

Droitwich War Memorial Biographies

1914 – 1918

Updated February 2009 (Version 2)

Researched by Jon Winks

Jon.winks@gmail.com

Introduction

These biographies have been written to provide a human touch to the town war memorial and to future remembrance services held in Droitwich. By describing where in the town these young men lived and worked, I hope to help people picture in their minds the ordinary men and boys of Droitwich who were caught up in such devastating world events.

I started this project in 1990 as an attempt to provide a short biography for each of the one hundred and thirteen names of men who died in the First World War listed on the Droitwich war memorial. However, it became apparent that this was less straight forward than I had imagined; despite my best efforts, some fifteen names cannot be found in the war records, the 1901 census or other records whilst other names appear to have been accidentally repeated (Nickin, Llewellyn and Yates). Other apparent errors include recording E P Cooper when it probably should have been F P Cooper and probably replaces the mysterious F Penly-Coope. Despite these challenges, I have managed to provide a biography for a hundred servicemen although I confess that I have included three names of men who for some reason are not listed on the memorial.

This is work in progress and I hope that I will be correcting and adding to these biographies for some time to come as families and others come forward with more information.

Some Facts and Statistics

Perhaps it is no surprise that more than half of all the men served in The Worcestershire Regiment. Ten men served in the 1/8th and eight served in the 3rd Battalions. The vast majority of the soldiers (ninety six men) died in France or Belgium. Of the remainder, six died in Turkey (Gallipoli), two in Italy and two in Mesopotamia (Iraq). The rest died in the UK. Two Droitwich men (Knight and Leek) were killed by the same shell exploding in their trench and F Crump was the last man from Droitwich to die in the war. One man was decorated for bravery; he is Sergeant Edward Harrison who was awarded the Military Medal.

The youngest name I have found so far is Thomas Bourne aged 17. The oldest is Walter Philpott, aged 44.

The memorial contains the names of five officers (B P Harrison, E P Cooper, W Boyle-Power, A V Lewis and J Willmore) two of whom were in the Royal Air Force. Interestingly both were test pilots and both were killed in flying accidents in the UK.

Only two men named on the memorial were in the Royal Navy and both served in warships which were sunk. George Nicklin was the first man from Droitwich to die on active service when his cruiser was torpedoed and Oliver Schoolcraft died when his destroyer was sunk by gunfire.

Biographies

H Aldridge

Harry Aldridge lived in Elmbridge but was born in 1891 In Addis Lane near Hampton Lovett. Harry was the youngest in the family having three older brothers and one older sister. His father, John was a farm labourer and his mother, Emily earned money by sewing shirts and mending other clothing. Harry and his brothers all became farm labourers working on Addis farm.

It is not known when Harry joined the army but he enlisted in Worcester and became a private in the 1/8th Worcestershire Regiment. He was killed in action, probably by artillery on August 17th 1917 in Belgium in the Passchendaele Battle during a period when the 1/8th Battalion were withdrawing from the front line after some heavy fighting. He is buried at New Irish Farm Cemetery near Ypres in Belgium and was aged 26.

E Barker

Edgar lived in Wychbold, and was the son of Thomas and Sarah Barker. He was a private in the 11th Worcesters and was killed in action on March 25th during the Salonika campaign in Greece. He was 20 when he died.

T Bateman

Thomas Bateman was born in Dudley but was married and living in St Mary Street in Droitwich during the great war. His father, Edward ran an off-licence at 14 St Peter's Street and Thomas was probably conscripted to the army in 1916. He

joined the 10th Gloucester Regiment and died, possibly of pneumonia or Spanish flu in April 1918.

A Bourne

Little is known about Albert. He joined the 1/8th Worcestershire Regiment and was killed in action in France during the battle of Arras on April 24th 1917.

G Bourne

George Bourne was born in Droitwich, the son of Henry Bourne, a 'medical masseur' probably working at Highfield Hospital. George may have been a regular soldier when war broke out and was in the Royal Field Artillery. He was killed in action in Belgium in May 2nd 1915 aged 25

G A V Bourne

George Albert Victor Bourne was a member of the Baptist church in Droitwich and joined the 4th Battalion Worcestershire Regiment. He was killed in action in October 1918 in France.

T Bourne

Thomas Bourne was born in Dodderhill and was living at Hanbury Terrace in Droitwich when war broke out in 1914. His father Henry was a salt maker. Before the war, Thomas was a delivery boy for Mr Everton, the grocer. He enlisted soon after the outbreak of war and lied about his age to be accepted as he was only 16. Thomas joined the 4th Battalion Worcester Regiment and went with his Battalion to the Gallipoli campaign fighting the Turks. He was wounded

during the battle of Krithia on May 8th 1915 and died of his wounds four days later. Thomas was 17.

W Boyle-Power

William Boyle-Power was born in Plymouth in 1887 and lived at Wyche Cottage in Albert Street at the start of the war in 1914. He obtained his pilots licence privately in 1914 and naturally joined the Royal Flying Corps as a when the war started.

