

LITTLE CHART

No war memorial found in the village. The village tribute may have been destroyed or subsequently lost during the Second World War when a German V1 flying bomb (Doodlebug) struck the St Marys Church on the Pluckley/Littlechart Road. The church was more or less raised to the ground. William Matcham's headstone lies in an isolated spot alongside the ruins.

We venture that the following names used to appear on the village's original tribute. It seems a bit odd to us that the people of Littlechart in the past 50 years have not considered erecting a replacement.

The Great War 1914 - 1919



ADLAM W.C

Rifleman 9839 William Charles ADLAM. 4th Battalion, Rifle Brigade. Formerly Australian Imperial Reserve Forces. Killed in Action Monday 19th April 1915 aged 29 years. Born Pimlico, Middlesex. Resided Littlechart, Kent. Son of James and Mary Adlam. Son-in-Law of Mrs M Chittenden of Goldham Cottage, Littlechart, Ashford, Kent. Husband of Hilda Mary Adlam of Box's Shop, St Giles in The-Heath, Launceston, Cornwall. William has no known grave. His name appears on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, Ypres, Belgium. Panel reference 46, 48 and 50.

The Kentish Express reported William's date of death as **21st April 1915.**

Before the outbreak of war William was Assistant Deer Keeper to Mr Walter Winans (Surrenden Manor) at Surrenden Park. He emigrated to Australia in 1913 but returned to England when the war started. It is likely that when William arrived home he enlisted into the Buffs (East Kent Regiment) although there is no evidence to prove this. At some stage he was probably transferred from the Buffs to the Rifle Brigade. He went to France in March 1915 and fell in action a few weeks later. William left a widow and 2 small children back in Australia.

The 4th Battalion, Rifle Brigade arrived on the Western Front in January 1915 (80th Brigade, 27th Division). Throughout the early part of March 1915 the battalion took part in operations in the St Eloi sector before moving to Dikebusch for a short while. On 24th March the battalion moved into billets at Poperinge. On the 5th April the battalion moved from Poperinge to Ypres where it began tours in the frontline in Polygon Wood Sector. 2nd Lt C.Mc Dyer was killed on 9th April in Polygon Wood. 2nd Lt C.A Vincent was killed on the 13th. On 22nd April 1915 the battalion withdrew from Polygon Wood and moved to St Jean. On the 23rd the battalion was in reserve at a wood east of Chateau. It would appear that William was killed in action somewhere in or near Polygon Wood 2 miles outside Ypres.

CAKETT W.A

Private G/24697 Walter Albert CACKETT. 7th Battalion, Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment). Formerly (9570) The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). Killed in Action 26th October 1916 aged 31 years. Born **Littlechurch? (Littlechart)**. Enlisted Ashford. Resided Westwell. Son of William Henry Cackett of "Frittenfield", Westwell, Ashford, Kent. Walter has no known grave. His name appears on the Thiepval Memorial, Somme, France. Panel reference 5D and 6D.

Before the outbreak of war Walter worked for Messrs Padgham's of Kennington.

Soldiers Died Great War lists Walter's place of birth as Littlechurch. I can find no place by this name. This may be an error. It seems likely that this should read Littlechart.

The 7th West Surrey's landed France 27th July 1915 having spent many months training in Codford Camp in Wiltshire. The men were very eager to do their bit and many were frustrated at the delays they experienced. The battalion was attached to 55th Brigade, 18th Division. The strength of the battalion when it embarked from Folkestone on the SS Victoria was 33 officers, 47 Sergeants and 947 men. Regimental Sergeant Major was C.E Smith. Upon arriving at Boulogne the battalion proceeded to Bertangles by train. Throughout September and October 1916 the battalion spent much time in the frontline near to the Schwaben Redoubt on the Somme. When the battalion was not fighting it was in billets at Albert. The battalion continuously lost casualties to long range shelling and a number of men were killed in action engaged on bombing raids. Walter probably lost his life to shellfire or during a bombing raid on enemy trench positions opposite Albert.



GATES A

Private G/7533 Alfred GATES. 8th Battalion, Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment). Killed in Action Monday 18th June 1917 aged 38 years. Born Littlechart. Enlisted Swanley Junction. Resided Dartford. Husband of Annie Agnes Gates of 2, Bank Cottages, Eynsford, Dartford, Kent. Alfred has no known grave. His name appears on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial, Ypres, Belgium. Panel reference 45 and 47.

