

## Remembrance Sunday 1914 village walk

### Stop 1 All Saints Church.

The village in 1914 was not so different from today, although it would have felt very different I guess. Possibly no power or telephone cables. Certainly an image of the Green taken around 1900 shows no telegraph poles.

Apart from a few post war houses built between Hall Farm and the School on Church Road and farm buildings converted to dwellings, essentially the buildings that stood then are the ones standing now.

The roads were in all probability not sealed and hedges and tree cover may have been less and of course motor vehicles would have been few and far between.

In 1914 the village had a population of 300, slightly higher than today. 43 men from Wood Norton responded to Secretary of State Kitchener's call and enlisted.

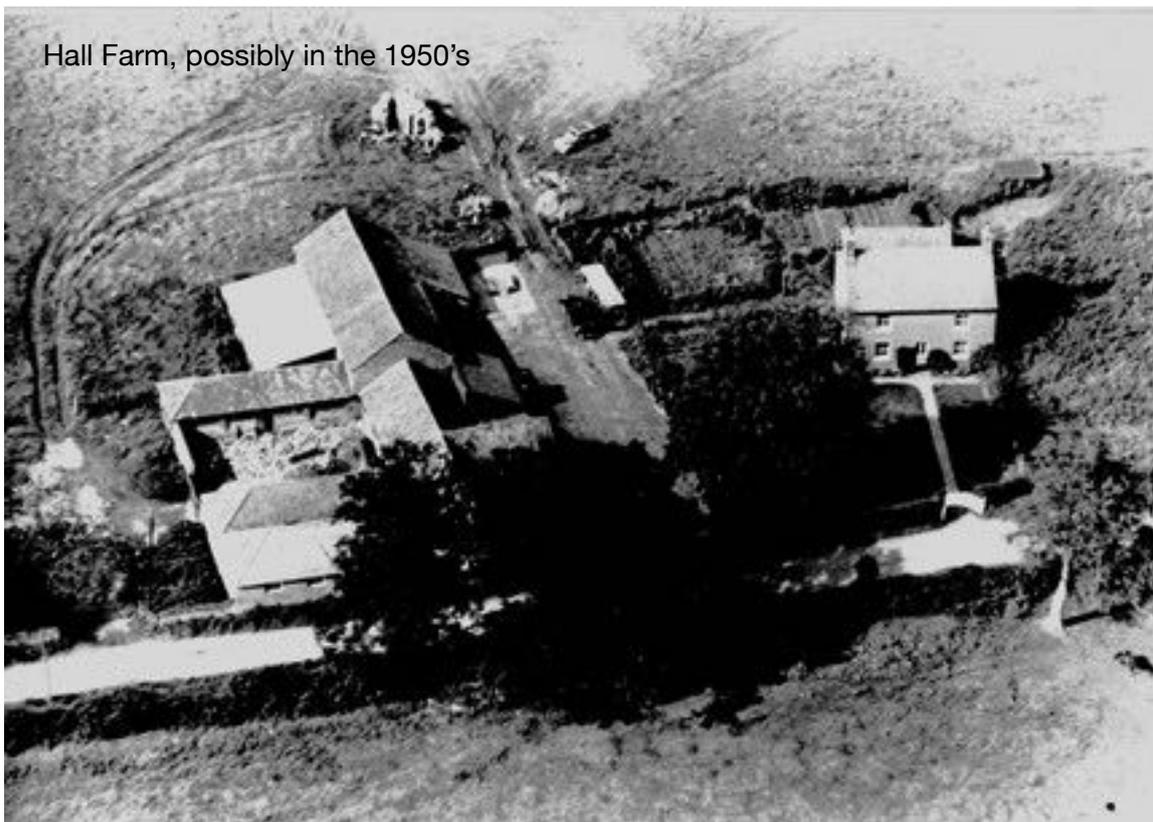
Nowadays with near enough instant communication world wide we all know about war, possibly even sanitised to its real horrors but when these 43 men signed up most would have had little concept of what lay ahead.

With the exception of the one officer, William Norris, these young men would all have left occupations associated with the horse-economy and the land; horseman, gardener, blacksmith, gamekeeper, wheelwright and saddler. We know there was a wheelwright based at Barn View on Rectory Road.

Many would have worked on local farms, like the Grange which along with Stable Cottage and Church Farm Barn was then called Church Farm. A close knit group of workers probably living in the village.

**STOP 2 Clare Cottage.**

Until recently Clare Cottage was called The Dairy and with the attached Hall Farm Barn behind were the farm buildings of Hall Farm and the farmhouse next door. It has been suggested the farmhouse is newer than the farm buildings.



### **STOP 3 Hawthorne Cottage.**

This is the site of the old Village Hut. The father of William Forbes Norris , who owned Wood Norton Hall and what is now Cromes, gave this wedge of land to the village in remembrance of those from the village who lost their lives in the Great War, including his son who signed up on 16th August 1914 and was killed on the 25th August 1915 in Gallipoli age 21.

An army billet was purchased from Weybourne Camp and erected on this site in May 1920. It served the village for 78 years and then dismantled and sold in 1998 to someone who then re-erected it for storage. So may still be going (strong?)



#### **STOP 4 Chapel.**

Holly Bank, was previously called Chapel Cottage after the Methodist chapel here. Alfred Wright of Brush Cottages was killed on the 8th December 1917. It is thought his parents moved from Brush Hill to Chapel Cottage, now Holly Bank in 1920, although there is also information which suggests Alfred's parents may have moved from Brush Hill to the Chapel Cottage before moving into what is now Holly Bank.

#### **STOP 5 The Green.**

We have some good photographic records of this part of the village.

#### **The School**

Built in 1875 for 70 boys and girls. Headmistress, and church organist, was Miss Miriam Jane Hunt. Highly likely that most of the 43 men from the village attended this school with the possible exception of William Norris.

Post WW2 Smith's Coaches operated from what is now the road haulage firm on the top road (B1110). They collected children and brought them to school. Meg Smith's parents-in-law bought the school after it had stood empty for several years. Meg Smith now lives in the school her family transported children to.



## The Post Office

Charles Edward Mason was the sub-postmaster in 1916; letters arrived and were dispatched twice daily and once on Sunday. Half-closing day was Wednesday.



## The Sun

One of two pubs in the village. Arthur Robert Buck (killed 25th May 1918) was lodging here in 1911 before he moved to Brush Cottages. The pub closed and became a private house in 1957.





### **Smithy and Cottages**

To the left of the Sun pub stood a row of cottages with a Smithy on the end. This may have been home to some of the servicemen living in 'The Street' in the 1918 electoral roll. We don't know why they have disappeared.

In the black and white image the smithy can be seen as a bulkier building on the end of 'The Street' but by the time the colour image was taken it had disappeared. Perhaps sometime between the Wars, this was relocated onto the site that is now Pendeford House and later developed as a garage. Petrol pumps can be seen in both images.

One of Smith's coaches is clearly visible in the black and white picture.