

The Way We Were



The Villages On The Eve of War

On the eve of war

The 1912 Kelly's Directory gives the population of the four villages – Grimston, Roydon, Pott Row and Congham – as around sixteen hundred. This population was not much smaller than the present day but the demography was very different. There were four schools – one in each of the villages – and the total average attendance was three hundred. Conversely there were relatively few people over the age of sixty. There was a large population of young adults – those aged between eighteen and thirty – and despite the absence of motor vehicles the villages were noisy and bustling places.

The railway station at Roydon provided employment and carried goods and people into and out of the village. It ran to King's Lynn in one direction and towards Fakenham and Cromer in the other giving access to the surrounding villages. As Gayton did not have a station at this time it was a less accessible place than Grimston and considerably smaller.

There were two grocers in Grimston and another in Pott Row and in addition there were butchers and a "stationery and fancy goods store". Congham and Pott Row had sub post offices whilst the main post office was in Grimston. Coal and fish were delivered around the villages. There were six pubs around the villages and the Working Men's Club in what is now the Village Hall. Thus the villages provided most of what people needed and it is likely that for most people a trip to Lynn (or to the coast) was an "event" rather than part of a regular routine. There would have been a lot of people around the village at all times of day and our predecessors would have been surprised at how quiet the villages have become.



Life at Home

When philanthropists such as Rowntree made a study of rural life early in the century they were surprised to discover that poverty was just as prevalent in the country as in the towns and that poverty was found in all counties including Norfolk.

Agricultural labourers faced two big problems. Firstly there was the uncertainty of wages which could vary immensely from season to season according to the availability of work and no work meant no pay. Secondly there was the problem of the "tied cottage". This housing-with-job might be seen as a workers bonus but it could be taken to be worth about 1s/6d a week and wages lowered accordingly. Furthermore it was of variable quality and, most importantly, it was the cause of constant insecurity. Moving or losing your job meant moving or losing your home and many families moved house between the 1901 and 1911 census probably because the earner changed employer.

The majority of the labourer's cottages were four rooms, traditional "two-up-two-down" - well over half of the men killed in the war lived in houses with four rooms or less. The problem of living in a small house with only an outside toilet and possibly a shared tap was compounded by the large size of many families. There was a lower infant mortality rate in rural communities than in the cities and this was cited in the poverty reports as both a blessing and a curse. Amongst the war memorial families there were fourteen families with six children or more and five was about average. Thus eating, sleeping and day-to-day living was of necessity "cheek by jowl" and, as people have not changed, there must have been friction which was probably exacerbated as children grew into young adults. In such families it was no wonder that Mum and Dad sometimes had to rule with a rod of iron or the copper stick and it is also no wonder that men chose to spend evenings in the village pubs.

Mother was the linchpin of any family. A woman who could budget efficiently, cook well and was good with her needle was indeed worth a price above rubies as her skills could ensure the well-being and happiness of the family. It was genuinely true that, at this time "a woman's work was never done". It was the role of women to try and make the family budget stretch to cover expenditure and to provide a good diet although this was actually impossible and every family had a diet deficient to some extent usually in protein. Throughout the summer women were vigilant for anything they could preserve for the long hard months of winter and they made jam, jellies, and pickles and sometimes even wine. Almost all clothes were hand me downs or make do and mend. Some families were lucky enough to have a contact in one of the big houses or a family member who was better off and would hand down their clothes; some mothers may have found the odd 6d to contribute to a clothing club. In addition to shopping, cooking, cleaning, childcare and trying to keep clothes serviceable and mended women often took on work outside of the home, charring being a last resort. Mothers were the least well-fed in any family; many women rarely ate meat the bulk of which was reserved for the wage earner.

Fathers were busy outside the home. At some times of the year such as harvest they would work from dawn till dusk and often the older children would join them. Men whose work involved tending the livestock worked seven days a week and having finished work at dusk, the horsemen would be expected to return to the farm to settle the horses around 8p.m. Leisure time was minimal. Many families had large gardens in which they grew vegetables, kept chickens or maybe even a pig. These

gardens and allotments could be the families' sole source of food during hard times and it was in everyone's interest to help in growing the maximum amount of nutrition.

Children no doubt made the best of life. There was a freedom which cannot be imagined by today's children. With no cars, no large expanse of water nearby and a community in which most people knew each other if only by sight it was comparatively safe for children to run free once schooling and chores were over. However, girls were always expected to help their mothers in the home with washing, cleaning or caring for smaller siblings and with money scarce boys were expected to find paid work whenever and wherever they could. They might work for a local shop keeper or butcher before school or at weekends and although the pay was very little – probably about 9d (4p) a week – it made a big difference to the family budget. In most families work took precedence over school for purely economic reasons and any boy would take a day off school if a day's paid employment was on offer. Life became a little easier when more money started to come in i.e. when children began to earn and contribute to the family budget. Grown children working away - girls in service, boys in the army – would try and send money home whenever they could and this was especially welcome as it did not come with an extra mouth to feed. All families strove to avoid debt. On such a small income debt once incurred was extremely difficult if not impossible to repay.

Although there were probably some in the village who felt that “life isn't living it's just dragging along” ¹there were many others who found real happiness in their families, their gardens and the special days in the year. Others who were devout Christians would have found solace and comfort in their faith. The majority probably accepted their lot with stoicism and worked hard to make life as pleasant as possible.

¹ Rowntree, Beerbohm. “How the Labourer Lives”, Thomas Nelson, 1917.

Going to work

The main activity of the community was agriculture. There are thirteen farmers listed in Kelly's Directory and these were supported by three blacksmiths (including Miss Mary Taylor) two vermin catchers and a mole catcher, a wheelwright, two harness makers, a threshing machine contractor, a sheep dipping contractor and Mr John Dodman Smith the vet. Most of the young men worked on the farms, others were employed in construction or on the railway. The average national wages before the war was 16/9 (approx. 87p) for a fifty-eight hour week. For agricultural workers it was around 13/- (65p) for uncertain hours; long "light until dusk" days in the summer and cold hard work in winter if enough work was available

Of those who lost their lives in the war the majority worked on the farms. Opportunities to do anything else would have been very limited. During the years leading up to the war the school records show that several boys earned a "certificate to work" showing that they had achieved level 5 (the highest level of achievement at Grimston School) but only one secured a place at Lynn Technical School presumably to study engineering or something similar. Opportunities for young men were limited but they were worse for young women. On the 1911 census a number of young women are listed with no occupation or "at home." One or two young women did escape the drudgery of domestic service (either in their own home or someone else's) by becoming apprentice teachers, in the pre-war years no boys were taken on in this role.

The Victorian class structure still held sway; it was easy to "know one's place". The local gentry were the village aristocracy. Mrs Elwes, a widow, lived with her children at Congham Hall whilst her sister-in-law Miss Violet Elwes resided at the other end of the village at Elder Farm. The elderly Everard siblings, Misses Geraldine and Constance and their brother Raoul, a JP, lived at Roydon Lodge. All of these people were living on their own means and they employed about a dozen domestic servants between them, none of whom originated from the village.

