

**THOSE RESIDENTS OF DIGSWELL  
WHO WERE CASUALTIES OF WORLD WAR 1  
AS RECORDED IN ST. JOHNS CHURCH, DIGSWELL  
AND ON THE MEMORIAL AT HARMER GREEN**

IN GLORIOUS MEMORY OF THE MEN OF THIS PARISH  
WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN THE GREAT WAR 1914 – 1919

VICTOR CADWELL	BEDFORDSHIRE REGIMENT
LIEUTENANT C.H.DIXON	ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY
L.CPL WILLIAM WINTER EDWARDS	EAST KENT REGIMENT
COY.SERGT – MAJOR E.T.EPHGRAVE	BEDFORDSHIRE REGIMENT
ALBERT F. KNAPP	ROYAL WEST KENT REGIMENT
JAMES MARDELL	BEDFORDSHIRE REGIMENT
CAPTAIN HERBERT F. MILES	K.O.SCOTTISH BORDERERS
SUB – LIEUT. OWEN PHILIP POWELL RN	H.M.S VERULAM
CAPTAIN DAVID RUSSELL	LONDON REGIMENT (P.O. RIFLES)
LIEUTENANT LAWRENCE RUSSELL	WEST RIDING REGIMENT
SERGT EDWARD SHADBOLT	BEDFORDSHIRE REGIMENT
L.CPL. FRANK UNDERHILL	HERTFORDSHIRE REGIMENT
CAPTAIN JAMES H. L. YORKE M.C.	PEMBROKE IMP. YEO.ATT <sup>D</sup> WELCH REGT

The names as recorded on a memorial plaque in St. Johns Church, Digswell, the same names are repeated on the memorial at Harmer Green.

Note: the plaque in St Johns is very dark and does not photograph well, hence it is not reproduced here.



The Hamer Green Memorial

### **CHARLES VICTOR CADWELL**

Charles Victor Cadwell was born 1897 in Harpenden, Hertfordshire. In 1911 at the age of 14 years, he was living at Digswell Lodge Farm, Welwyn (now absorbed into Welwyn Garden City) where his father was a Working Foreman and Charles helped on the farm. With the outbreak of war, he enlisted into the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment and was posted to Landguard Camp in Felixstowe for training and to await transfer to France. Whilst at Landguard Camp, Charles developed Acute Phlebitis (possibly from an injury) and Septicaemia from which he died on 15 May 1915 in De Stern Hospital, Felixstowe at the age of 19. Charles is buried in Felixstowe New Cemetery.

### **CHARLES HOWARD DIXON**

Charles Howard Dixon who before WW1 lived in Harmer Green, High Welwyn, Hertfordshire went to University College, joined the Officer Training Corp as a Cadet and became a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant on 20 January 1915. He joined the Royal Field Artillery and was wounded in France on 12 October 1916. He was returned to England where he went for convalescence to Lady Carnarvon's Hospital for Officers at 48 Bryanston Square, Middlesex.

The Hospital was financed by Lady Carnarvon's godfather and guardian Baron Alfred de Rothschild (Lady Carnarvon was widely believed to be his illegitimate daughter). Lady Carnarvon's Hospital for Officers had 40 beds and was affiliated to Queen Alexandra's Military Hospital. It became one of the small number of hospitals in London that treated patients from the Royal Flying Corps. As the use of aircraft greatly increased during the war, so did the casualties. By 1917 Royal Flying Corps Hospitals had also opened at 37 Bryanston Square and at 82 Eaton Square. The hospital closed in 1919.

On 12 September 1917, Charles died as a result of his wounds and was buried in Wareside (Holy Trinity) Churchyard in Hertfordshire. Charles is also named on the Wareside War Memorial.

### **WILLIAM WINTER EDWARDS**

William Winter Edwards was born in 1895 in Hackney, London. In 1911, he was living at 'Winterton', High Welwyn, Hertfordshire with his widowed mother. In 1916, William who was then a Dining Table Maker enlisted in Brighton into the 8<sup>th</sup> (cyclist) Battalion Royal Sussex Regiment. On 13<sup>th</sup> April 1918 at the age of 23 and a Lance Corporal in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion East Kent Regiment (The Buffs) he died probably as a result of injuries and is buried in Lussenthoek Military Cemetery, to the west of Ypres in Belgium.

During the First World War, the village of Lijssenthoek was situated on the main communication line between the Allied military bases in the rear and the Ypres battlefields. Close to the Front, but out of the extreme range of most German field artillery, it became a natural place to establish casualty clearing stations. The cemetery was first used by the French 15th Hopital D'Evacuation and in June 1915, it began to be used by casualty clearing stations of the Commonwealth forces.

From April to August 1918, the casualty clearing stations fell back before the German advance and field ambulances (including a French ambulance) took their places.

