



## Sydney Charles Hutton

46956 Private, 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion Northamptonshire Regiment

Sydney was killed in action on 21<sup>st</sup> March 1918 in France

He is commemorated at the Pozieres Memorial, Somme, France

Brick has long been a useful building material particularly in areas with limited amounts of timber and/or stone which fairly well describes the heavily cultivated, lightly wooded lands around Harleston. However, it was not until after the 1850s, when an 18thC brick tax was repealed, that bricks really came into their own as an affordable and popular building material in this area. With plentiful deposits of clay, brickworks sprang up all round the county including one on the Redenhall Road. Looking at the biographies of our Harleston Heroes, it is surprising just how many had links with either brickmaking or brick laying as many of our ancient (and not so ancient) buildings were given fashionable and practical new brick skins and new buildings were constructed entirely from this now affordable material.

Harleston thrived through much of the 19<sup>th</sup> C and in order to meet the demand for skilled brick layers and makers, a number of workers were attracted in from elsewhere. One such family were the Huttons; Kenninghall born William George Hutton and his wife Eliza nee Howard from Banham rocked up at Lushbush sometime between 1867 and 1868. The young couple had married in Eliza's home church of Banham in 1866; impressively the bride and groom (both the offspring of labourers) could write their names.

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
245	2. 1	William George Hutton Eliza Howard.	24 yrs	Bachelor Spinster	Brick maker —	Banham	Robert Hutton Thomas Howard	Servant Lab.

1866. Marriage solemnized at the Parish Church in the Parish of Banham in the County of Norfolk

Married in the Banham Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church by me, of the Banham P. Church

This Marriage was solemnized between us, { William George Hutton } in the Presence of us, { Eliza Howard }  
 { Eliza Howard } { Robert Sage } his mark

This was in spite of William, son of Sophie nee Howard and Robert Hutton having two totally illiterate parents. Property Sales details reveal that Robert had been living in one half of a comfortably sized double dwelling, with land enclosed about on Park Common in 1849. Robert's own father had been a porter for the Union (Workhouse); Sophie's father Thomas Howard, a labourer, both pretty normal rural working-class backgrounds. Robert's lack of literacy may be more a comment on his lack of education rather than his intelligence; Robert was very involved in Bell Ringing in Kenninghall, following the complex patterns that had evolved over the years in the English Change Bell ringing tradition. His older son, Robert Hutton Jnr also rang but out of the Banham Tower<sup>1</sup>. Having done some basic bell ringing – I can assure you that this is a skill that requires dedication, concentration and diligence! In later years he was involved in peals of over 5,000 changes following complex interweaving patterns with all 8 ringers working in and around each other.

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## KENNINGHALL.

**CAMPANOLOGY.**—The company of ringers of the above place on the 15th inst., rang a true and complete peal, consisting of 1867 changes of Bob Major in one hour and ten minutes. The peal was conducted by Jeremiah Mordey, and composed by J. Youngs, of Norwich. The men were stationed as follows:—Wm. Oxe, treble; Thomas Oxe, 2nd; Mark Mordey, 3rd; John Woods, 4th; John Clark, 5th; Robert Hutton, 6th; George Edwards, 7th; Jeremiah Mordey, tenor.

*Norwich Mercury, 18 May 1867*

Now, before we get any further involved in the life of William Hutton, father of hero Sydney Charles Hutton, we should have a quick look at Sydney's mother Eliza nee Howard of Banham who, research reveals, is linked to Pte Leonard George Howard who died in 1943 and whose death is also recorded on the Harleston War Memorial.

Thomas Howard Snr was not only the father of Eliza but of a number of other children including Thomas Howard Jnr and the baby of the family Selina. In 1881, Thomas Howard Jnr was working at the same Brickworks as his brother-in-law William Hutton (husband of Eliza) These brick works were on the low-lying land between Harleston and Lush Bush, the Gas Works were also close by and between at least 1891 and 1911 that was where Thomas Howard Jnr was working.

