School’s fallen honoured in a

Sophie Wylie

Pupil George Goodall won a school prize at Holt for his drawings of butterflies and moths in 1910.

Five years later the young talent was dead – aged just 21 – killed in the battle of Aubers Ridge on the Western Front.

The second lieutenant, who died on May 9, 1915, was among more than 100 young people from Gresham’s School whose promise was snuffed out as they served king and country in the First World War.

And his tragic tale is among the new stories in a relaunched book about them – called When Heroes Die.

Since it was first published 13 years ago, more facts about the school’s fallen heroes have flooded in.

Author Sue Smart, 62, a former history teacher and deputy head at the independent school, said: “I felt the first book seemed inadequate. Once I knew so much more about other soldiers I wanted to get the information out there.

“After my first book, people were visiting me straight away. They felt their ancestors had been left out and wanted them to be part of it. The very concept of the book was to recover lost voices.”

“The families were very proud of their ancestors and were enthusiastic to share their stories.”

She said it was an emotional experience researching the soldiers who went through “atrocious conditions”.

As well as speaking to families, she used the Gresham’s archive and British Library and the second edition took nine months to write.
First World War heroes are former teacher’s new book

The revised book also features:

■ Sheringham butcher Arthur Bird, who grew up on Manor Farm in West Beckham, now the Wheatsheaf pub. The father-of-one served with Army Service Corps in Baghdad and died of burns received “while saving life” on May 5, 1918, aged 30. Mrs Smart added: “The boys had a rough deal fighting for King and country. It was a war that we should not forget because the scale and carnage was terrible. We should not forget we lost 20pc of a generation and this is something we should pay tribute to properly.”

■ Pilot Donald Cunnell, an air ace who shot down nine enemy planes, was killed in action on July 12, 1917, aged 23. He lived in Mount Pleasant, Norwich, and was a trainee architect in the city and a talented draughtsman.

■ Tony Nicholson, trainee teacher and younger brother of artist Ben Nicholson, who died of wounds on October 5, 1918 while serving with the Royal Field Artillery in northern France when he was in his mid 20s.

■ The book costs £12.99 in paperback and £17.99 in hardback and is available from the Holt Bookshop in Appleyard, Holt.

■ Do you have a First World War story from north Norfolk? Email sophie.wylie@archant.co.uk.

■ Sue Smart with the second edition of her book When Heroes Die.

Drawings of butterflies, and an illustration by Donald Cunnell. Pictures: SUBMITTED

Four years of tributes

Over the next four years the Eastern Daily Press will be marking the centenary of the First World War with a wealth of material reflecting the sacrifices made by people throughout Norfolk, north Suffolk and the Fens.

We will highlight the impact of the conflict on the home front as well the bravery of those on the front line, to bring you the best possible coverage.

We are keen to hear from readers, communities and groups with stories, information and – in particular – pictures to share. Please contact us on wwi@archant.co.uk.

■ If you would like to publicise an event linked to the centenary, submit details – using the words “First World War” in your description – via the Going Out section of our website, or send details in the post to What’s On Listings, Norfolk Editorial, Prospect House, Rouen Road, Norwich, NR1 1RE.