

## **November 2018 – 100 Years After**

The 11<sup>th</sup> of November 2018 marked the Centenary of the First World War Armistice, the recognised agreement made between Germany and the Allies to end the fighting on the Western Front at 11am on that date. Whilst, technically, the First World War did not end until the formal signing of The Treaty of Versailles on 28 June 1919 it has traditionally been 11 November - Remembrance Day - when we commemorate the ending of hostilities. Fortuitously, in 2018, 11 November fell on a Sunday and so had added meaning as Remembrance Day coincided with Remembrance Sunday.

The significance of 11 November 2018 was marked globally with religious and secular services, musical and cultural events, visits to the sites of battlefields and, above all, the laying of wreaths and making of speeches at some of the war's great memorials and monuments.

Some days before 11 November 2018 I travelled with my wife to Belgium and Northern France to visit some of the monuments, museums and war grave cemeteries and to lay remembrance crosses at the Tyne Cot Memorial (near Ypres) and the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of the Somme in northern France. The culmination of our journey was scheduled as a visit, on Remembrance Sunday, to the Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing in Ypres (Ieper), Belgium, to place a wreath to mark the fallen of Neston and Burton before attending a service in the Cathedral. In the event, last-minute changes had to be made as public access to the Menin Gate on the day was denied as members of the Belgian royal family, and visiting dignitaries, staged their own commemorative services. So, on Remembrance Sunday we attended a morning service at the Anglican Church in Ghent (where we were made most welcome and the service was in both English and Dutch) and we laid the wreath at the Menin Gate on the following day. The traditional wreath, obtained through Neston Royal British Legion and donated by Neston Town Council was inscribed:

**Neston Town Council**

**November 2018**

**WE REMEMBER**

**Those Men from the Villages of  
Neston and Burton, Wirral,  
who Served with Distinction in  
THE GREAT WAR**

**Many Men Served - Many Men Died**

**Neston Royal British Legion**

Another purpose for our visit to the three major memorials was to identify and photograph the inscribed names of the 25 known local men commemorated there; at Tyne Cot there are 5 names, at the Thiepval Memorial there are 14 and at the Menin Gate a further 6. All the names of these men, none of whose bodies was ever recovered or identified, were found.

A few of the many hundreds of photographs taken are shown below.



Ian Norris, the author of HomeTown Heroes, laying the Neston & Burton wreath at the Menin Gate in Ypres , Belgium, in November 2018

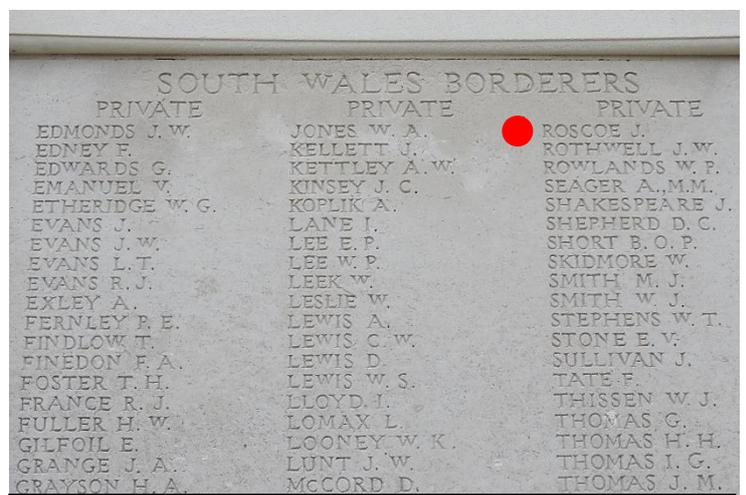
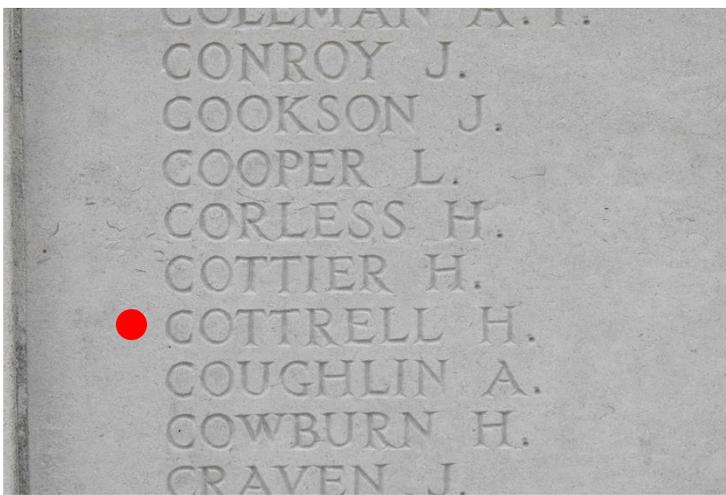
At both Tyne Cot and Thiepval the placing of the remembrance crosses was assisted by young and enthusiastic members of the Centenary Interns Programme of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC).