He worked as a test pilot an a week after coming home from leave, William was killed on July 17th 1916 in a flying accident when his plane nose-dived into Farnborough Common near Aldershot in Hampshire. He was 29. His father who was a councillor in Droitwich died in February the following year.

F Brown

Frank Brown was born in Bilston, but was living in Vines Lane, Droitwich with his wife Bertha (nee Colley) when war started. He joined the 4th Worcestershire Regiment and went with his Battalion to the Gallipoli campaign in March 1915 to fight the Turks. He was evacuated off the Gallipoli peninsular and died in a hospital in Cairo from Enteric Fever on November 9th 1915.

W J Carter

Walter James Carter was born in North Street, Droitwich and baptised in St Nicholas church; his father was a coal merchant and a local councillor. In 1916 Walter married

Hettie Robothan and by 1918 he had a temporary commission as a second Lieutenant attached to the 1/7th Worcestershire Regiment, serving in Italy and fighting the Austrians. He was injured and died of his wounds on August 29th 1918 aged 27.

G E Chapman

George Edward Chapman was born in Wordsley and enlisted in the army in Stourbridge. Nothing is known about what he did or where he lived before the war but he joined the 1st Battalion South Staffordshire Regiment and was killed in action in France on October 10th 1917. He was 27

F Coker

Frank Coker (known as Frovvy) was single and lived at 17 Burrish Street in Droitwich, the son of Vincent (a bricklayer's labourer) and Mary Coker and had an older brother, also called Vincent. Frank and Vincent joined the Royal Army Medical Corps as stretcher bearers and Frank was killed by shellfire on the second day of the battle of the Somme in France. Frank's commanding officer wrote to his aunt saying

"the deceased suffered no pain and was not conscious. The whole thing was over in two minutes. At the time he was hit, he was gallantly doing his duty with the squad of stretcher bearers, of whom he was one, carrying a wounded man down a communications trench. This trench was usually fairly safe but this was a most unlucky direct hit. The deceased had only just joined them, but his Sergeant had already referred to him as being a most willing person and cheerful and hard worker".

Frank was a quiet, peace loving man whose family claimed should never have been sent off to war. He was 25 when he died.

E Colley

In 1901, Enos Colley (then a 7 year old boy), his father and his five sisters and brothers all lived with his grand parents in a small house in Star Yard which was behind the Talbot Pub in the High Street in Droitwich. At that time, both his father and 72 year old grand father were general labourers. Enos went to the local school in Checketts Lane.

Enos may have joined the army as a regular soldier before the start of the war in 1914 and he served in the 1st Battalion the Worcestershire Regiment, gaining the rank of Lance Corporal before being killed in France on January 15th 1918. He was 24.

G Colley and Ernest Colley

George and Ernest were brothers and grew up at 128 Vines Lane next door to the Gardeners Arms Pub in Droitwich. When war broke out, all five of his sons joined the army as did their brother in law Frank Brown (see above). Their father, William and all his sons worked in the salt making industry.

Both George and Ernest joined the Worcestershire Regiment at the outbreak of war and both served in the 1/8th Battalion with Ernest achieving the rank of Sergeant. Both were killed within days of each other in an attack on a

fortified farm during the battle of Arras in April 1917. Ernest was 24 and George was married and 33.

J Colley

James Colley was born in Dodderhill, Droitwich and lived in Vines Lane. He served as a private with the 11th Worcestershire Regiment, gaining the rank of Lance Corporal. He was reported missing in local papers on June 6th 1917 and was later reported killed in action. He is also listed on Stoke Prior war memorial.

F Collins

Frederick was born in Sale Green and lived in Droitwich. He enlisted in Stourbridge and joined the 3rd Battalion Worcestershire Regiment serving in France. He was killed in action in April 1918 during the German spring offensive. He was 27

A Collins

Alfred was born in Hampton Lovett and lived at the Broad near Elmbridge. He was probably a farm labourer like his neighbour Harry Aldridge (see above). He joined the 4th Battalion Worcestershire Regiment and served as a private in the Gallipoli campaign against the Turks. He was killed by shellfire during heavy rain on May 11th 1915. His body was never recovered and he is commemorated on the Helles memorial on the Gallipoli peninsular. He was 24.

F P Cooper

Frank Penly Cooper lived in Westwood Avenue in Droitwich with his widowed mother. He joined the Kings Liverpool Regiment in 1914 and was commissioned as a Lieutenant in December 1915 and attached to the 17th Royal Warwickshire Regiment. He went to France just a few weeks before being killed in action on September 25th 1916 during the battle of the Somme.

S Crowther

Samuel was 21 when he died of wounds on June 15th 1918. He was born in Droitwich and lived at 57 The Vines with his parents and five siblings. He was not married. His father worked on the barges carrying salt, coal and other items to and from Droitwich along the canal.

He enlisted in the army in Worcester and joined the 4th Worcestershire Regiment and died in France.

F Crump

Frank lived in Droitwich and joined the Royal Berkshire Regiment. He transferred to the Labour Corps near the end of the war, possibly to help with clearing the battlefields after the armistice in November 1918. He was injured or became ill and returned home where he died on February 26th 1919 aged 18. He is buried in Dodderhill churchyard.