There is little evidence of "the middling sort" in the villages. One hundred pounds a year, often perceived by the Victorians as a middle class wage, was beyond the wildest dreams of most villagers who would think themselves extremely fortunate to earn half that money. In a community in which agriculture and manual labour prevailed there was little use for the clerks, retail assistants and supervisors who aspired to middle class status in the town. Certainly there were residents who probably thought themselves "a cut above" and these may have included those who owned and ran businesses as well as the professionals. Mr and Mrs Hammond were teachers at Grimston School for many years and raised a large family in the school house. It is certain that they were viewed as of the better sort and were loved and respected in the village but teaching wasn't a well-paid job and in 1912 Mr Hammond was supplementing their income by taking on the role of Registrar for Births and Deaths; Mr Tuddenham the Station Master lived with his wife and two little girls in the six-roomed cottage at the station and would surely have regarded himself as a little better than the farmworkers as did Mr Balding and Mr Grey the grocers and the lady post mistresses. The carters, publicans and tradesmen made a great deal more money than the average but their status in the village was probably defined more by roots than finances.

As everyone in the village knew their betters there was a considerable amount of cap doffing or tipping and a great deal of deference, this was accepted as the norm. If there was talk in the village

pubs of challenging the status quo most men would have been careful to avoid becoming too closely associated with such sentiments as it was dangerous to come to the landowner's attention as a trouble causer. Farming unions existed before the war – George Edwards started the Eastern Counties Agricultural Labourers Union in 1907 – but we have no way of knowing if workers in Grimston belonged to any such organisation or were interested in such things.

Whilst work for most of the men meant labouring on the farm, for women, who became wives and mothers, work probably was never ending and the burden of responsibility heavy. Women had to do the household chores, keep their families fed and reasonably clothed and in addition they also faced the enduring problem - and attached anxiety - of eking the family finances out to avoid debt, poverty and the workhouse Poor nutrition, hard work and multiple pregnancies meant that wives and mothers often experienced poor health.

The men who died early in the war in 1914 and 1915 were all regular soldiers or sailors and most families in the village had a son with the colours. The army seemed to offer an escape and a more exciting life to those who could cope with the brutality and discipline. The stories these soldiers brought home with them and the respect they inspired must have impressed many boys in the village. For most of the wartime volunteers and conscripts work at home had been tedious, hard and poorly paid and probably life sometimes seemed a dull and wearying daily grind. It is not surprising that the chance to wear a uniform, travel and experience new things might have seemed like an adventure and a short-term escape.

Going to School

The 1880 Education Act made school attendance compulsory between the ages of five and ten; further legislation in 1893 extended the age of compulsory attendance to 11, and in 1899 to 12.

Before the war there were four schools – one in each of the villages – and the total on school rolls was over three hundred. Mr and Mrs Hammond were teachers at Church Hill School for many years. Assisted by one or sometimes two apprentices they managed a school population of over one hundred ranging in age from five to twelve although some children did stay on longer. School entry as well as school leaving appears to have been a somewhat random event with children arriving and going throughout the year. As there were no school dinners children went home for lunch. The school day consisted of a morning and an afternoon session with a two hour break allowing time for children to walk home, eat and walk back. In rare cases where children lived too far away to walk home they were allowed to eat a packed lunch at school and play outside afterwards on the understanding that teachers were not responsible for them during that time. With all this trekking to and fro, the school day must have been very long especially for the smallest children and it is likely that many were reluctant to return in the afternoon

The number of pupils on roll at Church Hill between 1880 and 1910 was always over one hundred but attendance was usually well below that number. Children were absent for a range of reasons – the harvest, the Sandringham Flower Show, illness, bad weather (without cagoules or wellingtons small children walking to school would have quickly become soaked) and exclusion. Illness was a constant worry and any household suspected of having scarlet fever or measles would be quarantined, the parents told to keep all children at home. These measures were often applied to the neighbouring cottages too. Despite these precautions the school was closed in January 1914 due an outbreak of scarlet fever and in April of the same year a small girl called Bertha Collison died from the illness. During the thirty years 1880 – 1910 at least four children on the Grimston roll died as a result of complications of measles.

Another reason for absence was what we would call exclusion. Behaviour in school was not always good. The boys were guilty of stealing, bullying and being what Mr Hammond described in the school log as “insolent” “disobedient” and “a bad influence”. The use of the cane didn’t always improve this behaviour and one pupil attacked and kicked Mr Hammond requiring the intervention of the local policeman and the magistrates. In cases of bad behaviour the student was sent home with instructions to return with his father. When parent and child turned up there had to be a public apology and a pledge from the boy to do better although this wasn’t always complied with. Thus there is evidence of troublesome boys being shuffled between Grimston and Pott Row in an attempt to finish their schooling and avoid the Attendance Officer.

Assessment – monitored by the annual visit of the School Inspector and of the Diocesan Inspector – was at six levels. Most Grimston students achieved level 4 on leaving. Consulting the level descriptors, we can see that level 4 means only that most of our soldiers would have been literate or numerate. Those who failed to reach level 4 (or even levels 1, 2, or 3) simply remained illiterate and/or innumerate and went out into the world lacking those skills. Some boys gained a scholarship to Lynn Technical School and some girls went on to become apprentice teachers, these students had achieved level 5 or possibly even level 6. Boys could also gain a “Certificate to Work” and these boys also achieved level 5.

The school log book has references to some of the Fallen by name. **Lloyd Francklin** attended the school for just a year in between his mother’s marriages; **William Bird** was also a short term pupil.

Samuel Smith and his brother were often late (and were sent home as a consequence of this) whilst **Walter Hammond** was the model pupil. The **Mayes** family were plagued by ill health between 1893 and 1895 and **William Boldero** had to return to school in Pott Row after only a term at Grimston because the walk was too taxing for a child in such delicate health. Interestingly the army found him fit for service in 1916.

It is impossible to ascertain how parents and children viewed education. Whilst it was perceived as “necessary” to go to school and gain basic skills it is probable that for most people aspiration meant the hope of wages, home and a healthy family with the chance of a skilled job such as blacksmith, carpenter or saddler for the more fortunate or “clever”.

Going to the Pub

In the early years of the twentieth century the Temperance Movement was strong. There were temperance hotels in King's Lynn but there is no evidence that the movement had any influence in the village. There was an alternative to the pub – the Working Men's Club which was attached to the village hall and was given to the village by a benefactor. We cannot be sure how much it was used or what kind of atmosphere there was, it is possible that it was a temperance establishment in which case some of the men who were teetotal – often those involved with the Methodist chapel – would go there instead of the pub. Women did not go to the club or to the pub. The pub – usually a working-class establishment – was perceived as a male domain and to be seen in the pub would tarnish a woman's reputation beyond repair. During the war young women from the working and middle classes did begin to frequent pubs but this would not have happened in rural communities like Grimston where new ideas were slow to take root

The village had several pubs. Licencing laws before the war allowed children into pubs at the age of 14 which was the start of working life. Thus we might presume that once boys became "working men" they would go to the pub with their fathers although this would have depended upon Dad's willingness to take them. The pub was an escape for men; a place away from the children and the overcrowding that existed in most family homes. Men would have had a local, a pub in which they were a regular and it's probable that they rarely ventured into any of the other pubs. A pint of beer cost around 1.75 old pence in 1910. Although this sounds very little, family budgets were stretched and most men would have made a pint of beer last a considerable length of time. There may have been pub games in the pub – darts, dominoes or even cards although landlords were supposed to be strict about gambling on the premises – and there was conversation that would have been thought unsuitable for women's ears. We cannot know what exactly was discussed but there is no evidence that Grimston was a politically active community. Once the war started there would have been talk about events at the front and any news from men fighting would be passed on. In a society in which men were discouraged from showing emotion the pub was somewhere where bereaved fathers and brothers could grieve in their own way amongst their mates.

