

Remembering the pupils and staff of Fishergate School who died in the Great War.

Saturday 10th November 2018, 2pm to 4pm.

Programme

The event comprised a series of readings from the book published by FFH for the commemoration, with biographies adapted to be read in the first person. See below for transcripts and photographs.



1. Introduction

Christopher Rainger, Chair of FFH

Good afternoon and welcome to you all.

My name is Chris Rainger and I am the Chair of Fishergate, Fulford and Heslington Local History Society, who have arranged this centenary commemoration of the 86 former pupils and teachers named on the school's Great War memorial.

As well as welcoming past and present pupils, parents and others, I must give a special welcome to the Lord Mayor of York, Cllr. Orrell and the Lady Mayoress, his wife, Judy; and to the Sheriff of York, Verna Campbell and her Consort, Colin. We are also pleased to have with us our 2 Fishergate Ward councillors, Dave Taylor and Andy d'Agorne, and the Features Editor of the York Press, Stephen Lewis.

I would like to thank the musician and teacher, Josh Burnell, who has worked with pupils to prepare for the readings you will hear this afternoon.



Now, before we start, I should say a little about this commemoration event.

The Great War, as they called it 100 years ago, was a cataclysmic disaster that not only killed and maimed an unimaginable number of people, but it reverberated with more terrible wars throughout the 20th century, and is the origin of many of today's ongoing conflicts.

All families were affected in some way, and you will hear about some of them this afternoon. Over the 4 years of this centenary, our local history society has researched and published 4 booklets about the lives, families, jobs, and military service, of the 93 men who are named on the memorials at Fulford and Heslington churches. Researching the 86 men on the memorial at this school was an even more difficult task and I congratulate Barbara King, Judy Nicholson and Rosemary Newman for their tenacity in tracing all of the men, including some strange anomalies in their inclusion.

Today, we are presenting the results of their research and reading sections from our new book, which we are selling today below-cost price, thanks to a grant from the Fishergate Ward Committee. As well as the short biographies of the 86 men, the book tells the story of the school and its remarkable headmaster, George Barker, about whom you will hear more today. As he formally recorded the daily life of the school in his Log Book, Mr Barker also added notes and newspaper cuttings on the achievements of his pupils; their exam successes, jobs and of course, their military service.

We are very grateful to the school for allowing us access to the Log Book, which has allowed us to give a rounded picture of school life at the time. For example, did you know that one of York's leading Suffragettes taught here...?

Our readers will be telling the stories of a few of these men; the early years of the school, and the Fishergate they knew. The stories of the men will be told in the 1st person, which we hope will give you a more immediate connection with them.

We have not rehearsed this event, so please forgive any mishaps in our organisation! Despite the disruption of lives and teaching through the war years, the headmaster and his staff kept their focus on the education of their pupils, encouraging them to make the best of their lives. Those children carried the hope for a better future, just as they do today!

So.... We'll begin with Stephen Lewis, reading from a newspaper report of the first commemoration event, on Empire Day 1919....

2. Empire Day; 20 May 1919 Stephen Lewis, York Press

This report was published in the Yorkshire Herald, predecessor of the York Press, on 25th May 1919:

"The Empire Day Celebration at Fishergate School took the form of a welcome home to old boys, who have been demobilised from the Navy, the Army, and the Air Force. The Central Hall was gaily decorated with flags and flowers, and a large gathering of old boys assembled on the invitation of the present scholars and teaching staff, to spend an enjoyable evening.



The headmaster, Mr George Barker, presided and was supported by Miss McIntosh headmistress of the Infants' Department, and Mr J H Mascin, secretary of the Education Committee, and all the members of the staff of the infants' and mixed departments.

The Chairman read the names of 76 old boys who had given their lives for their country, those present respectfully standing at attention. Special mention was made of Harold Patterson, to whose father a posthumous presentation of the French Medaille Militaire and Parchment Scroll had been made. This, together with the British Military Medal, also awarded posthumously, was on view along with other records of bravery and conduct which have appeared in our columns during the years of the war.

It was stated that the school honour roll contained 470 names, and an appeal was made for information respecting any old boys who had served in the war.

A splendid programme, consisting of vocal and instrumental music, interspersed by elocutionary items was rendered by the following ladies and gentlemen: - Miss E B Barker, Miss Alya Dacre, Messrs J H Masca, R H Mason, G H Attenborough, Alan Peacock, Arthur Fryer, and Tom Connell. The efforts of these artistes were loudly appreciated. Mr Attenborough also very kindly acted as accompanist.

A vote of thanks to the artistes was proposed by Mr E H Stembridge, D.C.M., seconded by Mr R Percy Brown, MM, and supported by Mr Henry Vause of the Australian Contingent.

An excellent supper was served in the Infants' Hall and a happy and memorable evening was brought to a close by the singing of "Auld Lang Syne" and the National Anthem."

3. Walter Emerson's story Read by Judy Nicholson, FFH

My name is Walter, Walter Emmerson, from York, where I was born in 1882. I first lived in Elmwood Street, in Fishergate, where St George's School is today.

I live with my mother and father, three brothers George, Herbert and Frank and two sisters Daisy and Caroline. Daisy took ill when she was very young and died, we really miss her.

After that we moved to 18 Ann Street, right alongside the Cemetery. We used to get ragged at school for living next to the "dead centre" and we were glad when we moved to Alexander Street. All of us kids went to Fishergate School. I liked school, maths and learning about other countries was my favourite, oh, and football.

Dad works for the North Eastern Railway, first as a shunter and now as a guard in the Mineral Depot. Thanks to Dad and the people he knows when I left school I got a job with Foster Coverdale Mineral Water Factory off Hull Road, a bit boring but I always had fun with my mates, messing about, sometimes going to the swimming baths or for a drink after work.

In 1910 when I was 18, I signed up to join the navy with lots of other lads. Things were going to get exciting and hopefully I will get to see other places, better than loading bottles on a truck. Couldn't wait to get started. Mum wasn't too happy as my older brother was already signed up and away, I think he is going to join the HMS Tartar.



Being sent to Victory II, not a ship, but a training base in Portsmouth, was a wake-up call! However, it had to be done and we were not going to be sent to sea until we were fit and ready. The training was hard but fair and the food was good. I soon made good friends and we looked out for each other. I did miss home and Mum sometimes.

Before being posted to a ship's crew, I was sent on various ships to train, the HMS Renown, a battle cruiser, a training ship which was great and I wasn't sea sick, well only a bit! Then for a short while the HMS Roxburgh, an armoured cruiser, that was hard, but then I was sent to HMS Invincible a battle cruiser, which was part of the 3rd Channel Fleet and it really felt as if I was a proper sailor as we went round into the Mediterranean to Malta, I had my picture taken there to send to my Mum, she will be thrilled and show all her mates.

I am learning all the time and keeping my nose clean. I always wanted to get further than stoker and am now a leading stoker and working for petty officer rank, about to sit my tests. I am glad I joined the navy and can't wait to get a permanent posting.

At last!! I have my posting HMS Good Hope but of course the start of the war with the Germans and what is about to happen, is worrying but this is my job now and we will all do our best. We have been ordered south and here we are off the east coast of South America.