T Crump

Thomas Crump was born in Pershore and grew up at his family home in Mill Lane, Wychbold. However, when he

enlisted, he was living near Looe on Cornwall. He joined the 1st Worcestershire Regiment and was killed in action on June 6th 1918. He was 25.

T Davis

Thomas Davis was born in Droitwich and enlisted in the army, joining the 10th Worcestershire Regiment. He was wounded in France in 1918 and died on August 13th that year. His name is also on the Oddfellows Memorial in Bromsgrove. He was 24.

A Deakin

Albert was born in Droitwich but lived in Worcester Street, Bromsgrove. He never married and became a private in the 1/8th Worcestershire Regiment. He was killed in an attack in pouring rain and through thick mud against enemy trenches on August 27th 1917. The Official History described that day;

“Next morning the downpour of rain continued. The state of the ground bad enough before became worse. The great bog of shell holes had become almost impassable, a vast wilderness strewn with corpses and dotted at intervals by wrecks of smashed tanks”.

E. Evans

Private Evans (first name unknown) was in the 25th Royal Welsh Fusiliers and died of influenza (Spanish ‘flu) on December 15th 1918, about a month after the war ended. He

is buried in Colchester in Essex, probably near the hospital where he died. He was 23.

W Freeman

Walter was born in Droitwich, one of four children and but was working in Tredegar in South Wales at the start of the war. His widowed mother lived and 2 Hanbury Street. Walter enlisted in Abergavenny and joined the 9th Welsh Regiment and went to the front line in February 1915. He died of wounds on 6th November 1916 aged 28.

A Govier

Albert Govier was the son of Jelliho and Harriette Govier and the husband of Gertrude (nee Priddey). He was born in Redditch and probably lived away from home, possibly in the South West of England. He enlisted in the army and joined the 6th Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry and returned home in 1916, either wounded or sick. He died in Droitwich on February 20th 1916 and is buried in Dodderhill churchyard. He was 35

A Guise

Alfred Guise lived at Church Terrace, Hill End in Droitwich and was the son of Aaron and Elizabeth Guise. He attended the Baptist church where a memorial to him can be found. He joined the 6th Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, possibly with his friend Albert Govier and died, probably of an illness on June 7th 1918. He was 19.

C Guise

Despite being only 21 when he was killed in action, Charles Guise was a butler working at Westwood Hall, a large country estate in Beverley, Yorkshire in 1914. This may be because so many men were joining the army and domestic servants were very hard to find. He was born in Droitwich and he was bought up by his widowed mother, living with his aunt and uncle in Westcroft Street.

He joined the 8th Battalion East Yorkshire Regiment and was killed in action at the start of the battle of the Somme during a dawn attack on July 14th 1916.

H Gwilliam

Harry was Joseph's younger brother (see below) and was a regular soldier, being in the army before the war started. He was a private in the 2nd Worcestershire Battalion and was killed in action at Nonne Bosschen in Belgium, during the last attack of the first battle of Ypres on November 14th 1914. He was 17. The Battalion history describes the battle thus; *"Bitter cold and driving rain marked the following days. Trenches became filled with mud and water. The worn out troops suffered exceedingly. The enemy, equally miserable, made no attempt to attack but sniping and bombing continued at intervals, and patrols crept out over the mud to reconnoitre the opposing lines"*.

J Gwilliam

Joseph was born in Droitwich and was brought up at Oxford Cottage in Tower Hill but when war started, he was living and working in Birmingham. He enlisted in Birmingham and

joined the 9th Worcestershire Battalion and went with them on June 24th 1915 to the Gallipoli peninsula to fight the Turks. He was killed there during a 'quiet' phase at Suvla Bay on a stormy day in November 1915.

G Harris

George Harris was born in Droitwich and grew up at Hill End. He was married and had five children, the oldest being ten years old when he was killed. George went to Worcester and enlisted in the army in Christmas 1914 and joined the 3rd Worcestershire Regiment. He was killed on August 23rd 1916 by shell fire. He was 35. The Official History describes that day

"The sun blazed down while the final arrangements were completed for the attack on the enemy's position in front: a strongly fortified line known as the 'Lemberg trench'. At 4.10pm the British Artillery suddenly opened a devastating barrage of fire, and the Worcestershire and Wiltshire climbed out of their trenches and advanced. Covered by the barrage, the two battalions closed up to the enemy lines; then, as the guns lifted their fire, they dashed in with bomb and bayonet".

J Harris

James Harris was born in Droitwich and lived in Burrish Street. He joined the 3rd Worcestershire Regiment in 1916 and served in France. He was killed instantly by Shrapnel during the battle of the Aisne on May 29th 1918. His obituary in the local paper stated *"He was a very popular young fellow, well known in athletic circles and was also band*

master of the local Salvation Army. About twelve months ago he married a lady who was formerly a Salvation Army officer in Droitwich. Before joining the army he was a grocer's assistant with Mr Charles Everton". He was 37 years old.

