

# Gravesend Imperial Paper Mills



The Gravesend Imperial Paper Mills Great War memorial plaque is located at the entrance to the White House, which was formerly the offices of the Imperial Paper Mills at Imperial Wharf, Gravesend, as can be seen on one of the accompanying photographs by Rob Bedwell. On the opposite of the entrance is another plaque which is in remembrance of Alfred Charles William Harmsworth, 1st Viscount Northcliffe. We are much indebted to Rob Bedwell for the photographs, and to Patrick D. Scullion for carrying out the following transcriptions. The Great War memorial plaque is inscribed with the names of fifty four casualties, and bears the following inscription:-

IN PROUD AND GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE OF THE MEN FROM  
THE IMPERIAL PAPER MILLS WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN THE  
GREAT WAR

## The Great War

1914 -1919

**AITKEN**, Lance Corporal, WILLIAM WHITELEY, G/731.

"C" Company, 7th (Service) Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment).

Died Thursday 3 May 1917. Aged 20.

Born New Mills, Manchester, Lancashire. Enlisted London. Resided Gravesend, Kent.

Son of William Alexander Aitken and Sarah Elizabeth Aitken of Alexander Lodge, Lennox Road, Gravesend, Kent.

Commemorated on the Arras Memorial, Pas de Calais, France. Bay 2, and on the Gravesend, Kent civic war memorial.

When William enlisted in the army on 7 September 1914, he stated that he was 19 years old and employed as a Paper Maker. Following his training and service in England, William was posted to France on 28 July 1915. With some justification it is probably fair to say that the various commentators remarks about the action fought on the 2/3 May 1917 at the village of Ch risy, to the south east of Arras, France, by the 7th (Service) Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment), and by the other battalions taking part, along the lines of it being a failure are well grounded. It should be hastily pointed out however, that non of those (irrespective of country etcetera) who have passed judgment on same, have ever leveled any criticisms or disparaging remarks about those who took part in the action, which was undertaken as part of the overall battles of the Scarpe. On the night of 2/3 May 1917, William's battalion was opposite the village of Ch risy, which is situated only a short distance to the south of the Arras to Cambrai road (D939). Waiting in readiness for the attack were the officers and other ranks of both 'A' and 'B' Companies who had been selected to be the assaulting companies, with 'C' as the supporting Company, and 'D' Company being held in reserve, waiting in shell holes to the rear of the support trench. At 0345 hours the first two companies set off towards the battalions prime objective allotted the battalion on the morning of 3 May 1917, it being a location named Keeling Copse. Fortunately all the battalion were clear of the front trench prior to it, and

other locations being bombarded by German artillery. Blame for the confusion which had prevailed during the attack has been ascertained to numerous causes and people, but an overriding factor oft referred to was the fact that during the early stages of the days events, it had been pitch black. As the direct result of the lack of light, all the sections, platoons and even companies seen got mixed up and muddled. At one point virtually the whole of the 12th (Territorial Force) Battalion, Middlesex Regiment, had crossed in front of the 7th (Service) Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment), but with a measure of commendable skill that error was corrected. With the coming of dawn the village of Chérisy was not only reached but actually passed, and as it was entered by the battalion touch was made with the same Middlesex battalion which had 'strayed' across its front earlier in the attack. Upon reaching the river Sensée beyond Chérisy, it was noted that the adjacent battalions had in fact lost touch with each other again. As the result of the set-back, Captain Black of 'A' Company wisely halted the battalion, and set about forming a defensive flank along the road which runs to the south east of Chérisy. Before the reorganization could be accomplished, the troops were heavily attacked, which had the additional result of the message sent back by Captain Black failing to get back. By 0900 hours Captain Black's Company on the right flank of the battalion was unable to move. Resulting from the situation which 'A' Company was in, had the effect of those on the opposite flank losing what advantages it had made, with both 'B' and 'C' Companies having by that time also fought their way to the Sensée. Shortly afterwards, fresh orders were received by the 7th (Service) Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment), to advance in unison with the 8th (Service) Battalion, East Surrey Regiment to the 'Red Line,' and their fellow 55th Brigade, 18th (Eastern) Division, members of the 7th (Service) Battalion, Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment), to consolidate the 'Blue Line.' At approximately 1100 hours unclear reports filtered through that a general retirement was taking place, at a time when stretcher bearers and the like were engaged on rescue undertakings. An unfortunate result of the confusion generated by the 'retirement' was that those engaged on the rescues, those retiring and the enemy soldiers were to all intents and purposes intermingled, which had the knock on effect of making it virtually impossible to open fire. After the 'retirement' was stopped the attack, albeit with less momentum got under way again, and as late as 1915 hours an attempt was made to reoccupy 'Cable Trench' by the 7th (Service) Battalion, The Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment), supported by William's battalion, but it was to no avail as the assaulting battalion was driven back by intense German machine gun and rifle fire. By the end of the day on 3 May 1917, the 7th (Service) Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment) was back in the original front line trenches. As the result of the failed attack at Chérisy, the battalion had two officers killed, six wounded and four missing, and the casualties to the other ranks were one hundred and twenty killed, one hundred and sixty nine wounded, and approximately one hundred missing. Initially, William was numbered amongst the other ranks of his battalion who were posted as 'Missing,' but later for official purposes the Army Council presumed that he had died on 3 May 1917.



**BENNETT, GEORGE.** Private, CH/8200.

Royal Marine Light Infantry. (RMR/B/838). H.M.S. Cressy.

Died 22 September 1914. Aged 42.

Adopted son of Maria Bennett of 18, Newman Road, Perry Street, Northfleet, Gravesend, Kent.

Commemorated on the Chatham Naval Memorial. Panel 7, as shown above, and on the Gravesend, Kent civic war memorial.

