spell the first name as 'Lewis'.

Louis was born at Paddington in January 1893. In the 1911 census, he was still living there and was a 'Cheese Monger's Assistant'.

Louis' service number indicates that he was a 'Regular' who must have enlisted before the Great War. He was to serve with 'B' Battery, 73rd Brigade, Royal Field Artillery which was a Howitzer unit. An interesting note comes from 1916. In April that year Louis married Emily Florence Morris at Paddington and must have been granted special leave for this. However, Emily was 7 months pregnant at the time! They also had a second child born in May 1918, 3 months after Louis was killed.

Louis' date of death is given as 12 February 1918. The cause of his death is unknown but was probably German counter battery fire. He is buried at St. Sever Cemetery Extension, Rouen, France. He was aged 25.

Louis' connection to Sawbridgeworth/High Wych is very tenuous. Apparently, his wife lived for a time at 30 Knight Street, and her father lived at Sawbridgeworth after the Great War with relatives there.

Private Ambrose Stowers 15017.

Ambrose Stowers is not named on the Sawbridgeworth War Memorial.

Ambrose was born in 1886 at High Wych, the son of another Ambrose who was a 'General Labourer' and his wife Elizabeth.

In the 1911 census, 'our' Ambrose was recorded as a 'Woodman on (E)state'.

With the call for volunteers, Ambrose enlisted in 1914 and served in the 7th Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment, arriving in France via Boulogne 26 July 1915.

Ambrose went on to fight in the Somme offensive. His date of death is given as 18 July 1916.

Ambrose's Battalion was not in action that day, being some way to the rear at Maricourt. However, the Battalion diary recorded that the cookhouse was shelled at 1600 that day, and that casualties were taken. Possibly Ambrose was one of them. It should be noted though, that where Ambrose is buried was also the site of a major field hospital. Therefore, Ambrose could have died of wounds received from an action of 1 July 1916 when the Battalion assaulted the German front trenches and took heavy casualties.

Ambrose Stowers is buried at Peronne Road Cemetery and is named on the High Wych Memorial Plaque and the Gilston memorial.

He was aged 29.



7th Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment ('D' Company)

Private Charles Stracey 36464.

Charles was born in November 1894 and was baptised in January 1895. He lived with his family at 2 Bell Yard, Bell Street, and in 1911 was recorded as a 'General Farm Labourer'.

Charles was conscripted in January 1916 and enlisted at Hertford. After initial training with the reserve Battalion of the Hertfordshire Regiment, Charles served with the 6th Battalion Royal Berkshire Regiment.

Charles' date of death is given as 17 February 1916. On that day, the Battalion were involved in a major attack towards Miraumont and a feature called 'Hill 130'. They formed a defensive flank to the left which allowed the capture of another feature called 'Boom Ravine'. It was here that Charles was killed. He has no known grave.

Charles Stracey is named on the Thiepval Memorial and High Wych Memorial Plaque. He is also named on the Roll of Honour of the Congregational Church Sawbridgeworth.

He was aged 22.



Charles Stracey



The Thiepval Memorial

2nd Lieutenant Harry Duncan Toogood MC.

Harry Toogood was born in November 1894 and lived at Cross Street, Burton on Trent. He was the son of William Toogood, who was a Master Brewer for the Charrington's Brewery.

On the outbreak of war, Harry volunteered to serve and was commissioned into the King's Royal Rifle Corps, serving with the 9th Battalion. This was a 'Kitchener' Service Battalion. Thus, Harry's commission was 'temporary', meaning that it was for the duration of the war only.

The Battalion arrived at Boulogne in France 20 May 1915 and fought in the Somme offensive.

The 21 March 1918 saw the opening day of the German 'Michael' offensive. This was an attempt to defeat the allies before the Americans could arrive in force. The Germans fired over 350,000 shells in the first 5 hours before advancing. Harry Toogood died that day defending near Pozieres, and he was awarded a posthumous Military Cross for his gallantry. He has no known grave.

Harry Toogood is also named on the Pozieres Memorial. He was aged 24.

The link between Harry Toogood and Sawbridgeworth is very tenuous. Harry's father William was a brewer working for Colonel Francis Charrington at Burton on Trent. Colonel Charrington lived at Pishiobury House and had enough local influence to have Harry's name placed on the War Memorial at Sawbridgeworth.

Lance Corporal William Henry Tucker 24708.

William Tucker is not named on the Sawbridgeworth War Memorial.

