

TEN HEDGERLEY MEN FROM THE GREAT WAR





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Hedgerley Historical Society

Front cover photo – War Memorial in St.Mary's Church, Hedgerley
Inside front cover photo –Roll of Honour, Hedgerley Memorial Hall
Photos courtesy of John Lovelock

Dedicated to the memory of Judith Broadgate

Sadly, one of our research team, Judith Broadgate, died during the production of this book, but her research that is included in this publication is a wonderful legacy of her investigative and written skills, and her family can be rightly proud of her contribution.



Judith Broadgate outside the National Archives, Kew in November 2014
Photo courtesy of John Lovelock

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank members of the research team: Chris White, Judith Broadgate, Neil Coxhead and Mary Lane who have, for the duration of the project, dedicated themselves to making a detailed written memorial to the ten men.

John Lovelock

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FOREWORD

Between 1914 and 1918, over 44,000 men from Buckinghamshire served in the armed forces and over 8,000 died as a result of that wartime service. In addition to the locally raised Territorial units - the Bucks Battalions and the Royal Bucks Hussars - and the wartime service battalions of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, the names recorded on the county's war memorials represent every conceivable military unit, and every theatre of war.

Through the ready availability of service, medal and pension records, as well as other national military records, the collections of the Centre for Bucks Studies, and the local press, there is so much that can now be found out about wartime servicemen and their experiences. It remains, however, an often-frustrating exercise because records are frequently incomplete. It requires, therefore, a great deal of effort to recover lost lives when all those who fought in the Great War have passed away, and the living links with that generation are also diminishing.

Consequently, the work being undertaken by groups such as the Hedgerley Historical Society is invaluable. In the case of Hedgerley and Hedgerley Dean, the story of the ten men commemorated on the war memorial is further illuminated by vignettes of village life such as brick and tile making as well as the wider service of villagers: eighty-eight of those connected with the village enlisted.

The centenary of the Great War gives us a unique opportunity to gain a real understanding of the significance of what took place between 1914 and 1918. I am delighted to be able to welcome the publication of the work of the Hedgerley Historical Society.

***Professor Ian F.W. Beckett, Professor of Military History,
University of Kent and Honorary Secretary, Bucks Military
Museum Trust***

INTRODUCTION

In 1914 the combined population of the adjoining parishes of Hedgerley and Hedgerley Dean was 250, and of these, eighty-eight able bodied men left the village to fight for their country in what became known as the Great War. Sadly, ten of these men did not survive and a memorial was erected inside St. Mary's Church shortly after the end of the war to commemorate them. Every year during the Remembrance Day Service in St. Mary's Hedgerley wreaths are laid by the Scouts and the Royal British Legion. More recently a memorial stone has been erected in memory of one of the ten men who was buried in St. Mary's Churchyard.

As the centenary of the Great War approached in 2013 initiatives were launched both at a national and local level to encourage local communities to commemorate the people in their villages, towns and cities who served their country and, in many cases, gave their lives for King and Country.

Hedgerley Historical Society (HHS) decided in February 2013 to commence a research project to discover more about their short lives growing up in Hedgerley before the war, their families, their experiences in the theatre of war and the legacy of their death on family and the wider community. We hoped that the research would provide us with a greater insight into life in Hedgerley one hundred years ago and possibly reveal unknown photographs and documents from this period in our history.

Firstly, an appeal was launched for volunteers amongst HHS members to assist in the research and the first project meeting was held in October 2013. An appeal was then made using local media for relatives to share photographs, letters and memories.

We soon discovered that our research would have to be more detailed as there are few living relatives of the ten men still living in the area. The 1911 census also revealed that only four of the men were living in the village prior to the outbreak of war. Research has found that their connections to Hedgerley were diverse, as shown in the table on the next page.

Our study has revealed a lot of information on the lives of the men and life in the village, in particular from census and parish records, school log books, parish council minutes, local directories, estate records (specifically Hedgerley Park and Bulstrode Manor) and war diaries.

One theme that has emerged is the influence of Mrs Stevenson (and her daughters) from Hedgerley Park on the life of the church, school, parish council and property management in the village for almost eighty years from their arrival in 1881, and there is considerable scope for a further publication to celebrate this remarkable family.

John Lovelock

September 2017

Surname	First Name(s)	Hedgerley Connections
BIRCH	William Joseph	Grew up at Pennlands, Hedgerley Dean
BODDY	William Fairfax	Born in and grew up in Hedgerley
BOWDEN	Christopher William	Born in and grew up in Hedgerley
COX	George	Moved to Hedgerley in his late teens
HARRIS	Charles Buoyant	Born in and grew up in Hedgerley
HEARNE	Thomas	Born in and grew up in Hedgerley
HOBBS	Jesse	Born in and grew up in Hedgerley
PINER	Francis Edmund	Lived in Collum Green prior to the War
STEVENSON	George Herbert	Related by marriage to Mrs Stevenson of Hedgerley Park
STOCKWELL	Philip John	Lived in Hedgerley Dean prior to the War

Contents

Acknowledgements	3
Foreword	5
Introduction	6
Birch, William Joseph	9
Boddy, William F.	17
Bowden, Christopher William	33
Cox, George	45
Harris, Charles Buoyant	54
Hearne, Thomas	63
Illustrations	71
Hobbs, Jesse	75
Piner, Francis Edmund	79
Stevenson, George Herbert	99
Stockwell, Philip John	112
Our Contributors	128

Editor's Note

Farnham Royal in this book refers to the parish, not today's village. At the time of the Great War the parish was much larger than today and included part of Slough, and also Hedgerley Dean which is the part of Hedgerley that lies to the west of Hedgerley Hill and Village Lane and was once a separate parish.

**WILLIAM JOSEPH BIRCH
(1889-1917)**



William Joseph Birch

William's Early Years

William's parents, James and Ellen, were married in Farnham Royal on 19th May 1888.



James and Ellen Birch

William Joseph Birch was born on 9th February 1889 at Collum Green Cottages, near the Yew Tree pub in Hedgerley. He was baptised at St. Mary's, Hedgerley on 10th March 1889. William was the eldest of thirteen children (seven girls and six boys). William died of wounds at Étaples, France on 15th August 1917, age 28.

James and Ellen continued to live at Collum Green Cottages until at least 1891 when they moved to Bells Hill, Stoke Poges. William went to school in Stoke Poges. The Birch family were neighbours of the Piner family (see separate chapter on Francis Edmund Piner).



Ellen Birch outside her home in Bells Hill, Stoke Poges

William married Louisa Maud Boon on 27th November 1915 at St. Peter's Church in Burnham. The 1911 census shows Louisa living with her mother at One Pin Lane, Hedgerley Dean, Farnham Royal and being 'mother's help'. Louisa was living in Collum Green when they married, so there is no apparent connection with Burnham. However, the marriage register shows that Louisa married William at the same time as her brother, William Boon, married Winifred Aldridge of Dropmore View, Burnham!

War Service

Just two weeks after getting married, William Birch enlisted into the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry at Cowley Barracks, Oxford. After attestation, he was given the regimental number 5686 and departed for training soon afterwards. Training was initially at Oxford, then Ludgershall on Salisbury Plain and at Cheltenham. During this time William's brother, Arthur, was killed in action during the Battle of the Somme.

More than a year after his attestation, William arrived at his new battalion, the 1/4th Battalion Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, just before Christmas 1916 where he was allocated to 'A' Company.

At the start of the war, the 1/4th Battalion had been stationed at Oxford as part of the South Midland Brigade of the South Midland Division. It was mobilised for war and landed at Boulogne in France on 30th March 1915. By the time William joined the battalion it had already been engaged in various actions on the Western Front as part of the 145th brigade of the 48th Infantry Division.

William's reinforcement draft of 199 men joined the battalion at Bécourt near Boulogne whilst it was out of the line at 'D Camp'. Here in January 1917 William was re-numbered as part of the Territorial Force restructuring to 202173 Pte. William Birch.

After a short period of training with his new unit, William gained his first trench experience when his unit moved into Brigade Reserve in 'Sophie Trench' to the west of Herbecourt on the Somme. As was standard operating procedure at the time, 1/4 Battalion rotated in and out of the front line with other battalions. William moved to the front-line trenches for the first time on 9th February 1917, which was his twenty-eighth birthday.

William's first front line experience passed relatively uneventfully, and after a week of holding the line opposite La Maisonette, Peronne, the battalion moved back to brigade support at Flaucourt, and then to 'Camp 56' at Cappy for a short period of rest. This rotation (Herbecourt - La Maisonette - Flaucourt - Cappy) continued until the battalion entered the town of Peronne on 20th March 1917, recently vacated by the Germans as they retreated to the heavily fortified Hindenburg Line.

Also in February 1917, the British Army adopted new tactics based on experience from the recent Somme offensive: each platoon in a company would now launch attacks with rifle and hand grenade men and a Lewis machine gun section in support.

Following up on the German withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line, William's battalion entered Cartigny on 22nd March. Numerous patrols were sent out to try to ascertain the extent of the German withdrawal. After coming under fire near Roisel, it was reported that the village was still occupied. The battalion launched a successful attack on Roisel at 10.30am on 26th March 1917 and the Germans were cleared. Now with the German withdrawal completed, the British advance was halted and new front lines occupied opposite the formidable defences of the Hindenburg Line.

William then took part in a successful assault on Ronssoy on 5th April 1917. The front line here became home for the next month. May and June were spent in the trenches in the Hermies and Demicourt sectors.

The 1/4th Battalion took part in the Third Battle of Ypres (also known as the battle of Passchendaele) that took place from 31st July to 10th November 1917. After spending most of July 1917 out of the line resting and training, William arrived at a camp near St. Jan ter Biezen in Belgium on the first day of the battle. He remained there until 4th August.

On 4th August 1917 at 11.30am the Brigade moved forward to Dambre Camp. Arriving at 3.30pm, they "found the tents newly pitched and [the] camp much improved. A sunny day with occasional showers." [extract from 1/4th Battalion war diary]. At 7.30pm the following day the battalion set off to move into the line, relieving the 39th Division, completed at 1am, during which time they sustained several casualties

on the approach to Kitcheners' Wood. The battalion arrived in positions behind the Steenbeek stream in the early hours of 6th August. William's company was located at Adams Farm. Then on 7th August, after a quiet day, a heavy German bombardment fell upon William's position. During this bombardment nine men were killed and many were injured. William was one of the injured. He was evacuated to the large field hospital at Étaples, amongst the sand dunes south of Boulogne. At this point there were as many as 100,000 troops at Étaples. Sadly however, William succumbed to his wounds on 15th August 1917, age 28.

William Birch is buried in Étaples Military Cemetery in France. He is commemorated on the memorial in St. Mary's Church, Hedgerley, and on the Roll of Honour in Hedgerley Memorial Hall. William is also commemorated on the war memorial in Stoke Poges Church, alongside his brother, Arthur, who was killed in action on 16th September 1916 whilst serving as a Private in the Machine Gun Corps. William is also commemorated on the Burnham war memorial.



War memorial in Stoke Poges Church – William Birch is included in the Roll of Honour
Photo courtesy of Buckinghamshire Remembers

In Memory of

Private

William Joseph Birch

202173, 1st/4th Bn., Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry who died on 15 August 1917 Age 28

Husband of L. M. Birch, of Yew Tree Cottages, Farnham Common, Bucks.

Remembered with Honour

Etaples Military Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Certificate courtesy of Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC)

WILLIAM FAIRFAX BODDY (1883-1915)



William Fairfax Boddy
Photo courtesy of Donald (William's grandson) and Phyllis May

William Fairfax Boddy was born on 19th June 1883 in Hedgerley Dean. He died of wounds on 9th May 1915, age 31, whilst a Prisoner of War in Roeselare, Belgium.

Family History

William Fairfax Boddy's paternal lineage is as follows:

Great-great-grandparents:

Thomas Boddy (dates unknown) and **Ann Boddy** (née unknown) (dates unknown)

Great-grandparents:

William Boddy (1771-unknown) and **Martha Thompson** (dates unknown)

Grandparents:

John Boddy (c.1797-1879) and **Rowena** (née unknown) (c.1806-before 1851)

Parents:

Joseph Boddy (1840-1917) and **Ellen Sophia Hester** (1843-1926)

William's Great-grandparents

William Boddy (1771-unknown) and Martha Thompson (dates unknown)

William Boddy was baptised on 1st March 1771 in Chalfont St. Peter. William married Martha Thompson on 2nd September 1795, who was a spinster of the parish of Chalfont St. Peter. Their marriage was by licence rather than banns, possibly because they wanted the marriage to be private. The marriage took place only a few months before their first son William was born. William and Martha had another son, John, who was born c.1797.

William's Grandparents

John Boddy (c.1797-1879) and Rowena (née unknown) (c.1806-before 1851)

John Boddy was born in Chalfont St Peter, and was the son of William Boddy and Martha Boddy (née Thompson). John had a private baptism, which was most likely held at home and probably due to his parents thinking that the child was unlikely to survive.

Private baptisms are referred to in The Book of Common Prayer:

"The Ministration of Private Baptism of Children In Houses

The Minister of every parish shall warn the people that without great cause and necessity they procure not their children to be baptized at home in their houses. But when need shall compel them so to do, then Baptism shall be administered on this fashion."

Following his private baptism John Boddy was later brought into church on 25th August 1797, however records do not confirm whether he received a formal baptism ceremony on this date.

John had an older brother, William, who was baptised on 4th December 1795 at Chalfont St. Peter. He also had a younger brother, James, who, like John, also had a private baptism. James' baptism was held on 4th September 1799.

John married his wife Rowena in c.1835, but no record of their marriage has been found. John and Rowena had four children. Their eldest daughter Rowena was baptised in Chalfont St. Peter on 20th March 1836. The parish register shows that Rowena's father John was a publican at this time.

Rowena was followed by another daughter, Elizabeth, who was baptised on 10th September 1837, also in Chalfont St. Peter. Parish records tell us that John is still a publican.

The following year Cornelia is baptised on 17th February 1839, and again John is listed in the parish register as a publican.

John and Rowena's fourth child, Joseph, was born in Langley. We have been unable to trace a birth date for Joseph, but it is likely to have been in the 1840's as by the time of the 1851 census his mother Rowena had died. It has not been possible to find a record of Rowena's burial.

The Boddy family appear in the 1841 and 1851 censuses in Hedgerley, living in Hedgerley Hill. We have not been able to trace John Boddy in the 1861 census, but in 1871 he was living with his daughter Cornelia, her husband Henry Cox, a carpenter, and children William and Cornelia at their home in Holly Bush Road, Farnham Royal (now known as Christmas Lane). John Boddy died in Hedgerley Parish and was buried, age 82, at St. Mary's, Hedgerley on 11th May 1879.

William's Parents

Joseph Boddy (1840-1917) and Ellen Sophia Hester (1843-1926)

Joseph Boddy was born in Langley, Buckinghamshire and baptised in Langley Marish on the 27th September 1840. He appears in the 1841 census, age nine months, living in Hedgerley Hill with his parents, John and Rowena, and older siblings Robert, age 9, Rowena, age 5, Elizabeth, age 3, and Caroline, age 2, all born in Chalfont St Peter.

In 1851 Joseph, a scholar, was still in Hedgerley and living with his widowed father, a butcher, and older sisters. Caroline was now referred to as Cornelia. By 1861 Joseph had left home and was a lodger with the Healy family in Hedgerley. He was employed as a farm labourer.

William's mother, Ellen Sophia Hester, was baptised in Farnham Royal on 5th March 1843. Her father was James, a farm labourer, born c.1814 in Stoke Poges and her mother, also Ellen, was born c.1816 in Dorney, Buckinghamshire. They appear in both the 1851 and 1861 censuses, living in Farnham Royal. Ellen was the eldest of five children and had a younger brother, Charles Robert, and three sisters Martha, Amey Elizabeth and Phoeby Sarah.

Joseph, age 25, married Ellen Sophia Hester, age 23, in Farnham Royal, Buckinghamshire on 14th April 1866. Ellen was at least eight months pregnant when they married as the eldest of Joseph and Ellen's children, Charlotte Elizabeth, was baptised at St. Mary's Hedgerley the following month on 27th May 1866.

The entry for the baptism of Charlotte Elizabeth gives the parents' names as Joseph and *Helen* Sophia Boddy. This is the only reference to William's mother as Helen that we have found. All the census records from 1881 through to 1911 list her as Ellen.

Charlotte Elizabeth was followed by Eliza on 24th November 1867. It is likely that their other children were baptised in Farnham Royal. All the children were born in Hedgerley Dean.

The family may have been at Casualty Cottages, Hedgerley Dean, in 1871, but no records have been found to confirm that this was the case.

In 1881, we know that the family were living in Casualty Cottages. Joseph was by now a general labourer and was age 40. Ellen was age 39 and Charlotte was age 14. Charlotte was a general servant, but 'out of employ' and siblings Eliza R., Alfred, Florence A. and Cornelia were scholars. Ernest was an infant.

The 1891 census reveals that the family were still in Casualty Cottages, and three more children had been born: Edward, Fairfax and William.

In 1901 only Joseph, Ellen, Edward and Fairfax were in the cottage, and Edward and Fairfax were agricultural labourers.

By 1911 Joseph and Ellen were on their own in Hedgerley Dean. Joseph, now age 70 and a farm labourer, noted on the census return that they had been married for 44 years and had twelve children, three of whom had died. Joseph died age 76 in 1917, and Ellen died nine years later in 1926, age 83.

