

The twelve men of Nackington  
who died in the  
Great War 1914-18.

d by Mark Jopling 2012.

The first source

The Nackington Memorial is a Celtic Cross standing at the junction of Nackington Road and Church Lane. The inscription reads:

OUR  
GLORIOUS  
DEAD

F. BUTLER KENT CYCLISTS.

MAJOR C.M.B. CHAPMAN MC THE BUFFS AND RFC.

V.W. CHAPMAN THE BUFFS AND RFC.

OK K.R.RIFLES.

INE E.K.YEOMANRY.

LDRIDGE LABOUR CORPS.

RDNER GRENADIER GUARDS.

V.A.C. HEDLEY THE BUFFS.

OTT GRENADIER GUARDS.

E W.KENT REGT.

TON RN.

LIAMS E.SURREY REGT.

THESE MEN OF NACKINGTON GAVE THEIR LIVES  
IN THE WAR 1914-18.

### Further sources.

four main sites available on the internet for tracing “The Fallen”:

1. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission [CWGC] which takes immaculate care of all British and Commonwealth cemeteries and memorials overseas and holds all the records.
2. Soldiers Died in the Great War [SD] first published in book form by the War Office in 1921.
3. Faded Genes [FG]. A group of enthusiasts is compiling this and they intend to cover every town and village in Kent. They have done some in incredible detail, tracing a person’s family back to their Great-Great-Grandparents.
4. Roll of Honour [RH] which is in the process of being compiled by the Ministry of Defence and the British Legion. They hope, in the end, to have dealt with the men and women on every headstone and Memorial in the UK, but they have not yet reached Nackington.

Other important and available sources are the census records. These began in 1801 as mere headcounts for purposes of recruitment and taxation in the Napoleonic Wars. Since then, they have been held in every year ending in 1 [except 1941 when the information might have been of use to the enemy], but it is only since 1841 that people’s names, approximate ages and occupations have been recorded. For people of the right age to have been caught up in the Great War, the relevant ones are 1881, 1891, 1901 and 1911. The rest have not yet been released.

useful are parish registers of Christenings, Marriages and Burials, but these require a require a visit  
ary or archive office. Very limited information can be found on line in Birth, Marriage and  
cords.

Occasionally, a person’s Army or Navy Service Records may have survived the bombing of London in the Second World War.

## 1. F. Butler Kent Cyclists.

CWGC records him as Frank Butler Corporal 72588 18<sup>th</sup> Battalion Machine-Gun Corps. He died on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1918, aged 34, and was buried in Niederzwehren Cemetery in Germany. He was the son of John and Annie Butler, husband of Emily S. Butler of Nursery Cottage, Brogdale Road, Faversham. Born in Newnham.

SD and FG agree and SD adds formerly No.1831 in the Kent Cyclist Battalion, enlisted in Canterbury. The Marriage Records name a Frank Butler who married Emily Sarah Croucher in Faversham in July 1904. This must be the same man.

Niederzwehren Cemetery is in central Germany. It was started in 1915 for Commonwealth, French and Russian Prisoners of War and enemy civilians. Frank, therefore, died in German hands, but it is not clear whether he was wounded or not. After the war, in 1922, CWGC began moving all Commonwealth dead in Germany from smaller cemeteries and concentrating them in four big ones of which this was one. The French and Russians were also gathered together elsewhere. 1,500 Commonwealth soldiers were brought in to make a final total of 1,796 graves and memorials. Frank would have been captured in the huge German offensive of March to August 1918 which was the Germans' last chance to win the war before the Americans arrived on the Western Front in overwhelming numbers.

Turning to the census of 1891, we find John Butler, 40, Agricultural Waggoner, born in Newnham and his wife, Annie, 37, born in Throwley, living at Stuppington Farm, Norton near Faversham. With them were their seven children, all born in Norton; Henry, 15, Agricultural Labourer; James, 11, Scholar; Frederick, 9, Scholar; our Frank, 6, Scholar; Ellen, 4; Albert, 2; and Charles, 1 month.

1901, Frank was still at home on Stuppington Farm aged 16 and a Carter on the Farm. His older brother Henry and James, had left home and there is no mention of little Charles, but a new youngest brother is named as George, aged 8.

