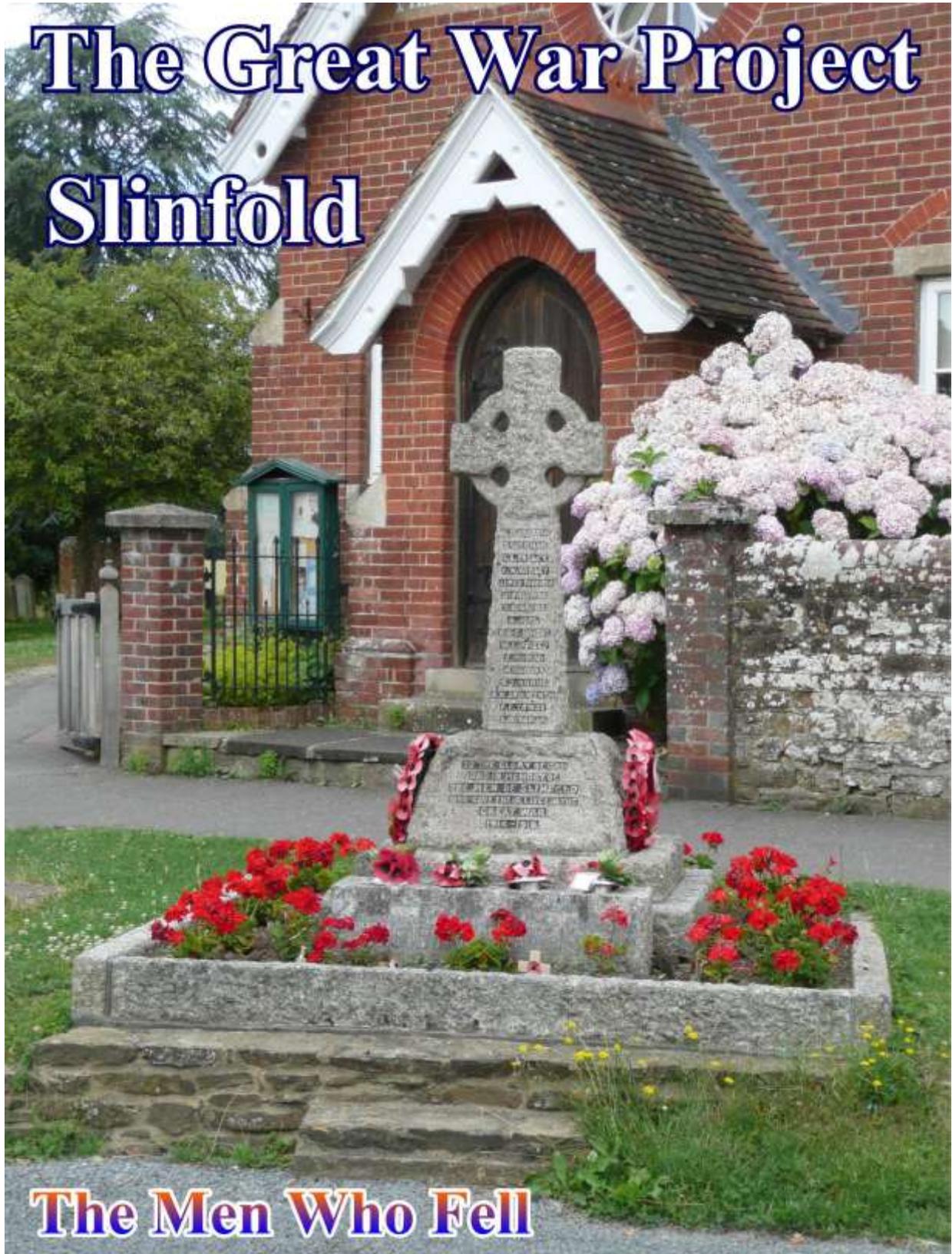


# The Great War Project

## Slinfold



**The Men Who Fell**

**THE WEST SUSSEX  
GREAT WAR PROJECT**

**SLINFOLD**

**COMPILED BY MEMBERS  
OF THE  
SLINFOLD HISTORY GROUP**

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## **THE WEST SUSSEX GREAT WAR PROJECT**

### **SLINFOLD**

The parish of Slinfold lies in the heart of the Low Weald, close to the Surrey/Sussex border. The village, which contains the Anglican church of St. Peter as well as a Congregational chapel (now URC), lies roughly in the centre of the parish and there are a number of farms and cottages scattered throughout the countryside. The chief landowners were the Duke of Norfolk and Major Edward St. John, J.P., of Slinfold Lodge, and there were a number of wealthy residents living within a short distance of the village. Major St. John acted as the 'Squire' of the parish and he and the other well-to-do residents of the parish saw it as their duty to be involved in all aspects of village life. They were examples of the *voluntary philanthropic endeavour* which characterised the lives of people of their station.

The experience of the men of the village who fought during the Great War changed the social order forever. No longer did they want their lives to be run by the gentry and the big landowners, they now wished to be personally involved in village matters which affected them. The provision of a war memorial after the war clearly shows that the élite expected the old ways to continue unchanged, while the villagers themselves had other ideas. The gentry, led by the Rector, the Revd. Frederick Hughes, favoured a memorial screen in the church, while members of the Slinfold branch of the Comrades of the Great War organised a separate collection and demanded that a stone memorial should be erected in a prominent position in the village rather than in the church. The differing ideas of the gentry and the men who had actually taken part in the war are permanently commemorated in the two separate war memorials, the inscribed screen in the church porch and the granite cross listing the names of the dead outside the Village Hall<sup>1</sup>.

Two further memorials were provided by individuals. The framed Roll of Honour of all those who fought in the war hangs in the church porch. This is a handwritten list of names surrounded by a printed floral border surmounted by flags. Where appropriate, the names are annotated with comments such as *Wounded* or *Killed in action*. At the foot of the panel are the names of three nurses from the village. This Roll was created in 1917 by A. Stanford. He clearly updated the Roll as further casualties occurred.

The fourth memorial was privately financed by Mrs. Mary Cumming in memory of her husband, who was chief commandant of the Church Army in France. She obtained an ex-Church Army hut which was placed in Park Road, near the centre of the village, to be used as a working men's club. This sprang from the 'hut habit' behind the front line in France, which was promoted by the YMCA and Church Army organisers, and gave working men similar social amenities to those that had been available to soldiers at base camps in wartime. This utilitarian building, known as the Cumming Memorial Hall, was erected without widespread consultation, but it quickly found acceptance amongst the men of the village and the club survived until the 1980s.

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<sup>1</sup> The Local Historian, February 2000 – Commemorating the fallen: war memorials in Sussex villages, 1918-1921 by Keith Grieves.

These diverse memorials all expressed the wish to do something towards healing the wounds caused by dreadful loss of life in the Great War.

## **NAMES INSCRIBED ON THE COMRADES CROSS FOR WW1**

### **ROAD SIDE**

E.W. BLUNDEN  
G. CHARMAN  
C.E. FARLEY  
A.W. FARLEY  
JAMES FREEMAN  
W. FREEMAN  
T. HIGGINS  
A. JEAL  
W.H.D. KNIGHT  
W. LINFIELD  
A. MORGAN  
M. REDMAN  
H.T. ROHDE  
B.W. SKIPWORTH  
F.P. TOWSE  
D. WISEMAN

### **FOOTPATH SIDE**

H.M. BROWN  
F.E. CHARMAN  
R. DUMBRILL  
C.M. CUMMING  
JOHN FREEMAN  
E.F. GRINSTEAD  
B.F.M. HUGHES  
A.C. KNIGHT  
G.B. KNIGHT  
F.W. MERRITT  
W.R. PETTITT  
A. RELFE  
G.E. SMITH  
M. TOFT  
W.F. WALLER



The Comrades Cross in the 1920s



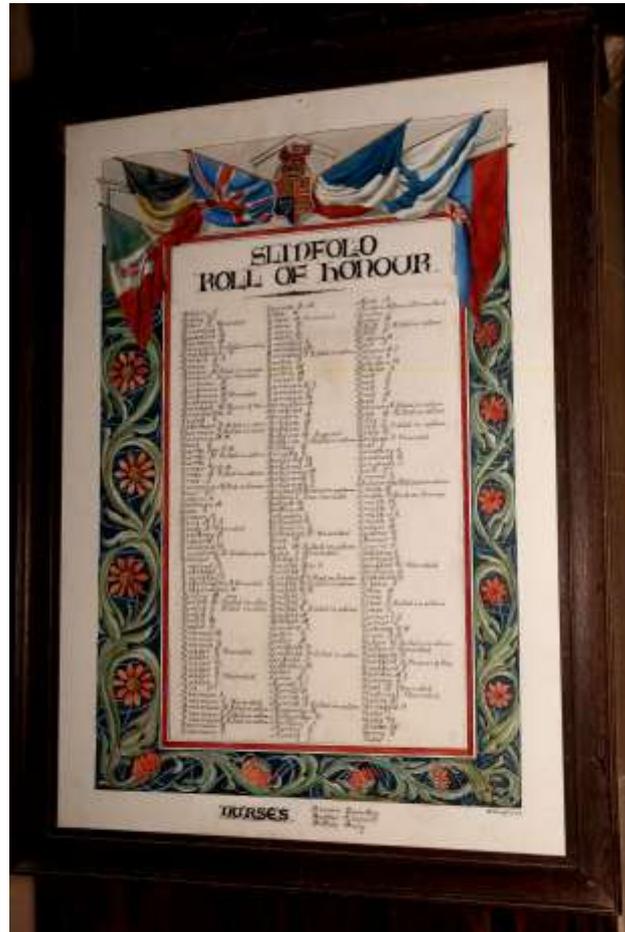
The War Memorial in 2014

## **THE SCREEN IN THE CHURCH PORCH**



E W BLUNDEN	G B KNIGHT
H M BROWN	W H D KNIGHT
G CHARMAN	W LINFIELD
F E CHARMAN	F W MERRITT
C M CUMMING	A MORGAN
R DUMBRILL	W PETTITT
A W FARLEY	M REDMAN
C E FARLEY	A RELFE
J FREEMAN	H T ROHDE
JAS. FREEMAN	B W SKIPWORTH
W FREEMAN	G E SMITH
E F GRINSTED	M TOFT
T HIGGINS	F P TOWSE
B F M HUGHES	W F WALLER
P A JEAL	D WISEMAN
A C KNIGHT	

