

# NOT FORGOTTEN

## THE WAR MEMORIALS OF ST JAMES' CHURCH, HEREFORD



Dennis Henry Morris from Park Street (in WW2), 1924-1944. Photograph provided by his sister, Dorothy Morris who was still living in Park Street in the family home in 2006. Note the Bartonsham Meadow fields behind Park Street where until 2019 the dairy cows grazed on pasture.

### INTRODUCTION

In 2006 I decided to research the WW2 memorial in St James' Church as some of my elderly friends said they had grown up with, or knew, some of the people listed. Initially I just recorded anecdotal information but later checked with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission website (CWGC) to find additional information. My friends asked if we could widen the scope of the project to include The Munitions Factory where some of them had worked, and also the Land Girls who supported farmers locally. One of them, Dorothy Morris, the sister of Dennis Morris shown above, was a land girl at Bartonsham Farm and Dairy.

Chatting to my friends proved a very good starting point for the project and brought to life many of the people recorded there. Now in 2020 sadly very few of my elderly friends are still alive. They are all named here so that they, too, are not forgotten. Revisiting the project in 2020 has given me the opportunity to gather more information which is added at the end.

I am very grateful to members of St James' Church, and some local residents, who have provided me with the following information about the lives of those people who are recorded on the memorials in St James' Church.

Particular thanks go to Joe Sockett, Tony Charles, Ena Price, Joan Clarke, Muriel Munn, Molly Hodges, Ella Levett, Doreen Pugh and Marie Hill. Sadly a long standing church member, and friend, Nora Foster, who grew up in Park Street, died at the time that I started the project; I am sure she would have wanted to contribute to it. She is remembered on the memorial to the women workers in the munitions factory in Hereford which is at Rotherwas. She was a radio announcer there.

Initially I anticipated that I would only find details of those who died in the Second World War. I was, therefore, very surprised that the first four letters I received were about people from the First World War and pleased that we could learn something about them, too.

A number of my friends and other local residents who had worked at the munitions factory, or had had family members who worked there, so this was also been included to show the contribution they had made to the war effort. It was very dangerous and hazardous work and led some, especially during WW1, to have lifelong health problems. People came from far and wide to work in the factory and were not just local.

For those particularly interested in the factory a book was published through Logaston Press, 'The History of Rotherwas Munitions Factory, Hereford' by John Edmonds. In 2020 the original Empty Shell Building was finally demolished to make way for a new, modern factory containing small units for local businesses on the site of the original building.

A further group who aided the war effort emerged from my discussions, The Woman's Land Army (or the Land Girls), and as some had been employed at Bartonsham Farm I thought it important to include them, too.

## FIRST WORLD WAR MEMORIAL



### Alfred Thomas Williams & William Henry Williams

**Alfred Thomas Williams** (and his brother not listed on the memorial but whose name is always read aloud at Remembrance Services, **William Henry Williams**). Mr Joe Sockett, a churchwarden when I first came to St James, has provided the information about his mother's brothers, Alfred and William. They were the sons of William Higginson and Annie Sarah Williams (nee Taylor) who lived at 83a Park Street (before renumbering).

The first, **Alfred Thomas Williams**, is recorded on the WW1 memorial. Born in 1891 he worked for the solicitors T A Matthews and later joined the Civil Service in Swindon. Alfred served as a Gunner with the Royal Field Artillery 'D' Bty. 286th Bde. and was killed in September 1918. According to CWGC website he was 24 when he died. He is commemorated at HAC Cemetery, Ecoust-St. Mein, ID7, France. Family thought he died in 1917.

The second brother, **William Henry Williams**, born 1884, had emigrated to Canada. He was the first man to enlist in British Columbia on 4th August 1914 and was killed in action on 12th December 1915. Joe's son, Bob, wrote to me and stated that 'when the memorial was created the vicar at that time would not allow his name [William Henry] to appear on the memorial on the grounds that it would be on a memorial in Canada. Later vicars agreed that the name should be read out on Remembrance Services, and that in the event of repair being necessary, the name should be added - but no repair or restoration has ever taken place.'

According to the CWGC website William Henry Williams is buried in Berks Cemetery Extension in Belgium. He was a Private in the Canadian Infantry (British Columbia Regiment). (See [www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org) for more information.) It also states he

was the son of William H. and Annie Sarah Williams of Park Street, Hereford, and that he died on 12/12/1915. It seems he had Canadian citizenship.

