

Links to the church

Thomas Bentham was the son of Rev. Thomas Bentham, curate of St Mary Magdalene, who became first vicar of St Mildred's. Thomas Mason was the son of the church treasurer. Lionel Wild's father was a church warden.

The following men were baptised at the church:

William Baxter
Alfred Brown
Alistair Creek
Bernard Gilson
Arthur Letts
Arthur Perry
Stuart Pulford
Lionel Wild

The following men were married at the church:

Sidney Barrett 7th June 1913
George Emmens 29th May 1915
Felix Parham 26th December 1914
Charles Serres 23rd December 1917
Ernest Smith 29th October 1916
Frederick Williamson 6th September 1913
(his daughter was also baptised at St Mary's)

Charles Serres died less than 3 weeks after his wedding

St Mary Magdalene with St Martin's War Memorials

by Stephanie Offer



The St Mary Magdalene war memorial was dedicated in July 1921 by George Tribe's step-father and Lionel Wild's father. It cost £100 (today about £5000) and was dedicated by the Bishop of Croydon. It was designed by the vicar, James Wright "together with a few friends." As it was unveiled Mr Wild said, "We unveil this tablet to the glory of God and in grateful memory of the men of this parish who fell in the path of duty during the Great War, 1914-1918"

The St Martin's War Memorial was unveiled in November 1921.

There are 96 men listed on the St Mary Magdalene war memorial and 17 listed on the St Martin's war memorial.

St Mary Magdalene

To the Glory of God and in grateful memory of the men of this Parish who fell in the path of duty during the Great War, 1914-1918

Atha, Leonard Edward
Attewell, Alfred William
Aveline, Arthur Henry
Bance, Albert Frederick
Barrett, Sidney
Baxter, William Henry
Belchamber, Eric Harold
Bentham, Thomas
Bond, Charles Nesbitt
Bradford, William Thomas
Brooks, Albert Alexander
Brooks, Percy John
Brown, Alfred Joseph
Buckland, John Martin
Burch, Herbert Charles
Burn, Robert
Cato, Charles Frances
Chittenden, Leonard Lloyd
Collitt, Percy Frank
Compton, Neville George
Conway, Guy
Corbett, John Archibald
Creek, Stanley Alistair
Day, Horaace Ernest
Delvaille, Ernest Henry

Delvaille, Stanley Hilton
Doble, Leslie Stephen Newton
Doody, Maurice Edgar
Doody, Wilfred George
Durling, George Joshua
Emmens, George Harold
Exelby, Charles Roden
Fairburn, Edgar Colin Ambrose
Finn, John Wallace
Flower, Albert Charles
Gilson, Bernard Hyde
Gray, Joseph Walter
Griffiths, Alfred James
Grover, Percy
Hadfield, Wilfrid John Mackenzie
Haley, Henry William
Hart, Clement Albert
Hubble, Frederick Richard
Hutchinson, Robert
Iles, Henry
Innes, James Stuart D'Auvergne
Issacs, Henry Roland
Kear, Walter Nelson
Keen, Norman
Kember, Leonard Henry Edward

Letts, Arthur Kingdon
Lee, Percy William
Lewsey, George Frederick
Little, Albert
Lloyd, Edward Stanley
Lloyd, Lyndsey
Lovell, William Leslie
Marsh, Charles Richard
Mason, Thomas Henry
McColvin, Norman
Morden, William Harry
Morris, Wilfrid Stanley
Nichols, Dudley Matthew
Parham, Felix Lawrence
Perrin, Thomas Frederick
Perry, Arthur
Petrie, Arthur Hunt
Phare, Dudley Gersham
Pulford, Stuart Arthur
Price, Arthur Edward
Price, Joseph William James
Reid, James Archibald John
Richardson, Percy Frederick
Riley, Alfred Valentine Cole
Roberts, Frank Marshall

Rogers, Alfred Joseph
Serres, Charles Herbert
Sinclair, John Leslie Hartnell
Skinner, Edward Walter
Smith, Ernest Hammond
Smithers, Robert
Smith, Ernest Hammond
Thompson, Robert Arthur
Thompson, William Frank
Tribe, George Herbert
Turner, Thomas Alfred
Westrup, Leonard
Wild, Lionel Tudor
Williams, Harold Ernest
Williams, Percy John
Williams, William Hutton
Williamson, Frederick Albert
Willsher, Harold Henry
Windsor, Arthur
Woodcock, Walter Stanley

