

BILSINGTON



There is a small plaque inside St Peter and St Paul Church that commemorates the village war dead. There is also a roll of honour listing all local men who served in the King's colours.

The Great War
1914-1919

BATES G.S.P

Private 2130682 George Simeon Percy BATES. 1st Canadian Infantry (Manitober Regiment). Died during army training Wednesday 13th November 1918 aged 32 years. Son of William John and Elizabeth Bates of 3 The Poplars, Kenardington, Ashford, Kent. Buried in the Brandon Cemetery, Manitober, Canada. Grave reference L.12.B.H.S.16. This cemetery contains the graves of 98 Commonwealth soldiers.

The Ashford 1918 Absentee Voters List gives –

Teigh Farm, Stone

Private 424319 Percy Archibald BATES. Canadian M.T, Army Service Corps.



COGGER J

Private 24324 John COGGER. 32nd Battalion (East Ham), Royal Fusiliers. Died Friday 15th September 1916 aged 21 years. Born Bilsington. Enlisted Ashford. Resided Aldington Frith. Son of Fred and Laura Cogger of Court Lodge Cottage, Bonnington, Kent. John has no known grave. His name appears on the Thiepval Memorial, The Somme, France. Panel reference 8C,9A,16A.

John was reported missing in action before his death was confirmed a month later.

On the 8th September 1916 the 32nd battalion arrived at Edgehill Station and then proceeded to Fricourt Camp via Montauban. Later in the day it went forward into frontline trenches north east of Deville Wood (Devil Wood). On the 15th September the battalion was in action alongside the 26th battalion Royal Fusiliers. The battalion sustained heavy casualties in this attack – 293 men killed or wounded. John must have been killed near to Deville Wood on the Somme.



KNIGHT S.A

Private 104013 Sidney Albert KNIGHT. 166th Company, Machine Gun Corps (MGC). Formerly (19010) Middlesex Regiment. Died Tuesday 27th August 1918. Born Warehorne 1886. Resided Pear Tree Cottage, Bilsington, Ashford, Kent. Buried in the Tournai Communal Cemetery Allied Extension, Tournai, Belgium. Grave reference III.D.1. The Ashford 1918 Absentee Voters List gives –

Pear Tree Cottage, Bilsington

Private 104013 Sidney Albert KNIGHT. 166th Machine Gun Corps.

The 1901 census gives

Sidney Albert	KNIGHT	15	Drapers Boy	Warehorne
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SMITH F.G

Lance Corporal T/1093 Frederick George SMITH. 5th Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). Died Tuesday 25th May 1915 aged 23 years. Born Newchurch. Enlisted Aldington. Resided Newchurch. Son of Mr. F.S Smith of Street Farm Cottage, Newchurch, Hythe, Kent. Frederick has no known grave. His name appears on the Kirkee Memorial, India. Panel reference H.

Frederick probably died of disease or illness whilst his battalion was still in India. Shortly after Frederick died his battalion was moved to Mesopotamia (Iraq) with the 6th Indian Division (35th Indian Brigade).

Kirkee, also known as Khadki, is a Military Cantonment adjoining the large university town of Poona on the Plateau above Bombay. It can be reached by train from Bombay to Poona or by long distance taxi service from Dada Taxi Stand, Bombay. There are direct flights from Bombay, Madras and Delhi but these tend to be irregular. Taxis and Motor Rickshaws are available from Poona Railway Station. To reach Kirkee War Cemetery, in which the memorial stands, one must ask for Mula Road along which the cemetery is located. One way is to cross the Sangam Bridge and follow the road which has the River Mula on its right. The CWGC road direction board is on a crossroads with the Bombay Poona Road. The cemetery is situated on the right hand side and backs onto the river. From the railway station follow the way via Juna Bazar, Sangam Bridge, past the Engineering college, over Wakdewadi Bridge, past Bajaj Kamal Nayan Udyan and onto Bhayawadi and Mula Roads. From the airport, one reaches Ahmadnagar Road which joins onto Nagar Road followed by Deccan College Road; over the Holkar Bridge and, keeping left at the junction with Elphinson road, one enters Mula Road. The cemetery is a short distance away on the left hand side of the road. The Commonwealth War Graves road direction sign is situated at the junctions of Elphinson Road and Mula Road, but it should be noted that this is often hidden from view by Market Stalls. Historical Information: The KIRKEE MEMORIAL commemorates more than 1,800 servicemen who died in India during the First World War, who are buried in civil and cantonment cemeteries in India and Pakistan* where their graves can no longer be properly maintained. This total includes the names of 629 servicemen whose remains were brought from Bombay (Sewri) Cemetery for re-interment here in 1960. On the same memorial are commemorated almost 200 East and West African servicemen who died in non-operational zones in India in the Second World War, and whose graves either cannot be located or are so situated that maintenance is not possible. The memorial stands within KIRKEE WAR CEMETERY, which was created to receive Second World War graves from the western and central parts of India where their permanent maintenance could not be assured. The cemetery contains 1668 Commonwealth burials of the Second World War. * Ahmadabad Cantonment Cemetery; Ahmednagar Government Cemetery; Ajmer New Cemetery; Ajmer Roman Catholic Cemetery; Alibag Cemetery; Ambala Cantonment Cemetery; Amritsar Cantonment Cemetery; Bakloh Cemetery; Belgaum Government Cemetery; Bhusawal Cemetery; Bina Cemetery; Bombay (Sewri) Cemetery; Dagshai Cemetery; Dalhousie Civil Cemetery; Dalhousie Military Cemetery; Darekasa Cemetery; Deesa Cantonment Cemetery; Deolali Government Cemetery; Deoli Cemetery; Dhamangaon Cemetery; Erinpura New Cemetery; Ferozepore Military Cemetery; Hoshiarpur (Christ Church) Churchyard; Igatpuri Cemetery; Indore New Cemetery; Jubbulpore Cantonment Cemetery; Jullundur Cantonment Cemetery; Jutogh New Cemetery; Kalka Cemetery; Kamptee Cemetery; Kamptee Roman Catholic Cemetery; Kasauli Cemetery; Khandwa Cemetery; Kirkee New Cemetery; Mhow New Cemetery; Mount Abu Cemetery; Nagpur (Talki) Cemetery; Nasirabad Government Cemetery; Neemuch Cemetery; Nowgong No 60 New Cemetery; Pachmari Cemetery; Palampur Churchyard; Poona (St Sepulchre's) Cemetery; Purandhar Cemetery; Ratlan (BB&CI Railway) European Cemetery; Sabathu Cemetery; Sanjauli Cemetery, Simla; Simla Old Cemetery; Solon Cemetery.