By 1911, as we know, Frank was married and he had become a Groom/Gardener living at Fir Tree Cottages, Pedding near Wingham. His wife, Emily Sarah, gave her age as 27 and stated that they had been married seven years and their two boys were Dennis Robert, 4, and Noel William, 2, both born in Newnham. His father, meanwhile, had become a widower and was still a Farm Labourer, aged 60, living at the same Stuppington Farm with his daughter Ellen and her husband and two little girls.

Two big questions remain: why was Frank commemorated in Nackington and why is he also named on Bridge Memorial? He apparently had no connection with either parish unless, perhaps, he and his family moved to one of them when he took a new job between 1911 and his enlistment. The two parishes have a common border to the east of Renville Farm so, if they lived on that border, it might be difficult to know to which parish he belonged. CWGC says Emily lived on Brogdale Road, Faversham, but she could have moved there after the war and Frank's death.

## 2. Major C.M.B. Chapman MC The Buffs and RFC.

CWGC names him Charles Meredith Bouverie Chapman Major Royal Flying Corps. He died on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1917, aged 25, and was buried in Mendinghem Military Cemetery. Oddly, it does not mention his MC. (Military Cross.)

does mention the MC and adds that he was a Lieutenant [Temporary Major] in the 29<sup>th</sup> Squadron RFC, and was also part of the East Kent Regiment and, most importantly, says he Died of Wounds. FG says much the same as the other two, but does add that he was awarded the Croix de Guerre (Belgium) and was a Chevalier of the Order of Leopold (Belgium.) He was the son of William C.N. and Maud Chapman of Heppington.

cemetery lay well behind British lines north-west of Ypres and, although The Buffs were mentioned in his Secondary Regiment, he died serving the RFC. He must have been badly wounded and taken back to a Field Hospital, but did not make it.

No further memorials to him are to be found inside the church of St. Mary. On the north wall is a board which is a placard with his name and honours on it which says he was a Lieutenant in 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion The Buffs, a Major (and Squadron Commander) in the RFC, born 9<sup>th</sup> January 1892, died of wounds 1<sup>st</sup> October 1917 and was "laid to rest" at Mendingham, Belgium. The other, in St. Michael's Chapel, is a wooden cross with a model propeller attached with the words "In memory of Major C.M.B. Chapman MC, East Kent Regiment, RFC killed in action 30/9/17." [This last statement should, probably, be a replicable error but might, perhaps, be "Wounded" or "Shot down" on 30<sup>th</sup> September.]

In the census of 1901 we find our Charles had a brother called William W. who almost certainly is the next man on the Memorial. Living at Heppington House were William C.N. Chapman, 40, Brewer, born in London, Regent's Park and his wife Alice M., 31, born in Brewwood, Bedfordshire. With them were their three children; Charles M.B., 9, born in Bridge; Violet M., 5, born in Hoath; William W., 4, born in Hoath.

His parents were still at Heppington House in 1911 and we learn that Alice's full name was Alice Maud, and that she had been married 20 years and had borne three children. Our Charles was 19 and lodging with Rev. George Thomas Steacy and his wife, vicar of Somerton in Somerset. Charles gave his occupation as Pupil at Somerton Brewery, which is quite natural considering his father was a Brewer. Until the war intervened, he was clearly going to follow in his father's footsteps.

Almost certainly he went to a Public School, but it was not Marlborough College.

### 3. Lieut W.W. Chapman The Buffs and RFC.

According to CWGC, he is Lieutenant William Wetherall Chapman RFC. He died on 7<sup>th</sup> October 1917, aged 21, and was buried at Neuville-en-Ferrain Communal Cemetery, France.

SD says he also was part of the East Kent Regiment and was Killed in Action. FG agrees that his Secondary Regiment was The Buffs and specifies that he was in 22<sup>nd</sup> Squadron RFC. FG also adds that he was the son of Mr. and Mrs. William C.N. Chapman of Heppington which eliminates any vestige of doubt that he and the previous man, Charles, were brothers.

It seems that he was shot down and killed near Tourcoing, close to the Belgian border, but well behind the German lines and it was they who buried him.

Inside the church of St Mary, on the north wall next to his brother's commemorative plaque we find his one. It reads, William Wetherall Chapman Lieut. 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion the Buffs and RFC. Born 1<sup>st</sup> October 1896, killed in action 7<sup>th</sup> October 1917, laid to rest at Neuville-en-Ferrain, France. 'They rejoiced that they were counted worthy to be smitten.'

His original wooden cross is preserved in the side-chapel with the words, "A la memoire de William W. Chapmann (with two 'n's). Capitaine au British Flying Corps. Tombe au champ d'honneur 1<sup>st</sup> October 1917" (an inexplicable error in the date.)