We were told today that we are to be the flagship for Admiral Craddock and to reinforce the 4th Cruiser Squadron and head further south. It is like going to the bottom of the world like the old explorers. I can't believe that this is really happening to me!! Evidently, we have some recruits from the new Canadian Navy with us.

We are going to go right round Cape Horn at the tip of South of Argentina and into the Pacific Ocean. Our job is to look for German ships which are attacking commercial shipping and trying to slip past into the Atlantic. The weather is terrible, this is getting real now and our part in the war is ready to start. We are looking for the Scharnhorst and the Gneisenau and many other warships under the command of Admiral Von Spee and we are now in the Pacific, off the coast of Chile.

The storms are terrible with force 7 gales and if this keeps up the Good Hope will not be able to use all her guns as half of them will be too close to the water. We have found the German fleet and are a battle stations, all our ships are lined up abreast and heading north to attack.

The guns have started firing and the noise is like nothing I have ever heard before. It seems all the German fire power is aimed at us. We are hit and afire, drifting and listing badly. There seems like no hope for us now.

The forward magazine exploded on the Good Hope and it sank in the Pacific with all 919 men on board.

The first sea battle of the War, the battle of Coronel. November 1st 1914

4. Unveiling the Memorial; 10 April 1924 Read by Verna Campbell, Sheriff of York

A local newspaper carried this report:

“The bronze mural tablet was unveiled on 10th April 1924 by Rev Jarvis, Assistant Chaplain-General to the Army Northern Command.

The ceremony was witnessed by a large gathering, among those present being Councillor E W Chapman, (Chairman of the Education Committee), who presided. The Rev. Canon Guy (vicar of Fulford), Dr Maus Sellars, the Rev. T Walton Meredith (Superintendent of the Wesley Circuit), Councillor J W Dow, Councillor A G Watson, Mrs Chapman, Mr F C Chapman (headmaster), Mr G T Barker (late headmaster), Mr H B Wrigley (assistant master), and Mr G H Gray (secretary to the York Education Committee).



The proceedings began with the hymn “O God our help in ages past.” Prayers were offered by the Rev. T Walton Meredith, and the lesson was read by Mr G T Barker.

The Chairman (Councillor E W Chapman), in his remarks, said that;

“the memorial is meant to be a perpetual reminder of the loyalty, devotion and heroism of the old boys from the school who have laid down their lives for their country. The best minds in the world are now engaged in trying to solve the problem of preventing such calamities as that which occurred in 1914, and they are pinning their hopes on the League of Nations. I believe that through the instrumentality of the League they will be able to devise the means which will make war impossible in the future.”

After the hymn “Fight the Good Fight,” Mr F C Chapman (headmaster) read the roll of names inscribed on the memorial.”

5. List of Distinctions (from the York Herald) Read by Colin Campbell, Sheriff's Consort

The following list of the principal distinctions gained by the old boys, was published in the Yorkshire Herald: -

Commissions – 20

Distinguished Conduct Medal - 6 – Harry Atkin,
Freeman Scurr,
Eli Stembridge, N H Sutton, Walter Vagg, Harry Wray.

Military Medal – 9 - R Percy Brown, Martin Caffrey,
Wallace Elland, Thomas Exelby, Leslie Gardner,
William Kendall, Harry Kelly,
John Peacock, George Shaw.

Medaille Militaire – 2 - Harold Patterson, William Vasey

Meretricious Service Medal – 2 - William R Beal, Gilbert Metcalfe.

Long Service Medal – 2 - George Backhouse, John Metcalfe



1914-15 Star – 8 - William R Beal, William Bonney, C Dunlin, W Dunlin, L Horseman, Wilfred Simpson, Percy Storey, Alfred Storey.

Distinguished Flying Cross – William Palliser

Croix de Guerre – William Palliser

Italian Decoration – Harry Wray

Mentioned in Dispatches – 4 - William R Beal, Harry Humphries, John Hutchinson, Gilbert Metcalfe

6. James Howard's story Read by Evie, Fishergate Pupil & Liz Morrell, former Fishergate pupil

I am James William Howard, only son of William and Martha. My father was from Norfolk, and my mother from Hemsworth near Wakefield.

I was born, as were my sisters, Edith and Alice, in Hemsworth, but we moved to York and my father started work as a typist for the Ordnance Survey at Fishergate House, just across the road from the school.

We were living at 38 Winterscale Street, just around the corner from Tower House where the Army Northern Command Headquarters was (now it's offices). Edith went off to work for the chocolate factory, and Amy and me were at Fishergate school, where I did well. When I left, I started work as an office boy for an accountant.

Now dad had worked for the Ordnance Survey since Hemsworth. And it was in the blood, because after I had a go at being office boy, I went to work for the Ordnance Survey too at Fishergate House, just across the road from the school.

The Ordnance Survey was part of the Army then and Captain Mozley was the divisional officer in charge in Fishergate House. But I got an idea that I wanted to be a soldier and I left a couple of years later and joined the 5th Battalion of the West Yorkshire Regiment.

This was before the War started, but when that began, with my trade as a surveyor, the Royal Engineers wanted me, and that's where I went in October 1914. That only left one superintendent and three draughtsmen at the York office, and it was the same in the other offices in Shrewsbury, Norwich and Belfast. The War effort needed all the surveyors it could get.

Well they want you here there and everywhere when you're trying to size up battlefields – so I got moved around the Field Survey Companies in France between September 1916 and April of 1918. At first there weren't many of us, but then they realised how important it was to have precise maps of the trenches, both ours and the Germans'. Of course, it wasn't helped that the French operated a different map measurement to us, metric - and with grids too, but we eventually harmonised ours with theirs. France, Germany, Russia, the Austro-Hungarians and the USA, they all had map-making operations, it was so important.



Yes, making maps was really crucial in wartime, you made them for your own lines, and for the enemy areas too. You do this triangulation of territory using theodolites, tripods and plane tables to create maps to show all the distances and types of terrain. There were different sorts of maps and survey information - line maps, photo-maps, sketch maps, trigonometrical lists, air photos, panoramas, to name a few - depending on where they would be used and who would use them. It all helped with operational intelligence and knowing about the enemy's defences and movements.

Our field survey maps overprinted the enemy defences on the topographical maps, so you could see what you were up against and where. We also trained our gunners in the survey techniques to work out from gun flashes how to target the enemy more precisely – using 'flash and buzzer boards' - as we called them.

Some of our maps got printed at Ordnance Survey HQ in Southampton, but later we were able to print them near the battlefields in France. This was the Overseas Branch of the Ordnance Survey, with women working in the units too.

And then surveyors were wanted up in the air to see the whole thing better.

At first they used tethered balloons, with a surveyor dangling in a basket, but aeroplanes could fly right over the German lines, which was better. There'd be two of us up in that little plane, the pilot and you, trying to work out the x, y and z coordinates and get them on the sketches. This was a big breakthrough in getting map accuracy, being able to see from above. At first our aerial photos weren't so good, but they soon improved.

The gunners on the ground used to call us their 'astrologers' because we could give them target co-ordinates, so they could send their shells accurately without having to warn the enemy by doing practice range-finding shots.

