Upper Beeding
First World War
War Memorial

Researched by Ken Wilson-Wheeler,
23 Monks Walk, Upper Beeding.
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Upper Beeding World War One War Memorial

The memorial is situated in the south-east corner of the churchyard at The Sele Priory Church of St Peter-in-Beeding - Upper Beeding’s Parish Church, in Church Lane. It commemorates 29 men who gave their lives.

It is one of the all too many “unhelpful” ones, which show just the initials and surnames of the fallen. Obviously, when the memorial was erected, in the early 1920’s, the villagers knew who the men were. It was not then foreseen that the time would come when that would not be the case. Nowadays, ninety or so years on, few, if any, villagers know who they were.

The front cover of this identification of them shows the memorial as it is today, in need of at least a good cleaning. I understand that Upper Beeding Parish Council was considering some refurbishment work a few years ago but, sadly, those plans seem to “fallen by the wayside”. The memorial has a “title tablet” and three tablets which record the names of the fallen. My efforts to satisfactorily photograph the tablets were nowhere near as successful as I had hoped. In view of this I have reproduced the tablets in text format on the next page.

Most, but not all, of the men who are commemorated on the Small Dole war memorial are also commemorated on this memorial. (Small Dole is part of Upper Beeding Civil Parish.

The men who fell during the Second World War, are commemorated on a separate memorial, which is on the north wall, inside the church. Please see my similar document to this one for details of those men.
Title Tablet

| T.R BARBER | H. BROWN |
| A. COOK | D. COPELAND |
| W.J. COZENS | E. DRISCOLL |
| H. EARLEY | A.E. FINCH |
| C.F. FISH | H. FLOWERS |

First Names Tablet

| C. GROVES | F. HOLDEN |
| F. HILL | S. MARTIN |
| J. MAY | A.H. NEWMAN |
| L.G. POINTING | E. RANSOM |
| R.H.S. SLOAN | R. SAWYER |

Second Names Tablet

| F. TULLETT | A. TICKNER |
| A. VIRGO | W.B. WATSON |
| S.M. WATSON | F. WITTEN |
| T. WITTEN | }
First World War service records

The service records of army other ranks, who served during the First World War, were kept in a warehouse repository in Arnside Street, London, SE17. They were very much “weeded” in the 1930’s. A considerable number of pages were removed from individual files in the course of that process, on the basis that it was considered no longer necessary to retain the information recorded on them. A considerable amount of information was thus forever “lost”. Even more information was then lost in December 1940, when a Luftwaffe bomber accidentally dropped a bomb on that repository, which was not its intended target. It is not known how many records were stored there at the time of the bombing, but it is estimated that only somewhere between 35% and 42% of the records survived the resulting fire and / or the water used to extinguish it.

The loss of records has inevitably meant that I have been unable to find out very much about some of the men who are commemorated on the memorial.

Officers’ service records were stored elsewhere and were, thus, unaffected by the bombing mishap. They were, however, similarly “weeded” during the 1930’s, with the loss of some of the information contained in them. In some cases the files were, perhaps, “weeded” to the point of extinction or have been lost, neither the Ministry of Defence, nor the National Archives having any record of what happened to them. Naval records were also stored elsewhere and were not “weeded”.

First World War campaign medals

For information purposes I have included details of the campaign medals and the memorial plaque and scroll, which were posthumously awarded to the casualties. These medals would have been sent to their next of kin in the early 1920’s. They are as follows:

1914 Star

This bronze medal was awarded only to those who served in France and Belgium between the outbreak of war on 4th August 1914 and 22nd November 1914, this latter date being the one on which the first Territorial Force men arrived in France and Belgium. Thus, those who qualified for the medal were nearly all men of the pre-war Regular Army – the so-called “Contemptible Little Army”.

Additionally, a clasp to the medal was awarded to those who actually served within range of the enemy’s mobile artillery between those dates. The original intention was that the clasp should be awarded to those who had actually served under enemy fire but, in the course of the compilation of the conditions of qualification for the award, that intention got “watered down” to “serving within range of the enemy’s mobile artillery” – with no requirement to have been on the receiving end of any enemy fire, whether or not that was artillery or small arms fire. Those who served back from the “Front Line” did not qualify for the clasp.

The rolls for those qualifying for the clasp were compiled by the units in which the men were serving when they landed in France or Belgium. It is apparent that many men who had qualified for the clasp were overlooked and, thus, it was not awarded to them (nor sent to their next of kin). There was, in any case, no provision for the next of kin to apply for the clasp. The usual reasons for the oversight were that the men in question were no longer serving with their “parent” unit. There were multitudinous reasons for their absence from their unit and these included:
• Subsequent transfer to another unit for whatever reason,
• death be that having been killed in action / died of wounds (or disease), honourable discharge on the grounds of being physically unfit for further military service,
• and, in the case of pre-war regular soldiers, having completed the length of service time for which they had signed-up and choosing not to re-enlist for the remainder of the war, although, with conscription being introduced in 1916, there was no guarantee that their military service had ended.

1914/15 Star

This bronze Star was awarded to all those who served in an area of active operations in 1914 or 1915, thus recognising the fact that recipients were either pre-war service men and women or those who had responded to the call to volunteer to serve “King and Country”.

British War Medal

This silver medal was awarded to all those who had left their home country and had served overseas. Additionally, however, all Royal Navy personnel received the medal on the basis of their being mobilised, without the requirement of overseas service.

Allied Victory Medal

The design of this gilt-plated bronze medal was, basically, the same for all of the Allied Countries. It was awarded to all recipients of the 1914 and 1914/1915 Star and most of those who had qualified for the British War Medal. Service in an area of active operations was a qualification requirement. Thus, it was not awarded to those who had served only in the United Kingdom, its dominions and / or colonies, nor was it awarded to those who had served in the base areas of France and Belgium, well back from the “Front Line”.

