



1914 – 1918

Remembering
the men of the
Parish of St Paul's
who died in service for
King and country in the
First World War

Acknowledgements

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For further information on First World War centenary commemorations and other historical memories relating to Wokingham, go to **www.wokinghamremembers.com**.

Thanks also go to Luke Addis, Jim Bell, Andy Clark, Jane Clark and Fr Richard Lamey for creating and installing the exhibition and contributing to this booklet.

St Paul's Church First World War Memorial



Introduction

The questions of whether or not Britain should have entered the First World War and whether the war was worth it are still being debated. Nevertheless, when the call to arms was sounded, many young men and women of Wokingham, together with their fellow countrymen, answered the call and fought for King and country.

Words will not bring back those who did not return but we will remember their selflessness and ultimate sacrifice.

*“They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them. ...”*

An extract from *For the Fallen*
by Robert Laurence Binyon (1869-1943)

Jim Bell
Local Historian

The Men of St Paul's

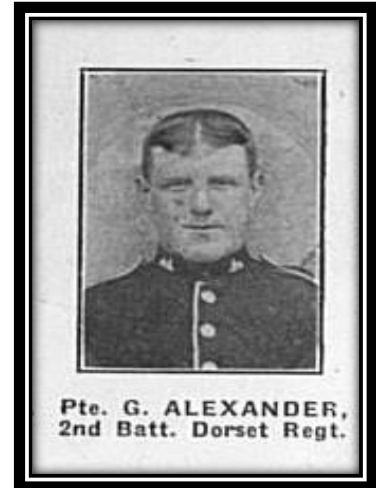
George ALEXANDER

d. 23 July, 1916

Born in Wokingham in 1893 George was one of 6 siblings (Charles, Alsie, Edith, William, Joseph) born to Maryan and Thomas Alexander.

In 1911, the family lived in Brookside Cottages in Barkham Road, Wokingham and young George William was already a private in the 2nd Battalion, Dorset Regiment.

He had joined up in Aldershot before 1911 so was set on a career in the Army. George was part of the much larger Alexander family who went to war.



At the start of the First World War the 2nd Battalion, Dorset Regiment, were stationed in India and after the hostilities commenced the Regiment were to sail for Europe only to be diverted to the Persian Gulf where they arrived in Bahrain on October 23rd 1914. They fought throughout the next few years in very inhospitable conditions throughout Mesopotamia, known today as Iraq.

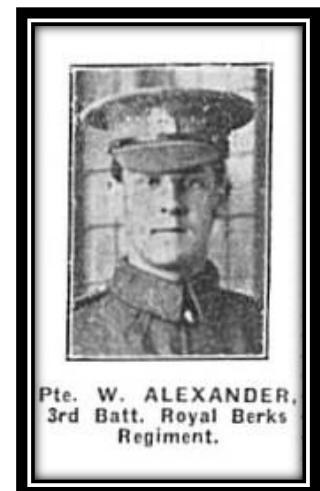
We do not know the details of George's death on 23 July 1916, but the battalion history tells that during July and August 1916 150 men were hospitalized for various illnesses and a number of them died. His name is on the Basra Memorial and he has no known grave.

William ALEXANDER

d. 14 March, 1916

Born in 1895 younger brother of George, William was one of 6 siblings who lived in Brookside Cottages, Barkham Road with their parents Maryan and Thomas.

William worked as a domestic gardener before the war and joined the local regiment, the Royal Berkshires. He enlisted in Wokingham, into the 2nd Battalion, but we do not know when. The battalion were serving in India when war broke out and were returned to Europe in October 1914. In November 1914, they went to France as part of the 8th Division. William died in March 1916 whilst the 2nd Battalion were serving near Lille. He is buried in



Merville communal cemetery in France. Merville was a railhead and hospital site.

Robert APPLEBY

d. 28 June, 1916

Robert Appleby was married and lived with his wife at 10 Barkham Road, Wokingham.

Service records tell us he was a Lieutenant in the Royal Scots, 1st Battalion, attached to the 3rd Battalion, but subsequent information also tells us he died serving in France. As the 3rd Battalion did not serve in France, it is possible he served another Battalion without his records being updated.

It is assumed he was a regular Army officer as, in 1911 a Robert Appleby was a Lance Corporal in this regiment. He died on 28th June, 1916, and is buried in Vermelles, France. Sadly this is all the information known so far about Robert.

A small article in the Reading Standard on 22 July 1916, reports Robert's death as a result of wounds he received during the battle of Vermelles. A note to his wife (reported as then living in Norton Road) from a fellow officer says, "He was a gallant officer, a gentleman, and every inch, a soldier."

Sidney Charles AYRES

d. 13 November, 1915

Sidney Charles, one of four sons, was born in Wokingham, the eldest child of Charles Osmund and Sarah Elizabeth Ayers of 20 Barkham Road, Wokingham.

In 1911, Sidney was 15 years old and was working as a carpenter's apprentice and part-time student. His father was a builder's foreman. He enlisted in Wokingham, into the Corps of Royal Engineers where he became a Sapper (the engineers' term for a private soldier). After serving in France, he went with the 88th Field Company to Gallipoli in August 1915. On the 23rd of August, 1915, following the battle at Scimitar Hill, the 88th Field Company was sent to North Beach to construct piers in shallow water for the evacuation of wounded.



On the 30th of September, his company was transferred from Anzac to Sulva. From this date, until the date of its evacuation from Gallipoli, the 88th Field Company worked on a multitude of tasks including water supply, construction of huts for winter quarters, improving beach landing areas, protection for piers

and other general engineer works. This work was continued until January of 1916 when the Company was evacuated from Gallipoli and proceeded to Egypt. Sidney died on 13th November 1915, aged 19, two months before the campaign ended on Gallipoli. He is buried at Green Hill Cemetery, Gallipoli

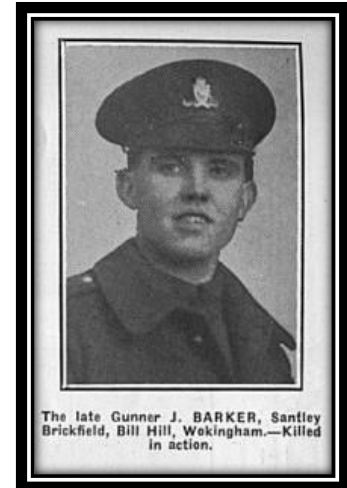
John BARKER

d. 24 July, 1917

John was born in Wokingham in about 1894 to Thomas Appleby Barker and Elizabeth Caroline, the second eldest of 5 brothers and 1 sister. The family lived at The Brickyard, Toutley where Thomas worked as a foreman. Alfred, the eldest brother was a tile maker and at 17, John was a brick maker and machine man.

He joined the Royal Berkshire Regiment, 4th Battalion and transferred to the Royal Garrison Artillery, 161st Siege Battery where he was a Gunner.

He died during the battle of Passchendaele on 24th July, 1917 (or Messines, the battle that preceded this). He is buried in Croonaert Chapel Cemetery.



The late Gunner J. BARKER, Santley Brickfield, Bill Hill, Wokingham.—Killed in action.

Thomas Frederick BARKER

d. 8 August, 1918

Thomas was the younger brother of John Barker and worked as a tile maker at the Toutley brickworks where the family lived and worked. In the 1911 Census, he was aged only 11. He joined the Royal Berkshire regiment and served as a private (number 45510) in the 8th Battalion. He died on the 8th August 1918 in “*the advance to victory*” and is commemorated on the memorial to the missing (some 9,000) at Vis-en Artois, France.

Thomas BOSHER

d. 8 August, 1918

Thomas was son of Edward and Ellen Bosher and had a brother and a sister.

By 1911 Thomas was married to Rhoda and they had a son Edward Thomas who was born in 1911. Rhoda must have been married before (she was a few years older than Thomas) as they also had 5 step-children and a lodger living

them at 14 Havelock Street (in 4 rooms). Thomas worked as a carter to a coal merchant.

He joined up in Wokingham and joined the Royal Field Artillery after which he was transferred to the Northumberland Fusiliers (number 36184) 22nd Battalion, Tyneside Scottish.

He died on the 8th August 1918 and is buried in Mons, Belgium.

An interesting article in the Reading Chronicle on 24th August, 1918, tells us a little more about Thomas: *"Private T Bosher Northumberland Fusiliers has died in German hands. Joining in 1916, he entered the RFA and was later transferred. He served in France and was sent home to hospital suffering from trench foot. Going out again in January 1918, within 6 weeks he was missing. His widow is left with 7 children 5 of them very young. Prior to joining up Mr Bosher was yard foreman for Mr W G Jefferies coal merchant of Wokingham and before that for Messers Gadd and Co."*

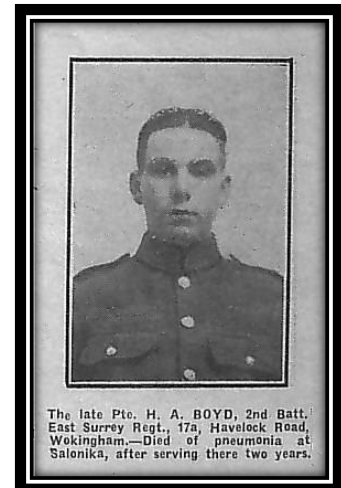
Horace Ambrose BOYD

d. 19 September, 1918

Son of Henry and Maria Boyd, Horace was born in 1897. In 1911, he was living with his two brothers and a sister in Havelock Road, Wokingham.

