



THE WAR MEMORIAL
AT THE
WINE VAULTS



INTRODUCTION.

These pages give some more information about the men whose names are recorded on the memorial board to former pupils of Shepton Mallet Grammar School on the wall in the restaurant of the Wine Vaults, High Street, Shepton Mallet. Much of the information, including photos of cemeteries, comes from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (<http://www.cwgc.org/cwgcinternet/search.aspx>) and the Ministry of Defence and Royal British Legion Roll of Honour (<http://www.roll-of-honour.com/>). Service records of many soldiers from the First World War (Others were destroyed by German bombing in World War II) can be obtained, for a fee, from the National Archives. The Naval and Military press also produce books and CDs that record the names of those who died in the First World War.

The board is dedicated by Sir Richard Arthur Surtees Paget, 3rd Baronet who lived at Cranmore Hall, East Cranmore. Sir Richard died in 1955. He was a scientist and barrister who helped develop the Paget Gorman Signed Speech communication system for people with speaking impairments in 1930.



Sir Richard Paget (courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery)



Cranmore Hall (Now All Hallows School)

(courtesy of Snibor Ltd)



The new Shepton Mallet Grammar School in 1899

(Courtesy of the Francis Frith Collection.)



The Old Grammar School, Shepton Mallet, 1899

(Courtesy of the Francis Frith Collection).

THE BATTLES.

Loos 1915.

The Battle of Loos was fought between 25 and 28 September 1915. As fighting continued around Arras and Festubert, and after the repulse of the German offensive at Ypres in May, Field Marshal Joffre devised a new offensive aimed at breaking the German lines in three places, the Champagne Valley, Artois and Loos. The British First Army under General Douglas Haig were responsible for the Loos offensive. General Haig wanted to postpone the attack pleading lack of ammunition and the weary condition of the soldiers but Joffre pressed him to go ahead, with the promise of poison gas to make up for the lack of shells. The battle was a disaster for the British. Gas was used for the initial assault and it was caught in the wind and blown back on the British infantry. The attack lost momentum so the artillery assault had little effect, though some parts of the German lines were taken. One area of German defences known as Lone Pine had been said to be lightly defended. The British believed this intelligence and were butchered by German machine gun fire. By 28 September the fighting at Loos had ended having achieved nothing and claimed many lives.

Gallipoli 1915.

The eight month campaign in Gallipoli was fought by Commonwealth and French forces in an attempt to force Turkey out of the war, to relieve the deadlock of the Western Front in France and Belgium, and to open a supply route to Russia through the Dardanelles and the Black Sea. The Allies landed on the peninsula on 25-26 April 1915; the 29th Division at Cape Helles in the south and the Australian and New Zealand Corps north of Gaba Tepe on the west coast, an area soon known as Anzac. On 6 August, further landings were made at Suvla, just north of Anzac, and the climax of the campaign came in early August when simultaneous assaults were launched on all three fronts. However, the difficult terrain and stiff Turkish resistance soon led to the stalemate of trench warfare. From the end of August, no further serious action was fought and the lines remained unchanged. The peninsula was successfully evacuated in December and early January 1916. The Helles Memorial serves the dual function of Commonwealth battle memorial for the whole Gallipoli campaign and place of commemoration for many of those Commonwealth servicemen who died there and have no known grave. The United Kingdom and Indian forces named on the memorial died in operations throughout the peninsula, the Australians at Helles. There are also panels for those who died or were buried at sea in Gallipoli waters. The memorial bears more than 21,000 names. There are four other Memorials to the Missing at Gallipoli. The Lone Pine, Hill 60, and Chunuk Bair Memorials commemorate Australian and New Zealanders at Anzac. The Twelve Tree Copse Memorial commemorates the New Zealanders at Helles. Naval casualties of the United Kingdom lost or buried at sea are recorded on their respective Memorials at Portsmouth, Plymouth and Chatham, in the United Kingdom.

The Battle of the Somme 1916.

On 1 July 1916, supported by a French attack to the south, thirteen divisions of Commonwealth forces launched an offensive on a line from north of Gommecourt to Maricourt. Despite a preliminary bombardment lasting seven days, the German defences were barely touched and the attack met unexpectedly fierce resistance. Losses were catastrophic and with only minimal advances on the southern flank, the initial attack was a failure. In the following weeks, huge resources of manpower and equipment were deployed in an attempt to exploit the modest successes of the first day. However, the German Army resisted tenaciously and repeated attacks and counter attacks meant a major battle for every village, copse and farmhouse gained. At the end of September, Thiepval was finally captured. The village had been an original objective of 1 July. Attacks north and east continued throughout October and into November in increasingly difficult weather conditions. The Battle of the Somme finally ended on 18 November with the onset of winter. In the spring of 1917, the German forces fell back to their newly prepared defences, the Hindenburg Line, and there were no further significant engagements in the Somme sector until the Germans mounted their major offensive in March 1918. The Thiepval Memorial, the Memorial to the Missing of the Somme, bears the names of more than 72,000 officers and men of the United Kingdom and South African forces who died in the Somme sector before 20 March 1918 and have no known grave. Over 90% of those commemorated died between July and November 1916. The memorial also serves as an Anglo-French Battle Memorial in recognition of the joint nature of the 1916 offensive and a small cemetery containing equal numbers of Commonwealth and French graves lies at the foot of the memorial. The memorial, designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, was built between 1928 and 1932 and unveiled by the Prince of Wales, in the presence of the President of France, on 31 July 1932. The dead of other Commonwealth countries who died on the Somme and have no known graves are commemorated on national memorials elsewhere.

Passchendaele 1917.