**NAMES INSCRIBED ON THE ROLL OF HONOUR IN  
SLINFOLD PARISH CHURCH**



Ashdown L.	Farley H.
Ayling W.	Foster E.
Baker B. Wounded	Francis A.
Baverstock G.	Francis L.
Baverstock A.	Francis R.
Blunden A.	Fielder G. Wounded
Blunden E. Killed in action	Fielder F.
Breakspeare W.	Fielder W.
Brown L.E.	Fielder E.
Brown W.	Fielder F. Wounded
Brown H. Died of wounds	Fielder J.
Brown C. Thrice wounded	Fox P
Buckman H.	Freeman I.
Buckman H.	Freeman C. Wounded
Buckman A. Wounded	Freeman W. Killed in action
Buckman W.	Freeman J. Killed in action
Burchell W. Prisoner of War	Freeman J. Killed in action
Bennyworth E.	Freeman F.
Cayley E.	Freeman G.
Charman G. Killed in action	Garrett H.M.
Charman F. Killed in action	Goble W.

Charman A.H.  
Child S.  
Clarke Reverend F.W.  
Clarke W. Killed in action  
Clarke J.  
Corser W.B.H.  
Cross A. Killed in action  
Cross L.  
Cumming M. Died in service  
Cluer D.  
Coppen H.  
Charman A.  
Dawe C.  
Dawson R.  
Davy M.J.B.  
Davey H. Wounded  
Dewdney A.  
Diplock J.  
Dumbrill C.  
Dumbrill R. Killed in action  
Downer W.  
England B.  
Evershed T.  
Evershed F.  
Etherington F. Wounded  
Etherington W.  
Farley A. senior  
Farley A. Killed in action  
Farley C. Killed in action  
Farley J.  
Huggett W.  
Hutton A.  
Johnson J.  
Johnson C.  
Johnson J.  
Johnson T. Wounded  
Jeal P.  
Jeal A. Killed in action  
Jupp F. Wounded  
Kensit P.  
Knight Reverend O.  
Knight G.  
Knight A.C. Died on service  
Knight D. Killed in action  
Knight W.H.  
Knight T.  
Knight H.  
Knight G. Killed in action  
Knight A.  
Killner A.  
Lambert T.  
Latter E.

Green A. Wounded  
Green R.  
Green J.  
Green T.  
Grinsted C.  
Grinsted M.  
Grinsted F. Killed in action  
Garton F.  
Garton A.  
Garton A.  
Grover D.  
Garman K.J.  
Garman F.  
Garman H.  
Hamilton A.  
Hawkins J.  
Heydon W.  
Heydon A.  
Heydon F.  
Higgins A. Injured  
Higgins T. Killed in action  
Henley W.  
Hemley G.  
Holland W.  
Holland A.  
Holloway A.  
Holloway G.  
Holloway L.  
Hughes B. Drowned in seaplane  
Hughes I. Twice wounded  
Read F.  
Redman M. Killed in action  
Relfe A. Killed in action  
Riley T.  
Rohde H. Killed in action  
Rohde R.  
Rowland F. Wounded  
Rust J.  
Sansbury C.  
Sansbury A.  
Sansbury T.  
Scott L.  
Simms C.  
Skipworth B. Killed in action  
Smith D.  
Smith G. Died on service  
Smith W.  
Smith W.  
Smith S.E.  
Smith H.  
Sawyer A.  
Squires W.

Latter A.	Skinner G.
Lindfield W.	Sayers W.
Linfield W. Killed in action	Stephens J.
Linfield T.	Southgate J.
Lidbitter H.	Stanford W. Wounded
Laker F.	Steyning A.
Lucas A.J.	Strachan D.
Merritt J.	St. John F.
Merritt A.	Towse A.
Merritt A.	Towse C.
Merritt F. Killed in action	Towse F. Killed in action
Muggeridge H.	Towse C.
Muggeridge W.	Tanner J.E.
Munday A.	Turner S.
Morley E.	Vickress W.H.
Morley J.	Venn F.B.
Mack M.	Waller W. Killed in action
Morgan A. Died in German hands	Waller S. Wounded
Newman J.	Weakford F.
Parker H.	Weakford H. Prisoner of War
Pettitt W. Killed in action	Weakford F.
Pettitt P.	Warren A.J.
Ponsford A.	Warren E.
Piper F.	West D. Wounded
Pilbeam A.T.	Wicking J. Wounded
Pelling E.	Waters L.
Pattenden W.	Worsfold P.
Phillips C.	Wells J.
Pratt T.	Wells W.
Pratt F.	Wilks W.
Pratt S.	Young F.
Pratt A.	Yates

The names of three nurses are inscribed at the bottom of the panel:

Brown, Dorothy; Hughes, Elspeth; Rohde, Amy

## **GRAVE IN SLINFOLD CHURCHYARD**

One grave in the Churchyard has the following inscription:

In loving memory of  
JACK DOWNES NESSLING  
Lieutenant R.A.S.C.  
who died November 1920  
of illness following being gassed in France  
aged 29

Clearly not all those who died as a result of fighting in the Great War were commemorated on the various memorials. Jack Nessling, for example, died too late to be included on the Comrades Cross or the Church Screen, and it is likely that this applied to other Slinfold men as well.

# THE MEN WHO FELL

## EDWARD WILLIAM BLUNDEN

Edward William and his twin brother, Albert H., were born in Easebourne, near Midhurst, towards the end of 1893. Their father must have died when the boys were about seven years old, and their mother, Mary, remarried. By 1901 the Census shows that they were living in Wisborough Green, with their stepfather William Fielder, their mother Mary, five stepbrothers and one stepsister. Their stepfather was a stockman working on a farm. At the time of the 1911 Census Edward and Albert, aged 17, were at Stone Cottage in Slinfold, with their mother, stepfather, three step-brothers and their stepsister. Edward was a carter (which indicates that he was a ploughman) and Albert was a cowman like his stepfather.

The Slinfold Parish Magazine of November 1914 lists Edward and Albert as among those from the Parish serving their King and Country. Edward was a Corporal in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the Royal Sussex Regiment, Service No. L/10143. The magazine for March 1915 records that Edward 'is the first of our Slinfold men to give his life for his country. He was killed in action at Guinchy on 26<sup>th</sup> January. His mother, Mrs. Fielder, has still five sons, all in the army – a record indeed to be proud of'.

Edward was awarded the Victory Medal, the British War Medal and the 1914 Star. His death is commemorated on panel 20 & 21 Le Touret Memorial, northern France. He died at the age of 21.

At the time of his death his mother was living in Burnt House, Rowhook, in Slinfold.

## **HAROLD MASTERS BROWN**

Harold Masters Brown was born in Slinfold in 1888, the son of William Brown and his wife, Kezia Harriet. His father was a Certificated Schoolmaster and his mother was also a school teacher; both taught at the local Slinfold School, which was a National School, built in 1849 and enlarged in 1883.

The family lived in Park Street Cottage, a partly timber-framed dwelling with eight rooms. The 1901 census indicates that Harold, aged 12, had an elder brother, two elder sisters, one younger sister and two younger brothers. By the time of the 1911 census Harold was a student aged 22, and his sisters and elder brother had all left home.

The Parish Magazine for June 1915 has an interesting piece about the Brown family, quoted from the Sussex Daily News:

Mr. Lindop Brown, eldest son of the respected master and mistress of Slinfold Church of England Schools, has returned to England to serve his country in the Flying Corps. He has been in North America for 16 years, chiefly in the United States, where he was ranching and horse-breaking. He has been interested in flying from a small boy, and took it up seriously in addition to his other work, and gained a pilot's certificate. He volunteered as soon as war began, and the Government telegraphed for him. .... Mr. Brown's second son, Dr. William Brown, lecturer in Psychology at King's College, London has joined the R.A.M.C., and is doing special medical work at Alexandria. His third son, Harold, a B.Sc., of London, is lieutenant in the 9<sup>th</sup> Berkshire Regiment; and his fourth son, Cyril enlisted in the Coldstream Guards directly the war broke out, went to the front on 9<sup>th</sup> Feb., and was severely wounded last week. His daughter, Dorothy, is a sister at the Helsbuy Auxiliary Military Hospital.

The Parish Magazine for September 1916 notes that the London Gazette Supplement of 26<sup>th</sup> August states that His Majesty the King has been graciously pleased to confer the Military Cross on Harold Masters Brown, in recognition of gallantry and devotion to duty in the field.

