

ST. ALBANS SOUTH SIGNAL BOX

ARMISTICE COMMEMORATION

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ST ALBANS RAILWAY WORKERS

A report in collaboration with St Albans Signal Box Preservation Trust on commemorating the railway workers of the Midland Railway Company from St Albans who died in the Great War.

- *Midland Railway War Memorial*
- *St Albans workers memorials*
- *Commemoration of local servicemen*

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Note: This document was republished in 2023 to include substantial additional research and correct some earlier errors. A significant biography of each Serviceman is now included and the text on the memorial updated.

Note2: Further additions and amendments were made in 2024 to include research on the ancestry of the workers and contact with possible relations. Full records are contained in an annex - 2024 commemoration ancestry.doc.

Introduction

The 11th November this year, 2018, will be the 100th anniversary of the Armistice, signed at 11:00 am. This brought to an end the Great War (1914-1918). It is a significant anniversary and the year is marked by many commemorative events organised by Government, the armed forces, national bodies, churches and community groups.

Initiatives are publicised, organised and supported across government (the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government). National organisations include the BBC, Historic England, the Arts Council, the British Library, the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Imperial War Museum and the War Memorials Trust.

These initiatives include a very wide range of activities, but in particular encourage local engagement between communities and interest groups. The survivors of the war are all gone now, but they live-on in the memories of many older people who would wish to pass-on the lessons of those times and take the opportunity to commemorate the sacrifice of these servicemen and their communities in the Great War.

As a heritage organisation and in support of these commemorations, the St Albans Signal Box Preservation Trust, has undertaken research into the servicemen who were railway workers at St Albans and died in service during the war. In addition, the trust, having restored the (Grade II listed) St Albans South Signal Box and grounds and successfully operated them as a public heritage asset for 10 years now, will be opening the box and grounds on the 11th November. Options for a commemoration on that day are therefore being considered.

One area of the research, was looking at the war memorials in St Albans. It is interesting that many

streets and two factories in the City centre erected memorial plaques to the residents and workers. These memorials are in the care of the local City and District Council under their City Neighbourhoods Committee which has oversight of the budget for their preservation. There are some thirteen memorials of this type, two of which are close to the station at the site of former track-side factories. The station does not itself have a plaque, rather, the Midland Railway has a memorial to all staff at Derby.

This document sets out the results of the research undertaken by the trust and discusses options for the commemoration.

Servicemen of the Midland Railway

The importance of railways in the conduct of the Great War cannot be overstated. Earlier European and American wars in the 19th Century demonstrated the importance of railways for movements of troops and supplies, but it was here in 1914 that war would become fully industrialised.

Trench warfare relied on the supply of millions of men and shells and all their associated weapons, supplies and infrastructure. With railways, the battlefield was only hours from the factories that sustained the conflict. The volume of materials that were moved would have been unimaginable to commanders more familiar with the mounted forces and horse transport of earlier times.