Then I was transferred to RAF 99 Squadron and made up to 2nd Lieutenant and became an Observer and Navigator, doing the bombing raids attacking German industrial targets. It was quite dangerous. Our squadron was supporting the allied ground offensive at Verdun in September 1916, a really tough battle for the French.

But by 1918 our squadron was suffering great losses, and we needed better planes than the de Havilland DH.9 bombers. We were going to get the faster DH.9A version, so they withdrew us on the 25th of September 1918.

But I had one last mission - on the 26th of September.

James William Howard died on the 26th of September 1918.
He was 22 years old.

He was buried at Charmes military cemetery south of Nancy.

He is remembered on three Ordnance Survey memorials;

- a stained glass window formerly at the London HQ,
- a covered plaque at the Southampton HQ,
- and a surveyor's trig pillar.

He is also in the King's Book of Heroes.

By the end of the war it was estimated that for Britain alone, 34 million maps had been made, 7 million of those by the Field Survey Units, and 22 million by the Ordnance Survey.

**7. Memorial unveiling speech by the Reverend Jarvis, Assistant Chaplain General, Northern Command
Read by The Rt Hon the Lord Mayor of York Councillor Keith Orrell**

This speech was given at the memorial unveiling by Rev Jarvis, Assistant Chaplain General, Northern Command, and reported in the Yorkshire Herald in April 1924.

Two minutes silence was reverently observed, and the Rev. Jarvis then withdrew the Union Jack which covered the tablet, and dedicated it to the glory of God.

In an eloquent address, the Rev Jarvis said;

“whatever the opinions about the war might be, it was through the sacrifices of those who went through it that the freedom of the people of this country has been preserved, and they must never forget it. England is England still, and the old city of York is theirs still and they are free, though life for some can never be the same again.

In 1914 we responded to the call. There was no alternative. We had to do it and we did it, and if there was no alternative we should do it again. Our liberty, our freedom, everything we held sacred and dear was at stake, and we defended ourselves, our women, and our children against the unsought and unprovoked attack.

What did the war cost us? We lost a million of our men – our best. Over nine million men were killed, and there were over 30 million casualties.

In 1914, our national debt was 708 millions, today it is over 8,000 millions. The interest on this is one million a day, and we are living on capital to repay it.

The question is, was it all inevitable? Was there no absolutely safe and effective alternative? That is the big problem the war has taught us, and which we have got to solve.

The lifework of the boys and girls today is to find and make effective a ‘moral equivalent’ to war. The old method has failed and stands condemned by nine million graves the world over; by hearts crushed by sorrow only death can heal; by conditions of life harder today than ever.

No. There is other work for men to do. The world conflict today is of a different character. For those who have eyes to see and a heart to understand, already the forces are marshalling within the shadows. A sordid soul-destroying materialism is threatening all thought and life, and the only hope for the future is a spiritual interpretation of life, embodied in the ethical standard and leadership of Jesus Christ – made effective in our lives and characters.

We have got to become more Christ-like, and just as we succeeded in the past, our problems will be solved.”

The service concluded with the hymn “Abide with me” and the vicar of Fulford, Canon Guy pronounced the Benediction. A number of floral tributes were placed at the foot of the memorial by relatives and friends.

The next day, the headmaster, George Barker, wrote in the school log book; ‘School assembled from 9.00 - 9.30 for the unveiling of the War Memorial.’



8. An early history of Fishergate School

**Read by Elizabeth Pitts,
Retired Assistant Teacher**

This is fine example of the York school buildings designed by Walter Brierley.

It opened on 12th August 1895, with over 1,000 pupils in attendance, and for the next ten years, an average of 975 pupils were registered. This meant there would be 60 to 70 children in each class, which was recognized by government inspectors as 'too large for effective supervision of each pupil'. But despite this, the education was excellent for its time, with many children going on to further study.



Mr George Thomas Barker was in overall charge, with Lydia Cara Powell responsible for the infants' department. In the first years of the school, the seniors were taught English, arithmetic, geography, history, singing, religion and physical training.

Boys were also taught elementary science, French drawing and manual instruction in wood, while the girls learnt domestic science, needlework and cookery. Hockey, football and swimming were the main sporting activities.

Compulsory schooling was a new concept and attendance levels were scrupulously monitored by the education authority, with inspectors examining the registers very frequently. Attendances dropped when the weather was bad and also when there were local events like the York races and fun fairs. The school closed for Empire Day, Royal coronations and funerals, and the Grand Yorkshire Gala, held in the grounds of Bootham Park.

Like the wider society, the school was beset by communicable sickness, including measles, scarlet fever, bronchitis, diphtheria and influenza, and serious outbreaks sometimes closed the school. The Headmaster's log book records these epidemics, and the teachers would often visit the children at home to check on their condition and confirm their absence.

In 1906 the school was renamed Fishergate Council School No. 6 and inspectors reported that scholars worked hard, spoke well and behaved well. Civic responsibility figured high, with lessons in patriotism, duty, peace, freedom, and the British Empire.

One of the leading York Suffragettes, Mrs Annie Coultate, was a senior teacher, and other teachers and former pupils were active in the Votes for Women campaign.

Miss McIntosh, replaced Lydia Powell as head of the Infants' Division before the war, and she continued through the Great War period, working closely with George Barker.

By 1910 there were three divisions in the school, senior (581), junior (123) and infants (280).

Most pupils left school at 14 to apprenticeships or other work, but some won scholarships to go to Archbishop Holgate's School and the headmaster and his staff took great pride in their achievements, erecting a panel in the hall which continues to inspire pupils today.

9. Thomas Peacock's story

Read by Beth, Fishergate Pupil

My name is John Thomas Peacock. I was a 2nd Lieutenant in the Royal Flying Corps.

I was born on 19th October 1895 in Stonegrave, near Helmsley. My parents were from nearby villages, but we soon moved to a little 2-up, 2-down house in Aldwark in York, close to Hunt's Brewery where my dad had found a job.

Most of our neighbours also worked at the brewery and I remember the 'knocker up' who made sure workers were not late for work. The brewery dominated the area with its looming buildings and the heavy smell, and men were constantly going up and down the street pulling carts of spent hops.

After a hard day's work, some of the men slaked their thirst at the Ebor Vaults – only just over the road from the brewery and the cheapest beer in the city!

I started my education at the Bedern National School, but I moved to Fishergate, where the teaching was much better. I did very well, and when I left, I got a job as an Articled Clerk with J H Turner's Solicitors in High Ousegate. In October 1914, I moved to York Records Office to work as a clerk, but I volunteered for the army in March the following year and was assigned to the Black Watch.

I did very well in my musketry and gymnasium tests and became a Sergeant-Instructor, training the new recruits and getting them fit for military service overseas.

My old headmaster took a keen interest in the progress of his pupils and he cut out an article about me from the Yorkshire Herald of 23rd May 1917, which reported that;

"Second-Lieutenant John Thomas Peacock, has been gazetted to the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry. He is the only son of Mr. and Mrs. John Peacock of 27, Aldwark, York and an old boy of Fishergate Council School. Lieut. Peacock is 21 years of age and his father is assistant brewer in the service of Messrs. J. J. Hunt, Ltd. with which firm he has been associated for twenty-one years."

