

Trooper John Joyce Postlethwaite (336) of the 5th Australian Light Horse was born in Cumberland on 11 June 1893 and emigrated to Australia in March 1911.

He died on 2 November 1915 aged 22.

He was the son of the village doctor Frank Postlethwaite and his wife Emma Elizabeth (Joyce) and the brother of Christopher.

His company officer wrote,

"Your son had recently been transferred from my squadron to the machine-gun section of this regiment (5th Light Horse), a position which he quickly learnt. At all times he proved himself to be a good soldier, as able and willing to perform the many fatigue duties as he was resourceful in the firing line."



John Joyce Postlethwaite.

Lieutenant Christopher Joyce Postlethwaite of the 12th Battalion, Suffolk Regiment was born in Perranporth, Cornwall on 29 Nov 1894.

He died of his wounds on 9 January 1918 aged 23.

He was the son of the village doctor Frank Postlethwaite and his wife Emma Elizabeth (Joyce) and the brother of John.

He had been helping on his father's farm in 1911.

He was engaged to Doris Medland from London, who requested his medals be sent to her. This was refused and his medals were sent to his sister, Kathleen

John and Christopher Postlethwaite (pronounced locally as Puzzlewhite) are the second set of brothers commemorated on the Brentor War memorial. Their parents were Frank Postlethwaite M.R.C.S. and his wife Emma Elizabeth nee Joyce. Dr Frank Postlethwaite became the village doctor

in Brentor but originally he was from Hitchin, Hertfordshire. Frank had been born on 13 December 1863, the son of Thomas Postlethwaite and his wife Mary Jane (Hackett).

In 1851 Thomas Postlethwaite was staying with his grandfather in London. Thomas Norton was a retired Silk Mercer aged 79 born in Lincoln. Interestingly, young Thomas, although only 25 and unmarried, was described as a farmer of 292 acres employing 9 labourers. His birthplace was given as Middlesex London. This is difficult to link with anyone in 1841, though through the silk connection he may have been the son of William, a Silk Manufacturer and his wife Lydia, who lived in Macclesfield.

The 1861 census shows Frank's father, Thomas, a farmer with 550 acres living at Offley and Holes Farms in Hitchin. He was 35 years old and his wife Mary Jane was 37. At the time they had four children, Mary Emily (6), Thomas Norton (4), Kate (2) and William (1). Also staying with them were Wm Henry Whiston, a solicitor articled clerk of 18, Robert Norton Whiston, scholar, (16), described as brothers to Thomas, head of the household, and Sarah Whiston, scholar, (14) sister.

Their parents were William Whiston, a solicitor living in Derby and his wife Sarah Mary, who were alive and well in 1861. The 1851 Census shows the parents and children living in Derby. Also with them on the night of the census was Mary Postlethwaite, aged 21, described as his daughter in law but unmarried. In 1841 William was living with Elizabeth Whiston who was slightly older than him and could have been an earlier wife, or his sister.

In 1871 the Postlethwaite family lived at Hazel Mount in Thwaites parish, Millom, Cumberland. Thomas was 45 and described as a slate merchant, Mary Jane 47, Emily Mary (16), Thomas Norton (14), Kate (12), Harry (8), Frank (7) and Elinor (5). They employed a governess, cook, nurse and housemaid. In 1881: Thomas was 55, a Slate Quarry Master employing 8 men. Mary Jane was 57, Kate 22, Frank 17 was a student and Elinor was 15. Additional information given by Thomas, tells that he was born in Middlesex in Gt Coram Street London. Frank studied medicine at St Bartholomew's Hospital, London where he qualified MRCS LRCP and was one of the last to qualify for the Apothecaries Examination.

In 1891 **Thomas** was a retired farmer living at 41 Oxford Road in Willesden, Middlesex with wife Mary Jane and daughters Mary E (35) and Eleanor (25) an artist in painting. He had died by 1901, but Mary Jane, by then 77, and her daughters Mary and Eleanor continued to live at 41 Oxford Road Willesden in 1901, but cannot be found in 1911.

Frank married Emma Elizabeth Joyce on 14 January 1890. The following year, Frank (27) and Emma (26) were living at Westfield House in Trough, Cumberland. He was listed as a General Practitioner, registered MRCS, LSA England, London. They employed a general servant and a stable boy. This record masks the anguish of the death of their firstborn child. Thomas Norton, named for his great great grandfather, was born on 27 November 1890 and died on 11 Mar 1891. He was buried in the churchyard of his grandfather's church in Nichol Forest. Whilst living in Stapleton, near Longtown in Cumbria their second child Mary J (May) was born in 1892 on her mother's birthday, 25 January, followed by John Joyce (Jack) on 11 June 1893. The family moved to Perranzabuloe, Perranporth in Cornwall on 1 February 1894 where Frank had a large practice in this mining area. Christopher Joyce was born there on 29 November 1894 and Kathleen Elizabeth on 2 December 1895.

