

Rochester and Borstal in the First World War: Selected Biographies of the Fallen  
Edited by Kate Bradley and Anne Logan

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Acknowledgements

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## Introduction

This short book brings together a selection of biographies of the men from Rochester and Borstal who fell in the First World War. These biographies were compiled by volunteers as part of the Rochester and Borstal in the First World War project, which was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council's Gateway to the First World War Centre. The project itself is a partnership between academics at the University of Kent's Medway campus and the Vicar and Church of St Matthew's in Borstal.

Why look at Rochester and Borstal? Rochester and Borstal (as well as Strood, Frindsbury and Wainscott) have been somewhat overlooked in the experience of the First World War in the Medway Towns. The Towns have a formidable military and naval heritage, through the presence of the Royal Naval Dockyard and the Garrisons in the Chatham, Brompton, and Gillingham areas. The Chatham Historic Dockyard, the Royal Engineers' Archive and Museum and the Guildhall Museum in Rochester all hosted major exhibitions around 2014, drawing attention to the rich heritage around the military presence in the towns. But what of the other parts of the towns? Whilst people who lived in Rochester and its surrounding areas might have been employed at or had connections with the dockyard or garrison, on the whole, this part of the Medway towns had a different economic history.

As a cathedral city, Rochester was the centre of the Diocese of Rochester, which extends into parts of south London and to Kent's border with Sussex beyond Tunbridge Wells. It had its own port, which connected it with London on the one hand and the rural Kent hinterland on the other.<sup>1</sup> The Lower Medway Valley – the stretch between East Farleigh near Maidstone and Rochester and Strood – experienced industrialisation followed by a period of deindustrialisation as various industries boomed... and then went into decline. As Andrew Hann has shown in his history of the valley, these industries included cement and chalk production, paper-making, brick making, barge and ship-building, brewing, and engineering.<sup>2</sup> These industries loomed large in the working lives of many of the men in this selection, though by the 1910s this was changing. Although some cement and chalk work continued into the early twentieth century, the cement boom that had caused Borstal to grow from a very small hamlet into a larger village was over by 1900 or so.<sup>3</sup> Yet new industries were also developing. Thomas Aveling's agricultural machinery business grew from the 1850s, before joining with Richard Porter to create the Aveling and Porter company in 1862. This company would remain a major employer in Rochester and Strood until the 1930s.<sup>4</sup> The Port of Rochester and the railway links would make this part of the Medway Towns a vital point of connection between London and the Thames on the one hand and the counties of Kent and Sussex on the other.<sup>5</sup> Aeronautical engineering and the supply of aeronautical parts was in its infancy in Rochester around the outbreak of the First World War. The Short Brothers moved their aviation factory from the Isle of Sheppey to what is now the Esplanade in Rochester in 1913, where their operations continued to expand until 1948, when the firm was nationalised and operations relocated to Belfast.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> J.M. Preston, *Industrial Medway: An Historical Survey* (Rochester: J.M. Preston, 1977).

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Hann, *The Medway Valley: A Kent Landscape Transformed* (Chichester: Phillimore, 2009).

<sup>3</sup> Stephen Hannington, *Out of the Shadows: A History of Borstal Village* (Colchester: Birch Leaf Books, 2015).

<sup>4</sup> Michael R. Lane, *The Invicta Works: A History of Aveling and Porter, Rochester* (Redditch: National Traction Engine Trust, 2010); J.M. Preston, *Aveling and Porter* (Rochester: North Kent Books, 1988).

<sup>5</sup> Catherine Shirley, "An Economic Analysis of Rochester," (Unknown, 1972). [Available as a reference-only copy from the Local Studies Library at Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre]

<sup>6</sup> C.H. Barnes and D.N. James, *Shorts Aircraft since 1900* (Putnam Aeronautical, 1989).

The economic and industrial picture of Rochester and its surrounding areas at this time matters because it is what brought many of the families of the men in this book to the towns. Some moved from more rural parts of Kent and Sussex to the Medway Towns, as the English agricultural sector shed jobs as a result of technological innovations and shifts in importing.<sup>7</sup> Others, like Frederick Youens, came from different parts of the country to take up posts in growing professions like school teaching. The work that many of these men undertook was physically demanding, and not always well-paid or with prospects. In many cases, families might have been able to afford for the mother of the family to remain at home caring for small children or older relatives, but this required everyone else to do paid work as soon as they were able. In some cases, recourse to the Poor Law and charity was necessary – the National Insurance Act 1911 would have made provision for some of those working in industry in the towns, but this would not have covered their dependents. On the other hand, some of the men who we encounter through these biographies came from privileged backgrounds, coming from families who were major land-owners in Kent and which had dominated politics in the Medway Towns for some time. People from all walks of life in the Medway Towns lost family members and friends during the Great War.

As the centenary of the Armistice comes to pass, it is important that we continue to remember the contribution made by these men, their families, their friends and the whole community. We can remember them through taking time to look at war memorials, such as that on Rochester High Street, by the cathedral, or through the Rolls of Honour displayed in the parish churches and schools. We can also remember them through the stories we have collected here, and on the project blog. The blog contains more biographies, with links to other sources of online information about the men and their lives (see <https://blogs.kent.ac.uk/rochesterborstalfirstworldwar/>). For anyone interested in finding out more about specific men, you will find more detailed references to source material online. We have also created a Google map which pinpoints the places that were important to the men during their lifetimes – the places they lived, worked and studied. This helps to show us how connected the men were to the community, and often to each other. It also shows how some streets – such as Sidney Road in Borstal – lost a considerable number of their residents. As we go past some of these places in the course of our daily lives, we can reflect on the men who lived or worked there over a hundred years ago.

Kate Bradley and Anne Logan,  
Chatham Maritime, 2018.

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<sup>7</sup> See Duncan Gallie, "The Labour Force," in *Twentieth-Century British Social Trends*, ed. A. H. Halsey and Josephine Webb (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), 282.

## The Biographies

### Abbotson, Sidney (1889-1918)

Sidney Abbotson was born in 1889 in Strood, which was then part of the city of Rochester. He spent much of his childhood at 84 Temple Street in Strood. In 1909, he married Esther Missen, and they had two children, Kate and Sidney, who were 2 years old and 7 months old at the time of the 1911 Census. The Abbotsons appear to still have been living in Strood in 1911, possibly lodging with Sidney's older sister, Harriet. In 1911, Sidney was working as an engineering labourer.

During the First World War, Sidney joined the Royal Engineers as a Sapper – Sappers were soldiers whose role involved building and maintaining key military infrastructure, like roads, bridges, wireless communications, and railways. Sidney served with the 27<sup>th</sup> Light Railway Company of the Royal Engineers.

Sidney died shortly before the Armistice, on 30 October 1918, in the 7th Canadian General Hospital, which was then in Boulogne in Northern France.

**Sources:** Censuses for 1891, 1901, 1911; England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837-1915; Peter Singlehurst, *The War Dead of the Commonwealth: Etaples Military Cemetery Etaples, France. the Second Part Sailors, Soldiers and Civilians from the United Kingdom A to Costa*; Commonwealth War Graves, 1914-1921 and 1939-1947; National Army Museum. Soldiers' Effects Records, 1901-60; NAM Accession Number: 1991-02-333; Record Number Ranges: 937001-938500; Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929; Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919. All Ancestry.co.uk

**Research by:** Kate Bradley



### **Adams, Albert (1876-1917)**

Private Albert Adams was born in Rochester on 18 September 1876. Albert first served in the Royal Engineers, enlisting on 26 February 1917, and transferring to the 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion East Yorkshire Regiment on 9 September, with his service number being 40416.

At the time of the 1881 Census, Albert's family lived at 20 Morden Street, Rochester. William Adams, Albert's father, was then working as a steward. Alice Adams, Albert's mother, had no occupation listed. In the 1881 Census, Albert had two older brothers, William T. and Frederick (then 9 and 6 to Albert's 4) and two younger sisters, Louisa and Alice M. By the time of the 1891 Census, William was listed as a mariner, and he had married again after the death of Albert's mother in 1888. Alice was buried in St Margaret's Churchyard. Around this time, Albert was a scholar at Troy Town School in Rochester. By 1891, he had acquired a step-mother, Caroline, two half-sisters – Nellie and Frances – and a step-brother, Henry White, who was the same age as Albert's sister, Alice. At this point, the family lived at 13 Rose Street. Albert and Frederick were working as telegraph messengers, whilst William T. had apparently left home and was living in in Snodland, working as a carpenter. William Adams was now listed as a mariner.

At the time of the 1901 Census, newly-weds Albert and Ada Caroline Adams were living at 35 Rochester Avenue, where they were the sole occupants of the property. Albert was a shipbuilder's clerk, and Ada's occupation was not given. By the time of the 1911 Census, the couple were living in Fisher Street, Sandwich, with their son. Albert worked as a licensed victualler, supported by Ada in this work. Their son, Albert Sidney (or Edney) Adams, was 2 and had been born in Sandwich on 24 December 1908. De Ruvigny's Roll of Honour states that, before his death, Albert was the licensee of the Globe and Laurel pub in Gillingham, at 105 Britton Street. As Albert is listed in De Ruvigny's Roll, he was presumably a reservist before the war.

Albert died on 2 October 1917, in action on the Poelcappelle Road, and is commemorated at the Tyne Cot Memorial, in West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. Albert was married to Ada Caroline Adams (nee Lower), and at the time of his death, she was living at 126 Britton Street, Gillingham. Albert's father, William, had by this point moved to Erith.

**Sources:** Censuses for 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911; De Ruvigny's Roll of Honour, 1914-1919 (all Ancestry.co.uk)

### **Akhurst, Arthur Humphrey (1896-1917)**

Arthur was born in Sevenoaks in 1896. By the time of the 1911 Census, Arthur was going by his middle name of Humphrey, and had moved with his mother to Strood. His mother, Susan, had married Humphrey's stepfather, Christopher George Chambers, around 1904, and Humphrey had a younger sister, Doris Gwendoline, who was 4 in 1911. His stepfather worked as a waterside labourer, whilst Humphrey, then aged 15, was working as a core maker in a local iron foundry. The iron foundry was probably Aveling and Porter, as the De Caville Index indicates that Humphrey is listed on the firm's roll of honour. Susan's occupation was not listed. The family's address was given as High View, Moore Street, Strood. His mother was still living there in the years immediately after Humphrey's death.

Susannah died in 1930 at the age of 61, in Strood.

Arthur enlisted in Chatham, and began his service as a Private in the Royal West Surrey Regiment, between 4 and 21 November 1916 (regimental number 16036), transferring to the London Regiment of the 22nd Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers (regimental number 61526).

Arthur died on 23 February 1917, and is buried in the St Sever Cemetery (Extension Part II UK A-D).

**Sources:** Census for 1911; Peter Singlehurst, *The War Dead of the Commonwealth St. Sever Cemetery Extension Rouen, France Part Two Sailors, Soldiers, Airmen and Civilians From the United Kingdom A-D*; Commonwealth War Graves, 1914-1921 and 1939-1947; Commonwealth War Graves Registers. London, United Kingdom: Peter Singlehurst; Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919; England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916-2007; England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837-1915. All via Ancestry.co.uk

### **Anderson, Colin Knox (1888-1914)**

Colin was the third son of George Knox Anderson and Mary Anderson. In the 1891 Census, he was listed as being 2 years old, and living at Saye House, Castle Gardens, Rochester with his parents, three siblings and five domestic staff. By 1901, when Colin was 12, the family were living at Holywood House, in Frindsbury. George Knox Anderson was the managing director of a cement manufacturing company, the Associated Portland Cement Manufacturers. George was one of the Justices of the Peace for North Aylesford, and he was made Deputy Lieutenant of Kent in 1911. He was also, very briefly, the Conservative Member of Parliament for Canterbury in late 1918.

Colin was educated at Malvern College in Worcestershire, before joining the Army. He was commissioned as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Royal West Kent Regiment in December 1908, and he was promoted to Lieutenant in 1911. Colin was very keen on sports, and he was on the football and cricket teams at Malvern. He also played cricket for the regiment, and was involved in amateur cricket in Kent.

Colin served with the British Expeditionary Force in France and Flanders, and was killed in action on 23 August 1914 at Mons. He is buried in Hautrage Military Cemetery in Belgium.

His effects totalling £4715 8s 11d were left to his father.

#### **Extract from the Regimental War Diary for 23rd August 1914**

Piece 1553/1-5: 13 Infantry Brigade: 1 Battalion Queen's Own (Royal West Kent ) (1914 Aug – 1916 April)

HORNU. 23.8.14 SUNDAY 4.454AM

Orders received for the troops holding our section of the line of the canal to be strengthened by one company & one of our advanced companies to proceed along TERTRE Road to support a reconnaissance by one squadron 19th HUSSARS & 5thCYCLIST CO.

A Coy. Under Capt LISTER was therefore sent forward to support C Coy. & come under the immediate orders of Major BUCKLE. C & D Coys. Had since their arrival on the line of the canal put their positions in as thorough state of defence as there was time for.

7.30AM.

When the mounted troops had moved out north of the canal A Coy. Took a position to cover their retirement at the road junction south of the E in TERTRE (MONS map B.T.7a)

12:0 NOON

Later the cyclists were driven in by superior force of GERMAN infantry, A Coy. Coming under heavy fire (rifle & shrapnel) & being forced to retire on the line of the canal. Their casualties were killed Lieut C.K. ANDERSON & 6 other ranks, wounded Lt A.A.E.CHITTY & 29 other ranks, missing Capt. G.D.LISTER (known to be wounded) & 58 other ranks.

**Sources:** Censuses for 1891, 1901 and 1911; Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919; Find A Grave Index for Burials at Sea and other Select Burial Locations, 1300s-Current; National Archives, First World War and Army of Occupation War Diaries, Class: WO 95; England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1966, 1973-1995; De Ruvigny's Roll of Honour, 1914-19.

Mark Jopling, *The Thirteen Men of Bridge who Died in the Great War 1914-18*, <http://www.bridgevillage.org.uk/jcwebfiles/historysociety/Publications/Bridge%20Memorial.pdf>, 2012.

‘George Knox Anderson’, *Wikipedia*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George\\_Knox\\_Anderson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Knox_Anderson).

**Research:** Sean Ryan

## **Anderson, William (Willie) 1895-1917**

Willie was the second son of Thomas and Charlotte Maria Anderson.

In the 1901 Census, Willie was 4 and lived with his parents, five siblings and a nephew at 1 Taylor's Lane in Strood. Their home was off what is now the High Street, on the same side of the road as the Prince of Wales public house (as of 2016). Thomas was working as a cement labourer. By 1911, Willie was still living at 1 Taylor's Lane with his parents and younger brother. His three older siblings have probably left home by this point, and his father is still a cement labourer.

The De Caville records and CWGC lists his address as 10 Pearson Street, Strood, suggesting his parents had moved.

Willie served as a Private in 6th Bn The Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment). Willie died on 30th November 1917, during the Battle of Passchendaele. His final resting place is unknown, but his name is recorded on the Cambrai Memorial, Louverval, France. Willie is included on the Memorial Inscription in St Nicholas' Church, Strood.

His effects totalled £8 10s. 2d. were left to his father.

Unfortunately, the War Diary of the 6th Bn The Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment) doesn't cover the date of his death but most of the Regiment was involved with heavy fighting at Passchendaele. The diary for the 1st December notes that information is difficult to obtain with no officers returned to the unit and the remnants of the unit, 25 Other Ranks, defended the Hindenburg Support Line

As footnote, his mother was listed in Strood Poor Law Union Records several times before her death on 15 December 1929 aged 70.

**Sources:** Censuses for 1901, 1911; Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919; National Army Museum, Soldiers' Effects Records, 1901-60, NAM Accession Number: 1991-02-333, Record Number Ranges: 814001-815500, Reference: 494; National Archives, First World War and Army of Occupation War Diaries; Class: WO 95; Find A Grave Index for Burials at Sea and other Select Burial Locations, 1300s-Current.

Janet and Richard Mason, 'The Queens Own Royal West Kent Regiment, Private W. Anderson', <http://janetandrichardsgenealogy.co.uk/Pte%20W%20Anderson.html>, 2008 and 2016, correct on 28 February 2017.

Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre; Collection: Poor Law Union Records; Reference Number: G/St/WIa/1

## **Andrews, Arthur William (1896-1918)**

Arthur was the eldest son of William and Isabella Andrews. In 1901, he was aged 5, and living with his parents and four siblings at 57 Sidney Road Borstal. His father was a cement labourer and a Private in the Army Reserves. William Andrews had served in the Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment), the 50th & 97th Foot from 1884-1892 and 1896-1901 in Gibraltar, Malta and South Africa. Arthur's mother was originally from Edinburgh.

Ten years later, in 1911, Arthur was now aged fifteen, and the family had moved to 41 Sidney Road. Sadly, his father had died, and he lived with his mother and two younger siblings. Arthur's occupation was given as painter.

He attended Borstal National School from February 1904 until he was 14, leaving on the 2nd April 1909. School records give his date of birth as 4th April 1895, although the Census gives 1896.

Arthur served as an Air Mechanic 1st Class, in the No 31 Squadron RAF. Service number 2446.

Arthur enlisted on 30 November 1914 as an Air Mechanic 2nd class in the Royal Flying Corps. His civilian occupation was given as 'chaffeur mechanic'. Arthur was described as being 5 feet 5 inches tall, with a 32 inch chest, and having brown hair, grey eyes and a fresh complexion. Arthur became an Air Mechanic 1<sup>st</sup> class on 1 July 1915, with Trade Proficiency as a Fitter (General). He embarked to 18 Squadron on 10 November 1915 in France. He went to the Home Establishment in France on 13 February 1917, then was moved the following month from B Depot to 114 Squadron and 31 Squadron in Lahore, via Egypt. Arthur died on 19 July 1918 at Stationary Hospital in Risalpur. He is buried in Nowshera Military Cemetery, and commemorated on the Delhi Memorial (India Gate). His effects totalled £108 13s 5d. and were left to his mother.

