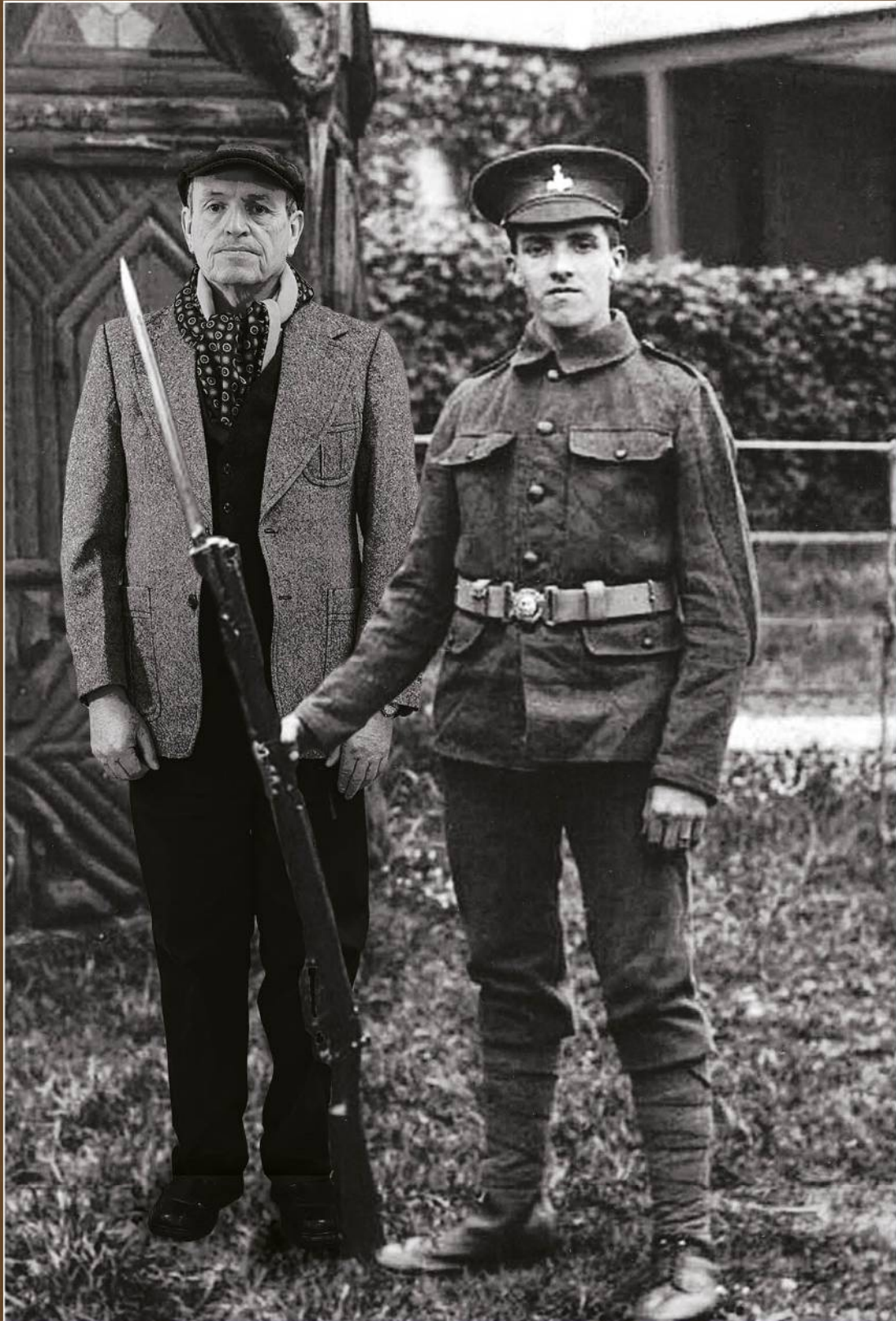


Postcards from
WITTON PARK



Joseph Humble with Dale Daniel.

Postcards from **WITTON PARK**

The Humble Family



The Humbles were parents Thomas and Sarah and sons Joseph and James.

