



THE GREAT WAR

1914 - 1918

THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE
NAMES ON THE WAR
MEMORIAL

BRATTON, WILTSHIRE



INTRODUCTION

100 years ago Bratton was an agricultural and artisanal community of some 180 households. Reeves Iron Works was in the middle of the village, with an all-male workforce, before the war, of 68. And there were more than 20 farms in the Parish, stretching from Dunge onto the Plain towards Imber.

Of the many young men who went to fight, 20 died between 1914 and 1918 and two more died later of their wounds. Two families lost two sons, one household in ten was bereaved. Seven wives lost husbands and two children their father.

In our village today there would be more than sixty names on the War Memorial.

THE WAR MEMORIAL

The aftermath of the First World War saw the biggest single wave of public commemoration ever with tens of thousands of memorials erected across England. One such memorial was the Bratton War Memorial, commemorating twenty local servicemen who fell in the First World War. It was donated shortly after the end of the conflict by Mr and Mrs Diggle of Bratton House, Their four sons returned safely from the conflict and thus the memorial also represents their act of thanksgiving.



The Bratton War Memorial is a wheel cross monument made from stone by Messrs Farmer & Brindley of London

Farmer and Brindley Ltd was a firm of monumental masons and sculptors, stone importers and architectural modellers, active between 1851 and 1929. William Farmer and William Brindley had become business partners by 1868. Much of their C19 work was for George Gilbert Scott and they were responsible for a number of war memorials, some of which are listed including those at Duxford, Orpington and the Waterloo Station Victory.

In 2002 it was discovered that two men were commemorated on the First World War plaque in the parish church but not on the memorial cross. They had died at home of the effects of their wounds after the memorial cross was raised and so their names were added to the cross in 2004. At the same time the names of the three servicemen who died in the Second World War were also added.



He who is honoured by this scroll is one of 90 **Bratton** men who at the call of **King & Country**, left home, endured hardness, faced dangers, and earned the lifelong respect of those whom they defended in the **War**

The four Diggle sons who returned from the War:

Captain Neston William Diggle CMG RN

Lt Col John Neston Diggle DSO

Lt Col Heathcote William Diggle DSO

Lt Col Leonard Wyndham Diggle MC

were each given a scroll along with the other 66 men of Bratton who fought in the War and survived.

The War Memorial was rededicated in a service on Remembrance Sunday, 11th November 2018, the 100th Anniversary of the Armistice. Lt Cdr Nicholas Diggle RN (Retired), the grandson of Lt Col Leonard Wyndham Diggle MC was present and laid a wreath during the ceremony.

THE NAMES

HENRY BLAGDEN

**LANCE CORPORAL, ROYAL MARINE LIGHT
INFANTRY (PO6388)**

Henry was born in 1872, son of James and Ann of Duck Street, West Lavington. In his teens he moved to South Wales to work in the mines. On 15 June 1892 he enlisted in the Royal Marine Light Infantry and served for 21 years, being discharged on 14 June 1913. As a reservist, he was mobilised on 2 August 1914 and posted to the Portsmouth Battalion. After service in Belgian ports, the Battalion was moved to the Middle East on 28 February 1915, to take part in the Gallipoli campaign.

KILLED IN ACTION 27 AUGUST 1915

HELLES MEMORIAL

HENRY BLAGDEN continued

Next of kin was his brother Thomas, who by 1919 was presumably resident in Bratton. Thomas had lived and worked in Edington (at the Monastery tea garden) for some years and was the father of Rifleman Thomas James Blagden bell ringer at the Priory who died of wounds on 19 January 1919.

GEORGE BRENT

**ARMOURER STAFF SERGEANT, ORDNANCE
CORPS (A/1997)**

George was born in 1888, only son of George and Naomi Maria of Luccombe House. His father, last proprietor of the wool carding mill there, died in 1900 at the age of 82. George was a mechanical engineering draughtsman and designer. He was instrumental in the conversion of Cleeve Terrace from a mill to houses. His wife, Edith remarried after he died.

He enlisted in the Wiltshire Regiment and transferred to the Ordnance Corps. He was attached to 'E' Training Battalion, The Machine Gun Corps (Clipstone) when he died of malaria.

DIED 3 SEPTEMBER 1918

BRATTON BAPTIST CHAPEL GRAVEYARD

ARTHUR CARTER

**LANCE CORPORAL, 1st BATTALION THE
WILTSHIRE REGIMENT (10595)**

Arthur was born in 1894 son of Frank, a farm worker and Martha of 1 Whitehorse Cottages. He worked as a carter on a local farm and was a bell ringer at St James' Church.