The Battle of Passchendaele, is sometimes called the Third Battle of Ypres. For the soldiers who fought at Passchendaele, it was known as the 'Battle of Mud'. Few battles encapsulate World War One better than the Battle of Passchendaele. The attack at Passchendaele was Sir Douglas Haig's attempt to break through Flanders. Haig had thought about a similar attack in 1916, but the Battle of the Somme occupied his time in that year. However, one year later, Haig felt able to launch such an attack. His main aim was a breakthrough to the coast of Belgium so that German submarine pens could be destroyed. Admiral Jellicoe had already advised both Haig and the British government that the loss of shipping (primarily merchant) could not be sustained and that Britain would face severe problems in 1918, if such losses continued. Haig's plan, to sweep through Flanders to the coast, did not receive support from Britain's Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, but as the Allies had no other credible plan, he gave his agreement for Haig to carry out his plan. Haig also had another reason for going ahead with his plan. He believed, incorrectly as it turned out, that the morale of the German army was very low - especially after the success of the Allies at the Battle of Messines. He believed that the Allies could tap into this lack of morale and roll

through Flanders without too much trouble. On July 18th 1917, a heavy artillery barrage was launched at the German lines. This lasted for ten days. Three thousand artillery guns fired over four million shells. Therefore, the German army in the area fully expected a major Allied attack - so any vague hope of surprise was lost, as was true in any attack that started with a major artillery bombardment. The infantry attack started on July 31st. The main assault was led by Sir Hubert Gough's Fifth Army. To their left were units from the French First Army led by Anthoine and to Gough's right was the Second Army led by the victor of Messines, Sir Herbert Plumer. The Germans, as happened at the Somme, were fully prepared and the Allied attack, launched across a eleven mile front, made only small gains. Then in the early days of August, the area was saturated with the heaviest rain the region had seen in thirty years. The area in Flanders became effectively a swamp. Tanks sent forward to help the infantry, simply got stuck. Infantry soldiers found movement very difficult. The impact of the artillery bombardment had destroyed the drainage systems of the region which greatly added to the problem. The shell craters made by the Allied shelling filled with water and did not allow advancing men the opportunity to hide in them. The fields through which men should have gone became impassable. Haig blamed the lack of progress not on the abnormal weather and the conditions it caused, but on Gough. Haig moved Gough and his men to a front further north and put Plumer in charge of the battle. Plumer used different tactics to Gough. He wanted small gains that could be permanently held as opposed to Gough's apparent desire for one major sweeping movement that would bring success. As a result, Plumer fought a series of small battles within Flanders - the Battle of Menin Road Bridge, the Battle of Polygon Wood and the Battle of Broodseinde. These were fought between September and October 1917. These gave British forces the advantage in the territory to the east of Ypres, Haig became convinced that German morale was on the verge of collapsing and ordered that the offensive be continued to Passchendaele Ridge. Between October 9th and October 12th, two battles were fought - Poelcappelle and the First Battle of Passchendaele. By now, those German soldiers who had been fighting on the Eastern Front had been moved to the Western Front - and they had been specifically moved to Passchendaele Ridge to bolster the German forces there. The Germans used mustard gas to assist them and the attempted Allied breakthrough to Passchendaele Ridge failed to materialise. However, Haig would not concede that the attack had not succeeded. In late October three further Allied attacks were made on Passchendaele Ridge. On November 6th, 1917, Passchendaele village was taken and Haig used this success as the reason for calling off the attack. However, the Third Battle of Ypres or Passchendaele had been a very costly battle. For the sake of a few kilometres, the British had lost 310,000 men and the Germans 260,000. Haig was heavily criticised for the attack and for failing to modify his plans as the attack clearly was not going to be a success.

Second Battle of Arras 1917.

An essential part of what became known as the Second Battle of Arras was an attempt to capture Vimy Ridge. As the ridge was 60 metres high, Nivelle argued that if Allied forces could control this area, they would have a commanding view of the German activities behind the front line. On the evening of 8th April, 1917, 30,000 members of the Canadian Corps. began to move to the front line. At 5.30

the next morning, 2,800 allied guns began pounding the German trenches and soon afterwards the Canadian infantry went over the top into No-Mans-Land. Supported by a creeping-barrage, the 1st Division, led by Major-General A. W. Currie, captured the Zwolfer Graben trench system within 30 minutes. After another hour had passed, the intermediate line south-east of Thelus was also under Canadian control. Major-General L. J. Lipsett and the 3rd Division took the huge Schwaben Tunnel. However, several concrete Machine Gun Posts had survived, and these were causing heavy casualties. The Canadian 4th Division was especially badly hit. One battalion, the 87th, incurred losses of over 50% in less than a few minutes. General Edmund Allenby and the British Third Army attacked on either side of Arras and the Scarpe and managed to advance 3km on the first day. However, progress was much slower south of the river and the Germans were able to hold the village strongpoint of Monch-le-Preux, against repeated British attacks. In an attempt to stretch German defences, General Hubert Gough and the British Fifth Army launched an attack further south. Even though Gough used tanks in the attack, it was repulsed by the Germans at Bullecourt. The Australians also took part in this operation and suffered its worst day's losses on the Western Front. The Canadians were still making good progress and by 12th April they were firmly in control of Vimy Ridge. Forced to the bottom of the hill, the Germans were unable to launch a successful counterattack. That night, under the cover of darkness, the Germans withdrew from the area. On 14th April, Sir Douglas Haig, called a halt to British attacks to await news of the French Aisne Offensive. When this ended in failure, the First and Third Armies were ordered to try and move forward again. After two days heavy fighting another 2km was gained. By the time the offensive was halted at the end of May, the British had suffered heavy losses: First Army: 46,826; Third Army: 87,226; Fifth Army: 24,608. The Canadian Corps lost a total of 11,297 men killed, missing or wounded.