### **EDWARD THOMAS EPHGRAVE**

Edward Thomas Ephgrave was born in 1886 in Digswell Water, Welwyn, Hertfordshire. By 1911, Edward was 25 years old and was a Lance Sergeant with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment based overseas in Bermuda. His father was a Groom and Gardner. On 12<sup>th</sup> October 1916, Edward by then a Company Sergeant Major was killed and is buried in Warlencourt British Cemetery near Bapaume.

Warlencourt, the Butte de Warlencourt and Eaucourt-L'Abbaye were the scene of very fierce fighting in 1916. Eaucourt was taken by the 47th (London) Division early in October. The Butte (a Roman mound of excavated chalk, about 17 metres high, once covered with pines) was attacked by that and other divisions, but it was not relinquished by the Germans until the following 26 February, when they withdrew to the Hindenburg Line.

### **ALBERT FRANK KNAPP**

Albert Frank Knapp was born in Coombe, Hampshire and enlisted in Walton, Surrey. On 30<sup>th</sup> September 1916, Albert a Private in the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment) was killed and is buried in Bancourt British Cemetery to the east of Bapaume.

The cemetery was begun by the New Zealand Division in September 1918 and completed after the Armistice when graves were brought in from the battlefields east and south of Bancourt and from certain Allied and German cemeteries. The great majority of these graves dated from the winter of 1916-1917, the retreat of March 1918, or the advance of August-September 1918.

### **JAMES MARDELL**

Philip James Mardell was born in 1900 in Digswell, Hertfordshire. In 1911, he was living at New Cottages, Woolmer Green, Hertfordshire where his father was a Cowman. On 27<sup>th</sup> April 1917, Philip at the age of 17 and a Private in 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment was killed during the Arras offensive of April – May 1917. He has no known grave but is commemorated on the Arras Memorial.

### **HERBERT F. MILES**

Herbert F Miles was born 1895 in Shillington, Bedfordshire. In 1911, he was living at Redcoat Green, Stevenage, Hertfordshire where he was a Grocer's Assistant, his father was

a Farm Labourer. Herbert was killed on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1916 whilst serving as a Captain with 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Kings Own Scottish Borderers and is buried in Delville Wood Cemetery , Longueval which is east of Albert.

Delville Wood was a tract of woodland, nearly 1 kilometre square, the western edge of which touched the village of Longueval in the Somme. On 14 July 1916 the greater part of Longueval village was taken by the 9th (Scottish) Division and on the 15th, the South African Brigade of that Division captured most of Delville Wood. The wood now formed a salient in the line, with Waterlot Farm and Mons Wood on the south flank still in German hands, and, owing to the height of the trees, no close artillery support was possible for defence.

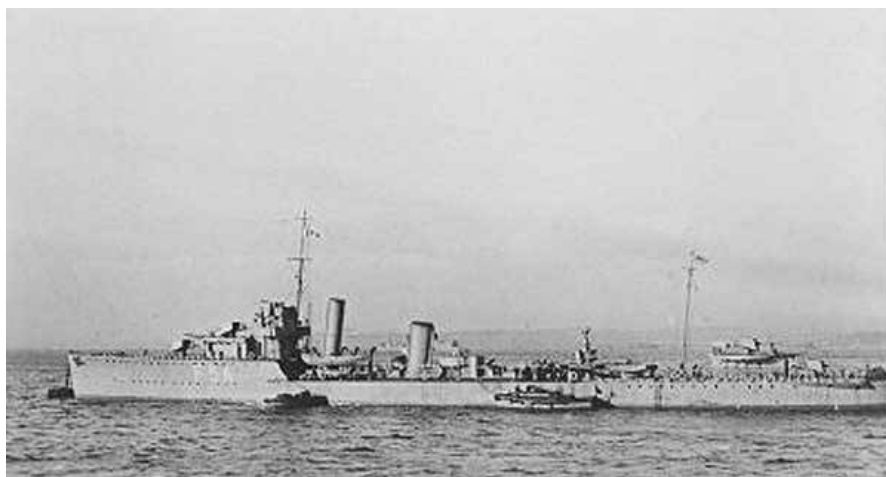
The three South African battalions fought continuously for six days and suffered heavy casualties. On 18 July, they were forced back and on the evening of the 20th the survivors, a mere handful of men, were relieved. On 27 July, the 2nd Division retook the wood and held it until 4 August when the 17th Division took it over. On 18 and 25 August it was finally cleared of all German resistance by the 14th (Light) Division. Delville Wood Cemetery was made after the Armistice, when graves were brought in from a few small cemeteries and isolated sites, and from the battlefields. Almost all of the burials date from July, August and September 1916.