Early in the Great War, the Royal Navy maintained a patrol of old Cressy class armoured cruisers which was called 'Cruiser Force C,' in an area of the North Sea known as the Broad Fourteens. On 16 July 1914 the German submarine U-9 had become the first submarine in history to reload torpedoes whilst still submerged, and on 22 September 1914 the same submarine under the command of Kapitänleutnant Otto Weddigen who had commanded the U-9 since 1 August 1914, sighted H.M.S.Cressy, H.M.S.Aboukir and H.M.S.Hogue all steaming NNE at 10 knots without zigzagging, although the patrols were supposed to maintain a speed of 12 to 13 knots and zigzag, the old cruisers were unable to maintain that speed, and the zigzagging order was widely ignored mainly due to the fact that there had been no enemy submarines sighted in that area of the North Sea at that stage of the war. Otto Weddigen and his crew later the same day put into practice under wartime conditions what they had perfected in peacetime, and were able to reload torpedoes beneath the waves. Otto Weddigen maneuvered the U-9 to attack the three cruisers, and at approximately 0625 hours fired a single torpedo at H.M.S.Aboukir which stuck her on her port side. H.M.S.Aboukir rapidly suffered heavy flooding and despite counter flooding developed a 20 degree list and lost engine power. It was soon clear that she was a lost cause and Captain Drummond ordered her to be abandoned although only one boat had survived the attack, as the result of which most crew had to jump into the sea. At first Captain Drummond thought that H.M.S.Aboukir had been mined and signaled the other two cruisers to close and assist with the rescue of his crew, but he soon realised that it was a torpedo attack and ordered the other cruisers away, but too late. As H.M.S.Aboukir rolled over and sank only half an hour after being attacked, Otto Weddigen fired two torpedoes at H.M.S. Hogue that hit her amidships and rapidly flooded her engine room. Captain Nicholson of H.M.S. Hogue had stopped his ship to lower boats to rescue the crew of H.M.S.Aboukir, thinking that as he was the other side of H.M.S.Aboukir from the enemy submarine he would be safe. Unfortunately the U-9 had managed to maneuver around H.M.S.Aboukir and attacked H.M.S.Hogue from a range of about only 300 yards, and it only took H.M.S.Hogue ten minutes to sink as the U-9 headed for H.M.S.Cressy, which was commanded by Captain Johnson. H.M.S.Cressy had also stopped to lower boats but she quickly got underway on sighting a submarine periscope. At about 0720 hours Otto Weddigen fired two torpedoes, one of which just missed, but the other hit H.M.S.Cressy on her starboard side. The damage to H.M.S.Cressy was not fatal but the U-9 then turned round and fired her last torpedo as a coup de grace, which hit

H.M.S. Cressy sinking her within a quarter of an hour. Survivors of the disaster were picked up by several nearby merchant ships including the Dutch vessels Flora and Titan, and the British trawlers JGC and Corainder, before the Harwich force of light cruisers and destroyers arrived. Flora returned to Holland with 286 rescued crew who were quickly returned to Britain, even though the neutral Dutch should have interned them. In all 837 men were rescued but 1459 died, many of whom were reservists or cadets. On 18 March 1915 the German u-boat U-29 was rammed and sunk by H.M.S. Dreadnought in the Pentland Firth, all 32 submariners onboard perished including Otto Weddigen who had been in command since 16 February 1915.

**BENNETT, THOMAS ALFRED.** Private, 5005.  
1st/4th (Territorial Force) Battalion, Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment).  
Died 28 July 1917.  
Born Northfleet, Kent. Enlisted Gravesend, Kent.  
Son of George and Maria Bennett.  
Commemorated on the Kirkee 1914-1918 Memorial, India. Face 7, and on the Gravesend, Kent civic war memorial.

**BIDDLECOMBE, PERCIVAL.** Private, 61608.  
24th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment), (2nd Sportsman's).  
Died 15 January 1917. Aged 19.  
Born Southampton, Hampshire. Enlisted and resided Gravesend, Kent.  
Son of Mrs. Gertrude Biddlecombe of 17, Bligh Road, Gravesend, Kent.  
Buried Regina Trench Cemetery, Grandcourt, Somme, France.  
Grave Ref: IV. A. 20.  
Commemorated on the Gravesend, Kent civic war memorial.  
Formerly Private, L/10661, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment).

**BONNER, JAMES GEORGE.** Driver, T/20320.  
Army Service Corps.  
Died 6 December 1916. Aged 33.  
Born Tovil Maidstone, Kent. Enlisted Maidstone, Kent. Resided Northfleet, Kent.  
Son of Elizabeth Bonner of 93, Farleigh Hill, Tovil Maidstone, Kent.  
Husband of Nellie Emma Bonner (née Harflett) of 73, Rural Vale, Rosherville, Northfleet, Kent.  
Buried Louvencourt Military Cemetery, Somme, France.  
Grave Ref: Plot 1. Row E. Grave 4.  
Commemorated on the Northfleet, Kent civic war memorial, and on the Rosherville, Kent civic war memorial.  
When James enlisted in the army as a regular soldier on 12 October 1903, for an engagement of 3 years with the Colours and 9 years in the reserve, he stated that he was 19 years and 3 months old, and that he was employed as a Paper Makers Assistant. In reply to being asked a question if he had a preference regarding which regiment or corps he served in, James replied the Army Service Corps. Following his enlistment, James joined the Army Service Corps at

Woolwich. On 12 January 1905 having completed 2 years service, James was awarded a Good Conduct Badge, and on 11 January 1906 he was discharged from his regular army commitment having completed his 3 years service as a Driver. At the time of his discharge, James was placed on the Army Reserve with instructions to report back to Woolwich if he was recalled in the event of a national emergency. James married Miss Nellie Emma Harflett at Maidstone Registry Office on 10 August 1907. At the commencement of the Great War James was recalled, and as instructed he reported back at Woolwich on 6 August 1914 and rejoined the Army Service Corps as a Driver, and of prevailing operational necessity he was posted to France for service in the British Expeditionary Force on 17 August 1914.

**BOURNE, WILLIAM THOMAS JAMES.** Private, G/11816.

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

Died 17 August 1916.

Born Northfleet, Kent. Enlisted Gravesend, Kent.

Son of Mrs. Mary Jane Bassant (formerly Bourne) of 209, Dover Road, Northfleet, Kent, and of the late William Thomas Bourne.

