

War Memorials

In 1925 the war memorial was erected on the north wall of the church and the altar rails dedicated to the memory of those who returned safely.

Those lost from the village were:-

Richard Frederick Norreys Bertie

(pronounced Barty) served as a Lieutenant in the Berks Yeomanry and was killed in action, just four days before the end of hostilities, in Palestine. He is also commemorated on a brass plaque by the organ. Richard Bertie was the last of his family to own Weston. On his death his mother sold the village and the manor. His sister remained in contact with friends in the village until the second half of the 20th century.



Gilbert Boddington was the younger son of Henry Boddington. His older brother had volunteered but was turned down because he was profoundly deaf. Gilbert, born in 1895 was already part of the family business by 1914 and worked beside his father and brother as a carpenter and wheelwright, making and repairing agricultural machinery. They also offered general carpentry, building and decorating services. Gilbert had attended the village school and left in 1908 to attend a school in Oxford. On the 1911 census he gives his occupation as carpenter, working for his father. He volunteered for service in the 5th Btn Oxon & Bucks Light Infantry at the beginning of hostilities and served as a private. His letters home refer to his family and friends and to the much appreciated gifts of cake and socks. Gilbert died in Flanders on 19 June 1915, aged 20 and is commemorated on the Menin Gate, Ypres. His commanding officer wrote:- *"I am writing to express my*

deepest sympathy with you in the loss of your son, who was in my company. He was killed on the way up to the trenches when along the road with headquarter company a shell burst close to them, killing and wounding several. I was not there at the time, so very much regret that I can give you practically no details, but hope you will accept my sympathy." A letter from Gilbert's comrades stated ".....Gilbert was killed instantaneously by a shell, which blew those who were with him to pieces. That was an awful night; the Germans were using gas shells, and it was the first touch of the stuff we had had." L.Corp. F.G. Godwin, Ptes R Porter, A.J. East, W. East, G.W. Varney and F.G.M Hawkins (all local men).

Pte F.G.M. Hawkins himself was wounded and wrote home *"We have been in the firing line five days, and it is a warm place, I can assure you. I had one of my mates from Weston-on-the-Green killed as we were going up to the trenches. After we had been there a few hours I had a slight wound on the upper lip. I don't think this War can last very much longer. We see plenty of dead lying about on both sides. I am looking forward to a safe return, which, with a bit of luck, I shall have."* Newspaper reports of Gilbert's death list him as *"...lost without trace during the defence of the Ypres Salient..."*



Percy Butler was born in 1899, the son of Joseph and Florence Mary Butler. Joseph was a shepherd and, having lived in Weston with Florence's father (a boot maker) they subsequently moved just over the parish boundary when Joseph worked on Chipping Farm, Islip. Percy had two

brothers and a sister and he attended Weston school until 1910. He was 19 years old when he was killed in action on 31 May 1918 in Flanders. He is commemorated on the Soissons Memorial, Picardie and has no known grave. He had served as a Private in the Devonshire Regiment, 2nd Battalion.



Ernest George Butler was not born in Weston; in fact he didn't move here until sometime between 1911, when he was single and living near Henley with his parents and 1917, when he and his wife Gertrude had their son Frederick James baptised in Weston. Ernest George Butler served as a Private in the 8th Bn Royal Berkshire Regt and was killed in action on 24 August 1918 and is commemorated on Vis-en-Artois memorial. He has no known grave. He had enlisted in Bicester and had originally served in the Oxon and Bucks Light Infantry. After Ernest George's death, Gertrude remained in Weston and a second son, William George was baptised here.

Edmund Cox was born in Weston, one of the six children of William and Emma Cox. The Cox family are in the Weston records from the first half of the 18th century with the birth of the children of Henry and Elizabeth Cox – 5 generations before Edmund. He attended Weston school from 1888 to 1897, the family living in North Lane. In 1901 he and his older brother were living together in the middle of the village, their parents and younger siblings were next door but one. By 1911, Edmund had married Esther Douglas of Wolvercote and they were living at Little Chesterton. Edmund was employed as a farm labourer. He volunteered for service and joined the Royal Garrison Artillery 128th (Oxford) Heavy Bty and died 6 June 1916, aged 31 and is buried in Brandhoek Cemetery, Belgium.

In a letter written to one of Edmund's comrades who was away from the front, injured, the following record of life during the war is given:- *"I got your letter alright and am very pleased to hear that you are doing well. I hope you will be fit again soon and be able to come back to us. Don't forget to write and let me know when you are convalescent and fit to return. I have bad news for you as far as the others went. Drivers Bryan, Cripps and Cox were all killed instantly. We buried them the following day in the Brandhoek cemetery. A number of the men attended and we had a jolly decent parson. I have given your letters to your brother so far but will send them on in future to you. You will be pleased to hear that we have given the Hun a bit of a shake up here and are holding all we have got. Write again and let me know how you are going on"*.