St Martin's

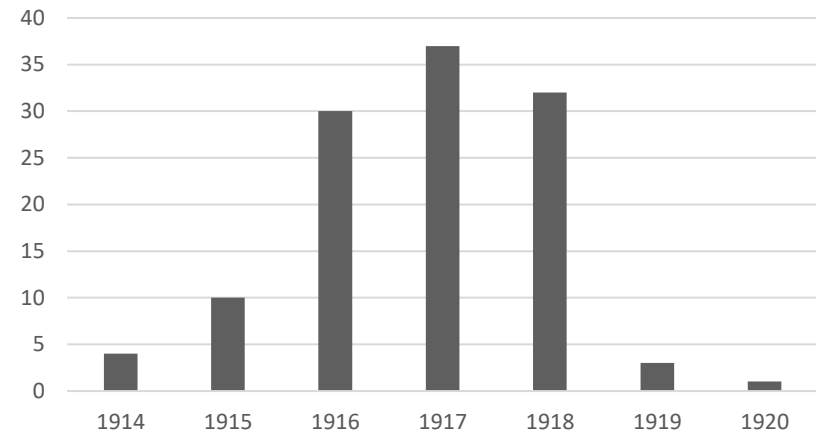
To the glory of God and in honour of those who in the service of God and country died in battle or of wounds or sickness in the Great war of 1914-1919

Baines, Arthur	Ray, William Wood
Chevins, Walter Henry	Richards, Arthur James
Kent, Percy	Riminton, Ernest William
King, George Frederick Hamilton	Riminton, Percy Henry
McQuat, Hugh	Smith, Albert Edward
Page, Richard William	Streeter, George Henry
Peters, Walter Stanley	Streeter, William Joseph
Playsted, Lionel Henry William	Williamson, Edgar Rowe
	Winter, Richard Bertram

Causes of death

Killed in action	70
Died of wounds	21
Missing in action	3
Illness	14
Spanish Flu	3
Air raid	2

Deaths by year



The average age of death was 25.

Youngest man to die: Walter Chevins, aged 17. He had signed up in 1915 aged 16.

Oldest man to die: Henry Haley, aged 49. He had joined the Territorial Army in 1887.

First man to die: William Streeter, 26th August 1914.

Last man to die: Arthur Letts, 5th June 1920.

6 of the men died while prisoners of war, 5 of the Germans, 1 of the Ottoman Turks.

Ranks

Highest Rank: Major Arthur Letts

Officers:

1 Captain

9 Lieutenants

13 2nd Lieutenants

Non-commissioned officers:

12 Sergeants

15 Corporals

The rest served as privates.

Commissioned officers made up 6% of the army during WW1, yet 23% of the men on our memorials were commissioned officers.

Where they fought

75 of the men from St Mary's fought solely in France and Belgium. The rest between them fought in the Balkans, Egypt, Gallipoli (Turkey), Greece, Mesopotamia (Iraq), India, the Persian Gulf, Malta, Jerusalem, Italy and the North Sea

Every man on St Martin's war memorial fought in France and Belgium

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Medals: medal records are available for 107 men, between them they won **240 medals.**

Edgar Williamson and Edward Lloyd won the **Military Cross**, awarded to officers for gallantry.

James Innes won the Military Cross with Bar, equivalent to winning it twice. Fewer than 3000 were awarded during WW1

106 men served in the army **1** in the navy and **4** in the Royal Flying Corps

Education

Of the men for whom records are available:

51 had elementary (primary) education

40 had secondary education

8 had university education

In 1913 only 5.8% of the population had a secondary education, yet of the men on our memorials nearly 40% had a secondary education. Likewise in 1911 only 0.06% had a university education, but yet again, of the men on our memorials nearly 8% had a university education.

Schools attended

The men for whom records are available had attended a total of 27 schools between them. A total of 16 attended Oval Road School, while one man, Stanley Creek, taught there. Next highest was Whitgift Grammar School with 14 men and Whitgift Middle School with 11.

Four men attended public schools: James Innes, Bedford School; Lionel Wild, Reading School; and Wilfrid Hadfield and Frederick Williamson, Repton School.

By contrast, John Buckland and Walter Woodstock were both educated in orphanages, showing the sheer range of social class and wealth among the men and the way that the war became a social leveller.

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Of those who went to university six went to branches of the University of London, including Goldsmith's College and the London School of Economics.

