

49: William Jones

The identity of William Jones was not discovered until after this work had been printed in October 2018. Consequently, these pages have been inserted post-publication and, elsewhere in this work (particularly in the Database and Data Tables in Volume 2) original comments such as 'Nothing known of this man', 'Unidentified' and 'Identity unknown' have been applied. Whilst he may be recognised by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission his entry in the CWGC database has not been identified.

The page numbering of this account has been 'adjusted' to maintain continuity with the accounts which proceed it.

Although William's identity and background are now known ¹, it has not been possible to identify his military career or the date or circumstances of his death. The plaque in Neston Parish Church names him as *Sapper W. Jones* and the *Memorial Service For Neston Men who have fallen in the War, 1914 – 1918* records him as William. A simplified family tree is given on a later page.

The CWGC records a number of men named William Jones with the rank of Sapper (ie serving with the Royal Engineers) and more with the initial W – there is no evidence that William had a middle name. However, considering his date of birth, together with other information contained within some CWGC records (and making the assumption that he *is* in the dataset), it appears as if the possibilities for William's identity lies within the following four possibilities although the fourth on the list may be the least likely:

WILLIAM JONES Sapper Service Number: 386931	4th Siege Coy. Royal Monmouthshire Royal Engineers United Kingdom	Died 28 June 1917	LIJSENTHOEK MILITARY CEMETERY XIV. C. 6. Belgium
W JONES Sapper Service Number: 459910	421st (West Lancs) Field Coy. Royal Engineers United Kingdom	Died 29 September 1918	ANNEUX BRITISH CEMETERY II. C. 2. France
W JONES Sapper Service Number: WR/194961	98th Light Railway Coy. Royal Engineers United Kingdom	Died 29 October 1918	HAIFA WAR CEMETERY B. 26. Israel and Palestine (including Gaza)
W JONES Lance Corporal Service Number: 139297	250th Tunnelling Coy. Royal Engineers United Kingdom	Died 17 October 1918	LA GORGUE COMMUNAL CEMETERY I. B. 1B. France

Additionally, there appears to be no local newspaper announcing the death of William Jones and his Service Records seem not to have survived.

¹ Through personal communication with a known descendant

William Jones was born in Neston, the son of coalminer Peter and Elizabeth Jones:

4	Peter Jones	Head	m	31	Coal Miner	1	Flintshire Hawarden
	Elizabeth do	Wife	m	25			Cheshire Ness
	Anne do	Daughter		3			do do
	Priscilla do	Daughter		2			do do
	William do	Son		3 mo			do Little Neston

1891 census (extract) – Little Neston

Peter Jones	31	coal miner	born Flintshire, Hawarden
Elizabeth	25		born Cheshire, Ness
Anne	3		born Cheshire, Ness
Priscilla	2		born Cheshire, Ness
William	3 months		born Little Neston

Peter Jones - born in Hawarden his history is unknown - married Elizabeth Jellicoe (not at Neston Parish Church) in mid-1885 ². Elizabeth, a daughter of labourer ³ Edward and Jane Jellicoe (née Woodward), of Ness and was baptised at the Parish Church on 27 May 1864 ⁴. Peter Jones must have come from the Hawarden district to work at the Neston Colliery Co. mines; after the closure of mining in Neston in 1855 work was restarted by this new organisation with shaft-sinking commencing in 1875. This new operation required a completely new infrastructure - after twenty years of disuse the old shafts and workings would have been flooded, degraded and largely unusable - and a new workforce recruited from outside the Neston district.

William Jones, probably the fourth child and first son, seems to have been born in early 1891 (he is aged 3 months in the 1891 census which was taken on 5 April) although there is no record of his baptism at the Parish Church.

The 1901 census records the family living on the western side of New Street and at the time of the 1911 census (both census returns are on the following page) they had moved to the terrace of 8 houses known as New Houses, Ness; built sometime before the 1851 census for colliery workers, and since demolished, these were situated on the southern side of New Houses Lane, Ness.

The 1911 household held all the surviving children other than the two eldest daughters, Mary and Annie. Mary, aged 26, was a domestic servant lodging with 74-year old widow Clara Briggs at 4 Cabry's Buildings, Neston High Street and Annie, aged 23, was a domestic servant for 72-year old Martha Lawton at Raby Mere. It is believed that Martha ran the tearoom by the boating lake and that this also had an association with the Lloyd family of Neston.

