

# Edenbridge Tannery



The Whitmore family of Tanners moved had moved from Westerham, Kent where they had two tanneries, to Edenbridge, Kent, circa 1860. A number of years later Whitmore's also had a tannery at Redhill, Surrey. The company also expanded to the Grange Tannery at Bermondsey in South London, which was a former monastery, and had originally been run as a tannery by Samuel Barrow & Brothers. Grange Tannery at Bermondsey was badly damaged during the blitz of the Second World War, at which time it was owned by Barrow, Hepburn and Gale Ltd. Having traded as Whitmores (Edenbridge) Limited, the Edenbridge Tannery closed down in the 1970's, bringing to an end some 500 years of tanning operations in the town. At the time that the above memorial plaque was erected, one of the Whitmore family; Herbert Searle Whitmore, in addition to being a Company Director of the family firm he also had substantial property holdings within the town of Edenbridge. One of Herbert's sons is amongst those commemorated on the memorial plaque which was erected by the directors & employees in 1922. The photographs kindly furnished for inclusion here were by Susan F. Above the names of those former tannery employees who lost their lives is inscribed :-

IN HONOURED MEMORY OF THE MEN FROM THIS TANNERY WHO  
LAID DOWN THEIR LIVES FOR THEIR COUNTRY IN THE GREAT WAR  
1914-1918

# The Great War

1914 -1919

**BONWICK, WILLIAM CHARLES.** Private, G/18841.  
6th (Service) Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment).  
Died Friday 30 November 1917.

Born Dormansland, Lingfield, Surrey. Enlisted and resided Edenbridge, Kent.  
Son of William and Emma Bonwick (née Bradford).

Commemorated on the Cambrai Memorial, Louverval, Nord, France. Panel 3,  
and on the Edenbridge civic war memorial, which is in the forms of panels at the  
Edenbridge and District War Memorial Hospital.

At the time of the 1901 census, the Bonwick family resided at 1, Tanners  
Cottages, Dormansland Road, Lingfield, Surrey. Head of the house was 31 year  
old Dormansland native William Bonwick, who was employed as a Tanyard  
Labourer. William Charles Bonwick was recorded by the census enumerator as  
being 6 year old.

**COSHAM, THOMAS.** Lance Corporal, G/9758.  
10th (Service) Battalion, Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment), (Kent  
County).

Died Saturday 30 September 1916. Aged 20.  
Born and enlisted Edenbridge, Sevenoaks, Kent.

Son of Albert and Kate Cosham of Mayfield Cottage, Lingfield Road, Edenbridge,  
Sevenoaks, Kent.

Buried Bancourt British Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France. Grave Ref: IX. A. 19.  
Commemorated on the Edenbridge civic war memorial.

At the time of the 1901 census, the Cosham family resided at Church House  
Cottages, Edenbridge, Kent. Head of the house was 31 year old Mayfield,  
Sussex native Albert and Kate Cosham, who was employed as a Leather  
Tanner.

**DIPLOCK, JOHN.** Private, 41164.  
7th (Service) Battalion, Northamptonshire Regiment.

Died Saturday 1 June 1918. Aged 18.  
Born Edenbridge, Sevenoaks, Kent. Enlisted Maidstone, Kent.

Son of William and Alice Beatrice Diplock of 22, Sunnyside, Edenbridge, Kent.  
Buried Bully-Grenay Communal Cemetery Extension, Pas de Calais, France.

Grave Ref: V. C. 10.  
Commemorated on the Edenbridge civic war memorial.

Formerly Private, 51668, Bedfordshire Regiment. At the time of the 1901 census,  
the Diplock family resided at 22, Sunnyside, Edenbridge, Kent. Head of the  
house was 42 year old Wadhurst, Sussex native William Diplock, who was  
employed as a Railway Ganger. John was the younger brother of Bert/Bertie  
Diplock who is the next casualty briefly commemorated below.

**DIPLOCK**, BERT or BERTIE. Private, G/6675.

8th (Service) Battalion, Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment).

Died Friday 1 September 1916.

Born and enlisted Edenbridge, Sevenoaks, Kent.

Son of William and Alice Beatrice Diplock of 22, Sunnyside, Edenbridge, Kent.

Commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France. Pier and Face 11 C, and on the Edenbridge civic war memorial.

Bertie was posted to France on 11 October 1915. Depending on which data source is checked, this casualty is recorded with the two different spellings of his Christian name as shown above. He was recorded by the census enumerator in 1901 as being 2 years old, and with his Christian name spelt Bert.

**PAYNE**, ALBERT. Private, G/4700.

1st Battalion, Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment).

Died Saturday 22 July 1916. Aged 39.

Born Edenbridge, Sevenoaks, Kent. Enlisted Tonbridge, Kent.

Commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France. Pier and Face 11 C, and on the Edenbridge civic war memorial.

Son of Mrs. Ellen Martin (formerly Payne) of 3, Paradise Row, Edenbridge, Kent.

At the time of the 1901 census, Albert was employed at the Mermaid Hotel, Yeovil, Somerset, where he also resided. Albert was posted to France on 23 April 1915 and during the time prior to his death he had also been a Lance Corporal.

**POCOCK**, HORACE JOHN. Private, 202111.

1st/5th (Territorial Force) Battalion, North Staffordshire Regiment.

Died Sunday 1 July 1917. Aged 22.

Born Hever, Kent. Enlisted Edenbridge, Sevenoaks, Kent.

Son of Mrs. Adelaide F. Pocock of 82, Delaware Cottages, Edenbridge, Kent.