Memorial Plaque

These bronze plaques, 120mm in diameter, and a parchment scroll were given to the next of kin of all service personnel, who had lost their lives during, or as a result of, their war service. Thus, they were given to the next of kin of all the village’s First World War casualties.

The Silver War Badge

This wasn’t a medal. It was a silver, circular, lapel badge, which was awarded to men who, for a wide variety reasons (including wounds and ill health), had been honourably discharged from the armed services. This was done because people were in the habit of presenting to men who, they thought, were of a suitable age and physical ability to have volunteered to fight for king and country, a white feather – a symbol of cowardice.

The Commemorated Men

22282 LANCE CORPORAL THOMAS RICHARD BARBER, ROYAL DEFENCE CORPS

The eldest son of Henry and Harriett (née Hurst) Barber, Thomas was born in 1875 and originally lived in the Newhaven area. Thomas enlisted into the Grenadier Guards on 6 February 1894, on a short service engagement (seven years with the Colours & five in the Reserve), giving his occupation on enlistment as milkman. During his service with the Grenadier Guards he achieved a 3rd Class Certificate of Education and received one Good
Thomas and Helena Barber’s existing grave stones (viewed from the foot of the grave).
Helena’s memorial inscription is on the right hand stone.

The headstone, which has fallen over and is lying on its back.
Conduct Badge. His only overseas service appears to have been 129 days service in Gibraltar in 1898, returning to the United Kingdom on 11 November 1898. Thomas was, however, prematurely discharged on 10 February 1899, as he had been found medically unfit for further service due to dental problems. It appears that, whilst serving in the United Kingdom, he had met his future wife, Helena Long, a Londoner whom he married in London in the summer of 1899.

The 1901 Census shows Thomas as a Chalk Quarryman, living at South Heighton, which is a short distance north of Newhaven. The 1911 Census shows him as a quarryman, living at 43 Dacre Gardens, Upper Beeding. The Dacre Gardens properties were the “tied cottages” of the former (and now long closed) cement works. By then, he had three children; two sons (Henry (1899-1970), & Frederick (1907-1987), and a daughter Evelyn (1905-1990)).

As an old soldier Thomas clearly wanted to “do his bit” following the outbreak of the First World War and enlisted into the 4th (Reserve) Battalion of the Royal Sussex Regiment on 9 November 1914 as 22282 Private T. R. Barber. The information contained in his service record indicates that he certainly didn’t serve overseas and that most of his time in the army was spent in the camp in Buckingham Park, Shoreham-by-Sea, with promotion to Lance Corporal coming on 29th January 1915. It also suggests that inclement weather whilst living under canvas for well over a year had a detrimental effect on his health. As a result of this he was transferred on 29 April 1916 to the Royal Defence Corps, an home service only unit not entirely dissimilar to the Second World War’s Home Guard. On 28th August 1916 he was discharged from the army as medically unfit for further service, being considered to be terminally ill. He was awarded a Silver War Badge but, apparently, not until July 1920! In fact, however, Thomas never knew about this as he had “lingered on” for about two and a half years, before dying at home, 43 Dacre Gardens, on 8th February 1919.

He was buried in the churchyard at the Priory Church of St Peter-in-Beeding. His grave is situated to the right of the church door (as you approach that door), just past and to the right of a tall conical tree, at the top of the downward sloping, often neglected and frequently overgrown part of the churchyard. The grave has a low “family” headstone commemorating Thomas, with Helena, who died on 13th April 1962, aged 86, being separately commemorated on one of the kerb stones.

It appears that the Commonwealth War Graves Commission was aware that Thomas had died but had no information as to where he was buried. Having located his grave in the course of my researches I arranged for details of the location to be passed to the Commission. They subsequently inspected the grave and did not, given its poor and neglected condition, consider it to be a satisfactory and fitting memorial to a man who had given his life for his country. They are planning to erect one of their own headstones on the grave but, as I write this, those plans have yet to come to fruition.

With no overseas service, Thomas didn’t qualify for any medals.

Photographs of the family grave are on pages 7 & 9.

Helena Barber’s memorial inscription - it is 1.65m long and necessitated two photographs.
ALSO HIS WIFE HELENA BARBER DIED APRIL 13TH 1962 AGED 86
212568 Gunner Henry Brown, “B” Battery, 37th Brigade, Royal Field Artillery

Henry enlisted in Hove and resided in Small Dole. He was the son of George and Mary Brown of Upper Beeding. The 1911 Census shows him as a farm carter, living in the High Street, Upper Beeding, with his widowed father, his elder brother, Albert, his younger brother, John, his cousin, Joe Brown. All of them are shown as farm workers and Henry’s younger sister was also living with them as their housekeeper.

He died aged 32, on Sunday 6th October 1918 in Alexandria, Egypt. Given that Henry was apparently serving in Egypt late on in the war and is simply shown as “Died” (i.e. not “Killed in Action” or “Died of Wounds”), I think it likely that he died of disease or some other natural cause(s) or, possibly, as a result of an accidentally sustained injury or injuries. In view, however, of the fact that his service record apparently did not survive the 1940 bombing raid (see page 5) it is impossible to be certain as to his cause of death. Although he died in Alexandria, Egypt, he is buried in gave CC. 21 Ramleh Military Cemetery, Israel, being one of a number of men who were exhumed after the end of the war and re-interred in that cemetery. I understand that Henry was known locally as “Harry Brown of Horton Hall”. So, presumably, he was working on that farm and that is why he is also commemorated on the Small Dole War Memorial.

Henry was awarded the British War Medal and Victory Medal, not having gone overseas until 1916 or later.