### **31 Squadron History**

31 Squadron was formed at Farnborough on 11 October 1915 composed of a single 'A' flight. In December 1915 the five officers of 'A' flight were deployed to Bombay, India and then Risalpur, arriving on 26 December. Subsequently, 'B' flight was formed in January 1916, followed by 'C' flight in April, both at Gosport, joining 'A' flight in Risalpur in May 1916. During World War I it operated along the north-west frontier of India, assisting the British army in its struggle against dissident Peshawar tribesmen. The first aircraft used by the squadron were Bristol BE2c and Henri Farman biplanes, fitted with bomb sights and racks. Two of the machines even had wireless sets which were used for observing and directing artillery fire.

**Sources:** Censuses for 1901 and 1911; Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919; England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1966, 1973-1995; India, Select Deaths and Burials, 1719-1948; National Army Museum, Soldiers' Effects Records, 1901-60, NAM Accession Number: 1991-02-333, Record Number Ranges: 814001-815500; Reference: 494. All Ancestry.co.uk

Royal Air Force, 'History of 31 Squadron',  
<http://www.raf.mod.uk/rafmarham/aboutus/31sqnhistory.cfm>, correct at 28 February 2017.

British Royal Air Force, Airmen's service records 1912-1939; National School Admission Registers & Log-books 1870-1914; British Army Service Records. All Findmypast.co.uk

**Research:** Sean Ryan

### **Andrews, Horace Gibson (1890-1917)**

Horace was born in Woburn in Bedfordshire. At the time of the 1891 Census, Horace was one year old, and living at 103 Park Street, Woburn. He was the youngest of eight children. His father, Gibson Andrews, was an ironmonger, and his mother was called Emma. The family were still living there in 1901, and Horace had gained a younger brother. By 1911, twenty-one-year-old Horace was boarding at 18 James Street Rochester, where he was listed on the Census as being an Assistant Master. As his name was recorded on the St Peter's School Roll of Honour, he was very likely to have been teaching there.

### **Military Career**

Horace served as a Captain 8th Battalion of the York and Lancaster Regiment. He was killed in action on 7th June 1917 on the first day of the Battle of Messines Ridge. The battle commenced with blowing up of over 20 mines under the German lines, the craters of which are still visible today. He is buried in Bedford House Cemetery Ypres

Horace left effects of £424 14s. 6d. to two of his brothers.

Another two of his brothers were also killed on the Somme in 1916.

### **Extract from the Regimental war diary (pages 436-437)**

We shared in the great victory for the 2nd Army. Zero hours 3.10am. The 9th Y&L took their objective in fine style, and at 6.50am we left their new line to attack the final objective (ZILLEBEKE). This we took with a strongpoint about 50yds in advance of the right flank, also the KNOLL, an eminence in NO MANS LAND in front of our own centre. Our Officer casualties were CAPT ANDREWS (killed), 2n/Lt HART (believed killed) 2nd/Lt LUCAS (believed killed) and 2/lts ASTON, IMISON < VANSENDEN, LT POPPLEWELL, CAPT BELL and 2/Lt BILLINGTON wounded. Estimated O.R. casualties 300. No counter-attacks after the position had once been consolidated. We held all our own gains, tho there was a terrific bombardment between 9 & 11.30pm. Our guns broke up an attempted counter-attack. Later we were relieved from the line by the 9th York & Lancaster Regiment, and the remnants of our unit took up quarters in MT. SORRELL depots we spent in rest.



**Sources:** Censuses for 1891, 1901, and 1911; England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1966, 1973-1995 Global, Find A Grave Index for Burials at Sea and other Select Burial Locations, 1300s-Current. All Ancestry.co.uk

**Research:** Sean Ryan

### **Ashton, Walter Arthur (1898-1916)**

Walter was the eldest son of Arthur and Emily Ashton. In 1901, the three-year-old Walter, his parents and three sisters were living at 22 Montfort Road, Strood. His father was a bricklayer. By the 1911 Census, the family had moved to 3 Moore Street in Strood, and Walter had gained a younger brother.

Walter enlisted in Chatham on 18 October 1915, though he lied about his age, giving it as 19 years and 4 months. At his medical inspection, taken on 9 October 1915, Walter was described as 5 feet 4 inches tall, and weighing 106 pounds, with a 34-inch chest. His trade was given as a clerk.

### **Military Career**

Private 11th Battalion Queen's Own (Royal West Kent) Regiment. Service No G/10240

Medical taken on 9th October 1915 Height 5 feet 4 inches. Weight 106lbs. Chest 34 inches

Enlisted in Chatham 18 October 1915, lying about his age, giving it as 19 years 4 months.  
Trade – Clerk

Embarked Southampton 2 May 2015, landing at Le Havre the following day.

19 August 1916 Applied Paid Lance Corporal

19 September 1916 Wounded in Action. Compound Fracture Humerus

To England H.S. ? ex 1 Can G.H. Etaples

Died of wounds 22 September 1916 in Military Hospital Newcastle. Family were notified by telegram the following day.

Buried in Strood Cemetery (C432). He is not listed by the CWGC, Kent Fallen or on Every Man Remembered website



*Photograph: Sean Ryan, 2016*

His mother acknowledged receipt of his effects by handwritten note on February 12<sup>th</sup> 1917. His father acknowledged receipt of his Memorial Scroll from the regiment in February 1920. His mother acknowledged receipt of his medals 21 September 1921. His effects totalled £3 4s 2d. and were left to his mother.

The diary pages the day he was wounded aren't in the War Diary for the Battalion but the 122nd Infantry Brigade were moved en masse by train to Oisemont on 16th September. This was during the Battle of Flers Courcellette on the Somme in which the tank made its first appearance. The battalion took very heavy casualties in this period.

**Sources:** Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919; England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1966, 1973-1995; National Army Museum, Soldiers' Effects Records, 1901-60, NAM Accession Number: 1991-02-333, Record Number Ranges: 814001-815500, Reference: 494; First World War and Army of Occupation War Diaries; Class: WO 95; Item: 4 Piece 2634/4: 11 Battalion Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment) (1916 May – 1917 Oct). All Ancestry.co.uk.

Censuses for 1901 and 1911, WO 363 – First World War service records 'burnt documents'. All Findmypast.co.uk

Geoff Sullivan, 'Royal West Kent Regiment' via David Hughes, Neil R. Clark and Kyle D. Tallett, eds., *Kent Fallen*, <http://www.kentfallen.com/west%20kent%20pages.html>, correct at 28 February 2017.

Janet and Richard Mason, 'The Queens Own West Kent Regiment – Private W. A. Ashton', <http://www.janetandrichardsgenealogy.co.uk/Pte%20W%20A%20Ashton.html>, 2008 and 2016, correct at 28 February 2017.

**Research:** Sean Ryan

## **Askew, John Amos (1883-1918)**

Eldest son of John and Angelina Amy Askew Born 17th June 1883 in Eastry, Kent.

At the time of his birth his father was a Private in the Royal Marines Light Infantry based at Walmer.

1890 Angelina A Askew and her sons John Amos and George William admitted to Medway Union on 5th March. She is listed as the wife of John A, a labourer. Religion is listed as Dissenter.

1891 Census aged 7 living at Roebuck Villa, Roebuck Road, Rochester with his mother, younger brother and sister and a boarder.

1901 Census aged 17 living at 26 Baker Street, Rochester and listed as a Lighterman Barge. His mother is still listed as head of the house but he has gained another brother and sister. Was his father away at both Censuses or has the same lodger, George Spitty, also a Lighterman got something to do with it? George Spitty's son Charles, also a Lighterman, boards there.

1911 Census aged 27 at 24 Grange Road Frindsbury with his mother, now a widow, and his 4 siblings and a 3-month-old niece. He is listed as Barge Captain.

### **Military Career**

The only record that can be found is his resting place in Kilmore (Grange) Graveyard, County Wexford, Ireland. He died on 26 February 1918 and was an Able Seaman in the Mercantile Marine

Records for the Merchant Navy from 1913 to 1917 were destroyed which inhibits further research.

**Sources:** Censuses for 1891, 1901 and 1911; Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837-1915; National Archives, Admiralty: Chaplain of the Fleet and successors: Registers of Baptisms, Confirmation, Marriages and Burials; Class: ADM 338; Piece: Piece 141; Piece Description: Piece 141 (1871 – 1898); all Ancestry.co.uk

Medway Archives and Local Studies Centre; Chatham, Kent, England; Collection: Poor Law Union Records; Reference Number: G/Me/WIa/11

**Research: Sean Ryan**

### **Atkinson, Frank Edwin (1896-1917)**

Third son of Joseph Atkinson and Ellen Matilda Atkinson (Sell).

1901 Census aged 5 living at 64 Brompton Lane, Strood with his parents and 2 brothers and two sisters. His father is a grocer/shopkeeper.

1911 Census aged 15 at 48 Weston Road, Strood with his father and his elder brother and sister. Frank is listed as a Milk Boy and father a Senior Gas Meter Collector. His mother had died in 1905 and his other sister in 1906.

### **Military Career**

Enlisted in Royal West Kent Regiment, service number G/4597

At the time of his death he was a Corporal in the 10th Battalion Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment) and died on 11th April 1917 in the early stages of the Battle of Arras. Service No G/61873.

The note in UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929 states – Death presumed on or since 11.4.17.

He has no known grave and is listed on the Arras Memorial, Pas de Calais France

His father died 4 days later and his sister, Mabel N Atkinson is listed as next of kin and received his effects of £8 2s 3d which was split between the surviving family. He has a memorial tablet on the family grave in Strood Cemetery.

Extract from the War Diary 10th Battalion Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment)

11th April 3am. Orders received to attack and take MONCHY LE PREUX at 5.30am. Major R. A. Smith arrived to take command.

After a stubborn resistance, the village was entered & occupied, the enemy placing on it a very heavy barrage.

By 3pm were all entrenched about the western edge of the village except for a small advanced part on eastern side of the village. Enemy shelling of village very intense, & the Cavalry who entered the village about 100am suffered severe casualties.

At 11pm the Battalion was relieved by the Queens (12th Div: )

12th April

Terrible night of heavy snow & very cold. Marched to FEUCHY CHAPEL, arriving there at 2am, spent the remainder of the night in ruined houses. Total casualties 9th -11th 12 Officers & 240 ORs

**Sources:** Censuses for 1901 and 1911; FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915; Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919 [database on-line]; National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1966, 1973-1995; National Army Museum, Soldiers' Effects Records, 1901-60; NAM Accession Number: 1991-02-333; Record Number Ranges: 685001-686500; Reference: 408; National Archives, First World War and Army of Occupation War Diaries; Class: WO 95 Piece 2532: 111 Infantry Brigade (1915 – 1919)

**Research:** Sean Ryan



### **Attree, Joseph (1880-1918)**

Listed in 1881 Census as aged 5 months, living at 21 Hooper's Road, Rochester. The youngest of 3 children, father David Attree (Mariner) and mother Jane.

1891 Census aged 11, now living at 13 Hooper's Road and gained another two siblings.

1901 Census aged 21 living at the same address and employed as a Dairyman. Two of his younger siblings are no longer listed.

1911 Census aged 31 still at the same address with his parents and one brother. Now listed as a Parcel Carman employed on the railway.

### **Military Career**

Private, 7th Battalion, Bedfordshire Regiment 21518

Killed in action on 11th February 1918

Buried in Noyon New British Cemetery, Picardy

He left effects of £10 7s. 4d. to his brothers and sisters

### **Extract from the Regimental war diary (page 889)**

1 – 8/2/18 Training

9-10/2/18 Move to GROVEN by route march, to NOYON by train and to VALENCY by route march.

11/2/18 Arrival of draft of 7 Officers and 174 other ranks from 8th Bn Bedfordshire Regt, which had been disbanded.

Hostile Bombing raid. One bomb demolished a billet occupied by "C" Company. Casualties:- Killed; 9 other ranks. Died of wounds 1 Officers & 2 other ranks. Wounded ; 6 other ranks.

12-13/2/18 Training

Joseph Attree was presumably killed in the bombing raid while behind the lines at a training camp.

**Sources:** Censuses for 1881, 1891, 1901 and 1911; National Army Museum, Soldiers' Effects Records, 1901-60; NAM Accession Number: 1991-02-333; Record Number Ranges: 640001-641500; Reference: 378; Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919 [database on-line]; Find A Grave Index for Burials at Sea and other Select Burial Locations, 1300s-Current; National Archives of the UK, First World War and Army of Occupation War Diaries; Class: WO 95 Piece 2043/1-7: 54 Infantry Brigade: 7 Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment (1915 Jul – 1918 Jul)

**Research:** Sean Ryan

## **Aubrey, George Ayers (1896-1917)**

Eldest son of Henry and Mary Ayers Born 4th June 1896

1901 Census aged 5 living at The Three Crutches Public House, Crutches Lane Strood with his parents and younger sister. His father was the Foreman of a Cement Works. The family were living with Mary's father and mother John and Alice Howes, John was the Publican. The brother in law of John Howes was also registered there as was a boarder.

1911 Census Not listed

14th January 1908 he enrolled at Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School in Form 2. His father is noted as Licensed Victualler of 2 Station Road, Strood. Aubrey had previously been at a private school. He left the school from Form U3a on 14th May 1910.

1911 Census Unable to find any of the family listed.

### **Military Career**

Enlisted as a Trooper in 2nd Life Guards in Windsor on 4th December 1914, service number 3606

Trade – Butcher residing in Cliffe

Height 5ft 10inches, weight 154lbs, chest 37 ½ inches. Fresh complexion, blue eyes, brown hair.

Appointed Lance Corporal 2.5.16, reverts to Trooper 3.8.16

Home service from 4.12.14 to 13.2.17

His Sick List shows that he had three spells in 2nd Life Guards Hospital with Influenza in 1915 and 1916

Embarked France 14.2.17

He died on 26th February 1917 of Bronchial Pneumonia in No 9 General Hospital having been admitted on the 15th February

His effects total £3 18s. 4d. which was left to his father, listed as Harry Ayers of 2 Station Road Strood.

2nd Life Guards wrote to his Father at the Amalgamation Hotel, Station Road in March 1919 asking for details of living relatives but it is his mother that signed the document as the sole relation.

He is buried in St Sever Cemetery Extension, Rouen, France

**Sources:** Census for 1901; FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915; Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919; National Army Museum, Soldiers' Effects Records, 1901-60; NAM Accession Number: 1991-02-333; Record Number Ranges: 439001-440500; Reference: 245. All Ancestry.co.uk

National School Admission Registers & Log-books 1870-1914 C/ES/306/4/7/2/3; Passenger Lists leaving UK 1890-1960; British Army Service Records WO 400 – The Household Cavalry 1801-1919 1856 Jan 01-1919 Dec 31 WO 400 89. All Findmypast.co.uk



Friends of Medway Archives, De Caville Index <http://foma-lsc.org/wwi/detail.php?Entry=135>

**Research:** Sean Ryan

## **Austen, Archie (1890-1917)**

Eldest son of Frederick and Emma Austen

Unable to find a listing in 1891 Census

1901 Census aged 11 living at 50 Sidney Road, Borstal with his parents and 5 siblings. His father is a cement labourer and mother a dressmaker working at home.

1911 Census aged 21 still living at 50 Sidney Road and employed as a Domestic Gardener. His father is listed as a General Labourer and mother still a dressmaker with the eldest daughter assisting. Archie has also gained another brother.

### **Military Career**

Private in 2nd/4th Bn the Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment). Died on 30th December 1917 and buried at Alexandria (Hadra) War Cemetery, Egypt. Service No 39452

Memorial Inscription in Borstal Mission

His effects totalled £7 15s. 1d.

His battalion were based in Egypt from August 1915 and fought at Gallipoli and Gaza. At the time of Archie's death, they were involved in heavy fighting in Palestine around Bethlehem and Jerusalem between 1st and 28th December 1917 with heaviest fighting over Christmas itself. The battalion moved in to Brigade reserve on the 28th December 1917. As Archie was recorded as dying on 30th December it is likely that he was wounded during the course of this fighting.

**Sources:** Censuses for 1901 and 1911; National Army Museum, Soldiers' Effects Records, 1901-60; NAM Accession Number: 1991-02-333; Record Number Ranges: 685001-686500; Reference: 408. All Ancestry.co.uk

2/4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, the Queens (Royal West Surrey) Regiment Association,  
[http://www.queensroyalsurreys.org.uk/war\\_diaries/local/2\\_4Bn\\_Queens.shtml](http://www.queensroyalsurreys.org.uk/war_diaries/local/2_4Bn_Queens.shtml) (correct at 6 March 2017)

**Research:** Sean Ryan

## **Austin, Arthur Frederick (1888-1916)**

Eldest son of Frederick and Alice Jane Austin born 6 December 1888

1891 Census Aged 2 living at Woolmer Green, Welwyn, Hatfield, Herts with his parents and three elder sisters. Father is an agricultural labourer.

1901 Census aged 12 living at Westland Road, Knebworth, Hitchin, Herts with his parents and 5 siblings, his two older sisters aren't listed. His father is listed as a platelayer on the Great Northern Railway

1911 Census aged 22 HMS Caesar at Devonport. Private in Royal Marines Light Infantry

1912 Married Eliza Jane Cordingley on 25th December 1912 at St John's Church, Chatham.

### **Military career**

Enlisted as Private CH/15717 Royal Marines Light Infantry: Chatham Division 14 January 1907 Recruit Depot Deal

In between spells at Chatham Depot he spent time on HMS Hannibal, Caesar, Formidable, Cressy, Aquarius and Conquest

5 feet 7 ½ inches tall, fresh complexion, dark brown hair, grey eyes. Trade – Coachman

Died 28 March 1916 Killed or died by means other than disease, accident or enemy action, His ship was HMS Conquest, death recorded as at Walton on the Naze.

