

**Information on those listed on
Borough Green War Memorial for WW1
(as published in the Voice magazine**

– all articles written by Suzanne Young except where indicated)



World War 1 (1914 -1918)

Name	Regiment/Service	Rank	Service No.	Died	Age	Memorial/Cemetery
Samuel O Bird	The Queen's (Royal West Surrey) Regiment	Private	3801	25 Aug 1916	26	Heilly Station Cemetery, Somme, France
William T Bird	Royal Navy - HMS Princess Irene	Leading Stoker	K/403	27 May 1915	26	Chatham Naval Memorial, Kent
Norman S Bevan	Queen's Own (Royal West Kent) Regiment	Private	L/11300	27 Dec 1916	17	Brown's Road Military Cemetery, France
Harry Bradford	Welsh Regiment	Private	57394	29 Dec 1918	38	Cologne Southern Cemetery, Germany
John J Brennan	Queen's Own (Royal West Kent) Regiment	Private	L/8236	24 Oct 1914	28	Le Touret Memorial, France
Sydney Bridgland	The Buffs (East Kent) Regiment	Private	L/9583	21 Mar 1918	25	Arras Memorial, France
Benjamin J Bunyan	Royal Navy - HMS Hawke	Ship's Steward	340125	15 Oct 1914	36	Chatham Naval Memorial, Kent
William Cooper	London Regiment	Private	6620	1 Oct 1916	21	Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France
George Cunningham	Prince of Wales (North Staffordshire) Regiment	Private	202113	1 Jul 1917	34	Arras Memorial, France
Thomas Cunningham	The Queen's (Royal West Surrey) Regiment	Private	207252	22 Oct 1917	35	No Man's Cot Cemetery, Belgium
William Cunningham	Royal Garrison Artillery	Gunner	144572	28 Jul 1917	31	Coxyde Military Cemetery, Belgium
Henry J Elliott	Queen's Own (Royal West Kent) Regiment	Private	G/5841	1916	24	Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France
Alfred J Evans	Royal Irish Rifles	Rifleman	52438	6 Jun 1918	19	Tyne Cot Memorial, Belgium
Ernest J Fogg	Queen's Own (Royal West Kent) Regiment	Private	203943	7 Jul 1917	40	Sunken Road Cemetery, France
Ernest C Hood	Royal Air Force	Sergeant	5063	6 Aug 1918	30	St George's Churchyard, Wrotham
John Mercer	Queen's Own (Royal West Kent) Regiment	Private	G/4855	1 Jul 1916	20	Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France
Charles F Merton	Royal Sussex Regiment	Private	G/13509	30 Dec 1916	34	Philosophe British Cemetery, France
Herbert S Mitchell	Queen's Own (Royal West Kent) Regiment	Lieutenant	-	21 Mar 1918	21	Pozières Memorial, Somme, France
Joseph C Moorecroft	The Buffs (East Kent) Regiment	Private	T/270709	13 Aug 1918	21	Loos Memorial, France
Edward G Newman	Royal Field Artillery	Sergeant	61654	5 Oct 1917	26	Etaples Military Cemetery, France
Sidney G Pearce	Royal Sussex Regiment	Private	G/11685	25 Sep 1917	36	Hooze Crater Cemetery, Belgium
Clarence A L Pemble	The Queen's (Royal West Surrey) Regiment	Second Lieutenant	-	1 Aug 1918	28	Arras Memorial, France
Frank J Powell	Lincolnshire Regiment	Private	265512	26 Oct 1917	39	Dochy Farm New British Cemetery, Belgium
William Shaw	Queen's Own (Royal West Kent) Regiment	Private	L/8260	6 Oct 1914	29	Netley Military Cemetery, Hampshire, England
Walter Sills	Royal Field Artillery	Gunner	103057	21 Oct 1916	24	Peake Wood Cemetery, Somme, France
Arthur R Taylor	Queen's Own (Royal West Kent) Regiment	Lance Corporal	18960	18 Apr 1917	25	Etaples Military Cemetery, France
Reginald F Thorndycraft	King's Royal Rifle Corps	Rifleman	R/966	3 Sep 1916	20	Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France
Arther LA Tomlyn	Worcestershire Regiment	Private	42213	12 Aug 1918	19	Hautmont Communal Cemetery, France
Harry Waters	Queen's Own (Royal West Kent) Regiment	Private	L/10671	7 May 1916	17	Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension, France

William Thomas and Samuel Oliver Bird

William and Samuel were brothers who in the 1901 Census were living with their mother and stepfather (Amy and George Crittle) at 2 Chapel Street (now Sevenoaks Road). In the 1911 Census George and Amy had moved to 7 Rock Road but the brothers had left home – William was in the Royal Navy on board HMS Gloris moored at Chatham Dockyard and Samuel had lodgings in Newhaven.



William was an acting leading stoker who died on 27 May 1915, aged 26, when HMS Princess Irene sunk off Sheerness. It was being loaded with mines and exploded killing 352 people including almost all the crew and dockworkers. He is listed on the Chatham Naval Memorial and left a widow, Lily, and two daughters who were living in Meopham.

Samuel was a private in the 1st Royal West Surrey Regiment who died on 25 August 1916, aged 26, at 38th Casualty Clearing Station in France from wounds received in action in the Battle of the Somme. He was buried at Heilly Station Cemetery. He left a widow, Elizabeth, a son and a daughter. Samuel and Elizabeth were married at Ightham and it is believed that they were still living in the area as war records indicate that his residence at death was Wrotham.



They also left a mother, five sisters and two brothers to mourn their loss.

Margaret and Richard Jeffery

Norman Sidney Bevan



Norman Sidney Bevan is the son of James and Margaret Alice Bevan (née Henbest/Hinbest) who were married in 1890. Unfortunately, Norman has been difficult to research on the census records but I believe I have found James and Margaret Bevan on the 1911 census living in Horsmonden. Their marriage details inform us that they have been married for 21 years and have two children, one is alive and one has died. Along with Margaret and James, who is a farm labourer, the following are also listed, their son Sidney Bevan (15) a farm labourer, a niece Josephine Wehmer (12), and two nephews Norman Wehmer (10) and Walter Wehmer (6).

Norman's service record shows that he was born on 28 July 1898 in West Malling and enrolled in the Royal West Kent Regiment at Maidstone on 2 April 1916 at the age of 18. His occupation is shown as woodcutter and fence maker and his religion is shown as Church of England. The service record informs us that he was at home from when he enlisted to 21 July 1916, he was then posted to France as part of the British Expeditionary Force on 22 July 1916 and was killed in action on 27 December 1916. His total period of service was 270 days.

Next of kin was listed as Mrs Patsy Whenman (address unknown) and Alice Bevan (Aunt) with an address of 2 Hill View, Basted, Borough Green. The service records also list his relatives and their address details his father James Bevan, his mother Margaret Alice Bevan, a full-blood brother, Walter Bevan (15) and a half-blood brother Thomas Bevan (24). Their address is shown as 9 Rock Road, Borough Green. A grandparent was also listed as Sophie Hinbest "invalided" with an address of Infirmary, Kings Hill, West Malling.

His personal effects form, dated 8 April 1921, was addressed to Mrs M A Bevan, 9 Rock Road, Borough Green. His personal effects were a note case, letters, note book and card.

I have also found a newspaper report listing his death:

N.C.O's AND MEN: ROYAL WEST KENT REGIMENT.

