



Charles Short

30828 Gunner, 7th Mountain Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery

He died on 3rd October 1918 in Salonika, Greece, aged 30

Charles is buried at Kirechkoi-Hortakoi Military Cemetery, Thessaloniki, Greece

Charles Short was, unlike many of our Harleston Heroes, an experienced professional soldier and, detailed as he was to one of the Heavy Guns sited well behind the front lines in Greece, he may well have hoped to survive the war. With the benefit of hindsight, we can see that within 6 weeks of his death the Armistice would have been declared. However, not all deaths were due to wounds received in action, microbes could be just as fatal. Another of our Harleston Heroes, Sapper Bentham, died of septicaemia, Short died either of Malaria or became so weakened by the disease he succumbed to the effect of the wound he was also suffering from. Malaria was rife in Greece, but it is also perfectly possible that Short had contracted the disease out in India, where his Battery was based before the outbreak of war. Malaria was one of those terrible diseases you never fully shook off, return bouts would wrack your body for years.

Charles Short at age 22, was one of the unmarried rank and file listed as part of the complement of 132 men, 4 officers, 2 officers wives and 8 soldiers wives with the 8th Mountain Battery in the 1911 census. There were also 15 soldiers children on the base, at Quetta, officer's children tended to be sent 'home' to be educated and trained into the next generation of empire builders. The same census has one of his cousins, William Jolly Jnr, of the Norfolk Rgt. In the less glamorous surroundings of the Malplaquet Barracks, Aldershot.

Check out this link for some amazing footage of the Royal Artillery at work and play in Quetta during the mid-1920's – more mechanisation, skimpier frocks and some dashing dance moves but otherwise much the same sort of environment that Short would have been immersed in, albeit the slightly less luxurious version of it experienced by the rank and file rather than the officers!

<https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/1060013401>

Charles Short, not to put too fine a point on it, came from a slightly chaotic background. A quick skip through the census would indicate his father was a Birmingham lad, apparently reversing the migration from country to town that was such a feature of the Victorian Era. The truth was actually a lot more complicated. Charles roots were actually in Laxfield, Suffolk where one side of his family had specialised in shoemaking, the other side had been agricultural workers. Somewhere in the early/mid 19th Century, everything went a little wrong for the shoemaking Shorts; I think we can be

reasonably confident that the outpost of 5 Laxfield born 'Shorts' in Gt Yarmouth in 1851, with 2 out of the three men being involved in shoemaking, were relatives.

The Suffolk Chronicle
29 Sep 1821

We actually need to go back to Ezekiel (the family seem to spell this Ezekial, but this is all a bit erratic, so I have gone with standard spelling) Short Snr; at some point he married Elizabeth Ship and proceeded to produce and baptise Maria, James, John and Ezekiel Jnr in Feb 1827 all in Laxfield, apparently in a house next to yet another member of the family.

IN THREE LOTS,
The following Valuable Estates,
Subject to such Conditions of Sale as will then and there be produced:—

Lot 1. Comprises a substantial Copyhold Dwelling-house, lately occupied by Mr. Botwright; a Dwelling-house adjoining, in the use of Mr. Edward Read; and Butcher's Shop, in the occupation of Benjamin Thompson.—Outgoings trivial.

Lot 2. Consists of a Double Cottage, situate in Laxfield-street, in the occupation of Wm. Short, and Ezekiel Short.

Lot 3. Comprises a Freehold Double Cottage, with 2 roods and 16 perches of exceedingly good land, now in the occupation of Samuel Folcard, and John Wright, at the yearly rent of nine pounds. No outgoings whatever.

For further particulars apply to Mr. Robert Flatman, or the Auctioneer, both of Laxfield.

I have actually found a record of an earlier Ezekiel Short, Cordwainer (maker of posh shoes) and wife Sarah, being allowed settlement in Metfield in May 1774, then being appointed an overseer in Withersdale way back in April 1793. There was then a cross migration into Laxfield from a few members of the Metfield branch. This was a family immersed in shoemaking. Shoemakers were not generally a tribe that got into much trouble, theirs was a largely solitary and not particularly thirsty job so less temptation to fall into bad company at the pub!

However, for some reason Ezekiel Snr blotted his copy book and wound up, in 1844 doing 14 days in Ipswich Gaol for larceny. Perhaps his eyesight had gone, perhaps his hands had developed palsy, perhaps he was just not a very good shoemaker but for some reason this elderly chap, in his 60's at the time he was incarcerated, had slipped up. This was probably the end of his business; in 1851 the widower was living in the Stradbroke Workhouse.

tenced to four months' hard labour.
Ezekiel Short, 24, Laxfield, shoemaker, pleaded guilty to a charge of having stolen, on the 16th of January, inst., at Lowestoft, one shoulder of mutton, of the value of one shilling and nine-pence, the property of John Martin; six weeks' hard labour.