### **SHIP'S BOAT FROM HMS CONQUEST LOST OFF HARWICH**

Conquest, light cruiser, aboard ship's boat, (listed as a whaler, although if this was the 27ft version, it seems too small for so many men), returning from shore leave, lost in snow storm and foundered, all drowned (42 in total)

From Hertford Mercury and Reformer 15 April 1916 –

LOCAL SOLDIER DROWNED – Private Arthur Frederick Austin aged 27, eldest son of Mr and Mrs F. Austin, Knebworth was drowned during the blizzard on March 28, owing to the capsizing of a cutter. He was returning from shore leave after seeing his wife. He and his comrades were being towed by a steam launch to join H.M.S. Conquest to which the deceased was attached when the sad disaster occurred. His overcoat is all that has been found at present. The painful event was a great shock to the family. Special mention was made of the disaster at both services at the Congregational Church, and special hymns “ A few more years shall roll” and “Brief life is here our portion” were sung at the morning service, and “Peace perfect peace” and “Now the day is over” at the evening services.

Buried in Chatham Cemetery, Maidstone Road, Chatham, Kent Grave P.P.55

Widow: Eliza Jane, 211 Dale Street, Chatham, Kent

**Sources:** Census for 1911; FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915; England & Wales Christening Records, 1530-1906; National Archives, Admiralty: Naval Casualties, Indexes, War Grave Rolls and Statistics Book, First World War.; Class: ADM 242; Piece: Piece 007; Piece Description: Piece 007 (1914 – 1919); Royal Navy and Royal Marine War Graves Roll, 1914-1919. All Ancestry.co.uk

Don Kindell, 'Pre-World War 1 to 2008 – Casualty Lists of the Royal Navy and Dominion Navies', <http://www.naval-history.net/xDKCas1916-03Mar.htm>, (2008)

Censuses for 1891 and 1901; *Hertford Mercury and Reformer* 15 April 1916. All Findmypast.co.uk

Friends of Medway Archives, De Caville Index <http://foma-lsc.org/wwi/detail.php?Entry=126>

National Archives ADM 159 – Admiralty: Royal Marines: Registers of Service/125/15717

Royal Marines medal index cards, 1914-1920

**Research:** Sean Ryan

### **Baker, William John (1893-1919)**

William John Baker was born in Rochester in July 1893. At the previous census (1891) his family were living at 4, St Peter's Place, Rochester. His father, Alfred, was an engine fitter aged 23 and his wife was three years younger. They had two small sons who like their mother, were born in Rochester. Alfred was born in Chatham.

In 1901 the family lived at 14, Princes Street, off Delce Lane, in housing which was demolished in the mid-20th century. Alfred was now described as a ship fitter aged 33. Ellen was aged 30 and they had five sons and one daughter; Ernest, aged 13; Walter, who was 11; the seven-year-old William; Arthur who was five; Esther aged four; and a two-year-old, Alfred junior. The household also contained Alfred Senior's younger brother, Walter, who worked as a compositor.

By 1911 the family lived a short distance away from their previous home, at 83, Wickham Street, Rochester. The family now comprised the parents and seven children with the addition of a one-year-old called Ella. The eldest boys were following their father into skilled industrial work: Ernest was now working as a coppersmith for the HM Dockyard's engineering department and Walter was an iron moulder for a traction engineering firm (perhaps Aveling and Porter). William himself was now aged 17 and worked as a plumber for a house decorating company. Alfred senior was still a ship fitter and also worked at the Chatham Royal Dockyard. Arthur was a solicitor's clerk at the age of 15.

William joined the Royal Engineers (RE) as a sapper and held the rank of Lance Corporal at the time of his death. His service numbers were 21470 and 314548. His choice of regiment may have been influenced by his training as a plumber as the RE took skilled men into their regiment. He was in the 3rd Reserve Battalion of the RE but it has not been possible to find a detailed record of his military service. All that is available is the statement that he received the British War and Victory medals and the Soldiers Effects Records. From the latter it can be seen that William left a widow called Lilian (Lily) and a daughter named Doris, who was born on 15 May 1913. Lily's maiden name was Read, and it is highly likely that she was the 15-year-old Lilian Read who lived in Middle Street, Chatham in 1911 and worked as a tailoress for the Axe Brand Sewing Company.

William died in Aldershot on 24 September 1919 at the age of 26. His body was returned to Medway and he was buried near his family in Fort Pitt Military Cemetery, less than a mile from the streets in which he grew up.



**Sources:** Censuses for 1891, 1901 and 1911; National Army Museum, Soldiers' Effects Records, 1901-60; NAM Accession Number: 1991-02-333; Record Number Ranges: 937001-938500; Reference: 576; National Archives; WWI Service Medal and Award Rolls; Class: WO 329; Piece Number: 505; British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920 [database on-line]; FreeBMD. England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837-1915. All Ancestry.co.uk

## **Baxter, William Thomas (1888-1916)**

William Thomas Baxter was born in Strood in the summer of 1888. In 1891 he was living in Strood with his father (also William Thomas) and mother, Mary Ann, his younger brother, Edward, who was four months, and a nine year old cousin. William Senior was a wharf labourer.

Ten years later the family had moved to 65, High Street, Strood. Edward had died, aged 4 in 1895 but William had three new, younger siblings, Sidney, Daisy and Charles. His father was now working as a fisherman's labourer.

In the 1911 census the Baxter family can be found at 6 Taylor's Lane, Strood, which was near Rochester Bridge. By this time William Junior was aged 22, unmarried and working as a plumber. His skill would have made him an attractive recruit for the Royal Engineers (RE) which was the regiment he joined as a volunteer, probably in 1914. By the time of the 1911 census William's 45-year-old mother had given birth to thirteen children, but only nine had survived. The household contained all nine living children at the time of the census. Sidney Baxter, now aged eighteen, was a gun-maker's assistant, and the other family members' ages ranged from twelve years to one month. Their father was now described as a fisherman.

In 1913 William Junior married Clara Alice Coomber. Clara was born in 1892 and in 1901 was living with her mother, Eliza at 24, Gun Lane, Strood, a short distance from William's childhood homes. Eliza was a widow and according to the census worked as a 'mangler' (a washerwoman). At the time of the 1901 census Clara was eight years old and had two older brothers, one a crane driver and the other a cement labourer, and two older sisters, one who was a general servant and the other without occupation. Clara also went into domestic service and in 1911 was working as a general servant in Weybridge, Surrey. In 1914 Clara gave birth to a daughter named Dorothy.

William was a Pioneer (Private) in the 90th Field Company of the Royal Engineers and his service number was 63421. The 90th field company was part of Kitchener's new, expanded army raised in 1914-15 which was technically part of the regular army. William was on active service by 1 August 1915. In 1916 the 9th (Scottish) division of which William's field company fought on the Somme. It was here, in the opening phase of the battle, that he was killed in action on 3 July 1916. He was buried in the Quarry Cemetery, Montauban, which is ten kilometres from the town of Albert. He was posthumously awarded the British, Victory and star medals.

**Sources:** Censuses for 1891, 1901 and 1911; FreeBMD. England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837-1915; Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837-1915; Civil Registration Death Index, 1837-1915; Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919 [database on-line]; British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920 [database on-line]. All Ancestry.co.uk

Chris Baker, 'The history of the 9<sup>th</sup> (Scottish Division)

<http://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/army/order-of-battle-of-divisions/9th-scottish-division/>

(2017). Correct at 6 March 2017

## **Bell, James Henry (c1898-1915)**

James Henry Bell was born in Darlington, County Durham c.1898. He is thought to have enlisted with the Royal Engineers (RE) in Gillingham. He was in the 1st/3rd Kent Field Company and was drowned in the 'Hythe' disaster on 28 October 1915 following a collision between the troop ship and another, larger vessel. His regimental number was 1184.

At the time of his death aged 17, James' parents, George and Louisa, lived at 23 Commercial Road, Strood. His father was authorised to receive James' war gratuity.

James' father, George, was an iron-moulder. At the time of the 1901 census the family still lived in Darlington, lodging with George's parents-in-law, but by 1911 they had moved to 3, Medway Cottages in Strood. In that year James was, at thirteen years old, the eldest child and still at school. According to the census form, his parents had had four children, three of whom were still alive at that point.

Members of the 1st/3rd Field Company of the RE were mainly recruited in the Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells area after its establishment by the RE's Honorary Colonel (and former Mayor of Tunbridge Wells), Sir David Lionel Goldsmid-Stern-Salomons. Sir David had formed a territorial unit of the Royal Engineers in 1908 and it officially became the 1st/3rd in May 1914. The company was mobilised on the outbreak of war and trained in Tunbridge Wells and later in Gillingham before leaving for the Mediterranean in October 1915. Sir David's own son (also David) was the commanding officer and he also perished on the 'Hythe'.

The ship, a former cross-channel cargo steamer owned by the South East and Chatham Railway Company was sailing from the Greek island of Lemos to Cape Helles when it was struck by another troop carrier, the Sarnia. The 'Hythe' was so badly damaged that it sank in a matter of minutes.

Sapper James Bell is commemorated on the Helles memorial in Turkey. He is also remembered on a memorial to the 'Hythe' victims in St Matthew's Church, High Brooms, near Tunbridge Wells. The latter memorial's inscription is as follows:

*This memorial is erected to the memory of those of the 1st/3rd Kent Field Company of the Royal Engineers who volunteered to serve their King and Country in the War of 1914 and lost their lives off Mudros, when upon HMS Hythe which was struck in a collision with HMS Sarnia on the night of October 28th 1915.*

*The names of all who perished are inscribed below...*

**Sources:** Census for 1911; England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837-1915 [database on-line]; National Army Museum, Soldiers' Effects Records, 1901-60; NAM Accession Number: 1991-02-333; Record Number Ranges: 226001-227500; Reference: 103; Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919 [database on-line]. All Ancestry.co.uk

David A. Ellis, 'The HMS Hythe Disaster', <http://www.kentfallen.com/PDF%20reports/HMS%20HYTHE.pdf>, (2008), correct at 6 March 2017.



## **Bowes, Reginald Leonard Ronald (1895-1917)**

Reginald Bowes was born in Chatham early in 1895. He lived at Fort Pitt Military Hospital in Chatham where his father, Peter Bowes, was a barrack labourer.

Reginald's father was from Ireland and his mother, Alice from Wiltshire. Peter was himself a retired soldier, having been a gunner in the Royal Horse Artillery. He married Alice, a former domestic servant, in London in 1887.

On Census night (31st March) in 1901 the Bowes' family were in the hospital with several dozen soldier patients (many from the Royal Engineers), some nurses and a few other resident families. In addition to his parents, Reginald lived with three older brothers, aged 13, 10 and 8, and a 3-year-old sister. [The 8-year-old, Victor, also died in the First World War – see Bowes, Victor Harold.] Fort Pitt became a military hospital in the early 19th century and briefly housed the first army medical school in the 1860s. Not long after the First World War the hospital was closed and replaced by a girls' secondary school on the site.

Reginald still lived at the hospital with his family in 1911, although only he and his sister and their parents were still at home at the time of the census. Now aged 16, Reginald was working as a telegraph messenger. In August 1911 he became an assistant postman for the General Post Office and was promoted to postman in 1913.

Reginald volunteered for Kitchener's army, joining the Royal Engineers and holding the rank of driver. He was in the 128th Field Company; his service number was 34306. His company joined the 23rd division on the Western Front from April 1915. This division fought on the Somme in 1916 and at the 3rd Battle of Ypres the following year. Reginald died of wounds on 31 August 1917 and is buried in the New Military Cemetery at Reningelst, south of Ieper (Ypres). Reningelst was a field ambulance station, being at a safe distance from the front line.

Reginald's father died only a few months after him, on 4 January 1918, and is buried in the Fort Pitt Military Cemetery, next to his workplace. Reginald's mother, Alice therefore was authorised in 1919 to receive the pay her son was owed. Reginald's age is incorrectly recorded on his gravestone which states he was 26 years of age, when in fact he was just 22.

**Sources:** Censuses for 1881, 1901, and 1911; Free BMD. England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837-1915; British Postal Service Appointment Books, 1737-1969 [database on-line]. POST 58; Reference Numbers 105 & 108; National Army Museum, Soldiers' Effects Records, 1901-60; NAM Accession Number: 1991-02-333; Record Number Ranges: 883001-884500; Reference: 540; Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919. All Ancestry.co.uk

London Metropolitan Archives, Saint Martin, Kentish Town, Register of marriages, P90/MTN, Item 016

UK and Ireland, Find a Grave Index, 1300s-Current

Chris Baker, 'The history of 23<sup>rd</sup> Division', <http://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/army/order-of-battle-of-divisions/23rd-division/> (2008), correct at 6 March 2017

Commonwealth War Graves Commission, <http://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead/casualty/152471/BOWES,%20REGINALD%20LEONARD%20RONALD>, correct at 6 March 2017



### **Bowes, Victor Harold (1893-1915)**

[For family background, see Bowes, Reginald]

Victor Bowes was born in Chatham on 18 January 1893. He followed his father into the regular army and at the time of the 1911 census he was aged 18 and was a private in the Army Ordnance Corps (AOC or armourers). He was staying in a widow's boarding house at Enfield Lock, which must have been a billet, as four other soldiers of the same rank and age as Victor were staying there also. The Royal Small Arms Factory was in Enfield Lock. AOC recruits were tasked with repairing and maintaining arms and munitions.

By the time of his death aged 22 Victor was a staff sergeant in the AOC. He was attached to the 8th battalion of the Royal Scots. His death is commemorated on the Le Touret memorial for soldiers who have no known grave, which is in the Pas de Calais region of France. The date of Victor's death – 10 March 1915 – and location of the memorial suggest that he died in the Battle of Neuve Chapelle. His service number was A/1236.

**Sources:** Census for 1911; Find A Grave Index for Burials at Sea and other Select Burial Locations, 1300s-Current [database on-line]. Both Ancestry.co.uk

## **Butler, John (1878-1914)**

John Butler was born in Chatham in 1878, the second to youngest child of George Whiterod Butler and Mary Ann; George and Mary had eight children. John was baptised at St Pauls Church, Chatham on 14th April 1880, together with his siblings, Mary, Amy and baby Ernest. The family's home was recorded as 45 Bryant Street and their father's occupation was given as a painter.

The 1881 census confirms that the family were still in Bryant Street, but at number 12. George was still a painter and the three eldest sons, Edward, Walter and Henry were all working. By 1891, only Mary, Amy, John and Ernest were still in the family home in Bryant Street.

John had also left the family home by 1901 as the census states he was part of the Royal Marine Light Infantry serving aboard HMS Terrible. The Terrible was one of two Powerful class of protected cruisers built by J.& G. Thomson on Clydebank and launched on 27 May 1895. By 1902, the Terrible had taken part in two major actions: Landing parties were provided to support the relief Siege of Ladysmith and crew members also took part in suppressing the Boxer Rebellion in China. As John was a Royal Marine, it is likely that he also saw action.

John disappears from records from 1901 until start of the Great War. Records show that John served as a Royal Marine sergeant on HMS Cressy. He was on board on the morning of 22 September. The Cressy was on patrol in the North Sea with her sister ships Aboukir and Hogue, when bad weather forced them to shelter. The poor weather also caused German U-Boat U9 to surface. The following engagement led to the sinking of all three ships at a loss of 62 officers and 1,397 enlisted men, 560 of which were from the Cressy, Sergeant John Butler being one of those lost at sea.

Sergeant John Butler is remembered at the Royal Naval Memorial in Chatham. His brother Edward of, 38, Grove Road, Luton, Chatham was notified of his brother's death and that the body was not recovered for burial.

John was not the only 'Butler' to be killed in action. His nephew, Acting Sergeant Walter Edward Butler from The Buffs joined the number of war dead on 13th October 1916 at the age of 28. He left a wife and two children, Walter and Emily. Family of the 'Butler Boys' still live in the Medway Towns.

**Sources:** Censuses for 1881, 1891, and 1901; All Ancestry.co.uk

Commonwealth War Graves Commission, <http://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead/casualty/3048618/BUTLER,%20JOHN>, correct at 6 March 2017

Find a Grave, <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=14367796&ref=acom>, correct at 6 March 2017

### **Chantler, Albert Peter (1892-1916)**

Albert Peter Chantler was born in the first quarter of 1892 in Snodland to Alfred and Sarah Amelia. He was baptised 25th January at All Saints Church, Snodland. The father's occupation was given as bargeman and the family were living in 4 Church Terrace.

Albert's childhood is not clear, but it is known that he married Rose Amelia Perkins on 14th June 1915 at Chatham Registry Office. The young couple's home was 52 Spratts Hill, Milton, Sittingbourne.

On 12th December, Albert was attested under the Derby Scheme and duly fulfilled his promise to visit a recruiting office. Albert's service records show he was a paper maker. Rose Chantler moved home to stay with her mother, Mrs Perkins, a greengrocer in Wouldham. It was there that Albert and Rose's only child Dora Rose was born on 20th June 1916. It is not known if Albert got to see his daughter as he embarked on 24th July.

His location and date of death indicate that Albert may have taken part in the Battle of Bazentin Ridge, which was part of the Battle of the Somme. The details of the actions around the French village of Bazentin have been made into a book, written by Norman Terry. The title can only suggest the conditions that Albert saw and died in- 'The Hell They Called The High Wood: The Somme 1916'.

Albert's widow received his person effects of –

1 sewing book

1 letter

1 Gospel

On 2nd February 1917 and on 16th September 1921, she received her husband's Victory medal and British War medal.