De Ruvigny's Roll of Honour, 1914-1924, contains the following entry:

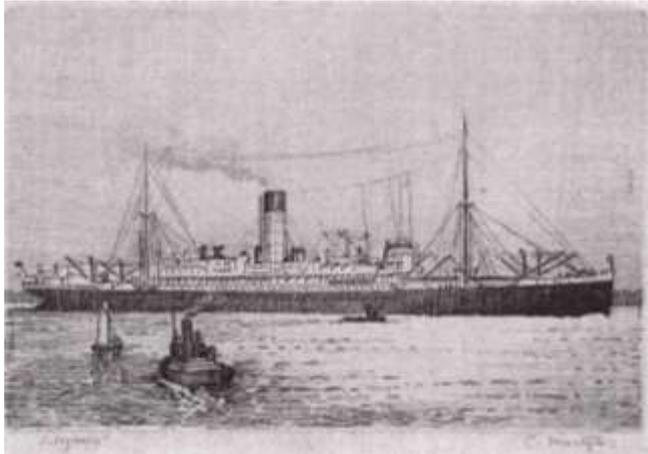
Brown, Harold Masters, M.C., 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut., 9<sup>th</sup> (Reserve) Battn. Princess Charlotts of Wales's (Royal Berkshire Regt.), 3<sup>rd</sup> s. of William Brown Head Master of Slinfold Church of England School, co. Essex (sic), by his wife, Kezia Harriet, dau. of William Lindop Evans; b. Slinfold, 21 July, 1888; educ. Horsham Grammar School, and King's College, London (B.Sc. Degree with Honours); was Science Master at the King's School, Canterbury; volunteered and enlisted in the Coldstream Guards 11 Sept. 1914; gazetted 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. Royal Berkshire Regt. 10 March 1915; went to France, and died at the Duchess of Westminster's Hospital, Touquet, France 3 July 1916, of wounds received in action on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of the month at Owillers, La Boiselle. He was awarded the Military Cross "for conspicuous gallantry in action on several occasions,

notably when he carried out a dangerous reconnaissance of the enemy's trenches and afterwards led his company to the attack with great dash. He was wounded in five places." His Colonel wrote: "He was a most popular and gallant officer, and led his company across to the enemy's lines splendidly," and his Captain: "He was a magnificent officer, and made his platoon the most efficient in the battalion; he was a great favourite with all the men and officers." One of his brother officers also wrote: "He had gained quite a reputation by having trained the platoon that won the competition for general efficiency and smartness, open to the whole Brigade." His two elder brothers were serving at the time of his death as Captains in the R.A.M.C, and his yr. one, a Corpl. in the Coldstream Guards, was wounded on three occasions.

Harold is commemorated at the Etaples Military Cemetery, near Boulogne.

## **FRANK ERNEST CHARMAN**

Frank Charman was born in Slinfold on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1890 and baptised on 7<sup>th</sup> September, the youngest child of Allan Elijah Charman and his wife, Mary. The family lived at Whitebreads on Stane Street with their seven children, the father working as an agricultural labourer. By 1901 the five elder children had left home and Frank now had a younger sister and brother. In 1911 the father had progressed to become a farm bailiff. Two of the children were still at home, mother-in-law now lived with them, as well as an adopted daughter, but Frank had left home.



Frank enlisted as a private, Service No. 2295, on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1914. His Battalion, 4<sup>th</sup> Royal Sussex Regiment, were stationed in Cambridge and then Bedford in May 1915. They were then sent to Gallipoli, travelling on the 'Ulysses' (pictured left, WSRO RSR PH 4/50) under the command of Sir Frederick Stopford, an elderly man close to retirement with no battle

experience at all. He had held ceremonial roles at the Tower of London. The intention was to land the troops at Suvla Bay and resolve the impasse at Gallipoli. Stopford was opposed by Kemal who later became Kemal Ataturk, the first leader of modern Turkey. Through poor leadership, the landing resulted in heavy losses for the British troops. Frank landed at Suvla Bay on 9<sup>th</sup> August, his first day of action. He died the very next day.

Memorial services for Frank Charman and Basil Hughes were held in the parish church on the fourth Sunday in Advent, 1915.

There is an entry for Frank in De Ruvigny's Roll of Honour which reads:

Frank Ernest Charman, Private, No. 2295, 4<sup>th</sup> Battn. Royal Sussex Regt.; served with the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force in Gallipoli; kill in action there 10 Aug. 1915.

He is commemorated in the Green Hill Cemetery, Gallipoli.

## **GEORGE CHARMAN**

George was one of Frank Ernest's elder brothers. He was born in Slinfold in 1883. In 1891 eight-year old George was living his parents, Allan Elijah and Mary at Whitebreads on Stane Street, together with his six siblings. The present Whitebreads replaces the earlier cottage which the family would have occupied.

The original Whitebreads where George and his brother, Frank, lived as children



By 1901 George, aged 18, was living in Storrington and working as a groom. He was back in Slinfold by the time of the 1911 census, living in Merle in Lyons Road and working as a chauffeur.

George enlisted in the 4<sup>th</sup> Bn., Royal Sussex Regiment, on 29<sup>th</sup> September 1914, Service No.TP/2284. In the early part of 1915 he married Nellie Berd Higdon in Newhaven. He died on 10<sup>th</sup> August 1915, at which time the address of his wife was given as 223, Springbank Road, Hither Green, London. Whether newly weds had been living in London since their marriage or whether Nellie went to live with relatives while George was away is not known.

George died at the age of 32, on the same day on which his younger brother, Frank, was killed, which must have been very sad for their family. He was awarded the Victory, British and 15 Star Medals. George is commemorated on the Helles Memorial in Gallipoli.

## **CHARLES MALCOLM CUMMING**

Charles Malcolm Cumming, always known as 'Malcolm', was born on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1867 in Streatham and was baptised at St. Leonards Church there on 24<sup>th</sup> September. His father was Charles Edward Durant Cumming, a stockbroker dealing in raw silk. The family lived in Balham Road, Streatham. The 1871 census indicates that Malcolm had one brother and three sisters, and there were six live-in servants. In 1881 Malcolm was a pupil at a boarding school in Worthing. The family had moved to Haling House, Ashley Road, Epsom, by 1901.

On 1<sup>st</sup> March 1905, Charles Malcolm married Mary Northey at Christ Church in Epsom. She was thereafter known as Mary Northey Cumming. Her father was a clergyman serving in several parishes, but latterly he and his family lived in Woodcote House, Epsom. Whilst in Epsom he had no cure of souls. Mary was born in Chaddesdon, Derbyshire, and was educated at a school in Thicket Road, Penge, run by Doris Echardt from Germany. Malcolm and Mary had three children, a daughter, Elizabeth Northey, a son, Malcolm Edward Durant Cumming, born 1907, and a second daughter, Ina Mary.

Malcolm Cumming went to the Federated Malay States around 1890 to work on a coffee plantation. He planted some of the first rubber there. For sixteen years he was manager of the Liuggi Plantation and a member of the State Council.

In 1911 Malcolm and Mary returned to England to attend the Coronation as Colonial Delegates and they remained in this country, living at Lydwicke at the top of Hayes Lane.



Lydwicke,  
Hayes Lane

Malcolm went to France in October 1914, taking his own car. He was a civilian, a member of the Church Army, and he was a chauffeur for the British Red Cross, working for the Motor Ambulance Department. He was attached to a Clearing Hospital at the Front and, in the Parish Magazine for March 1915, his wife made an appeal for more clothes to be sent out for use at the hospital.

Malcolm died, aged 30, on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1918 from an illness contracted in France. He was awarded the British medal.

The Parish Magazine for June 1918 contains a number of tributes to him:

'Rarely has the Parish been more deeply moved than when the sad news of Mr. Malcolm Cumming's death, on May 8<sup>th</sup>, became known. He had been in bad health for some time, but no immediate danger was anticipated. When the war broke out he took his car to France and joined a Motor Ambulance Convoy, and gets a Mons Star. In 1915 he was appointed Chief Commissioner for the Church Army Huts at the Front, and put his whole heart into the work until he had to come home owing to ill health, a tropical disease having been brought on by the hard life.

Prebendary Carlile writes:-

The Church Army will ever remember with feelings of deep gratitude his unselfish devotion to the great cause of bringing comfort and cheer to our gallant boys serving in the B.E.F. We owe much to his enthusiasm and forethought, and he greatly extended the work.

Another friend writes:-

I know how conscientiously and strenuously he worked, and the roughing he had in France, and his name deserves a place in the Roll of Honour, as he has given his life for his country's service.

Bishop Gwynne, the Assistant-Chaplain-General, says:-

I got to know him intimately as a personal friend and fellow worker. He worked untiringly for the comfort and happiness of the men of the B.E.F., and it may be that his strenuous and successful efforts in this direction shortened his life.

Mrs. Cumming wrote that she wished 'to thank most sincerely the many friends of all classes in the village who have shewn so much sympathy in her great sorrow'. She lived at Lydwicke until her death in 1952.



Grave of Charles Malcolm Cumming in Slinfold Churchyard

## **ROBERT GEORGE DUMBRILL**

Robert Dumbrill was born in Slinfold in 1889. The 1891 Census shows that two-year old Robert was living with his widowed mother, Anne J. Dumbrill, and elder brother Charles at Oakleigh Cottage, Slinfold, where his mother was housekeeper to Henry Pilbeam, a widower with six children.

In April 1914 Robert married Emily Napper in Horsham. Emily was born in Rudgwick in 1890 and in 1891 was living at Wanford Cottages, Rudgwick.