LOST MEN

AUSTEN S.E

Private L/8103 Samuel Ernest AUSTEN. 1st Battalion, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment). Died Friday 23 October 1914 aged 29 years. Born Bilsington, Ashford. Enlisted Canterbury. Resided Chilham. Son of Mr S. Austen of 2 East Villa, Chilham Lees, Kent. Buried in the Longuenesse (St Omer) Souvenir Cemetery, France. Grave reference I.A.9.

The 1901 census gives –
Walnut Tree Cottage, Lower Lees, Chilham

Samuel	AUSTEN	52	Publican	Selling
Eliza		50		Aldington
Lizzie		18		Aldington
Samuel		15		Aldington
Victor		13		Mersham
Archibald		10		Brabourne
Frank		7		Brabourne

It appears that Samuel was a regular soldier when the war broke out and that he went to France with the BEF. Before the war Samuel worked locally at one of the Gravel Pits with his brother. It is recorded that Samuel saved the life of his brother when a heap of Gravel fell on top of him. Samuel was wounded in France and was sent to the Military Hospital at St Omer. He died whilst at this hospital of his wounds.

The 1st battalion was in the Radinghem area on the 21st October 1914. It was holding the line near Great Flamengrie Farm. The battle of Armentieres continued for the next few weeks and the 1st battalion Buffs at Radinghem were in the thick of it. Samuel was wounded near Radinghem.

BURT G

Private 441201 George F BURT. 5th Battalion, Saskatchewan Regiment. Canadian Expeditionary Force. Died 15th August 1917 aged 21 years. Youngest son of Mr T Burt of Saskatchewan, Canada. Nephew of Mr C Luckhurst of Bilsington Cross, Ashford, Kent. George has no known grave. His name appears on the Vimy Memorial, France.

George enlisted in 1915 and went to France in 1916. He was sent back to England in 1916 for a short period to undergo an operation. He returned to France in April 1917.

His commanding officer wrote a letter stating that he had reached his first objective before being hit by machine gun fire. It was whilst holding the captured position under very severe bombardment that he met with his death.

THORPE P.H

Engine Room Artificer 4th Class M/16987 Percy Harry THORPE. HMS "Tyne". Royal Navy (RN). Died 22nd May 1917 aged 29 years. Son of John and Emma Thorpe of Bilsington, Ashford, Kent. Husband of Edith Emily Thorpe of 2, Oak Road, Farnborough. Percy has no known grave. His name appears on the Chatham Naval Memorial, Chatham, Kent.



WOODGATE E.J

Corporal MCG/101 Ernest John WOODGATE. Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. Eastern Ontario Regiment. Died 15th September 1916 aged 28 years. Born Bilsington circa 1889. Resided Ruckinge. Son of Mr S Woodgate of "Hurst Hill Cottage", Hothfield, Ashford, Kent. Ernest has no known grave. According to the Canadian Government Ernest's name appears on the Vimy Memorial, France.

David Hughes the renowned local military historian from Aldington has searched the Vimy Memorial for Ernest's name but he could not locate it anywhere. It is therefore possible that Ernest's name was left off the memorial by mistake...