1985 Sergeant Arthur Douglas Crook, 1st Battalion, The Rifle Brigade (The Prince Consort’s Own)

The memorial records the name “A. Cook” but I have been unable find any trace of an Upper Beeding casualty of that name. I am sure that the name is misspelt and should read “A. Crook” and that the casualty of that name is the above-named Arthur, who is also commemorated on the Small Dole war memorial as “A. Crook”. (Small Dole is, of course, part of the civil parish of Upper Beeding.)

Arthur is shown as having been born, enlisted, & resided in Brighton (most Small Dole army casualties appear to have been recorded as being Brighton men), although, he must have had some connection with Small Dole to have been commemorated on the Upper Beeding and Small Dole War Memorials. Born in about 1889, Arthur was the son of Herbert H. and Martha Jane Crook of Brighton. Herbert, who was a shoeing smith by trade, appears to have died at some point between 1901 and 1907. Arthur had previously served in the militia (1st Volunteer Battalion, the Royal Sussex Regiment) and joined the Rifle Brigade as a “regular” soldier on 7th March 1907, giving his civilian
trade as a milkman. He “signed on” for the usual seven years “with the colours” to be followed by five years as a part-time reservist soldier. He would, therefore, have reverted to civilian life on 7th March 1914, probably living and or working in Small Dole. He would have been recalled to full time army service when war broke out in August 1914.

Arthur died of wounds (a gunshot wound to the head, almost certainly caused by a rifle or machine gun bullet) on Wednesday 28th April 1915, and is buried in grave II.D.3, Vlamertinghe Military Cemetery, Belgium.

He was awarded the 1914 Star and clasp, British War Medal and Victory Medal, having landed in France on 23 August 1914.

T/203741 Private Dick Copeland, 6th Battalion, Queens (Royal West Surrey) Regiment
(Formerly Private, 2145 The Royal Sussex Regiment)

Born in Upper Beeding in 1897, Dick was the son of Richardson and Selina Copeland, and lived in The Nurseries, Gravel Lane, Upper Beeding. He attended Steyning Grammar School and is also commemorated on the School’s War Memorial.

Dick enlisted in Steyning and served on the Western Front. He was killed in action on Wednesday 28th August 1918 and, having no known grave, he is commemorated on Panel 3 of the Vis-en-Artois memorial (to the missing), Pas de Calais, France.

He was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal, not having gone overseas until 1916 or later.

G/3306 Lance Corporal William James Cozens, 9th (Service) Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment

Born in Pyecombe in about 1887, William was the eldest son of William and Rebecca (née Hopkins) Cozens. The 1901 Census shows William (Senior) as a farm worker living in Edburton with Rebecca and their four daughters and two sons. By the time of the 1911 Census some of the children had “flown the nest” and others, including William, had moved to Erringham Valley, Shoreham.

William (Junior) must have responded to the call to volunteer to “serve King and Country” and enlisted in Worthing. He landed in France on 31st August 1915, thus qualifying him for the 1914/15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal. He died of wounds on 9th October 1916 and is buried in grave I. E. 8 Barlin Communal Cemetery Extension, Pas de Calais, France.
020829 Private Edward Driscoll, Royal Army Ordnance Corps
Edward was apparently born in Wincanton, Somerset, in 1877 and subsequently moved to 2 Adur Villas, Upper Beeding, where he lived with his wife, Florence, née Smith, whom he married in Edmonton, London, in 1901. I have, however, been unable to find any further information about his early life.

He enlisted in Worthing on 4th August 1916 and was a blacksmith by trade. Edward was discharged from the army on 16th September 1918 as being medically unfit for further military service due to severe anaemia. He died in the Royal Sussex County Hospital, Brighton, on 11th September 1918 following surgery on a stomach condition. I understand that he was buried in St Peter’s Churchyard, Upper Beeding, probably in the now rather neglected part of the churchyard at the eastern end of the church. I also understand that, at one time, there was a headstone commemorating him but this has long since been removed, leaving the grave unmarked and untraceable.

Edward was awarded a British War Medal and a Victory Medal for his services overseas. He was also awarded a Silver War badge on his discharge from the army in September 1918.

41887 Sapper Harry Walter Herbert Earley, 130th Field Company, Royal Engineers
Born in Worthing in 1895, Edward was the eldest son of Hedley Herbert and Beatrice Elizabeth (née Burgess) Earley of 2 Dacre Gardens, Upper Beeding. The 1911 Census shows him as an electrician’s mate in the cement works which, perhaps, explains why he served in the Royal Engineers. Harry answered the call to serve king and country and enlisted in Brighton. He died of wounds on 22nd November 1916, aged 21. He is buried in grave III. A. 215, Bailleul Communal Cemetery, Extention, Nord, France. He was awarded the 1914/15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal, having served overseas, initially in Egypt from 12th July 1915.

25547 Sergeant Alfred Edward Finch M.M., 12th Battalion, Sherwood Foresters (Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire Regiment)
Alfred was born in Steyning in 1876 and was the son of George and Elizabeth (née Wintle) Finch of White Horse Lane. He married Rhoda Brooker, a Henfield girl, in 1899. The 1911 Census shows them living at 6 Castletown, Upper Beeding, with their two young sons, George and Alfred. It also shows that Alfred was a chalk quarryman, presumably at the cement works.

He answered the call to serve king and country and enlisted in Hove, serving in France from 29th August 1915. In 1916 Alfred was awarded the Military Medal “For Bravery In The Field”. This was promulgated in The London Gazette of 11th October 1916. Unfortunately the citations for that medal
were discarded many years ago and it is, thus, now impossible to find out what his brave deed was. In addition to that medal he was awarded the 1914/15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal. Alfred was killed in action in Belgium on 1st September 1917 and is buried in grave I. G. 36 Voormezeele Enclosures Cemetery near Ypres (now known as Ieper), Belgium.