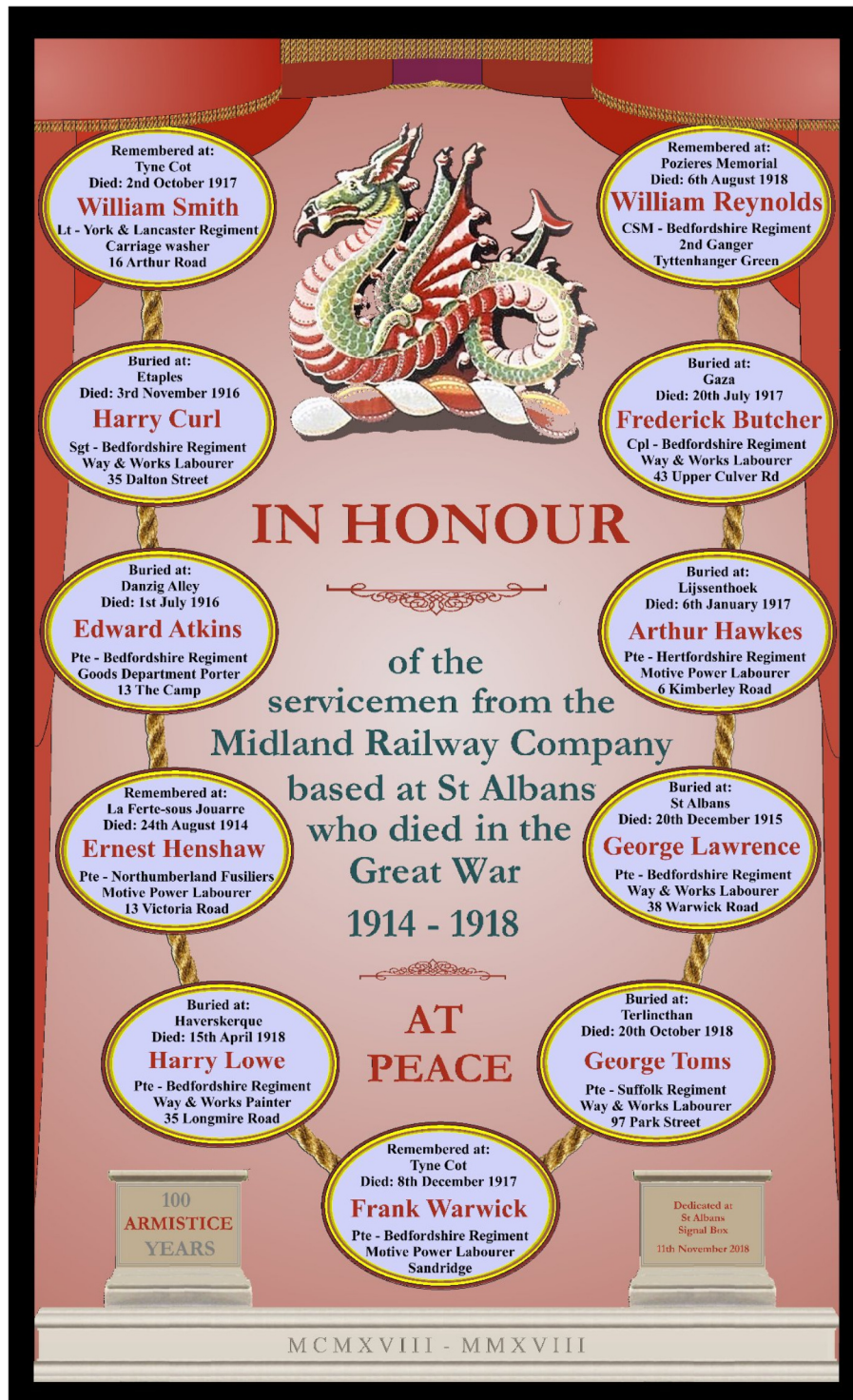
Although many railway workers would serve in all kinds of units, the importance of their skills in the war effort was significant. The Midland Railway released some 30% of their labour force (23,000 men) to the services. Of these, some 7,000 were injured and 2,833 killed.

The deaths in service of former employees of the Midland Railway Company are memorialised in Derby. The monument includes bronze plaques listing the names of the dead but in addition, the Midland Railway published a book of remembrance, a copy of which was sent to the family of each of the men listed on the memorial.

The book contains details about each man's occupation company, their home-depot, regiment and military rank. These materials and research in on-line ancestry services and census records has allowed the identification and location of eleven servicemen who were based at St Albans.

Servicemen from St. Albans

The servicemen identified as coming from St Albans, place of burial or remembrance, follow:



Edward Walter Atkins

Buried at: Danzig Alley

Died: 1st July 1916

Pte - Bedfordshire Regiment

Goods Department Porter

13 The Camp

Edward Walter Atkins was born in Smallford, Hertfordshire, on 29 June 1893, son of Walter Atkins who was employed in the Building Trade and Ada Septimar Atkins (nee Bishop). One of eleven children, although one died in infancy.

He was registered and Baptised Walter Edward Atkins but went by Edward Walter Atkins. The Baptism took place at St. Marks Church, Colney Heath, Herts, on 26 November 1893.

1901 Census records Edward aged 7, living with his Aunt and Uncle, Annie and George French in, Upper Street, Islip, Oxfordshire.

1911 Census see's Edward back living with his parents, and seven siblings at, Meadow Cottages, Smallford, Herts. He is employed as a Brickmaker's Labourer.

The Trade Union Members Register for The National Union of Railwaymen records Edward joining the St. Albans, Branch, on 3 May 1914, aged 20, he was employed as a Goods Porter, by The Midland Railway Company. The Register also records "Killed in Action 1/7/16".

Edward married Ethel May Whitmore in St Albans, Herts in 1914, They had one daughter Kathleen Lavinia Atkins born in 1915.

