

SHALFLEET CASUALTIES OF THE 1914 – 1919 WAR



SHALFLEET CHURCH, I.W.

J. Milman Brown's Series.

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Shalfleet Casualties of the 1914-1919 War

Introductory Points:

- 1 The aim is to offer an overview of the 1914-1919 war and to slot Shalfleet casualties into the wider picture.
- 2 There is no sense, rhyme or reason, regarding who was included or excluded from the Shalfleet Roll of Honour. It just isn't known why some names were included and others excluded. Since the original Roll of Honour was drawn up, circa 1920, more names have been added. Those on the original roll, and commemorated in the church memorial window, are indicated with an asterisk *
3. There are a number of key points to bear in mind.
 - a) In 1914 Britain had a tiny army circa 160,000 as compared to the French, Austrian, German and Russian armies. Their armies numbered in the millions.
 - b) British power was centred on the Royal Navy.....which was huge.
- 4 During the 1914-18 War the main British effort was centred along a west European trench line. There were subsidiary campaigns, Gallipoli, war at sea (Jutland in particular) Arabia, and what is now called Iraq, BUT the main effort was always centred on the Western Front.

Ian Broad 2019

The Western Front

During the summer of 1914 there was a rush to war. Austria declared war on Serbia. Russia mobilised to support Serbia. Germany mobilised to support Austria. France mobilised to support Russia.

Britain hesitated. Britain's main force, the Royal Navy, had been on summer manoeuvres...meaning tens of thousands of regulars and reservists were already at sea. The Liberal M.P. Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty, ordered the fleet to remain at sea.

On August 2nd and without declaring war, German troops moved into Luxemburg. On August 4th Germany invaded Belgium. Britain declared war on Germany that same day, technically at midnight. In theory we were at war to defend the integrity of Belgium. In reality there were many much wider and deeper issues.

Britain immediately sent her small, 160,000 strong, but well trained, army to Belgium. The British Expeditionary Force (B.E.F.) took up position around Mons. Some sources suggest the Kaiser referred to the tiny B.E.F as a contemptible little force...hence post war the survivors called themselves the Old Contemptibles. A huge number of Germans troops slowly advanced through Belgium, Luxembourg and then France. The intention was to encircle Paris...the Schlieffen Plan. The scale of the invasion was massive; millions of men, organised into seven armies, moved out of Germany,

The tiny B.E.F. had mustered near Mons, on the left flank of the French. The British first encountered the Germans on August 23rd. The massive French army was pushed back by the advancing German juggernaut. Unfortunately the French forgot to tell the British they were retreating. However the British now retreated from Mons...and overtook the French in the process. (The Retreat from Mons)

The Germans met greater opposition than expected from the French, British and miniscule Belgian army. Consequently the Germans abandoned their plan to encircle Paris. The French and British about turned and started to push the Germans back. (The First Battle of the Marne. 5th to 10th September 1914).

To the north of the battle a gap existed between the combatants and the North Sea. The Germans now tried to outflank the French, who tried to outflank the Germans...the so called Race to the Sea. The British were withdrawn from the area of the Marne, where they had ended up following the retreat. They were rushed to the north to help plug the gap between the French and the sea.

The British now took up positions in and around Ypres, in effect blocking the Germans' advance. The now very short gap left between the British and the sea was plugged by the remains of the Belgian army. The Belgians halted advancing Germans by opening sluice gates and flooding the land in front of the advancing enemy.

The opposing armies were stuck; neither side had sufficient strength to defeat the other side. Both sides started to dig and the Western Front now emerged: a trench line running from the North Sea, at Nieuport, to the Swiss border. The line, which was some 435 miles long, remained more or less unchanged until the spring of 1918.

Germans had invaded and defeated France in 1870/71 but this time the German advance had been held. As early as 1914 many Germans realised they had already lost the war. They had failed to take Paris and consequently they had failed to conquer France a second time.

The War and Shalfleet's Roll of Honour

1914

At the start Britain felt relatively secure because the vast Royal Navy protected our shores. This was a navy that had been unchallenged since 1805 and Trafalgar. Historically Britain's main military ports faced our traditional enemies, France and Spain...hence the naval bases of Plymouth, Portsmouth and Portland. However the enemy was now Germany, so Chatham, the Humber, Rosyth and Scapa suddenly became our main naval centres. There were now a series of events that shocked Britain to her very core. The all-powerful navy seemed to be failing.

On 22nd Sept three old Royal Navy cruisers were sunk in the North Sea. The "Hogue", "Aboukir" and "Cressy" were sent to the bottom with a huge loss of life.

In addition Germany had sent powerful ships into the South Atlantic to destroy British shipping. The Germans then moved around the Horn and into the Pacific. Off the Chilean coast a detachment of British ships were sent to find and engage the Germans. The Germans were spotted and the British engaged the much more powerful German ships. On 1st November 1914 two Royal Navy ships were sunk, the "Good Hope" and the "Monmouth". The Monmouth turned over and all 735 men on board were drowned. (The Battle of Coronel.)

On 26th November 1914 yet another naval disaster took place. H.M.S. "Bulwark" was berthed in the Medway, near Chatham where she loaded ammunition. The ship simply exploded. 750 men were killed and only 14 of the total crew survived. To this day nobody knows why the ship exploded.

One of the casualties was **Henry Milton Brett * (28)**. Henry came from Ningwood Common, Ningwood Hill where his father James, was a carrier in one of the local brickyards. James had been born in the parish of Shalfleet. Eliza, mother to Henry, had been born at Corfe Castle, Dorset and had married in Wareham in 1881.

The newly married couple moved to Ningwood, where, between 1882 and 1903, all of their eight children were born. Henry, the second child, was born in 1887. It is more than likely that all the children attended the school at Ningwood. Age 14, in 1901, he is found working in the local brickyard as a "boy for carrier." Perhaps he worked alongside his father. At some point, probably when he was 18, Henry joined the Royal Navy. In 1911 he attended a gunnery course at H.M.S. "Excellent" Whale Island, Portsmouth. H.M.S. "Bulwark" was originally commissioned in 1907. Taken out of commission in 1910, she was recommissioned in 1914 and patrolled the Channel. As a leading Seaman, Henry joined the ship in 1914. (Henry is commemorated on the Portsmouth Naval Monument)

Back on land, the Germans attacked in the Ypres area. The attack commenced on October 10th 1914 and the battle lasted until 11th November 1914 (The First Battle of Ypres). The Germans were trying to eliminate an Allied salient, or bulge, that protruded into the German lines. Shelling and sniping continued after the main battle had ended, a battle that destroyed most of the B.E.F. Relatively few of the 'Contemptible Little Force' survived.

