

Aston WW1 Memorial Project

How fields in the Memorial Listing are defined.

First name(s)

Each person on the Memorial has either one or two initials, very occasionally three. Initials would have been submitted to the church by immediate or extended family members or by friends. If submitted by friends then one initial is more likely, and it would have been for the name they knew them by, so not necessarily the correct initial, or indeed their first initial.

Where there is one initial on the Memorial, it is possible that two given names are included on the listing because the available evidence would have indicated this.

Where there are two initials on the Memorial then in most cases two given names are recorded in the listing. However, this is not always the case: sometimes I have only been able to find one given name. In these cases, my cross referencing of sources has had to demonstrate with high confidence that the person is the one on the Memorial, i.e. that some other piece(s) of evidence indicates that the right person has been identified.

Occasionally, initials are transposed, or sometimes where there are two initials I have only found the name for the second initial. I have accepted these names because it is common for second given names to be in everyday use, and available credible evidence would have been required to accept this. This became more common as I sought to find the person, with my research having to broaden to look at possibilities beyond the straightforward reading of initials on the Listing. The person having a link to Aston became even more important, and I remain generally unprepared to accept a name without such a link. Again,

Surname

The surname on the Memorial would have been given to the Church either verbally, or written down. In either case it would have been easy for surnames to be misspelt, or indeed simply misunderstood if received verbally. It is not surprising then that misspellings have occurred, and these are shown in the Listing; the name in brackets is the correct spelling as shown in other evidence / sources.

I have one person, Joseph Piper, whose military records give his name as Joseph Wiggan, alias Piper. All other records for Joseph have the surname of Piper, so I have retained this on the Listing.

There are a twenty-one names on the Listing which are, I believe, likely or highly likely to be a duplicate of another person. This occurs because of either two different spellings of a surname, or the same surname but slightly different initials. In all but four cases (F Hotcham, W Kenville, T K Maull and A Piece) there remains the possibility that they are valid names, so they are retained as "unable to trace" and kept under review.

Regiment and Service Number

I have used the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) website as the definitive source for regiment and service number, for consistency. Occasionally, what is recorded there can be at odds with what is recorded in other military sources, and this appears to happen most frequently when men have changed regiment.

Date of Death

As given on the CWGC website.

Where remembered or buried

As given on the CWGC website. I have tried to be careful in identifying either a burial or a commemoration for sites where both graves and memorials are present. Most times this is obvious from the CWGC record, but occasionally I have found that graves may have been replaced by inclusion on a memorial, particularly if a grave is lost.

Grave inscription

Where a grave exists, the inscription is that as given on the CWGC website and the Headstone Record contained therein.

Parents and Wife

In looking at the various sources of evidence it has often been possible to identify one or both parents and the wife, if married. Where only one parent is given this is because I have been unable to trace, unequivocally, the other parent. Omission of a wife does not necessarily indicate that they were not married, simply that I have been unable to find evidence for a marriage.

Address

(See also a separate document on definition of the Aston area for the purposes of this project, and the associated map).

The address given in the listing is a place that the person has lived in Aston (area as defined in the associated document) at some time in their life. It was often the case that I found multiple addresses in Aston throughout the individual's life, and it appears that moving house was quite common. For this reason, I have used the address where they lived that is chronologically nearest, and prior, to the year of their death. I have not used an address, typically found in the CWGC record for example, where the parents or wife are living after the person's death, unless I have no other prior-to-death address for them. This is because it is quite possible, and where the wife has remarried, very likely, that the person never lived there. I looked for an address no earlier than the 1901 census.

The decision to use this definition of an address is a personal one, and others might have chosen differently. However, the premise of this Memorial is that the person was a parishioner, or had an association with the Church or with Aston, and using an address in Aston where I definitively know they had lived seemed appropriate. In fact, without a

relatively strict boundary definition it may not have been possible to identify the right person with any confidence. So, for example, looking for a G Smith in the broader Birmingham or Midlands area would have given an exceptionally large pool of men to choose from, and making a choice might have been impossible. However, narrowing the geographical area from which to choose makes accurate identification more likely.

A small number of individuals I have named in the Listing lived just outside the boundaries I have defined as Aston, but I have been confident, because of other evidence I had, that these are likely to be the men named on the Memorial.

- Six men are included with an address in a group of streets classified as Handsworth, which are located in Witton between Witton Road and Aston Lane.
- Seven men are included who lived in Birmingham St George's, in streets close to the boundaries of the Aston registration district. Early on in my research I had been reticent to name anyone from the Birmingham area, but the proximity of these streets to the Aston boundary, the closeness of these streets to each other, and the failure to identify other candidate, lead me to conclude they were likely to be correct. Given that giving names for inclusion on the Memorial is likely to have been by 'word-of-mouth', the grouping of these and the proximity to the Aston boundary swayed my decision. I have not identified any other such grouping in other areas of Birmingham.
- One man is included from the Aston / Sutton Coldfield registration/registration sub district, and although this area was in Aston registration district in the 1911 census, it sits well beyond the other Aston registration sub districts and has not been included on the locations map.

As the research progressed, and I was looking for fewer and fewer names, I concluded that there were men for whom I could not find an Aston address where they had lived (from 1901 census onwards), but where evidence strongly indicated they had an association with Aston. Such evidence might have been the register of UK War Dead stating they lived in Aston; or having close family members who lived in Aston who could have given the name to the Church; or registrations of their birth, marriage, or children's birth in Aston. Occasionally, the name is so uncommon that it is difficult to see how it couldn't be them. In these cases, the Listing simply says 'Address unknown in Aston'; there are 15 entries in this category. One individual, Reverend D C Woodhouse, has no known association with Aston, or indeed Birmingham or the Midlands, but there is only one war record that has these initials. It is possible, given that he was a chaplain in the army, that one of the men returning to Aston from the war remembered him, perhaps because of comfort given at a time of distress.

Medals awarded

Where a medal for valour has been awarded, this is as detailed on the CWGC website. I Awards for men on the listing include the Distinguished Service Medal and the Military Medal.