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

When William enlisted in the army 'For the Duration of the War' on 30 November 1915, he stated that he was employed as a Labourer, and that he resided at 209, Dover Road, Northfleet, Kent, at which time he was 22 years and 137 days old. Following his enlistment, William was placed on the army reserve until being mobilised on 22 January 1916. William's initial training was carried out whilst serving in the 9th (Reserve) Battalion, Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment). On 18 May 1916, William was posted to France with the 8th (Service) Battalion, Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment).

**BRADBROOK, JOSEPH WILLIAM.** 2nd Corporal, WR/552550.

Inland Water Transport, Royal Engineers.

Died 11 March 1918. Aged 32.

Enlisted Gravesend, Kent.

Husband of Mrs. L. Bradbrook of 42, Cutmore Street, Gravesend, Kent.

Buried Basra War Cemetery, Iraq. Grave Ref: I. H. 16.

Commemorated on the Gravesend, Kent civic war memorial.

Formerly Sapper, 196938, Royal Engineers.

**BRADLEY, WILLIAM HENRY.** Private, L/1823.

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

Died 24 August 1914.

Born Stone, Dartford, Kent. Enlisted Maidstone, Kent. Resided Gravesend, Kent.

Buried Hautrage Military Cemetery, Saint-Ghislain, Hainaut, Belgium.

Grave Ref: II. D. 1.

**BUTTS, ARTHUR WILLIAM.** Private, 10740.

1st Battalion, East Surrey Regiment.

Died 23 April 1917.

Born Gravesend, Kent. Enlisted Maidstone, Kent.

Son of Arthur John Butts and Emma Fanny Butts (née Loft) of Gravesend, Kent.

Buried La Chaudiere Military Cemetery, Vimy, Pas de Calais, France.

Grave Ref: VI. C. 4.

Arthur had originally served in the 3rd (Reserve), Battalion, East Surrey Regiment, prior to being posted to the 1st Battalion, East Surrey Regiment for service with the British Expeditionary Force in France.

**CHAMBERS, HARRY JOHN.** Private, 74008.

16th Battalion, Machine Gun Corps (Infantry).

Died 6 May 1918.

Born Maidstone, Kent. Enlisted Gravesend, Kent.

Son of Eliza Chambers of Holbeck Cottage, Snodland, Kent.

Husband of Daisy Verbinia Chambers (née Powell) of 1, Gorham Cottages, High Street, Snodland, Kent. Formerly of 15, Winfield Road, Gravesend, Kent.

Buried Outtersteene Communal Cemetery Extension Bailleul, Nord, France.

Grave Ref: II. G. 58.

Harry married Miss Daisy Verbinia Powell at Ryarsh, Kent on 15 July 1911. He stated that he was 24 years, 11 months and 21 days old when he enlisted in the army on 3 June 1916. At the time of his enlistment, Harry also stated that he was employed as a Stoker, and that he resided at 15, Winfield Road, Gravesend, Kent. On 18 July 1916, Harry was mobilised and attested to serve in the Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment), and on 24 July 1916 he was posted to the 16th (Reserve) Battalion of the regiment. From 11 May 1917, Harry served in France. Having served in a number of battalions of his regiment, Harry was transferred to the 8th (Service) Battalion, Royal Dublin Fusiliers on 28 May 1917 as Private, 42445. On 9 March 1918 at his own request, Harry transferred to the Machine Gun Corps to benefit from the better service rate of pay, and the same day he was posted to the 16th Battalion, Machine Gun Corps (Infantry) in which he remained until being killed in action.

**CHAPMAN, GEORGE WILLIAM.** Private, G/979.

4 Company, 6th (Service) Battalion, Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment).

Died 8 October 1915. Aged 19.

Born Higham, Rochester, Kent. Enlisted and resided Gravesend, Kent.

Son of John Thomas Chapman of 65, Peacock Street, Gravesend, Kent, and of the late Charlotte Chapman.

Commemorated on the Loos Memorial, Pas de Calais, France. Panel 95, and on the Gravesend, Kent civic war memorial.

**CLIBBON, WILLIAM GORDON.** Private, G/4930.

6th (Service) Battalion, Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment).

Died 24 October 1918. Aged 33.

Born Strood, Kent.

Son of Walter and Rose Clibbon.

Husband of Alice Maud Clibbon (née Baker) of 32, Gordon Road, Strood, Rochester, Kent.

Buried Strood Cemetery, Rochester, Kent. Grave Ref: B. 210.

William was posted to France on 3 August 1915.

**COLEMAN, F.** No clear trace at this time of the casualty, as he is commemorated on the Gravesend Imperial Paper Mills Great War memorial plaque. Whilst carrying out the ongoing researches and transcriptions of the Northfleet, Kent, civic war memorial, it was noted that William Coleman who is the next casualty below had a younger brother Fred Coleman, who might be the Gravesend Imperial Paper Mills commemorated casualty. It would also seem likely that the Colman brothers father; Robert Coleman who was a native of Bristol, Gloucestershire, had also been an Imperial Paper Mills employee.

**COLEMAN, WILLIAM.** Lance Corporal, G/52827.

24th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment).

Died Wednesday 29 September 1918. Aged 29.

Born and resided Northfleet, Kent. Enlisted Gravesend, Kent.

Son of Robert and Sophia Coleman of 34, Station Street, Northfleet, Kent.

Husband of the late Winnie Coleman (née Thomkins).

Buried Beaumetz Crossroads Cemetery, Beaumetz-les-Cambrai, Pas de Calais, France. Grave Ref: F. 28.

Commemorated on the Northfleet, Kent civic war memorial.

Formerly Private, G/24469, Middlesex Regiment. William's medal index card entry records that he died of wounds on 29 September 1918.

**CUNNINGHAM, THOMAS.** Private, T/207252.

7th (Service) Battalion, The Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment).

Died 22 October 1917.

Born Wrotham, Sevenoaks, Kent. Enlisted Maidstone, Kent. Resided Gravesend, Kent.

Buried No Man's Cot Cemetery, Boesinghe, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium.

Grave Ref: B. 25.

Formerly Private, 20440, East Surrey Regiment.

**DIXON, HENRY WILLIAM.** Gunner, 128557.

319th Siege Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery.

Died 6 October 1917. Aged 21.