**Sources:** Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837-1915; British Army WWI Service Records, 1914-1920; National Army Museum, Soldiers' Effects Records, 1901-60; NAM Accession Number: 1991-02-333; Record Number Ranges: 358001-359500; Reference: 19. All Ancestry.co.uk

**Research:** Jayne Fenton

## **Cooke, Arthur Francis (1894-1917)**

Arthur Francis Cooke was the youngest son of Susan Ann and Robert Cooke of 25 Sidney Road in Borstal.

Robert Cooke was originally from Portsmouth (1849), whilst Susan Ann Phillips was born in Old Charlton. They married in 1881 in Farnborough, Hampshire. Robert was probably based at the nearby Aldershot Garrison, as he was admitted to the Royal Chelsea Pension in 1882, having reached the rank of Sergeant in the newly-formed Essex 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion. Robert had joined the Army in 1871, serving as a Private in 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 4<sup>th</sup> (The King's Own) Regiment of Foot. The family appear to have moved to Chatham, where the oldest son, Albert, was born in 1885, and then to Old Brompton until 1890, where daughter Winifred was born. Arthur was the youngest child, and he and his next oldest sister Florence, were born in Aylesbury, in Buckinghamshire. At the time of their births, Robert was an Assistant Warder at HMP Aylesbury.

In 1901, Robert was working as a Post Office Cleaner. At that point, his sons Albert (15), Robert Glynn (12), and Arthur (7), and daughters Alice (14), Winifred (11) and Florence (9), were living at home. Albert, born in Chatham, was a baker's apprentice. By 1911, Albert was a bombardier in the Royal Field Artillery, and was at the Shorncliffe Camp near Folkestone on Census Night. Robert Glynn had also joined the RFA, and he was serving in India. Robert Senior was working as a County Court bailiff, and Florence was draper's clerk. Arthur, then 17, was a baker's van mate.

Arthur was well known in Borstal, where the family had resided for twenty-one years. As a boy he attended the Borstal National School. He was also a chorister at St Matthew's church, where the processional cross is dedicated to his memory.

He enlisted at the age of 18 in the RFA and was sent to the Front almost at the beginning of the war. For his service there he was mentioned in despatches and was promoted in March 1916 from the rank of sergeant to 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenant. Albert and Robert Glynn remained in the RFA, with Albert becoming a lieutenant and Robert Glynn a 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenant at the Front, like his brother. Arthur was killed on March 4<sup>th</sup> 1917, while he was directing the fire of his battery against the enemy. Both of his brothers survived the war. Arthur is buried in Suzanne Military Cemetery No 3.

**Sources:** Census 1891, 1901, 1911; Commonwealth War Graves Commission, The War Graves of The British Empire, Hem Farm, Hem-Monacu Suzanne Communal, Suzanne Military, Herbecourt British, Frise Communal, France; England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837-1915 UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919 . England, Select Marriages, 1538–1973. All Ancestry.co.uk.

Unit History: Essex Regiment, <https://www.forces-war-records.co.uk/units/253/essex-regiment>

**Research:** Reverend Anne Bennett, Dr Alison Robinson.

## **Davis, William Richard Vince (1892-1916)**

William Richard Vince Davis was born in Borden, Kent in 1892, and was baptised on 19th July 1892 in Upchurch, Kent. William first appears on the 1901 census, aged 9; one of four children of Albert (37) and Fanny (39) Davis. Albert is listed as a bricklayer's labourer, William's elder brother Herbert (15) a journeyman baker (of bread). William's 2 sisters Alice (11) and Frances (6) complete the household at 51 Sidney Road Borstal, Kent.

At the time of the 1911 census, William was 19 and a general labourer. He had both lost a brother, Herbert, and gained a new brother Cyril (8). William's parents had eight children in total, now only four were surviving. William's father was now a general labourer and his two sisters are listed as domestic servants.

According to army records, William enlisted on the 18th November 1915 in the town of Chatham at the age of 23. His father had died earlier the same year; therefore, his mother, Fanny, was listed as next of kin.

William enlisted into the 6th Battalion of 'The Buffs' (East Kent Regiment), where he held the rank of private, his service number was G/8661. Enlistment documents reveal that William was just 5ft 2.5ins, weighed 114lbs and had a chest measurement of 35 inches.

The 6th Battalion was formed in Canterbury, Kent, as part of the battalions of new armies. From August 1914, the battalion fell under the command of the 37th Brigade, 12th (Eastern Division). William was posted to an infantry base in Etaples, France on the 9th of April 1916. Which were depots close to Channel ports designed to hold men and continue their training until they were posted to the front.

William was then posted to the front in readiness for the opening phase of the Battles of the Somme which began on the 1st of July 1916. The Buffs were engaged in the Battle of Albert which ran from the 1-13th July 1916. The Buffs' (6th Battalion, 12th Division) war diaries, record heavy fighting and losses of life on the 3rd day of the offensive, which included William.

William was 24 years old when he was killed in action on the 3rd July 1916. He has no known grave, but is commemorated on a panel of the Thiepval Memorial in Somme, France. Thiepval is a memorial to the missing of the Somme and commemorates some 72,000 men with no known graves, as well as equal numbers with graves surrounding the memorial. Those who died in the battles are remembered with a ceremony every year on July 1st.

William is also commemorated on the St Mathews Roll of Honour.

**Sources:** Censuses for 1901, 1911; Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1918-1919; England, Select Births and Christenings, 1538-1975, UK Commonwealth War Graves 1914-1921 and 1939-1947, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects 1901-1929; Army WW1 Service Records 1914-20. All Ancestry.co.uk.

### **Dutt, Sidney Harold (1899-1918)**

Sidney Harold Dutt was born in early 1899 in Frindsbury, near Strood. In 1901 the 2-year old was living in Strood, with his father John, a 50-year old housepainter, his mother, Amelia (aged 40), an older brother, and three sisters. Sidney was the youngest child at that point.

In 1901 the family lived at 62, Station Road, Frindsbury. Sidney's mother had died and his eldest sister was married, but still in the family home. Another sister was a laundry worker, but the third was no longer in the household. Sidney now had a fourth, younger sister, who like him, was a school pupil at the time.

Sidney enlisted in Chatham and he joined the Second Battalion of the Bedfordshire Regiment. He held the rank of private and his regimental number was 240723. He was killed at the age of 19 on 15 April 1918. Sidney is buried at the Canada Farm cemetery near Ieper (Ypres). His father received his effects and war gratuity.

**Sources:** Censuses for 1901 and 1911; Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919 [database on-line]; National Army Museum, Soldiers' Effects Records, 1901-60; NAM Accession Number: 1991-02-333; Record Number Ranges: 679001-680500; Reference: 404. All Ancestry.co.uk



## **Dyer, Ernest Henry (1894-1916)**

Ernest Dyer was born in Rochester in the third quarter of 1894.

He was recorded in the 1901 census as living at 4 Garden Place, Rochester. He lived with his parents, both aged 52, an 18-year old brother, and four sisters. Ernest was six years old and the family was completed by another boy, aged three. Ernest's father, George and his older brother both worked as oil mill labourers and one of his sisters was a domestic servant. Ernest's mother was called Sarah.

In 1911 Ernest lived with his widowed mother (whose age was given as 60 and occupation as nurse). Ernest's age was given as 17 (although he was 16 at the time) and his occupation as 'refinery labourer', which was very probably the same occupation that his late father had had. They lived at 59 John Street, Rochester and a grandson of Sarah's, as well as Ernest's younger brother, were both living with them.

Ernest enlisted with the Royal West Kent regiment and held the rank of private. His service number was G/4596. He was killed soon after the start of the Battle of the Somme and his body was not recovered. He is remembered on the Thiepval Memorial as the son of Mrs Sarah A. Dyer of Coleman Street Chatham.

**Sources:** Censuses for 1901 and 1911; Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919 [database on-line]. Both Ancestry.co.uk

Commonwealth War Graves Commission, <http://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead/casualty/752519/DYER,%20ERNEST>, correct at 6 March 2017

### **Dyer, Francis John (1893-1915)**

Francis John Dyer served in the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) as a Lance-corporal with the East Kent regiment (the 'Buffs').

His father had been a Royal Marine and married Francis' mother, Mary Millman, who was also from Devon, in 1889. Francis, their second son, was born in the Stonehouse Barracks, Plymouth on 11 July 1893.

By 1911 the family had moved to Chatham. His father now worked as a labourer. Francis' youngest brother was aged 4 and had been born in Stonehouse Barracks, so the move to the Medway towns must have taken place after the younger boy's birth.

In 1911 Francis lived, aged 18, with his parents and younger brother, Albert Edward, at 5, Mount Terrace Road, Borstal. The three men in the family all worked as general labourers.

Francis died on 26 May 1915, aged 21. By the time of his death his mother had moved to 26, Amherst Road, Delce, Rochester. Francis was in the 2nd Battalion and his service number was L/9851. The 2nd battalion were in Madras, India at the outbreak of war and returned to England before swiftly moving to France as part of the 28th division to reinforce the BEF. Francis would have fought and lost his life in the Second Battle of Ypres, which was the first battle in which poisonous gas was used as a weapon. His body was not recovered so he is commemorated on the Menin Gate memorial in Ieper (Ypres).

**Sources:** Censuses for 1901 and 1911; National Archives; Admiralty: Royal Marines, Plymouth Division: Order, Discharge and Letter Books, Registers and Returns.; Class: ADM 184; Piece: Piece 043; Piece Description: Piece 043 (1862 – 1894); De Ruvigny's Roll of Honour, 1914-1919 [database on-line]. All Ancestry.co.uk

### **Edwards, Charles Walter (1899-1918)**

Charles Walter Edwards was born in 1899, in Rochester, Kent. He first appears on the 1901 census aged 2, living at 6 Medway View, Wouldham, Kent. Charles was the youngest member of the family, which consisted of his father William (43) his mother Sarah (43) and 5 siblings Margaret (13) Harry (12) William (10) Gertrude (7) and Edna (6). Charles' father is listed as a chalk (clay) quarryman. Unlike the Kent birthplaces of the rest of the family, Charles' mother, Sarah, was born in Boston, Lincolnshire

The family had moved to 3, Sidney Road Borstal by the time of the 1911 census. Charles was now 12 and was listed as being at school. The only other siblings remaining in the household were Gertrude (17), an apprentice bookbinder, and Edna (16). At some point, Charles became a chorister at Rochester Cathedral.

Charles enlisted into the Lincolnshire Regiment in Chatham, Kent. Where he became a Private in the 10th Battalion. His regimental number was 42629. The 10th Battalion were active in various battles which saw their numbers drastically reduce. It is likely that Charles was active in the Battles of the Lys which took place over 9 to 29 April 1918. The last battle likely to have involved Charles is the Battle of Bailleul.

Charles died of his wounds in France and Flanders in the western European theatre of war on 16th April 1918, aged 19. He is buried in Haringhe Military Cemetery, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. This cemetery was which as a casualty clearing station was nicknamed 'Bandaghem' by the soldiers, reflecting its role in patching up the wounded. Eighteen other members of Charles' regiment are buried here.

On his death, his effects of 8 pounds 4 shillings and 6 pence was paid to his mother (at the request of his father) as well as a 4-pound war gratuity.

**Sources:** Censuses for 1901 and 1911; Civil Registration Birth Index 1837-1915; Commonwealth War Graves 1914-1921 and 1939-1947; Soldiers Died in the Great War; Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects 1901-1929. All Ancestry.co.uk.

### **Fuggle, James Sidney (1898-1916)**

James Sidney Fuggle was born in Bombay, India in 1898, and lived in Frindsbury at the time of his enlistment and death. He died on 9 April 1916 in Mesopotamia. James was a Corporal in the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment's 6th Battalion. His regimental number was 20297, and he first served in the Balkans, joining that theatre of war on 14 November 1915. He was awarded the Victory, British and 15 Star Medals. James is remembered on the Basra Memorial.

James' father, Nelson Henry Fuggle, was an Army Pensioner by the 1911 Census, and was working as a self-employed domestic gardener. Nelson was born in 1860 in Tenterden in Kent, and from the 1880s, had been working as an agricultural labourer. James' mother, Mary Ann (nee Foster), was born in Rodmersham Green, a village near Sittingbourne, in 1878. In 1911, she did not have an occupation listed, and was presumably running looking after the household, perhaps with the help of her oldest child, Teresa, then 17, single and living at home. James and his younger brother, Percy, were both still in school. The family lived at 37 Frindsbury Hill, Frindsbury Road in Strood at this point.

Nelson Henry Fuggle had joined the Army in 1879. He had been a member of the East Kent Militia, but signed up for General Service at Canterbury when he was 18. He listed his occupation at this point as a baker. Nelson Henry and Mary Ann had married in 1895 in the Milton registration district. Mary Ann was Nelson's second wife, after his first, Ellen, had died in 1891. Ellen and Nelson had a daughter, Harriett, who was 3 in 1891. By 1901, she was living with her maternal grandparents, the Watsons, in Rolvenden, Kent. It would appear that Nelson and Mary Ann had gone to Bombay at some point in the 1890s, where both James and Percy were born, and returning by 1911. A descendent of Teresa's noted in 2000 that Nelson Henry was a Sergeant Major in the Royal Fusiliers in India; however, he moved to the Middlesex Regiment (Indian Unattached List), the first and second battalions of which served in India in the late nineteenth century. The fact that Nelson Fuggle was on the Unattached List indicates that he was seconded to the Indian Army, and this may have extended the family's stay in India. Sargeant Major Fuggle took his pension on 1 May 1909, when he was in his later 40s, and the family returned to Kent, and to Strood.

**Sources:** Censuses for 1881 and 1901. British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920; National Army Museum, Soldiers' Effects Records, 1901-60; NAM Accession Number: 1991-02-333; Record Number Ranges: 632501-634000; Reference: 373; Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929; British Army Lists, 1882-1962 [database on-line], England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837-1915 [database on-line]. All Ancestry.co.uk

GRO Army Birth Indices (1881-1965). Findmypast.co.uk

### **Fuggle, Percy (1899-1918)**

Percy Edward Fuggle was born in Colaba, India in 1898, and lived in Frindsbury at the time of his enlistment and death. His older brother, James Sidney, had already served in the First World War, dying in Mesopotamia in 1916. He joined the 6th Battalion of the Queen's Own (Royal West Kent) Regiment in 1917, and died the following year in 1918 in France, on or shortly after 8 September. His regimental number was L/11767.

Percy's military history record reveals that he had only just turned 18 when he joined the army on 18 October 1917. He was 5 foot 7½ inches tall, and weighed 147 lbs. His complexion was described as fresh, his eyes grey and his hair brown. Following the Military Service Act 1916, Percy would have been conscripted rather than being a volunteer. James, on the other hand, was already in the army by the start of 1916, presumably having volunteered.

**Sources:** British Army WWI Service Records, 1914-1920; War Office: Soldiers' Documents, First World War 'Burnt Documents' (Microfilm Copies); (The National Archives Microfilm Publication WO363); Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919 [database on-line]; National Army Museum, Soldiers' Effects Records, 1901-60; NAM Accession Number: 1991-02-333; Record Number Ranges: 830501-832000; Reference: 505; Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929 [database on-line]. All Ancestry.co.uk

GRO Army Birth Indices (1881-1965), Findmypast.co.uk

## **Godden, George Frederick (1879-1916)**

Private George Frederick Godden, was a private in the 11th Battalion, Queens Own Royal West Kent Regiment (Regimental Number: G/10279). He had enlisted in Chatham on 19th October 1915, age 37, his height was recorded as 5ft 5 inches and weighting a healthy 168lbs. His postings were: Home, 19th October 1915 to 2nd May 1916; BEF, 3rd May 1916 to 15th September 1916.

The 11th (Lewisham) Battalion, The Royal West Kent Regiment was raised at Lewisham on the 5th of May 1915 by the Mayor and a local committee. They trained at Catford and joined 118th Brigade, 39th Division in July. In October they transferred to 122nd Brigade, 41st Division. They moved to Aldershot for final training in January 1916 and proceeded to France on the 3rd of May, and the division concentrated between Hazebrouck and Bailleul.

In 1916 they were in action at the Battle of Flers-Courcelette 15-22 September. Flers was captured on 15 September 1916 in the Battle of Flers-Courcelette, when it was entered by the New Zealand and 41st Divisions behind tanks, the innovative new weapons that were used here for the first time and during this action. George Godden was killed in action, his death assumed on or after 15th September 1916. The village was lost during the German advance of March 1918 and retaken at the end of the following August by the 10th West Yorks and the 6th Dorsets of the 17th Division.

After his death, the battalion saw action in the Battle of the Transloy Ridges on the Somme. In 1917 they fought during the Battle of Messines, the Battle of Pilkem Ridge, and the Battle of the Menin Road and took part in the Operations on the Flanders coast. In November the Division was ordered to Italy, moving by train to Mantua. The Division took the front line near the River Piave, north west of Treviso. In February they were summoned back to France and departed from Campo San Piero, travelling by train to concentrate near Doullens and Mondicourt. On the 16th of March 1918 the 11th Battalion were disbanded in France with troops transferring to other units.

George Godden is buried at Bulls Road Cemetery, Flers in the Department of the Somme, about 8 kilometres north-east of Albert.

The cemetery was begun on 19 September 1916 and was used by fighting units (mainly Australian) until March 1917. The 154 burials made during these months now form Plot I. Plot II, Row A, Graves 1-17 were added in September 1918 by the 17th Division burial officers. The rest of the cemetery consists of graves (mainly of September 1916, or August 1918) brought in after the Armistice from the fields between Flers and Longueval.

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George Frederick Godden was born Cliffe at Hoo, Kent in April 1879. He was the third son of Alfred and Harriet Amelia (nee Filmer) Godden, both natives of Cliffe who were recorded as having nine children between 1875 and 1894. His father Alfred is recorded as a cement labourer/worker throughout this period and lived until 1934 when his death is recorded at the age of 80. His mother, Harriett had her first child aged about 18 and her last when she was 41. She died aged 87 in 1940. George was single and living with at the family home by then in Borstal when he enlisted.