I was promoted to 2nd Lieutenant with the Duke of Cornwall's Regiment, but later, I had the chance to join the Royal Flying Corps and was sent to Reading to learn how to be a navigator and observer. In 1918, I moved to Hythe, on the south coast, training in De Havilland DH9 bi-planes in preparation for flying duties in France with the 49th Squadron.

When we were sent to France, we flew bombing missions over the battlefields to support troops on the ground; dropping bombs on German artillery positions, bridges and other targets. We often flew very low and I had to drop the bombs over the side of the plane, as well as navigating and taking photographs.

The DH9 was supposed to be an improvement on its predecessors, but it turned out to be slow and easy meat for the fast German fighters. Lots of my friends were shot down – no parachute in those days! Either you jumped, or you went down with your plane. Sometimes the fuel tank was hit and the plane was a fire-ball, so the crew jumped – and a few even survived the fall! I was injured on one of these sorties and spent 4 months in hospital, but I recovered and re-joined the squadron at Rozay-en-Brie, south-east of Paris. This was July 1918, when the German Spring Offensive was still causing mayhem, pushing our side back.



Our planes bombed their positions and their make-shift bridges over the river Marne to supply their troops. We had to fly low to be able to see our bombing target, but this made us vulnerable to their fighters and gunfire from the ground.

We lost lots of planes and crew at this time, and I had only been flying again for 3 weeks when I was hit in the head by a bullet and killed on 15th July. I was just 23 years old. I was buried in the North Cemetery at Melun, to the south of Rozay-en-Brie and I am remembered on the memorials at Fishergate School and in St Cuthbert's Church; Peasholme Green.

My photograph is also in the King's Book of York Heroes.

10. George Barker, Headmaster, 1895-1921 **Lisa Solanki & Glenys Engleman,** **Fishergate Teachers**

George Thomas Barker was Headmaster of the school from its foundation in 1895 to his retirement in 1923. Born in York in 1860, he was the oldest son of Robert Barker and his wife Amelia.

Robert and Amelia had eleven children and between the censuses of 1871 and 1881, the family lived in Elmwood Street, now the site of St George's Roman Catholic Primary School. The census described George Barker's father as a coachman.

George went to St George's Wesleyan Day School as a pupil from 1865. This was a Methodist school in Walmgate, where local children paid a small fee to receive a basic education. He was obviously a very bright pupil, as he went on to matriculate at London University and was only 22 when he became Headteacher of his old school, now the George Street Boys' School. This was the start of a life spent in education.

He married Annie Louise Chapman in 1884 and they lived at 13 Melbourne Street. Nine years later, they moved to Westbourne Villa in Barbican Road, now the Barbican Hotel. The 1901 census records three children; Elsie, Sydney and John. His wife's sister, Emily Chapman, also lived with the family.

In the same year, the City Education Board made George Barker the head of the new George Street Temporary Board School, as the old Wesleyan School was re-named when it transferred to their management. From there, he was clearly the obvious choice for headmaster of the new school in Fishergate.

George was appointed to the city's Advisory Panel for implementation of the 1885 Education Act and was closely involved in planning the city's new schools. He was also the first teacher to sit on the City Education Committee.

We have learnt a lot about Mr Barker and his school from the log book he was required to keep, and it is clear that he took great pride in the achievements of his pupils, pasting-in newspaper cuttings recording their awards and events at the school. He also erected the



'Achievements Board' in the hall, headed by the motto *Finis Coronat Opus*, which translates as: The End Crowns the Work.

Names on the board include some of the men listed on the Great War Memorial and also George's daughter Elsie, who won a scholarship and then a 1st class teaching certificate. His son Sidney has five entries, and George's successor, Fred Chapman, is also listed for earning his teaching certificate in 1895. The plaque is still there and inspiring pupils today.

Underpinning his role in education was George's Methodism. A lifelong Wesleyan, he was a Superintendent at the St George's Wesleyan Sunday School and an active member of the Melbourne Street Methodist Church, holding various offices throughout his life.

His commitment to improving the lives of ordinary working people like him, is also shown by his involvement in the National Union of Teachers, where he was president of the York and district branch three times. He was also a Governor of York County Hospital.

All the Barker children attended Fishergate School; Elsie became a pupil-teacher at Fishergate and married the headmaster of Knavesmire Higher Grade School.

Sidney was a very high achiever, obtaining a PhD from Berlin University just before the outbreak of the war and spending the next few years as Vice Principal of a university in India, before returning and becoming research director of the Wool Industry Association. Their younger son, John, worked in a bank at Seaham Harbour.

His wife, Annie Louise, was also very involved with the church. She died in June 1920, which he recorded in a typically succinct log book entry on 2nd July "owing to the death of my wife I have been away from school since 24th June."

The York Herald reported that the school closed for the afternoon when George Barker retired on 27th March 1923. Pupils, teaching staff, councillors and local education officials gathered in the hall to pay tribute to his 51 years' service to education and present him with gifts, including an easy chair and a gate-legged table.

The newspaper reported that 'many of his old scholars held degrees and five headmasters of local schools had at one time or another been under his guidance and several old pupils held important positions in the civic and official life of the city....'

George Barker died only 5 years later, aged 69.

11. Max Dove's story

Read by Rosemary Newman, FFH

At Fishergate School no one ever called me Edward. I was always known by my nickname Max. The Headmaster refers to me as Max Dove when he writes in his school Log Book in January 1916 that I had gained my Commission as Lieutenant in the Army the previous year. I also appear as Max Dove on the School Memorial plaque.

Max was actually short for Maddison, my middle name and my mother's maiden name. She was Frances Annie Maddison before she married my father, Charles Edward



Dove, a Wesleyan Minister. They married in Co. Durham in 1884 when she was 23 and Dad a few years older.

I was born on 6 June 1895 in Liverpool, the youngest of their 3 boys, and baptised Edward Maddison. My brother Charles Kingsley, was 9 at the time and Sidney Ernest was 6. Dad was the son of an ironmonger in Wragby, Lincolnshire, and when he was 16 he was apprenticed to a tailor. However, by the time he was 26 in 1878 he had become a Wesleyan Minister. As such he moved around the country a lot. In 1881 he was at Darlington, and might have met my mother there. Or possibly at Bishop Wearmouth in Sunderland where she came from, as it has the oldest and largest Methodist Chapel in the area. Both my brothers were born in West Yorkshire, however, and by 1891 the family had moved to Staffordshire, then later to Liverpool where I was born.

When I was 6, Dad was the Minister at Brunswick Wesleyan Methodist Church in Moss Street. We had a quite a big house a few miles away at Newton in Markerfield, which had expanded with the industrial development in the Lancashire area. I was glad that our live-in servant Elizabeth had moved with us as I missed having my brothers to play with. They had both been sent away to Kingswood School in Somerset, a Methodist boarding school for the sons of Wesleyan preachers.

I went to Kingswood later on, but before then I spent some time at Fishergate School. We had moved to York around 1908 when Dad was involved in organising a conference and other Wesleyan events there. We lived at 3 Marlborough Villas, a large house overlooking Athe Ouse and New Walk. During WWII it was used for military planning including the design for 'Mulberry Harbour' for the D-day invasion.