Robert worked as a Stoker at Christ's Hospital. The CH Council Minutes for July 1916 lists the names of the staff who were now in the Armed Forces, R.G. Dumbrill being among these. He was a Private, No. 50184, in the 20<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Royal Fusiliers, and was killed in action on 16<sup>th</sup> April 1917, probably at the Battle of Arras.

The West Sussex County Times & Standard for 1<sup>st</sup> December 1917 reported that R.G. Dumbrill, Engineering, Royal Fusiliers, 'is on the Roll of Honour for Christ's Hospital Administrative Staff'. The 20<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers was originally formed in Epsom for members of public schools.

Robert Dumbrill was awarded the Victory and the British War Medals. He is commemorated at the Heninel-Croisilles Road Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France.

## **ALBERT WILLIAM FARLEY**

Albert William Farley was born in Itchingfield in 1893. In 1901 Albert was living in Well Cross Cottage, Itchingfield, with his father, Albert, mother, Alice, one elder sister and three younger brothers. His father was born in Slinfold, while his mother came from Horsham. His father worked as a groom.

By the time of the 1911 census Albert William was 18 and worked as a farm labourer. He was still living with his family, but they had moved to 15 Hayes Lane, Slinfold. His father was working as a carman and coal carter. His elder sister had left home and he now had six younger brothers.

Albert enlisted as a Private in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, Royal Fusiliers, Service No. 2491, on 4<sup>th</sup> January 1915 and joined his Battalion on 11<sup>th</sup> January.

The Absent Voters' List of October 1918 includes Albert Farley of 15 Hayes Lane, and gives his details as 2491, Private in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Royal Fusiliers.

He died on 4<sup>th</sup> November 1918 at the age of 25, and he is commemorated on the Landrecies British Cemetery in the Pas de Calais, France. He was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. His family received a Death Penny in recognition of their son's sacrifice.



The British War Medal and the Victory Medal awarded to Albert Farley



Death pennies given to the parents of Albert & Charles Farley in recognition of their sons' sacrifice (reduced in size)

## **CHARLES EDWARD FARLEY**

Charles was born in 1895, the son of Albert and Alice Farley and younger brother of Albert William. He was born in Itchingfield.

In 1901 the family were living in Well Cross Cottage, Itchingfield. Father, Albert, was working as a groom. He was born in Slinfold, while his mother, Alice, was born in Horsham. They had one daughter and four sons, and Albert's widowed father, Peter, was also living with them.

By 1911 the family had moved to Slinfold and were living in No. 15 Hayes Lane. The eldest child, Alice, had left home and there were now seven sons, the three youngest being born in Slinfold. Charles, aged 16, was working as a House Boy.

Charles enlisted as a private in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the Royal Sussex Regiment, Service No. L/10213, on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1914. He died less than three months later on 3<sup>rd</sup> November.

He was awarded 14 Star, the Victory and the British War Medal. His parents received the Death Penny in recognition of their son's sacrifice. He is commemorated on the Menin Gate Memorial at Ypres.



Medals awarded to Charles Edward Farley

## **THE FREEMANS**

Three Freemans died in WW1 and are listed on the War Memorial, James, John and William Edward.

Maurice Freeman married Maria Chantler on 25<sup>th</sup> December 1855 in Billingshurst. Maurice and Maria had 7 children, two of whom were James born 1857 and Charles born 1860.



James married Jane Redman in 1886 in Horsham. Amongst their children were John and James.

Charles married Matilda Mercy Boxall in 1884 in Steyning. Amongst their children was William Edward. William was therefore a cousin of James & Jane's sons, John & James.

Matilda Mercy Boxall

## **JAMES FREEMAN**

James was born in Slinfold in 1898, the fourth son of James and Jane. By 1901 three-year-old James had four brothers and one sister. The family were living in Weavers, a five-room cottage at Five Oaks, Slinfold. In 1911 there were three daughters and four sons, including James, who was a 13 year-old schoolboy. His father was working as a farm labourer.

James enlisted as a Private in the 1<sup>st</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Royal Sussex Regiment, Service No. 200947, on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1915 and he joined his battalion three days later.

He was killed at the third battle of Gaza, fighting against the Turkish forces. The Royal Sussex Regiment was fighting in the Wadi Hanafish area from 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> November 1917. They sustained losses of 3 officers and 55 other ranks, either killed, dying from wounds or missing.

James' death was reported in the West Sussex County Times & Standard 1917: 'Death notice. Killed in Palestine, on the 6<sup>th</sup> November, Private James Freeman, 4<sup>th</sup> Sussex Regiment, aged 20, fourth son of Mr. & Mrs. James Freeman, Weavers, Slinfold.'

The Parish Magazine for January 1918 contains the following:

Mr. & Mrs. J. Freeman and family wish to thank their many friends for all the kindness and sympathy extended to them in their sorrow at the loss of their son James, and to express their gratitude through the *Magazine*. We sympathise deeply with Mr. & Mrs. Freeman, as this is the second son they have lost in the War. He and his brother John joined our county regiment together, and have now both laid down their lives for their King and Country.

James is commemorated at the Beersheba War Cemetery in Gaza.

## **JOHN FREEMAN**

John Freeman was born in Slinfold in 1893, the third son of James and Jane and older brother of James junior.



Weavers Cottage, Stane Street, Slinfold

In 1901 the census indicates that eight-year old John was living with his parents, James and Jane, together with four brothers and one sister in Weavers Cottage, Slinfold. In 1911 John was 18 and working as a bricklayer's labourer. He was still living with his parents, three brothers and three sisters in Weavers Cottage.

John married Elizabeth Hemsley in Horsham in the spring of 1914. Their son, Isaac was born in the summer of 1914.

John was a private in the 1<sup>st</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Royal Sussex Regiment, Service No. 200946, having enlisted at the same time as his brother, James. Two other brothers also fought in the war.

John was killed at the second battle of Gaza. At 10.50 am on 19<sup>th</sup> April 1917 the Royal Sussex Regiment was ordered to attack in the Gaze area west of Sheikh Rashid. By 1 pm 15 Other Ranks had been killed and 51 wounded. John was one of those who died. He was 24 years old.

His Death Notice appeared in the West Sussex County Times & Standard on 26<sup>th</sup> May 1917: 'John Freeman killed in Palestine leaving a widow and one child'.

John is commemorated in the Gaza War Cemetery. Interestingly, his name appears not only on the Slinfold War Memorial, but also on that of Billingshurst, so it is likely that John moved into Billingshurst parish after his marriage.

## **WILLIAM EDWARD FREEMAN**

William Edward Freeman was born in Itchingfield in 1896 to Charles and Matilda Freeman. Charles had been born in Billingshurst and his wife in Coombs. When William was 5, in 1901, he was living in Church Cottage, Slinfold, with his parents, an elder sister and a younger brother. His father was a general labourer.

By 1911 the family had moved to Ranfold Cottage in Slinfold. This was the original farmhouse for the farm of Ranfold, a timber-framed building heated originally by a smoke-bay and dating from about 1580. His father was now working as a cowman on the farm. William, aged 15, was a groom and his two younger sisters were at school.



Ranfold Cottage

William is mentioned as being a Scoutmaster in the parish magazine for August 1915. William enlisted as a Private in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the Royal Sussex Regiment, Service No. L/10405, on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1915, the same day as his cousins, John and James, and he joined the Battalion three days later.

Not much is known about his service as a soldier. He died on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1916, aged 20, most probably at Verdun. He is on the Roll of Honour hanging in the Church as having been killed in action. At the time of his death his parents had moved to 22 Hayes Lane.

He is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, Pier & Face 7c. This is a memorial to those missing in the Battles of the Somme with no known grave.

## **ERNEST FRANK GRINSTED, M.M.**

Ernest Frank Grinsted, known as Frank, was born in Slinfold in 1892. His father, William, was a butcher and cattle dealer, who c. 1880 took over the butcher's shop being run from Church View opposite the Church, later known as White Briars and now Starr Inn House.

William had retired around 1900, and he, his wife Emily, and their children, together with two servants, now lived in Amberfield, a 12-room house on the corner of Spring Lane. The 1901 Census shows that 8-year old Frank had four older brothers and two younger sisters.

In 1911 the family were still at Amberfield. Frank's father was now described as a butcher and farmer, as he was now farming Holmbush Manor Farm. There were two sons, two daughters and two servants living in Amberfield as well as Frank. Now aged 18, he was a nurseryman's pupil.

Frank obviously took an active part in village life as the Parish Magazine for January 1913 notes that he took part in the Rifle Range annual competition and in the Magazine for April 1913 he is described as the Scoutmaster.

By November 1914 Frank had enlisted in the Royal Sussex Regiment, Service No. TF/200140, and served at first in the Balkans. The West Sussex County Times & Standard reported in its edition of 28<sup>th</sup> July 1917 that 'Sergeant EF Grinsted, the youngest son of Mrs. & Mrs. Wm Grinsted of Amberfield, Slinfold, ..... has been awarded the Military medal for distinguished service. The same paper, for 1<sup>st</sup> December 1917, carried a Death Notice. 'Grinsted - Killed in action on 6<sup>th</sup> ult, Srg. Ernest Frank Grinsted, 4<sup>th</sup> Royal Sussex Regt, aged 24, son of Mr. and Mrs. W. Grinsted'. He was aged 24.