The German Offensive 1918.

In March 1918, Allies suspected that German forces would soon make a decisive move. They were right. On 14 March, General Erich Ludendorff, Chief of Staff of the German armies, was planning a surprise offensive to divide the French and British forces on the Western Front. As anticipated, the German army amassed its troops and launched an offensive on 21 March, on a front south of Arras in St Quentin sector. Sixty-three German divisions attacked over 60 miles of the front held by 26 British divisions, overwhelming British defences and driving them west. The Germans concentrated on infiltrating strongly in one central area, whereas the British expected that the attack would be spread out, and that the Germans would attempt to outflank them in the Somme woods and valleys. The British 3rd Army and 5th Army were taken by surprise, divided and forced to retreat. German troops then rapidly advanced across the Somme battlefield towards Amiens. In five days, they had recaptured all the land they had lost around the Somme in the previous two years. This was disastrous for the Allies. Not only had they lost all the land which thousands of men had died to capture, but also the Germans were now dangerously close to Amiens, a vital rail junction, which in March lay defenceless. In the short space of ten days since

launching the offensive, German troops were almost at the gates of Amiens. The Allies had to prevent the Germans from passing through Villers-Bretonneux, the main area before Amiens. On 25 March, the 3rd and 4th Australian divisions were on their way, hastily instructed to plug the gap and to assist in stopping the offensive.

THE MEN.

Private Bernard Eyre Baxter was killed 29th April 1915 aged 21. He was the son of Stanley Eyre Baxter, of North Lees, Taikawhana, Hokianga, Auckland. He served in Egypt (Suez Canal) but is commemorated at the Lone Pine Memorial in Turkey. He has no known grave. He must have been killed just a few days after landing in the Gallipoli campaign which started on 25th/26th April 1915. He attended Ashford Grammar School 3rd May 1906 to July 1908. He was a Private, 10/275, in A Company (West Coast), Wellington Infantry Regiment of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force. He was born on 2nd July 1893 at Hagg Hill Farm, Hinton, Steeple Ashton, Wiltshire.



Lone Pine Memorial

Lieutenant Wilfred Aubrey Brewer was killed 21st November 1917 aged 23. He was the son of Alfred Chaplin Brewer and Bessie Tyte Brewer, of Stoke St. Michael, Bath. He served in the 1st Battalion Sherwood Forester (Nottingham and Derbyshire Regiment). He is buried at Poelcappelle Cemetery near Ypres in Belgium. The place and date suggest that he died in the battle of Passchendaele (Where my grandfather was seriously wounded). The cemetery contains the grave of the youngest recorded British soldier to be killed in the First World War, John Holden of the Irish Fusiliers, who was 14 years old.



Poelcappelle Cemetery

Second Lieutenant Wilfred C. Burgess was killed 22nd August 1917 aged 26. He served in the 4th Battalion Somerset Light Infantry. He is buried at Hoge Crater cemetery on the Menin Road east of Ypres in Belgium. He could have been another victim of the battle of Passchendaele although that area was the scene of constant fighting throughout the war and numbers of soldiers killed by daily shellfire are buried in that cemetery. He was organist at Burrough Green Church, near Newmarket, in Cambridgeshire 1906 – 1912 (he must have been a talented boy to be church organist at the age of 15 – and if he was in Burrough Green when aged 15, when was he in Shepton Mallet Grammar School?) and is commemorated on the memorial there.



Hoge Crater cemetery

Private William Henry Wick Burr. There is no Commonwealth War Graves Commission record for anyone of this name. The only William Burr who served in the Royal Fusiliers was William James Burr, a married man, who died, age 28, on 27th December 1918 (presumably of wounds received in the war or of accident or disease) and is buried in Norwich cemetery. He was transferred to the Labour Corps and then to the 457th Agricultural Company.



Norwich Cemetery

Private H. T. Church was killed on 12th August 1916. There is no record of his age. He is registered as Canadian. He was a member of the 8th Company, Canadian Machine Gun Corps. He is buried at the Railway Dugouts Burial Ground near Ypres in Belgium. This was the site of a dressing station so many soldiers who were wounded in the front line and subsequently died were buried here.



Railway Dugouts Burial Ground

Flight Lieutenant B. E. Cotter of the Royal Flying Corps turns out to be Second Lieutenant Brian Charles Cotter of 216 squadron, Royal Air Force (formed from the Royal Flying Corps on 1st April 1918). He was killed (or did he die of Spanish flu?), aged 19, on 28th October 1918 – just two weeks before the First World War ended. He was the son of Laurence and Alice Cotter, of 79, Station Rd., Glastonbury, Somerset. He is buried in Charmes, in the Vosges area of eastern France so was part of the Allied advance leading to the final defeat of Germany. 216 squadron flew Handley Page 0/400 bombers, the biggest British aircraft of the time with a top speed of 79 miles per hour! Today the squadron's duties are flight refuelling of combat aircraft.