William has been mentioned already alongside Charles in the 1901 census, aged 4, living with his family at Heppington House. In 1911, we find William W. Chapman, 14, born in Sturry, as one of 52 pupils aged between 14 and 19 living in one of the Houses of Marlborough College. In all probability, he would have been commissioned in The Buffs soon after leaving school at about 18, which would have been in about 1915.

The Archivist at Marlborough College has sent a copy of the entry in the College Roll of Honour under William Wetherall Chapman: "The son of W.C.N. Chapman of Heppington, Canterbury was born 1<sup>st</sup> October 1896 and was at Marlborough College from September 1910 to Midsummer 1914. He obtained a Commission in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion The Buffs soon after the outbreak of war and went to France in time to take part in the second battle of Ypres. He was invalided home and served as a Bombing Instructor till March 1916 when he joined the 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion The Buffs at the Front. He came home wounded six months later and on recovery was appointed Adjutant to a Balloon School of Instruction at Lydd. Later he transferred to the RFC and went again to France as an Observer. He had brought down four enemy aeroplanes in aerial combat before his death in Action during a patrol on 7<sup>th</sup> October 1917."

Marlborough College has also supplied a photo of him in the uniform of a Lieutenant in The Buffs which is shown on the next page.

#### 4. A.W. Cook K.R. Rifles.

CWGC and FG agree completely that he was Alfred William Cook Rifleman R/10804 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion King's Royal Rifle Corps. He died on 17<sup>th</sup> July 1918, aged 23, and was buried in St. Mary's Churchyard, Nackington, on the south side of the church. Alfred is one of three men commemorated in St. Mary's Churchyard. In his case he is certainly buried with his father and mother and the cross which marks their grave also bears the following inscription: Alfred William Cook, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion KRRC, died 17/7/18 aged 23. "Duty: Bravery: Peace Perfect Peace." Alfred must have been badly wounded and sent home for treatment, but did not survive. Presumably, Alfred was buried first because, according to the Death Records, his mother lived to June 1923 and his father died in June 1931. At some point the impressive cross was erected to commemorate all three of them.

SD adds that he was born in Faversham, resided Canterbury (or, more accurately, near Canterbury), enlisted Mill Hill (which is rather odd.) It is also very specific that he died "at home" (ie in England.)

The first census to include Alfred is that of 1901. Here his parents were living on Heppington Road (ie the road leading to Heppington House.) Alfred C.T. Cook was 30, a Gardener, born in Barming and his wife was Letitia, 31, born in Harrow, Middlesex. Alfred W., 6, was the elder of two boys. He was born in Faversham, but his brother, Albert E., 1, was born in Nackington.

In 1911 his parents were still in Heppington and Albert, 11, was a Scholar. His father was still a Gardener and his mother stated that they had been married 17 years and she had borne two children. Alfred William, now 16, had a job in Canterbury. He was living in St. Augustine's College for Theological Students, Canterbury where he worked as a Scout (a domestic servant.)

## 5. C.T. Denne E.K. Yeomanry.

This man seems to treat his first names as interchangeable. CWGC records him as Cecil Thomas Denne Private G/20137 in 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion The Buffs. He died on 9<sup>th</sup> April 1917, aged 30, and was buried in Faubourg d'Amiens Cemetery, which is in Arras. On the Memorial his Regiment is given as East Kent Yeomanry [correctly Royal East Kent] who, before the Great War, along with other Yeomanry, had become the cavalry arm of the Territorial Army. They fought as cavalry in 1914, but in 1915, because the war had become static and infantry were needed much more than cavalry, they were dismounted and fought on foot. In February 1917, just before his death, his regiment was amalgamated with the West Kent Yeomanry to form a new Battalion of the Buffs [ East Kent Regiment.] CWGC also says he was son of Thomas and Eliza Denne of Nackington and husband of Louisa Kate Denne of Langham Park, Bishopsbourne. This was her parents' address, so the implication is that, after their wedding on 6<sup>th</sup> January 1916 and his spell of leave, they did not set up house together. She continued to live at home whilst he went back to France hoping, no doubt, to get their own home after the war. This would also explain why he is commemorated on the Bishopsbourne Memorial too. Here he is named Thomas Cecil Denne of the East Kent Yeomanry.