War Service

Edward enlisted at Bedford, posted to the Bedfordshire Regiment with the service number 20789. Serving on the Western Front with the 7th Battalion. He was killed in action on 1 July 1916, at the Battle of the Somme – (Battle of Albert). (1 July to 17 November 1916) The Battalion was in the front line, in Carnoy trenches.

Other Info

Ethel received a widow's pension of 15/- a week from 22 January 1917, for herself and daughter Kathleen, she also received his effects of £4-4s-8d, Pay Owing and his War Gratuity of £4.

Ethel remarried in 1920 to Frank Cox, they lived in Camp Road, St Albans. Edward married Ethel May Whitmore in St Albans, Herts in 1914, They had one daughter Kathleen Lavinia Atkins born in 1915.

Frederick Butcher

Frederick Ernest Butcher was born in St. Albans, Hertfordshire, on 5 March 1887, son of Frederick Ernest Butcher and Florence Butcher (nee Kimpton). One of twelve children, though five died in infancy.

Baptised in the Parish of St. Peter, St. Albans, Herts, on 31 July 1887.

1891 Census records Frederick aged 4, living with his parents, brother Charles (6) and sister Florence (3 months) at, Zennor Road, Streatham, London/Surrey. Florence died in 1893.

1901 Census records the family back in St. Albans, Frederick aged 14, living with his parents, and four sibling's at, "Fronfield House", 4, Grosvenor Road, St. Albans.

1911 Census records Frederick aged 24, single, his occupation is given as a Platelayer on the Railway, living with his parents, and five siblings in, Upper Culver Road, St. Albans.

The Trade Union Members Register for The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants, records Frederick joining the, St. Albans, Branch, on 2 February 1913, aged 25, he was employed as a Platelayer by The Midland Railway Company.

War Service

Frederick enlisted at St. Albans, Herts, posted to the Bedfordshire Regiment with the service number 15883, joining the 5th Battalion. In May 1915 the 5th Battalion was

Buried at: Gaza
Died: 20th July 1917

Cpl - Bedfordshire Regiment
Way & Works Labourer
43 Upper Culver Rd

stationed at St. Albans. They were issued with hot climate uniforms and mobilized for war.

The Battalion left Devonport on 26th July 1915, for Gallipoli with a brief stopover in Alexandria, Egypt on 6th August 1915, then on to Mudros arriving on 10 August 1915, disembarking at Suvla Bay on 11 August 1915. On 15 August the Battalion was involved in the assault on Kiretch Tepe Sirt and engaged in various actions against the Turkish Army.

The Battalion left Gallipoli for Mudros on 4 December, due to severe Casualties and illness. On 14 December 1915, the Battalion left for Egypt aboard the S.S. Alaunia, arriving on the 18 December, to defend the Suez Canal in 1916. In 1917 Frederick saw action at the 1st Battle of Gaza in March 1917 and the 2nd Battle of Gaza in April 1917. He was killed in action on 20 July 1917, possible while at Umbrella Hill. At the time of his death, he was Acting Corporal.

Other Info

His mother Florence received a dependents pension of 13/2 a week for life for the loss of two sons, Frederick & Albert. His effect of £5-13s-11d, Pay Owing and his War Gratuity of £14-10s-0d, also went to his mother Florence.

His brother Private 10747 Albert Edward Butcher, of the 2nd Battalion, Bedfordshire Regiment, was killed in action on 24 December 1917.

Harry Curl

Harry Curl was born in St. Stephen, St. Albans, Hertfordshire, (some documents give place of birth as Shenley, Herts), on 18 April 1884, son of Frederick Curl, a Gardener and Margaret Curl (nee Elsegood). One of six children, Although one died in infancy.

He was Baptised on 1 June 1884, at Holy Trinity Church, Frogmore, Herts.

1891 Census records Harry aged 6, at school, living with his parents and brother George (4) and sister Ethel (2) in, Prospect Road, St. Stephen, St. Albans, Herts.

1901 Census records Harry aged 16, working as a Farm Labourer, living a home with his parents, and four siblings at, Newgate Cottages, Sandridge, Herts.

Harry married Nellie Bacon of St. Albans, the daughter of Robert and Ellen Bacon, in 1907, in St. Albans. They went on to have four children, Alfred Frederick (1908), Ethel Primrose (B 1910), Arthur Noel (B 1911 and Irene (B 1917).

1911 Census records Harry married to Nellie, they have two children, Alfred and Ethel, they were now living at, 47, Brent View Road, Hendon, Middlesex.

