

NEWBERY, Robert George – killed in action – 3 March 1916 – aged 19

Robert was born in Membury in 1896. His parents were John Newbury and Bessie (nee Aplin born 1871) who married in 1895. He was their eldest child, and he had a brother Simeon James (1898-1968), a sister Emma P born in 1900. And another brother Frederick C born in 1904.

In 1891, Bessie Aplin was living with the Edwin and Annie Marley and their 4 children at Frogwell Farm, Wilhaye Lane, Axminster, Smallridge.

In 1901 John was a carter on a farm. He and Bessie, together with Robert, Simeon and Emma were living at Prospect Cottage, Membury, together with John's mother, Sarah Ann Newbury, who was a Laundress and Midwife.

In 1911, John was a Limeburner. He and Bessie, with mother Sarah and son Frederick were living at Green Down, Membury. Robert was a cowman living at Ford Farm, Furley, living with the Perham family. Simeon, aged 13, was a Mason's Labourer and was recorded as being a patient in the Axminster Hospital.

Robert enlisted at Axminster into the Duke of Cambridge's Own (the Middlesex Regiment) the 11th Battalion – army number: G/11087 (thought to be an early volunteer). The 11th Battalion was one of the units set up in August 1914 as Kitchener's New Army – made up of volunteers. They went to France between 29 May and 1 June 1915, landing at Boulogne. They were in action at the Battle of Loos in September 1915. After a period of rest, they move into reserve and then in the front line at Givenchy, and then a period of training.. They moved back to the front line at Loos on 12 February 1916.

His brother Simeon enlisted in the navy and their father John also enlisted in the army.

Robert Newbery was killed in action on 3 March 1916 and is recorded on the Loos Memorial for the Missing, in Loos-en-Gohelle, France. Also recorded on the Loos Memorial are Noah Aplin (possibly a relative of Robert's mother) and William Parker. The men who died there were mainly killed in No Man's Land as the front changed positions over time. Those bodies that still existed were not therefore recovered until after the war in 1919, when there was no way of identifying them.

Note: Membury History Society have one of his medals, and in the Membury file there is a picture of John and his two sons printed in the Exeter and Plymouth Gazette on Friday 2 July 1915