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The 'Great War: Between the Lines' project is funded by the INTERREG IVA 2 Seas programme. Its funds are distributed through the European Regional Development Fund and (Channel-North Sea)

www.greatwar1418.eu

This project will be running events, exhibitions and creating tourist routes to help commemorate the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War in 2014. For more details please visit our website www.great-war.co.uk where you can also view our growing digital archive and upload your own material.

The 'Great War: Between the Lines' project is a co-operation between 16 partners in the UK, Northern France and Belgium. The project aims to facilitate cross-border activities which will encourage the commemoration of the Great War centenary between 2014 and 2018, ensuring that the sacrifices made during the Great War and the legacy of the war on contemporary society continues to be understood and remembered. This project will be running events, exhibitions and creating tourist routes to help commemorate the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War in 2014. For more details please visit our website www.great-war.co.uk where you can also view our growing digital archive and upload your own material.

## Great War: Between the Lines



### 1 Lawrence Court

At the outbreak of World War One Lawrence Court was owned by the wealthy industrialist J A Fielden. From March 1915 Lawrence Court was used as a relief hospital for wounded soldiers. Fielden also donated £500,000 to the county and purchased a steam yacht to be used as a hospital ship. Lawrence Court is now the home of the Huntingdon Registration Service and Coroners Office.

### 2 Drill Hall – St Mary's St

Before World War One the Drill Hall was used by the various Volunteer forces which covered Huntingdonshire. In December 1914 the Drill Hall was altered for use by the Huntingdonshire Cyclists Battalion. The building was used as a recruiting office and included a canteen, a room suitable for officers, and a rifle range.



Image courtesy of Huntingdonshire Archives (WH11340A)



### 3 Old Bridge Hotel (Bridge House)

During the war Bridge House was used by the officers of the Huntingdonshire Cyclists Battalion. This battalion was formed on the 27 February 1914. During World War One the battalion was sent to East Yorkshire to patrol the coastline. By the middle of 1916 the majority of the original Huntingdonshire recruits had been drafted to different regiments serving in France. The Huntingdonshire Cyclists was disbanded in 1919.

Image courtesy of Martin Webster

### 4 Godmanchester War Memorial

This war memorial was paid for by the public. It was unveiled on 1 January 1921 by Major General Pilcher. The architect was Mr Alfred B Yates. 77 names from World War One have been recorded.



Image courtesy of Huntingdonshire Archives (5594/2112)



620 WAR MEMORIAL, GODMANCHESTER



"Investing in your future"  
Cross-border cooperation programme  
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(European Regional Development Fund)



## HUNTINGDON'S GREAT WAR HISTORY TRAIL

# 100<sup>★</sup> GREAT WAR 14-18



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### 5 Porch Museum

The Porch Museum is commemorating the First World War with an exhibition devoted to the experiences of Godmanchester citizens. It will include displays on war horses, the Royal Flying Corps and the first airman to receive a Victoria Cross, the Portholme Aerodrome Company, and Oliver George who was awarded the Croix de Guerre. The Porch Museum is open on various weekends through out the year. Please check the museums website for opening times.

### 6 Portholme

In the early days of the aeroplane, Portholme's large meadow made it ideal as a place for flying. Between April 1910 and 1913 numerous flights were made from Portholme by pioneers of early aviation such as James Radley and Will Moorhouse. During the war, it was used for drilling troops stationed in Huntingdon. The Highland Mounted Brigade was inspected there by King George V in 1914. The meadow was also used as a temporary summer flying camp and a Royal Naval Air Service training camp, with around forty aircraft, until September 1918.



### 7 Mill Common

Large numbers of soldiers were stationed in Huntingdon during the early years of the war. Wooden buildings were erected on Mill Common to accommodate horses belonging to the troops billeted in Huntingdon over winter 1914/15 (also on Views Common, Spring Common and Castle Hill House). There was even an outdoor concert arena which was also used for church services as the local churches could not accommodate everyone. The Huntingdonshire Cyclist Battalion also used open ground on Mill Common to practise digging trenches. The remains of these can still be seen on the Common.

### 8 County Hospital

The first group of wounded soldiers arrived at the County Hospital in November 1914. Like the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) hospitals, the County Hospital relied on donations of food and magazines from well-wishers to keep it going.

Image courtesy of Huntingdonshire Archives (PH48/286)



### 9 Brunswick Villas

This small house opened as a Red Cross Hospital with just ten beds on 2 September 1914. This soon became inadequate and the hospital moved to Walden House in December 1914.

