

Alfred C Wise

We return to the Nursling memorial and the story of Alfred C Wise. He was born in Tidworth, the son of Isaac Wise, shepherd, and his wife Annie, the family living in 1891 at what appears to be Pain's Lane. There's a distinct mystery about names, given that there are two sons, both with the name Charles J, listed in the family. A transcriber's error? Most likely, although Alfred seems to have regularly used the name Charles, his middle name, including for his war record. By 1901 the Wise family are in East Tytherly, at East End – Alfred is working as a farm labourer.

Finding the family in 1911 is tricky. They hadn't yet moved to Nursling – there is nobody called Wise in the village then. There is a Charles Wise working as a shepherd and living at Godsfield Cottages, Alresford with his wife of six years, Florence (nee Harding), and children Winnifred (five) and Harold (just one year old). Poignantly, they have already lost two other children in their six years of marriage. The clues to this being 'our' man are his brother Herbert (same name, date and place of birth as in the 1901 census) being with the family on the night of the census and child named Harold. A subsequent child, Archibald, is registered to the couple later that year.

Alfred enlisted in 1915 and served with the 1st Battalion Hampshire Regiment, taking part in engagements including the Battle of Hill 60. He rests near the village of Bertrancourt, having died of wounds on 30th June 1916, the day before the first Battle of the Somme started; one of 1st Battalion platoons had been hit by "friendly fire", possibly as part of the prelude to the battle. The German positions were heavily shelled prior to the British assault, although with little effect. Alfred was thirty seven, a private, and left a wife living in Upton, at 1 Lymer Villas.

The Wise family, including Harold and Archibald (known as Joe, which was his brother's nickname for him), kept within the Nursling and Rownhams locality and are still represented here by several members, including Archibald's daughter, Pauline Nutt. I'd like to thank them for the stories they've shared with me and the key names which have helped to locate their much beloved relative.

Ann Laird - Rownhams September 2014