### **William Henry Charles**

There is another William Henry from Park Street on the First World War Memorial, **William Henry Charles**, relative of Anthony Charles a current resident of Park Street who provided me with this information. Tony's great grandfather, William Charles, was in the police force in Hereford and after retiring became the coroner's officer. He married Hannah Haywood in St James Church (09/03/1880) and the family lived in De Lacey Street (in police accommodation). They had four sons, William Henry was the fourth, and later a daughter. They then moved to Park Street (93 old numbering).

According to family research William Henry Charles was born in 1893 and died in August 1915 aged 22. He was in the Australian Light horse battalion and died in the Dardanelles/Gallipoli campaign which claimed the lives of so many Australian and New Zealanders, in addition to members of the Herefordshire Regiment. The family believe he had gone to Australia perhaps looking for a better life and think that he probably worked his passage as they have been unable to find his name on any boat passenger list from that time.

According to the Commonwealth War Graves site it is recorded that his nationality was Australian, and that he was a private in the Australian Infantry. He died on 27/08/15 and his name is recorded on Lone Pine Memorial in Turkey. This is the actual site of some of the fiercest fighting of the Gallipoli campaign. For Cemetery photographs and details see the CWCG website.

### **Walter Bradley**

Walter Bradley was first husband of Mrs Hurcombe's mother. Mrs Hurcombe lived until recently in Park Street though her early years were spent in a little cottage in St Owen's Street (possibly where St Owen's Place is now) . Now resident in a nursing home, she said the family lived in St Owen's Street at the time of Walter's death. This is corroborated on the Commonwealth website along with other information. It states he was a private in the 1st battalion of the Herefordshire Regiment and died 04/08/16 aged 34. Also, he was the son of William Bradley; husband of Jessie Bent (formerly Bradley) of St Owen's Street. He is remembered in Kantara War Memorial Cemetery in Egypt (on the Eastern side of the Suez Canal) .

## SECOND WORLD WAR MEMORIAL



### Harold Sockett

Sadly, Joe Sockett also lost a member of his family listed on the 2nd World War Memorial, **Harold Sockett**, born approximately 1916. He was the son of his uncle Ernest Sockett and aunt Elizabeth who lived in Turner Street. Before the war Harold worked at Thynne's Tile Works. At the time of his death he was married with a daughter, Brenda. Harold joined the 2nd Battalion of the Herefordshire Regiment but was later transferred to the Durham Light Infantry where he rose to Lance Corporal. The War Graves site lists his parents and his wife, Alice, and that he is remembered at Groesbeek Memorial in The Netherlands. Harold died towards the end of the war (08/01/45).

My friend, Molly Hodges (nee Yapp), who also worked at the tile works told me that she remembered Harold Sockett.

## **John Lane Tillam**

**John Tillam** has been remembered by several members of St James' congregation as his parents owned a butcher's shop in St Owen's Street (somewhere opposite The Barrells pub) and this was a focal point for many local residents. Ella Levett recalls her mother going in the shop when the Tillam family had been informed that John was missing in action. Later they learnt that he was dead. Joan Clarke also recalls the family and believed John was around her own age. The Commonwealth Graves site reports he was 21 years old when he died on 25/03/44 and that he was a Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, and the son of John and Annie Elsie Tillam of Hereford. John was a sergeant and is buried at Hoogeveen (Hollandscheveld) General Cemetery.

A photograph of the Tillam's butcher's shop appeared in 'Age to Age' which is a newsletter published by an oral history group in Hereford. The photograph is in Volume 11 issue 2 and was provided by Dorothy Tillam (presumably a close relation, possibly sister).

(Molly Hodges told me that John Tillam had a popular dance band and played in parish halls etc in the war period. She said that Molly Jones another member of St James played the piano in this band. On speaking with Marie Hill I discovered she occasionally sang in the dance band.)

## **Douglas Charles Sullivan**

My friends, Joan Clarke and her sister, Muriel Munn, also remembered residents of Park Street where they lived their early years (on the field side). Both recalled **Douglas Charles Sullivan**, son of Albert Arthur and Lily Sullivan of Park Street (one of the houses set back from the road). Joan said she used to call for him every day on her way to St James' School where they were both pupils. Douglas was a sergeant in the RAF and was 22 when he died on 03/10/43. He is remembered at Reichswald Forest War Cemetery in Germany.