Born Acton, London. Enlisted and resided Gravesend, Kent.

Son of Henry John Dixon of 15, Salisbury Road, Gravesend, Kent, and of Emily Dixon

Buried Klein-Vierstraat British Cemetery, Heuvelland, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium.

Grave Ref: III. F. 14.

Commemorated on the Gravesend, Kent civic war memorial.

Henry's mothers maiden name was probably Roberts, and had possibly pre deceased Henry.

**DOWLAND, HERBERT.** Private, G/997.

6th (Service) Battalion, Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment).

Died 8 March 1916. Aged 21.

Born Ramsgate, Isle of Thanet, Kent. Enlisted Gravesend, Kent. Resided Northfleet, Kent.

Son of William and Elizabeth Harriett Dowland of 45, Hamerton Road, Northfleet, Kent.

Commemorated on the Loos Memorial, Pas de Calais, France. Panel 95, and on the Northfleet, Kent civic war memorial.



**DUCK, EDWARD.** Ordinary Seaman, J/16642.

Royal Navy, H.M.S. Pathfinder.

Died Saturday 5 September 1914. Aged 18.

Born Northfleet, Gravesend, Kent 4 August 1896.

Son of Henry and Mary Ann Duck (née Taylor) of 39, Cecil Road, Gravesend, Kent.

Commemorated on the Chatham Naval Memorial. Panel 3 as shown above, and on the Gravesend, Kent civic war memorial.

H.M.S. Pathfinder a 2,900 ton Pathfinder Scout Class cruiser which was built by Cammell Laird & Co Ltd at Birkenhead, she was launched on 16 July 1904 and commissioned on 18 July 1905. At the time of the commencement of the Great War H.M.S. Pathfinder was the leader of the 8th Destroyed Flotilla based at Rosyth, Scotland. On Saturday 5 September 1914 whilst running short of coal, H.M.S. Pathfinder was only making 5 knots at the time of her loss, which was at approximately 1630 hours when she was torpedoed and sunk in the North Sea off St. Abbs Head, Berwickshire, Scotland, approximately 10 miles to the southwest of the Island of May. She was sunk by a torpedo fired from quite long range from the type U19 Mittel-U class, German u-boat U-21, which at the time was commanded by Leutnant zur See, Otto Hersing. H.M.S. Pathfinder has the unenviable distinction of being the first Royal Navy warship to be sunk during the Great War by a submarine of the Imperial German Navy, and the first ship ever to be sunk by the use of a torpedo alone fired from a submarine. H.M.S. Pathfinder was struck by the torpedo in one of her magazines, which exploded causing the ship to sink within about four minutes with the loss of 259 officers and ratings; there were only 11 survivors of the sinking. Having sunk 36 ships for a total of 78,712 tons (warships excluded), on 22 February 1919 the U-21 sunk as the result of an accident whilst on passage under tow to surrender to the allied powers. Some data accessed states that the Commander of the U-21 ordered his crew to open the sea cocks of the u-boat, and scuttled the submarine. Having later been promoted to Kapitänleutnant, Otto Hersing survived the Great War, despite having had a not insignificant monetary bounty placed on him by the

British. When being interviewed by the journalist Lowell Thomas during the inter war years, as to what he did for a living, Otto Hersing told him that he was a Potato Farmer, which took the journalist by surprise as he was expecting him to answer with something of a nautical bent. Contained within the excellent u-boat museum at Cuxhaven-Altenbruch, Germany, is a lot of ephemera appertaining to Otto Hersing, including his Log Book, which notes in detail the events leading up to the loss of H.M.S. Pathfinder, part of which describes the weather that prevailed at the time: - "For a terrible time, snow storms and fog, reason why as soon as we could see nothing, only black cloud strips twisting in grotesques forms in front of us. But we had to cross the British lines protected by the fog."

**ELLIOTT, JOSEPH JOHN.** Corporal, TF/615449.

57th Company, Labour Corps.

Died 16 October 1918.

Born Walworth, Surrey. Enlisted Gravesend, Kent. Resided Northfleet, Kent.

Buried Romeries Communal Cemetery Extension, Nord, France.

Grave Ref: II. E. 17.

Formerly Corporal, TF/2680, 2nd/1st Kent Cyclist Battalion, Army Cyclist Corps.

**EVES, E.** No clear trace at this time of the casualty, as he is commemorated on the Gravesend Imperial Paper Mills Great War memorial plaque. Whilst carrying out the ongoing researches and transcriptions of the Gravesend civic war memorial, it was noted that Sidney Thomas Eves who fell on Thursday 23 November 1916, had a brother Ernest Eves who might be the Gravesend Imperial Paper Mills commemorated casualty.

**FAIRALL, SIDNEY.** Sergeant, 7285.

12th Company, Machine Gun Corps (Infantry).

Died 10 October 1917.

Born Ilford, Essex. Enlisted Gravesend, Kent. Resided Northfleet, Kent.

Son of Frank and Flora Fairall.

Commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial, Zonnebeke, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. Panel 154, and on the Northfleet, Kent civic war memorial.

Formerly Private, G/10105, Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment). Sidney's father who was a native of Wandsworth, Surrey, had also been employed as a Paper Maker at the Gravesend Imperial Paper Mills. On some which was accessed data accessed, Sidney is shown with his Christian name spelt Sydney.

**FARROW, SYDNEY ARTHUR.** Gunner, 121716.

462nd Battery, 179th Brigade, Royal Field Artillery.

Born and enlisted Gravesend, Kent.

Buried St. Sever Cemetery Extension, Rouen, Seine-Maritime, France.

Grave Ref: P. V. H. 12A.

Commemorated on the Gravesend, Kent civic war memorial, and on the Northfleet, Kent civic war memorial.

**FIELDER, HARRY.** Gunner, 120146.

53rd Anti-Aircraft Company, Royal Garrison Artillery.

Died Tuesday 19 November 1918. Aged 27.

Son of Harry and Alice Bullock of Perry Street, Northfleet, Kent.

Husband of M. Wise (formerly Fielder) of 38, Cooper Road, Perry Street, Northfleet, Gravesend, Kent.