Buried at: Etaples

Died: 3rd November 1916

Sgt - Bedfordshire Regiment
Way & Works Labourer
35 Dalton Street

He was employed as a General Labourer on the Railway. At the time Harry enlisted, the family were back living in St. Albans.

War Service

Harry enlisted at St. Albans, Herts, posted to the Bedfordshire Regiment with the service number 16147. On completion of his training, he sailed for France with the 8th Battalion arriving on 30th August 1915, seeing action at the battle of Loos.

In 1916, the Battalion saw action at the Battle of Flers-Courcelette (15th – 22nd Sept 1916), Battle of Morval (25th – 28th Sept 1916), and the Battle of Le Transloy (1st – 16th Oct 1916).

Harry died on 3 November 1916, from wounds received in action. At the time of his death, he held the rank of Sergeant.

Other Info

Nellie received a widows Pension of 31/3 a week from 7 May 1917, for herself and the four children, her pension card records the family were living at 35, Dalton Street, St. Albans. She also received his effects of £5-8s-10d, Pay Owing and his War Gratuity of £12.

Arthur Hawkes

Arthur Hawkes was born in St. Albans or Lemsford, Hertfordshire, (depending on the document) in late 1893, son of Arthur and Minnie Hawkes. He was one of eleven children.

1901 Census records Arthur aged 7, living with his parents, and seven siblings in, Park Lane, Colney Heath, Herts.

1911 Census, Arthur is working as a Farm Labourer, living with his parents, and six siblings in, Park Lane, Colney Heath, Herts.

The Trade Union Members Register for the National Union of Railwaymen records Arthur joining the St. Albans, Branch, on 13 July 1913, aged 19, he was employed as a Labourer by The Midland Railway Company.

Buried at: Lijssenthoek

Died: 6th January 1917

Pte - Hertfordshire Regiment

Motive Power Labourer

6 Kimberley Road

War Service

Arthur enlisted at St. Albans, Herts, posted to the Hertfordshire Regiment with the service number 1856.

The Battalion was mobilized for war at the beginning of November 1914, leaving Bury St. Edmonds by train on 5 November 1914. They embarked that evening aboard the SS "City of Chester" sailing at midnight for Le Havre, France, arriving the following morning 6 November. They disembarked and marched to No. 2 Rest Camp, about a 3½ miles march.

Seeing action on the Western Front. He died at No. 17 Casualty Clearing Station on 5th/6th January 1917, (depending on the record) of wounds received in action.

Other Info

His mother Minnie received a dependents pension of 5/- a week from 17 July 1917. His effects of £5-17s-6d, Pay Owing and his War Gratuity of £11, went to his father Arthur Hawkes.

Ernest Walter Henshaw

Ernest Walter Henshaw was born in St. Albans, Hertfordshire, in early 1884, son of Walter James Henshaw and Elizabeth Henshaw (nee Fuller). He was one of eight Children

He was Baptised on 27 January 1884, at Saint Peters Church, St. Albans, Herts, with his twin sister Alice Elizabeth.

1891 Census records Ernest aged 7, living with his parents and five siblings in, Victoria Road, St. Albans, Herts. His aunt Martha Blunt, a Nurse, was living with the family.

1901 Census records Ernest working as a General Shoe Hand, living with his Parents, and Six siblings at 13, Midland Terrace, Victoria Road, St. Albans, Herts.

1911 Census records Ernest (as Walter) aged 27, single, and a Private in the 1st Battalion, Northumberland Fusiliers, serving in India.

In 1913 his father William James Henshaw died aged 54. The Trade Union Register for the National Union of Railwaymen records Ernest joining the St. Albans, Branch on 2 November 1913, aged 28, he was employed as a Cleaner by The Midland Railway Company.

In the early part of 1914 Ernest married widow Florence Isabella Goulden in Loughborough, Leicestershire, they had one child Dorothy Elizabeth Henshaw.

Remembered at: La Ferte-sous Jouarre

Died: 24th August 1914

Pte - Northumberland Fusiliers
Motive Power Labourer
13 Victoria Road

War Service

At the outbreak of war Ernest was still on the Army Reserve list, he was mobilized for war service and re-joined his old regiment, 1st Battalion, Northumberland Fusiliers, with the service number 1654.

At the time the 1st Battalion was stationed at Portsmouth, Hampshire, were Ernest joined them. They were mobilized and landed at Le Havre, France, on 14 August 1914. They were assigned to the 9th Brigade, 3rd Division BEF, and remained with it throughout the war.