The Suffolk Chronicle;
17 Mar 1849

Unfortunately, his youngest son, Ezekiel Jnr followed his father's slip up with one of his own and, having stolen a shoulder of mutton, wound up doing 6 weeks in Ipswich in 1849, for Larceny. Bearing in mind his future perambulations, it is interesting that this crime took place in Lowestoft, a fair trot from home. Young Ezekiel, starting a pattern he was to follow for much of the rest of his life, went on the tramp and received another 6 weeks for Larceny in Stamford, Lincolnshire, on the 12th of October 1850. He obviously was not a very good thief, in 1851, this convicted felon was once more in Ipswich County Gaol, having been given 8 months in March of that year for Larceny.

County Gaol	Name of Prisoner	Convicted	Term	Month	Year	Occupation	Place
	William Taylor	✓	30	✓		Laborer	Holford
	David Palmer	✓	30	✓		"	Collyer
	Charles Beckin	✓	19	✓		"	Beckles
	George Chambers	✓	17	✓		Warringer	Lowestoft
	Ezekiel Short	✓	26	✓		Shoemaker	Laxfield



In 1861, Ezekiel was in Ramsey, now in Cambridgeshire but then in Huntingdonshire. His wife, Mary Ann did not then give a birthplace although a later census reveals this to have been Somerset. It is debateable whether they met in Somerset or whether they met when they were both on the tramp, it would also be unremarkable if they had never had benefit of clergy; women on the tramp would often have informal, but long-lasting relationships with a male protector. As might be expected of itinerant traders / craftsmen Ezekiel,

Mary Ann and 3 years old William Short were in lodgings, on this occasion a Beer house on Little White. This is most likely to have been The Unicorn, now the Hawk Bar. Being 3 lodgers, amongst 15, indicates both the size and the crowding of the establishment and that they would have had to fend for themselves for meals, probably cooking over a communal fire. In 1871 the Short family pitched up in North Walsham, which was wife Mary Ann's somerset birthplace was revealed; William (now 13) was shown to have come from Birmingham and the younger child, James 18 months, from Saxmundham, indicating how Ezekiel, shoemaker, was traversing the country. This decade, the family were lodging in a smaller, probably very basic, backyard lodging house; this itinerant lifestyle also explains why it was been very difficult to track the family down over the years. It would be surprising if there were not more children between, before, or after William and James; itinerants tended to dwell in the shadier edges of Victorian society where infant mortality was very high.

No.	NAME.	Age.	TRADE.	Deegree o
7	William Short	24	Striker.....	I
	21 Days, 19 July, 1875, Devides Police Court, as William Smith			
	2 Calendar Months, 9 Aug., 1875, Birmingham Police Court			
	6 Weeks, 8 Sept., 1876, Birming- ham Police Court			
	1 Calendar Month, 8 Jan., 1877, Birmingham Police Court			
	9 Calendar Months and 1 Year Supervision of Police, 6 April, 1877, Birmingham Sessions			
	14 Days, 12 Aug., 1878, Birming- ham Police Court			
	15 Calendar Months and 3 Years Supervision of Police, 7 Jan., 1879, Birmingham Sessions			
	18 Calendar Months and 2 Years Supervision of Police, 7 Jan., 1881, Birmingham Sessions			
	The same			
7	William Short			

I can find no trace of the Short parents in 1881, but it was a hard life on the road and, much as infant mortality was very high, so adults tended not to reach a ripe old age either. It could be that by 1881, William was alone in the world. Unfortunately, the best candidate for 'our' William in this census would be the incarcerated 'Engine fitter' languishing, along with 200 other prisoners in Salt Lane Prison, Worcester; that would make three generations of gaol birds! And I have to say, for a young man he had quite a list of convictions

58	William Short (alias Smith) Summary—9th Aug., 1875, assault, 2 cal. months' H.L. ; 8th Sept., 1876, assault, 6 weeks' H.L. ; 8th Jan., 1877, C.J.A., stealing a rabbit, 1 cal. month H.L. Apl. Sess, 1877, stealing mill brasses, 9 cal. months' H.L., and 1 year Supervision. Summary —12th Aug., 1878, drunk and riot- ous, 14 days' Imp. Devises—July, 1875, stealing a shawl, 21 days' H.L.	21	Puddler
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William Short's 1878 and 1883 lists