William's Early Years

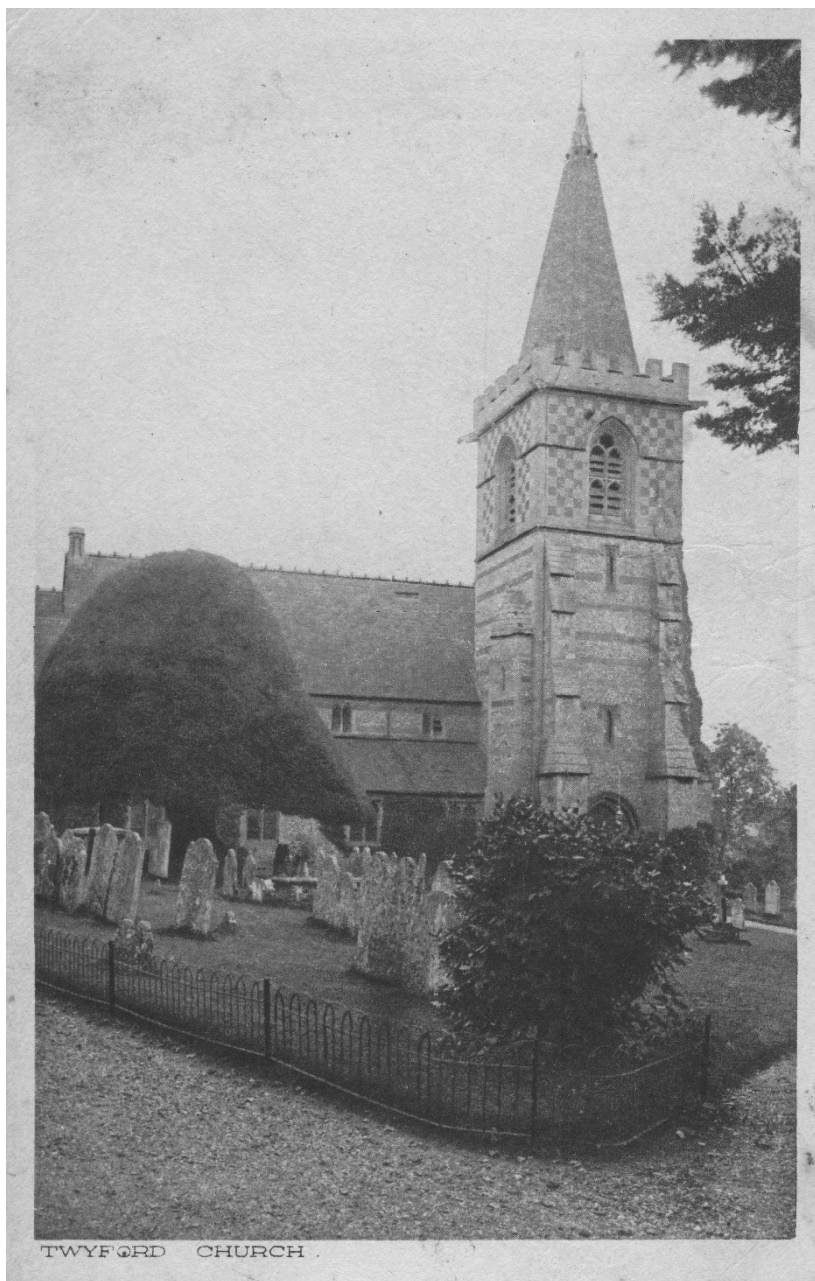
William Fairfax Boddy was born on 19th June 1883 in Hedgerley. The family lived in Casualty Cottages, Hedgerley Dean next door to the Hobbs family.

After attending school in Hedgerley, William went to live with his eldest sister, Charlotte, and her husband Charles Hillier, in Hensting, Fair Oak, Hampshire.

William enlisted at Winchester with the Hampshire Regiment, a regular army unit, in September 1901 when he was just eighteen.

According to the census in 1911, when he was twenty-seven, William was living with his sister's family and was working as a farm labourer in Hampshire. William is also listed incorrectly in the same census by his father Joseph as still living with his parents in Hedgerley Dean. Joseph listed all his children on the census form regardless of where they were living.

Around this time William met Beatrice Prior, who was working in service in nearby Winchester. On 11th July 1914 William married Beatrice Annie Prior at Twyford Church in Hampshire.



TWYFORD CHURCH .

Early twentieth century postcard of Twyford Church where William Boddy married Beatrice Prior

William Boddy was probably called up as a reservist. You could enlist from the turn of the nineteenth century on short service enlistment of three years with the Colours and nine years with the Reserve, as well as the existing term of seven years with the Colours and five years with the Reserve. Therefore, it would have been entirely possible to be back in the village in 1911 as a labourer after the term with the Colours had expired, but still to have the reserve liability to get him back into the regular battalion in 1914. About 60% of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) in 1914 were recalled reservists.

War Service

Britain declared war on Germany on 4th August 1914 and promptly dispatched the 100,000 strong British Expeditionary Force (BEF) to Belgium. The first engagement between the BEF and the German Army was at Mons on 23rd August as they attempted to sweep around the Maginot Line on their way to Paris (the 'Schlieffen Plan'). Despite being significantly outnumbered, the BEF was able to halt the German advance through Belgium at Mons. However, the elation of winning the first battle of the war was short-lived: the BEF was ordered to pull back to the River Marne and join with the French to protect Paris, in what became known as 'The Retreat from Mons'.

The 1st Battalion Hampshire Regiment had landed at Le Havre on the first day of the Battle of Mons. They were ordered as part of 11th Brigade to cover the BEF during their strategic withdrawal to the Marne. For two long, hot weeks the BEF and 11th Brigade were pursued by the German First Army. These were professional soldiers battle hardened in the Boer War. They were mystified why a strategic withdrawal was necessary. On the march, almost continually and fighting rear-guard actions on the way, morale was being stretched to the limit. The Battle of Le Cateau was a major rear-guard action where II Corps and 11th Brigade (including 1st Hampshire) paused their withdrawal and stood to. A brutal combination of field artillery and accurate rapid rifle firing halted the German Army once again, albeit briefly, but this action boosted morale and allowed the BEF to complete the withdrawal without major calamity.

William Boddy arrived in Belgium on 31st August 1914. At this point 1st Battalion was still fighting its way back from Mons. Why he did not travel with his unit on 23rd August we do not know. William's first action would probably have been at the Battle of the Marne that started on 7th September 1914 and saw British and French forces pushing the Germans back north east, crossing the River Marne and its tributary the Petit Morin. The pushback continued, and when the Germans reached the River Aisne they dug in. The Allied forces tried to continue the momentum, but being unable to dislodge the Germans from their defensive positions they also began digging trenches. The dynamic nature of the War was over. With both sides dug in, defensive trench warfare would grind on for the next four years.

The 1st Battalion Hampshires arrived near Ploegsteert, about ten miles south of Ypres on 21st October 1914, and occupied trenches at Le Geer. The weather was very wet and the trenches flooded, but the situation steadily improved during January 1915 with more pumps and better revetting. The area around the trenches was shelled daily by howitzers and field guns, however casualties were practically nil. The battalion continued to hold the line at Ploegsteert during February and shelling continued as in January, except with the trenches being bombarded directly. Casualties continued to be low and much work was put into strengthening the defences. The pattern continued the same up to 19th March, when a new scheme was adopted by the brigade whereby each unit now did six consecutive days in the forward trenches followed by six days in the support trenches. During the month shelling decreased and enemy activity reduced to occasional rifle grenade bombardment.

This period of relative inactivity came to a sudden end on 23rd April 1915, when the brigade was warned to move at short notice. The next day the brigade moved by train to Poperinge and then marched to Zonnebeke, arriving at 21.00 on 25th April. The situation was confused, but what had happened was that the French line at Zonnebeke (east of Ypres) had given way, and consequently the Canadians were "up in the air" i.e. were exposed to attack. Fighting hard, the Canadians fell back slowly to a new line just to the east of Ypres. However, on 25th April the line broke and a three-mile gap appeared in the line around Ypres. This was the gap that 11th Brigade had to fill. In a moving account of the

move from Ploegsteert to Ypres Lieutenant Colonel F.R. Hicks, Officer Commanding 1st Battalion, describes how on 26th April the battalion dug for their lives knowing "that their lives depended on being underground by dawn. Luckily for us we found some old trenches, ... and luckier still, the morning was misty so we were able to go on digging for another couple of hours." However, "with the lifting of the mist the German guns opened. It is hopeless to attempt to describe it ... For eight days and nights the guns never ceased. At times shells were falling on our trenches at a rate of about fifty a minute." Despite a succession of immense bombardments, the brigade was able to repel several German attacks. On May 3rd, 1st Battalion was ordered to retire and evacuate the line. By daylight on the 4th they were behind the Yser canal "very wet and very tired... but there was hot tea waiting for us there – hot tea after nine days!"

The war diary records that during the period 25th April to 4th May 1915 (during the move from Ploegsteert to Ypres – the Battle of St. Julien) 'other ranks' casualties were ninety-seven killed; twenty-one wounded; eighteen missing. Although we cannot be certain, it is possible that William Boddy was one of the missing, and was taken prisoner to a camp at Roeselare (no more than ten miles from Ypres).

Nigel Crompton of The Western Front Association has confirmed that William never managed to get away from the area around Ypres. His prisoner of war records do not show a date or location of capture, but there is a passing reference to trenches. Interestingly, there are no references to family or next of kin.

William Boddy died of 'lungenverletzung' (in English 'pneumonia'), on 9th May 1915 whilst a prisoner of war. He died in the sick bay (known as 'lazarett') of the Roeselare camp and therefore appears on the 'lazarett listen', essentially the sick bay list.

Many troops died of pneumonia as a result of gunshot wounds or even gas. Given that the German military authorities would probably not have admitted to the cause, especially if the deceased had been gassed, it is possible that William may have reached Roeselare very ill, and immediately transferred to a sick bay/medical facility. The Red Cross

records do not record any injuries on admittance to medical facilities, only cause of death.

William was buried by the German military authorities at Roeselare Communal Cemetery, alongside many Canadian Infantry brothers-in-arms. During the First World War Roulers (now Roeselare) was occupied by the Germans from October 1914 to October 1918. The communal cemetery was used for prisoner of war burials.

William and Beatrice had a daughter. Florence Ellen Boddy was born on 13th December 1914. Sadly, it is unlikely that William ever saw her as she was only five months old when William died. Beatrice was working as a member of the medical team at Park Prewett Hospital on the outskirts of Basingstoke (see photo below), and Florence was born in the Attendants' Cottages on the old Kingsclere Road (now Wellington Terrace). The cottages are still there today. Park Prewett was used as a Canadian military hospital from 1917-1919.



Park Prewett Hospital
Photo courtesy of Joe Collier

N.B.—Any person finding this Certificate is requested to forward it, in an unstamped envelope, to the Secretary, War Office, London, S.W.

Should this Parchment be lost or mislaid no duplicate of it can be obtained.

PARCHMENT CERTIFICATE of No. 605 (Rank) Private

(Name) William Boddy

1st Bn. Hampshire Regiment

Born in the Parish of Slough near the Town of Slough

in the County of Buckingham

Attended at Winchester on the 17th September 1901.

for the Hampshire Regiment, at the Age of 18½ years.

His description is as follows:—

Age 26½ years. Height 5 ft. 6 ins. Complexion Fresh

Eyes Hazel Hair Fair Trade Labourer

Marks or scars on the face or other parts of the body } Tattoo marks both arms (various)

Signature of Man W Boddy

He is transferred to the Army Reserve in consequence of the expiration of his period of Army Service

Service towards completion of limited engagement 8 years 0 days.

" " " " " —Abroad 5 years 220 days.

Transfer to Army Reserve completed at Londonderry

(Date) 16. 9. 1909 Signature A. Kelly

Place Londonderry (Londonderry, Hampshire Regt.)

He is discharged on _____ in consequence of _____

*Service towards completion of limited engagement.—Army _____ years _____ days.

" " " " " —Reserve _____ years _____ days.

Total ... _____ years _____ days.

*Service Abroad _____ years _____ days.

Discharge certificate _____

William Boddy's Army Form D 426 Parchment Certificate of Discharge Page 1
Photo by John Lovelock courtesy of Donald (William's grandson) and Phyllis May

His conduct and character while with the Colours have been :—

Very good. C.M.

Place *Londonderry*

Date *16.9.1909*

Commanding *C.M. Ridley Lieut for Lieut Col.
1st Bnth Hampshire Regt*

Civil Employment. (Give particulars of any special employment which he pursued during his service as a soldier, or for which he has shown special aptitude, and also of any technical classes, etc.)

C.M. Has been Officer's groom.

State below generally character as regards his qualifications for Civil Employment, in accordance with the King's Regulations.

Steady reliable.

Trade on Enlistment (to be stated if an Apprentice) *Labourer*

William Boddy's Army Form D 426 Parchment Certificate of Discharge Page 2
Photo by John Lovelock courtesy of Donald (William's grandson) and Phyllis May

The Parchment Certificate of Discharge states that Private William Boddy had been an officer's groom while serving in the army, and that he was 'steady' and 'reliable'.



William Boddy's Hampshire Regiment Cane
Photo by John Lovelock courtesy of Donald (William's grandson) and Phyllis May

In Memory of

Private

W Boddy

6305, 1st Bn., Hampshire Regiment who died on 09 May 1915

Remembered with Honour

Roeselare Communal Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

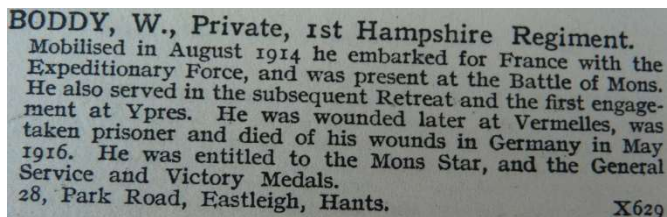
Certificate courtesy of Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC)

After the War

William was awarded the 1914 Star medal in addition to the British War and Victory medals ('Pip', 'Squeak' and 'Wilfred'). William's widow Beatrice received £6 1s 8s as payment for his effects. After the war, she received a further £5 as a war gratuity. Beatrice remarried in 1921, to George Marchant, a widower and labourer, in the Register Office at South Stoneham, Eastleigh. We know that Beatrice and George Marchant lived at 28 Park Road, Eastleigh as this address was listed in the National Roll. Beatrice's daughter Florence was also living there in 1935 when she married Henry James May on 12th October 1935 in Eastleigh.

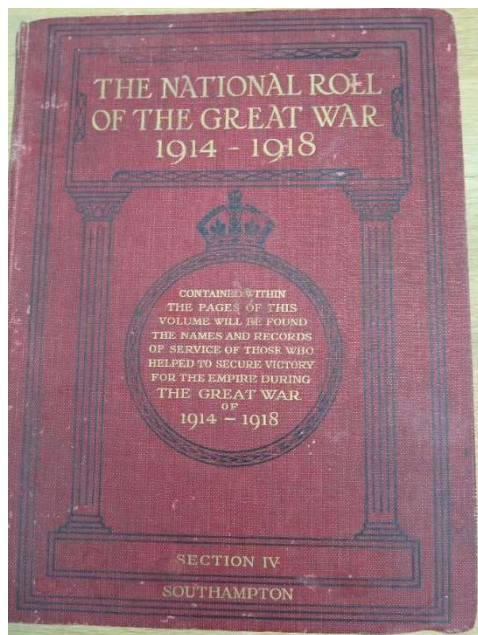
The National Roll of the Great War was a commercial enterprise as a response to the huge loss of life by The National Publishing Company who tried to create a record of as many participants in the war as possible. Entries were by paid subscription and mostly recorded those who had survived the war, although some families provided information of relatives who had died in the war. Fourteen volumes were published on a regional basis, but it was not a complete record and some major towns were not included.

The information published in the National Roll would have been based on whatever sources William's family were able to access. Details of some war deaths have come from the central records office in Germany, and this could be why William's family thought he had died in Germany and not, as is the case, Belgium.



BODDY, W., Private, 1st Hampshire Regiment.
Mobilised in August 1914 he embarked for France with the Expeditionary Force, and was present at the Battle of Mons. He also served in the subsequent Retreat and the first engagement at Ypres. He was wounded later at Vermelles, was taken prisoner and died of his wounds in Germany in May 1916. He was entitled to the Mons Star, and the General Service and Victory Medals.
28, Park Road, Eastleigh, Hants. X629

William Boddy's entry from The National Roll of the Great War Volume IV Southampton
Photo by John Lovelock courtesy of Donald (William's grandson) and Phyllis May



Front Cover of The National Roll of the Great War Volume IV Southampton
Photo by John Lovelock courtesy of Donald (William's grandson) and Phyllis May

Florence Boddy and Henry May lived at 99 Pitmore Road, Otterbourne, and it was here that their son and only child, Donald H., was born in 1936. The house was built in 1935 and Donald still lives there today (eighty-one years later) with his wife Phyllis. Donald's father was a coach builder for British Railways at Eastleigh and his father, Harry May, was a signaller. After National Service in the RAF Donald followed his father and grandfather by working for British Railways as a carriage inspector.

Donald married Phyllis Taylor on 5th October 1957 at St Matthew's Church, Otterbourne. Florence's mother Beatrice died in Winchester hospital shortly after the marriage.

Donald and Phyllis have three daughters and seven grandchildren:

- Trudi Chalk and children Hannah, James and Emily
- Jacqueline Vickers and children Aaron and Jason
- Nicola Thurman and children Amy and Sam

CHRISTOPHER WILLIAM BOWDEN (1892-1916)

Christopher Bowden was born in Hedgerley on 17th January 1892 and baptised in St. Mary's, Hedgerley on 17th April 1892 (Easter Day). Christopher died at home in Hedgerley on 19th December 1916, age 24, following honourable discharge from the Army on medical grounds.

The Bowden family in Hedgerley

We know that the Bowden family lived in Hedgerley for at least 180 years because the first event in the Parish Register is the marriage of Joseph Bowden to Mary Rane, both of Chalfont St Giles, on 17th November 1739.

Family History

Christopher's paternal lineage is as follows:

Great-great-grandparents:

Edward Bowden (c.1767-unknown) and **Anne Carter** (1763-1819)

Great-grandparents:

John Bowden (1795-1860) and **Anne Parnal** (c.1796-1857)

Grandparents:

William Bowden (1826-1885) and **Fanny Tyler** (1825-c.1911)

Parents:

Thomas Bowden (1854-1893) and **Emily Cooper** (1856-1921)

Christopher's Great-great-grandparents Edward Bowden (c.1767-unknown) and Anne Carter (1763-1819)

We have not established exactly when and where Edward was born. One possibility is Ockham, Surrey in 1767 as there is a baptism of an Edward Bowden on 26th April 1767 at All Saints and Hatchford St. Matthew.