Only four of the pubs remain: The Three Horseshoes, The Anvil (Congham), The Union Jack (Roydon) and the Bell.

The Bell, which has been a pub since the end of the eighteenth century, looked very different in 1911; the landlord was Mr William Smith who had been established there since 1904. At the crossroads where the Bell stands there were two other pubs .The New Inn (now the Clock House) and the Bushell which was part of the brewery behind the shop.

The Bushell was run by Mr Robert Case. In 1912 he was fined for opening after hours when Sergeant Webb found Charles Phillippo drinking spirits at 11.30p.m. Mr Case and Charles attempted to put the policeman off by claiming that Charles was staying the night but unfortunately for Mr Case the police waited outside the pub until Charles left at



1.20a.m. Mr Case was fined £1.00 with costs. This didn't put him off running the pub; he stayed until 1916 when Charles Cobb, who was steward at the working men's club, took over. The New Inn landlord was Alfred Harrowing who also ran a butchery business.

The Chequers Inn no longer exists; it was demolished in 1960 after a lightning strike. Before the war William Bird the landlord lived there with his son, also called William, and daughter in-law. William had been a publican for most of his working life, his wife Matilda had died shortly after he took over the Chequers so his son and daughter-in-law were there to help him although William Jnr also worked as a game dealer. When his son joined up in 1916 William gave up the pub; he was in his seventies and without his son's support it's probable that he found it difficult to manage. Sadly William Jnr was killed in 1917.

The Three Horseshoes was the biggest pub in the villages – the 1911 census lists it as having twelve rooms. It was run by Mr and Mrs Braybrooke who took over from elderly Mrs Dunham in 1912. The old lady continued to live in the pub presumably as a paying guest. Roydon also had the Plough Inn which still stands in Low Road, Congham. This was run by Mr Turner; Robert Twaite took over in 1916. The pub now called the Union Jack was formerly The Blacksmiths Arms. At the time of the war it was situated at the station so would be the first pub people saw when alighting from the train. This must have made it popular with both visitors and those returning to the villages.

Pott Row had three pubs listed on the pubs of Norfolk site, two of which are still standing. At the time of the war Pott Row was the most densely populated part of the villages and these pubs would have been crowded and busy. The Tumble Down Dick and The Carpenters Arms are close together but each man had his favourite. The landlord at the Carpenters had a prosecution for "gaming on the premises". It seems that the gambling in question was somethings called "spinning" in which there were various prizes to be won. The cost was 6d which would have been far beyond most working men (if they were prudent) and the authorities took a very dim view of this and fined the landlord £2.16s and 6d - a substantial sum. In 1910 the pub caught fire and was rebuilt by Mr Spragg the builder of the village war memorial. There were similar problems with gambling in The Jolly Farmers. The Lynn Advertiser of 5th February 1909 records that licensee Thomas George Mann was summoned before the magistrates for allowing a guessing competition for prizes – guessing the numbers of seeds in a pumpkin. There were three prizes of four gallons of beer, two bottles of gin and twelve cigars all of which would have been very extravagant prizes for the villagers. Entry conditions or costs are not recorded. Mr Mann was fined 2s 6d with 11s 6d costs despite claiming that he was unaware these actions were wrong. It seems that the Tumbledown Dick has a less colourful past.

The Anvil at Congham was called the Elwes Arms although locals often referred to it as the "Snake and Arrow" a reference to the Elwes family crest. The Rennett family, who like several others, combined inn keeping with butchery, ran the pub for sixty years.

The village pubs did not welcome women or children although dogs were probably accepted. They sold only drink although there may have been pickled onions or eggs on the bar. All of the men who died in the war would have been regulars at one or the other of the pubs or at the Working Men's Club – every establishment would have been missing regulars by 1919.

When Things Went Wrong

Edwardian working class families lived life on a financial knife edge. The material well-being of the family depended upon the bread winner and the woman of the house. The former was under pressure to bring in enough money to at least feed and house the family whilst the latter had the responsibility of making that money stretch to cover the family's needs.

In the years preceding the war the government brought in measures to reform social welfare. Pensions were introduced in 1909 although they were far from universal. In 1911 the National Insurance Act was introduced to provide sick and unemployment benefit but this was restricted to certain industries and to the worker only

The agricultural worker always had an insecure career path. By its very nature agriculture is seasonal and the need for labour fluid; there was not always work and no work meant no pay. It has been estimated that on average, men would be paid for around forty-four weeks out of fifty-two.² In "off weeks" men would usually work hard on their gardens or allotments as these provided as much as 30% of a family's nutrition. However, it was probably at these times that families were more likely to get into debt and it is certain that Messrs Balding, Grey and Blake, the village grocers, each had a book in which credit was written, some of which was unlikely to ever be paid off. In 1913 Rowntree suggested that once debt rose above one pound it would prove to be impossible to clear without some kind of extra income in the household. It is more than possible that some village women owed money in all the village shops which must have added to their burden of anxiety.

Grocery debt was bad enough but even more worrying was medical debt. Even in families where men could claim money under the 1911 act there was no provision for families and it was often women who required medical help. In most cases babies were delivered without medical intervention although the mother would be attended and assisted by friends, relations and/or the local midwife. The 1902 Midwifery Act had ushered in training and supervision for midwives and thus, officially, untrained midwives were to be phased out. This did not happen immediately and in rural areas there was often no trained midwife to call upon. Therefore, in cases where there were serious complications the local doctor – Dr Woodwark – would be called. Rowntree estimates the cost of medical attendance in a confinement as between 9s (80p) and 1gn (£1.05). Should any member of the family require more prolonged medical treatment the cost could escalate to between 3gn (£3.15) and 10gn (£10.50). This bill would have to be paid off weekly or monthly and could make a big difference to the lives of families already living hand to mouth.

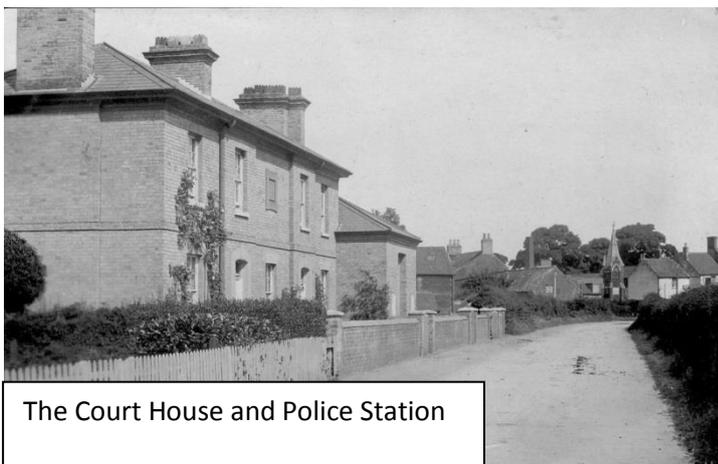
The death of a spouse was financially cataclysmic. If it was the wife who died the children would most often be rehomed with relatives as in the case of Frederick Brinkley and his sisters. If one of the girls was old enough to leave school she may take on the role of house keeper for father and siblings. If it was the husband who died the family instantly became dependent upon the kindness and help of others. Firstly from the land owner or farmer in whose cottage they lived, secondly from family and neighbours, who might donate food, clothing and may mind the children. Women, as in the case of Frederick's Spooner's mother, had to take work usually as a charwoman or a laundress.