Captain Arthur Hilliard William Temple * (39) of the 2nd Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment was killed in action on December 14th 1914. He fought with the Suffolks, but had family connections in Shalfleet. Born in Borstal, Rochester in 1875, he was the second of three sons. His father, Robert Temple, was a vicar who had married Katherine Close, of Bury, Lancashire in 1867. The family moved around a great deal, from Northam, Northumberland, to Borstal (where Arthur was born) and then to Thorpe, Suffolk.



Arthur joined the army and served in the Boer War and later Somaliland. In 1909 he married Enid Adela Powys Stone at Arreton. Enid was the daughter of the well-known architect and historian Percy Stone. The couple then moved to the 'Retreat', Cranmore. In 1913 Arthur had been placed on the reserved list.

The couple had two children, Margaret and William. Arthur worked closely with his near neighbour the local vicar, Rev Wardroper, who lived over the road in "Eversleigh". For a time Arthur acted as church warden in Shalfleet Church. On the outbreak of war Arthur was recalled to the colours and quickly found himself in Belgium. He found himself fighting at Petit Bois, in the southern part of the Ypres Salient. It was here that he was shot through the head. On December 30th

1914 a memorial service was held in Shalfleet Church. (Arthur's body was lost but his name is commemorated on the Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres.)

Back at sea, confidence in the Royal Navy was dealt a series of further blows when on 16th December, German warships bombarded the coastal harbours of Hartlepool, Scarborough and Whitby.

Britain had experienced a series of severe shocks in 1914. The war most certainly wouldn't be over by Christmas and the Royal Navy clearly wasn't invincible. The supremacy of Nelson's day was at an end. Britain was losing ships and men at an alarming rate and the B.E.F. had all but been wiped out. This was not a nineteenth century colonial war against men with spears, this was a clash between industrial giants.

At the very start of the war, Kitchener had replaced Jack Seeley, of the Isle of Wight, as Minister of War. Kitchener now appealed to the nation for volunteers. Tens of thousands came forward.

1915

After many months of fighting, the trench line had not moved to any significant extent. Both sides realised that the opposing trench line simply had to be broken. On April 22nd 1915 the Germans attacked again, (the 2nd Battle of Ypres.) For the first time the Germans used gas. The British defending Ypres were driven back and a great deal of territory around the city was lost. The bulge, or salient, into the German lines did however survive, but post battle this was now a much smaller salient.

Many, but particularly Winston Churchill, now argued the whole Western front should be outflanked. The result was a naval attack on the Dardanelles. The plan was that R.N. should break through the Dardanelles and sail to Constantinople. The aim was to dominate the then Turkish capital and take Turkey out of the war. The allies could then link up with the Russians via the Black Sea. It might also be

possible to sail up the Danube and attack Austria and then Germany from the south. Originally, under the command of Admiral Sackville Carden, the Royal Navy failed to break through the Dardanelles. Carden's health collapsed and he was replaced by the equally unsuccessful Admiral De Robeck. It was now the turn of the army, and troops were landed on the Gallipoli Peninsula on April 25th. (Ever since, the Australians have commemorated their dead on this day.) There were further landings during the night of 6/7th August. (Post war Carden spent much of his time at Rofford House, in the parish of Shalfleet.)

The fighting at Gallipoli led to two Shalfleet deaths.

John William Baker * (21) John was born at Churchill's Farm where his father, Charles, was a dairy farmer. Charles and his wife Georgina had married in Shalfleet Church in 1891 and had 8 children, of whom John was the second born. Most of the children worked on the farm, but in 1911 John was stated to be an apprentice, an apprentice to what isn't known. When war was declared, John immediately volunteered and enlisted in Newport. He joined the 1/8th Battalion of the Hampshire Regiment, the Isle of Wight Rifles.

After a spell in Bury St Edmunds and Watford the riflemen were sent to Liverpool where they embarked on "Aquitania". They arrived in the Greek island of Lemnos on August 6th. From there, on August 10th they were landed at Suvla Bay on the Gallipoli Peninsula. The landings were chaotic and many men decided to sit around, brew tea or go bathing. Order was re-established and the men moved inland on August 12th. Rifleman Cprl John Baker died on 12th August. The circumstances of his death are not known, but about this time it is likely that many unarmed British P.O.W.s were massacred by the Turks. (John has no known grave and his name is commemorated on the Helles Monument at Gallipoli. Post war, his sister Edith ran the farm. His parents, Charles and Georgina moved to Ronde Farm, Wroxall, the address that appears in the C.W.G.C. records.)

Charles Barton (23) Half-brother of the well-known Jack Barton, died of wounds 25th August. He was a member of the IoW Rifles. Charles lived, with his parents, at the Malthouse, Mill Lane, Shalfleet. Andrew Luke Barton, a steward and gamekeeper on the Swainston Estate, married Frances Mussell in 1890. Charles was the second of five children. (Frances died in 1908 and Andrew remarried Ethel Robbins of Cuckfield Sussex in 1910. There were four more children, including John Henry, remembered by many as Jack).



Charles enlisted at Newport. He joined the 8th Battalion of the 1st Hampshire Regiment, better known as the Isle of Wight Rifles. With John Baker he would have sailed on the “Aquitania” and landed at Suvla Bay Gallipoli. At some point Charles was wounded and he died of his wounds. At the time there was confusion regarding his death...it was wrongly suggested he died when the hospital ship, the “Royal Edward” was sunk on 13th August.

The name Charles Barton was not included in the memorial window in Shalfleet Church, the reason being that Charles was a Non-Conformist and not a member of the Church of England. (Charles has no known grave, his name is commemorated on the Helles Monument, Turkey).

Meanwhile back on the Western Front, always the main focus of the war, Britain attacked at the Battle of Loos (Sept 21st to October 8th). Since the experience of gas, at 2nd Ypres, a new research unit had been created at Porton Down, Wiltshire. The result of their research was that the British now used gas for the first time. This first use of British gas turned out to be a disaster. The wind changed and gas was blown back into our own trenches.

The Battle of Loos was, in reality, part of a much bigger allied attack. In co-operation with the British the French had attacked to the south. The British then hoped to break through the German lines, swing north and capture the ports of Zeebrugge and Ostend. This would deprive the Germans of submarine access to the North Sea.