Charmes

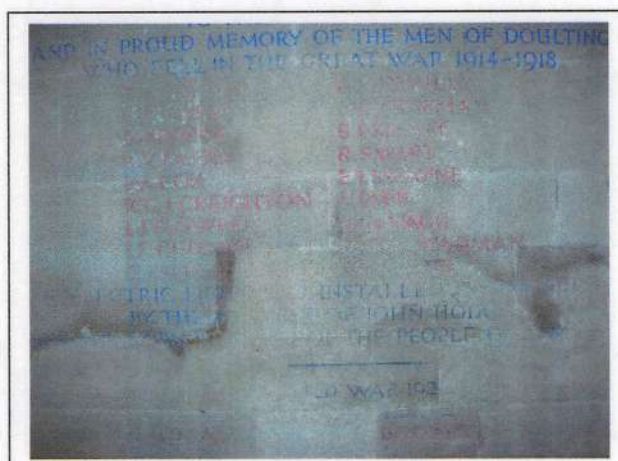


Handley-Page 0/400 bomber

Private Reginald Charles John Creighton was in the 17th Battalion Australian Infantry, Australian Imperial Forces. He is described as an Australian by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. He originally came from Doulting and must have emigrated to Australia. He enlisted in Sydney, New South Wales. His next of kin is recorded as Abigail Mary Creighton, presumably his mother. There is no record of his age. He died on the 12th May 1918. He is buried at Beacon Cemetery, Sailly-Laurette near Amiens. This suggests that he was killed during the last German offensive in France – Operation Michael – that began in April 1918. Allied forces retreated to Amiens and then counter attacked in July and August leading to an advance which led to the Armistice which ended the First World War on 11th November 1918. His name is recorded on the commemorative list carved on the west wall inside Doulting Church.



Beacon Cemetery, Sailly-Laurette



William Charles Croom was a 2nd Lieutenant in the 10th Battalion of the London Regiment, a Territorial rather than a Regular Army regiment, that was based in Hackney in east London. We don't know his age. He is commemorated on the Menin Gate memorial at Ypres in Belgium. This means that his body was never recovered and so he has no known grave. There are a total of 54,338 names recorded there of British and Empire soldiers, in this one sector of the Western front alone, who have no known graves. He died on 7th June 1917. This date could suggest that he was killed in the British offensive against the Germans at Messines Ridge but he could also have been the victim of the daily gunfire or shelling that was characteristic of the Ypres salient.



Menin Gate memorial at Ypres



Soldiers of the London regiment

Private Arthur Edwin Dauncey was the son Eli and Luena Dauncey, of South Barrow, Yeovil, Somerset. Although he is shown on the memorial as having been in the North Somerset Yeomanry he is recorded by both the CWGC and the Somerset Roll of Honour as serving in the 7th Battalion of the Somerset Light Infantry. He died on 12th September 1917, aged 29, and is commemorated at the Tyne Cot Memorial in Belgium as his body was never found. Undoubtedly he was another casualty of the battle of Passchendaele.



Tyne Cot Memorial

Ewart Arthur Edwin Emery was a Second Lieutenant in the 16th Signal Company of the Royal Engineers. He was son of Edwin and Emily Rosa Emery, of Prospect House, Oakhill, Bath. He was killed on 23rd March 1918 and is commemorated on the Pozieres Memorial 6 kilometres north-east of Albert, on the river Somme in France. His body was never found or identified. In March and April of 1918 this area was the scene of the German offensive, Operation Michael, which pushed the Allies back over the old Somme battlefields of 1916.



Pozieres Memorial

There was a private called **E. Green** in the 5th Battalion Dorset Regiment. There are no records of an E. W. Green. We do not know his first name. E. Green was the son of James and Lavinia Green, of Lower St. Marys, Blandford, Dorset. He died in hospital in Malta on 12th November 1915 aged 19 and was buried in the Pieta Military Cemetery. Malta and Gozo were the sites of hospitals treating the sick and wounded mostly from the Gallipoli and Salonika campaigns. The 5th Dorsets landed at Gallipoli.



Pieta Military Cemetery

Sergeant Arthur Reginald Heard was serving in the Royal Engineers. He died at the age of 30 on 14th April 1918 and is buried in Shepton Mallet cemetery. His parents were Herbert and Emily F. J. Heard, of The Shrubbery, Shepton Mallet. Herbert Heard wrote a book called "Shepton Mallet. Notes on the charities of the town" in 1903. Shepton Mallet Police Station, next door to The Shrubbery, was designed by a company called Wainwright and Heard. It must be the same family.



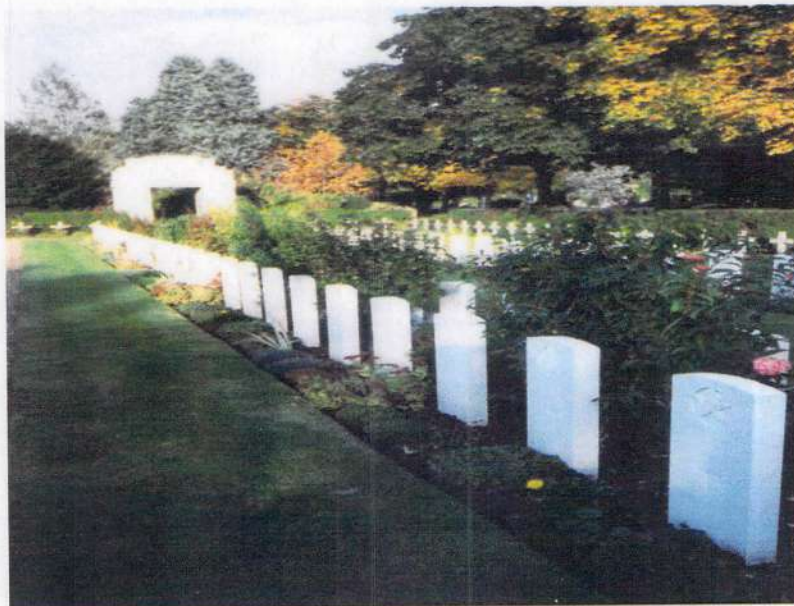
The headstone of Sergeant Arthur Heard in Shepton Mallet cemetery

Albert Stuart Hoddinott was a sergeant in the 29th Battalion of the British Columbia regiment of the Canadian Infantry. His parents were Albert and Mary Dobin Hoddinott, of 10, Rochester Terrace, Camden Rd., London. He died on 21st August 1917 and is commemorated on the Vimy Memorial near Arras in France. The Vimy memorial is on the site of the battle of Vimy Ridge where Canadian troops, fighting together for the first time, won a huge tactical victory on the first day of the Second Battle of Arras in July 1917. The memorial is dedicated to all 60,000 Canadian troops who died in the First World War, including 11,000 who have no known grave.