The Ashford 1918 Absentee Voters List gives –

The Forstal, Little Chart

Private X/0892 Fred GATES. 9th West Yorkshire Regiment.

The regimental history records – *“The 8th Battalion on the other hand, during this period (April-July 1918) of strategical inactivity on the British front came in for a good deal of local activity. It had a short rest at the seaside near St Valerie after leaving the Amiens front and then at the beginning of May 1918, went back to its old familiar haunts near Lens (France). Here the line had altered little since the 24th Division had left the sector. No-Man's land in the St Emile sector just North of Lens, which the 24th Division took over from the Canadians, was a mass of tangled ruins on the right, rather more open on the left. A big draft joined the battalion with 160 men and the battalions held strength was back up to 800 plus. The battalion started patrolling vigorously and before long, could report a mastery over their part of no-man's land. In May a raid was planned against enemy trenches at Conductor Sap. Actually gas cylinders fell short and several men were overcome by our own gas! A second larger attack went better resulting in a few MC's being awarded to officers including Major Brown (2ic), MM's were awarded to Private's Warford, Baker and Bowes. Many enemy prisoners were taken which proved useful. RSM Rankin was killed by shellfire during a football match whilst in reserve!*

It is likely that Alfred probably lost his life during a raid on enemy trench systems somewhere near to Lens, France. It is not known how he came to have his name commemorated on the Ypres Memorial because his battalion was never near to Ypres when he was killed? It is possible that he was away from his battalion when killed or perhaps killed by long distance shellfire?



MAIN H

Corporal 240504 Henry MAIN MM. 5th Battalion, Devonshire Regiment. Killed in Action 13th September 1918 aged 38 years. Born Devon. Enlisted Plymouth. Resided Littlechart. Son of Thomas and Mary Main of "Tulcanhay Cottage", Whitley Wood Lane, Reading, Berkshire. Husband of Elizabeth A Lambert (formerly Main) of 6, The Terrace, Littlechart, Ashford, Kent. Henry has no known grave. His name appears on the Vis-En-Artoise Memorial, France. Panel reference – 4.

Vis-en-Artois and Haucourt are villages on the straight main road from Arras to Cambrai about 10 kilometres south-east of Arras. Within the grounds of Vis-en-Artois British Cemetery, which is west of Haucourt on the north side of the main road, will be found the Vis-en-Artois Memorial. This Memorial bears the names of over 9,000 men who fell in the period from 8 August 1918 to the date of the Armistice in the Advance to Victory in Picardy and Artois, between the Somme and Loos, and who have no known grave. They belonged to the forces of Great Britain and Ireland and South Africa; the Canadian, Australian and New Zealand forces being commemorated on other memorials to the missing. The Memorial consists of a screen wall in three parts. The middle part of the screen wall is concave and carries stone panels on which names are carved. It is 26 feet high flanked by pylons 70 feet high. The Stone of Remembrance stands exactly between the pylons and behind it, in the middle of the screen, is a group in relief representing St George and the Dragon. The flanking parts of the screen wall are also curved and carry stone panels carved with names. Each of them forms the back of a roofed colonnade; and at the far end of each is a small building. The Panel Numbers quoted at the end of each entry relate to the panels dedicated to the Regiment served with. In some instances where a casualty is recorded as attached to another Regiment, his name may alternatively appear within their Regimental Panels. Please refer to the on-site Memorial Register Introduction to determine the alternative panel numbers if you do not find the name within the quoted Panels.

Soldiers Died records – Born Tuckenhay, Devon? This may be an error, note name (and spelling) of parents cottage in Reading?

Henry won the Military Medal (MM), a high ranking bravery decoration (VC, DCM, MM, MID) awarded to men in the field.



MATCHAM W.J

Pioneer 226873 William James MATCHAM. 330th Road Construction Company, Royal Engineers (RE). Died Sunday 25th February 1917 **aged 60 years.** Born Throwley, Faversham, Kent. Enlisted Canterbury. Resided Ashford. Formerly of Egham, Surrey. Son of Stephen and Ann Matcham of Throwley. Faversham, Kent. Buried locally in the Little Chart (St Mary) Churchyard, Littlechart, Ashford, Kent. Grave reference - on the Eastern boundary (beside the church ruins).