I felt at home at Fishergate School as the Headmaster, Mr Barker, was an active Wesleyan and a well-respected figure in the local community. He was a strict teacher but kind and inspiring. His firm belief in us, his pupils, and in our futures helped me a lot later on, together with my faith.

I left Fishergate for Kingswood when I was 15, by which time my brothers had moved on. Charles was teaching in Manchester and Sydney working as a bank clerk and living with our parents in N.E. London.

After leaving Kingswood I went to train as a barrister at the Inns of Court in London, and while there, in 1915, I joined their Officers Training Corps which practised on Berkhamsted Common in Hertfordshire, digging trenches and learning general warfare tactics. It was hard work but good preparation for what was to come. Our motto was 'the safety of the people is the supreme law'; somehow it reminded me a little of Mr Barker!

By December 1915 I gained my Commission as Lieutenant in the 8th Brigade of the East Surrey Regiment. The regiment had been sent to France in 1915 and was still in the Somme area when I joined them later on that year, just after the disastrous Battle of Loos. We were still in the Somme area on 1st July 1916, the first day of the Battle of the Somme. The fighting was intense and the casualties the worst yet, with 57,470 British troops killed or wounded. But the 8th Battalion was one of few that managed to break through and hold their position. Two DSOs, 2 MCs, 2 DCMs and 9 MMs were awarded in recognition of our bravery and endurance.

Afterwards, the men often talked about what had happened at Montauban on that day. Captain William (Billie) Neville had provided his platoons with some footballs to kick across No Man's Land towards the German trenches. He, like so many lost his life that horrendous day, but two of the footballs survived and we kept them as regimental trophies.

My brother Sydney was already in France, a 2nd Lieut. with the Queen's Own (Royal West Kent) Regiment, when I landed, but fighting was intense and I had little news of him. Our older brother, Charles, later joined the Royal Garrison Artillery, but he had scarcely arrived before we learnt that Sydney had been killed in action on 16 August 1916 near Carnoy while touring the front line trenches. It was devastating news. I thought about our parents, especially our mother, with all her sons so far away, and prayed God would protect us and comfort her.

During 1917 we continued fighting on the Western Front at Ancre, helping to force the German retreat to the Hindenberg Line, taking part in the heavy battles in the area from St Quentin to south of Arras. On 22 March 1917 I was awarded the MC for 'conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty'. Leading my platoon in an assault after many other officers had been killed or wounded, we gained our objective and held out for more than 4 hours, inflicting heavy losses on the enemy. I knew my parents and Mr Barker would be proud of me, but many good and brave comrades perished that day and I just felt lucky to be alive.

We were once again in the Front Line on 21st March the next year, when the Germans started their Spring Offensive, aimed at breaking through the Allied Forces on the French border. Just before it began it was unnervingly quiet, and in the trenches at night, carried on the wind, we could hear the German trains and transport rumbling their great army.

Then it started. An unending bombardment of thousands of shells and poison gas. Our battalion lost 309 men and we were forced to retreat. Against the odds I found myself alive still, but not for long. For me the war ended just 2 days later, on 23 March 1918, killed in action.

I was just 23, never married, and the second son my parents had lost.

At least my brother Charles survived to return home to his wife Jessie who he had married in 1913. He picked up his career as a schoolmaster, but Jessie was older, a widow, when they married and they had no children.

The carnage and chaos of the Spring Offensive was so great that I have no known grave. I am commemorated on the Pozieres Memorial along with 14,657 British and S. African soldiers of who likewise have no known grave. We were all killed between 21 March and 7 August 1918. In England I have 2 memorials: the Fishergate School memorial and the Inns of Court memorial on Berkhamsted Common. My brother Sydney is commemorated in France at the Guillemont Cemetery Memorial and on the Joint City and Midland Bank Memorial at Canary Wharf.

It is good to be remembered.

12. The School During Wartime **Josh Burnell, Fishergate Teacher**

Education was immediately disrupted when the war began. The War Office requisitioned seven York schools for soldiers' billets, including Fishergate.

Urgent arrangements had to be made for lessons to be held in other locations such as Castlegate School, St George's and Melbourne Terrace Sunday School. Pupils also walked to lessons in halls at James Street and Alma Terrace, with sports held on an open area off Heslington Road.



But, by August the 31st 1914, Mr Barker was writing in the log book that they had 'resumed work in our own premises again this morning' and were retrieving the books and other equipment from the temporary premises.

This was not the end of the disruption and there were occasions when the school had to share the building with other schools.

Scarcroft Road school sent some of their senior pupils to Fishergate when the army commandeered their school in December of 1914. In the same month, Fishergate school closed three days early for the Christmas break as it had again been commandeered by the military.

Furniture was removed in October 1915, when the school closed for the autumn holiday, and when it reopened a week later, the log book described arrangements for senior classes to be taught at St George's School, Hull Road, James St Adult School and double shifts with Castlegate School. In January 1916 Mr Barker writes of himself teaching at St George's in the morning and Castlegate in the afternoon.

Some children left the school as their families relocated to other towns and the pupils who remained sometimes sewed up hessian into sandbags. Boys in woodwork classes made lockers, chart boards and embroidery frames for the wounded soldiers in Clifford Street Hospital. Pupils also raised money for 'Christmas comforts' for soldiers and sailors, a sum of £2-3s-8d being raised at Christmas 1915.

On 3rd May 1916 Mr Barker tersely recorded in the log book 'A Zeppelin raid on the city last night has ... reduced the attendance this morning.' A Zeppelin dropped a bomb on the Low Moor in Walmgate Stray in September 1916, and on Dec 1st 1916, he records that the previous night's Zeppelin raid on the city meant attendance was down to 450 pupils out of 702.

A page from the log book shows the many issues the school had to manage, as they relocated to other sites whilst continuing to teach the children. As well as removing all the furniture on the day the school closed for the autumn holiday, teachers also had to stage a demonstration of 'housewifery', attended by the Mrs Glew, the wife of Alderman Glew.

Lower down the logbook page the Headmaster records the death of a former Pupil-Teacher, Captain Robert Randerson, who surprisingly, is not included on the memorial, or the city teachers' plaque.

Boys, teachers and pupil-teachers joined up, or were conscripted, and the school celebrated their successes or mourned their death. George Barker pasted newspaper articles into the log book about whole families of brothers, or fathers and sons in the Forces, and also a soldier's delightful wedding photograph.

Having been the Headmaster since the school opened, he probably knew most of these former pupils and took a personal interest in their lives. But in strict adherence to the regulations covering log book entries, he never expressed an opinion. His true feelings slip through occasionally in entries like that on 1st June 1915, when he writes with quiet pride - 'this makes the 5th old boy who has been made an officer in the army'.

Despite the disruption of the war, the school maintained a strong focus on the education of its pupils. A page in the log book from August 1918 records with obvious pride that out of all the candidates from schools across York, Fishergate pupils won four out of the five scholarships to move up to Archbishop Holgate School to continue their education.

On the same page he also records the death of Private Tom Vause.

13. Edward Hope Hawthorne Read by Angela Johnson, former Headteacher of Fishergate School

My name is Edward Hope Hawthorne and I was a Pupil-Teacher at this school.