In addition, and as a diversion to the main battle, the R.N. attacked the occupied Belgian coast. In tune with the French action, it was hoped that German attention would be diverted and they would move troops away from the main battle at Loos. An armada of small ships bombarded Zeebrugge and Ostend. The waters here are shallow so it was not possible to use large warships. One of the small armed vessels was the converted drifter "Great Heart". On 24th September, on the way out, with a crew of 8, she hit a mine off Dover and, with one exception, all of her crew were killed.

Amongst the dead was **William Davidson * (47)** skipper of the "Great Heart." William was a Scot, born in Kingussie, Inverness. He was the son of James Davidson and Elisabeth Ferguson. William married Isabella and the couple moved to Nairn, a fishing community on Scotland's east coast. There were six children. William earned his living by fishing out of Nairn and he became part owner of the "Great Heart." The vessel had been commandeered by the Admiralty,

ordered to sail south where it was converted for military use. The crew were all Scots, mostly men from Nairn, individuals already familiar with the “Great Heart”.

William’s connection to Shalfleet was limited, but he and his wife, Isabella, had set up a home somewhere in Bouldnor, where they named their house ‘Kingussie’. (William’s body was never recovered and, his name is commemorated on the Portsmouth Naval Memorial).

Back on land, the Battle of Loos was an allied failure. The fighting officially ended on 8th October. On that very day **Francis Lambert * (29)** was killed in action near the small village of Cambrin. George William Lambert, the father of Francis, was an extremely mobile individual. He had been born in Madras, India. At some point in the 1880’s he had moved from India to Honor Oak Surrey, where Francis was born.



Sometime before 1891, the family then moved to Chingford, Essex. From there they moved to Walthamstow, London. George now opened a school for shorthand typists in Hackney. His wife, Ellen Elizabeth was a teacher, presumably working with her husband. The couple had four children. There were three daughters and Francis, their only son. All four children became shorthand typists. Francis worked as a shorthand typist with a shipping agent in the City London. When war was declared somehow Francis joined the 114th Battalion of the Cameron Highlanders, where he became a Lance Corporal.

At some point George and Ellen obtained a property a Cranmore, the house was named 'Cannamore'. It is possible this was a holiday home. When the C.W.G.C. lists were drawn up, in the early 1920.s the family address was given as The Ridgeway, Chingford. In reality, Francis had very little connection with the Island, however his name was included on the original Shalfleet Roll of Honour. (Buried Cambrin Churchyard Extension, France. Grave reference K 28)).

The excitement of August 1914 had vanished, Britain was now fully aware of the realities of modern warfare. The loss of life in 1915 had been huge. Britain had failed at 2nd Ypres, Loos and Gallipoli.

The small but professional British Expedition Force had all but vanished and Kitchener had appealed for volunteers. A volunteer army now held the line. In reality this was an army of poorly trained civilians. The Commander in Chief, Sir John French was seen as a failure and during December 1915 he was replaced by John Haig

1916

From the self-confident days of August 1914 the situation in 1916 was now desperate. Not only had the bulk of the B.E.F. vanished but so had many of Kitchener's volunteer army. More men were needed and consequently conscription was introduced by the Military Service Act of 1916. It came into force on March 2nd.

Frank Cobb * (22) died 8th Jan 1916. Cobb's naval career was brief and it is very unlikely he spent much time at sea. Frank's father, Joseph Cobb, has been born in Wareham, Dorset. He married Emily Gillard of Adminston (Athelhampton) in 1876. There were many children, including Frank. All but one of them were born in Wareham.

At some point between 1901 and 1905 the Cobb family moved to Wellow, where their last child Sydney was born in 1905. The 1911 census tells us that Joseph was an engine driver, presumably some sort of farm based machinery. A few years later, in 1915, he was a farm labourer.

By 1911 Frank was also a labourer, who, on 13th November, just after the declaration of war, joined the Royal Navy and, as a steward, worked at the shore bases of Victory I and St Vincent. Frank married Mary Ann Constance Linington at Wroxall Parish Church. He was already an ill man. His address was given as Lucknow House, a small property possibly associated with the nearby Royal National Hospital at Ventnor. Frank was discharged from the navy suffering from T.B and, as a naval pensioner, he died in Lucknow House. His wife was with him at the time. At the time he was earning a living as a lorry driver.

His name appears on both the Wroxall War memorial and on the Shalfleet Roll of Honour. (It is assumed he was buried in an unmarked grave at Wroxall. His name was not included in the C.W.G.C. lists)

As always the Western Front remained the main focus, but for a short time attention turned from the land and back to the sea.

On May 31st the most important naval clash of the war took place. The German High Seas Fleet met the British Grand Fleet and the devastating Battle of Jutland ensued. The overall commander was the Southampton-born Admiral John Jellicoe. (Post war Jellicoe had a retirement home at St Lawrence.) The battle did not end in a clear 1805 style Nelsonian victory. Britain lost more ships and more men

than the Germans, she also lost what remained of her already damaged reputation of naval invincibility. The battle has been debated ever since 1916. However today the general consensus is that Britain won on points. In spite of her losses Britain maintained her naval blockade of Germany and the German Navy remained bottled up in its home ports. Nobody from the parish of Shalfleet was lost during the battle of Jutland, although many were lost from elsewhere on the Island.

Back on land again fighting continued around Ypres. There was no major battle in the Ypres area but periodic shelling and sniping took place. On 12th June 1916, **Eric Graham Mateer (18)** died of his wounds. We know that the young Eric was educated in Newport and that he had been an active boy scout. At the young age of 15 he had migrated to Canada but, aged 18, had returned to England in 1915 and joined the Royal Field Artillery as a gunner. A memorial stone was subsequently erected in the graveyard of Wellow Baptist Church, at the time Eric's father was the minister there. The Mateer family lived at Clevelands, Bouldnor but left the house sometime after the death of their son. (Eric was buried in the Railway Dugouts Burial Ground, Transport Farm, Belgium.)

During the early months of 1916 Britain planned yet another major attack, this time on the Somme. Events meant that preparations for battle had to be accelerated. In the early part of 1916 the French had shouldered the brunt of the fighting at Verdun. Britain now tried to relieve the pressure on the French by bringing forward their attack on the Somme. Once again it was also hoped the British could break the German line and, as with the Battle of Loos, swing north and capture the Belgium ports of Ostend and Zeebrugge.

The Battle of the Somme was not a success and it resulted in a huge loss of life with relatively little territory being taken from the Germans. On the first day alone, July 1st 1916, there were 57,540

casualties. The original B.E.F. had all but vanished, as had Kitchener's volunteer army.