Percy Williams went to Corpus Christi College Oxford and Thomas Bentham to Queen's College Oxford, followed by an MSc at the University of Durham.

Jobs

Of the 102 men for whom there are records:

- **36** were clerks, mostly in banks, shops, insurance and the railways
- **14** worked in retail in various roles
- **11** worked in skilled trades
- **6** in printing
- **6** as ship's stewards

Among the rest were 4 students, 3 professional soldiers, 2 accountants, 2 engineers, 2 journalists, 2 commercial travellers, 2 manual labourers, 2 postal workers, a librarian at Croydon library, a teacher, a chauffeur, a hairdresser, a chimney sweep, a scientific researcher and a wallpaper designer.

Although their occupations represent the full range of skilled and unskilled work, there were far more men in white collar work than the average for Croydon at the time. Comparison with their fathers' occupations also shows that there were real opportunities for social mobility available in Edwardian Addiscombe.

Their deaths represent a huge loss of potential, for example: Norman McColvin's brothers also worked at Croydon library and had distinguished careers as librarians; Percy Williams showed huge academic promise; and Thomas Bentham's potential as a research scientist was never fully realised.

Links between the men

- Felix Parham married Walter Kear's sister Beatrice
- The Doody brothers lived at 45 Elgin Road and John Finn at 46, all attended Trinity School and all died near the village of Mametz within 19 days of each other during the Battle of the Somme in July 1916. The Doody brothers died 6 days apart.
- Stephen Doble lived a few doors down at 38 Elgin Road and also attended Trinity School.
- Arthur Letts lived at 13 Inglis Road and Charles Burch at 14
- The Price brothers lived at 196 Oval Road and Arthur Perry at 198
- Joseph Gray lived at 10 Nicholson Road and The Delvaille brothers lived at 13

The following men were members of the same sports teams:

Old Whitgiftian Cricket

Thomas Bentham, Charles Bond, Charles Exelby and Thomas Perrin

Old Whitgiftian Rugby

Charles Bond, Albert Flower, Edward Lloyd

Croydon Swimming Association

Charles Bond, Robert Burn, Horace Day, Charles Flower, Ernest Riminton and John Sinclair

Many of the men were in the same school year:

- Leonard Kember, Robert Thompson and George Lewsey at Oval Road School
- Neville Compton and Charles Exelby at Whitgift Grammar School
- Stephen Doble, Wilfrid Doody and Charles Serres at Whitgift Middle School
- Herbert Charles Burch, Walter Kear and Alistair Creek at Woodside School

Families

For many of the parents these men were not the first children they had lost. Leonard Atha's parents had lost 2, while Wilfrid Hadfield and Dudley Phare's parents had both lost 3. In Hadfield's case his death left his parents childless.

Others like Horace Day, Henry Issacs, Thomas Mason and Lionel Playsted were only children.

Lionel Playsted's father wrote after his death to his son's former headmaster at Whitgift Middle School that he was heartbroken, "Oh, God, the blow seems cruel, being our only one, but we must look forward to that great day of re-uniting."

Many of the men had brothers who also served in the army but survived the war, for example Edward Skinner was 1 of 3 brothers in the army, as were the Doody brothers. Arthur and Joseph Price's parents had 4 sons in the army, while Dudley Nichols' parents only had 2 sons, both in the army.

Only 30 of the men were married, reflecting both their average age and that married men were not conscripted until May 1916.

Between them they had 34 children

Bombing raid 13th October 1915

On the night of 13th October 1915 German airships, called Zeppelins, carried out a bombing raid on Croydon. They dropped several bombs on Oval Road, damaging numerous houses and Oval Road School. Three people died in Oval Road:

- Percy Brooks, who worked in Sainsbury's on George Street
- Robert Thompson, an electrician
- Jane Miller, a seamstress

They lived at 62, 51 and 57 Oval Road respectively.

The first two are named on our war memorial, but for some reason Jane Sophia Maryann Miller was not, although she was mentioned in the Croydon Roll of Honour. She was born in 1863 near Regent's Park, London to James Miller, an East India Army Agent's Clerk and his wife Jane Scobie. She had two brothers and two half-sisters. Her father died when she was four and her mother later married Thomas Austin, a drapers' assistant. At the time of her death she was living with her step-father and mother at 51 Oval Road. She worked as a seamstress and drapers' assistant.



Bombed out houses in Oval Road