### **OWEN PHILIP POWELL RN**

Owen Philip Powell, the son of a Solicitor, was born in Chelsea, London in 1898. In 1901, he was living in Harmer Green, Welwyn, Hertfordshire. By 1911, his father is recorded as living at Lothman Club, 105 Piccadilly, London as a boarder but the whereabouts of Owen and his mother is unknown. Owen joined the Royal Navy but, as a Sub Lieutenant, drowned on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1919 when his ship, HMS *Verulam*, struck a mine in the Baltic and sank. Owen is buried in Styrssudd Point Cemetery, Finland and commemorated on the Archangel Memorial in Russia.

**HMS *Verulam*** was an Admiralty V-class destroyer of the Royal Navy. She was built by Hawthorn Leslie and was launched on 3 October 1917. She struck a mine off the island of Seiskari in the Gulf of Finland on the night between 3–4 September 1919, and sank within two minutes. HMS *Verulam* was on anti-Bolshevik operations in the Gulf of Finland . The bodies of eight men were subsequently washed ashore near the headland between Wiborg and Kronstadt, south-east of Koivisto, and were interred on a hill among pinewoods a quarter of a mile from the sea. The plot, called Styrssudd Point Cemetery, was purchased and fenced by the Finnish Government. Three of the bodies were identified.

The sunken destroyer was given to the state of Finland on 12 December 1919 together with her sister ship *Vittoria*; however, when salvage efforts began in 1925, it was found that both ships were broken in two and impossible to repair.



An Admiralty 'V' Class Destroyer

### **DAVID RUSSELL**

David Russell who is the older brother of Lawrence Russell below, was born 1891 in Great Amwell, Hertfordshire and was the son of William E Russell the Bursar of Haileybury College. He lived in and later becoming a student at the College. In 1911, David was a student at Hertford College Oxford; his mother now a widow was living in Guilford, Surrey. He enlisted in the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion London Regiment (Post Office Rifles) where he became a Captain. On 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1915, David died probably as a result of injuries and is buried in Bethune Town Cemetery near Arras.

For much of the First World War, Bethune was comparatively free from bombardment and remained an important railway and hospital centre, as well as a corps and divisional headquarters. The 33rd Casualty Clearing Station was in the town until December 1917.

### **LAWRENCE RUSSELL**

Lawrence Russell who is the younger brother of David Russell above, was born 1893 in Great Amwell, Hertfordshire. Like his brother, he lived and was a student in Haileybury College. Lawrence joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment) where as a Lieutenant, he was killed on 24<sup>th</sup> August 1914 and is buried in Hautrage Military Cemetery.

The village of Hautrage was in German hands during almost the whole of the First World War.

The military cemetery was begun by the Germans in August and September 1914, and in the summer of 1918 they brought into it a large number of British graves of 1914, mostly of the 2nd Cavalry and 5th Infantry Divisions, from the surrounding battlefields and local cemeteries. After the Armistice 24 British graves were brought in from COUVIN, MARCHE, MARIEMBOURG and THUIN GERMAN CEMETERIES and from COLLARMONT GERMAN

## CEMETERY, CARNIERES.

There are now 235 Commonwealth burials and commemorations of the First World War in the cemetery. 60 of the burials are unidentified and there are special memorials to five soldiers known or believed to be buried among them.

## **EDWARD SHADBOLT**

Edward Shadbolt was born 1894 in Digswell, Hertfordshire. In 1911 at the age of 17, he was living at Beulah House, Burnham Green, Welwyn Hertfordshire where he was a Gardner and his father was a Head Gardner. Edward joined the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion Bedfordshire Regiment and as a Sergeant was killed on 15 September 1916 during the Somme Campaign. He has no known grave but is commemorated on the Thiepval memorial.

On 1 July 1916, supported by a French attack to the south, thirteen divisions of Commonwealth forces launched an offensive on a line from north of Gommecourt to Maricourt. Despite a preliminary bombardment lasting seven days, the German defences were barely touched and the attack met unexpectedly fierce resistance. Losses were catastrophic and with only minimal advances on the southern flank, the initial attack was a failure. In the following weeks, huge resources of manpower and equipment were deployed in an attempt to exploit the modest successes of the first day. However, the German Army resisted tenaciously and repeated attacks and counter attacks meant a major battle for every village, copse and farmhouse gained. At the end of September, Thiepval was finally captured. The village had been an original objective of 1 July. Attacks north and east continued throughout October and into November in increasingly difficult weather conditions. The Battle of the Somme finally ended on 18 November with the onset of winter.

The Thiepval Memorial, the Memorial to the Missing of the Somme, bears the names of more than 72,000 officers and men of the United Kingdom and South African forces who died in the Somme sector before 20 March 1918 and have no known grave. Over 90% of those commemorated died between July and November 1916. The memorial also serves as an Anglo-French Battle Memorial in recognition of the joint nature of the 1916 offensive and a small cemetery containing equal numbers of Commonwealth and French graves lies at the foot of the memorial.