² David Mitch, "Agriculture as a Career", Institute of Social History. www.llsg.nl/publications

The workhouse remained a location to be viewed with dread. Mr and Mrs Warnes were master and matron; they had worked all their adult lives in the workhouse system. The workhouse population was larger in 1911 than it had been in 1881 although for most people a stay in the workhouse was temporary. The workhouse census shows that people were in the workhouse for predictable reasons - pensioners, unmarried mothers, widows and those unable to work. There were more octogenarians in 1911 than in 1881 and more children. Only the names Smith and Boldero appear on both the workhouse roll of 1911 and the war memorial and it is more than likely, especially in the case of Smith, that these were not direct relatives of the fallen.

Social problems were probably as prevalent as they are today. Marriages may have been brought on by an ill-timed pregnancy although a surprising number of women in the village gave birth to a child or children out of wedlock which were apparently welcomed into the family. Once married divorce was unheard of, the cost would have been prohibitive; marriage truly was "for better or worse". We cannot know what went on behind the cottage doors in the village (although the neighbours undoubtedly did) but some historians have suggested that, for some women, having a husband away in the army represented an improvement in their quality of life giving more money, more food and respite from a difficult or abusive husband.

Some kind of crime – domestic abuse for example – was rarely prosecuted in Edwardian villages although it's likely that the perpetrators were known to many of their neighbours and probably the local policeman. Other crimes such as vandalism, anti-social behaviour and fighting were dealt with by the traditional "clip round the ear", the intervention of the local constabulary with a warning or with a sullen resolution between the parties involved. There was a court house in Grimston which included housing for one inspector (in 1911 there was Sergeant Webb but no superior officer) and one constable. Court sessions were held twice a week and the offenders came from a very large area including West Bilney, Sandringham and the Woottons. Sadly the court records for the war years have been lost but the Lynn News for 1914 reported crimes in Grimston and most were what we would probably call petty theft. Examples are Alfred Loades who stole wheat and barley meal from a Mr Clarke and Charles Skerry who stole barley meal and some fertiliser. Some more serious cases originate in different villages and generally it seems that Grimston, Roydon and Congham had low



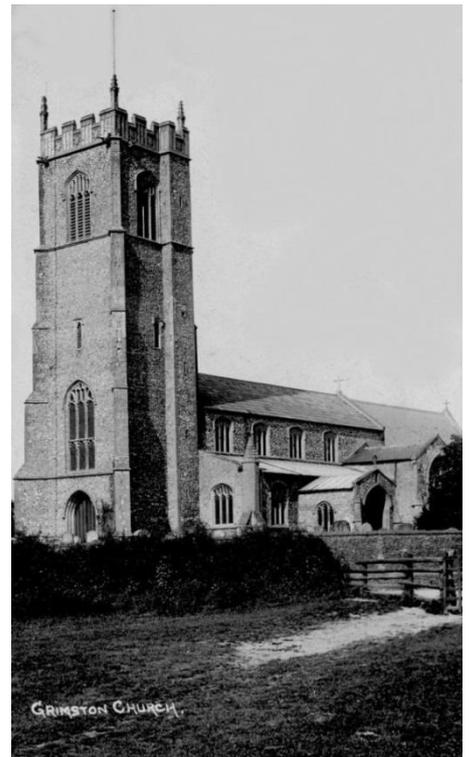
The Court House and Police Station

crimes rates and were safe and settled communities. Almost everyone was "in the same boat" and whatever their differences generally neighbours helped each other out when they could. They would need this community spirit in the dark days of the war when everyone lived in fear of the arrival of the dreaded telegram and every pre-war worry suddenly became insignificant.

Spiritual Matters

Although the church is often perceived as central to village life it is not possible to say what percentage of the population were regular attenders. The only survey of church attendance was carried out in 1851 some sixty years before the war and surprisingly it found that only a third of the population attended an Anglican church with the same number being non-conformists. In the years following the report Anglican churches, including Grimston, had undergone extensive restoration whether this had any effect on attendance in the village is unknown. It is most likely that whilst many villagers were non-receptive to religious doctrine they were attached to the church as a village institution.

There were four churches in the village – St Botolphs at Grimston , St Luke’s chapel at Pott Row, All Saints at Roydon and St Andrews at Congham. There were also two non-conformist chapels – one Wesleyan, one Methodist - at Grimston and Pott Row. The Reverends Alfred Ellaby , Herbert Thursby and Stewart Kirsley had the job of tending to the spiritual well-being of the parishes. Like many Edwardian clergymen they were all the sons of clergymen raised in comfortable upper middle class homes, alumni of Oxford or Cambridge, and whilst not quite upper classes were able to happily socialise and mix with them. Alfred Hall Ellaby lived at the old rectory (on Massingham Road) with his wife, two housemaids and two of his eight children; the older ones having moved out. The living of Grimston was worth £300 a year. The rector of Congham, Stuart Roper Kersey, followed his father into the job. He was granted the living worth £340 a year through his late mother. Rev Kersey lived very quietly in the large rectory with only one housemaid and his elderly governess who lived in his house until she died. The parish of Roydon was in the gift of Captain Howard of Castle Rising and the rector of Roydon, Rev Herbet Thursby, lived at Castle Rising. He also followed his father into the church although not into the parish. Despite this class gap there is some evidence that the rectors strove to understand the everyday lives of their flock and empathise with them.



At the beginning of the war the rector of Grimston played a lead role in Colonel Everard’s recruitment meetings. The Lynn News (December 1914) quotes: “He (Rev Ellaby) spoke of the splendid spirit of those at the front and hoped in the years to come many of them would have the honour of being among those who had served their king and country in the hour of need”. A Roll of Honour was regularly displayed at the church showing the names of the young men in the forces, but it also listed those who wanted to go but were medically unfit to do so. Throughout the war Rev Ellaby corresponded with many of the young men who had heeded the call and his notes on the fallen show that he felt a responsibility for all of his parishioners. No doubt the bond between rector and villagers was strengthened when the rector’s own son Cecil was killed at Gallipoli.

Several of the fallen were well-known to the rector. **George Mayes** was “a regular attender at evensong”; **James Smith** was a “St Lukes boy” whilst **William Stebbings** was a faithful member of the

church choir. During 1917 when the village suffered some of its worst losses there were regular memorial services at St Botolph's and St Luke's for those who had been killed. Rev Ellaby left the parish in 1918 before the end of the war to move to Thornham but returned for the unveiling of the war memorial on which his son's name was written.

Of the two hundred serving men of the parishes some would have been non-conformist and would have worshipped at one of the chapels in Pott Row or Grimston. **Gunner Jonathan Twite** who was killed in 1917 was a Sunday School teacher and honorary secretary of the Sunday School at Pott Row and was by all accounts much mourned by his young students as well as the chapel congregation

Sunday School

Sunday School was an important part of village life. The opportunity to send the children out for an hour or two on the one day of the week when there was no work gave parents a small amount of peace, quiet and private time. This was a blessing for couples living in the very tiny cottages usually filled with large families.