J A S Harris

John lived at 83 Burrish Street in Droitwich with his parents and was the oldest son of John and Catherine Harris. John served in the 2/8th Worcestershire Regiment. He died, probably of an illness on August 5th 1916 aged 20.

J G Harris

John was born in Droitwich and lived in Westcroft Street, Droitwich with his father. He had been employed as a carpenter for the Salt Union for twenty five years. He joined the army in September 1916 and went to France with the 16th Division Signal Company. He was killed by shell fire on March 30th 1918 at the start of the German Spring Offensive. His body was never recovered and he is named on the Poziers Memorial in France. He was 40 years old and single.

W H Harris

William Harris was the son of Mary Ann Harris and lived at Farmers Buildings in Hill End, Droitwich. He was probably in the Territorial Army and was called up to join the 2nd Worcestershire Battalion. He was killed in France on May 16th 1915. he was 19.

A Harrison

Albert Harrison lived in the Holloway in Droitwich. He joined the Royal Army Service Corps and later transferred to the Royal Fusiliers. He was 21 years old when he was killed in France on the 23rd October 1917 during an attack.

B P B Harrison

Bernard and his older brother grew up in Albert Street in Droitwich, the sons of Henry (a blacksmith) and Mary Harrison. He joined the Royal Flying Corps before the war and was commissioned as second lieutenant, obtaining his pilots wings on July 1st 1914. Bernard was testing an aircraft in Waddington, Lincolnshire when he was killed in a flying accident on January 6th 1918. He was 23.

E Harrison

Edward, known as 'Ted' was born in Droitwich, the eldest son of John and Ada Harrison of 23 Albert Street. Ted worked as a brick layer for the Great Western railway and played for Droitwich United football team. He enlisted in Birmingham in September 1914, joining the 9th South Staffordshire Battalion. In July 1917 he was a Sergeant and had been awarded the Military Medal for "conspicuous bravery and gallantry in the field."

Ted was killed in action on August 27th 1917 in France. He has no known grave although there is a decaying memorial stone to him in Dodderhill church yard. He was 36.

G T Harrison

George Thomas Harrison grew up at 12 Hanbury Street, Droitwich but lived with his wife in Sagebury Terrace, Stoke Works, working as a sheet man in the Salt Union works. He joined the army at Stoke Works at the start of the war and went to France with the 3rd Worcestershire Battalion in January 1917. He died on April 22nd 1917 of wounds received during the battle of Arras. He was 27 and had a five week old child whom he had never seen. His Chaplain wrote to his family

"He died on April 22nd from wounds received on the 21st. He was admitted to hospital on the evening of the 21st suffering severe wounds in the abdomen and the face the result of enemy shell fire. There was unfortunately no hope for him from the first. Yet everything possible was done to give him relief and to meet the needs of his case. He passed away quietly in the small hours of Sunday morning. I can sincerely say that he did not suffer acutely in spite of being so badly hit."

H Harrison

Henry Harrison lived in West Street Droitwich and worked for the Salt Union in Stoke Works. He joined the Gloucester Regiment and was killed in action on September 21st 1918 in France. He was 29.

J Harrison

John lived in Friar Street in Droitwich and joined the army just eight days after the war started in August 1914. He went to France in July 1915 with the 2nd Battalion Worcestershire Regiment and later transferred as a Corporal to the Royal

West Kent Regiment, probably to fill gaps after some heavy fighting. He was killed in action on August 9th 1918.

T Harrison

Thomas was born in Droitwich and was a regular 'career' soldier having been in the army since 1900. He was a Company Sergeant Major in the 4th Battalion Worcestershire Regiment and went to Gallipoli in April 1915. He was killed in a disastrous action against the Turks toward the close of the second battle of Karithia on August 6th 1915. The Official History explained that the 4th Worcesters

"had been brought up to full strength by fresh draughts and they were now 800 strong. The attack was not due to begin until early evening so the day was spent under the grilling sun and a haze of flies. At 2.20 p.m. the British heavy artillery opened fire and immediately the Turkish guns replied showering the trenches with shrapnel. At 3.15 p.m. the British machine gun batteries opened up, and five minutes later the field guns. For half an hour the storm raged overhead, then at 3.50 p.m. the platoons advanced. The Battalion advanced in four waves to attack the Turks in their trenches. All went well for the first 50 yards until they reached the crest of a low rise where they were hit by the enemy's machine gun bullets. The remnants of the charge jumped into the enemy trenches and fought, hand to hand, until they were overpowered by sheer numbers.

A fresh attack was to be made at 8.15 p.m. In the absence of any news it had been assumed that the 4th Worcestershire Battalion had taken their objective and were holding it, and the fresh troops were ordered to gain touch with them. In the gathering darkness the Manchesters

advanced to the Turkish trench. An officer went forward and asked "Are the Worcesters there?" - the reply was heavy gun fire.

Except for the personnel of Battalion HQ, the trenches of the 4th Worcestershire were empty that night. Out of 800 men, only 32 had survived - the casualties numbered 16 officers and 752 N.C.O.'s and men".