The Battalion was at the Battle of Mon's, 23 August 1914, and the subsequent rear-guard actions. Ernest was killed in action on 24 August 1914, during the retreat from Mon's.

He has no known grave and is commemorated on the La Ferte-Sous-Jouarre Memorial to the Missing in France.

Other Info

Florence received a widows pension of 17/6, a week from 29 May 1915, and his effects of £5-4s-9d, Pay Owing and his War Gratuity of £5.

George Herbert Lawrence

George Herbert Lawrence was born in Sandridge, Hertfordshire in 1882, son of Walter Lawrence and Emily Lawrence (nee Franklin). He was one of eleven children, though two died in infancy.

He was Baptised on 29 October 1882, in the Parish Church Sandridge, Herts.

1891 Census records George aged 8, at school, living with his parents, and five siblings in, Heath Terrace, Sandridge Road, Sandridge, Herts.

1901 Census records George's occupation as a Ground Labourer, aged 18 and single, living with his parents, and seven siblings in, Heath Terrace, Sandridge, Herts.

1911 Census records now working as a Platelayer on the railway, aged 28, and single, living with his parents, and four siblings. The family were now living at "Rosedale" Warwick Road, St. Albans, Herts.

The Trade Union Register for The National Union of Railwaymen records George joining the St. Albans Branch

Buried at: St Albans

Died: 20th December 1915

Pte - Bedfordshire Regiment
Way & Works Labourer
38 Warwick Road

on 2 February 1913, aged 30, he was employed as a Platelayer by The Midland Railway Company.

War Service

George enlisted at Bedford, posted to the Bedfordshire Regiment with the service number 22735.

The 3rd Battalion was a Home Defence Unit part of the East Coast Defence Force. Regular soldiers recovering at home from wounds received in action were also posted to the 3rd Battalion.

George died at home, 38, Warwick Road, St. Albans, on 20 December 1915, aged 33, he is buried in St. Albans (Hatfield Road) Cemetery.

Other Info

His effects of £2-14s-00d, Pay Owing went to his father Walter Lawrence.

Harry Lowe

Harry Lowe was born in Luton, Bedfordshire, in 1890, son of Henry Lowe and Maria Lowe (nee Snoxell). The eldest of eight children, although one died in infancy.

1891 Census records Harry aged 1, living with his parents, and 3-month-old sister Agnes in, Old Bedford Road, Luton, Beds.

1901 Census sees Harry (11), his parents, and four siblings living at, 1, Park Way, Luton, Beds.

1911 Census records Harry (21), employed as a Painters Labourer, single, living with his parents, and five siblings at, 35 Longmire Road, St. Albans, Herts.

The Trade Union Register for The National Union of Railwaymen records Harry joined the St. Albans Branch on 2 March 1913, aged 23, he was employed as a Fitter, by the Midland Railway Company. The Register also records "Died on Service".

Buried at: Haverskerque

Died: 15th April 1918

Pte - Bedfordshire Regiment

Way & Works Painter

35 Longmire Road

War Service

Harry enlisted at Bedford, posted to the Bedfordshire Regiment with the service number 48023. Serving with the 1st Battalion on the Western Front.

He was killed in action on 15 April 1918. The Battalion War Diary records they were in action at the (Battle of Lye – The Defence of Nippe Forest) (9 -29 April 1918).

An entry from the War Diary for 15 April 1918, reads - *In trenches artillery light, casualties 1 killed and 4 wounded.* Possible Harry Lowe killed in action.

Other Info

His mother Maria received a dependents pension of 7/- a week from 5 November 1918. (The pension record card has his mother as Elizabeth).

His effects of £11-00s-3d, Pay Owing and his War Gratuity of £3, went to his father Henry Lowe.

William Reynolds

William Reynold was born in Tyttenhanger, Hertfordshire, in 1884, son of George Reynolds, an Agricultural Worker and Ebber/Ebba Reynolds (nee Littlechild). He was one of twelve children, although one died in infancy.

1891 Census records William aged 7, at school, living with his parents and five siblings in Tyttenhanger Green, St. Albans, Herts.

In September 1899 William, aged 17, enlisted for six years in the 4th Battalion, Bedfordshire Militia, with the service number 4045, later transferring to the regular army.

The 1901 Census records William aged 18, Single, and a Private in the infantry stationed at Colchester Military Garrison, Colchester, Essex. The 1901 Census records his family living in Tyttenhanger, Herts. The fifth Cottage from The Plough PH.