Charles Frederick Rayner (26)* John Rayner was born in the parish of Whippingham, which at this time extended as far as Newport. He was variously described as being a farm wagoner, and at one time a maltster. In 1881 he married Mary Jane Sheath. John and his family lived at a number of places around the Island. The first of his five children was born in Royal Exchange, Newport. 1882, other children were born in Newport, Carisbrooke and Binstead. Two of the children died. Eventually the family settled in Shishford Cottage on the outskirts of Newbridge. For a time John worked at Westover Farm, ending his working life at Lower Mill.



Charles was born in Carisbrooke in 1889. It isn't known what Charles did for a living, he has not been traced on the 1911 census. It would appear that by 1911 he had left the Island. When war was declared Charles was living in Yorkshire and, at Wakefield, he enlisted in the 8th

Battalion Kings own Yorkshire Light Infantry. This was a newly formed Battalion, initially raised at Pontefract in September 1914, the result of Kitchener's appeal to the nation. The Battalion was trained in various parts of the country, including Kent.

Whilst In Kent he met Ida Constance Glover. She had been born in Burton on Trent, Staffordshire. There was something of a whirlwind romance because in the late summer of 1915 the couple married at Elham, Kent. When he married, Charles had already been promoted to the rank of corporal. In August 1915 the 8th Battalion were sent to France, landing at Boulogne on 26th August. Further training took place in preparation for the planned Battle of the Somme. At some point Charles was promoted to sergeant. The Battle of the Somme commenced on July 1st and the 8th Battalion went into action. They were fighting in one of the most difficult parts of the line, just a little to the north of Albert and to the south of Thiepval. Charles was one of the many thousands killed on that first day. (In 1919 his body was exhumed and reburied at Blighty Valley Cemetery, Authuille Wood. Grave Reference V. C. 40)

Is interesting to note that, during the war, his two sisters Caroline (Kit to the family) and Elise were both nurses. Caroline was already a pre-war trained nurse. Elise joined the Voluntary Aid Detachment the V.A.D. Ida remarried in 1922, her second husband was Thomas G Armstrong. The marriage took place in Newcastle on Tyne and in 1927 a child, Mavis, was born in Newcastle.

Major Aston Clifford Astley M.C. * (26) Aston's father, Captain Spencer Bynd Astley, was an army captain serving in India. (He retired and died in Bedfordshire, aged 70 in 1915.) Aston was born in Landour, West Bengal, 1887. However he was sent back to England and educated in a tiny private school at St Bartholomew, Hyde, a suburb of Winchester. At some point Aston returned to India and following his father's lead, he joined the army. He took a commission with the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers. It is known that on 2nd

December 1912 he became a Freemason at Jubbulpore, Bombay and on 1st April 1914, Lieutenant Astley joined the Concordia Lodge, Calcutta.



When war was declared, the 2nd Battalion was ordered back to Britain. From Britain the battalion was sent to Gallipoli. It isn't known if Aston sailed with them. At some point he was detached from his battalion and put in charge of a Machine Gun Corps. It is known that on November 28th 1915 Captain Aston married in Brompton, London. At that time his address was given as Glenhurst, South Farnborough, Hampshire. His wife was Flora Cecil Cochran of Ryde, Isle of Wight. Their original married home was at Dodpits, Newbridge. Later the home base became Cleveland, Bouldnor. This was the very same house that the Mateer family had occupied.

At some point Aston had been awarded a Military Cross, he had also reached the rank of Major. By now Major Astley was fighting on the

Somme and on 1st October 1916, Aston Astley was killed. The costly battle continued for some time and only formally ended on 18th November. (Aston was buried in the Danzig Ally British Cemetery, Mametz, France. Grave Reference I.E.13)

His widow became a hospital orderly working for the French Red Cross in Ajaccio, Corsica. Flora remarried on 19th Oct 1926. Her second husband was Ninian Lewis Elliot. Flora died in Easthampstead Berks in 1971.

Horace Victor Woodford * (29) also died on the Somme. He was killed in action on October 13th 1916. Horace was born in Newbridge in 1887, probably in Spring Hill House. His father, Cass, was the local relieving officer who had been born in Calbourne. His mother, Mary Martha Amey was a schoolmistress originally from Sheffield. They had married in Calbourne church in 1870. Horace was the youngest of three children, he had two elder sisters. In 1911 it is recorded that Horace was earning a living as a Cattle Dealer. That year Mary died and Cass remarried in 1912. His new wife was named Janet Hill. About this time Horace moved to the mainland and settled in Bruton, Somerset. He enlisted at nearby Castle Carey becoming a private in the Somerset Light Infantry. Later he was transferred to the Wiltshire Regiment. In October 1916 the Wiltshires were defending a trench near the village of Thiepval (today the site of the Thiepval Monument). There was little happening on October 13th, but the Germans were firing the odd shell. Horace was killed by one of the odd shells. (His body was lost and consequently his name is recorded on the Thiepval Monument.)

1916 saw two more Shalfleet related deaths. They both took place in what were considered to be minor theatres of the war.

The Gallipoli Peninsula had been finally evacuated in January 1916. However allied aircraft continued to fly over the territory. Aircraft took off from Mudros, situated on the nearby Greek Island of Lemnos. One of the pilots was **Victor Nicolson * (30)**. Victor was a Flight Lt and

a member of the Royal Naval Air Service, the R.N.A.S. On 10th July 1916 his aircraft crashed on the peninsula killing Victor Nicolson in the process.

Victor was the son of William Smith Nicholson, a director of the Union Castle Steamship company and his wife Elizabeth, nee Johnson. The couple had married in Kent in 1860. William was a sailor who was, at one time, Commodore of the Medway Yacht Club. His love of sailing brought him to the Island and in 1883 the extremely wealthy William built Eastmore. There were at least twelve children, with some dying in infancy. Most of the children were born in Hoo, Kent. Victor the youngest, was born on the island. Victor and a brother, Robert, were educated at the Isle of Wight College, St Helens. The brother Robert also joined the R.N.A.S (Victor was buried in the Lancashire Landing Cemetery, Turkey. Grave Reference K.83.)

The eldest male child, George, inherited Eastmore and another brother, Stuart became a Rear Admiral.