FG agrees with all this, but calls him Cecil Thomas and gives his regiment correctly as The Buffs. SD also calls him Cecil Thomas and adds that he was born in Canterbury, resided Nackington and Died of Wounds. This fits with the cemetery being in Arras itself whereas the great British offensive, the Battle of Arras from March into April 1917 was fought well to the east of the city.

The 1891 census has Thomas Denne, 40, Corn Dealer, born in Herne and his wife Eliza, 34, born in Waltham, living at 62, Northgate, Canterbury. With them were their six children, all born in Canterbury: Charles, 10, Scholar; Garnet, 8, Scholar; Mabel, 6; Cecil and Edith, twins, aged 4; George, 1.

By 1901, the family had moved to Court Lodge Farm, Nackington. Thomas called himself a Miller and Farmer, the two eldest boys had left home, but two new girls had been added, Kate, 8, and Nora, 7, both born in Canterbury.

In 1911, at the same house, Edith had left home, but the other five were all there: Mabel, 26, unmarried, simply said she was a Farmer's daughter; Cecil, 24, unmarried, was a Farmer's son, "helping"; George, 21, unmarried, was an Engineer Apprentice Millwright; Kate, 18, was a Farmer's daughter, Poultry; Nora, 17, was a Farmer's daughter, Governess.

Cecil is also named on the Memorial at Simon Langton Grammar School for Boys as C. Denne 1903 (the year he left.) Louisa Kate never re-married.

From the Kentish Gazette on 12<sup>th</sup> May 1917: "Many friends in Canterbury, and especially his old colleagues at The Langton School, will be genuinely sorry to hear that the death of Mr. C.T. Denne has now been officially notified as having occurred in France on Easter Monday. The exact circumstances are not actually known, but it is said that he was one of a party of eight, and that a shell fell in the midst of them, killing or maiming all around. Cecil Denne is believed to have died on the way to hospital. He was the youngest son (not in fact correct) of Mr. and Mrs. T. Denne of Court Lodge Farm, Nackington, and only about a year ago married Miss Kate Adams of Bishopsbourne....."



## 6. W.J.F. Eldridge Labour Corps.

CWGC identifies him simply as William Eldridge Private 31914 Royal Fusiliers. He died on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1918, aged 27, and was buried in St. Mary's Churchyard, Nackington. This means he must have been badly wounded a while before 23<sup>rd</sup> May and was brought back to England for treatment but did not survive. It is more than likely that he was wounded in the middle of the huge German offensive on a broad section of the front by which they hoped to win the war before the Americans arrived in overwhelming numbers.

SD gives his full name as William John Fagg Eldridge Private 60922 Labour Corps, and states that he was formerly 31914 in the Royal Fusiliers. He was born and enlisted in Canterbury and SD is quite specific that he died "at home" (ie in England.)

FG names him only as W.J.F. Eldridge Private 31914 Royal Fusiliers who transferred to his Secondary Regiment as 60922 Labour Corps. He was the son of W.J. and Priscilla Eldridge of Church Cottages, Nackington and his grave in St. Mary' Churchyard lies "near the west gate, north of the path."

There are two odd features of this. First, his headstone is not the usual regulation British war-grave headstone, but, presumably, one that his parents preferred. The inscription reads: "William John Fagg Eldridge, died 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1918, age 27. Well done, good and faithful servant." Secondly, at a time when the army was crying out for more infantry it must be extremely rare that a man in a front-line regiment would be transferred to a non-combatant unit like the Labour Corps. We do not know when he was transferred, but it is likely that it happened at a relatively quiet time.

The first census for William is that of 1891. Here William Eldridge, 25, Agricultural Labourer, born Thanington was living in Prospect Place, Canterbury with his wife, Priscilla, 23, born Petham and their baby William J., 3 months, born Canterbury.

By 1901, the family were living on Nackington Road, Nackington. William, 36, was a Yardman on a Farm and Priscilla, 32, said she was born on Stone Street, Petham. There were four children, our William, 10, Alice, 7, Thomas, 6, all born in Canterbury, and Annie, 3, born in Nackington.

By 1911, the parents had moved to Church Cottages, Nackington. William was still a Yardman and Priscilla declared that they had been married 22 years and she had borne 4 children who were all alive and well. Only the youngest was still with them, Annie Edith Hannah Eldridge, 14, a Scholar. Our William, with his name entered in full as William John Fagg Eldridge, 21, was a Shepherd lodging where he worked at Sextries Farm, Nackington.