He arrived in South Africa with the 2nd Battalion, Bedfordshire Regiment, on 6 May 1902, seeing action in The Boar War. He was awarded, The Queens South Africa Medal, with Cape Colony and Orange Free State Clasps, and the date Clasp South Africa 1902. The Battalion returned to England in 1903, returning to the Colchester Military Garrison.

In 1907 William married Rose Pearce of St. Albans, the daughter of George and Ellen Pearce. They went on to have four children, William George, Lilian Doris, Phyllis May and Ivy Kathleen.

1911 Census records William (27), married to Rose (24), they have two children William (2), and Lillian (6

Remembered at: Pozieres Memorial

Died: 6th August 1918

CSM - Bedfordshire Regiment

2nd Ganger

Tyttenhanger Green

months). William is employed as a Platelayer for The Midland Railway Company.

The Trade Union Register for The National Union of Railwaymen records William joined the St. Albans Branch, on 4 May 1913, aged 29, he was employed as a Labourer, by the Midland Railway Company. The Register also records "Killed in Action 5/8/18".

War Service

At the outbreak of war William re-enlisted at St. Albans, returning to his old Regiment (2nd Battalion, Bedfordshire Regiment) with the service number 6825. Seeing action on the Western Front.

In May 1918, William received a Gun Shot Wound (GSW) and was admitted to 139th Field Ambulance, later transferred to the Casualty Clearing Station. He returned to the front-line duties.

He was killed in action on 6 August 1918, he has no known grave, and is commemorated on the Poziers Memorial to the missing in France. At the time of his death, he held the rank of Company Sergeant Major.

Other Info

Rose received a widow's pension of 38/9 a week from 17 February 1919, and his effects of £38, Pay Owing and his War Gratuity of £30-10s-00s.

His younger brother Lance Corporal L/4112 Edward Reynolds, of the 9th Queen's Royal Lancers, was killed in action on 30 October 1914.

William James Smith

Not a lot is known about the early life of William James Smith other than he was born in Barnsbury, London, abt. 1884.

No 1891 or 1901 Census record were found for William James Smith.

William married Rosina Lewis in St. Albans, Hertfordshire, in late 1902. The daughter of William and Ellen Lewis, of St. Albans. They went on to have three children, Helen (B 1904), Rosina (B 1909) & Charles (B 1912).

1911 Census records William (27), Married to Rosina, and they have two children Helen Maud, (7), and Rosina Edith (2), he is employed as a Railway Carriage Cleaner, and living at, 16, Arthur Road, Fleetville, St. Albans, Herts.

The Trade Union Register for The National Union of Railwaymen records William joined the St. Albans Branch on 7 September 1913, aged 29, he was employed as a Railway Carriage Cleaner, by The Midland Railway Company. The Register also records "Died in October 1917, on active service".

Remembered at: Tyne Cot

Died: 2nd October 1917

Lt - York & Lancaster Regiment
Carriage washer
16 Arthur Road

War Service

William enlisted at the outbreak of war, posted to the Bedfordshire Regiment with the service number 14722. On completion of his training, he arrived in France on 11 August 1915, joining the 6th Battalion at the front.

Promoted to Corporal and later recommended for a Commission. He was Commissioned, 2nd Lieutenant, to the York & Lancaster Regiment on 28 February 1917, and attached to the 8th Battalion.

He was killed in action on 2 October 1917, aged 34, he has no known grave and is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial to the missing in Belgium. At the time of his death, he was acting Lieutenant.

Other Info

His effects of £75-16s-00d, Pay Owing and his War Gratuity of £17, went to his widow Rosins.

George Toms

George Toms was born in Park Street, Nr. St Albans, Hertfordshire, on 2 March 1891, son of Frederick Toms, a Farm Worker and Elizabeth Toms (nee Atkins). He was one of eight children.

Baptised on 3 May 1891, at Holy Trinity Church, Frogmore, Herts.

1891 Census records George aged 1 month, living with his parents, brothers William (8), Walter (5) and sister Kate (2) in, Park Street, Nr. St Albans, Herts.

1901 Census records George (10) and brother William (19), living with their grand parents John and Eliza Atkins, next door to his parents and five siblings in, Park Street, Nr. St Albans, Herts.

1911 Census, George (20), brother Frank (6) and his parents, were still living in, Park Street, Nr. St Albans, Herts. Employed as a Labourer on the Railway.

At the outbreak of war George was employed as a Labourer by the Midland Railway Company bases at St. Albans, Herts. He was living at 97, Park Street, Nr. St. Albans, Herts.