Perhaps the saddest of all the Shalfleet deaths was that of **Maurice Stanley Budden * (23)** Born in Wellow in 1893. His parents were Charles Budden, originally from Wroxall and Sabrina White of Wellow. They had married in the Primitive Methodist Church, Newport in 1883. For a short time they lived in Godshill, but after the birth of their first child, in 1884, they moved to Laburnum Cottage, Wellow. Another 5 children were born, but the last one only lived for a few hours. Maurice was the youngest of the surviving children. His father, William earned his living as a carter on a local farm and three of his sons followed his lead, all working on local farms, two of them as cowmen. In 1911 Maurice was a farm labourer and later a dairyman.

War was declared on August 4th 1914 and Maurice enlisted at Yarmouth on September 10th where he joined the Hampshires, but was quickly transferred to the Royal Field Artillery where he was trained as a gunner and allocated to the 1st Battalion of the 5th Hants Battery of the Royal field Artillery.

In November 1914 allied troops, mostly Indian, landed in Turkish controlled Iraq. The Allies slowly fought their way up the rivers Euphrates and Tigris. Maurice, a member of the Royal Field Artillery, advanced with the Anglo/Indian force. It is known that he had suffered a bout of dysentery and he spent a week in hospital at Aziziya.

The intervention ended in disaster when the Turks pushed the Allies back to Kut al Amara. The town was put under siege, finally surrendering on April 29th 1916. The starving Allied prisoners were treated with utmost brutality, paraded through the streets of Baghdad and then forced marched to Turkey. Many hundreds died on these death marches, Budden was one of them. It is not even known when or where he died.

Meanwhile his family knew nothing and, post war, wrote a number of letters to the War Office seeking news. Eventually, in 1919, survivors of the death marches started to be repatriated and it was reported that Maurice *might* have died at Marden, Turkey. A memorial stone was erected in Wellow Baptist Church Cemetery and it gives the date of death of as 31st December 1916, but this is simply an educated guess. (His name is commemorated on the Basra Memorial, Iraq)

1917

By 1917 Germany was feeling the strain and between February and April the Germans withdrew from a large salient in their lines. The straightened line meant a huge saving of manpower. The withdrawal to the Hindenburg line (South of Arras) had been carefully planned and in no way represented a defeat. However the withdrawal confused the Allies, who gingerly advanced through ground that had been left devastated and booby trapped by the Germans.

Nationally 1917 was to be a grim year and locally the parish of Shalfleet would receive its share of the bad news.

Harry Sidney Richardson * (28) died 9th March 1917, north west of Arras, Near Aubiny. His father, Edward, was a shipwright who had been born in Cowes. He had taken his skills to Kent where he had married Frances Anne Dyckhoff in 1884. The marriage took place in Erith, where eight children were born, including Harry in 1889. Harry grew up to become a clerk.

At some point before 1914, Harry had migrated to Australia. On 2nd March 1915 Harry joined the Australian Infantry at Liverpool, New South Wales. He quickly found himself fighting in Gallipoli where he was badly wounded, and on 9th October he was sent to the U.K on board a hospital ship. In England he was cared for in St Marks College, Chelsea. Eventually, in September 1916, he was declared fit for service and he was ordered to France, arriving at Etaples on September 17th. Promoted to corporal he re-joined his comrades of the 53rd Battalion Australian Infantry and made his way to the south of the old Somme battlefield. On 6th March he was wounded a second time. He was evacuated to the South Midland Casualty Clearing Station where he died on March 9th. (Harry was buried in the Dernancourt Communal Cemetery Extension, Somme, France. Grave Reference VI C 33).

It is not known if Harry ever visited the Island, but post war Harry's parents had moved to Crane Lodge, Cranmore. Edward died in 1930 and his widow left the island. She died in Bournemouth in 1957.

From 9th April to 16th May the Battle of Arras took place. Fighting erupted on a long front to the east of Arras. The main aim remained unchanged, i.e. to break the German lines and then swing north towards the Belgian coast. By now the need to take the North Sea ports was becoming urgent. Submarines sailing from the ports of Zebrugge and Ostend were proving to be highly successful and allied shipping losses were huge. There was a serious risk that Britain might be starved into submission. The Royal Navy had to accept that it could not contain the threat on its own. Somehow they had to block submarines at the German-held Belgium ports. In addition the push

from Arras had a subsidiary aim, namely to divert German resources away from a French attack that took place further south, along the Chemin-Des-Dames.

The British gained some ground in front of Arras, but there was no break through. In addition the French attack was a total failure. French troops mutinied and refused to go forward. The British were forced to take over more of the trench line and indeed carry the main allied burden for the rest of the war. By some miracle the Germans did not learn of the French mutinies. Many leaders of the mutiny were tried and executed. The French Commander in Chief, Nivelle, was dismissed and replaced by General Petain.

At some point **William Charles Bradley (40)** was wounded in France, probably in the Arras sector of the line. William's parents were Charles Bradley, who had been born in Lyndhurst and Jane Thomas, who had been born in Beaulieu. The couple married in 1868. Charles earned his living as a gardener. The couple moved around the area, from Marchwood, to Eling, and then the Romsey area. Eventually, about 1875, the family moved to Wellow on the Island. William Charles was born in Wellow in 1877, one of 9 children.

Sometime before 1901 William moved to Northwood and lodged with a brother-in-law. During the final months of 1901 he married Frances Moorman of Marks Corner, in St John's Church, Northwood. At the time William was a bricklayer's labourer. The 1911 census records that William and his family of wife and four children lived at Marks Corner. At this time he was a foreman working for the District Council.

Perhaps William volunteered to join the army, it is more likely that he was conscripted. All that is known, is that at some point, William enlisted at Winchester, and that he joined the 2nd Battalion of the Wiltshire Regiment. On the 9th April 1917 the Wiltshires attacked the Hindenburg Line in front of Arras. The German defences were too strong and 16 officers and 363 other ranks were killed or wounded. The attack was renewed some 10 days later and fighting continued for

another week. Once again the attack failed. Private William Bradley was wounded, exactly when and where isn't known. He was taken behind the lines and was eventually sent back to England and indeed to his home. He died on the Island on 18th July 1917. (William lies buried in Northwood Cemetery, Cowes. Grave Reference 68732.)

Away from France, and the Western Front, Shalfleet men continued to die in the subsidiary theatres. Following the defeat at Gallipoli, many men had been evacuated to Alexandria, Egypt. Troops were rested, reorganised and, once again, sent into battle against the Turks, this time across the Suez Canal and into Ottoman held territory. The initial task was to defeat the Turks at Gaza, this proved to be a task that demanded three battles.

The first battle of Gaza, 26th March 1917, was an Allied success. However in the confusion of war the British actually withdrew. The second battle of Gaza lasted from 17th to 19th April...and this time the Turks won a resounding victory.