I was born in 1871 and my father, who was also named Edward Hope, worked at the huge glass works in Fishergate, just across the road from the school, where he was a foreman glass cutter. His brother also worked there as a glass engraver and we shared the little house in Whitby Terrace with my mother's brother, who was a saddler, and his family.

Quite a few Fishergate school children lived in the Terrace, but it's gone now. It was demolished after the 2nd War and replaced by the Horsman Avenue Council Houses, just behind the school field.

By the time I was 10, we had moved to 24 Sandringham Street, which was somewhat more spacious, especially as mum's brother's family had moved out. It was great living close to the river and when it flooded, I used to go and watch it pouring over the New Walk footpath. This was before Fishergate School was built, and I went to St George's Wesleyan Day School in Walmgate, where I took up the Wesleyan view of the world, trying to make a difference and live a positive, Godly life. I followed George Barker's footsteps to study at the Wesleyan Teacher Training College in Westminster.

I became a Certified school teacher and married a lovely girl, Margaret Richardson. We lived on the other side of the Ouse at 49 Millfield Road, off Scarcroft Road and named our firstborn Edward Hope, (following the family tradition!) and then we had another boy, John Eric. Later, we moved to Mount Parade near the present-day Mount School. I was around 40 years old by then and working at Shipton Street School. This was in the Bootham area near York Football Club and the headmaster was H B Morrell.

When Mr Morrell moved to the new Scarcroft School, he asked me to go with him. He said that I had a reputation as a most popular teacher, with a quiet demeanour and was greatly liked by my pupils – that felt nice!

As well as teaching, I joined the East Yorkshire Volunteers and the West Riding Artillery. I was with them for 18 years, and awarded a Territorial Efficiency Medal, but I eventually had to resign due to ill health.

Soon after war started, I was appointed the Head of York Scout School. It may seem strange today, but Scouts were used for all sorts of things during the war. They delivered messages for the War Office across the city and in July 1915, because so many men had left the land, they helped local farmers gather-in the harvest. And it wasn't just boys, Girl Guides delivered milk, tended allotments and did many other useful jobs.

After 28 days of helping with the war effort each Scout was awarded a War Service badge and by December 1914, only 5 months after war had started, 50,000 badges had been handed out across Great Britain.

I was also put in charge of York Volunteers Aid Detachment (VAD). These people were trained in nursing, transport of the wounded, setting up auxiliary hospitals, stretcher bearing and many, many other jobs looking after the sick and wounded.



In 1915 the Government agreed that these volunteers should join the Military Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC). And so, in February 1915, just six months after the war started, I enlisted and joined the Medical Unit of the Royal Naval Division.

Owing to my previous training, I was immediately despatched to the Dardanelles, joining the Anzac landing on the Gallipoli Peninsular. I was involved in getting out the dead and wounded while constantly under fire from the Turks, who held all the best positions.

To keep my spirits up, I wrote as often as I could to my family and friends, telling cheerful and amusing stories, but I also hinted at the awful conditions. In one letter, I said; *"if you can invent a decent fly catcher guaranteed to catch millions at once we shall all be grateful"*.

I had a very lucky escape on Christmas Eve 1915, when I was drinking a mug of tea and a bullet went straight through my tin mug! I couldn't drink tea from it anymore, so I sent it home to my family as a souvenir.

Gallipoli was a diabolical disaster for us, and being part of the Medical Unit, it was terrible seeing so many men killed and wounded or going down with disease. When it was hot, there were huge clouds of flies, and little clean water, but then it got very stormy and terribly cold. Eventually we were all evacuated, and I was sent to the Greek island of Mudros, which seemed like a trip to paradise after escaping from hell. It couldn't last though, and I was soon sailing through the Mediterranean to Marseilles and then by train north, to the battlefields of the Western Front.

I was much older than the men around me and the awful conditions at Gallipoli and sheer hard work of tending so many men, had taken a heavy toll on my health. In September 1916, I was taken ill and put on a hospital train to the military hospital in Boulogne and then sent back to the South General Hospital in Bristol, where my dear Margaret came to see me.

My army records say I was suffering from "polypus" in my right ear, which my family now interpret as septic meningitis.

I died in the Hospital in Bristol on 3rd November 1916. I was 45 years old.

My family arranged for me to be buried at York Cemetery, and my Commonwealth War Graves headstone faces the family headstone, inscribed in my memory and also my parents and my dear wife Margaret.

My older son, Edward, had joined the army after going to Leeds University, and was served with the Seaforth Highlanders in France. Thankfully, he survived the war. My story has been kept alive in the family, who have kept many of my letters.

14. Fishergate the men would have known Andy D'Agorne & Dave Taylor, Fishergate Ward Councillors

As well as the streets near the school, our research has found that pupils came from across the city and a wide range of social class.

Many lived in the very poor housing of Walmgate (now demolished) and the terraces off Lawrence Street.



They would have encountered the sounds, smells and mess of animals in the cattle market when walking to school, passing the sheep and cattle pens next to Barbican Road and along the foot of the city walls from Fishergate to Foss Islands Road. Where Waitrose is today, railway sidings brought hundreds of animals to the market and slaughter houses and a large tannery off Lawrence Street would have added to the smell.

During the war, requisitioned horses were collected at the market before being shipped off to France. Pubs, such as the Seahorse Inn and City Arms, had stabling for dozens of drovers' and farmers' horses and provided overnight accommodation.

There was a large flax mill behind the Royal Dragon Chinese Restaurant (formally the Spotted Cow public house). It's still there and has recently been converted into flats. Further north, in the James Street area, local men worked in the historic brick and tile making works.

Hundreds of men, including many former pupils and their fathers, worked in both highly skilled and labouring jobs at the glassworks. Barges brought coal and sand to a wharf on Brownie Dyke and its smoky chimneys, furnaces and workshops dominated Fishergate. The whole area was redeveloped in the 1980s when the Novotel and Fewster Way housing estate was built.

Fishergate School children learnt to swim at the Corporation Baths, which were on St George's Field near where the River Foss Pumping Station is today.

An exciting new form of entertainment was the City Roller Skating Palace (now the site of the Mecca Bingo Hall). As well as roller skating and roller hockey, people flocked to the concerts and variety performances which were held there. In 1913, the front part of the building was converted into a cinema, one of the first in York, and this was also very popular.

At least one of the men named on the memorial worked in the tram depot, where Aldi now is. Electric trams replaced the horse-drawn ones in 1910 and clattered between the city and newly built Northern Command Headquarters (on the corner of Marlborough Street) past the Barracks and terminating at the growing village of Fulford. Fishergate school children would have seen the workmen digging up the road to install new rails and erecting poles for the overhead electricity lines.

Career soldiers lived alongside civilian workers in the terraces near the Barracks. Families in these streets suffered terrible losses during the Great War, with more than 1 in 10 households in Hartoft Street losing husbands or sons, and many more were injured. It must have been scary to see the telegram boy turn into the street on his bike, wondering which house he would go to with his terrible message.

The terraces where many Fishergate pupils lived, had purpose-built interspersed among the houses and on street corners. And there were many more along Fishergate, selling most of the things people needed. Young school-leavers had their first taste of working life as delivery boys or shop assistants.