## **Ernest John Sadler**

Joan and Muriel also remember **Ernest John Sadler** who lived 6 or 7 doors down from them in Park Street. Born in 1914 to Charles and Agnes Mabel Sadler, and later married to Alice May Sadler, he served in the Royal Army Service Corps as a driver, and died aged 30 on 24/02/1944. The Commonwealth Graves Commission state his Grave/Memorial Reference to be All Saints Plot, grave 470, at Hereford Cemetery. On speaking with my friend, Molly Hodges, I discovered that **Ernie Sadler** was her first cousin. Molly lived opposite Joan and Muriel in Park Street, just up the road from her aunt's family, The Sadlers. Her mother, Ethel Yapp (nee Bigglestone) was the sister of Mabel Sadler, and Ernie was older than Molly. He

married Alice (May) Jenkin from Eign Road - opposite The Brewer's Arms. Molly confirmed that Ernie was a driver and told me that he died from a heart attack.

### **Albert Edward Kennett**

Joan Clarke also remembered **Albert Edward Kennett** who lived near St Owen's Gate. Born 1919 to Albert Thomas and Harriet Kennett, he served as a Private in the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, and died on 16/07/44 and is remembered at St Manvieu War Cemetery, Cheux.

### **Albert Jennings**

Joan also recalls **Albert Jennings** who was a little younger than her. He came from a large family (12 or 13 children in all) one of whom lived in Park Street until recently. Molly also remembered the family. I am unable to locate Albert on CWGC site.

### **Harry Benbow**

Muriel recalled **Harry Benbow** from Turner Street who was a similar age to her. Molly also recalled Harry and thought he had a brother, Ron, and possibly was in the police force. The War Graves site lists him as Henry Walter Benbow (Royal Artillery) who died on 27/11/41 and is remembered in St Martin's Cemetery, Hereford.

### **Edward John Warwick**

Muriel also recalled **Edward Warwick** from Park Street who she thinks was in the army,

According to CWGC website, Edward was only 19 when he died on 16/07/1944. He served with the South Staffordshire Regiment 5th Bn. His parents were Edward J Warwick and Eva Warwick of Hereford. He is commemorated at St. Manvieu War Cemetery, Cheux V11.H.8. France.

### **Alan Griffiths**

Muriel also remembered **Alan Griffiths** who lived at the bottom of Park Street who left a young widow. Molly also recalled Alan Griffiths. I have been unable to locate any information on the CWGC website.

## William J Grisman (Jack)

Both Muriel and Molly also remembered **William J Grisman** from Portfield Street who was in the RAF (a big smart man according to Muriel). Molly recalls the sadness of the family and thought he was buried at Tupsley. The War Graves site states that William Jack Grisman was in the RAF and died aged 29 on 06/04/44. He was the son of William Charles and Gertrude Ellen Grisman, and the husband of Marie Grisman. He is remembered at Poznan Old Garrison Cemetery in Poland. \*\*\*

Further to this information going on-line I received an email at Christmas 2007 from the daughter of W J Grisman, Judy Maidment, who now lives in Australia. Judy, a twin, informed me that she was born when her father was in prison and so never knew her father. Her mother, Marie, remarried and now also lives in Australia. They asked us to correct some of our details. Jack was a man of average height (it was



his father who was the big man). Jack was captured after bailing out of his aeroplane after trying to make his way to a neutral port. He was held imprisoned in Stalag Luft III and was one of those portrayed in The Great Escape film. Sadly he was one of the 50 escapees who was shot after being recaptured on Hitler's orders.

Jack is buried in Poland and there is a memorial to him at that site. (Also as an aside, Marie's parents were Sydney and May Marchant who lived in Southbank Road and ran a grocery shop in High Street Hereford which many of our local residents remember especially as the smell of fresh ground coffee emanated from it luring them to the shop! Judy also told us that Jack's brother, now in his 90s, still lives at Ewyas Harold. Following an article reporting this email contact with Judy Marchant, the local BBC radio station requested more details which was

broadcast exactly 64 years after Jack's death. Several local people contacted us and others who heard the broadcast told me that they had known Jack and his family. Ena Boucher (see below) informed me she had been with Jack at St James' School. I am so glad that Judy, Jack's daughter, was able to know that her father is not forgotten in Hereford and St James' Church. He is also on the Hereford Boys High School memorial now located in All Saints Church, Hereford.