Ralph Porter was a Private in the Oxon and Bucks Light Infantry, 5th Btn. He was killed on 15 September 1915, aged 25 and has no known grave. He is commemorated on the Menin Gate, Ypres. He was the son of Albert and Charlotte Porter of Neepawa, Manitoba, Canada but gave Chesterton as his home at the time of enlisting. The 5th Btn arrived in France in May 1915 and Ralph had served in the front line for just one month before being killed. Albert and Charlotte Porter, originally from a long-standing Weston family, lived (along with another family) at what is now Walnut Tree Cottage. There is a possibility that the family went to Canada early in the 20th century and that Ralph returned and enlisted after the outbreak of war. Certainly he had a lot of family, and had grown up in Weston, so rightly deserves to be commemorated on our memorial.

Albert and Charlotte received a letter from a chum of their son saying he had been killed. *"...it was Ralph's wish that I should let you know if anything happened to him, and he was killed when we were attacking the Germans. We had captured their trenches and had got into them when Ralph was hit in the head, and died without any pain.....I was his chum in England, and we stuck together always. I was younger than he, and he was*



always getting me out of trouble, and was never afraid to do anything. He was the best chum anyone could have."

William Wise and **Thomas Wise** (below) were brothers, two of the eleven children of John and Harriet Wise. The census returns of 1881 and 1891 show John and Harriet and their growing family in Weston. William and Thomas and their father John were farm labourers. William was born in 1879 and Thomas, the youngest of the family, in 1894.

Thomas was a private in the Oxon and Bucks Light Infantry, 2nd Bn and died of wounds whilst a prisoner-of-war, on 21 April 1918 aged 24. He is buried in Cambrai East Military Cemetery.

William Wise had been a Gunner in the Royal Field Artillery and was wounded and eventually hospitalised in Cardiff. He wrote to Haman Porter, in Weston, asking if he could have some of his *'club money'*. He needed this money to buy tobacco. The *'club'* referred to was a form of social security which many men in Weston paid into on a weekly basis and drew out payments in the event of illness or injury making it impossible for them to work. Haman was in charge of the club at this time. William finally returned home, although how much of his previous health he recovered is not known. At the time of writing to Haman he mentions that he was *'a little better can walk a little way at a time'*. However, he died 13 May 1921, aged just 41 years from TB and heart failure and was buried in Weston churchyard and honoured with a Commonwealth War Grave monument. It was at his parent's request that the inscription (usually a short dedication) should include a reference to his younger brother buried at Cambrai.



A second war memorial tablet was installed and the gates at the eastern entrance to the churchyard were erected after the Second World War (1939-1945)

Those honoured are:-

Gilbert Boddington (see picture on reverse) was the nephew of the Gilbert Boddington who died in the First World War. Thus his father – Reginald Boddington lost first his younger brother and then his only son in the two world conflicts. Sapper Boddington died 15 October 1944, aged 25. He had served with the Royal Engineers 271 Field Coy and is buried at Coriano Ridge War Cemetery, Italy. The Allies, during 1944 and 1945 were engaged in the struggle to push the enemy up the length of Italy and back into Germany. Coriano Ridge is a few miles from the Adriatic end of the German defences on the Gothic line south of Rimini. Born in 1919, the second child of Reginald and Eva Margaret Boddington, Gilbert had attended Weston school, receiving a good report in the wood-working class – only to be expected in the son of the village carpenter and wheelwright. He left school in 1933 and from then on he worked with his father in the family business.

William Henry East was the son of William and Ethel Katie East, born 1920, William Henry had two brothers and one sister and was descended from a line of Easts detailed in the church records, beginning with Thomas East born about 1766. In fact he was second cousin to the Wise brothers lost in the First World War. He had attended the village school, leaving in 1934 and worked for a company involved with developing satellite airfields locally. William served as a Guardsman in the Coldstream Guards, 4th Bn which, from 1943 onwards was a motorised armoured division. He died 6 April 1945, just a month before the end of hostilities at the time the Allies were engaged in liberating European countries. William is buried in the Reichswald Cemetery, Germany close to the Dutch border and near the point at which the Allies were attempting to cross the Rhine.



Basil Mitchell died, aged just 19, on 1 November 1940. He had served as Aircraftman 2nd Class in the RAF Volunteer Reserve and died in an accident near York. His parents Ernest F and Annie Mitchell chose to have him buried in Weston. The Mitchell family first appears in Weston's records in the 1930s. Ernest and Annie Mitchell had four sons. The Mitchell brothers had attended Weston school, Basil left in 1934.

Rex Pinson (Richard Norman Pinson) was the son of Norman Albert and Lilian Edith Pinson of Weston. He was 24 years old when he died on 17 August 1944 and had attended Weston school. Apart from the usual records in the school log, he was noted as attending the woodwork class and was entered for the scholarship exams. Rex served in the 7th Bn of the Oxon and Bucks Light Infantry and is buried in the Ancona War Cemetery, Italy, some miles south of the Coriano Ridge Cemetery where Gilbert Boddington was buried two months later.

L-R Gilbert Boddington, Bert Giles, Basil Mitchell, Rex Pinson