Killed: - Pte. N. Bevan (Borough Green),

Source: *South Eastern Gazette*, 10 February 1917

The following newspaper article was also found on **Gunner Sidney Thomas Bevan**:

Gunner Bevan was wounded in France, June 15th, 1917, and is suffering from gunshot wound in ankle and left foot. He is now at Windsor Hospital, and is improving fairly well. The son of Mr and Mrs James Bevan, of Rock Road, Borough Green, he has gained the Military Medal and hopes to be home shortly. He has lost a brother in action.

Source: *Kent Messenger*, 11 August 1917

Additional Information on Sidney T Bevan

Sidney Thomas Bevan received the Military Medal along with 1914-1915 Star, British War Medal and the Victory Medal. He married Ada M Hill in Q2-1920 (Malling) and died 16 June 1958 at Linton Hospital at the age of 62. His probate informs us that he was living at Red Lion Cottages and his effects of £414 8s 7d (£8,724.79 in 2015) were left to his wife.

Harry Bradford - (Family in “Kent Cottages”, BG – Nr Black Horse Pub)

Harry was one of seven children born to Owen and Philadelphia Bradford in 1880 in Wrotham. Owen and Philadelphia Bradford (née Brand) were married at the end of 1868 in the Tonbridge area. The 1881 census shows Owen and his family living in “Cottage”, Platt, Wrotham (next to Holly Cottage). He was a general labourer and had five children, Annie May (10), George William (8), James John(6), Kate(4) and Harry(11 months).

In 1891 the family were living in Borough Green Road, Platt (nr Black Horse Pub). Owen was now a tile maker, Annie (20) a dressmaker, George (18) a general labourer, James (16) a general labourer, Kate (14), Harry (10) and Herbert (8 months).

The 1901 census shows an address for Owen and his family as Godstone Road, Platt, Wrotham (nr Black Horse Lane). Owen is a tile maker, Annie (29) a dressmaker, Harry(20) a tile and brick maker.

In 1911 Owen and Philadelphia are shown as living in Platt, Borough Green (nr Black Horse Pub). By this time Owen and Philadelphia only had two children living with them, Annie May (38) a dressmaker and Herbert (20) a mill hand at a paper factory. Owen’s occupation is listed as farm labourer.

The 1911 census shows Harry living with George William and Eliza Bradford (Harry’s brother and sister-in-law) and their family in Manor Road, Erith. Harry was single when the census was taken and both he and his brother were brickmakers. Harry’s father, Owen Bradford died in Q1-1916 at the age of 73 before Harry joined the army in October 1916.

Harry’s service record shows that he enrolled in the 7th London Regiment at Woolwich on 18 October 1916, his address is shown as 60 Arthur Street, Erith, he was 36, a brickmaker and was now married. Harry married Sarah Coshall on 1 August 1914 and they had one child, Doris Sarah Rose Bradford born on 9 April 1916 in Dartford.

The service record also lists his relatives and their address details, his mother, Philadelphia Bradford, three full brothers and two full sisters with an address of “Kent Cottages”, Borough Green.

Harry died on 29 December 1918 of pneumonia at the age of 38 and is buried in Cologne Southern Cemetery, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany and is listed as being a Private in the 6th Battalion of the Welsh Regiment (Service No: 57394).

(My own personal thought: I believe Harry survived the First World War and that he may have died in the flu pandemic of 1918. Flu was first observed in Europe, the U.S. and parts of Asia before swiftly spreading around the world. Surprisingly, many flu victims were young, otherwise healthy adults. At the time, there were no effective drugs or vaccines to treat this killer flu strain or prevent it spreading. Researchers later discovered, that in many victims, the influenza virus had invaded their lungs and caused pneumonia and this is what made the 1918 pandemic so deadly).

John James Brennan

John James Brennan was a private in the 1st Battalion of the Queen's Own (Royal West Kent) Regiment (Service No: L/8236). He was killed in action on 24 October 1914 at the age of 28. He is listed on the Touret Memorial, France.

I believe John James Brennan was born in Croydon, Surrey at the end of 1886. He was baptised James Brennan on 24 April 1887 and was the son of James and Sarah Brennan of 12 Kings Street, Croydon. His father's occupation was decorator.

I'm currently unable to find John James Brennan living with his parents on a census however in 1911 he is in India at Robert's Barracks, Peshawar. He is a soldier in the 2nd Royal West Kent Regiment, he's 23, single and is listed as born in Croydon, Surrey.

In the first quarter of 1914 he married Phyllis M Davey in the Malling area and is registered as James J Brennan. Unfortunately, they were only married for a few months before he was killed in October the same year.

Phyllis Martha Davey was born in 1886 in Hastings, Sussex and is the daughter of William Horace and Phyllis Davey who moved to Borough Green from Speldhurst. In 1901 they were living in Spencer's Cottages, Wrotham (these cottages are in Station Road, Borough Green which came under the parish of Wrotham). William was a blacksmith and Phyllis Martha was 13 years old.

The 1911 census shows William and his family living at Invicta House, Westbank, Borough Green and William is still working as a blacksmith. Phyllis is now 24 years old and her occupation is listed as home domestic duties.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission shows Phyllis Martha Brennan as the wife of John James Brennan. The Commission's work began in earnest after the Armistice and into the early 1920s and at this point in time the address for Phyllis Martha Brennan is listed as Invicta House, Western Road, Borough Green.

Sydney Bridgland

Sydney Bridgland was born in Fulham, London, on 1 March 1893 and baptised at St. Matthew's, Kensington, London, on 7 May 1893. He is the son of Edward Charles and Charlotte Bridgland (née Ingram) who were married on 27 November 1892 at St Matthew's, Hammersmith. Edward and Charlotte had four children, Sydney born in 1893, Nellie May in 1894, Florence Kate in 1895 and Edward Thomas in 1898 before Edward dies early in 1900 at the age of 43 in the Fulham area.

Charlotte probably found life hard following the death of her husband having to bring up four small children between the ages of 7 and 2, which is probably why the 1901 census shows the four children living with their grandmother, Ellen Ingram, at Basted Hill, Crouch along with her own four sons Henry, Daniel, John and Philip (Charlotte's brothers).

The 1911 census shows Ellen Ingram (a widow) living in Crouch, Borough Green, with two of her grandchildren, Sydney (18) a farm labourer, Edward (13) who is still at school and three boarders.

On 27 April 1911 at the age of 18, Sydney enrolled at Chatham and became a private in the 1st Battalion of the Buffs (East Kent Regiment – Service No: L/9583). His occupation is shown as farm labourer and his religion is shown as Church of England.

The service record informs us that he arrived in Dublin on 9 September 1914, he departs for India on 15/16 November 1914 on the S.S. Ultonia. He was posted to France and was missing in action, presumed dead, on 21 March 1918 at the age of 25. He is remembered on the Arras Memorial, Pas de Calais, France.

The service record also lists relatives of the deceased soldier and their address details, his mother, Mrs C Clarke (late Mrs Bridgland,) of Red Lion Square, a full-blood brother, Edward (21) of Claygate Cross, Crouch, and two full-blood sisters Nellie (24) and Florence (23) who now live out of the area.

Sydney Bridgland was awarded the 1914-1915 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal

Benjamin James Bunyan

Benjamin James Bunyan was a Ship's Steward on HMS Hawke and was killed as a direct result of enemy action on 15 October 1914 at the age of 36. He was the first Borough Green casualty of the First World War.

HMS Hawke was part of the 10th Cruiser Squadron operating on blockade duties between the Shetland Islands and Norway. Early in the First World War Hawke, commanded by Captain Hugh P. E.T. Williams, was engaged in various operations in the North Sea. On 15 October 1914 Hawke, sailing with her sister ship Theseus on a mail run, was torpedoed by a German submarine U-9. The submarine's first torpedo missed Theseus and hit Hawke igniting a magazine and causing a tremendous explosion which ripped much of the ship apart. Hawke sank in eight minutes sending her captain, 25 officers and 479 men to their deaths, only 70 crew members survived.



