

St Mary and All Saints' Church, Debden

Remembers

The Fallen Heroes of the Parish



1914—1919

William Banks

William Percival Banks was born in 1894/5 in Tottenham, the oldest son of William and Mary Banks. Like his father he was a hurdlemaker and the family lived in Water Hall. He was recruited into the Essex Regiment in Chelmsford and served in the 9th Battalion and was killed in action in France and Flanders on 11 August 1916 aged about 22. He is listed on the Thiepval Memorial which means that his body was never found..

Ernest Walter Bass

He was born in Debden on 28 October 1878 the son of Walter and Susan Bass. He was a gamekeeper living with his uncle Frederick, also a gamekeeper, at Simmonds in 1901. On 22 April 1910, he married Elizabeth Cox and in 1911, they were living at Rectory Cottages with 4 children Jessie, Margaret, Arthur and Fred. He joined the Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment) at Saffron Walden and served in the 10th Battalion. He was killed in action in France on 9 October 1918 aged 39 about a month before the Armistice. He is buried in the Bois-des-Angles British Cemetery, Crèvecourt sur L'Escaut.



John Bartrop

John Bartrop

Born in 1885/6 he was the son of George and Mary. George was a publican who kept the Three Horseshoes in Debden Green but he died in 1894. His widow, Mary, married William Bass, 12 years her junior. John and his siblings continued to live at the Three Horseshoes where his occupation is listed as shop porter in 1901 and agricultural labourer in 1911. He was recruited into the Essex Regiment at Saffron Walden and served in the 11th Battalion. He was killed in action on 12 March 1918 aged 32 and he is listed on the Arras Memorial and so has no known grave.

George Bateman

He was born in Debden on 15 February 1894 the son of George, a roadman, and Emma and the 5th of 5 children. They lived in Back Street in 1901 and Well Yard in 1911. Young George was a carpenter's labourer in 1911. He married Kate Dennison, aged 27, on 16 March 1918 but he died in Germany on 5 September 1918 serving as a Gunner in C Battery of the Royal Horse Artillery and is buried in Chauny Communal Cemetery. He was 24. Kate, who lived at Coopers Farm, died in 1929 aged 39.

Laurence Victor Bunting

He was born in Debden on 20 January 1899 4th of five children of David, agricultural labourer, and Harriet. He joined the Bedfordshire Regiment at Warley in Essex and served in the 6th Battalion. He was killed in action in France on 2 April 1918 aged 19. He is buried in Gommecourt British Cemetery No 2.



Alec Campbell

Alexander Robertson Campbell was the oldest son of William and Maggie Campbell who farmed Broctons having migrated from Scotland. Alec was born in 1894 in Glasgow. He enlisted at Saffron Walden and joined 9th Battalion of the Essex Regiment and attained the rank of Corporal. He was killed in action in France on 4 September 1916 aged 22 and is buried in the Faubourg d'Amiens Cemetery, Arras.

William Cox

He was born in Debden on 16 January 1883, oldest son of Arthur and Ellen Cox who farmed Howe Farm. He was recruited into the Essex Regiment and served in France in the 2nd Battalion. He was killed in action in France on 9 August 1917 aged 34. He is listed on the Arras Memorial and so has no known grave.



Sidney Dennison

Sidney George Dennison

Born in Debden on 26 February 1885 he was the third son of James, a gardener, and Mary Ann. They lived in the School Cottages. Sidney was a bricklayer's labourer and married Annie Nutting of Debden on 20 August 1910. They had 3 children Cecil, Violet and Leslie between 1910 and 1914. He enlisted in the Duke of Cambridge's Own (Middlesex Regiment) and served in the 9th Battalion. He was killed in action on 13 February 1916 aged 30. He is listed on the Loos Memorial and has no known grave.