Buried Gravesend Cemetery, Kent. Ref: Screen Wall Commemoration 5297.

The majority of the 82 Great War graves at Gravesend Cemetery are in a special plot on the south-eastern boundary. The names of those buried in the plot are recorded on a screen wall. The other Great War burials are scattered throughout the cemetery.

**FINCH, HORACE ARTHUR.** Rifleman, A/201474.

9th (Service) Battalion, King's Royal Rifle Corps.

Died 22 October 1917. Aged 27.

Born Gravesend, Kent. Enlisted Deptford, Kent.

Son of Frederick S. and Amelia C. Finch of Gravesend, Kent.

Husband of Louisa Finch of 15, Prospect Place, Gravesend, Kent.

Commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial, Zonnebeke, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. Panel 116.

Formerly Private, TR/13/71339, 111th Training Reserve Battalion. It was noted whilst carrying out the ongoing researching and transcribing of the Gravesend, Kent civic war memorial, that two Gravesend Great War casualties with the surname Finch are commemorated on it, but that Horace is numbered amongst those from the town who are missing from the impressive memorial.

**FOTHERGILL, JAMES WILLIAM.** Gunner, 46378.

16th Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery.

Died 25 June 1916. Aged 18.

Born and enlisted Gravesend, Kent.

Son of James and Elenor Fothergill.

Nephew of Mr. and Mrs. Windham F. Sandeman of Meadowlands, Longfield, Gravesend, Kent.

Buried Sucrierie Military Cemetery, Colincamps, Somme, France.

Grave Ref: I. F. 21.

Commemorated on the Gravesend, Kent civic war memorial.

**GOODA, LOUIS FREDERICK.** Private, 67234.

Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment), posted to the 2nd/2nd (City of London Battalion), London Regiment (Royal Fusiliers).

Died 26 October 1917.

Born and resided Northfleet, Kent. Enlisted Gravesend, Kent.

Son of Thomas William Gooda and Victoria Gooda (née Cattee) of Northfleet, Kent.

Commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial, Zonnebeke, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. Panel 29.

Formerly Private, 17827, 29th Training Reserve Battalion. Louis was a brother of the next casualty briefly commemorated below.

**GOODA, THOMAS JAMES.** Sapper, 208137.

Inland Water Transport, Inland Water Transport.

Died 21 May 1917.

Born and resided Northfleet, Kent. Enlisted Gravesend, Kent.

Son of Thomas William Gooda and Victoria Gooda (née Cattee) of Northfleet, Kent.

Buried Basra War Cemetery, Iraq. Grave Ref: IV. N. 17.

**GOUGE, ALBERT,** Able Seaman, London Z/1697.

Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve. Hawke Battalion, 63rd (Royal Naval) Division.

Died 13 November 1916. Aged 19.

Born Northfleet, Kent 3 August 1897.

Son of William James Gouge and Marion Gouge (née Whitbread) of 76, Springhead Road, Northfleet, Kent.

Commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France. Pier and Face 1 A, and on the Northfleet, Kent civic war memorial.

When Albert enlisted as a member of the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve on 6 May 1915, he stated that he was employed as a Paper Maker and that he resided with his parents at 76, Springhead Road, Northfleet, Kent, and named his father as his next-of-kin. Albert was amongst a draft of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force posted on 9 September 1915, and joined the Hawke Battalion, 63rd (Royal Naval) Division. From 21 September 1915 to 19 October 1915 Albert was suffering with Dysentery, he later joined the Base Depot at Mudros on 1 April 1916, joining the Hood Battalion of his division on 13 June 1916. Albert rejoined the Hawke Battalion on 31 July 1916, in which he then continued to serve until his death, at which time he was posted as Missing, assumed killed in action. Possibly Albert and Ernest Gouge who is the next casualty briefly commemorated, were related to Northfleet, Kent native Sir Arthur Gouge B.Sc., M.I.Mech.E., F.I.A.S. (1890-1962). Sir Arthur spent a total of 28 years with Shorts, during which time he was involved in the design and production of the Empress and Sunderland flying boats and the Stirling bomber.

**GOUGE, ERNEST.** Rifleman, O/80.

11th (Service) Battalion, Rifle Brigade.

Died Friday 12 April 1918. Aged 19.

Born Shorne, Gravesend, Kent. Enlisted Gravesend, Kent. Resided Northfleet, Kent.

Son of George and Rose Gouge of 31, All Saints Road, Perry Street, Gravesend, Kent.

Buried St. Sever Cemetery Extension, Rouen, Seine-Maritime, France.

Grave Ref: P. VII. K. 10A.

Commemorated on the Northfleet, Kent civic war memorial.

Formerly Private, 10/2771, Training Reserve.

**GRIFFIN, JOHN.** Private, 49491.  
12th (Service) Battalion, King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry.  
Died 13 April 1918. Aged 23.  
Born Bradninch, Exeter, Devon. Enlisted Gravesend, Kent.  
Son of John Griffin and of Agnes Griffin (née Lowman) of 56, Salisbury Road, Gravesend, Kent.  
Buried Outtersteene Communal Cemetery Extension Bailleul, Nord, France.  
Grave Ref: II. E. 45.  
Formerly Private, 54200, Royal Engineers.

**HADLER, GEORGE WILLIAM.** Private, G/12385.  
1st Battalion, Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment).  
Died 6 September 1916. Aged 31.  
Born Tovil, Maidstone, Kent. Enlisted Gravesend, Kent. Resided Northfleet, Kent.  
Son of George and Sarah Hadler of 26, Burley Road, Sittingbourne, Kent.  
Buried Delville Wood Cemetery, Longueval, Somme, France.  
Grave Ref: III. N. 10.

**HALL, PERCY JOHN.** Private, 51198.  
"C" Company, 4th Battalion, Bedfordshire Regiment.  
Died 25 May 1918. Aged 19.  
Born and resided Rosherville, Northfleet, Kent. Enlisted Maidstone, Kent.  
Son of William and Alice Mary Hall of 62, Gordon Road, Rosherville, Northfleet, Kent.  
Buried Mesnil Communal Cemetery Extension, Somme, France.  
Grave Ref: I. B. 38.  
Commemorated on the Northfleet, Kent civic war memorial, and on the Rosherville, Kent civic war memorial.