William Tucker was born in the summer of 1893 at High Wych, the illegitimate son of Mary Ann Tucker. In October 1893, Mary married Henry Aley who claimed to be William's father, which legitimised the birth. However, in census returns, William was always recorded as being born in 1894.

In the 1911 census, William was recorded as a 'Nursery Gardener' and was living at Rowney Cottages.

William was a 'Kitchener' volunteer, enlisting at Shepherd's Bush on 4 November 1914. His preference was to join the Royal Garrison Artillery, and he may well have served with them initially. Later, William was transferred to the 3rd Battalion Grenadier Guards. His service number shows that this transfer took place at the end of December 1915.

In the Spring of 1918, William's Battalion was near Arras, and was fighting an orderly withdrawal in the face of a large German offensive. William's date of death is given as 27 March 1918. The Battalion diary shows that for the period 27-28 March 1918, 30 'other ranks' were killed and 4 were

missing. Since William Tucker has no known grave, he presumably was one of the 4 who were missing.

William Tucker is named on the Arras Memorial and High Wych Memorial Plaque. He was aged 23.

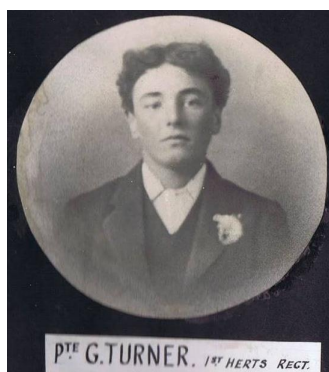
Private George Henry Turner 2304.

George was born at 27 Knight Street in February 1898. In the 1911 census he was recorded as a 'Milk Errand Boy'.

In 1916, George was conscripted into the Army, and served with the 1/1st Battalion Hertfordshire Regiment.

George was supposedly killed in action on 20 July 1918. However, the Battalion diary shows all was quiet that day with no casualties noted. Indeed, the last casualties noted were from a German raid on their trench on 12 July. It would seem therefore, that George Turner actually died of wounds received from that earlier action.

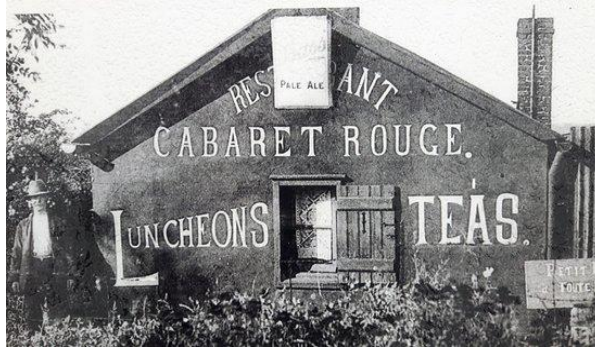
George Turner is buried at Cabaret-Rouge British Cemetery, Souchez, France and is named on the Roll of Honour of the Congregational Church Sawbridgeworth. He was aged 20.



George Henry Turner



Cabaret- Rouge British Cemetery



The original Cabaret Rouge before it was destroyed by shellfire in 1915

Rifleman Edward Alfred Vick S/27350.

Edward Vick is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials.

Edward was born in Sawbridgeworth on 11 May 1880 and was baptised on 6 June that year. He was a cousin of Alfred Saban who is also named in this history.

In 1881 the family were living at Bridge Street, Saffron Walden, but by 1891 they were again living at Sawbridgeworth in Knight Street.

Edward was (sort of) a professional soldier. He enlisted into Queen Victoria's Army in the late 1890s and served well. He became a cavalry Trooper and was to serve with the Commander-in-Chief's Bodyguard in the Boer War in South Africa with the service number 25601. This was a picked unit of mainly colonial soldiers. Edward was to receive both the Queen's South Africa Medal and the King's South Africa Medal. From 1900 until the unit's disbandment in 1902, the Commander-in-Chief was Field Marshall Lord Kitchener! On the 21 January 1902, as his unit was disbanding, Edward was enrolled as a Chelsea Pensioner at the very young age of just 21. Presumably Lord Kitchener himself influenced this decision as otherwise it is difficult to imagine how this could occur.

In the summer of 1912, Edward married Maud Dewey at Poplar in London. They were to have three children, the youngest of which was born in 1916 after Edward had re-enlisted in 1915.

Edward's father from 1911 onwards lived at 128 East Surrey Grove in Camberwell, where he rented three downstairs unfurnished rooms and lived alone. It was this address that Edward gave when enlisting (volunteering) in 1915.

The records are a little confused, but it seems that after training, Edward served first with the King's Royal Rifle Corps (R/28007) before being transferred to the 2nd Battalion Rifle Brigade (Prince Consort's Own).