The Grinsted family were clearly highly regarded in the parish, for the Magazine of January 1918 carried a lengthy obituary for Frank:

Deep sympathy is felt in the Parish with Mr. & Mrs. Grinsted in the loss of their youngest son in Palestine. Frank Grinsted, as he was popularly known, was for ten years a member of the choir. The five brothers were at one time all in the choir together. He was specially interested in the Boy Scouts. He started our company, and was Scout-Master, spending much of his spare time with the boys in training them, and in the summer camping out with them; and in his letters home he was often planning what he could do in their interest. He joined the Territorials some time back, and was called up directly the war began. He was awarded the Military Medal for conspicuous bravery, and might have had a commission, but preferred to stay with his men. The following extracts will be read with interest by his many friends in Slinfold:-

Extract from the Chaplain's letter:-

Your son was one of the first men I got to know in the regiment, and I feel personally that I have lost a real friend. He was a man with a very real

love for our Lord, and by his example and work did very real service to Him. He was Churchwarden in his company, and I always felt that I could rely not only on his advice and help, but also on the solid work he put in for the Church in the company.

From the Captain's letter:-

He was killed on the forward slopes of the hill we captured in the early hours of the morning (Nov. 6<sup>th</sup>), and was buried near where he fell. Of course you know that he was awarded the Military Medal for gallantry on March 26<sup>th</sup>. He again showed great gallantry on Nov. 4<sup>th</sup> in the defence of an awkward post, and showed himself possessed of the highest qualities of leadership. I shall miss him very much in the company, for to my mind he was the best type of non-commissioned officer – keen, intelligent, solicitous for his men's comfort, and always fair to them. His platoon, which he commanded in the absence of sufficient officers, was one of the best in the company, and certainly possessed more *esprit de corps*. They always struck me as being a very happy little family together.

Frank Grinsted was awarded the Victory Medal, the British Medal and the 15 Star as well as the Military Medal. He is commemorated on panels 26 & 27 of the Jerusalem Memorial. His name is incorrectly listed as 'Grinstead' on the Comrades Cross outside the Village Hall.

## **THOMAS JAMES HIGGINS**

Thomas Higgins was born in Thornton Heath, Surrey, in 1899. By 1901, aged one, Thomas was living in Glamorganshire with his parents, John and Margaret, and his three-year old brother, Arthur. His father was a labourer in the local colmine.

In 1911 the family was living in a four-room cottage in Rowhook, Slinfold, and his father was a general labourer. Thomas now had four younger siblings in addition to his older brother, and he was still at school.



Thomas joined the Royal Sussex Regiment on 16<sup>th</sup> May 1916. He later transferred to the Royal West Kent Regiment, and subsequently became a private in the 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Royal Scots Regiment, Service No. 202296.

He died of wounds on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1918, aged 18. He is commemorated in the Senlis French National Cemetery, Oise.

Tommy Higgins, 1916



Thomas's grave in Senlis French National Cemetery

## **BASIL FREDERICK MURRAY HUGHES**

Basil Hughes was born on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1896 in St. Leonards-on-Sea, the son of the Revd. Frederick George Hughes MA, and his wife Mary Eleanor. In 1901 Basil was living in St. Peter's Vicarage, Hastings, with his parents, one older sister, one younger brother and two servants.

Basil's father became Rector of the parish of Slinfold in 1902, continuing in this office until 1921. The family would have lived in the Rectory in Clapgate Lane opposite the church. This was a large building with 19 rooms. In recent years the Rectory has moved to a smaller house and the old Rectory is known as Ironwood House.

By the age of 14, in 1911, Basil was a pupil at Wellington College at Crowthorne, Easthampstead in Berkshire. His parents were in the Rectory with one son, a governess, cook, parlourmaid and housemaid.



Basil enlisted in the Royal Navy Air Service. On 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1915 Flight Sub-Lieut. Hughes gained a Royal Aero Club Aviators' Certificate taken on a Maurice Farman Biplane at the Royal Naval Flying School, Eastchurch, Kent.

Photo of Basil Hughes taken for his Royal Aero Club Aviator's Certificate

Basil drowned in a seaplane in an accident off Gibraltar on 1<sup>st</sup> December 1915. His father wrote the following in the Parish Magazine for January 1916:

My Dear People – It is almost impossible to express in writing how much we have been touched by the overwhelming sympathy we have received from all in the parish in our great sorrow, and how much we have been helped and comforted by it. We do indeed deeply appreciate all your kindness, and thank you most gratefully and affectionately. Such times of sorrow serve to draw us all more closely together, and help us to realize that we are all one family in the bond of fellowship in our Lord Jesus Christ. It is God's will that we should begin another year of this great and terrible war; but we believe that in His own time He will bring good out of evil, and we can trust fully in His all-wise Providence over-ruling all things for good. And in this spirit let us go forth to meet whatever He may have in store for us, and I pray that His blessing may rest upon you and give you His peace and happiness in the New Year.

Believe me, your affectionate friend, F.G. Hughes

We are adding the following official and other letters regarding the loss of our dear son, as we understand that his friends in the parish would like to see them.

*Admiralty* – “On the morning of the 1<sup>st</sup> December your son was flying with a mechanic in a seaplane when the machine was seen to suddenly dive into the water, which it struck violently and turned over. Assistance was at once sent, but unfortunately it was found that your son was dead when he was taken out of the machine. My Lords deeply regret this sad accident, and they desire me to express to you their sympathy at the loss of your son so early in his career.”

*From Commanding Officer* – “I write in the name of the Air Station here, and beg you will accept our keenest sympathy in your sad loss. We feel that we, too, have lost a very daring young friend and a keen and capable officer, whose quiet and gentlemanly nature was an example to all. The boy had a Service Funeral, and was buried in the North Front at Gibraltar. The grief at his loss was widespread, and the large attendance of perfectly voluntary mourners shows this quite definitely. May I say, in conclusion, that as his commanding officer, I found him trustworthy, quiet, and satisfactory in every way, and much to admire in his character. We were all very fond of him and bitterly regret that he should have died so young. It should be remembered that he was doing his duty, and taking his chance in an equal degree as one on service in the Field, and I am sure you will derive some comfort from this.”

*From the Wife of the Commanding Officer* – “I am writing to you to-day again to tell you that your dear son was laid to rest yesterday. It was the most lovely day, and the Cemetery is away from all the noise of the town, under the shelter of the Rock. The Cemetery is one of the most peaceful I have ever seen; buried near are several others who have given their lives for their country. There were about 400 people who walked to the Cemetery – 2½ miles. These included the band, who played beautifully, the firing party from one of the ships here, the men from his ship, all the men from the Air Station, and also the Admiral, the General, the Colonial Secretary, another Admiral (who was passing through here), the Spanish Vice-Consul, the son of the Consul-General of Spain, the Governor’s A.D.C., and the Flag-Lieutenant. Every regiment here was represented by about three officers, all the ships here sent nearly all their senior officers, and there were a great many others I did not know; there must have been nearly 80 officers. The flowers were lovely, I don’t know the exact number of wreaths, but there were a great many; those that could not be put on the gun carriage were carried by some of the Air Station men. The Naval Chaplain took the Service, which was most impressive, the only sound to be heard was the echo of the firing when the “Last Post” was sounded. Again accept our very deepest sympathy.”

The Parish Magazine for January 1916 also noted that Memorial Services for Basil Hughes and Frank Charman had been held on the fourth Sunday in Advent, 1915.

Basil is commemorated at the Gibraltar (North Front) Cemetery, Grave C.3201.

## **ALFRED PRINCE JEAL**

Alfred Jeal was born in Slinfold in 1899 and christened on 19<sup>th</sup> November that year.

His father, Prince Jeal, was born in 1874 in Bucks Green, Rudgwick. As a very young baby he was taken to the local pub. The publican said that, since the pub was called the Queens Head, the baby must be a prince, and that became his name. In 1891 Prince was living in Hullbanks, Tismans Common. He was a brick maker and later a well-sinker. Prince married Sophia Charlwood (born 1870), in 1897. By 1911 he was living in 23 Hayes Road, Slinfold (now Hayes Lane), and was still there when he died in 1947. His wife, Sophia, died in Slinfold on 9<sup>th</sup> November 1939. They had eight children, one of whom died.

Alfred tried to enlist 15<sup>th</sup> March 1915 when he was 15. He was officially signed up on 19<sup>th</sup> February 1916 when he was 16 years 9 months but on his military forms his age has been crossed out and declared as 18 years 6 months. He signed to agree to this. He enlisted in Horsham into the Royal Sussex Regiment, No. 4670. He had been working as a labourer and was deemed to be physically fit. He was 5ft 8 ins and weighed 124lbs. His battalion was absorbed/merged several times during his military service but he was certainly posted to France on 7<sup>th</sup> September 1916 departing Folkestone and disembarking in Boulogne the same day. The next day he moved to Étaples and it appears that in October he was wounded and sent back to England. In July 1917 he was posted to the 5<sup>th</sup> reserve Battalion of the Bedfordshire Regiment. He was then posted again to France leaving Folkestone on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1918 for Boulogne. His Battalion joined the Sherwood Foresters on 4<sup>th</sup> April 1918 and he was killed on 13<sup>th</sup> April 1918, probably at Bouzincourt near to the town of Albert. He died aged 18 having completed (according to his military record) over 2 years' service.

Alfred's name is on the Pozieres Memorial, which commemorates all those lost in the 1918 battles of the Somme. He is correctly called A. Jeal on the Comrades Cross outside the Village Hall, but is listed as P.A. Jeal on the Screen in the Church.

## **ALAN COLLINGWOOD KNIGHT**

Alan was born on 15<sup>th</sup> April 1877 in Avering House, Arkwright Road, Hampstead, Middlesex, the third son of William Duncan Knight and his wife, Agnes. In 1881 four-year old Alan was living with his parents, two elder sisters, two elder brothers, a cousin aged 14 and four servants. His father was a Master Soapmaker.