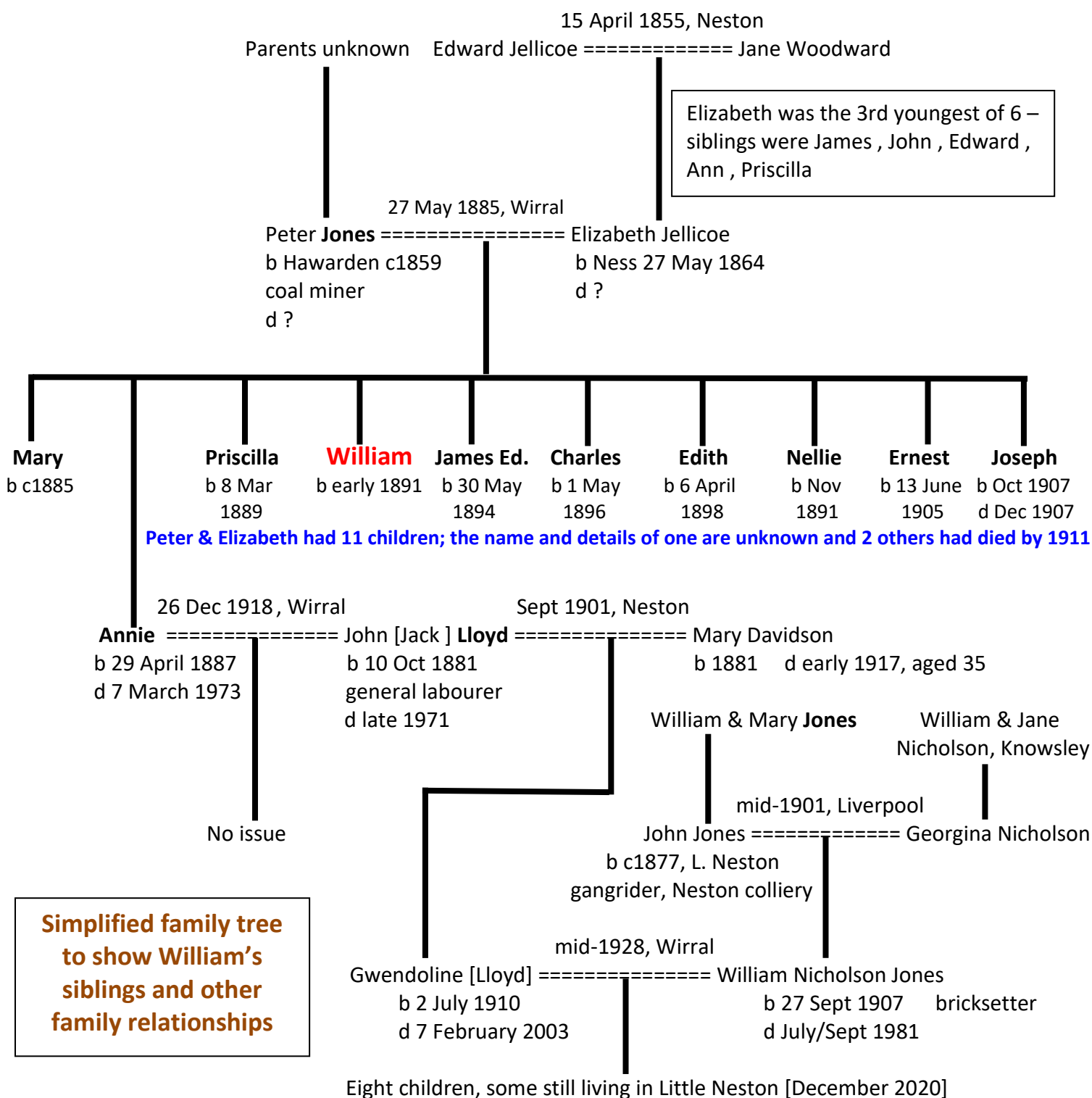
The 1911 census records that Peter and Elizabeth Jones had 11 children of whom, by the time of the census, 3 had died (the identity of one of these is unknown).

² It is *possible* that the marriage took place on 27 May 1885

³ He is recorded variously as banksman (a surface colliery worker), agricultural labourer, labourer and colliery labourer

⁴ Edward and Jane Jellicoe (*Gellico* in the 1861 census) had six children recorded in the 1871 census when the family was living at 4, New Houses, Ness as: James (14) ; Ann (12) ; John (11) ; Elizabeth (7) ; Priscilla (5) ; Edward (1)

accommodated and treated and the infirmary was commonly used for young women to give birth if they had no fixed accommodation or could not give birth at home. In the 1939 Register the only Edward Jones of an appropriate age and living in Neston was a pipe fitter's labourer, born 12 October 1903, living at 1 Cottage Close, Burton Road. Married, Edward was living with Mary Jones, born 29 March 1889⁵ and one line of the record has been redacted.