The family are recorded as living at 3 Reed Street, Cliffe in 1881, at Ivy Cottage, Chalk Street, Stone in 1891 and 19 Avenue Terrace, Borstal in 1901 Ten years later

they were still resident at 19 Avenue Terrace, Borstal. By 1901 George and his brother Ernest had joined their father working as cement labourers, although upon enlistment George is recorded as a general labourer, which may reflect the decline of the local cement industry. The two cement works in Borstal, Booths and Borstal Manor had both closed by before the outbreak of the First World War.

The table below summarises his family:

#### The Family of George Frederick Godden

<b>Parents</b>	<b>Born</b>	<b>Died</b>
Alfred Godden	1854	1934
Harriet Amelia Godden	1853	1940
<b>Siblings</b>	<b>Born</b>	<b>Died</b>
John Henry Godden	1875	?
Alfred William Godden	1877	1902
George Frederick Godden	1879	1916
Ernest Godden	1881	?
Violet M Godden	1885	?
Lewis Godden	1887	?
Harry Godden	1891	In infancy?
Phoebe Godden	1892	?
Alice Clara Godden	1894	?

The 1911 census records only his father Alfred, brother Lewis (aged 23) and sister Alice Clara (16) as resident with George, (aged 32) in Avenue Terrace. His mother, Harriett is now living in the household of his brother Ernest at 2 Primrose Cottages, Borstal in the 1911 census.

The census records suggests George had in total three sisters and five brothers, they also suggest Harry, one of the two children born whilst they lived in Stone may have died in early childhood – he is present in 1901 but not by 1911. Whilst the remaining seven survived into adulthood and most likely moved out of the household as they became of working age and/or married. George's elder brother Alfred William however died aged only 24 in 1902.

Until its decline, the cement industry provided stable employment that seems to have resulted in George's brothers being able to remain at the family home until their late teens or early twenties. George's sisters seem to have left home to go into service in the case of Violet Mary who in 1911 was a servant at 66 Croydon Road, Penge, whilst Phoebe was recorded as a nurse in the household of the Chaplin of the prison in Borstal.

**Sources:** Censuses for 1881, 1891, 1901 and 1911; Births, Marriage and Death records;

Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919. All Ancestry.co.uk

Janet and Richard Mason, 'The Queens Own Royal West Kent Regiment, Private G. F. Godden', <http://janetandrichardsgenealogy.co.uk/Pte%20G%20F%20Godden.html>, 2008 and 2011, correct on 28 February 2017

Stephen Hannington, *Out of the Shadows: A History of Borstal Village*, (2015)

**Research by:** Andy Brittan



## **Jennings, Herbert Blake (1899-1917)**

Herbert Blake Jennings was born in about October 1889 in Rochester, Kent to parents William Blake Jennings and Katharine Charlotte Littlewood, he was the middle child of three children. Herbert was baptized at Saint Margaret of Antioch, Rochester on 15 March 1890.

The 1891 Census shows the family living at 2 Maidstone Road, Rochester. By 1901, the family had moved to Queensville, Castle Church, Staffordshire his father was working as a Prison Department Clerk. Following the death of his father in 1907, Herbert, his mother and siblings had returned to Rochester and were living his grandmother Sophia Littlewood at 161 Maidstone Road, Rochester. Herbert was working as a contractor's traveller (sand, ballast, clay etc).

On the 18 August 1915, Herbert joined the Kent Royal Garrison Artillery and was serving as a gunner, Regimental No. 253. The Kent Royal Garrison Artillery was a unit of the Territorial Force with its HQ at Sheerness. In 1914 it was made up of three companies, No 1 (Fort Clarence, Rochester and Sheerness) Coy, No 2 (Gravesend and Northfleet) Coy and No 3 (Dover and Folkestone) Coy.

The Royal Garrison Artillery: developed from fortress-based artillery located on British coasts. From 1914 when the army possessed very little heavy artillery it grew into a very large part of the British forces. Because the forces were armed with heavy, large calibre guns and howitzers they were positioned some way behind the front line and had immense destructive power.

Herbert progressed through the ranks of the Royal Garrison Artillery to become a 2nd Lieutenant. He records show he entered the Theatre of War in France on 5 January 1917, serving in the Royal Garrison Artillery Territorial Force. Herbert was wounded in action and died from his wounds on 25 July 1917 in France. Herbert was awarded a Victory Medal and a British War Medal affectionately known as 'Mutt and Jeff' on 31st October 1922 after his death.

Probate records show that Herbert left effects of £485 19s left to widow Katherine Charlotte Jennings.

**Sources:** Censuses for 1891, 1901 and 1911; British Army WWI Medal Roll Index Card 1914-1920; Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929; Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919. All Ancestry.co.uk

**Research:** Karen Mapley

## **Jesshope, Herbert Leonard (1897-1917)**

Herbert Leonard Jesshope was born in Strood, Kent on 22 February 1897 to parents William Jesshope and Louisa Ann Stockbridge. He has six siblings. In 1901, the family were living at 9 Grange Road, Frindsbury, Kent, his father was working as a labourer. By 1911, the family had moved to 16 Cliffe Road, Strood, Kent, Herbert was a butcher's errand boy.

During the First World War, Herbert enlisted in Chatham, Kent. He served in the 7th Battalion of the Buffs (East Kent) Regiment as a private. Regimental no. 204076. This battalion was formed at Canterbury in September 1914 as part of K2. In September 1914, they were under command of 55th Brigade, 18th (Eastern) Division.

The 18th (Eastern) Division was established by the Eastern Command in September 1914, as part of the Army Orders authorising Kitchener's Second New Army, K2. Early days were somewhat chaotic, the new volunteers having very few trained officers and NCOs to command them, no organised billets or equipment. The units of the Division initially concentrated in the Colchester area but moved in May 1915 to Salisbury Plain. King George V inspected the Division on 24 June. The embarkation for France began on 24 July and units moved to assemble near Flesselles, completing concentration there five days later. The Division served on the Western Front for the remainder of the war, taking part in many of the significant actions:

1916

The Battle of Albert – Somme 1916 in which the Division captured its objectives near Montauban

The Battle of Bazentin Ridge – Somme 1916 in which the Division captured Trones Wood

The Battle of Delville Wood – Somme 1916

The Battle of Thiepval Ridge – Somme 1916

The Battle of the Ancre Heights – Somme 1916 in which the Division played a part in the capture of the Schwaben Redoubt and in the capture of Regina Trench

The Battle of the Ancre – Somme 1916

1917

Operations on the Ancre (notably Miraumont and the capture of Irlles)

The German retreat to the Hindenburg Line

The Third Battle of the Scarpe, a phase of the Arras offensive

The Battle of Pilkem Ridge – Third Battles of Ypres

The Battle of Langemarck – Third Battles of Ypres

First Battle of Passchendaele – Third Battles of Ypres

The Second Battle of Passchendaele – Third Battles of Ypres

In September 1917, in Strood Kent, it is unsure if Herbert was on leave or why he was home from the war but he married Gertrude Hammond. Sadly shortly after, during one of the battles of Ypres that Herbert was killed in action on 12 October 1917. He was killed near the

brewery at Passchendaele, Ypres. A memorial for Herbert can be found at the Tyne Cot Memorial, Zonnebeke, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium on Panel 17.

After his death, on 3 August 1920, Herbert was awarded the Victory and British Medals 'Mutt and Jeff' for his services.

**Sources:** Censuses for 1901 and 1911; British Army WWI Medal Roll Index Card 1914-1920; Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919. All Ancestry.co.uk

**Research:** Karen Mapley

## **Jolley, James Tuff (or Luff) (1899-1918)**

James Tuff (or Luff) Jolley was born in April 1899 in Rochester, Kent.

In 1901, the Census shows the family living at 22 Catherine Street, Rochester. His father John was a railway bridge riveter. After the death of his father in 1906, the family found themselves on 3 December 1908 being admitted to the poor union. The whole family were admitted by mother Hannah. Later the same mother, on 19 December 1908, James and his sister Doris were discharged from the poor union and placed in Medway Cottages Homes and Schools, whilst their mother remained in the workhouse.

In August 1903, the Medway Guardians opened a children's cottage homes sit on Pattens Lane, Chatham. The site was developed around the perimeter of a square. There were four pairs of boy's homes and four pairs of girl's homes in the school. Their stay at this school was only short as the 1911 Census shows the family back together living at 101 Maidstone Road, Rochester, Kent.

During the war, James enrolled in the 1st Dorset Regiment at Warminster, Wiltshire. He served as a private, Regiment Number 32062.

The Dorset Regiment – Battalions of the Regular Army

1st Battalion

August 1914: in Belfast. The later landed at Le Havre on 16 August 1914.

James later transferred to the 2nd Worcestershire Regiment, Regimental Number 57651. It was during his time with this Regiment that James was killed in action.

2nd Battalion, Worcestershire Regiment –

The Regiment was involved in a combined Franco-British offensive would attack eastwards against the German Sixth Army. It would attack on a 20-mile front between Arras and La Bassée. The British bombardment started on 21 September and continued into 24th, when the Regiment moved into reserve position west of Givenchy on the 24th September, amid heavy initial bombardments for the battle. At dawn of the 25th the poisonous chlorine gas was released, which formed a 30 to 50 feet high blanket, moving forward slowly in places but virtually standing still in the British assault positions in other areas, with devastating effects. As the troops advanced out of the trenches it was realised that the initial bombardment had failed to cut extensively the German wire; within range of German machine guns and artillery, advancing over open ground, the losses were great. Throughout the day of the 26th September the 2nd Worcestershire waited, eventually receiving orders to move southwards.

At 5 am on the 27th a strong German bombing party, advancing along the communication trench, was driven back. Throughout the day sharp firing was kept up between the trenches. The following day was spent in miserable conditions under continual firing. At dawn on the 29th September, the Worcester's repelled a fresh attack. After a long and hard day, the Worcester's were relieved by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings Own, and made their way back across the battlefield. They then remained at Essars till the following day. By this time the Germans had retaken both the Slagheap of 'Fosse 8' and the Hohenzollern Redoubt, and it was decided that the 2nd Division should relieve the 7th Division at Gun Trench with a view to regaining the lost ground.

Sadly, James was killed in action on 29 September 1918. He was buried in Pigeon Ravine Cemetery, Epehy, Departement de la Somme, Picardie, France.

James was awarded the British and/or Victory Medal on 3 September 1920 for his service.

**Sources:** Censuses for 1901 and 1911; Find a Grave Index for Burials at Sea and other Select Burial Locations, 1300s-Current; Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929; Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919. All Ancestry.co.uk

Peter Higginbotham (2017) 'Medway, Kent', *The Workhouse: The Story of an Institution*, [www.workhouses.org.uk/](http://www.workhouses.org.uk/)

**Research:** Karen Mapley

## **Jones, George William (1885-1914)**

George William Jones was born on 22 January 1885 in Rochester, Kent. He was one of eight children born to Edmund Jones and Sarah Ann Harper. The 1891 Census shows the family living at 5 Albert Road, Rochester, Kent his father was working as a shoemaker. By 1901, the family had moved to 203 High Street, Rochester, George was now working as a Billiard marker (Billiard markers kept score of billiard matches in pubs).

On 9 January 1907, George joined the Royal Navy. The first ship he served on was SS Acheron. His Navy records show that George had a fresh complexion, brown hair and hazel eyes. He was 5'5" tall, he had worked as a labourer. The last ship served on during this period was SS Pembroke II where he served until 27 January 1911, George was a stoker. On 28 January 1911, George transferred to RFR Chatham.

The 1911 Census, shows George living back with his parents at 317 High Street, Rochester, Kent. He was working for a Haulage Contractor as a motor driver's mate.

By 13 July 1914, George was back serving in the Royal Navy as a 1st stoker on HMS Aboukir, service no. SS102172. George drowned at sea on 22 September 1914, his ship HMS Aboukir was sunk by a German Submarine. He was killed or died as a direct result of enemy action aged 29, his father Edmund was informed of his death. His body was not recovered for burial.

During the first months of the First World War, one of the largest naval disasters happened in the North Sea, 22 September 1914. Three large but old British cruisers -HMS Cressy, Hogue and Aboukir- were shot at and went down just off the Dutch coast. Eight torpedoes launched by stealth from an unnoted German submarine sunk the ships whose crews were totally unprepared for the attack. For weeks after this catastrophe bodies of British sailors were washed ashore on the Dutch coast. Of the combined crew of 2296 there were 837 survivors, a few hundred of whom could be rescued by Dutch merchant vessels. The wrecks of the three unfortunate cruisers still rest on the seabed, forming as many mass graves.

George William Jones is remembered at Chatham Naval Memorial.

**Sources:** Censuses for 1891, 1901 and 1911; Find a Grave Index for Burials at Sea and other Select Burial Locations, 1300s-Current; Commonwealth War Graves; British Army, Navy BMD Records; Royal Navy and Royal Marine War Grave Roll, Royal Navy Record, via Findmypast.co.uk and Ancestry.co.uk

**Research:** Karen Mapley

## **Joyce, Frank Rupert (1897-1916)**

Frank Rupert Joyce was born in about January 1897 in St Ives, Huntingdon. Frank was the middle child of five children born to Frank Joyce and Mary Annie Pilgrim.

At the time of the 1901 Census, records show Frank, his parents and siblings had moved to 169 Maidstone Road, Rochester. His father was working as a Railway Agent for the GNR. Father Frank continued to work for the railway at the time of the 1911 Census and the family remained at this address during this time.

Frank enlisted in Chatham. He entered the Theatre of War in France on 15 November 1915 serving as a Private in the 24th Battalion, London Regiment of the Royal Fusiliers. Regiment no SP/2615.

The 24th Battalion was formed in London on 20 November 1914. The battalion moved to Hornchurch in March 1915. By June 1915 the Brigade was under the command of the 99th Brigade, 33rd division. In November 1915 the Brigade landed in Boulogne. Frank Rupert would have with his Brigade when they landed. On 13 December 1915, the brigade transferred to the 5th Brigade in 2nd Division.

On 1 July 1916, supported by a French attack to the south, 13 divisions of Commonwealth forces launched an offensive on a line from north of Gommecourt to Maricourt. Although the bombardment last 7 days, the German defences were barely touched and the attack met fierce resistance. Losses were catastrophic. In the following weeks, huge resources of manpower and equipment were deployed in an attempt to exploit the modest successes of the first day. The German Army resisted and repeated attacks and counter attacks. The village of Thiepval was finally captured at the end of September.

On 31 July 1916, Frank was killed in action. Like many of his fellow soldiers he is remembered in The Thiepval Memorial Cemetery. This cemetery is a Memorial to the Missing of the Somme and bears the names of more than 72,000 officers and men of the United Kingdom and South African forces who died before 20 March 1918 and have no known grave. The memorial also serves as an Anglo-French Battle Memorial in recognition of the joint nature of the 1916 offensive and a small cemetery containing equal numbers of Commonwealth and French graves lies at the foot of the memorial.

Frank was awarded three of the British campaign medals, the 1915 Star, British War Medal and the Victory Medal. Affectionately known as Pip, Squeak and Wilfred.

**Sources:** Censuses for 1901 and 1911; British Army WWI Medal Roll Index Card 1914-1920; Find a Grave Index for Burials at Sea and other Select Burial Locations, 1300s-Current; Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929; Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919, via Findmypast.co.uk and Ancestry.co.uk

**Research:** Karen Mapley

## **Joys, Arthur Samuel (1884-1918)**

Arthur Samuel Joys was born in about May 1884 in the parish of St Nicholas, Rochester, Kent.

On 7 November 1904, Arthur joined the Royal Army Medical Corps (Attestation service number 130). At this time he had resided in the Parish of St Johns, Chatham, Kent. Arthur was aged 20 years and 6 months, he was single and had worked as a labourer. His service records show his next of kin were: Step father Charles Edward Wright of 4 Caroline Row, Ordnance Place, Chatham, Kent and brother and/or brothers Charles William Bertie. Arthur was 5 feet 6 inches tall, with brown hair, a fair complexion and blue eyes. He had tattoos on both forearms.

At the time of the 1911 Census, Arthur was still serving in the Royal Army Medical Corps (registration district number 641). The census shows he was based in England on ED, Institution or Vessel: South Africa.

Arthur's medal index card shows his date of entry into the First World War as the 27 August 1914. He served as a private regiment number 19546. Arthur served at No 6 Stationary Hospital. This hospital was based in Le Havre from December 1914 to May 1916; Frevent from June 1916 to August 1918.

The Base Hospital was part of the casualty evacuation chain, further back from the front line than the Casualty Clearing Stations. They were manned by troops of the Royal Army Medical Corps, with attached Royal Engineers and men of the Army Service Corps. British hospitals were generally located near the coast, they needed to be close to a railway line, in order for casualties to arrive and they also needed to be near a port where men could be evacuated for longer-term treatment in Britain. There were two types of Base Hospital, known as Stationary and General Hospitals. They were large facilities, often centred on some pre-war buildings such as seaside hotels.

Arthur changed unit on 7 October 1917, possibly to the 2/3rd London Field Ambulance. He died on 4 July 1918, whilst serving with them. At the time of his death his regiment were involved in the diversionary attack at Gommecourt, one of the Battles of the Somme. He was buried in Aubigny Communal Cemetery, Aubigny-en-Artois, Departement due Pas-de-Calais, France, pot IV. J. 26.

Arthur was awarded the 1914 Star Medal, British War Medal and Victory Medal. These medals were affectionately known as Pip, Squeak and Wilfred all three medals are worn together and in the same order from left to right when viewed from the front. When the WW1 medals were issued in the 1920's it coincided with a popular comic strip published by the Daily Mirror newspaper. It was written by Bertram J. Lamb (Uncle Dick), and drawn by the cartoonist Austin Bowen Payne (A.B. Payne). Pip was the dog, Squeak the penguin and Wilfred the young rabbit. It is believed that A. B. Payne's batman during the war had been nicknamed "Pip-squeak" and this is where the idea for the names of the dog and penguin came from. For some reason the three names of the characters became associated with the three campaign medals being issued at that time to many thousands of returning servicemen and they stuck.