George Digby

Clement George Digby was born in Debden on 13 May 1893 the 2nd of 4 children of Clement, an agricultural labourer, and Charlotte. In 1911 they were living at Sparrow's Farm where George was also an agricultural labourer. He enlisted in the Bedfordshire Regiment at Bishop's Stortford and, in the 4th Battalion, he died of wounds on 19 January 1918 aged 24. He is buried in the British Cemetery, Manancourt.



Harold Fisher DSO

He was the second son of the Rev. Frederic Horatio Fisher and his wife Agnes born when he was Vicar of Fulham. He was Rector of Debden 1890-1907. Harold was born on 3 March 1877 and was educated at Haileybury. He entered the Manchester Regiment from the Suffolk Artillery Militia on 4 May 1898. He took part in the Boer War where he was severely wounded and he received the DSO in 1900 in recognition of his service in S. Africa. He was promoted to Captain in 1901. He was killed in action aged 37 on 16 December near La Bassée and is buried at Beuvry Communal Cemetery near Calais.



George Herbert Foster

Born on 29 April 1884 in Debden, George was the 4th of 8 children of George, a bricklayer, and Sarah. They lived in the village on Back Street. George married Elizabeth Bassett of Wimbish on 30 July 1910. They had 3 children Douglas, Walter and Corrie between 1912 and 1916. He enlisted at Saffron Walden and joined the 7th Battalion of the Duke of Edinburgh's (Wiltshire Regiment). He was promoted to Corporal but died of wounds in France on 6 November 1918 aged 34 within 3 days of the Armistice. He is buried in the Cross Roads Cemetery, Fontaine-au-Bois.

Harry Francis

A Henry Francis is listed in the 1901 and 1911 censuses as living at Lacy's Farm having been born at Thaxted. A Henry Francis, born in Thaxted, is shown as enlisting at Saffron Walden and serving in the 8th Battalion of the Bedfordshire Regiment. He was killed in action in Flanders on 17 December 1915 and is listed on the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial. There is no proof that the two Henry Francis's are the same and the same as the Harry Francis on the Memorial.

John Francis

He was the 2nd son of Samuel, an agricultural labourer, and Charlotte and was born in 1890/91. They lived at Rook End. He enlisted at Saffron Walden and joined the 2nd Battalion of the Grenadier Guards. He was killed in action in France on 4 September 1914 aged about 24 and is buried in the Guards Grave in Villers Cotterets Forest.



Arthur Charles Graves

He was the son of Arthur and Minnie Graves of Smiths Green Farm and was born on 6 January 1886. On 24 September 1908 he enlisted in the Royal Marine Light Infantry. He married Sarah Jane Matilda though where and when is not currently known. She is reported as living in Rochester in Arthur's death notices. He died on 1 January 1915 when the battleship, HMS Formidable, on which he was serving as Corporal, was torpedoed off Portland. His body was never recovered and he is listed on the Chatham Naval Memorial. A Sarah J.M. Graves died in Chatham in 1965 aged 79.

William Hewson

William Hewson was a retired London police constable living with his wife Matilda in 1911 at The White House when he was 63 – too old to serve in WW1. His son, William Matthew Hewson, was born in Lambeth in 1889. He is listed in the London Gazette of 18 August 1889 as a Temporary Boy Messenger for the Post Office and is described as such in the 1891 census. He married Florrie Turner in August 1915. He joined the Mercantile Marine Reserve and was killed on 7 May 1918 serving as Chief Steward on HMS Isonzo.

The Hon. Robert Henry Palmer Howard

He was the grandson of Lord Strathcona of Debden Hall. His mother, Lady Strathcona in her own right, married a Montreal based surgeon R.J.Bliss Howard. Robert served in the East Surrey Regiment first in the 4th Battalion and later attached to the 2nd Battalion. He was killed in action on 8 May 1915 aged 21 at Poperinghe in Flanders. He is buried in Potijze Château Lawn Cemetery. As well as Debden, he is also commemorated on War Memorials at Glencoe (also known as Strathcona) and the island of Colonsay where the Howard family have an estate.