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<sup>1</sup> It is possible they are one and the same man but unlikely

Checkout [Leonard Howard Bio](#) but in brief:- Eliza Hutton nee Howard's youngest sister Selina Howard, married Robert Amies and produced Louisa Amies. The older brother of both Eliza and Selina Howard, Thomas Howard Jnr in turn also had a son, George Howard. Selina's daughter Louise Amies married first cousin George Howard, son of Thomas Howard, Selina's brother – and from this marriage came another of our heroes Leonard George Howard, great nephew of William and Eliza Hutton! Oh and while we are at it one of William and Eliza's daughters, Laura married William's brother Robert Jnr's only child - yet another Robert Hutton (III) – keeping it all in the family! This Robert also continued in the clay trade although he died relatively young, in 1933 having been an invalid for 23 years -industrial accident? With 10 children to raise I doubt he was able to take much time off work.

William Hutton was one of two boys and two girls born to his parents; both the boys had started off as Agricultural labourers but moved to brick making – hard work but potentially steadier. In 1871, William and Eliza had three children all but the oldest of whom had been in Harleston – by 1891 they had brought 12 children into the world (of whom we have records), the 10<sup>th</sup> of whom was their son Sidney Charles and the youngest of whom was the then 5 years old Claude. They appear to have only lost Christina (at the age of 4 in Sept 1875 and possibly a William in 1871, rapidly followed by a successor of the same name.

Their 6th child Oliver had the honour of being the second child to be baptised at the new St John's Church on the 5<sup>th</sup> July 1872. Slightly surprisingly the Harleston magistrates Court fined this young man (in absentia) 2s and 8s costs for assaulting Alred Reeves in 1891. I say surprisingly as the assault was a slap around the head and such matters were generally deemed trivial, with magistrates being far more ferocious about theft or damage to property– perhaps it was 19 years old Oliver's failure to turn up in court that annoyed the magistrates?

## REDENHALL with HARLESTON

**A** RTHUR E. VINCENT is favoured with instructions from the Executors of the late G. A. CARTHEW, Esq., to SELL BY AUCTION, at the Magpie Hotel, Harleston, on **TUESDAY, 20th FEBRUARY, 1883, at Five for Six o'clock, in One Lot.**

All that **DESIRABLE FREEHOLD PROPERTY** known as the Lush Bush Cottages, comprising Two substantially erected **DOUBLE COTTAGES**, Brick and Flint Built, and Tiled, in the occupation of George Hannant and Edward Dunn, at rents amounting to £11. 14s.

A well built Brick and Tiled **DOUBLE COTTAGE** in the occupation of William Hutton and James Strutt, at rents amounting to £6. 6s.; and a Capital Claywrought and Tiled Messuage, in the occupation of Albert Whisken, at the yearly rent of £4, together with convenient Yards and Gardens.

The property is pleasantly situated by the high road, and is distant only half-a-mile from Harleston. Owing to its very desirable situation, the property readily lets, and consequently offers a good opportunity for investment.

There is a pump and well on the premises.

Other than this one blip, the Huttons seem to have been a most respectable family, raising their children in this settlement half way between the bustling town of Harleston and the quieter hamlet around the mother church of Redenhall. We are lucky to have a description of the cottage this family was squeezed into, dating from the early 1880's.

*Norwich Mercury*  
17 Feb 1883

For some reason, the family up stucked in the early 1890s and headed off to the Earl of Cadogan's estate in West Stow then on to Ipswich where a terrible double tragedy hit this heretofore quietly hard working and unassuming family.

The 7<sup>th</sup> child, Arthur Hutton, had been receiving treatment at the Ipswich East Suffolk Hospital since January 1895. Only 19, he had a 'diseased bone' in his leg and during a fourth operation on the leg in late April of that same year he suddenly died whilst under chloroform.

This young man, along with at least one of his other brothers, Robert, had been following the family trade of Brickmaking alongside their father at the Valley Brickworks not far from the Derby Road Station. William George Hutton took the loss of his son very hard and after giving evidence at Arthur's inquest on the Friday, drowned himself in a pond at work on the Monday leaving his wife to raise four of the remaining sons aged 15 and under including our hero Sidney who was then only barely 13.

Indeed, it was 15 years old Robert who accompanied his father to work on the day he drowned and found his body in the pond, having to get another employee to help him remove the lifeless body. It was reported that William had been low for some time and the inquest jury was left with the difficult task of fulfilling their obligations whilst not wanting to cast, what was then a substantial slur, on the reputation of the surviving members of the family by returning a verdict of suicide. They compromised by returning the cause of death as Drowning – no further details.