For the children it was worth attending Sunday School – we know it was held at both St Luke's and St Botolph's as well as at the Methodist chapel – in order to access the "treats" and prizes. Treats were funded by the local gentry and included an afternoon tea with games in the winter and an outing, sometimes to Hunstanton, in the summer. Prizes were handed out once or twice a year and these would have been awarded not only for Bible knowledge and work but also for regular attendance. Whatever these prizes were they would have been welcomed by children who rarely if ever, received a gift of any kind. As most children attended Sunday School, the war memorial men would have had a knowledge of the Bible which was far better than most modern people and we know that several of them took a Bible with them to the war.

What follows are pen pictures of every man on Congham war memorial.

For the sake of brevity and ease of reference we have given each man one page or less but we have more information on some men which we are happy to share.

Please read the stories. They were our men and by remembering them we ensure that their names really do "liveth forever more".

Men of Congham

1917

Edward Hugh Grief – died Thursday 19th April 1917

Edward Grief was born to a single mother, Sarah Ann Grief, in Dersingham in 1879. Sarah was only 18 at the time of Edward's birth and was almost certainly working as a servant; we have no idea who Edward's father was. In 1883 Sarah married a man called George Patrick and, unlike her own father, she took Edward to live in her new home; the 1891 census showed Edward living in Church Row, Dersingham with his mother and step father. Edward's grandfather James had lived all his life in Dersingham and worked as a farm labourer, George Patrick also worked on the land so inevitably Edward followed them and began work as an agricultural labourer. On 22nd July 1900 Edward married Sarah Hipkin at her home church in Shernbourne and by the 1901 census they already had their first baby, a daughter called – in the family tradition – Sarah Ann. By 1911 the Griefs had five children – two girls and three boys – and they lived in a five room cottage in Billings Row, West Newton. Edward was now working on the royal estate at Sandringham and thus the family had an estate cottage.



Edward and Sarah had another son whom they called Alexander in 1912. Two years later war broke out. As a 35 year old married man Edward did not have to join the army immediately and indeed he may have been able to avoid military service even when conscription came in but, patriotically, he enlisted in 1914 at East Dereham and joined the newly formed 1/5th Battalion of the Norfolk Regiment. This was the battalion in which Frank Beck's E company the so-called "Disappeared Sandringhams" served.

The 1/5th battalion set sail for Gallipoli on 30th July 1915 on HMS Aquitania. The first part of the journey took a week but it was, according to the battalion diary "an uneventful sailing". The troops changed ships and sailed on first to Lemnos, then to Imnos and finally disembarked at Sulva Bay on 11th August 1915. This was a difficult campaign from the start and would truly have been a "baptism of fire" for new soldiers such as Edward. After two or three cancelled embarkations the battalion was finally evacuated from Gallipoli in December 1915 and headed off to Alexandria where they arrived on 19th December. Throughout 1916 the battalion was involved in the defence of the Suez Canal but in January 1917, with the Turks having retreated into Palestine, the focus changed to planning an advance into Sinai and, on 29th March the army undertook an assault on Gaza which failed. A further assault was planned for 17th April but unfortunately, the Turks were ready. British soldiers outnumbered Turkish troops by a ratio of two to one and the British employed eight tanks

and 4,000 gas shells to ensure victory. However, the tanks proved unsuitable for the hot, dry desert conditions, and the Turkish forces put up a blisteringly effective defence. After three days and heavy losses—6,444 men - the British called off the attack.

Edward died on the second day of the battle. The 1/4th and 1/5th battalion lost approximately 1100 men during that battle and Edward would have been buried on the battlefield. Following the armistice as many as possible of the dead were brought in to be buried in Gaza Cemetery.

Thomas Harper – died Thursday 19th April 1917

Thomas Harper's life was full of complicated family relationships. Before Thomas was born his mother, Elizabeth Belden had married George Pooley when she was only 19. She had four children (one of whom died in childhood) with George before he died and she then married Thomas' father also called Thomas Harper. Thomas Jnr was born in 1876 in Lydgate, Cambridgeshire. When Thomas was 5 his mother and his little sister Miranda both died and six years later his father married Anna Thurston with whom he already had a son called Horace. The somewhat disparate family settled in Congham where they were living in 1891 along with a lodger aged only 11. This unfortunate child, one Ernest Elflett, was living with an aunt and uncle on the previous census and although a quite distant relation, had now washed up with the Harper family.

In 1902 Thomas married Agnes Lucy Hammond and in 1905 and 1906 they had two sons called Cyril and Albert. Agnes died in 1910 and on the 1911 census the boys had gone to live with Mr and Mrs Hammond, their maternal grandparents whilst Thomas shared a two-roomed home with another agricultural labourer. In 1911 he remarried, his bride was Annie Gamble.

Thomas joined the Norfolk Regiment. At 40 he would have been very much one of the older men. Having served in Gallipoli the 1/5 battalion went to the Middle East. In April the battalion was part of the Eastern Division involved in the 2nd Battle of Gaza. The Gaza Ridge was the only route into Palestine and so had to be taken. A full frontal assault was ordered despite the fact that the Turks were well-prepared with strong defences. The 1/5th advanced behind a tank and entered a redoubt capturing twenty prisoners and killing other enemy forces. However, the enemy artillery was then concentrated on the redoubt destroying the tank and killing many of the men so that the force was unable to resist a counter attack. It is during this battle that Thomas was killed along with a Grimston soldier, John Blake. On that day the 1/5th Norfolk had 113 men dead or missing, 87 killed in action and 4 died of wounds. This was in addition to their many wounded. The battalion is estimated to have lost up to 75% of its men.

If Thomas had a grave it was lost during the fighting. He is commemorated on the Jerusalem Memorial in The Jerusalem War cemetery standing just a few kilometres outside the walled city.

William Goodburn – died Monday 23rd April 1917

William was born in 1887 to parents James and Sarah Ann (nee Grimes). James wasn't a local man – he was born in Dodington, Cambridgeshire – but Sarah came from Gayton and the family lived in a cottage close to the post office in Congham. William was one of five children. He had two brothers and two sisters one of whom, Agnes, died in 1899 in her early twenties. Perhaps she was always “delicate” or in poor health as despite being aged 15 on the 1891 she has no occupation listed in an era when families could ill afford to have a worker idle. William worked in Congham as a farm labourer for all of his early adult life. In 1911 he was aged 22 and living with his parents, his sister Elizabeth and a two year old granddaughter called Dorothy.

William joined the Royal Artillery probably having been conscripted in 1916. All conscripts underwent basic training – the 5.30 a.m. start was probably quite normal for working men like William. Basic training was followed by more specialist military training involving basics of movement in the field, night operations and route marching then weapons handling, marksmanship and digging trenches. After this William and his comrades were sent to learn specialist skills- in William's case gunnery – sometimes at a large depot like Etaples. Once ready for duty the men awaited their unit's arrival in reserve and they would then have a short time to integrate and practice with their new units. This was very important in artillery units where quick and accurate firing was dependent upon good teamwork. We don't know what size gun William was working on – some of the big guns had crews of up to ten men plus drivers. William's battery was part of 76th Brigade which included the 2nd battalion Suffolk Regiment and the 1st Gordon Highlanders amongst others.

