

IN MEMORY OF GABRIEL OVERTON

DIED IN ACTION 15 SEPTEMBER 1916

Lived in a house at the junction of Sutcliffe Drive and Farm Street (no longer standing)

PLAQUE No. 13

The Overtons were a firmly established family in Harbury, their roots reaching deep into the village's history. Gabriel's father, William, was a shepherd and in 1871 lived in Golden Row, Harbury. Gabriel was baptized on 5 December 1894, in All Saints Church, the seventh child of William (now recorded as a labourer) and Elizabeth. The 1891 census places the family in Binswood End, Harbury.

By 1911 the 20-year-old Gabriel was living in a four-bedroom house on Farm Street with his family, in a 300-year-old thatched cottage clumped about with numerous outhouses - including a stable. He worked at the lime and cement works alongside his father, whilst his mother was a market carrier and the carer of a three-month-old child in Leamington.

When he was 23, Gabriel married Emily Hackleton, and moved to 22 St. Johns Road, Leamington Spa, where in March 1915 the 24-year-old Gabriel enlisted at the labour exchange. He was one of only five recruits who enlisted that week.

Gabriel left his new wife for the front as a Private in the 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards. By November he was serving on the Western Front, and plunged into the operations in the Somme as part of the 1916 Allied Offensive.

The British attack of 15 September 1916, the Battle of Flers-Courcelette, saw a British advance, with tanks clearing the path for the infantry behind them. Though the tanks were only lightly armoured, they were able to sweep past the rubble and wire of no mans land, allowing the soldiers to advance. The battle was won by 22 September, but Gabriel did not live to see it.

Gabriel was first reported missing, and was almost certainly killed, on 15 September 1916 - the first day of the battle. It was not until nine months later that his mother received news he was presumed dead.

Gabriel is buried in the Serre Road cemetery on the Somme.



Harbury World War 1 Memorial Trail

Remembering the men of Harbury parish who fell during the first world war in service of their country.