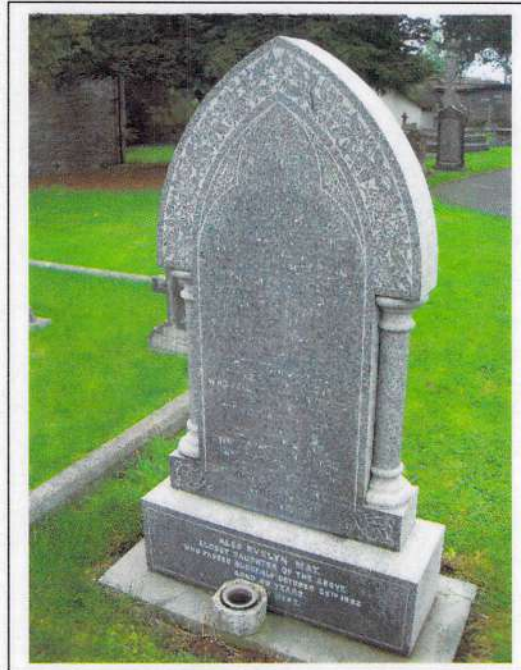
Vimy Memorial

Joseph Vasco Hodges was a corporal in the 6th Dragoon Guards (Carabiniers). He died of wounds, aged 23, on 2nd September 1914. We can deduce from this that he was a member of the Regular Army as the idea of Lord Kitchener's volunteer citizen army (New Army) and, later, conscription had not been introduced by that time. He was the son of Joseph E. and Charlotte V. Hodges, of Rifle Cottage, 26, Cowl St., Shepton Mallet, Somerset. He is buried at the City of Paris cemetery, Pantin. Burials in this cemetery are from the military hospitals set up to deal with the casualties from the first fighting in Belgium and France and the Battles of the Marne and the Aisne in 1914. However, the date of his death is before those latter actions so it is likely that he was wounded either in the battle of Mons or Le Cateau. The 6th Dragoon Guards were part of the 4th Cavalry Brigade of the British Expeditionary Force. They rode horses into battle at a time in the First World War when it was still thought that mounted cavalry would be a decisive factor in a war that would "be over by Christmas".



City of Paris cemetery, Pantin.

Gunner Douglas Arthur James served in the 3rd Reserve Brigade, Royal Field Artillery. He died of wounds on 3rd September 1917 at Fargo Hospital, Salisbury and is buried in the churchyard at West Cranmore, Somerset. Unusually, he is commemorated by a private, family headstone instead of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission pattern. He was the youngest son of Theo Tom James and his wife Elizabeth Jane James. He is also commemorated on the wall plaque on the northern wall inside the church.



The grave of Gunner David Arthur James in the churchyard of St Bartholemew's Church, West Cranmore



Wall plaque at West Cranmore church.

Paul Willoughby Jones, son of the Rev. R. L. and Ada Jones, of Shepton Mallet, Somerset, was a private in the 7th Battalion, Somerset Light Infantry. He died on 16th September 1916 and is buried at Corbie Communal Cemetery Extension. Most of the graves there are for soldiers who died of wounds at Corbie, which was a hospital base. The majority were victims of the fighting at the Battle of the Somme in 1916. The date of Paul Jones' death suggests that he was one of those.



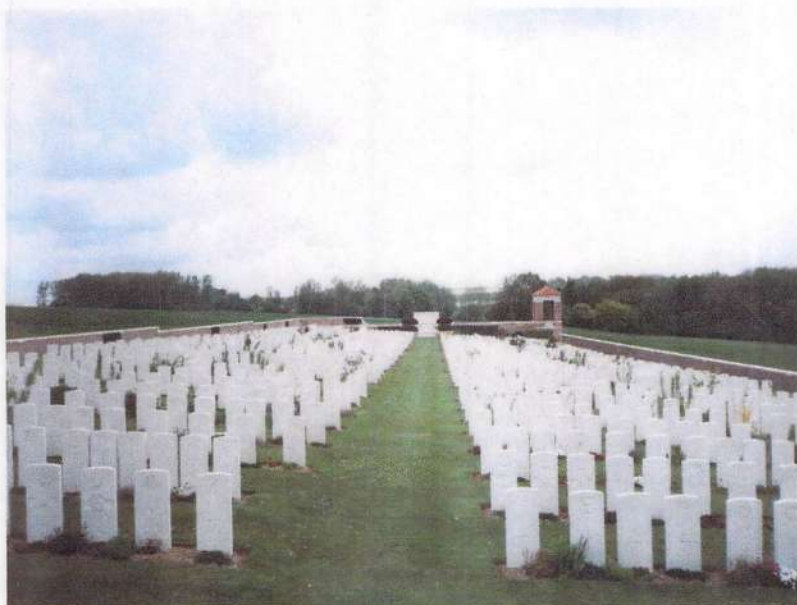
Corbie Communal Cemetery Extension

There are no records of a **Private H A E Marchant** of the Royal Scots Regiment in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Private H Marchant, age unknown, of the 9th Battalion Royal Scots is buried in St John's churchyard at Hipswell near Catterick Camp in Yorkshire. He died of unknown causes on 4th February 1917. The only other Marchant from the Royal Scots who died in the First World War was W Marchant who was killed at Gallipoli in 1915.