There are lots of websites remembering Jack, including a Wikipedia site

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack\\_Grisman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack_Grisman)

<https://www.stalagluft3.com/the-great-escape/> website with full story of the escape.



Sisters Muriel and Joan both had wartime marriages (in St James' Church - full details in parish register held at the Hereford Records Office). Their husbands both served in the forces in WW2 and were fortunate to survive their service so that many of us knew them: **Burt Munn** served in Burma for 4 years, and **Trevor Clarke** was in the RAF (the 'dam busters' squadron). Muriel and Joan's father, **William Carter**, served in The Guards in WW1 and went to France in the medical corps. They say he never spoke about that time. Molly's husband, **Howard Hodges**, also served in the war.

Ena Price (nee Boucher), now resident in Green Street, was born in Harold Street and her parents owned a shop in Green Street (opposite the electrical repair shop). She entered the ATS in 1938 but can remember many of the families of men lost in WW2 recorded on the memorial.

Like Joan Clarke, Ena said she can remember **Albert Kennett** who lived near her family shop in Green Street. He served in King's Own Yorkshire Infantry 1/4th Bn. He died aged 25 on 16/07/1944. He is commemorated at St Manvieu War Cemetery, Cheux, V.A.3. France. His parents were Albert Thomas Kennett and Harriett Kennett of Hereford.

Ena also recalled **John Tillam** and the butcher's shop and said the family also had a house in Hampton Street. She also remembers **Alan Griffiths** who was a member of the church and friendly with Joe Hill who was church treasurer when I first came to St James. They were members of the choir.

Ena remembered **Reginald Walter Owens** who lived in what was the 'derelicts' in Green Street (now number 3 Green Street) and that his family had musical evenings in their house (piano and violin) - his 2 brothers surviving the war. Reginald was in the Grenadier Guards 1st Bn. He was 26 when he died on 29/05/1940. He is commemorated at Hoogstade Churchyard, Grave 115, Belgium.

She remembers **Herbert L Southall** being in the RAF and living in Grenfell Road. I think that he is listed as Herbert Leslie Southall on CWGC site. If so he was in the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve 201 Sqdn. He died on 21/12/1941. He is commemorated at the Runnymede Memorial, panel 52, UK. It does not list family members, however, so am not 100% certain about this information. However Ena did recall he was in the RAF so is possibly accurate, and there were no other matches.

Ena remembered **W J Grisman** as living in Portfield Street.

Ena knew **Dennis Henry Morris** as she was a friend of the family and described him as a lovely young man. She recalled that she met him as he was going to the railway station to depart just before D-Day. She said he said to her that he didn't think he was going to come back.

Dorothy, Dennis' sister who had been Ena's hairdresser, was able to provide me with much information about **Dennis Henry Morris**, whose life is recorded on the

Second World War Memorial. The family were originally from Tupsley and Dennis were baptised in St Paul's Church but the family moved to the St James area in 1941. Dennis had attended St Paul's School and then St Owen's before starting work at Hardings ironmongery shop (now the site of MacDonalds) in Commercial Street. He was training in carpentry too when he was 'called up' aged 18. Sadly he died of injuries sustained in a campaign in France to capture Caen following the Normandy Landings and died on 9 July 1944, aged only 19 years old.

Shortly after the war, the war office arranged for his parents to visit his grave at the cemetery where he is buried and they were able to take flowers from other families whose relatives were buried in France; they also photographed the graves for them. They were greatly assisted by Father Sabire who was a Catholic priest attached to a local school; he tended many of the graves for the families. With a young French teacher (who owned an old German car that had been abandoned after the war) his parents were able to visit several cemeteries. Father Sabire told them of the bravery of two young French girls from the town who carried vital information to the allies before the assault on their town.