WW1 gun crew - 18 pound gun



23rd April 1917 was the start of the 2nd Battle of Scarpe part of the Arras Campaign. This campaign was begun in order to relieve pressure on the French and by the end of April the campaign was in its third phase. The artillery began the barrage at 4.45 a.m. William was killed on that first day, how and where we don't know. The cemetery where he is believed to be buried, Lievin Communal Cemetery Extension

contains the graves of seven hundred British soldiers most of whom were killed in April 1917. Some of them were brought in from smaller field cemeteries at the end of the war. William has a special memorial stating “Buried near this spot”.

Chief Petty Officer Richard Maurice Smith - died 9th July



Richard was born in Congham on 21st October 1877 to parents Robert and Hanna Smith nee Wilkinson. He lived in Church Hill Congham with his parents, three brothers and four sisters along with Henry Smith aged 78 grandfather of the family.

On the 1901 census Richard was ship's crew based in Portsmouth. He married Henrietta Julia in 1907 and had a daughter Doris in 1908. In 1911 the family lived in Gillingham, Kent Richard, his wife Henrietta and daughter Doris aged 3.

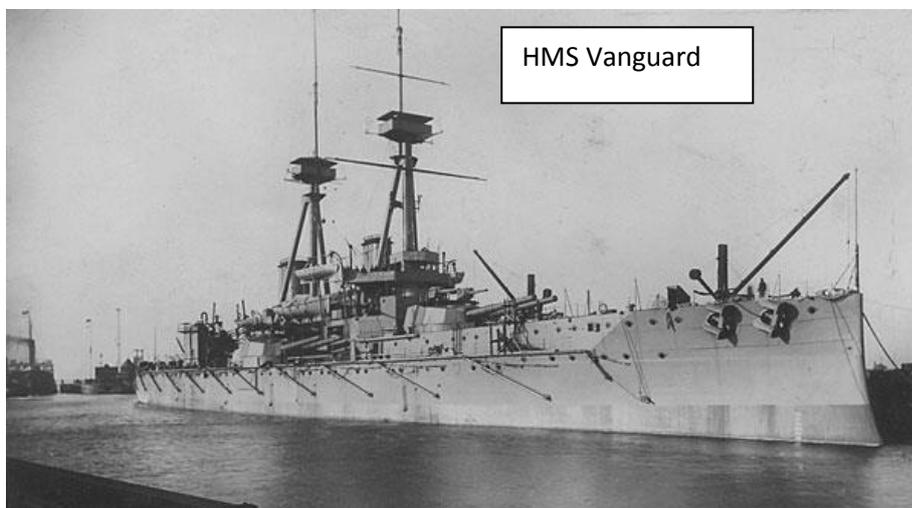
Richard had been in the Royal Navy 26 years when he died in 1917. He had served in the Ganges, Natal, Lancaster, London, Firefly and Argonaut. In common with many of his comrades who lost their lives in the Vanguard disaster, he went through the Battle of Jutland unscathed. He had had no leave since November but was expected to get home in August.³ Richard's death was described as an internal explosion at Scapa Flow, this was later reported as an accidental loss and was not caused by enemy action. 835 people lost their lives; this was the greatest number of deaths in a single accident during the war. Some of the serving men were fortunate not to be on board at the time of the explosion.

Fortunately Richard had just completed enough years in the Navy to be eligible for a full pension and this must have helped Henrietta and Doris. He is also listed as one of the fifteen freemasons who died aboard HMS Vanguard so it is to be hoped that his lodge took care of his wife and child after his death.

Richard's medals reflect his life's service in the Royal Navy serving as a Chief Petty Officer. He had a Long Service and Good conduct medal along with the Messina Medal. This medal was presented to those people who distinguished themselves by rendering assistance and medical treatment during the Messina Earthquake of 1908. He was aboard HMS Lancaster at this time.



Richard is remembered on the Chatham Naval Memorial as well as the Congham Memorial.



³ <http://www.gwpda.org/naval/vanobits.htm>

Herbert Coomber – died Friday 7th September 1917

Herbert Coomber was not a local man but he worked as a gamekeeper on the Sandringham Estate and lived in Congham and was therefore listed on the Congham War Memorial. He is also listed on the Dormansland Memorial.

Herbert was born in 1883 in Lingfield Kent to parents Edmund and Fanny, he was one of nine children. The 1891 census showed that Edmund was working as a bricklayer but by the 1901 census, when Herbert had apparently already left home, Edmund was listed as a farmer and he and Frances remained at Cernes Farm Edenbridge. It seems that Herbert moved around for work. On the 1911 census Herbert was living and working as a gamekeeper in Moreton-in-the-Marsh in Gloucestershire but according to information from the Royal Household he worked at one time for the cricketer W.G. Grace in Kent (presumably at his home in Mottingham) if this is true then Herbert must have been engaged in a different line of work to game keeping as Dr Grace's house was in a suburban setting. Military records state that Herbert was married to a woman called Rosina E. Coomber living in Chesterfield. We found a possible marriage for Herbert to Rosina Bacon (in Henstead, Norfolk) who was employed as a domestic servant. It is possible that she and Herbert met in service and that she moved away after his death to seek work. Her address in Chesterfield is no longer standing so there is no clue there.

As a Kent man it isn't surprising that in June 1916 Herbert joined the 1st Battalion of the Buffs. September 1917 found the battalion in the line at Hill 70. Hill 70 had been captured by the Canadians the preceding month but there was still sporadic fighting. Even during the first few days of the month, when the Buffs were not in the front line trenches, they had three men killed and several wounded. On the 5th September they moved into the front line trenches to relieve the 5th Bedford with whom they were rotating, and came under a gas attack. Two men were sent back with gas injuries. On 6th and 7th eight men were wounded and two – one of whom was presumably Herbert – were wounded but died of wounds. We do not know whether Herbert died on his way to the clearing station or there - the 33rd Casualty Clearing Station was in Bethune for much of the war and there are over three thousand men buried in Bethune Town Cemetery. Like so many men Herbert had been unfortunate to be killed at a "quiet" time in the line enforcing the soldiers' belief in the "bullet with your name on it." He is buried in Bethune Town Cemetery.

William Rupert Compton Ffolkes –died 30th December 1917

William R.C. Ffolkes is commemorated on the Hillington Memorial due to his family link with that village. He is mentioned on Congham Memorial because his mother, Sybil Compton Ffolkes was living at Congham Lodge at the time of his death.

W.R.C. Ffolkes used the name Rupert. He was born in Slough on 7th August 1898. Rupert's father Williams was the son of a churchman, his wife Sybil Maul came from the Home Counties where her father was also a clergyman. The 1901 census showed the family living at 8 Upton Park, a prosperous area of Slough with Victorian villas. William was working as an insurance clerk, living with Sybil, her mother and two-year old Rupert.



The family employed three servants and it was a comfortable upper middle-class family. William and Sybil were not young parents and Rupert was apparently their only child so he was probably very precious. The 1911 census showed that Rupert had gone away to school at Cordwallis School in Maidenhead. The following year William's cousin died and William succeeded to his title and thus became the fourth Ffolkes baronet of Hillington. In that year, 1912, Rupert went from Cordwallis to Radley School in Oxfordshire. He was a popular and much-loved student, apparently a quietly devout boy, always kind and sympathetic and he was given the affectionate nickname of "Tibbles". He became a prefect, played cricket for the school and took an active role in chapel services. He was, it seems, a golden child. Rupert's name appears on the roll of honour at Christ Church College, Oxford where, it is presumed he had gained a place before joining up.