St John's churchyard

Lance Corporal F. J. Padfield, son of Albert Francis and Katherine Padfield, of Church Farm, East Woodlands, Frome, Somerset, was killed on the first day of the battle of the Somme, 1st July 1916. The Memorial has got his initials wrong by saying that he was F G Padfield. He was 22 years old and a member of the 2nd Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry. He is buried at the Lonsdale Cemetery at Autheuile. He must have been part of Kitchener's "New Army" – hundreds of thousands of volunteers who responded to the call of "King and Country" – who, after initial training were decimated at the Battle of the Somme.



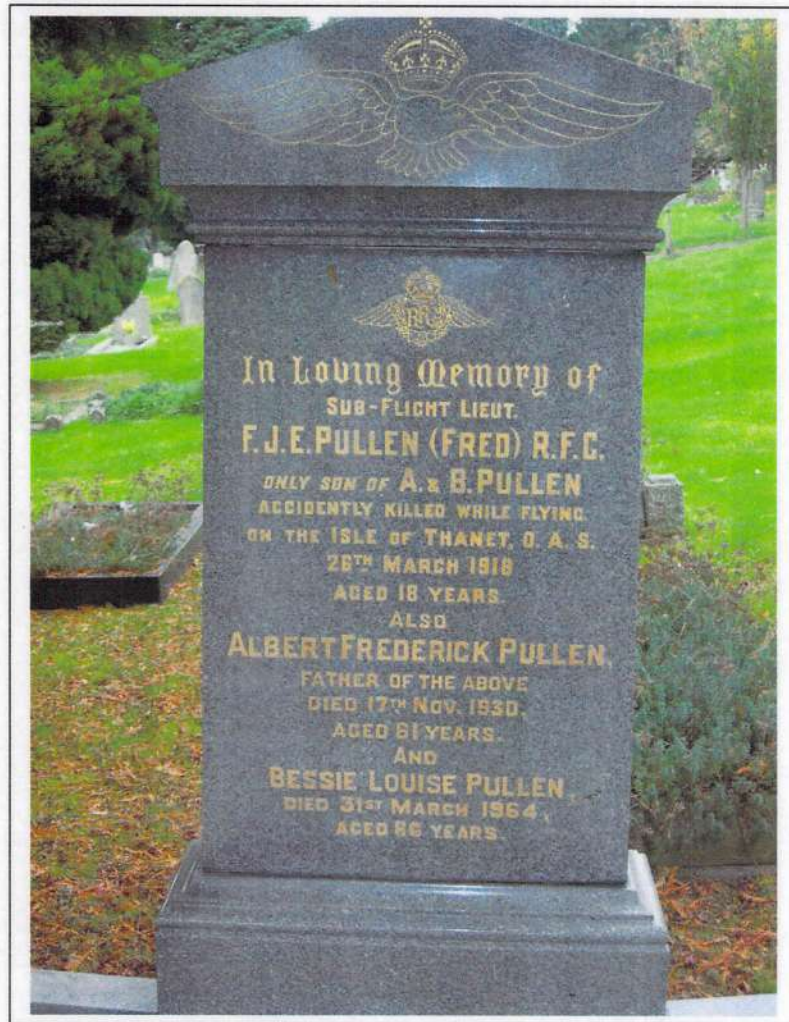
Lonsdale Cemetery at Autheuile

Lance Corporal H. L. Padfield died on 17th June 1917. The plaque says that he was part of the King's Royal Rifles but the Commonwealth War Graves records say that he was in the 5th Battalion of the London Regiment (London Rifle Brigade). The London Regiment was a territorial regiment with battalions with different names, as is shown by this memorial. They were affiliated to regular regiments but kept their own battalion names. The likelihood, therefore, is that the London Rifle Brigade were affiliated to the regular King's Royal Rifles in 1917. Lance Corporal Padfield is buried at Achiet-le-Grand Communal Cemetery extension between Arras and Bapaume in northern France. In 1917 this was the site of casualty clearing stations and field hospitals taking casualties from the 2nd Battle of Arras which began in April 1917.



Achiet-le-Grand Cemetery extension.

Second Lieutenant F. J. "Fred" Pullen was 18 when he was killed in a flying accident on the Isle of Thanet in Kent. The date of his death was 26th March 1918. He was, therefore, a member of the Royal Flying Corps rather than the Royal Air Force which was created on 1st April 1918. Fred Pullen is buried in Shepton Mallet cemetery. Unusually, he is commemorated by a private, family memorial rather than the standard Commonwealth War Graves pattern. His parents were Albert Frederick and Bessie Louise Pullen, of Shepton Mallet.



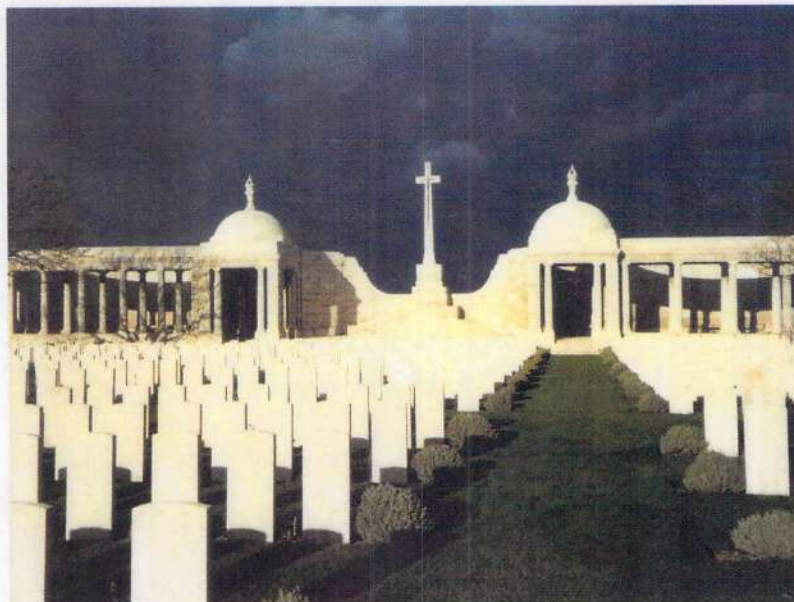
The headstone of Second Lieutenant Fred Pullen, RFC in Shepton Mallet Cemetery. The initials OAS probably mean "On Active Service".