Amos Arthur Buckett (38) Robert Buckett had been born somewhere in the parish of Shalfleet, probably Newbridge. He became a bricklayer. In 1870 he married Zara (sic) Ann Hunt originally of Whippingham. The couple married in the Registry office, Newport and moved to Clay Lane, Newbridge where they had four children, Amos being the youngest.

As an adult, Amos followed in his father's footsteps and became a bricklayer. In 1900 he married Kate Wadham also in Newport Registry office. The couple moved to Laundry Road, Yarmouth and had five children

Amos enlisted as a rifleman in the 1/8th Battalion of the Hampshire Regiment. It is possible that Amos had fought at Gallipoli and he had been evacuated to Egypt. At some point he was wounded, presumably a wound sustained during the 2nd Battle of Gaza. Amos was taken to a major hospital centre at Alexandria. It was here, on

May 28th 1917, that he died of his wounds. (Amos was buried in the Alexandra, Hadra, War Memorial Cemetery, Egypt, Grave Reference D 136. He is also commemorated on Yarmouth's War Memorial.)

Changes were now made in Egypt and General Allenby was given command. The third battle of Gaza took place between 27th October and 7th November. This time it was an Allied success. The British finally broke the Turkish lines and the Allies started to advance through Palestine, now Israel. Lawrence of Arabia, who later spent time in Cowes and Calshot, led an Arab revolt on Allenby's right flank.

By November 1917 Allenby had reached the outskirts of Jerusalem. The Battle of Nebi Samwil took place between 14th to 21st November.



Cap badge of Isle of Wight Rifles

Benjamin Page Treloar * (36) Benjamin had been born in Portsmouth. For a short period, 1904 to 1907 he joined the Royal Navy. Sometime before 1911 he had moved to the Island where, in 1911, he was living as a boarder in 143 High Street, Ryde. Benjamin was working as a railway porter. On the declaration of war he was recalled to the Royal Navy. On 2nd October 1915, when on leave, he married Mildred Hannah Downer in St Michaels Church, Shalfleet and the couple set up home in Newbridge.



Benjamin served on a steam yacht off the Scottish coast. On 6th January 1916 the yacht H.M.Y "Hersilia" sank in a storm. Benjamin now transferred to the army and he enlisted in Edinburgh and joined the 2nd/4th battalion of the Hampshire Regiment. He was wounded at the battle of Arras and sent home to Newbridge, to recover. Once he was well, in September 1917, he was sent to Egypt where he took part

in the 3rd battle of Gaza. The Hampshires quickly moved north and Benjamin found himself on the outskirts of Jerusalem. The Battle of Nebi Samwil ended on 21st November. Benjamin was killed in action on 22nd November. The military success of the battle meant that the road to Jerusalem was now open and Allenby literally walked into the city on December 11th. (Benjamin was buried in the Jerusalem War Cemetery. Grave Reference G 89.) In early 1918 Mildred Emma Jane Treloar was born, the daughter of Benjamin and Hannah. Post war Hannah lived in the Malthouse, Newbridge.

Back at home, **Fredrick James Sheaff * (41)** died 4th July 1917. Frederick was a long standing able seaman serving in the Royal Navy. Frederick had been born in Barfreestone, Kent in 1876. Barfreestone is a small village just a few miles north of Dover. Little is known of his service, except that as an Able Seaman he had served on H.M.S. "Renown" and H.M.S. "Jupiter". In 1901 "Jupiter" was berthed in Gibraltar. He retired from the navy and in 1907 he married Rose Kate Hunt in Shalfleet. Rose was an Island girl. The couple had initially moved to Newbridge and they had three children, Bernard born 1907, Rita 1909 and Ronald 1917.

For a time Frederick was a coastguard at Atherfield. Circa 1913, they also spent some time in the Coast Guard Cottages at Yarmouth. Whilst there, they had suffered a personal tragedy when in May 1913 his son, Bernard, had drowned at Yarmouth Quay.

When war was declared, in 1914, Frederick was recalled to duty. About October 1916 he suffered a complete breakdown, which led to general paralysis, a paralysis that lasted some 8 months. It isn't known what triggered his breakdown. He had been committed to the Island's Lunatic Asylum (It isn't known where he was buried, presumably somewhere on the Island. He is not listed by the C.W.G.C. but Frederick's name appears on both the Shalfleet and Yarmouth War Memorials).

In 1921 his widow, Rose Kate is found living in the Malthouse, Newbridge, the same building occupied by Mildred Treloar.

Yet again attention was directed towards the Western Front. It was during one of the minor skirmishes that **William Harold Cleveland* (23)** was wounded. The parents of William were Charles Arthur and Lily Elizabeth Phebe Sawyer. They had married in Newport's Registry office in 1889. Charles had been born in Sydenham, then part of Kent. Lily had been born in Thorley in 1867. One source suggests she had been born at Lee Farm. It would appear that there was one child who had been born in Portsmouth in 1888. In 1891 the couple were living in Petticoat Lane, Carisbrooke. Charles was working as a railway plate layer and Lily was a railway crossing keeper. Another child was born in Carisbrooke. Between 1893 and 1895 the family moved to Stoney Lodge, Shalfleet. William was born in 1894, the address was now given as Ivy Cottage, Ningwood. As a teenager, William was apprenticed to a blacksmith. Family life changed dramatically when In 1906 Charles died. In 1907 Lily married again, this time to Arthur Henry Francis who had been born in Corfe Mullen, Dorset.

Sometime between 1907 and 1911 the whole family left the Island and set up home at 5, The Avenue, Railway Terrace Brockenhurst. Somehow William managed to continue his apprenticeship as a blacksmith.

Soon after war was declared, Kitchener made his famous appeal for volunteers. All over the country, thousands enlisted. William travelled to Poole and joined the newly formed 5th Battalion of the Dorset Regiment. This was a service battalion. After a period of training, the 5th Dorsets were sent to Gallipoli. Following the evacuation, the Dorsets were sent to Egypt. In July they sailed to Marseilles and from there were sent by train to the Western Front in Northern France. The Dorsets were heavily engaged near Thiepval on 26th and 27th September 1916. This was one of the worst parts of the whole Battle of the Somme. William would probably have fought in this action.

Near Beaucourt heavy fighting resumed during the winter of 1916/17 most. By now, two thirds of the Battalion had been killed or wounded.