At thirteen, he was a school milk boy and was following the dairy business like his elder brother Harold.

Horace enlisted in Wokingham into the East Surrey Regiment, 2nd Battalion. From his regimental number it is possible to ascertain that he joined up in 1915 at only 17, and served until almost the end of the war. He died just two months before the end of the war on 19th September 1918, whilst in Salonika, where he is buried.



George 'Harry' BROWN

d. 20 July, 1916

He was the eldest son of Henry and Mary Brown and was born about 1885 in Godstone Surrey.

By 1901 the family had moved to Wokingham where they lived in Havelock Road. George Harry was by this time working as a railway clerk, his elder sister Katie was an Elementary school teacher. By 1911 George was not living at

home, but as a boarder at 1 Havelock Road with the Simpson family and was by now working as a bricklayer.

He joined the 6th Battalion of the Royal Berkshire Regiment in Wokingham, and served as a Private. The battalion took part in the Battle of the Somme from the 1st July, 1916, and it seems likely that George was wounded then and taken back to the Corbie area where there were many military hospitals. It is here he died on 20th July 1916. He is buried in Corbie Cemetery.



Arthur Owen BROWN **d. 30 September, 1918**

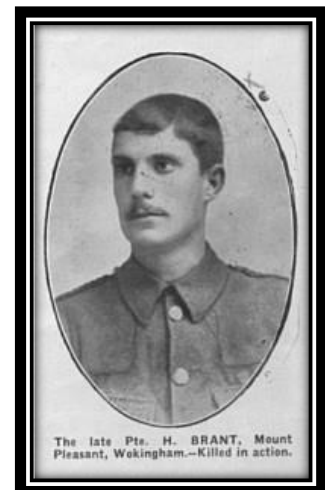
By the end of the First World War, the father Henry Brown, had lost both his sons. His wife Mary, had died in 1907 at the age of 46. Owen (Arthur Owen) was the younger brother of George 'Harry' Brown and died of wounds on 30 September 1918, only a matter of weeks before the end of the conflict.

He died serving in the Royal Irish Rifles though records show that he was previously in the royal Warwickshire Regiment. He is buried in "Bandagem" cemetery, Poperinge, the name of which is not as Flemish as it may sound.

Henry BRANT **d. 25 October, 1914**

Henry was the son of Ellen and Francis and was born about 1884, one of 9 children. The family lived at Rose Gardens in 1901, Wokingham and Francis was working as a carpenter. By 1911 Francis had died and Henry and his sister, Lydia, lived at home with their mother. Henry was a bricklayer/ labourer.

In 1913 Henry married Ada Bolton from Shinfield. It was whilst Ada was expecting their first child that Henry was killed whilst serving with the 1st Battalion Royal Berkshire Regiment (number 7424) near Zonnebeke, Flanders on 25th October 1914. His name is commemorated on the Menin Gate, at Ypres. His brother, William, also died for the 1st Battalion in 1917.

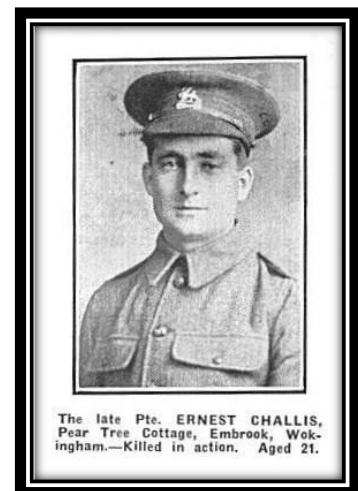


Here is a description of the action written at the time by a **Corporal Wickens**:
“Oct 25th Remain in trenches all day. Shells bursting very near worse position we have ever experienced, being within 4 yards of the main road, with houses quite close, and a school just in the rear of us on the other side of the road, all these more or less already reduced to ruins by shell fire, marvellous escape soon after dusk, just leaving the trenches to reform the Coy and form up on the road, when a large shell burst not 2 yards away, nearly filling the trench I had occupied, taking away all the head cover, and blew 3 or 4 yards of the hedge away, the force of the explosion knocking 6 of us over temporarily stunning and covering us with earth. Our Coy Officer who was standing the other side of the hedge not 2 yards from me being killed instantly, though we did not know until next morning, part of the shell weighing 8 or 10 lbs being scarcely a yard away from us, we tumbled into the trenches again and remained in them all night, rain fell during the night but managed to keep dry with Coat and Waterproof Sheet.”

Ernest CHALLIS

d. 23 July, 1916

Ernest was the eldest son of John and Ellen and lived in Emmbrook. In 1911 he worked as a bricklayer as did his father. He enlisted in Wokingham, and joined the Royal Berkshire Regiment, 2nd Battalion. The 2nd Battalion were fighting at Vermelles when Ernest was killed, aged 21.



William CHALLIS

d. 25 September, 1915

The only William Challis found in Wokingham is a man of 36 in 1911, who was married with 5 children. It is possible that he was an elder brother of Ernest Challis as his parents had 7 children and Ernest was one of the youngest.

The ‘Soldiers Died’ records show William Challis as serving in the 8th Battalion, Royal Berkshire Regiment and he was killed at the Battle of Loos on 25th September 1915, a day of very heavy losses.

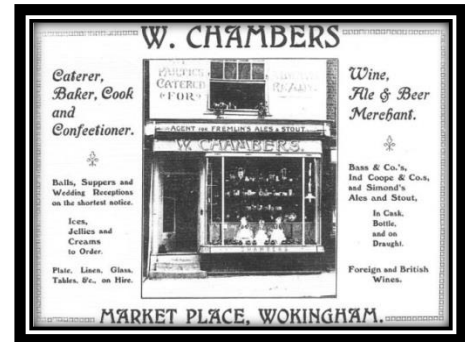


Frederick CHAMBERS

d. 14 November, 1918

Frederick was born in Wokingham in 1888 to William and Naomi Chambers. He was the eldest of their 4 children and in 1901 the family lived at Market place, Wokingham. William was a self-employed Baker/Confectioner.

By 1911, Frederick was a regular soldier serving in the 9th Lancers who, at the time were stationed in Canterbury, he was 23. He went from the Cavalry to the Machine Gun Corps (Cavalry) 16th Squadron in the 5th Mounted Brigade. This Corps only existed from 1917 to 1922. He died in Mesopotamia (now Iraq) and is commemorated on the Basra Memorial.



Albert George CHANDLER

d. 1 November, 1914

Albert was born in 1889 in Thatcham, Berkshire to father, James and mother Caroline. He was the second born and had two siblings, a brother James and sister, Mary. The 1901 census tells us the family were living in Cricket Hill and lived next door to the Murrell family. By the age of 22, Albert had become a bricklayer's labourer, and in 1911, lived with his parents in Common Field Lane, Finchampstead. His father was a wagoner at a local farm.

It is believed that Albert joined the Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry and, as a regular in the 2nd Battalion, would have soon been on his way to France. It is likely he joined sometime between 1911 and 1914, but the precise date is not known as records were burned during the Blitz.



James CHANDLER

d. unknown

James was the eldest child of James and Caroline Chandler. He was born in 1885 in Thatcham, Berkshire.



By the age of 26, James was serving in the Royal Berkshire Regiment, Second Battalion in India. Circumstances of his death are not known and by the end of 1914, James and Caroline Chandler were left with a daughter, but no sons.

William Archer COCKRELL

d. 11 November, 1917

William Archer Cockrell, third child of Alfred Herbert Horatio Nelson Cockrell and Elizabeth Gowan Wall, was born in January 1852 in St Bride, Fleet Street, London. William was baptized on the 7th March, 1852 and in the 1861 census the family still resided in Fleet Street; William was aged nine.

William married Jane Ashton in Eastbourne in the summer of 1884. Jane had lived in Poplar, London in 1881. Their daughter, Gladys Marion was born in April 1887 in Canterbury, Kent. From the 1891 census, the family were living in Northgate, Kent and William, aged 39 was an Army Car Depot Quarter Sergeant Major.

By 1901 the family were living in Lambeth, London and William was 49 years old. He was now the Superintendent of 'Institution 8, the South Western Ambulance Station' and employed by the Metropolitan Asylums Board. He was head of a household with 16 servants, all employed by the Institution.