## 7. H.F. Gardner Grenadier Guards.

CWGC and FG say exactly the same as each other on this man. He is Harry Frederick Gardner Private 21154 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion Grenadier Guards. He died on 27<sup>th</sup> September 1915 and is commemorated on the Loos Memorial to the Missing.

SD agrees and adds born Nackington, enlisted Slough (which is surprising) and calls him “Guardman” not Private. It specifies that he was Killed in Action.

None of them give his age, but he is named on a memorial along with one of his brothers and one of his sisters, presumably erected by their parents, close to the north wall of the churchyard to the left of the west gate. The three are George William Gardner, died 13<sup>th</sup> August 1900, aged 24; Martha Ellen Gardner, died 4<sup>th</sup> May 1884, aged 6 months; Harry Frederick Gardner 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion Grenadier Guards fell in action at Loos 27<sup>th</sup> September 1915, aged 27. “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” Peace Perfect Peace. Harry is not actually buried there since his body was never recovered or identified.

The Battle of Loos lasted from 25<sup>th</sup> September to 18<sup>th</sup> October 1915. It was a British offensive hoping to make the elusive breakthrough of the German trenches. It was a costly failure.

In 1891 William Gardner, 40, a Gardener, born in Ramsgate and his wife Sarah, 39, also born in Ramsgate, were living on Nackington Road, Nackington. With them were their children George W., 15, a Gardener, born in Ramsgate; Edward J., 9, a Scholar, born in Canterbury; our Harry Frederick, 5, born in Nackington; Florence, 2, born in Nackington.

By 1901, William and Sarah were living in Gardener’s Cottage, Nackington House. Their eldest boy, George had died in 1900, as we know from the memorial, but Edward was with them, aged 19 and a Gardener like his father. Harry was there too, aged 13, and so was Florence, aged 12.

By 1911 the parents were on their own and still living in the Gardener’s Cottage, Nackington House. Sarah stated that they had been married 36 years and she had borne five children of whom three were alive and well. Big changes, however, had happened to Harry Frederick. He was 23 and had become what he described as a Fitter (Ironmonger’s.) He was living in Brook St., Tring, Hertfordshire as a Boarder with Susan Watts, 65, widow.

If SD is correct in saying he enlisted in Slough, maybe it was his job that took him to that area of Berkshire some time after 1911.

## 8. Lieut. W.A.C. Hedley The Buffs.

CWGC and FG both identify this man as Captain (not Lieut.) William Alexander Cosgrave Hedley 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion [formerly 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion] The Buffs. He died on 19<sup>th</sup> July 1918 aged 23, and was buried in Abeele Aerodrome Military Cemetery. FG also adds that he was Mentioned in Despatches and was the son of Rev. Herbert and Mrs. Hedley of 17, Brockhill Road, Hythe, and was born in Mickley Vicarage, Yorkshire.

SD states that he was Temporary Lieutenant and Died of Wounds. Abeele lies behind the British base-town for Ypres at Poperingue. There was a fierce German assault on the Ypres Salient in April 1918, when the Salient was squeezed right in, though it did not break, but William was killed after that. However he died, William would have been taken back to a Base hospital behind Poperingue, but did not survive.

If he was 23 when he died, he would have been born in about 1895. The census of 1901 has, living in Mickley Village, Azerly, near Ripon, Yorkshire, Herbert Hedley, 41, Clergyman C.of E., born Masham, Yorks., and his wife Magaret I, 41, born Dublin. Their two children were there with them, Mary B., 10, born Silkworth, Durham and William A.C., 5, born Mickley.

By 1911, his parents had moved to The Vicarage, Masham, Yorkshire, where Herbert was the Vicar. Margaret Inglis Hedley stated that they had been married 21 years and she had borne two children both of whom were alive and well.

William, meanwhile, aged 15, had been sent to boarding school and was one of 202 pupils living in one of the Houses of Lancing College in Sussex. He would have been 18 in 1914 and it was a well-established career path for a Public School boy to get a commission in the Army. Maybe this is what he did.

The puzzle as to what could possibly have been his connection with Nackington is solved by the Lancing College Memorial, which also explains a few minor points. Here it states that his father, Rev. Herbert Hedley, was vicar of Nackington. The board bearing the names of the vicars of St. Mary's confirms this saying that Herbert Hedley was the vicar from 1913 to 1919. The reason that FG gives his parents' address as Brockhill Road Hythe seems to be that his father bought this house for the time when he would no longer be living in The Vicarage, Nackington.