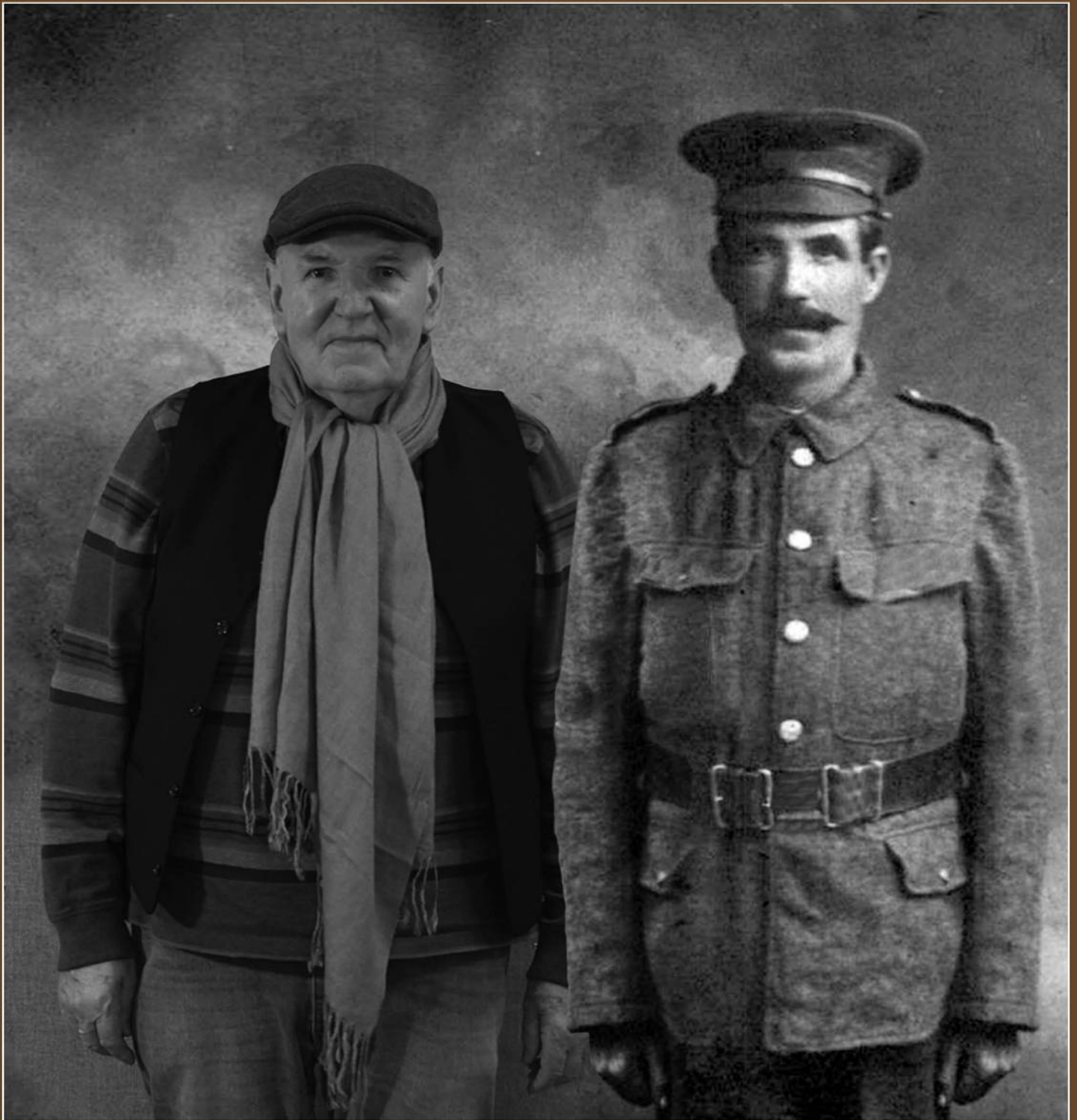
Both Thomas and Sarah moved to Witton Park in the late 1800s. Sarah's family, the Toppings, moved from Cumbria. The couple met in Woodlands and moved to Witton Park. Thomas died during the First World War.

Before the War, Joseph was a labourer like his father before him. His brother James was about 11 years old when the War began. Joseph enlisted with East Yorkshire Regiment and was a Private in the 11th Battalion.

He fought in the War for a couple of years, during which time he was gassed, leading to his discharge in 1916. He died at home on 17th October 1918, aged 23, as a result of the poisoning. He is buried in Escomb Cemetery.

James stayed in Witton Park and married Polly Swinbank, whose family lived at High Queen Street during the War.