Dennis's parents also had a chance meeting with the Paris correspondent of the New York Times who was visiting Caen at the same time. He was there to report on a visit by Montgomery to award honours to some of the local people. They told the American correspondent of the young girls' bravery; he sought out and found one of the girls as he was determined to present them to Montgomery. They had to return to England and were unable to be present at the ceremony. It would be interesting to see if there was any account of this in The New York Times should anyone be considering such research!

Dennis's sister was training to be a hairdresser at the outbreak of war but became a land girl and was employed by Matthews Dairy in Bartonsham which pleased the family as she didn't want to leave home. Part of her job was to take milk to local residents and as a result knew many of the names of those remembered on the Second World War Memorial.

Like the others Dorothy could remember **John Tillam** (son of the butcher). The Morris family still attended St Paul's Church and his sister could not recall when the memorial was erected in St James. After the war she went back to hairdressing and later worked from home as this allowed her to care for her mother who, sadly, never really recovered from losing her son, Dennis. War has so many unseen casualties.

I was shown many photographs of the Morris family dating back to the 19th Century, and copies of the Tupsley Parish Magazine which had relevant family information such as baptisms, marriages and deaths. Her father became an inspector on the railway.

The war graves site records Dennis' death as 09/07/44 and states he was a private in the North Staffordshire Regiment (6th battalion), son of William Henry and Annie Beatrice Morris of Hereford. He is buried at Cambes-en-Plaine War Cemetery. See his photograph at start of Not Forgotten.

## NOT FORGOTTEN - THE WORKERS AT ROTHERWAS MUNITIONS FACTORY



In recent years there has been a local project to record the names of people who worked in the munitions factory in the war years and a permanent memorial has been established at Rotherwas to commemorate their contribution to the war. **Nora Foster**, a life long member of St James who died earlier this year, was chosen to represent them - a picture of her is on the memorial. She worked in the factory and became a radio announcer and presenter there.

In the course of my conversations with members of our congregation about the memorials I have been struck by how many have associations with the munitions factory - either working there as young women, or having fathers or relatives working there at that time. Although the names of some of the munitions workers have been recorded on the memorial at Rotherwas, it would seem that many have not been remembered and I thought it would be appropriate to include some of them here so that their contribution to the war effort will not be forgotten.

I have spoken to 3 eye witnesses to the only bombing by Germans at the factory and thought other people would also be interested, so hope to include some details.

**Joan Clarke** was working in the munitions factory (examining bombs) during the war and recalls the night the bomb fell from an enemy plane when she was still working her shift. Her sister, **Muriel Munn**, who was 'on the buses' had just taken the night shift workers into the factory and saw the bomb fall. Their friend, **Elsie Bodenham**, who lived in Eign Road told me that from her bedroom window she saw the German aeroplane flying low over the munitions factory and the flash of the explosion.

**Ena Price's** father, **Thomas Henry Boucher**, was also a worker at the munitions factory and was on fire drill the night that the bomb fell. He got out of the factory but went back to drag another man out thus saving his life, for which he received the

BEM. Ena told me that he father sustained shrapnel injuries from which he subsequently died. The family received no compensation or assistance.

**Ella Levett's** father, **Bertram Hope Levett**, was a member of St James Church and worked at the Co-op prior to the war and up until 1941, and was also a special constable. In 1941 he joined the police force and was then drafted to the munitions factory. His sister, **Doris Prosser**, from Tupsley also worked in the munitions factory.

**Doreen Pugh's** father, **William John Archer**, also worked at the munitions factory. She remembers the yellow powder that used to cover his hair and clothes, and attributes the breathing of this powder as to the cause of his death in later years. (Joan Clarke also remembers the yellow powder dyeing people's hair.)

Doreen's husband, Gerald, had an aunt who came to live with his family (his mother's sister) to escape the dangers in London. His aunt, **Rene Ford**, also worked at the munitions factory. Another aunt came too and left her children with his mother so that she could be in the land army.

**Marie Hill** also worked in the munitions factory although she did not make bombs; instead she worked in the wages office at the factory. Her father, **Albert Wills**, who was born in one of the cottages adjoining Mill Street Stores, also worked at the munitions factory - he was in the patrol force there. Marie's mother, **Maud Wills**, was the uniform officer for the land girls.

Local residents Marjorie Ballingham and Beryl Sadler worked in the accounts department at the Munitions factory like Marie.