William's name appears on the Boughton Civic War Memorial near Faversham in Kent. He obviously lived there at some stage before the outbreak of war.

William's headstone is situated in a very beautiful spot underneath a tree next to the ruined church. One would imagine that few people visit his grave because it is so isolated.

The 330th Road Construction Company was a Royal Engineers unit raised at Stonar Camp, Sandwich, Kent in January 1917. During WW1 Stonar Camp was built by the army on the south side of Ramsgate Road, Ash to serve the Richborough Military Port. By the time RAF Sandwich was established in the 1930's this camp was vacant and it may have been used for accommodation. Other RAF Sandwich (Ash) station personnel were billeted at houses in Sandwich itself. The Stonar Girls School moved out of the adjacent Stoner House in 1939 and the house was used for officers' accommodation. The 330th Road Construction Company, R.E moved overseas to the Ypres area in March 1917 and over the next couple of years alternated between Amiens, Abbeville, Peronne, Zillebeke and Poperinghe. William did not serve overseas with this unit.

William was a very old soldier when he died (Ashford's oldest fallen man). David Hughes feels it is likely that William possibly operated some kind of "state of the art" mechanical machinery and that he possessed rare skills seldom found amongst younger men. He was probably employed by the Royal Engineers alongside members of the Labour Corps. Bearing in mind William's age, he may have died of heart failure or perhaps he was killed in a tragic accident whilst operating his machine.

The 1881 Census gives –

Throwley Forstal, Faversham, Kent - Grocer and Bakers Shop

Stephen T	MATCHAM	66 Years	Boughton	Farmer
Ann		60 Years	Throwley	Wife
Stephen S		36 Years	Throwley	Farmers son
Ann		22 Years	Throwley	Farmers daughter
Sarah M		20 Years	Throwley	Farmers daughter
John		19 Years	Throwley	Farmers son
George R		16 Years	Throwley	Farmers son

Coopers Hill Cottage, Egham, Surrey

Edward	PETTS	54 Years	Ramsgate	Steward R.I.E College
Matilda E		49 Years	Throwley	Matron R.I.E College
Eliza J		26 Years	Throwley	
William J	MATCHAM	23 Years	Throwley	

The 1901 census gives –
High Street, Charing

William James	MATCHAM	44	Butcher	Throwley
Frances		41		Charing
Selina A		2		Charing
Louisa E		1m		Charing
Henry	JENNINGS	78		Charing

In 1872 the Ashford Smock Windmill (on the site of the Ashford Telephone Exchange) at Regents Place owned by the Ashford Miller Stephen Sharp was dismantled and moved to Badlesmere by a **Mr Matcham of Throwley**.



SETTATREE J

Air Mechanic 1st Class 200915 John SETTATREE. Royal Air Force (RAF). Died of Wounds at Manston Airfield, Thanet, Kent Sunday 26th January 1919 aged 34 years. Son of Thomas and Julia Settatree of High Street, Charing, Kent. Buried locally in the Charing Parish Burial Ground, Charing, Ashford, Kent. Grave reference B.84.

John's Private (Family erected) headstone is now starting to suffer from the effects of age which is worrying bearing in mind the authors experience with Charing Parish Council. Someone needs to keep an eye on this headstone to ensure it does not deteriorate further. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission has a statutory responsibility for the grave upkeep and John's death is recorded on their Debt of Honour Register.

Also Commemorated on Charing village War Memorial.

The Ashford 1918 Absentee Voters List gives –

High Street, Charing

Air Mechanic 1st Class 210915 John SETTATREE. Royal Air Force.

The 1901 census gives –
High Street, Charing

Thomas	SETTATREE	45	Carpenter	Westwell
Julia		46		Maidstone
Thomas		24	Carpenter	Westwell
John		16	Carpenter	Little Chart
Richard		12		Little Chart
Frederick		10		Little Chart
Mary		8		Little Chart
Charlotte		6		Charing
Kate		4		Charing

John was killed in a flying accident at R.A.F Manston in Kent.