He enlisted in the Wiltshire Regiment and went to France where he was wounded. He returned to England where he died.

DIED OF WOUNDS 14 JUNE 1915

GRAVEYARD OF ST JAMES' CHURCH

HAROLD COSSER

**PRIVATE, 1st/4th BATTALION THE WILTSHIRE
REGIMENT (200122)**

Harold Francis was born in 1895 son of George and Anna of West Ashton. He was apprenticed to an ironmonger after leaving school. By 1914 he was living in Edington and may have worked at the Bratton Iron Works for a time (?).

He enlisted in the Wiltshire Regiment and moved to the Middle East (Asiatic Theatre) where he was attached to 2nd Battalion The Dorsetshire Regiment. He was captured by the Turks and in a Prisoner of War camp in Asia Minor, when he died.

DIED 22 MAY 1917

BASRA MEMORIAL, IRAQ

CHARLES DOWN

ABLE SEAMAN, HOOD BN RN DIV (R/6721)

Charles Llewellyn was born in 1888, son of James and Mary of 25, St Thomas' Road, Trowbridge. He married Annie Carr of Melksham, who when he was called up came to live with Frank and Martha Carter at 1 Whitehorse Cottages. After his death she remarried.

In February 1912 he took the appointment of 'Timekeeper' at the Bratton Iron Works. In August 1914 he was part of the proud 'Group Enlistment' which drove to Devizes. He was, however, at that stage along with most of the group, exempt. He was in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve from 1915. Called up in April 1918, he joined RN Division and was drafted to Hood Battalion in France on 8th September 1918.

KILLED IN ACTION 8 OCTOBER 1918

FLEQUIERES HILL BRITISH CEMETERY

JOHN DREWETT

**PRIVATE, 16TH BATTALION LANCASHIRE
FUSILIERS (62598)**

Charles John was born in 1900, son of Charles and May Effie of Church Road and later The Ball. Though christened Charles John, he was known as Jack as a child. His father was an Iron Moulder at the Bratton Iron Works.

By December 1915 John was also working at the Iron Works, as an apprentice Fitter and Turner, aged 16.

He later enlisted in Trowbridge and after training, was posted to France where he died aged 19.

KILLED IN ACTION 4 NOVEMBER 1918

ORS COMMUNAL CEMETERY



Private John Drewett was killed alongside his Commanding Officer and the famous war poet, Wilfred Owen one week before the Armistice was signed.



On 4 November 1918 at the Sambre-Oise Canal, near Catillon, France, when a partly constructed bridge was badly damaged before the advanced troops of his battalion could cross, Lieutenant Colonel Marshall organised repair parties. The first party were soon killed or wounded, but the colonel's personal example was such that more volunteers were instantly forthcoming. Under intense fire and with complete disregard of his own safety he stood on the bank encouraging his men and helping in the work. When the bridge was repaired he attempted to lead his men across, but was killed in the attack. Lieutenant Wilfred Owen was killed in the same engagement soon after the bridge was crossed as he encouraged his men.

Anthem for Doomed Youth

*What passing-bells for these who die as
cattle?*

Only the monstrous anger of the guns.

Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle

Can patter out their hasty orisons.

*No mockeries now for them; no prayers nor
bells,*

Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs, -

The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;

And bugles calling for them from sad shires.

What candles may be held to speed them all?

Not in the hands of boys, but in their eyes

Shall shine the holy glimmers of goodbyes.

The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;

Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,

And each slow dusk a drawing down of blinds.

Lieutenant Wilfred Owen MC

WILFRED DREWETT

**RIFLEMAN, 19TH (WESTERN) BATTALION RIFLE
BRIGADE (333)**

Wilfred was born in 1880, the son of James and Ellen, a farm worker and a dairymaid, of Bratton. By 1901 he was living with his widower father and sister, Sarah on The Ball. In 1911 he was living with Sarah in Stradbroke and working on a local farm. Around that time he married Ellen who at the time of his death was his next of kin.

He was transferred from the Rifle Brigade to the Labour Corps (358854) and posted to 810th Area Employment Company in Egypt where he died.