Our William, who had the name Cosgrave because it was his mother's maiden name, was in Heads House at Lancing from September 1910 to July 1914, and gained a place at Trinity College Cambridge, but instead, with the war under way, took a commission as 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in The Buffs in September 1914. [ He is, nevertheless, commemorated on the memorial in the chapel at Trinity College.] He embarked for France on 5<sup>th</sup> October 1914. The promotion to Captain was only a temporary one from 30<sup>th</sup> June 1917 to 9<sup>th</sup> February 1918 when he reverted to Lieutenant.

On the subject of his death, the Lancing College Memorial continues as follows: "On the 26<sup>th</sup> June 1918 the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion East Kent Regiment took over trenches in the Dickebusch area from the French. The state of the trenches was very poor with little wiring and no communication trench which forced reliefs to move across open country often under fire. During June, July and August the battalion suffered a steady stream of casualties from shelling and sniping of which William Hedley was one."

Lancing College also includes a photo of William which is reproduced on the next page.

## 9. J.H. Knott Grenadier Guards.

According to both CWGC and FG, he was simply J.H. Knott Private 30138 of 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion Grenadier Guards. He died on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1918, aged 19, and was buried in Bucquoy Road Cemetery, Ficheaux. FG adds son of Henry John and Mary Knott of 22, Chaucer St., Broadstairs.

SD correctly calls him Guardsman instead of Private and names him as John Henry Knott. It also adds born in Broadstairs and Killed in Action.

Ficheux lies south of Arras on the old Somme battlefield. The Allied fight-back began on 8<sup>th</sup> August 1918 after the last huge German offensive had petered out, and during that month they drove the Germans back off the old battlefield. John was killed in the early part of what became known as “The Advance to Victory.”

In the census of 1901, John Henry was 1, born in Broadstairs, living with his parents in Polegate Cottages, Thanet Rd., Broadstairs. His father was Henry John Knott, 26, Hackney Coach Driver, born in London, and his mother was Mary, 25, born in London, Marylebone.

By 1911, they had moved to the address given by FG, 22, Chaucer Rd., Broadstairs. [Whether the correct address was Chaucer Road or Chaucer Street is not clear.] Henry John gave his occupation as Cab Driver and Mary stated that they had been married 12 years and she had borne three children all of whom were alive and well. The three are named as John Henry, 11, Scholar, Charles Edward, 8, and Eva Mary, 3, all born in Broadstairs.

John Henry’s connection with Nackington is only conjecture. He was probably too young to have got a job there before he enlisted, so it is more likely that his father found work there some time after 1911 as a coachman or, maybe, a chauffeur or some other kind of driver, and the family went with him.

## 10. H. Maple. W. Kent Regt.

He is named in CWGC as Harry Maple Private 14756 Queen's Own [Royal West Kent Regiment.] He died on 27<sup>th</sup> March 1917, aged 23, and was buried in Faubourg d'Amiens Cemetery in Arras.

SD agrees, although it seems to have his number wrongly, and adds his Battalion, the 6<sup>th</sup>, born in Ickham, resided and enlisted in Canterbury, Killed in Action.

FG has masses of information about his family right back to his Great-Great-Grandparents, and of him it states that he was born in Ickham in 1894, enlisted in Canterbury on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1915 and was on active service in France from 13<sup>th</sup> September 1916 to his death, aged 23, on 27<sup>th</sup> March 1917.

The huge British offensive the Battle of Arras was launched on 9<sup>th</sup> April 1917 so Harry was killed in action less than a fortnight before that. Trench warfare, especially prior to a major attack, was always costly in terms of casualties. There was constant shelling and sniping as well as trench raids by both sides and the dangerous tasks of wiring and patrolling in No-Man's-Land. It would be quite normal for a man to be buried behind the lines in the base-town of Arras.

Looking at the 1901 census for Ickham, we find Edward Maple, 39, Agricultural Labourer, born in Littlebourne and his wife Ellen, 36, born in Ickham living in Ickham St. They had four children, all born in Ickham: Alice, 11, described as "Feeble-minded"; Kate, 8; our Harry, 7; Edith, 4.

In 1911 the Maples were still there. Three more children had been added, all born in Ickham, Annie, 9, Flora, 8, and Walter, 6. Ellen stated that they had been married 23 years and she had borne 9 children of whom 6 were alive and well. Checking the Death Records, the 6 are the ones we have seen in the census except for Alice who died in January 1905. Harry said he was 17 and worked as a Waggoner on a Farm.

