

# A tribute to the ...who was in fact

**A** CARDIFF soldier named on a city memorial dedicated to World War I's fallen, in fact survived the conflict, it has emerged.

Where the Boers and the Germans (twice) failed, the organising committee of the Grangetown Memorial succeeded.

Alf Norman emerged from the 20th century's bloodiest conflicts unscathed, having survived the Boer War, World War I and The Blitz.

Despite living through the wars, which claimed more than 76 million lives, his name appears on the memorial stone.

Sergeant Norman, who served in both the Boer War and World War I and worked in a munitions factory during World War II, went on to live for three decades after the memorial recording his death was built.

He was serving with the Glamorgan Yeomanry, believed to be in Mesopotamia, when his wife received two telegrams - one to say he was missing presumed killed and another to say he was killed in action.

His Cork-born "widow" Mary organised a traditional Irish wake in his absence.

Later news came through that far from being dead her husband was still very much alive and doing his bit for King and country.

And family legend has it that Mary quipped: "I've never been able to rely on him for anything."

For some reason, his name was still put forward in the early 1920s when the Cardiff memorial was built. Before he died in 1950 he was known for taking special trips with

**'Family legend has it he calmly surveyed the burnt out remains of his home while puffing on a cigar he had been given for Christmas'**

family visitors to the Grangetown Memorial to show how his name had been wrongly recorded as one of the area's 330 war dead.

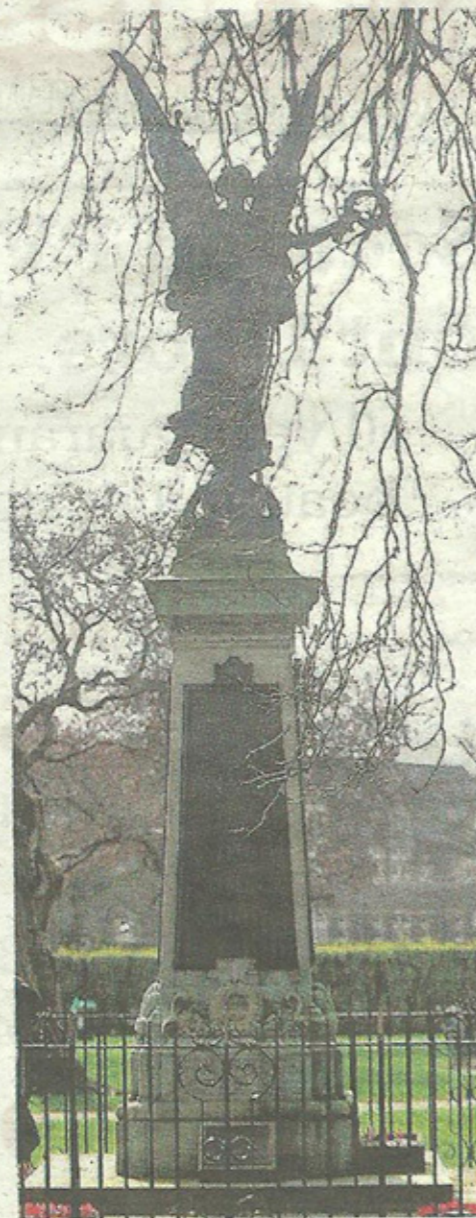
Chair of Grangetown Local History Society Zena Mabbs said it is one of several mistakes her group has found on the memorial.

"I would imagine that in those

His name appears on the Grangetown war memorial and his wife even organised his wake, but this Cardiff soldier not only survived the bloodiest conflicts of the 20th century but lived on for three decades afterwards. **Darren Devine** tells the remarkable story of a Sergeant Alf Norman

days people had to fill in a form about their family member," she said.

"As you can appreciate, in 1914 a lot of people were quite illiterate. For example, one of the men that died is named as 'W.C. Ridland', but we've discovered his name was actually 'Cridland', which is a very well known family in Grangetown.



■ The war memorial in Grange Gardens which includes the name of A Norman

"The name of another man (Private George Harben) is on twice."

Father-of-five Mr Norman, born in Somerset in 1869, had run away from home to join the army at 15. As well as his Boer and Great War service he also served in Britain's colonies of India and Ireland.

He escaped the Blitz when a German bomb hit his home in Maitland Place, Grangetown, on January 2, 1941.

It was the worst night of the Blitz for the Welsh capital.

Up to 165 people were killed and 427 more injured, while nearly 350 homes were destroyed or had to be demolished. Chapels and the nave of Llandaff Cathedral were also damaged.

Grangetown was the first area to be hit by 100 German aircraft during the 10-hour air raid.

Mr Norman, who worked as a postman and an inspector in Cardiff's arcades in civilian life, had taken refuge in an air-raid shelter when the sirens sounded and family legend has it that he calmly surveyed the burnt out remains of his home while puffing on a cigar he had been given for Christmas.

To mark the centenary of World War I the local history society has been collecting the personal histories of the men whose names appear on the Grangetown Memorial to produce online tributes.

Their research has unearthed 90 soldiers killed in the conflict whose names are missing from the memorial.

The society is keen for descendants of more than 420 Grangetown war dead - including those not on the memorial - to get in touch if they have any family stories or photographs.

■ It can be found at [www.grangetownwar.co.uk](http://www.grangetownwar.co.uk) and families can contact [grangetownwar@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:grangetownwar@yahoo.co.uk)

# fallen soldier still alive



■ Sergeant Alf Norman served in both the Boer War and World War I

## MAP PLOTS VICTIMS OF FIRST WORLD WAR

A MAP plotting the addresses of the Grangetown men who died in World War I has been created by Grangetown Local History Society.

Using an original map from Glamorgan Archives, the society plotted the addresses of almost 400 men from the area.

The research has taken the society about a year to complete and it still has addresses for around 35 men left to find.

The map also reveals the stories of some of the men who died, with more addresses added as further details are confirmed.

Anyone with information which can be added to the map should email the society on [grangetownwar@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:grangetownwar@yahoo.co.uk)