⁵ At the time of the 1939 Register this Edward would have been almost 36 and Mary was 50. It is possible that Mary had previously been married and widowed – a Mary Abel married an Edward Jones on Wirral in early 1929.

A few details are known of the siblings of William Jones:

Mary, the eldest child, is believed to have been born in 1885 although no baptism at Neston Parish Church is recorded.

She was not recorded at home with her parents at the time of the 1891 census (she would have been about 6), and hasn't been found elsewhere in the census returns.

Aged 15 she was with her parents at the time of the 1901 census (although no occupation was recorded for her) and, in 1911, seems to have been a lodger with Clara Briggs at 4, Cabry Buildings, on Neston High Street. Mary was recorded, aged 26, as a domestic servant. Other than that she may have had an illegitimate son, Edward, nothing else is known of her – no record of a marriage or her death has been found and she has not been identified in the 1939 Register.

Annie was born on 29 April 1887 although there is no record of her baptism at Neston Parish Church. On 26 December 1918 Annie, 31, married miner John [Jack] Lloyd, 37 (born 10 October 1881), at Neston Parish Church. John was a widower, previously married



Mealor's Cottages, Well Lane, Ness [Google StreetView]

(on 8 September 1907) to Mary Davidson, a daughter of deceased labourer Thomas Davidson. John and Mary had a daughter, Gwendoline (born 2 July 1910, baptised 14 August 1910), and they were living at Mealor's Cottages, Ness. Jack had been born in Birkenhead and, in 1911, he was a bricklayer's labourer; Gwendoline was

then aged 9 months and it is thought that they had no further children. Mary Lloyd died, it is thought, in early 1917 when she was aged 35. There is no record of her being buried at Neston Parish Church.

In the 1939 Register Annie and John, a general labourer, are recorded at 1 Lloyd's Cottages, Lloyd's Yard, off the Burton Road. Annie and John Lloyd did not have children; however, at the time of the 1939 Register the first child of Gwen and William Nicholson Jones, Mavis, was recorded with them.

At the time of the 1939 Register Annie and John (a general labourer) were living at N^o. 1 Lloyd's Cottages, Lloyd's Yard, off the Neston Road in Ness. Built in the early 19th century this is a short terrace of 3 sandstone cottages, with slate roofs, close to the junction with Well Lane. Jack's daughter, Gwen, had married bricksetter William Nicholson Jones (born 27 September 1907) in mid-1928 and at the time of the 1939 Register they were living just around the corner at N^o. 4 Rock Cottages in Well Lane in Ness. Gwen and William then had four small children and the eldest, Mavis (born 6 March 1929, who married Henry Oxton) was with Annie and Jack at Lloyd's Cottages. Jack Lloyd died in late 1971 and Annie died in early 1973.



Lloyd's Cottages, Ness [November 2020]

Priscilla was born in on 8 March 1889 and, named after an aunt of Elizabeth Jones, was baptised at Neston Parish Church on 14 April 1889 when her father was recorded as a collier. In 1911, aged 22, she was recorded as a domestic servant.

Priscilla married Richard L Smith (born 3? February 1893) in late 1928 and, in the 1939 Register, living at Smith's Cottages on The Parade, Parkgate, Richard was an inshore fisherman. The Register records also a domestic servant in the household and one line has been redacted although nothing is known of their children.

Richard died, aged 69, in late 1964 and Priscilla died in late 1975.

William is the subject of this account. He was born in early 1891 in Little Neston and was not baptised at the Parish Church. Although he died during WW1 few details are known.

James was born as James Edward Jones on 30 May 1894 although there is no baptismal record.

In 1911 the census recorded him, aged 17, living with his parents at N^o. 3 New Houses, Ness, a labourer at the colliery.

The Absent Voters' List – Wirral Division for mid-1918 notes that James, of New Houses, was serving as a driver with the 107th Brigade Royal Field Artillery (Service N^o. 135847). It is presumed that, following his discharge from the army, he returned to Neston as a collier. James (25), a miner, married Florence Elizabeth Steele (24, born 31 August 1895) at Neston Parish Church on 5 April 1920; both lived at New Houses, Ness, and James' father was recorded as being a miner. Florence, whose father was stonemason William Smith, had previously married Frank Steele (recorded earlier as a collier) at Eccleston Parish Church, St Helens, on 3 April 1916. He had enlisted, as an army reservist, in the 3rd South Lancashire Regiment in St Helens on 8 August 1914 when he was aged 19¼. He served overseas in 1915 (in Gallipoli) and 1916 (possibly in action on The Somme) but was discharged on 26 October 1916 as being *No longer physically fit for War service*. He had contracted a severe inflammatory disease of the middle ear, *otitis media*, in Gallipoli, where he was also wounded. He died, as a direct consequence of the ear infection, in St Helens on 25 June 1919. An account of Frank's life and war service, with additional information on James and Florence Jones, is given in this work as **173: Frank Steele** commencing on page 1809. Florence and Frank had three known children: Elizabeth (born illegitimately in Ness on 30 December 1913) ; Hannah who was born on 1 July 1917 (possibly born in Ness but registered in the Warrington district) ; Florence, born 12 July 1919 (the month after Frank's death), and registered in the Prescott district.