DIED 16 JANUARY 1918

KANTARA WAR MEMORIAL CEMETERY, EGYPT

WALTER FELTHAM

PRIVATE, COLDSTREAM GUARDS (17201)

Born in 1885 Walter was one of eleven children of Charles and Betsey Feltham of Thornicombe Farm, now just inside SPTA west of VP6 off the road to Imber. By 1901 he was a teamster on the farm.

He later moved to Slough and in 1908 married Agnes Nash of Westbury. He enlisted in the Coldstream Guards and was posted to the 3rd Battalion in Belgium/France. The Battalion took part in the battle of St Quentin (Judas Farm) where he was killed.

KILLED IN ACTION 28 MARCH 1918

ARRAS MEMORIAL

ALBERT FIDLER

**PRIVATE, 1ST BATTALION THE WILTSHIRE
REGIMENT (6802)**

Born in 1885 Albert William was a son of Thomas and Annie of Easterton and later of Sleight Farm, Potterne. By 1911 Albert was living in Little Cheverell, where he lodged with the Ridouts. In February 1912 he married Alice Mary Ridout and they moved to Bratton. He was employed as an agricultural labourer. In February 1914, Albert and Alice had a daughter Marjorie. He enlisted in Devizes and was posted to the Wiltshire Regiment.

KILLED IN ACTION 21 NOVEMBER 1914

YPRES MENIN GATE MEMORIAL

CHARLES GATLEY

CAPTAIN, ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS

Charles Alexander Robertson Gatley was born in Kingston-on-Thames in 1889. He was the only son of Henry, a GP, and Isabella of 12 Surbiton Road. He was studying medicine at Guy's Hospital 1907-1912. In that year he qualified MRCS, LRCP and until 1914 was house surgeon at Guy's. On the outbreak of war he went as house surgeon to Mrs Hall-Walker's hospital for officers, Regents Park. A year later he joined 55th Field Ambulance. By 1916, as a Captain RAMC, he was MO of 7th Battalion The Buffs (East Kent Regiment) with the British Expeditionary Force. In May 1917 he was very badly wounded at Cherisy, whilst going up to the firing line, because stretcher cases were not coming back fast enough.

CHARLES GATLEY continued

After demobilization he entered into partnership with Dr Trevor Shorland of Westbury. Later he was appointed medical officer for the Bratton District under the Westbury Guardians, he was also a member of the Pensions board for Wiltshire. In 1921 he died as a result of the wounds he had received in France.

DIED OF WOUNDS 28 FEBRUARY 1921

GRAVEYARD OF ST JAMES' CHURCH

His name was added to the War Memorial.

GEORGE HOLLOWAY

**PRIVATE, 1ST BATTALION THE WILTSHIRE
REGIMENT (10278)**

George was born in 1896, son of Henry and Mary Elizabeth of Court Farm. His father was a farmer and after leaving school George worked on the farm.

He enlisted in the Wiltshire Regiment and was wounded in France. He subsequently died of his wounds.

DIED OF WOUNDS 13 MARCH 1915

BAILLEUL COMMUNAL CEMETERY



ROBERT HURLE

LANCE CORPORAL, 6TH BATTALION THE
WILTSHIRE REGIMENT (12891)

Robert Albert was born in 1898, son of Henry and Rosa Eleanor of Lower Road, a near neighbour of the Holloways. His father was an engine driver at the Iron Works having been there for 40 years by the outbreak of war. Robert worked as a farmer's boy.

He enlisted in the Wiltshire regiment and was with the Regiment at the Battle of the Somme where he was killed.

KILLED IN ACTION 2 JULY 1916

THIEPVAL MEMORIAL

FRED KING

PRIVATE (3205597)

**31ST BATTALION CANADIAN INFANTRY
(ALBERTA REGIMENT)**

Frederick was born in 1884, son of David and Louisa of Butts Road and brother of Henry. Their father was a labourer at the Iron Works, where he had been employed for 54 years by 1914. Fred worked at the Iron Works (see photo c1905 on page 25 of Dennis Gardner's book). He subsequently emigrated to Canada.

By 1919 David and Louisa had moved to 4, Whitehorse Cottages.

Frederick enlisted in the Canadian Army and was sent to France where he was killed.

KILLED IN ACTION 8 OCTOBER 1918

**CANADA CEMETERY TILLOY-LEZ-CAMBRAI,
NORD**

HENRY KING

**PRIVATE 2ND BATTALION THE WILTSHIRE
REGIMENT (203093)**

Henry George was born in 1889, son of David and Louisa of Butts Road and a younger brother of Fred. Before the war he was a groom and gardener, living at home, probably working in the village.