G/23816 Private Frederick Charles Fish, 7th (Service) Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment

He was born in Small Dole in about 1900 as Charles Frederick Fish but served as Frederick Charles Fish. He was the fourth child of James and Mary Ann (née Hazelgrove) Fish. The 1911 Census shows the family living in the High Street, Bramer although his parents subsequently moved to “The Rosary” (now called “Tall Chimneys”) in Upper Beeding High Street. Charles enlisted in Chichester and was killed in action on Wednesday 18th September 1918. He is buried in grave 11. B1. 1 Epehy Wood Farm Cemetery, Somme, France. He was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal, not having gone overseas until 1916 or later.

“Charlie Fish”

2nd Lieutenant (Temporary) Herbert Flowers, 8th Battalion, Queens Own (Royal West Kent Regiment)

Herbert, who was born in Steyning in 1879, was the son of a solicitor, George Arthur Flowers and Kate, née Cripps, a Steyning girl. By the time of the 1881 Census the family had moved to 8 Salisbury Road, Hove. The 1891 Census shows Herbert as a pupil at what appears to be a small, privately run boarding school in 84 & 85 Buckingham Road, Brighton, whilst his parents and some of his siblings were still living at the same address in Hove. Kate died in 1898 and the 1901 Census shows Herbert, his father and Herbert’s older sister, Annie, living in a house called “The Knells” in Henfield Road, Upper Beeding, close to The Towers, which was then still a private house. Herbert was then a solicitor’s articled clerk. They were still living there at the time of the 1911 Census. By then Herbert was apparently a qualified solicitor and his younger brother, John, who was barrister at law had returned to the family home.

Herbert enlisted into the 18th (Service) Battalion (1st Public Schools Battalion) of the Royal Fusiliers in the early months of the war and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant into the 8th Battalion of the Queen’s Own (Royal West Kent Regiment). He apparently didn’t go over to France until 1916 as he was awarded the British War Medal and Victory Medal, but not the 1914/15 Star. Herbert was killed in action on either the 31 August or 1 September 1916 – the exact date varies from record to record. Whichever day it was it was a doubly sad time for the family - Herbert’s, 20-year-old nephew, John Arthur Flowers, who was serving as a Second Lieutenant, in the Royal Sussex Regiment, was also killed action, on 1 September 1916. Hebert is buried in grave XXX. I. 1 in Deville
Wood Cemetery, Longueval, Somme, France and is also commemorated on the Steyning War Memorial. John has no known grave and is commemorated on the Arras Memorial (to the missing), Pas de Calais, France.

Sergeant Charles Groves, 1st Battalion, Northumberland Fusiliers

I have been unable to find very much information about his early life beyond the fact that he was born in Upper Beeding in about 1885, and was the son of William and Ellen Groves of Upper Beeding. The 1901 Census shows him as “Charlie”, a 16-year-old apprentice civil engineer and still living in the village. The 1911 Census, however, shows him serving in the army as a 26-year-old Lance Corporal, having enlisted in Steyning. By outbreak of war in 1914 he had been promoted to Sergeant. He was one of the earliest British soldiers to go overseas, arriving in France on 13th August 1914. Sadly, less than a month later, he became the village’s first casualty of the war, dying of wounds on Sunday 6th September 1914. Charles is buried in grave III. A. 2 in Frameries Communal Cemetery, Frameries, Hainaut, Belgium. He was awarded the 1914 Star and clasp (please see the notes on page 5 regarding this), British War Medal and Victory Medal.

18430 Private Fred Hill, 2nd Battalion, Coldstream Guards

Very little is known about Fred’s early life. He was apparently born in Westhampnet, near Chichester in April 1881. The next information about him is that at the time of the 1901 Census he was living and working as a gardener in Saddlescombe, in the parish of Newtimber. Saddlescombe is on the South Downs, east of Fulking and north of Brighton, more or less “behind” and below the Devils Dyke. He married May Dean, an Upper Beeding girl, in Henfield Parish Church on 21st December 1901. The couple had three children: Fred (Junior), who was born in Pulborough on 21st November 1904; Mabel, who was born there on 17th May 1909; and Frank who was born in “Steyning” on 31st March 1913. The 1911 Census shows the family as living in Castletown, Upper Beeding. So that may be where Frank was actually born. Fred was still working as gardener at the time of the Ensus. With conscription looming in 1916, Fred enlisted in Hove into the Coldstream Guards on 12th November 1915, again giving Castletown as his home address and his occupation as gardener.

Fred was killed in action on 1st August 1917, the second day of the Third Battle of Ypres (more usually known as Passchendaele), when his battalion suffered 4 officers killed, 4 wounded and 175 other ranks, killed, wounded, or missing in action. He has no known grave and is, therefore, commemorated on panel 11 of the Menin Gate Memorial (to the missing) in Ypres (now known as Ieper), West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. Not having gone overseas until 1916 (or later) Fred was awarded the British War Medal and Victory Medal.
Gunner Frederick John Holden, 122\textsuperscript{nd} Siege Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery

Frederick was killed in action on 23\textsuperscript{rd} March 1918 and, having no known grave, is commemorated on panel 10 of the Pozieres Memorial (to the missing), Somme, France.

I have been unable to find any definite information as to his parents and his connection with the village. “Soldiers Died in the Great War”, however, records that he was born and enlisted in Brighton. For some unknown reason, that publication so records most of the Small Dole casualties and, on that basis, I have been able to identify only one Frederick John Holden, who was born in Brighton and was of a suitable age of have seen active service during the First World War. In the light of this, I can only assume that he must have moved to Small Dole at some stage after the 1911 Census.

The Frederick John Holden, whom I have identified, was born in Brighton in 1883, the son of John and Ellen Holden. The 1901 Census shows him as a 17-year-old postman. He married Grace Violet Coe, a Brighton girl, in Brighton in 1907. The 1911 Census shows Frederick still working as a Brighton postman and living in 37 Shanklin Road, Brighton, with his wife, Grace, and 3-year-old son William John.