HMS Hawke was an Edgar- class protected cruiser built at Chatham Dockyard and launched on 11 March 1891 (Propulsion: Steam) and was the 6th British warship to be named Hawke.

Source: www.naval-history.net

Benjamin was born on 30 December 1878 in Portsea, Hampshire. He was the son of Robert and Emily Bunyan (née Russell) who married in 1870 in Portsea. In 1881 when Benjamin was 2 years old his father's occupation was listed as Sergeant RMA (Royal Marine Artillery). On the 1891 census Benjamin was 12 and is listed as a school boy at the Royal Hospital School in Greenwich. His parents are living at 1 Thong Lane, Ightham. Robert is a nightwatchman and is living with his wife Emily and four children, John, Eliza E, D'Arcy A and Robert W. His father, Robert, died in 1897 at the age of 51 and was buried in Ightham on 16 March 1897. On the 1901 census Emily (who was born in Hove, Sussex) was living in Basted Lane, Borough Green with her younger children, Eliza and Robert. Emily's occupation is listed as general shop keeper.

On the 1911 census Benjamin was 32 (single) and was board HMS Cyclops, a repair ship which was moored at Chatham Dockyard. His occupation is listed as Ship's Steward. Emily Bunyan (Benjamin's mother) was living with her daughter Eliza Emily and her husband William Thomas Hearnden. Emily's occupation was grocer and they were living at 4 Moncktons House, High Street, Borough Green (now Quarry Hill Road).

Unfortunately, Benjamin's body was never recovered for burial but his name is listed on the Chatham Naval Memorial, Kent. After the First World War an appropriate way had to be found of commemorating those members of the Royal Navy who had no known grave, the majority of deaths having occurred at sea where no permanent memorial could be provided. An Admiralty Committee recommended the three manning ports in Great Britain – Chatham, Plymouth and Portsmouth – should each have an identical memorial of unmistakable naval form, an obelisk, which would serve as a leading mark for shipping. The Chatham Naval Memorial was unveiled by the Prince of Wales (the future King Edward VIII) on 26 April 1924.

Newspaper Report (HMS Hawke):

HEROES OF THE HAWKE

Thrilling stories are told by the survivors of the British cruiser Hawke, torpedoed by a German submarine in the North Sea on Thursday. When the order "All hands on deck" was given the crew, as one survivor says, "formed up as calmly as if on parade" and the Captain was standing on the bridge as his vessel went down.

Fifty-two survivors have arrived at Aberdeen in the trawler Benrinnes. They state that the Hawke was torpedoed and sunk within five minutes. They saw the periscope of the submarine which disappeared immediately. Hundreds of men were seen struggling in the water in cork jackets and hanging on to floats.

An able-seamen said – The torpedo must have struck a ready magazine for a terrific explosion occurred and the ship row as if she has hit a rock. There was no confusion. The Hawke had ten life boats and I don't know how many provisional rafts. The Skipper gave orders to lower the boats and the instruction was obeyed as promptly as could be. But what could we do? The Hawke was standing at heaven knows what angle and it was physically impossible to get the boats out then. "Every man for himself" someone sang out and we were all over the rails as hard as we could. "In our boat we rowed round and picked up as many as was possible until we were in danger of being swamped" he concluded.

(Source: The Daily Mirror, 19 October 1914)

William Cooper

William Cooper was born in Pembury, Kent in about 1896 and is the son of William and Jane Cooper. His father William was born in Suffolk and his mother Jane was born in Capel, Kent.

The 1901 census shows William and Jane's address as Amhurst Barns, Pembury (near Great Hawkwell) with five children, Edward (7), William (5), Ruth (4), Norah (1) and Emma (2 months). William's occupation is gamekeeper.

In 1911 William and Jane were still living at Great Hawkwell, Pembury but now had eight children, Edward (17), William (15) and is an agricultural labourer, Ruth (13), Nora (12), Emma (10), Earnest (8), Ralph (6) and Ben (3). William was still working as a gamekeeper.

William was a private in the 20th Battalion of the London Regiment and was killed in action on 1 October 1916 at the age of 21. When he signed up he was living in Pembury, unfortunately, I have been unable to ascertain when the family moved to Borough Green (5 Rock Road).

His father died in 1921 at the age of 53 and is buried at St Peter's Church, Ightham.

I have also been informed that William's brother Edward Cooper also enlisted during WW1 and survived, however he was gassed and sent home. William and Edward are brothers of Pauline Pennington's mother.
(Source: Pauline Pennington).

George and William Cunningham

George and William were brothers who died within four weeks of each other in 1917. The 1911 Census shows that George lived at Long Pond Cottages (in Wrotham Road opposite the recently closed police station) and William lived in Station Road.

Private George Cunningham of the North Staffordshire Regiment was killed in action on 1 July 1917 in France and has no grave. He is remembered with honour on the wall of the Arras Memorial France. He was 34 years old.

Gunner William Cunningham of the Siege Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery died of his wounds at the 91 field hospital France on 28 July 1917. He is buried at the Coxyde Military Cemetery in Belgium. He was 31 years old.

They were my Nan's only brothers.

Carol Hull

Thomas Cunningham

Thomas Cunningham was the first child of Jesse and Emma Cunningham (née Glover) and was born in Q4-1882 and christened in St. Mary's Church, Platt on 14 January 1883. George and Emma Cunningham were married in Q2-1882 (Emma came from Trottiscliffe). (Note: Jesse and Emma had ten children and they were all registered at birth as Cullingham and seven of them were christened in St. Mary's Church, Platt with the surname of Cullingham. However, two children were registered at birth as Cullingham and then christened - one at St. Mary's Church, Platt and one at Wrotham Church as Cunningham. I am still looking for the christening of one child).

On the 1891 census, Jesse Cullingham was living at Brickyard Cottages, Wrotham with his wife and children: Thomas (9), Harriett (7), Henry (5), Rose (1) and Frank (4 months). Jesse's occupation was a horse driver. The 1901 census shows Jesse and Emma Cullingham living at Long Pond Cottages in Borough Green with their children - Thomas (18), a carter for a contractor, Harriett (17), a rag cutter at a paper mill, Henry (15), a labourer in a stone quarry, Rose (11), Frank (10), Minnie (7), Elizabeth (6) and John (1). Jesse is listed as a brickfield labourer.

By 1911, Jesse and Emma "Cunningham" were still living at Long Pond Cottages in Borough Green (cottages in Wrotham Road opposite the recently closed police station in Borough Green). Thomas (27) is a carter (working at home), Rose (21) is working in a paper mill, Frank (20) is a carter (working at home), Minnie (18) is working in a paper mill, Lizzie (16), John (11) and Albert (6) there is also an Annie Anderson living with them who is listed as a relative. Jessie is also a carter working at home.

On 6 April 1912 Thomas married Alice May Summers in the Malling registry office. Thomas was living at Long Pond Cottages, Borough Green and Alice was living in the High Street, Borough Green.

Thomas Cunningham enlisted at Maidstone and became a private (Service No: 207252) in the 7th Battalion of the Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment). He was killed in action on 22 October 1917. He is buried in No Man's Cot Cemetery, West Vlaanderen, Belgium and was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Further Information:

Note 1: I would like to thank Brian Perkins for coming forward with the name of Thomas Cunningham. Thomas Cunningham was one of three great uncles that Brian lost during the First World War. George and William Cunningham were the other two and are on the memorial in the Church of the Good Shepherd.