John Harold Standrick was a Captain in the 2nd/18th London Regiment (London Irish Rifles). The London Regiment was a Territorial regiment with lots of sub-groups such as the Artists' Rifles. Captain Standrick had won the Military Cross for bravery. The MC was awarded to officers up to the rank of Captain although it was later extended to include Majors. He was the son of Alfred and Naomi Jane Standrick, of 8A, Oxford Avenue, Merton Park, Merton, London, although originally from of Shepton Mallet, Somerset. He was twenty five when he was killed in Palestine on 21st February 1918. Jerusalem was captured from the Turks in December 1917. The military cemetery continued to be used for British was casualties who fell in Egypt and Palestine in fighting after that date.



Jerusalem Military Cemetery

Second Lieutenant Frederick James Steele served in the 3rd Battalion of the Dorset Regiment but was attached to the 8th Battalion of the Royal Berkshire Regiment. He is described as a Grammar School Master. He was 27 years old when he died on 13th October 1915. His parents' names were David and Annie Steele. He was killed in the Battle of Loos and his body was never found or identified so he is commemorated on Panel 76 of the Loos Memorial at "Dud Corner" cemetery in the Pas de Calais. The cemetery is on the site of a German strongpoint captured on the first day of the battle. It is called "Dud Corner" because of the large number of unexploded shells found there after the Armistice. The date of his death suggests that he was one of those men who volunteered to join the regular army in the initial enthusiasm that followed the outbreak of war in 1914.



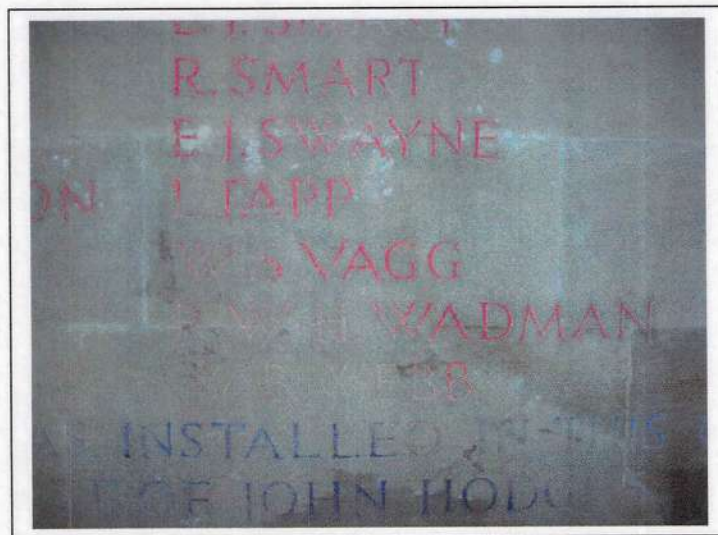
The Loos memorial

Rupert Wyatt Stuckey was an Airman Second Class in the Royal Flying Corps. He died, aged 19, on the 1st June 1917. His parents were George Wyatt Stuckey and Mary Stuckey, of Tutton's Farm Bungalow, Clevedon, Somerset. He is buried in the cemetery at Lijssenthoek which is between Ypres and Poperinghe. This area was out of range of most German field artillery so was used for casualty clearing stations and field hospitals. Poperinghe was a rest and recuperation centre. The cemetery is the second largest in Belgium with over ten thousand graves.



Lijssenthoek cemetery

Leonard Tapp was a private in the 6th Battalion Somerset Light Infantry. According to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission he died on 21st August 1916 and is buried at Dernancourt communal cemetery extension. Dernancourt is 3 kilometres south of Albert and is thus part of the Somme battle area. Leonard Tapp was undoubtedly one of the victims of the Somme battle in 1916 and is commemorated in the memorial in Douling church.



The only death of a soldier with the surname Vagg in the Somerset Light Infantry in the First World War was **Wilfred Stanley Vagg** who is buried in Douling Churchyard. Why the memorial plaque says A E Vagg is a mystery as there is no record of such a person. Wilfred Vagg was in the 1st battalion of the SLI and died, aged 18 on 11th February 1918. The fact that he was buried in the churchyard of his home village might suggest that he died of wounds. His parents were Albert Edward and Annie Maria Vagg, of Waterlys, Douling, Shepton Mallet. His name is recorded on the Douling Church memorial, although his name is fairly well decayed. His grave is marked by a CWGC headstone in the northeast corner of the churchyard. The stone is quite badly affected by green lichen as it is shaded under trees



The headstone of Private Wilfred Stanley Vagg in the churchyard of St. Aldhelm's Church, Douling.



Memorial to Wilfred Stanley Vagg in Douling Church.