Edward Vick's date of death is given as 10 February 1917. However, his Battalion was not in action at that time. Furthermore, the cemetery where he is buried was the site of a major field hospital, which indicates that he died of wounds received earlier, and probably due to the general daily attrition.

Edward Vick is buried at Peronne Road Cemetery, Maricourt, France. He was aged 36.

Arnold Wadsworth.

Arnold Wadsworth is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials.

Arnold Wadsworth enlisted underage and served throughout the war using an alias.

See Arthur Henry Edward Holgate for details.

2nd Lieutenant Percy Wadsworth.

Percy Wadsworth is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials, nor on the 'Herts at War' website.

Elder brother of Arnold Wadsworth, and a step-brother of Gordon, Percy and Stanley Archer, (all previously named), Percy was born in Halifax, Yorkshire in 1892.

Percy was well educated in Halifax, and before the Great War, worked at Vickers. His hobby was bowls.

In 1914, Percy volunteered for service, and was commissioned into the 1st Battalion East Yorkshire Regiment.

Whilst on leave in 1915, Percy married Ethel Holden. They lived at 15 Craven Terrace, Halifax.

During his war service, Percy Wadsworth was twice mentioned in dispatches.

Percy's date of death is given as 22 March 1918. At this time, his unit was involved in the Battle of St. Quentin. It was here that Percy died. He has no known grave. He was aged 25.

Percy Wadsworth is named on the Pozieres Memorial. He is also named across Halifax at St. Judes Church at Saville Park, Halifax Town Hall Books of Remembrance, Halifax Secondary School, Halifax Bowling Club and on the family grave at All Saints' Church, Dudwell.

Lance Corporal Frederick Reginald Wakeling 1099.

Frederick Wakeling is not named on the Sawbridgeworth War Memorial.

Younger brother of James, Frederick was born at 24 Collard Road, Walthamstow in 1894, and was baptised in November that year. After living at Bury Cottages, Old Road, Harlow, the family moved to Rowneys Farm, where Frederick in 1911 was a 'Stockman' like his brother.

Pre-war, Frederick Wakeling was a Territorial soldier, and upon the outbreak of hostilities was called to the colours, serving with the 1/4th Battalion Essex Regiment. After a period of Home service, this Battalion was sent to fight the Ottoman Turks, and arrived at Sulva Bay, Gallipoli on 12 August 1915, six days after the initial landings.

Only a few days after landing, Frederick was mortally wounded. He was actually on a ship being evacuated to a hospital at Alexandria in Egypt when he died of his wounds on 22 August 1915. He was buried at sea.

Frederick Wakeling is named on the Helles Memorial, High Wych Memorial Plaque and Old Harlow Memorial. He was aged 20.



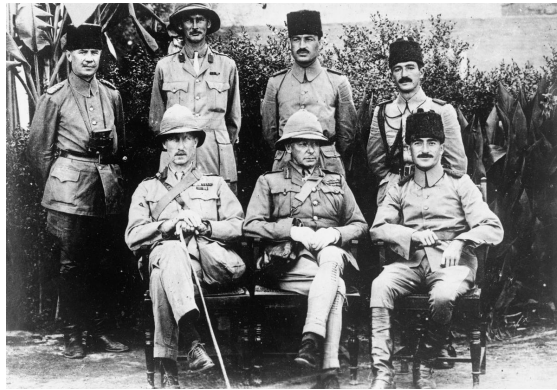
Helles Memorial, Turkey

Gunner James Harry Wakeling 70898.

James Wakeling is not named on the Sawbridgeworth War Memorial.

Elder brother of Frederick, James was born at High Laver, Essex, in 1890. His childhood was spent in Walthamstow and Old Harlow, and in the 1911 census he was a 'Stockman' working at Rowney Farm. However, in 1912, James enlisted into the 1090th Battery Royal Field Artillery. He was thus a professional serviceman.

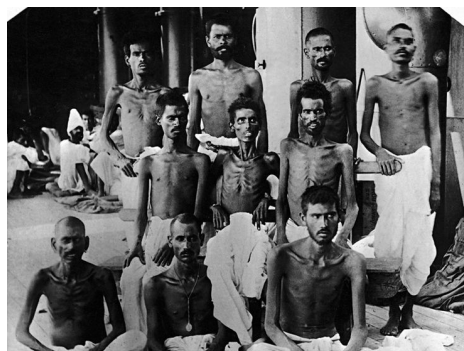
Before the Great War, James served in India, and upon it's outbreak, was a part of the 6th (Poona) Division of the Indian Army, sent to fight the Ottoman Turks in Mesopotamia (Iraq). Things did not go well, and from 7 December 1915 until it surrendered on 29 April 1916, this Division was besieged by the Turks at Kut al Amara. Modern historians are highly critical of the British commander, Major General Sir Charles Townshend, believing him to have been at best grossly incompetent, and at worst criminally so. 13,000 British and Indian soldiers were needlessly surrendered, of whom up to 70% would die in captivity in the most terrible conditions whilst their former commander was being wined and dined by the Turks in the best restaurants.