Commemorated on the Arras Memorial, Pas de Calais, France. Bay 8, Commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France. Pier and Face 11 C, and on the Edenbridge civic war memorial.

Formerly Private, 6019, North Staffordshire Regiment. At the time of the 1901 census, the Pocock family resided at Pains Hill, Limpsfield, Surrey. Head of the house was Horace's father; 33 year old Chiddingstone, Kent native George Pocock, who was employed as a Farm Carter. Horace's place of birth as shown above is as recorded in/on SDGW, but the census enumerator recorded Horace as being a 5 year old native of Edenbridge, Kent.

**SANDS, SAMUEL DAVID.** Private, 42487.  
2nd Battalion, Suffolk Regiment.  
Died Tuesday 1 October 1918. Aged 19.  
Born Oxted, Surrey. Enlisted Maidstone, Kent.  
Son of William and Annie Sands of Dencross Cottages, Paygate, Edenbridge, Sevenoaks, Kent.  
Buried Ribecourt Railway Cemetery, Nord, France. Grave Ref: D. 3.  
Commemorated on the Edenbridge civic war memorial.  
Formerly Private, TR/9/44773, Training Reserve, and Private, 51706, Bedfordshire Regiment. At the time of the 1901 census, the Sands family resided at 4, Hasted Farm Cottages, Lingfield, Surrey. Head of the house was 26 year old Edenbridge, Sevenoaks, Kent native William Sands, who was employed as a Farm Labourer.

**SMITH, HARRY.** Private, G/9877.  
6th (Service) Battalion, Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment).  
Died Tuesday 17 July 1917.  
Born and enlisted Edenbridge, Sevenoaks, Kent.  
Commemorated on the Arras Memorial, Pas de Calais, France. Bay 7, and on the Edenbridge civic war memorial.

**WHITMORE, ROGER SEARLE.** M.C. Captain.  
"D" Company, 1st Battalion, King's Shropshire Light Infantry.  
Died Tuesday 20 November 1917. Aged 23.  
Born Withyham, Sussex 25 May 1894.  
Son of Herbert Searle Whitmore and Annette Whitmore (née Watkins) of The Red House, Tenchleys Park, Limpsfield, Oxted, Surrey.  
Buried Ribecourt Railway Cemetery, Nord, France. Grave Ref: I. B. 12.  
At the time of the 1901 census, the Whitmore family resided at the above address. Head of the house was 39 year old Westerham, Kent native Herbert Searle Whitmore, who was a Tanner and an employer.  
Roger was educated at Hazelwood School Limpsfield, Surrey and at Marlborough. He joined the King's Shropshire Light Infantry in 1913, and was gazetted as a Second Lieutenant in the regiment. At the commencement of the Great War, Roger was serving with the 3rd (Reserve) Battalion of his regiment which was stationed at Shrewsbury, having been promoted to a Lieutenant, and on being mobilised the battalion moved to Llanion Barracks, Pembroke Dock, Pembrokeshire, Wales, where he was promoted to the rank of Captain. On 27 November 1914 Roger was posted to France, and joined the 1st Battalion, King's Shropshire Light Infantry at the front on 3 December 1914. On 31 January 1915, Roger was admitted as a patient at the 18th Field Ambulance of the 6th Division. On 8 August 1915, Roger was given temporary command of "A" Company, but unfortunately he was wounded in an attack on Hooge Crater the following day when "A" and "B" Companies made the assault, as the result of his wounding, Roger was evacuated from the front line, and eventually he was invalided home. He rejoined the battalion on 16 May 1916, and was posted to "D" Company, of

which he was placed in temporary command on 13 July 1916. On 19 July 1916, Roger reported sick, and then spent time as a patient at a Field Ambulance until 24 July 1916. He was put in command of "D" Company on 28 October 1916, and was sent home on leave for the period from 14 of November to the 25 of November 1916 inclusive. Ongoing health problems resulted in Roger being hospitalized from 22 February 1917 to 4 of March 1917, and after being discharged from the hospital, he was sent back at the Field Hospital and returned there again four days later. Roger rejoined his battalion on 4 May and resumed command of "D" Company. From 22 to 29 June 1917, Roger attended a Lewis Gun course at Le Touquet. On 7 July 1917, the Germans launched another major raid on "D" Company's positions, which started with a fifteen minute intense bombardment of its positions. "D" Company suffered heavy casualties and six of them were awarded medals for gallantry, among one being the award of the Military Cross to Roger. Details of which was published in a Supplement of the London Gazette dated 17 September 1917 and read as follows: "For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty during a hostile raid on our trenches. Throughout an intense bombardment by every description of projectile. He kept his line manned and successfully repulsed the enemy. He showed admirable skill and energy in organising the defence, and later in re-establishing the line when it had been practically flattened by the violence of the barrage." Roger was killed at the head of "D" Company whilst leading an attack on a spur near Ribecourt. During the Great War, Rogers's brother Herbert Searle Whitmore also served as a Second Lieutenant in the 3rd (Reserve) Battalion, King's Shropshire Light Infantry. Herbert was born on 23 June 1891, He left Hazelwood School in the spring of 1905 for Marlborough College, where he was from May 1905 to 1909, and there went up to Sydney College, Cambridge which he left in 1912 with a B.A., to go into his father's Tannery business at Edenbridge. Herbert enlisted in the army in 1914, but was later forced to resigned his commission due to ill health, but in 1916 he carried our recruiting work.





The Whitmore Tannery, Edenbridge Great War memorial plaque, can be seen set in the north wall on the right hand side of the photograph shown above.