Frederick was awarded the British War Medal and Victory Medal. This would tie in with his having been conscripted as a married man in 1916 or 1917. He is also commemorated on the Small Dole war memorial.

S. Martin

I have been unable to identify this man for certain. I believe that he may have been: TF/265852 Private / Acting Corporal / Lance Sergeant Stanley Martin, 2\textsuperscript{nd} / 6\textsuperscript{th} (Cyclist) Battalion, the Royal Sussex Regiment. Although I suspect that he probably was that man, given his enlistment as Territorial Force soldier in Brighton, I have been unable to find any evidence to confirm it.

“Soldiers Died in the Great War” records Stanley as having been born in Mile End, Middlesex, enlisted in Brighton, and having died in India on 16\textsuperscript{th} November 1918. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission “Debt of Honour” database has Stanley as having died on 10\textsuperscript{th} November 1918, whilst attached to the 1\textsuperscript{st} Battalion, 7\textsuperscript{th} Ghurkha Rifles, and commemorated on Face H of the Kirkee 1914-1918 Memorial. That memorial commemorates 1,807 First World War casualties who are buried in various civil and cantonment cemeteries in India and Pakistan where their graves can no longer be properly maintained. The discrepancy regarding his date of death could, perhaps, be the result of poor handwriting being misread?

The same database records Stanley as being the 24-year-old (when he died) son of Arthur and
Harriet Martin of 79, Godwin Road, Forest Gate, London. The 1911 Census shows the family living in 19, Vicarage Lane, Stratford, West Ham, Essex and Stanley’s occupation as being a 17-year-old wharf labourer.

**650 Corporal (Temporary Sergeant) John May, 4th Battalion, Australian Imperial Forces**

John, who was born in Upper Beeding in 1894, was the eldest son of John Henry May, who worked at the Cement Works and Katherine Frances May (née Hill). The 1911 Census shows the family living at 11 Dacre Gardens and John (Junior’s) occupation as a shepherd at Beeding Court Farm.

At some point between then and August 1914 John (Junior) emigrated to Jindera, New South Wales, Australia. He enlisted into the Australian Imperial Force in Sydney on 27 August 1914, giving his occupation as a groom. His initial overseas active service was on the Gallipoli peninsula in April 1915. He suffered a gunshot wound to his scalp on 18th July 1915. This must have been a serious injury as he was invalided to a hospital on the island of Malta and didn’t rejoin his comrades-in-arms until 2nd January 1916, after British and Imperial forces had abandoned military action on Gallipoli and had left the peninsular. After this his battalion was transferred to the Western Front, in France. John was killed in action and, having no known grave, is commemorated on Villers-Bretonneux Memorial (to the missing), Somme, France.

John was awarded the 19145/15 Star, The British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

**19757 Private Albert Charles Newman, 2nd (formerly 4th) Battalion, South Wales Borderers**

He is, however, recorded in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission’s database as Alfred Henry, the 17-year-old son of Albert and Ada Newman of 35 Dacre Gardens, Upper Beeding.

Given that he was only 17 years old when he was killed in action on 21st October 1916, it appears that he must have been one of the many teenagers who gave false information about their name and true age, etc when he enlisted in Brighton. “Soldiers Died in the Great War” shows his birthplace as Pontypridd, Monmouthshire, but the 1911 Census shows it as being Eastleigh, Hampshire and his true first name, as a 13-year-old schoolboy. Alfred / Albert was killed in action on Saturday 21st October 1916. Having no known grave, he is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial (to the missing), Somme, France. He apparently didn’t go overseas until 1916 and was awarded the British War Medal and Victory Medal.

**2408 Gunner Leslie Gordon Pointing, 80th Battery, 15th Brigade, Royal Field Artillery**

Born in Brighton in about 1896, Leslie was the son of Annie Pointing. The 1911 Census shows Annie as the sub-postmistress at Small Dole, and Leslie as a telegraph messenger. They were living (with several boarders) in the Post Office.
Leslie responded to the request to serve king and country and enlisted in Brighton in 1914. He died of wounds on 15th September 1918 and is buried in grave R.III.E15, St Sever Cemetery Extension, Rouen. He is also commemorated on the Small Dole War memorial. Having retired from the Post Office, Annie subsequently lived in 37 Shanklin Road, Brighton.

Having served in France from 16th February 1915 Leslie was awarded the 1914/15 Star, The British War Medal, and the Victory Medal.

L/6855 Private Edward Alfred Ransom, 7th (Service) Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment (Previously of the 2nd Battalion)

Born in Newhaven in 1884, Edward was the son of James T. and Fanny (née Phillips) Ransom. The 1901 Census shows Edward as living in 11 Lewes Road, Newhaven, with his parents and siblings and working as a labourer in a whiting factory. He married Nellie Elizabeth Parker, a Portsde girl, in Newhaven in 1908. The 1911 Census shows the couple living with their 2-year-old daughter, Violet, in 34 Dacre Gardens, and Edward working as a labourer in the cement works.

Edward must have enlisted into the army at some point between 1911 and 1914; he arrived with the 2nd Battalion in France on 31st August 1914. He thus qualified for the 1914 Star, British War Medal, and the Victory Medal. He was probably also entitled to a clasp (see page 5, above) to his 1914 Star, but this does not appear to have been awarded to him. This was probably because, with his having transferred to the 7th Battalion those who compiled the roll for the 2nd Battalion failed to include him in the roll for the clasp. The men of the 7th Battalion were not entitled to it and there was no provision enabling the next of kin of the fallen to apply for the clasp.