In 1901 Alan was boarding with a 64-year old ironmonger in Lewisham. His occupation is given as soap manufacturer and he is said to be an employer. Alan became a Freeman of the City of London on 1905. The Admission Paper states that he was admitted into the Freedom of the City by Patrimony, in the Company of Tallow Chandlers 'because he is legitimate, and was born after the admission of his Father into the said Freedom in 1866'.

At the time of the 1911 Census Alan, aged 33, was single and living in 33 Lee Terrace (8 rooms) in Blackheath, south-east London, with a housekeeper and her son. Both Alan and his brother, William Edward Duncan Knight, were tallow chandlers, the brother living at The Elms, Salway Hill, Woodford Green, Essex.

The Parish Magazine for November 1914 lists Alan Duncan Knight as one of those from the parish serving in the War. This is almost certainly Alan Collingwood as his parents had been living in the parish at Rapkyns since circa 1886.

Alan Collingwood was a Lieutenant in Rifle Brigade, 14<sup>th</sup> Battalion attached to the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. He died at the age of 39 on 29<sup>th</sup> June 1915 of wounds received in the Dardenelles. He had been in that theatre of war for just 26 days. The parish magazine of August 1915 records that:

For 15 years he had devoted his life to the work of the Boy's Brigade in London, and was much beloved by his boys. Such was his attachment to them that when many of them enlisted at the beginning of the war he also enlisted to be with them. After some time he accepted a commission in the Rifle Brigade, and at the call of duty he laid down his life for his King and Country.

The entry in the National Probate Calendar for 1915 is as follows:

Knight Alan Collingwood of 29 Quentin-road Blackheath, Kent, a lieutenant in the Rifle Brigade died 29 June 1915 at Gallipoli

Administration London 14 August to William Duncan Knight esquire.  
Effects £2920 12s 11d.

Alan Collingwood Knight is buried in Grave IV.A.7. Pink Farm Cemetery,  
Helles, Turkey. He was awarded the Victory, British War Medal and the 15  
star. His father applied for these in 1922.

## **GEORGE BARCLAY KNIGHT, M.S.M.**

George Barclay Knight was born on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1898 in Blackwool, Northchapel. His father, Charles William Knight, was a farmer and his mother was Helen Roy, née Barclay.

In 1901 two-year old George was living with his parents and younger sister, still in Blackwool. His father described himself as Farm Foreman.

Charles Knight was born in 1862 in Woodchurch, Kent. He wife, Helen, was born 1869 in Aberdeen. They had three children, George Barclay, Sarah Jean and Charles William Roy. All three children were born in Northchapel, Petworth. Helen died at some point after the birth of Charles junior. Charles senior remarried in 1908 in Thakeham, Sussex. His new wife was Ellen Rebecca Boxall. Both Ellen and Charles were in their 40s. Ellen was a spinster and had previously worked as a servant in Guildford. She was born in Lurgashall. In 1911 the family were living at Clappergate, Slinfold. (This would be Clapgate Cottage, Clapgate Lane.) Charles was now a farm labourer.

George enlisted in 1914. He first served in the Royal Sussex Regiment, No.1819. He then moved to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Machine Gun Corps (Motors), No. 253. He became a sergeant and was awarded the Military Service Medal, but there are no details of what he had done to merit this medal.

George died on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1918, aged 19, and his name is on the Pozieres Memorial, which commemorates all those lost in the 1918 battles of the Somme.

## **WILLIAM HENRY DUNCAN KNIGHT**

William Henry Duncan Knight was the great-grandchild of John Knights (the 's' disappeared over the years). John Knights was born 1792 in Hertford, the son of a Quaker farmer. At 14 he went to London on his own and managed to find employ in a Grocer's Shop. He took an interest in the waste product from the candles that were manufactured by the grocer and asked if he could experiment with the waste. The grocer gave him a shed in which to work and shortly afterwards he was selling soap to customers. The business grew and in 1817 became John Knights Limited, with John a Master soap maker. The company is now the manufacturer of Knights Castile soap.

The business passed to son William Duncan Knight, born in 1845. He owned Rapkyns, in Slinfold, by 1895, probably having bought the property when the Strood estate was sold in 1886. The Sale Particulars described Rapkyns as being a freehold estate of 80 acres. He was also a J.P. William was involved in parish affairs, being elected in 1897 to the Committee considering the enlarging of the vestry in Slinfold Church. William Duncan Knight died on 4<sup>th</sup> October 1922 in Horsham (probably in Slinfold as Horsham would have been the nearest registration district).

In June 1895 William's son, William Edward Duncan Knight, married Edith Charlotte Worsfold, daughter of the late Henry S. Worsfold, Surveyor General for HM Customs. The marriage took place in Slinfold Church.

In 1901 William Edward Duncan, wife Edith and family were living in London with William working in the family business. By 1911 William was managing director of the business and living at Woodford Green. William Henry Duncan was born in 1900 at Stamford Hill and in 1901, aged one, was living at 50 Ravensdale Road, Hackney, with his parents, two elder sisters, a cook and two servants. By 1911 William H.D. was at School at St. Clare, Cranes Road, Upper Walmer, Kent. His parents, two sons and three servants were living in Woodford Green.

At the time of his death, William H.D. was a Second Lieutenant in the 65<sup>th</sup> Squadron of the RAF. The RAF was only founded on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1918 so previous to this William would have been in either the Royal Flying Corps or the Royal Navy Air Service. Prior to February 1918 the 65<sup>th</sup> Squadron was flying defensive patrols over the Western Front. Thereafter the Squadron began ground attack missions with light bombs on enemy troops and battlefield positions. William Henry Duncan Knight died on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1918.

The West Sussex County Times for 1<sup>st</sup> June stated that The Times for the previous day (ie 31<sup>st</sup> May) had reported: 'Killed in action on the 2<sup>nd</sup> May, Sec. Lieut. WHD Knight, RAF, eldest son of WED Knight, Limura, and grandson of W. Duncan Knight, of



William H.D Knight

Rapkyns, Horsham, in his 19<sup>th</sup> year'. He is commemorated at the Heath Cemetery, Harbonnieres, France. William Henry Duncan Knight was the nephew of Alan Collingwood Knight who died in Gallipoli in 1915.

At some point after 1911 William's parents, William and Edith, had moved to Kenya, address The Post Office, Limuru. Limuru is near to Nairobi and was part of the White Highlands where many British settled to take advantage of the excellent farming opportunities. The Post Office was probably the address given to those residing in Kenya as post was almost certainly collected from a central point such as a Post Office.

## **WALTER LINFIELD**

Walter Linfield was born in the village of Shipley, Sussex, in 1890. His parents were David Linfield and Rose Ellen née Oram, who married early in 1881. Rose was 17 at the time of their marriage and bore their first child, Ada, the same year. Rose died in Horsham in 1935 aged 81.

In 1891 Walter, aged 10 months, was in Shipley with his parents and four older sisters and two older brothers. The Census records their father as being an agricultural labourer.

By 1901 the family had moved to Slinfold. Walter, now aged 10, was living with his parents and three brothers in Townhouse. This was a former farmhouse which was now divided into two dwellings. The Linfields part had five rooms. Their father was recorded as being a shepherd.



Townhouse

The 1911 Census records David and Rose and family as still living at Townhouse; however, Walter, now aged 20, was evidently living elsewhere. Later the family moved to Oak Cottage on Stane Street, Slinfold.

Walter must have joined up soon after the war started because he was listed as serving in the Slinfold Parish Magazine for November 1914. He had a very low service number, 4007, and progressed to become a Lance Corporal, 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Rifle Brigade. Walter was awarded three medals, The Victory, British and the 1915 Star indicating his service overseas.

Walter was killed on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1916, aged 24, at the battle of Flers-Courcelette, a battle within the Franco-British Somme Offensive which took place in the summer and autumn of 1916. Launched on 15<sup>th</sup> September, the battle went on for one week. Flers-Courcelette began with the objective of cutting a hole in the German line by using massed artillery and infantry attacks. This hole would then be exploited with the use of cavalry. It was the third and final general offensive mounted by the British Army during the Battle of the Somme. By its conclusion on 22 September, the strategic objective of a breakthrough had not been achieved; however, tactical gains were made in the capture of the villages of Courcellette, Matinpuich and Flers. In some places, the front lines were advanced by over 2,500 yards (2,300 m.) by the Allied attacks. The battle is significant for the first use of the tank in warfare. It also marked the debut of the Canadian and New Zealand Divisions on the Somme

battlefield. Walter's name is recorded on the Thiepval Memorial, the imposing Memorial Arch in Picardy that was designed by Edwin Lutyens.

### **FREDERICK WILLIAM MERRITT**

Frederick William Merritt was born in Slinfold in 1900, the son of Edward and Lucy Merritt. Edward Merritt was born in 1851 in the nearby parish of Shipley, Sussex. In 1861 and 1871 Edward was living in Five Oaks with his parents, and in May 1876, aged 25, he married Lucy Woods in Rudgwick. Over the next 20 years Edward and Lucy had 12 children. In 1881 the family were living in Haven Street Cottage in Rudgwick and Edward was working as a farm labourer. By 1891 the family had moved to Bucks Green, Rudgwick.

