



Ernest Frederick Hewitt

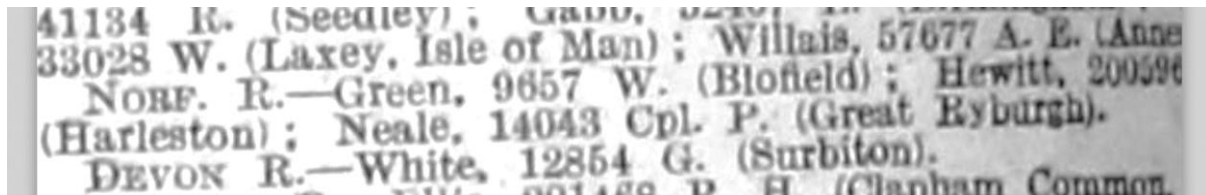
200596 Private, 1st/4th Battalion Norfolk Regiment

He 'died of wounds' on 28th April 1917 in Palestine, aged 20

Ernest was buried at Kantara War Memorial Cemetery, Egypt

His brother Frederick died on 26th July 1917 in Flanders, aged 23

Died of wounds:



Ernest and Frederick were two of the five sons of John James and Amelia Hewitt, there was a solitary daughter in the family too. The father, John James had been born into a farming family, only medium scale but back in 1871, when John James was 9 months old, his father had 116 acres in Gissing and was employing 3 men and 2 boys along with a live in dairy maid to process the milk from his cows. They were doing well enough to also employ a nursemaid, whilst a third employee, a Farm Servant, was also living in. Hewitt Snr continued to thrive, 10 years later he had added another 80 or so acres to his holdings and 10 years after that Ernest and Frederick's father, John James Hewitt, had struck out on his own and was working as a Farm Steward out in Winfarthing. He must have paid close attention to his own father as this was a responsible job for a 20 years old lad who would have been expected to supervise men twice his age or more!

A young man in a hurry, in early 1894 he married Amelia Frances Legrys, born in Tivetshall but living in Dickleburgh in 1881. Amelia was from a similar background to John James, although in 1881 her father only had 19 acres, 10 years earlier in middle age(54) Amelia's father had been farming 138 acres. The old boy kept going though; in 1891, when 74, he still claimed to be a farmer but I suspect mostly in tandem with his oldest son, also a farmer, living next door to him!

The Hewitt family appear in the 1901 census out in Flixton, not far from The Buck, next door to one of the Flixton Park Lodges. John James Hewitt was a Farm Bailiff, to the Flixton Estate and it seems Amelia may have had a side business going, or alternatively 'The Tea House' may just have been the name of the house they were living in? While the oldest of their four lads, Sydney, had been born in his father's home village of Gissing, the other three lads, Lister, Ernest and Ralph, claimed Homersfield birth, which at that time seems to have included the Flixton Estate!

Hewitt, although described as a steady fellow who had never been seen drunk was a bit of speed merchant and at twilight one evening in 1905, this bailiff to Sir Frederick Adair, even though he had put his lamps on, managed to drive into another pony and trap just by the Magpie. Although the other driver was distracted by the fact he was, essentially, giving a test drive to a prospect purchaser of his pony and had not got his own lamps on, the fact that Hewitt was belting along at 10 to 12 miles per hour meant he was required to pay half of the damages to the other chaps trap!

In 1909 Hewitt had the honour of being one of the 8 bearers of old Lady Harriet Adair's coffin when she was buried at Flixton Church.

In 1911, John James Hewitt again gives his profession as Farm Bailiff, on this occasion elaborating that he was indeed employed on the estate and being based on the Home Farm one

of the most important on the estate. Ida and Allen had been added to the family, a second daughter Kathleen Agnes had died in infancy in 1905 and their mother, Amelia, had died only the previous year, aged 44. The estate was providing work for much of the family, the second son, Ernest, (Gardener, Improver) was boarding with the head gardener on the Flixton Estate, whilst oldest son, Sidney was still at home but employed by the estate as a junior clerk. A widow (probably the rather ancient 68, not the 60 she was claiming) had been imported from the deceased Amelia's home village of Tivetshall (where she had been married to the blacksmith) to look after the Hewitt children.

Things worsen for the family, having lost their mother in 1910, John James himself died in early 1914, before war had even broken out. The family, even though the youngest child was only 10, would have become homeless since their home was tied to their father's job. George Godbold took over the Stewardship of Home Farm, one of his sons, Horace George died in March 1917.

366.

INFORMAL WILL.

W.O. No. 1 E/418.696/1
~~246/17/17~~ 17/8
 Record No. 227/5868/13
 " " 296/515-927 17/8

DOMICILE, *English*

The enclosed document dated *21-12-16.*

Name *Ernest Frank Hewitt* and signed *Ernest F. Hewitt*

Regtl. No. and Rank *200696 Private (3033)*

Regt. *1/4th Bn Norfolk Regiment*

Died at *2nd Australian Stationary Hospital Sol. Camp, Egypt*
wounds received in action

Date of Death *29th April 1917*

WAR OFFICE.

Date *25.3.15*

J. E. Godson
 for the Assistant Financial Secretary.

H. 161906.

It was most likely after this that the family moved to Harleston, or at least those old enough to support themselves. Their removal from Flixton is reflected in the fact that although their father was one of those who carried Lady Adair's coffin to its final resting place, neither of the boys is recorded on Flixton Church's roll of honour.

At the eve of the war, the family was doing well, maybe even prospering in a small way with the two older boys in employment, the father with the prime agricultural job on the Flixton Estate, running the home farm, and the mother possibly supplementing their income with a small enterprise of a Tea Room.

By the time the war was over, both parents had long been dead, neither surviving to see the outbreak of war. Two of the three oldest boys were dead with Lister, the one between, having moved to Bungay by the time the memorial was put up. He eventually died

Just before Christmas in 1916, Pte Ernest Frank Hewitt made a will out in favour of his older brother Sidney who whose then address was Station Road, Harleston.

Ernest was dead 4 months after he wrote his will, 3 months later Sidney was also dead.

Looking at the disposal of Ernest's effects one very much gets the feeling of a family who pulled together and looked after each other, a necessity after both their parents died when the older children were of an age to support the younger children who would still have been of school age.

Lister, the oldest brother, seems to have taken his share of back pay and the entirety of the War Gratuity. Allan who would have been 13 at the time of his brother's death would originally have had his share administered by Sidney, however on Sidney's death, this responsibility devolved to Emma Colby. Meanwhile, brother Ralph seems to have given his little sister, Ida, aged 15 at the time of her brother's deaths, his share.

Emma Colby? - originally not a clue, none in the area but, on the assumption some sort of relative, I dug into Hewitt / Colby marriages! Ta dah, an Emma Annie Hewitt, b 1866 of Gissing, father John, married a Frederick Colby of Norwich in 1889; further research confirmed this lady was Allan's aunt.

Oldest brother Lister/Lester Hewitt stayed local, married Minnie Whittaker in 1919, dying in 1974 aged 79; at least one child resulted from this union.

Younger brother Ralph Gordon Hewitt, just a little too young to have been caught up in the war (under 19's were not allowed to be posted abroad) wound up a long way from home, dying in Durham in 1974, most likely after marrying in Tynemouth in 1922 whilst the only daughter of the family, Ida Kathleen, seems to have married a Mr Marlow in Loughborough, and lived on to the grand old age of 90, dying in Luton

The baby of the family, Allen Percy, who was only 6 when his mother died and 10 when his father died, and 13 when his brother's died, stayed local, dying in Norwich at the age of 60.