The probable reason why Harry is named on the Nackington Memorial is that he got work there some time between 1911 and his enlistment in 1915, and moved to the village. Because his parents were his next of kin and still lived in Ickham, and he himself had been born and brought up there, his name also appears on the Ickham Memorial.

## 11. G. Murton RN.

According to CWGC he was George Walter Murton Stoker 2<sup>nd</sup> Class K/31943 Royal Navy. He died in 27<sup>th</sup> April 1916, aged 30, and was buried in Gillingham (Woodlands) Cemetery. FG says the same and adds he was on board HMS Pembroke and was the son of Mr. and Mrs. F. Murton of Mountain St., Chilham. SD does not record him because he was not a soldier.

He is, however, the only one of these twelve men whose Service Record has survived. This does not add much to what we already know, but it does give a crucial piece of information in that he died of disease. This explains why he was buried near Chatham because HMS Pembroke was not a sea-going vessel, but was permanently moored in Chatham and used as a Shore-barracks for men waiting to be assigned to a ship. His Service Record also says he was born on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1885 in Acrise, Kent.

The first census in which he will appear will be that of 1891. His parents were Frederick Murton, 34, Agricultural Labourer, born in Swingfield and Ann E., 27, born in Bridge. They were living in Denne Farm Cottages, Shottenden, Chilham with their two sons William, 7 a Scholar, born in Wooton and George, 5, born in Acrise.

By 1901, Frederick and Ann had moved to Deanery Cottages, Chartham and Frederick had become a Waggoner on a Farm. The eldest boy, William had left home, but George W. was 15 and working, probably with his father, as a Carter on a Farm. Two further children had been added, Annie H., 11, born in Wingham and Charles S., 2, born in Chartham.

In 1911 Frederick and Ann were back in Chilham and Ann stated that they had been married 27 years and she had borne four children all of whom were alive and well. Only Charles S. was still at home, aged 12 and a Scholar, but the parents have made a mistake, which has been crossed out later, and listed all four of their children rather than just the ones living with them. The three crossed out were William Frederick, 27, George Walter, 25, and Annie Harriett, 22. Our George was 25 and working as "Second Man on a Farm", one of four workers lodging with Farm Bailiff David Sheaff and his family on Hurst Farm, Chilham.

It would appear that the Murton family had no connection with Nackington at all, but there does remain the possibility that George, who had been Second Man on a farm in 1911, moved there to get a similar job some time after that.

## 12. E.H. Williams E. Surrey Regt.

CWGC and FG say exactly the same about this man. He was simply E.H. Williams Private G/3000 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion East Surrey Regiment. He died on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1915 and is commemorated on the Ypres [Menin Gate] Memorial to the Missing. For some reason he appears to have slipped through the net of SD which does not include him at all.

Given the date and place of his death, it is almost certain that he was killed in the big German offensive known as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of Ypres in which they attempted to eliminate the Ypres Salient, capture the city and thrust south into France to secure the Channel Ports. The battle lasted from 22<sup>nd</sup> April to 25<sup>th</sup> May and featured two fearsome new German weapons, poison gas and flame-throwers, but the British hung on at great cost.

It is only the census that gives us his name, and even then it is not his full name. In 1901, living at Nackington Cottages were Richard S. Williams, 40, Coachman, born in Ickham and his wife Ellen R., 39, born in Drayton, Norfolk. With them were their four children, all born in "Canterbury" [ie near Canterbury in Nackington] Edward, 9, Alice, 8, Alfred, 6, and James, 4.

By 1911, the parents, Richard Stroud Williams and Ellen Rosseta had moved to The Stables, Nackington House, where Richard was the Coachman. Ellen stated that they had been married 21 years and she had borne four children all of whom were alive and well. Only Alfred Richard, aged 15 and a Groom, was still with them and our Edward, 17 and a Groom, was lodging with Farmer Richard Wood and his family at Harmansole Farm, Lower Hardres.

None of these sources gives us Edward's middle name, but the Birth Records reveal an Edward Henry Williams who was born in December 1891 and registered in Bridge District, which would have included Nackington. This is almost certainly our man. He gave his age as 9 in 1901, but 17 in 1911, but, if the child born in December 1891 is the one, he would have been 24 when he was killed.



*William Wetherall Chapman*