W Harrison

William was born and lived in Droitwich. He was probably conscripted later in the war and served with the 15th Royal Warwicks, a Birmingham Battalion. He died in France of his wounds on September 15th 1918

E J Heath

Ernest James Heath was born in Droitwich, the son of John and Catherine Heath, originally from Walsall. He was in the 2nd Grenadier Guards fighting in France when he was killed by shell fire on July 2nd 1917. He was 27.

T Hemming

Tom was 22 when he was killed in action at the end of the battle of Arras in France during an early morning attack against enemy trenches. He was one of thirty four men killed from the 2nd Battalion Worcestershire Regiment during the attack and his name is on the memorial in the Baptist Church in Droitwich.

A Hicks

Albert lived in Droitwich and enlisted into the army in Worcester. He joined the 1/8th Worcester Battalion and was wounded in action. He died in hospital at Rouen in France on August 8th 1917. He was 21.

O Houghton

Oliver was born in Arrow in Warwickshire and lived in Droitwich. He enlisted in the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, later transferring to the 11th Battalion the Hampshire Regiment where he saw action at the battle of the Somme. He never married and was killed on September 5th 1916 aged 27.

G H Huband

George Huband was born in Worcester lived at 17 Westcroft Street in Droitwich. He was married and had no children and worked as a postman in the Cutnall Green district. He was in the Territorial Army and called up in 1914 when war broke out. George was in the 2nd Kings Shropshire Light Infantry and was an acting corporal when he was killed on May 7th 1915 during the second battle of Ypres.

F C Hughes

Francis Charles Hughes (known as Charlie) was born in Upton on Severn and lived at 20 High Street in Droitwich above his butchers shop with his wife Alice (nee Everton). His first wife was Alice's sister but she died in childbirth. Charlie joined the 11th Royal Warwick Regiment and was killed in France on August 12th 1917. He was 34

J E Hunt

James Edwin Hunt was born near Claines, the son of a furniture salesman and lived in Hanbury Street, Droitwich. He was in the Coldstream Guards when he was reported missing, later killed during the German Spring Offensive on April 13th 1918.

E H Jones

Edward Harold was born in Eastbourne in Sussex but lived in Miller street in Droitwich with his wife and two children. He worked as a pantry man at the Worcestershire Hotel (where the Worcestershire flats now stand) and joined the 1/8th Worcestershire Battalion when war started. He was killed on November 5th 1916 at the end of the battle of the Somme. His body was never found.

H Kemp

Henry lived at Hampton Lovett with his parents George and Elizabeth. He was possibly conscripted into the 2nd Battalion Royal Fusiliers and was killed in action near Fricourt in France during a particularly fierce attack on Sunday August 25th 1918. He was aged 20.

W Kendrick

William was born in Dodford and lived in Miller Street in Droitwich with his wife. He grew up in neighbouring Burrish Street although his father had died when war broke out. William worked as a grocer's assistant for John Bolton in Tenby House in the High Street. He was a Corporal in the King's Royal Rifles and was killed on march 20th 1916. He had just celebrated his 24th birthday and had no children.

A W Knight

Arthur William Knight ('Archie') was single and lived in Corporation Cottages in the Holloway in Droitwich with his parents George and Emma Knight. He joined the 2nd Battalion the Worcestershire Regiment but was transferred to the 1/8th Battalion. He was wounded by shellfire on October 19th 1916 and died the following day. His mother received the following letter from Archie's commanding officer;

Dear Mrs Knight

I am writing in the name of his company to tell you how sorry we all are for you. He was wounded by a large shell that burst right in the doorway of the dugout he was occupying together with two other men. All three were wounded and were at once removed to a dressing station after first aid had been applied. I subsequently heard that Knight and Savoury died in hospital the same day. It was particularly hard luck as it was only his first tour in the trenches and was, barring one period of shelling, a particularly quiet time. Your sons name will go down to posterity among those other names of men of Droitwich who heard the call and gave their lives for their country

He was 21 and his name is also recorded on the Oddfellows memorial in Bromsgrove.

F I Leek

Frederick Isaac Leek (Fred) lived at Tower Hill behind the High Street in Droitwich. He was probably a serving

Territorial soldier and was in the 1/8th Worcestershire Battalion. He died of wounds on June 25th 1915 aged 23

W H Leek

William Henry Leek was 20 when he was killed in October 1916 in the same explosion which killed Archie Knight. He lived with his widowed mother in Westcroft Street and worked as a builder on the new 'Imperial Hydro Hotel' in Corbett Avenue (this hotel was never completed and was eventually demolished). He was in the Territorial Army and was called up soon after war was declared, joining the 2nd Battalion the Worcestershire Regiment.

A V Lewis

Alan Vivien Lewis grew up in Droitwich, living with his parents and younger sister, Helena in Corbett Avenue and attended the King's school in Worcester. He taught at St Peters Sunday School and was a member of the church Lad's Brigade. He joined the Royal Naval Air Service and became a pilot in December 1916. Alan was 20 when he was killed whilst test flying an experimental aircraft called a 'Grain Griffin' on September 8th 1918 on the Isle of Grain. He was buried in St Peter's Churchyard in Droitwich with full military honours.