The 1901 Census shows that the family had moved to Salt Box Cottage in Slinfold. Frederick William was a year-old boy living with his parents, four brothers and two sisters. There was also a boarder living with the family, a common arrangement in those days that helped to supplement the family income



Lime Kiln Cottage

The 1911 Census records Frederick William, aged 10, living with his parents Edward and Lucy and four brothers at Lime Kiln Cottage, Slinfold. The father Edward was recorded as working as a foreman in the stone quarry in the parish, almost certainly at Theale.

Edward died in 1915, aged 64.

Frederick William enlisted on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1917 and declared his age as 18 years and 1 month. However he was actually 17. On 17<sup>th</sup> June he was posted to the 9<sup>th</sup> Training Reserve Battalion at Rugeley, Staffordshire. On 1<sup>st</sup> December he was transferred to the west Riding Regiment and thence to the 22<sup>nd</sup> Bn., Durham Light Infantry Service No. 81957. It is unclear when he was posted to France but during the run-up to the Third Battle of the Aisne he was reported as missing. The battle took place over two weeks from 27<sup>th</sup> May to 6<sup>th</sup> June 1918 and was a battle of the German Spring Offensive that focused on capturing the 'Chemin des Dames' Ridge before the American Expeditionary Force could arrive completely in France. It was one of a series of offensives, known as the

'Kaiserschlacht', launched by the Germans in the spring and summer of 1918<sup>1</sup>.

The British Army received an official German List of Dead on which Frederick appeared. The Germans gave his date of death as 27<sup>th</sup> May 1918 and this was accepted by the British.

Frederick William is recorded on the Soissons Memorial in the Aisne Department of Picardy, about 100 km north-east of Paris. The Soissons Memorial commemorates almost 4,000 officers and men of the United Kingdom forces who died during the Battles of the Aisne and the Marne in 1918 and who have no known grave.

Records suggest that Frederick's widowed mother, Lucy, may have received an allowance from the Army after his death.

## **ALBERT MORGAN**

Albert was born in 1898 in Farnham (Surrey), the son of Albert and Christina Morgan. In the 1901 Census he is listed as living in Farnham with his parents and elder sister.

At the age of 11 he was living in Hill Lodge, Slinfold, a dwelling-place with five rooms, together with his parents and his sister. His father was working as a coachman.



Hill Lodge, now named South Lodge, with modern extension to left.

Hill Lodge, Clapgate Lane, was built in the 1880s by Thomas Ayling, village builder, and is identical to Church House in The Street. It is now called South Lodge to distinguish it from the later West Lodge on Stane Street. Albert's father would have been the coachman for the owner of Hill House, W.G. Fladgate, Esq.

In the Parish Magazine for July 1913 it is recorded that some children were awarded cards for special merit in the Religious Knowledge examination and amongst the names of the children was that of Albert Morgan.

Albert joined the Durham Light Infantry 1<sup>st</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> Battalion as a Private, Service No. 93349, and died in German hands on 11<sup>th</sup> September 1918, at the age of 18. His grave is 1.L.9 Glageon Communal Cemetery Extension, Northern France.

## **WILLIAM R. PETTITT**

William was born in 1898 in Rotherhithe, the son of Henry and Emily Pettitt. In the 1901 Census Henry is listed as a furnace man and the family lived at 4 Forsythe Street. William had three elder sisters, two elder brothers and one younger sister.

In the 1911 Census the family was still in Rotherhithe. Henry was stated to be an antimony smelter. William was living with his parents, two elder sisters, one elder brother, one younger brother and two younger sisters.

According to the Parish Magazine William had enlisted by November 1914. He joined the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion, East Surrey Regiment as a Private on 30<sup>th</sup> May 1915. His Service No. was 12054.

William was killed on 24<sup>th</sup> August 1916. His death is commemorated on the Ploegsteert Memorial in Flanders. He was awarded the Victory Medal, the British Medal and the 14 Star Medal.

In the West Sussex County Times & Standard dated 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1916 William was listed as 'killed in action'.

His name was published in the parish magazine for July 1919 as having given his life for King and Country.



William Pettitt

## **MAURICE REDMAN**

Maurice was born in 1897 and was christened on 18<sup>th</sup> July in the same year. He was the son of John and Emma Redman, who lived at Upper Bottle House, Stane Street, Slinfold.

At the age of 3 he was living with his parents and 3 sisters; his father was a painter. In the 1911 Census, at the age of 13, he was a schoolboy and the family, with the addition of a brother, were still living at Upper Bottle House. This house had five rooms.

Maurice became a farm labourer and at the age of 18 he enlisted into the Army on 6<sup>th</sup> October 1915 and joined the Royal Sussex Regiment, Service No. G/11875, despite his having flat feet.

Maurice underwent training in England until 8<sup>th</sup> October 1916, when he was posted to France. At some point he was transferred to the Manchester Regiment, 18<sup>th</sup> Battalion. He was a Private, Service No. 41731.

Maurice was killed in action on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1917 at Heninel, just outside Arras, during the second battle of Scarpe. His death is commemorated at the Arras Memorial, northern France. He was 19 years old and was awarded the victory Medal and British War Medal.

The July 1917 edition of Slinfold Parish Magazine printed the following:

Mr and Mrs J. Redman and family wish to thank their many friends for all the kindness and sympathy extended to them in their sorrow at the lost of their son Maurice and to express their gratitude through the Magazine.



Certificate awarded to eight-year old Maurice Redman for Good Attendance at Slinfold School throughout the year of 1904  
(WSRO E/MISC/40 - reduced by 70 per cent)

## **ARTHUR RELFE**

Very little is known about Arthur Relfe. In the 1881 Census he is listed as being two months old and living with his parents, Alfred and Carolyn, and an elder sister and brother at 19 Tavistock Place, Marylebone, London. His father was a Pickle Warehouseman.

In the Slinfold parish magazine for January 1915 he is named as one of those now serving. He was a Private, No. 5265, in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the London Regiment (Royal Fusiliers).

The 1917 Roll of Honour in the Church porch states that he was killed in action. And he is listed in the July 1919 parish magazine as one of those who gave their lives for King and Country.

Arthur was awarded the Victory and the British Medals, and he is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, remembering all those missing in the Battles of the Somme with no known grave.

## **HAROLD TURNER ROHDE**

Harold was born in Kensington, London in 1889, the eldest son of Robert Turner and Olivia Rohde of Ranfold Grange, Five Oaks Road, Slinfold. His father was born in India. In 1901 eleven-year old Harold was living in Ranfold Grange with his parents, two sisters, two brothers, a children's nurse and three servants.



Ranfold Grange was built in the Victorian Gothic style in 1878 and is surmounted by an attractive cupola. The building underwent extensive modernisation in 1987

Harold was listed as one of the parishioners serving in the war in the parish magazine of January 1915.

De Ruvigny's Roll of Honour 1914-24 has the following entry for Harold Rohde:

ROHDE, HAROLD TURNER, Lieut. and Temp. Capt., 89<sup>th</sup> Punjabis, Indian Army, eldest s. of Robert Turner Rohde, of Ranfold Grange, Slinfold, co. Sussex, by his wife, Frances Olivia, dau. of Coventry M. Woodhouse; b. Kensington, London, W., 23 Aug. 1889; educ. Uppingham, and the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich (Sandhurst Contingent); gazetted 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. Unattached List, 8 Sept. 1909; appointed to 89<sup>th</sup> Punjabis, Indian Army, 15 Nov. 1910, and joined the regiment in Upper Burma; served on the Yunnan Boundary Expedition: passed the Higher Standards in the Hindustani and Burmese languages; went to Dinapur, Bengal, with his regiment in 1913, and from there to Egypt on the outbreak of war; was present at the actions with the Turks on the Suez Canal in 1914: afterwards went to Gallipoli in the early days after the first landing, thence to France with the regiment, and served five months on the Flanders front: then accompanied them to Mesopotamia in Dec. 1915, and was engaged in all the attempts to relieve the besieged garrison at Kut-el-Amara; killed in action 12 April, 1916, in the advance towards Beit Alessa, Mesopotamia. Buried where he fell, the spot being marked on the map as Rohde's Mound.

The West Sussex County Times & Standard of 5<sup>th</sup> August reported Harold's death in very similar terms, adding that he was shot through the forehead and

instantly killed while leading his double company in an attack on the Turkish positions in Mesopotamia, in the attempt to relieve Kut.

Harold's death is commemorated on the Basra Memorial in Mesopotamia. He is also remembered on a cross to various members of his family in Slinfold churchyard.



Cross to various members of the Rohde Family



'Also of his son,  
Harold Turner Rohde  
Capt. 89<sup>th</sup> Punjabis  
who fell near Kut  
12<sup>th</sup> April 1916'

## **BERNARD WILLIAM SKIPWORTH, M.C.**

Bernard was born in Eltham, Kent, in 1891. He was the son of William Green Skipworth and his wife, Emily. By 1901 Bernard was nine years old and living with his widowed father, his younger sister and three servants in Brookhurst, Broadbridge Heath. His father was engaged in the Dry Goods Export trade.

In 1911 Bernard was a 19-year old student. He was still living with his father and sister in Brookhurst, a sizeable house of 14 rooms. The father was now described as a General Storekeeper, and there were just two servants. His father was sidesman at St. Peter's Church, Slinfold, from at least 1913 to 1918.

Bernard enlisted as a Private in the 18<sup>th</sup> Royal Fusiliers and was serving by January 1915. He became a Lieutenant in the Royal Sussex Regiment 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, which was attached to the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion MG Corps (Infantry). He fought in France from 25<sup>th</sup> June 1916 and he was awarded the Military Cross for his bravery. He was also awarded the Victory and British Medals.