Note 2: Thomas is a cousin of George and William Cunningham. The mother of Thomas (Emma) is the younger sister of George and William Cunningham's mother (Eliza). Thomas' father Jesse is the younger brother of George, George and William's father.

Henry James Elliott

Henry was the youngest of two sons born to William and Dorcas Elliott (née Bennett) and christened in Wrotham on 3 July 1892. William and Dorcas were married in 1883 in Tonbridge. William was born in Ightham and Dorcas was born in Hadlow.

On the 1891 census William Elliott and his family were living in Long Pond Cottages, Wrotham Road, Borough Green; he was 31 and a general labourer. William Arthur George (Henry's brother) was 7 years old and at school.

The 1901 census shows William and his family living at Long Pond Cottages. William's occupation is now listed as sand pit labourer and William (junior) as a grocer's assistant.

The 1911 census shows the family still living at Long Pond Cottages. William's occupation is listed as general labourer in the sand pit and William (junior) and Henry were listed as general labourers in the stone quarry.

Henry James Elliott (G/5841) was a private in the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment and enlisted at Gravesend. He was killed in action on 4 August 1916 and is listed on the Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France.

Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France

On 1 July 1916, supported by a French attack to the south, thirteen divisions of Commonwealth forces launched an offensive on a line from north of Gommecourt to Marlcourt. Despite a preliminary bombardment lasting seven days, the German defences were barely touched and the attack met unexpectedly fierce resistance. Losses were catastrophic and, with only minimal advances on the southern flank, the initial attack was a failure. In the following weeks huge resources of manpower and equipment were deployed in an attempt to exploit the modest successes of the first day. However the German Army resisted tenaciously and repeated attacks and counter attacks meant a major battle for every village, copse and farmhouse gained. At the end of September Thiepval was finally captured. The village had been an original objective of 1 July. Attacks north and east continued throughout October and into November in increasingly difficult weather conditions. The Battle of the Somme finally ended on 18 November with the onset of winter. In the spring of 1917 the German forces fell back to their newly prepared defences, the Hindenburg Line, and there were no further significant engagements in the Somme sector until the Germans mounted their major offensive in March 1918.

The Thiepval Memorial, the Memorial to the Missing of the Somme, bears the names of more than 72,000 officers and men of the United Kingdom and South African forces who died in the Somme sector before 20 March 1918 and have no known grave. Over 90% of those commemorated died between July and November 1916. The memorial also serves as 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. The memorial, designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, was built between 1928 and 1932 and unveiled by the Prince of Wales, in the presence of the President of France, on 1 August 1932 (originally scheduled for 16 May but due to the death of French President Doumer the ceremony was postponed until August).

(Source: Commonwealth War Graves Commission)

Alfred James Evans

Alfred was christened on 25 May 1899 at Wrotham and was born to Joseph George and Minnie Evans (née Glover). Joseph George and Minnie were married in 1895.

On the 1901 census Joseph George Evans (although shown as George) is 27 and living in cottages at the top of Basted Lane. He is living with his wife Minnie, who was born in Offham, and their two sons Ernest (4) born in Offham and Alfred (11 months) born in Ightham Joseph's occupation is an agricultural labourer and he was born in Wrotham.

I have had difficulty in finding the family on the 1911 census but I believe they may have been living in Moncktons Cottages, High Street, Borough Green. Joseph George is a labourer at a Kent ragstone quarry, Ernest (14) is listed as boy working in flour store and Alfred (11) is at school. There are three additional children all born in Borough Green, Edith Grace (9), Georgina (7) and Frederick John (3).

Alfred was a rifleman in the 12th Battalion of the Royal Irish Rifles and died on 6 June 1918 at the age of 19. He is listed on the Tyne Cot Memorial, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium.

Tyne Cot Memorial, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium

The Tyne Cot Memorial is one of four memorials to the missing in Belgian Flanders which cover the area known as the Ypres Salient. Broadly speaking the Salient stretched from Langemarck in the north to the northern edge in Ploegsteert Wood in the south, but it varied in area and shape throughout the war. The Salient was formed during the First Battle of Ypres in October and November 1914 when a small British Expeditionary Force succeeded in securing the town before the onset of winter, pushing the German forces back to the Passchendaele Ridge. The Second Battle of Ypres began in April 1915 when the Germans released poison gas into the Allied lines north of Ypres. This was the first time gas had been used by either side and the violence of the attack forced an Allied withdrawal and a shortening of the line of defence. There was little more significant activity on this front until 1917 when, in the Third Battle of Ypres, an offensive was mounted by Commonwealth forces to divert German attention from a weakened French front further south. The initial attempt in June to dislodge the Germans from Messines Ridge was a complete success but the main assault north-eastward, which began at the end of July, quickly became a dogged struggle against determined opposition and the rapidly deteriorating weather. The campaign finally came to a close in November with the capture of Passchendaele.

The memorial forms the north-eastern boundary of TYNE COT CEMETERY which was established around a captured German blockhouse or pill-box used as an advanced dressing station. The original battlefield cemetery of 343 graves was greatly enlarged after the Armistice when remains were brought in from the battlefields of Passchendaele and Langemarck and from a few small burial grounds. It is now the largest Commonwealth war cemetery in the world in terms of burials. At the suggestion of King George V, who visited the cemetery in 1922, the Cross of Sacrifice was placed on the original large pill-box. There are three other pill-boxes in the cemetery.

Ernest Joseph Fogg



Ernest Joseph Fogg was born in 1877 in Fyfield, Essex. He is the third son of Charles and Lucy Fogg who were married in 1870. In 1871 census informs us that Charles is a farmer of 13 acres.

By 1901, I believe Ernest is boarding at 324 Woolwich Road, Charlton, London and he is an engine labourer aged 23. In 1908 he married Mabel Alice Woods in the registration district of Hungerford and on 25 October 1908 their daughter Margaret Lucy Fogg was born. Margaret was baptised on 9 January 1909 at St James in Weybridge. They were living at The Crescent, Weybridge and Ernest's occupation is listed as gardener.

In 1911, he was aged 33 living with his wife, Mabel, and daughter, Margaret, in a cottage on the green in Clopton near Woodbridge, Suffolk. At this time, Ernest was working as a labourer for the district council. I understand from Ernest's family that Ernest was a gardener and Mabel a cook in a big house near Tonbridge, where they had tied accommodation. This does match information recorded that Ernest was living in Tonbridge

just before the war and that this is where he enlisted.

Ernest was a Private (Service No: 203943) in the 3rd/4th Battalion of the Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment) and was killed in action on 7 July 1917 at the age of 40. He is buried at the Sunken Road Cemetery, Fampoux, Pas de Calais, France.

Unfortunately, Ernest died 22 days after his second daughter, Ruby J Fogg, was born on 29 July 1917 in Bromley where his wife and children were living in tied accommodation and upon his death they had to leave their home. We cannot be certain as to when the family arrived in Borough Green however the Commonwealth War Grave Commission list his wife Mabel as living at 10 Rock Road, Borough Green. It is possible that Mabel returned to an area she knew.

The family and I have searched memorials in Bromley and the Tonbridge area and have been unable to find Ernest J Fogg listed. His wife Mabel thought he had been listed on the War Memorial at Tonbridge but thought his name had been spelt incorrectly on the memorial as the inscription reads Ernest J Fagg (this is not the case, as I have done some further research and an Ernest J Fagg from Tonbridge was killed during the war). It appears that Ernest J Fogg may have "fallen through the net" and does not seem to have been included on a memorial. Therefore the Borough Green Parish Council have decided to include Ernest on the Borough Green memorial.