W Lewis

William Lewis was born in Broadheath and lived at 9 Star Yard (behind the High Street where the car park now is) with his wife and five children. He worked for many years as a gardener in Broadheath but prior to the war he began

working in 'experimental' gardens in Droitwich. William enlisted in the army at the outbreak of war, joining the 4th Battalion the Worcestershire Regiment. He went to Gallipoli in March 1915 and was killed in action against the Turks toward the close of the second battle of Karithia on August 6th 1915 on the same day as Sergeant Thomas Harrison (see description of the attack above).

W Llewellyn

William Benjamin Llewellyn lived at 27 Miller Street in Droitwich with his wife Mary and their two children. When war broke out he enlisted in the 2/8th Worcestershire Battalion and served in France and Flanders. He was killed in heavy rain and thick mud at the battle of Passchendale on August 27th 1917 a month after returning from ten days home leave. He was aged 25.

A H Mann

Alfred Harry Mann lived in the Vines in Droitwich with his father Alfred. He may have worked as a groom and was comfortable working with horses because he joined the Worcester Yeomanry (mounted troops) and went with them to Gallipoli to fight the Turks in September 1915. He was wounded a few days later and died on September 19th aged 28

W Milner

William Milner lived at Covercroft in Droitwich with his parents. He enlisted as a private in the 1/7th Worcestershire Regiment and went to the Italian front. He was killed on October 11th 1918 during a trench raid on the Austrian lines.

F Neal

Frederick Neal was born in Droitwich and lived at 22 Burrish Street. His father was a local postman and he had one brother, Walter. He joined the 1st Worcestershire Regiment in 1915 and was attached to a machine gun section. Frederick died of wounds on October 16th 1917. He was 24.

G Nickin

George Nicklin is one of two men on the Droitwich memorial who joined the Royal Navy. He lived at 81 Friar Street and was a probably in the Royal Naval Reserve being recalled for service at the outbreak of war.

George was Chief Armourer in an obsolete armoured cruiser called HMS Hawke and his job was to make sure the ammunition in the magazines was primed and ready to fire. HMS Hawke was patrolling in the North Sea on October 15th 1914 when it was hit by a torpedo. The ship sank rapidly and George and more than 500 others died. He was 36 years old.

J E Nicklin

John Edward Nicklin was born in Hanbury and lived at Gallows Green just outside Droitwich on the Hanbury Road with his parents Eliza and Albert. He enlisted in Birmingham and joined the 11th Worcestershire Regiment and was killed in action in the Salonika campaign in Greece on April 24th 1917 aged 29.

B Norwood

Herbert (Bert) Norwood came from Broughton Green but was living at 45 High Street in Droitwich with his parents and sister Alice. He enlisted in the army at the outbreak of war and joined the 1/8th Worcestershire Regiment and was killed on February 25th 1917 whilst trying to relieve other troops during a bombardment. He was 22.

H A Penzer

Henry Arthur Penzer was the son of a clergyman and born in Sparkbrook but lived in Droitwich. He was probably a Territorial Soldier and was a Lance Corporal in the Royal Engineers Mounted Yeomanry serving in Jerusalem where he died of illness on August 24th 1917.

W H Philpott

Walter Philpott lived at 54 Ombersley Street with his wife Elizabeth (nee Harrison). Walter was an old soldier having served in the Boer war in 1900. He went to British Columbia in Canada some time before the First World War started and joined 29th Canadian Infantry where he served as a Sergeant. He was killed in action on March 15th 1916 in Belgium. His platoon leader, Lieutenant Ross, wrote the following to his widow.

“Personally, I feel terribly cut up as I admired him so much, as he was such an honest, brave and fearless man. As platoon sergeant, he was like a father to the men and there was nothing in the world they would not do for him.”

Walter was 44 when he died.

P Pittaway

Percy Pittaway was born in Droitwich and lived in Friar Street with his parents John and Agnes and his brothers George and Bertie. He was probably a Territorial soldier regularly attended training and parades in the drill hall in Ricketts Lane in Droitwich and going with fellow soldiers on summer camps and manoeuvres.

Percy was called up at the outbreak of war and joined the 2nd Worcestershire Regiment. He was killed on September 26th 1915 in drizzling rain during the first attack of the battle of Loos. The Regimental History described the attack;

“With bayonets fixed the companies of the 2nd Worcesters swept forward across the open, wave after wave in splendid order. The platoons came under heavy fire as they reached the old German front line. That trench was found to be wide and deep, and crowded with disorganised or wounded men of the 7th division. The Worcester platoons made their way through the crowd and reformed on the other side. The survivors of the 2nd Worcesters held their ground opposite the enemy line during the remaining hours of day light, keeping up a steady fire and throwing up such cover as was possible.

Night fell amid rain and it became possible to collect the wounded and count the loss. Of the 2nd Ws, nearly half had fallen”.