**Cathy Norris with the Neston & Burton remembrance cross, and two CWGC staff, at the Tyne Cot Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery and Memorial to the Missing, near Ypres, Belgium, in November 2018**



**Tyne Cot**



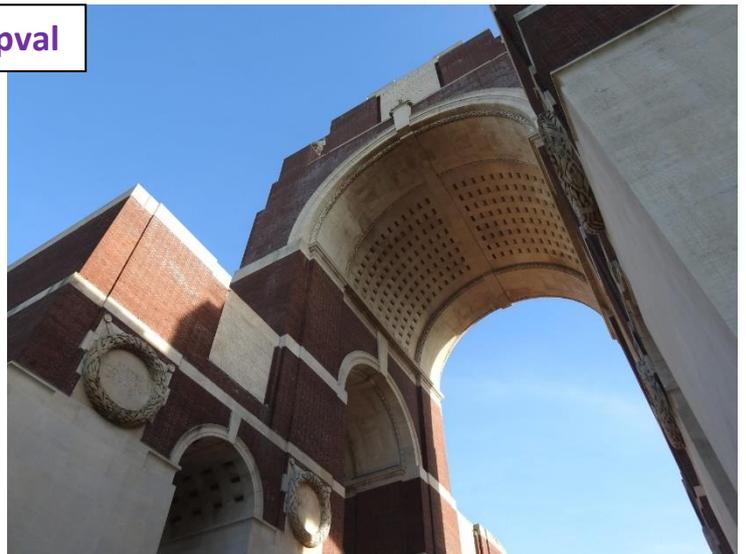
**Private Harry Cottrell, 245086**  
 2<sup>nd</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> Battalion The Loyal North Lancashire Rgt.  
 Died 26 October 1916, aged 19, shot by a German sniper to the north-east of Poelcappelle during The Second Battle of Passchendaele  
 Harry is commemorated in Neston Parish Church

**Private James Roscoe, 42379**  
 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion South Wales Borderers  
 Killed in action 10 November 1917, aged 27, during an attempt to capture the high ground north of Passchendaele  
 James is commemorated in Neston Parish Church

Inscriptions to Neston men at the Tyne Cot Memorial, near Ypres



Thiepval



A Remembrance Bench, very similar to that on The Green in Little Neston

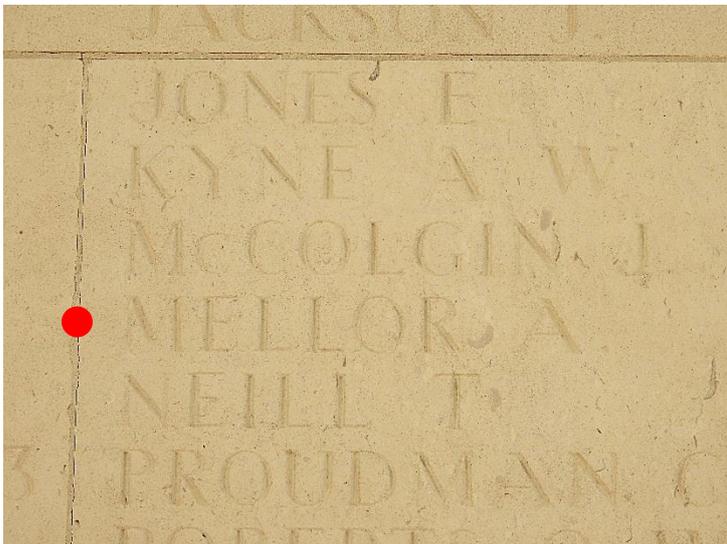
The 42m high brick arch, aligned east-west, on the Thiepval Memorial