However, we do know that Edward married Anne Carter in Farnham Royal on 15th October 1787. Anne was baptised on 19th July 1763 and her parents were John Carter and Elizabeth Wood. Edward and Anne's first child, Anne, was baptised on 10th May 1789. Edward had a younger brother, Henry, who was born on 28th February 1800 and baptised on 12th March in the same year.

Christopher's Great-grandparents John Bowden (1795-1860) and Anne Parnal (c.1796- 1857)

Christopher's great-grandfather, John, was a labourer and was baptised at St. Mary's, Hedgerley on 30th August 1795. He married Anne Parnal in Farnham Royal (probably St. Mary's) on 2nd October 1817. John was one of three children with an older sister, Ann, born in 1789, and a younger brother, Henry, born in 1800. According to the 1851 census Anne Parnal was born in Wraybury, Buckinghamshire in c.1796.

John and Anne were both living in Hedgerley Dean in 1841 (modern transcription records them as *Bowdon*) with their sons, James and Thomas. Next door neighbours were Thomas, Sarah, Lydia and Ann Piner (see also the later chapter about Francis Edmund Piner).

John and Anne were still living in Hedgerley Dean in the 1851 census with their son James. John was a farm labourer and James a labourer.

John Bowden, of Hedgerley Dean, was buried in Hedgerley on 3rd May 1860, age 64.

Anne appears in the 1861 census with her son James. Although she was a widow she is listed as unmarried, age 67. James was thirty-two and a labourer, born Hedgerley in c.1829.

Anne, age 77, appears in the 1871 census with son James, now age 42, and granddaughter Emma unmarried, age 19 and a servant, born in Chalfont St Peter. Emma was the daughter of Anne's son William and his wife Fanny (Christopher's grandparents). Confusingly, Anne's place of birth is recorded as Princes Risborough, whereas the 1851 census records her place of birth as Wraysbury. Next door was the Piner family: Thomas Piner, age 56, a farm labourer, born in Chalfont St Peter, and his wife Sarah, age 56, an annuitant, born in Beaconsfield.

Christopher's Grandparents

William Bowden (1826-1885) and Fanny Tyler (1825-c.1911)

Christopher's grandfather, William, was born in Hedgerley Dean and baptised at St. Mary's on 22nd January 1826. William was one of four children. He had an older sister, Anne, and two younger brothers, James and Thomas.

In 1841 William's parents, John and Anne Bowden, were living in Hedgerley Dean with their sons James and Thomas. At the same time William at age 15 was living in Hedgerley Dean and was a servant for Charles and Sarah Merohill (possibly Marshall) and family at their farm.

William married Fanny Tyler at St. James Paddington on 17th October 1846. Fanny's parents were William and Hannah. Fanny was born in Beaconsfield on 13th April 1825 and baptised on 8th May that year.

Their first child, Mary Ann Bowden, was born in Hedgerley c.1850, but by the time of the 1851 census the family had moved to Chalfont St. Peter. The census records show William, age 25 and a labourer; Fanny age 24, and Mary Ann Bowden, age 1, born in Hedgerley.

Ten years later in the 1861 census the family were living in a cottage near Slade Farm in Hedgerley, now with three more children: Emily age 9, Thomas, age 7, James, age 4, and Eliza, age 1.

In the 1871 census Fanny Bowden, now age 45, is recorded at Pot Hill, Pot Kiln, Hedgerley. It is not known where William was on census day.

William and Fanny appear in a cottage near the School House in Hedgerley in 1881. William is now age 55 and Fanny age 54. Also recorded in the census records is son John Bowden, age 19, a wheelwright, another son, George, age 16, a gardener, and William Pizzey (presumably a visitor or lodger), age 71. Pizzey was probably a misspelling of Pusey, a common local name.

William was buried at St. Mary's Hedgerley on 3rd May 1885, age 59. Records indicate that his lifelong occupation was as a labourer.

When the 1891 census was recorded Fanny was living at Bulstrode Gardens with her son Thomas, but by 1891 Fanny had moved to the hamlet of Three Households near Chalfont St Giles where she lived on her own for at least a further twenty years as she appears here in the 1911 census, age 84.

It is not known when and where Fanny died although there is a civil record of the death of a Fanny Bowden in Brentford Middlesex in 1914, but the age of 89 does not correlate.

Christopher's Parents

Thomas Bowden (1854-1893) and Emily Cooper (1856-1921)

Thomas and Emily were married in 1891. Banns were read at St. Mary's, Hedgerley on 17th, 24th and 31st May 1891, so the likelihood is that the marriage was in June or July that year.

Thomas Bowden was the son of William and Fanny Bowden and was baptised in St. Mary's Hedgerley on 19th March 1854. He was the fourth eldest of nine children born between 1849 and 1867, and the majority were baptised in St. Mary's. According to the census Thomas was born in Gerrards Cross.

Emily Cooper was born in Ruscombe, Berkshire in 1856. In the 1891 census, prior to her marriage to Thomas later that year, she was a servant in Gerrards Cross and age 34. She appears in the 1861 Census

as a child, age 4, living in Berkshire with her parents Christopher and Marriam Cooper.

Thomas Bowden appears in the 1861 census living with his parents at a cottage near Slade Farm Hedgerley, but by the 1871 census, now age 19, he had moved out of the village as he was a lodger with the Bruce family in Lower Feltham and an agricultural labourer. Next door was Bedford Place Market Garden run by the Cooper family, so he may have worked there. We have been unable to find Thomas in the 1881 census.

In 1891 Thomas Bowden was living with his widowed mother Fanny at Bulstrode Gardens, which was the kitchen garden for Bulstrode. Thomas was 37 and a gardener working for Bulstrode Manor. George Cox, another of the ten men in this book, was also a gardener there in 1911 and he also lived in Bulstrode Gardens.

Thomas and Emily had two children. Christopher William was the eldest, born on 17th January 1892 and baptised on Easter Day 17th April 1892. Christopher's younger brother Percy (Percival George Robert) was born two years later on 4th February 1894 and baptised in St. Mary's Church, Hedgerley, also on Easter Day, on 25th March 1894. Thomas gave his occupation in the register as a gardener.

Thomas died in June 1893 and was buried at age 40 in St. Mary's on 22nd June 1893. His widow Emily meanwhile continued living in Hedgerley until her death in 1921 at age 64. She was also buried at St. Mary's, on 22nd October 1921.

Christopher's Early Years

In the 1901 census Christopher and Percival (Percy) were living with their widowed mother in Hedgerley.

The 1910 Valuation Report includes Mrs Bowden, cottage and garden near Hedgerley Church (possibly on the bridleway). The owner is given as Mrs S. Eagle. When the census was recorded in 1911 Christopher, his mother Emily and brother Percival were living apart. Emily was still living in Hedgerley with young boarders and Percy was in the Army in the 1st Battalion Royal Berkshire Regiment based at South Front Barracks, Western Heights, Dover, Kent. Christopher was working as a

servant (farm labourer) for Louisa Thomas in South Wales at Parke, Whitland, Carmarthenshire.

There are records of help being given to the Bowden family by the Hedgerley Slade Charity (set up to help 'deserving persons of labouring class'). In 1914 'widow Bowden' was given a pension of 6/d (six old pence). Bowden's widow was also a recipient of groceries in 1914 and 1915.

War Service

Christopher enlisted at Cardiff at the start of the war in August 1914 and according to his pension records (written in June 1916) he was in good health. He joined the Welsh Horse Regiment as a Private. After service in France his regiment was posted to Turkey (Gallipoli) in October 1915 and then to Egypt in December 1915.

However, in January 1916 he reported with a persistent cough which continued beyond that time. He was sent to a hospital in Cairo and whilst he was there he was diagnosed with tuberculosis (TB) due to hardship and exposure. He was treated there until 19th May 1916 when it was reported that he was coughing blood. He then returned to the UK for treatment at Tooting Military Hospital, but shortly afterwards he was discharged from the Army on medical grounds on 21st June 1916.

Christopher Bowden was awarded the Silver War Badge for his contribution to the war. This was given to service personnel who had been honourably discharged due to wounds or sickness during World War 1. The badge was first issued in September 1916 along with an official certificate of entitlement. The badge was intended to be worn on civilian clothes, in fact it was forbidden to wear it on a military uniform. When worn on the right breast it prevented eager young women from presenting the injured soldier with a white feather, which were meant to mark those who were fit enough to be fighting the war.

Christopher returned to Hedgerley on 21st June 1916 and he died at home in Hedgerley just under six months later on 19th December 1916, age 24.

Christopher Bowden was buried in St. Mary's Churchyard on 23rd December 1916. This grave is no longer marked, so in November 2015 the Commonwealth War Graves Commission installed a memorial stone in the churchyard and this was dedicated after the Remembrance Sunday Service at St. Mary's on 13th November 2016 (see 'After the War' section on page 42).

Christopher Bowden's brother Percival (Percy) enlisted in the Army prior to the Great War. In 1911, he was at Dover Castle with the 1st Battalion Royal Berkshire regiment and it is assumed he continued with this regiment for the duration of the war. His army service is commemorated on the vellum scroll that hangs in Hedgerley Memorial Hall.

The following is an account of part of Christopher Bowden's war service recorded by Judith Broadgate from the war diary of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force:

Unit 1/1st Welsh Horse from 23/09/1915 to 20/12/1915

September 1915: *'Early in September the Regiment received notice to hold itself in readiness to proceed overseas'*. They spent a month equipping for dismounted service abroad. The horses were handed to the 2nd line Regiment on 22/09/1915.

1/10/1915: sent as Dismounted Yeomanry to Mudros where they remained on HMT OLYMPIC and then transhipped to HMT PARTRIDGE.

8/10/1915: Arrived at ANZAC COVE, GALLIPOLI. Marched to reserve gullies in rear of HILL 60. Within two days of arriving the Regiment was detailed to take over and carry out extensive mining and sapping. This was then delayed due to *'want of experienced miners and men accustomed to dig'*. [Hardly surprising as they were trained to ride horses!]. The Eastern Mounted Brigade moved nearer the front and the Welsh Horse still remained mining and digging. The Ghurkha Regiment moved in to HILL 60.

13/12/1915: Secret message to officers that the units were to be evacuated.

15/12/1915: *'A strong advance party left the Peninsula'*.

17/12/1915: A considerably larger force was evacuated and by 20/12/1915 all the remaining troops were withdrawn. The Welsh Horse were detailed to find the last garrison on HILL 60 – four officers and 39 OR – the rear-guard was withdrawn and joined the rest of the Regiment at MUDROS.

26/12/1915: The Regiment was concentrated at SIDI BISHR CAMP, ALEXANDRIA.

The next three months were spent re-equipping, reorganising, resting and training.

During this time, Christopher Bowden reported sick with his cough, and was transferred to Cairo hospital (see details on page 38).

The summary/ report for this period states, among other things, some comments about the work done by this Regiment on the Peninsula:

- *'arduous work on the Peninsula'*
- *'Verbally and by publication most favourably commented on by General Officers'.*
- *'Consisted of military mining of a dangerous nature'*
- *'Instrumental in effecting one of the biggest explosions resulting in the total destruction of the Turks front line for some 200 yards'.*

The summary also states that some men were killed in a mining explosion.

In Memory of

Private

Christopher William Bowden

15, 1st/1st , Welsh Horse Yeomanry who died on 19 December 1916 Age 24

Son of Mrs Bowden, of Hedgerley, Slough, Bucks.

Remembered with Honour
Hedgerley (St. Mary) Churchyard



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Certificate courtesy of Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC)

After the War

Christopher's mother Emily continued living in Hedgerley until her death in 1921 and she was buried at St. Mary's on 22nd October 1921 at age 64.

Christopher's brother Percy married Elsie Jane Venn, born 3rd December 1888, in Bristol in early 1918. They are recorded as living at Laundry Cottage (now known as Penny Royal) in The Dell, Hedgerley (close to Court Farm) in the 1920 Electoral Register and their son Kenneth was born in Hedgerley and baptised on 6th May 1921. It would appear that shortly after his mother died later that year, Percy moved with his wife Elsie and young son Kenneth to Bristol, thus ending the Bowden family links with Hedgerley.

The 1939 Register* shows Kenneth Bowden living at 2 Bantry Road, Bristol with his mother Elsie J. Bowden. There was a younger person at this address, but the record is closed as the person may still be alive. Elsie died in Stapleton Hospital Bristol on 11th April 1955 age 67. At the time, Percy and Elsie were living at 211 Hillside Road, St George. Percy died, age 69, in Bristol in December 1962.

* The 1939 Register, taken on 29 September 1939, recorded the civilian population of Britain just after the outbreak of the Second World War. It enabled the government to distribute identity cards and ration books (when rationing was introduced in January 1940), and to facilitate conscription. It was also used to control population movement caused by mass evacuation and military mobilisation.

Records held by the Maes Knoll Nursing Home in Bristol indicate that Kenneth served in Bomber Command during WW2 and during peacetime worked in the Aerospace Industry. He died on 1st June 2003, age 82, in Bristol Royal Infirmary. The authorities in Bristol believed that he was divorced from his wife and had a son in the USA and a daughter in Australia, but sadly he was estranged from his family.

An appeal was placed in *The Bristol Times* in 2016 in an attempt to trace any living relatives so that family members could be present when the Memorial Stone was unveiled in St. Mary's Churchyard on Remembrance

Sunday, 13th November 2016. Unfortunately, this appeal was unsuccessful, but a large congregation was present and the Hedgerley Scouts decorated the grave with crosses. It was a poignant and moving occasion.



John Turkington Licensed Lay Minister with Mo Russell, technical administrator, Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) at the dedication of Private Bowden's memorial stone on Remembrance Sunday 13th November 2016. Photo courtesy of John Lovelock



Christopher Bowden's Memorial Stone, St. Mary's, Hedgerley
Photo courtesy of John Lovelock 2016

GEORGE COX (1882-1917)

We have been fortunate to find out quite a lot of information about George Cox and his family as George's nephew Raymond George Cox still lives in Hedgerley village with his wife Thelma Alice Cox (née Williams). Their house used to be the village school room. They have taken a great interest in our research and have been kind enough to give us considerable assistance. This help included allowing us to borrow a copy of their family tree for reference.

Family History

The family tree has enabled us to establish that George Cox was born on August 13th 1882 in Faulkland, Hemmington, Somerset. He was the eleventh child of James Cox and his wife Jane, who later moved to Hedgerley. This must have been between 1885, when George's younger brother Herbert was born in Somerset, and 1891 when they are on the census as living in Hedgerley.

Research done by Somerset Archives found that George's father James was listed in the local directories in 1872 and 1875 as a blacksmith in Faulkland.

George (son of James and Jane Cox) of Faulkland, was baptised on 24th September 1882 at Hemington.

James Cox was a journeyman, blacksmith and road labourer, but his son George worked as a gardener.

George's Early Years

George Cox worked as a gardener at Bulstrode Park. According to the report of George's death in the Middlesex and Bucks Advertiser in September 1917 '*George Cox had worked in the gardens of Bulstrode Park for at least nineteen years*'. This suggests that George went to work there in 1896 or 1897 at the age of fourteen.



Bulstrode Kitchen Garden (Ponders) Open Day 5th June 2016
Photo by John Lovelock courtesy of Bob and Cristina Willans

George's marriage certificate shows that he was married on 13th February 1904 to Mabel Rose Leonard from Cambridgeshire. Mabel's mother and his father acted as witnesses and the ceremony was held at Farnham Royal Church.

George and Mabel had four children, two of whom survived infancy. They were living at Lower Gardens Lodge, Bulstrode in 1911 according to the census. After George was called up Mabel began work in the gardens at Bulstrode along with five other women. She remained working there until after the end of the war.

War Service

In the Bulstrode Wages Book there is a note for June 1916 saying that George Cox had joined the army, and Buckinghamshire Remembers notes that he enlisted in Gerrards Cross.

As George was a married man he was not conscripted into the army until 1916, and in May that year he enlisted at Gerrards Cross. He was originally taken into the Hertfordshire Battalion 1/1st as a Private, number 33651, and then transferred to the Warwickshire Battalion 2/5th, again as a private, with number 235027. This battalion was formed in Birmingham in October 1914 and became part of the 2nd Warwickshire Brigade, South Midland Division. In August 1915 it was redesignated as 182nd Brigade 61st Division.

The Division landed in France on 21st May 1916 and George Cox may well have been one of the private soldiers in this group. The 61st Division had been training on Salisbury Plain earlier in 1916 where they were inspected by King George V on 5th May. By May 28th the Division had concentrated in the area covering Merville - Gonnehem – Busnes – Thiennes. They remained in France and Flanders, and their first major attack proved to be a complete disaster. This was made at Fromelles on 19th July 1916 and the Division not only failed in its aim, but also suffered very heavy casualties. The damage to its reputation and its loss of numbers was so great that it was used only for holding trench lines until 1917.

Early in 1917 the Division was employed in the cautious pursuit of the enemy when they carried out a deep withdrawal from the Somme to the strong pre-prepared position known to the British as the Hindenburg Line. In the same year, the 61st Division was then moved north in July to the area of Ypres in Belgium, where there had already been two major attacks, neither of which had been any great success.

In July, the Russian offensive had accelerated the disintegration of the Russian Army and the French had attacked at Verdun, with some success. However, both of these actions had caused substantial German reinforcements on the Western Front. In reports to the War Cabinet Sir Douglas Haig stressed that the campaign at Ypres was necessary to

shield the other armies of the alliance although he admitted that the geographical progress was indeed very slow.

During a lull in the action during the early part of September 1917 both sides made attempts to improve their positions. Hill 35 was a lookout point and battery placement occupied by the Germans, and a battalion of the 61st division tried several times to rush this placement. This failed on 3rd September, was partly taken on 5th September, but lost to a counter attack (see map below).