The 1939 Register shows James, now a general farm labourer, and Florence living at 26 Mayfield Gardens in Little Neston with their presumed four children and two of Florence's daughters. On 23 May 1931 Florence's daughter, Elizabeth (20), had married house and ship painter Frank Lawton (born 28 April 1910) at Neston Parish Church and they, with their 4 children, were living at 3 Woodward's Cottages (behind Rightway) on Bridge Street in Neston.

26	do	48	1	Jones, James E	M	30 Aug 94	M	General farm labourer: 40-44
			2	Jones, Florence E	F	31 Aug 95	M	Unpaid domestic duties
			3	Steele, Hannah	F	1 July 17	S	Domestic servant
			4	BENNETT, Florencia	F	12 July 19	S	Domestic servant
			5	JONES, Freda	F	11 Nov 22	S	Domestic servant
This record is officially closed.								
This record is officially closed.								
This record is officially closed.								
This record is officially closed.								
26	Weyfield	London	48	9	JACKSON, John			School age
This record is officially closed.								

Whilst the 1939 Register reveals that James and Florence had had a daughter, Freda (born 11 November 1922), the three redacted lines suggest further children; the identity of the school-age John Steele in the household is unknown.

Freda Jones married George E Gover in mid-1943.

It seems that James Edward Jones died, aged 66, in late 1960 and Florence died, aged 90, in late 1982 in the Birkenhead district.

Charles was born on 1 May 1896 in Little Neston and was baptised privately in Neston on 30 December 1896 when his father, Peter, was recorded as a collier. In the 1911 census Charles, 15, was a cow boy (ie looking after livestock on a farm) at home with his parents. However, on 7 April 1915 (when he was 18) he was an ashwheeler injured at the colliery when *Wheeling ashes out of fire hole, fell and burning ashes fell on top of him - burnt arm and back*. The 1921 *Dictionary of Occupational Terms Based on the Classification of Occupations used in the Census of Population* defined an ashwheeler as *a labourer employed in works, rolling mills, etc.; rakes out or shovels ashes from ash pits and fires into barrows; wheels away barrows and tips them on ash dump; removes flue dirt and soot from boiler chambers*. By 1920, when he was 24, Charles had become an underground worker at the colliery as, on 19 July, he was again injured when, at 8.30pm whilst working in the King Mine, a *Stone fell from roof when lifting another stone. Bruised finger 1st left. Off 2 weeks - full rate 35/- comp. 2 wks*.

Charles remained unmarried and, in the 1939 Register (where his year of birth is incorrectly recorded as 1897), he is shown as a Public Works contractor's labourer living at 5 Lloyd's Cottages, Lloyd's Yard, Ness. Charles died in early 1983.

Edith was born on 6 April 1898 in Little Neston and baptised at Neston Parish Church on 22 April when Peter, her father, was recorded as a collier. Edith (21) married labourer John Fewtrell (21, born 25 April 1900) of Parkgate at Neston on 23 December 1920 – John's father, George, was a fisherman and Peter Jones was recorded as a miner. The 1939 register records them living at 4 Dee Cottages, The Parade, Parkgate; John was then a dock porter on the Manchester Ship Canal at Ellesmere Port. In addition to one redacted line in the Register, Patricia Jones (born 13 September 1929) was also in the household – she was a daughter of Edith's brother, Ernest ⁶. Edith and John may have had a daughter, Joan, born in late 1932 but it is not known when either Edith or John died.

⁶ It is believed that Patricia married Reginald Dainty, in the Cannock district, in late 1953

Nellie was baptised at Neston on 29 November 1901 and she died, aged 4, at the Wirral Joint Hospital and was buried at Neston on 10 October 1905. The Wirral Joint Hospital Board Isolation Hospital was founded in 1888 on part of the Wirral Union site at Clatterbridge and was closed in 1948.