He joined the Wiltshire Regiment and was killed in France.

KILLED IN ACTION 21 MARCH 1918

POZIERES MEMORIAL, SOMME

HAROLD MEAD

**PRIVATE 1ST BATTALION THE WILTSHIRE
REGIMENT (10607)**

Harold was born in 1892, second surviving son of Henry Levi and Elizabeth of Court Lane Farm. After leaving school he worked on his father's farm until the war. Tom the third brother was too young to be conscripted and lived to inherit the farm from his father.

Harold was a bell ringer at St James' Church.

He enlisted in The Wiltshire Regiment and was posted to France, where he was the first of the brothers to be killed.

KILLED IN ACTION 12 MARCH 1915

YPRES MENIN GATE MEMORIAL



Harold Mead's initials can be seen today
scratched in a wall at Court Lane Farm

WALTER MEAD

**PRIVATE ROYAL WILTSHIRE YEOMANRY
(320399)**

Walter was born in 1890, oldest surviving son of Henry Levi and Elizabeth of Court Lane Farm. After leaving school he worked on his father's farm.

As a teenager he served with the 1st battalion The Wiltshire Volunteer Rifle Corps from 1905-1908.

He enlisted in the Yeomanry and moved to France over the winter of 1915/1916. The Regiment saw little action as horsed cavalry and converted to infantry.

KILLED IN ACTION 19 MAY 1917

VILLERS HILL BRITISH CEMETERY

VILLERS-GUISLAIN, NORD

ERNEST MOORE

**PRIVATE 6TH BATTALION THE WILTSHIRE
REGIMENT (12081)**

Ernest Leslie was born in 1892, in Abbotts Ann, Hampshire. His connection with Bratton was that his Aunt Emma and her husband Edwin Barnes, lived at 2, Luccombe Terrace. Uncle Edwin was a blacksmith at the Iron Works. For eight years until the war Ernest also worked at the Bratton Iron Works as a fitter & turner (first as an apprentice), living with his Aunt.

He enlisted in 1914, in the Wiltshire Regiment, was posted to 6 Wilts and went to France where he was killed, on the same day as Frank Pearce.

KILLED IN ACTION 25 SEPTEMBER 1915

LOOS MEMORIAL, Pas de Calais

FRANK PEARCE

**PRIVATE 6TH BATTALION THE WILTSHIRE
REGIMENT (11308)**

Frank was born at Colston in 1890, son of George and May Ann who by 1911 had moved to The Ball. George was a carter.

Frank was a groom at the Bratton Iron Works in the Carters' Department, for six years before the war.

In 1914 he enlisted in The Wiltshire Regiment, was posted to 6 Wilts and went to France, where he was killed aged 25.

KILLED IN ACTION 25 SEPTEMBER 1915

LOOS MEMORIAL, Pas de Calais

OLIVER MULLENS

**PRIVATE 2ND BATTALION THE WILTSHIRE
REGIMENT (10551)**

Oliver Noah Mark was born in Wotton Rivers in 1896, son of Mark and Elizabeth who in 1901 were living in Pewsey and by 1911 in Horton, Bishops Cannings. Mark was an engine driver on a farm there and Oliver was a shepherd. By 1915 Mark and Elizabeth were living in Bratton.

Oliver enlisted in the Wiltshire Regiment, joined the 2nd Battalion and was killed in France.

KILLED IN ACTION 23 FEBRUARY 1915

RUE-DAVID MILITARY CEMETERY

FLEURBAIX, PAS DE CALAIS

FRED SCOTT

**GUNNER 225 SIEGE BATTERY ROYAL
GARRISON ARTILLERY (66554)**

Frederick was born in 1887, son of Alfred and Rebecca of Fairview (now Priory Cottages). His father was, by 1911, an Army Pensioner. Fred married Lilian Annie Pearce of Dilton Marsh in May 1909 and in 1910 they had a son Frank. By 1911 the family was living in Swindon, where he was working as a railway porter.

After enlistment he was posted to France where he died.

DIED 24 OCTOBER 1917

**MENIN ROAD SOUTH MILITARY CEMETERY
WEST VLAANDEREN, BELGIUM**



Menin Road South Cemetery was a collection cemetery and therefore Gunner Scott would have been killed elsewhere on the battlefield and may have died from wounds sustained in an earlier battle such as the First Battle of Passchendaele which took place on 12th October 1917

PHILIP WATTS

**PRIVATE 13TH BATTALION THE CANADIAN
REGIMENT (427433)**

Philip was born on 3rd August 1893, son of Frederick and Emma of Bury Lane. Frederick was a fitter's labourer at the Iron Works and by 1915 had been there for 35 years (since the age of 14). Frederick and Emma had 5 children, Philip was the middle one.