Rupert did not take up his place at Christ Church but instead enlisted and following training gained a commission in the King's Royal Rifle Corps commencing service in September 1917. Rupert would have been shaped by life in English prep and public school and would have been independent, accustomed to both discipline and physical training and schooled in the values of the empire and the church. Life in the army was less of a shock to most young officers than to many of the men. The men however, may well have been something of a shock to young Rupert. Despite this, according to the Radley School magazine *the men in his Platoon learnt even in a few weeks to love him*.⁴ The life expectancy of a young officer on the Western Front was short - six weeks is often suggested. Sadly this was the case for Rupert. He arrived in France on 22nd October 1917 and almost exactly six weeks later he was dead. Rupert did not die in a great battle. He was one of the many thousands for whom death was a result of bad luck. The 1st battalion KRRs had been in the trenches in the Canal du Nord sector since Christmas. The weather was severe with hard frosts and on the night of 28th snow fell. The Germans were shelling the line for a good deal of the time but casualties were comparatively light. On 30th it became clear that shelling was a prelude to an attack which took place on the right of the KRRs with trenches being overrun. Fortunately on that evening the 1st Royal Berks came up to relieve the KRRs. It was on the way out that Rupert Ffolkes was killed by a shell. He was buried at 11 a.m. the following day, some of the officers and men from the battalion attended his funeral at Hermes Cemetery.

For William and Sybil the loss of their only beloved child must have seemed too much to bear. William had hoped to pass the title to his only son; it would now pass to his brother Francis. William died in 1930 at Congham Lodge. Sybil lived on until 1947; she died aged 84 living back in her birth county of Suffolk

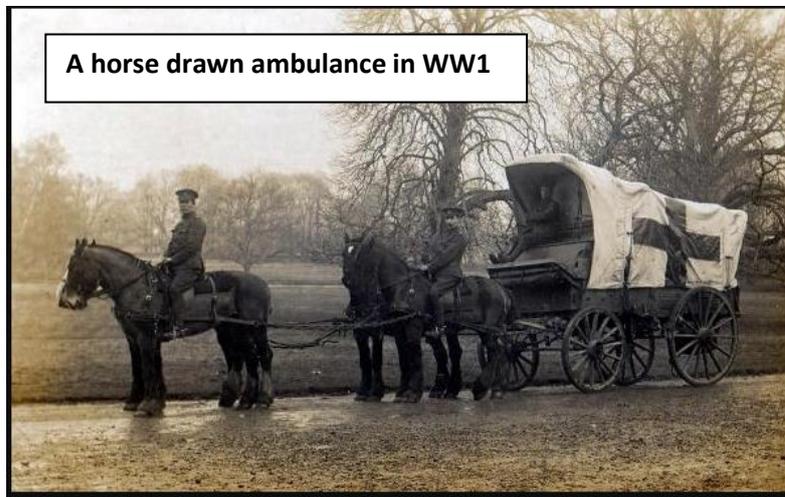
⁴ Radley School Archives, Obituary in Radleian of 30/3/1918.

Horace Rallison – died 1st April 1917

Horace was born in Swaffham in 1896. The 1901 census showed him living on Cley Road, his father Isaac was working as a farm bailiff. Isaac and Matilda had only two children with a ten year gap between them so Horace, then aged 5, was the only child in the house as his sister Elizabeth was aged 15 and already working. Isaac must have changed his job by 1911 because the family – without Elizabeth who had grown up and perhaps married – were living at Stoke Ferry. Horace's presence on the Congham War Memorial reflects the fact that he gave his address as "Congham" when he enlisted and his effects were sent by the army to Matilda at Congham despite that fact that the War Graves Commission listed her as living at Mintlynn.

Horace, a farm labourer, enlisted in King's Lynn on 8th February 1916; he was aged 20 and gave his occupation as shepherd. He was mobilised very soon afterwards – in March 1916 – and sent for training at the Norfolk Regiment depot. Horace embarked for France on 30th November 1916 and on arrival was posted to the 8th battalion Middlesex Regiment. The winter of 1916-17 was the coldest in living memory. Soldiers suffered from frostbite and exposure, causing them to lose fingers. The trenches did little to provide shelter or warmth from the extreme low temperatures, especially at night, when even clothes and blankets froze solid. The muddy walls became hard as bricks, and any food and water became almost impossible to eat. For newly arrived soldiers like Horace it would have been a truly terrible initiation into war. It seems that Horace was killed at a time when the battalion was in the line but not involved in any battle. The division was based near Arras and plans were in place for the 2nd battle of Arras which would commence on 9th April. It is likely that Horace was killed or fatally injured by a shell explosion or a sniper's bullet and this was the fate of many soldiers who died in the day to day experience of the front line.

Had he been injured Horace would have been taken by stretcher bearers and then field ambulance to the dressing station. From there he may have gone to the Casualty Clearing Station; if Horace made it to the CCS we know that sadly he did not get any further. Agny Cemetery, where Horace is buried was a cemetery frequently used by field ambulances and it is most likely that Horace died on the way to the aid centre.



1918

Edward Smith - died 18th October 1918

Edward Smith was born on 3rd November 1872 in Congham. His parents were Robert and Sarah and he had a twin brother called Charles; both were baptised just three days later. This seems very rapid -perhaps they were frail babies or just small. The 1881 census listed the Smith family living at Field Road Congham. There were six out of the seven children living at home. By 1891 two more of the older children – Harry and Elizabeth – had left home and everyone in the family except for Maud who was only 13 worked on the land or in the fields. After 1891 we lose track of Edward. We know that his brother Charles left home and went to work as a groom or an ostler – the 1901 census showed him working in Castle Rising at the (unnamed) inn. We also know that his parents died before the war; Sarah in 1902 and Robert in 1910. Edward's twin brother Charles was on the Norfolk Regiment Reserve from 1906 until 1912 and he tried to sign on again in September 1914. He was over 40 and, despite his previous military experience, he was finally rejected due to very poor eyesight. When asked to list his relations Charles didn't mention Edward which might seem strange as they were twins. It looks most likely that Edward had lost touch with his family and possibly he was a regular in the army.

Edward had two army numbers because he was listed as being in two regiments. Firstly the 2nd Battalion Norfolk Regiment and secondly the 6th Battalion Dublin Fusiliers. It was not unusual for men to move battalions nor even regiments if numbers were depleted. However, the 2nd Battalion Norfolk Regiment was a battalion of the regular army which was in Bombay at the outbreak of war. It was the battalion in which another Grimston soldier, Stephen Rudd, was serving. The battalion was sent to Mesopotamia and arrived in late 1914. This doesn't tally with Edward's medal roll which states that he was in the Balkans in 1915. What we do know is that by 1918 Edward, who despite his age seemed to come through the war so far unscathed, was in France with the Dublin Fusiliers.

In mid-October the battalion was at Le Cateau. The town had been in German hands since 1914 and had just been retaken. Edward and his comrades were involved in what the battalion war diary describes as "mopping up" presumably cleaning out any remaining enemy troops, sorting unexploded devices. Edward was one of only four battalion casualties killed that week with the end of the war just three weeks away.