Edward was killed in action on 3rd March 1916 and, having no known grave, is commemorated on the Addenda Panel of the Loos Memorial (to the missing), Pas de Calais, France. Nellie appears to have gone back to live in Newhaven after his death. She would have had to have moved out of the Dacre Gardens property as it was a “tied cottage”.

G/8120 Pte Richard John Sawyer, 9th (Service) Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment

Born in Maidstone, Kent, in 1875, Richard was the son of another Richard John Sawyer of 14 Station Road, Northfleet, Kent. (Further details are uncertain.) The 1911 Census shows him a lodger, living with the Dance family in 33 Dacre Gardens, Upper Beeding, and working as a kiln loader at the cement works.
Richard enlisted as a volunteer to serve king and country in early November 1915, with conscription looming in 1916. He gave his age as 39 years & no months and his occupation as a stoker at the cement works. He appears to have competed his military training in late March 1916 and to have joined the Battalion on 10th April. He was apparently wounded on 15 October 1916 and invalided back to a base hospital in Boulogne, rejoining his battalion on 25th November. He was killed in action on Tuesday 27th March 1917 and is buried in grave I. D. 8 in Aix-Roulette Communal Cemetery Extention, Pas de Calais, France. Richard was awarded the British War Medal and Victory Medal.

123947 Shoeing Smith Charles Edward Sheppard, “C” Battery, 187th Brigade, Royal Field Artillery

Charles, who was born in Fulking in 1892, was the son Charles and Amelia Ruth (née Costick) Sheppard, and is shown on the 1911 Census as a general labourer. The family was then living in “Briar Cottage, near Hassocks” at the time of that census. Charles (Junior’s) mother had passed away in 1906 and the census his maiden aunt Alice Rhoda Sheppard (1872-1946) acting as housekeeper. The family apparently, moved back to the Small Dole area at some stage after that.

Charles enlisted in Hove, becoming a Shoeing Smith. A lot of army transport, weapons, etc. were still horse-drawn and his skills as such would have been much in demand. He married Frances Sarah F. Franks in 1917.

Charles died of wounds in Belgium on 6 Sunday 6th October 1918 and is buried grave XXX. A. 19 in Lijssethoek Military Cemetery, Poperinge, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. He is also commemorated on the Small Dole and Edburton War Memorials, the latter memorial, which is situated outside St Andrew’s Parish Church, Edburton, is, effectively, the Fulking War Memorial. That memorial, however, has deteriorated so much over the years that it is now almost impossible to read the names of the fallen. He was awarded the British War Medal and Victory Medal.

Beeding and Bramber Local History Society holds an undated photograph showing “Mrs and Miss Shepherd” (sic, but subsequently overwritten as Sheppard) at Small Dole Post Office, which Alice ran from 1924, or sooner until at least 1938. It is difficult to say who “Mrs Shepherd” was. Given, however, that Frances was a young woman, only 20 or 21 years of age when she was widowed and had no children it is unlikely that she would have qualified for an army widow’s pension and would have needed an income. I think it likely that she was “Mrs Shepherd”. I cannot be sure about this as “Mrs Shepherd” might have been Mrs Florence Shepherd, the wife of Charles Edward’s younger brother, Frederick Henry Sheppard. Florence, however, is perhaps a less likely possibility as she had two children to look after. Frances remarried in 1928, becoming Mrs Arthur F. Richards.
L/10094 Corporal Robert Henry Stewart Sloan D.C.M., 2nd Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment.

Born in Brighton in 1894, Robert was the son of Frederick Percival (known as “Percy”) and Ellen Eliza (née Wingfield) Sloan. The 1911 Census shows the family living in St Botolphs Vicarage Cottage, near Steyning, and Robert’s occupation as “milker on farm”. He obviously decided, however, that farming wasn’t for him and he enlisted into the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Sussex Regiment in Chichester at some point between 1911 and 1914.

The battalion landed in France on 12th August 1914, one of the first British battalions to go overseas.

In 1916 Robert was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal. This was promulgated in the London Gazette of 19th August 1916, with the citation reading as follows: “For conspicuous gallantry when assisting to hold a captured enemy post against several heavy counter-attacks. He showed great coolness, and set a fine example to those around him.”

Robert died, aged 22, of wounds on Monday 24th July 1916, and is buried in grave I. C. 132 in Daours Communal Cemetery Extention, Somme, France.

As well as the Distinguished Conduct Medal, he was awarded the 1914 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal. Robert was probably entitled to Aug-Nov clasp to his 1914 Star but I have been unable to find any evidence that it was awarded. (Please see the above information regarding this in the Campaign Medals section of this document)

14743 Corporal Frank Symes, “D” Battery, 86th Brigade, Royal Field Artillery.

Frank, the son of Samuel and Mary Symes, was born in Hampshire in 1895. Mary died in about 1903 and Samuel married Emma Ferris in 1907. The 1911 Census shows the family living in Upper Beeding and Frank’s occupation as a grocer’s assistant.

He apparently enlisted in Brighton as a volunteer in the army and went over to France on 8th July 1915. He was killed in action, aged 23, on 5th November 1918 and is buried in grave B.21 in Fontaine-au-Bois Communal Cemetery, near Le Cateau, Nord, France. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission’s Debt of Honour database shows him as the son of Samuel and Emma Symes of the Manor House, Upper Beeding. That is not entirely correct – Emma was his stepmother.

Frank was awarded the 1914/15 Star, the British War Medal, and the Victory medal.
Frank had an older brother, Harry, who emigrated to Canada and served in the 16th Battalion of the
Canadian Infantry, the Manitoba Regiment, dying in Canada on 25th July 1920 as a result of his army service.

**2989 Private Arthur Clement Job Tickner, 1st/4th Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment**

Arthur, who was born in Steyning, was the son of Francis Charlwood Tickner and Alice (née Budd), an Upper Beeding girl. They ran a grocer’s shop / general store in Upper Beeding High Street but subsequently moved to Adur House, Riverside, Upper Beeding.