Postcards from
WITTON PARK



Joseph Swinbank with John Swinbank.

Postcards from **WITTON PARK**

The Swinbank Family



Elizabeth and David Swinbank lived at 58 High King Street (64 Low King Street in 1917) during the War, having moved from California. David was a farm labourer. They had six children, the eldest Joseph, followed by Polly, Thomas, Barbra, Robert and John James, the youngest who was seven-years-old when the First World War broke out.

David enlisted at the age of 44 alongside his brother, who was also in his forties. His son Joseph enlisted in September 1914 aged 19 with the DLI 14th Battalion shortly after the conflict began. His medical record describes him as five feet five inches tall, weighing just 104 lbs (7 stone 6lbs), with brown eyes and black hair.

Before the War, Joseph was a pony driver in the pit. After a year serving in France, Joseph was injured with reported gun shot wounds to the head, arms and legs and died in October 1916 after being transferred from the Somme to Wharmcliffe Hospital in Sheffield. He is believed to have lived just seven days after returning to England; his cause of death was noted as tetanus as a result of his injuries. In 1921, Joseph's mother Elizabeth received his Victory medal.

Polly Swinbank, the eldest sister, married James Humble, the younger brother of Joseph Humble. Their grandson is Dale Daniel.

Robert served in the war and was also injured. He was sent to Essex to recuperate and, in 1920, married the nurse who helped him back to health. They moved to Witton Park.

Postcards from
WITTON PARK



Thomas Robert Hewitson with Marjorie Lambard (niece).

Postcards from **WITTON PARK**

The Hewitson Family



Featherstone Hewitson and his wife Mary Anne (daughter of Robert Belton and sister of John, Ernest and Robert Belton) lived in Thompson Street and had a hardware store and haberdashery on Main Street. Their children were Thomas, Charlie, Albert, Emily, William and Amy. Mary Anne and her daughters ran the haberdashery shop whilst Featherstone and his sons ran the hardware shop.

The family also had a horse and cart which they used to sell items from their hardware store around local villages. Their eldest son, Thomas, worked in the shop before the First World War as a dairyman. He enlisted on 20th September 1916, aged 17, with 10th Lancashire Fusiliers. It is believed Thomas ended up in Russia as an injured POW. He was repatriated from France in August 1918 as an exchange prisoner after a shrapnel wound to his right wrist. His mother received a note from the War Office stating he was missing in action.

After returning from the War, Tom joined the family business. He also drove a car formerly owned by the Bishop of Durham as a taxi; this was also used as the village ambulance. He was frequently called upon to be a bearer for the funeral directors when they used his taxi for extra transport.

Tom was married in 1924 to Elsie Morton and moved to 13 High Queen Street, where he lived for his whole married life. They had two children, Raymond and Margaret.

Tom was a stalwart of Carwood Methodist Chapel and fulfilled various official positions in the chapel. He had a fine tenor voice. Tom died 5th March 1996, aged 97.

Postcards from **WITTON PARK**



*Left: Frederick Laverick Yorke. Right: Edward Laverick Yorke.
Centre Bottom: George Laverick Yorke. With, on the right, Joshua Yorke.
Photograph taken at Witton Park Football Club in 1905.*

Postcards from **WITTON PARK**

The Yorke Family



Enoch Yorke was born in 1861 at Greets Green Road, West Bromwich. He moved to Darlington in 1863 when his father Edward (born 1824) opened a grocery shop in the town. The 1871 census shows them living at 19 Ianson Street, Darlington. On the 4th of July 1887 Enoch married Emily Margaret Longstaff (born 1867) at Bishop Auckland. Enoch was a miner. His father-in-law, George Laverick, was a butcher and landlord at the Dun Cow Pub at Witton-le-Wear.

Emily had seven children but died on the 21st of April 1904 from a strangulated hernia. Enoch died on the 19th November 1907, aged 46 years, of burns received when a candle fell over, setting the bedroom alight. All of the children – Frederick Laverick Yorke 19, Edward Laverick Yorke 16, George Laverick Yorke 14, Albert Laverick Yorke 8, Enoch Laverick Yorke 3 and two granddaughters Elizabeth Laverick Yorke 12, and Louisa Laverick Yorke aged 5 years – moved in with their grandmother Elizabeth Hannah Longstaff, known as Granny Laverick. Emily's father George and mother Elizabeth never married. Elizabeth's father was James Longstaff, a local doctor.