At some point William was wounded. He was taken well behind the lines where he died, near Rouen, on January 26th 1917, aged 22. (William was buried in Boisguillaume Communal Cemetery, France. Grave reference 11. C. 10A)

The British now planned yet another major push. As always the aim was to break the German line, swing around to the Belgian coast and prevent German submarines entering the North Sea at Ostend and Zeeburgge. The scheme comprised of two parts. The first part was to take a ridge to the south of the Ypres salient. This was the highly successful Battle of Messines which commenced on 7th June 1917. The Battle of Messines morphed into the second, and much wider part, the Third Battle of Ypres...better known as Passchendaele.

Archibald John Harvey * (32) The Battle of Passchendaele lasted from 21st June until November 10th 1917 and Archibald was wounded in the abdomen on November 9th the day before the battle officially ended. He was taken back behind the lines where he died on 12th November.

John William Harvey had been born in Freshwater. In 1884 he married Jane Grace Baker in St Michael's Church, Shalfleet. John was a tenant farmer at Ningwood Green Farm. For reasons unknown John renamed the farm Palmers Farm....post 1945 the farm was renamed again when it became Green Farm. Six children were born, all of them female except the eldest, Archibald born at Palmers Farm in 1885. No doubt he walked the short distance to Ningwood School. It seems that Archibald had no wish to follow in his father's footsteps, the 1901 census tells us he was a Grocer's Apprentice.

On June 8th 1907, Archibald, now a grocer, left the Island and sailed for New York. He then made his way to Canada. When Britain declared war on August 4th 1914, thousands of empire troops immediately volunteered and Archibald, now a salesman, joined the

29th Battalion of the Canadian Infantry (British Columbia Regiment). The 29th Battalion was formed on October 29th and officially recognised on Nov 7th. Archibald joined at Esquimalt, British Columbia on November 15th. It appears that he was immediately given the rank of Lieutenant.

On 20th May 1915 the battalion sailed for England. Via Aldershot and Folkestone they finally arrived in Boulogne on 17th Sept 1915. They were then deployed in the Ypres Salient. In 1916 the Battalion took part in some of the fiercest fighting of the Battle of the Somme and in 1917, the battle of Arras at Vimy Ridge from there back to the Ypres salient at St Eloi. At some point Archibald was awarded an M.C.

The Canadians now took part in the third Battle of Ypres, Passchendaele. On the night of 6/7th November the battalion moved out of the front line and left the area on the 8th. One small group, company B, was left in the line. Lt Harvey was a member of B company. On November 9th he was shot in the abdomen. He was taken behind the lines to Poperinghe where he died on November 12th. (Archibald was buried in Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Poperinge, Belgium. Grave Reference XXVII. A.6. Post War, the Harvey family erected a plaque to his memory in St Michaels Church.)

Richard Henry Buckett (51) was somewhat older than most casualties, he had spent much of his working life at sea as a steward.

His parents, Andrew Buckett and Elizabeth Thearll, married in St Michaels Church, Shalfleet, in 1864. Andrew, born in Shalfleet village, was a bricklayer who, judging from the birthplace of his children, moved house between Ningwood (the birthplace of Elizabeth), Newbridge and Hamstead. In 1866, when Richard was born, the family were living at Ningwood Common where they remained for many years. There were five children, four of them daughters, who no doubt all attended the local school. In 1874 Andrew died of phthisis. Somehow the impoverished family continued to live on the Newport Road, Ningwood. In 1881 Richard, aged 14 and still at school,

is found as part of the family. For some reason he is listed under the name Henry, his second name. In 1911 Richard's mother died.

At some point, it is not known when, Richard joined the merchant navy as a steward. The suspicion is that he sailed out of Southampton. In 1894, he married Emily Jane Griffiths of Dorking in Surrey. They were married in Christ Church, Sandown. The couple had two children, Effie Ada Margaret Victoria born in the Cowes area in 1897 and Olive Una Louise born in the Calbourne area in 1901. Sadly Olive died aged 4 months. At the time the family were living at Marsh Farm, Newtown, Calbourne. The Census of March 31st, also confirms the fact that Emily's husband was a mariner at sea. In 1911 Emily and daughter Effie are found living at 30 Shirley Park Road, Southampton, presumably this made things easier when Richard was in his home port. Once again Richard was not at home when the census was taken on April 2nd 1911.

The next we hear of Richard is in association with the liner "Alcantara" She was launched in October 1913 and made her maiden voyage from Southampton to South America in June 1914. No doubt Richard was on board. In April 1915 the ship was requisitioned by the Admiralty and she was converted to an armed merchant ship. The ship was then sent to patrol the area north of Scotland and the North Sea. This was part of the major effort to blockade the German ports. On 26th Feb 1916, whilst 60 miles north of the Shetlands, the "Alcantara" encountered the German ship the "Grief". The fierce engagement ended with both ships being sent to the bottom. Some 230 men from the "Grief" died and some 68 from the "Alcantara". Royal Navy vessels arrived on the scene and picked up the survivors, including 210 Germans. Richard Buckett was one of the British survivors and he was later awarded a Distinguished Service Medal, D.S.M. for his actions assisting wounded survivors.

Richard now served on board the passenger ship "Stephen Furness". The ship had been built in Hartlepool and named after the ship owner

and local M.P. for the Hartlepool. At the outbreak of war the ship was requisitioned and converted to an armed boarding steamer, becoming His Majesties Armed Vessel H.M.A.V. "Stephen Furness". The ship took over the role of the "Alcantra" and operated out of Lerwick on the Shetlands. In December she was ordered to Liverpool for repairs. However on December 13th, off the Isle of Man, she was sunk by a torpedo fired by German submarine UB-64. 101 men were lost, including Richard Buckett.

Post war, Emily, Richard's widow, moved from Southampton to the Anchorage, Broughton, Stockbridge, Hampshire (Richard's name is recorded on the Plymouth Naval Memorial).

1918

When the New Year dawned in 1918 nobody could have guessed this would be the final year of the war. Huge developments had taken place and they continued to do so. Russia had withdrawn from the war and German troops had been moved from the eastern to the western front. America had declared war on April 2nd 1917 and "doughboys" were finally flooding into Europe, ...not that they were trained well enough to make any difference. The Germans prepared for an attack, hoping to break the allied lines before the American flood became effective and overwhelming. The Germans also hoped to break the Allied line, swing north and take the Allied ports of Dunkirk, Calais and Boulogne. This was more or less a mirror image of allied thinking. In the process the Germans hoped to split the French from the British and cut the flow of men and munitions from Britain.