**HARDY, CHARLES R.** Stoker 1st Class, K/33380.  
Royal Navy, H.M.S. Lookout.  
Died 9 May 1919. Aged 21.  
Born Deptford, Kent 7 January 1898.  
Buried Greenwich Cemetery, London. Ref: Screen Wall. 1 "C." B. 1217.  
Commemorated on the Northfleet, Kent civic war memorial.  
Greenwich Cemetery where Charles is at rest contains 556 Great War burials. More than half of these graves are scattered throughout the cemetery, but 263 form a large war graves plot known as 'Heroes Corner.' Here, two curved screen walls bear the names of casualties buried both in the above plot, and in unmarked graves in the cemetery.

**HAYNES, E.** No clear trace at this time.

**HULFORD, E.** Only one matching Great War casualty is commemorated by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, no data linking him to the Gravesend Imperial Paper Mills at any time, was found whilst researching the memorial:-

**HULFORD, EDWARD.** Lance Corporal, 530715.

2nd/15th (County of London) Battalion, London Regiment (Prince of Wales' Own Civil Service Rifles).

Died 31 October 1917. Aged 24.

Born Wood Green, Middlesex. Enlisted London. Resided Palmers Green, London.

Son of Fred and Jane Elizabeth Hulford of 74, Shrewsbury Road, New Southgate, London.

Buried Beersheba War Cemetery, Israel. Grave Ref: N. 26.



**KIRBY, HENRY JOHN.** Stoker 1st Class, SS/103966.

Royal Navy, (RFR/CH/B/8167). H.M.S. Hogue.

Died 22 September 1914. Aged 27.

Born Gravesend, Kent 22 December 1887.

Son of Mrs. M. A. Kirby of 3, Primrose Terrace, South Hill Road, Gravesend, Kent.

Commemorated on the Chatham Naval Memorial. Panel 5 as shown above, and on the Gravesend, Kent civic war memorial.

Early in the Great War the Royal Navy maintained a patrol of old Cressy class armoured cruisers which was called 'Cruiser Force C,' in an area of the North Sea known as the Broad Fourteens. On 16 July 1914 the German submarine U-9 had become the first submarine in history to reload torpedoes whilst still submerged, and on 22 September 1914 the same submarine under the command of Kapitänleutnant Otto Weddigen who had commanded the U-9 since 1 August 1914, sighted H.M.S.Cressy, H.M.S.Aboukir and H.M.S.Hogue all steaming NNE at 10 knots without zigzagging, although the patrols were supposed to maintain a speed of 12 to 13 knots and zigzag, the old cruisers were unable to maintain that speed, and the zigzagging order was widely ignored mainly due to the fact that there had been no enemy submarines sighted in that area of the North Sea at that stage of the war. Otto Weddigen and his crew later the same day put into practice under wartime conditions what they had perfected in peacetime, and were able to reload torpedoes beneath the waves. Otto Weddigen maneuvered the U-9 to attack the three cruisers, and at approximately 0625 hours fired a single torpedo at H.M.S.Aboukir which stuck her on her port side. H.M.S.Aboukir rapidly suffered heavy flooding and despite counter flooding developed a 20 degree list and lost engine power. It was soon clear that she was a lost cause and Captain Drummond ordered her to be abandoned although only one boat had survived the attack, as the result of which most crew had to jump into the sea. At first Captain Drummond thought that H.M.S.Aboukir had been mined and signaled the other two cruisers to close and assist with the rescue of his crew, but he soon realised that it was a torpedo attack and ordered the other

cruisers away, but too late. As H.M.S.Aboukir rolled over and sank only half an hour after being attacked, Otto Weddigen fired two torpedoes at H.M.S. Hogue that hit her amidships and rapidly flooded her engine room. Captain Nicholson of H.M.S. Hogue had stopped his ship to lower boats to rescue the crew of H.M.S.Aboukir, thinking that as he was the other side of H.M.S.Aboukir from the enemy submarine he would be safe. Unfortunately the U-9 had managed to maneuver around H.M.S.Aboukir and attacked H.M.S.Hogue from a range of about only 300 yards, and it only took H.M.S.Hogue ten minutes to sink as the U-9 headed for H.M.S.Cressy, which was commanded by Captain Johnson. H.M.S.Cressy had also stopped to lower boats but she quickly got underway on sighting a submarine periscope. At about 0720hours Otto Weddigen fired two torpedoes, one of which just missed, but the other hit H.M.S.Cressy on her starboard side. The damage to H.M.S.Cressy was not fatal but the U-9 then turned round and fired her last torpedo as a coup de grace, which hit H.M.S.Cressy sinking her within a quarter of an hour. Survivors of the disaster were picked up by several nearby merchant ships including the Dutch vessels Flora and Titan, and the British trawlers JGC and Corainder, before the Harwich force of light cruisers and destroyers arrived. Flora returned to Holland with 286 rescued crew who were quickly returned to Britain, even though the neutral Dutch should have interned them. In all 837 men were rescued but 1459 died, many of whom were reservists or cadets. On 18 March 1915 the German u-boat U-29 was rammed and sunk by H.M.S. Dreadnought in the Pentland Firth, all 32 submariners onboard perished including Otto Weddigen who had been in command since 16 February 1915.

**LANG, JAMES.** Gunner, 128514.  
310th Siege Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery.  
Died 29 July 1917.  
Enlisted Gravesend, Kent.  
Buried Boston Cemetery, Lincolnshire. Grave Ref: T. 933.  
Commemorated on the Gravesend, Kent civic war memorial.  
Formerly Gunner, 993, No. 1 Company (Kent), Royal Garrison Artillery.