The Wenlock Laundry, in Ambrose Street, employed local women in a labour-intensive business used by officers and middle-class families. In 1913 the laundresses went on strike demanding improved hours and wages for their often twelve-hour-days. The strike was quickly settled for a weekly wage of 12s.

Fishergate does not have its own parish church and members of the Church of England either attended St Lawrence's or St Oswald's in Fulford. But Non-conformism was very strong among working people and many attended the large church on the corner of Melbourne Street

and Cemetery Road. There was also a Mission Hall in Alma Terrace. Catholics worshipped at the new St George's church, within the walls in George Street, and Nuns lived in the small Convent in Fishergate.

Military parades often passed the school, with Hussars in resplendent uniforms presenting an attractive sight to many an impressionable child.

Those who had been professional soldiers before the war were called-up, and became the first casualties as the German army swept through Belgium and northern France in the autumn of 1914.

15. Harry Wray's story

Read by 1st St Margaret's Brownies & Fulford Scout Leader, Chris King



Scarlett Shaw – Fishergate

My name is Harry Wray, and I became a famous rugby player.

I was born in Hutton's Ambo, near Malton, in January 1887. My dad was from the village, but my mum was a Yorkie, and we moved there soon after I was born. We lived in St Anne's Place. It has gone now, but it was a close-knit community of small houses off Cemetery Road, where Horseman Avenue is now. Quite a few Fishergate children lived there.

Dad was as a general labourer, and the hard work took its toll on him. He died when he was only 48, leaving my mother to look after me and my brothers and sisters. It was quite a struggle to make ends meet, so mum took a job working as a sick-nurse and she had to live-in with the family in Milton Street. The rest of us moved to Thomas Street, which is off Lawrence Street. It wasn't far away from mum, and my sister Edith took over at home. My oldest sister, Nellie, soon moved out and married a man from near dad's old village, leaving Edith, Annie, Fred, George and me.

Anya Atkinson – Fishergate School

I went to Fishergate School when it opened in 1895 and really liked the sports they did. I think this what got me started at playing rugby, which I took up later as a professional.

I left school at 14 and got a job as an Office Boy Porter, but growing up in Fishergate and seeing the smart soldiers marching around, I had always wanted to join the army, so as soon as I was 16, I signed up with the West Yorkshire Regiment – and I was sent to India. It was a long way from Fishergate and much hotter too!

Although I was doing well in the army and promoted to Corporal, I yearned to play rugby too, so I came out and joined Horton Rugby Union Club. I was there for a while, but in March 1914 I got a terrific break when I signed for Bradford Northern.

Keira Taylor – St. George's School

The club said; "I was a fine player, who had the reputation of being a sturdy scrummager, who never tired of hard work". They also said; "I was a redoubtable tackler, of an unselfish disposition, and possessed of a useful turn of speed and remarkable strength. I was an ideal centre three-quarter, and always dangerous when near the line." They must have really liked me!

When war broke out, I was recalled by the army and sent to the Non-Commissioned Officers' School of Instruction in York. But I was lucky. The army let me to keep playing for Bradford Northern too, so I played 6 games in the 1914/15 season and 7 in the next.

I was doing very well in the army too, and promoted to Company Sergeant Major, so I sent a signed photograph to my old school, as I knew they would all be pleased to hear about my achievements.

Clara O'Grady – St. George's School

But in 1917, I had to leave the Officers' School and was assigned to the 11th Battalion of the West Yorkshire Regiment and posted to the Italian Front.

The fighting was along the border between Italy and Austria, high in the Alps and down in the plane of the river Piave north of the Veneto. Italy had hoped it would be easy to push into Austrian territory, but soon got bogged down in the rugged landscape, where transporting men and weapons was incredibly difficult. By the end of the war, the Italians had lost over one million men. The fighting also ruined the lives of the local people too. Thousands were moved to refugee camps, where conditions were dreadful and many of them died of malnutrition and disease.

Alexis Denton – St. George's School

After the Russian Revolution in 1917, the Germans sent extra divisions to support the Austrians, and they pushed the Italians back, just like they did in France in the Spring Offensive of 1918. They even threatened to go all the way to Venice!

I got there just as winter was setting in and I don't think I have ever been so cold! We were stationed along the river Piave, us on one side, the Austrians and Germans on the other. You may have heard about this if you have ever read 'Farewell to Arms' by Earnest Hemingway.

He was there at the same time, working as a volunteer ambulance driver, and his description of the fighting and dreadful conditions are pretty accurate - and I'm not surprised he was badly wounded.

As 1918 wore on, the Spring Offensive had failed, and the Germans were collapsing on the Western Front. The Austro-Hungarian empire was also on its last legs. But the Italians and us British wanted to push them back as they fell apart, so yet another major offensive was launched.

The attack started on the 23rd October 1918 and I was killed on 29th, only four days before the Armistice, which was declared on 3rd November on that Front.

Sophie Sylvester St. George's School

My old headmaster, George Barker, cut out a page from the local paper and stuck it into his log book. They gave me a splendid write-up, saying;

“Followers of football throughout York and Northern Union circles, will regret to hear that Company-Sergeant-Major Harry Wray, the one-time York and Bradford forward, was killed in action on the Italian front on October 29th. For some time past, Sergeant Major Wray had served in Italy with the West Yorks. Regt. And in addition to securing the Italian silver medal for valour, he had been awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

A-Leader – Chris King, Fulford Scouts

The citation records the reason for my DCM like this: -

“On the night of 1st-2nd July 1918, when in charge of a party of 20 men, this warrant officer (that's me!) showed great qualities of leadership and resource. Imperturbable under fire, he set all ranks a fine example of dash, and was responsible for many prisoners being taken. Throughout the operation he kept his party thoroughly in hand and brought them back without a casualty. He had also done exceptionally valuable and dangerous work on patrol preparatory to the raid.”

I am also commemorated by the Bradford Bulls Rugby Foundation and my photograph is in the King's Book of York Heroes

I was one of the last Fishergate pupils to die. You can find my grave in Tezze British Cemetery, near the Piave river, alongside 365 other British soldiers. I was 32 years old.

My headstone reads: “God Gave and Quickly Gathered. R.I.P.”

16. Alice Sutton's story **Read by Barbara King, FFH**

You will have seen that there are three Sutton's listed as killed on the school's Great War memorial and these were all my boys. But luckily, one was listed by mistake and he came back home to me!

I was born Alice Hoare, in Portland, Dorset in 1866. As a teenage girl, I went into service in a lodging house in Melcombe Regis, Dorset where I fell in love with John. We were married in 1882 in Weymouth, a lovely seaside town in Dorset with army bases nearby dating from the Napoleonic wars.

John was 16 years older than me and came from Liverpool. He was a career military man and eventually served a total of 26 years, mainly in the West Yorkshire Regiment, but also in the Army Pay Corps, attaining the rank of Quartermaster Sergeant.

Edith was our first child. She was born in 1884, before we moved to York. When we arrived in the city, we lived in the Infantry Barracks on Fulford Road, but later we moved to 31 Fishergate, opposite where Festival Flats now are, where John established a family drapery business.