Little is known of his military service, but it is believed that he was involved in the war's logistics as a part of the Army Service Corps. In his Service Record, there is a clue as to where he worked – there being an Army Remount Depot in Arborfield, a military camp (and village) near to Wokingham.

He died on 11th November 1917 and is buried in St Paul's churchyard. He was a Lieutenant (adjutant) and 63 years old, quite an age to still be serving one's country.

He lived at 'Sirinhari', Park Avenue, Wokingham, where his wife Jane continued to live after his death. His daughter Gladys (13 years old), died just weeks before her father, but Jane was to live to 74, passing away in 1932.

From the **Reading Mercury, Saturday 17th November, 1917:**

"Lieut. William Archer Cockrell, adjutant at the No. 4 Remount Depot, Arborfield, died suddenly on Saturday night, at his residence in Park Road, Wokingham. He apparently retired in his usual health, but during the night passed away from an attack of heart trouble. Much sympathy is felt for Mrs. Cockrell, it being only a month ago that their only daughter aged 13, passed away after but a very short illness."

The funeral, a military one, took place on Wednesday, at St Paul's Church, Wokingham, where the deceased had been in the habit of worshipping during his residence in Wokingham.

A gun-carriage, drawn by six splendid black horses, with a mounted sergeant in charge, conveyed the remains on their last journey. A firing party was supplied by the Middlesex Regiment, and some 100 non-commissioned officers and men were present from the No. 1 Remount Depot. The coffin was draped with the Union Jack, and eight sergeants acted as bearers. At the close of the graveside service three volleys rang out. The soldiers acted as escort and lined the pathway. The solemn ceremony was witnessed by large crowds of people. Police and specials, under Supt. Goddard, kept the ground."

William COLLYER

d. 1 July, 1916

William was the second son of Arthur and Ellen Collyer of Easthampstead Laundry, born in about 1896.

In 1911 the family lived at the laundry; William, his older brother and sister and 4 step-children and 2 grandsons.

William joined the Royal Berkshire regiment (number 16487) 6th Battalion and was killed on the Somme on the opening day of the battle. His body was not recovered and his name is commemorated on the great Thiepval Memorial. He was 19 years old.



Henry COOPER

d. 25 June, 1915

Reading Chronicle Saturday 10th July 1915:

"WOKINGHAM MAN KILLED IN ACTION - Deep regret is felt at the death of Corporal H. Cooper, 6th Somerset Light Infantry, eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. Cooper of Seaford Road, Wokingham who was killed in action on June 25th. He had only been at the front a few weeks and was a very promising young soldier. His death cast a gloom over all his company and sincere sympathy is felt with his parents."



Sadly, this is all that is known about Henry; and his final resting place is unknown.

Philip V CORNISH

d. 4 June, 1916

Philip was son of Captain William Hunter Cornish and Maud, his wife. He was born on 1st June, 1889, whilst his father was serving with the Indian Army in Simla, India. It is not a surprise therefore to note by 1911 at the age of 21, Philip was serving overseas in the army in the West Riding Regiment as a Second Lieutenant.

It is believed that he left for Canada in 1913 and then joined up on 12th August, 1914 once the war started, as did many ex-servicemen. He served in the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. He joined originally as a signals officer and was promoted to the rank of Captain on 29th November, 1915.

He was serving with his battalion at the Battle of Mount Sorrel, near Zillebeke, Belgium. Canadian records show that he was wounded on 2nd June, 1916 with multiple shrapnel wounds to the head, body and legs. He was at the time in a dugout occupied by the HQ battalion signalers when a shell came through the roof. He was not evacuated until the 3rd June and died of his wounds at No 10 Casualty Clearing Station the following day, 4th June, 1916 and is buried in Lijssenhoek, Belgium.

Around the time of his death, his parents were living at Barford House, Shute End, Wokingham.

Maurice A C DEANE

d. 24 May, 1916

Maurice was born in Wokingham in 1895, to William and Laura Mary Deane. In 1901 William was a solicitor's clerk and the family lived at Luckley Lodge, Finchampstead Road. By 1911 they had moved to The Cottage, Bearwood, where William was Estate Clerk.

Maurice worked as junior estate clerk before enlisting in Wokingham, into the Royal Berkshire Regiment. He served in the 4th Battalion and reached the rank of Lance Corporal (1625).

He died on 24 May, 1916 in Abbeville, which was a



very large communication and hospital area on the French coast during the war. He is buried in the communal cemetery there.

The Reading Mercury provided two accounts of his initial wound:

Sat 20th May – *“The parents of Lance-Corporal M. Deane, of the Royal Berks Territorials, have received notice that he has been wounded at the front.”*

Sat 27th May – *“The parents of Lance-Corporal Maurice Deane who was wounded at the front a few weeks ago have heard that it has been found necessary to amputate one of his legs.”*

Laurence EARL

d. 17 October, 1918

Laurence was one of 5 children born to Alfred and Harriet of 24 Mount Pleasant, Wokingham. His father was a carpenter.

By 1911 he was already serving in the army in the 1st Royal Dragoons. However, Laurence was serving in the Labour Corps (3629) when he was killed on 17th October, 1918, so near the end of the war. He is buried in Janval near Dieppe, France.

At the time of his death, he was married to Jessie, of 182 Blythe Road, West Kensington. A small article in the **Reading Chronicle, 26th October, 1918** tells of his death: *“Trooper Laurence Earl has died of illness in hospital in France. He was at one time a chorister of St Paul’s Church and was for some years a teacher at the Sunday School.”*

Albert ELLIS

d. 31 May, 1916

Albert was born on 17th August, 1888 in Wokingham, the son of Reuben and Mary Ann. They lived at 4 Havelock Place, Wokingham.

Albert served in the Royal Navy and by 1916 he was a Stoker 1st Class on the battle cruiser, HMS Queen Mary.

This ship was engaged in the Battle of Jutland and Albert, together with 1267 of his comrades, died on 31st May, 1916. There were only 8 survivors.

By the time Albert was lost at sea, his father had already died and his mother re-married a Richard Butler.



The late ALBERT ELLIS, 1st class stoker, 4, Havelock Place, Wokingham.—Killed in action.

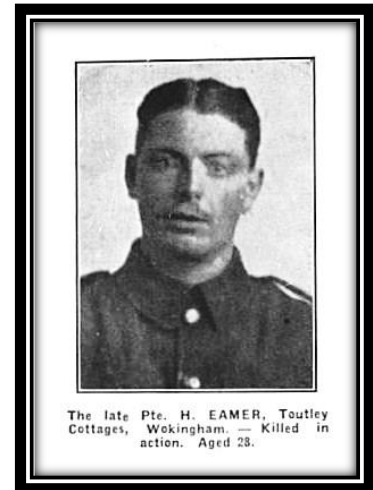
Harry EAMER

d. 1 July, 1916

Harry was born in 1887, a son of Aaron and Rosetta Eamer. In 1901 the family lived in Toutley, where Aaron worked as a gardener.

By 1911, Harry was serving in the army, 2nd Battalion, Royal Berkshire Regiment, (which was overseas) whilst his parents lived alone on the Toutley Estate, their 10 children all having left home.

Harry had married Rose (Carrie) Lawrence in the Spring of 1916, but sadly he was killed on the opening day of the Battle of the Somme, on 1st July, 1916 aged 28. His body has no known grave and he is commemorated on the great memorial at Thiepval. Harry's name also appears on the Roll of Honour in St Catherine's Church, Bearwood.



George FORGE

d. 18 August, 1916

George was born about 1890, his brother John about 1888 and from a young age in 1901, both lived as boarders in Wokingham with George and Charlotte Gardiner, who had a child of their own.

By 1911, Charlotte was a widow and George Forge was working as a miller's assistant. Visiting them on the day of the census was Mary Forge, born in Filey, Yorkshire. Perhaps she was George's mother/aunt. In 1901, Mary Forge was had been a servant at Winnersh Grove, a big house owned by the Wilsons.

George joined the Royal Berkshire Regiment, 1st/4th Battalion (2402). As this was a regular battalion, it is likely he was a regular soldier before the war.

The battalion fought at the Battle of the Somme and it was here that George was killed on 18th August, 1918. His body was never recovered, but his name is placed on the great memorial at Thiepval, Somme, France.

Frederick FULLBROOK

d. 13 August, 1915

Frederick was one of the 8 children born to Elizabeth and Walter Fullbrook of 6 Havelock Place, Wokingham. There were a number of Fullbrook families in the town at the time.

Frederick was a member of the 2nd Battalion, Hampshire Regiment. On the 13th August 1915, the troop transport "Royal Edward" was steaming towards Mudros, carrying men and supplies for the Gallipoli campaign, when she was torpedoed by a German submarine, the U-14, and became the first troopship to be sunk in the First World War.