Source: ancestry.co.uk & freebmd.org.uk

Photograph and additional information is courtesy of Hilary Hughes, wife of Ernest Fogg's Grandson.

Ernest C Hood

Ernest Charles Hood was born on 9 December 1888 in Malling, Kent and died on 6 August 1918 at the age of 29 in Shotley, Suffolk (Registration District: Samford, Suffolk).

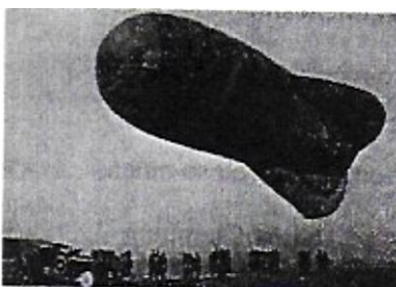
Ernest was the son of Mark and Eliza Hood who were living in Park Barn Road, Ryarsh in 1891 and was one of eleven children. His father was a farm labourer. On the 1901 census the family were still living in the village of Ryarsh and Mark Hood's occupation is listed as agricultural labourer and Ernest is listed as a domestic houseboy. In 1911, Ernest C Hood was 23 years old, single and a police constable with the Kent Constabulary based at a police station in Broadstairs, Kent. His parents were still living in Ryarsh at Stone Bridge Cottage and his father's occupation is listed as farm labourer.

In 1912, Ernest married Ellen Harriet Gurr who was christened at Wrotham on 20 May 1888. In 1901 Ellen and her parents (Jesse and Annie Gurr) were living in Western Road, Borough Green. Unfortunately, Ellen died in 1915 and Ernest married her younger sister Annie Sophia Gurr (1915) who was also christened at Wrotham on 2 November 1890.

Ernest's Service Record

Ernest joined the Royal Navy on 29 June 1915 and appears to have served at various land bases including the Royal Naval Depot in Port Said, Egypt in the Kite Balloon section. He returned to England and on 19 February 1918 transferred to the RNAS Base in Shotley, Suffolk until 31 March when he appears to have been transferred to the RAF.

Note: Shotley was a Kite Balloon Base used by the RAF/RNAS from 1914 until November 1918. The Shotley Kite Balloon Base was for four balloons and was redesignated a 12 Balloon Base.



Kite Balloon

Kite balloons with tail fins to give stability in wind were developed and it was this type of balloon that saw service in both World Wars.

Newspaper Report (Funeral):

WROTHAM

THE LATE SERGT. E. HOOD – the funeral took place in Wrotham Churchyard last week of Sergt. E. Hood, Balloon Section of the Royal Air Force, who, before joining up, was a member of the Kent County Constabulary, acting on the clerical staff at Chatham Police Station. A native of Ryarsh and only thirty years of age, he served in Egypt for about two years and on his return a few months ago was stationed at Shotley, where he was injured as a result of an accident and died three days later in Hospital. The remains were removed to the home of his father-in-law at Borough Green and the Rector, the Rev. Sir C. J. M. Shaw, conducted the funeral service. To show their respect for the deceased some 30 members of the Kent County Constabulary attended, including Detective Inspector Cochrane, Sergts. Golding, Stolton and Day, and PCs Walters, Riches, Wood, Stuckfield and Chapman. Under the direction of Supt. Ford of Malling, Sergts. Emptage, Neame, Hampshire, Cutting and others acted as pall bearers and lowered the coffin into the grave. There were many beautiful floral tributes. Deceased had lost a brother in the war - Mrs Hood and family wished to thank all kind friends for sympathy in their sad bereavement and for flowers sent.

(Source Kent Messenger August 24, 1918)

John Mercer

4855 Pte. J. Mercer (Borough Green),
7th Batt. Royal West Kent Regiment



John was christened on 16 February 1896 at Wrotham and was born to John and Annie Mercer, he was one of nine children. John Mercer married Annie (née Gardener) on 7 August 1893 in Plaxtol, Kent.

The 1901 census shows John Mercer (John's father) living in Spencer's Cottages, Wrotham (now in Station Road, Borough Green). He is living with his wife Annie and six children. John's occupation is listed as coal carter and he was born in Ightham.

The 1911 census shows the Mercer family were living in Station Road, Borough Green. John's father was a quarryman at a ragstone quarry and John was listed as garden boy.

The Kent Messenger ran an article on 9 September 1916 from John's mother reporting him wounded and requesting further information on her son. The address given was given 5 Station Road, Borough Green.

Unfortunately, Private John Mercer died on 1 July 1916 at the age of 20 and is listed on the Thiepval Memorial in the Somme, France.

Charles Frederick Merton

The 1911 census informs us that Charles Frederick Merton was born in Ashford. He was boarding with Thomas and Amelia Bashford and their family in Western Road, Borough Green. Charles was 29 and working as a labourer in a stone quarry.

On 8 November 1913, at St George's Church in Wrotham, Charles married Lizzie Mallion, a local girl living at Sunnyside, Borough Green. The parish register records Charles occupation as a labourer and his address as Western Road, Borough Green.

Charles Frederick Merton (Service No: G/13509) enlisted at Maidstone and became a private in the Royal Sussex Regiment and was killed in action on 30 December 1916. He is buried at the Philosophe British Cemetery, Mazingarbe, Pas de Calais, France.

After the war, Lizzie re-married on 25 April 1920 at St Peter's Church, Ightham. Her new husband was Joseph Fletcher, an engine driver from Ightham.

Herbert Samuel Mitchell

(Article from local paper April 1918)

Lieut H S Mitchell (Borough Green)
Royal West Kent Regiment
Killed in Action



Lieut. H S Mitchell, Royal West Kent Regiment, only son of Mr and Mrs S Mitchell of Basted Cottage, Borough Green, has been killed at the Front. Joining the Army shortly after war broke out, he was given a commission in the Royal West Kent Regiment after twelve months' service in the ranks. He went to France on October 24th 1916 and was attached to the London Regiment. Shortly afterwards he was appointed Intelligence Officer to his battalion. With his regiment he took part in the subsequent fighting and was killed by a shell while going up into the line on the morning on March 21st, aged 21 years. Sympathetic letters have been received from several officers. His Colonel, writing to the father from hospital in England, says

“My feeling of deepest sympathy for you and for his mother is all the greater as Sammy was one of the dearest boys I have ever met. He was so loyal and true, such a favourite with us all; he had been with me such a long time that I feel his loss the more. I recollect one day last summer, the General had called to see me and Sammy came to speak to me about something. The General, after he had gone, said to me “What a nice boy”. I then told him that if ever I had a boy, I would wish to have a boy like Sammy. I have lost many friends in this war, but none have I felt quite so much as the loss of Sammy. May it be some consolation for you to know that the end came so suddenly that he can know nothing of it. As I was wounded by the same shell and Sammy was walking by my side I am quite certain of that. Let our feelings of grief at his loss be mingled with a feeling of thankfulness for that.”

Margaret and Richard Jeffery

Joseph Charles Moorecroft

Joseph Charles Moorecroft was born in 1897, in Ightham, to Joseph Charles and Thirza Moorcroft (née Hinnell); he was the youngest of two children. His parents Joseph and Thirza were married in the Malling area in 1895. Joseph and Thirza had two children, Eva Dorothy born in 1895 and Joseph Charles in 1897.