Short, William alias Smith	1858	S	fitter	fr	dk br	gr	5 10	prop	oval	brow	Scar in centre of breast, mole right collar-bone, top of back, right shoulder and right arm pit	Birmingham Birmingham	7 1 81 Worcester 6 7 82	Coventry-road, Birmingham	18 ms. 2 yrs.	4 pre. con. Previously sentenced to Police Supervision. See Vol. 1880, in name of Short, William
Northon, Thomas	1863	S	labourer	fr	br	br	5 11	clerk	oval							

If this is our man, he obviously decided to make a new start and headed down south to Bungay, a town not far from the family village of Laxfield. There he met and in early 1884 married Susan Jolly, a first generation native of the town. I suspect this wayward lad met his match in Susan whose own family could be a little lively. This were young people both from families used to teetering on the edges of society, Susan Jolly was one of the last children of very elderly parents.

Robert Chapman and William King, charged with stealing, at Bungay, on the 30th July last, some bread, meat, butter, and twopence halfpenny, the property of Josiah Jolly, of Bungay, labourer, pleaded guilty, and as they were old offenders they were each sentenced to 14 days' imprisonment and to be whipped, and at the expiration of this sentence to be sent to a Reformatory for two years.

Norfolk Chronicle
8 Aug 1863

Those parents, Josiah Jolly and Susan Snr,

had both originally hailed from Laxfield, hometown of the Shorts, and would doubtless have known the family. The couple produced about 10 or 11 children who lived long enough to appear in censuses. I think Susan must have been a fairly kind and tolerant soul, in 1881 the 28-year-old silk weaver was heading a household that included her aged widowed mother (Susan Snr), another silk worker plus the illegitimate child of the sister of her younger brother's wife!

10 years earlier, in 1871, when Susan was 18, and her younger brother William 15, they along with a friend, were fined over 5s each for stealing wood from a fence, presumably for use on the fire at home. The third miscreant, Emma Clark, went on to marry her co-larcenist William Jolly, more or less the minute he was 18; two years later, in late 1873 and it was the daughter of Emma Jolly nee Clark's sister, Anna who was lodging with Susan in 1881. Hope you are keeping up with all this!

STEALING WOOD.

William Jolly, Emma Clark, and Susan Jolly, of Bungay, were charged with stealing part of a dead fence, the property of Mr. Brock, of Flixton, on the 5th inst.

The case being proved, they were each fined 3s., and costs 2s., damage to fence 2d.

Seven days allowed.

I am afraid to say Susan's brother, William Jolly, was a bit of a pickle and spent much of the next 30 years ambling in and out of the local court circuit on charges of poaching, drunkenness, assault in general,

assault in the course of heckling Salvation Army Meetings (favoured past time for the rougher elements at the time), failure to send his children to school (his sister in law, Ann Clark was charged at the same sessions for the same crime); this same sister in law seems to have been at the centre

of a family feud in 1890 which led to fisticuffs between Jolly and a slightly startled gentleman friend of this single mother.

Norwich Mercury
11 Oct 1890

He was further charged with assaulting William Frost. He was committed for one month. Complainant said he was sitting in Anne Clarke's house, where he lodged, when defendant came and struck at him, and threw him on to the table. He did not know why he was assaulted, and did not strike the defendant at all. Anne Clarke said that she tried to get Jolley away from Frost, but could not do so, and then she "shruck," and the police came. While Jolley was assaulting Frost, Jolley said that he (Frost) had had some talk with Jolley's wife. Inspector Lingley said he heard calls of "Murder," and went to Anne Clarke's house, where he saw Jolley beating Frost aery violently. He separated them, and Jolley went home at once. There had been a disturbance in the early part of the evening between Anne Clarke and Jolley's wife, who are two sisters.

In all honesty I sort of gave up perusing William Jolly's doings although it is good to see that in 1907, the family that fought together stuck together; William Jollys Snr and Jnr were both fined for assault.

Norfolk News Norfolk, England

5 Oct 1907

William Jolly, sen., labourer, Bungay, pleaded guilty to assaulting William Howes, labourer, of Bungay, on the 26th ult., and was fined 10s., and costs 7s.

William Jolly, jun., labourer, also pleaded guilty "under great provocation" to a like offence on the complainant Howes, and was fined £1, and costs 7s. Defendant was further charged with assaulting Samuel Aldred, and was fined £1, and 9s. costs, for this offence.