Digby Guy Learoyd

He was the oldest son of the Rev. Digby Learoyd who was Rector of Debden 1908 – 1936. He was born about 1880 in Barnet and was educated at Oxford University where he joined the Officers Training Corps where he was promoted 2nd Lieutenant in July 1913. In 1917 he joined Inland Water Transport, Royal Engineers and was posted to Mesopotamia. He died of enteric fever (typhoid) on 13 December 1917 aged 28. He is buried in the Basra War Cemetery.

Tommy Luckings

He was the 5th of 8 children of James, an agricultural labourer, and Emily. They lived first at Ricketts and later in Rook End Lane. He was born in Debden on 21 January 1897. Before enlisting he was an agricultural labourer. He enlisted at Saffron Walden and served as a Gunner in the Royal Horse Artillery. As a member of A Battery he was killed in action in Flanders aged 19 on 7 February 1916. He is buried at Railway Dug-outs Cemetery, Ieper (Ypres), West Flanders.

William Luckings

He was Tommy's older brother born on 31 December 1888 and was the 2nd of James and Emily's children. He too was an agricultural labourer before enlisting at Saffron Walden. He initially joined the Essex Regiment but was posted to the 4th Special Reserve Battalion of the Staffordshire Regiment. He was killed in action at Ploegsteert in Flanders aged 29. He is listed on Ploegsteert Memorial, Hainault, Belgium with no known grave.

Walter Pigney

He was the older of two sons of James and Charlotte Pigney. James was a gardener and the family had come from Norfolk some time between 1901 and 1911 and they lived at Church Cottage. Walter was born in Holt about 1898. He enlisted at Harringay and joined the East Surrey Regiment and later the 10th Battalion of the Essex Regiment. He was killed in action in France on 21 March 1918 aged 21 and is buried in Serre Road Cemetery No 2, Somme, France.

John Saunders

This is believed to be John Sanders who was born in Brirchanger and served in the 11th battalion of the Essex Regiment. He died of wounds on 12 November 1915 in Flanders and is buried in Lussenthoek Military Cemetery. His connection with Debden is not known.



Charles Seeby

He was born in Trumpington in 1876 and must have moved to Debden with his family before 1911. It consisted of his wife, Annie, who was born in Debden, and 5 children. They lived on Ivy Tod Hill and he was an agricultural labourer. He enlisted at Cambridge and first served in the Suffolk Regiment before being posted to the 14th (Service) Battalion of the Hampshire Regiment. He was killed in action aged 39 in France and Flanders on 20 October 1916. He is listed on the Thiepval Memorial and so has no known grave.

Frederick Herbert Smith

He was born at Waltham Abbey in about 1884, married Florence Dennison in 1907 and, in 1911, he was living in Debden with 2 children. He was an agricultural labourer. He enlisted at Saffron Walden and served in the 1st Battalion of the Essex Regiment. He was killed in action on 3 December 1917 aged 33 at the Battle of Cambrai. He is listed on the Cambrai Memorial at Louverval so his body was never found.

Henry Smith

He was born in Debden on 6 October 1886 the son of John, a hurdle and rake maker, and Mary. They lived at Lacey's Farm and, later, in the village. Henry was a postman in 1901 and a carpenter in 1911. He enlisted at Saffron Walden and joined the Essex Regiment first and then the 1st Battalion of the Northamptonshire Regiment. He was killed in action in France and Flanders on 27 September 1916 aged 29 and is listed on the Thiepval Memorial with no known grave.

Edward Taylor

He was the 2nd son of Charles and Minnie Taylor. Charles had been born in Thaxted and Minnie in Wimbish but Edward was born in Leytonstone in about 1898. They lived at Pages Farm where Charles was a horse slaughterer. Edward enlisted at Saffron Walden and served in the 8th Bedfordshire Regiment. He was killed in action aged 18 in Flanders on 19 April 1916 and is buried in the Essex Farm Cemetery at Ieper (Ypres), West Flanders, Belgium.