On the 1901 census Joseph Charles (Senior) and his family were living in Ightham along with his father-in-law, Josiah Hinnell (widow). Joseph's occupation is listed as paper maker finisher, his wife was a dressmaker and Josiah Hinnell as a domestic gardener (Josiah was born in Coney Weston, Suffolk).

On the 1911 census Joseph Charles and his family were living at 11 Sunnyside, Borough Green. Joseph Charles (Senior) is listed as a paper finisher at Basted Paper Mill, his wife Thirza was a dressmaker, their daughter Eva Dorothy was a dressmaker's apprentice and Joseph Charles (Junior), aged 14, is listed as a baker's errand boy.

Joseph was a private in the 10th Battalion of the Buffs (East Kent) Regiment and was killed in action on 13 August 1918 at the age of 21. He is listed on the Loos Memorial, Pas de Calais, France.

He was awarded the 1914-1915 Star, British War Medal and the Victory Medal (more affectionately known as Pip, Squeak and Wilfred). As well as being listed on the war memorial in the Church of the Good Shepherd, Joseph Charles Moorecroft is also listed on Ightham's War Memorial.

Note: Pip, Squeak and Wilfred 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.

Edward George Newman

Edward was born in 1891 at 5 Thong Lane, with the family later moving to Basted Lane. He joined the Royal Field Artillery and reached the rank of Sergeant. He died on 5 October 1917 and is buried at the Etaples Military Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France. He was awarded the DCM (Distinguished Conduct Medal) with the citation "for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. He has been in command of his sub-section for over two years, and has done consistently good work. His good example under the most trying circumstances has been invaluable to the other ranks of the battery. During the recent operations he was wounded while trying to extinguish a fire in his gun-pit under heavy fire."



Margaret and Richard Jeffery

Sidney George Pearce

Sidney was born in 1881 in Sevenoaks. He is the oldest of three children born to George and Esther Pearce. George was born in Barming and Esther was born in Bramley, Hampshire and they were married in Sevenoaks in 1880. The 1881 census shows George and Esther living at the Elephant's Head, St John's, Sevenoaks, their occupations were beerhouse keeper and beerhouse keeper's wife.



By 1891 George Pearce and his family were living at the Borough Green Hotel (this became the Railway Inn which changed its name to the Henry Simmonds and this is now being turned into a local Sainsburys). George was the licensed victualler of the hotel and his three children were at school Sidney G (9), Frederick W (8) and Esther G (3).

On the 1901 census George Pearce and his family were still at the Borough Green Hotel. George's occupation is listed as hotel pub keeper, Sidney's occupation is listed as groom/yard manager (Hotel) and Frederick was a coachman's apprentice.

On the 1911 census George Pearce and his family were now living at the White House, Sevenoaks Road, Borough Green. George was now an employer and ran his own saddlers business. Sidney was the only child still living with his parents and his occupation is listed as clothiers assistant.

Sidney was a private in the 12th Battalion of the Royal Sussex Regiment and was killed in action on the 25th September 1917 and is buried in the Hooze Crater Cemetery, West Vlaanderen, Belgium. However, Sidney was originally buried in a smaller/isolated cemetery and a document dated 6th June 1919 provides a map reference of where his body was found and that his body was identified by a waterproof sheet. His body was exhumed and reburied in Hooze Crater Cemetery. This was an established war grave cemetery where the Commonwealth War Grave Commission could ensure proper commemoration.

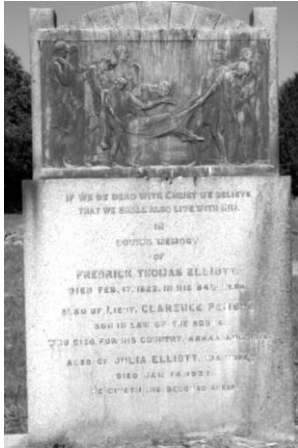
There is also a memorial to Sidney George Pearce on the gravestone of his parents, George and Esther Pearce who are buried in the Wrotham Churchyard Extension.

Clarence Pemble

Of the 17 names listed at the back of the Church of the Good Shepherd, this one proved to be the most difficult to trace. I started with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission website and once I had entered my search criteria only two names were listed:

Name	Rank (Service Number)	Date of Death (Age)	Regiment / Service	Cemetery / Memorial Name (Grave / Memorial Ref.)
PEMBLE, C	Rifleman (49153)	09/10/1918	Rifle Brigade	FLESQUIERES HILL BRITISH CEMETERY (IV.B.27.)
PEMBLE, CLARENCE ARTHUR LYON	Second Lieutenant	01/08/1918 (28)	The Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment)	ARRAS MEMORIAL (Bay 2)

I originally thought that the first record was possibly the one we wanted however I needed to prove that this was Clarence Pemble. Using other sources of information available the above C Pemble (Service No: 49153) is listed as Charles Pemble who was born in Northwood, Kent and his residence is shown as Chatham. I therefore turned my attention to Clarence Arthur Lyon Pemble but I was finding it difficult to link this Clarence with Borough Green or the surrounding area. However, on a trip to the Wrotham (St George) Churchyard Extension, I came across the following gravestone which gave me the breakthrough I needed:



IN LOVING MEMORY OF
FREDERICK THOMAS ELLIOTT
DIED FEB 17 1922. IN HIS 64TH YEAR

ALSO OF LIEUT. CLARENCE PEMBLE
SON IN LAW OF THE ABOVE
WHO DIED FOR HIS COUNTRY, ARRAS,
AUG 1918
ALSO OF JULIA ELLIOTT, HIS WIFE
DIED JAN 14 1937

Clarence was born and christened in Birchington, Kent on 25 January 1888. He is the son of Arthur Henry and Charlotte Hannah Pemble (nee Homewood). On the 1891 census Arthur Henry Pemble was the publican of the Accorn Public House, Park Lane, Birchington, Thanet. He was living with his wife, Charlotte Hannah, and their three children, Ashton H (9), Madoline (6) and Clarence (3). In 1901, the census shows Arthur and his family living at 11 York Terrace, Birchington, Thanet. Arthur is now an insurance agent, Ashton is a carpenter and joiner and Clarence is a plumber's apprentice. The 1911 census shows Arthur and his family living at "Beverly", 2 Paddock Road, Birchington. Arthur is a jobbing gardener and Clarence is a clerk at a gas works. Also listed with the family is a visitor Hannah Elliott (Clarence's future wife). Hannah's occupation is a dressmaker.

Although Hannah was living with Clarence in Birchington, the 1911 census for her parents show Frederick Thomas and Julia Elliot living in a council house in Borough Green. Frederick Thomas was an insurance inspector for Wrotham Council, his wife Julia and daughter Alice are shown as domestic duties at home, Amy was an apprentice milliner and drapery at Coleman's Stores, Doris (11) and Frederick Maynard Elliott (8) were at school (Note: Frederick Maynard was born in Birchington, Kent). Also listed is Frederick's brother, Harry Elliott, who is 25 and is a ship's officer 1st mate in the mercantile marine. I also noticed that Frederick Thomas was the enumerator for the 1911 census.

In 1911, Clarence married Hannah Elliott (daughter of Frederick and Julia Elliott) at All Saints Church in Birchington and they had a daughter (Audrey M) who was born in 1916. Hannah's father Frederick Thomas Elliot was a surveyor and inspector and when he died on the 17th February 1922 his probate record shows his address as Borough Green House, Borough Green, Kent. Effects: £1,128 2s 9d (£57,817.08 in 2015).

Clarence Arthur Lyon Pemble died at the age of 28 on 1 August 1918 and was a Second Lieutenant in the 8th Battalion of The Queen's Royal West Surrey Regiment. His name appears on the Arras Memorial, Pas de Calais, France. Clarence Arthur Lyon Pemble is also listed on the Birchington War Memorial.