**MILLS, HARVEY JAMES.** Private, G/11053.  
10th (Service) Battalion, Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment), (Kent County).  
Died 7 May 1917. Aged 22.  
Born Godstone, Surrey. Enlisted Gravesend, Kent. Resided Northfleet, Kent.  
Son of George and Christina Mills of "Grasmere," Park Avenue, Northfleet, Gravesend, Kent.  
Buried Dickebusch New Military Cemetery, Dikkebus, Ieper, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. Grave Ref: BB. 18.  
Commemorated on the Northfleet, Kent civic war memorial.  
James was 21 years and 167 days old when he enlisted in the army 'For the Duration of the War,' on 15 November 1915, at which time he stated that he was employed as a Paper Maker. On 3 May 1916, James sailed from Southampton

for service in the British Expeditionary Force, and arrived at the French port of Harve the following day.



**PARROTT, HENRY JAMES.** Able Seaman, London/Z/2135.

Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve. H.M.S. Natal.

Died 30 December 1915. Aged 20.

Son of Mary Anne Parrott of 25, The Shore, Northfleet, Kent.

Commemorated on the Chatham Naval Memorial. Panel 15 as shown above, and on the Gravesend, Kent civic war memorial, also on the Northfleet, Kent civic war memorial.

H.M.S. Natal was a Royal Navy 13,550 ton Warrior class armoured cruiser which was commissioned in 1907. She was at anchor in the Cromarty Firth when she quite literally exploded at about 1520 hours on the afternoon of 30 December 1915. A series of violent internal explosions tore through the ship, and within five minutes she capsized a blazing wreck. At the time of her loss, the ships commander Captain, Eric P.C. Back R.N., and his wife were hosting a party onboard the ship, which included nurses, civilians and children, all of whom were among the 388 who lost their lives when the ship blew-up. Those bodies which were recovered from the sea were interred in Rosskeen Churchyard Extensions, (or Burial Ground) Invergordon, Ross-shire, Scotland, and are included amongst the 150 Commonwealth burials from both world wars at rest at Rosskeen. Following the loss of H.M.S. Natal an Admiralty Board of Enquiry was convened; the official result from same was that the explosion onboard H.M.S. Natal was due to the deterioration of cordite in the ships magazine. For many years following the tragedy there was a story circulating in many quarters about the ship having been sabotaged. This apparently was based on 'the fact' that the Dreadnought battleship H.M.S. Vanguard had also exploded mysteriously after being visited by a particular Ordnance Chargehand, who also went into the magazine of H.M.S. Natal just before she too exploded and sank. The man in question is reputed to have then disappeared without trace; an obvious explanation accounting for his disappearance was that he too was lost when H.M.S. Natal exploded. For comprehensive details about the ship, probably the best book to consult is "They Called It Accident" by A. Cecil Hampshire which tells the story of H.M.S Natal from when she was launched until her tragic loss.

**PENNELL, CHARLES.** Private, G/13088.

"C" Company, 7th Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment.

Died 7 May 1917. Aged 40.

Born Swanscombe, Greenhithe, Kent. Enlisted Gravesend, Kent.

Son of George Pennell of Swanscombe, Greenhithe, Kent.

Husband of Alice Maud Pennell of "Haywood," St. James's Avenue, Gravesend, Kent.

Buried Faubourg-d'Amiens Cemetery, Arras, Pas de Calais, France.

Grave Ref: V. D. 25.

Commemorated on the Gravesend, Kent civic war memorial.

**PENNY, F.** No clear trace at this time. Appears to be the casualty who is commemorated on the Northfleet, Kent civic war memorial as F. PENNEY.

**REEVES, JOHN WILLIAM.**

Stoker 2nd Class, K/38155.

Royal Navy, H.M.S. Vanguard.

Died 9 July 1917. Aged 25.

Born Gravesend, Kent 25 April 1890.

Husband of Rosina Reeves of 7, William Street, Gravesend, Kent.

Commemorated on the Chatham Naval Memorial. Panel 24, and on the Gravesend, Kent civic war memorial.

A survivor from the Battle of Jutland in which she was part of the Forth Battle Squadron, H.M.S. Vanguard, a 19,560 ton St.Vincent class battleship commanded by Lieutenant Commander Alan C.H. Duke R.N, blew up and sank to the north of the Golta peninsula in Flotta, Scapa Flow at approximately 2320 hours on Monday 9 July 1917 with the loss of 843 lives. She went down as the result of a magazine explosion in one of the two magazines which served the 'P' and 'Q' turrets amidships. Following her loss an Admiralty Court of Enquiry was convened, with three possible causes tendered, they being: - (1) A spontaneous detonation of cordite, which had become unstable. (2) The cordite having caught fire from heating in an adjacent compartment. (3) Sabotage. To their credit Brian Budge from Kirkwall, and fellow enthusiast, Jonathan Saunders from Gillingham, Kent have carried out extensive research over a number of years into the loss of Robert's ship, and it as the result of their findings that the actual death toll and following information has been ascertained. The vast majority of those lost with H.M.S. Vanguard numbering 622, are commemorated on the Chatham Naval Memorial. Although no formal cause for the cordite explosion was ever found by the Court of Inquiry, the most likely explanation is that a fire in a coal bunker or other neighbouring area simply smoldered away undetected long enough to heat the cordite stored at an adjoining bulkhead to dangerous levels, which eventually triggered an explosive reaction. Although dwarfed by the losses such as the S.S. Lancastria off the coast of France in the Second World War, the loss of H.M.S. Vanguard remains Britain's worst disaster in Home Waters. The wreck-site of the ship is now thankfully designated as a controlled site under the Protection of Military Remains Act.

**RESELL, SYDNEY.** Private, 94368.

12th (Service) Battalion, (Pioneers) Sherwood Foresters (Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Regiment).

Died 21 March 1918. Aged 19.

Born and resided Northfleet, Kent. Enlisted Gravesend, Kent.

Son of Eliza Anne Restell of 5, Hartfield Place, Northfleet, Kent, and the late Thomas Restell.

Commemorated on the Pozières Memorial, Somme, France. Panel 53, and on the Northfleet, Kent civic war memorial.  
Formerly Pioneer, 1290, Royal Engineers.