In 1901 Frank and his family were living at Piran House in Perranzabuloe, Cornwall. Frank was 37 and a General Medical Practitioner, running his own practice from home. His wife, Emma, was not there on the night of the Census. Their children were Mary J (9) and John J (7), Christopher J (6) and Kathleen E (5). Frank's sister-in-law, Lucy S Joyce was with them on census night. She was aged 28 and had been born in Nichol Forest in Cumberland. Their housekeeper was Elizabeth

Juleff, who was 74 and came from St Ednon in Cornwall. Their youngest son, Paul, was born on 14 January 1904. Within eighteen months, Frank had to retire early, at the age of 42, because of almost total deafness. He came to Brentor in August 1906 and had a smallholding. It wasn't long before the people of Brentor discovered he was a medical man, and called on him when they were ill. Gradually he found he had a practice again. He lived in a house called Nutshell where he converted a room into a surgery and dispensary.

By 1911 Frank was 47 and described himself as a Registered Medical Practitioner and Farmer employing others. His wife Emma Elizabeth was 46 and they had been married for 21 years, she had had six children born alive, but only five were still living. Still at home were Christopher Joyce (16) who was a helper on the farm and Paul (7). Emma's sister, Lucy Sybella Joyce (38) continued to live with them in their six roomed house. Just weeks before the census, on 19 March, their eldest son, Jack, aged 17, had emigrated to Australia.

Emma Elizabeth Joyce Postlethwaite, the mother of John and Christopher, had been born in Nichol Forest Cumberland on 25 January 1865. Her father was the Rev Henry Morrogh Joyce, originally from Ireland and described in 1871, when he was 38, as the Incumbent of Nicholforest. Ten years before, prior to his marriage, he had been the curate of Kelloe and had lodged with the Hunt family in Coxhoe, Durham. His wife Isabella was 27 and from Scotland. They had 4 children Emma Elizabeth was the oldest at 6, John was 4, Christopher 2 and baby Ada Jane was 5 months old at the time of the census.

By 1881 the family at the Parsonage had increased with the addition of Lucy Sybella (b 1873), Mary Ann (1877) and Henry Walter (1880). Their eldest daughter, Emma Elizabeth married Frank Postlethwaite on 14 January 1890. Following the death of their baby son, Thomas Norton, in March 1891, he was buried in his grandfather's churchyard at Nichol Forest.

In 1891 the Joyce family was still living in the Parsonage. Henry M was aged 58, his wife Isabella was 46. Living with them were their children Christopher (22, an undergraduate at Durham University), Lucy S (18), Henry W (11), Hilda M (9) Robert L (6) Ella C (2) and Frank P (6 months). By 1901 only Robert, Ella and Frank, the youngest of their children, remained at home. The family continued to rely on the help of one live in servant: this time Grace Harrison a 15 year old from New South Wales in Australia.

Amazingly, Henry Joyce was still the Vicar of Nicholforest, Penton, Carlisle in 1911 after over 40 years. He was by this time 78 years old and gives the information that he was originally from Cork City. He had been married to his wife Isabella for 48 years, they had had 12 children, but only 8 were still alive at the time of the census. Frank P, was 20 and a student. The three of them continued to live in the 10 roomed vicarage.

John Morrogh Joyce Postlethwaite, Jack was born in Stapleton, Cumberland on 11 June 1893 and was educated at King's College, Taunton, and Tavistock Grammar School. He may not have been particularly gifted academically or he may have just craved adventure, but on 18th March 1911, while still a teenager, he set sail from London aboard the SS Multiades bound for Sydney, Australia. He travelled third class and described himself as a labourer aged 30! After some time in New South Wales he ended up near Winton in central Queensland working as a station hand. Whether he was working on a sheep or a cattle station is not clear, but the fierce heat and arid conditions of the outback would certainly have been different from life in Brentor.

When war broke out in 1914 the Australian government pledged to raise an army for overseas duty and on 26th January 1915 John presented himself at the Recruiting Office at Winton and

volunteered for service. He was described as being 24 years old, 5ft 8in tall, weighed 136 lb, had a dark complexion, brown eyes and black hair. As an experienced horseman by this time, he was allotted to B Squadron 11th Australian Light Horse Regiment. Initial Training was done at Enoggera Camp before the whole regiment assembled at Fraser's Paddock Camp, also at Enoggera, near Brisbane. Light Horsemen had to be prepared to fight as cavalry or infantry, but their main role was envisaged as being quick response infantrymen.