What the jury did not know and doubtless his wife would have kept very quiet, was that as far back as 1873, the then 28-year-old William Hutton, Brickmaker, of Redenhall, had been admitted to St Andrew's Thorpe, what we would now know as a psychiatric hospital but then described as the County Lunatic Asylum. He was later discharged having been deemed to have made a recovery from the 'Exhaustion and stress' from which he was suffering. He was photographed on his discharge, a very early photograph indeed!

The death of Oliver would have been the third of their 12 children to have died and this is borne out by an article describing the double funeral of Oliver and his father and the poverty that the family were left in; it was stated that the widow now had 9 surviving children. One of those seems to have joined the Army, being in India at the time of his father's death whilst another had headed North to the mines in search of work.

*East Anglian Daily Times*  
2 May 1895

Mother Eliza stayed on to raise her boys in Ipswich appearing in 1901 in Cemetery Road, presumably near to her husband and son's final resting places. The three

youngest boys were still all at home although none had followed their father's trade whilst the unfortunate Robert who had found his father's body in the pond 6 years previously, was working as a plasterer at the St Anne's Barracks out in Guernsey. The next oldest son, our hero Sidney, then 19, was working as a groom.

Rather nicely, one of her older boys Frederick, who I think we can assume was the lad who could not get to his father's funeral as he was in India, happened to be lodging next door, presumably on a home visit. This 1901 census reveals 30 years old Frederick to have been a Gunner in the Royal Artillery – 10 years on he was selling sewing machines in Colchester and the father of a single child!

In this 1911 census, Robert Hutton was a married father of 3 working as a Horse Shunter in the 'New Explosives Factory' at Combs Ford, Stowmarket.

George, the third of the four dependant children left after William's death, was way down in Devon working as a tinman and possibly struggling as he and his wife of a year and a half were raising their 1-month-old child in a single room.

Our Hero, Sidney, born and partially raised out in Lush Bush was also married and had stayed within the building trade working as a building labourer; he too had just a single child. Sadly, this little lad, Richard Sidney, the only child of their marriage, 12 when his father died, was to die himself, aged just 16 in 1922. His mother, Annie Elizabeth went on to remarry, judging by the pension records, to a Mr Webb sometime between 1918 and the death of young Richard in 1922. Checking the 1921 census we find that 15 years old Richard was already working as a plumber's assistant and, to further help make ends meet, Annie (37) had a lodger, a 60-year-old brickmaker, and a visitor, a 23 years old plumber's mate.

**DOUBLE FUNERAL.**—The interment of the bodies of William Hutton and his son Arthur, whose sad deaths have formed subjects of inquiry before the Borough Coroner, will take place in Ipswich Cemetery at 4.15 this afternoon. The widow and mother of the deceased, who lives in Camden Road, Foxhall Road, is bearing up fairly well under her double bereavement. She has nine children left—a son in India, another son who is a miner in the North of England, and arrived in Ipswich on Wednesday to attend the funerals, two married daughters, a daughter in domestic service in Ipswich, and four small boys who will for some time be dependent upon their mother's exertions for their support. The family came to Ipswich about 16 months ago from West Stow, where the father was employed upon the Earl of Cadogan's estate; and prior to that they lived at Harleston. The husband, with so large a family to maintain, had not been able to join any Friendly Society, nor, indeed, to save anything. Some kind friends in the St. John's district are interesting themselves to raise means to meet the pressing wants of the family, and we doubt not—considering all the sad circumstances surrounding the case—that aid will be even more widely forthcoming.

It was this plumber's mate, William Arthur Webb who married Annie the same year; probably a marriage sped up by the expected arrival of Doris Webb in November 1921. By 1939, William Webb was a turbine driver, young Doris was looking for work and Annie, who died in 1947, was a housewife.

We don't see a Hutton on our war memorial even though the Huttons had spent many years out in Lush Bush and were related to the Howard family whose son Leonard George perished in the world war that broke out only 21 years after the 'end of the war to end all wars'. By the time Sydney died, the family had long left Harleston and had partially scattered beyond East Anglia.

Instead, Sydney's name is one of almost 1500 that appear on the Ipswich memorial in centre of the town where he spent his adult life and from where he enlisted. This is most appropriate but it also appropriate that we too remember this son of Harleston whose extended family remained here only to lose a son of their own some 25 years later.

Once again it is proven just how interconnected and closely knit the families of the town were; it is almost impossible to imagine the repeated blows from the almost constant reports of the deaths of the young men of the town: sons, cousins, brothers, nephews and grandsons.