## **NOT FORGOTTEN - WOMEN'S LAND ARMY ('LAND GIRLS')**

As already stated, **Dennis Morris's** sister was a land girl at Matthews Dairy (Bartonsham Farm) in the war period. She had just been accepted to go into the women's land army when her parents moved into St James and, whilst speaking with old Mr Matthew's, her mother discovered they were desperate for more help on the farm. It was an ideal solution as her daughter didn't want to leave home. She made friends with two other land girls who had come from away to work at the farm and they would like to be remembered on our record. Her milk round was first in Park Street, Harold Street and Green Street, and later she changed to St Owen's Street, Bath Street, Kyrle Street and ended up at the police station where she delivered milk according to the number of prisoners (half a pint per day was allowed).

Her first friend, **Muriel Hodgkinson** came to Hereford from Sheffield in 1941, having volunteered to work in the women's land army. She worked for J W Matthews at Bartonsham which she remembers as a happy time, though hard work! Amongst other things she learned how to milk a cow by hand, and drive a horse and float in town. Her round was in High Town and she recalls the army and RAF

vehicles that made driving quite hard. Her round included the Odeon cinema, shops and cafes and she delivered milk to the Dean's wife. At that time the Deanery was used as a billet for some of the Yorks and Lancs regiment and it was here she met her future husband, Frank, who was in the regiment. They were engaged and then he was involved in the D Day landings. They married in October 1946, Muriel having left the farm in May 1946.

During her stay she was billeted with Mrs Tout in Green Street who was widowed in 1942. She had a daughter, Gwen, who worked at Thynnes Tile factory, and a son, Bernard, who was in the RAF and spent his war in India. Muriel now lives in Skipton and is widowed but has children and grandchildren.

Her second friend is **Joyce Wilkinson** who came to Hereford in 1942. Her milk round was as far as Whitecross. She was engaged to Bill who was also in the RAF in India, and was demobbed in August 1945 when her husband returned from the war, and they married in October 1945. Sadly she too is widowed now but has a daughter, granddaughter and great granddaughter. She still lives in Sheffield.

## **FURTHER INFORMATION ADDED MORE RECENTLY**

Subsequent to the initial information there have been some later additions as people have provided details of their family members on the memorials.

### **Raymond Allsop**

Pamela Horwood provided the following information. **Raymond Allsop** was the son of Frank and Beatrice Allsop, born in Manchester in 1917 but living in Hereford at the time of **WW2**. His father, Frank, had died in the trenches in WW1 just before his birth. His mother then married Herbert Wooldridge in 1919 and they lived in Park Street (104 Park Street, Landsdown Villa, renumbered to 30 Park Street). His step-niece informed me that Raymond was engaged to be married and serving in the country (Radar) when in 1942 he was killed whilst riding a motorcycle on active service while making a delivery. He is buried in Hereford Cemetery with commemorative headstone.

Raymond was a Second Lieutenant in the Royal Artillery. He died on 26/03/1942 aged 25.

## **Charles H Jarvis**

Sue Weaver (who lived in Park Street until her recent death) provided the following information about **Charles H Jarvis (WW2)**. He was the step-brother of her grandfather. Charles' wife was Edith Mary Jarvis, of Orleton, and they had 3 children, Doreen, Brian and Barry. Charles' mother, Flo, and his father William lived in Green Street.

Charles was a Lance Bombadier serving in the Royal Artiller. He is remembered at Hereford Cemetery (Non-conformist. Grave 6061). He was 30 when he died on 30/09/1944.

## **Jack Kenneth Bushnell**

I had the pleasure of meeting Jack's brother, Dave Bushnell, at a St James' Church Coffee morning and he pointed out to me his brother's name on the **WW2** memorial. Dave was still living in the family home in St Guthlac Street.

Later I visited Dave to ask him more about Jack. Their parents were John Henry and Katherine Bushnell. With brother Derrick they had all lived in Ross-on-Wye before moving to Hereford to live at Guthlac Street. Jack had attended school in Ross and then in Hereford - Dave thought he might have gone to St Owen's School just around the corner from their home. Jack then became a printer with Adams in their workshop which was at the back of The Booth Hall (off East Street).