From G. K. Rose, *The Story of the 2/4th Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry*, 1920

The British changed some of their infantry tactics at this time by adopting the 'leap-frog' method of advance, when waves of infantry stopped at an objective point and consolidated the ground, allowing another wave to pass them by and attack the next point. The first wave then acted as tactical reserves. However, this new idea did not improve their success rate on Hill 35 and another attack was attempted on 6th September. This was unsuccessful at 7.30 am and again at 9.00 pm. The weather was appalling that day with 24.6mm of rain falling from an overcast sky, while the temperature of 77°F (25°C) caused very high

humidity, making conditions for fighting uphill exceptionally difficult. This second attack was probably the one in which Private George Cox was wounded and it is likely that he was taken to the village of Lijssenthoek, where the hospital was being used as a casualty clearing station.

The village was situated on the main communication line between the Allied Military Bases in the rear and the front line at Ypres. It was close to the front but out of the extreme range of most German field artillery, making it a perfect place for a casualty clearing station. George Cox certainly died there on 7th September 1917, from the wounds that he had received the previous day.

On the night of 7th/8th September the rest of the battalion was relieved by the 2/1st Buckinghamshire regiment and the men were transported to Red Rose Camp, Brandhoek for reorganisation, refitting and training. The strength on the battalion had been twenty-seven Officers and 686 Other Ranks, but the losses reported in the war diary of 2/5th Royal Warwickshire are seven Officers and 255 Other Ranks.

Looking at British Army maps for this action it is clear that roads, farms, villages and geographic features were given English names, making comparison with modern maps very difficult. In the instructions given by the commanding Officer of 2/5th Royal Warwick Division it is clear that at this stage in the war aeroplanes were in use for communication and observation.

George died on 7th September 1917 from his wounds, and is buried at Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Poperinge, Belgium (see photo on next page) very close to the place where he was wounded and subsequently died. He was awarded the Victory Medal and the British War Medal under Army Orders. (A photo of Victory and British War Medals may be found on page 109 in the chapter on Major George Stevenson.).



George Cox's Grave at Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Poperinge, Belgium
Photo - Judith Broadgate

After the War

George was survived by his parents James and Jane Cox who are buried in St. Mary's Churchyard in Hedgerley (see photo below).



James and Jane Cox Gravestone, St. Mary's Churchyard, Hedgerley. Photo - Judith Broadgate

James died in 1907 at age 70. Jane outlived James by several years and died in 1928 at age 90. Jane's address is given as Apple Tree Cottage at the time of her death. Apple Tree cottage was one of the cottages that was on the site of Blue Cottage and Arden, Village Lane.

Two of his brothers, Edward and Herbert, also outlived him and had children and grandchildren. Only his nephew, Raymond George, still lives in Hedgerley.

An obituary for George Cox appeared in the Middx and Bucks Advertiser on 12th October 1917 which read as follows:

PRIVATE G. COX GERRARDS CROSS

We publish this week a photograph (quality too poor to reproduce here – Ed.) of Private George Cox, the news of whose death from wounds in action in France, was received with sincere regret by a wide circle of friends in the Gerrards Cross district. The late Private Cox joined the Warwick Regiment in June 1916, and was sent to France February last. His death took place on September 7th. his wife first received a telegram saying that he was dangerously wounded, a portion of a shell having entered his back, penetrating the chest and subsequently official information came through that he had passed away, a sister-in-charge of No 10 Casualty Clearing Station, writing: "He did not suffer much and went very quietly." Deceased was for no less than nineteen years employed as a gardener at Bulstrode, being, at the time of his enlistment, foreman under the head gardener, Mr. Waters. A good worker, and a man of sterling character, he was liked by all on the estate. he leaves a widow and three young children, to whom the deepest sympathy has been extended.

George's death was also reported in the 'Killed and Wounded' list in South Bucks Free Press: *From the War Office list of Casualties we take the following names:- DIED OF WOUNDS. Royal Warwickshire Regiment. - Pte 235027 G Cox (Gerrards Cross).*

In Memory of

Private

George Cox

235027, 2nd/5th Bn., Royal Warwickshire Regiment who died on 07 September 1917 Age 36

Son of James and Jane Cox, of Hedgerley, near Farnham Royal, Bucks; husband of Mabel Rose Cox, of Fulmer Rd. Cottage, Gerrards Cross, Bucks.

Remembered with Honour

Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Certificate courtesy of Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC)

CHARLES BUOYANT HARRIS

(1898-1918)

Charles Buoyant Harris was born on 5th August 1898 at Dell Close Cottages (now a single property and known as Old Keepers), Hedgerley, and baptised in St. Mary's, Hedgerley on 18th September 1898. Charles was the youngest of the ten men on the War Memorial and died in France on 30th March 1918, age 19.

Family History

Charles' paternal lineage is as follows:

Great-grandparents:

Richard Harris (c.1793-1882) and **Elizabeth Harris** (née unknown) (c.1806-unknown)

Grandparents:

Martin Harris (c.1826-1874) and **Ann Menhinick** (c.1831-unknown)

Parents:

Henry Harris (1854-1913) and **Rachel Nash** (1857-1910)

Charles' Great-grandparents

Richard Harris (c.1793-1882) and Elizabeth Harris (née unknown) (c.1806-unknown)

Richard Harris was born in the village of Bruern Abbey near Firfield in West Oxfordshire in c.1793 and it is likely that he married Elizabeth in about 1825 as their first child Richard was born in 1826. It is not known where they were when the 1841 census was taken, but by 1851 they had moved to London when Richard was age 58 and Elizabeth was age 45.

By 1861 Richard was a widower and working as a servant (bailiff) for Joseph Brereton, Rector of West Buckland, near South Molton in North Devon. Ten years later in 1871 he was living in Norfolk, but returned to North Devon by 1881 when the census records that he was living with

his son Richard at the Bake House in South Molton where his son Richard, age 52, was a bread baker. Richard Harris died in South Molton at the end of 1882, age 90.

Elizabeth Harris was born c.1806 at Alkerton near Banbury, Oxfordshire. This is all that is known about her.

Charles' Grandparents

Martin Harris (c.1826-1874) and Ann Menhinick (c.1831-unknown)

Martin Harris was born in 1826 at Chadlington, near Chipping Norton in Oxfordshire. It is not known when the family moved from Oxfordshire, but by the time of the 1851 census Martin was living with his parents, Richard and Elizabeth Harris, in the parish of Holy Trinity in Paddington.

Martin married Ann Menhinick at St. James, Bermondsey, Surrey on 4th April 1854, and it was in Bermondsey where their first child, Henry, was born later that year.

By 1859 Martin and Ann had moved to Herongate, Ingrave, Essex where their second child, Emma, was born. They were still there in 1861 and had moved to Billericay, Essex by 1862 when Ann was born and John in 1864. Martin died at the age of 47 in the summer of 1874 and was buried at St. Mary's, Hedgerley on 1st June that year.

Ann Harris (née Menhinick) was born in Liskeard, Cornwall in 1831. Her father was John Menhinick. By the time of the 1841 census she was age 15 and working as a servant for William Lobb in Bodmin, Cornwall. Ten years later in 1851 Ann was a servant in Reigate, Surrey. It is not known when or where Ann Harris died.

Charles' Parents

Henry Harris (1854-1913) and Rachel Nash (1857-1910)

Henry Harris was born in Bermondsey, Surrey in 1854 and by 1861 he was living with his parents at Ingrave (possibly Herongate) near Brentwood in Essex where his father was a groom. Ten years later in 1871 the family had moved to Brook Street in Hastings. Henry married

Rachel Nash in St. Mary's, Hedgerley on 19th April 1877 and they moved to Hastings where their three eldest children Ada, Lucy and Robert were born.

However, by 1883 Henry, Rachel and family had moved to Hedgerley as their next child John was born in Hedgerley Dean. Henry secured a job as a rural postman and was the village postman for at least a further twenty years. The family lived in Dell Close, Hedgerley for approximately thirty years. Their cottage was half of the current house Old Keepers. At the 1911 census Henry gave his occupation as retired postman and two years later, at the end of 1913, he died at the age of 59.

Rachel Harris (née Nash) was born in the summer of 1857 in the village of Little Ponton close to Grantham in Lincolnshire, which is where her mother was born. Her parents were John and Lucy Margaret Nash. It is known that John Nash was baptised in Hedgerley on 14th August 1825. Records indicate that his parents were Thomas, a victualler, and Martha. In 1861, at age 3, Rachel was living at The White Horse Inn in Hedgerley where her father was the licensed victualler. Rachel was still there, with younger sister Minnie, ten years later in 1871.

Henry and Rachel were married at St. Mary's, Hedgerley on 19th April 1877. Henry gave his profession as carpenter of Hastings, son of Martin Harris, coachman. Rachel was a barmaid, which was presumably at the White Horse. She was also the unofficial village nurse. Rachel's son Richard recalled many a summons to a sick bedside, often in the middle of the night.

Rachel's father John was still the publican of the White Horse in 1881, where he had been for at least twenty years, but by 1891 he was a gamekeeper.

Lucy Margaret Nash died on 30th June 1894 at the age of 60, and a year later her husband John died on 28th October 1895, age 72. Rachel Harris died on 13th December 1910, age 53.

Charles' Early Years

Charles was the youngest of twelve children born to Henry Harris and Rachel Nash between 1878 and 1898. Charles had five sisters and six brothers. One of his brothers, Robert, died in infancy. Charles and his surviving five brothers all served in the First World War. Charles' brothers all survived the conflict and are commemorated, together with Charles, on the Roll of Honour in Hedgerley Memorial Hall.

Charles Harris and his siblings leave Hedgerley

Ada, who was born in Hastings in 1878, left Hedgerley before 1901 as that year she was a servant (kitchen maid) for Lord Sackville at Knole, Sevenoaks, Kent. It is not known where she was in 1911.

Lucy Margaret, born in 1879 (also in Hastings), was probably named after her maternal grandmother Lucy Margaret Nash. In 1909 she married William Dolby, age 27, born in Whitwell, Derbyshire. In 1911, they were living with their son Richard, age 9 months, and Lucy's younger sister Rachel Louisa Harris at 22 Garden Village, Thornscoe, Rotherham. William was a coalminer. Lucy died in the summer of 1968, age 89, in Staincliffe, West Riding (Yorkshire).

John, born in Hedgerley in 1883, was a servant (coachman domestic) at The Stables, Stoke Place, Stoke Green in 1911. His name is on the scroll in Hedgerley Memorial Hall.

Ann (Annie) was born in Hedgerley in 1885. In 1901, she was a servant (scullery maid) for Mrs Stevenson and living at Hedgerley Park. In 1910, she married Walter Fowkes in Luton and moved to Dunstable in Bedfordshire.

Henry Martin was baptised at St. Mary's, Hedgerley on 23rd January 1887. In 1911, he was a servant (chauffeur under 2nd domestic) living in Britwell Gardens, Burnham. In 1919, he married Ethel Louisa Gates in Maidstone, and it would appear that he lived in Kent for the rest of his life until he died, age 68, on 21st September 1955. He clearly had fond memories of Hedgerley as he named his last house (in Haste Hill, Boughton Monchelsea, Maidstone) 'Hedgerley'. Probate was granted to his widow Ethel and brother Richard Martin Harris whose occupation was

insurance official. His name is also on the scroll in Hedgerley Memorial Hall.

Thomas was baptised at St. Mary's on 13th January 1889. It is not known where he was living in 1911, but his name, along with his brothers, is on the scroll in Hedgerley Memorial Hall.

Richard was baptised at St. Mary's on 27th July 1890 (born 29th June). Richard was living with his father in Hedgerley in 1911. He married Lydia Watts in Eton District in the summer of 1921 and died in the winter of 1984, age 93. His name is also listed on the scroll in Hedgerley Memorial Hall.

Bessie Maria was baptised at St. Mary's on 14th August 1892. In 1911, age 18, she was a servant (housemaid) for Charles Preston, a solicitor, and his family in Knotty Green, Beaconsfield.

Edward Gregory was baptised at St. Mary's on 6th January 1895. In 1911, he was an assistant grocer and draper employed by William Roberts at his shop in Cudham, Sevenoaks, Kent, possibly near his older sister Ada. He was a groom when he enlisted in Inverness (79th Recruiting Area) on 26th August 1914 and joined the 5th Battalion Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. His Short Service Attestation has survived and states that he was 19 years and 273 days old when he died, and his next of kin was recorded as his older brother John at Stoke Place. Edward was discharged from the Army on 7th October 1914 under Para 392a (iii) of the King's Regulations. His name is also on the scroll in Hedgerley Memorial Hall.

Rachel Louisa was baptised at St. Mary's, Hedgerley on 31st May 1896. In 1911, she was living with her sister Lucy in Rotherham.

By 1911 Charles Buoyant Harris had also left Hedgerley as when the census was taken on Sunday 2nd April that year he was living with his sister Ann and her husband Walter Fowkes, who had recently married, at their home at 5 Princes Street, Dunstable. Walter was a warehouseman for a gas stove maker. No occupation was given for Charles, but at age 12 it is assumed that he was a scholar.

War Service

Charles enlisted in Aylesbury. The exact date of enlistment is not known, but it was possibly in August 1914 as he would have been sixteen then. He joined the 7th Battalion of the Somerset Light Infantry as a Private.

The battalion disembarked at Boulogne from England on 24th July 1915 from No. 4 Canada Camp Salisbury Plain. The battalion was comprised of thirty officers, 860 Other Ranks (OR), seventy-three horses and mares, nineteen four-wheeled and four two-wheeled carts.

Charles died of his wounds in France on 30th March 1918, age 19, and is buried in the Namps-au-Val British Cemetery, south west of Amiens, in France. He was awarded the Victory and British Medals.

The war diaries for the Somerset Light Infantry 7th Battalion are held at the National Archives (WO 95/2127) in Kew and on 3rd January 2015 our researcher, Judith Broadgate, recorded the entries in the diary for the three months in 1918 leading up to the 30th March when Charles died. The entries give an insight into the horrors of war but also include some lighter moments such as a football match and a cross-country race.

January 1918

1 January – La Belle Hotesse

5 January – Alberta camp/Scottish wood camp

14 January – Canada tunnels moved to front line

15 January – Front line/Canada tunnels

18 January – Moved to front lines and relieved 7th Koyli

21 January – Relieved by 12th Kings. Preceded by light railway from Manor Farm Halt to Feuzeville then march to Chippewa Camp.

30 January – moved to support at Canada Tunnels

February 1918

- 1 February – Canada Tunnels/Front line
- 2 February – Improving front line trenches. Midnight patrol.
- 5 February – Chippewa Camp
- 6 February – Football match officers three, sergeants one
- 7 February – Front line Menin Road sector
- 9 February – Front line boys came under fairly heavy fire Menin Road from TM (trench mortar) batteries – 3 casualties
- 10 February – Resumption of TM fire from enemy batteries: one killed, one wounded.
- 11 February – Moved to Canada Tunnel
- 12 February – Canada Tunnels – two casualties – Tower Hamlets sector
- 14 February – Under heavy TM fire – five wounded
- 15 February – Relieved by 8th Battalion Somerset L.I., marched to Lambton on light railway to Maida Camp
- 16 February – March to Dickebusch then train to Ebbingham and march route to billets at Campagne
- 17 – 22 February – Campagne – marched to Steenbeque train to Nesle march to Freniches
- 23-28 February – Freniches

March 1918 – Freniches

- 7 March – Cross country race and mounted paper chase for officers
- 8 March – Route march 14.5 miles
- 11 March – Battalion took over work from 7th DCL at Curchy and Vayenne
- 13 – 18 March – Curchy and Vayenne

20 March – Standing to – first day of German offensive on Somme

21 March – Bussed from Curchy to St. Simon and took up battle positions

*** 22 March – Took up fresh position south side of Canal De St. Quentin, south of St. Simon. Enemy entered latter town on morning of 22nd.

23 March – Enemy crossed Canal below our right flank capturing Jussy and Flauy which freed us to retire to line Ollezy Annois.

Commanding Officer Lt. Col. C.J. Troyte-Bullock DSO was severely wounded, the acting adjutant Lieut. S.G. Berry killed, 2nd Lieut. P. Shambre wounded, eight officers missing.

24-31 March Hangard

*** Enemy captured Ham Causing [sic] and general retirement until the 30th March 1918. The survivors of the battalion held onto the Hangard Bridgehead.

Total casualties during the operations

	Killed	Wounded	Missing	Total
Officers	1	3	15	19
Men	10	57	390	457

In Memory of

Private

C Harris

38505, 7th Bn., Somerset Light Infantry who died on 30 March 1918 Age 19

Son of Henry and Rachel Harris.

Remembered with Honour

Namps-Au-Val British Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Certificate courtesy of Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC)

THOMAS HEARNE (1883-1918)

Thomas Hearne was born on 20th May 1883 in Hedgerley Dean. He was killed in action on 20th April 1918 whilst serving as a Private in the Oxford and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, although the St. Mary's Church, Hedgerley memorial has the date as 19th April 1918.

Family History

Thomas' Grandparents

John Hearne (c.1810-unknown) and Jemima Tripp (c.1811-unknown)

There is a baptism record for John Hearne on 9th July 1809 in Chalfont St Giles, which tells us that his father was also John and his mother Sarah.

John Hearne married Jemima Tripp on 4th October 1832 at Chalfont St. Giles.

Thomas' Parents

Thomas Hearne (c.1843-1917) and Maria Thompson (c.1841-1922)

Thomas Hearne appears in the 1851 census at age 7. Thomas was born in Chalfont St Giles and was living there with his parents John, born c.1810, and Jemima, born c.1811, and his elder sisters Sarah, Mary, Hannah, Elizabeth and Susanna. Records show that all the family were born in Chalfont St. Giles and that John was a wheelwright.

By 1861 the family were living at 12 Milton Field, and by now Mary and Susannah were needlewomen and Hannah worked in a laundry. Thomas, now age 17, was a wheelwright like his father.

Thomas and Maria Thompson married in Amersham in 1865. Maria was born in Chorleywood, Hertfordshire c.1841.

By the time of the 1871 census Thomas and Maria were living at 19 Milton Field with daughter Minnie and son James, both born in Chalfont St. Giles. Thomas gave his occupation as machinist.

In the 1881 census the family had moved to Hedgerley, probably in 1875, with children Michael, Henrietta and Leanna who were all born in the village. Thomas was now 38 and a carpenter employing one lad.

When the 1891 census was recorded Thomas (junior) was born. His older brother James was a carpenter and Michael was a general labourer. By 1901 only three children were at home: Michael, Leanna and Thomas. They were living next door to the village Post Office.