Frederick was only 16 when he died, lost at sea together with about 1000 other troops. His name appears on the Helles Memorial. At such a young age, his loss and the others was a terrible, morale-sapping blow for the campaign and of course for the families of all those involved. According to an article in the Reading Chronicle on February 2nd, 1918, three of Frederick's older brothers had all been awarded the Mons Star. Private Charles, Sergeant Ralph (Ernest) and Private Frank Fullbrook, all seem to have survived the war.

Owen GOSWELL

d. 30 April, 1918

Owen was born in 1898 in Faringdon Berkshire, son of Mary Hannah and Owen Goswell. Owen seems to have been an only child and by 1901, his father had died and his mother was Matron of the workhouse in Farringdon

In 1911, Owen was living or staying with his uncle Henry Goswell, a tailor, at 24 Barkham Road, in Wokingham,.

War saw Owen join the London Regiment, the 15th Battalion, Prince of Wales Civil Service Rifles though we do not know when or where he enlisted, or indeed why he joined that particular regiment. We do know that at the time of his death on 30th April, 1918, he was a Second Lieutenant, attached to the 2/16th Battalion of the London Regiment, the Queen's Westminster Rifles. They were



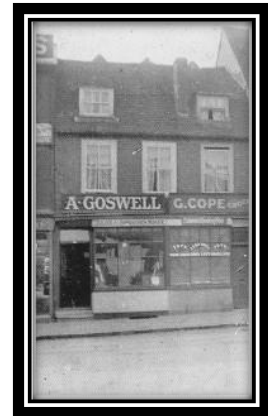
serving in Jerusalem at that time and his name is commemorated on the memorial there.

A Goswell, Tailor, Market Place, Wokingham, was Owen's Uncle Henry's shop.

A short article in the **Reading Chronicle** of **18th May, 1918** tells of the death of Owen:

"Second Lieutenant O. O. Goswell of the Queen's Westminster Rifles, was killed in Palestine aged 20, the only son of the late Owen Goswell and Mrs Goswell. Mrs Goswell is the Matron of Farringdon Union.

The deceased was well known in Wokingham and was a scholar at the Council School where he won a scholarship completing his education at Rasleigh College and afterwards entering the civil service. For many years he resided with his uncle H. Goswell of Barkham Road and made many friends."



William HAGGER

d. 11 April, 1917

William Hagger was born in 1885 in Stepney, London. There were a number of Hagger families in the area at the time. By 1911, William was enlisted into The Royal Irish Fusiliers 2nd Battalion (number 9475) and by this time he was living in Wokingham having married a local girl, Gertrude Lawrence in 1914.

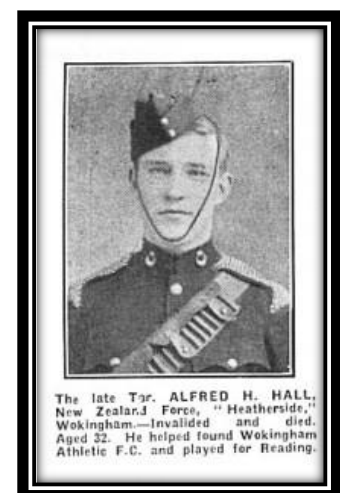
At some point before or during the war, he had moved to the 1st Battalion and was killed during the second Battle of Arras on 11th April, 1917. His name is commemorated on the Arras Memorial.

Alfred HALL

d. 8 June, 1916

Alfred was one of 5 children born to Henry Edgar and Isabella Hall. In 1901 the family lived in The Terrace, Wokingham and Henry worked as an Estate agent, his son Arthur was his clerk. Alfred was not at home at that time.

Sometime before The Great War, Alfred emigrated to New Zealand and when war broke out he joined the New Zealand Army Service Corps as a driver. He died in



England, probably at the New Zealand Hospital (Mount Felix) in Surrey on the 8th June 1916, and is buried in Walton-on-Thames cemetery.

A well-attended service is still held there each year to remember the New Zealand forces who gave their lives in the war.

Robert HAMBLETON

d. 9 June, 1918

Robert Alfred was born in Wokingham in 1889, the son of Alfred and Sarah Jane (Anderson). They lived in Mount Pleasant in 1901 and Alfred was a labourer in the brickyard.

By 1911 Robert and his elder sister, Gladys, had been joined by siblings, David, Oliver, Lily and Mary and the family now lived at 29 Havelock Road.

Robert enlisted in Wokingham into the 2/8th Battalion, Worcestershire Regiment (number 43734) and was killed on 9th June, 1918 in the St Venant area of France. He is buried in St Vennant Road Cemetery.

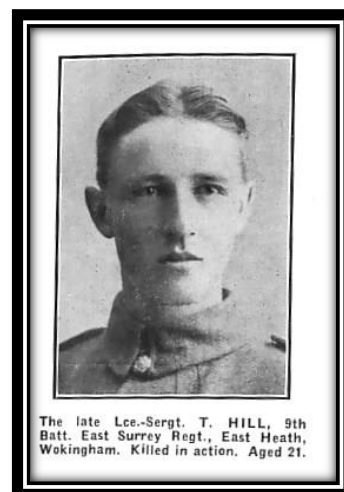
Thomas HILL

d. 7 January, 1916

Thomas, (known to his family as Tom), was born in 1894, to Mary (nee Matthews) and Alfred Hill. He had two brothers, George and Austin Alfred, and three sisters, Ellen, Agnes and Margery.

His mother had died in 1898, and by 1911, George (a boot repairer), Agnes (a house worker), Margery (a domestic housemaid), and Thomas (a domestic houseboy), were living together, apparently without their parents, at 128 Finchampstead Road, Wokingham.

Thomas joined the East Surrey Regiment, 9th Battalion and became a Lance Sergeant. He died on 7th January, 1916 and is buried at Menin Road South Military Cemetery, Belgium. The Menin Road ran east and a little south from Ypres (now Ieper) to a front line which varied only a few kilometres during the greater part of the war. The position of this cemetery was always within the Allied lines.



The late Lce.-Sergt. T. HILL, 9th Batt. East Surrey Regt., East Heath, Wokingham. Killed in action. Aged 21.

Edward HURST

d. 17 March 1916

Edward was born in Stadhampton, Berkshire, son of George and Louisa, in 1888. In 1911, he was working at Broadmoor as an Assistant Attendant. In the winter of 1913 he married Kate Goswell (or Coswell) and they lived at 24 Barkham Road, Wokingham. They had two children, Lily Ethel and Joan Rose.

Edward enlisted into the 7th (Shiny 7th) Battalion, London Regiment (number 4443), and was killed on 17th March, 1916. He is buried in Noeux-les-Mine, France.

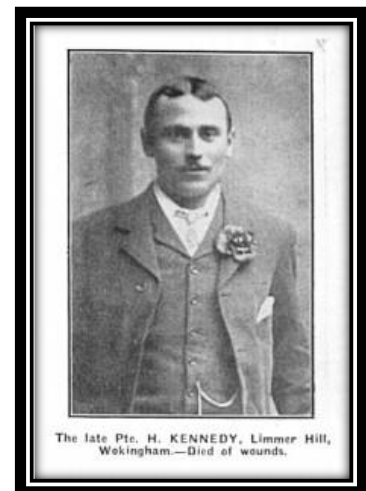
Harry KENNEDY

d. 9 November, 1914

Harry was born in 1886, the third son of Phoebe and (James) Albert Kennedy. He had a younger brother and sister. In 1901 the family lived in Mount Pleasant, Wokingham and his mother, by then a widow, was a shopkeeper.

At 15, Harry was a brickyard labourer and by 1910, Harry was working as a scaffolder when he married Rosalie. They lived at 14 Easthampstead Road.

Harry joined the 1st Battalion, Royal Berkshire Regiment (6657). He probably joined up as soon as war was declared or even before as the 1st Battalion was a regular unit, meaning that he was soon in France.



He died on the 9th November, 1914 whilst the battalion were involved in the first Battle of Ypres, Belgium. Though he is mentioned in the battalion war diary as dying that day, a quiet day in that sector, he may have been injured before then as he was buried in Boulogne, the site of vast military hospitals. By then, his wife and three year old son are recorded as living at 15 Barkham Road, Wokingham.

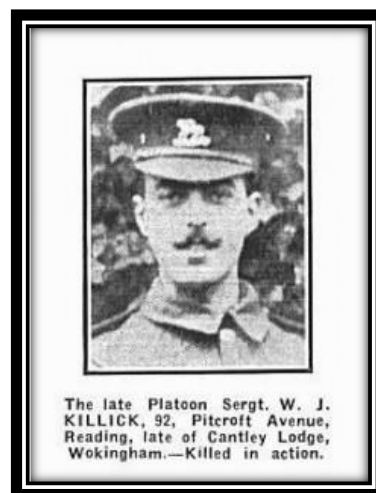
William John KILLICK

d. 1 July, 1916

William was the son of Horace and Annie Killick. He was born in 1891 in Ovingdean, Sussex. By 1911, the family had moved to Cantley Lodge in

Wokingham, where father Horace was a servant and William, a shop assistant in a grocery store.

