

Chiddingstone Hoath Chapel



The hamlet of Chiddingstone Hoath near Edenbridge, Kent, was formerly known as Rendsley Hoath. As late as the 1950's Chiddingstone Hoath had its own village hall, which also served as a school, and the north end of the hall was consecrated as a chapel. Originally the Great War brass memorial plaque commemorating three local casualties, was located in Chiddingstone Hoath Chapel, but it has been relocated to the parish church of St. Mary the Virgin, Chiddingstone. The following commemorations are by Patrick D. Scullion, and the photograph as shown above was kindly provided for inclusion here by Susan F. As can clearly be seen when viewing the photograph, the memorial plaque is clearly still well cared for, and as such it would seem that it had been a good move to relocate it to its current location. The brass memorial plaque bears the following three inscriptions:-

IN LOVING MEMORY OF THE BOYS OF THIS CHAPEL WHO LAID
DOWN THEIR LIVES IN THE GREAT WAR 1914-1918

SEVERED ONLY "TILL HE COME"

ERECTED BY FRIENDS OF THE CHIDDINGSTONE HOATH CHAPEL.

The Great War

1914 -1919

COULSTOCK, HARRY. Lance Corporal, 16295.

7th (Service) Battalion, East Surrey Regiment.

Died 13 May 1917? (Please see below).

Born Brixton, Surrey. Enlisted Kingston-on-Thames, Surrey.

Son of William Walter Coulstock and Louisa Coulstock of The Green, Chiddingstone Hoath, Edenbridge, Kent.

Commemorated on the Arras Memorial, Pas de Calais, France. Bay 6.

Harry enlisted in the army 'For the Duration of the War' on 3 December 1915, at which time he stated that he was 27 years and 1 month old, and that he was employed as a Warehouse Porter, residing at 46, Paternoster Row, London, EC. Harry named his father as his next of kin. Following his enlistment, Harry was attested to serve in the 4th (Extra Reserve) Battalion, East Surrey Regiment. On 22 March 1916, Harry was transferred to the 7th (Service) Battalion, East Surrey Regiment and posted to France. He was appointed to a (paid) Lance Corporal on 14 August 1916. Following his death, Harry was initially posted as 'Missing,' but due to the lapse of time involved, for official purposes his death was later presumed to have occurred on 3 May 1917? As can be seen, the latter date used for official purposes to record Harry's death, is different to that shown on his Commonwealth War Graves Commission, and on his Soldiers Died in the Great War, both of which show the date 13 May 1917. Although both the CWGC data and SDWG contains errors that do not match each other, but on this occasion it would probably be fair to assume that the date 13 May 1917 is the correct date.

COULSTOCK, ERNEST. Private, G/4858.

1st Battalion, Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment).

Died 18 April 1915. Aged 20.

Born Brixton, Surrey. Enlisted Tonbridge, Kent. Resided Edenbridge, Kent.

Son of William Walter Coulstock and Louisa Coulstock of The Green, Chiddingstone Hoath, Edenbridge, Kent.

Commemorated on the Menin Gate, Ieper, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. Panel 45.

Ernest was a brother of Harry Coulstock who is briefly commemorated above. Ernest's medal card entry shows that he was posted to the Asiatic war theatre on 7 April 1915, and that he was killed in action on 18 April 1915. In view of the battalion in which he was serving at the time of his death, it would appear that his MIC details appertaining to the war theatre are in error. The Coulstock brothers father; William Walter Coulstock was the local Wheelwright at Chiddingstone Hoath for several years. At the time of his death, Ernest's battalion was in the Vlamertinghe area of Belgium, and had taken part in the capture of Hill 60. The 1st Battalion, Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment) held its gains under heavy enemy fire and counter attacks, prior to being relived at 2030 hours and moving back to Vlamertinghe. Ernest was numbered amongst his battalions 78 other ranks deaths on 18 April 1915.

KNIGHT, LEONARD. Private, 22296.

1st Battalion, Dorsetshire Regiment.

Died 18 November 1916. Aged 27.

Born Upton Grey, Basingstoke, Hampshire. Enlisted Winchester, Hampshire.

Son of John and Sarah Knight.

Husband of Francis Lily Knight (née Harvey) of 4, River Side, Edenbridge, Kent.

Buried Serre Road Cemetery No.1, Serre-les-Puisieux, Pas de Calais, France.

Grave Ref: III. E. 11.

Formerly Private, 23323, Hampshire Regiment. At the time of the 1901 census, the Knight family resided at The Hoath, Chiddingstone, Kent. Head of the house was 42 year old Upton Grey, Basingstoke, Hampshire native John Knight, who was employed as a Farm Carter. Having commenced on 1 July 1916, the 'Battle of the Somme' officially ended on the day that Leonard was killed in action. The stark difference in the fighting at the commencement of the battle, compared to when it petered out can be illustrated by the casualty figures of the 1st Battalion, Dorsetshire Regiment. On the first day of the battle, Leonard's battalion suffered 67 fatalities, and on the day that he fell there were only 4, which had included a soldier who died of wounds. Leading up to Leonard's death, on 15 November his battalion had moved from the village of Mailly-Mallet, and moved into the front line the next day. On the day that Leonard was killed, his battalion was supporting an attack by the 32nd Division, to which the 1st Battalion, Dorsetshire Regiment belonged. The attack by the division was on German held positions named Frankfort Trench and Ten Tree Alley, which were located between Serre-les-Puisieux and Beaumont-Hamel. On 23 November, the battalion was relieved at the front and moved back to Mailly-Mallet. At the commencement of the Great War, the 1st Battalion, Dorsetshire Regiment was stationed at Belfast, Ireland. As part of the 15th Brigade, 5th Division; it arrived in France on 16 August 1914 and fought on the Western Front throughout the war. The worst experience which the battalion suffered was at Hill 60 on 1 May 1915 during the Second Battle of Ypres, when the Germans launched a gas attack at 0715 hours which resulted in almost 500 casualties. At the end of 1915 the battalion was transferred to the 32nd Division with which it then remained for the rest of the war. Serre Road Cemetery No.1 where Leonard is at rest was begun in May 1917, and these graves are in Plot I, Rows A to G. The rest of the cemetery was added after the Armistice, when graves were brought in from the nearby battlefields and from six smaller cemeteries. In view of where Leonard fell, he was probably originally buried at Ten Tree Cemetery No.1 at Puisieux, to the South-East of Serre-les-Puisieux, which contained the graves of 37 soldiers from the United Kingdom who fell between November 1916 and February 1917.