Arthur enlisted in Brighton and died of wounds in France on Sunday 3rd September 1916, aged 18.

He is buried in Grave 1. A. 21 in Acheux British Cemetery, Somme, France. I understand that he is also commemorated on Steyning Grammar School Memorial.

He was awarded the British War Medal and Victory Medal.

**21776 Petty Officer Frank Tullett, Royal Navy**

Frank, who was born in Nuthurst, Sussex, on 26th August 1884, was the second son of Henry and Louisa (née Baytop) Tullett. The family had moved to Steyning by the time of the 1901 Census, which shows Frank as a carter on a farm. His father was then a stockman on a farm. By the time of the 1911 Census Henry was a publican (beer retailer) in Small Dole.

Frank joined the Royal Navy as a 17-year-old Boy Entrant on 21st October 1901 (the 76th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar), giving his civilian occupation as a labourer. He served on board various ships and shore postings, joining his last ship, H.M.S. Bulwark, on 11th August 1914. He was accidentally killed aboard that ship on 26 August 1914, thus being the village’s first casualty of the war.

At 7.50 a.m. on that fateful morning the ship was anchored at no. 17 buoy in Kethole Reach, Sheerness, Kent. She had taken on further ammunition supplies and these were being stored in magazines. It was never established exactly what happened but it was thought to be as follows: A sheet of flame was seen by an eyewitness and this was followed a few seconds later by a massive explosion. This tore the ship apart and she sank. The process of storing the ammunition involved the magazine doors to be open and temporarily moving some cordite charges and placing them in a passageway. To make matters worse it was common practice to store a quantity of shells outside the magazines so that they were readily available for instant use. If the cordite charges had been placed too close to a heat source they would have self-combusted, causing the shells, which were outside the magazine, to explode. That explosion probably caused all of the shells in the magazine to...
explode. Only twelve of the approximately 750 men aboard the ship survived the catastrophe. The remains of those who didn’t survive (including Frank) were buried in a mass grave in Woodlands Cemetery, in Gillingham, Kent.

Frank was awarded the 1914/15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal. He was well on the way to qualifying for a Royal Navy Long Service and Good Conduct Medal but his untimely death robbed him of it.

He is also commemorated on the Small Dole war memorial.

**G/4486 Private Arthur Alfred Virgo, 9th Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment**

I believe that I have correctly identified the above named as the “A. Virgo” as the above named. This, however, was less than straightforward. He was born in Portslade and was not the only “A. Virgo” born there. To make things more difficult he appears to have abandoned the use of his middle name (Alfred) at some point and I have not found a definite connection with Upper Beeding. He did, however, enlist in Steyning, the only “A. Virgo” casualty to have done so, and my identification is based on that fact. I can only assume that he must have moved to Small Dole at some point after the 1911 Census. (He is also commemorated on Small Dole War Memorial.)

Assuming that I have correctly identified him, he appears to have been the son of John Virgo and Phoebe, née Weaver. Arthur married Louisa Winifred Cozens, a Southwick girl, in 1900. They appear to have had two children, one being an Arthur Edward John Virgo, who was born in Fishersgate in 1900. I have been unable to identify his sibling.

Private Virgo died of wounds in France on 20th January 1916, and is buried in Grave II. C. 31 in Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Poperinge, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium.

He was awarded the 1914/15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal.

His widow, Louisa, subsequently remarried in 1916, becoming Mrs Harry Kennard, of 47 Fishersgate Terrace, Southwick.

**2nd Lieutenant Samuel Meredith Watson, 64th Machine Gun Corps.**

Samuel, who was born in Steyning on 28th April 1885, was the second son (third child) of local builder, William Thomas Watson and Martha Melion (née Vicress) Watson, of Newbridge House, Steyning. He completed his education at St George’s College in Buenos Aires, becoming a mechanical and electrical engineer by trade, working on the railways in that city. He was a keen sportsman,
being a footballer and cricketer both for Steyning and continuing these activities in South America. He was also something of a golfer.

When war broke out in August 1914 Samuel returned to Steyning and, answering the call to serve king and country, enlisted as a private soldier SD/2015 in the 12\textsuperscript{th} Battalion (2\textsuperscript{nd} South Downs) of the Royal Sussex Regiment on 18\textsuperscript{th} November 1914. He transferred to the 19\textsuperscript{th} Battalion (2\textsuperscript{nd} Public Schools) of the Royal Fusiliers in February 1915. Then, on 19\textsuperscript{th} May 1915 he was commissioned as a 2\textsuperscript{nd} Lieutenant in the 5\textsuperscript{th} Leinster Regiment, subsequently being attached to the newly formed Machine Gun Corps, landing in France on 24\textsuperscript{th} February 1916.

Samuel was killed in action in France on 1\textsuperscript{st} July 1916, the disastrous first day of the Battle of the Somme, arguably the British army’s worst day ever, many thousands of men being killed, wounded, or taken prisoner. He is buried in grave VII. D. 4 in Gordon Dump Cemetery, Ovillers- La Boiselle, Somme, France.

He was awarded the British War Medal and Victory Medal.

Samuel is also commemorated on Steyning War memorial. For some years there was also a white stone cross commemorating him in St Peter’s Churchyard, Upper Beeding. This became broken and was discarded some years ago.

**TF/215 Serjeant Walter Benjamin Watson, 4\textsuperscript{th} Battalion, the Royal Sussex Regiment**

Walter was born in Bramber in 1881. He was the third son (fourth child) of local builder, William Thomas Watson and Martha Melion (née Vicress) Watson. He lived most of his life in Steyning and was a painter and plumber by trade.