William was living in Reading when he enlisted in the Queen's Royal West Surrey Regiment, 7th Battalion, in Guildford. The 7th was a new army battalion and were in France by July 1915. Their battle honours tell of fighting throughout France and Belgium and William, a Sergeant by this time, was killed on the first day of the Battle of the Somme on the 1st July, 1916.



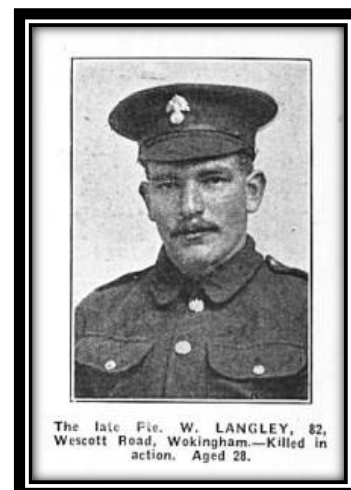
The regimental war diaries tell of the fighting in which William was killed: *"... At 7.30 a.m. The Battn. assaulted the German trenches to the front of left half of A1 Sub sector on a front of about 400 yards – After 12 hours fighting the final objective west of MONTAUBAN was reached and consolidated on a front of about 260 yards. Killed-174, wounded 284, missing 56. Battn Held objective gained during night, establishing touch with 8th E, Surrey Regt on its right and 8th Norfolk Regt, on its left."*

William A LANGLEY

d. 4 August, 1916

Reading Chronicle, August 1916:

"LOCAL CRICKETER'S NARROW ESCAPE - Private W. Langley, Royal Fusiliers, a well-known London Road Club cricketer, known as 'Fatty', in a letter to a friend at Emmbrook relates his marvellous escape from death when he was recently wounded. He says, "I have only got to thank my spoon and pay-book for not being killed. It cut my pay-book through, and my spoon was bent in two. I am keeping my spoon for a souvenir, and I shall keep my pay-book if they will let me. I saw several Wokingham boys in the hospital, all wounded. All our boys went for it like 'Boys of the Old Brigade.' They stepped out and charged across as if going to a church parade. It was a treat to see the way they went across." Private Langley has a medal from the London Road C.C. awaiting his return, and has also distinguished himself in sports in France. He has won a medal for boxing, and another for flat racing. He was treated at a hospital in France. He received a severe injury to the ribs."



William lived in Wescott Road, Wokingham. He died on 4th August, 1916 and is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France.

Frederick Arthur MITCHELL

d. 7 July, 1915

It is not certain that the following Frederick Mitchell is the man remembered on the St Paul's War Memorial. However, there is a Frederick Arthur being brought up in Sunningdale, near to Wokingham, but there is as yet no evidence to connect him to Wokingham.

Frederick Arthur was born in Wandsworth and joined the Devonshire's 2nd Battalion, attesting in Stratford, Essex. He was killed on the 7th July 1915 and in the absence of finding any other Frederick, we are happy to remember this brave man who died for his country in France.

Edwin MITCHELL

d. Unknown

Sadly, no information has yet been found regarding Edwin. We do not know when he was born, went to war or of his final resting place.

Arthur W PAYNE

d. Unknown

Note: It has not been possible to identify the death of Arthur from the war records. Here is an Arthur Payne from Sandhurst, but not necessarily the Arthur Payne named on the memorial.

Arthur was born in Sandhurst, Berkshire in 1880 to father, Henry and mother Mary. He was the fourth born and had six siblings; three brothers and three sisters.

In 1902, Arthur married Lilian Davey and had two children; Winifred (1903) and Henry (1909). By 1911, at the age of 31, Arthur had a carpentry business. His wife was born in Cornwall and the census records tell us that Lilian's widower father was living with them in Fairview, Sandhurst.

Sadly, Arthur's death is unrecorded and his final resting place is not known.

Frank POTTER

d. 5 June, 1916

Frank was born in 1899. In 1911, Frank was only 11; and he was still at school.

By 1916, Frank had joined the navy, most probably inspired by his elder brothers. He was a 'Boy First Class', 16 years old and amongst the youngest to serve in the First World War.

Little did he know that in the next few months he would be sharing a ship (HMS Hampshire) with Britain's greatest soldier of the time, Lord Kitchener of Khartoum, the face that recruited a million soldiers? HMS Hampshire, on route to Russia, never made it past the Orkneys and in appalling weather, was sunk.

It is impossible to imagine the atmosphere in the Potter household; although Frank was the youngest of the family to be at war, he was the first of the brothers to be killed.

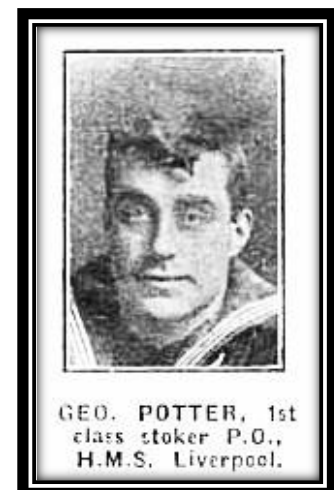


George POTTER

d. 15 February, 1917

George was born in Sandhurst on 20th October 1887. By the age of 13 he had become a port errand boy. George was married to Mary May Potter of 14, Essex Road., Newtown, Bognor, Sussex.

George joined the Royal Navy as Stoker, Petty Officer in the engine room of HMS Liverpool. On 15th February 1917, he died from disease. He was 29 and was buried at Brindisi Communal Cemetery in Italy and later moved to Bari Cemetery, Italy.



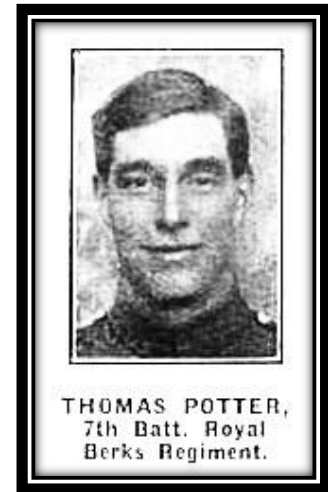
From the **Reading Mercury, 31st March, 1917**: "...our sympathies go out to Mr and Mrs Potter of Wokingham, their son Corporal Reginald Potter wounded recently, it has been found necessary to amputate his injured leg. He was a chorister at St Paul's Church. Another of their sons Petty Officer George Potter of HMS Liverpool died recently of enteric fever and another was lost on HMS Hampshire and yet another Percy was badly injured and is still in hospital."

Thomas Henry POTTER

d. 12 October, 1917

Thomas was born in 1892 in Wokingham. By the age of 19, Thomas had become a gardener like his father. Thomas married Dora Turner in the summer of 1917.

Thomas joined the 6th Battalion, Royal Berkshire Regiment in 1914. By 1915, he was in France and was involved in the Battle of the Somme. By 1917, he had moved onto Ypres and in October, he was in action at Poelcapelle, which was to prove to be his last. The battle was better known as Passchendaele. Thomas is remembered at Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium.



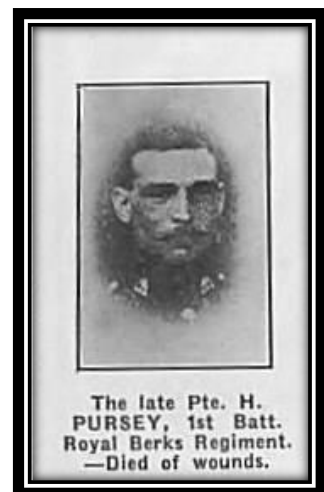
Frank, George and Thomas were three of a family of seven brothers and three sisters born to Charles and Fanny Potter. They lived at Toutley Cottages, Kings Street Lane, Winnersh, Wokingham. Other brothers also saw action in the First World War.

Henry PURSEY

d. 27 October, 1914

Henry's father, Charles Pursey was born in early 1852 in Barkham, Berkshire. From his census records Charles was a farm labourer for most of his life. He married local girl Mary Cannon and with her had four sons and five daughters. Tragedy was to touch the Pursey family when in 1891, two sons Charles (1883) and John (1889) were to both die in the same year.

Charles died in 1909 aged 57 so was not to see his other two sons be killed in the war. His wife Mary was born in Finchampstead in 1859 and was to watch her five girls Louisa, Elizabeth, Laura, Alice and Edith grow up to have families. Their 4th child and first son Henry was born in July 1887 in Barkham, Berks.



Mary remarried in December 1909 to Thomas Alexander and she was to watch four of her step sons also go to war. Mary and Thomas were to see only two of the six sons return home. Mary died in December 1928 in Wokingham, aged about 69.