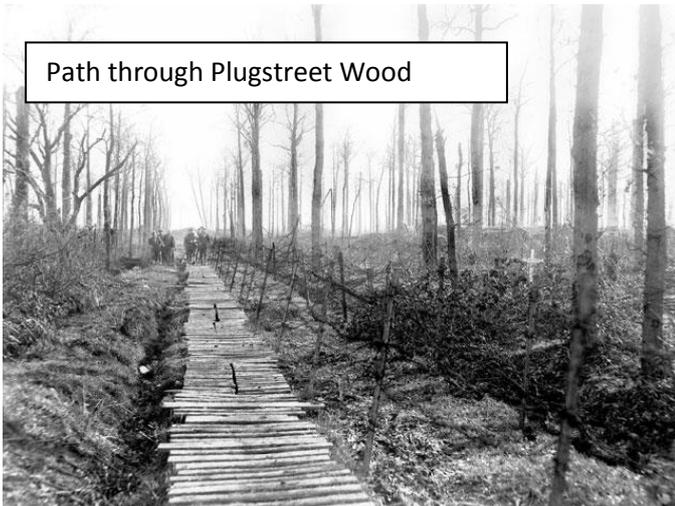
Edward is buried in Le Cateau cemetery. The cemetery was begun by the Germans and contains Commonwealth, German and Russian soldiers the latter having died as POWs.

Fred Smith – died 15th April 1918

Frederick Smith was born in 1890 to parents Henry and Anna Maria (sometimes referred to as Maria). The Smiths had eight children only five of whom survived childhood. Anna Maria was born in Harpley and after their marriage she and Henry lived there for a while before moving to Grimston/Congham where Henry worked on the land. In 1911 the family lived at Church Hill, Congham and Frederick and his younger brother Henry were also working on the land possibly alongside their father.

Frederick joined up in 1915; he is first registered as a soldier in May 1915 at Thirsk, Yorkshire. Fred had joined the 9th Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers. The Northumberland Fusiliers were in the support trenches on the first day of the Somme, they were then involved in fighting around the Somme area and in 1917 they took part in the Battle of the Scarpe which was part of the Arras Offensive. On 21st March 1918 the Germans launched their Spring Offensive, an attempt to finally break the deadlock of the Western Front. To some extent they caught the allies “on the back foot” and for some time one town after another fell into German hands following a strategic withdrawal by the Allies. On 7th April the Germans began a heavy two day bombardment of the Allied line followed by an attack on 9th. Their aim was to capture Ypres and the high ground around the Messines Ridge. Three days later, on April 12th the Germans made a concerted attempt to capture

Hazebrouk, a major Allied logistics centre. Such was the pressure that Haig sent a special order to the troops “*With our backs to the wall, and believing in the justice of our cause, each of us must fight on to the end.*” It was during this time and in that spirit that Fred was killed. Possibly he was fighting in “Plugstreet Wood” which was overrun soon afterwards and not retaken until September 1918. In the chaos of battle Fred’s body was lost and he is remembered on the Ploegsteert Memorial with over eleven thousand of his comrades.



Path through Plugstreet Wood

After the war



A community changed

Victory celebrations took place everywhere, there was universal relief that the long conflict was over. There was also however, a feeling of uneasiness created by the certain knowledge that nothing would ever be the same again. Of the two hundred plus men serving with the colours in 1916 over fifty would not be returning to the villages. Some of those who were returning would not be able to resume their old way of life. Sidney Stapleton had had his leg amputated, Charles Phillipso suffered the effects of a head injury; Samuel Barlow had been completely blinded and was in St Dunstan's Home; some men were affected by gas and several men had been discharged from the army as "disabled".

Some families had been almost destroyed by the war. The Padgetts, who in 1914 had four sons working on the land, had William and Arthur killed, Robert discharged with severe rheumatism and James with shellshock. Mr Blake, whose wife died during the war, had lost two out of four of his sons, young Stanley who was buried in the churchyard having died of illness without firing a shot in anger. The Mayes, the Buntings and Mr and Mrs Todd were all parents who lost two boys. Long Row was hit hard; the row of tiny cottages in Pott Row had the highest loss in the villages, five of the boys who grew up there were killed. Some men left young widows. Clara Twite, widow of Jonathan had scarcely had time to be a wife before becoming a widow whilst Alice Bird (widow of William) and Clara Mayes (widow of Ernest) were both left with families to raise alone on an army pension. At least three families – the families of Frederick Brinkley, Charles Eggleton and William Stebbings – lost an only boy mourned by sisters as much as parents. The death toll was seemingly random. There was apparently no reason why some families came through the war intact and relatively unscathed whereas others paid such a terrible price. Although men like Ernest Mayes had taken on a dangerous job (tunnelling) for most men life or death was very much a matter of chance and this made it even harder for bereaved families to come to terms with. It mattered not how kind and sympathetic neighbours were, if they had their sons home safely they were ill placed to comprehend the grief of those bereaved once or even twice. Some of those lost died after the Armistice; November 1918 was a dark month for the village – four men died either just before or just after the ceasefire

It was very difficult for the families to accept that they had no grave to visit. The villagers were accustomed to the loss of a child - it was not entirely unknown to lose a child through illness or accident – but the lost one was always safe in the churchyard and could be visited and cared for. This was not the case in the war. Those who had notification of a grave would never be able to visit (although their descendants would) and then there were those with no known grave. The "no known grave" tag forced families to accept the true horror of the war; it was impossible to protect relatives if they were given this information. The despair of loss was compounded by the certain knowledge that husband or child had lain unburied and by nagging thoughts about his final condition.

On 11th November 1918 the rector called for a service at 4 p.m. in St Botolph's. Although it was arranged at short notice word spread and the service was, according the Lynn News, very well attended. All the parish churches held a service of Thanksgiving on Sunday 17th November. On the last Sunday of the year there was a memorial service for the fallen and a collection was taken as a start to raising a memorial. £3 1s 8d (£3.07) was collected and whilst this may now seem a paltry sum it should be born in mind that most village families struggled to make ends meet on weekly incomes of around 15s (75p).

On June 28th 1919 the peace treaty was signed and the church bells pealed out. The village magazine reported that villagers spontaneously gathered at the church and a "joyful service" followed. There was an official national service on Sunday July 6th and on Saturday 19th the villages held a day of celebration all three parishes joining together. Mr Hammond, the head teacher, was called upon to form a committee to organise the day. The children - over four hundred of them – had sports and games in a field lent by Mr Taylor and the day was presided over by the Elwes family. Mrs Elwes handed out the prizes and her son Godfrey presided over a veteran's dinner in the evening which was attended by over one hundred servicemen. It was a valiant attempt to try and rekindle the spirit of the villages as it had been before the war.

Congham chose to have their memorial in the church. Possible, being a much smaller village than their neighbour Grimston, the villagers felt that a large stone cross was simply too expensive or inappropriate for a small number of names. However, in Grimston, where the debate about the memorial was lengthy and heated, there was a considerable amount of support for an in-church memorial so quite possibly the tablet was the choice of the villagers.

In addition to the tablet Congham has a list of names of all those who fought which is a wonderful gesture of thanks to all the men who went to the war.



**Their names liveth
forever more**