We were married for 25 years and I had 13 children before John died in 1908, just after our last son, Leslie, was born, leaving me with a large family and the drapery business to run.

With their father having been in the military, it was not surprising that five of our oldest boys, Harold, Frank, Arthur, John (who was known as Jack) and Charles, all joined the army - and they all served in the Great War.

I'll tell you something of their stories:

JOHN ERNEST SUTTON (JACK)

1895 - 1916

57442 BOMBARDIER - 24th ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY

Jack was the sixth surviving child of my family. He was 12 when his father died and like his brothers, he went to Fishergate School. But, when he was just 15, he wanted to be like his brothers and he joined the army as a trumpeter in the 24th Battery of the Royal Field Artillery, based at Bulford Hut Barracks near Salisbury.

The 24th Brigade was mobilised in August 1914 and sent across the Channel to serve with the British Expeditionary Force, which was fighting to stop the rapid German advance through Belgium and into France.

By early 1916, the Brigade was engaged with a number of diversionary attacks around the town of Ypres. This historic town was of huge strategic importance and had a wonderful 14th century Cloth Hall. This was a major historic landmark, but it was almost destroyed by shelling as battles raged around the town throughout the war, but I'm glad to say that it was re-built afterwards and stands today as a memorial to the death and destruction that was visited on the town.

The nearby town of Poperinge was one of only two towns in Belgium not under German occupation. Just behind the front line, it sheltered refugees and military hospitals, and billeted British troops.

My poor boy Jack was only 20 when he died of the wounds he sustained in action near Poperinge on 27th February 1916. They buried him in Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery and he was also commemorated in the King's Book and Fishergate School Great War Memorial. The Headmaster maintained a keen interest in his pupils and his log book contained records of many of his former pupils. He pasted this snippet into the log book from the Yorkshire Evening Press, which said...

"From the age of 15 Jack experienced life in the army rising to the rank of Bombardier with the Royal Horse Artillery and Royal Field Artillery. (A bombardier held a full non-commissioned rank equivalent to a corporal)."

Jack thought a great deal about his family and his will divided the little money he had saved equally, with each of us receiving £4 5s 2d.

CHARLES FREDERICK SUTTON

1896 - 1918

9826 PRIVATE, 11th BATTALION - EAST YORKSHIRE REGIMENT

My youngest son, Charles, was desperate to follow the family tradition and in 1910, he enlisted in the army at the tender age of 14. He joined the East Yorkshire Regiment and served as a private in the 11th (Service) Battalion (known as the 'Hull Tradesmen'). The battalion had been

formed at Hull in June 1915 and by December they were mobilised for war and embarked for Egypt to defend the Suez Canal.

In March 1916, they were posted to France and the Division engaged in various actions on the Western Front, where they remained for the duration of the War. One well known and bloody battle involved the Capture of Oppy Wood, between May and June 1917, where so many of the Hull Pals lost their lives. In fact, Hull lost more men on 3rd May than any other during the war.

There was no let up for the Division, and Charles' Unit fought in many of the battles on the Western Front. Charles survived right through until 28th June 1918, when he was killed. He was buried at Aval Wood Military Cemetery. He was only 21 years old.

HAROLD WILLIAM SUTTON

1888 – 1947

19980 A/CORPORAL - EAST YORKSHIRE

Harold was our eldest son and was first listed on the 1891 Census when we were living at the Infantry Barracks in Fulford with 4 children, all born in York; Edith 7, Ida 5, Harold (William) 2 and Frank (L) 5 months.

By 1901 my husband John, had come out of the army and we were supplementing his pension by running a drapery business from our 5 roomed house at 31 Fishergate. Our family had grown to 8 children; Edith 17, Ida 15, Harold (William) 12, Frank 10, (Arthur) Harry 8, John (Jack) 5, Charles (Frederick) 4 and Doris 2, so our lives were very busy. Fishergate School was just a short distance from where we lived, so it was easy for my school-aged children to get there.

Like his brother Charles, Harold enlisted at the age of 14, and joined the Army Service Corps. He was only 4' 10½" tall at the time and he seemed so young, but he was keen to follow his father into the army.

At the age of 18, he transferred into the ranks, but he was not as strong as he liked to think and only 2 years later, in 1908, he was discharged as being unfit for duties.

We were running the family drapery business by then and it was arranged that he went to London, to train with a draper in Farringdon Street, called Mr Tilley. But by the time war broke out, he was back in Fishergate working alongside me in the shop.

With so much recruitment going on around him, he re-enlisted in 1916 and joined the 11th Service Battalion of the East Yorkshire Regiment. He was very proud to be given the rank of Lance Corporal.

He was sent to France with his unit, but Harold was still not a strong lad, and he was admitted to No 11 Casualty Clearing Station, possibly at Varennes, on the Somme, on 12th March, to be treated for an inflammation of connective tissue in his heel. He was discharged back to duty on 23rd March 1917 and stayed on the Western Front, throughout the rest of the war.

It was comforting to know that at this time he was in the same regiment as his brother Charles. In the confusion of war, and the loss of his brothers, we feared that Harold had died too. But in 1919, Harold was still working as a Transport Class "A" driver for the Army Reserves, probably involved with clearing up the mess of war and recovering equipment.

With the death of his brothers and what with him still being away with the army in France, it seems the people compiling the list thought he had also died, so it was quite a shock to discover he had been named on the Fishergate School memorial.

By 1925 he was back home with me at 31 Fishergate, once again working as a fancy draper. He eventually outlived me and only passed away in 1947.

I couldn't let this moment pass without mentioning my two other boys, who both fought in the Great War and survived. Frank had attained the rank of Bombardier by 1914 and Arthur Harry met Royalty!

I'll just read you an abridged version of a remarkable article in the York Evening Press of 1914, headed....

THE KING AND A YORK HERO

Distinguished Conduct Medal and Promotion for Rescuing Three Wounded Gurkhas. Corporal A. H. Sutton, of the 42nd Brigade Royal Field Artillery, is to be awarded the DCM. The award was presented personally by his Majesty the King on the battlefield, and took the form of the medal for distinguished conduct in the field – a decoration only second to that of the Victoria Cross.

It was on Wednesday, 2nd December 1914, that Corpl. Sutton was summoned from the trenches to receive the medal at Locre, a tiny hamlet in the fighting zone of the western theatre of war.

His Majesty King George was there, as was the Prince of Wales, King Albert of Belgium, President Poincare and General Sir Horace Smith-Dorien. Field Marshal Sir John French was directing important operations at the time, and was, therefore, unable to be present at the ceremony.

The King, pinning the medal on the corporal's breast, said he was very pleased to be able to present to him a medal of such high distinction, and hoped Sutton would be successful to the end of the war. The King and his suite shook hands with Sutton, and those of his fellows who had been similarly honoured, and the function was at an end.

When I died in 1941, my home was at 3 Holly Terrace, overlooking the river Ouse. My eldest daughter Edith, who was also a widow, dealt with my effects, which were valued at £887. I had witnessed the horrors of the First World War, losing two of my boys, and I died in the middle of another war.

17. Closing Remarks

Louise Wheatley, FFH

(To be added soon)



18. Closing Poem
Read by Beth, Fishergate Pupil

(To be added soon)