Jack joined the Home Guard with his father until he was old enough to enlist in the regular army. John had been in WW1 and did not fight in WW2 due to 2 injuries he sustained in WW1. The Home Guard were based in The Bricklayers Arms public house, now The Victory, and were fire watchers and wardens in the area.

Jack had a pal, Eddie Warrick, who lived in Andrew's Close who also signed up. Dave told me that Edie was killed on his birthday. Another friend was Bernard Turner from Harold Street.

Jack died in the turret of his tank when attacked by Nazis. Dave told me that initially the bodies of the dead soldiers were left near their tanks - later they were moved to the cemetery at Schoonselhof.

Jack served in the Royal Armoured Corps, 'C' sun Hussars, and died aged 21 on 04/09/1944. Antwerp was liberated on that day. Jack is buried at Schoonselhof cemetery in Antwerp in Belgium.

## CONTINUING RESEARCH POST REMEMBRANCE 2020

### Vincent Keeble Bullen (WW1)

**Vincent Keeble Bullen** was Chief Stoker on the Royal Navy HMS 'Vanguard'. The ship experienced an internal explosion and sank on 09/07/1917 in Scapa Flow with great loss of life (only 2 survivors). Vincent was 44 at the time of his death. He is commemorated at Chatham Naval Memorial, 23. He was the son of William Richard and Ellen Bullen, of Blakeney, Norfolk, and husband of Marian Elizabeth Bullen, living at 5 St Ethelbert Street, Hereford.

Vincent is also remembered on 2 memorials in Blakeney, Norfolk - in St Nicholas' Church and also on the village memorial. My thanks to Pam Peake who researched the Blakeney memorials who has allowed us to use her information here. My thanks also to Blakeney Area Historical Society (BAHS) who suggested I use the link here to their website for the full details of his early family life and background, and his naval career that Pam has researched. (The full text beneath his entry below.)

### Blakeney Area Historical Society (BAHS)

<http://www.bahs.uk/history-centre/collection/ww1-blakeney-remembers/blakeney-ww1-casualties/vincent-keeble-bullen/>

Pam also passed on my contact details to some of Vincent's grandchildren (Vernon Hughes, Gill Watkins and Courteney Bowler) who are still living who provided more personal details about Vincent and his wife, their maternal grandmother, Marian Elizabeth (Granny Bullen). Grateful thanks for them for providing the personal details below.

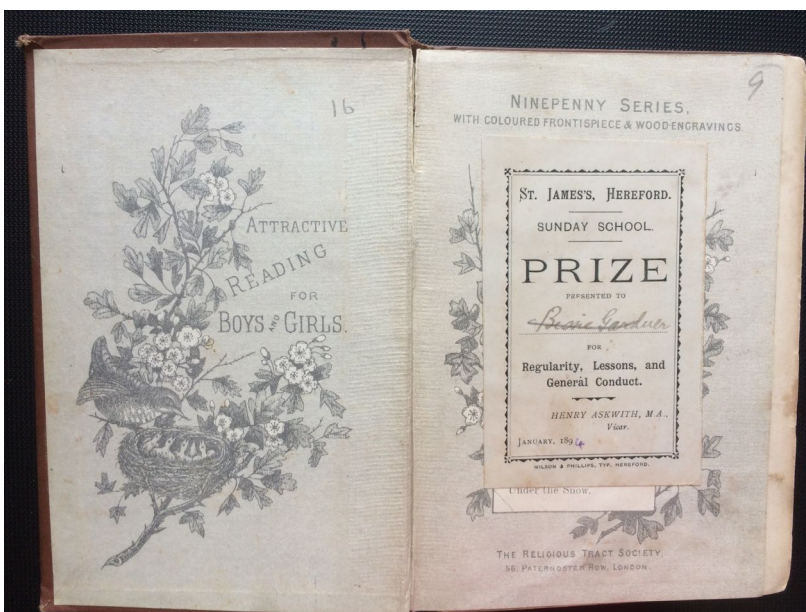
**Vincent Keeble Bullen** from Blakeney, Norfolk, married Marian Elizabeth Gardiner in Hereford in August 1902. Marian had attended St James' School as a child. The marriage was conducted in the school that was dedicated for the occasion as the church had been recently burned down. The couple lived in various houses in the area (including Harold Street and St Ethelbert Street) and later in Whitecross Road.