Bernard died on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1918 and he is remembered on the Tyne Cot Memorial in Belgium, Panel 86-88. He is also remembered in Slinfold Churchyard. His stone is next to the tombstone commemorating his parents.

## **GEORGE EDWARD SMITH**

George Edward was born in Clapham in 1892. His parents were George H. and Ellen. By 1911 his father had died and he was living with his widowed mother, two younger brothers, one younger sister and a servant in an eight-room dwelling in Cromwell Road, Teddington. George, aged nineteen, was working as a fruit broker and his sixteen-year old brother was a fruit salesman.

It is not known when George moved to the Slinfold area, but he is listed as serving in the Parish Magazine of 1914, and the Absent Voters' List of October 1918 gives his home address as Bakers Hill, Stane Street, Slinfold. His Service No. was 238502 and he was a Petty Officer in the Royal Naval Air Service.

George died on 8<sup>th</sup> February 1919 and the Parish Magazine of that month states that he was buried in the Slinfold Churchyard on the 14<sup>th</sup>. His tombstone reads 'In loving memory of George Edward Smith R.N.A.S., who passed away Febry 8<sup>th</sup> 1919, aged 27 years - Beyond the sea of Death, Loneliness today, yesterday, for ever'.



Tombstone of George Edward Smith in Slinfold Churchyard

## **MARK TOFT**

Mark Toft was born in 1892 in Wolstanton, Burslem, Staffordshire. His parents were Luke and Mary J. Toft.

Luke Toft married Mary Jane Broad in Wolstanton on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1888. Mary had had an illegitimate daughter, Elizabeth, in 1881. Luke and Mary lived in Wolstanton until about 1900, Luke working as a potter's presser. In 1901 the family were living in Battersea and their sixth and last child, William, was born there. Luke was now a pottery foreman. In 1911 the family were still in Battersea and Luke was a foreman overseeing the making of clay crucibles. The big employer in Battersea was Morgan Crucibles, so it seems likely that Luke worked at their factory on Church Road. The family lived at various addresses in Battersea from 1900, the last address being Park Cottages in Church Road, recorded in 1918.

Luke Toft died on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1918, whilst living at Park Farm, Slinfold. He left £280 14s 8d to his widow. She died on 20<sup>th</sup> February 1951, having lived at Deepdene, Broadbridge Heath. Luke was only 50 when he died.

Mark Toft's siblings were John William, George, Mark, Laura, Matthew and William. William became a Civil Servant. The daughter, Laura, married Leonard Laker who ran Laker's Woodyard, situated on the Guildford Road near Clemsfold, Slinfold.

In 1911 Mark Toft was an apprentice carpenter living with his parents in Battersea. He enlisted as a Private in the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the East Surrey Rifles Regiment, Service No. 1517. The Battalion arrived at Boulogne on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1915. They were involved in the Chalk Pit attack, part of the Battle of Loos, the first part of The Big Push. The action began on the evening of 24<sup>th</sup> September. The previous day there had been torrential rain so the trenches were flooded. The men were subjected to heavy machine-gun fire from the Germans and the losses were heavy. 477 men died from the East Surrey Regiment. Mark died on 26<sup>th</sup> September.

Mark Toft's relative, Luke, told the Slinfold History Group in 2008 that Mark's body was not found and permission to add his name to the war memorial was only given after the war, too late for it to be included on the screen in the Church porch. In fact Mark's name is on the screen, but is not on the Roll of Honour. Mark is also commemorated on the Loos Memorial in France.

## **FREDERICK PETER TOWSE**

FREDERICK was born in Billingshurst in 1889, the son of Albert and Mary Towse. At the age of one he was living in the Five Oaks Inn, Billingshurst with his parents, five sisters and one brother. His father was innkeeper and also a grocer. By the time of the 1901 Census Frederick was 11 years old and living with his family at 3 Toate Hill Cottages, Itchingfield. One more brother had been born and at that time his father was shown to be a gardener. By the time he was 21 Frederick was working as a labourer at the Brickfield off Hayes Lane and the family, consisting of his parents, five sisters and one brother, had moved to 1 Hayes Lane, Slinfold, a cottage with five rooms.

In 1916 Frederick joined up as a Private in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Coldstream Guards, Service No. 16673.

The West Sussex County Times & Standard announced on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1917 that:

The death has occurred in action of Pte F. Towse, Coldstream Guards, son of Mr and Mrs A. Towse of Slinfold. He was killed instantaneously by a shell in France on his 28<sup>th</sup> birthday, after serving 14 months in the trenches. In a letter to his relative, his commanding officer refers to him as most cheerful under all conditions and to his work being well done and deeply regrets the loss of so gallant a soldier.

Frederick was awarded the Victory Medal and the British War Medal. His death on 31<sup>st</sup> July 1917 is commemorated on panel 11 at the Menin Gate Memorial at Ypres.

## **WALLACE FRANKLYN WALLER**

Wallace Waller was born in Slinfold in 1897, his parents being Peter and Mary Ann.

The 1901 Census records that three-year old Wallace was the youngest child, having four sisters and one brother. They lived in Farm Cottages, almost certainly the building which is now Random Hall on Stane Street. His father was a stockman on the farm and his older brother was a farm labourer.



There was also a boarder living with them who worked as a carter on the farm.

This Farm was known simply as 'Farm' & housed 2 families  
Postcard sent in December 1909

By 1911 the family was living in a four-room dwelling in Park Street. The father was now a farm labourer, Wallace was a schoolboy, his older brother was a carter in the timber yard on Stane Street, and three of his sisters had left home.

Wallace enlisted in the 2/4<sup>th</sup> Royal Sussex Regiment in 1914 and served with them for 20 months. He then transferred to the 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment, aged 19 years 1 month, where he served as a Lance Corporal, Service No. G/40376. On his enrolment paper it states that his trade was that of Grocer.

Wallace was killed in action on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1917. He is commemorated on the Arras Memorial, Pas de Calais, France. He was awarded the Victory and the British Medals.

## **DAVID WISEMAN**

David was born in Fulham in 1881, the son of John and Amelia Wiseman. His father was a bootmaker. In 1891, aged ten, he was living at 12 Pellant Road, Fulham, with his parents, an elder sister, two elder brothers and one younger brother.

By 1901 his father had died and David, his widowed mother, his sister, one elder and one younger brother were still at the same address. David, now 19 was working as a Legal Clerk. His mother was still living in Pellant Road in 1914.

David enlisted in the Royal Fusiliers Regiment, Service No. Ps/6177, and later transferred to the "Z" Company, 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Royal Fusiliers, Service No. G/55230.

David Wiseman married Catherine (Kate) Jarvis in Horsham in 1917.

The 1901 Census records that 12-year old Kate Elizabeth had been born in Brighton. She was living at 24 Belfast Street, Hove, with her parents, William M. & Mary, together with three younger brothers. Her father was a cab driver, who had been born in Marylebone.

By 1911 Kate's father had died. The family was still living at the same address in Hove. This Census states that Kate had been deaf since the age of four.

David Wiseman died on 21<sup>st</sup> March 1918 at the age of 36 and is commemorated in the Wancourt British Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France. He was awarded the Victory and the British Medals. His name is on the War Memorial and the screen in the Church Porch, but not on the Roll of Honour in the Church.

On July 22<sup>nd</sup> 1918 Prudence M. Wiseman was born in Horsham registration district, four months after her father died. Prudence married Teddy Prisk in Redruth; there were no children. Kate never remarried and died in 1968 in Truro. Prudence died in Camborne in 1986.

## **COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES COMMISSION**

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission owes its existence to the vision and determination of one man – Sir Fabian Ware.

Neither a soldier nor a politician, Ware was nevertheless well placed to respond to the public's reaction to the enormous losses in the War. At 45 he was too old to fight but he became the commander of a mobile unit of the British Red Cross. Saddened by the sheer number of casualties, he felt driven to find a way to ensure the final resting places of the dead would not be lost forever. His vision chimed with the times. Under his dynamic leadership, his unit began recording and caring for all the graves they could find. By 1915, their work was given official recognition by the War Office and incorporated into the British Army as the Graves Registration.

Ware was keen that the spirit of Imperial co-operation evident in the war was reflected in the work of his organisation. Encouraged by the Prince of Wales, he submitted a memorandum to the Imperial War Conference. In May 1917, the Imperial War Graves Commission was established by Royal Charter, with the Prince serving as President and Ware as Vice-Chairman.

The Commission commemorates the 1,700,000 men and women of the Commonwealth forces who died in the two World Wars.

It was renamed the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in 1960.

All the men except one, who are commemorated on the Comrades Cross are also commemorated at one of the cemeteries or memorials looked after by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. A sheet giving details of the individual, and showing a picture of the cemetery/memorial where he is remembered, can be downloaded from the Commonwealth War Graves Site. An example is shown on the following page.

The one person who is not commemorated on the CWGC site is George Edward Smith of the Royal Naval Air Service. He died on 8<sup>th</sup> February 1919, presumably as a result of his wartime service, and was buried in Slinfold Churchyard on the 14<sup>th</sup> of that month.

In Memory of

Private

## Albert William Farley

2491, 3rd Bn., Royal Fusiliers who died on 04 November 1918 Age 25

Son of Mr. A. Farley, of 15, Hayes Lane, Slinfold, Horsham.

Remembered with Honour  
Landreccies British Cemetery



Commemorated in perpetuity by  
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

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### **Acknowledgement:**

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