Ernest Taylor

He was Edward's older brother also born in Leytonstone in about 1896. He too enlisted at Saffron Walden and served in the 8th Battalion of the Bedfordshire Regiment. He died of wounds on 16 October 1916 at Gueudecourt during the Battle of the Somme. He was aged 20. He was buried in the Bancourt British Cemetery, Pas de Calais.

1939—1945

Douglas A. Brookes



Douglas Arthur Brookes was born in Debden on 26 June 1922 the son of Walter, a cow keeper, and Annie. He served in the RAFVR where he reached the rank of Sergeant. He died on 7 February 1944 but the cause and location are at present unknown. He was 21. His name is on the Runnymede Memorial.

Frank E. Barnett

He was born in about 1910 in Croydon where his father, Joseph, was described as a sign writer. Before 1920, Joseph and his wife, Annie, moved to Debden where they had a further 2 children and Joseph gave his occupation as House Decorator. They lived at Rook End. Frank joined the RAFVR and became a Leading Aircraftman but, on 17 October 1942, he was in a Mitchell which crashed at West Raynham in Norfolk. He was 32. He is buried in East Raynham Churchyard.

William F. Bone

William Frederick Wallis Bone was born in Plaistow in 1899 the son of William Thomas and Alice Maud Bone. William Thomas was born in Sennen, Cornwall as were Nicholas Bone of Monks Farm and Richard Bone of Roothers Farm so they must have been related. William Thomas worked in a gasworks where, in 1911, he was a crane driver.

William Frederick died at Addenbrooke's aged 44 on 4 April 1944 when he was serving as a Sergeant in the Home Guard attached to the 12th Essex battalion. He is buried in Thaxted United Reformed Church where his grave can still be seen. The cause of his death is currently unknown. He married Nellie Frances who died in 1981 and is buried with him. The inscription on the grave refers to him being a husband and father so they evidently had children. When he died they were living at "The Bungalow", Debden Green.



Alec S. Dennison

Alec Sidney Dennison was born in Debden on 12 September 1924 the son of William, an engine driver, and Edith. He joined the 14th Battalion of the Sherwood Foresters (Notts and Derby Regiment) but was killed at the landings at Anzio in Italy on 7 May 1944. He was 19. He is buried at the Beach Head Cemetery at Anzio.

Raymond C. Gilder

He was the son of Richard, a carpenter, and Mildred. He was born in Debden on 13 July 1924. He served as an Able Seaman in the Royal Navy and while in the Far East on HMS Pioneer, an aircraft carrier, became ill and died from a brain tumour in Chelmsford aged 21 on 21 April 1946. He was buried in Debden Churchyard on 26 April 1946.

Edward E.R.R. Moulding

Edward Robert Reginald Moulding was the son of Reginald and Lilian and was born in Bridport, Dorset in 1923. They settled in Debden Green where Reginald was a baker for many years living at the Bakehouse. Edward joined in the RAFVR and, with the rank of Sergeant, flew in Lancasters as Gunner. Based at Downham Market with 625 Sqdn, he was on a raid to Nuremberg on 31 March 1944 when his Lancaster was shot down over Steinem and he was killed aged 21. He is buried at Rheinberg War Cemetery. His father died in 1971 and his mother in 1988. Both are buried in Debden.



In April 1919, a village meeting was held in which parishioners expressed themselves in favour of a village institute and the placing of a memorial brass in the Church in memory of the fallen heroes of the parish. In May 1919, it was decided that a mural tablet would be placed in the Congregational Chapel as well as the Church.

The two memorials were dedicated on 18 January 1920 by the Rev. Digby Learoyd in the Church and by Mr E.W.Tanner J.P., C.C. in the Chapel. They are of Sicilian marble with a black marble background and both are identical except the one in the Church has a cross in the pediment. Both are the work of Messrs Whitehead and Day of Saffron Walden.

The Memorial in the Chapel was removed to the Memorial Hall in about 1967.

This information has been extracted from editions of the Saffron Walden Weekly News in 1919 and 1920