War Service

George enlisted at St Albans, Herts, posted to the 8th Battalion, Bedfordshire Regiment, with the service number 16578.

Buried at: Terlincthan
Died: 20th October 1918

Pte - Suffolk Regiment
Way & Works Labourer
97 Park Street

In August 1915, the 8th Battalion, Bedfordshire Regiment were at Chobham Common in Surrey, carrying out trench warfare training when they were mobilized for war. The Battalion arrived in France on 30 August 1915.

George was transferred to the 278 Railway Company Royal Engineers with the service number 152854. Later transferred back to the 8th Battalion, Bedfordshire Regiment, then to the 4th Battalion, where on the 13 March 1918, the battalion was in front line trenches near Ribecourt-Le-Tour, when the battalion was heavily shelled with mustard gas, some 5 Officers and 264 other ranks were evacuated due to the effects of the gas,

George was admitted along with many of his comrades to the 149th Royal Naval Field Ambulance on 20 March 1918.

On his recovery he was transferred to the 2nd Battalion, Suffolk Regiment with the service number 42527. He was wounded while with the Suffolk Regiment and died on 20 October 1918, of wounds received in action.

Other Info

His mother Elizabeth received a dependents pension of 5/- a week from 6 November 1918. His effects of £28-7s-2d, Pay Owing and £19, War Gratuity, went to his father Frederick Toms.

Frank Charles Warwick

Frank Charles Warwick was born in St Albans, Hertfordshire, in late 1883, son of John Warwick, a Blocker in the hat trade and Emily Warwick (nee Keys). He was one of eight children although two died in infancy.

He was Baptised Frank Charles Warwick, at Saint Albans Abbey, on 13 January 1884.

1891 Census records Frank aged 8, at school, living with his parents, and five brothers in, Boundary Road, Sandridge, St Albans, Herts.

By the 1901 Census Frank (16) had left school and was working as a Shoe Maker, still living in Boundary Road, Sandridge, St Albans, Herts, with his parent, four brothers and sister Alice (6).

On 7 December 1905, Frank travelled to London and enlisted in the Bedfordshire Militia for six years as a Militiaman, he gave his age as 18 years, his occupation as a Carman and his address as 15, Boundary Road, Barnards Heath, St Albans, Hertfordshire, he was issued with the service number 5477. On 11 June the following year 1906, he transferred to the regular Army.

1911 Census records Frank, aged 23, single and a Private with the 2nd Battalion, Bedfordshire Regiment, stationed at Prospect Barracks in Bermuda. Frank left the Army about 1912.

The Trade Union Register for The National Union of Railwaymen, records Frank joined the St. Albans Branch, on 4 May 1913, aged 28, he was employed as a Cleaner, by the Midland Railway Company. The Register also records "Killed in France 8/12/17".

Remembered at: Tyne Cot
Died: 8th December 1917

Pte - Bedfordshire Regiment
Motive Power Labourer
Sandridge

War Service

At the outbreak of war Frank travelled to the County Town of Herford and re-enlisted in his old Regiment, the Bedford's with the service number 8527. He arrived in France on 16 August 1914, with "C" Company, 1st Battalion, Bedfordshire Regiment. He was at the Battle of Mons (23 August 1914) and the subsequent retreat.

On 7 May 1915, Frank was admitted to No. 2 General Hospital, Le Havre, France, with a Gun Shot Wound (GSW) later transferred back to England for treatment. On his recovery he returned to the Western Front. Later posted to the 2nd Battalion.

Frank was killed in Action on 8 December 1917, he has no known grave and is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial to the missing in Belgium.

Other Info

His mother Emily received a dependents pension of 3/6, a week from 14 January 1919. His effects of £18-10s-3d, Pay Owing and his War Gratuity of £19-10s-00d, went to his father John Warwick.

Note that of these eleven servicemen, a local address for Edward Atkins was difficult to find. Also, he is not listed on the St Albans War Memorial. He is however shown in the Midland Railway records as working at St Albans on call-up. Perhaps his posting here was only temporary, but for completeness, his details are included.

Memorials in St Albans

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings has published a detailed review of its research on the war memorials in St Albans which is summarised here along with information from the City and District council and the St Albans and Hertfordshire Architectural and Archaeological Society:

The fact that St Albans Abbey is a diocesan cathedral as well as a parish church meant that priority was given to its grander role when commemorating the dead of the First World War. It produced a Diocesan Book of Remembrance and commissioned a Memorial West Window.