Although in 1901 Henry had joined his father in farming, by the age of 24, he was a regular soldier with the 2nd Battalion, Royal Berkshire Regiment. By the start of the war he had been transferred over the 1st Battalion and saw immediate action in France. He was involved in the Retreat at Mons, when the British Expeditionary Force were heavily outnumbered but were able to slow the German advance down significantly.

By October 1914, the Germans were on the attack at the First Battle of Ypres and it was here on the 27th October when Henry died. He is buried at Ypres Town Cemetery.

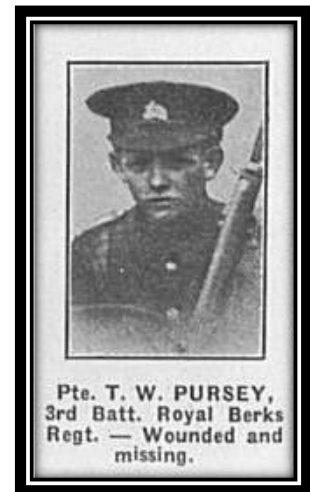
We are not sure if he was involved in earlier action, but it is believed on this day he died from his wounds. Other names from the St Paul's Memorial such as Sadler, Warwick and Brant were also killed during this action.

Thomas W PURSEY

d. 15 May, 1915

Thomas William Pursey, was the 8th child of Charles and Mary. He was born in April 1896 in Barkham. In 1911, he was a labourer and during the Census was assisting the local milkman and living with the Alexander's, his step family, on the Barkham Road, Wokingham.

The Royal Berkshire's however was to be his final calling and although it was stated he was in the 3rd Battalion, his Commonwealth Wargrave Record tells us he died with the 1st Battalion in 'D' Company on 15th May 1915. He is remembered on the Le Touret Memorial, France.



(George) Oliver REYNOLDS

d. 28 August, 1918

George Oliver was born in 1899 in Wokingham, to his teenage mother, Martha. He was the first born and had just one sibling, a sister named Nellie. By the age of 12, in the 1911 Census, Oliver is still a scholar. He lived with his mother, uncle and widowed Grandmother, Mary Ann at 12 Mount Pleasant. Both his mother and grandmother were laundresses and at that time, Wokingham was a hard place to earn a living.

Oliver joined the Somerset Light Infantry 1st Battalion probably after 1916. The 1st was a regular battalion and Oliver is likely to have been used as a 'top up' after the losses in the regulars started to mount up. He was soon on his way to France. Only a matter of weeks before the end of hostilities in 1918 he had been killed on the 28th of August and he is commemorated on the Vis-En-Artois Memorial in Picardy.



This Memorial bears the names of over 9,000 men who fell in the period from 8th August 1918 to the date of the Armistice, in the Advance to Victory, in Picardy and Artois, between the Somme and Loos, and who have no known grave. George Oliver Reynolds was only 19 when he died.

Charles RIDEOUT d. 25 September, 1915

Charles was born in 1889 in Brighton, Sussex to father Charles and mother Annie. He was the first born and had two brothers and three sisters. The family home was at 41 Easthampstead Road, Wokingham.

By the age of 21, Charles had become a harness maker, working for Mr Evans the equine supplier at 19 Peach Street, Wokingham.

Charles joined the 8th Battalion of the Royal Berkshire Regiment around 1914 and was soon on his way to France. He became a Corporal and knew things might turn out badly for him.



Charles was killed on the 25th September, 1915, during the Battle of Loos. It was a bloody battle and the attack on the 25th was the bloodiest. Charles is remembered on the Loos Memorial, France.

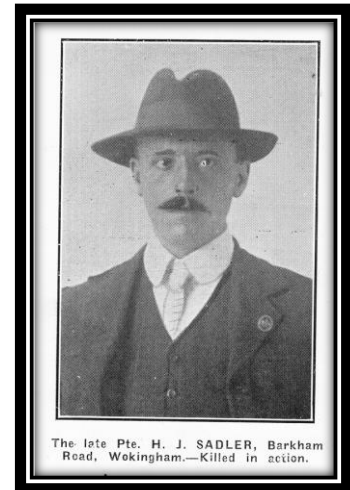
An article in the **Reading Mercury, 9th October 1915**, read: "*Corporal Rideout was an enthusiastic cricketer and footballer, also a member of the Wokingham Town Band and a St Paul's bellringer. He has a brother Frank serving in the 8th Royal Berkshire Regt.*"

Henry James SADLER
d. 26 October, 1914

Henry was born in 1886 to father Henry and mother Ellen in Wokingham. He was the first born and had six siblings, three brothers and three sisters. By the age of 14, Henry had become a butcher and was living with his parents on the Barkham Road, Wokingham in 1901.

By 1911 Henry was now a bricklayer and living as a lodger in Matthews Green, Emmbrook.

Sometime possibly before 1914, Henry was a regular in the Royal Berkshires, 1st Battalion, which was part of the regular army (as distinct from Kitchener's volunteers). He would have been part of the early British Expeditionary Force and moved straight into the Retreat of Mons and held the German advance at the Marne. However, Henry was to reach his end early in the war and during what is known as the 1st Battle of Ypres (both armies were attempting to out flank each other as they raced to the French and Belgian coast). He is remembered on the Menin Gate Memorial at Ypres in Belgium.



The late Pte. H. J. SADLER, Barkham Road, Wokingham.—Killed in action.

James William SADLER
d. 3 September, 1918

James was born in 1888 to father, John and mother Ellen in Wokingham, Berkshire. He was the first born and had four siblings, three brothers and a sister. By the age of 23, James had become a baker and his father a saw mill labourer. His parents lived at Denmark Street in 1901.

James joined the 12th Battalion of the Royal Irish Rifles around 1915, and in the October landed in Boulogne, as a part of the 36th Ulster Division.

The Ulsters, with James amongst it, all fought in the Somme, Messines, Cambrai, 3rd Ypres, but it is probable that he was killed during the successful attack on Nieuwkerke (also known as Neuve-Eglise). The town was captured by the Germans on from 14th April 1918, after a stubborn defence by the 49th (West Riding) and 33rd Division, and remained in their hands until it was retaken by the Ulsters on 2nd September. He was buried in Nieuwkerke Churchyard, Belgium.

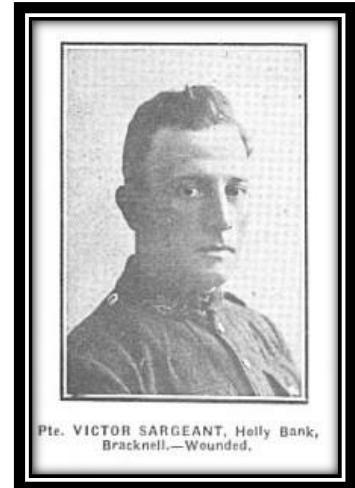


The late Sergt. J. R. SADLER, 19, Mount Pleasant, Wokingham.—Killed in action. Aged 21.

Victor SARGEANT, MM **d. 2 November, 1918**

Victor was born in 1887 to father John and mother Martha in Bracknell. He was the ninth born and had six brothers and seven sisters. The 1911 census tells us Martha had fourteen births and remarkably, they all survived. Before the war the family lived in a large Georgian home at Shute End, and later moved to The Shack, Oxford Road, Wokingham

Of seven sons, five emigrated to Canada and two stayed in England – William, and the youngest, Donald. However, when duty called to defend the old country, all five of the Canadian sons answered the call.



Victor joined the 46th Battalion of the Canadian Infantry (Saskatchewan Regiment) around 1916, and was soon on his way to France. He was awarded the Military Medal for bravery, but a few weeks before the end of the war, on the 2nd November he had been killed around the village of Auberchicourt, northern France. He died aged 31 and is buried in the Auberchicourt British Cemetery.

An article in the **Reading Chronicle**, 23rd November 1918 read: "*Mr and Mrs J F Sargeant have to mourn the loss of another son Victor who belonged to a Canadian regiment. One of 7 brothers who volunteered, 5 accepted for service and Victor the second son to give his life. Severely wounded at Vimy Ridge and sent to England to convalesce he spent time at Bearwood and returned to France last April. Two daughters of Mr and Mrs Sargeant were among the first lady carpenters to go to France and worked at Calais for upwards of 12 months.*"

Robert E SARGEANT **d. 28 February, 1915**

Robert was born in 1891 to father John and mother Martha in Bracknell. He was the twelfth born and had six brothers and seven sisters. Not a great deal of information regarding Robert's life appears in the records. Four of his brother emigrated before 1911, so it is possible that he followed them to Canada.

He became a bombardier with the Royal Garrison Artillery, 9th Heavy Battery, but was wounded during an action in 1915 and died at home with his family. He is buried in the churchyard of St Michael and Mary Magdalene, Easthampstead, Bracknell.