Percy was 18 and unmarried.

A Price

Wilfred Albert Price was born in Tetbury in Gloucestershire but lived in Droitwich. He joined the 3rd Battalion Worcestershire regiment, was made a Lance Corporal and was killed in France on October 1st 1918.

E Price

Ernest Price was the younger of two brothers. He was born in Dodderhill in Droitwich, lived with his wife Harriet (nee Harrison) at Hill End and worked as a stoker in the Corporation Gas Works located at the far end of Friar Street. He was conscripted to the 3rd Battalion Worcestershire Regiment and was killed instantly by a shell on the second day of the battle of Messines Ridge on June 7th 1917.

R Price

Reuben Price was born in Droitwich, the son of Reuben and Ellen Price. He enlisted in Bristol into the 2nd Battalion Royal Berkshire Regiment and died of his wounds on June 27th 1918. He was 19.

S Price

Samuel Price was the eldest son of Samuel and Sarah Price and lived with his parents at Woodfield Terrace, Droitwich and had worked at the Royal Hotel in Queen Street since leaving school at 15. He joined the army in January 1918, two weeks after his 18th birthday and went to France on July 5th 1918 with the 12th Battalion the Gloucestershire Regiment. Samuel was killed by a shell blast on August 23rd 1918 on the first day of the battle of Albert.

W J Price

William John Price was born in Droitwich and baptised at St Nicholas Church. He was in the Durham Light Infantry when he died of his wounds on September 22nd 1917. There is a memorial to William in the Baptist Church in Droitwich.

H T Priddey

Harry Thomas Priddey was the son of Thomas (a brick layer) and Dorkas Maria Priddey. He was born and lived in Droitwich and was probably conscripted into the 2/8th Worcestershire Regiment. Harry was killed in action in France ten days before the end of the war on November 1st 1918 aged 19.

A Priddey

Albert George Priddey was born in Droitwich and lived at 9 Winnetts Lane. He was the brother of Harry (see above) and was in the 1st Worcestershire Battalion when he was killed in France on June 7th 1918. He is not listed on the Droitwich War Memorial for some reason.

W Prosser

William Prosser lived in a cottage in Tower Hill in Droitwich (described by Nellie Copson as “two up, two down with a yard and a pump”) and worked as a farm hand and shepherd. He was probably in the Territorial Army when he joined the 3rd battalion Worcestershire Regiment. He was 30 when he died on January 17th 1915 in Flanders mud as described in the Regimental History for this time.

“In that heavy clay soil, the greater height had but little effect on the drainage of rain water and the trenches below the Spanbroek Mill tended in the same way as those further south to dissolve into a welter of sticky slime. At one point of the line, the muddy slush was so deep that the sentries had to be stationed standing in barrels which almost floated in the liquid mud.”

F Pugh

Frederick Pugh was born in Bradley Green and prior to marrying Sarah Monkton in December 1914, he lived with his parents and brothers John and Bertie in Friar Street in Droitwich. Their mother was a furniture dealer and their father was an engine driver. Frederick enlisted in Birmingham into the 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards. He was killed in France on November 4th 1918, just one week before the end of the war. He was 22.*

W Rawlings

William Rawlings was brought up by his Aunt, Mary Crook who lived at 11, Old Coach Road. It is not known if he was living there before he joined the 2/8th Worcester Regiment. He became a Lance Corporal and died in deep and heavy mud during the Third Battle of Ypres on August 27th 1917. He was 27, single and his body was never found.

* There were at least 2 Fred Pugh's from Droitwich serving in the army. The man detailed above survived the war so further research is underway to identify the man who died.

J Rudd

John Rudd was born and lived in Droitwich, the son of Thomas and Susannah Rudd of 87, Holloway Road. John joined the Royal Artillery as a Gunner and was killed in action on April 24th 1918 during the German spring offensive. He was 23.

F Sadler

Although Frank Sadler's parents lived in Tagwell lane in Droitwich, Frank had moved away and had been working as a bank clerk for the Brecon branch of Lloyds Bank for five years prior to the outbreak of war. Frank's father was on the town council and taught at the public elementary school at the bottom of the Holloway. Frank enlisted into the army in Cardiff and was transferred from the Royal Fusiliers into the 7th Battalion East Kent Regiment where he was responsible for a Lewis machine gun. He was killed in action during the battle of Arras on May 3rd 1917. He was 29.

O J Schoolcraft

Oliver Johnson Schoolcraft was married to Harriet and lived at 87 Friar Street in Droitwich. He was the only son of Oliver and Lily Schoolcraft. He joined the Royal Navy and served in the destroyer HMS North Star. This ship took part in the famous raid on the Zeebrugge German submarine pens on April 23rd 1918 where it was sunk by shore batteries and Oliver was killed. He is one of just two men listed on the Droitwich memorial who were in the Royal Navy (see also G Nicklin). Oliver was 24.

W Snow

William Snow was the eldest son of William and Ann Snow of Droitwich. William had probably served in the 1st battalion South Wales Borderers for some years before the war started in 1914 but he died of sickness in a Boulogne Hospital on Christmas Eve 1914. He was aged 31.