The 11th set sail from Brisbane aboard A30 Borda on 16th June bound for the Mediterranean. It is thought that also aboard were their Waler horses. After landing in Egypt it was only a couple of months before they were desperately needed as replacements in Gallipoli. John was transferred to 5th LHR who were in the trenches fighting as infantry and he became part of a machine gun section. Sadly he was killed on 2nd November aged 22, his correct age at last. He was buried by the chaplain Rev E.W.Dexter on the same day in what is now the Shell Green Cemetery .

His company officer wrote: *"Your son had recently been transferred from my squadron to the machine-gun section of this regt. (5th Light Horse), a position which he quickly learnt. At all times he proved himself to be a good soldier, as able and willing to perform the many fatigue duties as he was resourceful in the firing line."*

A comrade wrote, *"There were a good many of the men rolled up to see him buried; fellows from his own regt. and also from the one to which he was posted. From the Major downwards, your son was tremendously popular, and the men are very cut up at his loss. A cross bearing his name, regt., age, and date of death, was erected by his regimental comrades."*

Eventually his father received his scant possessions - his dog tags, a cigarette case, a pair of spurs, a hair brush, a pair of gloves, a knife and a badge. His mother received the few pounds owing to her son and the three medals, the 14/15 Star, the British War and Victory medals were forwarded to his sister Kathleen.

When the cemetery was taken over by the War Graves Commission and each grave was formally commemorated with name, rank, regiment and date of death, his family chose to add a quotation from Jeremiah, chapter 31, verse 16, *'They Shall Come Again from the Land of the Enemy.'*

Christopher Joyce Postlethwaite was born in Perranporth, Cornwall on 29 November 1894. His father Frank was the village doctor in Brentor, where he also had some land which he farmed. Christopher appears to have left school by 16 when he was listed as a helper on his father's farm. Like his brother, John, who had gone to Australia, Christopher also decided to try life abroad.

On 29th April 1914 he sailed from Southampton bound for New York, although his stated destination was Canada. He travelled with John Cowling, father of Harry, third class aboard the Olympic (sister ship of the Titanic). She would soon be converted to a troopship for the duration of the war. Perhaps because of the outbreak of war Christopher returned from Montreal aboard the Megantic. He arrived at Liverpool on 16th November 1914. He was described as a farmer and was destined for Brentor, Tavistock.

It is likely that he joined the army early the next year. He was serving in the Ordnance Corps as a private, but was soon promoted to Lance Corporal. He arrived in France on 24th April 1915, although he seems still to have been at Havre in June waiting to deliver arms to the front. It may have been that he was awaiting promotion because on 20th October 1915 he was commissioned into the Suffolk Regiment as a Second Lieutenant. He was posted to the 12th Battalion. He either returned to England to join them or met up with them when they entered France in June 1916.

John Postlethwaite 1893-1915

Christopher Postlethwaite 1895-1918

The 12th had been raised in Bury St. Edmunds and was a 'Bantam' battalion. All the men would have been rejected earlier in the war as being too small to fight, although officers were 'normal' size.

He was wounded on 9 August 1917 and came back to Brentor on leave, with his fiancée Doris Medland, on 26 October 1917. Christopher remained with the 12th Suffolk and was promoted to Lieutenant. He was wounded again, during a snowstorm on 8 January 1918 and died the following day of his wounds, aged 23.

He was buried in Achiet-Le-Grand Communal Cemetery Extension, reference II. C. 6. Achiet-le-Grand is a village 19 Kms south of Arras. Achiet station was an allied railhead. The village was occupied by the 45th and 49th Casualty Clearing Stations at that time, so it is possible that he died in one of those, because he had been recently injured and hadn't had time to be moved further along the chain to a Military Hospital. The communal cemetery and extension were used by Commonwealth medical units from April 1917 to March 1918. The extension was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens.

He qualified for the 15 Star, the British War and Victory medals. His estate was valued at £164 15s 6d. in the Brentor Archives is a picture of woodcutters cutting pit props included Christopher. He was described as a talented runner, who was in love with a local girl, Doris Medland.

The British Army WW1 Medal Rolls Index Cards record that

Miss D Medland applies for medals in respect of the late Lt C J Postlethwaite 19.9.21

*Address 16 Leonard Place,
Kensington
W8.*

*Medals to sister:
Miss K E Postlethwaite,
Brentor,
Nr Tavistock,
S Devon*

Doris Marian Medland was born in Lambeth, London in the summer of 1893. Her parents were Ernest George Medland (born in Exeter) and Marian Wakelin (born in Walworth), who were married in Lambeth in 1892, when they were both 21.