The Post Office was the third of the three cottages in the foreground of this photo taken c.1910.

The Hearne family lived in the middle one. The cottages stood on the site of the present Blue Cottage and Arden. The children shown here may well include some of the ten men in this book.

Photo courtesy of Hedgerley Historical Society

In the 1910 Valuation Mrs Hearne is listed as a tenant of Mrs Stevenson of Hedgerley Park.

In 1911 Thomas (junior) was the only one of Thomas and Maria's children left at home. By now Thomas senior was sixty-eight and not retired as he gave his occupation as builder.

Maria, being two years older than Thomas, was now seventy. In the census return completed by Thomas he indicates that he had seven children and one had died.

The 1920 Electoral Register (and Kelly's Directory) lists Maria Hearne, The Post Office. In 1920 the Post Office was located in Village Lane on the site of the present Blue Cottage and Arden, but it has occupied at least six other locations in Hedgerley at different times.

Thomas was buried on 25th September 1917, age 75, in Hedgerley. A note in the Parish Register states that he was the village carpenter who with his three sons James, Michael and Thomas, cut the beams and placed them on the walls of the nave of St. Mary's, Hedgerley. Thomas' workshop, and later his son's, was on the site of The Little House, Village Lane. His wife Maria was buried with her husband on 10th May 1922, age 83. Prior to her death she was living in Kendal, Cumbria.

The Kelly's Directories of 1924 and 1928 list Michael Hearne as sub-postmaster in the village.

Thomas' Early Years

Thomas grew up in Hedgerley and was employed by his father until his marriage at St Leonard's, Upton in June 1915 to Flora Louise Colyer. Thomas' father Thomas was listed as a builder and Flora's father, Walter Edward, was a gas fitter. Thomas' aunt Jane was married to the father of Jesse Hobbs (see separate chapter about Jesse Hobbs), so Thomas and Jesse were cousins.

Flora was baptised in Faversham, Kent on 13th September 1885. Her parents were Walter Edward and Fanny Colyer. Walter was born in Faversham c.1859 and employed as a gas and water fitter. In 1891 Flora was living with her family (elder brother George, and younger siblings, Walter and Margaret) at 6 Orchard Place, Faversham.

In 1901 she was still living in Faversham, but was now with her grandparents George and Ann Wood at 31 Orchard Place next door to William Girls School. By 1911 Flora had moved to Hedgerley as she appears in the census employed as a servant (housemaid) for Mrs

Stevenson at Hedgerley Park. This is presumably when she met Thomas Hearne.

Flora Louise Colyer married Thomas at the Church of St. Lawrence in the parish of Upton-cum-Chalvey on 12th June 1915. Banns had been read at St. Mary's Hedgerley for Thomas. They married at St. Lawrence church because at that time Flora was living and working at The Mere in Slough.

The Mere was owned by Richard Bentley. His father George built the house in 1887 and he owned a publishing firm that published books by Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins and Disraeli, amongst others.

Thomas and Flora lived at The Bungalows, Cippenham and Thomas worked as a carpenter before he enlisted.

War Service

Automatic enlistment, usually referred to as conscription, came into effect in 1916. Initially all unmarried men aged between 19 and 41 on 2nd November 1915 were deemed to have enlisted on 2nd March 1916, but this did not apply to Thomas Hearne as he was married at this time. However, the rules were extended to include married men, and the age lowered to 18, on 25th May 1916, and now Thomas was required to enlist. Another change was that conscripted men were no longer able to choose which unit they joined, other than choosing the Navy in preference to the Army.

Thomas Hearne enlisted at Slough, we assume shortly after 25th May 1916. Thomas was initially assigned to the 4th (Reserve) Battalion of the Devonshire Regiment based in Bournemouth. He was then transferred to the 2nd Battalion which had been in France since November 1914, and transferred again to the 2/4th Battalion Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry (OBLI). Unfortunately, we do not know the dates when Thomas moved between the three battalions he served in.

However, we do know that in March 1918 the 2/4 Btn OBLI suffered enormous losses during the Somme Crossings. Captain G. K. Rose M.C., an officer of the 2/4th Battalion whose first-hand account was published

shortly after the end of the war, wrote that "the loss in all ranks had been so heavy that the killed and missing could only be computed by counting over those few that remained."

In summary, Captain Rose described the events of March 1918:

"On the night of 18/19 March the Battalion went into the front line. Early on March 21 ... the ground shook to a mighty bombardment. Trench mortars of all calibres and field guns, brought to closest range in the mist and darkness, began to pound a pathway through our wire. It was 4.50 a.m. The hour had struck. Our guns, whose programme in reply was the fruit of two months' preparation, made a peculiar echo as their shells crackled through the mist. On all headquarters, roads, redoubts, and observation posts the enemy's howitzer shells were falling with descending swoop, and battery positions were drenched with gas. In the back area the fire of long-range guns was brought with uncanny accuracy to bear against our rest billets, transport lines, and dumps. Cross-roads, bridges, and all vital spots in our communications, though never previously shelled, were receiving direct hits within a short time of the opening of the bombardment. Never in the war had the Germans flung their shells so far or furiously as now.

By daylight all front-line wire had been destroyed, and our trenches everywhere were much damaged. Before noon the enemy had passed Fayet and his patrols had reached Selency... At Enghien Redoubt Battalion Headquarters had received no news of the attack having begun ...the first three men to put their heads over were killed by Germans, who had crept close along the sunken road which leads from Favet to Selency. The rifles and machine guns of the garrison opened up and gained superiority. The defence, destined to last for many hours, of Enghien Redoubt proved an important check to the enemy's advance and helped to save many of our guns. [Shortly after noon, Battalion] Headquarters were surrounded by the enemy.

Towards evening on the 21st the Berks, who were in reserve when the attack started, were sent to counter-attack. This local attempt to stem the German onslaught proved of no avail. At 10.30 a.m. on March 22 the enemy, whose movements were again covered by mist, pressed the attack against the battle line. Almost before the Gloucesters knew they

were attacked in front, they found themselves beset in flanks and rear. At noon the enemy from its north side had penetrated Holnon Wood. Gloucesters and Oxfords fell back to join the garrison of the Beauvoir Line, all parts of which were heavily engaged by evening. The line was too weakly manned long to withstand the enemy; though parts of it held till after 8 p.m. on March 22, before midnight the whole of this last Army Line had been lost. The enemy had 'broken through.'"

(Rose, G.K., *The Story of the 2/4th Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry*, 1920).

Rose goes on to describe the British retreat behind the Somme, the Somme Crossings, and associated rear-guard actions.

The first ten days of April were thus spent regrouping and re-organising. During this time, the 2/1st Bucks amalgamated 431 men with the battalion. The battalion then travelled by train to Robecq on 11th April and spent the rest of April doing tours in and out of the line during the Battle of the Lys.

On 19th April the battalion was relieved by 2/5th Gloucesters. One man was killed and five were wounded during the relief operation. April 20th was a quiet day and the night was spent in improving posts and putting out more wire, especially along the west bank of the Clarence River. One death is recorded. Either of these deaths on 19th and 20th April could have been Thomas Hearne. He is certainly buried in the nearby St Venant-Robecq Road British Cemetery, which was started on 12th April 1918.

There is a tribute to Thomas in the Hedgerley School Log Book for 29th May 1918: "*Heard that Thomas Hearne an old scholar paid 'the supreme sacrifice' on April 19th and as a mark of respect the children began morning with the hymn 'For all the saints who from their labours rest.'*" At the time of Thomas' death Flora was living at The Bungalows, Cippenham and that would explain why Thomas also appears on the Cippenham (and Burnham) War Memorials (see photos on pages 69 and 74). Flora did not remarry and died in the Windsor area in 1969.

Flora received £3 8d as being the value of Thomas' effects. She also received a further £8 War Gratuity.



Cippenham War Memorial where Thomas Hearne is commemorated
Photo courtesy of John Lovelock

In Memory of

Private

Thomas Hearne

34584, 2nd/4th Bn., Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry who died on 20 April 1918 Age 33

Son of Thomas and Maria Hearne, of Hedgerley, Farnham Royal, Bucks; husband of Flora Louise Hearne, of The Bungalows, Cippenham, Slough, Bucks.

Remembered with Honour

St. Venant-Robecq Road British Cemetery, Robecq



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Certificate courtesy of Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC)



Hedgerley Memorial Hall shortly after its opening in 1921
 Photo courtesy of Hedgerley Historical Society



Hedgerley Memorial Hall in 2016
 Photo courtesy of John Lovelock



Casualty Cottages in 2017. The Boddy and Hobbs families lived here (in the cottages with blue doors) during WW1, as well as some of the workers at the brick and tile kilns at Pennlands.
Photo courtesy of John Lovelock



Soldiers on horseback during World War 1 in Farnham Common
Photo courtesy of Judy Tipping



Princess Mary Gift Fund 1914 Box

An embossed brass box that originally contained a variety of items such as tobacco & chocolate. It was intended as a Christmas present to those serving at Christmas in 1914 and was paid for by a public fund backed by Princess Mary. Photo by John Lovelock courtesy of Rosemary Followell



Christmas Card from Princess Mary Gift Fund 1914 Box
Photo by John Lovelock courtesy of Rosemary Followell



Burnham War Memorial where William Birch and Thomas Hearne are commemorated.
Photo courtesy of John Lovelock

JESSE HOBBS (1888-1916)

Jesse Hobbs was born on 14th January 1888 in Casualty Cottages, Hedgerley Dean and his father was a farm labourer. He was baptised at St. Mary's, Farnham Royal on 11th March 1888. Jesse became an agricultural labourer before joining the Royal Berkshire Regiment in 1908. He was killed in action in France on 24th September 1916, age 28, and is buried at the British Cemetery in Vermelles near Lens in France.

Family History

Jesse's Parents

Jesse Hobbs and Jane Hearne

According to the 1901 census both Jesse Hobbs and his wife Jane (née Hearne) were born in Chalfont St Giles. Jane was baptised in Chalfont St Giles on 20th June 1852. Her parents were George and Ann. Jane was an aunt of Thomas Hearne (see separate chapter about Thomas Hearne), so Jesse Hobbs jr. was Thomas Hearne's cousin.

In 1861 Jane was living with her parents. Her father was George, age 53, and an agricultural labourer and his wife was Ann, who was age 49 in 1861. They were living at Henplat, near Lawn Lane in Chalfont St Giles. Jane's eldest sister Sophia was a lace maker and older brothers William, Thomas, Charles and George were agricultural labourers. The youngest brother Daniel was four years younger than Jane. All the family were born in Chalfont St Giles.

By 1871 Ann Hearne, Jane's mother, was a widow living at Rosewood Lane Cottage, near Rosewood Farm. In the cottage were Jane's older brother George, still an agricultural labourer. Jane was by now age 21, but no occupation was recorded. Her mother Ann is recorded as an agricultural labourer.

Jesse and Jane Hobbs were married in Amersham District in 1873 and lived in Chalfont St Giles with their three sons and two daughters before moving to Coleshill where they were recorded as living in the 1881 census. Their three youngest children were all born in Hedgerley Dean, so it would appear from the 1891 census that the family moved to Hedgerley in c.1885.

Jesse's Early Years

The 1891 census shows the family living in Casualty Cottages, Hedgerley. Jesse's place of birth is given as Great Missenden. In 1901 Jesse was still living at Casualty with his parents, older brother Joseph and younger sister Jane.

Jesse Hobbs Sr. was buried at St. Mary's, Hedgerley in September 1919 at age 79. Jane was buried on 28th October 1922, age 72.

There is no evidence to connect Jesse Hobbs with Jess Hobbs. Jess was the landlord at the White Horse, Hedgerley within living memory, and the late husband of Dot Hobbs, who is the current licensee.

War Service

Jesse joined the Regular Army in 1908. He enlisted at Reading into the Berkshire Regiment. His regimental number was 8865. The 1911 census shows that on 2nd April 1911 Jesse was in India, a Private in the 2nd Battalion Royal Berkshire Regiment, which at that time was in Meerut. The battalion moved to the large fort at Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh in 1912, where it remained until 20th August 1914 when it was ordered to return to England and prepare to be mobilised for war. The battalion embarked on troopship HMT Dongola at Bombay on 30th September 1914, arriving at Liverpool on 22nd October. The ship's manifest shows that Jesse was in 'B' Company.

The 2nd Battalion was mobilised for war on 5th November 1914 arriving at Le Havre on 6th November.

In 1915 the battalion was engaged in The Battle of Neuve Chapelle, The Battle of Aubers and the Action of Bois Grenier. In 1916 the battalion participated in the Battle of Albert, which comprised the first two weeks

of the Battle of the Somme from 1st to 13th July, and was in the centre of the attack on Ovillers on the first day. July 1st was a day of terrible losses for the Allied forces. The 2nd Battalion suffered 437 casualties in not much more than two hours. This battle is what fuelled the 'lions led by donkeys' view of the war. "Lions led by donkeys" is a phrase popularly used to describe the British infantry of World War I and to blame the generals who led them. The contention is that the brave soldiers (lions) were sent to their deaths by incompetent and indifferent leaders (donkeys).

Jesse Hobbs achieved the rank of Lance Corporal. He was awarded the 1914 Star as well as the Victory and British War medals (examples of these medals may be found on page 109).

Jesse was killed in action later in the Battle of the Somme on 24th September 1916, age 28, and is buried at the British Cemetery in Vermelles near Lens in France.

After the War

Jesse's brothers George, John and Joseph survived the war and are all listed on the Hedgerley Memorial Hall Roll of Honour. John Hobbs entered the war on 7th April 1915 and served in the OBLI 2nd Battalion. He was awarded the 1914-15 Star, and then the Labour Corps. Joseph enlisted in Maidenhead on 7th September 1914 and entered the war in France on 18th December 1915. Joseph was awarded the 195 Star, initially with the Hampshire Regiment, then with the Labour Corps.

In Memory of
Lance Corporal

J Hobbs

8865, 2nd Bn., Royal Berkshire Regiment who died on 24 September 1916 Age 33

Remembered with Honour
Vermelles British Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Certificate courtesy of Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC)

FRANCIS EDMUND PINER (1897-1917)

Private Francis Edmund Piner
reported wounded & missing
Sept 20th 1914
aged 20 - June 14th 1917



Photo courtesy of Rosemary Newman

Francis Edmund Piner was born on 14th June 1897 at 119 Wellington Buildings, Pimlico, London. Francis was reported wounded and missing (killed in action) in 'France and Flanders', on 20th September 1917, age 20.

The Piner Family in Hedgerley

Parish records indicate that there were six generations of Piner families living in Hedgerley for over 200 years from 1784 to 1987. There are seventy-five Piner baptisms, four Piner marriages and twenty-nine Piner burial records in the Parish Register for St. Mary the Virgin in Hedgerley.

There is a headstone in St. Mary's Churchyard (transcribed by the Buckinghamshire Family History Society in 1990): "Sacred to the memory of Mrs Charlotte Piner wife of Mr William Piner of Chalfont St Peter, Bucks who died 5th May 1816 in her 36th year a tender mother, a wife, a sincere faithful friend lies buried here, also of the above Mr William Piner who died January 9th 1836 aged 79 years".

A map of 1825 held by Bucks County Council shows Pennlands Farm and a brick kiln, and one of the daughters of Thomas and Mary (Caroline) appears to be baptised twice in the same month in November 1825.

The 1841 census includes two Piner families (John and Sophia, and James and Ann) in Collum Green, Burnham; three in Hedgerley Dean (William and Eliza, Thomas and Sarah, James and Hannah); and one family in Hedgerley (Mary and John).

James, son of James and Hannah Piner, was one of the first children to be baptised in the new St. Mary's Church shortly after its completion and consecration in December 1852. Amongst the burials is the tragic case of Ann Piner, age 46 (born c.1820) of Hedgerley Dean who was killed by a machine and buried on 25th March 1866.

A local directory published in 1847 and 1852 lists William and Henry Piner as brickmakers.

The 1851 census includes six Piner families living in Hedgerley Dean. All the husbands (George, William, Frederick, John and Thomas) were farm labourers, with the exception of William Piner, whose occupation was

brickmaker. In Hedgerley the census recorded Eden Piner, born in Farnham Royal c.1849, age 2, living with her maternal grandfather and Mary Piner (widow), age 66, a laundress born in Iver c.1785 and her grandson, John Syers Piner, age 7, born in Farnham Royal c.1844.

One headstone in St. Mary's Churchyard has the inscription "Sacred to the memory of William Piner who departed this life 10th December 1858 age 73 years, also of Elizabeth wife of the above named who departed this life 7th September 1861 age 76 years".

Another gravestone has an epitaph "Sacred to the memory of Ann wife of Henry Piner of Gerrards Cross who departed this life 21st August 1861 in her 61st year also of Henry Piner who died 14th September 18?? (illegible) age 76 years."

The 1861 census describes how five Piner families were living in Collum Green:

James and Ann and their children Francis and Mary Ann were living in the Yew Tree beer house (see photo on next page). James was the beer house keeper and in the adjoining four cottages were:

James and Hannah and their children Edmund, Albert James and Sarah. No occupation was given for James, but his son Edmund was a shoemaker. James, who was living in Farnham Royal Parish in the 1841 census, then age 22, was buried at St. Mary's on 4th May 1891, age 73. He was parish clerk for forty-three years, Clerk of Hedgerley Church.

John and Sophia and their children Henry and Ann. John and Henry were agricultural labourers and Ann was a dressmaker.

Frederick and Sarah and their children Thomas and Caroline (both scholars).

Edward and Mary Ann and children Mary Ann, Edward and Charlotte. Edward was a brick and tile maker and wife Mary Ann, a dressmaker.

The 1871 census indicates that Edmund (brick and tile maker) and Mary Ann, Frederick and Sarah and James and Hannah were still living at Collum Green.

The 1881 census shows that James and Ann have moved from the Yew Tree to the cottages, and James gives his occupation as brickmaker. Sarah is now a widow, and John and Sophia have moved.