On 21st March 1918, the Germans attacked, the so called Spring Offensive. The Allied line started to bend at the point where British and French troops met. The major aim was to drive a wedge between the allied forces. The British retreated and after nearly four years of fighting it seemed that the Germans were about to achieve their objectives and win the war. The Western Front started to bend, but it did not break. In something of a panic General Foch, of France, was

appointed supreme commander. Haig and the British army, now took its orders from the French. Fortunately the Germans initiative could not be sustained and by April the crisis was over.

Harry James Saunders * (24) Matthew Saunders, originally from Portsmouth married Kate, an island girl. They married in 1892 in St Mary's, Carisbrooke. The couple had five children. The eldest, Harry James, was born in Newport in 1893. At some point between 1893 and 1895. The family moved to the village of Shalfleet where Matthew became the miller at Shalfleet Mill. Harry grew up to work in the mill with his father.



When war was declared Harry found himself in the 593rd company of the Army Service Corp (A.S.C.) Service No M2/175960. This was a new A.S.C. company having been formed in October 1915. Its role was to move equipment, ammunition and stores, in particular heavy shells.

During the June quarter of 1916, probably on leave, Harry married Hilda May Bennett, originally from the Cowes area where she had been born in 1891. The couple married in Holy Spirit Church, Newtown. Hilda and her family lived in Port Vale, Porchfield Village, where her father was the local grocer. At some point the shop also acted as the local Post Office.

Harry found himself fighting in the Ypres area. For a short while, probably March 1918, he was at home on leave. He returned to the front and helped counter the German Spring Offensive. Harry was wounded on 12th April 1918. He was taken back behind the lines but died that same day. (Harry was buried Medingham Military Cemetery, Belgium. Grave Reference IX E 19. He was commemorated on both the Shalfleet and Porchfield Rolls of Honour.) Hilda May remarried in 1920. Her new husband was William Henry Moore and their address was given as the Post Office, Porchfield.

On 18th July, now supported by American troops, the Allies counterattacked. At long last the Allies advanced and they kept advancing, the so called Hundred Days. Germany was now in chaos; at home there was civil unrest. The British naval blockade of Germany was succeeding and the population was starving. The German Army and the German people knew they had been defeated.

On 29th September the military leaders Hindenburg and Ludendorff, in effect military dictators, told the Kaiser that the war had been lost. Power was handed over to civilian politicians. Quite cynically the politicians were to accept the blame for the defeat, not the military. This was the start of the travesty known as the stab in the back.

Mutinies broke out in different parts of the nation. On October 29th the navy was ordered to sea in a pointless, last minute attempt to engage the Royal Navy. On November 3rd the sailors at Kiel mutinied. On November 9th the Kaiser abdicated and fled into exile in neutral Holland. Aged 82 he died there in 1941. The new administration in Germany now signed an armistice document and after four years the Western Front fell silent on 11th November 1918.

Armistice 11th November 1918 to Peace Treaty 28th June 1919 and beyond.

The armistice of 11th November 1918 was not the end of the war. It was possible, if very unlikely, that the Germans might renew the offensive. Britain therefore maintained its naval blockade of Germany. To Britain's shame this meant that thousands of Germans, particularly children, died of starvation. The Peace Treaty was finally signed at Versailles on June 28th 1919.

The armistice required that the Germans immediately surrender their High Seas Fleet. Consequently, under the command of Admiral Ludwig von Reuter, 74 powerful German vessels duly arrived at Scapa Flow. Peace negotiations dragged on and the Commander of the German Fleet wrongly understood that talks were about to break down. On 21st June 1919 Reuter ordered the German Fleet should scuttle itself. 52 ships went to the bottom that day. 9 Germans were shot dead during the process. (Most of the ships were raised for scrap in the 1920's but to this day 7 of them remain under the waters of Scapa).

The guns may have fallen silent but the situation in Europe was chaotic. Between 1914 and 1918 the world had changed dramatically. In mainland Europe empires had collapsed and new nations had been created. Britain was no longer the world's dominant power, that role had been filled by America. There was considerable civil and military unrest in Britain, including a serious mutiny in Southampton. As if the post war political situation was not bad enough there had been an

outbreak of flu', the so called Spanish flu', in itself a misnomer. The flu' is now believed to have originated on a poultry farm in Kansas, America.

It is estimated that about 20 million were killed in the war and a further 21 million had been wounded. Of the 20 million dead about 1 million were from Britain and her Empire. In 1914 values Britain had spent some £3,251 billion. The final Great War loan was repaid as late as 2015. The 1918 flu' pandemic claimed an estimated 50 million lives. The suffering did not end in 1918.

James Marsh Wardroper (45) died on 27th March 1920. James was the son of Alfred and Sarah Wardroper. At the time, 1913 to 1929, Alfred Wardroper was the vicar of Shalfleet. His son James had been born in Needham Market, Suffolk in 1875. Never married, James had become a professional soldier, reaching the rank of major. James had survived the Boer War, the Great War and the flu' pandemic. Having survived all this he died in London of pneumonia. Was this was a complication resulting from flu'? His body was brought from London to Shalfleet and he was buried in the Wardroper family grave, Shalfleet.

For reasons that are not clear the death of James was included on Shalfleet's Roll of Honour, this was probably due to his father's influence. It is also curious to note that James name is included on the list of C.W.G.C. dead.

Perhaps the final name that should be noted is that of **Ernest Charles Sowerbutts (56)**. Ernest had been born in Manchester in 1874 and he became an agricultural lecturer. During the war he had served with the Lancashire Fusiliers. During the German advance of spring 1918 he was in charge of a food depot at Mezieres. As the Germans had entered one end of the village Ernest had re-entered the village from the other end, Ernest wanted to rescue some important paperwork. His wartime experiences led to a mental breakdown and he returned home unfit for work. The breakdown, if that what is was, continued post war. He turned his back on people and towns and took to the

road. He was not without means and at some point he bought an old coastguard boat and sailed the Solent. Circa 1924 onwards, he spent each summer in Shalfleet Creek. He berthed his boat opposite Crabb Cottage where the Mussel family lived. The locals welcomed and helped him, in particular Mrs Mussel. As winter approached Ernest would make his way back to Manchester, spending the Christmas period with family and friends. On 17th March 1930 he arrived back in Shalfleet, but died that very same day. His body was buried in Shalfleet's Churchyard. His name does not appear on the C.W.G.C lists or any Roll of Honour.

In September 1939 Britain found herself at war again. Many argue that, in reality, this was merely a continuation of the Great War.



Shalfleet Church looking West from what is now St Michaels Close; just before the Great War