## **FRANK GILBERT UNDERHILL**

Frank Underhill was born in 1891 in Radwell, Nr Hitchin, Hertfordshire. In 1901, he was living at Rectory Lane, Radwell, his father had retired due to ill health. In 1911, he was working as a Domestic Gardner in the North Foreland Lodge, North Foreland, Kent. At the age of 25 on 30 July 1916, as a Lance Corporal in the Hertfordshire Regiment, he was killed and is buried in Caterpillar Valley Cemetery, Longueval near Bapaume.



Caterpillar Valley was the name given by the army to the long valley which rises eastwards, past "Caterpillar Wood", to the high ground at Guillemont.

The ground was captured, after very fierce fighting, in the latter part of July 1916. It was lost in the German advance of March 1918 and recovered by the 38th (Welsh) Division on 28 August 1918, when a little cemetery was made (now Plot 1 of this cemetery) containing 25 graves of the 38th Division and the 6th Dragoon Guards. After the Armistice, this cemetery was hugely increased when the graves of more than 5,500 officers and men were brought in from other small cemeteries, and the battlefields of the Somme. The great majority of these soldiers died in the autumn of 1916 and almost all the rest in August or September 1918.

### **JAMES HAMILTON LANGDON YORKE M.C.**

James Hamilton Langdon Yorke was the grandson x4 of the 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Hardwicke, Philip Yorke and is listed in Burkes Peerage.

James was born 1884 in New Zealand. He was the son of Mr. James Charles Yorke, J.P. of Langton, Durnbach, Pembrokeshire, and Kathrine Ellen Langdon who came from New Zealand. At the time, James Charles Yorke was a Journalist, Farmer and joint owner of a Printing Business in New Zealand.

By 1896, James Charles Yorke was living in Wales and was the High Sheriff of Pembrokeshire.

James came to England and was a boarder at Haileybury School in Great Amwell, Hertfordshire before moving to Oriel College Oxford, where he gained a BA. He joined the Pembroke Yeomanry while still a graduate.

In 1910, James married Violet Mary Vincent (whose father was the Chancellor of the diocese of Bangor) of 8 Argyll Mansions, Chelsea, London. In 1911, they were living at 6/7 Atherstone Terrace, London.

At the outbreak of war he was employed by the British South Africa Company but resumed his service in the Pembroke Yeomanry, who had been in Egypt since March, 1916. On the 2nd February, 1917 they were merged with the Glamorgan yeomanry to form the 24th Battalion, Welsh Regiment, which was attached to the 321st Brigade, 74th (Yeomanry) Division.

The Division moved into Palestine at the beginning of 1917, and moved up through the country, fighting at the Three Battles of Gaza, before moving in on Jerusalem. James, now a Captain, was Killed in Action during the Battle of Jerusalem on the 27th December, 1917 aged 33, and is buried at Jerusalem War Cemetery. He was awarded the Military Cross.

His son James John Simon Yorke born 1<sup>st</sup> September 1912, joined the Royal Navy and was awarded DSC & Bar in WW2. He later became the High Sheriff of Pembrokeshire.

In 1918, The London Gazette of 2 July read;

*'For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. When part of the line was driven back by the enemy he rapidly reorganised the situation with great skill under very*

*heavy shell and machine-gun fire. He showed splendid leadership and initiative.'* He was killed during the action on 27 December 1917 and is buried at Jerusalem War Cemetery.

**It is not clear why James is recorded on the Digswell Memorial as there does not appear to be any connections to the area.**

At the outbreak of the First World War, Palestine (now Israel) was part of the Turkish Empire and it was not entered by Allied forces until December 1916. The advance to Jerusalem took a further year, but from 1914 to December 1917, about 250 Commonwealth prisoners of war were buried in the German and Anglo-German cemeteries of the city.

By 21 November 1917, the Egyptian Expeditionary Force had gained a line about five kilometres west of Jerusalem, but the city was deliberately spared bombardment and direct attack. Very severe fighting followed, lasting until the evening of 8 December, when the 53rd (Welsh) Division on the south, and the 60th (London) and 74th (Yeomanry) Divisions on the west, had captured all the city's prepared defences. Turkish forces left Jerusalem throughout that night and in the morning of 9 December, the Mayor came to the Allied lines with the Turkish Governor's letter of surrender. Jerusalem was occupied that day and on 11 December, General Allenby formally entered the city, followed by representatives of France and Italy.

Meanwhile, the 60th Division pushed across the road to Nablus, and the 53rd across the eastern road. From 26 to 30 December, severe fighting took place to the north and east of the city but it remained in Allied hands.

The Jerusalem War Cemetery was begun after the occupation of the city, with 270 burials. It was later enlarged to take graves from the battlefields and smaller cemeteries in the neighbourhood.