The Neston & Burton Remembrance Cross at the Thiepval Memorial



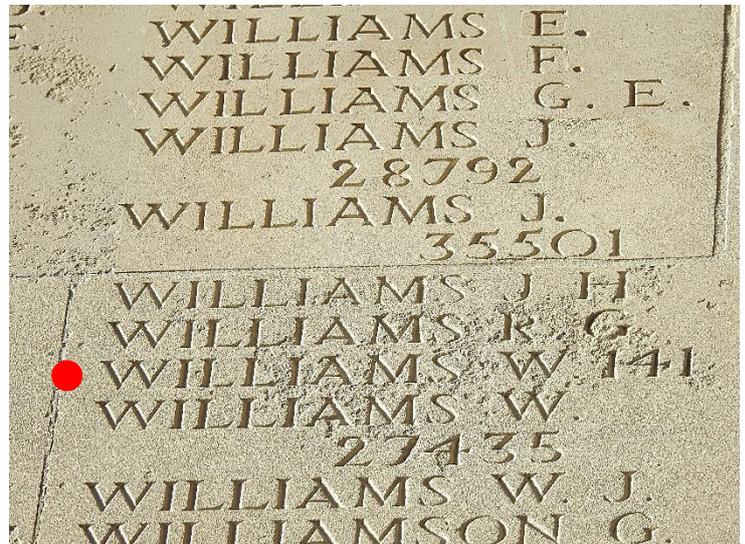
The imposing Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of the Somme in Picardy, N. France. Here, 72 337 missing British and South African servicemen who died in the Battles of The Somme between 1915 and 1918, and with no known grave, are commemorated. Designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, the memorial was built between 1928 and 1932 and is the largest Commonwealth Memorial to the Missing in the world. Five men from Neston and Burton have their names inscribed on the monument.



**Sergeant Alphonso Mellor, 49382**  
**10<sup>th</sup> Battalion Cheshire Regiment**

Died 3 October 1916, aged 23, killed in action during a localised action or enemy shelling, probably at Ancre Heights near Thiepval

'Alf' is commemorated in Burton Parish Church



**Private Wallace Williams, W/141**  
**13<sup>th</sup> Battalion Cheshire Regiment**

Died 7 July 1916, aged 20, presumed killed in action during the assault on Mametz Wood and Ovillers, The Somme

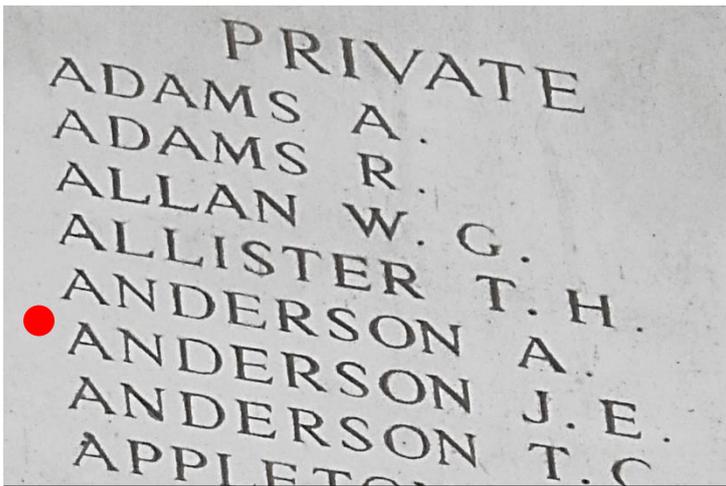
Harry is commemorated in Neston Parish Church

Inscriptions to Burton & Neston men at the Thiepval Memorial, Authuille, France



The Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing in Ypres (or Ieper), West Flanders, is dedicated to the British and Commonwealth soldiers who were killed in the Ypres Salient of World War I and whose graves are unknown. The memorial bears the names of more than 54 000 officers and men of whom 6 are known to have had a significant connection to Neston. Unveiled in July 1927 the Menin Gate is located at the eastern exit of the town and marks the starting point for one of the main roads that led Allied soldiers to the front line.