Frank John Powell

Unfortunately, Frank Powell has been very difficult to trace but, according to records of soldiers that died in the Great War, I do know that he was residing in Borough Green when he enlisted and had a sister (Emma Matilda Carter née Powell) living in Borough Green.

I believe Emma and her younger brother Frank had a very poor start in life and I think I have found them on the 1881 census which shows them living in the Maidstone Union Workhouse School, East Farleigh. Emma (5) and Frank (4) were both listed as paupers and, according to this census, both were born in Maidstone (there is a birth of a Frank John Powell registered in Maidstone in June 1877). I am unable to find any parents.

By 1891, Frank Powell is still listed as living in the Maidstone Union Workhouse School, East Farleigh. He is now 15 years old and is listed as a pauper/scholar. I believe Emma has moved on and I have found an Emma Powell working as a domestic servant in Snodland.

Emma Matilda Powell married Henry Carter in the spring of 1898 in the Malling registration area and by 1901 they were living at 3 Chapel Street, Ightham (near Red Lion Inn) with their daughter Clara (3). Henry was employed as a stone quarryman.

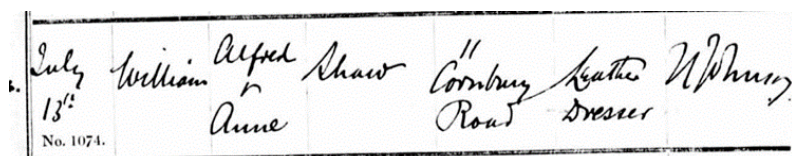
In 1911, Emma and Henry were living at East View, Bank Cottages, Station Road, Borough Green with two daughters, Clara Alma (12) and Emily Dorothy (9), and Henry was employed as a foreman in a ragstone quarry. Frank John Powell (Service No: 265512) enlisted in Grimsby but was residing in Borough Green, Kent. He was a private in the 4th Battalion of the Lincolnshire Regiment and was killed in action on 26 September 1917 at the age of 39. He is buried in the Dochy Farm New British Cemetery, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium.

Other than the above information, I am currently unable to find any further information on Frank John Powell and have been unable to find him after the 1891 census.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission shows Mrs E M Carter living at 2 Kent Terrace, Borough Green and this information would be from the early 1920s.

William Shaw

William Shaw was baptised on 13 July 1886 at St Katherine's, Rotherhithe and is the son of Alfred and Anne/Annie Shaw. At the time of William's birth, Alfred was employed as a leather dresser



William's Baptism 1886 - St Katherine, Rotherhithe

The 1891 census shows Alfred and Annie living at 29 Smith's Building, Bermondsey (Leather Market area) with three children : Alice (12) a scholar, Rose (6) and William (5). Alfred's occupation is leather dresser. On the 1901 census, Alfred and Annie were living in the Claygate Hop Houses (Huts), near Basted with two children Rose (15) and William (15). Alfred was a carter on a farm.

The 1911 census - Alfred and Annie were boarding at 15 Rock Road, Borough Green. There is no occupation listed for Alfred or Annie and it tells us that they had been married 20 years and had 13 children, 3 were living and 10 had died!

Meanwhile, William Shaw (Service No: L/8260) joined the Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment) and the 1911 census shows William in Robert's Barracks, Peshawar, India. He is a soldier in the 2nd Battalion of the Royal West Kent Regiment. He was 23 years old and single. On 15 August 1914, William was posted to

France/Flanders and was part of the 1st Battalion of the Royal West Kent Regiment. I believe he was wounded in action and transferred back to England to the Royal Victoria Military Hospital in Hampshire. Unfortunately William died of his wounds on 6 October 1914 at the age of 29. He is buried in the Netley Military Cemetery in Hampshire. He received the 1914 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

(Note: Netley Millitary Cemetery is a permanent military cemetery, the property of the Ministry of Defence. The cemetery was at the back of the Royal Victoria Military Hospital and was used during both wars for burials from the hospital.)

Walter Sills

Walter was baptised on 6 November 1892 in Tovil, Maidstone, Kent and is the son of James Collin and Anne Sills (née King) who were married in the Malling area Q4-1867.

The 1901 census shows John and Ann living at 11 Beaconsfield Terrace, Maidstone, Kent with their family, Frederick (22) a stonemason, Beatrice (18) a draper's shop assistant and Walter (8). John's occupation is a stonemason.

By 1911, Walter had left home and is listed as a hotel waiter at the Calverley Hotel, Crescent Park, Tunbridge Wells (aged 18). Meanwhile, his father is listed with his wife Ann still living at 11 Beaconsfield Terrace, Tovil, Maidstone. His occupation is still a stonemason but shows that he is working within a quarry.

Walter Sills (Service No: 103057) was a Gunner in the Royal Field Artillery and was killed in action on 21 October 1916 at the age of 24. He is buried in the Peake Wood Cemetery, Fricourt, Somme, France.

**Newspaper Report:
Gunner W Sills (Borough Green)
R.G.A.
KILLED IN ACTION**

Gunner Sills joined up 29th June 1915, arrived in France September 2nd, 1915, had his 24th birthday September 4th, 1916, and was killed in action October 21st. He was formerly employed by Messrs Chittenden and Simmons at Borough Green, and was esteemed by all who knew him. His Major writes: — "November 5th, 1916. Dear Mrs Sills, I deeply regret to inform you that your son, No. 103057 Gunner W. Sills, was killed, in action on the 21st October 1916. It may be some small consolation to you to know that he was killed instantaneously and suffered no pain of any sort. He died in the forefront of the battle for his King and Country, and no man can do more. I would like you to know what a respect I had for your son while he has been in my battery. I have always found him sober, industrious, and well-behaved, an excellent man in every respect. He was buried with full military honours in a cemetery well behind the lines and a cross has been erected over his grave."



Source: Kent Messenger 2 December 1916

Further Information:

Walter Sills was employed by Chittenden and Simmons at Borough Green before joining the RGA. I believe that Chittenden and Simmons may have operated out of Isles Quarry, Borough Green:

Chittenden and Simmons (Maidstone)

By 1875 Chittenden, Knight and Co were one of the largest owners of steam ploughing and threshing machinery in the UK. The ploughing business continued to be very successful until the general depression in agriculture largely reduced the area of arable land. About this time the firm added steam-rolling to their other operations. Edmund Barrow Chittenden took into partnership Mr Percy A Simmons and the firm developed further their road-contracting business, and purchased some quarries. In 1906 the business was converted into a limited company, with head offices in Maidstone, and carried out large contracts for tarmacadam and bituminous road surfaces for the Kent County Council, the London County Council, and other public bodies.

Source: Grace's Guide to British Industrial History

Arthur Robert Taylor

The parish register for Emmanuel Church, West Dulwich, Surrey lists Arthur's christening as 22nd February 1891. Arthur is the son of Henry and Sarah Taylor (née Webb), the family's address is shown as 56 Hamilton Road and Henry's occupation is gardener. On the 1891 census Henry and his wife Sarah were living at 65 Hamilton Road, Lambeth with three children: Charles (5), Alice (3) and Robert (under 3 months). Henry's occupation is domestic gardener.

By the 1901 census, Henry and his family had moved and were now living at Black Horse Lane, Borough Green. The children listed are Charles (15), Alice (13), Arthur (10) and Ellen (7). Henry's occupation was still domestic gardener and Charles is listed as a mill hand. The 1911 census shows Henry and Sarah living with Arthur in Western Road, Borough Green. Henry's occupation is listed as gardener and Arthur is a baker.