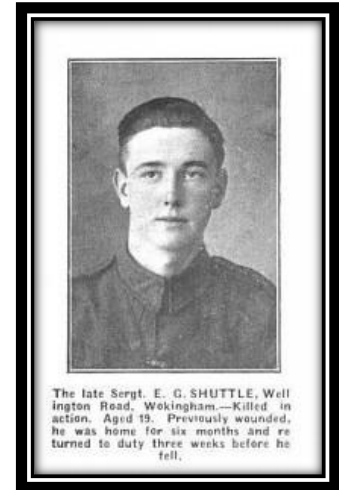
Ernest G SHUTTLE

d. 20 March, 1916

Ernest was born in 1897 in Wokingham to father James and mother Kate (nee Beaven), both of whom had passed away by the beginning of the war. He was the second born and had one brother and five sisters. The family home was at 2 Wellington Road, Wokingham before and during the war. By the age of 18 he had become a Railway checker (according to his attestation).

Ernest joined the Rifle Brigade 3rd Battalion in August 1914, quickly becoming a Sergeant in the 20 months he served. In March 1916 he was killed during fighting around Ypres. He is believed to be buried in Maple Copse Cemetery, which was the name given by the Army to a small plantation about 900 metres east of the village of Zillebeke, and just west of Sanctuary Wood. The place was used by Advanced Dressing Stations and burials took place there both before and after the Battle of Mount Sorrel in June 1916. However, in that engagement, and in later fighting, the graves were mostly destroyed.

He had been previously wounded and took six months to recuperate and was killed only three weeks after his return. Ernest was only 19 when he died having joined illegally at 17 stating he was born two years earlier (minimum age was 19 in 1914).

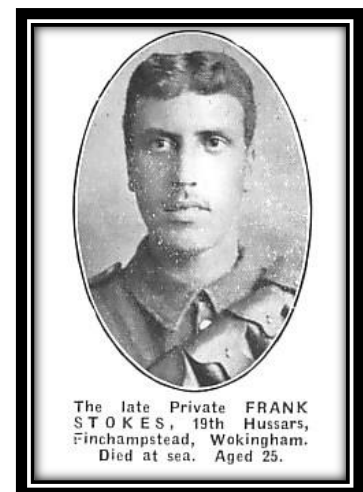


Frank Chaston STOKES

d. 26 November, 1915

Frank was born in 1889 to father William and mother Maria (nee Chaston) in Arborfield. He was the second born, having three brothers and a sister.

In 1891, the family lived on the Finchampstead Road, Wokingham and by 1901, were in the 'Brook'. In the same road on the 1901 census, there is Eastbrook, a mental hospital and working there is a Joseph Chaston, aged 41, a servant from Norfolk. This person is very likely to be Maria's brother and shows us how families so often moved around the country in search of work. Whilst his father had remained a coachman for most of his life, by the age of 21 Frank had become a self-



employed farmer in 1911. His parents still lived at Brook Cottage, Wokingham in 1911.

Frank joined the 19th Hussars before the start of the war, which later joined the Gloucestershire Regiment. By 1915, the regiment made their way to the ill-fated Gallipoli campaign. Frank died from dysentery while at sea on 26 November, 1915. He is remembered on the Helles Memorial, Gallipoli, Turkey.

George Frank STREET

d. 28 March, 1918

George was born in 1888 to father, Harry and mother Kate in Wokingham. He was the first born and had four siblings, one brother and three sisters. His parents and younger siblings had moved to Deal in Kent in 1911. From the 1911 Census, George had in fact slipped off the records and it is possible he had joined the services by this time. However, records show that he had married Helen Anns in 1912.



George joined the Royal Berkshire Regiment, 2/4th Battalion and was soon on his way to France. By the 28th of March 1918, he had been killed during the German Spring Offensive and is remembered on the Namps-au-Val British Cemetery.

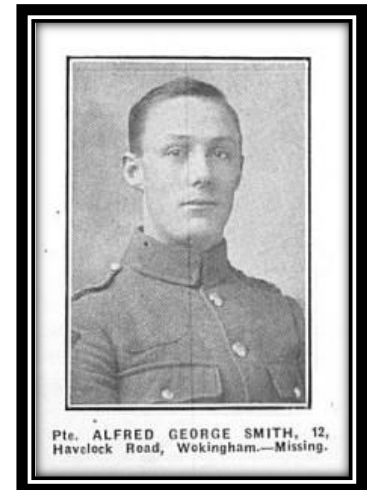
An article in the **Reading Chronicle, 20th April, 1918** reads: “*Corporal G Street is reported as having died of wounds received near St Quentin on 28th March. He volunteered on November 14th 1915 and was 30 years old. He was for some time on the staff at the local infirmary and left to take up a position as Master’s assistant at Uxbridge. He leaves a widow.*”

Alfred George SMITH

d. 16 August, 1916

Alfred was born in 1889 to father, William and mother Phoebe in Wokingham. He was the third born and had four siblings, two brothers and two sisters. Alfred’s parents lived on the Henley Road in 1901 and at Lawrence’s Brickworks in 1911. His father, William was a carter at a local timber yard and later worked in the same trade at the brick works.

Alfred joined the Royal Berkshire Regiment, 2nd Battalion and as this was a regular unit, it is possible he joined before war started. This is further evident as his 1911 census record is missing and the battalion, prior to 1914, had been serving in India. The 2nd Battalion were part of 25th Brigade within 8th Division. They were allocated to III Corps/Fourth Army for the Somme engagement.



Before the Somme, the 2nd had already seen its fair share of contact. After arrival from India, the unit was sent into the first Battle of Ypres, then onto the Battle of Neuve Chapelle, then Loos, before arriving at the Berkshire nemesis, The Somme. It was here that Alfred lost his life on the 16th August, 1916. His final resting place is not known although his war record states it as France or Flanders.

Harold Victor SURMAN

d. 16 November, 1918

Harold was born in 1890 to father Thomas and mother Mary Ann, in Wokingham. He was the tenth born and had eleven siblings, eight brothers and three sisters. By the age of 21, Harold had become a Cowman and later a baker during the war. His parents lived at 8 Budges Cottages and his father was a gardener at a 'pleasure ground' in 1911.



Harold married twice. His first marriage was in 1914 to Elizabeth Harden, which ended early due to her death in 1915. Harold was to marry again in 1916 to Ethel Mary Swindon in Reading.

Harold's war record shows that he joined the Royal Army Medical Corps in 1917. There is an exemption stamp on the record. There is no information on Harold's activities during the war, but his record states that he died of pneumonia at the hospital camp in Etaples, France on the 16th November 1918, just under a week after peace was finally called. Harold was buried at Etaples Military Cemetery. He was 29.

William THOMAS

d. 13 June, 1916

According to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission records, William was born to Edwin and Kitty Thomas in Reading, 1891. He joined the Royal Berkshire Regiment, 8th Battalion (which was set up at the end of 1914) and we therefore presume he was part of the volunteers for that time. Although we know he was killed on the 28th June 1916, there are no existing records regarding the circumstances of his death, but he is buried in Maroc British Cemetery, Grenay, France.

Note: There are a number of issues with the records. Although the CWGC records say he was 25 when killed and born in Reading, there are no births in that area for that year with his name. Although his parents were living in Wokingham by the time of this death in 1916, they do not appear to be living anywhere in Berkshire in the 1911 Census. The address given of 29 Barkham Road, Wokingham (from the CWGC records) is housing a family other than the Thomas's in 1911. What is known is that William was killed during 1916 and that he left behind his parents, Edwin and Kitty of Wokingham.

Trevor Sidney TUFFREY

d. 31 July, 1917

Trevor was born in 1895 to father, Sidney and mother Sophie in Islip, Oxfordshire. He was the first born and had two sisters, Lavinia and Violet Maude.

By the age of 15, Trevor had already become a soldier, albeit a musical one, as in 1911, he had joined the Oxford Light Infantry as a musician. His parents lived in Station Road, Wokingham by 1917.

Trevor died on 31st July 1917 during the Battle for Mesopotamia and is remembered on the Basra Memorial.

Marilyn Bourne, Trevor's great-niece records: *"There were two siblings, Lavinia and Violet Maude born 4th June 1902. Violet was my Grandmother, who continued to live in Wokingham until her death in 1988. My Grandmother told us her mother Sophia had saved up to buy Trevor out of the Army as he was so unhappy, but £5 was so much for them. While she was saving he was sent to India; war started and he never returned."*

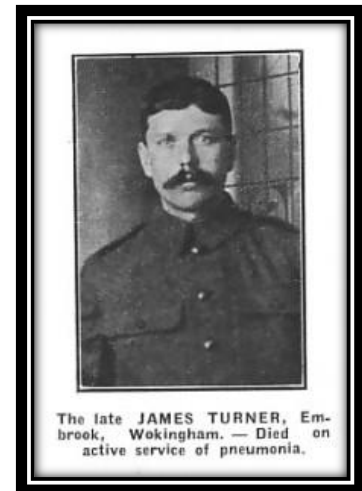
James TURNER

d. 20 December, 1915

James was the first born in 1881, in Hurst, to parents Alfred and Emma. As with many of the men in Wokingham and the surrounding areas, James became a general labourer to the farming community and by 1906 he was married to a Mortimer girl, Martha Annie Weston and lived at Four Houses, Emmbrook. By 1910, they already had two girls, Elsie (1908) and Winifred (1910).