In all other local parish churches (including those in St Albans) tangible, personal monuments were being put up, outside or inside the church, listing the dead of that parish. The names of men lost from the Abbey parish were inscribed in the Book of Remembrance, but there was no separate memorial to them in the Abbey. People wanted to see the names of their loved ones in a public place; they wanted a place to lay flowers and remember their dead.

It is unclear where the idea for St Alban's street plaques came from, but certainly Canon George Glossop, who served the Abbey for 40 years until 1925 and who lost two sons in the conflict, promoted the plan. The City Council still officially refers to the plaques as 'The Canon Glossop Memorials' although many other people were actively involved. Records indicate that Abbey curate, the Revd. Harry Evans made street collections to fund the scheme. It is said that when he visited the grieving families of the parish he offered the idea as a comfort.

The street memorials placed throughout the City are thought to be unique survivals. The Imperial War Museum knows of no others still in existence, although there are some plaques to individuals on houses in Letchmore Heath, a village near St Albans.

The ten memorials mounted on ordinary houses in the Abbey Parish of St Albans (Albert Street, Bardwell Road, Fishpool Street, High Street, Holywell Hill, Lower Dagnall Street, Orchard Street, Pageant Road, Sopwell Lane and Verulam Road.) were unveiled in 1920 and 1921 to commemorate more than 110 men (including nine pairs of brothers) who came from a small group of streets clustered around the Abbey. Approximately 650 men from St Albans died in the conflict so the high number lost from this tight knit working community is notable.

There are 2 other street plaques, not part of the Abbey parish scheme. The first is a memorial to employees of Vyse's Hat Factory, formerly of Ridgmont Road. Following redevelopment of the original building on which this was attached it has been re-mounted at Ridgemont Plaza Car Park, Ridgmont Road, on the car park wall of Anthony Gibbs House. This site is immediately adjacent to the Signal Box and station car park. Unfortunately, this plaque is now on private land behind a controlled gate and access by the general public is no longer possible.

The second is a plaque recording the loss of employees from Edwin Lee's Boot Factory which was similarly remounted following redevelopment. This is now on the wall in front of the Ziggurat in Grosvenor Rd. The building backs onto the railway just South of the station and opposite the station car park.

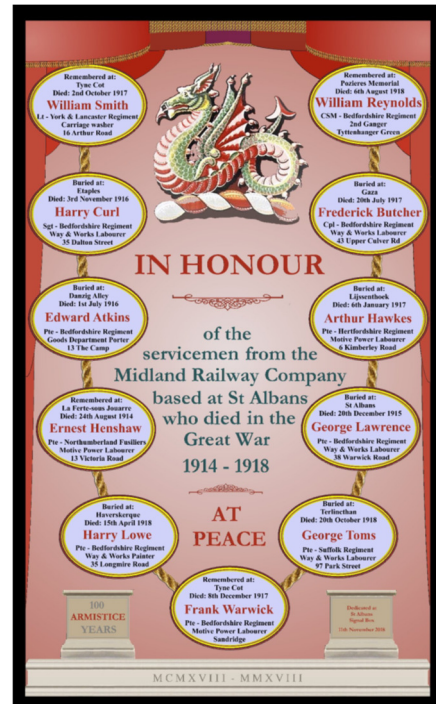
As discussed previously, there is no local memorial associated with the railway. Indeed, it seems that the two plaques on factories were installed as part of an initiative separate to the church led memorials. Nevertheless, that both these factories are immediately adjacent to the City station does connect the railway with these unique street memorials and perhaps more could be done to record and commemorate the role of the railway workers in the War effort.

Servicemen's commemoration

The St Albans Signal Box opens to the public on the 2nd Sundays of each month (among other days) and this year the 11th November falls on a Sunday. Consideration has therefore been given to whether a commemoration should be arranged to mark the anniversary of the Armistice.

In particular, a plaque commemorating the servicemen of the railway has been created in the form of a poster/museum board for display within the signal box. In addition, the trust has many photographs of railway operations around the station, but it is thought that only a very few are as early as the war years.

It is hoped that, if there is a will, our generation will find a way to commemorate the armistice both as a lesson in history to those who come after us and to honour those whose sacrifice came before us. Renewing the bonds that link our communities is perhaps the most valuable work a historic society can deliver and all are welcome to participate.



This commemorative plaque has been prepared by the trust and shows the “Wyvern” from the arms of the Midland Railway Company along with the names, place of death or remembrance, rank, regiment, role on the railway and home address in St Albans.