Ernest was born on 13 June 1905 and baptised at the Parish Church on 28 July. Ernest married Eliza Sharp (born 14 September 1908) on Wirral in mid-1928; Eliza may have been a daughter of farm labourer William and Rachel Sharp of (in 1911) Gordon Terrace, Willaston. In the 1939 Register Ernest and Eliza were recorded as living at 31, New Road, off Showell Road, Wolverhampton, where Ernest was a bricklayer and an Air Raid Protection warden. Their oldest child, Patricia, was with Ernest's sister Edith (see above) on the day of the Register but there were two other children in the house, William E (born 10 March 1936) and Frederick C (born 4 September 1937). It is believed that there were at least two other children: Douglas (born late 1931 on Wirral) who may have married Yvonne Pagington in the Cannock area in mid-1951 and Robert E Jones who was born on Wirral in late-1934. The 1939 Register shows one redacted line for the family which may conceal the details of one of these sons.

230	1	JONES	ERNEST	M	13 JUNE 05	BRICKLAYER.	A.R.P. W. H. H. H.
	2	"	ELIZA	F	14 SEP 08	UNPAID DOMESTIC DUTIES.	
This record is officially closed.							
	4	"	WILLIAM E.	M	10 MAR 36	S UNDER SCHOOL AGE.	
	5	"	FREDERICK C.	M	4 SEP 37	S UNDER SCHOOL AGE.	See Page 21
1939 Register A note against the entry for Frederick states See Page 21. This refers to a second entry, amongst a sequence of redacted entries, which gives the same details and refers back to the first entry:							
This record is officially closed.							
This record is officially closed.							
	230	5	JONES Frederick C	M	4.9.37	S Under School Age.	See Page 18
This record is officially closed.							
This record is officially closed.							

Eliza died in the Oswestry district in July / September 1979 and Ernest died, also in the Oswestry district, aged 80, on 18 September 1985.

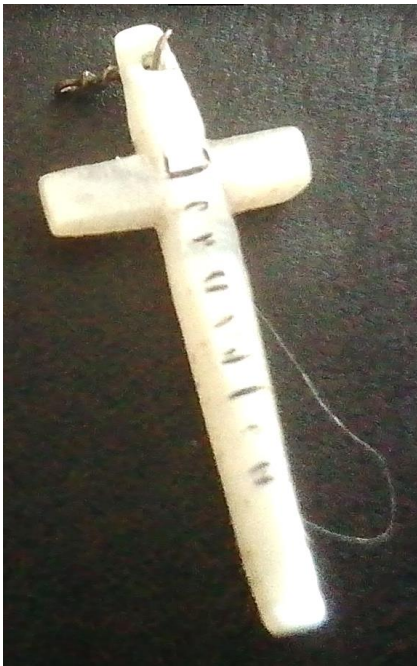
Joseph – baptised privately in Neston on 14 December 1907 he was buried, aged 3 months, on 31 December 1907. The grave is unknown

The 11th child

The 1911 census, which recorded that Peter and Elizabeth had then been married for 27 years, recorded that they had had 11 children of whom 3 had died. Only two of these deceased children, Nellie and Joseph, are known; it is presumed that the unknown deceased child, for whom no details are known, died very shortly after the birth. Note: the Ethel Jones of Ness, aged 1 day, who was buried at Neston on 30 March 1901 was not this child – she was a daughter of labourer William and Ann Jones.

But what is known of William Jones, the subject of this account? Whilst non-bloodline descendants (grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Jack Lloyd and Mary Davidson) still live in Little Neston, and elsewhere, they have little detailed knowledge of William. Whilst the plaque in Neston Parish Church has the inscription *Sapper*, the equivalent in the Royal Engineers of Private, there is no certainty that this was his rank at the time of his death.

It is known also that William was, at least at some time during the war, in the Middle East as he sent ivory jewellery home to his sister Annie. One of these, a small cross, is inscribed *Jerusalem*:



In 1911 William Jones had been recorded as a labourer at Neston Colliery although it is not known whether he worked at the surface or both here and underground. Whilst the Royal Engineers had many units one, known as ‘the Moles’, was a specialist company which had been formed to dig tunnels under the enemy’s lines – and this unit had many colliers amongst its ranks. However, RE units covered a wide variety of disciplines including building front line emplacements, digging deep underground fortifications, developing responses to chemical and underground warfare, constructing and maintaining railways, roads, canals, water supply, bridges, transport and the communications networks which involved installing radio, telephones and other signalling equipment. With so many different elements, constantly moving to support the fighting units, it is almost impossible to track individuals within the Royal Engineers.

Finally, whilst it is disappointing that William’s army service, and details of his death and where he is buried/commemorated, are not known we do know his family history. Only if further details of him emerge in the future can his story be concluded.