James was in his thirties when he joined the Royal Berkshire Regiment. As the volunteers were joining thick and fast, the 5th Battalion had already reached its full complement by September 1914. So he joined the newly created 6th Battalion. The 6th trained at Colchester from October 1914 and by the following May were moved to Salisbury ready for the journey to France in the July.

Their first job was to come in late August when they held the line at Mametz and missed out on engagement at Loos. However, it was during one of the 6th's inactive periods (and preparation for the Somme) in December 1915, that James Turner lost his life. Even outside of the main battles, there was always continuing trench fighting and the British were losing 300 soldiers a day right across the lines. James died on 20th December, 1915 and is buried at St Sever Cemetery, Rouen, France.



Charles SKEFFINGTON WEST

d. 30 December, 1917

Commander Charles Skeffington West was educated on HMS Britannia and later at Trinity College, Cambridge University.

He fought in the First World War, where he was mentioned in despatches three times and was wounded.

He gained the rank of Commander in the service of the Royal Navy. He was commander of the Howe Battalion, Royal Naval Division. He was decorated with the award of Companion, Distinguished Service Order (D.S.O.) in 1917, but was killed by the end of that year.



Photograph: S Huxford 2011

He is buried in Metz-en-Couture Cemetery. It is not known what the battalion was doing there but it is interesting to note that in that cemetery lie five other Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (RNVR) officers.

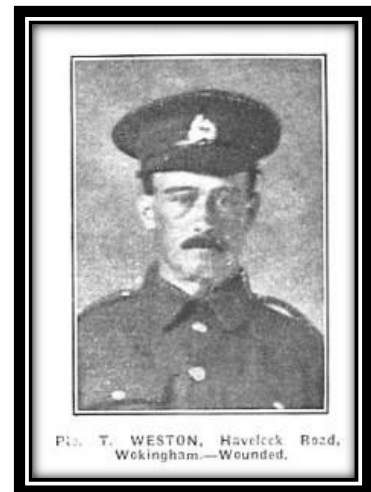
His family lived at Chetwode House in Wokingham. The house itself no longer exists but there is a little lodge house on the main road by St Crispin's School called Chetwode and a close of detached houses just behind there called Chetwode Close.

The War Office issued the following notice in **17th April 1917**: *"T/Lt.-Com. Charles Skeffington West, R.N.V.R. For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. He rendered invaluable service by most ably guiding and placing companies of the battalion in their battle positions within 400 yards of the enemy. He worked continuously under heavy hostile shell-fire, and was largely responsible for the success of the operations."*

Thomas WESTON **d. 19 July, 1917**

Thomas Weston was born in Mortimer, Berkshire in 1882 and was part of a large family that grew to eight over twenty five years. His Mother and Father, Mary and Andrew lived in various places, including Stratfield Saye, Bramley, Mortimer, Hurst and finally, 7 Havelock Road, Wokingham.

Thomas joined the 5th Battalion of the Royal Berkshire Regiment sometime after late 1915, aged 34. It was a newly, formed unit to accommodate the new recruits who joined as a result of Lord Kitchener's national call to arms.



As part of the 5th, he would have seen service in the Battle of Loos, stepped on the bodies of the 2nd regulars at the Somme, and finally in 1917, broke out of Arras and onto more fighting in Battery Valley.

He was killed on the 19th July 1917 the 5th Battalion were not at that time involved in any major battles, although skirmishes were constantly taking place over this part of the front. Thomas' short time in service would have seen some of the worst experiences of the war and in his quiet way represents the true character of Wokingham's fallen heroes. His final resting place is unknown.

Frederick WESTLAKE

d. 29 October, 1914

Frederick Westlake was born in Wokingham in 1886, the fourth of John and Ellen's five sons. They lived at 59 Havelock Road, Wokingham, which is just opposite the town's railway station.

Frederick joined the Royal Berkshire Regiment long before the war started and was already in the 1st Battalion by the time the census was recorded in 1911.

From an obituary that appeared in the Reading Standard on 14th November 1914, we know that Fred had formerly been an attendant at Broadmoor.



The Battalion saw almost instant fighting and Frederick's war was a short one, being killed right in the middle of the first Battle of Ypres.

Ypres was, by the end of the war, to account for a huge part of the regiment's loss to the point of its virtual obliteration by the war's end. Frederick's brother, William, although wounded, survived the war and died in 1966 at the age of 86.

Reginald G WHITING

d. 31 October, 1914

Reginald was born in 1887 and lived with his parents, elder brother and three younger sisters. They lived in various places varying from Reading, Sulham, Shinfield and Emmbrook. The 1901 census shows his father worked as a cattleman, whilst he and his brother were carters.

By 1911, Reginald had joined the Royal Berkshire Regiment, 2nd Battalion and by 1914, he had moved to the 1st Battalion, which was to see early action at the start of the war. Although not stated, it seems probable that as Reginald was killed at the end of October 1914, the likely location is around the first Battle of Ypres.



The excerpt below is from John Chapman's excellent account on the Royal Berkshire Regiment, 1st Battalion: *"The 1st Battalion was at Aldershot when war was declared. They departed for France on the 12th August 1914 and participated in the retreat from Mons as part of 6th Brigade. Their first major*

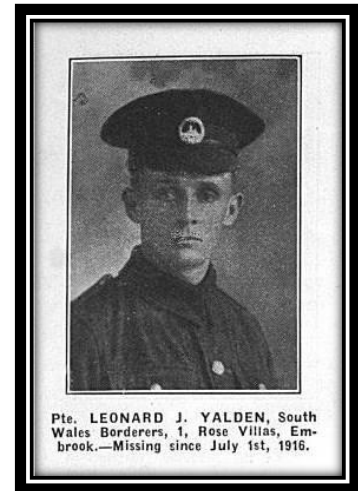
action was at the Bridge on the Sambre 25th/26th August. The end point of the Retreat was reached on 7th September when they reached Le Poteau. The flow of fighting was reversed on 9th September when they crossed the Marne and then the Aisne on the 14th. They then settled into trench warfare based at La Metz Farm."

Leonard Yalden, MM

d. 1 July, 1916

Leonard's father was a professional soldier and as a result Leonard was born in Gibraltar (his sister S. Africa and his brother Dublin). By 1911, the family had settled in Oak Lodge, Matthews Green, Wokingham, where Leonard was a doctor's messenger.

He was killed on the notorious first day of the Battle of the Somme, July 1st, 1916. His military records show he was in the Royal Artillery and later the South Wales Borderers. He had been awarded the Military Medal.



... May they rest in Peace and rise in Glory.

2014 – 2018 Commemorations

In all of the planning to mark the centenary of the start of the First World War on August the 4th, both in the parish and in the town, there was a concern as to how to maintain that sense of remembrance and thanksgiving for the next four years, right the way through until the centenary of the Armistice in November 2018. The Parish of St Paul's is committed to two significant ways of remembering in the months and years that lie ahead.

The first aims to make a firm connection between the 62 men who are named on the War Memorial in St Paul's and the fact that they sat in our pews, went to our schools, walked our streets and lived in our houses. We know the home addresses of 50 of the 62 men. We have printed out all of the information we have about them and in October 2014 we are going to deliver that information to the people who live in that address today. In a few cases we have only a road name, in which case we will deliver the information to someone in the road. The hope is that this will interest people and make them feel a strong sense of connection with the town and with the person who died. The hope is that it will inform their thoughts and their remembering. There is something very fitting about those who died being remembered not only in the country they died for but also in the home they left.

The second will run throughout the next four years. At 11am we will ring the church bell a hundred years to the day the day after each of the 62 were killed. Their names will also be added to the prayer list for the week and they and their family will be prayed for in Church. When people hear the bell being rung at 11am 62 times over the next 48 months they will, we hope, pause and remember and pray for those who still serve our country and those who did not come home.

There are clear clumps of fatalities (e.g. late October 1914, early July 1916, Spring 1918) which reflect the progress and crises of the War. As we realise that the bell is ringing again it will make us echo the shock felt in the town a hundred years earlier. On some days the bell will ring for one man, and then be still, and then start again to mark a second casualty. The bell will toll the age of the man who died. Those who hear the bell will hear it start, and count, and be reminded again how young most of the 62 were, how much of life should have lain ahead.

Fr Richard Lamey, Rector
Parish of St Paul, Wokingham



**St Paul's
Church**
Wokingham
1864-2014

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