He joined the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Volunteer Battalion of the Royal Sussex Regiment on 8\textsuperscript{th} December 1898, serving in the Partridge Green Detachment. Walter transferred to the 4\textsuperscript{th} (Territorial Force) Battalion when the Territorial Force was formed in 1908. This was intended as a home defence unit and its members had no obligation to serve overseas. The desperate need for more men to serve on the Western Front meant that most of them felt obliged to volunteer and sign up for overseas service, including Walter.

Instead, however, of being sent to the Western Front Walter’s Battalion was despatched to the conflict on the Gallipoli Peninsular. They landed at Suvla Bay on the morning of 8\textsuperscript{th} August 1915. Walter’s service there lasted for just a week. On 15\textsuperscript{th} August he suffered shrapnel wounds to his right leg and left shoulder. As a result of these he was invalided to a military hospital on the Island of Lemnos, Greece. On 1\textsuperscript{st} September Walter was recorded as being seriously ill with tetanus. He never recovered from this and died on 5\textsuperscript{th} September 1915. He is buried in grave II. L. 211 in East Mudros Military Cemetery, Lemnos, Greece.

Walter was awarded the 1914/15 Star, British War Medal, and Victory Medal.

He is also commemorated on both the Steyning and Bramber War Memorials.
8151 Private Frederick Witten, 2nd/6th Battalion, Royal Warwickshire Regiment (formerly 3002 Royal Sussex Regiment) and

5528 Private Thomas Witten, 2nd/6th Battalion, Royal Warwickshire Regiment (formerly 3001 Royal Sussex Regiment).

Frederick and Thomas were the youngest children of Arthur Witten and Ellen, née Westgate, the lived in a house which is now called “Starlings” in High Street, Upper Beeding. It was previously called the “Old Bakehouse”. The boys had an older brother, Arthur, and an older sister Edith.

The 1911 Census shows that Frederick was a bricklayer’s labourer and that Thomas was a farm labourer. They enlisted in Steyning, almost certainly on the same day, given that they had consecutive regimental numbers.

Frederick was killed in action on 10 July 1916, aged 24, and is buried in grave II. J. 15 in Rue –Du-Bacquerot No 1 Military Cemetery, Laventie, Pas de Calais, France. Tragically, Thomas was also killed in action, nine days later, on 19 July 1916, aged 21. He has no known grave and is commemorated on the Loos Memorial (to the missing), Pas de Calais, France.

They are also commemorated on their parents’ headstone in Upper Beeding Churchyard Extention, which is situated on the other side of Church Lane, behind the church car park. The inscription reads as follows:

| IN LOVING MEMORY OF |
| ELLEN |
| WIFE OF ARTHUR WITTEN |
| WHO DIED JANUARY 23rd 1929 |
| AGED 68 YEARS |
| ALSO OF ARTHUR WITTEN |
| WHO DIED DECEMBER 18th 1937 |
| AGED 82 YEARS |
| AT REST |
| AND OF TWO SONS OF THE ABOVE |
| FREDERICK |
| DIED JULY 10th 1916 |
| AGED 24 YEARS |
| THOMAS |
| DIED JULY 19th 1916 |
| AGED 21 YEARS |
| WHO LOST THEIR LIVES IN FRANCE DURING |
| THE GREAT WAR WHILST SERVING WITH THE |
| ROYAL WARWICKSHIRE REGIMENT |

(Note: The above text is as it appears on the headstone, i.e. the names are larger the rest of the text (apart from “AT REST”, which is smaller), and the name of the regiment is aligned to the left, not centred, as the rest of the text is.)

There is a photograph of the Witten family headstone on page 24, overleaf.

Frederick and Thomas were each awarded the British War Medal and Victory Medal.
The Witten family headstone in the Upper Beeding Cemetery Extension – not now in as good a condition as it once was. (The blotches are on the headstone, even after cleaning it in order to photograph it.)
A casualty who is not commemorated on the War Memorial

“Soldiers did in the Great War”, the official listing of the British army’s soldiers who died in the First World War, identifies another man with an Upper Beeding connection, who is not commemorated on the war memorial. He was:

9275 Lance Corporal Harry Michael Winton, 5th Battalion Duke of Edinburgh’ (Wiltshire Regiment)

Harry was born in Upper Beeding in 1892 and was the son of Harry Stoner Winton and Ellen Elizabeth, née Smith. The family lived in Upper Beeding High Street. Harry (Senior) died in 1897 and the family continued to live there for a while but moved to the village of Downton in Wiltshire at some point after the 1901 Census and before the 1911 Census. The latter census shows Harry as an 18 year-old baker.

Harry must have answered the call to serve king and country, enlisting in Salisbury in 1914 or 1915. He fought in the Gallipoli campaign, arriving there on 30th June 1915. He was killed in action on 13th August 1915 and, having no known grave, is commemorated on the Helles Memorial (to the missing), which is situated close to the western end of the Gallipoli Peninsular.

He was awarded the 1914/15 Star, the British War Medal, and the Victory medal.

My Acknowledgements and Sources

Debt of Honour Register, Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Soldiers Died in the Great War 1914-1919, HMSO 1921, the official listing of British soldiers, who died whilst serving during that war. (Subsequently republished on CD-Rom by the Naval & Military Press, Uckfield, Sussex.)

The London Gazette for the citation for Cpl Sloan’s Distinguished Conduct Medal.

Census records, Admiralty, & War Office records held by The National Archives, Kew, London and / or now available online at Ancestry.co.uk.

Pat Nightingale (Secretary, Beeding and Bramber Local History Society), for additional information.

Sue Light of Lancing, for information which she found whilst she was researching the men, whose names are recorded on the Steyning War Memorial, which is inside St Andrew & St Cuthman’s Church.

Diana Durden – proof reading.

Findmypast.co.uk - Births, Marriages and Deaths indices.

Freebmd.org.uk - Births, Marriages and Deaths indices.