Back to the Shorts, our Harleston Hero, Charles Short first appeared, in the 1891 census, aged 3, with two younger siblings in Nethergate Bungay. His father William Short, aged 32, gave his job as Hawker, basically a man who tramped the roads or hung about the marketplace selling small items from a tray. Not an easy way to earn

a living, although one he would have been familiar with from the days he was tramping with his parents. In 1901, slightly bizarrely, William Short was claiming to have been 'Discharged from the Army', a tad bizarre because, frankly, he would have been too damn old and too damn married to have enlisted between the ages of 32 and 42! It is just conceivable that he had been in the territorials and had been called up for the Boer War. If so, Charles, not quite a teenager, would have been the perfect age to be impressed by tales from South Africa.

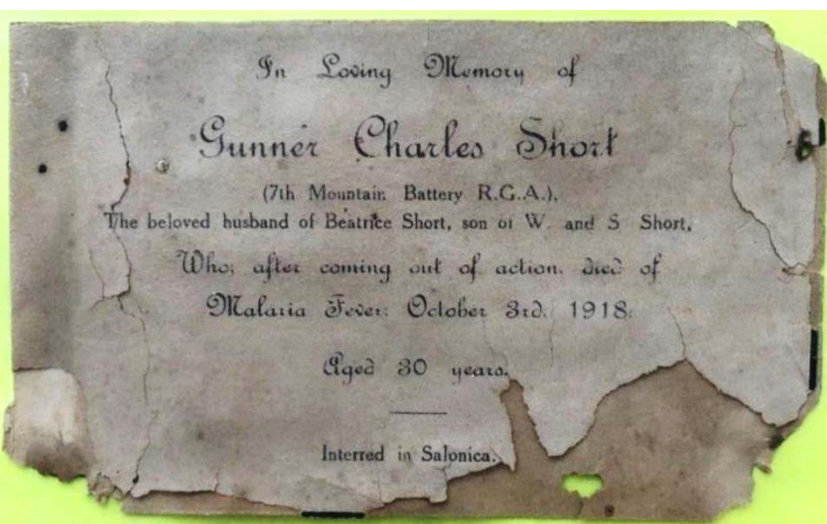
Wesleyan Chapel Bungay



In this 1901 census Charles' mother was the cleaner at the local chapel, a useful addition to the family income. I think we can assume Wesleyan as that was the faith that Charles carried on his military records.

Ten years later the family had drifted out to Wortwell, hence Charles' presence on our war memorial. Younger brother George (maybe named for William's younger brother who appeared in the 1871 census) was a house painter whilst Charles was out in the Mountains of India. Literally for centuries, poor working-class lads from East Anglia had enlisted in the Military, exchanging the rough and tumble of overcrowded cottages, and narrow prospects for the discipline and empire traveling of the Army and Navy. This census also revealed the sad fact that, like many families barely getting by, there had been a high mortality in the Short household; of the 5 children brought into the world during their 27-year marriage only 2, Charles and his younger brother, George, survived.

Charles Short's regiment, familiar as it was with the rugged terrain of Northern India, were deployed to the dry rugged terrain of the Mediterranean. Charles reported sick on the 25th of September 1918,



running a high temperature and suffering from both malaria and a mortar wound to his back. Too ill to be treated on the base he was dispatched by Ambulance Train (just as likely to indicate a column of ambulances as a railed steam engine) on the 26th. Short lingered for a week before finally succumbing to the combined effects of Malaria and a possibly infected wound although his memorial card, preserved at Wortwell Hall before being passed onto the RBL Archives, tells a slightly different story.

Although the card, after 100 years of being kept in less than ideal conditions is a little battered, the text clearly reads:

Beloved Husband of Beatrice Short and son of W and S Short (*William and Susan*)

Who after coming out of action died of Malaria Fever

Charles left a widow, Beatrice Short, most likely Beatrice M nee King, whom he married in late 1916. This marriage took place up in Wakefield possibly, as was traditional, Beatrice's hometown, maybe they met in London, that is the address Beatrice gave after the war, maybe they met somewhere else entirely and they grabbed the chance to marry when Charles was on leave. Perhaps his wife to be was the Beatrice Mary from Stroud who was working as a general servant in Roundhay in 1911?

It may not have been quite respectable, but I did hope that the little lad, Frank L Short, mother's maiden name King, born in Hemel Hempstead, also in 1916, was theirs, leaving Beatrice with more than just memories to cling to after her husband's death. However, since the next time Frank L Short appears, in the 1939 register, still living in Hemel Hempstead when it becomes plain that his parents were Henry and Emma Short, it seems Charles had no children to carry on his name.

At the end of the war, Charles father, William Short, the single surviving son of tramping parents and his wife, Susan, from the prolific Jolly family, were left with a single son, George, and maybe a grandchild or two. Two 'Jollys' are commemorated on the Bungay War Memorial, whether they were cousins of Charles is a matter for another researcher.