**Sources:** Census for 1911; British Army WWI Medal Roll Index Card 1914-1920; Find a Grave Index for Burials at Sea and other Select Burial Locations, 1300s-Current; Army



Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929; Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919, all via [Findmypast.co.uk](http://Findmypast.co.uk) and [Ancestry.co.uk](http://Ancestry.co.uk)

## **Manktelow, Bruce Malcolm (1891-1917)**

Bruce Malcolm Manktelow was a private in the 7th Battalion, Queens Own Royal West Kent Regiment (Regimental Number: G/3892). He had enlisted in Chatham. In the 1911 Census his occupation was a cement labourer when he was aged 20.

The 7th (Service) Battalion was formed at Maidstone on 5 September 1914 as part of the Second New Army (K2) and then moved to Purfleet to join the 55th Brigade of the 18th (Eastern) Division. They moved to Colchester in April 1915 and on to Salisbury Plain in May.

The battalion mobilised for war on 27 July 1915 and landed at Havre and engaged in various actions on the Western Front including:

During 1916: The Battle of Albert, The Battle of Bazentin Ridge, The Battle of Delville Wood, The Battle of Thiepval Ridge, The Battle of the Ancre Heights, The Battle of the Ancre.

During 1917: Operations on the Ancre, The German retreat to the Hindenburg Line, The Third Battle of the Scarpe, The Battle of Pilckem Ridge, The Battle of Langemarck, First Battle of Passchendaele, and The Second Battle of Passchendaele.

The battalion was engaged in ferocious action at Cherisy between 3-5 May, after being withdrawn for ten days rest they returned to the line between Cherisy and Fontaine les Croisilles and again saw action to the end of May and Bruce was recorded as killed on 29 May 1917

On 9th February 1918 they transferred to the 53rd Brigade of the 18th Division and saw actions including; The Battle of St Quentin, The Battle of the Avre, The actions of Villers-Brettoneux, The Battle of Amiens, The Battle of Albert, The Second Battle of Bapaume, The Battle of Epehy, The Battle of the St Quentin Canal, The Battle of the Selle, The Battle of the Sambre.

The battalion ended the war in at Le Cateau.

Bruce Malcolm Manktelow was killed in action in Flanders on 29 May 1917, when he was 26 years old and buried at Rookery British Cemetery, C. 24, Heninel. The village and commune are in the Department of the Pas-de-Calais, 10 kilometres south-east of Arras and 3 kilometres south of the straight main road from Arras to Cambrai. Heninel village was captured in a snowstorm on 12 April 1917 by the 56th (London) and 21st Division and the 50th (Northumbrian) Division, advancing from Heninel on the two following days, captured Wancourt Tower.

Rookery British Cemetery (named from a group of trenches) was made by the 18th and 50th Division Burial Officers in April-June 1917 and used until November 1917. Two further burials were made in August 1918. The Cemetery is 1.5 kilometres from Heninel village, 165 metres north-east of the road to Fontaine-les-Croisilles opposite Cuckoo Passage Cemetery.

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Bruce Malcolm Manktelow was born on 7 February 1891, in Borstal, Kent to Eliza Ellen Manktelow (nee Chadwick), age 28, and William James Manktelow, a wheelwright age 32. His father had moved upon marriage to Yalding from Stepney where his family lived,

possibly suggesting Huguenot heritage on his father's side. His mother was from Spindon, Derbyshire. Between 1885 and 1893 they had five children. Four were born in Kent, their second son however was born in Rye, East Sussex. After his birth they moved back to Kent and were resident at 3 Primrose Cottages in Borstal by the 1901 census. The table below summarises his family:

#### The Family of Bruce Malcolm Manktelow

<b>Parents</b>	<b>Born</b>	<b>Died</b>
William James Manktelow	1858	1907
Eliza Ellen Manktelow	1863	1925
<b>Siblings</b>	<b>Born</b>	<b>Died</b>
Ada Priscilla Manktelow	1885	1972
Stanley James Manktelow	1887	1956
Frank William Manktelow	1889	1975
Bruce Malcolm Manktelow	1891	29/05/1917
William J Manktelow	1893	1968

Bruce's father died on 13 November, 1907, at the age of 49. His mother lived another eighteen years, dying in 1925.

The census also records his eldest brother Stanley James was born on November 7, 1886, in Ospringe, Kent and was an apprentice in the cycle trade. However, this may be an error as younger brother Frank is noted as an apprentice butcher. In 1908, aged 21 Stanley Manktelow enlisted in the Army Service Corps, (which was responsible for keeping the British Army supplied with all its provisions barring weaponry, military equipment and ammunition) his trade is shown as a butcher. Stanley Manktelow served from enlistment until the end of hostilities in the Army Service Corps. Stanley died in 1956 aged 69.

His other elder brother, Frank Manktelow who was born whilst the family lived in Rye, may have briefly joined the navy, although his service is unclear as the only surviving records refer to him aged about 16 having serviced on HMS Swiftsure from 1 July to 12 December 1905. In 1909 he was noted as a witness at his sister's wedding in Borstal. When Frank was 35 he married Louise Betsy Baggett on 9 Aug 1924 at St. Matthews Church. At this time he still lived at 3 Primrose Cottages, however it had been renamed to its current address – 79 Borstal Street. Frank was recorded as a store house assistant when he married. They subsequently had two children: Audrey A. Manktelow and Colin S. Manktelow. Louise died in 1962 (registered in Chatham) but Frank lived to the age of 85, dying in the Sittingborne area in 1975.

Bruce's sister, Ada Priscilla was born in 1885, in Faversham, and was shown as a dressmaker in 1901. Ada married Walter William Wells, a builder from Dover, on 18 Oct 1909 in St. Matthew's Church, Borstal and subsequently moved to Dover and had a son by the time of the 1911 Census.

Bruce's younger brother William was born in 1893 and was recorded as an Assistant Grocer in the 1911 census. In 1915 he married Ellen Edith Rivers at St Nicholas church in Rochester. In June 1916 he joined the Royal Field Artillery and was recorded as living at 76 Castle Avenue, Rochester with his wife Ellen, son Vivian James and his mother. By the 1930s William and his family were living in Lambeth in South East London. William died in 1968 in the Tonbridge area aged 75.

The house Bruce grew up in, 3 Primrose Cottages survives and as noted above was re-named/numbered between 1911 and 1924 as 79 Borstal Street which it still is in 2016:



**Sources:** Censuses for 1881, 1891, 1901 and 1911; Births, Deaths & Marriage records; Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919; London, England, Electoral Registers, 1832-1965. All Ancestry.co.uk

Janet and Richard Mason, 'The Queens Own Royal West Kent Regiment, Private B. M. Manktelow', <http://janetandrichardsgenealogy.co.uk/Pte%20B%20M%20Manktelow.html>, 2008 and 2016, correct on 28 February 2017.

Stephen Hannington, *Out of the Shadows: A History of Borstal Village* (2015)

**Research:** Andy Brittan

### **Martin, Richard Charles (1896-1915)**

Richard Charles Martin was born in Strood in the first quarter of 1896. He was the son of Charles and Mary Martin and brother to Ada, Edith and Mabel.

The 1901 Census shows the family living at 63 Frindsbury Road, Strood. Charles, the father, is listed as a bricklayer's labourer, who was born in Wateringbury. Richard's mother stated her place of birth as Hare Street, Hertfordshire.

Richard may have been influenced by the early recruitment campaigns as he enlisted into the Royal Field Artillery on 29th August 1914 in Chatham and took the rank of Gunner. His service number was 94764. His occupation was given as a waiter.

However, he was listed amongst the deserters in the Police Gazette in January 1915, having gone absent from Aldershot. Whether this was the realisation that the war did not end at Christmas or because his 19th birthday was fast approaching, which would lead to an overseas posting.

Richard did return to the Royal Field Artillery and was posted. He arrived in France on the 13th May 1915. He spent 62 days in France, accidentally drowning on 12th July 1915. He is remembered at Hinges Military Cemetery.

His personal effects totalled just over £3 and were claimed by his mother Mary.

**Sources:** Census for 1901; England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837-1919; UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919; National Army Museum, Soldiers' Effects Records, 1901-60; NAM Accession Number: 1991-02-333; Record Number Ranges: 166001-167500a; Reference: 63; National Archives; WWI Service Medal and Award Rolls; Class: WO 329; Piece Number: 2543. All via Ancestry.co.uk

British Army, deserters and absentees in Police Gazette 1914-1919, via Findmypast.co.uk

**Research:** Jayne Fenton

**Martindale, Henry William (1893-1915)**

Henry Martindale was born in Worcester in 1893 and moved to 4 Bank Terrace in Thomas Street, Rochester, sometime before his 18th birthday.

In 1911, Henry was an 18 year old, single machinist and the only child of his father Ernest Martindale, a painter and mother Jane Martindale. His parents were both born in Birmingham.

Henry served as a Rifleman in the Rifle brigade, having enlisted in Chatham. His regiment number was 5741. Henry died on 2 July 1915 from wounds he sustained.

Henry is buried in the Cite Bonjean military cemetery in Armentieres, Northern France.

**Sources:** Census for 1911; Civil Registration Birth Index 1837-1915; Commonwealth War Graves 1914-1921 and 1939-1947; Soldiers Died in the Great War; Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects 1901-1929. All Ancestry.co.uk.

**Research:** Samantha Stevens

### **Moorey, Henry (1890-1915)**

Henry Moorey was one of two brothers to serve and die for the King's Royal Rifle Corps – the other was Jesse Moorey.

Around the time of Henry's birth, the Moorey family were living at 14 Newark Street in Strood, and Charles, Henry's father, was the captain of a barge. Charles Moorey the elder was born in Strood, whilst his wife and Henry's mother, Elizabeth Mary [Skillen], was born in Camberwell, in South London. Charles and Elizabeth married in 1886 in Gravesend. In 1881, Elizabeth was 18 years old living and working as a domestic servant at 15 Darnley Road in Gravesend for George John Smith, who was a trinity pilot. At the time of the 1901 Census, Henry was living with his family at 14 Victoria Street in Frindsbury. Henry was the third of five boys born to his parents at this point, with his eldest brother Charles aged 14, John aged 12, Henry himself was 10, Jesse was 7 and Albert was 3. No occupation was listed for Elizabeth in any of the later Censuses, so Charles the elder was apparently able to support her to remain at home; and all the boys with the exception of Charles were in school. Charles was also missing an occupation, but the enumerator noted that he had lost an eye. By the 1911 Census, Henry and his younger brother Jesse were still living at home with their parents and youngest brother. Henry and Jesse were both listed as grocers' assistants, and that they were working at home. They had not followed their father into working on the water.

Henry Moorey was a Private in the 2nd Battalion of the Kings Rifles Corps, with his regimental number 11603. He died on 25 January 1915 of wounds incurred whilst he was serving in France and Flanders.

NB: Henry's surname has been misspelt at Henry Morrey or Moorley on some documents.

**Sources:** Censuses for 1891, 1901; FreeBMD. England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837-1915; Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919, all Ancestry.co.uk

### **Moorey, Jesse (c.1894-1915)**

Jesse Moorey was one of two brothers who served and died for the King's Royal Rifle Corps – the other was Henry Moorey. More of the Moorey family background can be found in Henry's biographical entry.

Jesse Moorey enlisted for the 1st Battalion of the King's Royal Rifle Corps (KRRC) as a Rifleman on 15 May 1915, when he was 21 years old. His older brother, Henry Moorey, had joined the 2nd Battalion of the KRRC, and died of his wounds in January 2015. Up to this point, Moorey had been working as a general labourer. His service number was R/12896

At a medical examination around the time of his enlistment, Jesse was 21 years and 5 months old when he enlisted, and he was 5 foot 10.5 inches tall. Jesse had married Bertha Banks on 4 July 1915 in Strood; presumably just before he was shipped to France with the Rifles. Bertha was from Snodland, further south down the Medway Valley on its western side, and in 1911, was working in the local paper mill. Tragically, the Mooreys' marriage would barely last a month before Jesse was involved in the Battle of the Somme. He listed as missing on 27 July 1916. Moorey was one of the 73,367 soldiers who died during this Battle, and he has no known grave. His name is on the Thiepval Memorial.

After the war, Bertha would marry Frederick A. Burney, a carpenter in the cement works, who was also from Snodland, in 1919. Burney was also a Rifleman, but in the 12th Battalion of the KRRC (service number R/3392). Burney was transferred to AR Class Z 19 2 19. Burney is listed on the Snodland Roll of Honour.

**Sources:** Censuses for 1901, 1911; National Archives; WWI Service Medal and Award Rolls; Class: WO 329; Piece Number: 2771; WWI Service Medal and Award Rolls, 1914-1920; British Army WWI Service Records, 1914-1920; War Office: Soldiers' Documents, First World War 'Burnt Documents' (Microfilm Copies), all Ancestry.co.uk



### **Nicholls, Joshua (1894-1916)**

Joshua Nicholls was born in Strood in 1894. His father was also called Joshua Nicholls and Mother was Eliza Nicholls.

In both the 1901 and 1911 Censuses, Joshua was registered as living at 50 Station Road, Strood with his father, a magazine labourer (for the military), mother and younger brother, Redvers William Nichols. In the 1911 Census however, it was discovered that his parents had had another son called Sidney Nicholls and they had a 73 year old widowed lodger boarding, by the name of Eliza Raynor. 16 year old Joshua was also registered as working as a baker's assistant at this time.

Joshua signed up for a short service attestation in March 1915, whilst registered as living at 16 Cliffe Road, Kent. He was assigned as a private for the North Staffordshire Prince of Wales regiment. His Regiment number was 40568.

Sadly a year later Joshua died shortly after the Battle of the Ancre, one of the last major British attack during the Battle of the Somme, on 19 November, 1916. He is registered on the British War medal index.

Joshua's grave is situated at the Thiepval Memorial, France.

**Sources:** Censuses for 1901 and 1911; British Army WWI Service Records, 1914-1920; all Ancestry.co.uk

**Research:** Samantha Stevens

### **Packman, Thomas Alfred (Tom) (1895-1916)**

Lieutenant Thomas Alfred Packman (Tom) was born in Strood in 18th May 1895 and was killed in action at Vermelles, near Lens, in France on 9th September 1916, aged 21.

Tom's parents were Alfred Charles Augustus Packman, originally from Sheffield, and his wife, Eliza, who was born in India. Alfred senior was a medical doctor and a Justice of the Peace for the City of Rochester. His wife was a Poor Law Guardian and keen, active supporter of women's suffrage. In 1901 the family lived at 105 London Road, Strood, and Tom, who was born in Strood, had one older and one younger brother. By 1911 they had moved to 54 Maidstone Road, Rochester, but the eldest son, Arthur, had died. At both addresses the family had two live-in servants, a housemaid and a cook. The family undoubtedly were well-known in the area: Alfred's medical practice and civic work brought him into close contact with the poor of Rochester and Strood while his wife campaigned for better poor relief for widows as well as agitating for votes for women.

Tom attended Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School in Rochester and is on the School's Roll of Honour. Later, he studied engineering in London. According to an obituary in the Kent Messenger, he was on a motoring holiday in France when war broke out in 1914. He immediately returned to England and took a commission in the Royal Horse Artillery and began active service in early November 1914 at the age of 19. The newspaper reported that he had 'latterly been engaged with trench mortars, and had been in the thickest of the fighting'. He was attached to the 7th/8th Trench Mortar Battery of the Royal Field Artillery. According to the University of London Officer Training Corps 'Roll of the Fallen', he was killed by a sniper while he was on observation work in command of a battery.

The Kent Messenger said that Tom was 'well known in Rochester and the sympathy of all classes goes out to Dr and Mrs Packman'. Probate was granted to Tom's father in 1919 on an estate worth £633 14s 6d and Tom is buried in the Vermelles Commonwealth Cemetery in France.

**Sources:** Censuses for 1901 and 1911; England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837-1915; England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1966, 1973-1995; University of London Officers Training Corps Roll of War Service 1914-1919. London: Military Education Committee of the University of London, 1921. UK, Memorial Books WWI and WWII, 1914-1945;

*Kent Messenger*, 16 September 1916, p. 6.

National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies Kentish Federation First Annual Report, 1913 (Women's Library).

*South East Gazette*. 1 March 1910, p. 2.

## **Parker, Frank Herbert (1889-1918)**

Frank Herbert Parker was born on 11 February 1889 in Aldershot. He was the son of a sergeant (later a Company Sergeant Major) in the Royal Engineers (RE) and he was to follow in his father's footsteps.

Unfortunately Frank's military records do not seem to be available, but his father's service is recorded in reasonable detail, so we can learn a lot about Frank's childhood from it. Frank's father, John Parker, was born in Devon and joined the RE in 1876 as a carpenter when he was in his early twenties. According to one of its official historians, the RE customarily drew its 'rank and file...from the class of artificers or tradesmen'. John served in two tours of duty in Southern Africa, where he earned a medal in 1879, and was later stationed at Aldershot, Curragh Camp in Ireland, Chatham, Monmouth and Beaumaris. In South Africa John took part in the Anglo-Zulu War, the first Boer War and the Bechuanaland expedition of 1884-5. He was awarded the South Africa medal with clasp, and the long service medal.

John earned regular promotions through the ranks and in 1886 he married a Canadian woman called Emily Agate, who was ten years younger than him. Their first child, Evelyn, was born at Curragh in 1887 but by the time of Frank's birth in 1889 the family were stationed in Aldershot. They were still in Aldershot at the time of the 1891 census when Frank was two years old and his younger brother, Frederick was nine months old.