Ernest was the son of Edward (24), a carriage maker, and Mary (26) Medland who had been living at 9 Clifton Street Exeter in 1871 when Ernest was 9 months old. They had all been born in Exeter.

In 1881 the Medland family was at the Poltimore Inn at 167 Sidwell St Exeter, where Edward was the Licensed Victualler. Ernest had three little sisters Alice Mary 8, Eva Elizabeth 6 and Edith Alberta 3. The family continued running the Inn there until at least 1901. Interestingly, Edward's parents, George and Ann, his brother Henry and perhaps other members of the family were the Licensees or Inn Keepers at the Acorn Inn in Exeter from 1850 -1900.

1901 Earnest was a Licensed Victualler at 9 Bridge St Exeter, living with his wife Marion and daughters Doris M 8 born in Kensington and Violet A 5 born in North Tawton. In 1911 the family was back in London at 57 Hartismere Road Fulham, with Ernest a gas fitter. Doris was a milliner. Two more sisters had been added to the family: Sylvia 8 born in Exeter and Phyllis 3 born in London.

In 1921 when Doris applied for the medals she was living at 16 Leonard Place Kensington W8.

The years after the war must have been difficult ones for the Postlethwaites after losing two of their three sons. The joy of their daughter, May's wedding to Australian Will Stevens on 30 April 1919 turned to further grief when she died of TB on 27 September that same year. She was buried in the churchyard at Brentor.

Two years later, on 21 June 1921, their younger daughter Kathleen married Henry Theodore Wilkinson and their first grandson, Christopher Francis was born on 30 June 1922. Just over a year later, when Kathleen was expecting her second child, the Wilkinson family left Brentor for New York, arriving there on 21 October 1923. They were detained on Ellis Island for seven days, before going to stay at the home of their attorney, Mr Smoleff. Soon after, Kathleen was admitted to hospital where she died of bronchial pneumonia on 9 November 1923 and her second child died six weeks later. In January 1924, grandson Christopher was issued with passport for his journey back to Brentor.

Dr and Mrs Postlethwaite's grief must have been unimaginable, having lost two sons, two daughters and a grandchild within eight years. Dr Frank and his little grandson went on to become great friends. A memoir of the Postlethwaite family, written by Chris Wilkinson and stored in the Brentor Archive, describes the wonderful friendship they had for each other and Chris' role as his grandfather's assistant.

"He was a small man with white hair and a short white beard which he had a habit of rubbing when talking! He always wore dark grey suits, rather rumpled looking, and black boots. He was extremely deaf and you had to shout very close to his ear to make him hear - strangely he could hear my voice better than most, and I would often act as a go between him and his patients."

"He had a reputation for being a very good diagnostician and was greatly loved by all his patients. When I knew him he drove the "best car in the world" - a Trojan with solid tyres!"

By 1928 Mrs Postlethwaite, known as Mary, was an invalid and rather overweight. Her only surviving son, Paul was away in the army and she fussed over young Chris.

In 1931 Nutshell, the home which had been rented by the family, was sold, so they bought a plot of land halfway along the road from Brentor to Burn Lane Corner and there the bungalow called Bluebells was built. Dr Frank lived there after the sudden death of his wife Mary, (Emma Elizabeth) on 30 March 1932 aged 67. The end room was his surgery and dispensary and he continued to treat his patients from there.

He met and married his second wife Lydia and lived there at Bluebells until 1942 when he moved to a bungalow called Station View near Holwill Junction. He died in 1943 aged 79 and was buried in the churchyard at Brentor with his wife of 42 years, Emma Elizabeth.

Dr Postlethwaite was a poet and philosopher, writing and publishing books under the name of Frances Thwaite. He gave a Challenge Cup in his name to be competed for in the football competition at the annual Village Sports Day. Although not remembered as a churchgoer, he used to take out his Bible to emphasise something he was trying to tell his grandson and point to the Book of Revelations, saying "all you need to know, is in this one book." Dr Postlethwaite was never well off financially, for he never asked for payment, though his patients gave him what they could. His kindness was remembered by all.

His grandson Christopher Wilkinson remembered *"He used often to say, "Some people travel through life with blinkers on, and look neither to right or left but straight at their goal; but I go through life picking the flowers along the way." This I often remember, and have followed him. I loved him dearly, he was I think my best and only childhood friend."*

A fitting tribute for such a good man.