**RING, G.** No clear trace at this time.

**ROBINSON, WILLIAM FRANCIS.** Lance Corporal, G/24471.  
23rd (Service) Battalion, Middlesex Regiment, (2nd Football).  
Died 30 September 1918. Aged 30.  
Born Curragh Camp, County Kildare, Ireland. Enlisted Gravesend, Kent. Resided Northfleet, Kent.  
Son of John Robinson of 2, Galley Hill Terrace, Swanscombe, Kent.  
Commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial, Zonnebeke, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. Panel 114, and on the Northfleet, Kent civic war memorial.

**RUSSELL, A.**

**RUSSELL, ARTHUR.** Stoker 2nd Class, K/38141.  
Royal Navy, H.M.S. Vanguard.  
Died 9 July 1917. Aged 27.  
Born Swanscombe Kent 29 March 1890.  
Son of Edward Thomas and Rosina Elizabeth Russell.  
Husband of Annie Beatrice Russell of 1, Stanbrook Road, Northfleet, Kent.  
Commemorated on the Chatham Naval Memorial. Panel 24 as shown above, and on the Gravesend, Kent civic war memorial, also on the Northfleet, Kent civic war memorial.

A survivor from the Battle of Jutland in which she was part of the Forth Battle Squadron, H.M.S. Vanguard, a 19,560 ton St.Vincent class battleship commanded by Lieutenant Commander Alan C.H. Duke R.N, blew up and sank to the north of the Golta peninsula in Flotta, Scapa Flow at approximately 2320 hours on Monday 9 July 1917 with the loss of 843 lives. She went down as the result of a magazine explosion in one of the two magazines which served the 'P' and 'Q' turrets amidships. Following her loss an Admiralty Court of Enquiry was convened, with three possible causes tendered, they being: - (1) A spontaneous detonation of cordite, which had become unstable. (2) The cordite having caught fire from heating in an adjacent compartment. (3) Sabotage. To their credit Brian Budge from Kirkwall, and fellow enthusiast, Jonathan Saunders from Gillingham, Kent have carried out extensive research over a number of years into the loss of Robert's ship, and it as the result of their findings that the actual death toll and following information has been ascertained. The vast majority of those lost with H.M.S. Vanguard numbering 622, are commemorated on the Chatham Naval Memorial. Although no formal cause for the cordite explosion was ever found by the Court of Inquiry, the most likely explanation is that a fire in a coal bunker or other neighbouring area simply smoldered away undetected long enough to heat the cordite stored at an adjoining bulkhead to dangerous levels, which eventually triggered an explosive reaction. Although dwarfed by the losses such as the S.S. Lancastria off the coast of France in the Second World War, the loss of H.M.S.

Vanguard remains Britain's worst disaster in Home Waters. The wreck-site of the ship is now thankfully designated as a controlled site under the Protection of Military Remains Act.

**TREADWELL, ARTHUR.** Private, G/23103.

21st (Service) Battalion, Middlesex Regiment, (Islington).

Died 9 April 1918. Aged 38.

Born and resided Northfleet, Kent. Enlisted Gravesend, Kent.

Son of Alfred Thomas and Caroline Ann Treadwell.

Husband of Sarah Ann Treadwell of 4, Carter's Road, Perry Street, Gravesend, Kent.

Commemorated on the Ploegsteert Memorial, Berks Cemetery Extension, Comines-Warneton, Hainaut, Belgium. Panel 8.

**THOMAS, ALBERT SIDNEY.** Private, 31051.

1st Battalion, East Surrey Regiment.

Died 8 May 1917. Aged 33.

Born Milton Regis, Kent. Enlisted Gravesend, Kent. Resided Northfleet, Kent.

Husband of Ada Beatrice Ellen Cork (formerly Thomas) of 80, All Saints Road, Perry Street, Northfleet, Kent.

Commemorated on the Arras Memorial, Pas de Calais, France. Bay 6.

**VICKERY, REGINALD GEORGE.** Private, G/4872.

2nd Battalion, The Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment).

Died 25 September 1915. Aged 16.

Born Snodland, Kent. Enlisted Gravesend, Kent. Resided Northfleet, Kent.

Son of William C. Vickery and Caroline Vickery of 24, Peer Road, Rosherville, Northfleet, Kent.

Commemorated on the Loos Memorial, Pas de Calais, France. Panel 15, and on the Northfleet, Kent civic war memorial.

When Reginald enlisted in the army on 24 February 1915, he stated that he was 19 years and 48 days old, employed as a Labourer, and that he resided at 24 Peer Road, Northfleet, Kent. Following his initial service in the 3rd (Reserve) Battalion, The Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment), on 29 August 1915 Reginald was posted to the 2nd Battalion of his regiment for service with the British Expeditionary Force, and embarked for France. He joined the 2nd Battalion, The Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment) in France on 3 July 1915. As Reginald's birth was registered in the Malling, Kent, registration district during the first quarter of 1899, it would appear that he was 'muddled' when stating his age at the time of his enlistment, and doubtless eager to do his bit. Having served for 89 days in France, Reginald was originally posted as 'Missing,' but for official purposes he was later deemed to have been killed in action, on or about 25 September 1915.

**WALLIS, STEPHEN.** Private, G/12872.

9th (Service) Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment.

Died 6 December 1916. Aged 38.

Son of Henry and Susan Wallis of Northfleet, Kent.

Husband of Mary A. S. Wallis of 40, Toronto Road, Tilbury Dock, Essex.

Buried Philosophe British Cemetery, Mazingarbe, Pas de Calais, France.

Grave Ref: I. K. 37.

**YATES, THOMAS.** Private, G/1939.

"D" Company, 7th (Service) Battalion, Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment).

Died 8 July 1917.

Born Northfleet, Kent. Enlisted Gravesend, Kent.

Buried Dickebusch New Military Cemetery Extension, Dikkebus, Ieper, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. Grave Ref: II. C. 19.

Commemorated on the Northfleet, Kent civic war memorial.





Memorial plaque erected by the employees of the Imperial Paper Mills in remembrance of the newspaper magnate Alfred Charles William Harmsworth, 1st Viscount Northcliffe (15 July 1865 – 14 August 1922). Such was Viscount Northcliffe's influence on propaganda over the Germans during the years of the Great War, that German battleships were sent to shell his house in an attempt to assassinate him. His former residence still bears a shell hole out of respect for his gardener's wife who was killed in the attack.