In 1893 John was promoted to Sergeant Major. This was an honoured position for an ordinary soldier to attain. In 1897, after twenty-one years in the service, he was granted permission to remain in the army. By 1901 he was based with the Royal Anglesey RE in Beaumaris, North Wales. On census night that year John was at a hotel in Wrexham, although Emily, Evelyn and Frank and Frederick were all at home at 11 Margaret Street, Beaumaris. The Parkers' youngest daughter was born in Anglesey c.1903.

In 1904 John was discharged from his regiment at the age of fifty. The family, at that point still in Beaumaris, intended to move to Chatham, a town where John had been stationed in 1893. Frank was fifteen years old when his father retired from the army, and perhaps was starting to learn carpentry from his father. John's army record had described him as 'a very superior cabinet maker and carpenter'.

Having been brought up entirely in barrack towns, and lived the itinerant lifestyle of an army child, it is perhaps no surprise that Frank also enlisted with the RE, joining the regiment in Chatham. In 1911 he was stationed in Egypt with the 2nd Field Company of the RE. He was aged twenty-three, and described on the census form as a sapper, a carpenter, and unmarried. Although he probably had some carpentry skill when he entered the force, the RE took in young recruits and gave them further training.

Meanwhile, Frank's parents were living at Crown House, Rainham Road, Gillingham, with his two sisters. In September 1914, John, now resident with Emily in Elm Cottage, Wainscott, volunteered for the army reserve. Frederick, having been allegedly turned down for military service in Chatham because he was too short, served an apprenticeship in Gillingham before emigrating to Western Australia where he became a farmer. However, on the outbreak of the First World War Frederick volunteered for the Imperial Australian Forces in Helena Valley, near Perth. Lance-corporal Frederick Parker was injured at Gallipoli in 1915 and after recuperation in a Birmingham military hospital he served in France in 1918. He undertook a motor fitting course with a company in Rochester before returning to

live in Western Australia. In 1967 he applied to the Australian government for a Gallipoli medal.

Frank, meanwhile must have received rapid promotion through the ranks – probably because of the war conditions after 1914, in which the size of the RE increased rapidly – as at the time of his death he was an Acting Company Sergeant Major. On the outbreak of war the 2nd Field Company of the RE joined the 8th division of the army, returning from Egypt in October and reinforcing the British Expeditionary Force the following month.

Frank was killed on the first day of the Third Battle of the Aisne, 27 May 1918. By then he was with the 7th Field Company, part of the 50th division. A German bombardment started at 1am on the morning of the 27th, over a twenty-six mile front and to a depth of twelve miles, in what was hitherto thought to be a quiet stretch of the Western Front, but which was next to a strategically important river. According to the official corps history, several field companies of the RE suffered heavy losses even before daylight. Royal Engineers were also involved in destroying bridges over the Aisne River and canal.

Frank's body was not recovered so his life is commemorated on the Soissons memorial. He was twenty-nine years old when he died and his regimental number was 12820. He was awarded the DCM, a medal awarded to non-commissioned ranks for 'distinguished, gallant and good conduct in the field'. Probate was granted to John on Frank's estate and was valued at £110 19s 7d, nearly £100 of which was the money owed him by the army. Frank's service number was 12820.

**Sources:** Censuses for 1891, 1901 and 1911; Free BMD. England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837-1915; British Army WWI Pension Records 1914-1920: WO364; Piece: 2832; Australia, WWI Service Records, 1914-1920: National Archives of Australia: B2455, First Australian Imperial Force Personnel Dossiers, 1914-1920; England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1966, 1973-1995.

Baker Brown, *History of the Corps of the Royal Engineers* Volume IV (Chatham, The RE Institute, 1952)

Royal Engineers, *History of the Corps of the Royal Engineers* Volume V (Chatham, The RE Institute, 1952)

### **Parris, Alfred (1890-1917)**

Alfred Parris (known as Jim) was born in Borstal on 13 December 1890, to his parents Mark and Isabella. He was baptised at St Matthew's Church on 15 February 1891, and lived at 24 Sidney Road.

On 3 March 1908, when he was 17 years old, Alfred volunteered for six years of service with the Buffs' Special Reserve. At his medical on 5 March 1908, Alfred was 5ft 2ins tall, with blond hair and blue eyes, and he was passed as fit for service. His regimental number in the Buffs was 8887.

At the time of the 1911 Census, Alfred was still living at home with his mother, who was then 53, widowed and working as a laundress. Isabella Parris was originally from Whiteparish in Wiltshire. Alfred's oldest sister, also Isabella, was also living at home, as she had been widowed less than a year into her marriage; his older brother, Frederick, was unmarried and also living at home. Frederick was working as an oarsman, whilst Alfred was a labourer at the cement works. The youngest daughter, Lily, was aged 14 and no occupation was recorded for her – she may well have still been in school. Mark Parris was originally from Cooling, and at the time of the 1901 Census, was working as a general labourer.

Alfred was discharged from the Buffs on 10 April 1912, as he was about to join the RAM Corps (his regimental number was then 6325). Joining the RAMC took him to Aldershot, where he attended the training college and achieved Third Class in his Army School training. At his medical in April 1912, Alfred had grown two inches and had also acquired various tattoos. He was declared fit for service in the RAMC.

However, he did not remain in the RAMC, as his war grave records him as being a Driver in the Royal Horse Artillery and Royal Field Artillery, with his regimental number now 98450. The De Caville Index lists him as being in the 55th Division Ammunition Column, of the Royal Field Artillery. Alfred would have been helping to get ammunition to artillery.

Alfred was killed in action on 28 August 1917, aged 26. He is buried at Vlamertinghe New Military Cemetery, in West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. Alfred was awarded the British War Medal in 1920.

**Sources:** Censuses for 1901 and 1911; British Army WWI Service Records, 1914-1920; WWI Service Medal and Award Rolls; Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919, all Ancestry.co.uk

**Research by:** Patricia Allen and Alison Robinson; with additional research by Kate Bradley

### **Parris, Frederick (1888-1918)**

Frederick Parris was born in Borstal on 2 May 1888, to his parents, Mark and Isabella. He baptised at St Matthew's on 1 July of that year. He lived at 24 Sidney Road with his parents.

At the time of the 1911 Census, Frederick was still living at home with his mother, who was then 53, widowed and working as a laundress. Isabella Parris was originally from Whiteparish in Wiltshire. Frederick's oldest sister, also Isabella, was also living at home, as she had been widowed less than a year into her marriage; his younger brother, Alfred, was unmarried and also living at home. Frederick was working as a carman, whilst Alfred was a labourer at the cement works. The youngest daughter, Lily, was aged 14 and no occupation was recorded for her – she may well have still been in school. Mark Parris was originally from Cooling, and at the time of the 1901 Census, was working as a general labourer.

Unlike his brother, Frederick does not appear to have served as a reservist in the years before the First World War. During the war, Frederick served with the 2nd/4th Battalion of the Queen's Own (Royal West Kent) Regiment as a private. His regimental number was 201427. The 2nd/4th Battalion was formed in September 1914, and was sent overseas to Sulva Bay and to the Gallipoli Campaign. The Battalion remained there until December 1915, when they were evacuated to Egypt.

Frederick was killed in action in Egypt on 19 September 1918, aged 30. He is buried in the Ramleh War Cemetery, Gaza.

**Sources:** Census for 1901 and 1911; British Army WWI Service Records, 1914-1920; Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919

**Research by:** Patricia Allen and Alison Robinson, with additional research by Kate Bradley

### **Pattenden, George Ewart (1898-1917)**

George Ewart Pattenden was born in Strood in April 1898. He was registered as living with his family at 9 Vicarage Road, Frindsbury. His father was called Thomas Pattenden and his mother was called Edith Pattenden.

In the 1901 Census, two year old George lived with his father, a Foreman Bricklayer, his older brother Rodney, an apprentice bricklayer and his two older sisters Winifred and Elsie.

In the 1911 Census, the family were still living in the same property, but it was apparent that his father had started his own building company as he was now registered as an employer and his mother also was now employed as an assistant in business. His brother was also recorded as a builder. George was registered as a 12 year old scholar.

George was enlisted at Shaftesbury Street, within the 4th City of London Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers. He was regimented as a Lance Serjeant and his regiment number was 281961.

George was killed in action in the France and Flanders on 26th October 1917. He is buried in Zoonebeke, Belgium. He is also listed on the Tyne Cot memorial.

**Sources:** Censuses for 1901 and 1911; Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919. All Ancestry.co.uk

**Research** Samantha Stevens

### **Payne, Edwin Ernest Wilson (1894-1917)**

Edwin Ernest Payne was born 26th May 1894. He was born in Strood. His father was called Thomas and was a Bricklayer and his mother was called Eliza. In the 1911 Census Edwin was an apprentice brass moulder, with his employer listed as Aveling, Strood. He lived with his parents and seven other siblings at 9 Cliffe Road, Strood. It appears that Edwin/Edward worked for the Portsmouth Tramways Corporation before the war,

He married Hilda Daisy Pillen in February 1916.

He served for the Royal Navy. His service number was SS117592. His first date of service was 29th May 1916 aboard the Pembroke II and his last day of service was 30th March 1917 in which he was serving on the Wallington. (Records conflicting). On his Registration of Seaman Service he was described as 5'9 with brown hair and hazel eyes. He was also described as having a tattoo on his forearm. However, he was called Edward in this recording not Edwin.

States on records that he was killed on the HMS Cheerful when it was sunk on 30th June 1917 near the Shetland Islands. He was registered as living at 6 Almon Place, Rochester at the time with his wife Hilda. Unfortunately his body was never recovered.

He is registered on the Chatham Naval Memorial.

**Sources:** Census for 1911; Royal Navy and Royal Marine War Graves Roll, 1914-1919; British Army and Navy Birth, Marriage and Death Records, 1730-1960; Royal Navy Registers of Seamen's Services, 1853-1928, UK, Commonwealth War Graves, 1914-1921 and 1939-1947. All Ancestry.co.uk

Portsmouth City Council,

<http://www.ataleofonecity.portsmouth.gov.uk/firstworldwar/edward-ernest-payne/>

Peter Singlehurst; Memorials to the Naval Ranks and Ratings of the Empire Who Fell in the Great War and Have No Other Grave than the Sea Chatham Memorial Part 4 1917

**Research** Samantha Stevens



**Payne, William Charles (1894-1917)**

William was born in Strood in 1894. He lived at 41 Cross Street with his mother Ellen Payne, father Henry George Payne, four brothers and three sisters. In the 1911 Census, 17 year old William was registered as an assistant pastry cook. Between the 1911 census and the date of sign up army registration, William's family had moved to 12 Bowes Road.

William served as a private for the London Regiment (20th Battalion) of the Royal Fusiliers and his regiment number was G/53254

William was killed in action on 16th April 1917 when he was 24.

William is buried in France Heniel-Crosilles Road cemetery.

**Sources:** Censuses for 1901 and 1911; Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919; all Ancestry.co.uk

**Research:** Samantha Stevens

### **Phillips, Claude William (1885-1917)**

Claude William Phillips was born in Norwood, near Croydon in 1885. However, both his parents were originally from Kent (his father, William Henry, from Rochester and mother, Ada, from Chatham), and by the time he was six the family had moved back to the Medway towns. At that point they lived at 113, High Street Rochester and his father's occupation was recorded in the 1891 census as a 'fruiterer'. Claude was the Phillips' oldest child: he had a sister, also called Ada, and a baby brother called Arthur who was a year old in 1891. Ten years later the family lived at 345 High Street, Chatham, where William Henry was now described on the census return as a 'master fruiterer', working at home, which suggests he ran his own shop at that address. Now sixteen, Claude William had no occupation recorded on this census, although his fourteen-year-old sister is described as a 'fruiterer's assistant'.

By 1911 Claude William was working as an assistant in his father's business (still at 345 High Street, but this time described as 'Rochester') along with his younger brother. Ada was no longer ascribed an occupation, and the family had a new member, eight year old Evelina, who is described as a 'daughter'. According to the census form, the family had had a fifth child who had died. At this point Claude William was unmarried, and no further records have been found of him until his death, and although at some stage he presumably married a woman called Alice, it has not been possible to find a record of their marriage.

Claude William died on 10th October 1917. He was thirty-two years of age and has no known burial place. He had joined the Middlesex regiment at Ealing, although at the time of his death he was a private in the East Surreys. It is not known when he transferred but his regimental number was 28509 when he died. His battalion, the 1st, was made up of soldiers in the regular army. Claude William was a casualty of the third battle of Ypres (sometimes known as Passchendaele) which was one of the most controversial battles of the First World War, due to the opposition to it of the then Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, the huge human sacrifice (310,000 British soldiers and 260,000 Germans), the use of mustard gas, and the wet weather which turned the fields of Flanders into mud. Moreover, after several months the Front had moved only by a few kilometres.

Claude William Phillips' sacrifice is remembered at the Tyne Cot memorial near Ypres. According to the entry in the book of remembrance, his widow, Alice Phillips, lived at 2 Horsley Road in Rochester.

**Sources:** Censuses for 1891, 1901 and 1911; England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837-1915; UK Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919. All Ancestry.co.uk

Michael Duffy, 'Battles: Third Battle of Ypres, 1917', *First World War.com*  
<http://www.firstworldwar.com/battles/ypres3.htm>, (2009), correct at 24 February 2017

### **Phillips, George (1899-1918)**

The younger brother of Joseph Phillips, George was also born in Strood, probably on 14 March 1899. [For details of the rest of the family in 1901, see Joseph Phillips].

In the 1901 Census George was recorded as being two years of age and in 1911 his age was given as eleven. The family had three other relatives living with them at the time: a married couple in their later forties and early fifties and a young man aged nineteen. It seems likely that George's older brothers had all moved out and two of them were married (not including Joe). His two older sisters were also married and two more girls had been born since the previous census. Presumably George was at school (he has no occupation recorded) but some other male family members were working as cement factory labourers.

In September 1915, less than twenty weeks after his older brother Joe's death at Gallipoli, George volunteered for the Royal West Kent regiment. A medical officer at the Chatham recruiting office noted that he was five feet, three and a half inches tall and weighed 115 lbs. George had brown eyes and hair with a dark complexion and his faith was recorded as 'Church of England'. He worked as a 'general labourer'. His 'apparent age', according to the form filled in by the medical officer, was eighteen years and six months: in fact he was 2 years younger than that, and not old enough to serve in the army. The authorities must have found out his real age as on 30th November he was discharged from the army due to a 'misstatement as to age'.

Obviously George returned to the army as a private once he was old enough, and he served with the Queen's Own Royal West Surrey regiment in France. He died aged nineteen on 19 June 1918 and is buried in the Harponville Communal Cemetery extension in the Somme.

**Sources:** Census for 1901; British Army WWI Pension Records 1914-1920, all Ancestry.co.uk

## **Phillips, Henry (1878-1917)**

Henry Phillips was born in 1878 in the village of Frindsbury, near Strood. In the 1891 census he can be found living in Sone Street, Frindsbury with his father, an agricultural labourer, who came from the village of Luddesdown, near Gravesend, and his mother, who hailed from the neighbouring village of Cobham. Henry was the youngest child and had two older sisters. Ten years later the family lived at a different address in Strood and Henry's parents had both taken up laundry work: his father William however was aged sixty-nine and although described as a 'laundryman', the column 'neither employer nor employed' was marked next to his name. Therefore it seems likely that his wife and eldest daughter (described as 'laundresses') took in washing and William helped with this small business. Henry himself, now aged thirteen, was an apprentice paper hanger. The household also contained another young laundress (aged sixteen) and two boarders, boys aged twelve and eight, who were at school.

In July 1900 Henry married the twenty-year-old Elizabeth Rose Hall at St Nicholas Church in Rochester. She was born in Rochester, the daughter of a mariner, and had lived in Parris Head Lane, just off the High Street. After their marriage the couple lived at 88 Temple Street (now the site of the Strood Tesco store and carpark). In the 1901 census Henry's occupation is given as 'cement labourer'. In June 1901 Elizabeth gave birth to the first of their nine children.

Ten years later the family still lived at the same address in the centre of Strood. Henry was now described as a 'chalk digger' at the cement works and by the time of the 1911 census he and Elizabeth had four sons and three daughters.

Henry was still working as a chalk digger when he volunteered for army service on 19 October 1915, at the age of thirty-eight. He joined the East Kent Regiment ('the Buffs') as a private, was posted in 1916 and served in Flanders. He was recorded as missing in action, presumed dead, on 13 October 1917, at the first battle of Passchendaele and his sacrifice is recorded at the Tyne Cot military cemetery. Henry was awarded the British War and Victory Medal, which went to his wife, Elizabeth.

Henry's army records show the names of all his nine children, the youngest of whom was born in 1917, only weeks before his death. His army medical examination showed that he was nearly five feet and seven inches tall and weighed 140 pounds when he signed up. He had no disciplinary offences recorded against him and was never found to be drunk. He must have been an exemplary soldier.

Elizabeth was awarded a pension in 1918 of fifty shillings and five pence for herself and eight children (perhaps the eldest was of working age by then so was not seen to require subsistence).

Henry's regimental number was G8395.

**Sources:** Censuses for 1881, 1891, 1901 and 1911; British Army WWI Service Records, 1914-1920. All Ancestry.co.uk

## **Phillips, Joseph (1892-1915)**

Joseph (Joe) Phillips was born in Strood in the early months of 1892. According to the 1901 census, his father, William was a brickfield labourer who was born forty years earlier in Hoo, while his mother, Rose Ann, came from Rainham. In 1901 the family lived at 87, Cuxton Road, Strood. Joe had an elder sister, two older brothers, and a younger sister and brother (c/f George Phillips).