W Southwick

William Southwick was born in Wychbold and lived in Droitwich with his wife Mary (nee Noake) whom he married in March 1914. He enlisted in the army and joined the 1st battalion Worcestershire Regiment and was killed in action during an attack on his lines at Moreuil Wood in France on April 1st 1918. He was 25

T Sparks

Thomas Sparks was born in Droitwich, the son of Reuben and Mary Sparks of Woodfield Terrace in Droitwich. He worked as a general labourer but later became a regular soldier in the 3rd Worcestershire Regiment. Although he served in France during the war, he was wounded and was returned home to Droitwich where he died on July 29th 1917. He is buried in Dodderhill church yard. He was 32.

F Tolley

Frank Tolley lived at 7 St Peters Walk in Droitwich and was married in September 1910. He was a career soldier, being in the army before the war in the 2nd Battalion Scots Guards Regiment. By 1914 he was a Lance Corporal and was killed

on December 18th 1914 near Amentieres in France during the first battle of Ypres. He was 24

G Turner

George Turner was born in Ramsgate in Kent, a regular soldier in the 1st battalion Grenadier Guards when he was killed in action during the first battle of Ypres on October 29th 1914. He was 20

H Turner

Herbert Turner was born in Droitwich, the eldest son of Herbert Turner of 9 Hanbury Terrace. He was probably a Territorial soldier and was called up to the 1st Battalion Worcestershire Regiment when war started in August 1914. He was killed on March 13th 1915 at the battle of Neuve Chappel aged 20. The Regimental history describes the aftermath of the attack in which Herbert died;

“Outside the trenches, the open ground was littered with dead and wounded. Many of them were dragged to safety by brave men who dashed out of the trenches and brought in their stricken comrades in spite of the enemy’s fire...The losses had been terribly severe. The 1st Worcesters had lost over 370 of all ranks including 19 officers. The battalion had gone into action on March 10th with strength of 26 officers and 870 rank and file. On the morning of March 13th the whole battalion could muster no more than 7 officers and 450 men”.

F Wagstaff

Fred Wagstaff was the son of Frederick and Elizabeth Wagstaff of Ombersley Street in Droitwich. His father was a retired butcher. He joined the Royal Field Artillery and died, probably of Spanish Influenza on October 15th 1918. Fred was 30.

W Wagstaff

William was born and lived in Droitwich although his parents lived in Sparkbrook in Birmingham. He was a Territorial soldier serving as acting Bombadier in the Royal Horse Artillery and died of wounds in France on August 16th 1917.

G Ward

George Ward was born and lived in Droitwich with his parents in Back Lane, Hill End. His father was a farm waggoner. George was a bandsman in the 2nd Battalion Worcestershire Regiment and was probably a regular 'career' soldier. He was killed during the first battle of Ypres on October 21st 1914 aged 24

J H Watkins

John Henry Watkins was born in Rugeley in Staffordshire but worked and lived in Droitwich. He joined the 9th Battalion Worcestershire Regiment and went with them to Palestine fighting the Turks. He was killed at the start of the battle of Kut el Armara on January 25th 1917. The Regimental History describes the attack thus;

“At 0930am on the 25th of January the British Artillery opened a sudden intense bombardment against the enemy’s second line defences. In splendid order, the waves of bayonets swept over the open under a fierce fire of shrapnel and machine guns. Losses were heavy, over 100 fell while crossing the open ground. The advance was continued until the leading wave was within 50 yards of the shells bursting along the enemy’s front trench, and then the leading line lay down and the remainder conformed. There was some wild shooting and bayoneting along the trench, but in a few minutes all resistance was at an end. The enemy’s front line had been won and the work of consolidation was at once commenced.”

A Wells

Arthur Wells was born in Huddington and lived in Droitwich where worked as a Baker. He was probably conscripted into the army and joined the 2nd Battalion Worcestershire Regiment. He was killed on April 16th 1918 by shellfire during a German attack on allied trenches. He was 27 and his body was never recovered.

F Wilkes

Fred was born in Birmingham and lived and worked in Droitwich. When war started, he joined the 10th Battalion the Worcestershire Regiment and was killed in action in France during an allied counter-attack on the evening of March 23rd 1918. He was 19.

M G Woodrow

Melville Goding Woodrow's parents, Robert and Mary Woodrow lived at St Nicholas House on the Ombersley Road in Droitwich. Melville was born in Wimborne in Dorset and when he enlisted in the army he was living in Winchester. He became a Lance Corporal in the 1/4th Battalion Hampshire Regiment and died probably of Cholera in Basra (now in Iraq) on June 27th 1916. He was 28.

E Yates

Ernest Yates was born in Powick and grew up in Droitwich. He married and moved to Horfield, Bristol working as a solicitor's clerk. He was also in the Territorial Army and was called up when war started, joining the 2/6th Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment. He was 34 years old when he was badly wounded and returned to Britain where he died in a London Hospital on Christmas day in 1915.