Edward and his two brothers Frederick and George attended school in Witton Park and, after leaving school, they all worked in the pit as hewers. Edward was 5 feet 10 inches tall, had hazel eyes and dark brown hair. He enlisted at Bishop Auckland less than a month into the First World War in 1914, at the age of 23. He served in the 7th Battalion of the Border Regiment and was promoted to Lance Sergeant.

He died at Arras on the 23rd of April 1917, aged 26 years, and is buried at Arras Memorial, Pas de Calais, France.

Postcards from **WITTON PARK**



Charles Mills, his wife Mary Elizabeth and their daughter Margaret Ann,
with Julie Knighton.

Postcards from **WITTON PARK**

The Mills Family



When the First World War broke out, the Mills family lived at 10 High Albion Street in Witton Park. The head of the household, John Thomas Mills, is believed to have left the family between 1906 and 1908, never to be heard of again. He left his wife Elizabeth to raise six children alone. The Mills children were girls Margaret, Hannah, Mary Alice and Henrietta, and boys Charles (born 1894) and John Joseph (born 1897).

Charles, being the eldest boy had to leave school after the disappearance of his father and worked as a miner to help his family. His younger brother John Joseph joined him a couple of years later. In January 1915, at the age of 20, Charles enlisted at Bishop Auckland and became a Private in the Yorkshire Regiment, 11th Battalion, part of the Green Howards.

John Joseph is also believed to have fought in the war. It is thought he was shot between the eyes which left him almost blind. Although he survived the War, he died in 1927 at the age of 29.

Charles served in France and sustained either a gunshot or shrapnel wound in November 1915. Medics bandaged his arm to his side but, as he had open wounds, by the time he got to hospital his arm had fused to his side. Doctors operated to free it, but this left him with arm mobility problems. He was brought back to England and was eventually discharged from the Army on 31st October 1916 with "a gammy arm".

He went back to Witton Park to his wife Mary Elizabeth and daughter Margaret Ann Firbank Mills. Unable to work due to his injury, he was awarded an army pension at just the age of 23 but chose to go back to working in the Bitchburn pit, losing the pension.

Charles and Mary had a further ten children – John Charles Mills (1918), Elizabeth (1920), George (1922), Henry (1925), Gladys (1927), Jack (1931), Henrietta (1934), Hannah Jane (1936), Mary Alice and Ann.

Charles died on 21st September 1967.

Postcards from
WITTON PARK



John Willie Belton with Keith Belton.

Postcards from **WITTON PARK**

The Belton Family



The Belton Family moved to Witton Park in 1867 to work in the iron works and then opened a shop – Robert Belton – on Main Street. Robert (originally from Portsmouth) and his wife had three sons, John Willie Belton, Robert Jabers Belton and Ernest Belton. The family were well-known Methodists whose lives were entwined with Wesleyan Chapel. All three were teetotal.

John Willie Belton was born in 1879, he married Sarah Tallentire from Forest in Teesdale in 1900. Between 1901 and 1924 they had 13 children, 11 of which survived. They had three boys, John Thomas, Charles Frederick and George Morrison and eight girls, Elizabeth (known as Peggy), Amy, Elsie, Edna, Emily Annie, Ethel, Ruth and Eva. Peggy was the eldest child and brought up many of the children. She married but never had her own children.

Before the First World War, John worked in the family shop as a grocer. During the War, it is known that John had trench foot but no other war wounds. He returned to the shop after the War ended. Sarah died in 1950 and John remarried. He lived until he was 83. He never learnt to drive but bought a Morris Minor car.

Robert Jabers Belton was born in the 1890s and was the youngest of John Willie's brothers. Prior to the War, Robert worked on the railways. He married Lucy Luck during the War, which he survived with no wounds. When the Depression started there was no work and not enough opportunity in the family shop so Robert moved to Haswell where he died in the 1950s.

Ernest Belton also joined up and survived the War. Before and after the War, he had a grocer's shop on Park Road. Not long after the War he moved to Stockport and no further details are known.

The majority of John Belton's family remained in Witton Park, with just two of his daughters moving to Darlington. The family became well-known for their musical ability, with both John Thomas and Charles Frederick conducting the Sunday School Choir.