# Norfolk Oxfam donation revives mystery of First World War officer’s lost Bible



A recent discovery at an Oxfam shop in Norwich has sparked a poignant quest to uncover the history of a soldier who served in the First World War. The story began with a large, leather-bound Bible, donated to the shop, which contained an inscription dedicated to Lieutenant Adrian Harry Stewart. This striking find prompted volunteer Sarah Gosling, 58, to delve into the life of the man who had once owned it.

Lieutenant Stewart, who tragically lost his life in August 1914, was the youngest son of Colonel Harry Stewart from Hopton Hall, Norfolk. He served with the Gloucestershire Regiment and later with the Nigeria Regiment, where he was killed during an engagement in Garua, Nigeria. As it stands, he has no known grave; his name is inscribed at the Calabar Memorial in Nigeria, which commemorates those lost in that theatre of war. Lt Stewart's life, encapsulated in his Bible, unfolds against a backdrop of youthful bravery, cut short by the ravages of conflict.

After discovering the Bible, Gosling expressed her emotions, stating: "We were quite moved by it in the shop, and I wanted to find out more." Her curiosity led her to contact Reverend Nigel Lacey at St Margaret’s Church in Hopton, a community institution known for its historical significance and beautiful stained glass from William Morris and Company. The church, where the Bible was once housed, is located not far from the site of the Hopton War Memorial, which commemorates local soldiers lost in the World Wars, including Stewart.

The Bible's journey from the church remains a mystery. It is unclear how it came to be in the Oxfam shop or if there are living descendants of Lt Stewart who might hold more insight into his legacy. Reverend Lacey confirmed that the Bible had been a part of the church's possessions, enhancing the sense of loss surrounding its absence.

In an effort to resolve the mystery, Gosling returned the Bible to its rightful place in the church on May 1, where it was duly placed back on the lectern for use during prayers at the Sunday service. "I’m unaware if there are any living relatives or if anyone knows why the Bible left the church. It would be very interesting to find out more about this Bible's story," she shared.

The church’s community has been drawn into the intrigue, with many wanting to learn about Lt Stewart and the circumstances of his service and ultimate sacrifice. St Margaret's Church stands testament to the local history, not only through its architecture but also its role in preserving the memory of those who served during the Great War.

As this story continues to unfold, it reflects a broader narrative of remembrance—one that ties together personal histories with collective memory, reminding us of the sacrifices made by individuals like Lt Adrian Harry Stewart in the course of history. The resurrection of this Bible may well lead to renewed discussions about the significance of commemorating those who served, encouraging the community to connect past events with the present.

In the era of growing global conflicts and complexities, the story of one soldier, whispered through the pages of a forgotten Bible, may help shed light on the sacrifices made in the name of duty, valor, and remembrance.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25156024.norfolk-oxfam-donation-sparks-search-soldiers-family/?ref=rss)
2. Paragraph 2: [[2]](https://livesofthefirstworldwar.iwm.org.uk/lifestory/4265380)
3. Paragraph 3: [[1]](https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25156024.norfolk-oxfam-donation-sparks-search-soldiers-family/?ref=rss), [[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_Margaret%27s_Church%2C_Hopton)
4. Paragraph 4: [[1]](https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25156024.norfolk-oxfam-donation-sparks-search-soldiers-family/?ref=rss), [[4]](https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/10183/find-us/)
5. Paragraph 5: [[1]](https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25156024.norfolk-oxfam-donation-sparks-search-soldiers-family/?ref=rss)
6. Paragraph 6: [[1]](https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25156024.norfolk-oxfam-donation-sparks-search-soldiers-family/?ref=rss), [[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_Margaret%27s_Church%2C_Hopton), [[5]](https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1468465)
7. Paragraph 7: [[1]](https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25156024.norfolk-oxfam-donation-sparks-search-soldiers-family/?ref=rss), [[2]](https://livesofthefirstworldwar.iwm.org.uk/lifestory/4265380), [[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_Margaret%27s_Church%2C_Hopton)
8. Paragraph 8: [[1]](https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25156024.norfolk-oxfam-donation-sparks-search-soldiers-family/?ref=rss), [[2]](https://livesofthefirstworldwar.iwm.org.uk/lifestory/4265380)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25156024.norfolk-oxfam-donation-sparks-search-soldiers-family/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://livesofthefirstworldwar.iwm.org.uk/lifestory/4265380> - This page provides a detailed biography of Lieutenant Adrian Harry Stewart, born on 25th February 1888 at Morningthorpe Manor, Norfolk. He served as a Lieutenant in both the Gloucestershire Regiment and the Nigeria Regiment during the First World War. Lieutenant Stewart was killed in action on 29th August 1914 in Nigeria and is commemorated at the Calabar Memorial CWGC Cemetery/Memorial in Nigeria. The page includes personal details and military service information about Lieutenant Stewart.
3. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St\_Margaret%27s\_Church,\_Hopton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_Margaret%27s_Church%2C_Hopton) - St Margaret's Church in Hopton-on-Sea, Norfolk, is dedicated to St Margaret of Antioch. The current church was built in the grounds of Hopton House, owned by James Henry Orde, and designed by architect Samuel Sanders Teulon. The church features stained glass windows by William Morris and Company, and a war memorial in the churchyard commemorates those who died in the World Wars. The church is a Grade II\* listed building and serves the local community.
4. <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/10183/find-us/> - This page provides information about St Margaret's Church in Hopton-on-Sea, including its location, contact details, and service times. The church is situated on Old Lowestoft Road, Hopton, Norwich, NR31 9AH. The page also mentions the church's history, including the presence of stained glass fragments and memorials dedicated to individuals and events significant to the local community. The church is part of the Church of England and serves the Hopton-on-Sea area.
5. <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1468465> - This listing provides detailed information about the Hopton War Memorial, located in the churchyard of All Saints Church in Hopton, Suffolk. The memorial, erected in 1919, commemorates 14 members of the local community who lost their lives in the First World War and two from the Second World War. It is a Grade II listed building and stands as a testament to the sacrifices made by the community during the World Wars.
6. <https://www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/memorial/117480/> - This page offers details about the Hopton War Memorial, including its location in the churchyard of All Saints Church, Hopton, Suffolk. The memorial is a square stone obelisk with a pyramidal top, listing the names of 14 men who died in the First World War and two in the Second World War. The page provides information about the memorial's design, inscriptions, and historical significance.
7. <https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101468465-hopton-war-memorial-hopton> - This entry provides a description of the Hopton War Memorial, located in the churchyard of All Saints Church, Hopton, Suffolk. The memorial is a 2.5-meter-high square stone obelisk with a pyramidal top, listing the names of 14 men who died in the First World War and two in the Second World War. The page includes details about the memorial's design, inscriptions, and its Grade II listing status.