By 1911, Philip had joined his father at the Iron Works as a wood turner. He must have left shortly afterwards as he is not on the 1912 list of employees. He emigrated to Canada where he was a farmer. A cousin (?) Robert Philip Watts was also a Canadian, a dairyman. He was a son of

PHILIP WATTS continued

Albert Watts of Butts Road and eight years older than Philip.

Philip and Robert enlisted in the Canadian Army in 1915 and were noted as fit for the overseas expeditionary force. Philip went to France with 13th Battalion The Canadian Regiment and was wounded. At some stage he returned to Bratton where he died many years after the war.

DIED OF WOUNDS 13 MAY 1934 GRAVEYARD
OF ST JAMES' CHURCH

His name and that of Albert Merrett were added to the War Memorial after its dedication in 2004.

ALBERT MERRETT

**PRIVATE 13TH BATTALION THE DEVONSHIRE
REGIMENT (41283)**

Albert Thomas was born in 1890, son of John and Phoebe. John Merrett was a bricklayer and later builder based in Lower Road, probably in the area of Ashton Combe. In 1911 John, his second wife, Martha and his sons Philip and Albert were still living in Lower Road. Albert married Elsie Laura House in August 1915. After his death she remarried. Albert joined the Devonshire Regiment and later transferred to 447 Agricultural Company of the Labour Corps. He died in England just after the armistice.

DIED 1 DECEMBER 1918

GRAVEYARD OF ST JAMES' CHURCH

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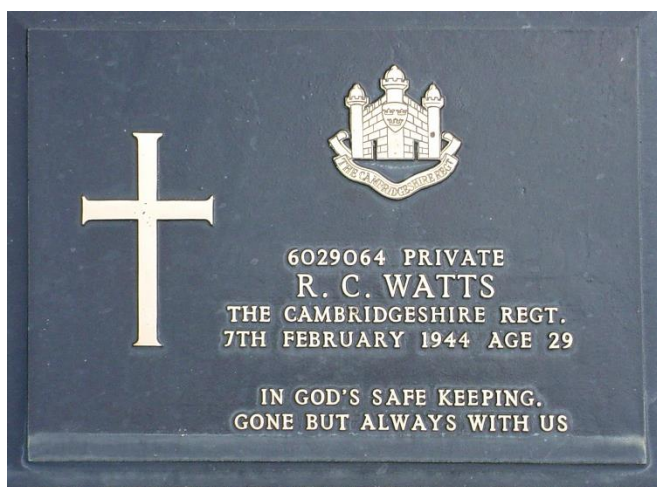
SECOND WORLD WAR

REGINALD WATTS

PRIVATE THE CAMBRIDGESHIRE REGIMENT
(6209064)

Reginald Charles was the son of Charles and Eliza Watts of Bratton. He died on 7 February 1944 at the age of 29 while a prisoner of the Japanese.

He is buried in Chungkai War Cemetery, Thailand.



HARRY HALLETT

COMPANY SERGEANT MAJOR ROYAL CORPS
OF SIGNALS (2321628)

Harry Robert was the son of Harry Robert and Elizabeth S. Hallett and husband of Marjorie Hallett. He died on Sunday 3 May 1942 at the age of 31.

He is buried in the Graveyard of St James' Church.

VINCENT HYATT

**FLYING OFFICER (AIR BOMBER) 102
SQUADRON RAF(VR) (132394)**

Vincent Longmead was the son of Mr & Mrs Harry Hyatt of Bratton. He died on Sunday 3 October 1943 in the crash of Halifax serial number JD276 of No 102 Squadron RAF near Hayton, between Pocklington and Market Weighton.

On the night of 2nd / 3rd October 1943 the aircraft took off from Pocklington airfield to undertake a night cross country training flight. The aircraft was in the process of landing back at Pocklington but overshot the landing and attempted to fly a circuit of the airfield to go in and make another attempt at landing. The aircraft lost height and crashed. Four on board were killed while three others died soon after of their injuries at York Military Hospital

He is buried in the Graveyard of St James' Church.

Researched and compiled by Lieutenant Colonel Tony Hyde
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