The Yew Tree, Hedgerley probably in early 1950's. Collum Green (or Yew Tree) Cottages were behind the Yew Tree on the right of the photograph
Photo courtesy of Hedgerley Historical Society

The 1891 census describes how Edmund and Mary Ann, Sarah Piner (now a widow) and James (now a widower) were living at Collum Green. Neighbours were James and Ellen Birch and their children William and Arthur. William was later to die in the Great War (see separate chapter on William Birch).

By 1901 only Edmund and Mary Ann (and children) plus Sarah Piner remained in the cottages. Henry Piner (son of John and Sophia), age 27, of Collum Green was buried at St. Mary's, Hedgerley on 17th January 1906. Sarah Piner of Yew Tree Cottages died in May 1906, age 87, and was buried on 26th May 1906.

By the time of the 1911 census the Piner families, Francis and Katherine and Edward and Mary Ann, were living at Collum Green in Burnham parish.

Brick and Tile Making

The brick and tile works were at Pennlands, Hedgerley, and had been run by the Piner family since the mid-nineteenth century. Prior to this, in the eighteenth century, the Piners were brick and tile making in the Chalfonts.

Many of the workers lived in the hamlet of Casualty, both in the cottages there and at The Potter's Arms. In the winter, they worked from 7am to 5pm and could work from sun-up to sun-down in the summer if demand was high.

Before the end of the First World War (when Slough Trading Estate was started) brick, tile and pottery making were the only forms of employment for villagers other than gardening or agriculture. Rosemary Newman has some clay models, that her father Ernest said were made by the workers in their lunch breaks, one of which is possibly of Judge Jeffreys of Bulstrode:



Clay models made by workers at the brick and tile kilns at Pennlands
Photo courtesy of Rosemary Newman

Pennlands was so called because it was probably one of several areas of land locally, held by the Penn family of Penn. The clay was dug from an open pit in the winter with the aid of a barrow and shovel and thrown

onto a mound to weather. During the summer brick and tile making season the clay was taken to be watered and covered in sacks overnight.

The Piner family was supposed to have its own secret recipe for making oven tiles that were much in demand for use in bakers' ovens, kitchen ranges, ovens on board ships and for ordinary domestic grates. Pennlands only had one kiln (known as a Scotch kiln – referred to as "The Kill") that burned for two days and a night.

The bricks made on site were usually bound for London, and left the village on a horse-drawn cart until a lorry was acquired in the 1920's. They were sold for the modest sum of four to six pounds per thousand to a firm called Lovells in Beaconsfield, amongst others. One company, called Boots, even built a house from them at the Ideal Home Exhibition in the 1920's or 1930's and came away with a prize. The site was rented from Lord Burnham since the area formed part of his estate. It closed c.1936.

Family History

Francis Edmund Piner's paternal lineage is as follows:

Great-great-great-great-grandparents:

Richard Piner (1697-1770) and **Mary** (née unknown) (1698-unknown)

Great-great-great-grandparents:

Thomas Piner (1718-unknown) and **Mary Body** (dates unknown)

Great-great-grandparents:

Thomas Piner (1750-1824) and **Elizabeth Gay** (1764-unknown)

Great-grandparents:

James Piner (1793-1869) and **Ann Row** (1816-1868)

Grandparents:

Edward Piner (1831-1920) and **Mary Ann Alsford** (1837-1927)

Parents:

Francis Piner (1872-1969) and **Ellen Ada Brown** (1872-unknown)
and **Katherine Piner** (1873-1934)

Francis' Great-great-great-great-grandparents
Richard Piner (1697-1770) and Mary (née unknown) (1698-unknown)

Great-great-great-great grandfather Richard (1697-1770) married Mary (Maria), possibly in Chalfont St Peter.

Francis' Great-great-great-grandparents
Thomas Piner (1718-unknown) and Mary Body (dates unknown)

Great-great-great-grandfather Thomas was born 1718. It is possible that he was baptised on 9th June 1720 in Wendover (his parents were Richard and Martha). Thomas married Mary Body in Chalfont St Peter in 1742. A marriage bond was signed by Thomas Piner on 23rd April 1742. Thomas was twenty-three and Mary twenty-one.

Francis' Great-great-grandparents
Thomas Piner (1750-1824) and Elizabeth Gay (1764-unknown)

Great-great-grandfather Thomas (1750-1824) married Elizabeth Gay (born in Bray in 1764) in Bray, Berkshire on 3rd June 1784 and shortly afterwards they moved to Hedgerley.

This was the earliest Piner family living in Hedgerley and they had seven children baptised at St. Mary's, Hedgerley between 1785 and 1795. Thomas was buried in St. Mary's, Hedgerley on 4th November 1824, age 74.

Francis' Great-grandparents
James Piner (1793-1869) and Ann Row (1816-1868)

Great-grandfather James (1793-1869) married Ann Row (1816-1868) from Farnham Royal. James was baptised in Hedgerley on 20th October 1793. Ann's parents were Thomas and Elizabeth Row.

James is recorded in the 1841 census in Burnham, age 45, a labourer, with wife Ann, age 40, George, age 15, scholar, Frederick, age 14, Charlotte, age 10, Edmund, age 8, Caroline, age 7, Charles, age 4 and Richard, age six months.

In the 1861 census James is age 65 living at The Yew Tree Public House. He was born in Farnham Royal and was a beer house keeper. Ann is shown as being born at Hedgerley Dean with son Francis, age 25, agricultural labourer, Mary Ann, granddaughter, age 10, born Farnham and Richard Pizzey, grandson born in Chertsey, Surrey. Pizzey was probably a misspelling of Pusey, a common local name. James planted the original yew tree outside the Yew Tree Public House.

Ann was buried at St. Mary's Hedgerley on 28th September 1868, age 72.

James was buried in St. Mary's Hedgerley on 25th July 1869, age 75, on St. James Day.

Francis' Grandparents

Edward (1831-1920) and Mary Ann Alsford (1837-1927)



Edward (Edmund) and Mary Ann Piner. Photo courtesy of Rosemary Newman

Grandfather Edward, sometimes recorded as *Edmund*, (1831-1920) was baptised at St. Mary's, Hedgerley on the 31st July 1831 and he appears in the 1841 census, at age 8, in Burnham Parish. Edward was with his parents, James and Ann, plus siblings George, Frederick, Charlotte, Francis, Caroline, Charles and Richard.

In the 1851 census Edward was age 19, a farm labourer and servant of Charlotte Healey at Pennlands Farm. Charlotte was a farmer of 250 acres who also ran the brick and tile works that employed twenty men and five boys at Pennlands. These works were later owned by the Piner family.

Edward married Mary Ann Alsford (1837-1927) at St Peter's Church, Burnham on 5th April 1856. Mary was born on 15th February 1837 and baptised at the Bethel Chapel, Cores End, Wooburn on 19th March 1837. Her father was William Alsford and mother Sophia Gurney.

Edward, age 29, and Mary, age 24, appear in the 1861 census living in Yew Tree Cottages, Collum Green, which prior to 1934 was in Burnham Parish, with their eldest daughter Mary Ann, age 4, son Edward, age 2, and Charlotte, age 1. Edward was a brick and tile maker and Mary a dressmaker. They had twelve children born between 1857 and 1880.

The 1871 census shows that Frederick Piner, age 44, brick and tile maker, was living in one of the Yew Tree Cottages next door. Also in the cottages were James Piner (brick and tile maker and Parish Clerk of Hedgerley) plus his wife Anna, son James (a shepherd), Jonah (a gardener) and Emma (a scholar). There is a gravestone in St. Mary's Churchyard for James and Anna.

The 1881 census revealed that the family were still at Yew Tree Cottages in Collum Green. Their son Francis (Francis Edmund's father - known as Frank) was still at school at this time as he was eight years old.

The 1891 census return for Yew Tree Cottages shows that the Piner families lived next door to the Birch family, including William Joseph Birch, who is also covered in this book (see earlier chapter).

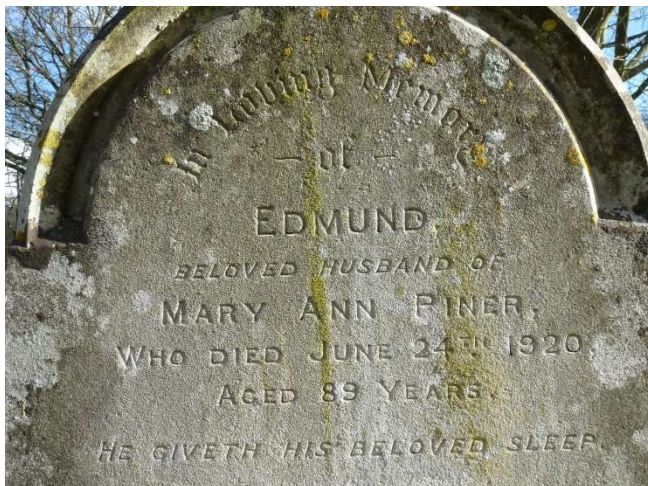
Edmund and Mary Ann's daughter Kate died on 2nd January 1892, age 17, and was buried at St. Mary's, Hedgerley on 9th January 1892.

The 1901 census confirms that Edward (Edmund), Mary Ann and children Francis, Ethel and Sarah are still at Yew Tree Cottages. The photo on page 86 of Edward (Edmund) was with his wife Mary Ann was possibly taken outside Yew Tree Cottages in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century.

Their son Henry was buried at St. Mary's, Hedgerley on 17th January 1906 and his headstone reads "In loving memory of Henry son of Edmund and Mary Ann Piner who died January 13th 1906 aged 27 years".

By the time of the 1911 census Edward and Mary Ann are on their own at Yew Tree Cottages, as the entry states 'Edward Piner; Head;79; retired brickmaker and old age pensioner; Burnham and Mary Ann Piner; Wife, married 54 years; 74; old age pensioner; Wooburn, Bucks.'

Edmund was buried in St. Mary's Churchyard on 28th June 1921, age 89, and his headstone reads "In loving memory of Edmund beloved husband of Mary Ann Piner who died June 24th 1920 aged 89 years also Mary Ann wife of the above who died January 14th 1927 aged 89 years rest in peace". Mary Ann was buried on 18th January 1927 (see photo of grave below):



Headstone of Edmund and Mary Ann Piner, St. Mary's Churchyard, Hedgerley
Photo courtesy of John Lovelock

The family lived in Yew Tree Cottages, Collum Green for at least seventy-six years.

Francis' Parents

Francis Piner (1872-1969) and Ellen Ada Brown (1872-unknown) and Katherine Piner (1873-1934)

Father Francis, known as *Frank*, was born on 12th May 1872 and baptised at St. Mary's Hedgerley on 30th June 1872. His father was recorded as Edmund Piner. He died age 97 in 1969. (See photo below of Francis Piner with his granddaughter Rosemary Newman (née Piner) in c.1947).

Francis appears in the 1881 census, age 8, a scholar living at Pennlands with younger sisters Kate, age 7, Ethel Elizabeth, age 7 months, and younger brothers Arthur, age 5, and Harry, age 2.



Francis Piner with Rosemary Newman née Piner c.1947
Photo courtesy of Rosemary Newman

In 1891 his parents were at Yew Tree Cottages, Collum Green with Harry, age 12. Francis meanwhile was living and working at the bakery run by Mr G. Smith, head baker, in Bells Hill, Stoke Poges with his younger brother Arthur, who was born in 1876.

Mother Ellen (sometimes called Nellie) Ada Brown was born on 31st July 1872 in Catford, Kent and baptised at St. Mary's Church in Lewisham Kent on 20th October 1872. In the 1881 census the family were living at 2 Farley Road, Lewisham and her father George Thomas Brown gave his occupation as manager of a wine and spirits vault. Her mother Pamela (age 40) was born in Stonehouse, Gloucestershire. In the 1891 census she was living with her father George, now a licenced victualler, mother Pamela Mary Ann Brown (née Cambridge) and her younger sister Amy at 63 Chester Terrace in Knightsbridge. George Thomas Brown married Pamela Mary Ann Cambridge at some time between October to December 1859.

Francis and Ellen Ada Brown were married at the Register Office in the Registration District of St George, Hanover Square, London on 5th March 1897 (this area is now covered by the modern parish of Westminster).

The marriage certificate records Francis, age 24, bachelor, gas fitter, 196 Wellington Buildings, Pimlico. Father: Edward Piner, foreman, brick works and Ellen Ada Brown, age 24, spinster (no occupation) living at 119 Wellington Buildings, Pimlico. Father: George Thomas Brown (deceased), builders' foreman. Witnesses were A.E. Willey and H. Willey.

Francis' Early Years

Francis was born on 14th June 1897 at 119 Wellington Buildings, Pimlico, London. His parents were Francis Piner (a gas fitter) and Ellen (Nellie) Ada (formerly Brown). Francis Piner owned and worked the brick kilns at Pennlands at the time of his son's death on 20th September 1917.

In 1901 Francis Edmund was living with his mother Ellen (entered as Nellie on the census) at 34 Christchurch Street, Pimlico. Nellie gave her occupation as teacher of pianoforte, which the census enumerator crossed out and wrote in music. Her place of birth is Catford, Kent and her age is 25.

Francis appears in the 1901 census living with his parents at Yew Tree Cottages. Edward (tile and brickmaker), age 69, born Burnham, Bucks and Mary A. age 64, born Wooburn, Bucks. Francis is shown as married, age 28, born Burnham, Bucks. His occupation was insurance agent.

Francis and Ellen (Nellie) divorced in 1905. We do not know what happened to Ellen after the divorce. There is a possibility that she either emigrated to North America or remarried and stayed in London.

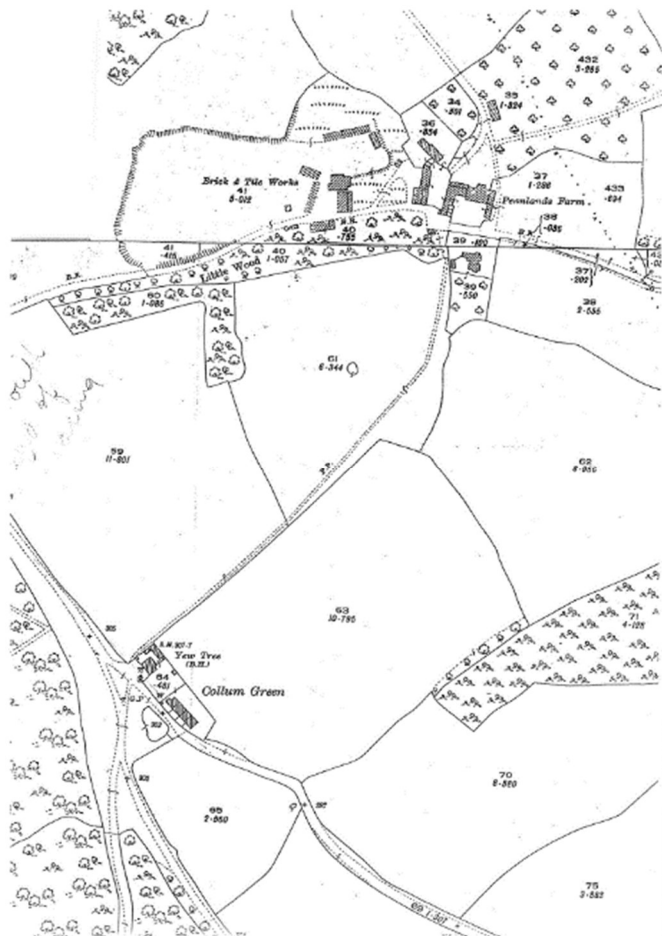
Francis remarried at the age of thirty-five to his cousin Katherine Piner, who was thirty-four and born in Slough. The wedding took place at St. Matthew, Fulham on 15th August 1907.

In the 1911 census Francis Edmund Piner was at school (either East Burnham or Hedgerley) and living with his father Francis, step-mother Katherine, step-brother Ernest, and Uncle John, age 42.

Francis and Katherine had two children. Ernest Edward was born on 25th April 1909 and was baptised at St. Mary's, Hedgerley on 11th July 1909. The family moved to Pennlands shortly afterwards. At the time Ernest was born his father Francis gave his occupation as insurance agent. Their youngest child, Janet Catherine, was born on 5th December 1913 and baptised at St. Mary's on 28th December 1913, and her father gave his occupation as brickmaker, so it would appear that about this time he took over the family brick making business from his father Edward. A local Directory (Kelly's) of 1915 lists Frank Piner, brick and tile maker, Hedgerley Dean.

War Service

Francis Edmund was called up for service in March 1917, but received dispensation as he was needed for work in the family brick kilns at Pennlands (see map below).



This map was surveyed in 1874, revised in 1923 and published in 1925. It is made up of two sections: North (Brick Kilns) 48.13 and South (Collum Green) 53.1.

Conscription was introduced in 1916 and all healthy men between the age of 18 and 41 had to join the Army or Navy.

Francis Edmund Piner was called up again in June 1917 close to his twentieth Birthday on 14th June, (see photo on page 79), but this time the appeal was refused.

He enlisted at the Drill Hall in Slough, which had been built by James Elliman, then Slough's greatest benefactor, and like many other Hedgerley lads he joined the Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry (OBLI) 6th Battalion in August 1917. He served as a Private (number 7322) in the 2/4th Battalion, then (number 33446) in the 6th Battalion.

Sadly, he was reported wounded and missing (killed in action) in 'France and Flanders', on 20th September 1917 aged just 20. He served his country for only six weeks before losing his life. He is commemorated at the Tyne Cott Memorial in Zonnebeke, Belgium, on the Hedgerley St. Mary's Church war memorial and on the Hedgerley Memorial Hall Roll of Honour.

Medals were issued to his family together with a Dead Man's Penny inscribed 'Francis Edward Piner' (see photo below):



Francis Edmund Piner's Dead Man's Penny (inscribed 'Francis Edward')
Photo courtesy of John Lovelock

He is likely to have died in the Third Battle of Ypres (also known as the Battle of Passchendaele) when an offensive was mounted by Commonwealth forces to divert German attention from a weakened French front further south.

In the summer of 1917, the OBLI held the line at Bailleulemont, near Arras and saw further service in many of the subsidiary battles that took place between 31st July to 6th November. Some of the battles that the OBLI took part in included Menin Road and Polygon Wood in September and early October. The initial attempt in June to dislodge the Germans from the 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 on 6th November 1917 with the capture of Passchendaele by British and Canadian forces.