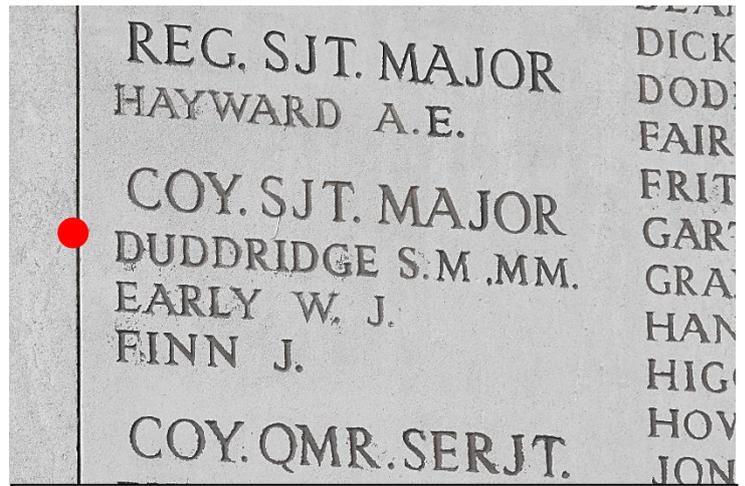
During the First World War, Ypres (or "Wipers" as it was commonly known by the British troops) was the centre of the Battles of Ypres between German and Allied forces. Between October 1914 and November 1917 three significant conflicts – the best-known and most costly being the Battle of Passchendaele in 1917 - raged around the town. Between 31 July and 6 November 1917 it is estimated that both sides had around 500 000 casualties and the town, since restored, was almost entirely obliterated by artillery fire.



**Private James Edward Anderson, 4252**  
**1<sup>st</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> Battalion King's (Liverpool Regiment)**

Died 16 June 1915, aged 22, presumed killed in action during the First Battle of Bellewaarde (The Battle of Hooge), Belgium

James is commemorated in the Neston URC church



**Company Sergeant Major Samuel Mark Duddridge**  
**13<sup>th</sup> Battalion Cheshire Regiment**

Died 7 August 1917, aged 28, killed in action following the Battle of Pilckem Ridge, near Hooge, east of Ypres, Belgium

James is commemorated in Neston Parish Church

Inscriptions to Neston men at the Menin Gate Memorial in Ypres

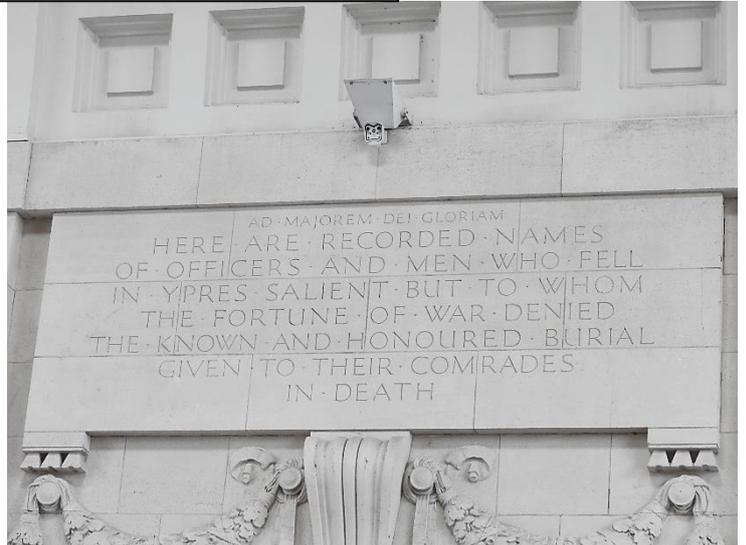


The Menin Gate, looking westwards from outside the town with the fortification wall and town moat



Armistice Centenary wreaths at the Menin Gate - the Neston and Burton wreath is resting against the wall

### Commemorative inscriptions at the Menin Gate



Two small parts of a large and graphic diorama depicting aspects of front line warfare – Thiepval Museum