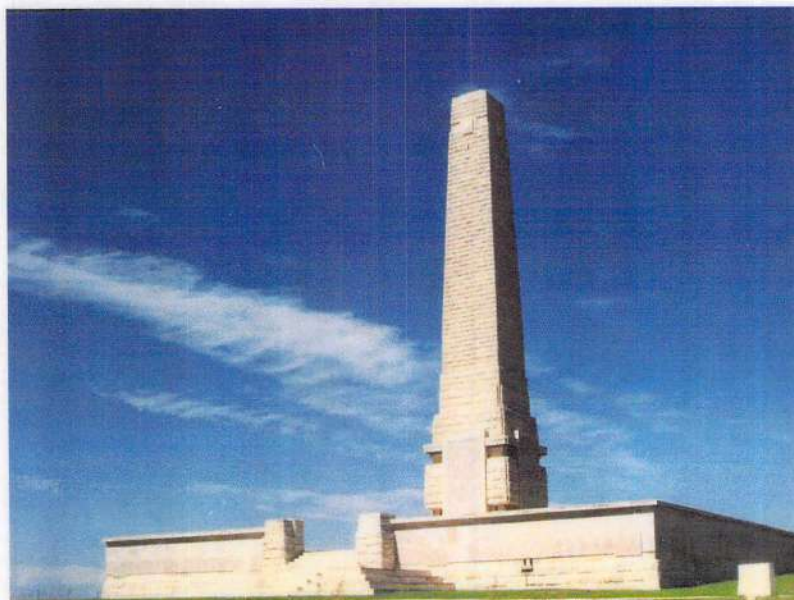
Lance Corporal Albert Charles Purchase Witcombe. He was the son of Albert and Marian Witcombe, of The Comer House, Ruishton, Taunton, Somerset. He served in the 2nd Battalion of the Yorkshire and Lancashire Regiment. He died on the 15th September 1916 aged 25 years. His name is recorded on the Thiepval Memorial so he was yet another who died, with no known grave, in the Battle of the Somme.



Thiepval Memorial

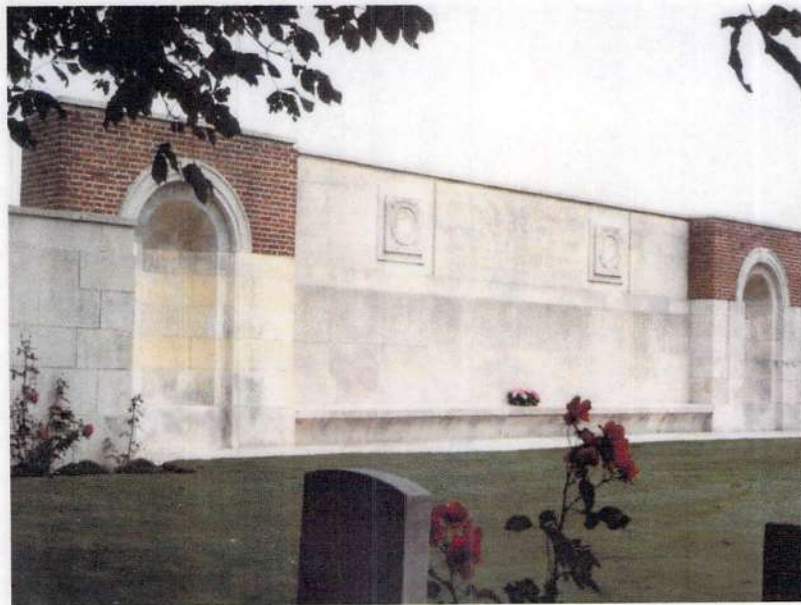
Flight Lieutenant G H Woodland, Royal Flying Corps (actually Second Lieutenant, Royal Air Force) was the son of Mark and Ada Woodland, of 1, Bellvue, Haydon, Kilmersdon, Bath. Born at Radstock. He belonged to the 52nd Training Depot Station and died on 5th November 1918, aged 19, just six days before the First World War ended. He is recorded as being buried in Radstock (St. Nicholas) churchyard extension. It has proved impossible, so far, to locate his grave. The churchyard is badly overgrown and quite disgracefully neglected in some areas. Commonwealth War Graves do not seem to be maintained in this cemetery.

Private Arthur Edwin Perry was the son of Albert and Ann Perry, of Over Compton, Sherborne, Dorset. He is actually recorded as being a Lance Corporal. He served in B squadron, based at Sherborne, of the 1st/1st Dorset Yeomanry (Queen's Own) a Territorial Unit. This was a mounted unit but was converted to infantry. It fought at Gallipoli and its losses were so great that it was broken up and ceased to exist by January 1916. Private Perry died on 21st August 1915 aged 25. He is commemorated on the Helles Memorial so that indicates that he was killed at Gallipoli and has no known grave.



Helles Memorial

As is the way of things, the last name on the memorial plaque has proved to be one of the most difficult. **Private E R James** of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force. Was it **Private Ernest Robert James** of the NZEF 1st Battalion Canterbury Regiment who died on 2nd October 1918? He is commemorated at Grevillers (New Zealand) memorial in the Pas de Calais. The New Zealand memorials here are from the defensive fighting against the last German push in early 1918. However, the date of his death is after that. There are here commemorated victims of the "Advance to Victory" which took place in the summer and autumn of 1918 led to the German Army's final defeat. The Grevillers memorial is dedicated to New Zealanders who have no known grave. E R James is remembered on that. The rank of private soldier and the membership of the NZEF suggest that this is our man. However, there was a **Corporal Edwin Roland James** of the New Zealand Training Unit, husband of Mrs. G. C. Borrie (formerly James), of Hunua, Auckland. Records say that he was born in Somersetshire, England which is a bit too much of a coincidence to leave one feeling completely sure.



Grevillers (New Zealand) memorial



Soldiers of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force.



Wellington (Karori) cemetery

The author wishes to acknowledge and thank all those sources of information, albeit mostly unconsciously, who contributed to the search for more information about the men whose names are commemorated on the memorial board.

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Bob Rees.

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