Overall, it was one of the bloodiest battles of the war with huge losses on both sides. In fact, the battles of the Ypres Salient claimed so many lives it quickly became clear that the commemoration of members of the Commonwealth forces with no known grave would have to be divided between several different sites. The site of the Menin Gate was chosen because of the hundreds of thousands of men who passed through it on their way to the battlefields. It commemorates those British casualties before 16th August 1917, after that date casualties are named on the memorial at Tyne Cot, a site which marks the furthest point reached by Commonwealth forces in Belgium until nearly the end of the war.

In Memory of

Private

Francis Edmund Piner

33446, 6th Bn., Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry who died on 20 September 1917 Age 20

Son of Francis and Katherine Piner (Stepmother), of Hedgerley Dean, Slough, Bucks.

Remembered with Honour

Tyne Cot Memorial



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Certificate courtesy of Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC)

After the War

Francis Edmund is named on the Tyne Cot Memorial with his next of kin as his father Francis and step-mother Katherine. This memorial bears the names of almost 35,000 officers and men whose graves are not known. The memorial, designed by Sir Herbert Baker with sculpture by Joseph Armitage and F.V. Blundstone, was unveiled by Sir Gilbert Dyett on 20th June 1927.

When the brick kilns were sold early in the 1930's, Ernest and his mother Katherine and father Francis, known as *Frank*, moved back to Broad Oaks Cottage. Katherine Piner died (by suicide) on 21st September 1934, age 61, in Windsor Hospital, and her grave is in the churchyard in Hedgerley. Her address at the time of her death was Broad Oaks Cottage, Parish Lane, Hedgerley.

The Kelly's Directory of Bucks published in 1935 lists under Burnham: Pennlands Farm and Brick Kiln Co. Brick and Tile Makers, Farnham Common 36 (phone number).

In the 1939 Register (the 1931 census was destroyed by fire, although not by enemy action, in the Second World War and no census was taken in 1941) Francis Edmund's step-brother Ernest (he would have been 29) was recorded with his father Francis at Holly End, Parish Lane. This house was built by Francis in 1935 (see photo on page 97). Francis recorded as a retired brickmaker, whilst Ernest was a motor mechanic and electric tool fitter at Satchwell Controls on the Slough Trading Estate.



Holly End, Parish Lane, Hedgerley
Photo courtesy of Rosemary Newman

There is an entry in the Hedgerley Marriage Register for Ernest Piner's marriage:

3rd August 1942 Ernest Edmund Piner age 33, Holly End, Parish Lane, Father - Francis, brick and tile maker (retired), Bride - Gladys Faith Goddard bookkeeper, The Laurels, Parish Lane, age 26. Father - George Thomas Goddard, baker and confectioner (retired), Beaconsfield Bakery (Old Town). Witnesses - Flora Goddard and Francis Piner.

Ernest and Gladys Piner had one daughter, Rosemary, who was born on 7th August 1945 and they lived with George and Flora Goddard (Gladys' parents) at The Laurels, Parish Lane until 1952, when they moved to Orchard Side in Parish Lane. The Laurels was demolished c.1957 and two detached properties were built on the land. *(These are the two houses between the bungalow which was formerly Green Shadows to the left and Wiston on the right).*

Orchard Side and Holly Side were built by Ernest Piner (probably in the early 1930s, after the sale of Pennlands). These properties were let to tenants at first, and it was not until Rosemary was seven that they were able to move into Orchard Side. Rosemary lived at Orchard Side until she married Brian Newman at Hedgerley Church in September 1967 and moved to Tylers Green.

In all there were four properties built by the Piner Family in Parish Lane, starting with Broad Oaks, a semi-detached property where Miss Jordan lived next door to the Gill Family. Broad Oaks Cottage was next; where the Piner Family lived. It was later sold to Alan Barker (after the death of Katherine Piner).

Holly End was built in Parish Lane by Francis Piner (Grandfather to Rosemary Newman (née Piner)). He and Ernest Piner (Rosemary's father) lived there after the death of Katherine (Ernest's mother). Francis (known as Frank) lived there until his death (in hospital) in 1969 at the age of 97.

Rosemary's parents lived at Orchard Side until Francis (Frank) died. They moved into Holly End (Frank's home) after it had been modernised: there was no electricity or main drainage and no gas supply in Parish Lane either. The house was very dusty to say the least! In 1987 Holly End was sold because the upkeep of the garden and orchard was becoming too much for Gladys and Ernie to manage. They moved to Tylers Green to be near Rosemary and her family. Gladys died on 3rd June 1996 and Ernie was looked after by his daughter Rosemary until his death on 15th February 2002.

MAJOR GEORGE HERBERT STEVENSON (1876-1915)



Major George Herbert Stevenson

Photo courtesy of David Warren and Buckinghamshire Remembers with the consent of
The Trustees of the Regimental Museum of The Royal Welsh (Brecon)

George's Early Years

George Herbert Stevenson was born at 3 Melville Terrace, Stirling, Scotland at 2pm on 23rd April 1876. His father was George Newcombe Stevenson (1846-1897), Captain of the 91st Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. His mother was Anne Chaplin Stevenson née Robertson. His parents married in Edinburgh on 23rd June 1874. According to the Roll of Honour website at Haileybury School, George Newcombe Stevenson was later promoted to the rank of Major.

George Herbert Stevenson's grandfather, George Robert Stevenson (1817-1908), was also in the military and achieved the rank of Major.

The Newcombe name is derived from George Herbert's great-grandfather, John Stevenson (born 1786), who married Elizabeth Newcombe at Exeter, Devon in 1809.

At the time of the census in 1881 George, then five years old, was staying with his maternal grandfather, David S. Robertson (a chartered accountant), in Murlingden House, Brechin together with his sister, Ethel Constance, who was born in Ireland in 1875.

Schooling

George was educated at Haileybury School, near Hertford, joining Lawrence House in January 1890, at age 14. The Haileybury School Register (1862-1911) lists him in Lawrence House from 1890 to 1893, from the age of fourteen to seventeen. George left the school in February 1894 at eighteen. He is commemorated in the School Register 1862-1911: "Lawrence 1890-93, born 23 April 1876, at Stirling, Scotland. Killed in Action."

George was at Haileybury School at the same time as John Henry Montague Stevenson, who was his cousin from a Devon branch of the family.

George is listed in the 1891 census at Haileybury School, age 15. Meanwhile, his sister Ethel appears in the census of the same year living at 3 North View, Wimbledon.

War Service



Major Stevenson on horseback
Photo courtesy of David Warren and Buckinghamshire Remembers with the consent of
The Trustees of the Regimental Museum of The Royal Welsh (Brecon)

It is not clear what George did after leaving school, but The London Gazette of 8th July 1895 records him in the 3 Battalion Welsh as a 'Gent' 2nd Lieutenant. Haileybury School records indicate that he joined the Welsh Regiment on 15th May 1897 at the age of twenty-one, and this is corroborated by the Welsh Regimental Museum. The army records show that he was in the UK until 30th November 1897 before serving in East India from 1st December 1897 to 5th July 1902, and returning home from 6th July 1902 to 19th March 1903. He then went to South Africa from 20th March 1903 until 6th October 1906.

The Welsh Regimental Museum in Brecon records that he joined the 2nd Battalion as 2nd Lieutenant on 15th May 1897, which was serving in India at the time, and was promoted to Lieutenant on 20th April 1899 just before his twenty-third birthday. On the Bucks Remembers website there are photographs of Lieutenant Stevenson taken at Poona in India in 1901 (see below) and also in 1905 (see page 103). His sister Ethel Constance is shown as next of kin on his GHS (General Household Survey) service record.



Major Stevenson in Poona, India 1901

Photo courtesy of David Warren and Buckinghamshire Remembers with the consent of The Trustees of the Regimental Museum of The Royal Welsh (Brecon)



Major Stevenson in Poona, India 1905
Photo courtesy of David Warren and Buckinghamshire Remembers with the consent of
The Trustees of the Regimental Museum of The Royal Welsh (Brecon)

George was promoted to Captain on 1st June 1903 at the age of twenty-seven, and was Adjutant from 2nd Dec 1903 to 2nd June 1907.

Stevenson was seconded for service under the Colonial Office as Adjutant to both the Ceylon Mounted Rifles and Ceylon Planters Rifle Corps (CPRC), as a Captain seconded from 2/Welsh Regiment from August 1914 to June 1915. Whilst in Ceylon he lived in Kandy. The London Gazette dated 11th March 1915 advises that he was promoted to temporary Major from 1st November 1914 and substantive from 15th December 1914.

Even though he had received orders to rejoin his regiment, he sought consent to embark and sail for Egypt with the Ceylon contingent, but thereafter left the CPRC for France. In his service papers from the National Archives there is a copy of a letter written on behalf of the Governor of Ceylon consenting to Stevenson accompanying the Ceylon contingent to Egypt, before departing to rejoin the 2nd Bn. Welsh Regt. in France.

His Army record at The National Archives in Kew describes him as single and his next of kin as Miss Stevenson c/o Lieutenant Colonel Charles Pratt Holdene, Oaks, Tonbridge (Ethel Stevenson is listed in Tonbridge in the 1901 census). He was awarded the 1914-15 Star with date of disembarkation as 27th January 1915.

The first entry in the war diary was 31st January 1915 Captain (not Major) G.H. Stevenson reporting for duty in the morning.

Prior to his arrival, the war diary records on 24th November 1914 that there was sniping all day and night, and at one point the British trenches were within thirty yards of the Germans before they marched to Oultersteene. Six days later the battalion was inspected by Field Marshall Sir John French, and on 3rd December HM The King inspected the battalion accompanied by HRH The Prince of Wales. A draft of 500 men arrived from the base and the battalion was now 1,048 including thirteen officers, one medical officer and two French interpreters. This increased to 1,109 including sixteen officers by mid-December. The diary records that on 25th January a party of forty Germans got as far as

Givenchy Church and were killed or taken prisoner. The British casualties were high with eighteen killed and thirty-eight wounded.

On 3rd February 1915 George's battalion left the front line and were billeted at Labeuvrière. A regimental concert was held on 16th February 1915. Concerts were held every Monday evening whilst the battalion was billeted and were a great success.

General Munro C.B. inspected the battalion on 23rd February 1915 and complimented the smart turnout of the men considering the length of time they had been in the trenches and their gallant conduct at Givenchy (on January 25th): "Your officers have told you the cause you are fighting is sacred".

By 7th March the battalion were in Festubert where they relieved the South West Borderers. The diary writer notes that the trenches were a vast improvement on December at Festubert when the soldiers were standing in mud and water up to the knees.

On 1st April, the diary notes that five men were killed and fifty-nine wounded by snipers and a small service gun they named "pipsqueak". Eight days later on 9th May a recommendation was sent to the Commanding Officer "Major G.H. Stevenson for excellent work throughout the day and in conducting the support companies up under heavy fire". Casualties were high that day with fifty-nine killed, 154 wounded and thirty-two missing.

Even the billets were not completely safe as on 1st June 1915 the diarist records that their billets at Bethune were shelled by the Germans and one woman was killed.

Major G.H. Stevenson was reported as going on leave on 17th July 1915, but there is no record of when he returned. On 30th July 1915 the 3rd Battalion Horse Show was held at the sports ground near Annezine: "A most successful entertainment – Lieutenant E.F.M. Sun who rode Major Stevenson's pony carried off second prize in the officers jumping."

On 18th September 1915, the diarist recorded that the first consignment of gas cylinders arrived, and three days later the first of four days of bombardment commenced with little response from the Germans.

The Battle of Loos

The war diary describes that after four days of bombardment of the German lines the enemy was attacked in the early hours of 25th September 1915.

The diarist gives a vivid account of the next two days which not only describes in detail the battle, but also the compassion shown towards the wounded by both sides.

25 September -*The battalion moved off at 3.30am and took up its position in some old French trenches just in front of Vermelles.*

At 7.30am the enemy fired gas shells. When it cleared, men went over the ridge and out of sight, we thought everything was going well, but there was still a lot of rifle fire which we could not understand.

11.00am orders to move up to Le Rutoire Farm dropping into a trench – we saw a great many of our men wounded and an astonishing number of men suffering from our own gas.

Staff Captain of 1st Brigade reported capture of Cite St. Elie and Loos.

12.30pm received orders to support the Munsters in an attack south of Hulloch – under heavy fire from German front line between Lonetree and Bois Carre.

3.30pm A German bearing a white flag came towards us – 160 men and five officers surrendered. They had a wounded English officer in their officers dug out and treated him very well. We eventually reached the Hulluch to Lens road and stayed to 6.00pm as they lacked strength and support.

Then ordered to withdraw to a line of German trenches 700 yards behind us. We spent a miserable night all being soaked to the skin and having no coats or anything.

26th September - *Quiet until 9.30am when we saw an attack on Hill 70, but it was unsuccessful.*

10.30am Germans advanced.

10.20 am Orders from Brigade to attack Hulluch – we telephoned to Brigade and advised Germans were advancing – at 10.55 a shell fell on our telephone wire, cutting communications. At 10.50am masses of Germans came out of Bois Hugo and advanced in one great mass, but five heavy shells fell right into the middle of them and they retreated to the wood. We reached the Hulloch to Lens road having lost about 100 men. We were now in the predicament of being entirely unsupported and only about 300 strong. Just at this moment, 11.15 am, we saw a marvellous sight – line upon line of men in extended order come over the crest of the hill behind us and advanced to the Hulloch Lens road and up to the German trenches on the crest of the rise. All the Germans who had advanced to attack us turned round and ran as hard as they could up the hill, throwing away all their arms and equipment and through their barbed wire and into their trench. Our machine guns fired on German machine guns which could be seen firing from the windows of houses in Hulloch.

German trench was attacked and unoccupied – few Germans unarmed and desirous of surrendering. The Corps on our right reached the German wire and we all thought at last we had gained what might be called a real victory as according to maps their line was the last line of defence and we all had visions of advancing many miles, but suddenly to our amazement and disgust the whole corps on our right turned round and bolted in a wild panic. The men threw away their rifles and equipment and ran back across the valley and disappeared over the crest of the hill over which they had advanced so magnificently.

In this rout they all bunched together and so made a good mark for the German shrapnel and machine guns in Hulloch and consequently lost twice as many as they did advancing. We were left with two companies on the crest of the hill and two companies opposite Hulloch, an impossible situation to remain in as we had both flanks in the air and had no support, so we retired slowly but naturally, losing heavily. Eventually the remnant of us, some 180 men with seven officers, arrived in the trench we started from. Here we remained all day in comparative quiet. All our wounded had to be left between the lines. About 2.00pm the Germans sent out a great many stretcher bearers and RAMC men who worked the whole afternoon binding up our wounded and standing

all who could walk or crawl back to us. There were lots of our shells falling about, but although they apparently lost more men, these Germans never stopped their good work.

Directly it was dark we sent out porters to bring in our wounded and we found several men who had been bound up by the Germans and who had left them telling them that if they were not removed before a certain hour, they would be forced to take them provisions. We were relieved about 12 midnight and went back to the old German front line.

Our Officers casualties were:

Lt. Col Prothers = missing (now rep prisoner)

Major Stevenson – wounded and missing

Capt Butter – wounded

Capt Miles – wounded and missing

2nd Lt. Sim – wounded

2nd Lt. Legat - wounded

2nd Lt. Pidduck- wounded and missing (now rep prisoner)

2nd Lt. Jenkins – killed

Lt. Peck – wounded

On 25th Officer casualties were

2nd Lt. Hatnell – Sinclair - killed

2nd Lt. Sear – wounded.

26 September – 3.30am battalion moved off Vermelles. 7.00am Germans used gas.

30th September – relieved by the Irish Guards and went back to Neoux – Les – Mines.

1st October – General Holland congratulated the Regiment on its work.

Major Stevenson was listed as wounded and missing in action on Sunday 26th September 1915 near Hulloch on the Western Front. He was thirty-nine. No Obituary has been found.

The Regimental History records:

" The attack on Hulluch by the Black Watch and S.W.B. was repulsed. The only glimmer of success had fallen to the Welsh, who, unsupported and in the air, eventually reached the trench from which the attack had started, now only seven officers and 180 other ranks. Major Stevenson, who was described by C.S.M. Joshua as sitting on a hill calmly writing reports of the progress of the fight, was killed trying to rally some of the 72nd Brigade."

There is no grave, but an entry on the Loos Memorial Pas de Calais Panel number 77 and 78. Major Stevenson was awarded the 1914-15 Star (Major, Welsh R), British War and Victory Medals (Major) (see photo below).



Major Stevenson's WW1 Medals. Photo courtesy of David M. Warren LLB

Legacy

The likely reason for Major Stevenson's inclusion on the war memorial in St. Mary's Church, Hedgerley is that Mrs Ellen Stevenson of Hedgerley Park was related by marriage. As mentioned earlier, George Herbert Stevenson's great-grandparents were John and Elizabeth Stevenson and these were the grandparents of Mrs Stevenson's late husband, Henry S. Stevenson, who was also a military man serving in the Royal Horse Artillery. Therefore, Henry S. Stevenson was a first cousin of George's father, George Newcombe Stevenson.

The medal index card in Major Stevenson's army records at the National Archives indicates that his sister Ethel Constance Stevenson applied for his medals on 1st December 1920. Ethel was living at 12 Selwood Terrace, Onslow Gardens, SW7 and electoral registers show that she was living here from 1915 to 1939. By 1965 she had moved to 16 Westcroft Gardens, Merton, (a Victor S. Stevenson is also living in the property), and she died in Merton in 1971, age 96. The medals were sold at auction in June 2005.

In Memory of

Major

George Herbert Stevenson

2nd Bn., Welsh Regiment who died on 26 September 1915 Age 39

Son of Maj. George Newcombe Stevenson, (91st Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders).

Remembered with Honour

Loos Memorial



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Certificate courtesy of Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC)

PHILIP JOHN STOCKWELL

(1886-1917)

Philip John Stockwell was born in a cottage adjoining East Burnham National School in Hawthorn Lane, East Burnham on 29th March 1886. Philip died of his wounds in France on 1st March 1917, age 30.

