

The First World War and Goldington, 100 years on – December 1918

Continuing the occasional series of articles to add some detail to the scant information on the First World War memorial in the church porch and to mark one hundred years since each individual soldier fell:

The Armistice may have been signed back on 11 November, but the war claimed one more casualty in December 1918 to add to the Goldington Memorial Board. His name was **Private George Townsend**.

George was not native to Goldington. He may never even have visited. He was born 5 May 1883 in Hanworth, Middlesex, to James and Betsy Townsend. George was the middle son of three as well as having three elder sisters.

In 1905, aged 22, George married Ada Buck from Goldington and this is the link that resulted in his inclusion on the memorial board.

Ada was the sixth of seven children born to Henry and Jane Buck in Goldington. Henry was an agricultural labourer and Jane a laundress. It seems Ada followed her mother into the laundry business and moved away from home. By the time of the 1901 census she was working as an ironer / laundry-woman in Berkshire.

By 1911 George and Ada were living in Isleworth with two daughters. George was working as a market gardener's labourer.

George joined the 7th Battalion, East Kent Regiment. We don't know when he joined but the records indicate that he died on **17 December 1918** of wounds received as the result of an accident – although there is nothing further on the particular circumstances. He was aged 35.

He is buried in the Busigny Communal Cemetery Extension in France, near Saint Quentin. After the death of her husband, Ada appears to have returned to Bedford and was subsequently living in Clapham.

These articles have hopefully shed a little more light on the 29 soldiers named on the memorial board so that they can be remembered as individuals. But the memorial lists only those, like George, who were lost in the war.

The memorial only scratches the surface of the wider impact of the war on those who afterwards had to cope with the tragic consequences – people like Ada who had lost loved ones, or the unnamed soldiers who had fought, survived and returned but perhaps bearing wounds and / or experiences that would haunt them for the rest of their lives.

Thus the memorial board is a reminder of the survivors and the bereaved, just as much as the fallen few.

Lest we forget.