### 10 Dryden House

This was the site of Portholme Aerodrome Company. During the war the company built armoured cars, sea-planes and Sopwith Camels and Snipes fighter planes. A large number of additional workers were drafted in to work on the planes.

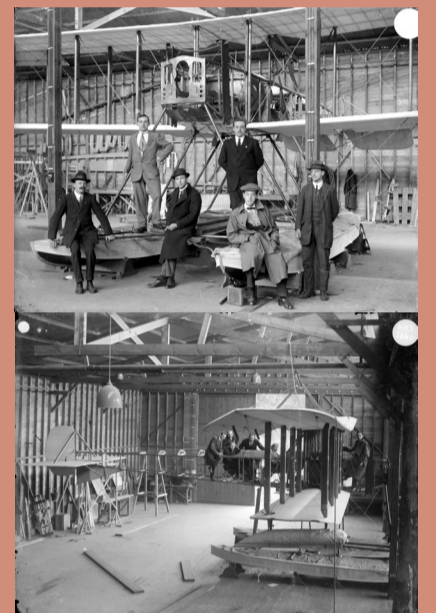


Image courtesy of Huntingdonshire Archives (WH2/72)

### 11 Walden House

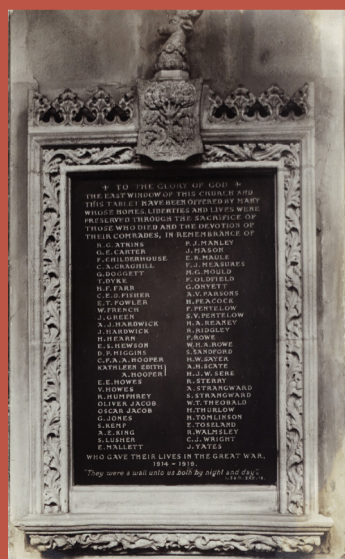
The former home of Henry Geldart JP, Walden House became a Red Cross Hospital in December 1914 when Brunswick Villas proved to be too small. It had to be extended with the addition of temporary buildings. By 1917 it could accommodate eighty five patients. Almost all the staff were volunteers. By the time it closed in January 1919, the hospital had treated 3,900 in-patients as well as numerous out-patients – up to 50 on one day at its peak.

### 13 Huntingdon War Memorial

Despite raising large amounts of money for the war effort, the people of Huntingdon failed initially to support the building of a memorial hall or other form of commemoration of the fallen. The Town Council installed a memorial tablet in the Town Hall, but the Huntingdon Women's Institute, formed in 1918 from the Women's War Agricultural Committee, decided to fund a separate memorial. Lady Kathleen Scott was commissioned to design and make the statue. The cost of the statue was met by the Women's Institute fund and a Mayor's fund paid for the plinth and the cost of erection. 3000 people attended the unveiling of the statue on 11 November 1923.



Image courtesy of Huntingdonshire Archives (MC4/3)



### 14 Town Hall

Important announcements in the town were made from the balcony of the Town Hall. It was from here the Mayor announced the end of the war at 4pm on Monday 11 November 1918. Fireworks were let off indiscriminately and there was a huge bonfire in the grounds of the Red Cross hospital at Walden House on which an effigy of the German Kaiser was burnt. There is a memorial tablet in the Town Hall, recording the names of 118 men and women from Huntingdon who had lost their lives between 1914 and 1918.

Image courtesy of the Norris Museum (PHIHUNTN/79)



Image courtesy of the Norris Museum (PHI HUNTN/092)

### 15 51 High St (now Brighthouse)

The former Murkett's premises in the High Street were converted in to a 'Soldiers Institute', one of many places across town where the troops stationed in Huntingdon could go to relax. There was generally a room set aside for reading and writing and another area for entertainment and games donated by local people. The former cycle repair shop was turned into an impromptu concert hall.

### 16 Huntingdon Library and Archives

Call in to Huntingdon Library and Archives if you want to start researching your military ancestors. We have free access to World War One records, via the Ancestry and Find My Past websites. We also have the Hunts Post newspaper for 1914 – 1918 on microfilm.

Images courtesy of Huntingdonshire Archives (WH2/7, WH3/2640)



### 12 Old Grammar School buildings (formerly Probation)

A 'Central Restaurant' was opened here in February 1918 to provide dinners at reasonable prices and to help people hit by rationing. The restaurant could accommodate 200 people and meals were served between 12 and 2 pm (children's meals from 12 and 12.45 pm). Items from the menu on the opening day included soup (1 or 2d), beefsteak pudding (5d), stewed apples (2d) and rice pudding (2d). There was also a takeaway facility or 'outdoor department' at the rear of the building.