General Townshend (front centre) after the surrender

There was little food in the POW camps, and Cholera and Typhus were rampant. James Wakeling survived as a prisoner from 29 April 1916, until 6 May 1918. He died either through disease or maltreatment and beating, reportedly at a camp in Aleppo (Syria). Both were commonplace. He has no known grave as the Turks were not particularly bothered about burying the dead, (in fairness, not even with their own troops).

James Wakeling is named on the Basra Memorial, Old Harlow War Memorial, and the High Wych Memorial Plaque. He was aged 28.



Starving Indian troops from Kut al Amara after just 145 days of imprisonment

Lance Corporal Arthur Percy Walker 5622.

Arthur was born in 1895 and lived at 12 West Road. In the 1911 census, he was recorded as a 'Farm Labourer'.

Arthur was a professional soldier, enlisting in London before the war. He served with the 1st Battalion East Surrey Regiment, and prior to the Great War was posted to Ireland.

With the outbreak of war, the Battalion was sent to France, arriving at Le Havre on 15 August 1914. In early May 1917, the Battalion was a part of the 5th Division taking part in the Battle of Arras (9 April-16 May). It was near the 'official' end of this battle that on 8 May 1917 that Arthur Walker was killed in action. He has no known grave.

Arthur Walker is also named on the Arras Memorial, France. He was aged 21.

Private George Henry Watson Walker S/10801.

George Walker is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials.

Note. The 'Herts at War' website incorrectly gives his birthplace as Alnwick, Northumbria. His rank was given as Lance Corporal in a contemporary newspaper report of his death, but all official sources name him as a Private.

Born at Coveney in Cambridgeshire in 1880, George was a 'Jobbing Gardener', and by his twenties was living on the Kent coast. In 1901, George was living at Margate, and in 1911, he was living at Broadstairs.

In August 1911, George married his wife Louisa Bradley at Brondesbury in London. They settled in Hitchin/Letchworth and had one son who was born in August 1913. They were Methodists and regularly attended church where they lived.

George was seemingly a professional soldier. He appears to have enlisted into the 2nd Battalion King's Royal Rifle Corps in early 1914 at Islington. Before the war, this Battalion was based at Blackdown near Aldershot. George's Battalion arrived in France via Le Havre on 13 August 1914 and was to take part in many battles including Mons 1914, Loos 1915 and the Somme 1916.

After twice being wounded and under treatment for shellshock in hospitals in Ireland and Northampton, in 1917 George was transferred to the 3rd Battalion Seaforth Highlanders. This Battalion was a reserve unit and served the whole war in Scotland, firstly at Fort George, then at Cromarty. It does not appear that George was to actually serve with them though.

George Walker died 8 May 1918 and was buried in Great St. Mary's churchyard, Sawbridgeworth. George Walker's death was due to suicide. Although still being treated for shellshock, sadly George left his hospital and walked in front of a train at Spellbrook.

George Walker is named on the Roll of Honour of the Central Methodist Church, Stevenage/Letchworth. He was aged 39.

After the war, his widow lived at 2 Station Road, Soham.



Tombstone of George Henry Watson Walker

Lance Sergeant Samuel Alfred Ward 40497.

Samuel Ward is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials.

Samuel was born in 1888 at High Street, Wayland (Watton), Norfolk. In the 1911 census he was recorded as a 'Servant Baker', and still lived at Watton.

Samuel was a professional soldier, enlisting before the Great War and served in the 2nd Battalion Lincolnshire Regiment. Whilst on leave in July 1916, Samuel married Alice Bilverstone at Swaffam, also in Norfolk.

At the start of the Great War, Samuel's Battalion was in Bermuda. It was quickly brought back to Britain via Canada, and on 6 November 1914 landed at Le Havre in France.

Samuel served in many major engagements in 1915 and 1916 and in November 1917 was in the trenches near Ypres. Samuel's date of death is given as 17 November 1917. The Battalion diary recorded no major action at that time, which implies that Samuel was killed through the daily general attrition.