Family History

Philip's paternal lineage is as follows:

Grandparents:

Caleb Stockwell (c.1806-1869) and **Eliza Gregory** (c.1811-unknown)

Parents:

Edwin Stockwell (1842-1915) and **Mary Ann Dancer** (1846-1921)

Philip's Grandparents

Caleb Stockwell (1806-1869) and Eliza Gregory (1811-unknown)

Caleb Stockwell was born in Abingdon Berkshire c.1806. There is a record in the 1881 census of a John Stockwell born in Abingdon in 1808, who may have been a younger brother of Caleb.

Caleb Stockwell married Eliza Gregory at St Leonard, Shoreditch on 18th November 1829.

Eliza Gregory was born in Bray, Berkshire on 2nd August 1809 and baptised on 13th August 1809. Her parents were George and Susannah Harrison who were married in White Waltham, Berkshire on 18th October 1801.

Caleb, age 35, is recorded living at Holyport Street, Bray, Berkshire in the 1841 census together with Sarah, age 10, George, age 6, Catherine, age 4, and Eliza, age 2. His wife Eliza was staying with her parents (George Gregory, a sixty-year-old carpenter, and possibly her step-mother Mary, age 55) in Bray when the census was taken.

By the 1851 census the family had moved to The Crown Inn at East Burnham:

Name	Relation to Head of Family	Condition as to Marriage	Age Last Birthday		Rank, Profession or Occupation	Where Born
			Male	Female		
Caleb Stockwell	Head	Married	45		Victualler and Carpenter	Abingdon Berkshire
Eliza	Wife	Married		40		Bray Berkshire
George	Son	Unmarried	16		Carpenter Apprentice	Bray
Catherine	Daughter	Unmarried		14		Bray
Eliza	Daughter	Unmarried		12	Scholar	Bray
Edwin	Son	Unmarried	9		Scholar	Bray



The Crown Inn, East Burnham, June 2017. Photo courtesy of John Lovelock

The 1861 census records Philip's father Edwin still living with his parents, Caleb and Eliza, at The Crown public house in East Burnham:

Name	Relation to Head of Family	Condition as to Marriage	Age Last Birthday		Rank, Profession or Occupation	Where Born
			Male	Female		
Caleb Stockwell	Head	Married	55		Licenced Victualler and Joiner	Abingdon Berkshire
Eliza	Wife	Married		50		Bray Berkshire
Katharine	Daughter			24	Unknown	Bray
Edwin	Son		19		Unknown	Bray

Caleb died on 11th May 1869 and was buried in Burnham on 18th May 1869.

His widow Eliza, now age 59, was living with her unmarried daughter, age 30, in the cottage adjoining East Burnham School at the time of the 1871 census. Eliza was a housekeeper and her daughter a dressmaker. We have not discovered when Eliza died.

Philip's Parents

Edwin Stockwell (1842-1915) and Mary Ann Dancer (c.1846-1921)

Philip's father was Edwin who was born 1842 in Holyport, Bray, Berkshire. Philip's mother Mary Ann (née Dancer) was born in Egypt, Farnham Common c.1846.

Mary Ann's parents were George John Dancer (born 1826) and Susan Akerman (baptised in Farnham Royal on 28th June 1807). George John Dancer was born on 10th July 1826 and Susan was born in Hillingdon, Middlesex in 1828. George and Susan were married on 17th June 1845. Susan's parents were John and Rebecca Akerman.

Edwin appears in the 1861 census (age 19) living with his parents, Caleb and Eliza, at The Green Man public house, Beaconsfield Road, Farnham Royal.

Edwin Stockwell and Mary Dancer were married on Christmas Day (25th December) 1865.

In the 1871 census Edwin and Mary Ann were living near the Stag and Hounds public house in Beaconsfield Road, Farnham Common possibly at Boa Vista Cottages next door to the Foresters Arms. The census entry includes Edwin, age 29, joiner, (born Bray, Berkshire), Mary Ann, age 25, (born Burnham) and their children George, age 4, Frederick, age 2, and a lodger, George Dancer, age 22.

By the 1881 census Edwin's family are living in the cottage next door to East Burnham National School:

Name	Relation to Head of Family	Condition as to Marriage	Age Last Birthday		Rank, Profession or Occupation	Where Born
			Male	Female		
Edwin Stockwell	Head	Married	38		Joiner	Bray Berks
Mary Ann	Wife	Married		34		Egypt Bucks
George Caleb	Son		14		Joiner	Farnham Bucks
Frederick William	Son		12		Scholar	Farnham Bucks
Lilian	Daughter			9	Scholar	Farnham Bucks
Philip John	Son		6		Scholar	Farnham Bucks
Emily Alberta	Daughter			4	Scholar	Farnham Bucks
Albert Edwin	Son		1			Farnham Bucks

In 1891 the census tells us that Edwin and Mary Ann were still living in School Cottages. The entry shows Edwin, age 49, Mary Ann, age 44, Frederick, age 22, Emily, age 14, Albert, age 11, Henry, age 9, Katharine, age 6, Philip, age 5, and Christopher, age 1. Miss Maria Collins was headmistress of the school next door.

Edwin died in 1915 age 74 and Mary in 1921 age 75, both in Eton Registration District.

Philip's Early Years

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Philip Stockwell was born in a cottage adjoining East Burnham National School. The school (photo below), was located between a house called East Burnham End and the Stag public house. Local historian and long-time resident of Farnham Common, Judy Tipping, has advised that the cottage fronting Hawthorn Lane was occupied by the headmistress, and the cottage behind (facing The Stag public house) was occupied by the Stockwell family.



East Burnham National School
Photo courtesy of Judy Tipping

Nearby was Well Cottage, occupied in 1881 by Thomas and Hannah Snapes and their son Richard. Thomas was keeper of East Burnham Common and Richard was a woodman.

Also a short distance away was East Burnham Lodge (now Caldicott School), which was occupied in 1881 by Lord Henry Cholmondeley, his wife Lady Frances and children Edith, George, Caroline and Charles.

Philip was baptised at St Peter's Burnham on 1st February 1889. On his birth certificate Philip's father Edwin Stockwell gave his occupation as carpenter (journeyman).

Philip appears in the 1891 census, age 5, living with his parents (Edwin and Mary Ann), eldest brother Frederick, age 25, bricklayer, Emily, age 14, Albert, age 11, gardener, Harry, age 9, scholar, Katherine, age 6, scholar, and younger brother Christopher, age 1.

The household at East Burnham Lodge was by this time occupied by Lady Frances Cholmondeley, who was now widowed, plus daughters Edith and Caroline, and son George who was a student at Cambridge University, plus servants – a lady's maid, housemaid, under housemaid, kitchen maid, butler and, next door, a coachman.

Philip and his siblings attended East Burnham (National) School next door. National Schools were run by the 'National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the principles of the Established Church'. The headmistress in 1891 was Miss Maria Collins.

A notice was displayed in the School:

EAST BURNHAM SCHOOL

RULES TO BE OBSERVED BY THE PARENTS OF THE CHILDREN

- 1. Each Child must bring a penny to the School on Monday morning: those who learn writing must bring twopence.*
- 2. Children are admitted from 5 years old and upwards*
- 3. The parent must send the children neatly dressed, with their face and hands washed, and their hair neat and tidy*
- 4. School hours from 9 til 12, and from 2 to 4, from Michaelmas; except on Saturdays, when there is no school*
- 5. No child may be kept from school, without leave being asked, and given by the mistress*
- 6. The children are required to attend on Sunday at half past 9, and walk to church with the mistress; and to meet at the school at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, till half past 4*

The walk to church would have been a fair distance for the children as the nearest church in 1891 would have been St Peter's in Burnham High Street or St. Mary's, Farnham Royal, as St John's in Farnham Common was not built until 1905.

By the time of the 1901 census Philip was fifteen and still living in the cottage adjoining East Burnham National School. The school was run by Miss Hannah Mackay, age 26, and her sister Beatrice, age 19.

Philip had left school and was a general labourer. Also in the household were his parents, brothers Albert, age 21, and Harry, age 19, who were bricklayers, sister Catherine, age 16, a mothers' help, and younger brother Christopher, age 11.



The Old Telephone Exchange, Kingsway, Farnham Common, home of Philip Stockwell 1911
Image © David Hillas re-used under Creative Commons Licence

By 1911 (the census was taken on Sunday 2nd April) the family had moved to the telephone office (photo above) in Kingsway, Farnham Common.

Philip was now twenty-five and a general labourer. In the house were his parents Edwin, age 69, a carpenter, Mary, age 65, older brother Albert, age 31, a general labourer, older sister Catherine, age 26, a telephone operator "at home" and his younger brother Christopher, age 21, a jobbing gardener.

The following year, on 5th October 1912, Philip John Stockwell, (26) bachelor, a jobbing gardener, of Telephone Office, Farnham Common, Farnham Royal married Sarah Roberts (24) spinster, a cook (domestic) of 8 Alma Place, Langley New Town, Slough. They were married at the Eton District Register Office (probably in Slough) in the presence of J. King and L. King. Philip and Sarah's marriage certificate tells us that

Philip's father Edwin is still a carpenter (and journeyman), and that Sarah's father, James Roberts, was a watercress farmer, although he is no longer alive by the time of the wedding.

Philip and Sarah Stockwell had three children who were all born in One Pin Lane, Hedgerley Dean, and this would explain why Philip Stockwell appears on the Memorial in St. Mary's Church, Hedgerley.

Philip and Sarah's three children were:

Percy Albert Stockwell born 7th March 1913. Percy's birth certificate gives the occupation of his father as general labourer.

Elsie Mary Elizabeth Stockwell born 25th September 1915. Elsie's birth certificate also gives the occupation of her father as general labourer.

Violet Winifred Stockwell born 16th January 1917. Her birth certificate gave the occupation of her father as Private, Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry (general labourer). As Philip died on 1st March 1917 it is likely that he never saw his youngest daughter.

Shortly after the outbreak of the First World War on 1st August 1914 Philip was in trouble with the law, together with William Dancer. He is believed to be William George Dancer, born in Hedgerley in 1871 (son of George, born 1850, and Jane Horton, born 1842). In 1911 William was living with the King family in The Yard, East Burnham, known as the Pin Yard, Thomkins Lane.

ROBBING AN ORCHARD – Slough Eton and Windsor Observer 22nd August 1914

At Beaconsfield Petty Sessions, William Dancer (45) and Philip John Stockwell (28) labourers, of Farnham Common were brought up in custody charged with stealing from an orchard at Hedgerley a quantity of growing apples, the property of Mrs Ellen Stevenson, value 7s.

Both pleaded not guilty.

Police Constable Warner of Farnham Common, stated that in consequence of information received, he was keeping observation on the house of the prisoner Dancer, about one pm on 11th August when

he saw the two prisoners leave Dancer's house carrying two skips of apples and go to a shop. He followed them and called them out and asked them what explanation they had to offer for having the apples in their possession. Dancer replied, "They are codlings I picked them from my garden last Friday". He examined the apples. They were not codlings. Dancer had one apple tree in his garden, there were no apples on it. He arrested the two prisoners who afterwards said they had picked the apples up in Hedgerley Park.

Henry Walse, Head Gardener at Hedgerley Park, stated that he was in the employ of the prosecutrix. On Sunday evening 9th of August he visited the apple trees in the park. There were only three apples on the ground at that time, and there had been no storm since. On 11th August he visited the trees again with Inspector Dibben, and found that all the lower branches had been stripped. The apples were not ripe and were not falling.

Inspector Dibben stated he received the prisoners from Police Constable Warner on 11th August. Dancer stated they were out in Hedgerley mushrooming at 6am on the morning of the 11th, and saw the apples lying on the ground. There were a lot left lying there after they had brought the others away. He visited the trees and found no apples on the ground. All the bottom branches had been stripped. Some of the apples left on the trees were bruised as if they had been hit with a stick. There were a lot of leaves lying on the ground.

The Bench found the prisoners guilty and fined them 14s with 9s 6d costs, both having previous convictions.

Stockwell paid his fine. Dancer paid 10s (ten shillings) and was allowed fourteen days to pay the balance.

War Service

Philip Stockwell enlisted at Slough and served with the 6th Battalion of the Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry as a Private.

Philip died of his wounds in France on 1st March 1917, age 30, and was buried at the Grove Town Cemetery Meaulte (near Amiens and the River Somme) France. He is also listed on the Farnham Royal War Memorial (photo below).



Farnham Royal War Memorial
Photo courtesy of Neil Coxhead

In Memory of

Private

P Stockwell

23638, 6th Bn., Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry who died on 01 March 1917

Remembered with Honour

Grove Town Cemetery, Meaulte



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Certificate courtesy of Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC)

After the War

Philip's parents Edwin and Mary Ann died in 1915 and 1921 respectively.

Philip's younger brother Christopher (Chris) survived the war and Judy Tipping has a photograph (below) of an owner driver bus parked outside the Maidenhead Gas Company c.1926 on a trip to Ascot Races, which includes Chris Stockwell.



Bus outside the Maidenhead Gas Company with members of the Stockwell family on board. Passengers were Tubby Stockwell, Chris Stockwell (younger brother born 1890), Mr Earl (Rate Collector and Undertaker for Farnham Royal), Fred Dean, Charlie Wingrove, Bill Axteed, Ted (Edward) Stockwell, George Pusey, Cardy Burroughs, Mr Vickery (jeweller known by local children as Ticker Vickery as he mended watches!), Mr Oakes, Aubrey Carter, Mr Dean, Grandad Dancer (Frederick Albert Dancer), "Toff" Dancer (Judy Tipping's grandfather - known as "Toff" as he wore a carnation), Old Mr Oakes, Harry Bunby, Mr Arnett, Mr Weir and driver Dick George. Maximum speed of the vehicle was 12 mph.

Photo courtesy of Judy Tipping

In 1916 the Stockwell family were helped by the Slade Charity in Hedgerley with groceries to the value of five shillings (twenty-five pence).

A British War Medal and a Victory Medal were sent to Philip's widow Sarah (Agnes) from the Record Office in Warwick in September 1921.

The citation reads as follows:

I am directed to transmit to you the accompanying British War Medal and Victory Medal which would have been conferred upon No 23638 Pte P J Stockwell Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry had he lived, in memory of his services with the British Forces during the Great War.

In forwarding the Decoration I am commanded by the King to assure you of His Majesty's high appreciation of the services rendered.

I am your obedient Servant W Bateman Colonel I/C Records

The family have the memorial plaque, commonly known as the 'Dead Man's Penny', which would also have been sent to Sarah as Philip's next of kin, but the whereabouts of the medals listed in the citation above is not known.



Philip John Stockwell's World War I Bronze Memorial Plaque (Dead Man's Penny)
Photo courtesy of John Lovelock

Sarah Agnes Stockwell kept this plaque until she committed suicide on 19th December 1949, age 61, whilst living at Myrtle Crescent, Slough. An inquest was held on the 21st December and her death was registered on 28th December. The plaque was passed on to her son Percy.

Percy married Josephine Elizabeth Potter, who was born on 7th March 1913 in Eton District. At the time of writing, Josephine Potter's brother James is still alive at age 91. They lived in Upton Lea, and then Manor Park, Slough. One of Philip's descendants by marriage, Gail Stockwell, has a delightful picture of Josephine Stockwell with her children, Malcolm and Jacqueline, taken in about 1940. Jacqueline died in 2006.

Percy was a toolmaker and worked for Satchwell's on the Slough Trading Estate. He did not enlist in the Second World War as he was in a restricted profession where his skills were needed on the Home Front. Percy died age 79 in March 1992 in Slough District. His wife, Josephine Stockwell, died in July 2006.

Percy's sister Elsie married Bromislaw Wodejko, a Polish refugee. Elsie's youngest sister, Violet, married Alfred V. Smith in 1943 in Eton District.

Following Percy's death, Philip Stockwell's plaque was passed to his son Malcolm. Malcolm was born on 25th February 1938 and he later worked as a stonemason for Ross Stonecraft in Elliman Avenue, Slough. Malcolm married Gail Stockwell née Bond at Windsor Parish Church in 1960 and they had two children: Dean born in March 1966 and Samantha born in November 1968. Malcolm died on 25th March 1999, age 61, and the plaque was passed to his son Dean who currently holds it. No doubt in time this will be handed down to Dean's children Jenna, James and Jake, and then to Jake's children Oscar and Summer (Philip Stockwell's great-great-great grandchildren) keeping alive the memory of Philip Stockwell.



Philip Stockwell with his wife Sarah. Photo courtesy of Gail Stockwell

Our Contributors

John Lovelock has a B.A. in Social Sciences from the University of Westminster and his Honours thesis was on the Women's Land Army in the First World War (*God Speed the Plough and the Woman who Drives it*). He moved to Hedgerley in 1992, joining the Hedgerley Historical Society committee almost immediately and led the Parish Map Millennium Project. John has served as Honorary Secretary of the Society since 2007.

Judith Broadgate studied Physics at Leicester University and was then awarded a teaching diploma, later becoming Head of Sixth Form. After retirement, she gained an MSc in Archaeology at Oxford. Pursuing her interests in history and archaeology, Judith travelled extensively throughout the world to both polar and tropical regions. Judith also ran a U3A archaeology group and led expeditions to archaeological sites in the UK and abroad. Her interest in World War One stemmed from her grandfather who had been in the Territorial Army and was injured at Ypres.

Neil Coxhead has lived in Hedgerley for six years and after a career in aerospace and telecommunications industries he now runs his own microbrewery. With his interest in military history Neil has been an important member of the team researching the war diaries at the National Archives, and looking at the theatres of war that the ten men were engaged in and the impact these had in the overall victory of the allied forces.

Chris White lived in Hedgerley for thirteen years until 2010 and is a previous editor of Hedgerley Magazine. With a lifelong interest in history, she has a degree in History and English Literature and has been a member of Hedgerley Historical Society for many years.

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Roll of Honour, St. Mary's Church, Hedgerley
Photo courtesy of John Lovelock



Poppies on the altar at St. Mary's Church, Hedgerley on Remembrance Sunday 2015
Decoration by Ruth Brogden - photo courtesy of John Lovelock

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