By the time of the 1911 Census Joe had left home. It seems that Joe had been in the regular army for some time before the outbreak of war: it is highly likely that he was the 'Joseph Phillips' recorded on census night at the Badajos army barracks in Aldershot (although there are slight discrepancies in both his place of birth – recorded as Chatham – and his age, which was given as twenty rather than nineteen). In 1911 Badajos was an infantry barracks, housing the 1st battalion of the Hampshire Regiment and named after an 1812 Peninsular War battle in which forces under Sir Arthur Wellesley (later the Duke of Wellington) had triumphed over Britain's Napoleonic foes. Built in the late 19th century, it was a red-brick barracks, probably similar to the naval buildings at Brompton in Gillingham, and was one of several at Aldershot named after Wellington's victories.

At some stage Joe must have moved to the 2nd battalion of the Hampshires. At the outbreak of the Great War in August 1914 they were stationed at Mhow in the Madhya Pradesh region of India. Along with other regular army units scattered across the British Empire, Joe's battalion was soon recalled from India to join the 88th brigade of the 29th army division. Once back in Britain, they were stationed at Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick, before embarking at Avonmouth to sail to Egypt in late March 1915. From Egypt they sailed onward to Cape Helles on the Gallipoli peninsula. The battalion arrived on 25th April 1915 and tragically Joe lost his life the very next day.

**Sources:** Census for 1911; England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837-1915; Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919; National Army Museum, Soldiers' Effects Records, 1901-60; NAM Accession Number: 1991-02-333; Record Number Ranges: 173501-175000; Reference: 68; UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929. All Ancestry.co.uk

Hampshire Cultural Trust, 'Badajos Barracks',  
<https://hampshireculturaltrust.org.uk/content/badajos-barracks-west-infantry-barracks>, correct at 24 February 2017

'Aldershot Command', *British Military History*,  
<http://www.britishmilitaryhistory.co.uk/documents.php?aid=1&nid=1&start=0>, (2011), correct at 24 February 2017

**Research by:** Anne Logan

**Roberts, Harold Richard (1891-1916)**

Harold was born in 1891 in the parish of St Peter's, Rochester, when his family were living in Burritt Street, Rochester. Harold was the youngest son of Samuel and Fanny E.H. Roberts, who at the time of his death were living at 142 Rochester Avenue. At some point between the 1891 and 1901 Censuses, Samuel appears to have left working as a joiner at the Chatham Dockyard in favour of moving the family to Caterham in Surrey, where he worked as an engine fitter. In the 1911 Census Harold was already registered as living at the guards' depot in Caterham Barracks, having enlisted in March that year, whilst his family had returned to Rochester. In 1911, Samuel and Fanny were recorded as having 8 children together, one of whom was still living with them – Percy Godfrey, who was 21 and working as a boiler maker at the Chatham Dockyard. Samuel was also back at the Dockyard, working as a ship's joiner. Harold appears to have had an older brother, also called Harold.

Harold was a Sergeant in the Grenadier Guards regiment. 2nd Battalion. His regiment number was 15166. Harold was killed in battle in the France and Flanders battle on 29th April 1916. He is buried in the Guards Cemetery, Windy Corner, France.

**Sources:** Censuses for 1891 and 1911; FreeBMD. England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837-1915, all Ancestry.co.uk

**Research:** Samantha Stevens

### **Tulett, Thomas (1882-1914)**

Thomas Tulett was born in Chatham on 31 August 1882. In the 1901 Census, Thomas was registered as living in Rochester with his father, also Thomas, a longshore labourer, his mother, Florence, and 8 younger siblings. 18 year old Thomas was already registered as working as a class stoker for the Royal Navy. His first day of service was 18 March 1901 when he joined the HMS Pembroke II, which was the newly-built shore establishment in Chatham.

He married Nellie Tillmon in 1910.

In the 1911 census Thomas was registered as living in 19 Cliffe Road, Strood with his wife and in laws, Mr and Mrs Tillmon. They also housed their 4 other children.

He was then promoted to Acting leading Stoker. His regiment number was 296909. His last day of service was 22 September 1914 when he sadly was lost in the North Sea when the HMS Cressy was sunk by a German Submarine.

Unfortunately Thomas's body was never recovered for burial. However, he has been registered on the Chatham Naval memorial register. His Widow, Nellie lived at 23 Mayfair, Frindsbury, Strood, Kent at the time of death.

Thomas is also on the De Ruvigny's Roll of Honour.

**Sources:** Censuses for 1901 and 1911; Royal Navy Registers of Seamen's Services; Class: ADM 188; Piece: 480; Royal Navy Registers of Seamen's Services, 1853-1928, TNA Series: ADM 242/10; Scan Number: 0786; Royal Navy and Royal Marine War Graves Roll, 1914-1919; De Ruvigny's Roll of Honour, 1914-1919; Service Registers and Registers of Deaths and Injuries. All Ancestry.co.uk

### **Watkins, Sidney George (1890-1917)**

Sidney George Watkins was born in Strood, Rochester in the spring of 1890. Sidney first appears in the 1891 census aged 1, living in Wykeham Street, Strood with his father William Joseph Watkins (42) a cement worker, his mother Eliza (42) with his older siblings William (8), Bertha (6), John (4) and Frederick (2). A cousin Lily Sullivan aged twelve is also listed at the property although she may have been visiting. Sidney's parents were both born in Frindsbury, all the children were born in Strood save the eldest who was born in Upnor.

By the time of 1911 census the family had moved to 111 Frindsbury Road, Frindsbury. Bertha had married Thomas Blair, a blacksmith in the Royal Navy. The two elder sons, William and John were naval ordinance labourers, however Sidney, his parents and third brother Frederick appear to be trading 'at home' within their own business as 'fishmonger dealers'.

During the First World War Sidney enlisted, in Rochester, into the Machine Gun Corps. He served in the Infantry as a Private in the 75th Machine Gun Company, his Regimental Number 90421. The 75th Machine Gun Company Joined the 25th Division and fought in the Western European theatre of war in which Sidney was killed in action in The Battles of Ypres on September 9th 1917, aged 27. Sidney's memorial inscription is located at Chatham Dockyard Memorial and his burial place is Tyne Cot memorial, Belgium.

Sidney was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

**Sources:** Censuses for 1891, 1901 and 1911; Civil Registration Birth Index 1837-1915; Commonwealth War Graves 1914-1921 and 1939-1947; Soldiers Died in the Great War; Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects 1901-1929. All Ancestry.co.uk.



### **White, Walter Edward (1892-1917)**

Walter Edward White was born in Borstal, Kent in 1892. Walter first appears on the 1901 census, aged 9, living at 1 Sidney Road, Borstal. Walter was the third son of William (42) and Emma (45), his siblings were Francis (14), Arthur (11) and Grace (6). The household was completed by a 2-year-old Walter Billings who is listed as a boarder. Walter's father was a cement labourer, whilst his elder brother Francis was a domestic gardener. Walter attended Borstal National School from 1897.

At the time of the 1911 census, Walter, now 19, was a general labourer. His brothers Francis and Arthur were no longer living at 1 Sidney Road; however, his sister Grace remained and worked as a shop assistant. Walter Billings remained as a boarder, and was now 12 years old and attending school.

Walter enlisted in Rochester, Kent into the Royal Garrison Artillery. He was a gunner in Kent [RGA- (TF)] Battalion, his regimental number 358640. Walter was part of the 62nd Siege Battery, which first engaged in France in March 1916. Siege Batteries were deployed behind the front line and equipped with heavy artillery, and attempted to destroy the enemy's infrastructure and artillery.

Walter was engaged in the western European theatre of war where he was killed in action during the Battles of Ypres on 10th September 1917. He was 26. Walter's last resting place is Bleuet Farm Cemetery, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium, where he is one of 442 fallen soldiers of WW1.

**Sources:** Censuses for 1901 and 1911; Commonwealth War Graves 1914-1921 and 1939-1947; Soldiers Died in the Great War; Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects 1901-1929. All Ancestry.co.uk.

## Woodgate, Edwin Henry (1896-1917)

Edwin Henry Woodgate was a Private in the 10th Battalion Queen's Own (Royal West Kent) Regiment (Regimental Number: G/6351). He had enlisted in Chatham.

The 10th (Service) Battalion (Kent County) was formed at Maidstone on 3 May 1915 by Lord Harris, Vice Lieutenant of Kent, at the request of the Army Council. Attached in July 1915 to 118th Brigade in 39th Division but transferred in October to 123rd Brigade in 41st Division. They moved to Aldershot in January 1916. The battalion landed in France on 4 May 1916. After Edwin's death the battalion moved with the Division to Italy in November 1917 but returned to France in March 1918.

During the summer and early autumn of 1917, the battalion was engaged in the third battle of the Ypres Salient. At the end of July and early August, they took part in the opening engagement of the battle – the battle of Pilkem Ridge. In September, they took part in the third general offensive – the battle of Menin Road Ridge between 20th and 26th September. War Department records show that Edwin Woodgate died of his wounds on September 23rd 1917 at the age of 20 – it seems likely these wounds were received during the Menin Road Ridge action, less than a month before his 21st birthday.

He is buried in Godewaersvelde British Cemetery France. The creation of the British cemetery dates back to July 1917, between the Battle of Messines and the Battle of Ypres.

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Edwin Henry Woodgate was born in Brenchley near Paddock Wood in October 1896; the registration of his birth is recorded as Tonbridge. Edwin was the fourth son of George and Harriett (nee Taylor) Woodgate, who were recorded as having twelve children between 1873 and 1900. His father George is recorded as an agricultural labourer throughout this period and he and his family are recorded in Brenchley, Marden, Yalding, Pembury and Cuxton between the 1870s and 1900. His mother, Harriett had her first child aged 17 or 18 and her last when she was 44.

The family are recorded as living at Cuxton in 1901 when Edwin was four years old. Ten years later they have crossed to the other side of the Medway Valley and are resident at 52 Sidney Road in Borstal and the now fourteen year old Edwin has joined his father working presumably locally as an agricultural labourer. His father George died in December 1932 at the age of 80.

The table below summarises his family:

The Family of Edwin Henry Woodgate

<b>Parents</b>	<b>Born</b>	<b>Died</b>
George Woodgate	1853	1932
Harriett Woodgate	1856	?
<b>Siblings</b>	<b>Born</b>	<b>Died</b>
George Woodgate	1873	?
Alice Woodgate	1875	?

Harriett Woodgate	1877	?
Mary Woodgate	1879	?
Stephen Woodgate	1881	1952
Elizabeth Woodgate	1883	1951
Lilly Woodgate	1885	?
Frank Woodgate	1887	1975
Beatrice Maud Woodgate	1890	1979
Edith Mary Woodgate	1896	1977
Edwin Henry Woodgate	1897	1917
Ebenezer Ralph Woodgate	1900	1987

The 1911 census records only his brothers Ebenezer (aged 10) and Frank (23) as resident with their parents. However, Frank is recorded as a Stoker 1st class in the Royal Navy. Records show that Frank married in 1911 and it is possible he was on home leave on census night preparing for his marriage. The Dartnell family tree suggests he had in total seven sisters and two other brothers, the census records suggest some may have died in infancy whilst six survived into adulthood and most likely moved out of the household as they became of working age and/or married given that the period 1873-1896 saw one of the longest depressions in British agriculture, with falling incomes and many farm workers migrating to the growing urban areas to find employment.

**Sources:** Censuses for 1881, 1891, 1901 and 1911; Births, Deaths & Marriage records; Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919; Dartnell Family Tree; all via Ancestry.co.uk

Janet and Richard Mason, 'Private E.H. Woodgate', <http://janetandrichardsgenealogy.co.uk/Pte%20E%20H%20Woodgate.html>. 2008 and 2011; correct at 24 February 2017

**Research by:** Andy Brittan

## **Woodgate, Lionel Streatfeild (1888-1914)**

Lionel Streatfeild Woodgate was born on 11 June 1888 in Rochester, on Star Hill the home of his parents, Ernest and Edith. Ernest Woodgate worked as a solicitor. Edith was a 'Rochester lady', according to the Dover Express, a member of the Streatfeild family of Chiddingstone, near Tunbridge Wells. Ernest's family were from the same area, being the Woodgates of Penshurst. However, both Edith and Ernest were born in London, and they got married at St Matthew's, Bayswater on 8 February 1877.

Ernest followed his father, William Woodgate, into the legal profession. William [Senior] was listed on the 1851 Census as being a solicitor, a farmer of 70 acres and an employer of 6 labourers. Ten years earlier, however, William Senior and his family (pre-Ernest) had been living in St Pancras. Ernest died in 1896 of heart disease on a visit to Littlehampton with Edith and the family, when he was aged 51. At that point, he was serving as the Mayor of Rochester.

Ernest was the cousin of Major-General Sir Edward Prevost Woodgate, who had been in command of the King's Own Royal Lancaster depot, before dying at Spion Kop during the South African Wars. William Francis Woodgate and Anna Allnutt were the parents of William Senior and Henry Arthur Woodgate, who was Sir Edward's father. The family appear to have been living at Tonbridge Castle (presumably in the then new mansion attached to it) around 1800. Henry Arthur was the rector of Belbroughton Holy Trinity Church in Worcestershire. Lionel appears to have been a distant relative of both Lucy Deane Streatfeild (by marriage), one of the first female factory inspectors, and Noel Streatfeild, the author.

In 1881, the Woodgates were living at 13 Star Hill with Catherine Streatfeild, Edith's mother. 13 Star Hill has since been demolished, and was roughly where the bus stop on the Star Inn side of Star Hill is (2016). By 1891, however, the Woodgates were living in Dover, where Ernest was working as a solicitor and a JP. Lionel's eldest brother, William Ernest Streatfeild, was 13, Hamilton was 10, Violet was 5 and Lionel was 2.

Lionel was educated at Bradfield College, near Reading, which had a further Rochester connection through the actor Dame Sybil Thorndike being a fan of the Greek Theatre offered by the school in a chalk pit in the nearby village. Lionel is listed on the 1901 Census as being a boarding pupil at Bradfield. By 1901, the rest of the Woodgates were living again at 18 and 20 Star Hill. Hamilton, then aged 20, was an articled clerk about to follow his father into the law. William Ernest had died the previous year, aged 23, whilst serving as a Lieutenant in the 2nd Battalion of the King's Own (Royal Lancaster), having been injured at Vryheid on 11th December 1900. William Ernest had joined the Regiment in 1897, and was promoted to Lieutenant in 1899.

After Bradfield, Lionel went to Sandhurst Military College, following in the footsteps of William Ernest and Sir Edward on his way to join their Regiment. Lionel's first appointment was on 8 February 1908 as 2nd Lieutenant in the Royal Lancaster Regiment (the King's Own). In the 1911 Census, he was still in this role, but was in India, serving at the Havelock Barracks in Dilkusha, Lucknow. His promotion to Lieutenant would follow on 7 October that year.

At the outbreak of the war, Lionel served as a Lieutenant with the 1st Battalion (4th Foot) in the King's Own (Royal Lancaster Regiment), and was with the British Expeditionary Force

in France and Flanders. His service was courageous, but ultimately short-lived. The Kent and Sussex Courier wrote about how Lionel was in charge of the machine gun section during the extremely heavy fighting at Le Cateau, and of the high regard with which he was held by his fellow soldiers.

He left £130 6s 6d to his mother, who was listed as living at 20 Star Hill in Rochester. Edith applied for the 1914 Star in respect of her son.

Lionel died on 8 September 1914, at the age of 26, and is buried in the Montrueil-aux-Lions British Cemetery in Aisne, France. Lionel is also remembered with his family on the family memorial in St Margaret's Churchyard, Rochester.

**Sources:** Censuses for 1851 and 1901; England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1966, 1973-1995; British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920; via Ancestry.co.uk

Census for 1901; De Ruvigny's Roll of Honour, 1914-1918; Anglo-Boer War records 1899-1902. Via Findmypast.co.uk

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*Derby Daily Telegraph*, Saturday 5 September 1896, p.

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## **Youens, Frederick (1892-1917)**

Frederick Youens VC (regt no 9019) was a 2nd Lieutenant in the East Surrey Regiment and the Durham Light Infantry 13th Battalion.

He was serving with the latter when he died on the 7th of July 1917 near Hill 60 Ypres, Belgium. He was buried at the Railway Dugouts Burial Ground. For his actions on that day he was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross.

GAZETTE ISSUE 30215 reads: His Majesty the KING has been graciously pleased to approve of the award of the Victoria Cross to the undermentioned:- Temporary Second Lieutenant Frederick Youens, late Durham Light Infantry. For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty. On 7th July 1917 near Hill 60, Belgium, while out on patrol this officer was wounded and had to return to his trenches to have his wound dressed. Shortly afterwards a report came in that the enemy were preparing to raid our trenches. Second Lieutenant Youens, regardless of his wound, immediately set out to rally the team of a Lewis Gun, which had become disorganised owing to heavy shell fire. During this process an enemy's bomb fell on the Lewis Gun position without exploding. Second Lieutenant Youens immediately picked it up and hurled it over the parapet. Shortly afterwards another bomb fell near the same place; again Second Lieutenant Youens picked it up with the intention of throwing it away, when it exploded in his hand, severely wounding him and also some of his men. There is little doubt that the prompt and gallant action of Second Lieutenant Youens saved several of his men's lives and that by his energy and resource the enemy's raid was completely repulsed. This gallant officer has since succumbed to his wounds.

He was born at 11 Gordon Road, High Wycombe, Bucks on the 14th of August 1892. The 1901 Census lists his mother as Lizzie Youens, aged 33 and his father as Vincent Youens, a basketmaker, aged 33. At that time he has 3 brothers and 4 sisters. At the time of his death in 1917 his mother, Mrs L Youens, was living at 42 Luton Road, Chatham. Before the war, Youens worked as a teacher at St Peter's School in Rochester.

**Sources:** Censuses for 1901 and 1911; Victoria Cross Medals, 1857-2007, via Ancestry.co.uk

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Research: Dr Alison Robinson

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