Samuel Ward has no known grave but is named on both the Tyne Cot and Watton Memorials. He was aged 29.

Samuel's only link to Sawbridgeworth is that his widow Alice was a servant at Hyde Hall in 1919.



Soldiers from the Lincolnshire Regiment brewing tea in a quiet moment

Gunner Thomas William Ward 88581.

Thomas Ward is not named on the Sawbridgeworth War Memorial.

Thomas was born in November 1881 at Redricks Lane. He married Eliza Jane Lane at Epping in August 1903 and was a 'Domestic Gardener'. They had one son. In the 1911 census, the family was living and working at Hill Hall, Theydon Mount.

The records are ambiguous, but it seems that Thomas volunteered in 1915, and because of his age was assigned to the Labour Corps, 417th Agricultural Company. Thomas later transferred to the Royal Garrison Artillery and served in France near Arras.

Thomas' date of death is given as 23 April 1917. This was during the Battle of Arras. It is not known how Thomas died, but it may well be from German counter battery fire.

Thomas Ward is buried at Aubigny Communal Cemetery Extension, France. He is named on the High Wych Memorial Plaque. He was aged 35.

Private Arthur Warwick 23710.

Arthur Warwick is not named on the High Wych or Sawbridgeworth War Memorials.

Arthur was born in February 1897 in Sawbridgeworth. The son of a 'Horse Keeper', in 1901 Arthur was living in Old Harlow, and in 1911 he was in Stanstead Abbots.

Arthur was a volunteer, and after training served with the 3rd Battalion Grenadier Guards on the Somme front.

Arthur's date of death is officially given as 14-17 September 1916. However, he most likely was killed on the 15 September. The Battalion diary states that the unit attacked near Ginchy at 0620 on the 15 September, with many casualties taken on the right flank. The 16 September was a general holding action, but with severe German shelling. The Battalion then withdrew to the rear on the night of the 16-17 September.

Arthur Warwick has no known grave. He is named on the Thiepval Memorial, but not on any local memorial that I can find. He was aged 19.

(Corporal?) Walter Richard Webb (unknown number)

Walter Webb is not named on the Sawbridgeworth War Memorial.

Walter was born at 6 Redricks Lane in 1888. In the 1911 census he was still living there and was recorded as a 'Glazier, Building'.

The records are very sparse, but at some point, Walter joined the Army. He was probably conscripted in 1916, but that is conjectural. He served in the Royal West Kent Regiment and was posted to Mesopotamia (Iraq). This means he must have served in either the 2nd or 1/5th Battalion of that Regiment.

After the war ended, Walter stayed in Iraq as part of the mandated British forces. He was a Military Policeman, which is why I have assigned him a provisional rank of Corporal. It is also highly likely that Walter had been transferred to the Royal Air Force, as they were in charge of much of the Iraqi operations.

Strictly speaking, Walter should not be part of this history as he died nearly 3 years after the end of the Great War.

Walter Webb died in 1921 and is buried at Baghdad (North Gate) War Cemetery, Iraq.

Walter Webb is named on the High Wych Memorial Plaque. He was aged 32-33.



Royal Air Force in mandated Iraq in the 1920s

Lance Corporal Ernest John Wood 266434.

Ernest Wood was born in April 1886 and was baptised at Sawbridgeworth in June that year. He lived at Trims Green, High Wych and was an 'Ordinary Agricultural Labourer'. He volunteered for service in 1915 and was initially assigned to the 3/1st Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment with the service number 4606. Later, Ernest was transferred to the 1st Battalion Hertfordshire Regiment, and was in action with them on 31 July 1917, the first day of the Passchendaele offensive. The Battalion advanced across the Steenbeek towards Langemarck but could make no progress as the German wire was uncut. The Battalion took heavy losses of roughly 75% casualties (including all the officers) and effectively ceased to exist for a long time after this.

Ernest was mortally wounded this day. He died of his wounds on 5 August 1917 at a casualty clearing station at Dozinghem, and is buried at Dozinghem Military Cemetery, Belgium. He was aged 21.

There is now a memorial to the Hertfordshire Regiment at nearby St. Julien. Surprisingly, Ernest Wood is not named on the High Wych Memorial Plaque.



The Hertfordshire Regiment Memorial at St. Julien

REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY.

In compiling this history of those who fell in the Great War, I have used too many sources to realistically allow full referencing. These sources have included soldier's written memoirs, along with Battalion, Regimental and Divisional diaries, and official Regimental records. The attached list is given so that anyone with an interest may have a basis for further reading and research.

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