Arthur Robert Taylor was a Lance Corporal (No:18960) and died of wounds on 18 April 1917 at the age of 25. He was in the 6th Battalion of the Queen's Own (Royal West Kent) Regiment and is buried at the Etaples Military Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France.

Newspaper Report:

TAYLOR — Lance-Corpl. A. R. Taylor, Royal West Kents, the dearly loved youngest son of Mr and Mrs Taylor; Western Road, Borough Green, died of wounds at Etaples, Canadian Hospital, France, on April 18th, aged 25 years.

Source: Kent Messenger, 5 May 1917

Reginald Frank Thorndycraft



Reginald was born on 3 July 1896 in Basted and was christened at St Peter's Church in Ightham on the 18th October 1896. His parents, William and Jessie Mary Thorndycraft (nee Green), were married in 1892 in the registration district of Wandsworth. William was born in East Farleigh, Kent and Jessie was born in N.W. London.

The 1901 census shows William Thorndycraft living with his wife Jessie and all five of their children at Basted Lodge. The children are Augusta Alice (8), Arthur (6), Reginald (4), Elsie (3) and Horace (1). William's occupation is listed as gardener domestic.

On the 1911 census William Thorndycraft and his family were still living at Basted Lodge. William's occupation is listed as gardener to estate, Arthur (16) was a carpenter, Reginald (14) is also a gardener to estate, Elsie (13) and Horace (11) were at school.

Reginald's service record shows that he joined the Kings Royal Rifle Corps at Maidstone on 3 September 1914 at the age of 19. He was living at Basted Lodge, Borough Green and his occupation was gardener. He was Church of England. The service record informs us that he was at home from when he enlisted to 20 July 1915 and was posted to France 31st July 1915 until his death on 3 September 1916.

Newspaper Reports:

966 Rifleman R. F. Thorndycraft (Borough Green),
11th Battalion King's Royal Rifles.
KILLED IN ACTION.

The painful news has been received by Mr and Mrs Thorndycraft, Basted Lodge, Borough Green, of the death of their second son, aged 20. He joined the colours on September 3rd, 1916, and after nine months' training in England, went to the Front on July 21st, 1915. The following letter has been received by the parents from his Lieutenant: - "Dear Madam, — It is with the greatest regret that I have to inform you of the death of your son, Rifleman Thorndycraft. He was killed in action on the afternoon of September 4th during the fight which was taking place then. Your son had been in my platoon as a stretcher bearer ever since the battalion was formed, practically for two years, and both in England and out here, more especially out here, I have always known him

to be the most gallant soldier I have met. On every possible occasion he had distinguished himself for coolness under fire and devotion to duty, and he met his death still gallantly attending to wounded men under very heavy shell fire. I had myself sent in his name for reward some two months ago, but unfortunately it had not time to pass through the various headquarters. His loss is very deeply felt by all his comrades, and by myself, who have always held him in such admiration, and I can sympathise most fully with you in your great loss. But I am sure you will be proud to know you had such a gallant son, and that he died in such a worthy manner. — I remain, yours sincerely, Gerald Meredith, Lieut.”

Source: Kent Messenger, 16 September 1916

Reginald was awarded the Military Medal and his name was listed in the third supplement of The London Gazette on 19 January 1917:

War Office, 22nd January, 1917.

His Majesty the KING has been graciously pleased to award the Military Medal for bravery in the field to the undermentioned Ladies, Non-Commissioned Officers and men: R.966 Pte. R. F. Thorndycraft, late K. R. Rif. C.

He is remembered on the Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France.

Arthur Leonard Austen Tomlyn

There is a memorial on a Tomlyn family grave in the burial ground of the Borough Green Baptist Church to Arthur Leonard Austen Tomlyn.

He was born in Highworth, Swindon, in 1899 and is the son of Arthur Leonard and Kate Tomlyn. His father, Arthur, was an ironmonger and was running his own ironmongers' business at 33 Regent Circus, Swindon. By 1911, Arthur and Kate Tomlyn had moved and were now living 52 Hillcrest Road, Acton, Middlesex. Arthur and Kate now have three children, Kate (16), Austen (12) and Rose (8). However, although Arthur is still an ironmonger, he is now a worker rather than an employer.

The connection to Borough Green is through Arthur's grandparents (William and Ann Eliza Tomlyn). Arthur Leonard Tomlyn (Arthur's father) was born in 1870 and baptised in Wrotham Church on 23 August 1879. In 1871, Arthur's grandparents were living in Wrotham (near Wrotham Place) with three children, Frank (5), Ernest (3) and Arthur L (1), Ann's brother, George Austen, a butcher and two servants. I believe William was doing very well as his occupation is listed as, master builder employing 17 men and a boy, master saddler employing 1 man and a boy and master butcher employing 1 man and a boy. Unfortunately he died at the age of 34 on 7 April 1875 and is buried at Borough Green's Baptist Church along with his wife who died 17 years later.

No service record survives for Arthur Leonard Austen Tomlyn (Service No: 22937 & 42213) but we do know that he enlisted at Swindon and originally joined the Duke of Edinburgh's (Wiltshire) Regiment. He later joined the 1st Battalion of the Worcestershire Regiment and died on 12 August 1918 at the age of 19. He is buried in the Hautmont Communal Cemetery, France, and was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

The memorial at the Baptist Church informs us that he died a POW at Hautmont which is in France (very close to the Belgian boarder). The Commonwealth War Graves Commission informs us that Hautmont was captured by the Germans in the early days of the First World War, and it remained in their hands until retaken by the 42nd (East Lancashire) Division on 8 November 1918. The communal cemetery was used by the German troops for the burial of their dead, and the Allied prisoners who died in the local German hospitals and were buried there by the authorities of the town. (Note: There was a German War Hospital in Hautmont).

Harry Waters

Henry Waters was born on 4 November 1898 and christened in 1899 at St Mary's, Platt. He was one of five children born to Henry and Florence Elizabeth Waters (née Bennett). Henry and Florence were married in the Malling area in 1895.

On the 1901 census, Henry and his wife were living in Forge Lane, Wrotham with two children, Ellen (5) and Henry (2). Henry's occupation is shown as fishmonger on own account. Also living with the family is Henry's mother-in-law, Mercy Bennett, who is a widow and her occupation is paper mill hand/rag cutter.

In the 1911 census, Henry and his wife were living in Station Road, Borough Green with four children Ellen (15) a domestic servant, Henry (12), Alice Annie (9) and William George (2). Henry's occupation is shown as fish hawker on own account and still living with the family is Henry's mother-in-law, Mercy Bennett, whose occupation is shown as mill hand at Basted Paper Mill (Mercy was born in St Mary's Platt, Kent).

Henry's Service Record – Henry was a Private and his service record shows that he joined the Royal West Kent Regiment at Maidstone on 6 February 1915 at the age of 18 (note: his date of birth is listed at 4 November 1896!). He was living in Station Road, Borough Green and his occupation was labourer. He was a Baptist. The service record informs us that he was at home when he enlisted to 30 September 1915 and was posted to France as part of the British Expeditionary Force on 1 October 1915 until his death on 7 May 1916. He served for 1 year and 91 days.

His next of kin is listed as Henry Waters of Station Road, Borough Green. The casualty form within his service record informs us that he was wounded on 6 April 1916 with gunshot wounds and died following the amputation of his right leg and left foot at 3:30am on 7 May 1916.

Henry is buried in the Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension in France. The Commonwealth War Grave Commission has his age at death as 17 (this would correspond with his true date of birth of 1898).