Vincent and Marian had two daughters, Mary May Bosanquet Bullen (called Maisie), who was 8 at the time of her father's death, and Clara Eleanor Bullen (called Bunny by the family, and Claire by others) who was 3 when her father died. Mary lived in Hereford for her whole life, in 1996 attending the St James' School centenary celebrations, where she had been a pupil. Clara's family moved away from Hereford in the 1950s.

Marian and their daughters were deeply affected by the sad loss of Vincent. The family are pleased to know that we remember their grandfather on Remembrance Sunday each year and were unaware that his name is on our church memorial.



Marian Gardiner of Hereford in her wedding dress in 1902 (without her veil or flowers), married in St James' School as the church had recently burned down. She married Vincent Keeble Bullen, born at Cley but grew up in Blakeney (Norfolk). He joined the the Royal Navy in 1894. You can see his stoker's badge/insignia on his lapels (a propellor with star above).



Left: Sunday School prize that Vincent's wife received in 1894 from Rev Henry Asquith at St James' Church. Photo provided by Gill Watkins.



For those reading this on hard copy and without Internet access: Pam Peake's research from Blakeney area history society website follows:

**Chief Stoker 277882 HMS Vanguard, Royal Navy  
Died 9<sup>th</sup> July 1917, aged 44  
Remembered at Chatham Naval Memorial  
& on both Blakeney War Memorials**



Vincent was born 9<sup>th</sup> September 1872 at Cley, not Blakeney, (Norfolk) as stated in his Naval Records and repeated by the CWGC. He was the eldest son of William Richard Bullen of Holt (1844-1910), plumber and glazier, and his wife Ellen Keeble of Starston (1848-1897). His siblings were William Ahmed born Cley, Mary Elizabeth born Down, Cambridge and Henry Charles born Blakeney. In 1891 the family were living in the High Street, Blakeney, opposite the present Delicatessen. Then ten years later, after the death of their mother and young William, Mary and Henry were living in Newlands Row, High Street opposite the present Royal Legion car park. Mary was a school teacher while Henry was a shoemaker. Their father was absent from home.

Meanwhile Vincent had already signed up with the Navy in 1894 and married Marian Elizabeth Gardiner at Hereford in 1902. They had two daughters; Mary May Bosanquet Bullen and Clara Eleanor Bullen known as Maisie and Claire respectively.

By 1911 Vincent was on board HMS Mallard, a Torpedo Boat Destroyer stationed at Malta in the Mediterranean. He was Acting Chief Stoker (Head). Meanwhile his younger brother Henry had also joined the Navy and was 2<sup>nd</sup> Sick Bay Attendant Medical on HM C6 Submarine stationed at Harwich.

Sometime later, Vincent was transferred to HMS Vanguard, a newly built St. Vincent-class dreadnought assigned to the Home and Grand Fleet. Apart from taking part at the Battle of Jutland, HMS Vanguard generally patrolled the North Sea as well as engaging in training exercises. At the time of his death, Vincent was with HMS Vanguard in Scapa Flow where she had that very day just finished a training exercise for abandoning ship. At 11.40 pm, shortly before midnight, she suffered a massive internal explosion and sank immediately. In terms of loss of life, it remains the most catastrophic accidental explosion in the history of the UK and certainly one of the worst accidental losses of the Royal Navy. She was one of five warships destroyed by internal explosion rather than enemy action; the others being HMS Bulwark 1914, HMS Princess Irene 1915, HMS Natal 1915 and HMS Glatton 1918. Each explosion was caused by the overheating of cordite and in the case of HMS Vanguard, the cordite was stored against an adjacent bulkhead in one of the

two magazines which served the gun turrets amidships. This was the culmination of both bad design and bad practice that resulted in the death of some 2,291 sailors from the five warships. Of the 804 men who lost their lives by misadventure at Scapa Flow were 16 year old Alick Grey of Morston, Vincent Bullen and Christopher Cooke, both of Blakeney. According to his Naval Records his widow, Marion, was living at 71 Commercial Road, Hereford whilst his CWGC certificate gives her address as 5 Ethelbert Street, Hereford.

***If you have any information you would like included in the memorial project, please email me at [faith@halfcentury.net](mailto:faith@halfcentury.net) or via the church website [spsj.org.uk](http://spsj.org.uk)***

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